



post haste



bell air



stamps

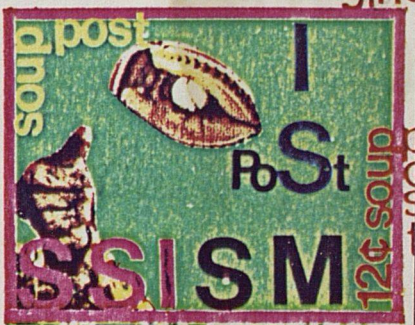
gina lotta post



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SOUP STAMPS



the MONTHLY



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SOUP INTRO



All soups age gracefully; most taste better the second time around.
— Betty Wason, *The Soup to Desert High Fiber Cookbook*

Cold soup, cold soup clear and particular and a principal a principal question to put into.
— Gertrude Stein, *Tender Buttons*

EVERY MAGAZINE IS A HEAVY investment and risk, not only of time, money and energy, but also literary purpose. Editors who eclectically publish friends, strain to catch "big names," or randomly regurgitate "Whatever comes in" may be popular today but are ignored tomorrow. Serious writers soon dismiss them.

The first SOUP was intended as a mini-anthology, a cross-section of current work emphasizing new directions. It won approval. One consistent recommendation: SOUP should clarify its focus. Gradually I realized my main interest was toward "New Narrative" writing.

Since Bruce Boone's essay on the "Talks" issue of HILLS suggests some central objectives of this project—if only by way of comparison to certain other writers—I need add little by way of introduction. New Narrative is language conscious but arises out of specific social and political concerns of specific communities. It may be foregrounded as in the work of Luisah Teish, Shirley Garzotto, Robert Gluck and Judy Grahn or more buried as in recent work by Leslie Scalapino and Aaron Shurin. It stresses the enabling role of content in determining form rather than stressing form as independent or separate from its social origins and goals. Writing which makes political and emotional (as well as linguistic) connections interests me more than writing which does not.

At the same time it is too early to close dialogue on these matters. Ron Silliman's review offers a divergent viewpoint. Gil Ott, Bob Perelman and others til a middle ground. Unsolicited manuscripts have poured in. A few contained surprises that fit the focus of this issue. A few I liked well enough I didn't care if they fit. Variety is the spice of life. Soup too. A good cook, however, uses spices sparingly.

SOUP 3 will focus on translations. Submission deadline is Oct. 1, 1981. Contributors should enclose texts in original language as well as in translation; also a brief note on translator's theory and methodology.

— Steve Abbott

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Correction:

Memory Babe: A Critical Biography of Jack Kerouac referred to in intro of first SOUP was written solely by Gerald Nicosia. Frankie Edith Parker and some 300 other interviewees contributed information to it. Grove Press will publish it in one volume in 1981. special thanks to Sharon Skolnick (preliminary graphic design consultation), Renaissance Graphics, 5 Brosnan St., SF (typesetting), Ginny Lloyd (cover, graphic design, paste-up & rubberstamp art)



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ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE % STEVE ABBOTT, 545 ASHBURY NO. 1, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94117

Kathy Acker

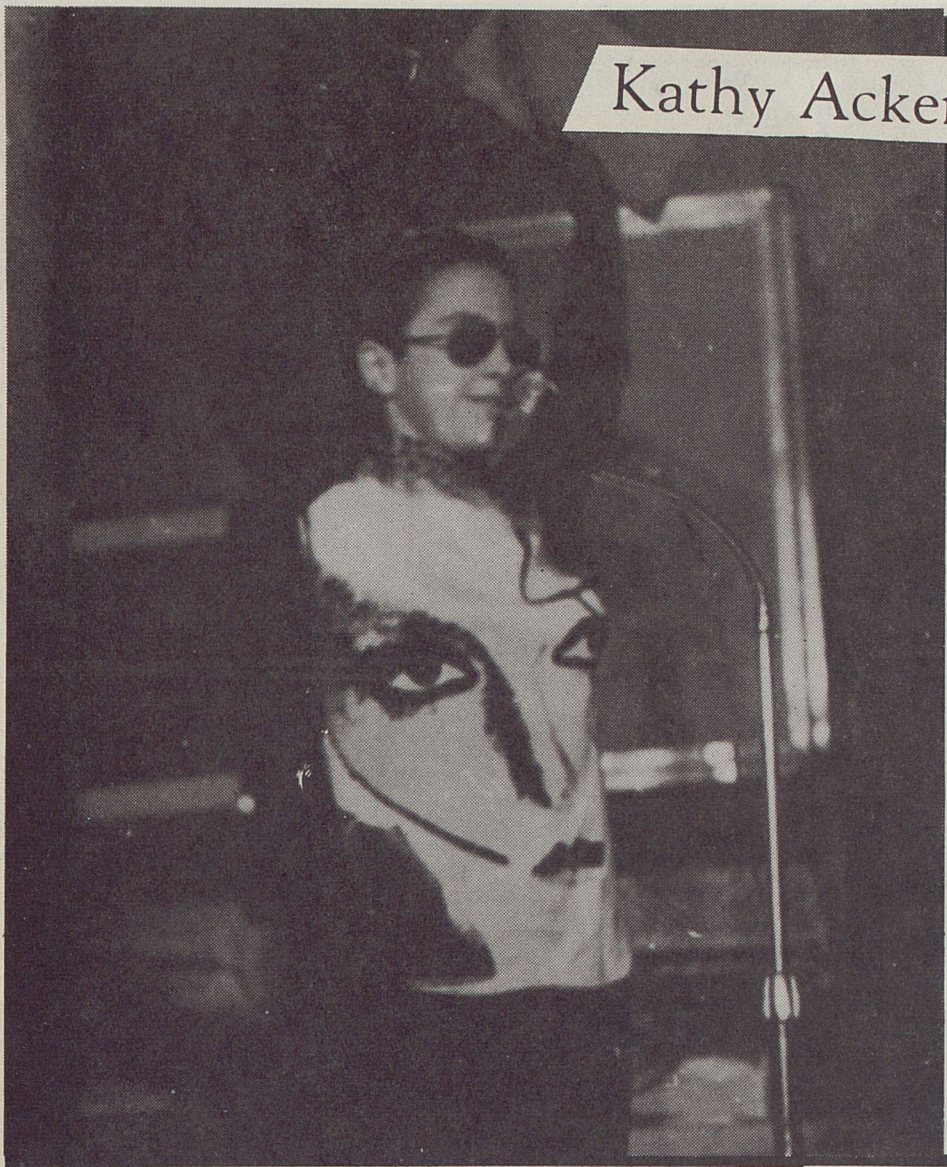


photo by Ritz Degli Esposti

FIRST DAYS OF LIFE

20

MY FATHER HAD LEFT ME all his possessions and I was, by the world's accounting, a well-to-do young woman. I owned a large estate in Seattle. The rest of the money, since it was tied up in stocks and bonds and lawyers' incomprehensible papers, only meant that I was now untouchable. I knew most people wanted money or fame desperately just in order to survive. I knew I was no longer a person to a man, but an object, a full purse. I needed someone to love me so I could tell what reality was.

The rest of my life was programmed for me: Since I had inherited an estate in Seattle, I would go to Seattle. Clifford, my father's best friend, was going to accompany me. I would never do what I wanted to do. My aunts Martha and Mabel had made sure that my money wouldn't allow me to act unreasonably and pleurably. I grew accustomed to that reality.

My father died in the middle of January. It is now almost two years later. I can't describe Sutton Place — where Ashington

House lay — for I miss it so deeply.

*St. Agnes Eve — Ah, bitter chill it was!
The owl for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limped trembling through the
frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in wooly fold;
Numb were the beadman's fingers, while
he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seemed taking flight for heaven, with out
a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his
prayer he saith.*

It was snowing all the time. Frost covered the rooftops the trees the cars.

People without hands walked slowly down the middle of the streets. Just as during the blackout, New York City had become a small happy town or a series of small towns strung out in a line. Whenever my mind looked in its mirror, it counted up its blessings: I was walking down a street. There was no one who was attacking me. There were no more stories or hard passion in my life. I had real moments of happiness (non-self-reflectiveness), when I freely read books.

I knew there could be no way I would live with a man, because, while I desperately needed total affection, I wasn't willing to give away my desires which is what men want and I couldn't trust. The men who were part of my life weren't really part of my life: Clifford, because I hated him, and the delivery boys, because they were weaklings.

Only sensations. What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth — whether it exists materially or not — for I have the same Idea of all our Passions as of Love they are all in their sublime, creative of essential Beauty . . . The imagination may be compared to Adam's dream — he awoke and found it truth. I am the more zealous in this affair, because I have never yet been able to perceive how anything can be known for truth by consecutive reasoning — and yet it must be. Can it be that even the greatest philosopher ever arrived at his goal without putting aside numerous objections? However it may be, Oh for a Life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts!

Of silks satins quilted satins taken from grandmother's bed thick satins black fur shorn from living lambs cottons steel wool the density of shit chewed-up cinnamon bark clustered angora and linen goose and duck feathers slumber

Of pyramid cheeses covered by red pepper overripe goat cheeses blue runs through the middle blue alternates with wine down the middle port sherry crumbled crumbling at fingertips' pressing no taste a physical touch sensation more than a taste the nose winding around itself

In front of the eye: red blue yellow green brown gray purple violet gray-blue violet-gray in various combinations or forms move by in a faintly maintained rhythm. These are the pleasures of the mind.

The mistake is allowing oneself to be desperate. The mistake is believing that indulgence in desire a decision to follow desire isn't possibly painful. Desire drives everything away: the sky, each building, the enjoyment of a cup of cappuccino. Desire makes the whole body-mind turn on itself and hate itself.

Desire is Master and Lord.

The trick is to figure out how to get along with someone apart from desire if that's at all possible.

The body is sick and grows away from the perceiver. As old age comes the body gets sicker. All this is inevitable. When the body's sick, also the nerves are sick, the mind becomes sick because it no longer knows if it can trust itself. The scream no longer against pain, pain is now accepted as part of living, but against doubt begins.

I'm going to tell you something. The author of the work you are now reading is a scared little shit. She's frightened, forget

what her life's like, scared out of her wits, she doesn't believe what she believes so she follows anyone. A god. She doesn't know a goddamn thing she's too scared to know what love is she has no idea what money is she runs away from anyone so anything she's writing is just un-knowledge. Plus she doesn't have the guts to entertain an audience. She should put lots of porn in this book cunts dripping big as Empire State buildings in front of your nose and then cowboy violence, nothing makes any sense anyway. And she says I'm an ass cause I want to please. What'm I going to do? Teach?

Author: You're a dumb cocksucker. If some dumb person bought this book, he should have the grace to read it and if he doesn't like me, so what.

He (the author) has not hit the humors, he does not know 'em; he has not conversed with the Barthol'mew-birds, as they say; he has ne'er a sword-and-buckler man in his Fair, nor a little Davy to take toll o' the bawds there, as in my time, nor a Kind-heart, if anybody's teeth should chance to ache in his play. None o' these fine sights! Nor has he the canvas-cut i' the night for a hobbyhorse man to creep in to his she-neighbor and take his leap there! Nothing! No, an' some writer (that I personally know) had had but the penning o' this matter, he would ha' made you such a jig-a-jog i' the booths, you should ha' thought an earthquake had been i' Seattle! But these master-poets, they ha' their own absurd courses; they will be informed of nothing! Would not a fine pump under the stage ha' done well for a property now? And a punk set under her head, with her stern upward, and ha' been soused by my witty young masters o' the Cop Station? What think you o' this for a show, now? He will not hear o' this! I am an ass, I!

Author: Huh? What rare discourse are you fall'n upon, ha? Ha' you found any friend here, that you are so free? Away rogue, it's come to a fine degree in these spectacles when such a youth as you pretend to a judgment.

What is this that we sail through? What palpable obscure? What smoke and reek, as if the whole steaming world were revolving on its axis, as a spit?

sailors, who long ago had lashed themselves to the taffrail for safety; but must have famished.

"Dood Hope, Dood Hope," shrieked Jackson, with a horrid grin, mimicking the Dutchman, "dare is no dood hope for dem, old boy; dey are drowned and d . . . d, as you and I will be, Red Max, one of dese dark nights.": *the only certainty*

To prove that there was nothing to be believed; nothing to be loved, and nothing worth living for; but everything to be hated, in the wide world.

Sir, my mother has had her nativity-water cast lately by the cunning men in Cow-Lane, and they ha' told her her fortune, and do ensure her she shall never have happy hour, unless she marry within this sen'night, and when it is, it must be a madman, they say.

Why didn't Melville suicide?

He didn't want to.

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy, Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide Him in a closet, of such privacy That he might see her beauty unespied, And win perhaps that night a peerless bride, Never on such a night have lovers met,

The old woman leads him through many halls to the bedroom. He hides and hiding watches the girl he's in love with. Around the window a carved representational frame stained glass the middle a shield the middle blood. The girl who's never fucked takes her clothes off. She falls asleep on her bed. The young man covers her naked tits with candied apples fruits creamy jellies cinnamon syrup dishes silver, and lies down beside her.

She doesn't wake up. "Now, Sarah, this is purely medicinal." He handed the full cup to me. "It'll warm you. You must be warmed. What you should have is a hot bath and climb into a warm bed. I'm afraid Parrot Cottage can't offer such amenities. Never mind. This is the next best thing."

I did what he wanted me to and I hated myself for doing it. I was feeling good because the hot liquid relaxed my body and my tension; this growing ease made me a traitor to myself.

I had to keep the joy growing to blot out my consciousness of what was happening to me. Sensuous beauty is its own perfect excuse, for it brings itself into existence. Constant unendurable sensuousness — not passion, which destroys

better than I do. He's tricky. He gets me to be who he wants.

He says it's love. I mutter something about the girl I've heard he's going to marry. He laughs, and his laughter excites me.

"She's here with me," he says. "She's Miss Sarah Ashington. I decided she was the one as soon as I set eyes on her."

We married, but I still wanted madly to tell him I was afraid. I did not love the man I had married. He had overwhelmed me and aroused a certain passion in me. For a deadly moment I had found him irresistible. I don't love him, I cried inside my mind. I hate the inside of my mind. I want loving kindness, tenderness, not this mad wild emotion which he makes me become.

He drops to his knees and kisses my brow my eyelids my throat. He is kissing my naked heart. His tiny hands are shuddering my naked heart and now he is beside me (he is whispering to me he is whispering into me oh) This whisper is an outside cool breath This whisper is controlling me this whisper is my breath

In Paris policemen wearing blue triangular hats walk past buildings smaller than themselves and murderers look like each other and wear black. The ornamentation of Venice is precise a fairytale. The Roman streets lie sunlit, though there's no sun, where rooms, above, wander into room after room so that inside is outside though it isn't. Sometimes I murdered a man or a group of men murdered me. I never saw the details of their faces.

"Sarah, my love," he murmured, "didn't you know? It was meant to be."

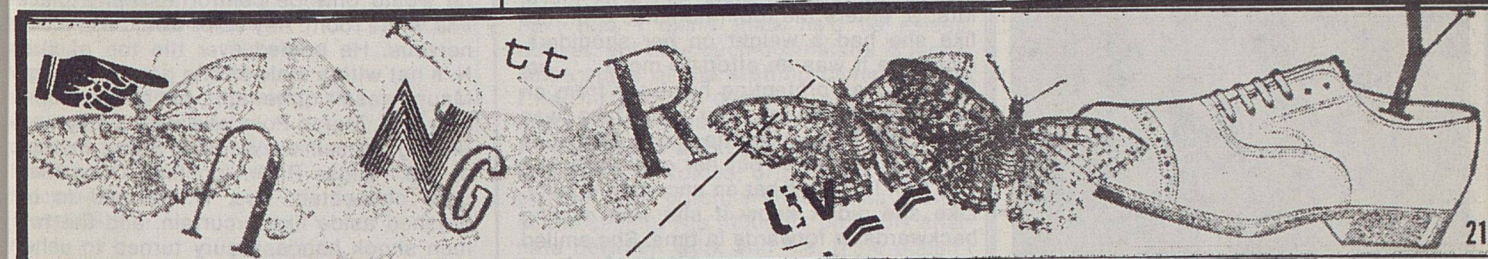
"I raped you," he said.

I stared at him incredulously.

"I want you to realize what a resourceful husband you have. You know how thick these winter fogs become? It occurred to me it'd be easy to lose our way . . . to wander around and around. You would feel tired. You wouldn't know what you were doing. I would make you drunk. I would be your savior. Under the guise of being God, I'd do what I want. You see how romanticism works."

"Is love always disgusting?" I was still regarding his perspective as useful.

He laughed. "What do you say, my pet? What does your body say when I touch it? I'm a man, Sarah; I'm not the mealy-mouth you think you want. You'll never know where I am."



"Look here," said Jackson, hanging over the rail and coughing — "Look there; that's a sailor's coffin. Ha! Ha! Buttons," turning round to me — "how do you like that, Buttons? Wouldn't you like to take a sail with them 'ere dead men? Wouldn't it be nice?" And then he tried to laugh, but only coughed again.

"Don't laugh at dem poor fellows," said Max, looking grave; "do, you see dar bodies, dar souls are farder off dan de Cape of Dood Hope."

— allows neither time nor memory. Later what happened helped me to understand my own nature; and even later. I could remember. I knew that this glory will and always happens and has something to do with dislike.

There is a dreamlike quality: My body wants as simply as any dream action. The body that wants a man whom I remember I heartily dislike, Clifford Still, cannot be my body and I'm not upset. I know he knows every pore of my body

"I still think it's disgusting you raped me and you planned to rape me."

"Your heart is telling you the truth," he said.

I didn't know if I loved my husband, or not.

I hated him I hated him but I knew if he should leave me I would die.

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!

"Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?"

"Thy beauty's shield, heart-shap'd and
vermeil dyed?
"Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
"After so many hours of toil and quest,
"A famish'd pilgrim, — sav'd by miracle.
"Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
"Saving of thy sweet self; if thou
think'st well
"To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

Is my lover trying to murder me?
Is my lover trying to get my inheritance?
Is my lover a stupid worthless being?
"You have to trust me," he tells me.
He won't tell me why. As soon as he tells
me I have to trust him he takes some of

my jewels, not my favorites, to sell because
we can use the money, and when I ask him
where the money is he won't answer me.

It's always my fault.

The nightmares have begun again.

As I said, it was winter. Three days
after the winds started they could never
stop for the concrete buildings housed
them the streetlights held them the very
beds and streets were winds. My skin and
the stuff under my skin tremble, feel the
temperature extremes, I don't know what
is physical doubt and what is mental doubt.

I want vision. If I do everything I can
to change myself, (my *self* is my desires
and dreams), so I don't have to leave this
man — if I leave him, I won't bother again

with a man, am I turning away from all
that is dearest and deepest: vision? Or is
vision that which has nothing to do with
the will, but is necessity working itself out?

When I was in eighth grade, I thought
the twins in my class who were the only
girls considered to be as intelligent as me,
absolutely evil. I thought about them or
absolute evil all the time. My husband
wants me to put my inheritance in a joint
bank account and draw up a will in his name.

How do we know how to act? How
do we know when our actions will cause
pain? How is it possible to choose? I knew
I must not choose and I must escape.

Ye winds, ye cold air-snakes who wind
through flesh, all who are nature:

FIRST PERSON THIRD PERSON NOTES



Shirley Garzotto



A STEADY POUR perhaps an avalanche

in the morning, laying quite still, listening to heels on the wooden
floor of the hall, apart from my sound of breathing or the hum of
the humidifier, lending me the pleasure of knowing things are taken
care of, and I don't have to do anything.

Short chapters.

Connections or Links.

The soft white calf of her daughter's leg.
Mrs. N. enters the room hunched over, not
like she had a weight on her shoulders,
more like it was an effort to move . . . no,
like she was protecting her body from an
overhanging branch. Her pale face was
beginning to accumulate those fine lines
that add character but her gray eyes and
soft thin lips gave her an uncertain quality.
Like she didn't know if she was moving
backwards or forwards in time. She smiled
and several lines appeared in her forehead
rebutting the smile. She wore a felt beige
hat that blended in with beige-silvery hair.
Everything she wore was beige, even the
gloved hand she hesitantly extended and
he hesitantly shook, soft chamois locking
against his palm. He knew he couldn't
be direct and open with her because she
would shy away. Touching her glove was
the closest she would let him get. He
thought of water seeping in a long, barely
noticeable line out of a hole in a rock.
Grey cement, damp, cool to touch.

Behind her was Mr. N., tall with wide
shoulders but somehow sparce, as though
he would only be comfortable in a black
and white room. Any color would make him
nervous. He peered over the top of Mrs.
N.'s hat with a stale strong gaze as though
Maury wasn't quite right, but then nothing
ever was. Marco Polo, awkward yet cynical
finding himself on Webster Street instead
of the Yangse River. (unclear) Once their
gaze connected, Mrs. N. seemed to be
brushed aside like a curtain, and the two
men shook hands. Maury turned to usher
Mr. N. into the living room and was
momentarily jolted to find Mrs. N. right
beside his arm so that he nearly bumped
into her. It was funny because he hadn't
felt her presence at all.

How much energy could Maury sustain?
He felt dwarfed although only Mr. N. was
taller and only by a few inches. And, as
always when alien people came into his
home, he saw his furniture become alien
too. The ashtray, a large black iron oval
in the center of the room, seemed ugly,