

O to University at Buffalo

1963-fall of '65

O flew to the Vancouver Poetry Conference
the summer of '63
He, Phil Whalen and Allen Ginsberg
stayed at the home of Warren & Ellen Tallman

Olson's 4-hour closing reading on August 16
was very well received
w/ O telling Betty it was the best reading he'd ever given

His pay: \$900
which he could really use

At the Vancouver conference
Olson was offered a distinguished professorship
at the newly founded SUNY Buffalo

by a classics scholar and writer named Al Cook
who'd been brought to SUNY Buffalo
to chair the English Department & organize the writing faculty

The job would begin in just a few weeks
& O, still in Vancouver,
accepted the offer.

Betty opposed the move very strongly
and refused to go to Buffalo
though later relented

The three settled into a fairly fancy
"mansion," the Hooker house, in nearby Wyoming

as O began teaching in the fall of '63
& quickly attracted a lively and talented
group of students

Robert Kennedy, campaigning for the U.S. Senate
drew a huge crowd to the Buffalo campus
10-3-63 at Norton Union

Olson was enthused by the
Black Mountain-ite gathering
of students, followers & listeners

Betty disliked
being trapped
in a rural house,
however much a "mansion"
with O, for instance, tarrying with students
at Onetto's after class

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Death of Betty

March 28, 1964

That day Betty drove to the nearby town of Batavia
purchased an Easter basket for Charles Peter
went to a movie
then drove on icy roads
back toward Wyoming
it was after dark

Her VW crashed into an oncoming truck
crushing her chest
unconscious when taken to the hospital
where she passed away
not quite 39

She resided in an open casket in the house
while Olson shook over her
with enormous grief

It was just 10 years after Betty
had performed Stepan Wolpe's setting
of a song from *Peer Gynt*
at Black Mountain

Later Charles Peter
was taken to the care of Betty's sister
Jean Radoslovich

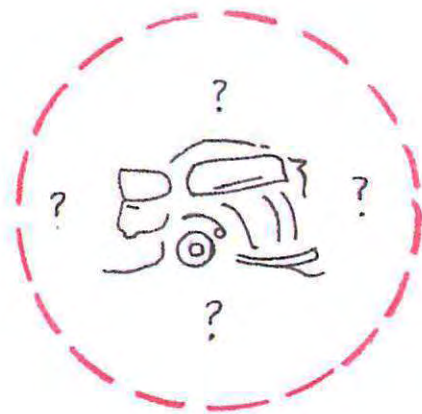


Spring 1964

Olson roamed
the site of
Betty's
fatal
crash

Looking to
clearly discern
what had happened

worried
she had killed
herself
& that he'd not
cared for her enough
in person



Poems for Bet

I went full tilt
And then she was killed,
in her automobile

I need every bleeding minute now
I don't have any time for any new life

*reading John Wieners'
Ace of Pentacles, Friday
October 9th 1964*

Friday,
October 9th
Nineteen
Sixty-
Four Follow Bet
Into
The colors of her dress
and up the weak ladder
to the
Face of God

Bet 2

Her skin
covered me, let light into me, held
my nature, kept me
for myself, and I wasn't sorry
to be closer. In the horrors and transparent
policy,
of the present...

The typescript just above, "Bet 2," was typed
by O same night of 10-9-64, created from
the lines below, which he wrote in

Ace of Pentacles:

Stay close
to her, at no matter what cost.
She is—she was, she does cover
your soul . . .

Harvey Brown & Olson

He was Harvey Brown III
27 in 1964

He had inherited a lot of money
& had been raised in Cleveland

where, very young, he had grown
fascinated with jazz

and had founded a recording company
to help artists such as Don Cherry, Ornette Coleman,
Clifford Brown and Clifford Jordan

Harvey was what you could call "shy/bold"
& filled a number of notebooks with his own poetry
but was very shy about it

He was living in Cambridge with Polly Jones
whose father was the head of
Harvard U Press

(They were married late in '64)

Harvey stayed with Jack Clarke
in Buffalo a few weeks in the fall of '64
while he audited Olson's courses

He founded *Niagara Frontier Review*
& soon, inspired & prodded by O
formed Frontier Press
which between '66 & '71 brought out
25 books and pamphlets

(one of the first was my *Peace Eye*, with an intro by O)

(His economic support of O
in the mid-late '60s
you could say, made it more possible
through the banishment of penury-worry

for O to write the poems, '65-'69
in *Maximus III*)

