

On the Centennial of Aaron Kurtz's Birth

It occurs to me to celebrate your hundredth birthday
while you can still put me under the table
with your favorite schnaps: The Last Healthy Poet
of a Long Lost Past.

In a civilization of multi-cellular cities where will
there be other roots for soil like you ? --

I am preparing to plant a tape recording of you half way
down the Grand Canyon.

I am planning a new Lewis and Clark Expedition to
allow the Columbia River to hear you sing when the
salmon start their search for birth and rush against
the current upstream.

You are not one poet, one people, but a race laughing
at the common geology of the world.

Meanwhile, -- and I mean while Flatbush Avenue parakeets
tweet their elegies on the top of Brooklyn grave-
yards -- I am listening to you quietly, calmly,
judiciously putting the mountains and the rivers
and the canyons into place.

But Aaron -- let's get down to earth: You are living on
the Atlantic Shores of Long Island in a summer resort
which you chose for the winter. I now realize the
wisdom of your choice:

You picked this ocean spot to live -- in independent of the
will -- so we can think about the way you teach the
waves about the tides of spring,

telling off the Old Man of the Sea with its pounding
threat of doom,

announcing to sand and waves and other temporal affairs
that ours was the craziest happiest most living and
loving of all geological spores.

-- Walter Lowenfels

Mays Landing, N. J.