

# ti-TCR

## a web folio

Number 13



For Jamie Reid

Edited and designed by Andrea Actis & Dylan Godwin

Cover image: Jamie in Earl Bales Park, Bathurst Street, Toronto, 1982  
Photo by Carol Reid

Facing page: James Douglas Reid, *Spirit Island, Maligne Lake, Jasper National Park* (detail), canvas embroidery, date unknown [c. 1950-70]  
Photo by Arthur Allan

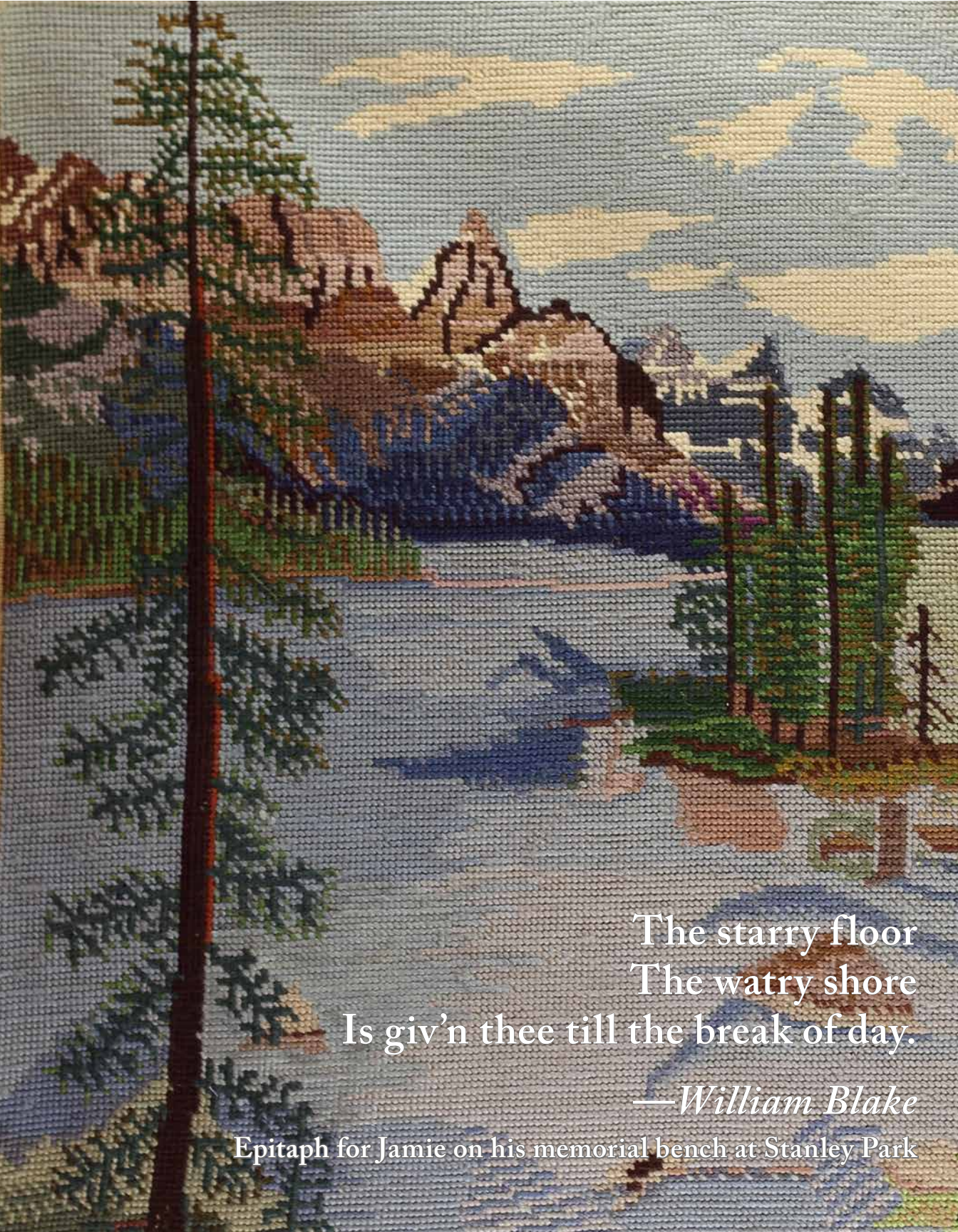
All canvas-embroidery work featured in this tribute to Jamie was created by his father, James Douglas Reid (b. 1909, d. 1987), a mining engineer who lived in Canmore, Alberta. He made many embroideries of the western mountains, all revealing his intimate knowledge of the geology of the area. Some of his work is held in the collection of the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, Alberta.

*Love and thanks to Carol Reid for her generous assistance with this project.*

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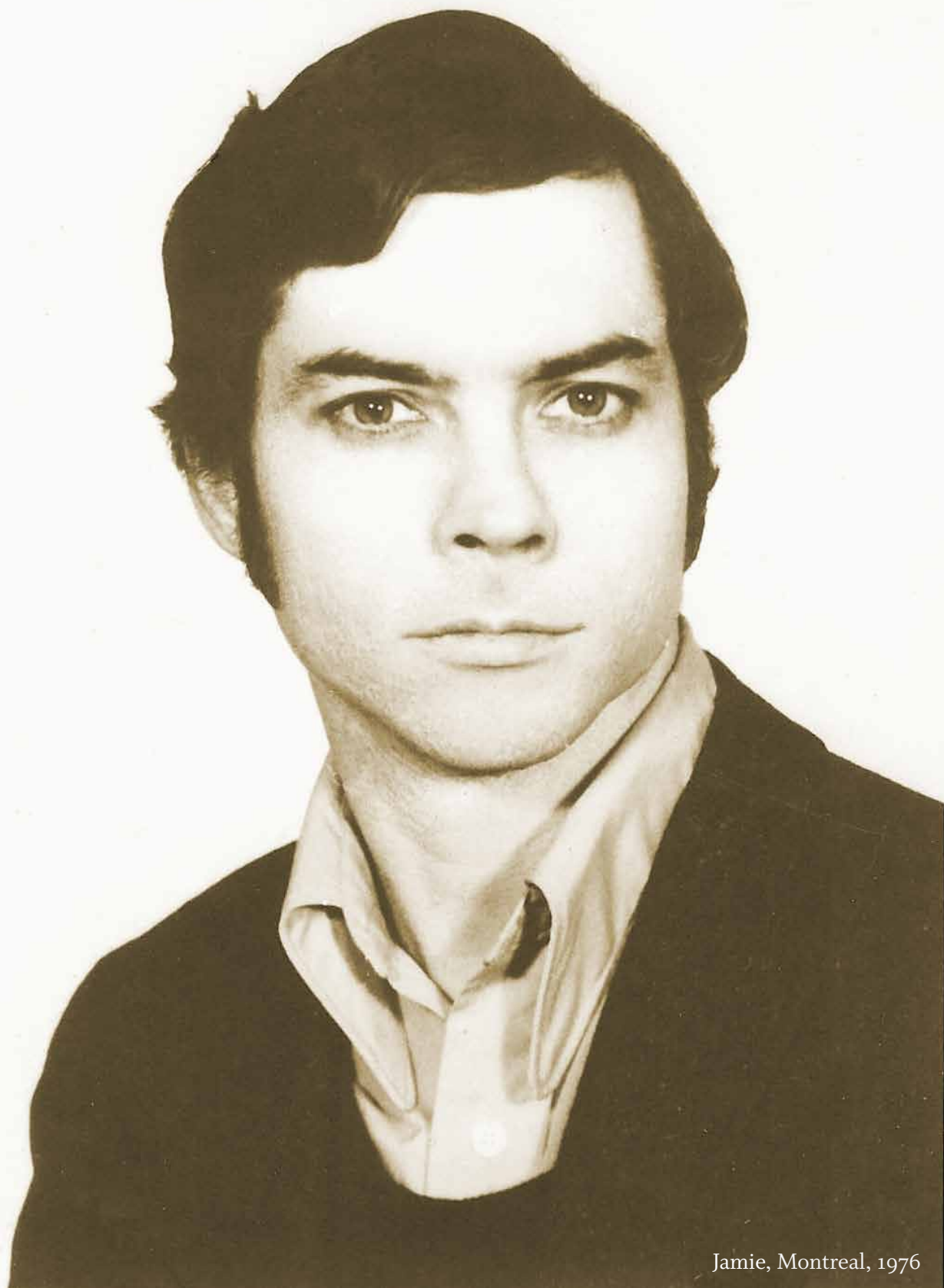


The starry floor  
The watry shore  
Is giv'n thee till the break of day.

—*William Blake*

Epitaph for Jamie on his memorial bench at Stanley Park





Jamie, Montreal, 1976

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eamji

*bill bissett*

d reed jamie reid irth ay b d e  
p a p e h a p a p h irth b ya  
rith ya yu mon amie thir thri reed  
jamie reid jamie ider reid eidr deer  
amiej jamie jeima jamie jam eeee am  
jamie jamie amiej mieja jeima mieaj  
jeiam edre reed mon amie

aji  
aji aji  
aji aji  
aji aji  
aji aji  
aji jia aji  
aji a aji  
aji m aji  
amie amie  
miea amie  
aje aji  
ajejeejeeja  
aji

happee birthday jamie

much love n thanks bill



Baby Jamie in Timmins, Ontario, c. 1941



# Fragments from a Lengthy Autobiography

*Jamie Reid*

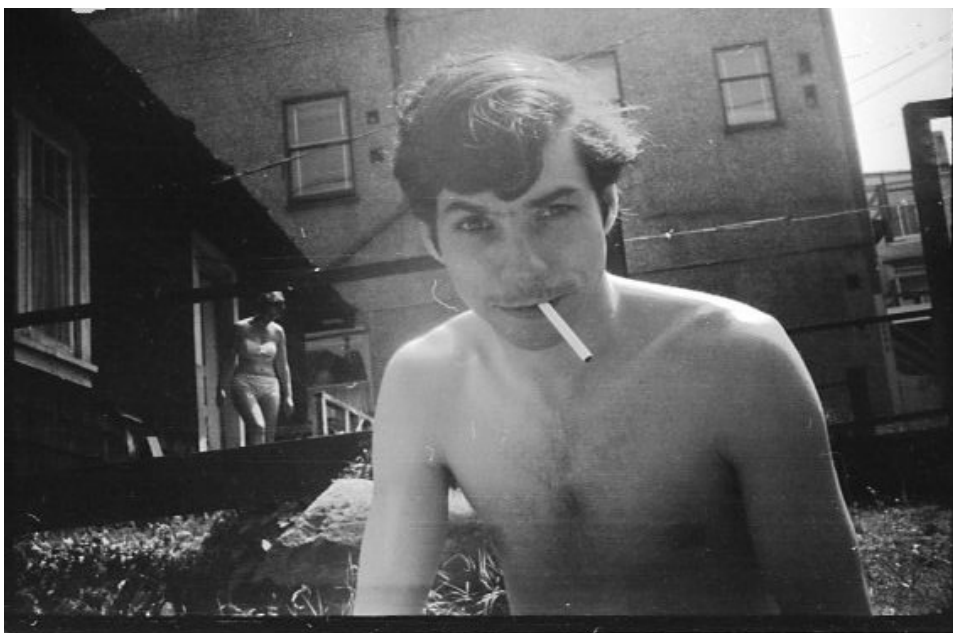
I was born in Timmins, Ontario, on April 10, 1941 and lived in Banff and Edmonton as a young child. My mother, my younger brother and I moved to Vancouver in 1953, where I attended Edith Cavell to complete junior high school, King Edward High School, and later UBC, from which I graduated with a BA in 1965.

My mother was a psychiatric nurse at Shaughnessy Hospital until her retirement in 1976. She gave me my first education in poetry, reciting poems which she had learned as a child as I sat on her knee. “Casey at the Bat” was a big favorite, but I especially loved “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,” which she knew completely by heart. My love of the spoken and written word began with these moments.

At Camp Howdy on the North Arm of Burrard Inlet, a counselor one night around the campfire read aloud to the assembled campers from an edition of Earle Birney’s “David.” This poem so moved and impressed me that I vowed that I would try to become a writer when I grew up.

In 1959, myself and some friends became caught up in the excitement of the literary upsurge known as the “Beat Generation” and avidly read the books of Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, etc., most of whom wrote about jazz: its excitement, its improvisatory quality. My real introduction to modern jazz took place in those years.

We listened to Errol Garner, the Modern Jazz Quartet, but especially to the Miles Davis Quintet of those years, with Cannonball Adderley, John Coltrane, Philly Joe Jones, Red Callendar, Bill Evans, Wynton Kelly, which we knew was the epitome of cool. I remember playing old 78s of the Norman Granz Jazz at the Philharmonic series. It was on this record that I first heard Lester Young, playing on “Perdido.” While still in high school, I often attended the weekend jazz concerts at the old Georgia Auditorium near Stanley Park, where I heard local jazz lights like Frazer McPherson, Chris Gage, and others. Through the beat generation, I also became acquainted for the first time with the works of Baudelaire, Rimbaud, and some of the twentieth-century French poets who have exercised the most lasting influence on my own work.



Jamie, Yew Street, Vancouver, 1966

A friend of mine encountered an article called “Kerouac’s Sound” published in *Evergreen Review* by a UBC professor, Warren Tallman. As fledglings at UBC we hastened to meet him and became immediately embroiled in what became a lifelong engagement for me and for the others involved. Warren became the teacher and mentor to the “poetry novices” of Vancouver, who soon published their own mimeographed magazine, known as *TISH*, the first issue of which appeared in 1961. Many Vancouver writers have had some association with *TISH*, either through writing in it or acting as editors. Dan McLeod, the publisher of *The Georgia Straight*, was one of the editors of one of the later series of *TISH*, and so also was Stan Persky. Vancouver writers and poets like bill bissett, Carol Bolt, Gerry Gilbert, Gladys Hindmarch, Lionel Kearns, Red Lane, John Newlove, and Daphne Marlatt all appeared in the pages of *TISH*. All of the original *TISH* poets (George Bowering, Frank Davey, Fred Wah) are still active as teachers and writers.

I and many of my friends were members and hangers-on at the Jazz Society at UBC, where we got the opportunity to hear the finest jazz of the day on recordings: Monk, Mingus, Brubeck, Charlie Parker, Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane, McCoy Tyner, Bill Evans, Art Blakey, Ornette Coleman, and dozens of others. During those days, various jazz clubs operated in Vancouver, beginning with the Cellar in an alley at Broadway and Main. There I heard Joe Gordon and Charles Mingus. To my continuing satisfaction, I saw Mingus hurl a football player from my high school over three tables as if he were a frisbee, when this rude fellow refused to respond to Mingus’ admonitions to be silent so that others could hear his music. There, too, I watched bill bissett read



to a bunch of yahoos, who pelted him with glasses, called him “faggot,” etc., as he read on bravely.

•

Most of my poetry is about subjects other than jazz. Nevertheless, in all of my poetry, I have sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously tried to imitate the accent and line of the great jazz musicians. Jazz represents for me one of the highest forms of the artistic representation of North American language and experience, and is linked in some way with all the events in history and in my personal life that have meant something to me. Jazz, with its inherent drama, its noise and its irony, is a music of conflict and of struggle, reflecting the drive of an oppressed minority to make voice for themselves and to make it heard by the world at large.

•

I do not believe in the ability of art and music alone to make a better world, but my world has certainly been better and richer on account of the contributions made by the thousands of jazz musicians the world over. I can't imagine a world without jazz, or a better one which jazz does not have a part in making.

•

“Prez” pays tribute to this feeling. It was written when I finally returned after twenty years in Central Canada to my home territory on the West Coast in 1987 and it celebrates a feeling of return, of release and liberation. The first lines of the poem occurred to me while listening to

an old 45 record in a downtown Toronto pub called the Imperial Pub and Library, whose owner was a collector of all the old jazz classics from Louis Armstrong to Charlie Parker.

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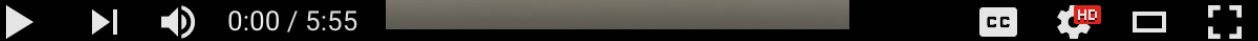
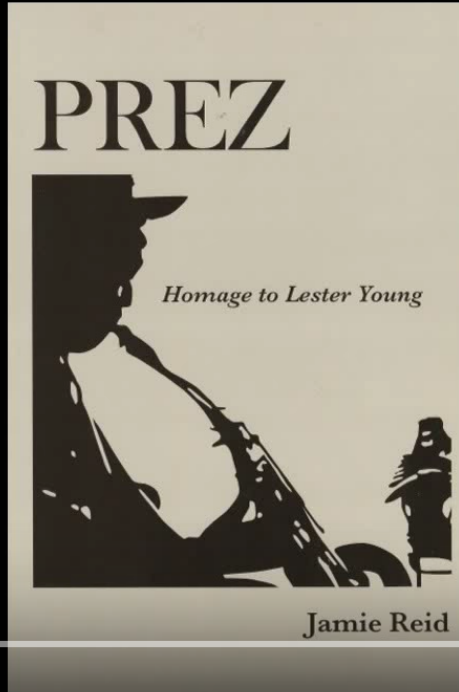
*A Wanton Act of Poetry*, installation of excerpts from *Prez* at English Bay. Coincident with Vancouver's International Jazz Festival, June 1998. In collaboration with T. S. Thomas. Photo by Carol Reid.

“Prez” is a jazz poem in the jazz idiom, and I have written a few other poems in a similar idiom, but not very many, so I do not call myself a jazz poet. Jazz is only one of many streams that co-exist in my work, and is not always the dominant one. But “Prez” may be my “best” poem to date, and it surely is the most popular thing I have ever written, which reflects the depth of the feeling that jazz has deposited in the North American psyche. In some ways, because jazz is so much a part of everyday life these days, there is a tendency to devalue it, to treat it as one more of the commodified forms of popular music, and in many respects it is just that. Still, it seems to me that although the same cult of personality, the same hucksterism and commercialism seems to gather around jazz as it does around the other forms of so-called “popular” music, jazz, more than any of these other forms, reflects an authenticity of thought and feeling, a complexity and maturity of feeling, enhanced by skill and craft unmatched within the other forms.

In the years intervening between the publication of my first book and the writing of “Prez” in 1987, I was active in revolutionary politics, and took part in many of the movements and activities of the anti-war movement, the movement against racism, the movement against sexual inequality and discrimination, etc. These social concerns are reflected in “Prez,” along with aesthetic and artistic concerns connected with the inner life, which I had put on the shelf during my years as a political activist. People from my own generation will remember me as the person publicized in the press as the main spokesperson and organizer of the first Human Be-In in Stanley Park in 1966, although many other people did as much as I did to organize that event.



uploaded in HD @ TunesToTube.com



## Jamie Reid: Poetry and Jazz



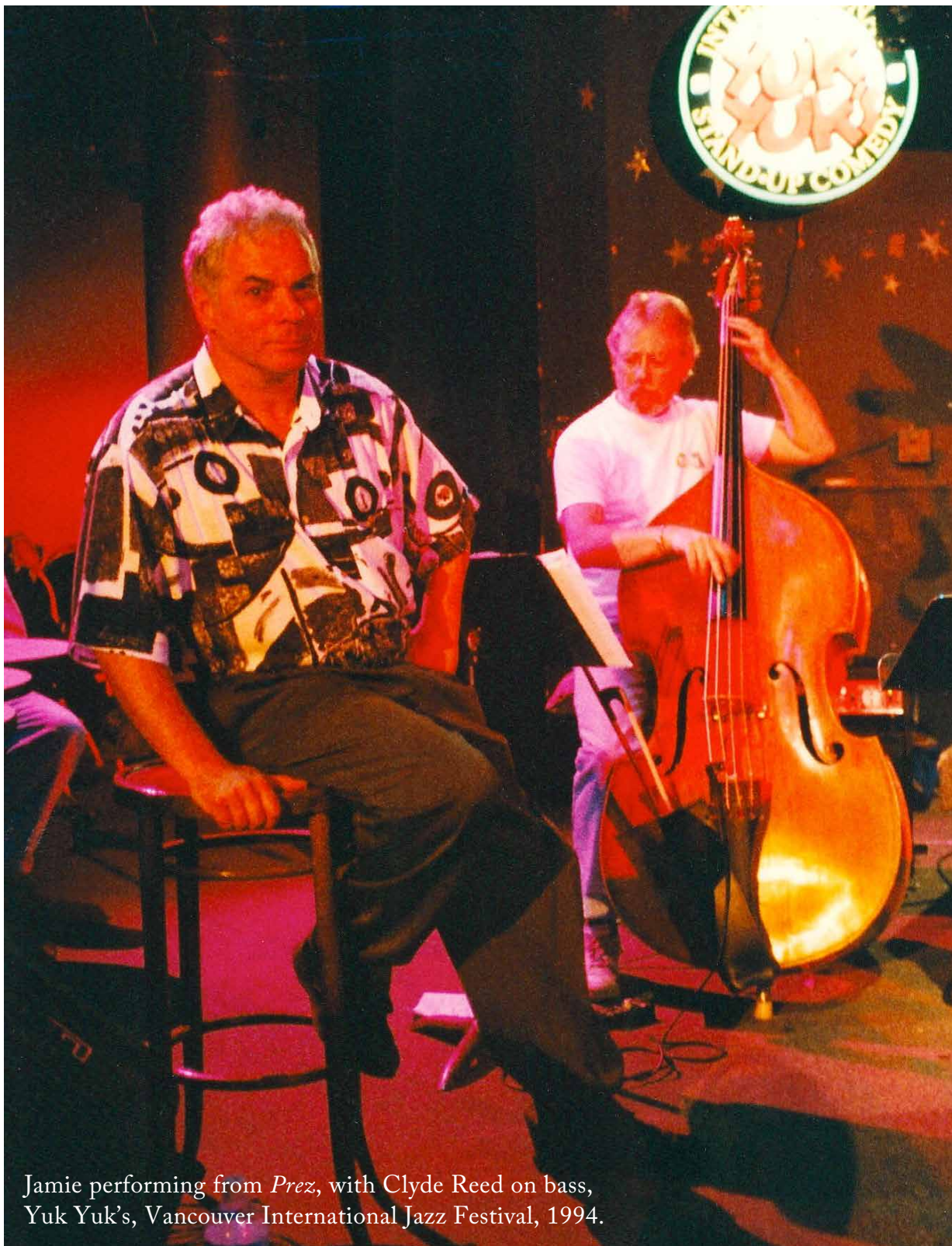
Gregg Simpson



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“Surrealism in Deep Disguise,” an essay Jamie wrote in 2009 in response to his friend Gregg Simpson’s book *Classic Mode: A Reverie*, is available to download [here](#).



Jamie performing from *Prez*, with Clyde Reed on bass,  
Yuk Yuk's, Vancouver International Jazz Festival, 1994.



Portrait of Jamie, Toronto,  
1980. Ink sketch by  
Carol Reid.



# Inside Ours

*George Bowering*

I've already thought of four things I wanted to tell him, but he fell from our lives last week.

Fell from so many lives we will walk like holes through each other's environments.

He broke his mother's glass table with a Christmas tree, and she laughed, she was so proud of him.

Maybe not proud really, maybe just enjoying him so much, what a lesson she was.

He was a bit like a four-legged spider in his skinny black pants, black turtleneck sweater, a good health spider.

When we were assigning poet roles among us, he became another Rimbaud minus the sacred.

Jamie Rimbaud ran away from home and joined the insurgents in the Paris Commune and national television.

Sometimes he slammed our door when he left us for good from time to time.

He came from the sky into Stanley Park with his beautiful wife, who just could not be a spider.

She could not be a spider with her beautiful blue eyes—they picked up the colour of his soul.

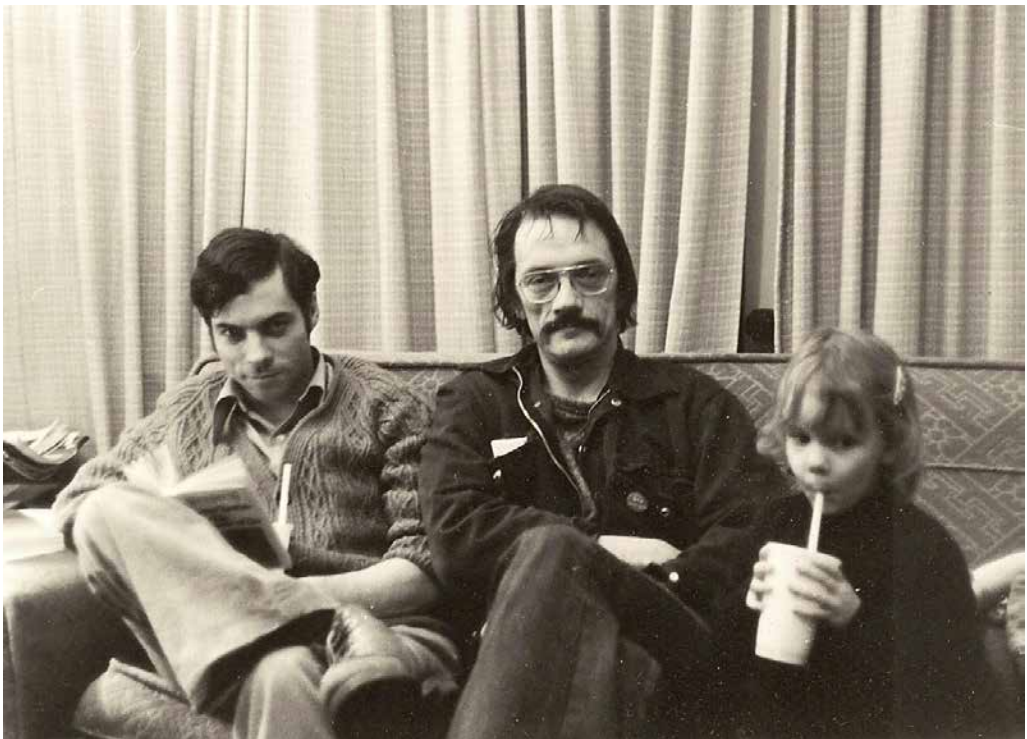
The old joke went that we would adopt door-slamming Jamie and give him a place to eat breakfast and poetry.

There is an old round stone fence that used to surround a school, then a college, then a hospital.

Here, Jamie, it said, I have what you need, you and King Edward,  
the Peacemaker.

I wanted to stand on the street and deliver that message, but you  
are outside our galaxy's skin now.

Outside our galaxy's skin and inside mine.



Jamie Reid, George Bowering, Thea Bowering, Kerrisdale, c. 1974/75  
Photo by Angela Bowering

# Remembering Jamie

*Eve Joseph*

I once watched a ghost write her own eulogy; or rather, I watched as her husband, sitting alone at their kitchen table, jotted down a sentence or two then stopped to glance over his shoulder. He'd nod or say, in an irritated voice, "I know how to spell," or "yes, I've already put that in." And so it went until the eulogy was done and the man, who had not slept in the three days since his wife died, put his head down on the table and closed his eyes.

Jamie was the eulogizer in our family. Over the years, he wrote eulogies for John Newlove, Warren Tallman, Red Lane, Allen Ginsberg and Jerry Pethick amongst others. In an homage to Jack Spicer, he wrote of ghosts gathered unceremoniously at the bottom of the garden swearing and smoking Gauloises. I need him at my shoulder—irascible, impatient, generous—fierce in his love for poetry and poets and singing his particular praises for the disenfranchised, the holy and the mad who are never far from us. After all these years, I still see him as a kind of gypsy king walking the streets of Vancouver. At home in the old neighbourhoods, stopping to greet people, showing up at the Saturday night writer's evenings at 10<sup>th</sup> and Alma before heading off into the dark for some bar at the top of a steep flight of stairs.

I met Jamie the night my brother was killed in January of 1964 and saw him again one week later when he and my sister, Carol, were married in a simple civil ceremony at Vancouver City Hall. I was eleven, I didn't understand anything about poetry or politics but I knew that



my brother-in-law burned with a beauty and an intensity I had never before encountered. The first time my sister saw him, he was onstage at UBC playing the part of Humphrey in *The Lady's Not for Burning* and desperately feeding lines to the lead actress who had forgotten hers. He first saw Carol entering the Jazz Society hut at the University, which they each frequented independently. She was oblivious, he said, and took no notice of him; but he noticed her.

It was a time of awakening. God's Eyes hung in every window. Hare Krishnas chanted in their saffron robes down Georgia, head shops abounded on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Harry O'Day sat in his used bookstore smoking and extolling the virtues of communism and on one sunny afternoon in 1963, at the end of the Vancouver Poetry Conference, Jamie, along with Carol and some friends, went up Grouse Mountain on the chairlift with Allen Ginsberg—the sound of Allen's thumb cymbals tinkling all the way up. Anything, it seemed, was possible. A few years later, Dylan, on his way to perform at the PNE Agrodome, ghosted by a downtown intersection in a silver-gray Buick. He shot Jamie, Carol and the four poets they were with, idling in a beat-up Chevy at the same light, a look so scathing it immediately entered the realm of mythical stories about the great poet troubadour. He was, they concluded, only a man, as they all were, in a time of change happening so fast that a glance from a car window summed it all up. The exhilaration and the exhaustion. The hope and the letdown in a world that was shedding the old but not yet understanding what the new might be.

Strange to say, perhaps, that although we were in each other's lives for over fifty years, I didn't really know him. We were family with

all the ordinariness that that implies. When we visited, we didn't stay up late talking about poetry and jazz; more often than not, we drank wine, walked in the garden and ate a meal after which J would fall asleep in whatever chair he was reading in. Death makes us look again. It made me pause today, listening to the exquisite opening notes of "Song-Song" by Brad Mehldau and thinking how strange it is that life continues when someone you love dies. It is as if their simple pleasures become our own; as if we hear and see for them because they no longer can.

On the Talonbooks website, Jamie's work is described as fiercely intelligent, fearlessly incisive and always politically charged. He was all of these things and yet now, sitting on a weathered deck, in front of a little ocean side cabin at Robert's Creek, what I remember most clearly is his kindness. I miss that kindness. I miss the man. His activism was an activism fused with compassion. If you needed him, he was unerringly there. In 2004, when my mother died, Jamie wrote to my son in Ghana. His words guided him home like a phosphorescent trail on the ocean visible only from the heavens. He showed him the way and was waiting when he got here. I'll never forget that.

In a recent interview with Shelagh Rogers, the writer and activist, Wab Kinew, said

"If there is a life after death, it persists in the ones they knew and loved." I like the plosive *persists*—derived from the Latin *persistere* meaning "to abide, continue steadfastly." It's a word that holds both resistance and patience and catches something essential about Jamie for me. His refusal (and sometimes downright stubbornness) to comply with authority was a kind of faith. A belief that the world could be

better than it was. His poetry, he said, came in short bursts punctuated by long dry spells during which he patiently prepared for the moments it would come back to him.

I return to his writing and see him in a way I could not fully see when he was alive. On the page, I meet him again. As if for the first time.



Eve Joseph and Jamie sharing a story from Jamie's childhood in Banff  
Maplewood Bird Sanctuary, 2005  
Photo by Carol Reid

# Jamie

*Daphne Marlatt*

first time encountering your vision,  
Chagall's *glow-bird* you said its music  
*frees it from cages* you also  
called a poem *an execution*....

*something clean. Like...pulling the switch  
to the electric chair when everything is ready*

readiness being *aware* and  
*WILLING TO BE AWARE*,  
that sharp  
that painful

you understood  
*the world is plural* according to  
singular receptivities on the move  
like gulls

*shoved mutely into minute  
white deaths and  
unseen resurrections  
unheard  
behind the buildings*



so you witnessed against  
police violence, against heavy  
handed injustice moving  
in myriad ways

past bullet-holes  
in your window, the winged gulls  
a *consolation*, later

joy note  
liquid flow note  
you move into music—

now you join that unceremonious  
gathering at the bottom of the garden,  
your dead poets, you reading to them  
in your baggy sweater, characteristic  
that left hand move, that inquiring  
(do you get it?) tilt of your head.

Quotes from Jamie's very early essay "What's Going On?" in *TISH* #2  
(October 1961), his "Editorial" in *TISH* #4 (December 1961), and his poem  
"The Consolation of Violence" in *TISH* #8 (April 1962).

# Jamie

*Lionel Kearns*

Back in our UBC days in the early sixties, Jamie was excited by a translation of an Old English text that he had come upon. It was the Venerable Bede's comparison of one's life to the passage of a sparrow through a thane hall in which a great feast is taking place. The bird enters through a hole in the thatch, and flies through the light and the smoke and the clamor of the carousing warriors, then disappears at the far end of the building, returning again to the cold and the dark and the silence.

The sudden transition from one context to another seemed to characterize Jamie's life. Many of us drift gradually through a series of personal states, from one set of ideas and behaviours to the next. Jamie's transitions were not gradual. They were extreme, precipitous, profound.

I first met Jamie in the early 60s. We were members of a group of student writers at UBC. Out of that context evolved the literary magazine *TISH*, with Jamie as one its original five contributing editors. Like the other four, George Bowering, Frank Davey, Fred Wah, and Dave Dawson, Jamie was a dedicated writer and serious defender of certain literary ideologies. In the *TISH* office, heated editorial discussion was endless. I know because my office was right across the hall. As Teaching Assistants in the English Department, George, Frank and I had been assigned offices in an old army hut on the far side of the campus. The office shared by George and Frank became *TISH* headquarters, and it was a Jamie hangout.

When the editorial tenure of that group of five came to an end, Jamie did not follow his friends into graduate studies. Instead, he immersed himself in the swirling countercultural ferment that characterized the West Coast during the 60s. He organized light shows in old warehouses and “Human Be-Ins” in Stanley Park. Psychedelia was happening, and Jamie was in the thick of it. If I remember correctly he applied for, and perhaps received, a Canada Council grant to search for angels (the spiritual kind) in a remote corner of the Okanagan Valley.

I was out of the country for two years in the mid 60s, but when I returned to take up a post in the English Department at SFU, Jamie was part of the Vancouver hippy scene, which was in full bloom. He was also writing and publishing, and carrying on a vicious battle with Stanley Cooperman, an American poet who had moved into the territory. The focus of their argument was whether or not deer could climb trees. I cannot remember which one was for, and which against.

As time passed we noticed that Jamie’s commitment to various excesses and extreme non-traditional styles seemed to be having a deleterious effect on his appearance, if not on his general health. His friends were worried. Jamie was going down hill. What could we do?

Then something astounding occurred. Jamie underwent a life-changing conversion. I have no idea how this came about. However, the transformation was more than dramatic. It was shocking. I could not believe what I’d witnessed. I saw him standing at a Fourth Avenue bus stop. His hair was trimmed. He was clean shaven. He was wearing a blue blazer, white shirt, tie, newly pressed gray flannel slacks, and shiny black shoes. He carried a businessman’s brief case. Was it a costume? A masquerade? Some kind of stunt? No. This was a new man.

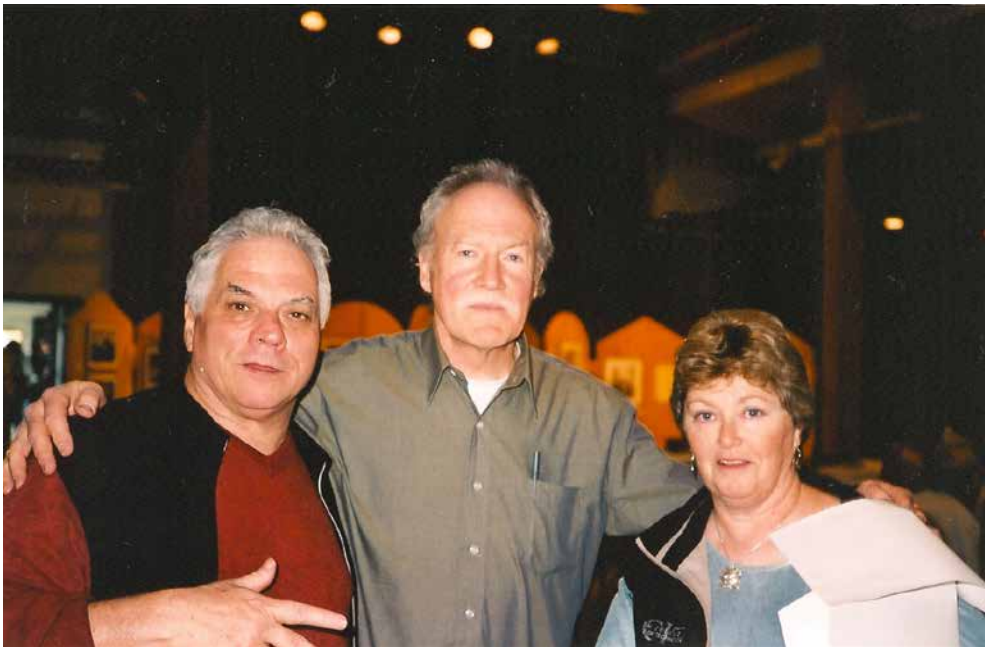
Jamie, and his wife Carol, had joined the CPC-ML (Communist Party of Canada, Marxist-Leninist). Their commitment was absolute. Jamie stopped writing poetry. He denounced his own publications and the writings of his associates. His vocabulary changed. He alienated most of his friends and energized his enemies. Milton Acorn issued the supreme insult, insisting that Jamie was a spy for the CIA. Jamie and Carol moved to Toronto. It was difficult, but we kept in touch. Once Jamie turned up at a poetry reading I was involved in at Harbour Front in Toronto. He was out of just jail on bail, having been arrested for banging his fists on the hood of Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau's car.

I know very little of the CPC-ML or of Jamie's and Carol's involvement and experiences in that organization, except that they were sometimes guests of the Albanian government. I am happy to say, however, that theirs was not a lifetime commitment. After a number of years they turned their backs on the party and returned to Vancouver, where Jamie struggled and succeeded in taking up the literary life again. He began writing poetry, organizing literary events, publishing the odd chapbook. This new transformation gave us a more benign and generous Jamie. He and Carol settled down to a warm family life in North Vancouver, where their home became the centre of literary gatherings. He kept an extensive electronic mailing list, and informed everyone about what was going on. You could count on Jamie to be at any Vancouver literary event, however small or unpublicized. The writing community grew accustomed to his presence. It was good to have him. It gave the occasion an air of authenticity. Now that he is gone, there is a big hole in the fabric.



I was hoping that Jamie would sometime write something of his own singular life experience, but that was not to be. He was never a confessional writer. He had no interest in his own past. Once I suggested that he write his memoirs, but he said no, he wanted to forget all that. He was looking ahead, not backwards.

That leaves Carol, Jamie's wife and lifelong supporter. Carol is a painter and a writer too. I'm hoping that she will one day give us a few glimpses of their extraordinary life together. It was Carol's quiet and committed support that gave Jamie the freedom to pursue his own visions. There is a fascinating story there. Perhaps it will someday be told.



Jamie, Lionel, and Carol, 40th anniversary of *TISH*  
Vancouver, 2001

# The Beautiful Mind of Jamie Reid

*Joe Rosenblatt*

What I liked about Jamie was his dedication to the muse and a quiet non-partisan approach to poetry in not lining himself up with any divisive faction in Muse land Vancouver; he was above that—in short he was his own man, an intellectual island unto himself, as a superb poet, essayist, and critic. I took his critiquing of my poetry (if that is the word, I prefer “criticism”) very seriously, even if I had been writing poetry for over fifty years and had an impressive publishing career, books, anthologies, etc.—he would instinctively pick out his favourite poems and discuss them in-depth with me, and I would realize I was privileged in having him discuss my musings.

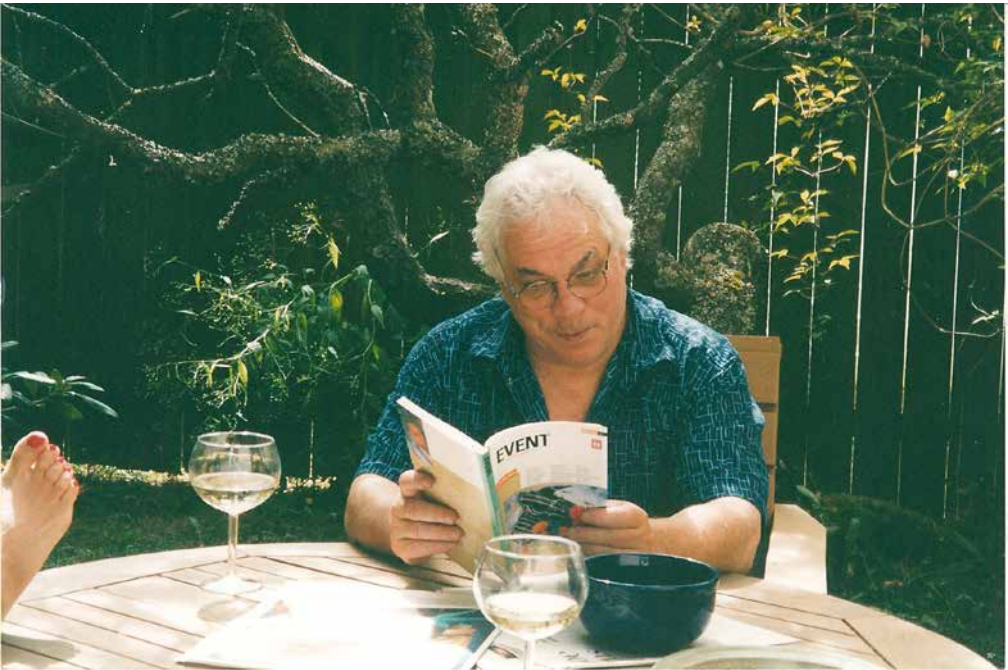
I was dealing with a beautiful mind. Often I would bump into Jamie at the Railway Club in Vancouver, or meet him at poetry readings at local coffee houses, which he faithfully attended to support the performing poets, and this was noted by them as a sign of support and a level of respect for the craft of poetry.

He would purchase their poetry books at these poetry readings after a reading, and engage the poets and members of the audience always with an upbeat and sunny disposition. I knew Jamie from way back in the early sixties, and for a time he disappeared from the poetry scene and entered the Maoist fold. His name would come up from time to time among the faithful in poetry circles—even in Toronto, a possible Jamie sighting. I met up with Jamie in the seventies and I asked him if he was interested in writing about his experience being in Albania,

and his involvement with the policies of Enver Halil Hoxha and his extreme far left Marxist-Leninist ideology.

Jamie avoided going into the matter and didn't want to discuss the idea of writing a book about that part of his life. I had an interest in the matter as I had been a Trotskyist in the sixties—and that would have made Jamie and I mortal political adversaries.

Anyway, that topic was dropped. This didn't stop Jamie from expressing opinions on, say, the environment, on provincial politics—and other matters pertaining to the well-being of humanity. I want to end this tribute only to say I will miss Jamie as will his friends and other creative writers in the writing community of Vancouver, and indeed across Canada.



In Eve Joseph's garden, Victoria, 2009  
Photo by Carol Reid

# Never Alone (for Jamie Reid)

*Paul Nelson*

In the light of the smoke  
of the Cascadia globally—  
warmed summer  
the Olympics are burning, eighty in Alaska, yet there

's always music to *rescue the heart of man*.  
The music of language'd take you  
(transport) as the musings of bebop'd

chase the racism  
away for a joyful sleepless night. Never alone.

Alone never *the sound of the heart purely alone*  
's one cue *the sound of the heart and breathing*  
*alive to the nuance of just this precise unalterable*  
*moment* you'd write proving your point from the quiet

light that side the veil. You in your 70s writing of ghosts and  
ancestors. You in your 70s knowing you're never alone. You  
and the shades (eidolons Walt'd say) with a few uninvited  
tips we can chew on while *the permanent moment of rain* [is]  
*remembered*.



Rain on Jamie Reid we did not hear Lester calling.  
Rain on Jamie Reid I may not be alone but need  
your help with the poem.  
Rain on Jamie Reid & militate the corporate devouring  
of every last atom.  
Rain on Jamie Reid while we keep on guessing where  
you've gone.

7:18pm – 6.27.15

Portland, Oregon

*All quotes from Jamie Reid's Prez*

# In Honour of Jamie Reid

*Rhoda Rosenfeld*

Well before knowing of their significance to the Haudenosaunee people I began to paint red poles into my photographic work. I saw them as orienting structures. They were stabilizing. Also beautiful.

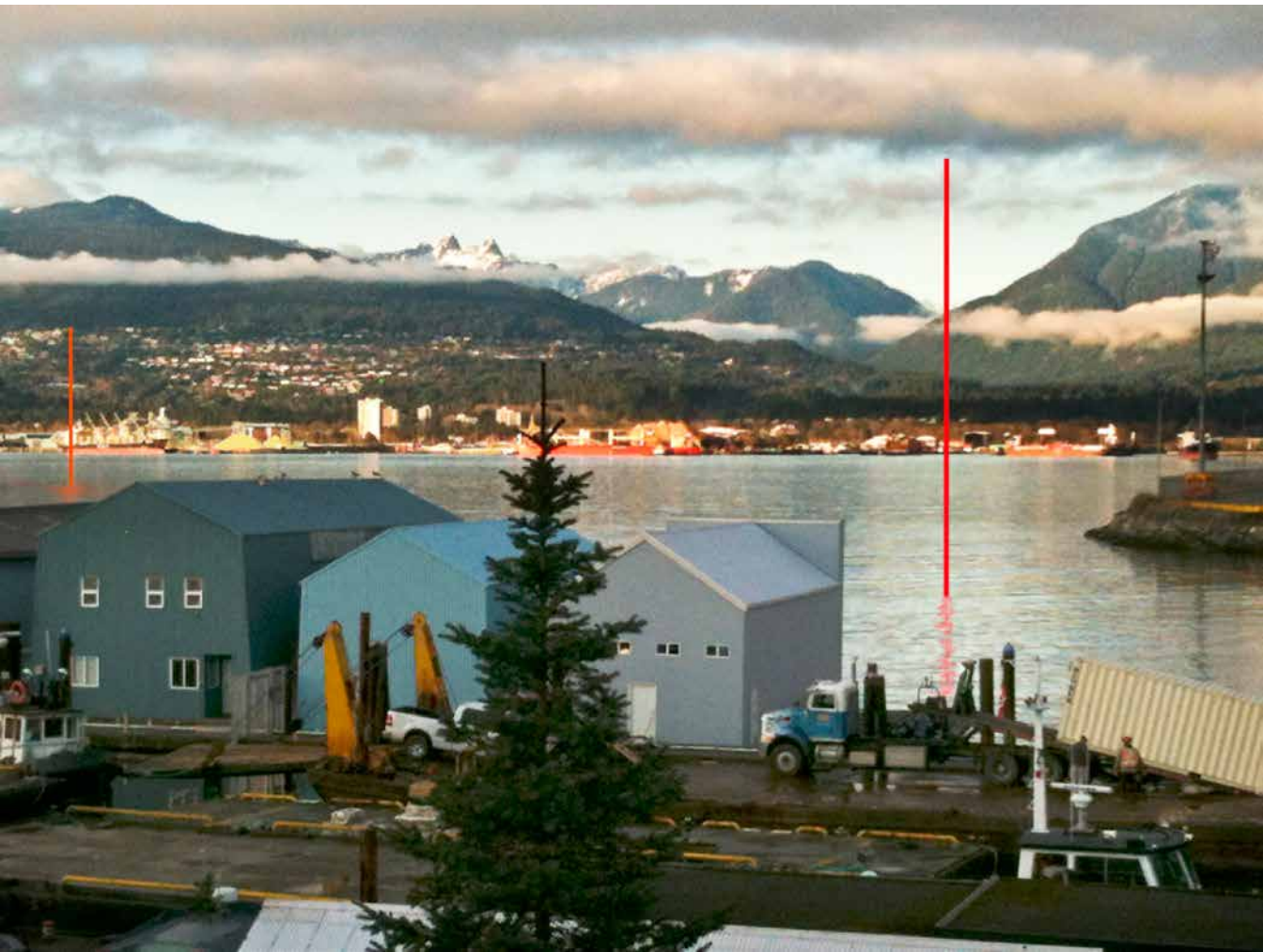
I happened upon an article, recently, about the Red Post Art Exhibit (which took place at Kanehsatà:ke as part of events reflecting on the Oka Crisis, 1990). I was amazed to learn of their meaning to the Haudenosaunee.

“In the centre of the exhibit is the red post itself, an installation piece created by Katsi’tsakwas Ellen Gabriel. The red post refers to the Haudenosaunee (People of the Longhouse) practice of erecting a red post in communities during times of conflict or war.”\*

\*Powerful reflections on the Oka Crisis at Red Post Art Exhibit  
Jennifer Dales [rabble.ca](http://rabble.ca)

No Tankers No Greed

In Honour of Jamie Reid



# Jamie & The Raid

*Sharon Thesen*

It was 1968 or so and the house on the corner of 8th and Oak was an unusually large place for a couple of English majors studying poetry at SFU, but we must have gotten a really good deal on the rent. With three bedrooms upstairs and a semi-furnished self-contained suite in the basement, we had an excess of space. We didn't want to be landlords, but Jamie Reid, who'd been looking for a place in Vancouver from which to set up as a newly-minted member of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist), was happy to move into the basement suite. So there we all were: Brian and I upstairs with our two cats, Starlight and Uncle Mitch; and Jamie downstairs in the basement suite with his Bud Powell records.

We began to notice that a tan Buick sedan with a lone occupant who sat in it for hours at a time was often parked across the street, even though hippies from Saskatchewan, North Vancouver, and Kamloops had long since stopped coming to the door asking for "Jim." We thought it would soon become obvious we weren't selling drugs, and he'd go away. But it went on and on—we'd moved in in August and he was still out there well into October. I wouldn't be surprised if Brian had had some words with him, or had made certain gestures which Brian could accomplish in a very menacing manner, having grown up in Prince George.

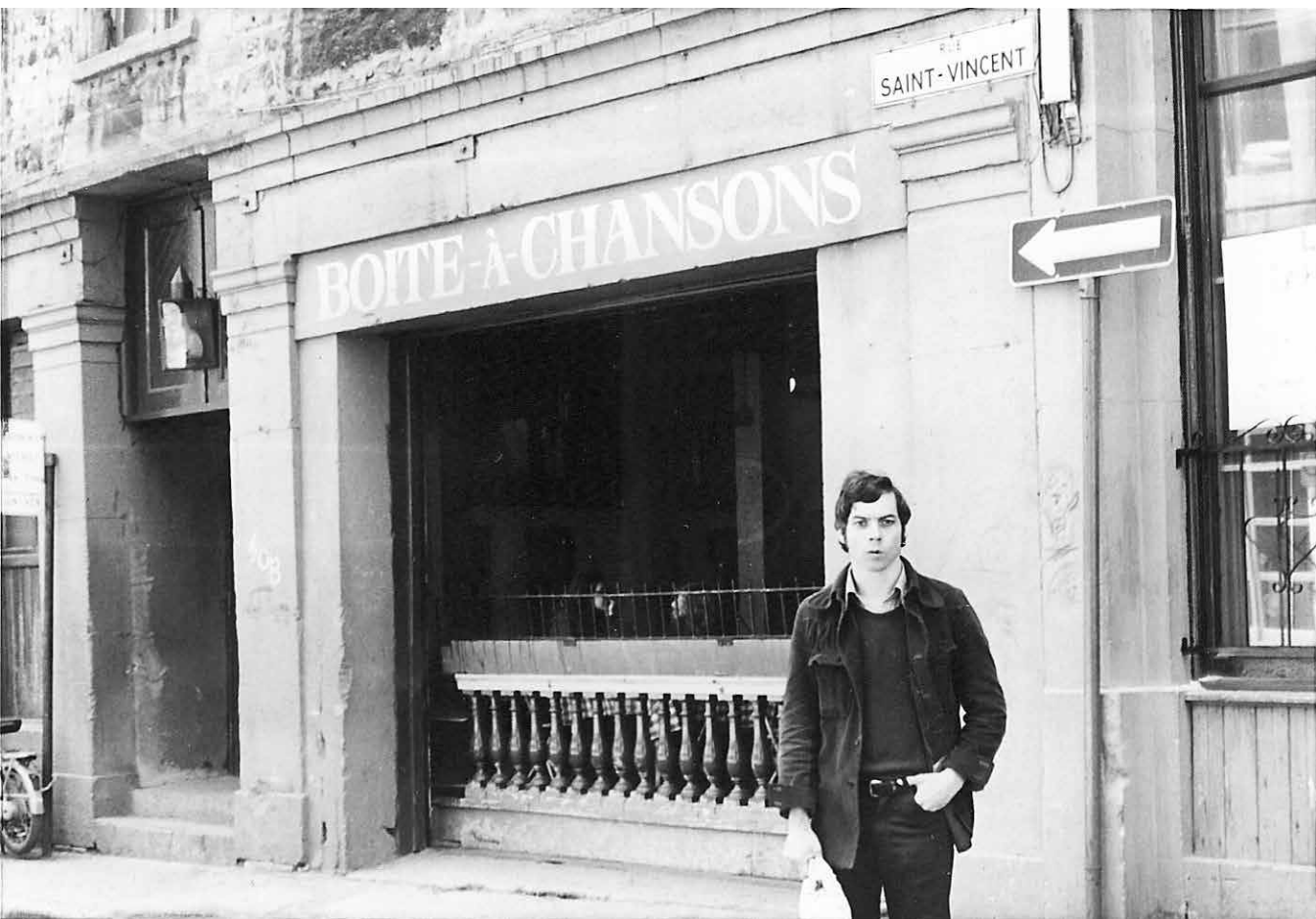
Meantime, Jamie would be coming and going on the Broadway bus in his respectable Communist overcoat and shorn proper haircut to



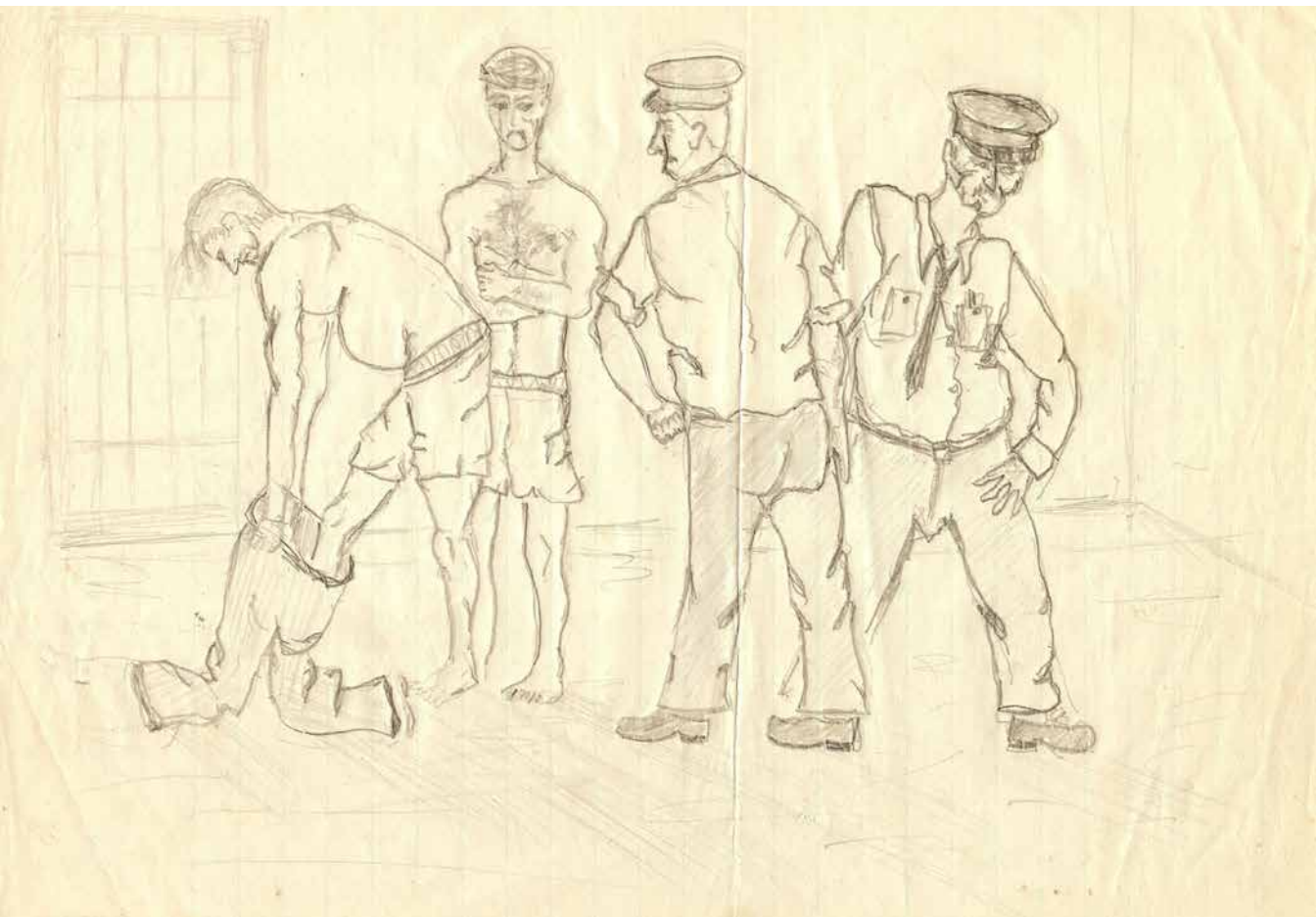
meetings or whatever, with a briefcase. While at home, he would listen for the sound of footsteps upstairs. Let's say we had company, like Brian's Sacred sister and brother-in-law, Nina and Dick. Jamie would knock on the back door and invite himself in and begin browbeating Nina and Dick about the class struggle. It was a bit awkward, but we had to admire Jamie's seriousness.

We shouldn't have found the stake-out quite so silly, however, because early one morning in November three cops burst through the back door and demanded we stay put while they searched the house. They tore drawers out of bureaus and dumped out wastebaskets. One would watch us while the others searched through kitchen cupboards and our few pieces of furniture. Canisters were opened; books shaken out. They sniffed the spices in the spice rack and sliced open a bag of kibble.

Then they went down to Jamie's, telling us to stay in the kitchen. We were terrified Jamie would be arrested. We heard voices and a bit of shouting from the suite. Soon the cops drove off and Jamie came upstairs. He was amazingly calm. He said he had told them that as a Marxist-Leninist, he did not believe in doing drugs. That was Jamie: never flustered, always ready with a clear sentence or two, and possessed of a larger vision than most of us had. We all moved from that house not long afterward, Brian and I to Port Moody, Jamie—I forget—but when we'd talk about it later at the Cecil, Jamie was not the least bit surprised that it had happened, while we continued to fume and fluster. Maybe it was Jamie they were really after. I wish I'd taken the opportunity to ask him, once and for all, what he thought had been happening then.



Jamie outside Boite-à-Chansons, Old Montreal, 1973  
Photo by Carol Reid



Jamie's pencil sketch from jail, Millbrook Correctional Centre  
Millbrook, Ontario, 1970s

# On Jamie Reid, 1941–2015

*Colin Smith*

During the thirteen years I lived in Vancouver, I spent most of my time and emotional life becoming a devout spawn of the Kootenay School of Writing. Most of the folks involved in it were my age, plus—much more to the point—the lexically gnarly, politically complicated writing coming out of and circulating through this faux school fascinated me and made me want to make that sort of thing myself. While the KSW was focused finely enough that it got a nefarious and undeserved reputation for Language Hermeticism, I always felt like there were allied constellations of people and styles of textmaking in near and far orbits around us. Something never comes from nothing, after all. One of our closer affinities was with the *TISH* group of poets. Maybe it would be fair (or amusing) to consider *KOOT* as a later mutant psychic twin of *TISH*, not so much in the tenor of its poetic output but as a model of inspirational organizing for young badasses trying to do something difficult—and to think of *TISH* means to think of Jamie Reid, one of its youngest members an achingly long time ago.

I consider Jamie a passionate sceptic, that gruff man with a volcanic laugh wandering around with perpetual beer bottle and cigarette, absorbing everything going on in a room and considering those “everything”s quickly, often emotionally. Though it’s obvious from his poetry that careful reflection came into play, too.

What a diverse figure was Mister Reid For him to have written in his twenties a thorny book of intense lyric poems (*The Man Whose Path*

*Was on Fire*, 1969) and then proceed to a full immersion in communism for twenty years (writing “little else but political cant” during this time, by his own admission), and to then re-emerge in poetry with a book-length tribute to the life and music of a jazz musician (*Prez: Homage to Lester Young*, 1993) and then to spend the rest of his life synthesizing what he’d learned in the communist trenches toward crafting some of the most humane and carefully nuanced political poems we have (I’m thinking here of a lot of those later texts that appear in 2004’s *I. Another. The Space Between: Selected Poems*). A baffling diversity! Which I have no problem with, whatsoever. As crooked or meandering paths often produce results of an odd, nonconforming, polyglot nature. Which should be celebrated and treasured. Are we, however, lumbered with a truncated or belated appreciation of his lifework because of his, oh what a dreadful phrase, “late blooming”?

Do we need to catch up on Jamie? Will there be posthumous books? What do we make of this contrary, eclectic fellow who sincerely believed in living the maxims of that drastic prick Arthur Rimbaud—“Change ton vie” and “Je est un autre,” specifically—and who was also a humble and generous person?

I’m not sure, but I’ll miss him. He was a weird uncle-style elder for me.





Jamie at home in a T-shirt designed by Neil Eustache  
Photos by Carol Reid



# My Exceptionally Good Friend Jamie Reid

*Frank Davey*

In all the 55 years that our lives overlapped I knew Jamie fairly well only in the first *TISH* years, 1960-63 in Vancouver, and in his early Maoist years, 1970-75 in Toronto. “Fairly well.” I suppose that we were mainly intellectual friends—poetics, politics, ethics—and may have shared a conviction that people had to resolve the events of their private lives on their own.

What I noticed on first meeting Jamie—and probably what most people noticed in 1960—was that if he believed something he believed it loudly and passionately. I never thought him to be capable of being “politic” in his responses, and not at all of dissembling. Though he was capable of self-critically parodying his own certainties.

What I noticed next about him in those early days was that he cared about the intellectual and ethical well-being of his friends—cared about whether they were acting publicly in their own best interests and being responded to fairly. He led the *TISH*-group criticism of Bowering’s 1961 “Meatgrinder” poems seemingly because he cared about George, and thought the poems unworthy of him, and likely to tempt him away from the best that he could do. He felt similarly about my 1964 chapbook *City of the Gulls and Sea*, and reviewed it on CBC radio, as I recall, with vigorous sarcasm. When I accused him of betrayal, he declared that his intentions were quite the opposite, that he expected writing from me that was so much better. He later sent

me a copy of the book annotated as heavily as one might annotate a failed first-year essay.

I lost track of Jamie until 1970 when I moved to Toronto and he made contact and began visiting me and Linda and our children every few months. It was a somewhat asymmetrical relationship. I don't recall that we ever knew quite where Jamie lived, and seldom knew in advance when he might want to visit, although a couple of times I attended big general meetings of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist), the CPC-ML, at his invitation. I don't remember now where these were held—somewhere on the industrial west side of downtown. The Toronto “left” in those days was large and multi-faceted, from the Maoists through to magazines such as Windsor's *Alive* (in which I published and which reviewed my books) and *This Magazine Is About Schools*, to the Rochdale College supporters, the Therafields psychotherapy commune, and the save-the-Toronto-Island-community activists—from Jamie to Victor Coleman, Margaret Atwood, bpNichol, and Dennis Lee. Jamie's “left” was as vigorous and outspoken as Jamie had ever been; Linda and I would see him on local television demonstrating or picketing or banging the hood of a limousine with a makeshift truncheon as often as we would see him in person.

One of Jamie's worries, and one of the reasons he kept visiting, we came to suspect, was that he thought us too bourgeois to be able to survive the coming political upheavals. We “owned” our small house and large mortgage. We owned a Datsun sedan. Jamie believed in the Maoist cause, and in its ultimate triumph, as strongly and passionately it seemed as he had believed in the poetry he had thought the *TISH*

writers capable of creating. He seemed to be trying to save us, as outlandish as that might seem now and probably seemed to Linda and me then. I later heard that during a visit to Vancouver he had quarreled with Warren Tallman when trying to warn him too that he could be one of the first ones executed in the coming revolution. I suppose Warren may have perceived this warning as a threat, and at any rate was much more interested in saving Jamie for poetry by extricating him from Maoism than he was in saving himself from any revolution. Concern can create odd conflicts.

Linda and I never quarrelled with Jamie, and had various complicated conversations with him about his current convictions and hopes. One afternoon he arrived with a large bandage on his left hand. He had been working for some time as a machinist in a small factory, a job which he implied the party had encouraged him to obtain so that he might influence its workers. “What happened to your hand, Jamie” our 4-year-old son asked. “Greedy capitalist factory owners,” Jamie began, “impose hourly production quotas on their workers, which force workers to take risks in order to keep their jobs, help the capitalist owners amass more capital, and make the observance of workplace safety impossible.” He went on for another couple of minutes before our son tried again. “But Jamie, what happened to your hand?” And Jamie laughed and abruptly switched discourses, and told him indeed what he had done to his hand. Jamie didn’t see a lot of comedy in life; his laughter was usually triggered by irony.

We moved from this house to a larger one near Casa Loma in August of 1976 and never again saw Jamie in Toronto. I assumed he must have moved to another city. By 1990 I had left Toronto for nearby

London. Mao had died in 1976, and his wife with her “Gang of Four” had been arrested and imprisoned shortly after, putting an end to the “Maoist” Cultural Revolution that Mao’s supporters had launched in his last years of decline. An apparently more authentic Maoism had survived in Albania under Enver Hoxha, which Hardial Bains and his Toronto Maoists were already recognizing by the mid 1970s. But Hoxha had died in 1985 and his Maoist state had been overthrown in the spring of 1990 following the 1989 collapse of East Germany. I would next encounter Jamie in Vancouver, to which he’d returned in 1990 to resume poetry and local activism. I thought of his return as a small but personally important part of global events.

I have three strong memories of him since then. One was the enormous work he put into arranging a 40-year *TISH* reunion at the 2001 Vancouver Writers’ Festival. That reunion seemed more important to him than to any of the other *TISH* writers, a feeling which I think I understood and hope I honoured. He would go to his death seeing himself as *TISH*-group co-founder, editor, and poet, and as bearing responsibilities because of that. Two was his being, with Maria Hindmarch and Daphne Marlatt, among the only *TISH* writers who responded to my invitation to read the manuscript of my 2011 memoir *When TISH Happens* and point out errors, oversights, or misunderstandings. He was still strong and honest in expressing his opinions, which I appreciated—honesty can prevent further misunderstandings. Two years later that book was panned as “self-serving” by a friend of one of the original editors and Jamie spent two weeks vainly trying to get various surviving editors to make a strong collective response. I understood that too. Perhaps silence was wiser,



but Jamie was never one for concealing his opinions. I kidded him that he and I might already be the last of *TISH*. That was by email, and I can't be sure he laughed.

My final email from Jamie came on April 24, 2015, telling me that he and Carol were setting up an e-mail group of George's friends to which they would relay news about his hoped-for recovery from a cardiac event two days before, so as to spare his wife Jean from being overwhelmed with correspondence. Jamie had sometimes had disagreements with Jean about what *TISH* had become. But he had cared about George, during agreement and disagreement, for much longer. I miss that.



Gathering of *TISH* poets and friends, Granville Island, 40th anniversary reunion, 2001. From left: George Bowering, Maria Hindmarch, Lionel Kearns, Robert Hogg, Dave Cull (behind), David Dawson, Fred Wah, Jamie Reid, Frank Davey, Brad Robinson, Daphne Marlatt, Ellen Tallman, Diane Lalogue, Peter Auxier.

From all the things he has brought himself  
to recognize, from the motions they make,  
their infinite noises, he feels  
the silence escaping, a grand  
invisible gesture, impressive  
in its emptiness, like the trains  
setting out daily for some named place,  
in reality nameless  
& not properly called anywhere.

January 1965

+ + + + + + + +

THE WALL

what after all  
is this wall between myself  
& the words to give me flesh?

I love you. That simple,  
it seems. Your white face  
above me in the dark,  
sees me real this once.  
Speaking, my flesh  
crowds in upon me.  
I love you, I  
love you.

January 1965

+ + + + +

THE HILL RAJA'S DREAM

for C. H. Breeze

The Hill Raja dreams. His cock  
is limp and white between his legs.

His dream is also limp,  
but wet & many colored—  
foetus, cunt, eyeball,  
smoky faces.

There is some hope  
(not much)  
the dream  
will some day  
be dry.

The lewd faces, & the hanging tongues  
will long have gone away.





Summer visit to Vancouver  
(Granville Island)  
Photo by Carol Reid

# Have (Just) Come to This for Jamie's 70<sup>th</sup>

*Fred Wah*

The discrete curve  
Of “thigh” or “fuck”  
Just trust whose voice  
Or voices

—but this is the world  
Even in the third person  
An impatient twinkle  
And shift of city choice

But not in Burnaby  
It was a sunny morning  
At Tenth and Blanca  
Goodbye

Thus, resident rust words  
Just a foregone memory  
That the left over truth  
Is just as filthy

Real life left behind  
Car's West Pender shoulder  
Incarcerated tie rod re-  
Incarnated.

Justice in some languages  
Hello is goodbye  
Whose terminal juncture  
Seems to have no effect

And what doesn't  
To have just come to this  
Gap beyond the incomplete  
Sentence

(December 2010)



# Jamie

*Patrick Friesen*

Not a lot of literary news came across the Rockies to Winnipeg in the 1960s, at least as far as I knew. But some thirty years later, as I was in the process of moving to Vancouver, and was driving through the foothills and into the Rockies, Sharon Thesen, who was traveling with me, talked about writers in Vancouver, and I recognized the name Jamie Reid. I knew I'd heard it way back. I think I heard it in relation to a Human Be-In, or to some demonstration. I knew he was a poet with a strong political stance.

In 1997 I guest-edited a Bill Bissett festschrift issue of *The Capilano Review*. In conjunction with that issue, I also organized an event for Bill at the Vancouver Writers' Festival. Among the people I asked to write for the issue, and hopefully, to read at the event, was Jamie. A few things stood out for me. I didn't know the man at the time, but I quickly found out how diligent and enthusiastic he was. He met every deadline, considered every request I made of him, and handed in a beautiful piece. I was impressed. At the event, if I remember correctly, he read some Bissett but also Chaucer in that splendid, inimitable voice of his.

Jamie was a great support to other poets and to poetry events. He loved jazz, and he loved poets. The second last time I saw him was at the Twisted Poets reading series at the Cottage Bistro. He and Carol had just arrived, by taxi, from the airport, after visiting New York. He was a happy man that evening. He had heard Brad Mehldau's trio, and he was at a poetry reading.

This support, along with arguments I'm sure, showed in his ongoing online interactions. He never lost touch, and he never lost his intensity of involvement.

# Jamie Reid's "Envoi"

Maria Hindmarch

a P.S.  
a sending forth  
a message from  
a friend in his 20s  
abt to take off

Envoi

And when the time  
at last  
arrives, the time  
to give this world up,  
will my friends,  
for what is life  
without them, be  
as I want them  
worthy?

3 sudden deaths already and Jamie's brother  
younger  
why this comma?  
to create a stronger pause?  
1968 seems too late for so  
many commas—  
is there a form he's  
imitating or playing  
with?

Key

Will I, with them,  
or without them, who's  
to care,  
being without them, be  
exact? The one  
they will remember?

Jamie cares

wondering aloud  
like Keats + Shelley <sup>did</sup> in their 30s  
Byron too

Key

Will I be wiser then than now,  
or stupider,  
still raging?

Jamie raged Jamie ranted Jamie was there

Who  
will have departed  
from their lives?

too many - the 4 above plus Ian Dunn  
(Carol's brother) in his early 30s

Will I be  
as they remember me?

plus at least 20 others by  
now in 2016

Some mouths, I suppose,  
will be finally shut,  
some eyes, as well,  
in which tears,  
idle as ever,  
might appear.

could be read with  
the primary stress  
on either word

of the Turing group David  
Dawson first then Jamie

yes  
+  
no

a serious  
and slow  
image  
Cocktail?

did Jamie think  
we'd take human  
form? <sup>be</sup> recognizable?

But being dead,  
as now it seems  
I must be,  
where could I appear,  
but in their endless error?

yes - he is one of them here

critical: they don't see him as he does

There is a stillness,  
as though of memory, incorruptible stillness  
incorruptible. Static Fixed in time

Once,  
there were birds, but  
tired of each other's company,  
they flew away

crows,  
gulls,  
flicker?

more natural + several  
not an owl not a nightingale  
or skylark not a  
golden bird singing  
of "what or part, or  
passing, or  
to come"

reason why

Jamie Reid's "Envoi" (the closing lines of a ballad, a postscript of sorts, a message) was published in 1968 when he was twenty-six but may have been written earlier. I turn to it now because, unexpectedly, he is gone, has given "this world up." In the sixties, his brother and three friends who were in their twenties died suddenly: Red Lane (brother of Pat), aneurism; Robert, Jamie's younger brother, aneurism; Neri Gadd, suicide near the Burrard Street bridge; Sam Perry, suicide in his Kitsilano studio. Here one day, gone the next. We were not ready.

Jamie imagines his own death in this poem. "Will my friends, for what is life without them, be?" Life in Kitsilano in our twenties was communal because we lived in old apartments and houses where people came in and out, and walked up and down the streets and crashed and partied wherever we were. We argued with each other, talked for hours, made love, drank, smoked, danced, cooked, wrote essays wrote poems wrote stories wrote plays, studied, sat next to each other in classes and crossed in UBC halls, went to readings, openings, concerts, trip festivals, flicks, the Cellar. What would this life without those friendships that had so much to do with our formation be? But also, Jamie asks "be, as I want them worthy?" Worthy of friendship, of shared values which were changing—both poetically and politically.

His second stanza poses a different question. He asks will he be as "exact" without his friends as his audience. Will they still be there listening as he was of them? Jamie and many of us were in Writers' Workshop together

from 1960-62, and we were always calling each other when our wording got loose and the rhythms destroyed by sameness. There was TISH ('61-63 the first phase) with all its energy and animated discussions. (I recall hearing three different versions of what happened about a single poem in one day as I came out of and went into classes.) And that was followed by the Vancouver Poetry Conference in August of '63, a wild, three-week credit-course in which several of the participants came from universities across the border and back east. In this stanza Jamie says "who's to care" because he *does* care, but also realizes that change is coming. He pleads and points—"will I be as they remember me?"—and soon he was to go off into his political phase where, hopefully, he would continue to develop and become wiser. Or, would he be not "wiser" but "stupider, still raging?"

He then addresses the question of his own death—"who will have departed from their lives?" There were many by the time Jamie died: Ian Dunn, who was Carol's brother, died in an accident in his early 30s, John Newlove, Roy Kiyooka, Kurt Lange, Jerry Pethick, David Dawson, Billie Little, Goh Poh Seng, and Margaret Goh. Also some of his teachers: Warren Tallman, Ellen Tallman, Jack Spicer, Robert Duncan, Charles Olson, Alan Ginsberg, Milton Acorn, Robert Creeley. And of course, his mother, Eunice. He sees them with their eyes shut, but brings them alive a second with "tears, idle as ever, might appear." Will they know who he is? Will they greet him? Will he know that he is dead "as now it seems I must be"?

Here he becomes critical of his peers. Some of their mouths are "finally shut," but some (still alive I assume) bring him up "in their endless error," their inability to see the world and its conflicts and

relationships as he saw them, their criticism—if it is that—of him. He is in a static state of “stillness, as though of memory, incorruptible.” I see this as both a reaching back to earlier times and forward, a statement about the changing nature of friendship as much as death and the death of some friendships. Unlike Yeats in “Sailing to Byzantium,” where Yeats rejects the natural and becomes a man-made gold-enamel bird on a “golden bough to sing to lords and ladies,” Jamie juxtaposes this static, perhaps-eternal state with a group of birds such as crows or flickers or seagulls: “but tired of each other’s company they flew away.” Just like that. Gone.



# Beyond Coherence

*Ted Byrne*

A context in which various elements cohere seems missing. One waits with varying degrees of patience for a pattern to emerge, when all that seemed relation was fantasy, the hopeful product of education or something equally spurious. (Introduction, *The Man Whose Path Was On Fire*, Talonbooks, 1969)

From all of this brokenness, he no longer expected to find a pattern, a unity in the patterns of flights of birds. (*I. Another. The Space Between.*, Talonbooks, 2004)

I must've first met Jamie Reid in the pages of *New Wave Canada* (Contact Press, 1966). That book was our *New American Poetry*. At this Banquet, Jamie Reid sits between Michael Ondaatje, two years younger than him, and Fred Wah, two years older. So Jamie was, practically, always there. Re-reading this lengthy selection of poems from his early twenties, the one I remember is, of course, "The Man Whose Path Was On Fire". When he published this a few years later in his book of the same title, he subtly rewrote it, as was his practice. The rewrite was for clarity, for coherence, to get the facts straight. "The world," he says, in his Introduction to the book, "finally, is a world founded on facts no matter how far the dream will take us into ourselves." In the rewriting, for example, "the white moon / was his

own envy” became, “the white / moon, he / envied / it”. In the earlier version, the man’s fire turns the sands into “masses of glass, / mottled, blackened & bent.” In the later version this becomes “masses of glass which returned his image / hopelessly bent, hopelessly / never the same.”

He envied the moon. He dreamt that the sun envied him, for he burned so bright. But he envied the moon, presumably its calm, its diminished, reflected light. Nonetheless, he burned so “fierce” (“fiercely” in the early version) that he turned sand into glass, which then, mirror-like, reflected his image, bent like a stick in water, and “hopelessly never the same.” In his splendid “My Friends” he subscribes to one of Plato’s versions of mimesis:

These tears, the excrescence of the dream, of the uncompleted idea, trembling, unable to cover its embarrassed, half-formed nakedness even under the shadow of words, themselves the shadows of shadows of shadows. (*I. Another.*, 101)

“The Man Whose Path Was On Fire” is not reprinted in *I. Another. The Space Between.*, Jamie’s Selected Poems of 2004. I wager that this was based on a conviction that to include it would diminish the substance of the earlier book. A book whose Introduction and “Last Poem” (also not in the Selected) already announce the divide, the renunciation, the space between. Or, more simply, because it was the poem people most often remembered, which can be an annoyance, if not a burden. In remembering Jon Furberg—the mostly forgotten author of the unforgettable *Anhaga*—in a piece from the 90s, Jamie says:

I introduced myself,  
and he asked me without smiling  
though he meant it as a joke,  
Is your path still on fire, Jamie?  
Still leaving flaming footprints behind you?  
Not yet, not still, I replied, embarrassed... (103)

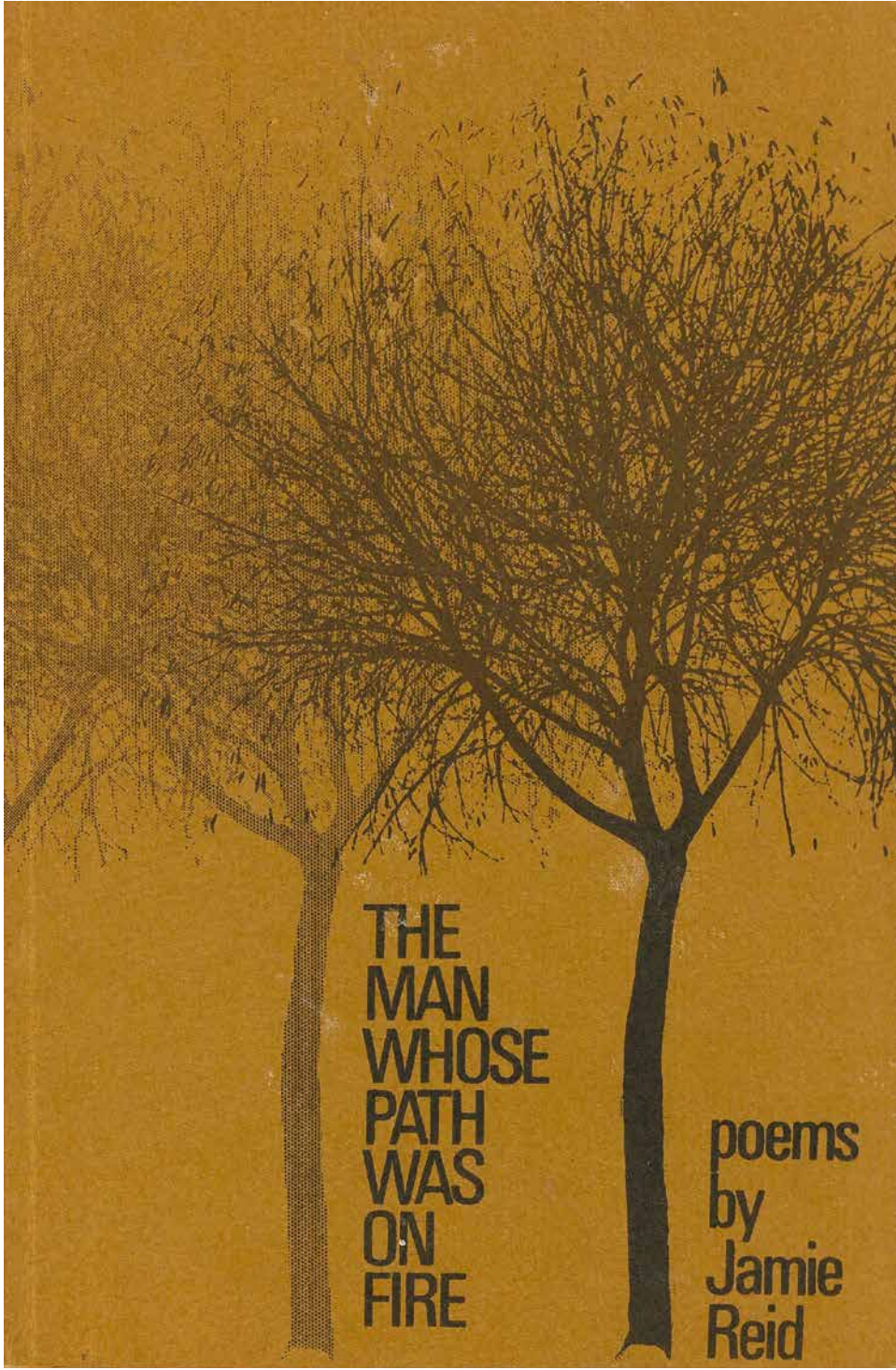
His departure from poetry was rimbaldian, full of renunciation and disgust (see the 1975 Western Front reading at <https://vimeo.com/139729985> where he begins by saying that, re-reading his old work, he “found that it nauseated me, in my stomach...”). However, unlike Rimbaud—more like Oppen or Valéry—he did not remain in that heroic space of not writing.

“The Man Whose Path Was On Fire” is a medicine song, but it’s also much like a myth, or a fairytale from *Illuminations*, “Conte” for example. It’s hard not to read it as Jamie’s myth, his personal song, as the Furberg anecdote confirms. His project is as incomplete as Rimbaud’s. He’s not one poet, but many. So many of his poems look like they belong to books that have not been written, but not not written by the same author. There’s a sadness in this, but it’s of a piece with the gap, and it may be, in the end, where the lamented coherence lies.

I miss not seeing him there, where he practically always was. His sad, generous face. I wish I could ask him. I didn’t know him when he was young. I was amazed to see him in the Stan Fox film “What Happened Last Summer” (<http://vancouverartinthesixties.com/archive/382>), his beauty, his coherence. For example, with regard to his coherence, he spoke of working at the Department of Social Welfare:

It was something terrifying to try to do something for somebody and to have a case load of 235 people, and at the end of eight hours you've seen about ten people, all of whom have problems that could be very easily solved with the application of a bit of money...What they want to do is they want to rehabilitate people. They think there's something psychologically wrong. If they don't have money then there's something psychologically wrong with them.

With regard to his beauty, I mentioned this to one friend who knew him in the 60s and she said she couldn't see it. I mentioned it to another, and he said he would have followed him anywhere.



Cover of *The Man Whose Path Was on Fire* (Talonbooks, 1994)





Jamie reading "Poem for April Fools" in Fool's Day Parade, Commercial Drive, Vancouver, April 1, 1990. Kiss on the cheek bestowed by Miss America, who was riding a grocery cart in long underwear. J. J. Crashbang holding the umbrella. Photo by Gaye Baxter.

# "At least the cops kept their distance": Jamie Reid's "The Eaters"

*Reg Johanson*

Jamie Reid was one of the first real poets I met. By real I mean someone for whom the term was definitive. When I met him he had already passed through the cycle of renunciation and return. He never renounced poetry again. The first poem of his that I read, "The Eaters," with its long unfolding elaborations, Rabelaisian appetites, and vision of hospitality and plenty, still seems the most like him.

The appetites of *The Eaters* appear at first joyous, pastoral. Consumption here appears unenclosed, vital, which is why the cops stay clear of it ("any kind of flesh might be food for their pots, even the rancid flesh of cops"). The mere presence of *The Eaters* makes things grow, the earth seems to want to feed them. Yet *The Eaters* are still yoked to, compelled by, a reproductive necessity driven by some kind of technology for accumulation—"cunning scientific devices invented by their ancestors"—which create a gendered division of labour and a normative morality ("Gluttony and lechery [...] are mutually exclusive, and therefore we have fewer reasons to be damned than others, for which we thank God"). They still labour and wander even in the midst of plenty. I think of Jamie's own wandering and serving in his sojourn away from poetry, in the service of revolution. In this poem he performs a kind of Gulliver, returned from these travels with a "dark message":

## The Eaters

*from "A Hotel In the Countryside"*

When did you hear of those intrusive presences, the ones  
with the dark message hidden behind their ears, the ones  
who came only at night and only with omnivorous intent?  
They would eat anything, wouldn't they? And drink. My god,  
they would mash up every berry and vegetable in the house,  
add the sugar and spice of their own piss to make their beer and wine.

They could hardly wait for the fermentation to begin  
before they would put their lips to the lip of the jug,  
sucking up gallons in a single draught.  
When those men had finally drunk enough,  
they would run to the trees and tear off leaves  
to roll up into scraps of newspapers for an after-dinner smoke.

They were poor, poor in everything but appetite.  
Don't you remember their celebratory howls?

I kept feeding them bushels of carrots, the carcasses of old chickens,  
and once I stole a monkey from the zoo and threw it into the pot,  
but they were indifferent to any refinement of taste.  
Everything was the same to them as long as it was food,  
and as long as it didn't break their teeth,  
which were very tough teeth, like the teeth of horses.

They had huge loud voices and when they started talking  
the inside of the house felt like the inside of a drum boom boom boom  
It wasn't that they demanded too much, it was merely the terrible  
strength of their need.

Long before they would arrive you could feel it everywhere.

The vegetables in the garden began to grow larger with the ache of that  
insatiable demand.

The beets and the carrots  
would literally burst from the ground, demanding to be cooked,  
and once a stream of potatoes shot through the kitchen window  
like a shower of meteorites.

We, too, felt the pull of that fantastic hunger, like a kind of reverse  
gravity, the curved drag of a magnet. Days before their arrival, we would  
find ourselves ordering in extra provisions,  
preparing dinners for guests who were not even present.

After a couple of years, of course,  
we learned to recognize these urges as the signal of their imminent  
arrival.

Of course, they were always incredibly grateful. The breath of their  
thanks would knock you off your feet, hold you pressed to the wall,  
and of course, they always insisted on singing for their supper.

Nothing you could say would dissuade them. Neighbours miles away  
would telephone to complain. At least the cops kept their distance.  
They had heard tales of these monstrous appetites and thought perhaps  
that any kind of flesh might be food for their pots,  
Since they never came, we never found out what might happen.

Normal people seemed to be accepted readily into their company, apart from the fact that they could never understand why the visitors would ever decline the huge, stinking pot-fulls of food that they offered, the jugs full of vegetable beer and berry wine.

When they ate alone among themselves, they ate without speech, but they were far from silent. Great gulping and sucking sounds, like the sound of elephants dragging their feet from the mud, incredible guttural snorts, belches which seemed to come from the bowels of the earth itself, farts that rumbled like bubbles in magma, smelling of sulphur and mashed vegetables. They were too polite to make eating compulsory for others. Eating by itself was occupation enough for them, but their notions of courtesy demanded conversation with their guests. It was hard to tell which was harder to take without wincing.

Their words had a way of entering your belly like wind into a balloon. They left you bloated, exhausted, more flatulent than any plate of beans. Yet their childlike desire for approval and acceptance was all the more touching because of their giant ugliness.

Not that they were boring, either. They had their own philosophers and poets, and spoke from a decidedly different and interesting point of view.



For example, they always felt that the sexes should be kept separate. Where are your women? you might ask. Our wives stay at home was their answer, while we roam the earth, scouring for food which we engorge until we reach this gargantuan size. Then we return to the fold. By means of cunning scientific devices invented by our ancestors, the flesh and fat we have laid on our bones are drained into vast communal vats from which the women and children feed. We shrink in short order from our huge six-foot girth to slender and willowy little slips of eight-foot men. We do not stay with the women and children, and we do not make love to our wives except at certain carefully appointed times because we would thereby develop a terrible nostalgia for home and be rendered incapable of our husbandly duties of travelling the world to hunt for food and hospitality so that our wives and children may be fed. Gluttony and lechery, in our world, they would say, are mutually exclusive, and therefore we have fewer reasons to be damned than others, for which we thank God.

Not everyone lives like this, we know, their philosophers would remark, somewhat dejectedly and apologetically, while their poets kept up a mournful litany of the names of their loved ones at home, their touching little habits, their own loneliness, and so on, like soldiers sent to war on foreign soil.

We have never known any other way, the philosophers would say, and now it is far too late to change.

*post-1990*

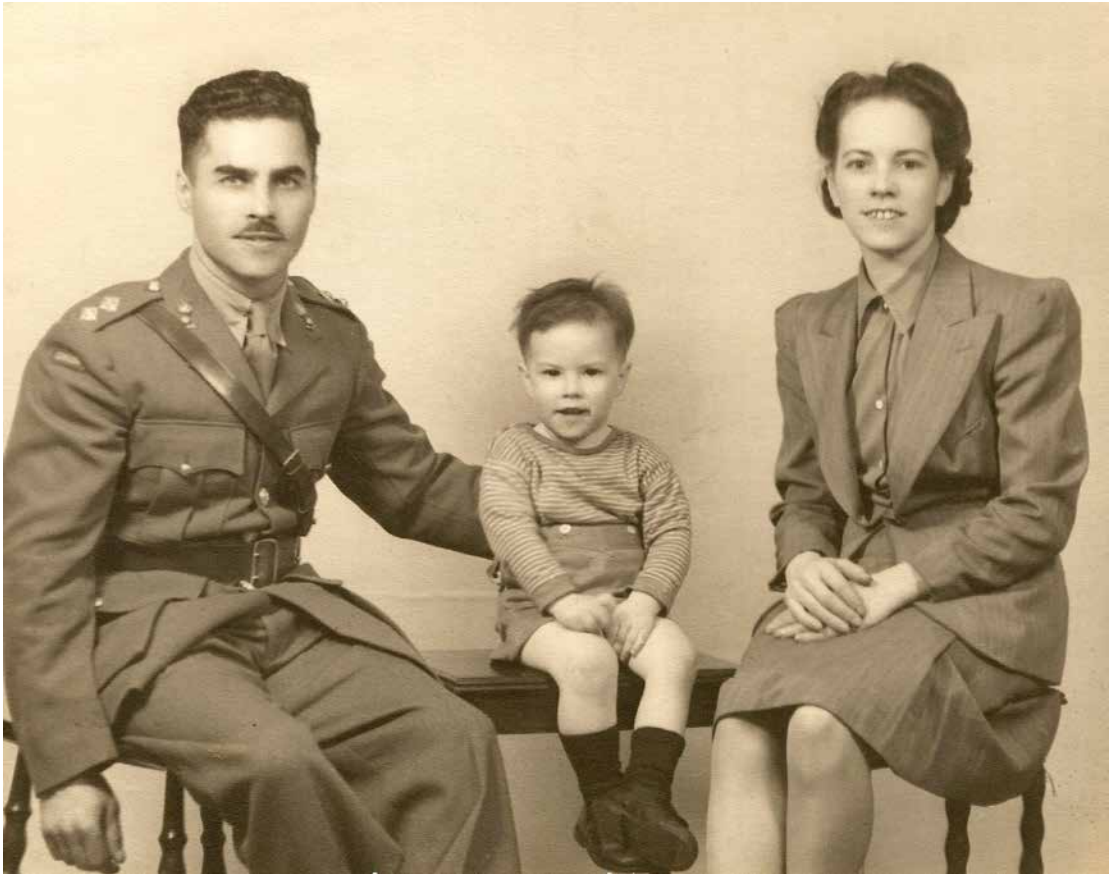


James Douglas Reid, *Canadian Rockies* (detail), canvas embroidery, date unknown



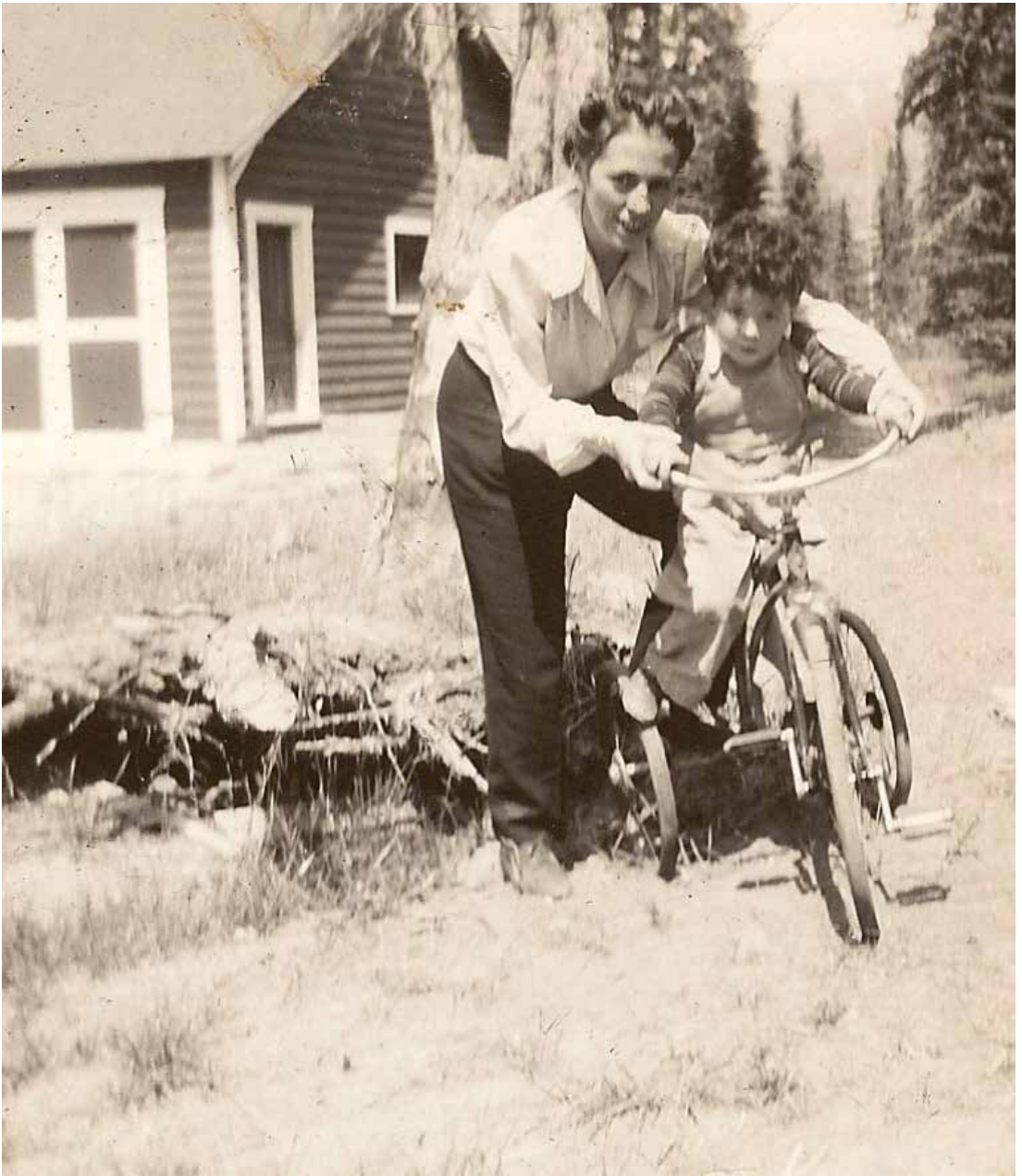






Jamie with his father, James Douglas Reid, and his mother, Eunice Elaine Reid (née MacKinnon), before his father went to war, 1942

Jamie lived in Cultus Lake while his father trained as an army engineer and prepared to serve in Sicily and England. James Reid was an outdoorsman, a naturalist, and a trained geologist before he became a soldier and lost everything.

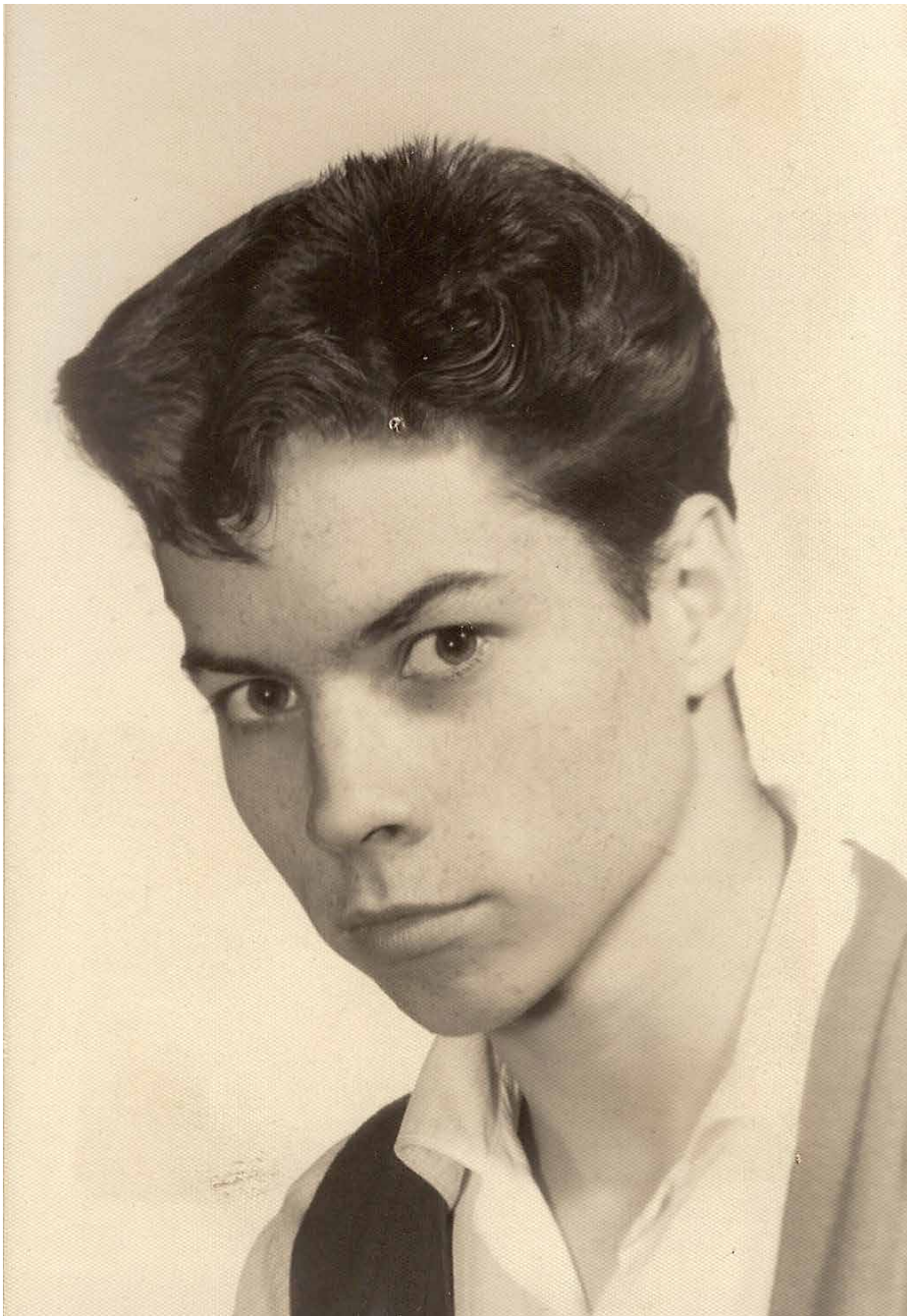


Jamie and Eunice, Banff, Alberta, 1943





Grade 13, King Edward High School, Vancouver  
c. 1958/59



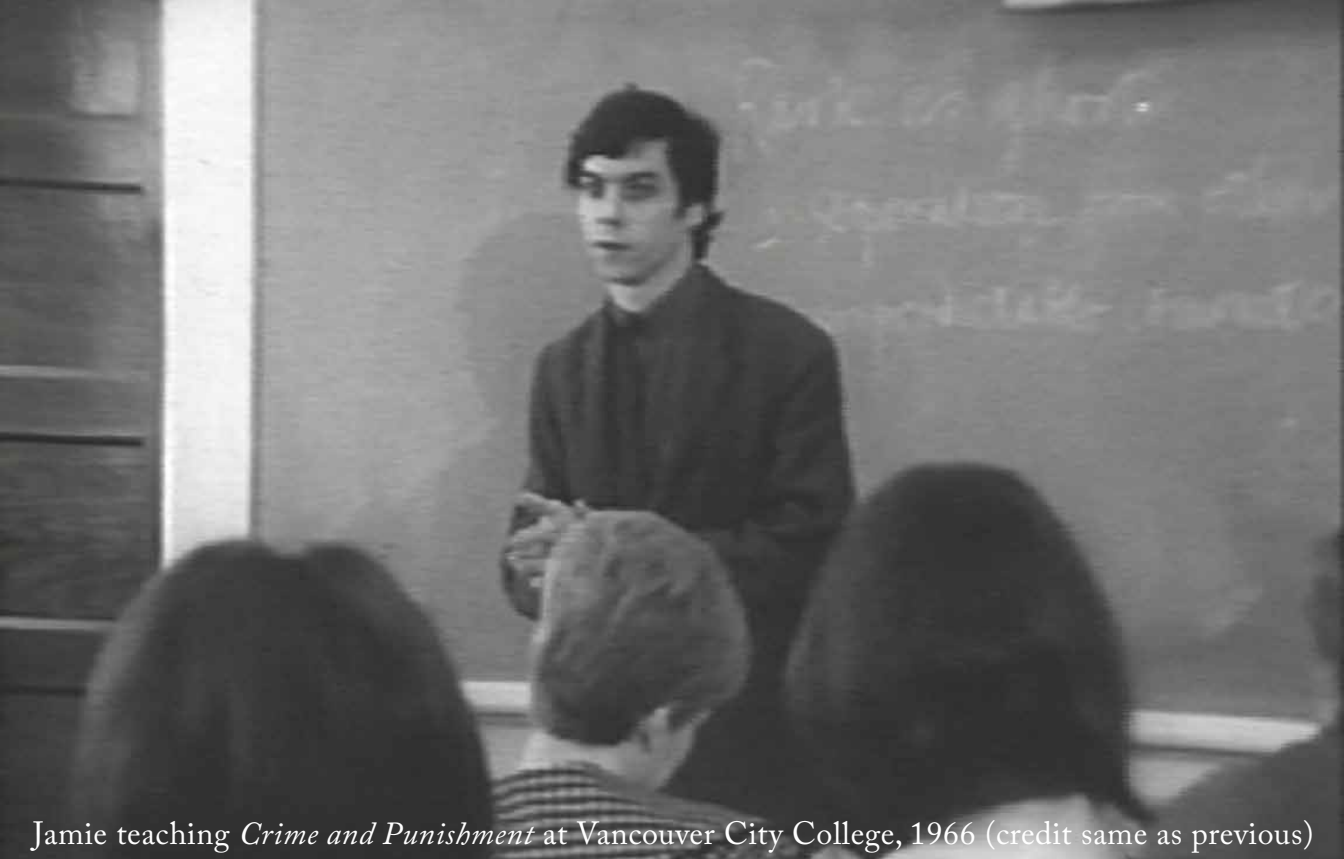
Grade 11 or 12, King Edward High School, Vancouver  
c. 1956/57



Carol and Jamie outside Rosie's Rags to Riches secondhand store on 4th Avenue, 1966  
Still from Stan Fox's *What Happened Last Summer* (CBC, 1967), CBC Archives



Carol and Jamie outside apartments at 1719 Yew Street, talking with Marcia Stone's son Michael, 1967 (credit same as previous)



Jamie teaching *Crime and Punishment* at Vancouver City College, 1966 (credit same as previous)

More *Crime and Punishment*...



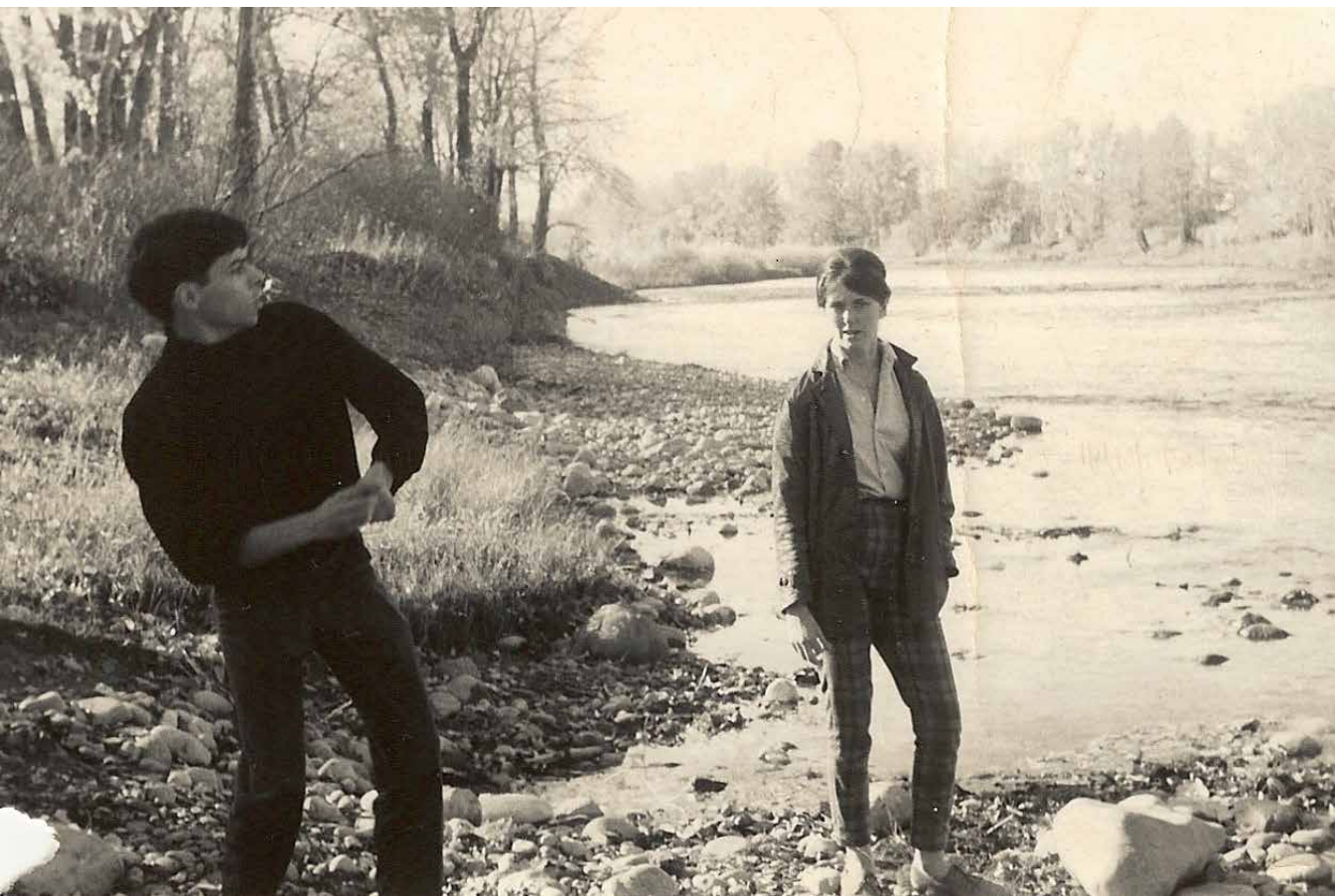




On 4th Avenue, Vancouver (credit same as previous)



A screen capture generated by Lary Bremner in Koriyama, Japan, 2009, taken at approximately the 38:12 fade-out/fade-in transition point of *What Happened Last Summer*.



Jamie and Carol, Bowness Park, Calgary, 1964  
Photo by George Bowering





Jamie and Carol, 1964  
Photo by George Bowering



Jamie and his niece Leigh Joseph, Victoria, 1979  
Photo by Carol Reid





Carol and Jamie, Longbranch, Lakeshore, Toronto, c. 1984





Eating Oysters, Point Atkinson, 1980s  
Photo by Carol Reid

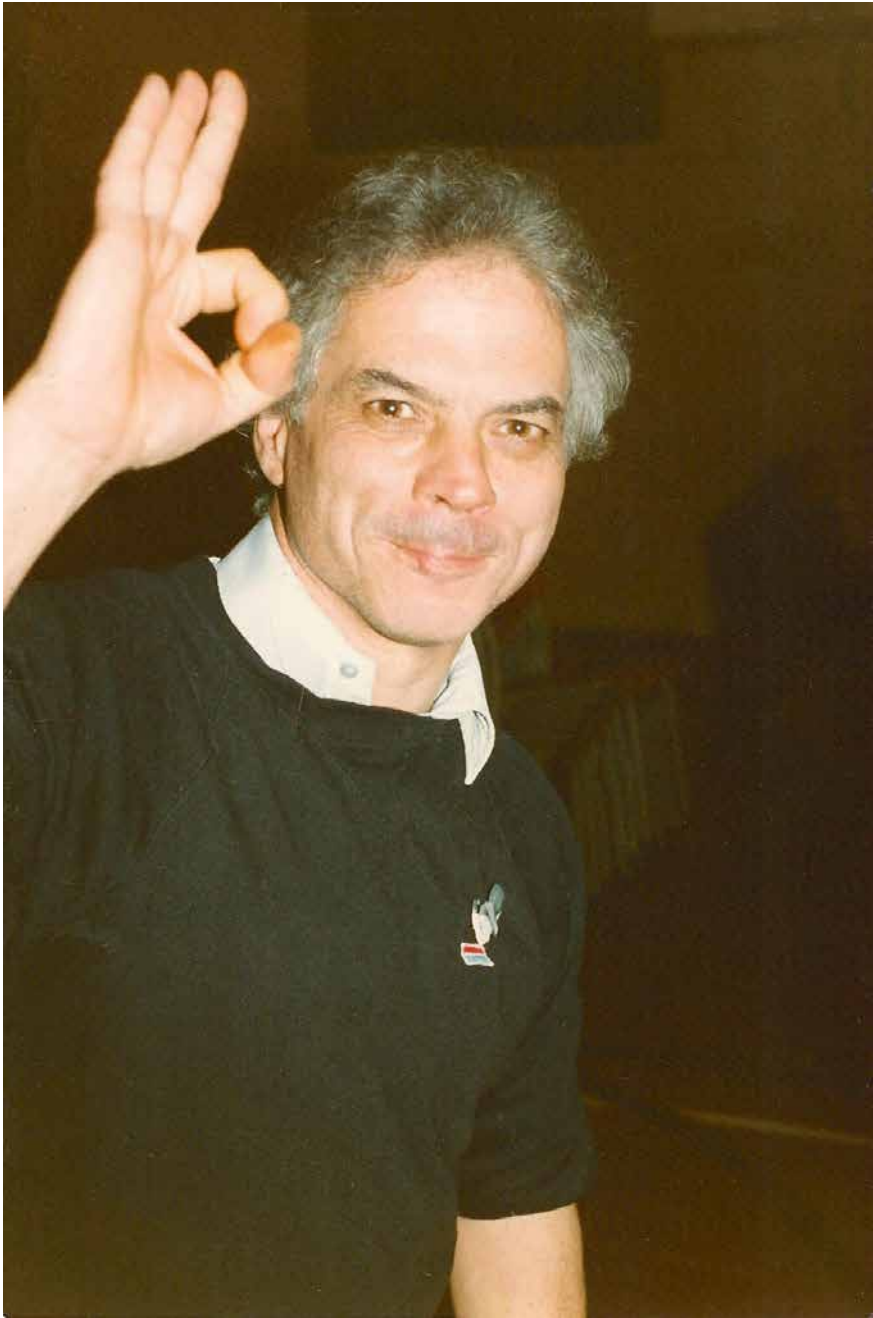


Stream fishing, Sooke River, Vancouver Island, BC, 1980s  
Photo by Carol Reid



With Fred Douglas, North Vancouver, 1990s





Signaling success of a production of *The Christmas Rose*, which Jamie directed for the Shawnigan Players, Shawnigan Lake, Vancouver Island, 1989.



Garden party and book launch at Jamie and Carol's home for Billy Little's *St. Ink* (CUE Books, 2008), North Vancouver, 2008. From left: Trudy Rubinfeld, Renee Rodin, Rhoda Rosenfeld, George Bowering, Jamie Reid, Jim Allworth, Billy Little, Rojeanne Allworth, Judith Copithorne, Pierre Coupey, Jenny Penberthy, Matt Little. Photo by Carol Reid.

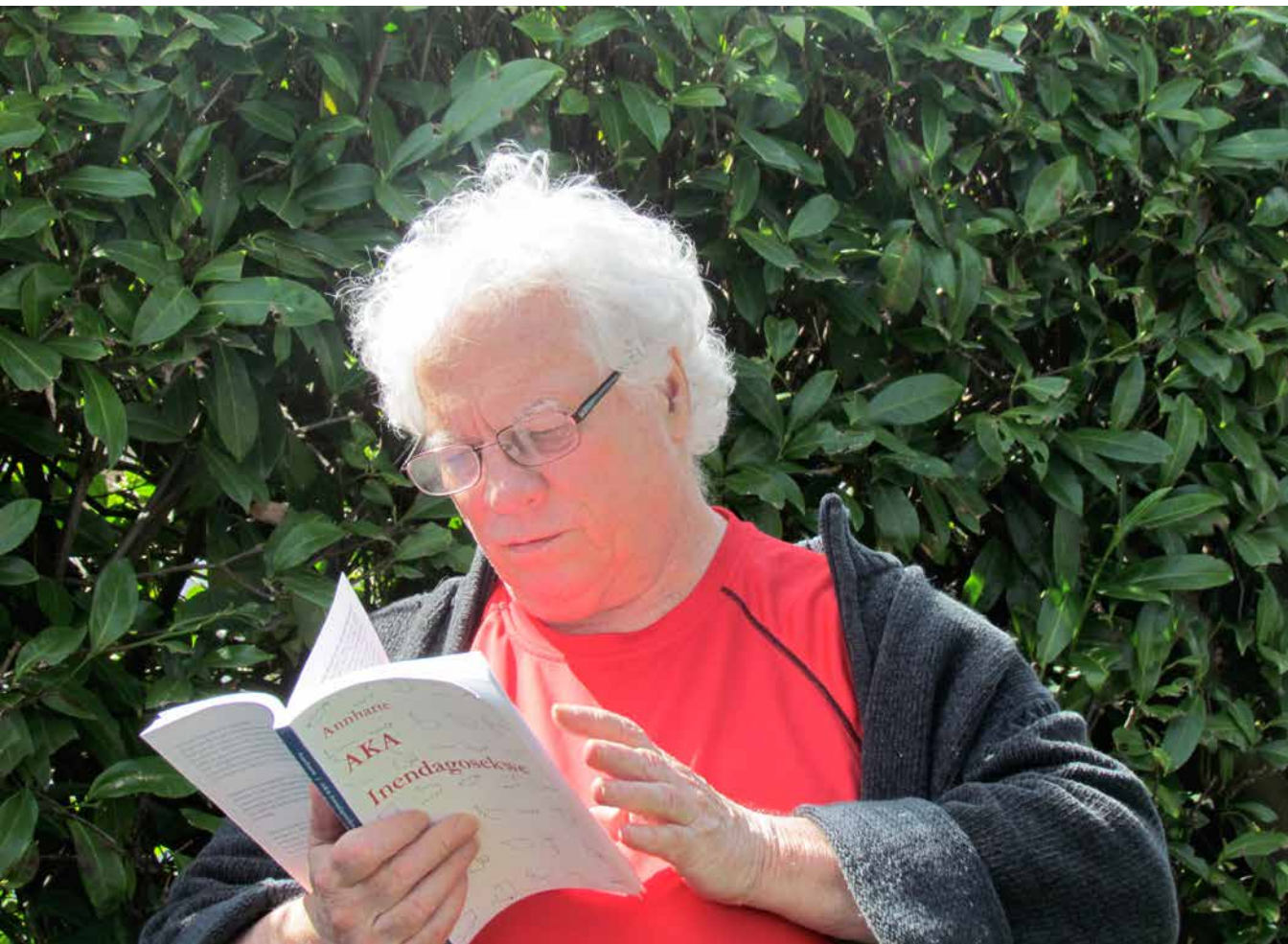




Jamie Reid, George Stanley, and others, Canadian Writers Against the War demonstration (against the war in Iraq), Vancouver, October 2008



Reid reading, 2012  
Photo by Carol Reid



Reading Annharte's *AKA Inendagosekwe* (CUE Books, 2013), 2013

Photo by Carol Reid





Reading at Poetry Meets Art, Seymour Art Gallery,  
Deep Cove, North Vancouver, January 26, 2015  
Photo by R. C. Weslowski



Jamie in his study, North Vancouver, 2004  
Photo by Carol Reid





Ambleside Beach, West Vancouver, looking across to Stanley Park, 2014  
Photo by Carol Reid





In NYC, May 2015  
Photos by Carol Reid









A walk in the Maplewood Bird Sanctuary, 2009  
Photo by Carol Reid

# i placed my hand on Lenin's cheek

*Joanne Arnott (with thanks to the Gao Brothers)*



i placed my hand on Lenin's cheek this evening  
his head a full metallic glimmer in the moonlight

Mao with a long balancing rod in hand, stood still  
upon his crown

i stepped back, glanced over my shoulder  
to the high placed moon

i placed my hand on Lenin's cheek this evening  
& thought of you

Originally published in *Can You Hear Me Now?* and *A Night for the Lady*  
Photo: Dan Fairchild

# Homage for Jamie Reid

*Joanne Arnott*

The writer's room is an underworld through which the heavens shine  
and cloud over

The writer's job is to wait to pounce like a cat, opportunistically,  
to play with the mouse of enlightenment

The writer's descent and ascent and descent and ascent mark the  
rhythm of life, the chariot pulling the sun, the writer in labour

The sound of the love of his life, calling him back, and the life-giving  
pummel of her hand on his breast

The vision of Tama, Super-Station Master of Wakayama Electric  
Railway's Kishigawa Line, calico in waiting, her tilted  
station-master's hat

Competing claims on the writer's senses, clear directions that cannot  
be synched, possible reasons for an unscheduled rueful departure

Relational poetics, from the man whose path was on fire

Homages through fake poems, an arc of beauty, a riff of humanity



Joanne Arnott with Jamie, book launch for *St. Ink* by Billy Little (CUE Books, 2008) at the Reids' home in North Vancouver, 2008  
Photo by Carol Reid



# The Fake Anthropologist V

*Dwight Gardiner*

*(For Jamie)*

Orphée traverse le miroir.

When you walk through a mirror, what is on the other side?

Winged beauties? Spooks? Wild-eyed serpents with swords through their nipples?

White slack-ear false-lambs with claws through your hands.

A bed of pork-pie hats with satin dolls tickling your toes and  
Lady Day

whispering in your ear.

Ancestors calling you to a deep place on the other side.

In Boom Lam Yai the monks chanted for 3 days, & then our mother,  
Mama La-or shot up to the stars.

She came back to our village to say good-bye.

A smell, a green light, a last pouring of water,

my electric toothbrush left running to tell us that she was here.

She was a green light & shot up to the stars.

Tormented bird spirits squealing in Jeun-ju. Right after Carol's call,  
an owl, perched on our bedroom window, bringing news.

Then two owls flew up to the roof.

On the island of Jin-do, a shaman is sending a spirit. She is agitated and complains that the incense is burning her throat. She beats a gong and tells the hourglass drummer that her back is sore. I cannot find a trance to connect me to the other side. The hourglass drummer plays the Bo Diddley rhythm for three hours.

The shaman dances in her white cloths & waves paper cut pong-pongs. She strips off some of her cloths & is connected by string to the hourglass drum. There is no spirit to capture on the other side & send off into the sky.

Jamie's room is now filled with the sound of a silent piano looking at Blue Monk sheet music. Will Jamie come to say good-bye & play one last solo from the other side? Sent back through the mirror. A Blue Monk solo that we can never hear. We will not ask who turned the piano on.

But Carol says that he will not come back.

Salish songs & drumming have shown him the path to the other side. An eagle skull whistle has shown him the way. He has already turned on the horizon, looked at us & waved goodbye.

Burrard Inlet is a mirror. What is on the other side?

Tormented birds are lights that lead the path to the other side.

Jamie sits in a place called xway. A mask that we will never know.

# words are different makers

*Lary Bremner*

*“i needed to talk i needed to talk it slipped out of me like  
an animal from its burrow” —Gerry Gilbert*

\*

I half-knew it all along, you would be in my notes  
unrecognizable until gone.

By your leave, I’m going to get more & more  
*inconsequential* here,

thinking in the space you always made  
available. Circumstances

co-exist; nobody is glorious, but everyone  
is transformed. My notebook falls

from the misnomer that is Siwash  
Rock. The earth &

its outbursts & the ones who ran  
out of time. We who

remain / retrieve Pacific flotsam,  
athermos of dead leaves, *or*

the boughs bent backwards by what  
the wind resembles, *or*

memoir scars of low trapeze, the dis-  
orderly world in self-erasure, *or*

the moon goes behind the clouds, torn  
uneven as the *biwa* plays on.

\*

I noticed some things. From the soup bowl you took in first  
the aroma, then the taste; from the book sought impossible

possible, no utopian powders. This could be a transcript of  
a Rusty Gull conversation, circa 2012, could be the phrasal

trowels of the effortless cat, or dozing off to summer reading  
somewhere around page 136, the words as actors pretending

to be drunk & to be falling off the stage, old wine in new  
bottlenecks, words without supervision or irony. Most of



the content just had to go, in favor of directions in every direction that continue to count every breath since birth.

What you did & what you thought about was who you were. I'll dispense with the elegiac enhancements: the real enough comes

flooding in & what is going to happen next always does: the silver dollars hidden in the family piano (Leybach, 1930); the imprint of

North Shore mountains that turn all art to dust. Living with this living condition, giving it all up to start again. The much too late for nothing.

\*

Words are different  
makers, they scan down the gutter of  
the page picking up cues, each an orthodoxy in corduroy, each  
a telling apart. Words

stand on their own  
quaking ground, measuring the relative ratio of despair to  
joy, measuring the voice-over that knows the difference between  
the weather & the weather report. There

is no thesis to the birth of  
meaning but what utterly unfolds. Words will with-  
draw their claim, die like all of us, & poetry will one day no longer  
serve to illustrate your argument. Jamie's

words were a someone with whom I could  
share a draft, trusting they would not just let the holograms  
*fight it out for us* in the unsteady claustrophobic  
stream of being. Words as

write first, ask answers later. Thinking-  
back memory builds advances, drops the thread of its own  
self-entitled logic & every day becomes another & an-  
other historical inaccuracy.

\*

I'm for antipoesia at the mic check one check  
hinged wisdom & academia undone

I'm for curbing greed by getting older  
no structure underneath to `fall

back on' (as they say about  
a career in teaching) I'm for

audible sugar tongs, the anonymous  
rendition version of things so far

I'm for the more people know about it  
the more lips brush lips

I'm for only as many details as prove  
irrelevant

I'm for what you already know is not  
of or among them

I'm for one way is to read the book back-  
wards & wait for revelation

I'm for the poem on the edge  
of collapse

I'm for the outskirts of town where  
the wild berries grow

I'm for setting sail for the precipice of  
reading it out loud

I'm for word-boats as they  
limp out of harbour

I'm for their starboard listing  
imperatives

I'm for ensure the welfare of &  
offer passage to

I'm for pass leaflets out &  
divert the course

I'm for giving testimony while  
nailing the joke

I'm for summering in the winter  
that speaks your mind

I'm for be out of formation &  
want for nothing more

I'm for spread the word &  
sweep the warehouse

I'm for get yourself fed &  
add molasses

I'm for polish the utensils &  
get on the good foot



I'm for organize the wake &  
address the assembled

I'm for give over to the writing &  
be on your way

\*

Each morning takes all morning  
to form the voices

from Thelonius partials to out-  
stretched parcels, to

ships as shape, all mountain behind,  
transfixed as we are by

the local, that sky, those figures of  
synesthaesia, the real more

real because between a circular  
drone & rake scrape awake.

Dream residue details a bust of Bach  
sporting Glenn Gould's hat,

a delicious swoon, the face of Ayaka  
Tomoda hovering like tactile

mist, one line fading from the other side:  
*First roads will always follow*

*the course of the river.* At the material  
juncture, old truths, eyes

that widen in the darkness & day, to say  
the poem is & now underway.

\*

You no longer have no use for any of this I do.  
For my time left, Jamie, I'm just going to write

anything that moves, slip the house of How Much,  
begin in concentric effects of support & dismissal,

use the distinctions at hand to find my way around.  
Intellection just narratises the sought-after cohesion

with a thesaurated anecdote intoned in atwood hue  
(light the cantos, read the candles, wax in the pulsar

palimpsest & collect your *book de prix*). Poetry:  
dimwit of the hours, empty-handed messenger.

The try & fail exhale, the re-gathering-in to feed  
the holes with melon-wheels of purpose. When

Gerry died, I thought he was transmitting lines to me  
months afterward. When Peter, songs. Impulse turns

out not to be answer but a vanity, a close-captioned  
October, all out at the knees, all breathing its breath.

\*

clear    cold    water    words  
on & down                    the page  
I    understand    I    clearly  
don't            know    nothin'  
poetry:                    the departed  
the            flow            of  
rainwater   straight   into   the  
open    eye of the    mouth

\*



Jamie's gone. Poetry says this is  
the fissured underscore of the smudged document, hear  
the brushstrokes & incisions doing mud  
to mathematical, hear the

serpentine oud, bazouki riff  
recording stone, dim rattle of underwater bones & the  
intermingling aural translucence. Poetry knows  
consciousness a jump-cut

in panorama, a zero artifice, the feint of  
everything an action. Virtuosity puts its wrong foot forward, like a  
stick figure impersonating a likeness in transpirations of  
phrasal cave. Poetry says, we are the

surface beauty of an unwanted truth, remembering  
things forward, the wind thumbing through the last pages of  
what our ancestors must have meant by every  
dreaming waking moment.

\*

# An Instrument of Labour

*Wayde Compton*

forms a mutual exchange. Their  
instrument of circulation,

an instrument for securing,

is precisely a mistake during  
a panic. An instrument

for obtaining some similar means

buys an advance, coincides, is  
commanded, can  
accumulate  
gold.

Between dealer and dealer,

is the instrument.

*For Jamie Reid, from Capital*

# Observer Effect (for Jamie)

*Kim Goldberg*

It's 5:00 a.m. and I haven't slept a wink. Might as well get up, make a cup of tea and walk down to the harbour to watch the sun come up through the gap between Newcastle and Protection islands. The crab dock is empty. As I wander out to the end, I see yellow polypropylene ropes lashed to the dock and disappearing into dark water. The ropes are securing crab traps suspended beneath the blackness. Whether the traps contain crabs is a question for Schrödinger's cat. The only way to know is to haul up the traps, which changes everything.

the line cleaving life  
from non-life—a string of bubbles  
in the sea

As I walk along the dock, the pre-dawn light reveals messages scrawled in jiffy marker on every bench:

*I miss you C-10*  
*Tell me you understand*  
*C-10, C-10, C-10*  
*I still love you C-10*  
*Please forgive me*

Crab-10 perhaps? Did an unlucky fisherman fall in love with one of his salty charges? The crab doomed in the fisherman's world, the fisherman doomed in the crab's, neither able to let go until a pincer intervened, the fisherman now begging for a second chance at unity? Or perhaps Schrödinger himself was here, and the scientist's detachment finally gave way to the heart's compassion on the tenth cat.

undetectable:  
the web on which a spider  
walks across the sky

\* \* \*

*I chose to dedicate this haibun to Jamie partly because Schroedinger's Cat is the name of his blog and poetry ezine. But also because of Jamie's sense of humour (which I think a lot of people never recognized) and his compassion for all living things. He was a very sweet and humble person. In February 2010, Jamie and I and Catherine Owen and Rhonda Ganz all roomed together in a guesthouse on Galiano Island while attending and reading at the inaugural Galiano Literary Festival. Every morning before it was light, Jamie would get up while the rest of us were sleeping and hike down the hill to the Sturdies Bay Bakery and buy all of us these huge, freshly baked blueberry scones, which were incredibly delicious. I don't think any of us ever offered to reimburse him. (We were such pampered shits!) But he never said a word. He just proceeded to do his good deed every morning while we all slept in.*

# Poem for Jamie Reid

*Catherine Owen*

If this is a fake poem, it contains real feelings  
(for Jamie, of course)

Wish I was writing a real poem  
about your fake death

& not this putting together of words  
to reach towards a true loss—

the way you were so often present—

the only one of the older poets in Vancouver  
to be a consistent ass-in-chair at events—

and there too as rant & lens & diamond

& the jazz of it all, glowing beyond  
the ego, giving the utter for art, always.

Read at Jamie's Celebration of Life, August 9, 2015



# Jamie Reid's "Homage to Paul Éluard"

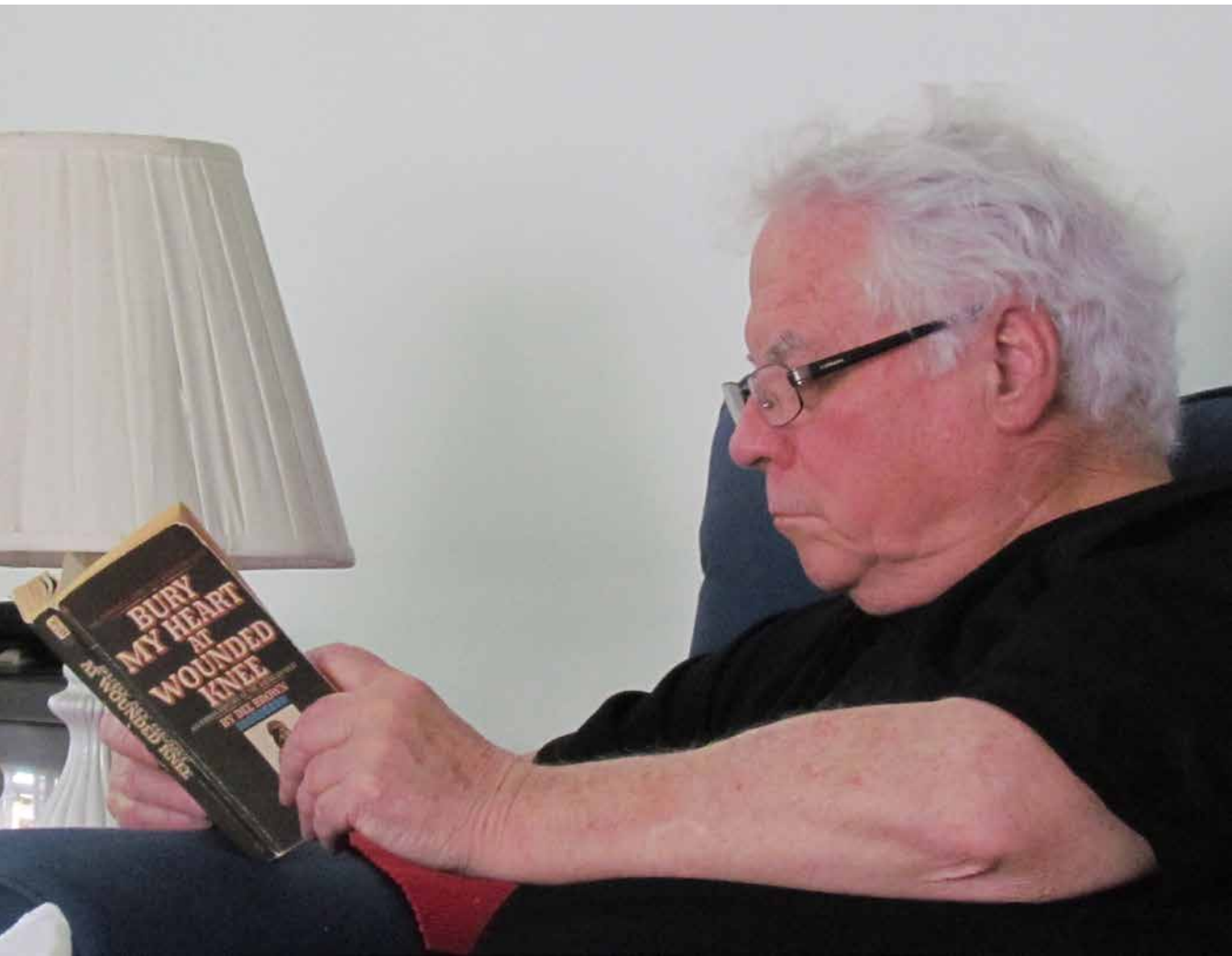
*Chris Turnbull*



Jamie's 60th, Bourbon Street Pub, Vancouver, 2001  
Back row: George Bowering, Chris Turnbull, Mark Forbes  
Front row: unknown, Jamie Reid, George Stanley, Willy Trump



Reading for Lunch Poems at SFU, Vancouver, November 2012  
Photo by Carol Reid



Jamie on the afternoon of June 25, 2015, at his home in North Vancouver, BC, hours before his sudden death. Reading *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* by Dee Brown. Last picture ever taken of him. Photo by Carol Reid.

# Last Day for Jamie

*Carol Reid*

Jamie's sudden death was totally unexpected and a devastating shock to our community of family and friends. I would like everyone to know that his last day, June 25, was an amazing day of healing, happiness, vibrancy and creative energy.

Early in May, Jamie and I had taken a rare vacation together to New York City and Montreal. The morning after our return, on May 14, he developed a vicious and rapidly spreading staph infection in his right leg and was admitted for treatment to Lions Gate Hospital. After weeks of struggle and uncertainty, he was back home and by mid-June it was finally clear that he had beaten the cellulitis infection and was almost entirely healed of it.

Many friends wrote to him and encouraged him during his recovery, and he was buoyed up by the outpouring of affection and support. He thanked everyone—his friends, his nurses, and me—and was looking forward to getting out and reconnecting. He was planning to attend George Bowering's book launch on June 27 at the Commercial Street Café; and today, August 9, he was scheduled to read at the Hazelwood Writers Festival in Ladysmith.

On June 25, the day he died, he was up early as usual, mobile, and out for a morning walk. He was able to go downstairs to his studio for the first time, play his beloved keyboards, and get back on his computer. In the morning, he prepared to send off two manuscripts for publication, including *Fake Poems*, *Homages*, and other writings.



He saved the emails as a draft, as was his habit, just in case there was something he hadn't considered, or there was something he wanted to add. His plan was to send the manuscripts off later that day.

At 10:42 am, he made his last post to Facebook, a poem by Margaret Atwood entitled "The Poets Hang On." He wrote on his timeline: "The poets have it right this time for sure."

In the early afternoon, after nearly a month of barely eating anything, and having lost 30 pounds, he was ready for lunch on the porch and asked for fresh peaches. When I told him there wouldn't be any Okanagan peaches until August, he settled on cherries, camembert, and wine. It was a gloriously warm and sunny day—a "shorts" day, as he called them.

By lucky chance, I took several pictures of him, one eating lunch and drinking wine in the shade of the porch—bright, fresh and happy; and one shortly afterward in the living room, leg up and dutifully resting, reading a copy of *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, which his friend Lary Bremner had brought to him when he was still in the hospital. Just days before, he had told Lary about the writing project he was mulling over, a big, long, "Olsonite, composite, truth and reconciliation poem... a *book* maybe," he said.

...and he told me he had a new book of childhood memories he wanted to write, recollections of his family in his very early life—wonderful and funny stories which I had begged him to finish for years.

Sometime in mid-afternoon, he retired downstairs to his room, and I to mine. We each rested, and I only found him when I called him for

dinner at the customary time—6 o'clock—and he didn't answer. He had fallen from his chair, collapsed to the floor and was unresponsive. It is likely that he suffered a sudden heart attack, possibly weakened by the ravages of the cellulitis infection he had been fighting for six weeks.

The chaos of his sudden death shot through the happiness of his last day, but it did not destroy it. On the contrary, the love and vibrant energy remained contained within him, and immediately flowed out to touch everyone who knew and admired him.

I would like to thank the entire community for the outpouring of love for Jamie and for me and for the family, and for their appreciation of his life, his spirit, his art and his work. It has cushioned us and let us get our bearings.

Jamie was passionate for ideas, for truth, and for justice; and unafraid to speak and act; but he had the soul of the poet and could see into the heart of things and show it back to us. He was your community and you his, and because of this he will be remembered and treasured, and you will carry him with you always. Blessings to you all.



Lunch of cherries, wine, and Camembert, hours before Jamie's death, June 25, 2015  
Photo by Carol Reid



Site of Jamie's future memorial bench, Stanley Park Seawall, c. 2014  
Photo by Carol Reid

# from *West Broadway*

*George Stanley*

3

A girl runs—dashes—across Broadway  
to the north side & hardly slowing down rushes to embrace  
the boy waiting for her (who watched her coming  
all the way) & they kiss

& I look again,  
thinking, is he that cute? No, I decide, he's not,  
but as they move towards the open door  
of the 99, together, I concede—he is unique.

Ten minutes later, I get off the 99  
in front of Safeway and a woman coming toward me  
jerks her face downward oddly,  
& then does it again, and I see  
it's compulsive.

Time paused twice,  
once for the girl & boy, once for the woman & me.

\*



Alive (alone)  
in time

like when you brush your finger  
over your eyebrow you can feel  
the thin hairs & the thick hairs

of the days

\*

‘We can despair of the meaning of life in general, but not of the particular forms that it takes.’ —Albert Camus

\*

Sprawled—heavy, fiftyish—on the sidewalk—dark hair, dark complexion—& breathing stertorously—bike leaning—bent—on a tree. Does anyone have a cell? Do you have a cell? No. Do you have a cell? No.

Pulpfiction. But the door is open & the clerk is already on her cell—‘Looks like he fell off his bike. Intoxicated’ (to the cops). Relieved she’s called, I go back to the bus shelter & say to a woman standing there, her coat buttoned up, ‘The clerk in Pulpfiction called 911,’ & she says:

‘I DON’T CARE ABOUT HIM! and (not exactly her words)  
‘if the police are *wasting* their time on *him* there might be some other  
*family*, something happening at their *house*, they wouldn’t get to.’  
Furious.

The Fire Medic car & a cop car pull up right away.

\*

‘What do we know but that we face  
One another in this place?’ —Yeats

\*

13 January 2015

2:45 p.m.

SW corner, Broadway & Yew

Man on cell (loud):

‘Benny! My cancer’s gone!’

\*

## The Recovery of Innocence

We're in an audience. A young man up front is reading something, probably a poem.

The boy I'm with (we're together, but he's sitting in front of me) turns around. He's a dark, animated boy. I desire him, and he knows it, but we're just friends. Referring to the young man reading, he says, 'He said you didn't even look at him.'

Then he says, 'I'd like to have a covenant with my father.' In my mind I frame the question, 'Who would you make the covenant with?' then think the word, 'Devil.'

Then we're kissing. Our mouths barely open, lips pressed gently against each other. I feel the tip of my tongue almost touching his lips. This goes on. The kiss lasts. (And I also seem to see my own face, still, serious, moved.)

It's the recovery of innocence.

A gift.

\*

‘The things worth writing about, and the things worth reading about, are the things that feel almost beyond description at the start, and are, because of that, frightening.’

—Douglas Coupland, *Shopping in Jail*

\*

## Love

J., a young Chinese-Canadian man standing by me at the bar. A clearly intoxicated man approaches, says, as if to no one, ‘What’s happening in Chinatown?’

‘What did he say?’ J. asks. I repeat the man’s words. ‘That’s racism.’ ‘It’s also a geographical location,’ I reply (knowing this is bullshit even as I say it). ‘Yeah, but with me standing here,’ J. says, and leaves the bar.

The man now moves closer sidling up to me. In an unnecessarily loud voice, he says: ‘Where you from?’ ‘San Francisco.’ ‘I’m from Ireland. I’ve been to San Francisco.’ ‘I’ve been to Ireland.’ ‘How d’you like Vancouver?’ ‘Don’t ask me any more questions,’ I say. ‘How’re we gonna have a conversation if I can’t ask you questions?’ ‘We aren’t going to have a conversation.’ ‘Oh’ (offended). The man leaves.

J. comes back. I beckon him over. ‘It was racism.’ ‘I know.’

I was listening to an interview on *BC Almanac* with Chief Joe Alphonse of the Tsilqot’in First Nation. Duncan McHugh asked Chief Alphonse about implications of the recent Tsilqot’in Aboriginal Title decision (of the Supreme Court of Canada). He referred in particular to the residual right of Federal and Provincial governments to infringe on Aboriginal Title ‘in exceptional circumstances.’ A caller-in pointed out that the BC government had apparently started work on the Site C dam project on the Peace River—that would flood the valley—heedless of First Nations’ claims. McHugh commented that the Aboriginal ‘right to choose’ stated in the decision ‘wasn’t much of a veto,’ to which Chief Alphonse assented.

Then Renee phoned to tell me Jamie had died.

Racism, environmental destruction, death. Occasions of love.

\*



## Muse

*after Akhmatova*

When, nightlong, I await her arrival.  
Life, it seems, is scarcely bearable.  
What is acclaim, what youth, what freedom,  
next to her sweet presence, flute in hand?

She's here already! Drawing aside her veil  
with an attentive mien she regards me.  
I say to her: 'Did you dictate to Dante  
pages of Hell?' She answers, 'It was I.'

1924



Jamie Reid, *Self-Portrait*



Mind your head, Jamie said  
Mind your head, Schwitters said  
Mind your head, Mao said  
Mind your head, Dada said  
Mind your head, Dylan said  
Mind your head, Auschwitz said  
Mind your head, Pablo said  
Mind your head, Creeley said  
Mind your head, Newlove said  
Mind your head, MacLatt said  
Mind your head, Dudek said  
Mind your head, Al Neil said  
Mind your head, Blaser said  
Mind your head, Ali said  
Mind your head, Cohen said  
Mind your head, de Beauvoir said  
Mind your head, Gail said  
Mind your head, Richter said  
Mind your head, Marden said  
Mind your head, Lester said  
Mind your head, Duchamp said  
Mind your head, Jamie said

Pierre Coupey, *Personae & Shadows, for Jamie Reid*  
Archival inkjet print, 2011

# For Jamie

*Karl Siegler*

When Jamie Reid died last summer, he left behind a priceless gift which, of course, was always his way—he never walked through anyone’s house without leaving something of value behind. When Jamie returned to spirit, as Leonard George described his passing at the time, loaded up in the drafts folder of his email outbox was a three-part book proposal: a reprint of his playfully irreverent “Homages” previously released in a limited edition by Pooka Press; one of the finest unpublished series of 21 poems ever written in the English language that he called his “Fake Poems”; and a collection of reminiscences, tales and decoded mysteries about the rise of the counterculture movement in Vancouver of such profound insight that no historian could ever hope to be able to convey that era with a greater degree of either objectivity or understanding—even anyone else who had lived those days with Jamie—so generously free of bias and self-interest, so sharp and clear, was his understanding of those who had walked the path of his life with him. It is such a privilege to now be spending my days working on a book of such genius, getting it ready for publication by Anvil Press in 2017. What a delightful uplifting revelation that will be for us all!

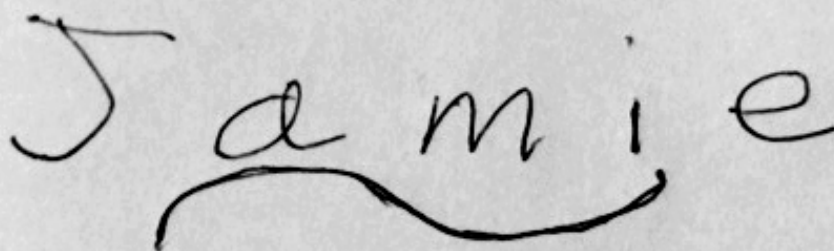


Jamie Reid, August 25, 2014  
Photo by Gabor Gasztonyi  
[www.gaborphotography.com](http://www.gaborphotography.com)



# Friend

*Renee Rodin*

A black and white photograph of a piece of white paper with the name 'Jamie' written in cursive. The paper is slightly wrinkled and has a dark shadow on the left side. The name 'Jamie' is written in a fluid, handwritten style, with a long horizontal flourish under the 'a' and 'm'.



James Douglas Reid, *Mt. Assiniboine and Lake Magog* (detail), canvas embroidery, date unknown





# Contributors

**Joanne Arnott:** When I received the call from Carol Reid, letting me know that Jamie had died, I was utterly stunned. I set down the phone and lay down my head, and began sobbing. Within a very few minutes, all of my kids who were home had gathered around. He was my best friend. I met Jamie online, via John Barlow's riverspine and whalesnail (poetry groups). He invited me into his home, and for a few years facilitated my transition from a poet who hides out at home to a poet who goes out and experiences the full dimensions of a poetry community. I called him my mama duck, as I felt like a duckling, imprinted on him as a safe figure in a kaleidoscopic environment, literally following him about. Jamie features in my latest book, *Halfling Spring*, identified by his online moniker dadababy. He was one of the readers for that collection, and generously provided a blurb for the back cover.

## bill bissett

met jamie reid shortlee aftr th  
beginning uv time  
jamie n his partnr carol who was  
also sew xcellent livd a few doors  
above on yew st th 1600 block n  
knew them continuing in 2 th 60s  
whn jamie n carol launchd th first  
be- in in stanlee park an awsum n massiv adventur that continued  
thru time  
they went away 4 a whil twice n  
returning i wud visit them in north  
vancouvr we had manee frends in  
common jamie n carol wud always talk with evreehun carol still duz  
shes awsum n sew is jamie i miss  
him he is awsum

**George Bowering:** I met Jamie Reid in 1960, and in 1961 we were two of the five editors who started a poetry newsletter called *TISH*. We remained friends for 55 years, through all my moves and all his moves.

**Lary Bremner** is a North Vancouver poet who first met Jamie Reid in the mid-80s while working as an operator for Gerry Gilbert's CO-OP Radio program "radiofreerainforest." When I returned from Japan in 2011, Jamie had a great deal to do with reintroducing me to the writing scene in Vancouver, and we became close friends and neighbours.

**Ted Byrne** was born in Hamilton Ontario and has lived in Vancouver since the late sixties. He was a member of the Kootenay School of Writing collective in the nineties and beyond, and worked briefly with Jamie in that scene, as well as on the organizing committee of the conference "Recovery of the Public World" (the "Blaser Conference") in 1995.

**Wayde Compton's** latest book, *The Outer Harbour*, won the City of Vancouver Book Award. He also recently edited the poetry anthology *The Revolving City* with Renée Sarojini Saklikar. He is the associate director of Creative Writing in Continuing Studies at Simon Fraser University, where he administers the Writer's Studio.

**Pierre Coupey** was the founding Editor of *The Capilano Review* and currently serves on the Capilano Review Contemporary Arts Society board. He exhibits nationally and internationally, and his work is in numerous private, corporate, and public collections. Gallery Jones in Vancouver and Odon Wagner Contemporary in Toronto represent his work. He met Jamie when he first arrived in Vancouver in 1965, and continues to be in awe of his fierce passions and intelligence. Which live on.

**Frank Davey** was—with Jamie Reid—one of the founders of the *TISH* poetry newsletter in 1961, and was its managing editor 1961-63. He edited Talonbooks' collected *TISH* No. 1-19 in 1975 and published with ECW the memoir *When TISH Happens* in 2011. His most recent poetry publication



is *Poems Suitable to Current Material Conditions*, from Mansfield in 2014. See also the Frank Davey Blog: <http://www.londonpoetryopenmic.com/frank-davey-blog>.

**Patrick Friesen** lives in Victoria. He has published more than a dozen books of poetry, a book of essays and, with P. K. Brask, co-translations of several Danish poets. Friesen has also written stage and radio plays, text for dance, and has recorded two CDs of spoken word and improv music with Marilyn Lerner. His play, *The Shunning*, was produced by the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre in 2011. Friesen's most recent book is a long poem called *a short history of crazy bone* (Mother Tongue Publishing, 2015). He knew Jamie as a poet and literary theorist and organizer before becoming his brother-in-law.

**Dwight Gardiner:** In 1976 Gerry Gilbert and I brought Jamie out to read at the Monday Night Poetry Series at the Western Front. Jamie stayed around for a few months and Carol came out to join him. Then they disappeared out east and by the time they got back, I had mostly disappeared from the poetry scene. In the early 2000s, I was living in a small shack on the Seymour River and ran into Jamie at the pool. We sat outside his house all night listening to Piano Night from New Orleans and neighbours commented on our beautiful laughter. Another night, he sat on my balcony and we watched the sun go down and the changing lights off Burrard Inlet. For the fireworks, I put on the radio broadcast and they were playing big band swing. Jamie kept saying "Dwight are you sure you've got the right station?" I should have put on some Sun Ra. It always struck me that through entirely different routes we both had made deep connections with the first nations world. He was in the midst of reading *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* when he left us. His loss affected me deeply and left a big hole. As I look across the Inlet at Stanley Park, he is still with me.

**Kim Goldberg** is the author of seven books of poetry and non-fiction, including *Undetectable*, her haibun poetry travel diary through Hepatitis C and its cure. She is a winner of the Rannu Fund Poetry Prize for Speculative

Literature. Her poetry and prose have appeared in *Geist*, *Literary Review of Canada*, *West Coast Line*, *The Capilano Review* and elsewhere. She lives on Vancouver Island and online at [www.PigSquashPress.com](http://www.PigSquashPress.com).

**Maria** (then known as Gladys) **Hindmarch** met Jamie in 1960 before *TISH* existed and got to know him at Writers' Workshop meetings attended by George Bowering, Frank Davey, Lionel Kearns, Daphne Buckle now Marlatt, Carol Johnson the later Bolt, Bobby Hogg, David Cull, David Dawson, many others etc. She loved Jamie's intense eyes, his way of jumping into discussions and holding ground, and the variable rhythms he created in his work. Jamie's eyes never let go until an argument was over. In 1964, when Carol and Jamie were about to be married, they asked Gladys "to stand up for us" and she happily did so—in a tiny office next to Vancouver's VD clinic at Vancouver General Hospital.

**reg johanson**: I met Jamie Reid in the mid-90s. He was one of a circle of writers who met most Fridays in the pub. Together we published a zine called *Tads* through the late 90s. He was one of the people I expected to see at any poetry event, with a glass of red wine and stepping out for a cigarette.

**Eve Joseph** is Jamie's sister-in-law. She was fortunate to have known him for over 50 years. Her two books of poetry, *The Startled Heart* (Oolichan, 2004) and *The Secret Signature of Things* (Brick, 2010) were both nominated for the Dorothy Livesay Award. Her nonfiction book, *In the Slender Margin* was published by HarperCollins in 2014 and won the Hubert Evans award for nonfiction. The book was named one of the top 100 picks of the year by the Globe and Mail.

**Lionel Kearns** is a Vancouver writer whose friendship with Jamie Reid goes back to the early 1960s. Kearns' latest publication is *La Leyenda de Silvery McLune*, a bilingual selection of his early poems edited and translated by Javier Raya and published by El Centro de Cultura Digital, Mexico D.F. A free copy (either PDF or interactive ePub) can be downloaded [here](#).

**Daphne Marlatt** first met Jamie Reid as one of the *TISH* poets in the early 1960s. She appreciated his wry sense of humour, admired his passion for poetry and social justice, and received generous critiques of a few of her earliest poems from him. He remained a strong political activist and poetry networker when he came back to Vancouver—a voice we always needed.

**Paul Nelson** is a poet, interviewer, essayist. He founded SPLAB & the Cascadia Poetry Festival & wrote *American Sentences* (2015), *A Time Before Slaughter* and books of essays on poetics. He was co-editor of *Make It True: Poetry From Cascadia*, the first anthology of Cascadia poetry and one of the last places where Jamie Reid published work.

**Catherine Owen** is a writer who lives in New Westminster, BC, the author of twelve collections including the most recent compilation of interviews with Canadian poets called *The Other 23 and a Half Hours or Everything you Wanted to Know that your MFA didn't Teach You* (Wolsak & Wynn, 2015). She met Jamie Reid in the mid-90s when he performed at one of the series she co-ran and they continued to stay in touch, he being a vital supporter of her work, attending her readings in Vancouver and performing with her at the inaugural Galiano Writer's Festival in 2010 where he gallantly went out each morning to purchase scones for the other writers staying with him. His words, his photos and his presence are immoderately missed.

**Carol Reid:** I first met Jamie in 1962 at UBC when I was 18 years old. We independently frequented the Arts Auditorium Cafeteria, where many would-be artists, writers, philosophers, and other free-thinkers came for coffee and the famous UBC cinnamon buns. He caught my eye, I caught his, and so began a lifetime of adventures and an unbreakable friendship. We moved in together in the spring of 1963 and married in January of 1964. From the moment I met him until the day he died, Jamie captivated my imagination and my heart. I never lost interest in his keen intelligence, kind generosity, and beauty as a poet.

In that sense, his spirit will always be present.

**Renee Rodin:** Long before Jamie and his wife, the artist Carol Reid, returned to the West Coast, I'd heard lots of stories about his incredible *joie de vivre*, his intense social consciousness, and that he was a brilliant poet. After we met in the late '80s at my bookstore R2B2, where Jamie gave a riveting reading, I discovered that all the stories about him were true. And then some. Jamie quickly became a vital part of our community of writers, artists, and activists. He contributed and he supported. Big time. I miss him. His rock solid presence.

**Rhoda Rosenfeld:** I grew up in Montreal during the era of La Noirceur and came of age with the Quiet Revolution. Formed in Montreal, I was transformed by meeting artists and poets who came from the west in the mid 60s. In the summer of '68, I came to live in Vancouver. I met Jamie sometime in the 90s and will remember him especially for his rare ancient manners of respect and kindness. Years earlier, I copied a poem of his into a notebook now packed deeply into a cardboard box buried deeply under another cardboard box. The last line of the poem reads: "this is no time for cracking up." Except only in laughter with you, dear Jamie.

**Joe Rosenblatt** was born in Toronto in 1933. Rosenblatt has written more than 20 books of poetry, several autobiographical works and his poems have appeared in over thirty anthologies of Canadian poetry over his forty year career as a poet. His poetry books have received major awards, such as the Governor General's award for poetry in 1976 and the BC Book Prize in 1986. He first met Jamie Reid in 1966 in Vancouver, but it wasn't until the late seventies that Rosenblatt connected with Jamie, and carried on a discourse on poetry usually at the Railway Club in Toronto, a shared watering hole.

**Karl Siegler:** The former publisher at Talonbooks, Karl Siegler is currently a freelance writer, translator, and cultural policy advocate/consultant. A charter student of SFU, where he earned a BA (Hons), MA, and a Distinguished Alumni Award for Arts and Cultural Achievement, he is currently an Associate of its Centre for the Humanities. He was inducted into the Order of Canada in 2014.

**Gregg Simpson:** Jamie and I met in Kitsilano in 1965 through Al Neil, with whom I was playing drums. We collaborated as early as 1966 doing poetry and jazz concerts. In the early 1990s we again collaborated doing live recordings of Jamie reading from *Prez* with jazz trio accompaniment. Our final collaboration was on *Quest for the Mad Boy* for which I supplied a number of collages. His appreciation of Dada and Surrealism also led him to do a review of my photographic study, *Classic Mode*, for which he wrote a penetrating essay. Jamie's influence has always been strong in my life and I highly value working together on those projects.

**Colin Smith's** latest is *Multiple Bippies* (CUE Books, 2014). He lives now in Winnipeg (Broken Treaty One Territory), where he tries to walk gently. During the Eighties and Nineties, he was a clumsy yet valiant acolyte for the Kootenay School of Writing in Vancouver (Occupied Coast Salish Territory). It was in those times that he became a casual pal and consistent admirer of Jamie Reid.

**George Stanley's** most recent book of poetry is *North of California St.: Selected Poems 1975-1999* (New Star, 2014). He is a co-editor of *Make It True: Poetry from Cascadia* (Leaf Press, 2015), and has recently read at Cascadia poetry events in Nanaimo, Vancouver, and Seattle.

**Sharon Thesen** is a BC-based poet and contributing editor of *TCR*. She knew Jamie since the late 60s, seeing him mostly at poetry readings, talks, parties, and gatherings in Vancouver. Her books of poetry from House of Anansi Press include *Oyama Pink Shale*, *The Good Bacteria*, and *A Pair of Scissors*. A Talonbooks selected poems, *News & Smoke*, was published in 2001. She is the editor, with Ralph Maud, of *Charles Olson and Frances Boldereff: A Modern Correspondence* (Wesleyan) and *After Completion: The Later Letters* (Talonbooks). Sharon Thesen currently lives in the Okanagan where she is Professor Emeritus of Creative Writing at UBC Okanagan.

**Chris Turnbull** lives near Ottawa, Ontario. Recent books include *continua* (Chaudiere Books, 2015) and *[ untitled ] in o w n* (CUE Books, 2015),



alongside work by Heather Hermant and angela rawlings, respectively. She met Jamie in Vancouver in the 1990's, and kept in touch with both Jamie and Carol when she moved to Ontario. Jamie contributed "Homage to Paul Éluard" to her *footpress, rout/e*, in 2011, intrigued by what might happen to it over time in the outdoors. The poem disappeared in 2014. In that same year, Jamie sent her another poem, "Fake Poem 4," which she planted in fall 2015. He influenced her in uncountable ways. He thought deeply—deliberated—continuously, returning, reconsidering, open to elements of the inconclusive. And out of that came gems of poetry and a very generous form of engagement. And when Jamie laughed, how could you not see the humour he saw?

**Fred Wah**'s recent collections of poetry are *Scree: The Collected Earlier Poems 1962-1991* (2015), *Sentenced to Light* (2008), and *is a door* (2009). An anthology of contemporary poetry and poetic practice, *Toward. Some. Air.* (co-edited with Amy De'Ath) was released in 2015. Fred worked on the journal *TISH* with Jamie in the early 80s at UBC where they were both part of the ongoing discussions on poetry at the Tallman house on 37th. They met again, in Vancouver, in the late 90s and continued to share an interest in poetry readings and publishing events.

