

UC San Diego Libraries Acquire Letters of Pulitzer Prize-Winning Beat Poet Gary Snyder

New Cache Builds on Archive for New Poetry, One of Nation's Premier Post-War Poetry Collections

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Dolores Davies

The University of California, San Diego Libraries have acquired a collection of the letters of Gary Snyder, the Pulitzer Prize-winning poet who began writing in the 1950s as one of the writers of the Beat Generation. Snyder, 78, who currently resides in the Bay area, was also just recently named as the 2008 recipient of the \$100,000 Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize, the highest prize given in the field of poetry .

The Snyder letters, which add to the UC San Diego Libraries Mandeville Special Collections' nationally-renowned Archive for New Poetry, comprise personal correspondence between Snyder and Shandel Parks, a founder of San Francisco's Louvre Gallery and the American Academy of Asian Studies. Parks and Snyder were friends who shared an interest in Zen Buddhism as well as a set of like-minded friends, including Alan Watts, Philip Whalen, Kenneth Rexroth, and Shunryo Suzuki. Parks introduced Snyder to Kenneth Rexroth, a poet and scholar who was a major influence on the poet. In his latest collection of poetry, Snyder dedicated two poems to Parks.

"The Snyder papers will complement a number of single-author collections in the Library, including those by the poet's publisher, Donald Allen, and his colleagues, Joanne Kyger, Lew Welch, Paul Blackburn, Clayton Eshleman, and Jerome Rothenberg (UC San Diego Emeritus professor of Literature)," said Robert Melton, curator of the Archive for New Poetry.

According to UC San Diego Literature Professor Michael Davidson, a well-known authority on modern poetry, Snyder read his poetry at the legendary Six Gallery reading in San Francisco in 1955 and was associated with Beat Generation writers, including Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Philip Whalen, Michael McClure, and Lew Welch. A Zen Buddhist who has been described as the Henry David Thoreau of the Beat Movement, Snyder's papers reflect his love of the wilderness, which can be traced back to his childhood in the Pacific Northwest and subsequently, through his travels in Japan, China, and India. Snyder was immortalized as the mystical poet in the book, *Dharma Bums*, by the Beat writer Jack Kerouac, who was inspired by a mountain climbing outing Snyder led with some of the Beat writers in the Sierra Nevada mountains.

Snyder has published sixteen books of poetry and prose, including *Mountains and Rivers Without End* (1997); *No Nature: New and Selected Poems* (1993); *The Practice of the Wild* (1990); *Left Out in the Rain, New Poems 1947-1985*; and *Regarding Wave* (1970). He received the Pulitzer Prize for poetry for his book, *Turtle Island* (1974) and an American Book Award for *Axe Handles* (1983). He also translated the Chinese poet, Han-shan, (*Cold Mountain Poems*), and the Japanese poet, Miyazawa Kenji, and throughout his life, moved between Asia and the U.S. His long poetic series, *Myths and Texts*, fuses the cultures of Northwest Indian peoples with East Asian cultures and a working class environmental ethic. A professor emeritus of English at UC Davis, Snyder has been the recipient of numerous awards for his poetry, including an American Academy of Arts & Letters award, the Bollingen Prize, and the Robert Kirsch Lifetime Achievement Award from the *Los Angeles Times*. The bulk of his papers are housed at the UC Davis Library.

The UC San Diego Libraries' Archive for New Poetry is widely recognized as one of the most comprehensive research collections of American poetry in the nation, documenting alternative and experimental approaches to writing in the post-WWII era. The collection focuses on the "New American" poets, including the Black Mountain poets, the Objectivist Movement, the San Francisco Renaissance, the New York School, and the language writers. The Archive, which includes more than 35,000 volumes, 1,800 serial titles, over 700 poetry broadsides, and extensive manuscript holdings, was established in 1968 by UC San Diego Literature Professor Roy Harvey Pearce. Collections of personal papers in the Archive include those of Paul Blackburn, George and Mary Oppen, Charles Reznikoff, Susan Howe, Jackson Mac Low, Lyn Hejinian, and James Schuyler, among many others.

"The Archive for New Poetry, which supports intense research use by students, scholars, and writers throughout the world, has been noted for the unique materials in its holdings," said Davidson, who uses the Archive in his research and teaching. "In addition to monographs, anthologies, and works on criticism and interpretation, the Archive has substantial holdings of literary manuscripts and correspondence, publishers' and editors' archives, broadsides, sound recordings, 'little magazines,' ephemeral printings, artists' books, concrete poems, and serials," said Davidson.

With nearly 3.5 million print and digital resources in its collections, the UC San Diego Libraries are the largest academic library system south of Los Angeles. Comprising nine distinct libraries ranging from arts and oceanography to biomedicine and special collections, the UCSD Libraries rank in the top 25 U.S. public libraries among the members of the prestigious Association of Research Libraries.

Media Contact: Dolores Davies, UC San Diego Libraries, 858-534-0667



TIMBERLINE, OREGON

30 July - 1954

Dear Shandel
you will excuse my delinquency in writing
when I explain what has happened since I
left Saffron-cisco, to wit:

After a pleasant hitch-hike up the coast,
and an uneventful arrival at your place 51-



G.S. Snyder



Shandel parks
1756 Broadway
San Francisco, California



YEAR 'ROUND PLAYGROUND
IN MT. HOOD NATIONAL FOREST

A Berry Feast

I

coyote

Fur the colour of mud, the s
Crapulous old man, a drifter,
Praises! Of Coyote the Nasty
Puppy that abused himself, t
Bringer of goodies.

berries



In bearshit, you find it in
Neat pile on the fragrant tr
August, perhaps by a Larch-t
Bear has been eating the ber
high meadow, lat
Blackbear
eating berries,
To a woman whose breasts ble
From nursing the half-human

Somewhere of course there ar
Collecting and junking, gibb

coyote

"Where I shoot my arrows
"There is the sunflower's shade



"K'ak, k'ak

people

The Chains
Suburban b
Will waver
The madden



TSINGTAO BEER

30 TABLETS
for just relief from acid indigestion

ear here I nest
if my face
intersection,
the com.

We spell spell "spell"
from deadly da
and light in,
rest my perso
back black cl
the meaning o
that velvety
with no fear
of my incident

THE
NATIONAL THEATRE
M. 3
SEAT 23
1977
\$10.00
H
ROW
GOOD ONL
SUN. 2:00 P.
APRIL
URIS TH
MEZZANINE



SENECA JOURNAL
"The Serpent"

1

In Windsor Pierce's words
"a monster" (1937) must've been
200 ft in length
& 5 ft high
with horns
or others "just a huge horned serpent"
when the timber grew there
white men hadn't come
but lightning from all directions
struck that place

The Thunderers
because they hated snakes
were shouting
(their lightnings twisted like a snake
or maybe because of it) one heavy serpent
slid down the hill astride a log
while men shot arrows after it
floated as far as Tracy Run
there dug into the earth
& vanished
in the eddy called "deep water"
or "deep hole"
the place called

"where the snake slid down!"
all when the world was new

2

in denial of its beauty
the story so modified by time

themselves so beautiful
brought to a fullness
only time can tell
of how the girl poor orphan little loser
left to die on some lonely island
Sedna in the sea
abandoned
fingers turned seals upon the waves
like Jephtha's
daughter

two months in the woods
Iphigénia
crying from
her island
women forever left to die
in appeasement of the gods
the *beno* thunderers
out in the west
forgotten
in the later telling
that the snake appeared to her
Monster Horned Serpent love god
Djo-nih-gwa-donh

(said)
in danger of his life he'd carry her
seated on his back
her hands drawn in against
the flesh blue veins he bears the skin
of human lovers swollen
to the act of sex
will plunge into the lake
she ride astride him
where the head swells out
will whip him if he slackens
crying *ja-gonh!*
watching in the sky the west