

Poet Kenneth Rexroth to read and perform

March 3, 1978

Kenneth Rexroth, one of California's most distinguished poets and translators of poetry and a luminary of the "beat" movement of the 1950s, will read and perform with musicians at 8 p.m. Wednesday, March 8, in a free public program in Building C of the Student Center at the University of California, San Diego.

In his appearance at UC San Diego Rexroth will be accompanied by three performers on Japanese musical instruments, the koto, the sakahachi and the Japanese flute.

Rexroth is best known for his critical, poetic and journalistic works but he is also a gifted painter and has had one-man shows in Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Paris. Born in South Bend, Indiana, in 1905 and reared in Chicago, New York and various Midwestern towns, the poet studied at the Chicago Art Institute, the New York School for Social Research and the Art Students' League. Long identified with San Francisco and its poetry renaissance, he now lives in Santa Barbara where he is writer-in-residence at the University of California campus there.

In recognition of his lifetime achievement and his "New Poems" (New Directions, 1974), Rexroth received the \$10,000 Copernicus Award in 1975. The award, offered annually by the Academy of American Poets, which administers the prize, and by the Copernicus Society, which supports it, noted the poet's "precision and tenderness, qualities which also inform Rexroth's many poems of love."

Rexroth has contributed many translations of poems, in particular from Chinese and Japanese, among them the following: "100 Poems from the Chinese" and "100 Poems from the Japanese" (New Directions), "Poems from the Greek Anthology" (Michigan), translations of Lubicz-Milosz, Pierre Reverdy and of a number of contemporary Spanish poets.

New Directions published his "100 More Poems from the Japanese" in 1976 and this spring will publish a selection of poetry by Kazuko Shiraishi, edited and introduced by Rexroth and including his and others' translations from the Japanese.

Two collections of Rexroth's essays are also published by New Directions -- his "Bird in the Bush" (1959) and "Assays" (1961). "The Collected Shorter Poems of Kenneth Rexroth" (New Directions, 1967) brings together poetry from his earlier volumes, among them "The Art of Worldly Wisdom" (1930), "The Dragon and the Unicorn" (1952) and "Natural Numbers" (1964), as well as a group of new poems.

His articles have been published in many magazines in this country and abroad. He has written criticism for such publications as The London Times Literary Supplement and Art News and for many years has reviewed books for Pacifica Radio.

In addition to the Copernicus Award, Rexroth has won two Guggenheim Fellowships, two Commonwealth Medals, and grants and awards from a number of national and international poetry, arts and literary foundations and academies. He wrote the libretto for the San Francisco Ballet Company's "Original Sin," with music by John Lewis and choreography by Lew Christensen.

His UC San Diego performance is part of the New Poetry Series, cosponsored by the Departments of Literature and Visual Arts and the Office of University Events. Rexroth's visit is also being supported by the music committee of the events office. All poetry readings are taped and become a part of the Archive for New Poetry.

The Archive for New Poetry is located on the eighth floor of the Central University Library and is one of the Special Collections. It houses tapes, monographs and collections of poems by 20th-century authors. For information about the archive or about listening to tapes, telephone Michael Davidson, Special Collections, 452-2533.

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