

Tape: 21 (7 1/2)

CC 178

Side I Clayton Eshleman reading poetry on a tape sent to Blackburn from Tokyo, Feb., 1962.

1-115 Eshleman reads Blackburn.
115-200 Translations of Vallejo.
200-456 Translations of Neruda.
457-493 Two poems of Gary Snyder read by Eshleman.
495-end Eshleman reading his own work from the book, Mexico North.

Side II Eshleman continues to read; Harold Dicker reads and Paul Blackburn reads Dicker's poem.

1-188 Eshleman reading concludes.
188-end Dicker reading his poem, "Requiem for Three Dead." Blackburn reads it, too, and Dicker re-reads it. This may have been an attempt to improve Dicker's reading style with Blackburn demonstrating a better oral presentation.

AN INDEX TO THE PAUL BLACKBURN TAPE COLLECTION

The Paul Blackburn Tape Collection represents one of the great resources to modern literary history. The poet, Paul Blackburn (1926-1971) was, in addition to his talents as poet, translator and editor, a great supporter of an ongoing oral tradition in poetry. He organized and attended poetry readings in New York City during the fifties and sixties at St. Marks, Le Metro, Deux Megots, Max's Kansas City and other bars and clubs. He organized his own poetry radio show, "Contemporary Poetry" on WBAI in New York. And he collected tapes from his friends and from these readings throughout his life, maintaining what is now recognized as one of the largest oral history collections in the country.

At his death in 1971, UCSD purchased Paul Blackburn's entire Archive, including poetry manuscripts, notebooks, letters and his tape collection. Paul Dressman and I have spent the past year listening to all of his tapes, annotating which poets read and which poems are read. We found that there are a wide variety of tapes which fit, more or less, into six categories: 1) whole tapes of Paul Blackburn reading in public and in private; 2) tapes of group readings or lectures in public; 3) recordings of conversations among Blackburn and his friends; 4) recordings made from the radio and television (such significant events as the first Sputnik orbit, the first Moon landing, presidential inaugural speeches, etc.); 5) taped "letters" from friends living in various parts of the world; 6) miscellaneous music and sounds. This latter category is interesting if only for locating the particular city ambiance in which Blackburn lived (and wrote poems) day-to-day.

Michael Davidson
June 23, 1975

Paul Blackburn Audio Collection

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