

## How the Mimeo-Magazine Sounds in 1960s Counterculture: *The Floating Bear* as Sonic Artifact

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The “small magazine,” Ezra Pound maintained, was the place where modernism was born. Developed in the early twentieth century, the little magazine proliferated as a genre for publishing the “newest” in poetry, fiction, and literary criticism. Indeed, the little magazine became the twentieth century’s most influential type of publication through which avant-garde poetry was cultivated and flourished.<sup>1</sup> Most little magazines were created and published by writers for writers, giving the genre an “insider,” coterie audience and thus also had small print runs, making for a less-than-lucrative publishing venture. This resistance to commercial enterprise and its focus on the “newest” poetic trends, pushing both individual poetic license and collective editorial production, created poetic community united by collective creativity on the pages of the magazine. Defined more broadly by scholars, like Jeffrey Drouin and J. Matthew Huculak in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism*, as a periodical with low costs of operation and small print runs distributed to a specific audience, the little magazine as an artifact of twentieth-century print culture is in constant danger of being lost to history as small print runs and resistance to the market economy make them hard to find and even harder to preserve. Because of such emphasis on low costs and small print runs, many little magazines are lost to future scholarship, as they circulated

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<sup>1</sup> I follow Sophie Setia’s formulation of the avant-garde throughout this article as “provisional networks of affiliation rather than rigidly demarcated groups” (3).

in small networks, regional communities, and were made with inexpensive materials that deteriorate rapidly. The little magazines that do endure provide us with a raw form for understanding the poetic avant-garde: the little magazine “is independent, amateur and idealistic—it doesn’t (or, shall we say, feels that it shouldn’t) need to print anything it doesn’t want to print” (Hamilton 7-8). It is this independent, amateur quality that this article will address, a quality that allowed the genre to proliferate, most notably in the post-World War II (1945-1970) counterculture of the U.S. Notable among the flourishing form was one such little magazine that endured for over ten years called *The Floating Bear* (1961-1971). *The Floating Bear* is one of the more established little magazines of the era in terms of its influence on poets and writers in this historical period, and its reliance on the mimeograph machine for production makes it a prime example of the historical importance of the mimeographed little magazine. But among the more ephemeral examples of the use of the mimeograph to record poetry in this time period is a little magazine called *Le Metro*, which exemplifies the sonic relationship to poetry to a degree that the more well-known mimeographed little magazines strived to emulate. In conjunction with examples of the more ephemeral and fleeting mimeographed productions *Le Metro*, I establish the genre’s connection to sonic reproduction through the mimeograph.

What is unique about the little magazine after 1945 is its adaptability in light of new media; media that becomes constitutive of the form of publication and dissemination itself. This exploration of new media within the little magazine would integrate, resist, and experiment with new poetic forms, producing a different set of questions for poetry after 1945. This emphasis on multimedia after 1945 shifted the focus from a purely print medium to a multimedia endeavor, aided by print, visual, and sonic reproduction technologies easily accessible at midcentury. Other scholars and poets have noted that the relationship between multimedia and the avant-garde allows

poetry to flourish (Rasula *Lana Turner*), but scholars of poetry and print culture have spent little sustained attention on the relationship between various media and the little magazine after 1945. Chelsea Jennings’s article “Pirating Pound: *Drafts and Fragments* in 1960s Mimeograph Culture” addresses how the mimeographed, pirated *Cantos* motivated New Directions to publish an “official” version, showing how the mimeograph disrupted the publishing industry in the 1960s (88). In *Reinventing Print*, David Jury reminds us that *Doctor Zhivago* (1957) was first distributed underground in the USSR through mimeographed copies of the novel (147). And Lisa Gitelman has spent a career writing about the relationship between print and technologies of reproduction. *Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines* connects the typewriter to the phonograph, but interestingly says little about the relationship between the mimeograph and the phonograph.

While the reasons for this paucity of scholarship on the mimeograph are complex, the intermedial composition of midcentury little magazines has made it difficult for traditional, textual scholarship to grapple with the various mediations within the bounds of close reading techniques. In other words, scholars of print culture tend to stick with print as the primary method through which to analyze textual and historical components of the magazine. But to fully comprehend the ways in which the little magazine relied on other media—and how various media affected poetic contribution—after 1945 necessitates comprehension of textual scholarship *and* scholarship of media. However, for the purposes of this article, I focus on one little magazine, one type of technology for constructing the little magazine, and one conceptual framework to give an intermedial reading of avant-garde poetry at midcentury. Indeed, as the post-1945 period advances, scholars are forced to grapple with poetic mediation beyond the page. Indeed, the page itself transforms into a site of oral performance, bringing poet and audience together into a communal space. This communal space is created through the production of the little magazine on the

mimeograph machine, a machine with a style so distinctive it is represented on the pages of the mimeographed little magazine. Thus, the community of readers would have also known themselves to be a community of listeners, transporting themselves from the pages of the magazine to the coffeeshops where performances were held. The anachronistic use of the mimeograph shows how technological reproduction does not always follow a neat, linear progression in historical time and that developments from almost a century ago can and do become an integral component for producing avant-garde poetic movements.

Thousands of little magazines were produced from 1945 to the 1970s using mimeograph technology. The simplicity of the functionality of the machine also means that the copies are crude, distinctly hurried but admired as a “symbol of resourcefulness and a rebellious spirit” (Jury 147). The mimeograph machine was light, compact, and easily moveable. Copies were made using a silicone or wax stencil, upon which a typewriter would indent letters, words, sentences by displacing the coating on the stencil and allowed ink to soak through. One could also draw or write free-form onto a stencil with a sharp object, making it possible to reproduce amateur artwork. After the stencil was ready, one would place the stencil onto the base of the mimeograph. Through a crank on one side, one would pull the stencil and paper through an inked cylinder, leaving copies on the other side:

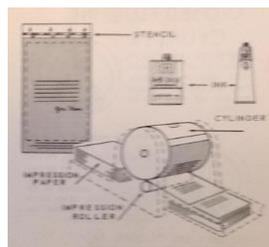


Fig. 1. “The Mimeograph Process” from *Techniques of Mimeographing*, a manual printed by the A.B. Dick Company, copyright 1958. Reproduced with permission.

The trace of the mimeograph machine marks both the composition and the experience of reading the little magazine as an immersive, intermedial experience. In the mimeographed little magazine that I have chosen to discuss, *The Floating Bear*, the mimeograph machine functions in two modes: 1) as a community-building, active presence in the formation of avant-garde poetry on the printed pages of the little magazine; 2) and as an experience of the sonic trace the mimeograph itself inherited from its invention and the sonic trace of the poetry performance upon which the avant-garde, counterculture poetry community relied at midcentury. We can understand the origins of the mimeograph through its relationship to the invention of the phonograph at the end of the nineteenth century. The mimeograph's use at midcentury enacts a kind of "out-of-timeness," or obsolescence, even as its use undergirds the Mimeograph Revolution, as I discuss below in more detail. The sonic trace of the poetry performance can be read within the pages of the mimeographed little magazine through the structure of the "acousmatic," a sonic formulation developed by Pierre Schaeffer to discuss how sound reproduction affects listening. However, this structure can also be seen in the intimate, everyday-ness of the poetry and letters published in *The Floating Bear*. To underscore the context of the mimeograph's relationship to sound reproduction—and thus to *The Floating Bear*'s historical and intermedial importance—I will show the interconnectedness of the mimeo little magazine to live poetry readings. The poetry reading that I will discuss is one that happened at Le Metro, a coffeeshop on the Lower East Side in New York City, where some of the most well-known poets of the era read and participated in live readings. These readings were "recorded" not by sound technologies, but by a mimeographed artifact that was transcribed "on the spot," while the reading happened. This intimate relationship between author, reader, and interpolated subject enacts the "live" poetry reading but does so with the page rather than with a recording. However, as the production and reception of poetry and poetics relied ever more heavily

on the mimeograph to “capture” fleeting moments in “live” poetry performances, the mimeograph and its poetic archive deserve sustained attention as the historical moment lingers in this “in-between” mediation.

### **Mimeographic Mimesis: Lyric Poetry in the Mimeograph Revolution**

The mimeograph and the phonograph were intimate contemporaries of one another, emerging from the same laboratory one year apart. The mimeograph machine was patented by Thomas Edison in 1876, one year before the phonograph would be patented and which would be the first machine to record and play back sound. The two machines were intertwined in their development, and the same engineers worked on both inventions to “store up” text and sound (“Edison Notebook”). The Edison Archives show us that the engineers used similar language and concepts to describe how each technology worked: the “stylus” pressed down upon wax paper to create a reproducible copy; both used the same cranking mechanism to reproduce sound (the phonograph) or copies (mimeograph); and both had a central drum upon which sound was replicated (the phonograph) or ink would reproduce a copy (mimeograph) (“Edison Sketches”). This parallel between the evolution of sound and print replication technologies has as yet not been fleshed out in its entirety but is beyond the scope of this paper. However, I point to this parallel to show how the inventors’ conception is mutually constitutive with the phonograph, and that in composing the phonograph, one finds the mimeograph. This is striking for the purposes of this article because the sonic element of the early Edison cylinder is inscribed in the mimeograph machine: both the phonograph and the mimeograph rely on a rotating cylinder, a hallmark, according to Lisa Gitelman, of Edison’s inventions: “The rotating cylinder has been described as part of Edison’s ‘style’; it was his version of the baroque writer Thomas Browne’s quincunx, a shape that looms everywhere once the search is on” (185). This shape calls the mimeograph back to the late-nineteenth century while producing

the avant-garde of the mid-twentieth century. And, in the same breath, the mimeograph's early history cannot be disconnected from the form of the phonograph.

And yet, as the phonograph became a household item throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and evolved into different forms—like the record player by the 1950s, and the magnetic tape in the 1960s—the mimeograph stayed relatively the same from its inception to the 1960s, and the simple, easy design of the mimeograph made it a perfect reproduction tool at midcentury. This simplicity and stability through time lent it an “aura of obsolescence” (Burges 71); it represented an out-of-date technology repurposed at midcentury for the avant-garde.<sup>2</sup> The repurposing of the mimeograph for the avant-garde, then, places it in a temporally dubious position: by midcentury it was obsolete as a serious machine for publishing, but used by avant-garde publishers as a machine *after its time* producing poetry *before its time*. The juxtaposition between old technology and new artwork manifests on every page of the little magazine, a manifestation that becomes a central component of the aesthetics of the counterculture. This resistance is not only a temporal resistance, but it also indicates that the style of the mimeographed publication would embody the form of out-of-time-ness, obsolescence, and radical, democratic access seen in the use of the machine itself. Thus, the *use* of the machine imprints itself onto the page, leaving the trace of obsolescence, a trace that is manifested in the printed word of the mimeograph magazine. And, at the same time, the mimeograph *style* left by the trace of the machine on the page would embody the same obsolescence and access, making it a unique byproduct of capitalist resistance to popular literary culture reliant on the contemporaneous publishing industry (Burges 72-3).

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<sup>2</sup> As other copy machines were developed, including the office photocopier (1937) and the spirit duplicator, the mimeograph up to midcentury was mostly used for office work and for printing posters, pamphlets, and other print ephemera. Little magazines, before the mimeograph revolution, used more sophisticated technologies, like lithography, to print copies.

Diane di Prima, long-time editor of *The Floating Bear*, would use the mimeograph to publish each issue of the little magazine. *The Floating Bear* influenced the countercultural avant-garde of the 1960s through its resistance to capitalist culture and flourishing of poetry community across the country. Edited by di Prima and Amiri Baraka<sup>3</sup> (as LeRoi Jones), it ran for 37 issues from February 1961 to July 1969. It was produced through mimeograph technology for every issue, showing the relative stability of mimeograph printing techniques throughout the 1960s. The first issue had a print run of 250; by the end of production, the runs had hit roughly 1,000 copies, making it one of the most successful mimeographed little magazines of the 1960s.

The subtitle of the little magazine is “a newsletter,” and each issue instantiates the mimeographed “newsletter” in its use of typewritten stenciling and relative lack of sketches or drawings. Thus, subtitle also indicates that the little magazine is to be considered both “news” and a “letter,” further emphasizing the individual as well as communal interpolation of a community interested in intimacies of the epistolary form and the community-binding notion of news. Lisa Gitelman’s notion of the newspaper as an oral performance (28) and Daniel Kane reminds us that many writers “highlighted the poem as a spoken phenomenon and typed or ‘scored’ their writing to emphasize its place on both page and stage” (D. Kane 5). Thus, we can see the front page of the “newsletter” like a stage for communal performance. This stage was for “news” and for “letters,” placing the little magazine in the realm of both gossip (found in the epistolary form itself) and for understanding “happenings” (the news, after all is a form of the question, “what’s happening?”). It also captures editorial intention: di Prima and Baraka wanted the chatty quality found in the letter form and the immediacy of the news to be two of the largest influences of the magazine. Indeed, the magazine included many letters, either in the form of intimate letters between two

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<sup>3</sup> Baraka would step down as co-editor of the magazine in 1963 after publishing issue 25.

people or in the form of “letter to the editors.” Both types of letters would become important for *The Floating Bear*.

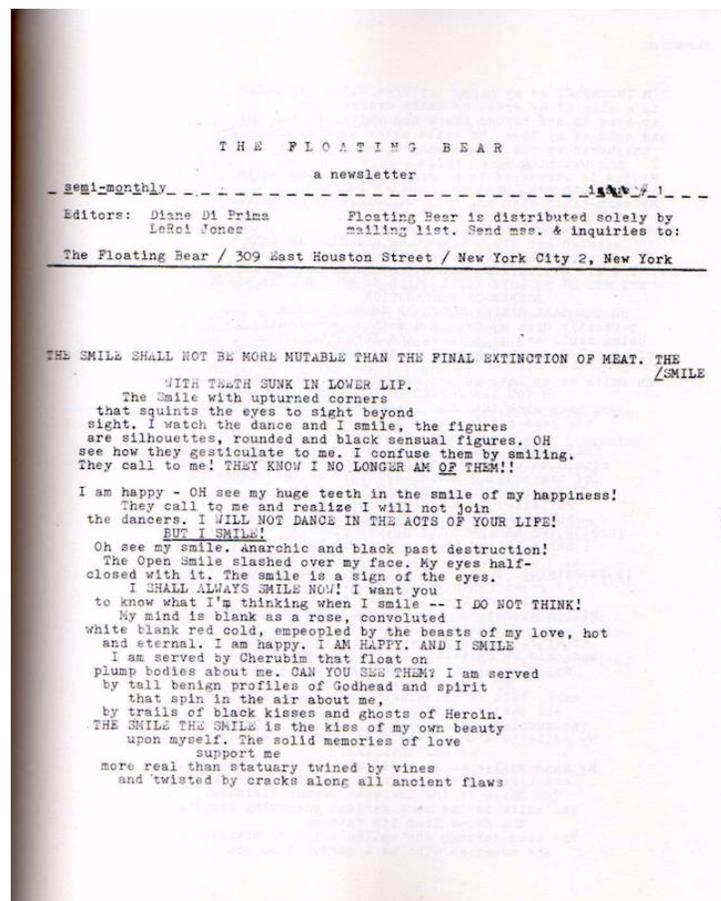


Fig. 2. *The Floating Bear*, no. 1, 1961,

Raymond Danowski Poetry Library, Emory University. Reproduced with Permission.

The first issues of *The Floating Bear* look like a letter typed and mailed on inexpensive typewriter paper that leaves residue of loose paper fibers on one’s fingers. Even the ink bleeds, fades, and can be seen on the opposite side of the page. The use of inexpensive, almost delicate paper was a part of the aesthetic of the mimeographed little magazine; because the magazine was not a money-making venture, paper quality was not a top priority for di Prima or Baraka. As di Prima indicates,

“Apart from getting hold of out-of-the-way work and unpublished poets, our other major concern, at least for the first year or so, was speed: getting this new, exciting work into the hands of other writers as quickly as possible” (x). The editors’ two major concerns were to publish unknown and obscure work and to print such work as fast as possible. These two concerns are not only practical, but aesthetic. Firstly, making sure that those who are unknown to a large part of a writing community expand the aesthetic sensibilities of a particular group of writers, especially in an era of rapid changes in poetic technique. Secondly, the emphasis on speed tells us something about the use of the mimeograph itself. Access to Larry Wallrich’s mimeograph machine, set up in his Phoenix Bookshop (di Prima xi) was a necessary condition for producing the publication. As di Prima stated: “What we did have in common was our consciousness that the techniques of poetry were changing very fast, and our sense of the urgency of getting the technological advances of, say, Olson, into the hands of, say, Creeley, within two weeks, back and forth, because the thing just kept growing at a mad rate out of that” (xi). Here, di Prima’s focus on the medium’s ability to speak to particular poets while highlighting the technological advances of the poetry produced indicates her own awareness that she was involved in a multimedia endeavor. The relationship between speed of production and dissemination also highlights the ways in which the mimeograph operates in tension with itself. On the one hand, the mimeograph was the best way to publish and disseminate avant-garde poetry and poetics in the 1960s, a poetry that was changing fast, leading to the necessity of using the mimeograph in the first place. On the other hand, the mimeograph’s obsolescence as a 1960s technology indicates the temporal rupture that actually became a productive temporal rupture for this period and for the emerging New American poetry and poetics. But it is also this back and forth speed that instantiates the community as a site of poetic performance.

Indeed, as such a temporal rupture became a site of productive publishing, the ways in which poetry itself developed through communal channels like the poetry reading also affected what was published in the pages of *The Floating Bear*. As poetry readings emerged out of the counterculture as a way of being in the present moment, performing to a community of like-minded poets, writers, and artists, the mimeographed little magazine represents the record of such performances. Mimeographed little magazines like *Le Metro* and *Les Deux Megots* were produced at the coffee shops of their namesake, on the spot, which were “enactments of oral readings, as opposed to finished presentations of ‘closed’ poems” (D. Kane 37). We see this relationship between enactments of oral readings, community-based improvisation, and contingency even in the production of *The Floating Bear*: “In the winter of 1961-1962 we held gatherings at my East 4th Street pad every other Sunday. There was a regular marathon ball thing going on there for a few issues.... The typing on those particular issues was done by James Waring who’s a choreographer and painter. Cecil Taylor ran the mimeograph machine, and Fred Herko and I collated, and we all addressed envelopes” (xii). This process of producing the magazine was aided by the communal intention of all involved. It is also striking given the emphasis on the resemblance of *The Floating Bear* to a letter, or writing to a group of friends, as di Prima indicates in her discussions of production of the little magazine. Such coterie emphasis also shows the way in which each issue was contingent on so many factors to be produced in the first place.

While there is no evidence that *The Floating Bear* produced any issues in an “on-the-spot” poetry performance, there are contemporary examples that were created in the same timeframe and in the same location as *The Floating Bear*. One example, mentioned above, is a 1964 artifact entitled *Poets at Le Metro*:

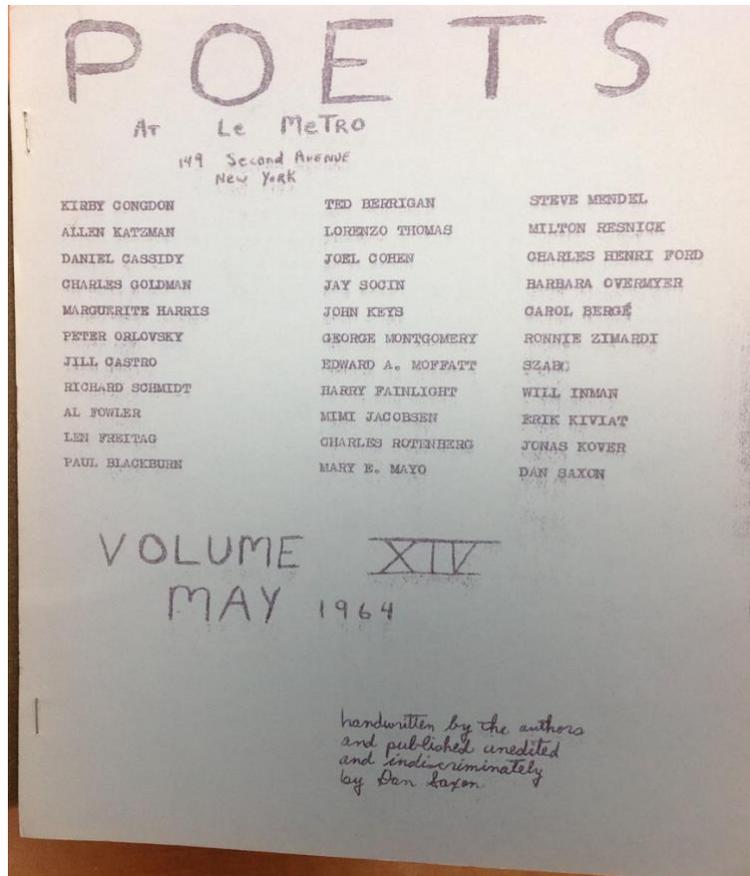


Fig. 3. Cover of "Poets at Le Metro,"

Raymond Danowski Poetry Library, Emory University. Reproduced with permission.

Compiled by Dan Saxon, Saxon would bring a mimeograph machine to Le Metro when poetry readings were to take place. There, poets would read their poetry in front of an audience and then transcribe the poem onto a wax mimeograph sheet. Saxon would compile all sheets at the end of the night and run off copies of the "performance" for poets and audience members. These records show the collective, creative, and oral performances transformed into a recorded artifact. However, the recording here is not a sonic recording; rather, the recording happens on paper and in the handwriting of each individual poet. It's as if the poets not only perform for the live audience, but they then perform for the audience on the page.

*The Floating Bear* and Saxon's artifact captured oral performances on the page for practical reasons: it was much cheaper to print oral enactments than it was to record oral enactments. Tape recording would have been available at this time, but it was more expensive, not as easily movable, and a notoriously delicate operation. Magnetic tape is delicate, often catches in the recording apparatus, and was easily destroyable by everything from too much sunshine to brittleness over time. The mimeograph machine still maintained a stability that tape recording did not. Thus, the use of the mimeograph machine to create poetic tracts, magazines, and posters became as valuable as a type of poetic performance until sound recording devices stabilized.

### **The Lyric Apostrophe as Sonic Acousmatic in *The Floating Bear***

Frank O'Hara is one of many midcentury poets whose writing appears in *The Floating Bear* and who frequently published work in it. In Issue 2, printed and published in 1961, four poems by O'Hara open the issue. Here, we see early works that display the intimacy and everydayness that is present throughout his poetic career. We can also identify what Seth Perlow has called the "social condition of anonymity" (135), or O'Hara's alienation from the social while being immersed in the social. The second poem of the sequence displays both the material conditions of the mimeograph and a link to a sonic structure known as the "acousmatic," which materializes the mimeograph on the printed page while also exemplifying the sonic trace in the structure of the poem itself:

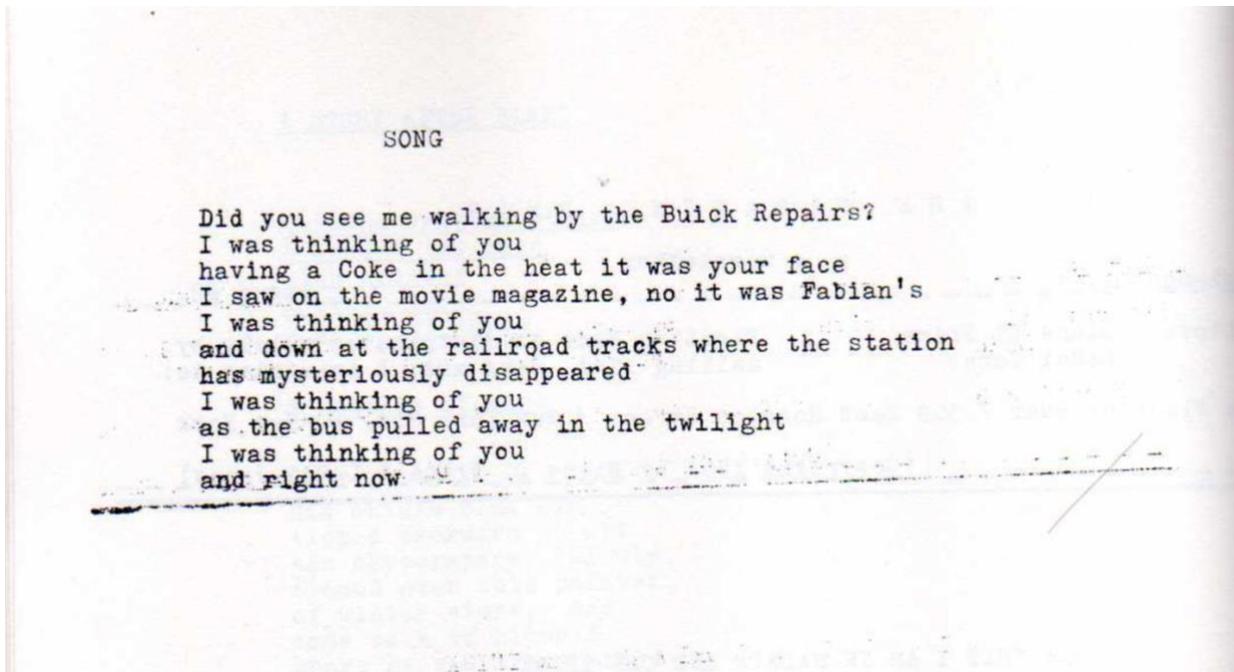


Fig. 4. From *The Floating Bear*, vol. 2, 1961,

Raymond Danowski Poetry Library, Emory University. Reproduced with permission.

Here, the poem itself is slightly off-center on the page and we see the first page bleeding through to the second page. The distinct line below the poem comes from the masthead on the first page and makes "SONG" look cut-and-pasted. Upon looking closer, we see traces of words, phrases, from the first page. When examining the formal elements of the poem, a few elements recall us to the sonic. Firstly, the title of the poem is "song" and thus return us to the vocal performance of singing. The title almost commands the reader to sing the short lyric, asking the reader to participate in the lyric performance.

The first line of the poem moves us into the realm of lyric address: the lyric apostrophe frames the poem, calling to "you" over and over again. And yet, the lyric address also calls the reader in both through the title of the work and through the structure of the apostrophe. Not only are we called to participate in the "song," but we are also called to "listen in" on this longing for

the one who is not there. O'Hara's refrain, "I was thinking of you," saturates the poem with an almost obsessive longing. And yet, this saturation works against itself as the "I" never returns to "you" within the context of the poem. The "social condition of anonymity" even within a poem as intimate as this one can be seen in the speaker's turning away from direct address in favor of apostrophe, all while allowing the reader to listen in on the longing of the speaker. Not only is this a condition of lyric form, but, put in the context of the mimeographed little magazine, we have the trace of the sonic that situates the poem as a lyric on the page as well as lyrics in a song. This move, then, necessitates a sonic reading beyond the formal structures of the lyric to better understand how the lyric reacts to the noisy world at midcentury.

"The acousmatic" (*l'acousmatique*) is a term from sound studies used to denote a structure of listening, a structure that is useful in discussing the sonic emphasis of the lyric in Frank O'Hara's poem "SONG". Before returning to the poem, the term "acousmatic" necessitates a historical reading to understand how it is used in contemporary sound studies and how it can be brought into discussions of the lyric form, particularly at midcentury. Pierre Schaeffer, a musicologist working at the French Radio and Television Broadcasting at midcentury, recuperates the word "acousmatic" (*l'acousmatique*) from the brink of extinction in the French language and uses it as the basis for conceptualizing what he calls the "sound object" (*l'objet sonore*) in his 1962 work *Treatise of Sound Objects (Traité des objets musicaux)*. The sound object is a complex set of structures that eventually settle, in the *Treatise*, on the phenomenon of the listening subject. Thus, the sound object itself is a radical type of listening that "gave back to the ear alone the entire responsibility for a mode of perception normally backed up by other sensory evidence" (Schaeffer 64). Thus, the sound object is an object in that it does not rely on any other sensory evidence for comprehension. While the sound object is the ultimate goal in the *Treatise*, I am interested in the

structure of the acousmatic as a structure for listening. The acousmatic, for Schaeffer, is the structure that allows the sound object to manifest and thus it should not be confused with the sound object itself. In other words, it is the foundation upon which Schaeffer builds his theory of the sound object. However, I show how the acousmatic can structure other sonic phenomena and that we are not beholden to Schaeffer's ultimate goal of manifesting a sound object from, say, the lyric form. Instead, I situate O'Hara's poem as an example of an acousmatic structure that highlights the sonic possibilities within the pages of the midcentury avant-garde little magazine.

Etymologically, the term "acousmatic" refers to a group of Pythagorean disciples known as the *akousmatikoi*—the "listeners or auditors"—who, as legend has it, heard the philosopher lecture from behind a curtain or veil ("Acousmatique").<sup>4</sup> This visual rupture produced by the physical barrier of the curtain restricted the *akousmatikoi*'s ability to participate and gain knowledge through the use of visual or other sensory aids in the master's demonstrations beyond listening (B. Kane 55). This reliance on listening alone may seem a restrictive or basic mode, seemingly placing listening or hearing as a primary step from which one would then be admitted to the "full" knowledge that Pythagoras would allow those who could step behind the curtain to see—as well as hear—Pythagoras's lessons. We will return to the epistemological importance of this structure below, but first, note the foundational, fundamental place of hearing in this structure: *hearing* without the ability to see made listening all the more important and fundamental for grasping Pythagoras's lessons. It is, in fact, this emphasis on Pythagoras's curtain that allows for listening to become so powerful. In a similar vein, we can map the structure of the acousmatic onto

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<sup>4</sup> Brian Kane has spoken at length about this myth in *Sound Unseen: Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice* (2014), particularly in Chapter 2 "Myth and the Origin of the Pythagorean Veil." Kane tells us that "[t]here is no single central text describing the founding, meaning, and transmission of the term 'acousmatic' from Pythagoras to the present day. Rather, there are multiple partial accounts that circulate in various discourses on acousmatic sound." (45)

the structure of the lyric, in particular, the structure of the apostrophe, to move us squarely into a sonic reading of O'Hara's poem.

The apostrophe is a figure of speech that "consists of addressing an absent person" and is the basic figure that underpins the lyric address. In Greek, it literally means "to turn away" ("apostrophe"). But from whom is the speaker "turning away"? Is it the "you" to whom the speaker addresses? Or is it the reader? In O'Hara's poem "SONG," the speaker turns away from the reader, a reader who listens in on a speaker addressing "you." This structure of "turning away" while speaking mimics the drawing of the curtain in the acousmatic situation. No longer able to "see" the speaker, the reader transforms into a listener, a listener who relies solely on the voice of the addresser, the lyric "I," to understand the sonic performance of the poem. This experience of reading sonically manifests in the form of the poem itself and places the acousmatic situation on the page of *The Floating Bear*.

Beyond the individual poem itself, which is only one example of many poems and letters within *The Floating Bear*, the mimeographed page connects readers to a literary community while acting as a material substitute for the oral performance. The mimeographed page acts as the curtain or veil in acousmatic listening, for we no longer have the poets and audience in one room, but rather we have a rupture, an out-of-time-ness in the use of the mimeograph and in the page itself while also instantiating the place, the site of the performance on the page itself. This structure of the mimeographed little magazine, then, places it in line with structures and conceptions of recorded sound that emerged at the same time as the Mimeograph Revolution.

## **Conclusion**

In the last twenty years, scholars of modernism have argued for the fundamental importance of the little magazine for its social, experimental, and creative influence on twentieth-century literature,

particularly in its relationship to poetry. For instance, scholars recognize the space of the little magazine as a place where poets, readers, and critics could “address one another directly, with a segment of the public listening in on those conversations about what kind of visual, verbal, and musical works were best suited for the modern world” (Scholes 74). The emphasis on the multimediality of the little magazine should be highlighted here. Not only was this a place for visual and verbal interaction, but it was also a site of merging sound and vision through the pages of the little magazine. Indeed, the little magazine at midcentury acted as a type of communication that allowed artists, critics, poets to “speak” to one another directly through its pages, and the audience could “listen in” on the conversations. This emphasis on “listening in” is important. Firstly, this idea of listening in on a work addressed to another is the structure of the lyric form in poetry. Secondly, taken from a sound studies perspective, this structure confounds sound studies scholars today: this is the structure of the acousmatic. Thirdly, we can see a striking relationship between the lyric and acousmatic structures in the formulation of the little magazine, especially as we move into the technologically saturated mid- to late-twentieth century. Focusing on the little magazine of the post-1945 period, I have argued that the social and cultural forces at work in this period change the nature of the little magazine from its earlier twentieth-century precursor as it moves the reader toward a sonic framework of listening to the performance taking place on the page. This listening is structured in different layers and formal considerations: firstly, the mimeograph form itself lends itself to contingency, improvisation, and unfinished-ness. Its obsolescence or “out-of-time-ness” at midcentury helps it to become a central device through which to read traces of sound reproduction. Secondly, the editors highlight the structure of “listening in,” most commonly understood as the structure of the lyric, in their editorial choices, most notably in the poetry and letters published in the magazine. The intimacy of the editorial

choices allows both the lyric structure and the communal nature of the magazine to work in between verbal and vocal registers to erupt in conversation, gossip, and extra-textual sonicity within the pages of *The Floating Bear*. Thus, reading the post-1945 little magazine intermedially means reading the little magazine attuned to the sonic elements that help to produce it.

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