

S S S S S S S S S S S  
Charles Olson

THE MAXIMUS POEMS

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... the ultimate aesthetic question: what is a poem? ... reaction against  
1950s, "academic" poetry using a priori form, left hand margins, caps, &c ...  
NEW POETS OF ENGLAND AND AMERICA ... "competence" ... so what? ...

T. S. Eliot: to compose according to the musical phrase, not the metronome

William Carlos Williams: the variable foot

Charles Olson: stance and breath line - field composition, projectile verse

Robert Creeley: "Form is never more than an extension of content"

Allen Ginsberg: "Mind is shapely"

(syllable vs foot / breath vs metrics / ear vs numbers / process vs poem)

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Maximus of Tyre, Phoenicia, which held off Alexander for several days

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"There was a search on simultaneous fronts for the personal voice, for  
the immediate impulse and its energy, for the recognition of (even  
surrender to) process, to the elements of randomness, whimsy, play,  
self-sabotage... Those elements are hardly new in the arts, but had  
recently gone either unrecognized or been dismissed as peripheral by the  
dominant formalist criticism that emphasized product, the order brought  
out of "chaos", the fidelity to established form -- the "statement",  
not the struggle that produced it."

Martin Duberman, BLACK MOUNTAIN: AN  
EXPLORATION IN COMMUNITY, Dutton, 1972

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Charles Olson: "Writing traditional form makes for rhetoric. The  
alternative is to write as you breathe. Either one is good if it is  
done well in its way. Form is then the skin or the how of the art.  
Your rut is so much more important. And this is only arrived at by  
the sharp influx of things ..."

"You've got to take hunches, you've got to jump and then see what -- you've  
got to operate as though you knew it. Take chances, jump in there and  
see what happens."

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One may say that the American experience is based on the DECLARATION OF  
INDEPENDENCE, the BILL OF RIGHTS, Emerson's "SELF-RELIANCE", and  
Thoreau's "CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE".

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