

## Poetry by Richard Benney



### Sister Michaelen

Sister Michaelen lives in a cave by the edge of the lake,  
habitually raises her head to gawk at the hole in the sun,  
scrawls prayers in the sand.

Sister Michaelen loves like a pagan slut but keeps knocking her beads and signing tender notes,  
Sister Michaelen

Sister Michaelen, priestess long and lovely, yearning for her Father's love.  
A black-waisted sunrise comes creeping overhead.

Sister Michaelen, chaste queen tastes chalice lips, starves for the public boy who serves at twilight, sweet organ grinds.

Sister Michaelen saint aspire linen lace naked choir.  
Cats whine while white under briefs are hung from the line.  
Sister Michaelen has strung St. Teresa's strands of sacred hair above from where she sleeps and spreads sweet loins.  
Sister Michaelen.

### blues by Norman Blackmailer

Julian lived with his father, a widower. Julian would come home from work every night and sit down at the table with his father. After the meal, Julian read to his father who would rest his chin on his chest and stare intensely between his legs at the floor. Julian often became quite involved in the emotional sequences and often quite sombre while spouting the long descriptive paragraphs. He was never sure that his father was listening, and that seems to provide Julian the courage to read loud and at times most dogmatically. But Julian's curiosity finally conquered his control over the literature. One night, Julian decided to substitute for his father's chosen volumes, free verse of his own. As he approached the seventeenth line and ninety-fourth word of his most cherished piece, his father suddenly and deliberately rose from the dinner table, fetched the evening paper, and sat down in an armchair, and read to himself.



Berney, his wife Susan and daughter Damoni.

### While Waiting in the Wings

variations on a theme by the king of the flatland shuffle

If I had but the patience to endure all of this  
the patience and good sense not to proclaim myself a living artist. . .  
the will to sharpen my wits would be like a venom rushing to my head and I would cough up my experience into one vat and mellow into an accomplished hippie or better still

a Sartre of sorts  
or much worse  
a disembowled Ginsberg  
squatting in the road with the Childe Harold

I wait to be found out. I wait to be wooed with water while fasting on the open range and to be called forth as the ecclesiast of rock.

(and I would cringe with disdain while gripping his balmy hand and accept checks while women view my crotch from where they slouch and comment on the fiftie's mania when slicked backed honkies spat like young hellions in shark-skinned tights.)

Thus, out of respect for sweet pimps those glory strafed ass shakers  
I have shorn my locks and schizoid whiskers to stand nude faced and skin headed before my peers,  
my wife,  
and hordes of peasant stock who grok on me and scoff at my authenticity  
and who in insipid jive challenge my stance with crass revolution upheavals about awareness.

(were James Dean not dead. . .)

With glee, the fantasy shocked hero comes to sit in regal thrones in Levi's stretched cross his ass to twitch his thighs and to slur the congregation come to see the haughty boy from the Midlands who in flamboyance personified emotes tears and prayers to be heard by Georgia bankers and Polish millers and Rodeo Bob types and Panthers and cops and Conglese ambassadors and corporate slob.

### Dancing

given one stark room  
and one naked human being  
the setting proves unmistakably isolated

and one RCA turntable of '51 vintage sends staccato signals at high volume and the still air thick with smoke from the master's cigarette hand

thirty-six measures have passed

and on the thirty-seventh one the naked human being spread-eagled drops to the floor to begin what will be an hour of confined flight

great visual art is paid for by a wealthy individual's petty cash—who from a straight-backed chair can witness Regina in motion