

be healthier if there were removed from it that dinky yearn for "even a token payment, even a pittance, just to make a writer feel his work is not entirely valueless." Does a token payment of a dollar really make him feel valuable? Come, come, what price self-respect?

The plea: If the Authors Guild objects that it cannot approve of writers contributing to non-paying publications, let it consider the corresponding situation in the theatre. There the guilds and unions recognize the economic gap between Broadway and Off-Broadway and make their rules accordingly. In the literary field there should be the same recognition by the Guild of the difference between the publication that pays its staff (or any single member thereof) and that which pays no one except the printer and the post office. The first ought to pay its contributors; the second should not — and writers should understand why it does not. They should appreciate the service it performs and the non-monetary values it creates for writer and reader alike . . . and why stop there? For American culture as well.

MARVIN MALONE. EDITOR, *WORMWOOD*

What is the role of the little mag in the USA? Well, in as few words as possible here is one opinion:

- a) to champion simultaneously integrity and individuality.
- b) to publish the new writers, who for various reasons don't fit into the mass consumption mold, and yet who have the ability to communicate something valid.
- c) to provide and promote some degree of recognition for these new poets; this fills for them a profound need and gives them courage to continue to develop their vision. No matter what anyone says, writers must communicate to remain sane. Words cannot fall into a complete vacuum
- d) to provide a medium for communication among writers, so that they do not accept the mass psychosis for sheer loneliness.
- e) to persist in publication even though the format goes from print, to offset, to mimeograph . . . to persist in spite of the lack of money . . . to be ingenious. . . .
- f) to publish material, ideas and concepts which the masses are not ready to digest, cannot digest, will not digest, but will slowly accept as the more adventurous "slicks" begin to catch the drift and copy.
- g) to air the taboos. Today some of these are 1) death in an individual sense, 2) the relativity of individuality, 3) the stasis of culture in the USA at the pre World War II level, 4) that teamwork is best for horses, 5) that a breast in hand is worth two in the bra, 6) the

- lack of really VALID work for a MAN to do in the USA, and  
7) etc.
- h) to keep alive the rich American tradition of ironic, intelligent, baiting humor (yes, baiting; not biting).
  - i) to discomfit as much as possible the self-assured literary critics; to set up an active dissent against the easy success of X. J. Kennedy, Alan Dugan, *et al.*
  - j) to not be pro-Catholic, pro-Protestant, pro-Jewish, or pro-Zen, but to be pro-humanity. But even then to be violently pro-anything is to develop a dull, dull, little mag. The spirit of Dada is perhaps the best attitude for editors.
  - k) to be apolitical also. But the border areas are fair game and it is good to harass the "Harvard-type pseudo intellectuals" with the amusing aspects of the Jack Kennedy-Elvis Presley Syndrome, the Marilyn Monroe-Jackie Kennedy Identification, The Daddy Warbucks-Ike Complex, the Mad Mag-Madison Ave. symbiosis, etc.
  - l) to prove to the academy poets that it is still possible to write a good love poem that is also a good erotic poem.
  - m) to oppose the idea that "black is black, white is white, and that grey is red."
  - n) enough, enough . . . but above all . . . to be alive and provocative.  
OK?

GILBERT SORRENTINO, EDITOR, *NEON*, *KULCHUR*

It is, of course, a truism to say that the first place a serious writer looks for publication is the little magazine. I do not know of any good writer in this country who was not first published in a little magazine. They are the bulletins, as it were, from the front, nor is there any possible way for those interested in *avant-garde* writing to discover and study that writing except by reading the little magazine.

The reasons for this are many and varied, but of course the basic one is that they are essentially writers' projects, the editors, that is, being writers themselves, with (thank God) an axe to grind. They are open to all levels of work, and certainly publish more bad work than good; however, the fact remains that the good is published consistently, the little magazine never dies, the "world" of the little magazine embraces every young writer in the country, if not *in* the world. Since no one who publishes a little magazine cares about audience and advertisers, work that could not possibly hope to find a place in the commercial magazine is displayed for those to whom the reading of that work is important, viz., other writers. As Pound has said, they serve almost as open letters to x number of persons.