

**GARY SNYDER**

## For Robert Duncan

Walking down Grant Avenue just short of the Place  
late at night,  
ran into Robert Duncan, we embraced.  
nineteen fifty-five.  
He said, "Gary, your number."  
Gave me a copy  
of *Letters*; signed it standing in the streetlight.  
number sixty-nine. The gleam  
in Robert's sidelong eye

And I think of Neuri,  
whose elbows and jaw-juts and knees all jangling  
I wrapped up in my arms and packed into the car,  
'37 Packard,  
her so drunk, she beat my  
face and eye—mean and sweet—  
and in the poem I wrote for her I said  
"because I once beat you up"  
when it was me got whacked.

Old "male chivalry"  
and a literary scholar trots it out  
because I'm "Allen's friend"

slender girl I never slept with  
you liked women.

And I loved Robert for his teaching.  
Some crime.

**PERKY EDGERTON**

*Downstairs, 2018*  
Oil and collage on canvas, 30 x 40 in

