

FIRST MEETING OF LITERATURE COMMITTEE - 1966

A. R. Ammons

RL - A good writer

SK - An unfulfilled poet - shallow

RL - A charmer but on the thin side. Better than Pound imitators.

SK - He is on an original tract.

GF - We will guard against inviting a second application unless he approaches us.

Bishop

RL - There is no doubt about her.

RPW - There is no discussion about her if she wants it.

SK - I want her to write more poems. Her book on her life in Brazil may be reduced to a guidebook.

R1 - She would like to go back to Brazil, where she lives a stable life with a friend.

SB - We are not likely to find many applications of her quality.

RL - This is a certain thing. If she had had her application last year, there would have been no question.

Frodie

Hungerford nominated him. He is a junior at Northwestern.

It is difficult to discuss students.

SA - It would be interesting to nominate 3 grants for students and see what comes of it.

SB - Not a bad idea.

GF - suggested getting samples of what students felt was their best writing and sending copies to 2 people. If these 2 considered it to be good, GF would send it to the others. A given number of awards cannot be designated with the firm expectation that they will go that way - the officers must decide.

R1 - Promising students are hard. It is a question of how much manuscript you must wade through.

GF - We should at least look at their materials.

R1 - Will we judge on the manuscripts rather than the nominators?

GF - On both.

SK - It is no more work to examine student material than any other.

GF - Should I get material from Frodie.

If it does not mean he will become an applicant.

Burke

SK - Absolutely

SB - Yes, he is one of the people who should simply get a grant

SK - We can nudge him in the direction we wish.

Charvyn

SK - He does not sound like a hot candidate.

Cowley

RL - A complicated question. He is a tremendous literary man with great talent.

RPW - He is a literary man of some evidence.

RL - He is a good writer. Some of his reminiscences are good. Does he need the grant. He does not have much money.

RPW - I do not see why we should support a person like him. Burke has made a good contribution to literary thinking and criticism. Cowley is a literary

Cowley (cont'd)

RPW - journalist. Those of the age of Cowley should be helped by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Although Burke and Cowley are about the same age.

RL - Cowley is decent but there are more important writers.

SK - He is a reporter of the scene.

SB - He should be considered if he is writing a book of reminiscences.

SK - That is the same thing as Herbst.

RL - The real point is if he needs money.

SA - But there are not an infinite number of grants to give. Let's leave this as a question mark.

Deaux

SK - We were strong on him.

GF - We gave him high priority last year. There are different evaluations of EDDIE CEMENT and critical comments concerning the manuscript he submitted.

SB - I would have given it to him last year.

JEB - Should we not leave him on the list until there is a new novel?

Dobson

GF - This is a case where we know nothing. Would you like to see a part of his manuscript?

SB - I think so.

SK - Let's leave open a category for 3 unpublished writers whom we were discussing as students.

Faust

SK - He was pretty good - interesting.

Gross

SK - One of the few really sound studies in modern poetry - a philosophical book.

GF - The question is whether he needs funds to complete this.

RL - Is he a writer good on anything or is he one that you want to know.

SK - I have a feeling he would be good on anything he wants to write about.

GF - We will get in touch with him to see where he stands.

Hawkes

SK - He would be good for a book on the South as he cares about place and violence.

SB - He is very good.

RPW - We should consider him

SK & RL - There is no question that he is good.

Hoffman

SB - I do not know him.

RPW - He is not clear about the range of his talent yet. Let's keep him on and see what he looks like. I would feel bad to say no right now.

GF - We should have details about what he wants and needs.

RPW - He knows he wants to write poems.

GF - He is really not being prevented from writing his book where someone else may be.

SB - He has an indifferent talent and some money so not for us.

We will keep his name in play but not invite an application from him now.

McCarthy

SK - I know his one book and feel it is brilliant.

RPW - I feel he is brilliant also.

SB - I liked it very much. He would be holding the National Institute travel grant now. We should be in touch with him this year.

RPW - He is young and has a real touch for getting things told. A real flair.

Murray

SB - He is a nice man but what he has done has been reviewing for LIFE. He was an Air Force Major and now gets retirement pay. He is in his early 40's and has literary ambition.

GF - Do you feel Murray has talent that the Foundation could help.

RPW - I do not know.

SB - I knew him in Paris when he was preparing to be a writer. If he has done writing, it would be interesting. We should find out from Ellison what Murray is doing.

Roth

Had an FF at American Place Theatre last year. He must pay \$100 a week alimony. He is in financial difficulty.

SK - He has just finished his manuscript.

He has asked to be considered before the spring. - as Ellison and Tucci were last year.

RL - He is terrific - much better than Tucci.

SK - He should be in limbo now.

RL & SK - With his alimony arrangements it is really bad. He will always need money.

GF - We cannot give him a grant because of his alimony.

SB - Without mentioning need, from the artistic side he should have help.

RL - We are for him.

SK & RPW - We were disappointed in his last novel.

JEB - The grant must be decided on the plans for his next novel.

GF - We must know something specific about what he wants.

RPW - Survival and survival as a writer and two different things.

GF - Then we would favor helping him if it is connected with his next project.

RL - Do not put if there.

SK - We know he is a writer

SB - WE are strongly in favor

SK - He is a touchy individual. He will not like to have to produce an idea for a book.

GF - We must talk with him about what he wants to do.

Seager

RL - His wife is dying. He cannot be well off.

GF - Can we say he would feel free to get in touch with us as he is a nominator.

RPW - He is proud and would not ask for help

GF - We will find out what the Guggenheim prospects are for him and leave his name in play.

RL - I like him but do not know if his book will be wonderful.

SK - I feel doubtful.

RPW - He has good scenes and skills. Some of his writing is quite good.

SK - It is a difficult assignment and he does not know how to manipulate materials.

Howe and Kazin

If they give us proposals we would be prepared to invite applications.

SB - Howe is good of his sort.

RL - I like Kazin better than Howe.

Howe and Kazin (cont'd)

SK - They are not comparable.

RL - I put Kazin high.

SK & R - Neither would be a bad choice but neither is in need.

RPW, RL, & SK thought Howe's book on Faulkner was thin.

SB & SK disliked Kazin's second book of memoirs.

GF - Then we are not wild for either but do not want to turn them down.

RPW - But I like Kazin over Howe.

Dickey - He has a 2-year appointment to the Library of Congress.

Yurick

SB - He is a primitive and naive but he is very close to his material.

His material is rough. He writes on young gangs in Brooklyn - a marvelous, crude story. He is not an artist but he has a certain amount of raw material with great feeling and that says much.

GF - I will have a talk with him.

Walsh

SK & RL - Would not consider Chad Walsh.

Ferryman

RL - Allen Tate said he needed money.

SB questioned why a President of the University should interfere in this.

SK - Let's find out from Tate.

RPW & SK - If he needs help, this is no question at all.

MacDonald

RL - He works like hell and is not paid much. He is always writing for deadlines. He is talented.

GF - Should we find out what he would do?

SK - What could he do that he has not already been engaged to do?

SB - He is an uneven writer although he has done some excellent things.

SK - He is a literary journalist as is Cowley.

SB - Not if he has a specific subject and some ____? work.

Tolson

SK - I am very interested in him as a candidate. He has had nothing.

Markfield

SB - I dislike his work intensely.

SK - I thought him talented though not completely successful.

RPW - It dies away though he is good.

SB - He wrote on insider stuff, private jokes. He had a willingness to laugh at all. TO AN EARLY GRAVE was poor human stuff and got credit beyond its merit. I am prejudiced for I knew the dead man. He turned this human man into crap.

GF - We will leave him in limbo but will find out what he has in mind.

Carrol

SB - He is nothing. He is an off-poet.

SK - I sort of like him, but he is a silly choice.

Howard

RL & SK - He is industrious

SB - He is a good translator but not important at all.

Petrakis

RPW - He is a middle-aged Greek in Chicago who writes strong stories on the Greeks in Chicago.

SK - I felt that they were slight.

RPW - They are not big.

Jones

RPW - THE INNOCENT was an excellent book. He is teaching at a low salary. It is as good or better than THE ORCHARD KEEPER. His first novel got good reviews. He has talent and is now in the mill of a hard working job.

SB - We should read him.

Poverman - has withdrawn

Lytle

He has a thin teaching job and 3 children. He had a year off and went to Mexico. His wife had cancer and took a long time to die. Then he had cancer but he is now in good health. He is now 60 and wants to write a book.

RL - He wins everyone's heart who knows him.

RPW - This is a case of a man having lost 10 to 12 years. Now he has the will to write.

RL - I am for him.

SB - I would clearly like to see an application from him.

RPW - Have the committee read 1 or 2 of his novels. THE LONG NIGHT is a better book. Let's not ask him to apply though and turn him down.

Finkel

RPW - I think well of him and he should be read. Get SIMEON if possible.

Tolson

SK & RPW are for Tolson without any qualification.

Olsen

SB - She is quite good. She is an odd ball. We must find out if she will get an Academy grant.

RPW - She is up but I do not know if she will get a grant. We must find out about her current writing.

RL - Not absolutely terrific.

Meredith

GF - Is he now at a time when he needs help.

SK - Does he need a grant?

RPW - He has a full-time job and wastes a lot of writing time by devoting himself to this project. He is beyond discussion on sheer merit. He is at Princeton this year and I believe he will be there for good.

GF - We should find out more about his circumstances.

RL - He is responsible and talented.

Elkin

SK - I was for Elkin and am still for him.

GF - Should Elkin come off better than he did last year. Last year he wanted help from June, 1967, onward.

Sutherland

SK - Knows him. He is out of the picture as he has an inheritance.

Singer

SK & SB - He is a first-rate writer.

Singer(cont'd)

GF - Would he be more productive if not on newspaper.

SB - He is so used to it.

Williams

No one knew him and all would read his work.

Lawrence O'Sullivan

RPW - He sounds interesting.

GF should get manuscript.

Orlovitz

SK - I know his work. He does not fall into a category. He is superior to some poets of a greater reputation. He is in need. We should get his work but do so quietly. (A collection in TODAY'S POETS.)

pink Noll

SK - It is tight. Wait for another book. The one book is not basis enough

Suzanne Gross

No one knows her work.

Welly

RPW - She has had a rough time

RL & RPW - She is a marvelous writer. SB agrees.

Get an application.

Hurt

RPW - He is terribly good.

RL - Do we want a student category?

SB - We should read his stories.

FRancis

RPW - He is a frosty poet.

RL - He is very thin

SK - Do not see giving him a grant.

Clark

No one knows him.

Salisbury

RL - He was once a student of mine. j

Ray and Stafford

Stafford is excellent. He is the more accomplished one.

RL - We should see some of Ray's material.

SK - I feel we would be negative on Ray by intuition.

RL - Then we should not see Ray.

GF - We should find about Stafford's circumstances and plans before we ask for an application.

Gordon

RL - Her new book on heroes is weird.

GF - Is there a reason why she needs consideration. She gets alimony from Tate.

RL - She works hard. She is 68.

SK - Is she in a special problem category?

RL - She has a kind of genius without much recognition.

Gordon (cont'd)

RPW - Her Elic (?) Morris book is incredible.

RL - Marvelous and odd.

RPW - She is a real writer.

SK - She is worthy.

SB - She is awfully good, but her last 2 books were not good.

SK & RPW - Her last novel was dreadful.

SB - Her critical essays have left me cold.

S, - Her dogmatic approach to literature offends me.

RPW - She is a Calvinite Catholic. She teaches around a lot and may need money.

Leonie Adams

SK & RL - She is good

RPW - What about the Bollingen prize?

SK - She is poor and teaching very hard.

RPW - She is at the retirement age but has no pension.

SK - She is bitter over the lack of recognition. It would be dreadful for her to be turned down.

GF should get material on her.

RPW & SK like her.

Alexander, Margaret Walker

Should see JUBILEE

Koch

Should investigate his works.

Chappell

RL - He is a southern regional writer that is pretty good. Others should read THE INKLING.