



Stars Seen in Person: Selected Journals of John Wieners

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A contributor to Donald Allen's seminal *New American Poetry* anthology, John Wieners was on the periphery of many of the twentieth century's most important avant-garde poetry scenes, from Black Mountain and the Boston Renaissance to the New York School and the SF Renaissance. Having achieved cult status among poets, Wieners has also become known for the compelling nature of his journals, a mixture of early drafts of poems, prose fragments, lists, and other fascinating minutiae of the poet's imagination. *Stars Seen in Person: Selected Journals of John Wieners* collects four of his previously unpublished journals from the period between 1955 and 1969. The first journal depicts a young, openly gay, self-described "would-be poet" dashing around bohemian Boston with writer and artist friends, pre-drugs and pre-fame. By the last book, decimated by repeated institutionalization (the first for drug-related psychosis, the rest the consequence of the first) and personal tragedies, Wieners is broken down and in great pain, but still writing honestly and with detail about the life he's left with. These journals capture a post-war bohemian world that no longer exists, depicted through the prism of Wieners' sense of glamour.

Praise for *Stars Seen in Person*:

"Like Rimbaud in *Season in Hell*, or Baudelaire with *Intimate Journals*, there's an unguarded spark and trust in John Wieners because impulse and imagination reign supreme. In 1955 he writes, "I shall try the only true thing I want to do. I shall go to my poems." Predating *The Hotel Wentley Poems*, moving through *Ace of Pentacles*, and ushering us into his life before *Nerves*, *Stars Seen in Person* further illuminates John as our future/former best unkept secret."—**Micah Ballard**

"Thanks to Michael Seth Stewart's editorial legerdemain, at long last we have the magnificent John Wieners here before us, in his full undressed splendor: poet, stargazer, philosopher, shaman, flâneur, survivor. His journals—an inspiring monument, filled with taut provocations and purple illuminations—are valuable as cultural history, as lyric performance, as uninhibited autobiography, and as a motley, genre-defying epitome of *gesamtkunstwerk* aesthetic possibilities that seem as fresh and enticing as anything being dreamt up today."—**Wayne Koestenbaum**

"These pages of notebooks and poetry—so exhaustively exhumed and returned to light and breath—are equivalent to Rilke's *Letters to a Young Poet*, but in reverse. John Wieners (forever young) evolved through his prose notes towards a sustained poetics of adolescence, holding that tormented phase on a long unyielding band-wave, resisting the sop of adult living with all his might and undergoing the inevitable punishments that such persistence brings."—**Fanny Howe**

"John Wieners remains one of the best poets of my generation. His work & life continue to influence younger poets. These journals reveal his deep commitment to poetry & the poem; they contextualize his constant questing & devotion to the art. I knew John during many of the periods his journals cover &, as always, remain amazed & moved by his deeply examined honesty & purity."—**David Meltzer**

John Wieners studied with Charles Olson at Black Mountain College, and later edited the small magazine *Measure*. He lived for a year and a half in San Francisco, where he wrote his breakthrough book, *Hotel Wentley Poems* (1958). In the early seventies he settled into an apartment on Boston's Beacon Hill, where he lived and wrote until his death in 2002.

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