

Why I Read Tom Clark's Vlog by Charlie Vermont

Contributed by Charlie Vermont

Â Â Why I Read Tom Clark's Blog

<http://tomclarkblog.blogspot.com>

The advent of the internet gave everyone the advantage of finding old friends and Amazon.com was then a natural bibliography for someone who had not paid attention to the poetry world for a long time. Â My favorite book of Tom's is The World of Damon Runyon. I had read, prior to that, his biographies of Olson, Creeley, and Dorn, poets whose books I had intensely read during my time as a poet. I had lived next door to Creeley for several years in Placitas and had met Dorn at the height of his power, The Gunslinger, years. Olson was a particular idol of everyone particularly Ken Irby who was a friend in California. I suspect Allegory of Poet (Olson) is the definitive scholarly work and the others vivid first person accounts. Â To me Damon Runyon was spectacular because it was so outside the Bolinas/Berkeley/San Francisco poetry milieu of the 70's and far from the political domains of say Ginsberg and Snyder all reading against the war in Vietnam with Robert Bly reading The Teeth Mother Naked at Last and alas Bly lost it with Iron John. Runyon covers the territory of the first 50 years of America sport and celebrity with life portraits of American icons: Jack Dempsey, Arnold Rothstein, Guys and Dolls, Joe Louis....sport and Hollywood. A remarkable scholarly book from Colorado to Montana to New York...with Eddie Rickenbacker...WWI flying Ace and chairman of Eastern Airlines scatteringÂ Runyon's ashes overÂ Central ParkÂ at the end.Â The popular culture of the 1950's was heavily populated with derivatives of or directly from Runyon...looking back so to speak. Â The second book that truly hooked me was his The Exile of Celine. The sixties' ethos having fell apart and the fact that I moved to a part of the country that was more traditional and back in time and pre internet to a sense of exile and I had read Celine's North and Castle to Castle in part in a continuing quest to comprehend the fascist impulse that had led to the Holocaust and WWII. Unfortunately fascism is a very human impulse. Clark's book is true artistry in that the verisimilitude in creating the environment of chaos as war reigns and a hunted individual flees. Again considering Bolinas and Berkeley of the time it was an incredible feat of creative imagination. Â So the poetry too...Light and Shade....the Blaze Vox...steady stream. Erudition and universal poetry just a click away everyday. Â Â