

An abstract painting of two hands, rendered in a highly expressive, gestural style. The colors are vibrant and varied, including deep reds, oranges, yellows, blues, and purples, all layered and blended together. The brushstrokes are thick and visible, creating a sense of movement and texture. The hands are positioned as if holding each other, with the fingers slightly curled. The overall effect is one of intense emotion and physicality.

JAMES HUMPHREY

THE POETRY READINGS

ARGUMENT FOR LOVE

1 9 6 9 - 1 9 7 4

The first part of this rare recorded collection takes place in 1969—and poet James Humphrey (1939-2008) is at a proverbial crossroads (tracks 1-15). It's a year after Humphrey has completed his self-described nine-year writing apprenticeship, personally known as “writing *at* writing poems in free verse” and it's a year before *Argument for Love*, Humphrey's first book, will be published. Reading in poet Darrell Gray's apartment in Iowa City on a summer evening we hear the ambient sounds of the neighborhood—including two cats fighting as they inadvertently perform background vocals for a poem. But more importantly, we hear the emergence of Humphrey's bare bones writing style. It's cause for celebration!

Later, we catch up with Humphrey at poetry readings as he begins to read for larger audiences. Beginning in 1972, at Lawrence Auditorium in Falmouth, Massachusetts, later at the Mouthpiece Coffee Shop, Providence, Rhode Island, in 1973 and finally at Rhode Island College in 1974 for a lively night of poetry and music as Humphrey shares the stage with singer/songwriter/artist and close friend, Jay Bolotin. This collection offers a look into a window of time when Humphrey was actively reading his poetry publicly and his star was on the rise.

A note from Saroyan, Humphrey's son: I was about six when I attended these readings with my father. It was a mysterious world. I remember dark, smoke-filled rooms with hushed voices, clinking glasses and when my dad would read a poem dedicated to me or I was mentioned in a poem, audience members would turn to me and smile and I, painfully shy, would usually turn a couple shades of red, and try to smile back. Today, as I was then, I am proud of my father and I hope you enjoy these readings of a powerful poet. (6-09)

COVER: “An Abstract of a Rare Nuthatch Flower In Tribute to Georgia O’Keeffe”
BACK COVER AND DISC: (Detail) “Bursting Spring Flower” PAINTINGS BY JAMES HUMPHREY

JamesHumphrey.net

DESIGN: SAROYAN HUMPHREY/SAROYANDESIGN.COM



JAMES HUMPHREY
THE POETRY READER
ARGUMENT FOR LOVE
1 9 6 9 / 1 9 7 4

*Recorded during an interview on WGBH-FM, Boston, 12-8-75.

**Recorded at Rhode Island College, Providence, R.I., 11-23-74.

***Written and performed by Jay Bolotin; courtesy Doc/Owsley Music—BMI. Title of "Argument for Love"—courtesy James Humphrey, recorded from a television as it aired on TV-36, Providence, 12-19-75.

****Written and performed by Jay Bolotin; courtesy Doc/Owsley Music—BMI; recorded at Mouthpiece Coffee House, Providence, 10-27-73.

Total time: 64:23

PAINTINGS BY
JAMES HUMPHREY

PRODUCED BY LISA SUMMER
AND STEVE KOWALSKI

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PAP CD-610

1. FOR LOVE
2. SNOW ANGELS
3. HER LOVE
4. WE ARE
5. ARGUMENT FOR LOVE
6. TODAY
7. A BED FOR THE POET'S
FIRST BORN, JUNE 1964
8. POEM/The reflection
9. LOVE WITH NUMBERS
10. CONTEMPORARY
POETRY, SECOND
SEMESTER, AN
ILLUSTRATION FROM
INSTRUCTOR TO
STUDENTS ON HOW
NOT TO WRITE A
CONTEMPORARY
POEM, OR, MAYBE *MAD*
MAGAZINE NEEDS YOU
11. FOUND
12. WHERE I WAS
13. POEM/Water
14. GETTING UP
15. A LETTER TO ONE OF MY
POETRY STUDENTS
16. POEM/for Jean Larson
17. AFTER BUYING A NEW
TYPEWRITER RIBBON
18. INSIDE AND OUT
19. SPRING FLOWER
4 MAY, 1970
20. POEM FOR JAY BOLOTIN
21. THE SECRET*
22. Reading introduction
by Bill Small**
23. DO YOU HEAR ME?
24. GOING OUT
25. THERE ARE WORDS
26. UNTITLED/for Diane
Wakowski
27. FIRST COMMUNION
28. ECHOES: A DIARY
29. POEM/Poets are wanted
for what they're not
30. AFTER WRITING ALL
NIGHT AND INTO THE
DAY, I GO TO THE
REFRIGERATOR FOR
ANOTHER BEER AND SEE
A YOUNG GIRL THROUGH
THE KITCHEN WINDOW
WALKING BY
31. AND SO ON
32. SOMETHING AT NIGHT
33. A PLAY IN ONE ACT
34. UNTITLED/My reading
has been completed.
35. POETS ARE WANTED FOR
WHAT THEY'RE NOT
36. THE VISITOR
37. SIMPLY
38. JUST TO SING
39. AN HOMAGE, THE END OF
SOME MORE LAND
40. On moving from Iowa to
Cape Cod
41. THE RELEARNING I
42. THE RELEARNING II
43. BREAKFAST TABLE,
AFTER WRITING ALL
NIGHT
44. UNTITLED/How light
the air is
45. POEM WRITTEN WITH MY
SON'S PEN
46. HERE NOW
47. FOR NORMA
48. FOR NORMA
49. FOR MY SON SAROYAN
50. THE CHANCE
51. NEW YEAR POEM/The
Relearning III
52. ARGUMENT FOR LOVE/
Jay Bolotin***
53. THE OLDER LADY'S
LOVER/Jay Bolotin****
54. Humphrey on entering
a junior high school
classroom to teach
poetry.