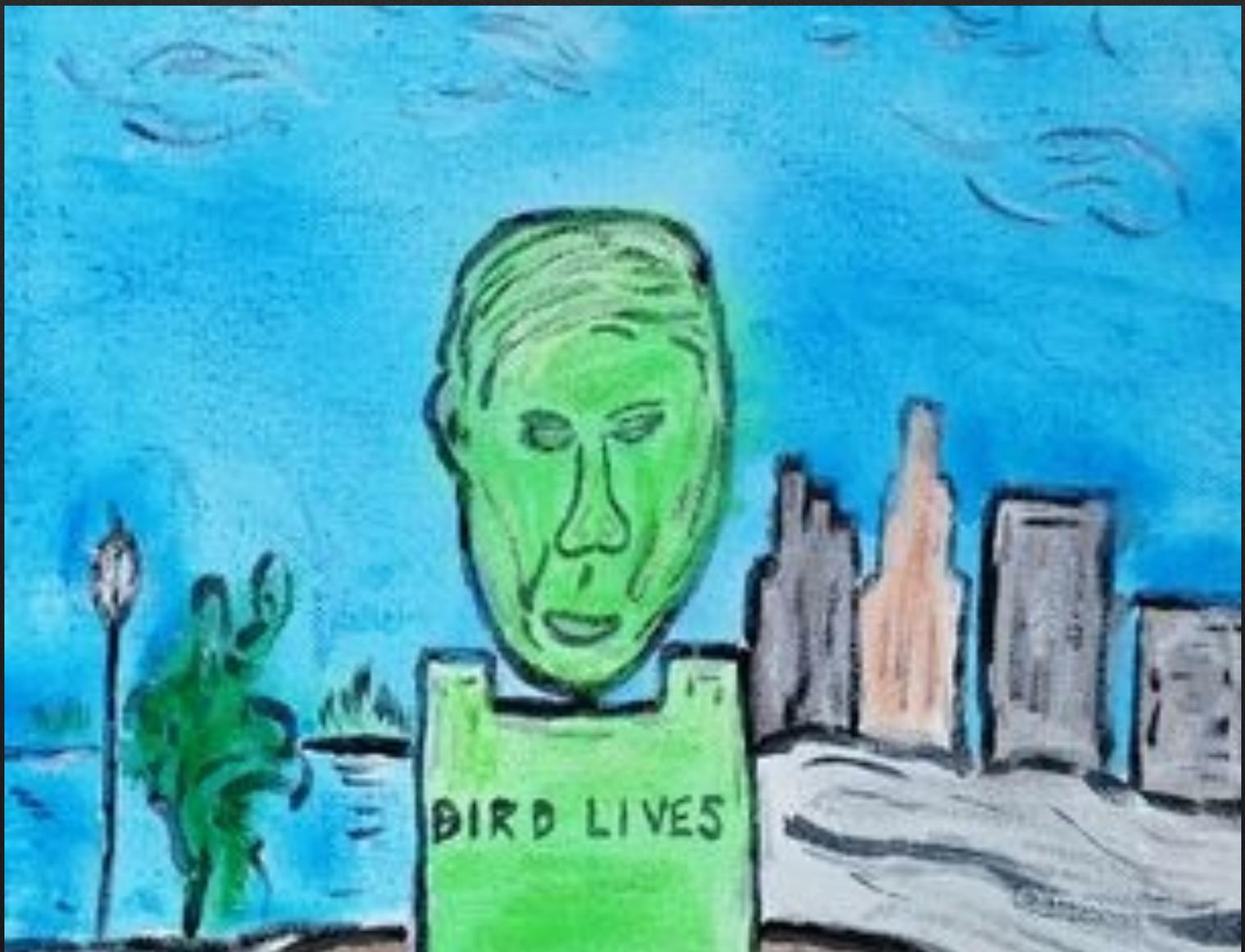

neon jazz poems
jazz shrines went so improv they aligned in precision

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Jazz Define

the
collective
jazz
voice
is
made
of invisible
swaths
of
air
that
gave
this
country
sound
when
the
silence
wasn't
enough.

David Amram

speeding
in a
NYC train
composing
thick
words
over a
cell phone
in a
talk full
of laughter
as he
mused over
the music talent in KC
and talked of
an award
he would
get that night
for
being alive long
enough
and
full of cool
to orchestrate
a
Kerouac semi-colon.

Bergonzi

he said
he didn't
think about
yesterday in
large Boston cool
as another
monumental
snow fell to earth
while
warm stories of Brubeck
and
life
on the road
heated over
the phone receiver
the
way
a
good tune
can
call
each of us
forever
&
ever.

The Man

after he explained
the fascination Kerouac
had with life
talking to a janitor
at a BYOB party
in 50's NYC,
his hip
verbal swagger
assured me
that dizzy gillespie
and
louis armstrong
were fast pals
contrary to
history etchings
and it
was then in my attic high
over Missouri
i saw 3 stealth
fighter planes fly by in
one dark line booming
with sound
as mr. amram
just kept
talking his
hep words.

Weston

his worn,
yet wise brooklyn voice
explained
how all of africa
pepetually
swang.

the trees,
elephant trunks,
gifaffe tails,
all the
life

just
moved in swing ..

and it was then that
his old jazz voice said
that is how the africans
brought
jazz to america
and the massive velvet curtain
parted
in a way
i never
imagined it could
ever move
showing
me the birth of jazz.

Rollins

sonny said plaintively
that
he was hoping
his
next album
would be
his finest
yet
and in all
the jazz
saints
he gave
birth to
and the easy cool
he made the
streets of
jazz flow,
i just let
mr. rollins
explain his
humble wisdom
over the
clean
and
clear of his
collosus
legacy.

The Prodigy

justin k. spoke with a smooth,
content glide about
how the jazz cats of the world are
so grounded because
they are all borrowing
the song as the
piano prodigy
chuckled with tales
of quincy j. and clark t.

he also said
that sounds didn't intensify
after losing his sight
and the main thing
is the beautiful noise
of jazz that hits the crowds ears
as the young wonder
is now a man speaking
like an old jazz vet
ready to educate
the world the only way
he was told by the wise
old
jazz jedi council.

Gee Glee

on an accidental
chance with the great count
in his basie,
george
with his gee
spoke of how
he is going
to descend swing
onto all continents of this planet
in his cool cat glow
while
musing over memiors
he needs to write
and the movie of his life
that may play out
better than anything
even a legend could assume
and as the phone line
cut loose after
i thanked him for his time,
i called back
and he picked back
up where the band left off
dazzling the ear with more improv
made of NYC echoes
melded with the finest sound
today can
make.

Hot Sardine

miz elizabeth
hummed in a dignified
jazz growl that if
there was a jazz delorian
to go back in time,
she would catch sinatra
in the heyday of unironed collars
and girls dreaming
of something sweeter than
finding a new universe.

then,
she said seeing
armstrong and the old crooners
of the day
would round out a nice fictitious
trip through the bell tower
of another
stack of jazz ghosts
as her hot sardines
were waiting
in the tour bus
with another anonymous tip
on how to survive better
with life
on that long,
cool jazz trip.

The Lake

he goes by oliver
and his world
is a lake of artistic wonder
and in that aged,
tempo jazz soul
of his
he spoke
like a poet that
never went to formal school
and a painter that
decorated your dreams
at the apex of night,
but he spoke
of how the horns
changed his life
and the gallery was the best home
he could find in this life
as the old landline he
spoke into
crackled like a
warm fire
getting hotter by his words

...another
small element of his creative arsenal
heating up everyone
that
drifted by.

McPherson Cool

in the middle of a mingus tale,
charles stopped me in his old jazz man
cool to say politely
that he needed to
switch the oars
on his phone waiting and he'd return.

after less than a minute,
he said in that
golden san diego sunshine
that a neighbor was in a
life threatening fix
but his wife was on the way to help
and just as quickly,
he said 'where was i .. "

then,
it was back into mingus
and the metaphor for the mcpherson
tale that would unfurl into a long,
rich story of wonder
fueled by the horns,
books,
mentors and the outer reaches
of eons of universes that is
the folds of his wise brain going on
and on like a jazzy
sagan cosmo.

I Said “Hi Karen”

she came back
and simply said,
'karrin'
and i said, 'oh,
i'm sorry.'
several times.

but,
sometimes you
sorta recover
from
missteps with a
veteran
and other times
you just get stuck
in the shadow of star
and kid reporter.

and in that proverbial transit
between the moon
and new york city
& back to kansas city,
I stood there like the dark haired step
child itching for a good story
if he could just get
the names right
in the allyson
of it all.

Basse

david in the tenor
of his basse told me about
two curious musicians that wanted
to meet the titan miles davis one day.

so,
they went to his hotel,
found his room and
nervously knocked on his door.

he opened the door naked,
looked at them wordlessly
and went back to bed.

the two musician kids in
adult bodies looked on in wonder
as the bebop hero
went back nude to sleep
in his rented bed.

when miles woke,
he walked to close the door
and saw the kids looking in
and said,
'you motherfuckers still here?'

at this,
they said 'yessir.'
and mr. davis tossed them
a wad of cash and said to
buy them some sandwiches.

they did and ate with the king of jazz.
after they finished their sandwiches,
he said,

'you motherfuckers still here?'
they replied,
'yessir.'

so, he told them to come with him to
the place he was going to gig.

they followed.

at the gig,
closer and closer to their dream.
he put them up front in the audience
and practiced a bit.

then,
looked out at them again and said,
'you motherfuckers still here?'

at this,
miles in his cool,
invited them on stage to play.

and there,
the best dream in one lifetime
and every country in the jazz map
was achieved
motherfuckers.

The Sam

sam in his newsome
sort of approach
to living the jazz dream
took me under his wing
briefly and led me
through the streets of jazz story
that wound into one
about how donald byrd
would speak continually on
one such jazz venture
and the oratory was so amazing,
sam and all the jazz
cats in the car got a
years load of education
from the mouth of a master.
including the tale of philly joe jones
running a trolley in philly before he was
big and would stop
off at clubs during
his route
to bang out tunes in
gigs on the skins
then hop back out onto his trolley
like nothing happened.

just a bit of magic in the club,
much like sam
doing in words

as the story wound around
like intricate
avenues of brain
squeezing together in
perfect hemispheres filled with
every possible jazz note
you could imagine.

Mighty Fred

he survived 9 days in a coma
and said he
could hardly move
when he awoke and his brilliant
jazz fingers trained by
a prodigy cloud
around him
couldn't even grasp a pillow ..

but,
he relearned the world and his
jazz instrument to get back into
the villiage vanguard to see
the face of coltrane on the wall
and the invisible notes of bill evans
wafting around and through the tables
like the coma dreams
fred would retell in his
unique sort of way as his voice captured
the song his keys
slightly touched
in yet another jazz story
avoiding the traffic jam
to tell you
how the world
ended
and
began again.

DeJohnette

jack
spoke so low
i had to press the
microphone harder towards
the phone unsure if i
would capture
dejohnette
eating some fruit or bread
as he went over the
mystifyingly cool beginnings
of his life in a chicago jazz town
slightly before the miles davis train
would come through
and whisk him into a legendary
storm cloud us bourgeoisie
can only imagine
in our jazz loving brains
as jack the jazz drummer
wipes his mouth of the food
and continues on dishing out
the audio food
almost silently
in the loudest
scream
he could muster.

Woods

he seems to
be the hunter s. thompson
of the jazz world
and
it was when
phil woods
began speaking to me
in initial pleasantries,
it was loud,
precise and skeptical.

but,
once we started going over
the horn his uncle gave
him as a boy
and the first gigs that
moved him into the cool racket of
bebop legacy,
i saw the skepticism
become smooth,
cool shapes of the finest music
i had ever heard
just like him laying down
the best he had in the
greatest jazz
juke joints
this world has
ever heard.

KC Jazz Foundation Foundation

she told
me that a paranormal
crew had been in
the very room
i was standing the week prior
and confessed
that they never felt the spirits
as powerfully
as they did
in the oldest jazz house
in kansas city.

with this in mind,
i sifted my eyes around
and imagined teams
of ghosts that
were armed with jazz horn
from the KC heydeys
jamming into
the moments the sun would
rise once again and
the world again was getting
pregnant with a new
hangover
of tasty jazz
and the best gin on
the planet.

as ms. dixon
retold the story
of the local 627
and the
charlie parker tales
with everything minced
in between,
i could sense the jazz spirit
was soaring around like
lost notes from a worn horn
that made everything
make sense via
music at one time.

and as i walked
out of the jazz shrine,
i felt a
bit cold,
alone,
vastly different
from the kindred
now of the inside
where warmth
and jazz live
for absolute ever
off a little street on 18 and Vine
in that Kansas City
town of ours.

The Best Jazz Tale

reggie pondered hard for a minute
to conjure the best jazz story
he ever heard and
in a sudden 'oh' it hit him.

his old boss,
the great maynard ferguson
moved to LA to become a musician
for major movie studios
and during his tenure
in the land of dreams and sunshine,
he got himself some lover girl
that made his horn the better.

apparently,
this girl was one of sinatra's gals,
as well.

and the dame war was to begin.

one afternoon while
at home in the hills,
maynard got the knock on the door
from a massive mafioso style dude
with a maynard LP and pen in hand.

when the door flew open,
he asked for his autograph.
after the ink was beginning to dry,
maynard said

*'what the fuck? you didn't come here to
get my autograph.'*

at this,
the man cut through the quick
LA air of warm and said that he needed
to leave Frank's girl alone.

at this,
maynard told him to tell
frank to go fuck himself and the door
slammed hard into the wood frame.

time went on and nothing got strange
until one day months
later frank and maynard
were on the same lot
to do some anniversary TV show filming.

frank was in the spotlight,
maynard was in the band.

at one point,
they passed each other and
frank merely said,
'you got some balls, kid'

at this,
reggie and i laughed so heartily that
we forgot what time it was here in jazz
story land.

Mintzer

it took 20 minute or so
of routine calls up
to a 5-star chicago hotel room
in the middle
of a warm midwestern day
to see if
i could have a bit of time
to speak with the
journeyed cat
known as bob mintzter.

and when the receptionist
at the hotel finally
got me an alternate number
after sending me to his room
many times,
i got ahold of
a club owner that was going to
feature bob that night
and he had no idea where his
mysterious whereabouts were.

and with that,
i knew that another day
and another way
was going to transpire.

as i hit the road,
my phone rang hard and

it was bob apologizing
to me for not being around
and being trouble.

and it
was me erasing that blank
of saying it's fine,
fine,
fine like a jazz improv solo ..

the legends and
stars have such a humanity
that it's odd to
hear an apology,
but it only adds to
their
soul cool
and
metered approach
to mastering the
best jazz
we
can all
possibly muster.

Wilkins

the deadpan overtures
of his meter
was spiked with
levels of greatness
as he spoke through
the invisible pages
of his jazz history.

then,
he finished all
of the eloquence
and memory of days
in his brooklyn voice
by saying
that he didn't care
what his legacy was
or if anyone thought about it.

he explained his case
in a short explosion of
monotone words
with the sounds of
simultaneous sinatra
songs playing somewhere and the lore
of old jack wilkins was
solidified in my book
and that legacy is larger than
he would
ever admit.

Al

they call
him al
and his canadian jazz cool
oozed through
the phone receiver
here into the middle of america
as his entire lineage
was ringing with
'i've got nothing to lose'
and *'the whole world is cool'*.

as the canadian winds roared
and the american trumpets
began somewhere in this
kansas city town,
mr. murihead
hung up the phone and continued
to walk his
mark right up
the international jazz road
into a
sun
that
will never set.

Mr. Heath

as jimmy wove down all the
intricate and tall stories
of jazz history,
he had to pause
in a composer's lurch
on the legacy and history of coltrane.

he explained in detail
how coltrane spent hours
in that philly fog and sunshine
practicing that horn until he
literally had to sleep or gig.

the constant sound of the horn
and the tiny pin prick portal
into the legacy of a champ.

and as jimmy heath went on about
miles and the rest
of the cool cats that made jazz

what it is today,
he just went on as though
he was telling me about his family
into some dusty recorder
so the world would know
once and for all how it all
fuckin' really
went
down.

Cobb Truism

in the many studio takes
that rolled down the miles davis
sweat river,
it was the man
behind the drum kit
that told me the truth about that
kind of blue
set of days that made the finest wax ever
spun on a record player.

jimmy cobb explained that
it was no big deal
at the time,
the group just played
their buns off under that
expert eye of the hero
known as miles.

and that was it.

no special
kentucky fried ingredients
or aura that needed dispelled.

just the magic
of jazz wizards
getting their human minds moving
in a way that was
kind,
blue and timeless.

Sweet Lou

his answering machine popped on
in a haze of old tape
with a bluesy sax wailing and a voice
telling the people what to say
to his legendary
phone box of recordings.

i could only assume
it was lou donaldson,
and it was confirmed
some hours later when the man
had called my phone
to wonder who the hell was
playing at the
big charlie parker festivities
in KC that summer.

and it was then that
he tossed me the jersey
in the coke ad with a
mean joe green flick
saying he had 10 minutes before
tee time to talk.

and in that 90 seconds or
so before i put the mic on
and decided what i was
going to ask on the fly,
i knew that he was going

to sound better than
that answering machine
and have some stories
of bird and the world
of jazz that would finally
bring that
holy grail to light
and make the jazz phoenix
come straight
back to life.

Weather Jazz

he slightly mentioned
that he was the man
in the 80's that played
the tasty jazz collection
on the weather channel
as our collective
eyes figured out
what to wear,
and dreamed of that
hot spot on the map
that blotted out
the bleak winter cold,
it was lenny marcus
in some studio that
provided the
soundtrack of our weather lives
set to his eternal jazz
making sure that
no matter the weather,
it was going to be jazz ..

and that's the best kinda
forecast legacy
lenny could have
given each
and all
of us.

Bobby

he spoke
in a laugh
as he said
he huddled over
in the corner with
the cool new york guys
as the
ultimate hipster from the jazz skins
known as the art blakey
took his old bones
onto the european disco floors
and danced with sweat
flying like jazz keys through
the early morning
piercing eyes that
became the only thing on that
dancing liquor haze
as the world of every music genre
melted and it was
art's wide smile
ensuring that jazz was
never
ever gonna die,
baby.

The E.E. Pointer

a local jazz man specializing in
zen cool
had one more
story in the 2nd floor
of a rainy day coffeehouse
to tell me
before we would
waltz away from our jazz hour.

he said one night
he went to get his wife
some ice cream
and pulled up to
the shack seeing a cherry red cadillac
with a distinct license plate.

as he climbed out and
to the window with the sweets
his wife needed
in her pregnant state,
he saw chuck berry loading up on
a flavor caravan of
ice cream.

in a nervous flush,
EE said he
talked to chuck for a minute or so
and said he was the coolest cat
he's likely ever met.

the earth was flat
and as chuck drove off
and mr. pointer had
his coveted sweet ice cream,
he thought he had entered
desert nivana
of purgatory as
the st. louis night
lost a bit more light,
but gained a few more stars visible
in the
skies above.

Molly Jazz

i called
to new york.

i called to
los angeles.

and left messages
to talk
to the daughter
of a california
jazz hero.

she just released
a new album of
tasty jazz vocals.

something the world
never expected,
but the tiny venues that
caught her
act would
never forget it.

and it's with this
tiny plea,
that i keep the 16th candle
going and imagine
that one day
you will interview
in jazzy pink,
mrs. molly ringwald.

The Laws

before the
real questions were
to begin,
he said that
he went to the car wash
earlier that day
and explained to a
man detailing his car
that he hit
that point in his life where
he was giving it away.

there was no need to
hold all the words, cash
and richness of soul within.

it was time to give it away.
and as the
legendary hubert laws
laughed the old,
strong,
wise laugh
chiseled by all
the hours he
has experienced
this show down here,
i understood
that in his own way
he gave me

everything single thing
in that one quote
that all the stories of
ensuing jazz
were just trying
to catch up to like
a scorching flute solo
when the crowd was still
in the parking lot
ready to
witness magic.

Pender Cool

he was driving
down the 405
of LA sunshine
while his darkened glasses
glittered under his signature bald
head of trumpet cool.

and he went on to
tell me that while
he was on the road
playing the horn
in the 80's with
bruce springsteen
that he was singing
marvin gaye one night
in the hotel
and the words 'love man'
came out in such power
that steve van zandt
dubbed mr. mark pender
the love man
and the nickname stuck.

and it was with that story,
before the real jazz story would begin,
that he was entered into
the official hall of cool
permanently ..
forever.

We Love You Madly ..

Thanks won't cut it for the cool jazz cats that are a part of this poetry collection and all the Neon Jazz Interviews that go down. Talking to the current musicians and legends that have given this world so much quality is one of the most sublime events to be involved with. T

he stories, wit, precision and humility is amazing to behold.

Specifically, thanks to the following cats included and revered in this volume:

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