

Reviews and comments about Jonathan Williams, including reviews of *The Lord of Orchards*:

[The Truffle-Hound of American Poetry](#)

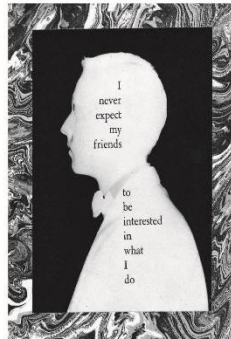
Jeffery's official obituary of Jonathan Williams as published in the *Asheville Poetry Review*, on the North Carolina Arts Council website, and elsewhere, 2008-2010.

**Jonathan Williams: The Lord of Orchards**

*The Lord of Orchards  
selects his fruit  
in the Firmament's  
breast*

"Of all the Black Mountain poets (teachers and disciples alike), Jonathan Williams is the wittiest, the least constrained, the most joyous." —*The New York Times*

"Indispensable! . . . We need him more than we know." —R. Buckminster Fuller



The Jargon Society publisher, Jonathan Williams, was a whirlwind of creativity—a poet of considerable stature, book designer, editor, photographer, letter writer, critic, proselytizer of visionary folk art, curmudgeon, gardener, resolute walker, and always an adroit raconteur and gourmand.

At the forefront of the Modernist avant-garde, yet possessing a deep appreciation of the traditional, Williams and his seminal press nurtured the work of hundreds of emerging or neglected poets, writers, artists, and photographers. A recordist of the peculiarities of American and British vernacular speech, he tirelessly advocated the beauty of the mundane and the strange.

Buckminster Fuller once called Williams "our Johnny Appleseed." Critic Guy Davenport described him as a "kind of polytechnic institute," while Hugh Kenner hailed Jargon as "the Custodian of Snowflakes" and Williams as "the truffle-hound of American poetry."

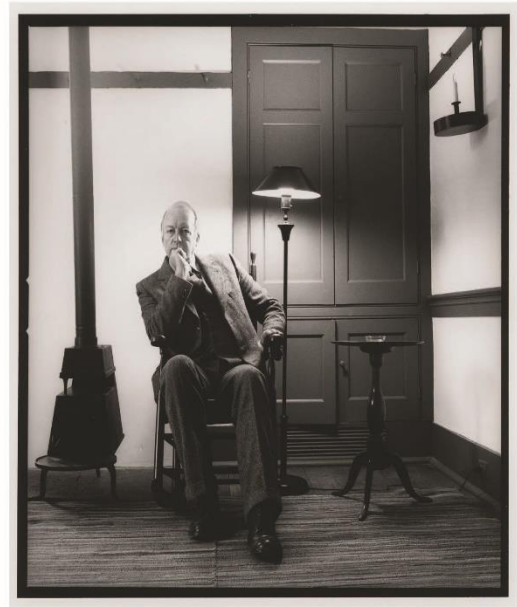
This book of essays, images, and shouts aims to bring new eyes and contexts to Williams' influence and talent as poet and publisher. One might call his life a poetics of gathering, and this book a first harvest.

**PROSPECTA PRESS**  
www.prospectapress.com



JONATHAN WILLIAMS: THE LORD OF ORCHARDS  
EDITED BY JEFFERY BEAM AND RICHARD OWENS

JONATHAN WILLIAMS  
THE LORD OF ORCHARDS



EDITED BY JEFFERY BEAM AND RICHARD OWENS

Indy Week [Top Ten Fall Book Releases](#) September 2017.

Readings in the Triangle of North Carolina chosen as Our Pick by Indy Week, November 2017.

“A not-to-be-missed Festschrift commemorating this witty avant-garde publisher, photographer and man of letters. —**Washington Post** reviewer **Michael Dirda** in his holiday 2018 list “Forget trendy bestsellers: This best books list takes you off the beaten track”, November 28, 2018.

When I hear the word “bluets,” I tend to think not of Maggie Nelson’s widely adored lyric essay, but rather of Jonathan Williams. His 1985 book, *Blues and Roots/Rue and Bluets: A Garland for the Southern Appalachians*, is a paean to the landscape that held and compelled him, a compendium of careful attention to the nuances and the lilt of a place. (Originally from Asheville, Williams, who died in 2008, attended Black Mountain College in the 1950s and lived in Scaly Mountain, N.C., for much of his life.) With Richard Owen, the Hillsborough-based poet Jeffery Beam coedited *Jonathan Williams: The Lord of Orchards*, a new anthology of “essays, images, and shouts” in response to Williams’s fifty-plus years of poetry, photography, Southern folk-art collecting, and publishing (he ran famed independent press The Jargon Society). Fittingly, Beam and Owen bring together a cadre of interdisciplinary artists and writers to celebrate the collection.

—American Studies scholar and performing arts critic, **Michaela Dwyer**, *Indy Week*, November 2017.

This text, the first to try and focus new attention on Williams’s expansive literary and creative legacy, offers four distinct sections . . . [and] offers readers a comprehensive introduction to the diverse publications and productive arts of Williams, an artist who is every bit as varied as the numerous epithets associated with him – lively language ranging from “The Truffle-Hound of American Poetry,” to “our Johnny Appleseed,” to “maggie,” to “America’s largest open-air museum” . . . Thanks to *The Lord of Orchards*, a new set of readers in the present and in the future will be able to easily locate a fuller picture of both Williams’s and Jargon’s immense contributions to the literary and visual arts . . . For those interested in Appalachia, Black Mountain College, and poetry, *Jonathan Williams: The Lord of Orchards* is an incredibly significant addition to the research on place, photography, and poetry . . . [and] offers a wealth of resources for new and future research on Williams’s varied achievements. As one of the editors, Jeffery Beam, enumerates in the Introduction, there are many new additions to the print version of the text. For example, this print version includes the first publication of letters between Williams and his first partner, Ronald Johnson; a new article by up-and-coming Williams scholar Ross Hair; a new version of the *White Trash Cooking* story of the cookbook’s publication by Thomas Craven, who once served as Jargon’s attorney; and an expansive bibliography of audio and visual recordings as well as transcripts of two interviews with filmmaker Neal Hutcheson. In addition to these specific new resources, several contributors highlight further possible research opportunities for work on Williams’s rich legacy. For example, Jeffery Beam writes that he looks “forward to the folk, who in the near future . . . will step forward to write what has to be an absorbing Jonathan biography of comprehensive Jargon history”. As Beam suggests, given that “Jonathan was certainly one of the best, most remarkable, and productive correspondents of the last century, there are volumes of letters to be published, and unpublished poems, and who knows what else, lurking in the antique spice cabinets” in Williams’s North Carolina home. While the call to action for a comprehensive biography may be too overwhelming of a task for some younger researchers, Richard Deming provides a call for future research that is a bit smaller in scale, but no less significant. Arguing that there has been “insufficient attention to Williams’ photographs and his identity as a photographer,” Deming suggests that “there is a great deal more to discover in terms of thinking about Jonathan Williams and what his work signifies”. As a researcher of Williams and all things Black Mountain College, I was a bit disappointed not to find an index within *The Lord of Orchards*. However, I must say that this collection merits a cover- to-cover read, so perhaps an index may just detract from the fruitful harvest Beam, Owens, and the contributors offer readers in *The Lord of Orchards* . . . Williams’s life and work, as portrayed in *The Lord of Orchards*, offer an intimate, intricate portrait not only of a productive, artistic life, but also what makes a life worth living. Williams’s legacy has much to teach all of us about how to live, even in times as troubled and tumultuous as our own. Williams’s life in the arts “demanded direct and persistent engagement with the world”, and his writing “insists on the primary importance of imagination as a foil to ignorance and pinpoints ignorance (whether in the arts, civic, or personal realms) as the source of cultural blight”. Here, it seems we all have much to be grateful to Williams for, because art, after all, does demand engagement, and within each of us, there is a vast need to cultivate our own creativity in order to oppose ignorance and “cultural blight.” As Ronald Johnson aptly puts it, the “fate of multitalented men” like Williams “is often that their art is not comprehended by more direct minds.” However, “It may be, though, peeping through exactly these so often cranky, cross- grained, quirky minds, that one focuses best on a complex time.” Johnson describes Williams as being “like Ezra Pound and Ruskin before him, that rare

breed of proselytizing exemplar to whom each act of art constitutes an impetus for freedom". Williams's work, as depicted here in *Lord of Orchards*, reminds us all that creativity, the pursuit of imagination, and the preservation of good writing, are all, indeed, liberatory acts.

— "A First Harvest from North Carolina's Johnny Appleseed" by writer and editor Savannah Paige Murray from her extensive review in the *North Carolina Literary Review Online*, 2019: 50-52.

A little late to the party but hugely glad to finally arrive, I've been immersed in *Jonathan Williams: The Lord of Orchards* ... This 'memorial festschrift' briefly brought to mind an earlier example, *Madeira & Toasts for Basil Bunting's 75th Birthday*, edited by Williams himself, which gathered prose and poetry (and illustrations and music) from almost a hundred writers and artists, published by the Jargon Society and with a cover (a pastel portrait of Bunting) by R. B. Kitaj. But none of those contributions was more than three pages long and most were less than a page, whereas this book of 'essays, images, and shouts' is not only a good deal heftier, not far short of 500 pages, but also includes substantial studies of several aspects of Williams' life and work, and is thus perhaps more reminiscent of the 'Person and Poet' series of often ground-breaking volumes produced by the National Poetry Foundation. 'Heft' is an apposite word, in fact, with its cluster of meanings, some obsolete or archaic, some dialect, 'weight', 'ability or influence'—and one alternative reading 'a number of sheets fastened together: an instalment of a serial publication.' Apposite for Jonathan Williams, to be sure. Polumetis — 'many-minded', versatile—was one of the stock epithets for Odysseus, which Ezra Pound took over and lavished also upon Sigismondo Malatesta; and Williams possessed, and displayed, that versatility in spades, a versatility not only of cultural activities and poetic forms but in his range of reference, from the Greek and Latin classics to Appalachian eavesdropping. Divided into four sections—'Remembering', 'Responding', 'Reviewing' and 'Recollecting'—and concluding with two invaluable checklists, of Jargon Society titles and of Williams's own publications, this volume explores and celebrates that many-minded Williams in a rich array of prose, poetry and, appropriately, illustration—Williams was a superb photographer. There is an extraordinary gallery of images, both of and by Williams, some truly memorable (and also offering a splendid selection of Williams' hats). ... The last three sections include extensive, thoroughly-researched essays: on Williams and Black Mountain; on Williams' poetic practice and, more specifically, on 'metaphors', the form that he invented, refined and extended through several books ... and on Williams the photographer. ...

The main impressions—either new or enhanced—that I take away from this remarkable collection are, firstly, the truly multifarious nature of Williams' activities and enthusiasms. ... Secondly, I'd say, a much better grasp of Williams' complex relationship with the Black Mountain poets (so many of whom he published and, often, launched) ... Thirdly, the Jargon Society's irrefutable importance in the history of American literature in the second half of the twentieth century ... Fourthly, the extent of Williams' enthusiasm for the chance encounter, the overheard remark, the glimpsed roadside sign, the ready-made. ... Fifthly, the extent of his concern to commemorate and celebrate those—poets and others—who have gone on to Elysium.

As soon as I came across Jeffery Beam, in his introduction to this print edition, quoting a 1991 letter from Williams that starts by recommending Alan Judd's fine biography of Ford Madox Ford, I knew that the omens were good, at least for this reader. And so it proved, to a greater extent than I've managed to outline here—and a sense of Williams' real significance is brought into sharp relief by the extraordinary range and variety of the contributors gathered in *The Lord of Orchards*, to remember, bear witness, respond, review and celebrate the poet, the publisher, the photographer and the man. In his 2007 interview with Beam's co-editor, Richard Owens, Jonathan Williams remarked of Lorine Niedecker: 'It's hard to imagine people not being interested in her but most people do manage not to be interested and it continues on'. Most people do so manage and it does continue on—but it's at least as hard to imagine anybody with an interest in Jonathan Williams, or Charles Olson and the other Black Mountain poets, or small press publishing, or Anglo-American literature from the 1940s to now, not finding a great deal of intense and lasting interest—and enjoyment—here.

—British scholar **Paul Skinner** from his extensive review on his blog [Reconstructionary Tales](#), September 2018.

The title of this short essay is taken from a Tom Petty song, and I couldn't help myself. Petty was a quintessential American artist, whose recent death affected so many, and he was popular in a way that the artist, poet, and editor Jonathan Williams could only dream about. But Williams' reach and influence will continue to grow as the decades pass, and this collection of essays commemorating his work and life will be one of the first documents to illustrate the tremendous achievement of this generous raconteur and publisher, a career that could only have been created in the United States. Like Petty, Jonathan Williams understood the potency of the American vernacular, and taking his cues from William Carlos Williams and

Charles Olson, his poetry was filled with the speech patterns, phrases, slang, and idioms that are typical of the Southern voice — and more specifically, the polyglot mongrel voice of Southern Appalachia. His poetry, like the best songs from the Heartbreaker's catalog, are deceptively simple, often short bursts of truncated lines, dense with meaning, and rhythmically muscular. Williams "found" his poetry by listening intently and finding signs and signifiers wherever the wind blew him, from coast to American coast and in the pubs and cottages of Great Britain, where Williams kept a home in the Pennine Dales of Cumbria, England. Starting in the late 60's, he spent half his year traversing and conversing in the Lake District of Wordsworth and Coleridge and half in Highlands, North Carolina, on Skywinding Farm, nestled in the bosom of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Born in Asheville, North Carolina, on March 8, 1929, to Thomas Benjamin and Georgette Williams, the young Jonathan was soon moved to Washington, DC, where he attended St. Albans. Then consecutively, without taking a degree, he studied art history, painting, engraving and design at Princeton, Phillips Memorial Gallery, Atelier 17 in New York City, and the Institute of Design in Chicago. Upon returning to North Carolina in 1951, Williams was drawn into the orbit of Black Mountain College, a Bauhaus-influenced experimental school where poet Charles Olson was the rector and a host of literary and cultural personalities landed down and taught. Self-described as a "poet, publisher, essayist, hiker, populist, elitist, and sorehead," Williams found himself surrounded by like-minded creative eccentrics at Black Mountain, and his unique blend of talents found their full flower.

Later that same year, Williams founded The Jargon Society, one of the most influential independent presses of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, committed to publishing works by then-neglected poets, especially those associated with Black Mountain College. His mission, as he stated it, was "To keep afloat the Ark of Culture in these dark and tacky times!" He went on to become one of the most active small publishers in the United States. Pegged by Hugh Kenner as "the truffle-hound of American poetry," he rooted out and published such writers as Charles Olson, Kenneth Patchen, Denise Levertov, Paul Metcalf, Kenneth Rexroth, Louis Zukofsky, Robert Duncan, Basil Bunting, Mina Loy, Robert Creeley, Lorine Neidecker, and many others. His "Statement of Purpose" (1960) for his publishing venture was audacious:

*The purpose of a writer's press like Jargon is reckless and doomed. It is to make coherence in the avant-garde community—a community which is snide and sullen and generally deserving of the rock-bottom place it holds in America. Regardless of what they say ("they" being poeticules, criticasters, kitschdiggers, or justfolks) I believe the writing of poems to be more than a minor art and the only way to impress this upon a distraught American attention is by stating and restating the main traditions of the few poets who move us from generation to generation.*

Williams wrote and compiled more than fifty books, including *An Ear in Bartram's Tree* (1969), *Blues and Roots / Rue and Bluet s* (1971), *The Loco Logodaedalist in Situ* (1972), *Elite/ Elate: Poems* (1979), *The Magpie's Bagpipe: Selected Essqys* (1982), *Blackbird Dust* (2000), and *Jubilant Thicket: New and Selected Poem s* (2005). He was a relentless and brilliant photographer, painter, collector of outsider art, and an unparalleled and prodigious composer of some of the most interesting correspondence in literary history (the collection of his letter s alone would be a treasure trove). The range of Williams' interests and creative output was staggering and included both high and low art, classical music, jazz, baseball and trash magazines, as well as cinema, kitsch, fine arts, and Scotch whisky.

*Jonathan Williams: Lord of Orchards* is an accumulation of essays, remembrances, elegies, tributes, recollections, historical perspectives, and pages of black and white photographs lovingly compiled by Jeffery Beam and Richard Owens—a must-read for every lover of poetry and art. There are surprises and astonishments on every page of this collection, jagged bits of poetry, slashes of art, and keen sharp photos of many literary personages and places taken by Williams himself. There are also several pages of photos of Williams across his entire life, taken by family, admirers, lovers, and an exhausting catalog of famous (and infamous) friends and collaborators.

The editors call this gathering "a first harvest" of the wide and deepening oeuvre that flew from the

constantly moving hurricane that was Williams' life, a force that will resonate for generations to come.  
— "Alive in the Great Wide Open" by poet and editor **Keith Flynn** in *The James Dickey Review*, vol.33 (2017): 136-138.

In the literary world, a lot of people often go unnoticed. Great talents come and go with their contributions unrecognized by culture or by time. Such is definitely not the case with poet-publisher Jonathan Williams, who was on the forefront of the literary avant-garde and the Outsider Art movement his whole life. As a young man who studied at the now legendary Black Mountain College and who spent his adult life dividing his time between his home in western North Carolina and the hill country of England, Williams has been both an enigma and a constant presence in the literary conversation. *Jonathan Williams: The Lord of Orchards* is a fitting tribute to his life, his legacy, and his love for local color. In terms of his own work, Williams is probably best known for his fascination with found language and, as the book's back cover puts it, "the beauty of the mundane and the strange." ... In a 2003 *Rain Taxi* interview with this book's co-editor Jeffery Beam, Williams described this process: *A lot of my poetry is found and I think that's because I'm willing to lay back and listen. It's something to do with living in the country . . . I really heard some amazing stuff. And I left it pretty much as I heard it. I didn't have to do anything but organize it a little bit, crystallize it. That's the thing I love about found material— you wake it up, you 'make' it into something. . . . The Lord of Orchards* is modeled somewhat on this fascination for what is found, as evidenced by the fifty friends, writers, and artists who have found their way into this collection of tributes. A wide range and swath of testimonials are offered here, written by everyone from the legendary English bard Basil Bunting to Williams's life partner Thomas Meyer. A potpourri of remembrances, responses, and recollections, the tome marks Williams's life much as a monumental gravestone would, such is its size and breadth. ... How would one sum up this memorial tome honoring one of America's uniquely important literary outsiders? Maybe it would be by simply quoting Beam from the book's introduction: *Entering Jonathan's orbit, for anyone, was transformative. . . . no one activity or identity takes primacy over any other—seminal small press publisher of the Jargon Society; poet; book designer; editor; photographer; legendary correspondent; literary, art, and photography critic and collector . . . cultural anthropologist . . . curmudgeon; happy gardener, resolute walker, and keen and adroit raconteur and gourmand. These shouts, herein, aim "to bring new eyes and contexts to his influence and talent."*

—Poet and publisher **Thomas Rain Crowe** in *Rain Taxi*, Vol 23 no. 2, Summer 2018.

The book is a festschrift honoring the work and spirit of Williams. Divided into four sections, "Remembering", "Responding", "Reviewing", and "Recollecting," the book remembered and discussed Williams's contribution to poetry, photography, and culture. There are also photographs of Williams, his friends and various scenes. The entries are written by friends, colleagues, and artists Williams assisted and influenced. These entries paint a picture of Williams like he described the Lord of the Orchards in a one of his poems, "The Lord of Orchards / selects his fruit / in the Firmament's / breast. Williams selected the best from artists he searched out and encountered. This book should not be read steadily cover to cover. It is a book that inspires and offers a way of looking at the world. Williams once said he wanted "poetry that has whang in it."

Reading and

comprehension of such a book takes time. Literary scholars may read it steadily. Artists will read slowly to savor it.

Recommended for all libraries that collect literature about the Black Mountain College literary movement, books about North Carolina writers, members of the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame, and libraries that want to inspire artists.

—Librarian **Robert Arndt**, University of North Carolina at Pembroke, [North Carolina Libraries](#), Vol 76 no. 1, 2018.

Jonathan died in 2008. In subsequent years' poets Jeffery Beam and Richard Owens, who were close friends of Jonathans, have been gathering memorial remembrances of Jonathan from his many and varied friends and literary cohorts. In the end what Jeffery and Richard have come up with is nothing less than a tome of close to 500 pages of essays and photographs that document his life, his work and his influences of more than half a century. With over 50 different people represented in this anthology, we get a perspective of the person of Jonathan Williams from quite literally every angle. Remembrances. Responses. Reviews. Recollections. ... And then there are the photographs—again from every angle—from the young Jonathan Williams in 1941 to photos taken at Black Mountain College in 1955, to photos taken of him at Skywinding Farm on Scaly Mountain in 2005. A plethora if not a performance of Williams' life, interests and work. ... All in all, this impressive anthology of eulogies feels more like a large sculpted tombstone one might find on the grounds of the famous Pere Lachaise Cemetery in Paris, France. Such is its weight. Such is its elegance. Such is its history. ... In the liner notes for *The Lord of Orchards*, the editors state: "Williams and

his seminal press nurtured the work of hundreds of emerging or neglected poets, writers, artists, and photographers. A recordist of the peculiarities of American and British vernacular speech, Williams tirelessly advocated the beauty of the mundane and the strange.” And the accolades go on and on in this collection as with each page, each essay and photo Williams’ imaginary Pere Lachaise tombstone grows ever larger in stature as his literary legacy approaches literary sainthood. ...In short, as a tribute to this literary legend there is something in Jonathan Williams: The Lord of Orchards for everyone. So wide the range and so diverse the voices that inhabit the valleys, rivers and hills of Western North Carolina and beyond in his behalf that it is, indeed, comprehensive. This sentiment is only further emphasized in the words etched on the back cover of this unique and informative book: “One might call his life a poetics of gathering, and this book a first harvest.” Hopefully, there will be more literary fruit gathered and an even bigger harvest to come.

—Poet and publisher **Thomas Rain Crowe** in [Smoky Mountain News](#), February 2018.

...*The Lord of Orchards* is a new collection of essays and reminiscences, a reflective glance over some four-hundred and fifty

pages, examining the enormous legacy left by Jonathan Williams’s work. Edited with sensitive care and an accurate eye by Jeffery Beam and Richard Owens *The Lord of Orchards* is a work of fidelity and loyalty to the poet’s life-work as a writer, a photographer and the founder of Jargon Press. It points us in the direction of the unique value of the man ...

—British literary critic **Ian Brinton**’s extensive critical review “[Jonathan Williams ‘our Johnny Appleseed’](#)” in *Golden Handcuffs Review*, Vol 2 no. 24, 2018.

JW is one of the great neglectorino poets of the 2nd part of the 20C. One of the best ears & finest eye I know of ... get the book.

—Poet **Pierre Joris** in his blog [Nomadics](#), March 2018.

More than a celebration, admiring participants reflect on Williams’s contribution to poetry and small press publishing (he was the renowned publisher of the Jargon Society, printing beautifully-designed books by Charles Olson, Lorine Niedecker, Paul Metcalf, and others).

—Poet and publisher **Dale Smith**, in Poetry Magazine’s [The Reading List](#) blog, September 2017.

The title of this short essay is taken from a Tom Petty song, and I couldn't help myself. Petty was a quintessential American artist, whose recent death affected so many, and he was popular in a way that the artist, poet, and editor Jonathan Williams could only dream about. But Williams' reach and influence will continue to grow as the decades pass, and this collection of essays commemorating his work and life will be one of the first documents to illustrate the tremendous achievement of this generous raconteur and publisher, a career that could only have been created in the United States. ... Jonathan Williams: Lord of Orchards is an accumulation of essays, remembrances, elegies, tributes, recollections, historical perspectives, and pages of black and white photographs lovingly compiled by Jeffery Beam and Richard Owens—a must-read for every lover of poetry and art. There are surprises and astonishments on every page

of this collection, jagged bits of poetry, slashes of art, and keen sharp photos of many literary personages and places taken by Williams himself. There are also several pages of photos of Williams across his entire life, taken by family, admirers, lovers, and an exhausting catalog of famous (and infamous) friends and collaborators. The editors call this gathering "a first harvest" of the wide and deepening oeuvre that flew from the constantly moving hurricane that was Williams' life, a force that will resonate for generations to come.

—Poet, editor, musician, and publisher (Asheville Poetry Review) **Keith Flynn**’s review “Alive in the Great Wide Open”, *James Dickey Review*, Vol. 33, 2017.

After one has read ALL the books by Jonathan Williams this is the book where you will want to land. . .or vice versa. . whichever way you go don't miss out!

—Poet, publisher, and bookseller **Bob Arnold** on his blog [A Longhouse Birdhouse](#), September 2017.

Jeffery Beam is an old friend and a wonderful poet whose work is often celebrated here. In 2009, a year after the passing of Jonathan Williams, he and Richard Owens published online a “festschrift” of remembrances and appreciations in honor of Williams and his accomplishments ... The print version, with many excellent additions, has

now been published. ...I met Jonathan Williams at a small press fair in Carrboro [NC] where we each had a table. Over the years, Jargon Society titles and broadsides of JW's poetry have come my way and kept me intrigued with the noble, eclectic, Epicurean curmudgeon of Highlands. The title of the book comes from a JW poem: the Lord of Orchards / selects his fruit / in the Firmament's / breast ... JW had many titles, most of his own epistolary stylings: Lord Nose, the Colonel, J Jeeter Swampwater, Big Enis. He was also called, by Hugh Kenner, Custodian of Snowflakes and Truffle-Hound of American Poetry, in honor of his indefatigable efforts to find and preserve culture, some found in the oddest places. He was a champion of Outsider artists, a curator of obscure literary references and a model for all those who shared or admired his "deep affection for the strange." With Jargon Society Press, he presented the world with much important writing, well after his heyday of publishing cohorts at BMC, where JW enrolled in 1951 in order to study photography with Harry Callahan. The BMC connections are strong but complicated as described in Ross Hair's essay in this book, entitled "Hemi-Demi-Semi Barbaric Yawps" – Jonathan Williams and Black Mountain College. ... As publisher, JW helped establish some BMC reputations but also applied his always broad skills as book designer and editor to create a unique body of published work that celebrates the visionary creativity to be found in the South. Mr. Hair well describes the way JW's absolutely wide-open close attention and curiosity regarding all cultural phenomenon, in his poetry and publishing, provides a balance to the hyper-masculine and exclusionary influences of Olson's BMC era. The anthology, like the original online feature, contains four sections: Remembering (memorial writings), Responding (literary analysis), Reviewing (his photography), and Recollecting (appreciations of Jargon Society Press). Additions included in the print version include letters between JW and his first partner, Ronald Johnson, a recounting of the publication of *White Trash Cooking*, and transcripts of interview/film sessions with Neal Hutcheson. Congratulations to Jeffery and long live the memory of Jonathan Williams, a true original. ...

—Papermaker, publisher, educator, naturalist and writer **John Dancy-Jones** on his blog [Raleigh Rambles](#), September 2017.

Perhaps the only source one needs to consult with regards to Jonathan Williams's staggering contributions to the Black Mountain School, and American poetry as a whole. This book combines biography, criticism, and poetry to give a great overview of Jonathan Williams.

—Librarian **Kevin Rothenberg**, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, [Library Guide to the Black Mountain Poets](#).

I've just finished *JW Lord of the Orchards*, about that outrageous, larger than life man who managed to direct his entire years on this earth to doing what he wanted, which included contributing to art and, through publishing, to the support of a small coterie of friends who adored him. And enjoying the sensual world. I loved a friend saying, "What a splendid thing a day out with Jonathan is. Most people don't notice anything, but Jonathan notices everything." First, there is the luxury of reading the book itself, caressing the cream of the pages--definitely heavy cream. Jargon's books were always a physical work of art. I found James Jaffe's the most moving memoir, along with yours--it's always a delight when your voice comes to life from the printed page. "Of his own work, Williams has said, 'Jargon is a small effort. Yet I think it stands for something. That's all that's important....' His are artists in the bud or in the dust, salvaged by a fellow outsider." Vic Brand got it right: Jonathan Williams was the ultimate outsider.

—English teacher, poet, reader, gardener, epicurean, friend and lover of the arts **Jane Rinden** in an email to Thorns Craven, May 2108.

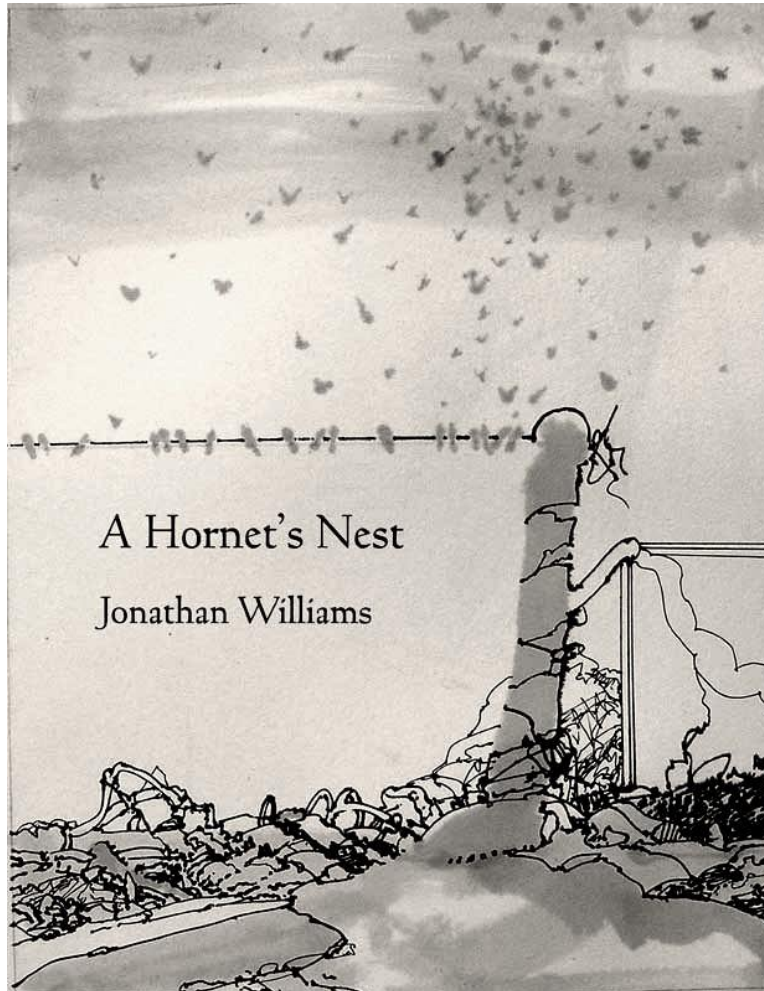
An [interview about the book Jonathan Williams: The Lord of Orchards](#) with **Jackie Helvey** and **Valerie Schwartz** on the Wacqueline Stern radio show, WCOM 103.5 FM, November 10, 2017.

## A Hornet's Nest

A selection of quotes from the Colonel himself — compiled for his memorial service by  
Jeffery Beam

**From Jeffery's intro:** A daunting task – not unlike extracting pollen from a bee sack with tweezers excavating the Book O'Jonathan. I've passed over most of the stronger bourbons– the barbs, the way-outs, & tumescences —

simply because they lose vibrancy, punch, & sting out of context. The clerihews, limericks, meta-fours, acrostics, concrete & found poems were particularly resistant. And just think of all the amber buried in letters here & there? For those flavors, glistening the tongue, one absolutely must go to the works themselves. Reason enough to spend a day or two or four with acutely dazzling books or in letter files — of course, with glass in hand. Dear reader: I suggest restraint. Don't overindulge. Let a single quote stay with you for a while before imbibing another. Remember, this is my very own personal selection. Where's yours? "Sting! Stang! Stung!"



Cover © James McGarrell

Excellent compilation to the memory of the poet and publisher of Jargon Press, Jonathan Williams.  
—Poet, publisher, and bookseller **Bob Arnold**



this letter is meant as both a simple fan letter and an invitation for you to consider working with us (my wife sandra and me) on some kind of project.<sup>1</sup> our publications are varied, hard to categorize, personal and they take a long time to do—<sup>2</sup>

you have good people on your list and it's comforting to know that not all the interesting printers and publishers have succumbed in poppy bush's new kinder gentler gehenna.<sup>3</sup>

richard minsky produced a few luxurious copies of ANTHEM-A-MARANATHA with sublimely hideous drawings by the unique bill anthony.<sup>4</sup>

the mad arab of mount horeb produced a little edition of my NO-NO NSE-NSE with terrific little drawings by henrik drescher.<sup>5</sup>

the phoebes has returned from winter travels. bloodroot can't be more than two weeks off.<sup>6</sup>

lots of solomon's seal after that. april in the blue ridge is cosmic despite heavy & the following.<sup>7</sup>

you would have no need to water tomatoes in this land of blue hills. the first old-fashioned was summer in years.<sup>8</sup>

i'm delighted you know the turnbells, two of the more cosmic people on this balduf planet.<sup>9</sup>

lord and lady fern-well are a whiting corn chow.<sup>10</sup>

slouched on the sofa, slurping whisky like mad dibana genitases from the cosmoswolds.<sup>11</sup>

and tearing apart the morning newspapers along with flame azalea and mountain laurel.<sup>12</sup>

if you want to see the catawbiense (purple) rhododendron in bloom, you need to come to highlands in late may. the maxima (white-pink) follows in june.<sup>13</sup>

maybe john and i can come up with a project that would interest TURKEY PRESS.<sup>14</sup>

i have decided that all my readers are either dead or not yet born. still, one mustn't be abashed as basil burning always insisted.<sup>15</sup>

the next opusculum is called LETTERS TO MENCKEN FROM THE LAND OF PINK LICHEN.<sup>16</sup>

it took fourteen rabbinowitzs of curtle the night press 5 copy to phone and say yes.<sup>17</sup>

zarn hamill will be doing my new and selected poems, libidinal thicket.<sup>18</sup>

godine is doing the book of my digitized, color prints with text.<sup>19</sup>

i've self-published a couple of short this year—<sup>20</sup>

one of recent quotations one of poem, noisy & covert.<sup>21</sup>

excellent: june as megarrall drawing on the cover of each.<sup>22</sup>

you need to catch your fancy when your appetite, make you run to your case full of garmond by deberry & peignoc.<sup>23</sup>

it means gets a free weekend with ross perot.<sup>24</sup>

i hope our paths cross one of these days in and make noise.<sup>25</sup>

he says he can redraw them to fit into larry's slot of details in the inner margin.<sup>26</sup>

in the light of this light, emphasis, i've want to design one of the book to appear.<sup>27</sup>

and handily, lighted, it wonderfully above excess, so are my little metaphors.<sup>28</sup>

in old word that c. courage used a lot. it's old latin for excesses.<sup>29</sup>

thing tres cosmique for turkey press.<sup>30</sup>

one thing i have thought about for a long time is visiting the small romanesque churches in the soviet republics.<sup>31</sup>

when i say little, i mean 30 poems or so, enough to let you know you've had a light supper with excellent accompaniment.<sup>32</sup>

in carolina and cumbria, but that is very much alien to urban thinking as i am.<sup>33</sup>

well, maddy finally managed it.<sup>34</sup>

of the broves i will not speak.<sup>35</sup>

of the cubs i really won't speak.<sup>36</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>37</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>38</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>39</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>40</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>41</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>42</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>43</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>44</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>45</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>46</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>47</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>48</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>49</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>50</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>51</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>52</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>53</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>54</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>55</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>56</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>57</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>58</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>59</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>60</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>61</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>62</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>63</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>64</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>65</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>66</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>67</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>68</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>69</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>70</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>71</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>72</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>73</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>74</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>75</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>76</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>77</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>78</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>79</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>80</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>81</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>82</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>83</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>84</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>85</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>86</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>87</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>88</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>89</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>90</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>91</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>92</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>93</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>94</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>95</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>96</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>97</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>98</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>99</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>100</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>101</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>102</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>103</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>104</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>105</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>106</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>107</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>108</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>109</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>110</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>111</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>112</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>113</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>114</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>115</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>116</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>117</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>118</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>119</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>120</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>121</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>122</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>123</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>124</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>125</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>126</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>127</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>128</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>129</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>130</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>131</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>132</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>133</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>134</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>135</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>136</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>137</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>138</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>139</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>140</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>141</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>142</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>143</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>144</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>145</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>146</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>147</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>148</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>149</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>150</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>151</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>152</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>153</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>154</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>155</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>156</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>157</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>158</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>159</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>160</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>161</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>162</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>163</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>164</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>165</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>166</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>167</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>168</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>169</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>170</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>171</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>172</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>173</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>174</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>175</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>176</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>177</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>178</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>179</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>180</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>181</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>182</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>183</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>184</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>185</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>186</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>187</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>188</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>189</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>190</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>191</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>192</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>193</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>194</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>195</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>196</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>197</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>198</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>199</sup>

of the red sox i really won't speak.<sup>200</sup>

Frontispiece image © Sandra Reese

[Tales of a Jargonaut: an interview with Jonathan Williams](#)

On the occasion of the publication of *A Palpable Elysium: Portraits of Genius and Solitude*

*Rain Taxi*, Spring 2003. Jeffery Beam spoke to Williams on a gray Sunday afternoon at Skywinding Farm, Scaly Mountain, North Carolina, where the man Hugh Kenner hailed as "the truffle hound of American poetry" has resided for much of his life.

Airing of part of a recording of the [Rain Taxi interview with Jonathan Williams](#) by Jeffery Beam, along with a 1981 poetry reading by Jonathan. WordPlay with **Jeff Davis**, WPVM 103.5 FM Asheville, NC, Sunday, April 12, 2009.

## **Blackbird Dust: Essays, Poems, and Photographs**



Jeffery reviews [Blackbird Dust](#) in the Winter 2001 issue of *Oyster Boy Review* no 14.