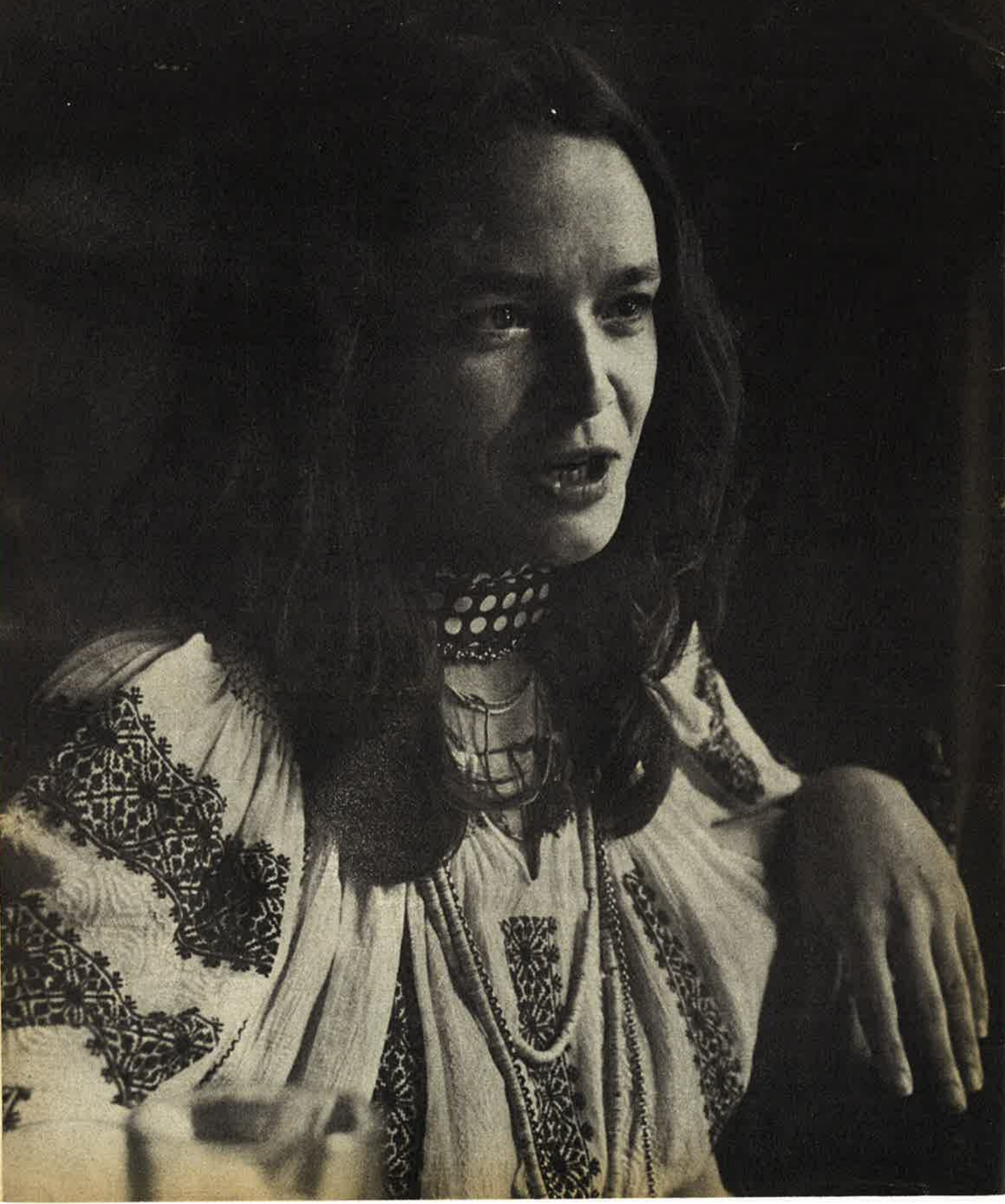


# TEACHER





## A PRIESTESS OF NEW YORK POETRY BRINGS A GLAMOROUS ANTHOLOGY OF PROS TO A COLORADO HIGH

In the rarified world of avant-garde poetry, Anne Waldman is queen, a vampish one at that, cool, chic, with long cigarette and Campari and soda. Her court is in Manhattan's ratty East Village, where she heads the St. Mark's Poetry Project, a series of readings by poets and novelists who come to the historic St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery at Waldman's behest. The news, then, that the thoroughly urbanized Anne Waldman is summering as a schoolmarm in the Colorado Rockies is about as unlikely as Maria Callas polishing her pipes at a hootenanny.

But it's true. The co-founder (with poet Allen Ginsberg) and chief administrator of the poetry program at the Buddhist-supported Naropa Institute in Boulder, Waldman, 30, has made ankle-length silk sheaths, heels, designer scarves and clanking jewelry the last word in mountaineer mufli.

For the budding poets who have flocked to her courses and workshops, Waldman has magically produced an assemblage of her writer friends, just as she does in Manhattan in the winter. Avant-garde authors William Burroughs, Robert Bly, Diane DiPrima, Gregory Corso—among others—have turned up to lecture and rap with students. Burroughs' skill at flycasting in nearby trout streams failed him. He left for New York after a week. But Corso arrived from Cape Cod early and has stayed ever since, save for a weekend at Vegas, where he bottomed out, boozed and broke, and had to be wired air fare back to Boulder.

Waldman, the author of five collections of poetry (*Fast Speaking Woman* is the latest), is an old hand at shepherding wayward poets and novelists. At St. Mark's, she is a one-woman switchboard arranging their comings and goings, many of which are reported in her monthly *Poetry Project Newsletter*. Waldman single-handedly bleeds foundations and angels for the project's \$40,000 annual budget.

In Boulder, she and Ginsberg have dubbed their summer program the *Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics* after the late, self-styled Dharma Bum. A founding father of the Beat Generation, Kerouac was a disciple of the meditative ways of the Tibetan Buddhists who sponsor the Naropa curriculum of dance, art, music, literature and meditation. The institute is governed by Chögyam Trungpa, a lama who emigrated from Tibet in 1970.

Ginsberg defines disembodied poetics with characteristic obscurity as "the crazy wisdom of the whispered transmission." Waldman, by way of explanation says, "We encourage students to open their imaginations to spontaneous playfulness." She asked one class to juxtapose random phrases clipped from newspapers and spin poetry from the non sequiturs that resulted.

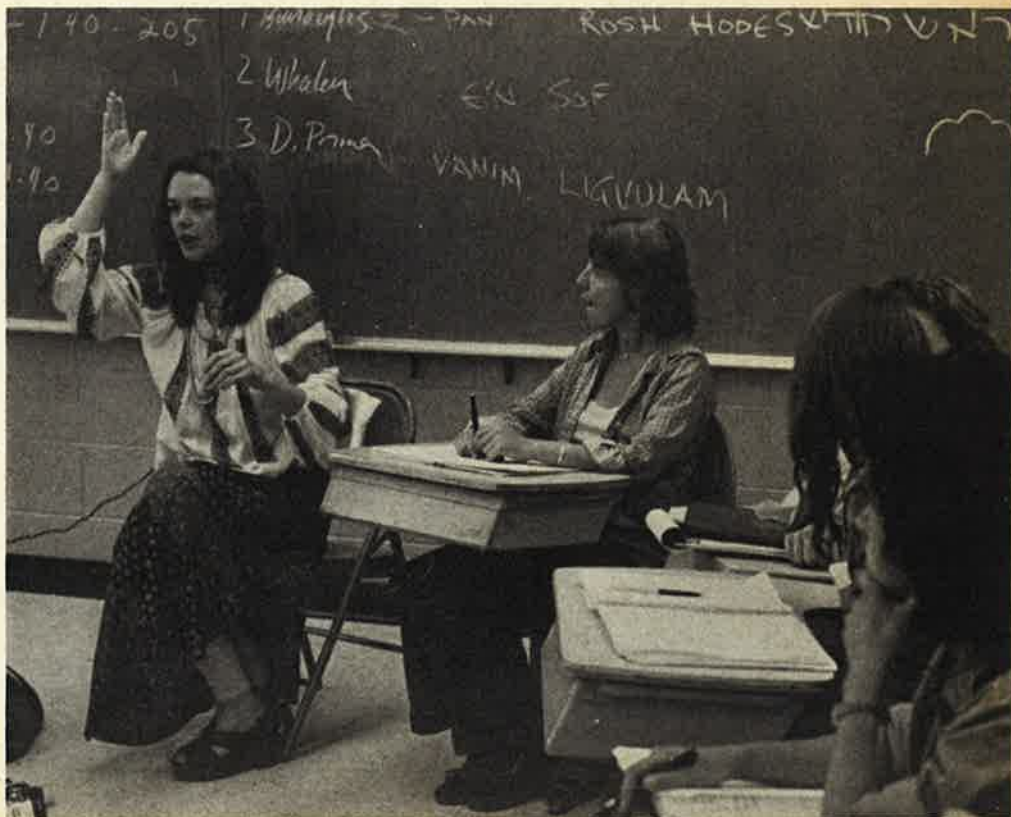
Like most of the 85 faculty and 1000 students, Anne Waldman (who studied oriental philosophy in India) regularly hunkers down to meditate on a custom-designed Naropa prayer pillow. But not at sunrise. Late-night revelry with her visiting luminaries makes her appear-

ance at dawn mass-meditation a rarity. But "the fast speaking woman" knows the value of contemplative silence. "Everyone should meditate," says the lady from New York City. "It's better than Valium!" □

**Waldman and Allen Ginsberg (far left) lured two cronies to lecture—mop-headed Gregory Corso and William Burroughs.**



**Waldman conducts her poetry workshop in a classroom borrowed from a Boulder parochial high school.**



**She bills herself a "fast speaking woman," but poet Anne Waldman's style is cool and unruffled in her Colorado summer.**



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