REMEMBERING
MERTON AND NEW YORK

Robert Lax

N.Y. places
I went to
with Merton:

Childs,
103rd
St.

Gold Rail.

West End
Cafeteria
Bar.

A drugstore
(Tilson's)
on the corner
of 116th &
B'way

“the girl
place”.

The drug
store
on 113th
where we'd
often eat
lunch,

ice-cream
& chocolate
sauce on

roasted

pound
cake,
milk
shakes,"burn
one".

Down
town:

The Hickory
House.

Nick's.
The Famous
Door.

Jimmy
Ryan's
(52nd St.).
Low-
ceilings
place
Count
Basie
played in.

Who played
at Jimmy Ryan's?

Teddy
Wilson,
Wingy
Manone,
The Higgin-
bottom
Brothers,
Pee Wee
Russell

(Sunday
afternoon
Jam
Sessions)
good
clarinet
&
bass
with
Teddy
Wilson.

At
Hickory
House:
Joe
Marsala,
Woody
Herman,
A d e l e
Girard.

Place near
the Taft,
49th St.
West?
Where
Hot Lips
Page,
Zutty
Singleton,
Joe Blanton
played &
Billie
Holliday
sang.

Cafe Society
Downtown:
Billie Holliday,
Lena Horne,
Zero Mostel,
comedian & M.C.
Edmund Hall,
clarinet
(played at
Famous Door,
too).

After school
when I was
living at the
Taft:

The Barberry
Room,
Rum drinks.

Sardines
for lunch.

Sardi's, once or
twice, for a
drink.

World's fair.

Cuban village,
Dutch pavilion,
French pavilion,
Brazilian, too, at
least once.
The Chicken
Dock.

Sometimes
to the zoo:

Eat at zoo's
terrace
restaurant.

Harlem:
The Savoy,

The Apollo,
(Renaissance
Ball Room?
Maybe just
once).

Don Tilman's
Bar:
drinks
& conversation;
a Gibney dis
coverly.

Savoy:
Chick
Webb.
Louis
Armstrong.

We'd go
to the Theater
Palace (downtown)
too:

Duke
Ellington,

Judy
Garland.

We'd go up
to Nyack
on the
Hudson

& drink
beer.
Down to the GAC, German American Athletic Club.

And to eat & drink beer at Luchow's.

Did M ever go to Spivy's Roof?

Maybe once.

He'd come up to the Taft but we wouldn't stay there for long.

We went up to New Haven one Sunday to drink on the Yale campus.

Books Merton gave me:

*The Mooks & The Gripe.*

James Joyce.

*Brighton Rock,* Graham Greene.

*The Dark Night of the Soul & The Ascent of Mt. Carmel,* St. John of the Cross.

Once he told me about:

*The Allegory of Love,* C.S. Lewis.

*The World's Body,* John Crowe Ransom.

*Poems of Dylan Thomas.*

*Perennial Philosophy & Ends & Means* Aldous Huxley.

Later:

*Jorge de Lima* (Peruvian Poet).

*Fernando Pessoa,* South American.

*Ernesto Cardenal & Cesar Vallejo* (the one who said he'd die on Thursday).
Painter he knew:
Reginald Marsh.

one he liked:
Dali.

Juan Gris too,
Joan Miro,
Picasso.

--

Big enthusiasm:
Blake.

Other:
Gerard Manley Hopkins.

Other:
Crashaw.

Other:
Southey.

Also:
John Skelton.

Spenser?
I guess so.

Milton?
I think so.

Dante?
Yes.

Piers Plowman?
Yes.

Chaucer?
Yep.

Rabelais?
Yep, plenty.

I think Rice, Merton, Slate, Gibney, & I liked Rabelais.

M was glad when someone compared “Cables to the Ace” to Rabelais later.

Liked Auden’s Christmas Oratorio.

He came to like Gilson & Richard McKeon & Maritain.

Liked Dan Walsh.

St. John Perse.
Leon Bloy.
Robert Lax

Who did he like in the movies?

Joan Bennett.
Hedy Lamarr.
Lucille Ball.

H. Bogart.
J. Carroll Naish.
Paul Guilfoyle.
J. Edgar Kennedy.

Charlie Chaplin.
(Sydney Chaplin).

Wheeler & Woolsey.

Laurel & Hardy.
Edw. G. Robinson.

The Marx Brothers.

The "Cold in the Mountains" guy.

I don't think he liked "El Brendel".
Mischa Auer? Yes.

English traits.

French & Medi

Remembering Merton & New York

ter
ran
ean
traits.

New Zeal and ones.

English: Liked beer, kippers, sardines.

Could talk limey to English sailors.

Liked Evelyn Waugh, Cyril Con nel y.
C. Day Lewis.

Shakes pear, lots of English authors.
He had a refined
in
or
con
ser
va
tive
style.

He
was
man-
like,
boy-
like,
but
not
child
like.

Not
"rug
ged
ly
in
d i
g
vid
u
a
al
ist
ic"

but
not
a
de
pend
ent
type
either.

Sophistication.

May be Cam bridge brand. Liked English films.

Little mouse tache.

Tweed or worst ed busi ness suit. shirt? short tab collar strip 'd shirt. Con ser vative neck tie (by our stan
dards).
Robert Lax

(you'd charac
ter
ize him
as)

in de pen dent (in his style).


Surviv or traits:

Always trying to give up cigarettes. Talked of bland, mild, nour ish ing foods.

Remembering Merton & New York

Had only a com ic in ter est in giving up alcohol. Did he "like life"? Yeh. Was he a spir itu al ly
Robert Lax

in
tel
tual
ly
hard

y
type
?

Yes.

Was
he
anything
like
a

wide-
eyed

eas

ily
in
flu
ced
hari
krish
na

kid
?

No.

Major
or
char
ac
ter
is
tic:

Remembering Merton & New York

(gen
tu

live
li

ness.

French:
did things

he could

afford to
do

(not run into
debt
not end the
evening
too broke
to get
home).

Maybe
approached

novel writing,

poetry &
drawing

(as much
or more)

like French

man than

English man.

Moral

concerns:

English.

Aesthetic

approach:

French.

Loved

Picasso.
Robert Lax

Liked
Dali's
_Dream of Venus._

Liked
Waugh.

---

Forgot to mention he liked
Kierkegaard & Rilke
(poems & the journal)
& the
_Duino Elegies._

Kafka?
Yes.

_Trial_?
Yes.

Don't remember much he said about K.

_Great Wall of China._

Liked
Bajan Calypso

Remembering Merton & New York

music.

Wilmoth Houdini.

Lord High Executioner.

Childlike voices.

Childlike vocabulary.

Ch-like ingenuity.

Liked (sort of)
South African
Trans vaal songs like “brandy leave me alone”.

Ellington.
Basie.
Armstrong.

Ellington's band, fat, well-fed, contented.
Gave
music
special
(happy
sound)
feeling
of
a group
like
“heaven
ly
city”
feeling
in
Havana.

(These
dis
coveries)
seemed
(French)

Med
i
ter
ran
ean

sur
viv
al
ist
tem
per
a
ment.

Poetic
side,
prose
side,
never
great
ly
at
odds.

A feeling
everyone
sensed
with
Merton
was
his
okay-
ness.

Not a
type
to come
to your
door
at 3
in the
morning
&
fall
in a
heap
on the
living
room
floor.

Much of
what he
did
(if relaxed
in company) he'd do as though it were a parody of what he was doing,
as though he were imitating (someone in the comic strips) or Mack Sennett film,

the way you might open a bottle of champ as a parody of some one doing it & (take the what off any