A Memory of Michael McClure

A bunch of us performed at Town Hall in NYC in May of ’94 — as the finale of a 5 Day Conference on the Beat Generation at NYU.

I opened the evening by calling William Burroughs in Lawrence, Kansas and talked with him from the stage to the applause of the overflow audience.

Later I stood stageside and bantered with Michael McClure & Gregory Corso.

Some of the best moments at this sort of event are found in the intimate discourse standing offstage or in the dressing rooms.

I told McClure that Johnny Depp had paid 15 grand to Kerouac’s estate for one of Jack’s jackets.

He & Ray Manzarek were just about to go on & Ferlinghetti was toning his final poem.

McClure flipped me the hard Sophoclean eye & said “I have five or six of those.”

“So do I,” I replied, my mind shifting cunningly from free will to Good Will thinking, of course, that Depp will need a 2nd coat for when the 1st is in the cleaners & another for his summer home & one for his manse in Nice.

—Ed Sanders
Woodstock, NY
in memory of my longtime friend & literary explorer
Michael McClure

Born in 1932, Michael McClure was raised between his birthplace, Marysville, Kansas, and Seattle. He finished high school and began college in Wichita before going to the University of Arizona and from there, in 1954, to San Francisco. In 1955, he was the youngest reader to participate in the historic Six Gallery reading where Allen Ginsberg first read *Howl* in public. Poet, playwright, novelist, essayist, journalist, and author of more than forty books, McClure was a central figure whose experience in the 1950s was foundational for the creation of the counterculture of the 1960s and its aftermaths. He died on May 4th, 2020, at his home in Oakland, California.