# Muriel Rukeyser, introductory remarks – Sir George Williams University, January 24, 1969
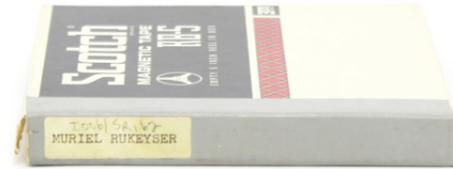
Katherine McLeod   September 19, 2019

Audio of the week, ShortCuts, SPOKENWEBLOG | 1969, Katherine McLeod,
SGW Reading Series

Tweet   Share   Cite this article   ❝

▶   00:00 ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬   00:00   🔊 ▭▭▭
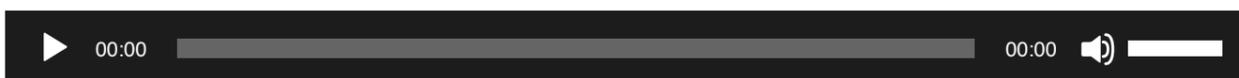
In her opening remarks, poet Muriel Rukeyser asks her audience to raise their hands if they have ever written a poem. We hear a murmur and bits of laughter and, presumably, hands are raised. She thanks them, explaining that she has begun asking every audience this question and that "there's always the moment of silence, and looking around first, and generally, quite slowly, almost all the hands go up." Before reading a single poem, she manages to create a community of listeners and of poets. As Jane Malcolm has argued, if Rukeyser's goal is "to occupy the room with poetry," then, even without knowing how many raised their hands, "we are now listening to a collective, to one mere poet in a room of poets." We start to hear the room as collectively invested in the questions of what a poetry reading is and why poetry readings as live events are worth seeking out – questions that we may also ask ourselves while seeking out and listening to these recordings today.

Listen to the entire reading here.

For more information on the Sir George Williams Reading series, see:

1. Camlot, Jason and Christine Mitchell, eds. "The Poetry Series," Amodern 4 (2015), http://amodern.net/issues/amodern-4/.

2. Malcolm, Jane. "The Poem Among Us, Between Us, There: Muriel Rukeyser's Meta-Poetics and the Communal Soundscape." *Amodern 4: The Poetry Series* (March 2015).

Katherine McLeod

Katherine McLeod researches and teaches Canadian literature through sound, performance, and archives. Her recent publications include a chapters in the books *Public Poetics: Critical Issues in Canadian Poetry and Poetics, Moving Archives* (Wilfrid Laurier UP), and *CanLit Across Media: Unarchiving the Literary Event* (MQUP), which she also co-edited with Jason Camlot. Currently, she is an Affiliate Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Concordia University, where she researches CBC Radio recordings and where she is organizing SpokenWeb's Ghost Reading Series.

Follow the site she curates for Montreal readings at WherePoetsRead.ca and @poetsread.

About Us

Contact Us

Get Involved

Downloads

News

Opportunities

Submit an Event

Log in