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## About the Cover



Photo taken by Robert Berg ca. 1954. Copyright Robin Blaser Estate; used with permission of David Farwell, Executor. Held in the 'Robin Blaser Fonds' in the Contemporary Literature Collection, Special Collections and Rare Books, Bennett Library, Simon Fraser University.

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This image of Robin Blaser (along with several other images) was discovered by San Francisco poets Kevin Killian and Dodie Bellamy at an estate sale of photographer Robert Berg. They purchased the photos and sent them as a gift to Blaser; the photos now reside in Simon Fraser University's Special Collections & Rare Books at the Bennett Library, among the poet's papers and archives.

In the photo, the young Robin Blaser is shown on the campus of UC-Berkeley, where he studied in the late 1940s–early 1950s. While at Berkeley, Blaser became fast friends with fellow students Robert Duncan and Jack Spicer, forming an important poetic triumvirate that came to be styled the 'Berkeley Renaissance,' a fore-runner of the Beat-inflected 'San Francisco Renaissance' that exploded in the Bay Area with Allen Ginsberg's reading of 'Howl' at the Six Gallery in October 1955.

Blaser and Spicer both studied medieval language and literature with philologist Arthur Brodeur. As Blaser later wrote in his essay 'The Fire,' '[I]t was the fantastic



pull of hearing Brodeur read *Beowulf*, a hundred lines a whack on a good day, which led Spicer and me to compete in our translations to bring over the heat of that story' (Blaser, 2006). Manuscripts of both poets' student efforts in translating *Beowulf* reside in the Spicer Archive at the Bancroft Library at Berkeley. As Dan Remein argues in his essay for this issue, the fact of these poets' engagement with Anglo-Saxon language and literary form not only has enormous implications for the development of the late-twentieth-century poetic *avant-garde* in the United States, but also suggests unexplored avenues in literary criticism of Anglo-Saxon verse.

### Reference

Blaser, R. 2006. The Fire. In *The Fire: Collected Essays of Robin Blaser*, ed. M. Nichols, 3–12. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

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