

The background features a complex network of white circular nodes connected by thin purple lines, set against a gradient background that transitions from dark purple at the top to a bright pink at the bottom. The nodes are scattered across the frame, with some forming distinct geometric shapes like triangles and polygons.

Ground Work: Before the War/In the Dark

Written by Robert Duncan

Published by mckeonandassociates

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Ground Work: Before the War/In the Dark

By Robert Duncan

Groundwork Before Interview

Robert Duncan's *Groundwork*, the American poet's unparalleled final masterpiece, is now available in a single volume. I am speaking now of the *Dream in which America sleeps, the New World, moaning, floundering, in three hundred years of invasions, our own history out of Europe and enslaved Africa.*--Robert Duncan, from *Groundwork* Robert Duncan has been widely venerated as one of America's most essential poets: Allen Ginsberg described his poetry as rapturous wonderings of inspiration, Gwendolyn Brooks called it a subtle spice, and Susan Howe pointed to Duncan as my precursor father, Lawrence Ferlinghetti said he had the finest ear this side of Dante, and Robert Creeley called him the magister, the singular Master of the Dance. Now Duncan's magnum opus, *Groundwork*, is available in one groundbreaking edition. The first volume, *Groundwork I: Before the War*, was published in 1984, after a fifteen-year publishing silence, and received immediate acclaim: it was nominated for a National Book Critics Circle Award and won the first National Poetry Award for Duncan's lifetime devotion to the art of poetry and his grand achievement.... The second volume, *Groundwork II: In the Dark*, was published in February 1988, the month of Duncan's death. The internationally renowned poet Michael Palmer has written a marvelous introduction for this new edition, where the singlemindedness of Duncan's] life's work shows itself in the confident energy of every line (Voice Literary Supplement).

/// Spicer & Duncan should get a beautiful enemies treatment a la Epstein's study of O'Hara-Baraka. Maybe add Levertov to the mix. Think of them doing seances in Duncan's house in the 50s, both receiving Lorca as radios, splitting into bars (Spicer) & tea parties w/Helen Adams (Duncan).

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/// Mythopoetic in Duncan as of course ridiculous/antique on the outside but also an extension of the real practice of his family. & when yr in it not much is as compelling as his portrait of the hive in "Structure of Rime XXVII." It's all about the bees man cf Caesar's Gate.

/// "Do I really want the thunder of this hour, / this mouth my mouth seeks, this tongue" (190) / Have heard complaint RE: Duncan's later poems, how they get same-y, revolve around the same themes. Consider their relationship to Spicer's idealization of the poem "with an infinitely small vocabulary." & also the vulnerability of these poems at the end of his life vs earlier vatic "thunder." ...more

Ground Work: Before the War/In the Dark

Groundwork Before Riding

I didn't like the second book as much as the first. It seems like he realizes in it that he has cornered his own method and is no longer enjoying it. There are some strong things in II, particularly the first page and The Face.

Continually reading. In the Dark is so much more personal than Before the War, but the poetics are similar.

Groundwork is a staggering collection that I keep near.