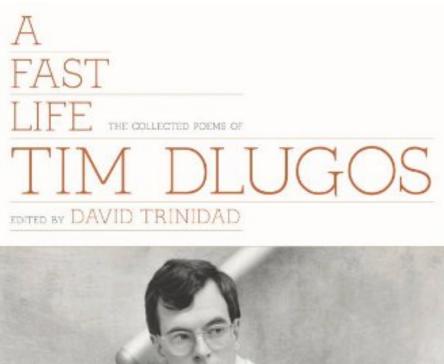
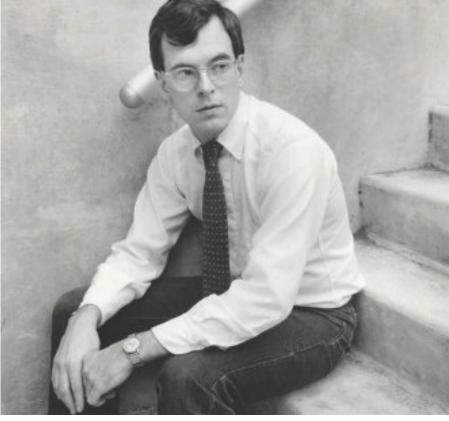


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Review "The Frank O'Hara of his generation." (Ted Berrigan)

About the Author

Born in 1950, TIM DLUGOS was involved in the Mass Transit poetry scene in Washington, D.C., and later, in New York City, in the downtown literary scene. His books include Entre Nous, Strong Place, and Powerless. Dlugos died of AIDS at the age of forty. DAVID TRINIDAD's most recent collection of poetry is the The Late Show. He teaches at Columbia College in Chicago.

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A Fast Life establishes Tim Dlugos—the witty and innovative poet at the heart of the New York literary scene in the late 1970s and 1980s and seminal poet of the AIDS epidemic—as one of the most distinctive and energetic poets of our time. This definitive volume contains all of the poems Dlugos published in his lifetime, a wealth of previously unpublished poems, and an informative introduction, chronology, and notes assembled by the volume's editor, poet David Trinidad.

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Extraordinary Accomplishment

By M. Coffey

Tim Dlugos died of AIDS in 1990 at age 40. People who knew his work back then realized that he was an impressively talented poet. But it was not until his friend David Trinidad put together this magnum opus of Dlugos's work that the extent of his accomplishment could be seen in full. The result of years of research and editing, this book makes clear that, despite his early death, Tim Dlugos deserves recognition as a major voice in 20th century American poetry.

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The major AIDS poet writes in plain language about his life in NYC, describing "the tangled postures lovers learn"

By H. Williams

In March 2015 for National Poetry Month, the book discussion group at The LGBT Center in NYC read poetry by Tim Dlugos from "A Fast Life: The Collected Poems of Tim Dlugos." Despite the horrible snowstorm, we had a terrific turnout, including one member who actually knew Dlugos, and some absolutely enlightening and inspiring discussion. (This is why we discuss books and poetry.)

I sometimes have a difficult time reading poetry. This book was huge ("a real door-stopper," somebody called it) so I originally chose a dozen poems to try to focus the reading to a reasonable length, which may have been helpful but also biased the reading toward his later more depressing poems. Many of the early poems are lighter (some of them very light) and don't really point toward the serious tone his writing takes near the end of his life. The poems I originally selected: SHELLEY WINTERS (a pop culture poem recalling Frank O'Hara) POEM AFTER DINNER (an occasional poem) GILLIGAN'S ISLAND (pop culture and commentary) JE SUIS EIN AMERICANO (humor) CLUBS I'VE JOINED (a very smart list poem) AT THE POINT (memoir) SONNET ("The night he leaves you," more about NYC) DESIRE UNDER THE PINES (on Fire Island) SODOM (on The Mineshaft) SPY OF LOVE (another well-controlled sonnet) CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD (haiku-like brevity and clarity) THE STEVEN HAMILTON SESTINA (a masterwork of style and meaning) SLEEP LIKE SPOONS (such a touching ending, such terrific language) POWERLESS (a major poem and the title of one of his collections) G-9 (the great AIDS poem made up of short lines holding on for life) IT USED TO BE MORE FUN (on being mortal and a poet) **RADIANT BABY** (on Keith Haring) D.O.A. (a final poem)

Dlugos's life and work cannot be separated. He was a Catholic monk who left the monastery at the age of 21 in 1971 to become an activist for political and gay causes. He originally moved to Washington, DC, before he moved to NYC. In both cities, he made friends with a number of the leading gay poets and authors of the period including Michael Lally, Joe Brainard, Brad Gooch, Eileen Myles, and Dennis Cooper, among many others whom he identifies in his poems. He was a denizen of the newly liberated gay world found in NYC during the late 1970's before he eventually sobered up and enrolled in the Yale Divinity School, where he hoped to become an Episcopal priest. He was diagnosed with AIDS in 1989 and died in 1990 at the age of 40.

Dlugos is widely known for the poems he wrote while living with HIV and AIDS and is considered the seminal poet of the AIDS epidemic. His long narrative poem "G-9" (which was the name of the AIDS ward at Roosevelt Hospital) is considered one of his major accomplishments.

The critic Marjorie Perloff wrote, "This is poetry of extraordinary speed and energy that fuses fact and fantasy, dream and documentary. Tim Dlugos' every nerve seems to vibrate."

Much of his early poetry does seem very fast. The comparison to Frank O'Hara is inevitable (think "The Lunch Poems"). Much of his writing, if not almost all of it, is personal and autobiographical. He's full of pop

culture references, and a number of attendees enjoyed reading about NYC in the 1970's and looking for the references: clones, Christopher Street, Danny's Potbelly restaurant, the Ninth Circle hustler bar, streets and addresses, music and bars, and churches and clubs. Many of these references already need footnotes and future readers will depend on quickly disappearing information that may completely slip away any day now.

His language is very common and most of his writing is about everyday events: I had lunch with this guy, I slept with that guy, I thought about another guy, I'm watching TV and going to the movies now, then then going dancing. The complaint is that he doesn't elevate language or his daily occurrences to the level of "great" poetry. He's a regular guy with a specific cadence and consistent point of view, and the poetry often seems uninspired and uninspiring. While modern poetry is written in everyday speech, Dlugos has the ability to show his skill with the use of formal poetic forms.

His most serious free-verse poem, as noted above. is "G-9." It's long and discursive. But two of his other great poems, which we discovered from readers at the meeting, may be able to give you a feeling for his writing. If you don't read anything else, you might want to read these. For the THE STEVEN HAMILTON SESTINA, look at the ending words of the lines in each of the stanzas and then how all the words get used in two lines at the end. For SLEEP LIKE SPOONS, pay attention to the biblical references and the beautiful imagery.

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