



Robert Duncan in San Francisco (City Lights/Grey Fox)

Michael Rumaker

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A newly expanded edition of an enduring classic, *Robert Duncan in San Francisco* is both a portrait of the premier poet of the San Francisco Renaissance and a fascinating account of gay life in late 1950s America. Following his graduation from Black Mountain College, Michael Rumaker made his way to the post-*Howl*, pre-Stonewall gay literary milieu of San Francisco, where he entered the circle of Robert Duncan. His account of that time gives an unvarnished look at Duncan's magnetic personality and occasional failings, while delivering vivid snapshots of other significant poets like Jack Spicer, John Wieners, and Joanne Kyger against the backdrop of legendary North Beach haunts like The Place, Vesuvio, and City Lights Books. Contrasting Duncan's daringly frank homosexuality with his own then-closeted life, Rumaker conjures up with harrowing detail an era of police persecution of a largely clandestine gay community struggling to survive in the otherwise "open city" of San Francisco. First published in 1996, this expanded edition includes a selection of previously unpublished letters between Rumaker and Duncan, and an interview conducted for this edition, in which Rumaker provides further reflections on the poet and the period.

Michael Rumaker has written several novels and short story collections, as well as the memoir *Black Mountain Days*. He was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and is a graduate of Black Mountain College—where Duncan served as his outside thesis advisor—and Columbia University. He taught at City University of New York and the New School for Social Research.

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