

OLIVER HADDO'S



MAESTRO INSANA GOES WEST



"... I don't know where they all appeared but Haddo's original Insana Room series was great -- maybe the most distinguished long poem of the 1960's. At the very least a damned good poem..."

-- M. K. Book

"...yeah, he's OK...."

-- Charles Bukowski

"Tell me about Haddo."

-- Christopher Perret

"I recommended the Insana poems to three legitimate publishers and to two experimental publishers and none was interested. The "legitimate" boys were not interested in an "unknown," while the poet-operated experimental presses were mad at the entire staff of Chicago's Literary Times (which included Haddo). The Insana poems in Wormwood appeared as follows:

Maestro Insana's Room III, IV and V: Issue 13,  
page 13.

Maestro Insana's Room IX, X and XI: Issue 18,  
page 3.

Maestro Insana's Room XIII, XVII and XIX: Issue  
19, page 9.

Maestro Insana's Room 24 and 25: Issue 22, page 5.

Maestro Insana's Room 27: Issue 24, page 32.

-- Marvin Malone

"...Haddo is the talent among those blasted Chicago wild men...."

-- Anonymity Requested

Maestro Insana's Room: 27

He never had his picture on the cover  
Of Time or his name in Who's Who,  
But he did have a picture of Caruso  
Patting him on the head and his name  
Painted in black Gothic letters on the door.

"...I had word from Jay recently that Maestro Insana died recently, about two weeks back. He said he'd send me the obit, but I haven't seen it yet. Whether he likes it or not, however, he will live forever."

-- Ray Puechner  
11/29/67



### Maestro Insana Goes West I

It was a bad day at Blackhawk, the old Indian Trail along the Rock River, first stop from Chicago on a gray morning. A concrete chieftain Watched us from the hillside across the river As the thermos came out, hot coffee and brownies, And the Maestro sat on a picnic table staring At the river and chewing slowly -- his plate was Loose. When the wind was wrong a sweet sick Smell of decaying food drifted from a rusted Trash barrel. A popsicle stick (with wrapper) Floated by and empty beer cans edged the bank.

### Maestro Insana Goes West II

Expresswaying through flat farmlands of Iowa In dead green monotony, we paused momentarily To stuff down a hamburger at Victorian Inn In Victor, town of. These corn-bred people Are not too fabulously original at names. The food was bad and the gas from the Adjoining station the same, the car choking On it as we hurriedly went our long straight Way. Even the cornstalks popping through The ground seemed very disappointed in Having come up where they had.

### Maestro Insana Goes West III

Fagged after watching 800 miles of Interstate Sliding by we lulled in the Sunset Motel with The stockyard smells drifting in the windows Of this thick Omaha night. Finally we picked Up our bodies and walked them across the road To Cliff's Chicken House, a magnificent house To be in if you are a chicken. Omaha's finest. Some old farmer had knocked out a wall and Put in a few tables on the ground floor. Patrons Knocked each other down to get their Friday Catfish fries or Cliff's personal chicken at \$1.75. The Maestro wore black suitcoat, levis, and plaid Shirt and most mistook him for a regular.



#### Maestro Insana Goes West IV

The metamorphosis began shortly after passing  
Through Ovid, Col. The dead flat plains broke  
Suddenly into hills with plants of Indian  
Paintbrush -- Marlboro red -- and columbine.  
Don't pick! And go west, old man, we did  
To Greeley whence we came to rest with the  
Mountains waiting heavily on the horizon.

#### Maestro Insana Goes West V

The radiator boiled over delightedly  
In the rarified air -- 13,000 feet --  
As tourists we were in Rocky Mountain  
Park we tossed the remains of the brownies,  
Crumbs, over the stone retaining wall  
Where Clark's nutcracker and common  
Chipmunk vied for a share of the handout.  
The first mountain streams of fresh water,  
An inquisitive marmot looking like a lost  
Beaver above the timberline, pausing to  
Throw snowballs. It seemed a pity to live  
Back there on Michigan Avenue.

#### Maestro Insana Goes West VI

The sun dropped behind Pike's Peak as we  
Watched from the bathroom window of the  
Blue Fox Motel, the only room with a view.  
No more hamburgers tonight. Vincent's  
Six course dinner for \$1.49. (Skipped the 10 cent  
Hamburgers at Michael's Drive-Inn.) And all night  
Stayed awake listening enviously to a tribe  
Of Pueblo Indians (college graduation party)  
Hold a mad bash on both floors with beer-can  
Joy and giggling girls footstepping along the  
Runways. They seemed almost American.

#### Maestro Insana Goes West VII

The chapel, of course, Saarinen's steel accordion;  
Like waltzing inside a moving kaleidoscope.  
Protestants upstairs! Catholics downstairs!  
Jews in the little room on the side, please!



Outside again the white stone blocks glisten  
So bright our eyes water red, try to bleed.  
In panic, the Maestro and I run, stumble  
Into the Planetarium, right on time for the  
Matinee -- ceiling slides cut from Halliburton's  
Book of Marvels. Later, I had a hard time  
Convincing the Maestro that we had not yet  
Reached Disneyland, simply the Air Force Academy.

### Maestro Insana Goes West VIII

Past big Red Mountain, down in the green valley,  
Silverton, where the snows have thawed, but  
The residents have not, where the last major  
Construction project was the indoor outhouse  
Installed at the railroad stop. A bagful  
Of sandwiches in his hand, the Maestro boards  
The toy train to Durango. Kids screaming.  
Some five hours and fifty miles later, waiting  
For him on the tourist-trap Old Town street,  
He arrives, sound asleep, his lunch untouched.

### Maestro Insana Goes West IX

The ex-Nazi, Japanese cameras hanging on him  
Like war ribbons, first appeared to haunt us  
At Mesa Verde, home of the Pueblo Indians.  
While climbing through the Cliff Palace ruin,  
Peering into a kiva, and pausing in the museum  
To admire the skull of a man who possessed  
A particularly gruesome tooth disease, he was  
Omnipresent, watching us watching him watch us.  
Old habits, it seems, are hard to shake.

### Maestro Insana Goes West X

A can of beer, a deck chair, and thou,  
Grand Canyon yawning in the sunrise.  
The mules descend leaving numerous  
Territorial markings along the trail,  
The better to find their way home.  
The more civilized human animal simply  
Follows the string of rusting beer cans.



### Maestro Insana Goes West XI

Among the many things we would rather not be,  
We concluded, is a Navaho Indian dwelling in  
Monument Valley. It would be all right if you  
Didn't like trees or grass or eating regularly,  
If you could learn to enjoy severe sunstroke  
As a sport, learn to give up water for a perpetual  
Lent. Monument Valley where a man's home is his  
Hogan (call it a mud igloo) and the inhabitants  
Wait for the Negroes to move into the neighborhood  
So that the property values will begin to rise.

### Maestro Insana Goes West XII

In order to make certain that no trace or trickle  
Or water might by some accident slip down a wash  
Or a draw and reach the lips of the Navahoes,  
Your friendly neighborhood U. S. Government  
Has kindly constructed a damn, Glen Canyon,  
To suck up all of the waters of the Colorado  
Before it gets down to the reservation. This  
Great and glorious system is called American enterprise.

### Maestro Insana Goes West XIII

In the modest little town of Kanab, Utah,  
Motels as fine as any to be found. How  
Come? we asked. This, said the proprietress  
Proudly, is where they make the Westerns.  
Confidentially, the very room I'm giving you  
Was once slept in by George Hamilton.

### Maestro Insana Goes West XIV

Playing the nickel slots in the Lounge  
At the Sahara, the Maestro hit an \$8  
Payoff, but, not seeing the girl rush  
Toward him with the money, thought  
The blinking, buzzing machine had tilted  
And played another nickel, while all  
Around gazed in admiration at the gambler  
Who had no time for a mere \$8, but went  
On resolutely for the big two hundred.



### Maestro Insana Goes West XV

Fresno, where stopping at the motel of  
The same name, we walked to Riding Park  
And saw white flowers as big as our heads  
Grow on a tree, paid two-bits to be insulted  
By the chimps in the zoo, a modest but  
Provocative little bestiary. And after  
The smorgasbord we fell asleep to the tune  
Of Magic Fingers walking. We shall return.

### Maestro Insana Goes West XVI

Early morning and the deer sponging food  
Along the roadside (easy marks, we tourists),  
Tossing bread crusts, snapping color slides  
With which to bore our friends and onward  
And upward to Glacier Point. There, down  
In the valley a white bird sails on the wind --  
Species: Beechcraft Bonanza. Water, water,  
Falls everywhere. Nevada, Iililouette, Ribbon,  
Sentinal, the great Upper and Lower and more.  
Not God's country but ours. Half Dome to the right,  
El Capitan on the left, and we like stout Cortezes  
Standing silent upon this viewpoint in Yosemite.

### Maestro Insana Goes West XVII

We're off to see the hippies, the wonderful  
Hippies of ... Chinatown, my Chinatown ... those  
Broadway topless rhythms got us on the go-go!  
We ensconced in the Oxford House, making daily  
Cable trips to the bay, walking, walking,  
Telegraph Hill, City Lights, not so much of  
A bookshop after all, the Vesuvio, near the  
Park the banana lovers, at the Wharf the fresh  
Shrimp looking like overgrown maggots, a Golden  
Gate painted red. And we left our hearts in San  
Francisco, but before we left, we had them served up  
Raw, looking like slices of cold watermelon, and  
Called roast beef. It's a great place to visit,  
But you wouldn't want to have your sister eat there.



## Author's Biography

Oliver Haddo's 'poems' have appeared in Oyez, Wormwood, Cardinal Poetry Quarterly, Spectroscope, Kauri, Gadfly, and New Improved. Oliver Haddo is the pseudonym of:

Charles B. Victor, whose 'stories' have appeared in Swank, Jem, Midwestern University Quarterly, Bachelor, Macabre, Dapper, Trace, etc. Charles B. Victor is the pseudonym of:

Ray Puechner, whose 'humor pieces' have appeared in Saturday Review, The Realist, Grump, North American Review, Dare, Pageant, Literary Times, Omnibus, 1000 Jokes, The Smith, Adam, etc.

### Recommended Reading:

The Sky Went Red, by Charles B. Victor, is due shortly as a paperback original novel from Avon.

The LSD & Sex & Censorship & Vietnam Cookbook, by Ray Puechner (pronounced Peak' ner), is a collection of humor pieces to appear in April from Harris-Wolfe.