



**Nodin Press**

**5114 Cedar Lake Road, Minneapolis, MN, 55416**

**Contact Norton Stillman (952) 546-6300 / Fax (952) 546-6303**

**nstill4402@aol.com**

## Born Under the Sign of Odin

*The Life & Times of Robert Bly's  
Little Magazine & Small Press*

**Mark Gustafson**

Long before Robert Bly became a cultural icon as a leading light of the Men's Movement, he was shaking up the world of poetry with a "little magazine," published from his farm in western Minnesota, that celebrated the deep imagery of European and South American poets while playfully mocking the often tepid and academic work of his American colleagues. This is the story of that literary revolution, the effects of which are with us to this day.

Author Gustafson draws upon Bly's literary and personal correspondence, private papers, and the publications themselves to paint an indelible portrait of an artist driven by unusual ideas of expression rooted in earthiness, myth, open forms, and social conscience. Bly's iconoclastic tendencies bring plenty of spice to critical exchanges with James Dickey, Donald Hall, Denice Levertov, Tomas Tranströmer, Gary Snyder, and many other eminent poets at a time when the more formal and conservative aesthetic of the Pound/Eliot cadre and the hyper-technical analysis of the New Critics were proving themselves inadequate to the changing times. Using the issues of *The Fifties* and *The Sixties* as guideposts, Gustafson explores Bly's courageous stance against the Vietnam War, his principled response to receiving the National Book Award, the technical challenges of financing and printing a "little" magazine from the prairies of western Minnesota, and other adventures, with flashes of humor brightening many turns in the path.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Mark Gustafson, born and raised in Chicago, has been a classics professor focusing on historiography, religions, late antiquity, and ancient tattoos. He first encountered Robert Bly's poetry a half-century ago, and spent the next twenty years attending readings and scouring used book stores for Bly's more obscure publications. Eventually, Gustafson made Bly's acquaintance, and was given open access to his collected papers.

In 2012, Red Dragonfly Press published his *The Odin House Harvest: An Analytical Bibliography of the Publications of Robert Bly's Fifties, Sixties, Seventies, Eighties, Nineties, and Thousands Press*. Essays in *Antioch Review*, *Great River Review*, *Kenyon Review*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *Rain Taxi Review of Books*, and *Robert Bly in This World* (University of Minnesota Press, 2011) grew out of the research for these books.

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