

**Negative Capability  
in the Verse of  
John Wieners**

**Micah Ballard**

While experiencing the weight of the world, Wieners knows that in the chamber of maiden-thought the poet gains an identity, a soul. With this soul he is able via the imagination, to go beyond the mansion of life to unknown realities in search for truth and beauty. Here the highest imaginative experience occurs, where the mind lands in a daemonic labyrinth, or night palace. The night palace consists of unearthly phenomena similarly found in dreamworlds, where the landscape, under occult agency, is heightened, exotic, rare, and often terrifying. It is a neutral ground that is neither a heaven nor a hell but a place where Wieners' imagination can roam freely. Like Keats, he knows not to fearfully or moralistically abandon the daemonic, but to trust in the dimension of beauty it adds to his poetry. In being loyal to his imagination Wieners understands that ultimately, it delivers him beyond earthly realities. Through a sympathetic, synthetic imagination Wieners is able to create a lasting poetry that forever contains an intuitive, intensified edge of emotion where truth and beauty endlessly reign.

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