The following index lists the major topics in the audio recording and the approximate point when they occur in the recording according to an analog cassette recorder’s tape counter. This tape counter index (TCI) has not been edited for accuracy by Archives and Special Collections.
Introduction to the program.

Bevis comments that the second half of the course has begun and now there will be a more delicate attention to consciousness in the readings, which is what Bevis would like to see in more of the Western writings. Bevis says that the readings now move into a more modern era. The books previously read in the class were written in before 1950. Bevis mentions that modern writing has more attention to consciousness.

Bevis explains what attention to consciousness is. It is a set of differing points of view. For example, environmentalists give a different picture of Colstrip than does Montana Power. Bevis talks about there being a great deal of consciousness in the last three books of the class and that consciousness today affects contemporary art.

Bevis explains that in the second half of the course we will be moving beyond good guy and bad guy myths. All three of these books were published in the early 70's. Tonight's panel, to discuss Dick Hugo's poetry, consists of Madelaine DeFrees and Tess Gallagher, both of whom write poetry and teach in creative writing at the University of Montana. Today Bevis wants to consider Northwest poetry and the Northwest school of poetry.

Bevis asks DeFrees if she or any poets think there is a Northwest school of poetry. DeFrees says that most poets she has talked to don't feel that there is such a thing as a Northwest type of poetry. DeFrees says that many poets have said that the more they go into their deep feelings and write about them the more people seem to think that the poet is talking about them. Thus the poetry is universal.

DeFrees asks the question of what would be included in Northwest poetry if there was such a thing. DeFrees says that California would have to be left out. The area would be from Oregon north to British Columbia and east to Montana. She notes that another division would be made in that there is coastal versus an inland area. She says that there is some poetry in these areas that is not like the poetry in other areas of the country. For example, much of the poetry from the Northwest is concerned with nature.
Bevis mentions that the South also has a great deal of nature literature. DeFrees says that you would probably not mistake Southern literature for Northwest literature, however, because there is a difference in language. There is also such extremes in wealth and poverty and history in the South that writing that comes from there is very much conditioned unlike Northwest writing. Bevis asks Gallagher whether she would go back to New York and tell them that there is such a thing out here as Northwest literature. Gallagher says that she would not say that there is a Northwest school for poetry.

Gallagher does mention that the poetry in the Northwest is very localized, however. Many of the poems have the names of trees, animals, rivers and Indian tribes that are native to the area, in them. Gallagher says that there is a different type of poetry in the East that can be distinguished from the Northwest. In the East the poems are more involved with relationships between people than anything else. Gallagher says that some people in the Northwest also tend to internalize their poetry putting upon it a person's view of nature.

Gallagher uses the example of Dick Hugo, who when he writes about landscapes, always has the sky as gray. Gallagher continues to talk about the different types of people in the East as compared with the students here. The students here seem to be more "generous" with themselves than students from the East, which surprised her since the students out here had to work for what they have as compared with Eastern students, most of whom have been given everything they want from their families.

DeFrees and Gallagher talk more about the differences between students in the East as compared with students in the West. Bevis says that in Hugo's poetry he sees two things that could be considered characteristic of Northwest poetry. One is the loneliness that appears in his work and the other how sad the works really are.

Bevis says that Western art seems to be the saddest forms of art in the country. Nostalgia, backward looking, the sense of decay all seem to be endemic in Western literature. Bevis asks the question of whether this can be seen as regional. Another quality that Bevis thinks might be a part of the Northwest is the terse language. It seems to be plain, gruff, honest speech. Bevis again asks whether this could be a claim to Northwest poetry.

Gallagher says that this is reflected in the writings from this area. The students in the courses at the university all seem to have this style, at least the
ones who are from this area and have spent a lot of
time alone out here. The writing out here seems to be
done with a sense of confidence because people will
welcome and look at the writing out here, which is not
always the case in other parts of the country.

551-600 Gallagher says that out here there is sometimes a sort
intellectual ignorance, helplessness. Back East,
however, the first thing you learn is not to be
helpless. You may feel helpless but you never want to
show it. Gallagher tells a story of how hard it really
is to get around New York, especially on the subway and
you don't even know anything about the place. No one
offers to help out either so it really is a different
type of lifestyle.

601-650 Bevis asks Gallagher to clarify what is simpler about
country style poetry as compared with urban poetry.
Gallagher says that in some of the poetry out here she
sees the first lines as being "I am sure", which makes
her feel as though the person is unsure otherwise they
wouldn't have bothered to put it in. This is a view of
overqualification, which isn't necessary in writing.

651-700 DeFrees says that after a while the language becomes
weak in writing because of so much qualification.
Bevis says that at the level poets operate on, many of
the qualifications are dishonest. In academics,
qualifications are actually disguises to avoid dealing
with the true feelings or problems a person is trying
to show.

701-750 Gallagher says that Hugo's poems seem to emotionally
volunteer a lot. His poems show that he isn't really
afraid to be vulnerable. The intimacy that Hugo shows
in the poems also impresses her. She compares Hugo
with Ashbury, a poet from the East. There are a great
many differences in the style but she feels that they
both have the same intimacy in their poems.

751-800 Bevis asks if she considers Hugo to be somewhat
confessional as a poet. Gallagher says that Hugo does
bring a lot of personal things into his poetry about
his friends and family. DeFrees agrees with what
Gallagher has been saying that Hugo's language is
getting more complicated. DeFrees says that a poets
style in writing changes when his life changes.

801-850 DeFrees says that there have recently been a lot of
changes in Hugo's life and it even seems at times that
he is being a little apologetic in some of his poems.
Bevis says that this is the one thing he doesn't like
about Hugo's poems. Bevis says that the most objective
thing that he has heard about Hugo's writing is that
there seems to be a lot of unrelenting despair.
Bevis is talking about Hugo's poetry and that people in Montana do find offense with some of it. They talk about writers in that they should not be feeling sorry for themselves when they write. Bevis then reads one of Hugo's poems. Bevis says that the poem seems to be registering a lot of self pity. DeFrees says that the poem seems to be acknowledging the way that some people's lives are lived in small towns like, in this case, Phillipsburg.

Gallagher says that much of the poetry being written today tends to put people to sleep. DeFrees comments that poetry isn't supposed to put people to sleep but instead should wake them up. Bevis asks them to explain Hugo's dreary poem to the people in Phillipsburg. DeFrees noted that Hugo's landscape of Phillipsburg was largely artificial and projected onto Phillipsburg. DeFrees says that the people should feel badly about the poem because they are only being used symbolistically.

Bevis comments that Dick Hugo's book was never really meant as a documentary. It can be regarded as a pure image for the sake of effect on the reader, however. DeFrees says that many readers of poems don't really understand the function of the actual in the poems. DeFrees gives an example of two poems she sent her brother and the one with references to the family he said he understood but the other one he didn't. DeFrees says that most people don't really understand the poetry but they think they do if they can recognize something in it that is familiar to them.

They comment that people in Phillipsburg would probably not object to another town being described in the same way but people are very protective. Bevis says that people also ought to be able to recognize when a person is a visitor in a place and when that person lives there, when that person writes about the place. You are likely to get two different views. Bevis notes that Hugo, who is from Seattle, has a lot of nostalgic poems about Seattle. Bevis says that the time is up for the panel and he thanks them for being on the program.

Bevis begins the second part of the program. Bevis says that Hugo is sort of a Northwest style of poet. He says that Hugo uses a type of speech that, if not Northwest, is certainly American and characteristic of the Northwest region. Bevis asks the question of why
speech is important. Bevis notes poets used to quite frequently yell at one another because the American poems weren't using American speech.

201-250 Bevis comments that certainly Hugo has stayed within American English when writing his poems. Another things about Hugo is that he was born in the Northwest, Seattle specifically, and he has lived his life here. Another way Hugo qualifies as a contender as a Northwest poet is that he deals with Northwest subjects.

251-410 Bevis talks about one of Hugo's poems. Bevis wants to talk about craftsmanship in Hugo's poetry. Bevis says that Hugo is clearly aware of his literary heritage. Bevis reads one of Hugo's poems and analyzes part of it. Bevis wraps up the program by saying that Hugo's writings are now developing the conscientious feelings that are so apparent in contemporary art. Bevis then signs off.

[END OF TAPE]