

**COLLECTED POEMS: 1961-2000**

**RICHARD DENNER**

All Rights Reserved. Copyright © 2001 Richard Denner

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping or by any information storage or retrieval system, without the permission in writing from the publisher.

Published by Comrades  
For information, please contact:  
Comrades Press  
23 George Street  
Stockton, Southam  
Warwickshire, England  
CV47 8JS  
Website: [www.comrades.org.uk](http://www.comrades.org.uk)  
email: [editor@comrades.org.uk](mailto:editor@comrades.org.uk)

Quotation from *Kora In Hell* © by William Carlos Williams,  
reprinted with permission of City Lights Books.

“D Press: Jewel in the Net”  
originally published in *The Temple #16*  
Tsunami, Inc., 2000

Front cover collage: Kim Secunda  
Back cover photo: Jessica Framer  
Linoleum block prints by the author

ISBN: 0-7388-6318-1

Printed in the United States of America

*for my mother, Helen*

*and in memory of my father*  
*Samuel Denner*  
*1900-1998*

*Here's splotchy velvet set to hide a door*  
*in a wall and there— there's the man himself*  
*praying.*

Table of Contents  
Foreword  
Preface  
Acknowledgements  
Introduction

**Berkeley, Aptos & San Luis Obispo: 1961-1968**

Letter to Sito in Time of War  
ABCs  
Poem on My Birthday  
Commitment  
Tabula Rasa  
Poem on My Return  
Captain of Poetry  
Song  
Patterns  
Tale  
A Book Entitled  
Vision  
Spaced  
Yes  
My Poems  
Elizabeth Says  
Calculated Lion  
Cogito Ergo Shazam  
A Bramavits Sits on the Head of a Neo-classicist  
Split Pe-rsonality Soup  
Ode to Graham Crackers  
27½ Before 3  
Taxman  
Line Drive  
Augustus Turns in His Tomb  
Sermon on the Mound

Flower Poem  
Putting Down Roots  
Oakland Should Be  
Langtree  
Tantrik Tune-up  
Detail  
Scorpio, Scorpio Rising  
Happy Climes  
All The Heads of the Town Lit Up

**Ketchikan & Deep Bay: 1968-1970**

Feather  
Evidence  
Poems  
Woodnotes

**Fairbanks & Preston: 1970-1974**

The Beast  
Poloot  
Big Foot  
Islam Bomb  
Headwater  
Truckin' the Alkan  
Dirt  
On the Beach  
Seascape  
Atman  
Sea Change  
Steppin' Out  
Printer's Devil  
Hell/Life  
Funk of the *F* Word

**Ellensburg: 1974-1995**

Traveler's Blues  
Scat Song  
Get Down  
Burger Productions  
In Advance of Beatitude  
Gold Leaf  
Chilling Out with *The Eclogues*  
Relax  
At Iambic Feet  
Diamond Hanging J Floating I  
Variables of Existing Choices

Cattle Are Just an Excuse for Shooting Coyotes  
Canis Latrans  
Om Om on the Range  
Critics Aren't Agreed  
Right Livelihood  
Notes on the Back of a Feed Bill  
Washington Swine Seminar  
Green Pastures  
Duke's Mix in Winter  
Living Well  
Evolved and Eclipsed  
Ecological Hazard  
Beeper  
Learning New Words  
Tortureland  
Calf Graft  
Now Is Like That  
A Tumbleweed Carries It's Shadow Tucked Within  
New Gravity  
Transformation  
Convalescent Conversation  
Robbers' Roost  
Ordinary Adventures  
Leaps and Bounds  
Andy the Mechanic  
Ancestors  
Flake on Flake  
Now There Then  
Am I Repressed  
Rodeo of the Equinox  
It's a Mess  
After the Volcano  
Old Growth  
Slash  
Synthesis  
What Are You Up To?  
*All Mimsy Were the Borogoves*  
A Hill Called Bringer of Luck  
Night Deluge  
By the Numbers  
Love's Way  
Chances  
Hermit and Trout  
As Above, So Below  
Secret Spots  
We Love Each Other

Ordinance  
By Dint  
Beryl  
Red Light, Blue Light  
Beryl on the Rocks  
Erewon  
Winter Forest  
Slowly  
Curve of Wind  
Angel  
Birthday  
Nature Has No Memory  
Sure Sign  
Astray  
Heart, How Close You Are  
Interior Rose  
Box  
Elemental  
Gifts  
Maid of Mist  
Vista  
Dark Order  
Soul Light  
In First Light  
Waterdownstone  
Green Feeling  
Afternoon Feeling  
Dandelion Wishes  
All Ways  
Fourwinds  
So  
Moonrider  
Cookin'  
Everything  
Two Roses  
Two Friends  
Walking  
Do I Hear Trumpets?  
March of Reds  
Silent Language  
Real  
Strained Sunrise  
Eyes That Cry  
You Gave Me a Ring  
At the Blackhawk

Driving Along  
F You C K  
Up Before Four  
Space Out  
Dream  
Clouds  
Light on Light  
Shifted  
Insured  
Below the Rad Lab  
Home  
Ok

**Pagosa Springs: 1994-1997**

Too Many Horses, Not Enough Saddles  
Right to the Point  
Clear  
What Where Is Here  
Method in My Madness  
Post-Dogmatist Puddle  
Painting Clouds  
Once  
Transition  
Africa  
Whatever It Takes  
Samsara and Nirvana  
Furniture Poem  
Shrine for Jimi Hendrix  
Deja Voodoo  
Too Little Too Late  
Warm Light  
Our Natural View  
Turn Beauty Turn  
Party Down, Anasazi

**Santa Rosa & Sebastopol: 1998-2000**

Pebbles  
On This Side of the Pass  
Beating Against the Rock  
Takes on a Blue Set  
Head Start  
Eco Biz  
Sky Line  
Painpoint  
Intrusions  
Moving Finger

Come onto Dry Land  
Stake Out  
Cold Fountains  
Blue Notes  
Poetics  
Tara  
Endangered  
Follow the Instructions  
Heavy Artillery  
Once I'm up to Speed on *Quark*  
Flatline  
Man-eater  
Back to the Real World  
Morning  
Noon  
And Night  
Dark Matter  
And the Tree of Life Also  
Five Abstracts Inspired by Mark Rothko  
Vacuumgenesis  
Telecosmos  
Nutcracker  
Cutting a Swath  
More Light  
Picture from Williams  
At East West Café  
Diminishing Options  
Fresh Flavor  
Compassion  
Cowboy  
Angels  
Duet at Sunset  
Que Petite Sirah, Sirah  
Constructive Rest  
Xitro  
Singing to the Cows  
Singin' Dixie  
Rising from the River  
Omni-spatial Matrix  
Mandala  
I Voted for Ike When I Was Eight  
History on Her Hands and Knees  
11:55 a.m. on This Planet  
Turning and Mirroring  
Full Moon  
Music of Her Face

Yes, Repeat, No  
Across No Divides  
Song at Midnight  
Eye Roving Over Blue Hills  
Trace-tones and After-dots  
Approachable But Out of Reach  
*When My Work Is Done I'll*  
Look for the Seven-headed Beast  
Heart's Love & Yearning Misery  
Flying White  
Luminous Form  
At the Center Is Fire  
Fully Awake in Your Look  
Found Poem  
Tapestry  
The 12:02  
Bear Dance  
Following Salvador Dali  
Excruciating Beauty  
Dicey  
Lovers Lain  
Coyote Meets Bodhidharma  
Israel 33½  
Buddha's Last Words  
Bunkhouse at 6 a.m.  
Cold Out There  
Fable  
Clotho, Lachesis & Atropos  
Pleides  
A Way She Walks  
So Sudden  
A Lovers Are  
Another Day  
Wipe Out  
Keep Moving  
Nestled in the Rose in the Meadow of Midnight  
Instructions to My Apprentice  
So High You Kissed the Sky  
Minaret  
Mother Muse  
Calendar of the Moon  
No O Zone  
Time Space Language  
Being Just As We Are  
Just As It Is  
Spit in the Ocean

*Pasta Is Fasta Ordered By Phone*

Encounter

A Leaf Ready to Fall

For Breakfast

Fragments

Freight

Believe Me, Laura

Timberline

Green Fire

Heart's Timber

Stubborn Lumber

Where On the Paper Chain Are You?

Planting the Blast

On to the Next Unit

Whip or Will

Vacuum Plus

Flash an Ogham

Five Is the Key

Cold Mountain

Suspicious

Go Song

Zero Tolerance

Napoleon Without a Bone

Irresolute

Open on All Levels

Automorph

Calendar Art

Do or Dot

There There

The Wart Cannot Be Coerced

Space Control

Way Through

Crazy As Possible

Stress in the Field

*B* Is for Reflection

Interchange of Tinctures

Why2K

Adventures of Psyche on The Astral Plane

How to Proceed

Things Change Yet Are One

President Buchanan Slept Here

Your Bones Know You Can

Calculus

*Just When Phoebe Decided Life Held No More Interest*

Rules

Space & Longing & a Few Flashes of Light

Sunshine within Sunlight  
Flowers Inside the Present  
Mutiny Is Fate  
Galatic Addressing Code  
Give Me Fag Vomit  
O, the Hells Ring Out  
Trains That Could  
Apocyyylove  
War Saw  
Weapons of Mass Destruction  
No Visible Means of Support  
General MacThuselah  
Terror Angel  
Errata  
Worn to A Phrasl  
Flashburn  
Ideogram  
The Color White  
Geraniums  
Gwen  
Percy  
I Know a Place  
Weary Elves  
Maddening  
Forest Perilous  
Billy Meets the Canyon Spirit  
Boogie Knight  
Maybe a Maiden  
Not Anything Real  
Merlin Creeping About  
Stars and Time  
Hear Them Buzzz  
Risking the Boundary  
Persephone's Mirror  
Hermes on His Rounds  
Holographic Paradigm  
Phantom's of the Fayum  
Numbed by the Rays  
*He Who Lists to Hunt*  
Nectar  
Late Knight on the Golden Gate  
Perfect  
For Jennifer  
Seeing Angels with the Inner Eye  
In Ketchikan  
Marilyn Manson on the Rag

This Script Has a Butt Shot  
Sunflower Kitchen  
Of Suns and Worlds  
High Pressure Center  
Box of Nerves  
At Every Level of Montezuma's Consciousness  
Love's Garden  
Visionary Designs  
At the Game Reserve  
Joy in All the Little Things  
Wavetwisters  
I Am Virgin to My Poem  
Soul of the Anti-poet  
My Escape Forward  
I Know Nothing  
Page of Wands  
What Is Mind?  
Night of Mystic Rain  
Magician's Apprentice  
Flowing  
All This Inside Me  
Vision Quest: So Many Rainbows  
Samsara Is an Airport Surrounded by a Delayed Flight  
Hookeena Village  
*Aloha* Means Don't Crash on the Rocks  
At Mahukona Beach Park  
Wind Blows East, Then West  
Pointless Poem about the Existence of Non-existence  
Story My Mother Tells  
Cord Cutting  
Refuge  
Juxt Pose  
Postcard from the State of Disaster  
Sit Like a Mountain  
Lost in Tongass Forest  
Nima's First Sweat  
Mother of All Sweats  
Poised  
November Mist  
Discovery  
Dream  
Along the Cutbank  
New Forms  
Dharma Talk  
Building a Fire for the Medicine Man  
Eurydice Awaits Orpheus in Hell

Installation  
Friends

## **FOREWARD**

At Comrades Press, we have a vision—this book is part of that vision.

Comrades Press was founded in 2000 as a direct result of its on line magazine. The amount and the quality of poetry, fiction, and non-fiction that we received was staggering, much of it from previously unpublished writers. We decided to rectify this by becoming publishers ourselves and, with no funding whatsoever, set about the task of bringing the work of the misplaced poets of the world to the world. The first step in this rather grand and impossible plan (the higher the goals, the higher you can climb) was to be the publication of the first of our yearly anthologies. However, the possibility of publishing the work of Richard Denner arose, and a race began to see which book we would publish first. As both the horses were in the Comrades stable, the race was a foregone conclusion, and I am proud to say that you are holding the winner in your hands right now.

By utilizing print on demand technology and on line stores, we are able to produce quality books without many of the overhead costs associated with traditional methods. This means that we are prepared to take risks that would probably have other publishers waking up in a cold sweat in the middle of the night. Rather than publishing what we know will sell, our goal is to publish work that we like, work that we believe in, which should be the only reason for anybody to publish anything. Comrades Press works on a non-profit basis. If we make any money from our publications, it sits in the bank account just long enough for us to make the red numbers a little smaller before it is channeled straight into our next publication.

This also allows us to produce short-run chapbooks from brand new authors whose work grabs you by the throat and demands to be read or picks away at the back of your brain until there is no choice but to go for it.

If this all sounds like a good idea to you, then please do visit our web site at [www.comrade.org.uk](http://www.comrade.org.uk) where you will find details of our other upcoming publications.

Verian Thomas  
Editor - Comrades

## **AUTHOR'S PREFACE**

The muse is not necessarily embodied in a single person. My first contact with this spirit of inspiration was Juanita Miller, the daughter of the flamboyant, 19th century California

poet, Joaquin Miller. She lived in a vine-covered castle among her father's monuments to Moses, John Frémont, and the Brownings, nestled in the Oakland hills, in what is now Joaquin Miller Park. In our neighborhood, she was unusual. On a foggy Halloween night, some friends and I spotted her in a white nightgown walking barefoot through the eucalyptus. We were sure her house was haunted and dared not go to her doorstep to trick or treat. She rode with my family to church on Sunday, and on one occasion she signed a copy of a collection of her father's poems and presented it to my mother. I revered this book. I would open it and gently touch her signature. It amazed me that we knew someone who was associated with the arts.

I memorized a poem from Miller's book, a poem to Lily Langtree, a popular singer of his day. I recited this poem in the 4th grade, and the next year in Mr. Shriner's 5th grade class, when asked to memorize a poem, I recited the same poem to fulfill the assignment, and the class jeered me, saying they had heard this poem before. A red-headed girl came to my defense and said she still thought the poem beautiful. A muse can be old or young, peaceful, joyful or wrathful, and sometimes they are teachers. In the 6th grade, Mrs. Latimore whacked the back of my hand with a yardstick for passing a scatological note when I was supposed to be diagramming sentences. Professor Traugot reprimanded me in front of a freshman comp class at Cal for plagiarizing Alfred Kazan's essay on Blake, and Professor Parkinson proclaimed my essay, "My Home," the worst thing he had ever read. I may be forever re-writing "My Home," but I have learned to disguise my sources with more craft.

Kenneth Rexroth was the first poet I heard read. Ernest Blank opened my eyes to hidden beauty in poetry by explicating Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress." Mike Sneed critiqued my first poem, a parody of Poe's "The Raven," and he pointed out that poems are not Freudian soap-operas. While guarding the balcony of the Campanile on the U.C. campus, Don Bratman taught me how to scan a poem's lines. Dennis Wier fired my interest in printing by showing me how to burn plates with a light bulb in an orange crate in his closet. Vic Jowers promoted my first chapbook at the Sticky Wicket near Aptos. Up to this point, I was dabbling, but I was primed for allegiance to this art when the 1965 Berkeley Poetry Conference was announced. My English teacher said he knew Robert Creeley and that I would learn more in one day at this conference than I would in a whole year at Cal Poly, so I turned in my journal, accepted a C for the semester, and thumbed my way back to Berkeley.

A major turning point—an injection of rocket fuel. I want to thank Gary Snyder for telling me Berkeley didn't need another bookstore and to take the nuts and bolts of what I had learned and move to the hinterlands where I was needed. Thanks to Allen Ginsberg for revealing that I could be both a good poet and a good businessman. "Just be *good*," he said, and I took the meaning of this to apply to both esthetics and ethics. As a bookseller, I always tried to find the right book for the right person at the right time. As a poet, well, you really can't be called a poet unless your poems survive a couple hundred years. Thanks to Charles Olson for showing me the meaning of *epic scale*. It was a mind transmission watching him bebop through the universe fusing Gilgamesh and quantum mechanics. To Robert Creeley, who laid down two laws: William Carlos Williams's *No*

*ideas but in things* and Ezra Pound's *Make it new!* To Jack Spicer, who admonished, "Poet, Be Like God," and to Robert Duncan for pointing out I could write with or against the sun. To Kirby Doyle for showing me that we are all connected; we just need to hold hands. To Ed Dorn for including me among The New Poets. To Max Scheer for making me The Poet of the Berkeley Barb. To Richard Kretch for inviting me to read at Shakespeare & Co. and publishing my early poems in *avalanche*. To Wesley Tanner for teaching me to thump type. To Philip Whalen for his blessing. To Moe Macowitz for my initiation into bookselling. To Jon Springer for giving me shelter in New York. To Luis Garcia for giving me his tattered thesis binder, so I could organize my poems. To Belle Randall, Gail Chiarello, Marianne Baskin, Kate Coleman, David Cole, Jim Whelage, Patrick Gord, William Boardman, Don and Alice Schenker, Carry McWilliams, Patricia Turrigiano, Price Charlston, Grant Risdon, Bob Allen, and Cheri Bader for their encouragement. To John and Karen Bader for their patronage. To John Oliver Simon for building an anthology, *City of Buds and Flowers*, around a few of my poems. I flitted through Charles Pott's *Valga Krusa*. I became a Berkeley Street Poet and a Poet of Peace and Gladness.

Many of the names above are famous, and I do not mean to imply I have been on intimate terms with all of them, but it was during these days many lifelong friendships started, and all of these people have in one way or another been instrumental in my development as a poet. Luis Garcia, my closest friend and collaborator, has been my greatest mentor, always present with insights and humorous twists of perspective. I met Lu right after the Berkeley Poetry Conference, and we continued meeting with other poets for weeks to come. Lu's style of writing is unique—playing with the words within the words, he directed me to meditate on the morning light and helped me understand that it was important to discover my own voice, to forge a blade, as he put it. Lu's poems sizzle. They move so fast, if you aren't ready, you miss them. By imitating Lu's use of jazz rhythms and breath notation, I began to read my poems aloud. Just like Leadbelly learned to play the 12-string, I learned my craft by putting my spine against the piano.

The choice of poems here is mine. Mainly, I have arranged them in chronological order, except where they seem better situated in the thematic contexts of later D Press chapbooks. I usually self-publish my writing, developing the arts of collage and printing along side the poetry. The printing of my poems is a way of editing my work, bringing what I say into better focus. Some of my poems appear in more than one book and in more than one version. It has never been my intent that any of them be the final version; I am not writing the *poeme supreme*. Words and phrases, which have bothered me after reading them for years, have here been changed or dropped. Due to format limitations, I have included only a selection of the early poemebooks with linoleum block illustrations. The cyberbooks, *Wavetwisters* and *Another Artaud*, are absent from this collection because they require elaborate typography and photographs to be fully appreciated.

Many events have affected my view. Many collaborations have enriched my life. I am especially grateful to my family and the many friends of my life. Also, thanks to my publisher, Verian Thomas. My poetry is my experience. This is my secret autobiography.

Richard Denner

Santa Rosa  
December 4, 2000

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Some of the poems and art have appeared in these journals and anthologies:

*Tangents*, Cabrillo College, Aptos, 1962

*Breastbeaters*, Berkeley Pamphlets, Berkeley, 1963.

*Poly Syllables*, California State Polytechnic College, San Luis Obispo, 1965.

*America Sings*, National Poetry Press, Los Angeles, 1965.

*Berkeley Barb*, Berkeley Barb, Berkeley, 1965-1967.

*avalanche*, undermine press, Berkeley, 1966.

*Polar Star Art-Lit Supplement*, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, 1970-1972.

*Vagabond Anthology*, Vagabond Press, Ellensburg, 1976.

*City of Buds & Flowers*, Alderaran Review, Berkeley, 1977.

*Heart in Utter Confusion*, The Dog Ear Press, Hulls Cove, 1980.

*Ellensburg Anthology*, Ellensburg Arts Commission & D Press, 1980-1987.

*Crab Creek Review*, Crab Creek Review Association, Ephrata, 1983.

*Catalyst*, Laocoön Books, Seattle, 1988.

*The Temple*, Tsunami Inc., Walla Walla, 1997-2000

*Pacific Northwestern Spiritual Poetry*, Tsunami Inc., Walla Walla, 1998.

*Blue Collar Review*, Partisan Press, Norfolk, 2000.

*The 2River View*, Daeman College, Amherst, 2000.

*Waterways*, Ten Penny Players Inc., Staten Island, 2000.

*The Louisiana Review*, Louisiana State University, Eunice, 2001.

*Butcher Block*, Butcher Shop Press, Oneonta, 2001.

Published at these sites on the worldwideweb:

*Comrades*, [www.comrades.org.uk](http://www.comrades.org.uk)

*The Physik Garden*, [www.physikgarden.com](http://www.physikgarden.com)

*Poetry Tonight*, [www.poetrytonight.com](http://www.poetrytonight.com)

*The Place Around The Corner*, [www.1freespace.com/art/olgasearch](http://www.1freespace.com/art/olgasearch)

*dIVE*, [www.pages.prodigy.net/yog-sothoth](http://www.pages.prodigy.net/yog-sothoth)

*The Junkyard*, [www.thejunkyard.org](http://www.thejunkyard.org)

*The Half-drunk Muse*, [www.geocities.com/owatagal](http://www.geocities.com/owatagal)

*Central California Journal of Poetry*, [www.solopublications.com](http://www.solopublications.com)

*Seeker Magazine (The Gryphon's Nest)*, [www.seekermagazine.com](http://www.seekermagazine.com)

*Dream Forge*, [www.pcisys.net](http://www.pcisys.net)

*Niederngasse*, [www.neiederngass.com](http://www.neiederngass.com)

*NuFoto*, [www.nufoto.com](http://www.nufoto.com)

*Bardo Burner*, [www.dedcenter.com/bardoburner](http://www.dedcenter.com/bardoburner)

*Absinith Literary Review*, [www.absinthe-literary-review.com](http://www.absinthe-literary-review.com)  
*Aluminum Baby*, [www.safesurfer.co.uk/rdenner](http://www.safesurfer.co.uk/rdenner)  
*In Posse*, [www.webdelsol.com/InPosse](http://www.webdelsol.com/InPosse)  
*Fresh Poetry*, [www.freshpoetry.com](http://www.freshpoetry.com)  
*Electric Acorn*, [www.acorn.dublinwriters.org](http://www.acorn.dublinwriters.org)  
*State of unBeing*, [www.apoculpro.org/SoB](http://www.apoculpro.org/SoB)  
*Poetry Downunder*, [www.aceonline.com](http://www.aceonline.com)  
*Adirondack Review*, [www.suite101.com/myhome.cfm](http://www.suite101.com/myhome.cfm)  
*Poetry Super Highway*, [www.poetrysuperhighway.com](http://www.poetrysuperhighway.com)  
*Cool Bird Poems*, [www.usd.edu/~tgannon/bird.html](http://www.usd.edu/~tgannon/bird.html)  
*Poems About Poetry*, [www.homepages.tesco.net/~magdtp](http://www.homepages.tesco.net/~magdtp)  
*Eclectica Magazine*, [www.eclectica.org](http://www.eclectica.org)  
*Bluff Magazine*, [www.bluffmag.com](http://www.bluffmag.com)  
*2River*, [www.daemen.edu/~2River](http://www.daemen.edu/~2River)  
*Story Bytes*, [www.thor.he.nte/~stories](http://www.thor.he.nte/~stories)  
*Moria*, [www.moriapoetry.com](http://www.moriapoetry.com)  
*Dark Planet*, [www.sfsite.com/darkplanet](http://www.sfsite.com/darkplanet)  
*zygzag*, [www.zygzag.com/pages/ZZhome.html](http://www.zygzag.com/pages/ZZhome.html)  
*Melic Review*, [www.melicreview.com](http://www.melicreview.com)  
*Samsara*, [www.sundress.net/samsara](http://www.sundress.net/samsara)

This volume collects the work published by D Press over a period of 33 years.

*Poems & Blocks*, Ketchikan, 1968.  
*The Eye of the Vitamin*, Ketchikan, 1968.  
*Denner Recipes*, Ketchikan, 1968  
*Poems*, Ketchikan, 1968.  
*Crankshaft*, Ketchikan, 1968.  
Untitled Poembooks, Deep Bay, 1969-1970  
*Chainclankers*, Deep Bay, 1970.  
*Head Soup*, Fairbanks, 1972.  
*The Scorpion*, (at Arif Press) Berkeley, 1975.  
*New Gravity*, Ellensburg, 1980.  
*Flake on Flake*, Ellensburg, 1981.  
*Said Just So*, Ellensburg, 1982.  
*Flower Poem*, Ellensburg, 1985.  
*Night Deluge*, Ellensburg, 1986.  
*Blue Agate*, Ellensburg, 1988.  
*Blood Dust* (with Luis Garcia), Ellensburg, 1988.  
*Slowly*, Ellensburg, 1989.  
*Dark Order*, Ellensburg, 1989.  
*Curve of Wind*, Ellensburg, 1989.  
*Interior Rose*, Ellensburg, 1990.  
*This Mississippi Miss*, Ellensburg, 1991.  
*Moonrider*, Ellensburg, 1992.  
*With Loss of Eden*, Ellensburg, 1992.

*Soul Light*, Ellensburg, 1992.  
*Vista*, Ellensburg, 1993.  
*Maid of Mist*, Ellensburg, 1993.  
*Two Roses*, Ellensburg, 1993.  
*Crossover*, Ellensburg, 1993.  
*Waterdownstone*, Ellensburg, 1993.  
*The Blank Flower*, Ellensburg, 1994.  
*Too Many Horses, Not Enough Horses*, Ellensburg, 1994.  
*Risking the Boundary*, Ellensburg, 1995.  
*Blue Light*, Ellensburg, 1995.  
*Sambhogakaya Cowboy*, Pagosa Springs, 1996.  
*Turn Beauty Turn*, Pagosa Springs, 1997.  
*One In a Jillian*, Pagosa Springs, 1997.  
*Party Down, Anasazi*, Pagosa Springs, 1997.  
*Talking Trash*, Santa Rosa, 1998.  
*Wide As the World*, Sebastopol, 1998.  
*Constructive Rest*, Sebastopol, 1998.  
*First Flower*, Sebastopol, 1998.  
*Xitro*, Sebastopol, 1998.  
*Letter To Sito In Time of War*, Sebastopol, 1998.  
*Chain Clankers & Linoleum Nudes*, Sebastopol, 1998.  
*New Gravity: A Collection*, Sebastopol, 1998.  
*Islam Bomb*, Sebastopol, 1998.  
*Tack Shack*, Sebastopol, 1998.  
*On Borgo Pass*, Sebastopol, 1998.  
*Hollow Air*, Sebastopol, 1999.  
*Cow Songs*, Sebastopol, 1999.  
*The Spot*, Sebastopol, 1999.  
*Flying White*, Sebastopol, 1999.  
*Bear Dance*, Sebastopol, 1999.  
*Green Fire*, Sebastopol, 1999.  
*Second Boiling*, Sebastopol, 1999.  
*Imaginary Toads*, Sebastopol, 1999.  
*Aluminum Baby*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Sebastopol, 2000.  
*Aluminum Baby*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Sebastopol, 2000.  
*Ice Moon*, Sebastopol, 2000.  
*A Double Play* (with Luis Garcia), Sebastopol, 2000.  
*Wavetwisters*, Sebastopol, 2000.  
*Another Artaud*, Sebastopol, 2000.  
*Poems of the Four Times*, Sebastopol, 2000.  
*Windfall*, Sebastopol, 2000.

## **INTRODUCTION**

## D Press: A Jewel In The Net

Like Indra's all-encompassing jewel net, D Press sparkles and shines with an offering of well-crafted chapbooks that reflect more than forty years of publisher Richard Denner's handiwork with words, ink, paper and illustration. Available works are always new as the idea of keeping press runs short allows for a quick turnover, a low cost or break even per book, more time for fresh material and other writers to make it into print. Present titles include *Angio Gram* by Charles Potts, *Celestial Cattlecall* by Lee Harris, *Rebel Girls* by Leila Castle, *What Is The Sign?* by Gay Shelton and *A Year in Cows* by Jane Booth. Belle Randall (*Wax Museum*) and Luis Garcia (*Even Steven*) have been performing with Richard for years under the group name *Circle of Friends* and are kindred spirits.

Although conceived in a Ketchikan attic flat in 1967, the roots of D Press go back to the Bay Area of 1959. Richard took classes at UC Berkeley (Diane Wakoski was there) and perhaps unconsciously received the metaphysical mantle of alumnus poet Robert Duncan. Soon, Richard found himself reporting for Public Service Station *KPFA*, getting married and working as a bindery clerk. He became acquainted with every facet of printing: the feel and look of paper, the color and smell of ink, typesetting and the uses of different typeface, the feeding and rolling of presses, the cutting and stitching of recto and verso. After a move to Aptos for more classes at Cabrillo College, Richard became a regular at The Sticky Wicket, a coffee house with poetry readings and live jazz. Many ordeals and a few years later, he attended the seminal 1965 Berkeley Poetry Conference, what John Bennett has called, "an event creating white light intensity that rivaled any drug high and had more staying power."

This convergence of the Black Mountain, Berkeley Renaissance, Beat and Northwest Schools gave Richard the pivotal opportunity to study under such avant-garde poets as Charles Olson, Ed Dorn, Robert Creeley, Allen Ginsberg and Jack Spicer. Later he would study with Robert Bly, Gary Snyder, Phillip Whalen, Denise Levertov and Carolyn Kiser at Fort Worden Center for the Arts in Port Townsend, Washington. But it was Jack Spicer's molding of *series poetry* into little books that had the most singular effect.

In 1965 Richard became a staffer on one of the original underground newspapers, the Berkeley Barb and wrote his first article, *Where Is The Citizen?*, which according to publisher Len Fulton (Dust Books) put the coffin nails in this floundering Berkeley co-op paper which he co-directed. Besides printing his poems in The Barb, Richard became a street poet who gave impromptu solo and regular group readings with others such as Luis Garcia, Richard Brautigan, Richard Kretch, John Oliver Simon, and Gene Fowler. "I would hold five different colored magic markers," Richard said, "and write rainbow words on girls' legs and arms." Poems from these embryonic years appear in his *Letter to Sito in Time of War* (D Press 1998).

Here I am reminded of Cummings or Snyder, words in vertical order as if they had fallen off a pen, images juxtaposed with ideas to steer and grip the eye rather than rhyme scheme, line length and academic filler. *we find/ourselves/in a new/world/speaking/an*

*old/language//we speak//of beauty/and feelings/while the/machines/blast/the birds/ from our/hearts//watch/the words/ hear/the howl/come/to the ear/eye/nose/lip//scream/at the/dichotomy/of the/comma—a dream/an illusion/how time/passes//dinosaurs/dance off/the map/where you/and I sit/drinking/coffee//we hold/down/this loose/end/of the/universe/feeling/at home/in the/smoke.* Great one breath rhythm here, vowels echo and consonants resonate while war and apathy are clearly addressed. An economy of words, words used like paint or graffiti, well-woven words that challenge and explode with intensity and insight, simple poems not only of use but of beauty and all connected by a central motif—these would become Denner trademarks. Luis Garcia aptly alludes to them as “dinner” in the title of his book, *Poems for Dinner* (Summit Road Press 1997).

According to Karl Shapiro, a rational person is least able to understand poetry, and the poet must find inspiration and pry truth from hard won experiences. At The Barb, Richard was suffering from rationalitis with acute ennui and hot flashes of Armageddon. So he took off for Alaska, in search of lost horizons, to find his true self (and what is reality?) through a series of pristine cognitions. He worked as a water-chaser, unsetting choke and bundling logs for a logging outfit. For two years Richard lived with wife and child in a cabin at Deep Bay off berries, hunting and fishing. Back in civilization, he got a job on the Ketchikan Daily News and worked at a cold storage plant. *Tackshack* (D Press 1998) is full of such experiences: the Tongass National Forest, glacier deposits, bears, dead salmon, king crab, soil samples, and *The Beast* (Richard’s Alaskan Pipeline poem which pits industrial horrors against natural habitat and spells indigenous doom).

The first D Press chapbooks were simple affairs, printed from a Kelsey movable type handpress and 60 point Boldini Bold, all acquired for fifty bucks. The pages were hand cut, hung to dry in Richard’s attic flat and hand bound, yet showed brilliant illustrations (*Aztec Design* by Grant Risdon). Good paper, fine cover art with linoleum block prints to accentuate the poems, a balance of art and word, these Dennerisms would become D Press trademarks. An old picture of Richard adorns one cover: he appears much like young Trotsky in Siberia with wire-rimmed glasses, mustache, student garb and a pensive gaze...he had reason for concern.

Up the Alkan Highway, Richard traveled to the University of Alaska at Fairbanks. He worked in the backshop of the student newspaper and graduated in 1972 with degrees in English and Philosophy. D Press was admitted to the campus library but banned from the UA student bookstore. Perhaps it was the explicit prints in *Linoleum Nudes* or graphic poems, such as ‘Musky/Hump/in US/for 69.’ Whatever, feathers flew, and the UA Polar Star (which later printed Richard’s works) put out the story, ‘Books Raise Censorship Question.’ Professors came to his defense; Richard’s chapbooks were found to have literary and artistic merit; and D Press was back on the shelf. It would be easy to dismiss this book ban as provincial fuss, however the ground D Press broke in Fairbanks mirrors the breakthroughs of alternative publishers such as Grove Press and City Lights in the lower 48 states.

Next stop Seattle, where Richard took a job with the Queen Anne News and studied at Port Townsend. *Islam Bomb* (D Press 1998) presents some of Richard’s first post-

modernist poem experiments during these years (1972-74). Here there is an expansion of line and poem length as well as consciousness expanding East meets West terminology. Much like Eliot, Richard combines his fragments into a unified whole, and does not leave one in a forest of foreign text (like Pound) or babble (like Joyce). Using even romanized Sanskrit and Tibetan is high risk business, yet Richard explains his diction and uses it as part of a tapestry whose weave is encyclopedic in scope. In point, his four page poem on the once unprintable *F* word reminds me much of Robert Grave's exhaustive piece *Lars Porsena, or The Future of Swearing*.

From Seattle, Richard went to Ellensburg to oversee a 300 head cattle ranch in Badger Pocket for several years. Between stints in Alaska, he worked at Moe's Bookstore in Berkeley, so perhaps it was *deja vu* that he opened the Fourwinds bookstore in Ellensburg (1977). This literary nucleus was enlarged to include a restaurant by Richard's son, Theo, who continues to operate it today. It was here that Richard received a Washington State Arts grant to produce *Ellensburg Anthology* which featured and promoted local writers. The list of Denner influences East of the Mountains seems endless: more anthologies, readings and poetry workshops at his bookstore, formation of a city arts & crafts festival, exhibition of his books and printing techniques at Kittitas County Art Gallery, a three-day poetry workshop for the Washington Poets Association, and video production for Ellensburg Public Television.

D Press books began to resonate with new organic imagery in his *Cow Songs* and *New Gravity*. In 'Diamond Hanging I Blues' the lines are simple and effective, *I mend the fences./I tend the herd./...The shit is ten feet deep/and I can't eat or sleep/coyotes yap all night/below the blown moon*. A number of D Press books can be considered pivotal in the evolution of Richard's poetic style, psychic metamorphosis and creative adaptability. *The Scorpion* (1975) combines all of Richard's loves: astrology and tarot, philosophy, Tantra, Latin ('Cogito Ergo Shazam') and the fine art of printing, which Richard learned thumping type for Wesley Tanner at Arif Press.

*Xitro* pays tribute to Richard's spiritual quest, his teachers, Ginsberg and Tsultrim Allione, a vast range of philosophical studies and Tibetan Buddhist practice. When I read *On Borgo Pass* (1998), the line drawings mixed with poetry take me back to the novel water colors of Henry Miller and the wild pictopoems of Kenneth Patchen, *apocalypse now/a pair of lips now, or words of my perfect T-shirt/Don't Worry/Be Hopi*.

For fifteen years Richard annually planted trees, giving back to the earth and getting in touch. Now, he plants seeds by teaching at a school run on the Steiner Method and also online in poetry chat rooms. When I was asked to write this essay on D Press and 40 years of Richard Denner, I was told there were about 100 chapbooks, and I thought, pull the other leg. James Tate is called prolific because he published some twelve books of poetry in six years. Richard is more likely to publish six books in one year along with a bevy of other poets. James Laughlin (New Directions) published William Carlos Williams and Ezra Pound for years at his own expense when they were not selling. He did not want them to end up like Blake, being generally unread in their own lifetime. In

the same sense, D Press allows greater access to a variety of poets whose vitality is assured by limited editions of selected work.

As I opened a 20 pound box mailed from Santa Rosa, chapbooks flooded my table, and I wondered how I could begin to encompass such a literary sea (and most of Richard's work is out of print). Seamus Heany's old headmaster used to look over his writing and sigh, "Ah, pure Hopkins" or "Ah, pure Chekov." My eyes swim through this tidal wave of excellence, collage covers which steal my breath, Leonardo illustrations, such brillig poems, and I can only whisper in awe, "Ah, pure Denner."

Lee Harris  
Seattle

### **BERKELEY, APTOS & SAN LUIS OBISPO 1961-1968**

#### **LETTER TO SITO IN TIME OF WAR**

we find  
ourselves  
in a new  
world  
speaking  
an old  
language

we speak  
of beauty  
and feelings  
while the  
machines  
blast  
the birds  
from our  
hearts

watch  
the words  
hear  
the howl  
come

to the ear  
eye  
nose  
lip

scream  
at the  
dichotomy  
of the  
comma—  
a dream  
an illusion  
how time  
passes

dinosaurs  
dance off  
the map  
where you  
and I sit  
drinking  
coffee

we hold  
down  
this loose  
end  
of the  
universe  
feeling  
at home  
in the smoke

### **ABCs**

it begins  
like this

and ends  
like this

and continues

.

in the  
beginning  
it was

done on  
a blank  
page—

white  
on  
white

on the  
day of  
creation

.

hear  
here

is a bird  
in the  
window

is a bee  
a flower

a garden  
in the  
mind

.

dilute the  
potion

pour in  
water  
with the  
hemlock

open the  
windows

look for  
patterns  
in this  
dream

.

a new  
dimension?  
shaped  
words,  
canvases  
of space

.

song  
bird

word  
word

heard  
third

.

we are  
running  
we are  
mad

the stars  
point out  
the way

we are  
naked

we are  
free

there are  
flowers on  
the path

•

I was  
told

I was  
shown

it was  
pointed out—

the narrow path  
the word's wisdom

•

so  
intricate

so  
complex

so amazing

the dead  
leaves

on the  
sidewalk

the dog  
barking

the man  
scratching

•

what's out  
side is  
within

is there  
emptiness  
without  
awareness?

.

word

wise  
will

word

weed  
worm

word

were  
wood

word

weld  
wink

word

wild  
wing

word

wall  
war

.

construct  
something  
out of  
clay  
dirt

obscene  
words  
in the  
wash  
room

stall

VietnamVietnamVietnamVietnam  
ietnamVietnamVietnamVietnamV  
etnamVietnamVietnamVietnamVi  
tnamVietnamVietnamVietnamVie  
namVietnamVietnamVietnamViet  
amVietnamVietnamVietnamVietn  
mVietnamVietnamVietnamVietna

no time  
not place  
no mind  
for it—  
it is  
a dark  
sentence,  
a joke on  
the wall

.

island  
city

one can  
loose

oneself  
in any

pattern  
any tree

star  
cloud

mountain  
field

.

a problem today  
is to put down  
the black-white  
marble of mind

draw a circle  
take your shot  
feed daffodils  
to crocodiles

.

there  
is a  
cemetery

in the  
heart  
tombstoned

we look  
for it  
the door

that  
opens  
onto

gardens  
and  
graveyards

.

there  
are stars  
in the  
branches  
of the  
tree

all the  
windows  
of the

moon  
open and  
close

.

the count  
and how  
to count  
the count

.

how is it  
sir?

how  
is it?

it is  
how  
it is

is  
how  
it  
is

down  
that  
road

soften  
it up

how  
it  
sir

.

Spring  
do not

mistake  
me for

a flower  
or a tree

Death  
knows

there's  
music

in the  
air

### **POEM ON MY BIRTHDAY**

once again this day protrudes  
its ugly head out of the debris of the year

bleary-eyed & melancholy, strung out  
in my Imolian web

i contemplate my 23rd time-twisted  
space-spun, yelping year

with River Lethe flowing  
my scorpion soul

winds its wayward way  
to a shipwreck upon a seed

### **COMMITMENT**

when Ezra Pound was released  
from St. Elizabeth's, he said  
"America is an insane asylum,"  
and then he split for Spolento

It appearing to the Court  
on this day  
the above named defendant  
appeared to answer  
a charge of committing Treason

It appearing that the said Judge  
in it appearing that on that date  
a doubt arose as to the sanity

of said defendant  
dismissed criminal proceedings  
in said action  
and certified the above-named  
for hearing and examination  
by said Court  
to determine the sanity  
of the said defendant; and  
the attorneys  
for defense and prosecution  
stipulated  
that the doctor's reports  
could be received in evidence  
and the Court  
considered the evidence  
presented upon the issue  
of the present sanity  
of said defendant and found  
the said defendant to be insane

It is THEREFORE ORDERED  
ADJUDGED AND DECREED  
that the said defendant  
be committed and confined  
as an insane person  
until such time as he shall  
become sane

the poet sits alone  
in the Idlewild Airport Café  
sketching his next Canto  
'mid  
C Beef 65¢  
Coke 10¢  
comfort after 14 years  
in a Washington D.C. mental ward

across the room  
a dark-eyed beauty  
cool, contemplative

*Cassandra, your eyes are like tigers  
with no word written in them  
You also I have carried to nowhere.*

noise from the juke box

interrupts his cold beef vision

## **TABULA RASA**

A clear slate  
An empty table  
A clean plate

He rose  
With earthquake and lightning  
Pierced and naked

He returned  
To prove  
His identity to those

Who betrayed  
Feared and denied  
Him

And  
When he spoke  
He spoke

As one from eternity to  
Us  
The living

A new life  
A second chance  
A second coming

## **POEM ON MY RETURN**

i'm back among the living  
back from where angels & devils dwell  
with no one dead i know

i'm back  
and see the meager come, the greater go  
day follow day as usual

i'm back and will live lustily  
among the oak trees

### **CAPTAIN OF POETRY**

a cold, bleak day—  
i'm playing gin rummy with Phil  
when we hear on the radio  
Elliot is dead

i have a photo of him  
dressed in a black suit with a cape  
wearing a wide-brimmed hat  
carrying a walking stick  
standing in the shade of a tree  
was he ever young?

not feeling very young myself  
i walk along the shore  
and listen to the gulls  
watch the waves  
feel the whirl

i figure he has the answer  
to the question now, but  
what do you do with it  
when you're dead?

### **SONG**

the president of the univers-  
ity Ph.D LL.D  
acting in good faith  
opened the key to symbols  
and saw

the new requirements  
applicable to persons  
not embarked  
are shown in circles

Do Not Fold, Bend  
Stipple or Mutilate

Beware of kindergartens  
early elements  
exceptional  
specialized  
adults  
credentials  
supervision

**TEXTBOOKS**  
**MAPS**  
IRS regulations

under the current regulations  
peace and gladness  
cannot be deducted

## **PATTERNS**

look at the numbers  
Kant 478a-79d  
there is beauty in moral order  
and Bacon who should  
be in Everyman's Library  
knew Augustine confessed

I have a friend who says  
there are 3 principles  
the good, the bad  
and that which is neither  
good nor bad

as for the which is neither  
my friend told me to stop  
smoking, which changed my life  
because I smoke 2 to 3 packs

I write this sitting  
on a Persian rug  
listening to a harpsichord  
on a Victrola play

Partia #2 in C Minor  
Schmieder 826

478 79 3 2 2 2 826  
in the bottom of the 9th

## **TALE**

an ancient tale  
of a river that fell in love  
with a maiden

my soul stretches as a river  
your image is reflected  
deeply, quietly

blue eyes and bright face  
kind, calm  
a fresh flower on a spring day

when the image is lost  
my soul  
floods with despair

## **A BOOK ENTITLED**

when you die we will plant you  
beneath the magic mushrooms

they will grow lush and perfect

on a night with a full moon  
you will hear them cry out  
to be gathered

eebee  
eebee  
ooooo

eebee  
eebee

ooooo

Listen!  
Prepare the *Jell-O*!  
Light the sofa!

## **VISION**

my vision of a fish  
brown with a yellow streak  
and an amorphous red eye  
encircled by a river  
has fused with the dead cat  
in the gutter I sent  
to heaven with flower-stars

## **SPACED**

Time stopped—  
and like the drool  
on the lip of an idiot

I hung over the abyss  
looking inward  
amazed

## **YES**

o yes  
read first

by all means—

now, a  
string of DNA  
floats

having  
come unstrung  
from its coil

o yes  
I keep a  
loose vowel

## **MY POEMS**

Who said it  
wasn't just  
sound, Gail?

You just  
happened  
to come

On a night  
when I've  
lost all

Of my poems.

## **ELIZABETH SAYS**

I get that feeling  
you get in your nose  
when you eat ice cream  
in my eyes when I hear  
the sound of the needle  
at the end of the record  
like a mouse eating crackers

## **CALCULATED LION**

A god  
passed by  
my window.

"Into the  
Lion's  
Mouth,"

Lu said.

I quickly  
jumped.

### **COGITO ERGO SHAZAM**

9 times 9 times 9

miles, minutes  
trains, tracks  
clanking chains

electronic brains  
Harpo Marx? No,  
an acustaka

often ten

### **A BRAMAVITS SITS ON THE HEAD OF A NEO-CLASSICIST**

*for Wolfman & The Big X*

3 out of 4 hippies aren't

badminton  
mushrooms  
mungbeans  
moonbeams

sitting in Kip's  
with a book and a burger  
my valves are loose  
and my chains clank

### **SPLIT PE-RSONALITY SOUP**

And so it goes and goes and goes  
between your toes and up your nose.

Take two, one for each.  
So far out, it's out of reach.

Can you guess which is best  
and which is less than all the rest?

### **ODE TO *GRAHAM CRACKERS***

GRAY  
HAM

AND  
peanut butter

sliced pickles  
and  
peanut brittle

take another toke

cherry pie  
on rye

### **27½ BEFORE 3**

close to a  
symbol stupor

do not listen  
unless you know  
what you are doing

we must be careful  
when filling special  
dietary needs

beware of toxic chemicals  
beware of toxic poetry

### **TAXMAN**

clanking chains  
electronic brains  
a harpsichord?  
no, a cowbell

there are two angels  
one records, and the other  
dictates

listen to the hum  
take a cosmic breath  
relax, man, hell is hung  
with pretty pictures

listen to the sitar  
Indian hard-bop twisted  
on the frame of a fugue

sit and listen  
as it tears your soul from you

## **LINE DRIVE**

ami  
ma moo  
ami  
ma moo

that's a train  
we go on that train  
yes, we go on that  
train

power steering batting average  
power steering batting average

stop.

I cannot ignore  
certainly not dismiss  
Anulios

## **AUGUSTUS TURNS IN HIS TOMB**

bottom of the 13th  
Willie faces the left-hander  
2 for 5  
homerun for the 9th

overcast has blown away

in the next room  
a sewing machine whrrrs  
draining the power

static

fast ball hit into right  
for a base

the mood shifts  
LeFever is up

why is the spectacular held  
in San Francisco  
when the riots are in L.A.?

## **SERMON ON THE MOUND**

apparently  
I did not understand

when He spoke of the grain  
which is the symbol of man

looking to the burial of the seed  
its death and resurrection

I want mustard on my hotdog

## **FLOWER POEM**

Gladness linked to

madness to amuse you.  
Characters move—

rhythms, waves of color  
flowers.

They whisper to me.  
I am a privileged guess.

They let me do as I please.  
They do as they please.

In the core of the bud  
is fire,  
the bone of desire.

.

I knew  
when a moth flew out  
of the moon's eye

the dead  
would teach me  
to love.

.

There are stars  
in the branches of the trees.

The moon's windows  
open and close.

It's right  
there

DANCE  
DANCE  
DANCE

.

Her eyes are for me  
to see her heart.

While she moves into mine  
I move into hers.

The grave, cold, simple—  
ordained  
in the see.

.

New directions,  
old directions, each  
is eaten in time,

each star,  
seed,  
stone.

.

Moon moves  
mind into fragments.

Visitation comes  
wordless, shapeless.

It is sweet, the taste  
of a tree, children running,  
guns clicking,  
that shaking of my head,  
needles too—a place  
in space,

song, bird, word,  
word, heard third.

.

The moon is a flower.  
The day is a song.  
Let the dog bark

down the hall of fading portraits,  
my face in the mirror  
above a broken vase.

Her mouth quivers.  
She sees humor  
in the antics of the man  
trying.

.

There is a cemetery  
in the mind.

We look for it—

nine times nine times nine  
nails, needles, trains, trees—  
often ten.

The moon is a flower.  
This is to say  
I love to say

I love.

## **PUTTING DOWN ROOTS**

Serge planted a tree  
when he was three on Berkeley Way.  
Luis did too,  
two birch, on Acton.  
Peter started ivy  
to cover his hideaway.  
William grafted roses,  
rows of them.  
Patrick sowed oats  
up and down on Telly.  
Wes confesses  
he hates green.  
Alice says there's nothing like Oakland  
bay laurel for cooking  
or as a fact there.

## **OAKLAND SHOULD BE**

abolished.  
She's an early bird  
that catches the worm  
on MacArthur at Manila,  
an intersection, a branch  
of Oak. O police love her.  
City of Merritt,  
your lakes and hills  
are eyes and thighs.  
You lay in asphalt splendor.  
Your ways are littered,  
and pigs are chased by panthers  
orbited by angels dancing  
on the tips of your limbs.  
City of the Raiders,  
what's it like blasted?  
Are you made of aluminum?  
Where is London square?  
Wolves aware of the sea's tear  
wander in rose gardens  
and eucalyptus groves.  
Joaquin Miller Amphitheatre  
is dedicated to California's writers,  
dead ones.

## **LANGTREE**

Joaquin sings  
of Lily's graces.

She brought  
the house down.

The house had beams  
musically spaced,

columns of concrete  
delicate as bird legs.

A structure,  
a broken shell.

## TANTRIK TUNE-UP

Wheel your rig into DICK'S—  
you'll get a square deal.  
Dick distributes *Punch Products*.  
*Punch* protects your transmission  
parts. Perfect parts  
produce the proper frequency  
to transcend planetary interference.

Pour *Punch* in your crankcase, it'll be-  
come a peacock with 6 heads and 9 tails.  
After this rite, things will be right on.  
Stick it in your gas, it'll swell  
until there's a tyger in your tank.  
Stuff it in that stash behind the dash.  
Rub it on the hood or slip it in your ear,  
*Punch* stops heat, sludge, jerking

and the formation of calluses  
on your eyes

## DETAIL

Birds that lay  
in Euclid's branches  
have a view of May.

Spring blows and sucks,  
sucks and blows  
the eucal blossom.

It's always ragtime,  
suck and blow.

## SCORPIO, SCORPIO RISING

Scorpio  
beastie in the bunghole  
bugaboo of bugaboos  
mite in the middle of the third root race  
big eight of the cycle of life

maggot of the mind's eye  
mistake, abortion, infection, crablouse  
error of the raised eyebrow

O deadly persuader  
O propagator of corruption  
O comic of crimes not yet committed  
O gutless guttersnipe  
O diddler at the door of destruction

let me fall with you into generation

### **EYE OF THE SCORPION**

is issuing from the brain  
shinning upon us  
to block our knock off  
in the 13th week  
a pearl in wine  
the web of life, and a worm  
are weaving deep in the earth  
a wooden bowl  
is being filled with blood  
to make bread  
as the cauldron boils  
more gold and more gold  
is issuing from the brain  
white is holding a corpse  
in the east of the brain  
red is holding a banner  
in the west of the brain  
yellow is holding an arrow  
in the south of the brain  
black is holding a bowl  
in the north of the brain  
as the worm weaves the web  
in the 13th week  
in the eye of the scorpion

### **HAPPY CLIMES**

Athens of the West—  
she creates a provincial mentality  
by fulfilling through witchcraft  
whatever the mind pretends.

In Berkeley I was reduced  
to monads by the Mænads,  
classified scizo-non-decisive,  
and given Stelazine and A.T.D.

A minor inconvenience—  
a nervous breakdown.  
Strangled by my vocabulary,  
what to do with the stiff?

No one knew I was there  
until a flood of vomit  
oozed from under my door.

### **ALL THE HEADS OF THE TOWN LIT UP**

I filled vials with violets and grass.  
I made baggies of marigolds and grass.  
I loaded a wine bottle with grass  
and announced a Party for Allen.

I underestimated by a hundred  
how many would attend this bash.  
I was in a spot, so I put out my stash  
and passed my Stetson.

Olson filled the papa chair  
and passed his pipe—that was some pipe.  
Orlovsky and I made it to the liquor store  
much to everyone's relief.

Kretch read a diatribe seated on the commode.  
Lew Welch swung from the chandelier.  
It was Creeley demanding everyone know  
where the firemen and police were located

that cleared the place.  
So, I added the cost and the cost of the cost.  
Nothing was stolen, and nothing was broken,

save for the chandelier.

## **KETCHIKAN & DEEP BAY 1968-1970**

### **FEATHER**

unicorn  
canker  
Ketchikan  
the moon  
the axis  
the exasperation  
what can I say?  
I saw them on the slope.  
I saw them  
climb Deer Mountain.  
I called my friend  
and he gave me  
no answer.  
I entreated him  
my mouth  
god  
suck  
flower

### **EVIDENCE**

whereas a fortress  
whereas a jade pagoda  
whereas a river  
of diamonds, a river  
of blood

whereas the fortress  
is the pagoda, whereas  
the river is blood, whereas  
men and women are diamonds  
I ask what is there  
where imagelessness prevails?

whereas some cosmoses are being  
transformed, whereas some are  
being transfigured, whereas  
some metamorphosis continues  
I ask how is this possible where  
there is no imagination?

## **POEMS**

HAS ONE  
TIME TO

SEE THE  
MISTAKE

THERE  
AMONG

FLOWERS  
OPENING

TO THE  
MARBLE

LIGHT OF  
CANDLES?

.

CAN WE EAT  
THE GRASS

GOOD-BYE  
FAREWELL

TOMORROW  
TOMORROW

A TEST  
A VISA

TO MEXICO  
TO AFRICA

GOLDEN LEAVES  
IN THE SUN

.

AROUND  
ME THE

WALLS  
MOVE

THE SKY  
IS DARK

WITHOUT  
A MOON

THERE'S A  
DAEMON

EATING  
MY LIVER

.

AT THE  
CENTER

OF THE  
FLOWER

LOOKING  
BEMUSED

AT AN  
ANGEL

RUNNING  
A SWORD

THROUGH  
A WORM

.

WORD

WORM

ACID  
ANON

LOVE  
LICK

LEAF  
LEAK

ONLY  
ONCE

WIND  
WORD

## WOODNOTES

*for David and Jim*

*Seek to realize the self—  
the way, the poets say, is difficult.*

We are situated in a cedar cabin  
built on stilts over the water in a cove  
a mile across Moser Lake from Deep Bay,  
our mail drop, Deep Bay 99901.  
Mail arrives weekly from Ketchikan,  
25 miles by plane weather permitting.  
Mid-winter—there is four feet of snow.

Elizabeth and baby Theo and I,  
helped by friends, take to the woods  
after reading Bradford Angier's  
*How to Live in the Woods on \$10/Week*.  
With my last paycheck, income tax return  
and promise of employment insurance  
we should make out—hoping that  
by discriminating use of ecological resources  
most of our material needs can be met—

*Selfless means to a selfless end,  
as Ghandi put it.*

So around this complex  
our routine flows—all activities  
merge in the pursuit, which deepens  
here in Deep Bay.

Schedule remains firm.  
Implementation of spiritual discipline,  
Karma Yoga—wood and water  
wood and water, wood and water.  
Would you believe, wood and water?

Elemental—the meaning is subtle,  
but we're only scratching the surface.  
We have stored away necessary  
supplies, several cords of wood  
cut and split and stacked.  
Now we improvise.

.

Awoke to a 14 foot tide, high  
enough to float a forty-footer off  
an abandoned logging donkey.  
Tied on and rowed it to shore,  
breaking a rib in the dinghy near the stern.  
Tied up and came in for coffee.

Sometimes, I'm the ocean,  
man-boat-ocean.  
I wonder how hard the wind can blow.  
Whips us from the east today.  
Whitecaps in the cove, cedar bending.  
Gulls motionless in the gale.  
February is a windy month.

Can we use up our desires?  
Not that we don't have sense cravings.  
Food is Number One God here.  
And Shelter.  
And the twin god, a good pair of Boots.

Made a mixture of vinegar, water,  
cloves, onion, garlic, salt, mustard,  
sugar, ginger for sauerbraten.  
Put this mix and a venison roast

in a stoneware crock to marinate.

•

By the way, I'm told  
Ramakrishna uses the simile of the ocean,  
the ocean of *sat-chit-ananda*  
the ocean of existence,  
consciousness, bliss—dissolve  
myself like a salt-doll in this ocean.

Lu Garcia writes from Berkeley,  
“Things spin as they always spin.”

Jon Springer, at this time, finds it  
“fetid in the Ukrainian ghetto of 6th St.

•

How did I get from selling the *Berkeley Barb*  
on Telegraph Avenue to this cabin?  
The old personality breaks down, and  
the world becomes pure—like Blake said,  
*as it is in infinity*.

It is curious how some moves take  
years to come about, but then  
done with full support of mind & body  
they move forward.

•

The wind gathers strength.  
As weather delays delivery of oil,  
as the *Coleman* stove is in parts,  
we cook over a makeshift grate  
in the Yukon oil drum heater.  
Elizabeth achieves bliss of sourdough  
chocolate cake, cerealmate bread,  
venison stroganoff, and fern frawns.

Living in the woods is a fruitcake idea.  
Can others be influenced by seeing how  
it's done?—expanding circle—friends,  
town, state, country, galaxy, cosmos  
returns me back to myself.

•  
Snowflakes falling outside  
and in my mind.  
The temperature, 40 degrees.  
Nothing sticks.

I roam the woods.  
Tongass National Forest.  
Sitka Black Tail Deer. Beaver. Squirrel.  
A few bear.  
Much spirit life.

While dark, I take to the woods.  
When dawn cracks, I'm waiting.  
I'm a good shot, felling my game  
with a single round from a 30.30.  
Death, sorrow, sort of unreal,  
this tug of life and death.

Repression, exploitation—  
leaving the city to avoid the establishment,  
and, in turn, I become the Man.  
Good weather, one clear day in thirty  
in this rain forest—ego hunting—lots  
of weird animals in the mind—the mind  
itself a crazy monkey.

•  
Somewhere, the Governor of Someplace  
makes money in real estate.  
Dr. Leary attends Altamont, says  
it's a lesson to be learned.  
Theo and I float in our boat, while far away  
Neil Armstrong takes his giant step.

Hunt and fish, wood and water.  
Today, eight crabs in the trap.  
Cut and stacked cedar blocks,  
using the tide to move them to shore.  
I came indoors to paint the cabinets  
until Theo knocked over the paint can.  
Put him down for a nap and read  
a few chapters of Thomas Á Kempis.

•  
Field studies:

*Periculum aquillium*

a perennial fern, local species “hog braken”  
substitute for asparagus.

Theo gets up early to pick the fawns.

*Tiarella trifoliata*

Quileut “gwaqwlatcyu’l”

three leaves (*qwal’l=3*)

Chew for coughs.

*Equisetum arvense*

“field horsetail”

Used by Quinault to regulate menstrual flow.

While reading this aloud, Elizabeth  
starts her period.

We have no ailments in the woods,  
except when we go to town, we catch  
the Ketchikan crud.

•

A whirly-twirly, sunny day.

Here it rains 200 inches a year.

10% chance of rain means 10 inches of rain.

Made ice cream and had mincemeat pie  
à la mode.

Watched a sea otter dive for crab.

The sky *Gualoises* blue, the water  
a shade of jade and now smooth.

Buds and bugs and migrating fowl signal

Spring—

I feel like pulling the doors from the jambs,  
but I’m afraid of the ceiling falling down  
from a ton of newspaper & mattress insulation.

•

Cut and split another cord of wood.

Supper of red snapper filets, scalloped  
spuds, and sponge cake w/berry sauce.

We haven't seen a soul on the water  
for days—grooving on the isolation.

By kerosene lamp I read Lone Wolf Smith's  
letters to the Daily News,  
always a revelation—

*Not one new goat trail here.  
What for our Poor People and trollers  
more rotten Pinks from Creeks  
and let Coho go?  
Where o where is Gov. Hinkels  
Better or Bitter way?*

.

Not sure I want improvements.  
Sit and watch the deer on the beach,  
watch them turn their heads, twitch  
their ears suspiciously.  
A little bird settles on a branch,  
listen to it sing.

## **FAIRBANKS & PRESTON: 1970-1974**

### **THE BEAST**

Old Valdez.  
275 sq. miles. Second oldest  
white settlement in Alaska.  
Captain Cook 1778  
1794 Bligh Island  
Spaniards 1798.

1800s whaling. Copper mined.  
Route to the gold fields.  
Blue fox farming in the 1920s.  
*Iron Trail* by Rex Beach set here.  
Young Miss Miller marries  
the Maharajah of Indore.

New Valdez.  
Rebuilt after quake on a new site.  
Voted All-American City 1965.  
Valdez rhymes with "ease."  
South Terminus of *Alyeska's*  
pipeline from Prudhoe Bay.

Wrathful *Alyeska*  
auger in one hand  
marshprobe in one hand  
geo-stick in one hand  
polaski in another

I take soil samples  
along the surveyed route  
from Valdez to Tonsina.  
I follow the Lowe River  
through alder swamps  
across marshmuck to bogmire.  
Streams jambed with rotting salmon.

I follow a bear trail  
to the cutline where I auger  
twenty feet to bedrock.  
I sidetrack near Kendal Cache  
to collect lichens and weathered  
telegraph insulators.  
I note the conglomeration  
from a glacier deposit.

Along glacier benches to bedrock  
across rivers to bedrock  
to bedrock under ridges, under  
boulders, under cobbles, under sill  
under sand, under volcanic ash.  
I take a rest and get sick.

A caravan of *Winabegos* passes.  
A woman points to a dead salmon  
and exclaims, "Someone should do  
something about that." Cheechakos.  
10% chance of rain in a rainforest  
means 10 inches of rain.

At Trans Alaska Pipeline  
Point on Ground TAPS PG=361+68

I join my copter pilot.  
Mustachioed Vietvet with shades  
his scarf trails in the breeze.

He drops me off on a sandbar.  
There's a field of devil's club  
and a jungle of alder hanging  
from granite cliffs between me  
and my test hole.

King crab to Otterman:  
glacierized graywhacky  
sandy sill  
silly sand  
gravel  
cobbles  
Indian love stones  
fucking rocks  
over

Otterman to Kingcrab:  
reading you  
alluvial fan  
metamorphic composition  
zone theory  
montage effects  
colluvium  
colluvium  
colluvium  
clear

Dhal sheep graze below me.  
As the *Alouette* lands, a bull moose  
into the brush.  
Up the line, a grizzly and her cubs  
into hiding.

From the Arctic Ocean  
at Prudhoe Bay, over  
the Brooks Range  
across the Koyukuk River  
across the Yukon River  
and the Tanana, stretching

Across the Alaskan Range  
this in temperatures below zero

for more than one hundred days  
below forty below for weeks  
dropping to eighty below  
in arctic winds

From Thompson Pass  
down a glacier moraine, the pipe  
slouches into Valdez.

1972

## **POLOOT**

Alaska, who lives there?  
Caribou, wolves and bear.

This grizzly airs a grudge  
that everyone fears to judge.

A refinery don't smell  
like *Chanel*— more like hell.

## **BIG FOOT**

One drop goes  
a long way to ease  
the friction.

100 billion barrels,  
ten to the tenth power—  
while the answer is hair

warm nights in fur,  
and the best investment  
is Sasquatch.

## **ISLAM BOMB**

### **1. inner secret**

theoretically the absolute p(ohm)e

is defined in a self-consistent way  
the unit of resistance  
determined with a coil  
spinning in a field

passion-love-beauty formula  
the passion of love  
the catalysis of beauty  
the passion of beauty  
the crystallography of love  
the beauty of love  
the musicology of passion  
the *of* of beauty the passion love  
passionlove of the *the* of beauty

expressed concretely  
in terms of smart bombs  
(a form of intercourse protected  
under the cuntstitution)  
Kenning equations concocked &  
cunninglingously composed  
paradoxically pertinent when  
accepted as parts of patterns  
suspicious as it sounds  
using Euler's formula  $L+2=P+A$   
& correcting for obscured areas

let us begin w/the premise  
when we take care of ourselves  
participants are swept along  
in unacknowledged harmony  
true Taoist cyberneticism

ask & thou shall receive  
what is matter?  
never mind  
what is mind?  
it doesn't matter

sometimes wordgames seem flippant  
& worldgames whenso are malignant  
yet the awesome Silence prevails

Andillusion dogmaradarwowgod  
i  
begin this line

knowing particular  
themes elude development

and on the and in the  
and on the and in the  
and on the and in the

magnetic whispers  
from the heart of a moth  
a frog in a muskeg  
evolves into a dinosaur  
in the twit of a newt it  
(knew(i)t) quantumleaps

we are meat such that  
we are primemovers such that  
the primemovers & the meat  
are the same, and

whatever *Beta* may be  
(Beta is a cow of mine)  
is true when  
and only when  
a primemover  
is prime rib

## **2. intergallactic69pornoputer**

your Honor, i will speak my peace  
i confess to fucking-up  
convicted as i was arrested  
a bag of predigested meat (that i am)  
incorrigible & incapable of rehab  
corrupt & spreading contagion

your major premise  
worth is self-evident  
is a 2waymirror  
pimping your nose w/yr tongue  
you sniff my rectum  
& blame me for bad taste

NOT FLOOD FIRE OR ICE but  
A Deluge of Smutmirth  
f/Interpornogallatic Cyber-Messenger

grit of true shit for breath  
gobs of swarming cum emit  
f/throbbing organs against aghast  
esophagi, burning bitters  
dripping in eyes, ears, on breasts  
acrox continents

now my blood bdellatomically runs  
f/opened veins, a feast

OM MATRIX  
MANTRA VORTEX  
ABEL BAKER  
CAIN DOZEN

she who meditates on the penis of sorrow  
has to ball The Jack  
he who dreams of Wombman  
must come to rack and ruin  
in the Spanish boot of time

words of our bodies  
seeds of our minds  
statements of elements  
ejaculations of truth  
tables of turns  
tricks of trades

in that Silence our lives are mingled  
& in my mindheart there is terror

across the sea of abyss  
over the pass of bandits  
thru the valley of the beast  
i fill in the blanks

*STRIVING WITH SYSTEMS*  
*TO FREE OURSELVES f/SYSTEMS*  
as Blake saw

i find a place where the rent is low  
gardens grow, pace is slow  
mushrooms blow

whitehole/blackhole continuum  
rivers evaporate on Mars

40000 BCE at 8 'til eulenspiegel  
while a child discovers its feet and  
a legislature extends its session

into a series of telemetric sequences  
another unconscious police action  
uniting conditionally imagined  
noun phrase verb phrase strings  
*La Illa Ha Il Allah Hu*

either/or & both

*GURU KHAN*  
*HUM PHAT*

KRAZIGNATZKAT  
PUPPIGDUNGFUNGI  
X-RAY CRISTALGRAPH  
pendulum harmonographic  
alpha-particular articulation  
that i = an elliptical metaphor 4  
misononeismystic Presbyterianism

Bohem's exegesis of Genesis  
Buddhist Logic of Exists  
differential equations

### **3. plug them in and stand back**

dinosaurs grazing in pastures of hemp  
micro-organisms under an airtight lid  
færie-dæmon foxfire dynamos  
bunraku hooded trinities  
section Xn relative to Yn  
Gemini martyrdom  
Sze indications of good fortune  
soon June vine design  
synergistically synchronized valve/relay  
yin/yang daisycrazy turkeyjerky  
a posteriori experience related  
a fortiori in terms of significance

KALI APPEARS WITH A NECKLACE  
OF FLAVORED HEADS  
atom fudge spinach nicotine  
pie are squared double negative delight

phallic fluff interarticular fibercartilage  
cosmic grout alimentum ornamentum  
Pythagorean lotus bean jade attle  
fissigemnation chainshot

psychedelic pink psychodelphi  
pink psychoracle lick pink ink pink  
the color of lips the color  
of the cheek the color of  
intestines eyes of insects  
winged bleeding things  
in inner space  
substantives hold their own  
adjectives depend on substantives  
holding their own

STOP  
NO U  
TURN

ONE  
WAY

ARE  
YOU

PUTTING  
ME ON?

automatic replication analogue of  
passion-beauty-love  
analytic pre-molar political  
intersubjective meta-aleatoric  
patramorphosis

on the blue pole of the South Moon  
Venus has a hot cushion

#### **4. business reply mail**

postage paid by addressee  
octahedrally this RLD  
molecule circles the news that stays news

THE SCARLOSIS DAILY SCOOP  
THE THERMONUCLEAR CARBUNCLE

THE ABYSS  
THE WASTING TIMES

Planetarium  
Depicts  
First Christmas

Council Studies  
Concrete Lid  
For Reservoir

the war is over/it never was/the  
war is not/the war is over  
Merry Kissmyass the real cost  
was the cost of the cost  
2 + 2 being more  
Christus-Falcon entalloned  
Mithras cutting the throat of the Bull  
with a zip code

CHAPTER TO

on my way from the 12th planet  
in n minus 1 ( $n = 0$ ) solar system  
of RLD-59 Andasinwand Galaxy  
to the Labor Temple on 2nd Ave  
i encounter an old friend  
“Whashappeninmon?” i inquire  
“Got a vasectomy, remarried  
my first wife & found Jesus”  
“Does this frequently happen  
after vasectomy?” i ask  
but before he can answer  
the effect of the experience  
inhibits my memory  
from recalling the event  
to which the question pertains

daze of trauma stretch to kalapas  
until interrupted by the mantra  
HARE MARX KARL KARL  
HARE BODY HAIRY BODY  
SPIRITO MESCALERO  
SANCTAS IMMUNITA

rainforest/pastureland equation—  
MacDonald’s boasting billions dead

has a walk-in fantastic replica  
of a *Big Mac* guaranteed to be  
a short path to Sipa Bardo  
if piped with Allen Ginsberg's  
*Holy Soul Jelly Roll* & what else?  
just a 1929 ordinance  
forbidding moonlight & shadow dancing  
invoked by antediluvian assholes  
to prevent psychedelic light shows

#### CHAPTER TOO

in this chapter the flop quickens  
...the *the* figuring as formula, the *the*  
imparting stature to the *the*  
...tautological hokermoker...  
just thrust into the thick of the quick  
as the media's view snowballs into ametropia

#### CHAPTER of the OVERALL ORDER of HUGGERMUGGER

deaf dumb hungry & blind  
the eater that is eaten  
i am a plucked biped cooked in my juices  
by atomic tantra evolutionarily predicated  
*a* as in *a* *b* as in *be*  
every effort forever formed given grace  
however haphazard i imagine an alder tree  
under which a really real rishi rests

#### HEAD WATER

*for Robert Duncan*

Syntactic order brackets  
word relationships,  
but this should not prevent us  
holding hands

Asked what  
prevented him when asked  
what prevented  
him from  
internally reallocating  
functor categories

f/internally  
reallocating functor  
categories from non-  
exigent conditions  
from non-exigent  
conditions, he replied

Oh, potato chip  
prime mover of palatability  
bugaboo to step on in the dark  
cosmic potato of parabolic curves  
let me lick your salty thighs

S/Seys  
E/Cexy  
X/Son of Lucifer  
bringer of fire

Whether it is a potato or not  
I do not know or not know  
care or not care  
for, for sure, it will resemble  
Arp's navel

When asked what  
prevented the potato chip  
f/attaining inter-subjective  
metamorphosis when injest-  
ed

Edgar Allen  
Poe tato  
replied

*Birds of calm  
rest on the charmed wave*

## **TRUCKIN' THE ALKAN**

*"We Drove The Alkan!"*  
an air-polluted fantasy  
a flick to see  
for the dust alone  
soon to appear



Kindness an official bitch.  
Lawn order on every street.

### **ON THE BEACH**

The beach at Miramar  
is marked *Right To Pass*  
*Revocable At Any Time*.

Banana skins, plastic cups,  
oil derricks, all forms  
of rubber, wood and steel

ripped to elements,  
stripped of character  
and dipped in tar.

### **ATMAN**

My start is slow.  
My legs disappear.  
My back bows, and  
I shoot into the wall.

Once again, I am  
a moving target.  
Once again, I move  
to a sound I hear  
in a dark fire.

### **SEA CHANGE**

I dreamt my cells were bells,  
and muck that fixed the deep  
rose to surf

While all existence hung ten.

## **STEPPIN' OUT**

*for Max*

Outside the Steppenwolf,  
I finish off the wine.  
An alley. On the wall  
are words by madmen.

Panhandle a turkey san  
from the grotto,  
hike up University  
and crash in the bushes.

I awake with fingers  
in my pockets, roll  
into Strawberry Creek—  
up the bank and to the tracks.

As light illumines the bay,  
“Hey, man, let’s smear that queer.”

Feet, do your thing.

## **PRINTER’S DEVIL**

When *l* is  
a sentence  
and *e* is  
a sentence  
followed by  
a sentence  
and *H* is  
a sentence  
followed by  
three sentences  
*Hell* will be  
a sentence  
in more than  
one sense

## **FUNK OF THE *F* WORD**

Oyez! I plant a seed.

The AHD has the etymology of *FUCK*  
the ME verb *FUCKEN* meaning  
to strike, move quickly, penetrate  
borrowed f/M Dutch *FOKKEN* meaning  
to strike, copulate with.

In the AHD appendix, the ME affix *PEIK-*  
also *PEIG-* meaning evil-minded, hostile  
(in Germanic, *FIKAL*; in OE, *FICOL*  
treacherous, false, fickle).

In A Dictionary of Slang, Partridge  
using Grimm's Law finds *FUCK*  
to be cognate w/Latin v. *PUNGERE*  
to strike, linking *FUCK* to *PRICK*.

Etymology unknown in OED:

1503, Dunbar. *Poems*.

Be his feiris he wald haute fuckitt.

1535, Lyndesay. *Satyre*.

Bishops may fuck their fill  
and be vumaryit.

1535-6, *Answer to Kingsie Flyting*.

Ay fukk and lyke ane furious Fornicatour.

1598, Florio. *Worlde of Wordes*.

Fottere, to iape, to sard, to fucke,  
to swive, to occupy.

1680, Anon in *Rochester's Poems*  
*On Several Occasions*.

Thus was I Rook'd of Twelve  
substantial Fucks.

1684, *Sodom*. Epilogue spoken  
by Fuckadilla. A little Fuck  
can't stay an appetite.

1800, Burns. *Merry Muses*.

When maukin bucks, at early  
f\_ks, In dewy glens are seen, sir.

The ME Dictionary lists *FUK*  
a noun f/M Dutch meaning  
a foresail, fukmast, foremast.

Phallic connotations aside  
the Puritans inscribed *F.U.C.K.*

upon the stocks of persons punished  
For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge.

No *FUCK* in An AS Dictionary  
but *FUGEL*, a bird is there  
& the middle finger extended  
is known as flying the bird.

In the *Magic of Words & Speech*  
Lama Govinda defines mantra  
as tools for thinking that have  
no specific denotative meaning  
but are symbolic units that through  
a synthesis of rhythm & melody  
transport the user beyond meaning  
into intuitive receptivity.

The *Mandukya Upanishad* begins  
*OM*. This eternal word is all,  
what was, what is and what shall be,  
and what is beyond in eternity.  
All is *OM*.

In Sanskrit the vowel *O* is a diphthong  
constituted of *A* plus *U*.  
The 3 sounds, *A-U-M* are equated  
with (1) the waking life of outward  
moving consciousness, (2) the dream life  
of inward moving consciousness, and  
(3) the sleeping life of silent consciousness.

The primal Sanskrit sound */a/* is produced  
at the back of the open mouth  
a low, back, rounded, simple vowel.

The open mouth moves towards  
the closed mouth of the bilabial,  
voiced, nasal consonant */m/*.

Between these two sounds is the high,  
back, rounded vowel */u/*  
formed by the openness of */a/*  
but shaped by the closing lips.

It is from the position of the closed mouth  
that all begins, so runs the analogy, and

dreams are compounded of the waking life  
shaped by the unconsciousness of sleep,  
the closed mouth being the foundation  
from which speech arises  
as well as the end to which it returns.

The first sound in *FUCK*  
is a labiodental, voiceless slit-fricative,  
the *U* sound in *N.* American dialect  
is a mid, central, unrounded, simple vowel  
and the *CK* consonantal sound  
is a velar, voiceless stop.

*F* is the fantasy component.  
*U* is the libido urge.  
*CK* is catadromous activity, fishes  
going down a river to spawn.

The meaning of *FUCK*  
is contorted in different usage.  
*The Dictionary of Slang* posits:  
*FUCK-PIG*, an unpleasant man (1870)  
*FUCK LIKE A RATTLESNAKE*  
cowboy expression (1895)  
*FUCKED UP & FAR FROM HOME* (1899)  
*FUCKER SOLDIERS*, Pukka Soldiers more  
interested in women than fighting (1915)  
*FUCK MY OLD BOOTS*, euphemistic variant  
of seduce my ancient footwear (1918)  
*CREATE FUCK*, protest (1920)  
*FUCK ABOUT*, play the fool (1920)  
*FUCK MY LUCK*, army expression (1920)  
*FUCKING THE DOG*, avoid work (1920)  
*FUCKED-UP*, fail (1925)  
*FUCKED*, extremely weary (1925)  
*FUCKED BY THE FICKLE FINGER OF FATE*  
Canadian Army expression (1939)

*FUCK* is used amelioratively and pejoratively.  
As an insult it means the object so described  
has been defiled, but as a compliment, it means  
that the object is held in a position of power.

*FUCK* is used as a means of address, of  
attracting attention, opening a conversation,  
starting a sentence, and when it is used

as pure emphasis, it has the meaning  
of having no meaning at all—it describes  
that which is otherwise without description.

Sing *FUCK*, scream *FUCK*, mumble *FUCK*,  
YOUR LIFE WITH BE SUBLIME!

1972

### **ELLENSBURG: 1974-1995**

#### **TRAVELER'S BLUES**

just down the road a jog  
follow the river 'til it bends  
across that field to the far side  
up the hill to the ridge—  
thataway, as the crow flies

I pull up my mount  
and peer from the peak  
at more mountains on the other side

the map I was made  
must have been made  
to get me lost

make camp  
rustle up some grub

“Ain't nobody goin' to git  
nuttin' done, if he's got mor'an  
one choice,” the hayseed said  
“I got a world of ways”  
and the dude rode on

through a vale  
across a dale  
over a pass  
my ass

it's not where I'm going

it's the going

## **SCAT SONG**

*for Gary Snyder*

You climb the mountain  
because it's there where  
you know where it's at—

Where the bear shat.

## **GET DOWN**

Flies mate on the page  
drawn by my attic honey breath.

Life in Washington is delicious  
compared to the worm  
eating at the core.

Ruskin describes it—*a march  
of infinite light...intevalued  
with eddies of shadow.*

Note the famine, the flames, the plague,  
if only a tapestry of the travesty,  
a  $n+1$  number of knots.

## **BURGER PRODUCTIONS**

The band heats the air  
with acid rock.  
Black-lighted bodies  
dissolve in the dark.

Flames of ice,  
flames of flood,  
flames of meat,  
flames of mud.

## IN ADVANCE OF BEATITUDE

My dad and I, at the Skyline  
Café counter, discuss  
Beatnik ethics.

Hermes out of orbit,  
I fume, albeit  
light-years ago. Today,

in another place,  
my wife warps her loom to throw  
a weft of her experience.

What strikes me right off  
about this woman is the possibility  
of traveling light.

## GOLD LEAF

As custodial head  
at the care center  
infection control  
and safety briefing  
I get a hot lunch.

I sip my au jus  
mistaking it for coffee.  
Lab reports are read.  
I eye my pie.

How many cultures  
on a clean plate?  
Did she say forty?

The entrapment of a mouse  
is announced. My bit  
of *Velveeta* and *Old Vic*  
trap makes a hit.

Stomp, stomp, stomp  
go the days. It's March 10th.

Alexander Graham Bell invents  
the telephone. Kissinger calls  
for more nuclear technology.

Birds will eat the feed  
I put in the tree  
by Rose Roberg's room.  
Events—a waterfall.  
Spray, white, spray.

### **CHILLING OUT WITH *THE ECLOGUES***

I smoke and contemplate  
autumn at the end of this millenium.

I am still  
reading Virgil.

The leaves turn to gold—

So much for Caesar  
and so much for...  
“Damn, Silenus

How do you expect me to rhyme *ease*  
with bees in my beard?”

### **RELAX**

Relax and read  
the stove'll go out.

You may have cleaned it  
and it will go out.

Open the grate  
and burn your fingers.

Get soot on the rug  
and get really pissed.

Smear the soot deeper.

## AT IAMBIC FEET

there is a hamburger such that  
there is a prime mover such that  
the prime mover and  
the hamburger are the same,

and whatever *Beta* may be  
(Beta is a cow mine.)  
is true when and only when  
the prime mover is prime rib.

## DIAMOND HANGING J FLOATING I

I mend the fences.  
I tend the herd.

The shit is ten feet deep,  
and the shitters play for keeps.  
What are you after, they ask,  
a hoof in the mouth?  
The shit is ten feet deep,  
and I can't eat or sleep.  
Coyotes yap all night  
below the blown moon.

The shit is ten feet deep.  
Shine on, shine on.  
Hold it down, you buggers,  
or I'll rope your ass, I sing.  
The shit is ten feet deep  
and dear.  
Hay has more than doubled in price.  
There's no market for feeder steers.

The shit is ten feet deep  
and clings like it's alive.  
Pour on gas. Set those doggies afire.  
Give those cows a kick in the udder.  
The shit is ten feet deep

and thick.  
Chew your cud, mama,  
let those juices flow.

The shit is ten feet deep,  
and sometimes it hums.  
The shit is ten feet deep,  
and here and there a head protrudes.

The Angus are black—  
purgatorial beings.

The Herefords are red—  
mythological monsters.

The Charolais are white—  
easy to spot against the dung.

The shit is ten feet deep  
and covers the fences.  
The shit is eleven feet deep,  
my shovel is hooked to coke.  
The shit is beginning to climb,  
making inroads through the hills.

O, the shit is infinitely deep  
and running still—running.

1975

## **VARIABLES OF EXISTING CHOICES**

Shorty is now in Glen's feedlot.  
What if I stuck him in a hot box—  
a square of electrified wire fence?

Turn on the juice, so this steer understands  
the concept of fence.  
You may call it a concentration camp,

but I call it home.

## **CATTLE ARE JUST AN EXCUSE FOR SHOOTING COYOTES**

Lest decomposing acids or infectious  
pests affect your stock and feed  
take heed.

Here's hoping we are blessed  
with bountiful crops  
and all our calves drop well.

It's midwinter spring.  
I notice rhythmic modulations—  
the last leaves on the cottonwoods

and birds turning and turning in the air.

## **CANIS LATRANS**

Coyotes run with the herd.  
Cows pay no attention.  
I take a bead on one,  
and Trickster says, "Caio, Dude!"  
and weaves through my sights.

## **OM OM ON THE RANGE**

I received a pamphlet advertising  
an artificial vagina, a liquid semen  
refrigerator, and a trans-jector  
electronic ejaculator.

Comes with a lifetime warranty.  
You wear it, you keep it.

## **CRITICS AREN'T AGREED**

upon meaninglessness. Knowing  
the tack helps in taming a maverick.  
It's some struggle, how to place

the what where. A *running W*  
will put a horse on its knees.

## **RIGHT LIVELIHOOD**

At first we were cowhunters.  
Texas in the 1830's. We were called  
cowboys because of our youth.  
Cowpokes poked cows to their feet  
through the slats of the cattle cars.  
A cow to a cowboy is anything  
he can drive.

## **NOTES ON THE BACK OF A FEED BILL**

FIRST INSCRIPTION: "Take that statue,  
*i.e.* Hammarabi Code

### I. Qualification

#### A. Ontology

##### 1. ( )

...O. it's base Overpowered

...6.023 times $10^{23}$

### II.

#### A. Whitespace

##### 1. Points to that which transpired"

...a broken odelisk

## **WASHINGTON SWINE SEMINAR**

I write this from the Holiday Inn  
where I attend the Eastern Washington  
Swine Seminar. African Swine Fever is  
an expanding threat to American hogs.  
Note depreciation and shrinkage.

Between the ten year farm inventory  
and depreciation allowance bit and  
irrigation system design capacity functions  
there's a bluesy sax thing with moog rhythm  
on the *Musak*.

## **GREEN PASTURES**

I push water.  
I keep the cowpies out of the corrugation.  
I spread it out,  
run it up hill if I can.

There's an art to irrigation,  
and the cows eat the grass,  
and when they're done  
they move to greener pastures,  
and then  
there's the delicing, tagging, dehorning  
shots, shine and a shave.

## **DUKE'S MIX IN WINTER**

One cow rubs her hip on the feeder,  
one hits the dust bag, one butts an intruder.

Two magpies pick at frozen grain,  
then walk like fat Z's  
towards the squeeze chute.

Fog filters the light,  
sagebrush just visible over the hog pen.

Don't fret—it's a cow's life.  
There's a growing cavie in your womb  
singing for another bale of first cut hay.

*A Surefire Heater* in the water trough.  
Dry snow caps each fence post.

## **LIVING WELL**

October *Family Circle*  
contains Mrs. Earl L. Butz's  
Russian Noodle Casserole.

Says Earl, "When my wife wants to be thrifty, we have casserole dishes. They are very nutritious and very tasty, and I enjoy them. Anyway, I've spent my whole life always eating what was put before me."

## **EVOLVED AND ECLIPSED**

I took my pigs for a walk,  
two gilts and a young boar.  
Kicking and barking  
we frolicked in the fields.

The moon arose.  
The moon descended.  
The bear and the hunter,  
the warrior, the lovers.

## **ECOLOGICAL HAZARD**

If it weren't for cats  
the mice from the timothy fields  
would create havoc. As it is

the cats shit everywhere.

## **BEEPER**

*for Theo and Elizabeth*

Siamese, Himalayan, Persian  
with schizoid face markings,  
he's only been outside once  
and won't wash his asshole.

He pisses on his tail,  
and his farts are enough  
to collapse my lungs.  
He's a stinker.

Theo sets up his dolls,

and Beeper dash-twists  
into Big Jim's camper  
and out the side door.

A saber-tooth tiger strikes  
Big Jim and Tonto at tea.  
Big Jim loses a leg  
and Tonto a hand.

As The Masked Man  
readies his mount  
a Delacroix feline  
leaps on Silver.  
Theo shouts, "Damnpissshit!"  
I say, "Theo, watch the language."  
Beeper upchucks on my muckluks.  
"Letmestranglethesonofabitch!"

Elizabeth comes from the kitchen  
and soothingly asks us to cool it.  
Theo points at the puke.  
Elizabeth hands me a towel.

Tucked under the covers,  
Beeper looks like Blake's Tyger  
with his long ancient whiskers.  
He's done his best.

## **LEARNING NEW WORDS**

"Hey, Dad, what does this say?"  
I look at the magnetic letters on the fridge.

"*AZOLE MOUSE.*"  
"Naw, it says *FUCKMOUSE*, doesn't it?"

"That begins with an *F.*"  
"What does a *F* look like?"

"An *E* without the bottom leg."  
"There is no *F.*"

"Let it stand as is. Now, off to bed."  
"How about a short poem, tonight, Dad?"

Yes, how about it.

## **TORTURELAND**

Actually, it's California.

"When you get there," Theo says,  
"they cut off your head."

Big Jim, Tonto, and the Maskedman  
stripped to their pivot joints  
and wrapped in white paper and scotch tape.

These are torture hats, and they're suffering  
burning brands to subdue their wills.  
Theo is getting at the truth.

"All right," I say, "pick up this stuff."  
Theo, "But I want to save this torture stuff."  
"Here, put it in this torture baggie."

## **CALF GRAFT**

*for Glen*

Count the stock. And again,  
still one heifer missing.

Down by the west fence line  
four legs stick out of a catch ditch.  
Eyes rolled back, nose bleeding,  
my presence adding to her fear,  
"Lay back, Cowslip, relax."

More than I'd rope and tie,  
I wrestle her to her feet.  
Moaning, she makes for the feed.  
She'll be all right if she can walk and eat.

Telling my irrigating buddy,  
he guesses I was some kind of lucky.  
I see a hide hanging on his fence and  
asked if he had lost one, he replies

“Just born and coughed up its guts.  
Skinned it out and bought a new calf  
off a cow with a blown udder.

Put this new calf in the dressed skin.  
Cow finally took it for her own, after  
I sprayed deodorant up her nose.

This morning I smell something dead,  
that skin rotting from the calf’s heat.”

### **NOW IS LIKE THAT**

Driving along 4th Parallel Road, I see  
an Angus cow with placenta attached  
and dangling umbilical cord, licking  
the sack off her calf’s face.

The calf staggers and falls, and his mom  
nudges him up and goes back grazing.  
Like lightning the calf finds the tit.  
My first birth of the season.

Around the calf there’s a beige halo.  
Or maybe it’s just the light.  
Maybe I should shave?  
Leave the mustache?

### **A TUMBLEWEED CARRIES ITS SHADOW TUCKED IN**

Round-up is over, and the cattle are culled.  
The fences rebuilt and the barbed wire stored.  
Now, I’m painting the barn.

I use an electric wire brush  
to get off the peeling paint  
until it catches on the fly of my overalls  
and twists into my groin.

I’m out here on the Diamond Hanging J  
Floating I Ranch

doing the Bred-Sow-Concentrate Rag.

## **NEW GRAVITY**

*for Cheri*

Out there—  
you walk on air  
in your new gravity

No matter how  
heavy  
you'll keep it up

ignoring signs  
moving with your heart

.

A new gravity

Disagree, it loses  
authority

.

Overheard—"Those people,  
are you one of those, too?"

A leaf, you move out  
into the open way

.

You have important things to do  
and don't want your life wasted  
on detail

Live deep—summon  
laziness,  
a breeze, the shape  
it comes forth in

.

Some go  
the way you think  
they might

So a leaf  
in a warm wind  
starts out—these are  
orange rocks

These are also  
rocks—that's  
the sky

and that's  
also a flower

.

Æolus operates—  
lips moist, veins  
filled with sunlight

Wind strikes a chord,  
skirts bellow, and bodies  
dance whether they want or not

.

Wind affects a single figure—  
so many measures of one scale  
then so many of another

Wheatfields augmented w/backroads

.

Fields come to meet me,  
wires loose, the light harsh

I await a late bus

.

A sorrel gelding dreams  
Hind hoof cocked under an apple tree  
Bright apples against the leaves

A herd of Herefords steam and stamp  
Chew their cud and crap in place  
Magpies pick the warmed grain

A *John Deere* tractor lugs up the track  
Meeting a girl on an Appaloosa  
The ploughboy raises a finger to his cap  
Eyes clouded she trots pass

.

At rest, I stay at rest  
until you enter

Do you have a date?  
In a manner of speaking, you say  
leaving for the Corner Stone

Sunday night at Rodeo  
down on all fours in the shoots

.

The grass was brutal  
compared to your caress

The mint rank  
beside your scent

The creek's chattering  
overwhelmed our words

Earth loved us

.

Overhead  
green shadows follow  
the late afternoon

To my eyes  
a field between  
two firs

I listen to grasshoppers

Their thighs make clear sounds  
in the stillness

.

The bobwhite bobwhites  
and a bird called purplewreath  
purplewreathes

Another, purple crepe, purple crepe  
the chitbird's chit chit chit's heard

One sings drinkyourtea  
one, takeoffyourunderwear  
it's spring

.

I hear voices, I see visions  
but no matter how disordered my senses  
I'm no fool—  
or, if so, in the grand tradition

Knowing all lovers change  
although I'd be the last  
I try again to impress  
my heart in yours

Let me move within you  
by the reading of my gift

.

You will fulfill your goal  
and be acknowledged, although  
you may absorb much that is wrong

You will, by instinct, become an artist  
if that is what you want  
and be remembered for what is yours alone

.

You've got that bod

.

You are sensuous pleasure  
your lips are loved  
your clothes, doubly liquefactive

You were made to be laid  
no matter some find that shameful

You have a rare, divine gift  
to give love, transforming  
what is base into grace

.

Hand on hand  
smile on smile

I think and think  
I do as I do

Unhealed, the hurt hurts

.

Everything in the past  
was in the future once

What's next?

"Tell me," you say  
"it's not just DNA?"

.

Cool your feet in the Yakima  
salute the sun, heat and dust

Let it pass.

1980

**TRANSFORMATION**

*for Moonstone*

*The scene: Everything is dense and gray  
and out of the heaviness emerges a person  
of the city who is met by a person of the forest,  
a rishi, who sits by a fire, and the city dude  
is covered by a winding cloth*

Rishi: Come closer to the fire, share the warmth  
see it dance, it's alive

Dude: A fire, a real fire? Why, it is a real fire !  
(*begins to unwrap the winding cloth, more is  
removed as the scene proceeds*) Reminds me of  
when I was a boy

Rishi: Do you believe trees can talk? These  
trees gave me the gift of wood and berries, so  
I made this tea, so drink, and it will heal you

Dude: Thank you, that's a beautiful gesture,  
thank you

Rishi: Thank you, trees

Dude: Do you live here?

Rishi: This is my home

Dude: Well, my house has been built to code,  
with art and furniture and a digital TV, but I'm  
so wrapped up in this business (*tugs at cloth*)  
I've lost touch—I know I'm in here, but I can't  
seem to feel—don't you miss the comforts?

Rishi: I like things simple

Dude: You don't have any shoes

Rishi: It's warm, I like to touch the earth, the  
purple rays come down from heaven, and the red  
rays come up through your body, your left leg  
brings up the red rays, and your right leg sends  
down the purple, a perfect exchange, a massage  
in every step, each step is different

Dude: I'll try (*takes a few steps*)—it's lumpy

Rishi: You'll get used to it

(*They dance and sing*) Walking on the earth  
Walking on the earth  
Walking on the earth  
We find our way

## CONVALESCENT CONVERSATION

Jesse: I came from England.  
Where did you come from?

Bessy: Why, Ellensburg, right here.  
Where did you say you were from?  
Jesse: England.  
Bessy: Engleburg?  
Jesse: England. English, I'm English.  
Bessy: Oh, English, you're English.  
Jesse: That's right, I'm English.  
I came here sixty years ago.  
Bessy: I'm from Ellensburg. I'm a native.

### **ROBBERS' ROOST**

through this valley  
where robbers roost

I strive with systems  
to free myself from systems

easy to see the irony—  
implementation's more severe

find a place where rent is low  
gardens grow, pace is slow

in the end  
it won't matter

we can settle on a small  
farm in Berkeley—

just a radioactive cow  
and a few chickens

### **ORDINARY ADVENTURES**

are composed of  
remarkable  
instances and strange  
coincidences

Over the top—  
the chickens fly the coup

## **LEAPS AND BOUNDS**

*for Lisa and Camille*

leaps and bounds  
the heart's a kangaroo

a pouched animal  
with a punch that'll

knock you on your ass  
eats grass

natives call'em  
boomers

## **ANDY THE MECHANIC**

Square Deal Andy  
died of overwork.  
He knew too much to be of use  
in an up-to-date fix-it shop.

*Square* has negative connotations.  
His art couldn't be assimilated.  
He has parked his rig  
in the Maker's garage.

## **ANCESTORS**

Grandfather,  
I speak for you—  
I speak that you may live.

Of old,  
I did not mind the death.  
How long he had sat there,  
the hunter with his sling!

His eyes on my every move,  
he lured me near, and I went

that he would be fed.

But now,  
they munch on energy bars  
(I can read their litter)  
and dress like billboards.

4X4s rut the roads.  
Their radios cackle doom.  
Their rifles scope in.

### **FLAKE ON FLAKE**

Love is its own  
warmth and strength.

Truth and mystery cross  
on 3rd & Main.

Rigs gear for the coast  
with cargoes of hay.

•

Through a vale,  
across a pass,  
down the trail,  
my ass.

The map I was made  
must've been meant  
to get me lost  
as the crow flies.

I make camp—  
the light gets dark,  
the dark, darker.

•

Hard to see  
the truth. Shaggy curves  
in a fuzzy country.

Realm of the densely packed,  
in turn a town with streets  
that aren't on any map.

•  
I'm here  
to glue pictures.

These bricks should look  
like a baker laid them.

If it doesn't look  
like a child could built it,  
it isn't.

### **NOW THERE THEN**

*for Jan Mejer*

Organically rising out  
of common motor pools of 5  
we find a new world  
speaking a new language

Let's look at it—  
sky cloud bird  
mountain ocean sun  
smoke house man  
street dog bike

*No Bike Riding  
On the Sidewalks*

*While visiting our community  
Please adhere  
To a meatless, eggless  
Non-alcoholic diet  
And abstain from smoking  
Mind-altering drugs and  
Unnecessary nudity*

Dig in—be happy  
this bizarre circus stretches  
beyond metaphysics beyond  
meditation beyond your great  
grandmother's condominium

**AM I REPRESSED**

or is this taking place  
in a little espresso bar  
along the peaceful Nile?

oh, I thought I saw  
two shadows

I'm sorry—  
I'm sorry, too

too much coffee  
I'm damn jittery

.

we sit in a cool spot  
amid the burning

the moon trine Uranus

.

miraculous water  
partings,  
waves splitting  
finding  
in the sand  
the Pharaoh's grave

a damn rib  
in her  
icy stare

## **RODEO OF THE EQUINOX**

There's an urgency  
to his line, the  
tension meant to hold

a wonder. Orion  
lassoes an Atlas-bred  
heifer by the hoof.  
Nearly tugging free

Sterope is tied  
hard and fast  
with hemp.

Not too shabby, all  
agree, and space is  
taut in admiration.

The Olympian buckaroo puts  
a silver buckle on his belt.

Sterope licks  
her burn in  
the calf pen.

### **IT'S A MESS**

by the creek where I squat  
with nosebleed after smacking  
my face in the slash

a crisscross of fire-hardened  
barbed sticks, o mama  
the dead forest

and the hills  
lush in bitterbrush and ceinosis  
sea of noses

o mama  
there's no hope for the trees

.

slashier slash  
rockier rock

this little unit  
has snow on it  
and's unusable

out of shoot #1  
it's Flaming Hoedag  
ridden by J. Root

o mama  
there is hope for the trees

.

Orpheus instructs the treeplanters  
Watch those scalps  
Keep an eye on spacing  
Don't plant too deep  
No J roots  
I only want to see asses and elbows

.

We plant ahead of progress rates  
into full pay with laurels

We're paid to plant a tree,  
and we'll come back  
and back again until it grows

The trees—  
out of their depth  
with this logic,

driven around in vans,  
debated about like dots on a map

.

Go Fir It Reforestation  
in the Land of Many Abuses  
it's well

trying to plant in a week  
what, destroyed in a day,  
took 1000 years to grow

## **AFTER THE VOLCANO**

No need to go  
outside—there's  
just ash out.

Quite a scene  
at Joe Albertson's  
during the ashout.

A man with a towel over his head  
wearing swimming goggles  
stocks up on beer, another  
wearing a surgical mask  
carries an umbrella.

It's dark.  
We stay indoors and listen  
to Orson Welles'  
*War of the Worlds*.

After the Martian smoke settles,  
trees drop their pyroclastic debris,  
and birds start a new day,  
although it's a bit gritty.

## **OLD GROWTH**

Mother is gaga,  
limbs tied with tape.

No cedar to see, dear.  
Can't dial 911-rape.

## **SLASH**

Hands at work,  
sound of saws,  
a drape of smoke.

Gaia grotesquely  
posed, tossed flesh  
that terrifies.

## **SYNTHESIS**

*for Bev Ombrek*

O Mother Earth, O Father Sky  
We bring you gifts, our step is light  
Goddess of the Hearth  
God of Sacred Ecstasy  
Lord of the Dance  
Goddess of Time  
God of the Flowers

We give praise with costume & prop  
With synthesizer, drum & tambourine  
Clap your hands, slap your thighs  
Stamp your feet

Let the Divine take possession  
Be seized by the Strong Force  
Tension release, catharsis reach

Fire leaps about the hearth  
Clouds swirl across the sky  
Water stalks the sand  
Land rises and falls  
Beast, plant, galaxy, atom  
Dance is older than Love

**WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?**  
*for Alia*

Here it is, your birthday,  
and you're 34. Four  
is before five, bunnytoes,

and three is one  
before four. Remember,  
too, I'll love you,  
never counting the decades.

.

I see you see  
beauty, as we

share sunrises,  
join silences.

.

Sounds pathetic,  
but back there

a goose merged with a gear,  
a tick developed a number.

1981

***ALL MIMSY WERE THE BOROGOVES***

Feeling queasy having eaten  
a handful of oriental party mix  
and a dozen ginger snaps.  
Just moved into this house.  
New sounds—a grasshopper chirps,  
but I think it's the smoke detector  
on the fritz.

2 a.m. I'm paranoid.  
My dope sits in the open,  
and I get a head change  
discovering the grasshopper  
in a crevice of my coffee table  
right beneath my stash.  
I can see the dude clearly  
and my paranoia vanishes  
because, now, I know  
I'm not bugged by the narcs.

I sit down  
to a thunderclap in the south  
from the firing range  
where the Army plays war games.  
Laser wars.  
Fluorescence and weird harmonics.

The wind picks up.  
A helicopter passes overhead.  
Sirens in town.  
Maybe they've contacted Venus.

I meditate on my psychedelic posters.  
*Andy Warhol and His Plastic Inevitable*

*Plus the Mothers of Invention \$2.00*  
*Friday May 27 Filmore & Geary Streets*  
I'm relaxed and in a new groove.

The grasshopper chirps.

## **A HILL CALLED BRINGER OF LUCK**

*for Sybil*

starting with day A and proceeding to F and backing back to B realizing F leads to U if you mean to get to C a Chinese box where you let me into a room with a door I can go through but you can't and I let you into a room with a door you can pass through but I can't

starting with pieces the book *Pieces* and your face the typeface I said I didn't like it the boldness but your face was receptive and I liked it especially the freckles on your nose E dim of ME *freken* from ON *freknur* you perusing poetry and I assuming the role of the dark Host of the Ethereal and it was slow and easy standing there imagining a secret place at another time I get out of a car I get off a horse down the street from the *Silver Dollar* we enter a Quonset hut with a false front

you touched the omphallus of my heart and the current was sufficient to set the wheels pinging a new beginning merely by placing your hand on that slim volume the waters rushing apart and we begin to step out on real ground

I feel like I have the hands of a chimp signing to the barman for two beers finding seats by the ribs of the beast I take off to take a whiz wondering if I should leave you alone but noting the flag pinned to the curtain and the dark faces I know we are on native soil

the head is full of patrons pissing away the night four dudes at the bowl and one peeing the length of the trough three guys in front of me putting theirs under his arc and I try not to get hit thinking what a shot of the pool cue to find this corner pocket I observe there is no subject there is no object so I zip up to an accordion and guitars

I get out of a car I get off a horse on Umptanum Ridge and smoke while you change your shoes I wear galoshes lore on how to live in the woods and I step into the creek and feel the firmness and rhythm of your grip

you are a stranger in the twilight apprehensive I might strangle you with barbed wire in a hollow by a snag while I'm nagging myself for not bringing a compass since I'm into true north and I want to tell you about the Big Dipper how the Indians see a great bear looking for a place to lie down and the French see a casserole and the Egyptians a hippopotamus with a crocodile on its back asterisms the casserole the possible exception expressing ancient and astonishing wisdom

we have to re-evaluate the past but that seems like a lot to lay on you our first date so I talk about the contours of the land and you about the bouquet of bullet holes in an enameled stove and your childhood in Illinois the girls of Fairberry wanting to be on their own going to Bloomington to work at *State Farm* my grandparents lived nearby in Chenoa and the summer nights full of fireflies whose tails we pinched to make engagement rings and wearing sheets in abandoned farm house rooms like Klu Klux Klan and when the gypsies camp by the river and set up a sideshow my uncle makes them vamoose and my destiny goes with the fortune-teller

the Queen broods on her Byzantine chalice like me she's dreamy like you she's sympathetic to the man of dejected aspect deserting the cups of his felicity and all that I possess house and archives is riot reflected in the Chariot reversed

our treasures and our hearts are there when we begin a short hike that gets shorter and shorter as we climb scree it is wise of me to show you sage by rubbing the leaves in my palms no matter the waterfall is out of reach hunters shoot at the cliffs kids roll rubble from a cave the site of the archeological dig is a mystery nature at her best is a blast of sage

I get out of a car I get off a horse and walk beside you a woman a man talking about rock we stop by a standing stone describing the basalt formation in antediluvian times but it leaves out how each star of the Big Dipper of each constellation has several kinds of influence each star has a form in the landscape

driving along riding along everything shimmering the branches in the field vine maple? elderberry? wild rose sage rose rose of the desert a red shimmering along the road I saw it and you were happy I saw it too even if I didn't know what it was

1983

## **NIGHT DELUGE**

I see you in white shorts sitting  
in your white *Pinto* on red upholstery  
me wanting to kiss you  
but standing back, awkward

I see your hand outstretched  
returning the money I loaned you  
wind blowing through as I bend to take  
what you owe me

I don't know who is served  
by me going broke in devotion to you

yet it's a wonder you haven't told me  
to shove off

Hard to have it like you like it  
when nothing's real until it's real  
and then it's real forever—I pull up  
on my *Harley*

just when you think you're going  
to get some rest  
and now you're cruising without a clue  
there's another gear

### **BY THE NUMBERS**

“Numerologically,” you say  
“*Jell-O* is a 9”

I feel displaced  
and circle your room  
asking your opinion  
giving you gifts

Easy to get caught again  
thinking there is something  
I can do

“I can understand,” you say  
“your love and hate”

### **LOVE'S WAY**

Two eyes look at two eyes  
two hands play a simple air  
the wind, hot and dry  
blows through your hair

.

Love's way is a ricochet  
if you'd allow a kiss now  
it'd be synchronicity

.

We conjugate the tenses  
of the body's language  
relax, love, it's true  
love is senses—nonsense  
and double sense intensely

.

I fly high, I fly low—  
questions in the sky  
answers in the snow—  
love is not less for falling

.

You're hot—you'll be hot  
when you're 50  
saying, "I'm hot, God, it's hot  
this house is hot  
this cup looks like hell  
and I'm drinking from it  
but it's cold and wet"

## **CHANCES**

Life is huge and cruel,  
and at best we get a chance to dance.  
Let's turn it upside down—  
life's up, down and crosswise.  
No one knows why  
but you and I.  
So, why hide behind disguises?

.

Love of love makes the poet mad.  
He dies and makes death wise.

.

I called my love false love—

but what she said then,  
“Sing Pine, Sing all a Pine”  
let no one blame her.  
I invite her scorn.  
What next? Who knocks?  
It is the wind.

## **HERMIT AND TROUT**

*for Beryl*

I'm a hermit  
talking to a trout.  
I touch you softly,  
and you dart away.

I can't make you  
make up your mind,  
although I've caught  
your heart in a net.

You might love me  
since I'm someone  
you can love  
more than yourself.

It's September,  
and the laughter  
of the leaves  
mocks me.

## **AS ABOVE , SO BELOW**

He wants to know my birth time for an astrological chart.  
I thought I knew where I had put my birth certificate,  
but when I look I can't find it, although I find the kids'  
Social Security cards and the numbers I need for my loan.

He's says a Gemini generally has a lot of boyfriends  
and goes steady with one or more each week, says I'm  
searching for a soul-mate or another side to myself.  
He's older and wise with intense blue eyes.

He's laid back against the door of my closet

and holds a glass of white wine, twirling the liquor  
in the glass with the Gemini twins painted in gold  
and tells me what I need in a lover.

He'll stay up all night talking with me, remember the words  
to "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band,"  
tell me I'm the most beautiful woman in the world  
when I look like a dead horse.

This guy is hot for me and wants to wait on me hand and foot.  
I'm chain smoking generic lights, and I can hardly breathe.  
I'm weirded out. I can feel the bones of my skull in my head.  
I wish I could dissolve into nothing in peace.

1986

### **SECRET SPOT**

We are redeemed in Paradise  
my tongue in you  
now now now  
buzz talk  
I drink you  
and we explode  
in this mortal bed  
what is this lightness?

### **WE LOVE EACH OTHER**

you just coming  
out of a drunk  
frightful bitch  
in a dark funk

you see me  
as amigos

see yourself  
as we

see us

as them

I'm deaf, but I hear you

### **ORDINANCE**

selected for you  
the blue dressing gown,  
and far away  
the cannon fire.

Mrs. President,  
the neck is seen  
in its cloud rack.

The moon is ice.

The moon lifts up  
and like ice  
is fixed.

### **BY DINT**

I tried to teach you  
what I know,

and you said  
goodbye for good.

I tuned my lyre  
to a minor key,

and you shot  
a hole in my foot.

### **BERYL**

like her who  
or like her who

she who  
came to

a bag of clothes  
a bag of booze

o days, o rocks  
music seeing her

### **RED LIGHT, BLUE LIGHT**

Do you want it back?

Do you, do you  
want it  
back?

“No, I want it  
where it’s at.  
I want it

Exactly where’s at.”

### **BERYL ON THE ROCKS**

I like the rocks.  
I like everything  
on the rocks.

I like hard rock.  
I like Rachmaninoff.

I’ve had it straight.  
I’ve had it mixed.

What I really want  
is having it on the rocks

beneath the stars.

## EREWON

Zeroing-in on  
the many that are one,  
a place

where the parts  
are not knowable  
for the hole.

Halve what you have,  
enough is enough.  
“Good morning, nice day!”

## WINTER FOREST

January 25th, Saturday, 5 p.m.  
Sun 05° Aquarius opposed the Moon  
Winter transmutes Craig's Hill  
dense and gray—a dead forest

Ethan and Barb and Steve  
Tom and Sharon and Jill  
circle dance around  
the water tower

when you touch Earth  
red rays rise through your body  
when you walk you bring  
purple rays down from Heaven

meanwhile  
I'm drinking *Jack Daniels*  
with a little water  
while they dance and chant

explaining how, if you'd let me  
I'd let you...  
when we go in for the hydrogen bomb

and it is embarrassing  
standing here in a white shirt  
with debris falling, yes

it's a long day  
if you have an extra sunrise  
and a long night  
with ultra-violet spring  
after a nuclear winter

1986

## **SLOWLY**

*for Marcie*

Can we stay in orbit  
without spinning out?  
Can we touch  
without getting a rash?  
Lasagna and yogurt  
baked together.

.

Are you crazy?  
No, I love you.  
You love everyone.  
There's only one you.  
You're crazy.

.

Slowly, at a snail's gallop, we move  
between the ocean and the moon.  
You'd think we were kiss-proof.

.

Living in the æther,  
one another in the other,  
we're hiding from the void outside.

.

You're in your tower,  
addled on Freud.  
I hear the celestial choir  
and beyond.

•

I'm going west.  
Let's meet in the east.

•

New York's the most  
expensive place to live.  
I'll get some special shoes  
to live in when it's cold.

•

I feel you close,  
continuous, and on both sides.  
I'd have you stay,  
but you ride away.

Why does the light dissolve  
after we've parted?

•

You're the breath of *the*  
in *Do the Right Thing*.  
You can swim more laps  
than a black she-devil.

You can swim more laps  
than I can write poems.  
Let's melt with longer laps,  
stronger strokes.

•

Riddled by love,  
shot full of shafts,  
I fly through the roof  
into a night of stars.

Stay—like a star  
until dawn.  
Turn,  
but return.

## **CURVE OF WIND**

Rosco and I wait for the fishermen to return.  
I sit on a bench and watch the clouds change shape.  
Rosco has my belt around his neck and tow chain hooked to a tree.  
Dogs must be on a leash.  
Ducks and rabbits are loose.

A teenage girl wearing white shorts sunbathes in the light breeze.  
I see one cloud as Tristram reclining  
and a small round cloud as a cup he is proffering to Isoude.  
The girl listens to her *Walkman* and glances my way.  
I cannot reduce her pubescent curves to mythological planes.

A tall, burly boy with his gray tee-shirt cut along his ribs  
carries an armload of boxes and kicks a couple towards a fire pit.  
A dramatic and disruptive act.

Above them the clouds move ahead in a larger current.  
The breeze off the lake takes up the huge cardboard ashes  
and sprinkles them on the girl.  
“Thanks, Ron,” she says, getting up and shaking her towel.  
“I’m just trying to help out,” he snickers from his pickup truck.

A couple of rabbits hop by.  
Rosco can’t even lift his head with the weight of the tow chain.  
The rabbits disappear under the porch of the Mt. Baker store.

Still no fishermen, and the cloud that was Isoude  
has become a free spirit and will not drink from the cup.

1989

## **ANGEL**

You dreamt you saw frozen DNA,  
but really it was an angel, coiled  
and waiting to be discovered  
in the palace of your mind.

## **BIRTHDAY**

*for Tresa*

A Sagittarius, you won't believe  
romantic love is invented.

All your cluttered days  
culminate in this fact.

When friends come to the door,  
your living room breathes.

The cake says, "Have a happy life."  
Voices bubble like champagne.

You open your presents, laughing,  
and risk another line.

## **NATURE HAS NO MEMORY**

Nature has no memory.  
The past vanishes like winter wind.  
I look out your window,  
down the steep hill shadowed  
deep with leaves.  
I gaze on the sun,  
a lake of joy and pain.  
Can I trust the day?

## **SURE SIGN**

We are alone in your home,  
talking of this and that. We are  
the only reality.

It's winter, and it's warm.  
Our hopes are upside down  
like chickadees in a tree.

This is a sure sign

spring has come in December.

### **ASTRAY**

It begins with the sun going down.  
Venus flings off her gown.

Who is drowned  
emerges from the sea of drunken illusion.

Astray, I am an atom  
twirling.

### **HEART, HOW CLOSE YOU ARE**

If you seek me,  
look towards the lake.  
I have fled from the zoo.

This time, I am myself.  
My pheromones  
are having a field day.

### **INTERIOR ROSE**

*for Beryl*

I turn myself into a bar room.  
Drunks roll from my armpits.

Awake all night in the gray light,  
smudges become masterpieces.

.

I see you see clearly as we share solitude.

The body will decay.  
Don't delay.

Our words make light everywhere we look.

The body will decay.  
Don't delay.

.

I like you liking me.  
I like it. I like it.  
I like it.

I could be in Mexico.  
A voice says, "Go,"  
but I can't resist

being here with you.  
I like it. I like it.  
I like it.

## **BOX**

I'm in a room  
with a door  
you can go through  
but I can't.

You're in a room  
with a door  
I can go through  
but you can't.

Now, I see your face  
in another place  
and hear the echo  
of your voice.

I'm trying to say  
just how I feel,  
but a mist  
surrounds my song.

## **ELEMENTAL**

Two friends  
near  
this fire.

You here,  
I there  
in a garden

of fire.

## **GIFTS**

Here's a sprig of pungent artemista.

I would also give a sun dog  
and the moon, low and round,  
the green shade of Manastash cliffs  
and the almost voice of Taneum creek.

I send sage from my desert to yours.

## **MAID OF MIST**

*for Laura*

Something small,  
the size  
of a star.  
Did you make a wish?  
Far away,  
far, far away.  
Hard, hard  
like a star.

.

A miss, a  
mysterious maid  
made of mist.  
A face that enters  
my dreams  
and a kiss  
I miss

when awake.

.

Look up,  
both ways,  
and down.  
Splendor balanced  
quietly.  
Her voice,  
a carriage  
of song.

.

Love sighs,  
never,  
forever.  
The world is small,  
the heart huge.  
Love signs,  
never,  
forever.

.

Pices  
quivers  
on the horizon.  
Venus exalted,  
her dream is deep.  
She fairly  
bristles  
with romance.

.

She walks  
to work  
on the stars,  
a goddess  
in her constellation.  
Believe me,  
the stars  
are really there.

.

The stars,  
music, joy  
in all weather,  
and those few moments  
we made real.  
Under your heart,  
I long  
to suffer.

.

Look up,  
both ways,  
and down.  
Morning warmth,  
wet mist weighing on me.  
So it is—my love  
is earthy.

.

She walks  
to work on  
the stars.  
Love's location  
is hidden  
within  
the tiniest  
of spaces.

## **VISTA**

*for Laura*

Does love hurt?  
—Yes, it hurts.

.

Half cloud  
half wave

Half sand  
half moon

If I don't suffocate,  
I'll drown.

.

Sometimes a little  
sometime much  
sometimes nothing.

.

What is *to love*, what  
does it mean?

If I say "I love you,"  
need this be true?

What kind of mistake  
is there room for here?

.

Baffled,  
I try to walk  
backwards,  
see backwards.

The leaves lighten  
and grow  
visible.

Light  
filters down.

.

Feeling is a path,  
and when the path splits,  
you must sit

and be quiet

until the ground  
trembles.

.

To say "I love"  
is not the same  
as what I feel.

The sense is not  
the sentence,  
but the words  
are enough.

.

Would you be  
the one, the only  
one near?

Were you here  
I would fill you  
with my words.

.

I don't mean to wheedle,  
flatter or maneuver.

You are in my poem, your  
presence, strong and real.

## **DARK ORDER**

*for Karen*

Moonchild, woman  
of innocence,  
no love but yours  
will tame me.

Your beauty is  
enough to sacrifice  
a hart upon a stone,  
enough to turn a heart

to stone.

Somewhere in the sea  
the fish are awake.  
Between the stars  
there is laughter.

Telling you  
you are beautiful  
is my job.

## **SOUL LIGHT**

*for Naomi*

It's after midnight,  
hours since I came home  
and sat thinking—  
hours since I came home,  
your blue eyes still before me.

It's after midnight.  
Time has passed.

I think with my feelings.  
Encountering each tiny sensation,  
I gather up the warm truths  
and the sad ones in the late light.

## **IN FIRST LIGHT**

Covered in colored scarves,  
you dance,  
alone but not lonely,  
in a desert, harsh and gray.

Crows fly up, and I divine  
your name in their flight.  
The world's new and true and lovely,  
nothing else to be.

## **WATERDOWNSTONE**

*for Heidi*

We compare our scars  
and talk for hours.

You sit, I spin.  
Love looks through love.

•

Our dream  
will not  
sleep.

Feeling  
jogs us  
awake.

I hold you,  
my heart,  
and sing

a fool song  
to renew  
the day.

•

You want  
your plan  
to work,

your luck  
to change,  
a miracle to come.

I open my heart,  
right or wrong,  
and sing this song.

## **GREEN FEELING**

The rain comes down

on our sunny days.

We grow old,  
and all we know

is memory.

Like a dumb snail  
we listen to the sky.

Our passions  
break through to

the warmth  
and breathing

of a fresh, green feeling.

### **AFTERNOON FEELING**

An afternoon feeling  
brought into the light  
the instant I looked  
into your eyes.

A need to continue,  
minute overlapping minute,  
no logic to it—  
to focus an obscure desire.

### **DANDELION WISHES**

You laugh  
with the thunder  
circling the moon.

You see  
backlit cows hanging  
upside down in the sky.

You ride the wind  
making dandelion

wishes.

You try to flee  
but return, sealed  
in a green cell layer.

## **ALL WAYS**

Always young  
always high

Maid of earth  
made of sky

You with starlight eyes  
I with voodoo ways

I do what I do  
to be with you.

## **FOURWINDS**

At the Fourwinds  
we enter the bourn  
that true friendship is.  
The table tilts—  
we orbit the sun and moon  
body, voice and mind  
bright, blesséd, kind.

But this is bubblegum,  
you complain,  
where are the dirty feet,  
the fish floating belly up?  
The table tilts—  
no killing the monkey in the hall  
or the worm in the rotten wall.

Now mild and restrained,  
now wild and unreined,  
we talk, and our words make light.

## SO

Even we  
even so

The candle burns  
the candle burns

## MOONRIDER

*for Sherry*

In the swing, I can smell  
apples in your hair  
and, faintly, some  
deeper secret in that scent.

The catalysis of passion  
the passion of love  
the crystalography of love  
the beauty of passion  
the catalysis of beauty—

A formula I incant  
to induce sleep.  
You can't sleep,  
yet nothing awakens you.

Moonlight becomes you.  
You become moonlight.  
Darkness makes a woman  
from shadows.

## COOKIN'

Love is composed  
of basic ingredients—

shared solitude,  
clean sheets,

and the fire  
in our bones.

## **EVERYTHING**

Everything's  
the world.

Everywhere  
it's happening.

Everything is  
everywhere.

## **TWO ROSES**

Two roses in the park  
two noses in the dark

Flowers blooming  
in and out—

Monsters moving  
in and out—

Sometimes I think  
it has been a fall scene

A false scene  
since the very beginning

Two roses in the park  
two noses in the dark

## **TWO FRIENDS**

Two friends sit  
near this fire  
counting stars.

Ears hear fire.  
Eyes see light  
here in this air.

Garden of stars,  
garden of fire,  
garden of air.

## **WALKING**

You have a quick mind  
and soft lips

I have a soft mind  
and quick lips

Walking up Maple  
crossing to Alder

“A Hawthorn?”  
“No, a Russian Olive.”

Around us, the leaves  
fall all fall long

## **DO I HEAR TRUMPETS?**

Do I hear trumpets  
or is it thunder?

Shadowy letters flicker  
*The End—*  
crazy

Inside and out,  
just totally black

I'm not sure  
if I should take a walk  
or lean back

## **MARCH OF REDS**

A march of reds  
and yellows  
in a marsh of reeds

A marshmallow  
over an open fire  
in Indian summer

We really should know  
where the nearest firehouse  
is located

## **SILENT LANGUAGE**

The touch of my tongue  
on your lip

Your palm on the curve  
of my hip

A cut rose in a vase  
an invisible rose growing here

## **REAL**

I'm glad you too  
like to hug and kiss  
trees

A man and a miss  
in bliss—  
this's what this is

## **STUNNED SUNRISE**

a stunned sunrise  
the sky bloody and bruised

make my bed—  
I'll be ok  
if I can get up

the rest  
is gallows humor

### **EYES THAT CRY**

eyes that cry  
lips that kiss  
awake to bliss

everything to see  
forget  
and see again

### **YOU GAVE ME A RING**

you gave me a ring  
turned my finger green

if you want  
you'll get close

if you don't  
you won't

silence in the roar  
silence I can hear

### **AT THE BLACKHAWK**

lovers holding hands  
sipping rum & coke

soft bob caress

wailing

lifting  
wailing  
drifting

## **DRIVING ALONG**

driving along, riding along  
everything shimmering

the branches in the field  
vine maple? elderberry?  
wild rose, sage rose  
rose of the desert  
shimmering along

you are happy  
I see it too, even if  
I don't know what it is

## **F YOU C K**

she's in a hammock  
between two willows  
jeans cutoffs and bandana  
for a top

she says, "If you see Kay,  
tell her I want her."

sweat on my face  
I stand there—  
I'm 14 and don't get it

## **UP BEFORE FOUR**

*for Marjie*

she's up before four  
stirring up dust  
rising with the cows  
raising the weather

this also, stretching  
far enough—  
as far as necessary  
to find her joy

## **SPACE OUT**

I space out  
in the dayroom I

beat myself, so they  
put on a helmet

bite at the face guard  
in the blackness

after all  
madness is only madness

## **DREAM**

I wander in a dream  
near the ocean's edge

How did this crab  
get in my mouth?

Defiled by the thing  
a puppet on a string

Yakity yak  
yakity yak

Every second second  
yakity yak

## **CLOUDS**

clouds

like smoke  
like mist  
like smoke

feathers  
smoke  
fur  
smoke

perhaps  
each

### **LIGHT ON LIGHT**

light on light  
a river of light  
a bank of light  
a forest of light

sharing this sunset  
silence is a world  
of feeling  
whirling through light

### **BLUE LIGHT**

*for Sandra*

trying to talk of love  
I struggle with words  
tied to my heart

only afraid love  
will end, love  
let us be

blissful as bees  
in the buzz  
of honey making

.

long night

morning sun—  
lady in blue  
nice to see you

dressed in diamonds  
your best suit  
ready for business  
hardass business

harder than diamonds

•

blue lady  
passed through

lilac in winter  
a wave of blue air

•

my life goes on  
going and going

I watch the moon  
on snow tonight  
blue light

bright blue light

•

sunny moon  
several shades of blue  
a face whose lips say  
she loves me

destiny at my fingertips  
infinity a little way—  
beyond the stars

## **SHIFTED**

a distortion

in the fog

a man without  
form

a man with  
one arm

a man with  
one lip

an old man  
I finally understand

## **INSURED**

lines of light  
run off to the bay

this house—  
comfortable

like the face  
I live in

there's a medical  
clause...

*the longest steps  
are those to home*

## **BELOW THE RAD LAB**

slanted rain falls  
on blank flowers  
in a mechanical garden

I have desperation  
I walk like a dog  
without shifting my gaze

## **HOME**

dust piles up

I don't think  
we'll ever get unplied

we have a full house

I think we need  
four big asses

to go under  
our big asses

## **OK**

if I can  
get up

if not  
I'll crawl

all the way  
to Australia

## **PAGOSA SPRINGS: 1994-1997**

### **TOO MANY HORSES, NOT ENOUGH SADDLES**

*for Richard Running Deer*

Where do you come from?  
Before anything  
there was dirt  
a breast-shaped mountain  
a valley, a plain  
just dirt

Mother Nature wearing  
a dress with many pockets

looks over the land  
and bends low  
moving her hands  
she makes clouds

Taking seeds from her pockets  
she throws a few here  
some there, some in the valley  
pfff, pfff, pfff  
some on the plain, pfff, pff  
and on the mountain, pff  
she stands up and the clouds leave  
and she calls Father Sky  
“Bring the sun over here”  
this is on the first day

On the second day  
she takes a look  
and makes adjustments  
she says to Father Sky  
“Take the sun back  
back further, over there!”  
and she takes some seeds  
from a pocket way in the back  
that she’s never used before  
pfff, pfff, over here  
pfff, pfff over there

Mother Nature is a lot like us  
she’s never satisfied  
always making corrections  
pfff, pfff, pfff  
Then she takes the water people  
from a pocket near her hem  
and sets them to one side  
and the winged people  
and the four-legged people  
from yet other pockets  
she takes the two-legged people  
and sets them to one side  
and says, “Pay attention  
don’t say anything  
watch what I do  
and I’ll explain later”

This story goes on

Mother Nature adds  
and subtracts, she points  
the water people toward the valley  
and the four-legged people  
to the mountain and the plain  
the two legged people  
beg her to have their place  
but first she tells  
the winged people  
to fly over the land  
and report back to her

She invites the leaders  
of the peoples to a circle  
the Bear tells the humans  
“I will give you wisdom  
but you can’t hunt me”  
the Elk offers bones  
for tools and hides for clothes  
and meat for food  
the Fish promises  
to keep the river water clean  
and the Eagle to carry  
messages to the Great Spirit

And the story goes on  
for a long time  
and I may have forgotten  
a part, like about Coyote  
promising to be a teacher

The Conquistadors come  
with their firesticks  
and the Bluecoats with their rifles  
now, we’re in the time  
of the third language, T.V. land  
and Mother Nature looks over  
the breast-shaped mountain  
at Bobcat bounding  
from an alter at Tara Mandala

A new moon  
yip yap and yowl of Coyote  
screech of Hawk  
and drumming sounds  
from a yurt at the base

of the Continental Divide  
east meets west  
we're back to basics  
wood and water, water and wood  
the energy of vajra  
song and dance

Our love of the land  
is our comfort and strength  
this the Ute people know  
this the Buddha people know  
the sangha is a circle  
here is where we are from  
awake to the scent of rabbitear sage  
ears hear fire, eyes see light  
all one taste  
garden of fire, garden of stars  
garden of air

1994

### **RIGHT TO THE POINT**

*for Anne*

what is the point  
of low self-esteem  
power facades  
one crises after another  
when you're dead?

spirit, sex, neither  
either—  
it's my decision  
not to manipulate  
confuse or harm

### **CLEAR**

*for Bonnie*

capricious horses graze  
on pure mountain air  
you lay on a bed

of pinecones and roses  
the horses laugh  
the river flows both ways  
look where we live

### **WHAT WHERE IS HERE**

*for Jillian*

I drive to Fairfield  
a fair field  
I drive to Riverside  
a river side

I turn right, then left  
our spirits meet  
you laugh, I laugh  
perfection is infectious

### **METHOD IN THE MADNESS**

*for Jane*

I write, then I type  
I retrieve, I retype  
I cut and paste  
images of real objects

a process of recovery  
and discovery  
a contemplation of silence  
in this maelstrom of violence

### **POST-DOGMATIST PUDDLE**

*for Cecil*

all in order  
on a plate of gas  
Maxwell House  
is avant-garde

## **PAINTING CLOUDS**

*for Pricilla*

Clouds are familiar sensations  
only their positions are uncertain

A pink diver circles Squaretop  
a dark hood caps Little Brother

A chorus line of kachinas high step  
a bony dakini drinks from a skullcup

Soft clouds become hard  
quiet clouds become loud

Lightning has struck her, so  
she sings while she paints

## **ONCE**

*for Lynda*

we would go  
backhorse riding  
when the horses

were boys  
and the cows  
were girls  
the dogs were boys

and the cats were girls  
et cetera  
the ducks and the geese  
the birds and the bees

et cetera  
I was also pretty sure  
Einstein wrote the Bible

later, things got complicated

## **TRANSITION**

*for Shannon*

I make this a song  
that vanishes woes  
uncurses all wrong  
and banishes foes

I turn the clock ahead  
“Hello, Springtime”

## **AFRICA**

*for Richard & Ilsa*

when you come back  
bring me a spear  
when you come back  
bring me a drum

when you come back  
bring me a leopard  
when you come back  
bring me a spot of soul

bring me back, bring me back  
Africa, Africa, Africa

## **WHATEVER IT TAKES**

*for Bruce*

creations of ordinary reality  
don't forget to burn the sun

do whatever it takes  
to get that steak to your plate

## **SAMSARA AND NIRVANA**

*for Kim*

she's a buddha

who uses aloe vera hand cream  
I've heard her say

"I need money"  
then point to a double rainbow  
in my heart

### **FURNITURE POEM**

*for Steve*

start with two marks  
wisp of a world

on the cusp of chaos  
and in this corner

a hint of disclosure  
about a continent in stasis

ambient poetry  
elevator murmurs

### **SHRINE FOR JIMI HENDRIX**

*for Denise*

a diamond guitar  
spirals out of Sagittarius

a god in his constellation  
digs the celestial choir

moving east  
to meet in the west

### **DEJA VOODOO**

*for Ashlee*

o never always  
would the mind  
let go

even the grass  
will attain  
liberation

### **TOO LITTLE TOO LATE**

*for Corinne*

waiting at the Liberty  
how long have I been waiting  
how long should I wait

am I early  
am I late  
or am I?

### **WARM LIGHT**

*for Brent*

spring soon  
still winter

still winter stillness  
the brown ground moves

bees have no attainment  
bees have no non-attainment

### **OUR NATURAL VIEW**

*for Ivy*

nectar to our eyes  
Chimney Rock, Archuleta Ridge  
and the Continental Divide

as exotic as Crete  
or a grotto on Molokai  
we give our blues to the sky

•  
to be and not to be  
to be is not to be

flower of life  
heartstream

do you remember  
that rock, was it mica?

only a sparkle  
only a sparkle left

•  
flower of light  
being of flight  
small birds arriving

we stop to look at cows  
a magpie hops across  
a longhorn

•  
you have a quick mind  
and soft lips

I have quick lips  
and a soft mind

that which is soft  
penetrates that which is hard

promises  
promises

## **TURN BEAUTY TURN**

scandalous beauty  
looks into her mind

with lion's breath

she chants

I'm not one  
I'm three

you have to love  
all of me

.

scandalous beauty  
looks into her mind

spaced out, she sees  
light in everything

so odd to reject  
what's in the offering

.

scandalous beauty  
looks into her mind

in yabyum  
she faces front

I'm just you, Dad  
with a cunt

.

scandalous beauty  
looks into her mind

we know nothing  
of one another

nothing  
each is alone

.

high flavor, low flavor  
one taste, no taste

white trash beauty  
looks into her mind

garlic is the polka  
of spaghetti

.

white trash beauty  
you have flayed me  
and beaten me with a club

I count my days  
bite my hand and embrace  
emptiness

.

you draw an arrow  
I turn towards my bed

shot by the jealousy  
in my thought

winds ravage within  
outside

birds crack jokes

.

redhead  
I see you at the drugs  
buying ginseng wrinkle cream

I smell your hair  
and despair sweeps me  
into a lair of sea monsters

.

how can there be  
such clarity and bliss  
in weariness

terrified, I stand in fire

having ridden the wind  
and kept your memory

.

are love and fear  
indivisible?

I give you a kiss  
you bite my head off

sentiment  
filled with appetite

.

the sun is seen  
the fun begins

stir blood  
in a conch shell

when the lower part  
of the moon appears

dance wildly  
in the flames

.

no boundaries  
no barriers

love is a dark healing  
unclean but holy

**PARTY DOWN, ANASAZI**  
*for Gaela*

KYPHI

an Egyptian scent  
earthy and sensual

a prayer to unlock  
my mother's suffering

she'll walk in beauty  
silk sent into sunlight

#### NAZCA SERAPH

weaving illusion  
and it could change

bird form  
spider spirit

weaving illusion  
and it could change

#### OSHUN

daughter of the mountain  
river goddess, source of joy

new moon, love shines  
jewels drums mirrors

new moon, lamp of love  
love shines in your mirror

#### MANU

manu, bird  
manu wai, water bird

huruing wuhti  
rock clay hardstuff

manu wai huruing wuhti  
water bird radiant in clay

#### NAGA JEWEL

rock cut with sand

really blasted

snake arising  
egg arriving

snakesong, eggsong  
rock beyond this world

## WORD

dancing green woman  
plant spirit stone

laughing green woman  
tracing her shadow

singing green woman  
“I really love men”

## CHACO RIVER BEING

what is it  
gives pleasure

in a minim?  
don't ask

let's not  
force it

## NEPAL

a place setting  
a place of heart

circle a mountain  
ride a thunderbolt

an awakening  
an *Ah*

## MASK OF YORUBA

a reminder of innocence  
an initiation

beadwork looking cool  
each bead is a friend

cowrie shell, Orisha kiss  
life stone of the dakinis

## MYSTERY OF MUSIC

nest of the bird goddess  
Sumer 3000 BC

first born, first known  
woman and spirit

this side and that side  
rock paper song

## STONEBONES

water lines  
dream lines

song lines  
ley lines

bones in stones  
an oracle speaks

## **SANTA ROSA & SEBASTOPOL: 1998-2000**

## **PEBBLES**

we are born  
to dream

we wake  
was there something  
fluttering?

I was going to ask, but  
it must have been a dream

.

too much  
or not enough

a sound  
we cannot hear

.

swift  
clear  
sure  
final

.

time and loss  
two worlds

in and out

.

held together  
the great  
the small  
by light

.

mountain and wave  
lip and leg  
a relationship  
of man and woman  
and moonlight

.

in this light  
to sit with you  
in rest

so it is  
happiness pours out  
like a yellow rose

.

a glance  
becomes  
a gaze

.

one day, yes  
another, no

.

your refusal and departure  
swift, sure and final  
an injury so severe  
nothing can be done

except massage my heart

.

I hold your picture  
to my lips

your eyes, lips, eyes

.

in memory of  
bug hovering evenings  
and the touch of  
a cinematographer

.

apocalypse now  
a pair of lips now

.

I feel like I'm a walking  
Freudian soap opera

.

words of my perfect T-shirt  
*Don't Worry*  
*Be Hopi*

.

a skylark in a field  
of larkspur

.

I listen  
I feel  
I hurry

## **ON THIS SIDE OF THE PASS**

*On Borgo Pass*  
*suddenly the light divides*  
*and the land on one side*  
*rises to heaven*  
*and on the other falls*  
*no one knows where*  
—*Nosferatu*

grandeur of dawn in transparent gold  
dreamthoughts caught in a net  
dew on grass  
teakettle whistles shrill  
færies to the high ground  
time for tea and scones

the world is swinging to and fro  
and I am standing still  
the yellow sky fills with clouds  
in this cataclysmic bliss tornado

time has stopped

and the tiny spasm by which we hang  
becomes an abyss where phantoms nourish  
on a child's prayer

I follow the lines of my desire  
beauty reflected on surfaces and mirrored  
by the crazy monkey of mind  
no matter what vampire light appears

I drink my tea and eat my scone

## **BEATING AGAINST THE ROCK**

*for Lisa*

gold from the heart  
boundless light upward  
outward downward  
flowers of obsession

a promise in the blood  
joy in the stones  
in tune with our touch  
sphinx-like spirit

an eye an apple  
an oyster a thousand miles  
from the sea still feels  
the tug of the moon

in this bowl of noodles  
moon outside moon within  
gaze on the dripping light  
hear the voice of a star

why does the universe exist?  
no single answer to this  
a bouncing bubble  
a ball of strings

by all means wear pearls  
while you vacuum  
and a diamond crown tiara

when you change the cat's box

### **TAKES ON A BLUE SET**

I want a metaphysic so loose  
the most incredible accident could occur  
and it wouldn't cause a ripple

In the meantime, I search for the omphallus  
and the continuation of culture  
Is Great Pan dead?

You're forty feet tall—  
put me in your pocket  
and take me with you

### **HEAD START**

awoke this morning  
with my head on backwards

looked in the mirror  
at a mess of hair

thought, shit oh dear  
my face needs brushing

after brushing my teeth  
with a hairbrush

I knew I was loosing  
my grip on the day

### **ECO BIZ**

the world  
melting down

we take stuff

out of the earth  
heavy metals  
and put it into  
the biosphere  
a closed system  
spread the stuff about  
molecular garbage  
100 pounds of product  
yields  
3000 pounds of trash

time is running out  
tick tock tick tock

### **SKY LINE**

near you in a dream  
crazy as it seems, giving  
comfort to your distress  
hard to understand  
close to you like the air

no more looks, no more words  
don't ask with those lips  
words like clouds  
cloud following cloud, hiding  
what you must hide

### **PAINPOINT**

easy to say  
pain is just pain  
like a jagged blade

easy to say  
pain passes  
like night

easy to say  
pain is a point of view  
if you're comfortable

## **INTRUSIONS**

another note on my pillow  
the horses are dying

unnatural things can happen  
in a natural way

and quickly

## **MOVING FINGER**

the heart  
satisfied  
with and by  
what is

now I sit in Wolf's  
Tea Room, Santa Rosa  
pushing 58  
as I once sat

in the Black Sheep  
with my mother  
in Berkeley  
a boy of 10

writing on napkins

## **COME ONTO DRY LAND**

*for Jane*

your heart's blank  
and your head's  
an empty chamber

you feel there's a brick  
between your feelings  
and your fingers

say no more  
your days are flowers of water  
you wake to find the river rose

## **STAKE OUT**

I set my shutter speed  
and adjust my stance  
so my shadow falls  
outside the frame

I check again—  
the birds are still there  
and I find delight  
in their chatter

.

recorded with directional mic  
written in the margin of a bill  
toilet tapped, bed bugged

an easy one  
the guise, the lies  
the prize

familiar fries  
fishing for grease  
muffled cries

collar or color  
play the moister  
on the whistle dump

ample gum awake  
burnish in tragic  
plus one

.

a fragment  
of a conversation

“I don’t understand  
the whole concept—  
I don’t understand  
like...”

and she was out of hearing

.

I ask the question again  
and it sees me coming  
and ducks around the corner

.

no way I’m getting  
in her face

just keep floating  
naively watching  
the ads on TV

my world exploding  
the 20th century is  
a fairy tale

and soon  
every conceivable vice  
will seem like play

you’ll need a lawyer  
to ask her out

## **COLD FOUNTAINS**

days when I look in my mirror  
and see fear

and the mirror curves  
towards a nest of dread

what’s next?  
fear to be or go or stay

no now there  
no now here  
nowhere

.

where does the light  
in our dreams come from?

.

I stalk Artaud  
I dis Rimbaud  
I burn Villon

I look on the world  
with a cold, blue eye

.

a risk  
a miracle  
a hope  
magic of

## **BLUE NOTES**

The bug is right,  
we're pond scum, flotsam  
in the evolutionary wave.

Hear that—  
Coltrane, man,  
*Kind of Blue*.

There's a certain shape  
to these chords,  
a crystal structure.

Inside, you can see  
naked people, the living  
dancing with the dead.

## POETICS

What is the point, Jack?  
is poetry a conversation  
among the dead, and the poet  
gets it second hand, a vampire  
moon sucking off the sun?

What is the poet, Jack?  
a battered radio transmitting  
static between the stations  
on a lonely stretch of road  
or a punchdruck fighter  
whose taken one too many  
hooks to the head?

Powerful emotion recollected,  
the most exasperating art?  
Charles Potts makes an analogy  
with Mahamudra, Williams hears  
a sort of song, Lu Garcia invents  
a ragged song, and Yeats sees  
tattered clothes upon a stick.

Belle says poetry is experience—  
I awake to morning light  
thoughts sweet as honey  
buzzing in my brain.  
Swatting them I get stung  
by real bees in a dream garden.

## TARA

*for Emily*

crossing the street in wonder  
about the angle of the earth's shadow  
on your soul's wanderings  
the crescent moon within hand's reach  
you are the path serene  
I bathe in your light

you paint details on a batik  
of Vajradhara in yabyum

while ants march across the table  
your snake lifts his head  
and your cats cruise among the candles  
I am your devotee, speak through me

you've made yogi tea  
and we've gone beyond the fuss  
of the day into a room warm  
in the flow of words and gestures  
our glances and grazes become  
a store of bargains beyond form

you are a star near and far  
a fearless guide in my meditation  
you step down from your lotus  
in the dimension of bliss  
granting my boon, soothing my fear  
I am your devotee, speak through me

totally awesome space, you are  
the teaching and the teacher  
present and aware in the street  
finding smashed glass from a car  
your compassionate heart feels  
for someone suffering loss

walking through the plaza we find  
a shopping cart, and you hop in  
but don't let me push you too far  
so as not to put the clerk to extra work  
at dinner you read my fortune cookie  
saying I have consideration for others

this really applies to you, who give  
a 50% tip and say, "Why not?"  
Swift One, I bring this flower  
I'm blown apart sitting, standing  
eating, walking, your vibe emanates  
in all realms and in your presence

I find solace with all objects  
all subjects empty, you elegant  
no stain, no blame, no blemish  
full-breasted with kindness  
warm heart, cool brain  
carry me over

## **ENDANGERED**

*for Shannon*

Birds and rain  
turtles on the waves  
deep in your heart  
you know harmony.

Keep your eye peeled  
for litter along the way.  
If it talks to you, pick it up.  
That's politics, too.

"Hi, I'm a moldy doughnut  
in the dumpster wishing you  
a really nice day  
with sprinkles on top."

"I'm a recycled plastic bag  
giving you longevity vibes."  
"An aluminum can, here, sending  
blessings of happiness and peace."

"No, I want to send peace!"  
"Shut up, you dumb Styrofoam,  
get back, and wait your turn."  
"Then, I'll send joy and light."

Birds and rain  
turtles on the waves  
I sing of lovingkindness as  
a responsible use of power.

## **FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS**

so wrong and so right  
crude and too perfect

whatever

basically, what does

*whatever* mean, anyhow?

tap gently and keep moving

### **HEAVY ARTILLERY**

I'll listen to your unhappiness  
I'll even hand you a towel  
but I'm not going to E.R.  
because of a broken heart

I had a love like that  
and one's enough  
I would just as soon forget  
the way she walked

### **ONCE I'M UP TO SPEED ON *QUARK*** *for Sam*

after the first 10 to the minus 43rd second  
a new layout to the universe  
a bouncing bubble, a ball of strings

a hundred things to delight  
fountains, flags  
a butterfly of gas in flight

### **FLATLINE** *for Sito*

it has a pulse  
it has a smile

someday, we'll get down  
to the core

it's a short distance  
but a long way

## **MAN-EATER**

hard to conceive  
perfect content

hard to be  
content

with form only  
a sphere, a cube

or the Sphinx—  
target practice for his nib's troops

## **BACK TO THE REAL WORLD**

the bills, the boss, the stress  
walk the line

walk the dog, wash the car  
push the cart, prune the bush

“Hello, hello, something wrong?  
something on my face?”

## **MORNING**

what's before emptiness  
nothing  
I have words for

I pull back the curtain of the sky  
and enter  
the mirror that is

the World of Nun  
chaotic and watery, without sun  
“Pack your bags, Tinkerbell”

## **NOON**

long afternoon in my rose garden  
long evening in the infinite shadows

long afternoons, longer evenings  
I listen, I listen, I listen

long-stemmed beauty  
we seem to get nowhere

## **AND NIGHT**

a summer night  
moonlight

we are in a very old garden  
dreamkisses free and easy

I love you, but what to do

this is a dream where I awake  
saying, "This is a dream"

## **DARK MATTER**

we drift in infinite space  
or no space

illusion of oneself in an obscure  
place  
a floating reflection

nothing holding us up

## **AND THE TREE OF LIFE ALSO**

I go to the shore and sit  
I become limpid blue sky

seaweed seaspray  
seagulls and sand

dry wet high low  
empty full fast slow

bored blissed

**FIVE ABSTRACTS INSPIRED BY MARK ROTHKO**  
*for Sito*

i

“O, God, let me out of this world; I can’t live like this, hurting the one I love.”

ii

yellow  
>>>>>red  
>>>>>>>>>>and red

a gesture of friendship  
something  
in lieu

of taking a trip  
or going for a walk  
with you

iii

two crash dummies  
what>>>>>>>>we  
feel>>>>>>>>about  
>>>>courage  
>>>>dignity  
>>>>>>>>>>and  
>>>>>>>>>>death

iv

a suit coat neatly hung on  
a kitchen chair before



is a song you sang  
along the San Juan

a canticle of water and air  
a riff of iridescence

## **NUTCRACKER**

*for Lulu*

everyone listen up  
this is a beautiful woman

this is a beautiful woman  
so I sing

there's something special  
about her toes

and she knows  
she has those toes

she points to a pair  
of point shoes

and I catch a reflection  
of her smile

and forget  
what I've got going

## **CUTTING A SWATH**

an old man pushes his wheelchair  
and a clothes basket down the hall

he is slowly advancing to the laundry  
with a plastic bag of soiled diapers

and with him the whole world comes

## **MORE LIGHT**

my father gulps air  
jaw slack, hands astray  
in front of the TV  
sound on full blast

he can't make out the words  
but the music helps him sleep  
it's Ida Lupino Month on *TCM*  
May and December

his 75th Masonic Anniversary  
at the Luther Burbank Lodge tonight  
proud he can walk to the East  
worried he won't remember the Word

how to tie his tie is a real mystery  
his first car, a 1916 *Buick*  
I drive into the fire  
to help him

## **PICTURE FROM WILLIAMS**

*for Jane*

she did a painting, which in  
keeping with the spirit was to be  
a red wheelbarrow  
    rain-drenched  
    with chickens  
no fuss, straight up

finally, tore the sky  
    into four pieces, each  
    had a line of verse  
and framed the botched wheelbarrow  
and too bright interpretation of  
chickens with sewn on feathers  
by thumbtacking it to a stretcherbar

so much depends upon  
that first cup of coffee

## **AT EAST WEST CAFÉ**

*for Emily*

The street is slippery and wet, so  
East West is refuge from the rain.  
I have damp feet and a cold brain,  
And there's a hole in my shadow.  
Clarity and charity are fleeting.  
The air belongs to invisible fish.  
No matter what I might wish,  
I'm always warmed by your greeting.  
A special touch is what I need today.  
You prepare the perfect cup of chai,  
And while making change you spy  
A tarnished coin and say,  
"Oh, it's worn, but it's not that old."  
Suddenly, I'm composed of gold.

## **DIMINISHING OPTIONS**

*for Belle*

Neanderthal took his peculiar stones  
and Pharaoh his throne and gilded boat.  
I'll be buried with my TV and remote  
as well as a cell phone to keep in touch.

## **FRESH FLAVOR**

what do I know?  
nothing that is known  
everything unknown

how humming birds fly  
where your birthday falls  
in the digits of *pi*

I work beyond movement  
I make funny sounds  
in the serious stillness

much laughter

much joy  
pervasive and empty

## **COMPASSION**

a heart vowed to eradicate hells  
if I don't help, who will?

plunging into black chaos  
I know

it begins with grace  
and ends with grace

but in between  
there's a black horse without a rider

a black dog without a bark  
a blasted tree without bark

## **COWBOY**

rein in your mind  
there's rain in your mind

don't shy, relax  
let it fall

you built it  
now, it's gone

so bright  
so much light

it's alright  
the tears

head 'um up  
herd 'um out

## **ANGELS**

angels riding turtles  
angels flying kites  
angels necking in the park

the lady at the county office  
accepts my application  
although my registration is invalid

the UPS man's clipboard buzzes  
says he has a problem meditating  
boxes backed up Pagosa to Omega

angels riding turtles  
angels flying kites  
angels necking in the park

## **DUET AT SUNSET**

*for Heidi*

I heard a mother sing  
I hold a Symphony that brings  
Me peace and gives me faith  
A dream of many colors

The wind stirs up and hollers  
Superstition!  
Feel free to go a new direction  
Here's a chilly kiss for comfort

The mother retorts  
Be still, heart  
My songs are nightmares and prayers  
Painted with the hues of Windy Bay

## **QUE PETITE SIRAH, SIRAH**

*for Mike Dunne*

I hear what the guests say  
Big, dense, robust and rambling  
Where is his modesty?

He shoulders the food aside  
He's got too much muscle for the table  
Too full of himself to sit with us

But who knows my real name?  
Or what's behind my ripe berry smile  
Go on about my tell-tale peppery spiciness  
Say what you will about my grinding tannins  
I may not be supple on the dance floor  
But I'll leave the party with a royal flush  
While all the zinfandels rush for power

### **CONSTRUCTIVE REST**

*for Pamela*

This is magic.  
It's the technology  
that's real.

The burned, twisted bodies  
are real. The beauty  
is monstrous.

No, you can't blow it up  
even if it is the damned home  
of the atom bomb.

Your feeling is a path  
and when the path splits  
sit until the mountain crumbles.

Stay strong.  
Stay strong for the child of the world.

### **XITRO**

*for Allen Ginsberg, 1926-1997*

I

I'm sitting in Tsultrim's kitchen Pagosa Springs looking at a picture you took of her at a table in your kitchen Manhattan clear autumn day thinking how long it's been since you sat in my kitchen Fairbanks in thin winter light I'm one of your many colorful

children spawned from *Howl* breath spontaneous exuberant misconduct passing original uncensored yelp around Miss Jacobi's Latin class yes I know the pluperfect of *amare amaveram amaveras amaverat amaveramus amaveratis amaverant* my mind eager for peyote solidities green tree cemetery dawn wine drunkenness over rooftops I am a candle you are the sun

Wanting to plug in and dig the symbiotic intersubjective meta-aleatoric patramorphosis my first peckertrack poems written to you making them into paper airplanes and sending them airmail from open Derby Street parlor window looking for North Beach with my surfer buddies Stinson Beach Bolinas Bodega Bay where is this North Beach further north? looking south finding Monterey Jazz Festival seeing you or a lookalike reading in a candlelit art gallery Beatniks that's what these must be Art Ball and me on Dexedrine and *Glick Stite* writing copy for Ralph Gleason wide-eyed taking it in licking it up sniffing it out poking about

## II

A difficult labor Berkeley Poetry Conference two weeks dinosaurs grazing in pastures of hemp micro-orgasms under an airtight lid færy-dæmon foxfire dynamos bunraku hooded puppeteers all poets Beat Black Mountain and Reed strutting their stuff playing it fast and loose Sector Xn relative to Yn a trig question here a Geminian martyrdom there two synthetic a priori approximations but the real you the King of the May recently rearived with *Planet News* even if forcibly expelled from Myakovski's bedroom with a broomstick up your butt I filled vials with violets and grass I made baggies of marigolds and grass I loaded a triangular-shaped bottle with grass and delivered these to various heads announcing "An Inaugural Party for Allen"

You were selected Secretary of State of Poesy by President Charles Olson's decree and the oligarchical consent of Snyder-Duncan-Dorn starchamber dada poetry politics I underestimated by a hundred how many would attend this bash and in a spot I put out my stash and passed my Stetson

Extracting some bills from your coin purse you started the collection wisely sending Peter Orlovsky with me to the liquor store no telling what scam a mustachioed poet might contrive to pick up some quick cash ah The wild eyes! The holy yells! when we return you seated in the posture of Milarepa a joint in one hand a glass of wine in one with one you sign your name for the 100 thousandth time with one hand you pat my infant daughter's head Kirsten dead now two years from Aids so young grim pedophile death what is the age of consent?

Always encouraging the young Richard Kretch reads a diatribe seated on an antique commode while Lew Welsh swings from the chandelier it is Creeley's remark that everyone should know where the firemen and police are located that clears the place I add up the cost and the cost of the cost = nothing was stolen nothing was broken save for the chandelier

## III

All day all night readings to close the SF Wobbly Hall I ask you about your costume acrylic shirt *Van Heusen Classic Collection 35% cotton* you say washes and dries overnight traveling bodhiseed mala some one gave you Salvation Army kaki trousers and women's tennis shoes I question "Men's shoes women's feet woman's shoes men's feet?" you shrug

A wake for the Labor Hall and the end of an era the party rolls on Kali appears with a necklace of 69 flavored heads atomic fudge spinach nicotine cosmic grout Pythagorean lotus jade shuttle fissigeneration chainshot aleatory fruit us entangled in a mass of bodies leaped on and dazed I hand you a book from the shelf entitled *The Black Box* which you sign with the dementia of a crazed Benzedrine addict a black line forming an ever increasing square

You Paul X and I hail a cab and ride up Grant Avenue to Gary Snyder's pad and you comment that I'm a real clown because I'm wearing a suit and my Stetson with a feather which I take as a compliment even though I'm excluded from the party you and Paul have planned me throwing up in an alley to the wail of Pony Pondexter's tenor sax ride Pony ride you in the cab bebop skat reading neon signs and billboards *Star Fun Club Glass Shop Pet Talk Full Service Quality without Compromise* first word best word poetry in action

We meet in front of Moe's Bookstore Berkeley and go for coffee meeting Robert and Bobbie Creeley and Ed Dorn at Robbie's Cafeteria I can't help flirting unabashedly with Bobbie checking out her miniskirt me asking you whether it's better to be a bad poet or a good businessman and in exasperation you saying to be a good something but to shut up and let Ed talk a gunslinging wordsmith lucky of me to get out alive Creeley saying there'll never be another conference in Berkeley Berkeley is too bizarre

*A Human Be In* the next best thing Turn On Tune In Drop Out Cheri and I meeting you at Harold Adler's apartment after your Public Television reading of *Wichita Vortex Sutra* and you congratulate me for my illustrated poems in the *Berkeley Barb* cutting my thumb on a jagged door latch and holding my hand and applying a *Band-Aid* oh Jewish mother chicken soup nurse telling me we're not our skin you exemplify muse power

#### IV

Fairbanks Alaska Allen Ginsberg arriving on the wrong plane from Ayers Rock Central Australia summer there minus 10° when you land waiting for you with an Airforce parka and white rubber bunny boots our breath making cartoon balloons "Where does this road lead?" I'm so excited to be your driver we can drive north only as far as Circle but south as far as Cape Hope "Quit fooling around; my time is short; where can we drive around here?"

A few miles from Fairbanks is Fox giving you my tour guide spiel 1901 Captain Barnette sets up a trading post at the juncture of the Chena and Tanana Rivers Felix Pedro disco gold near Fox site of Red Dog Saloon and the "Ice Worm Saga" *Wild and wide are my borders/Stern as death is my sway/From my ruthless throne I have ruled for a million years a day/ Hugging my mighty treasure/ Waiting for man to*

*Come* Robert Service verse miners call this place Fairbanks after an admired Senator from Indiana Charles W. Fairbanks later a vice-president under Teddy Roosevelt census in 1912 is 3500 present population is 84000 Barnette became the most hated man in town when his bank failed

You have on your maroon Tibetan wool scarf your glasses and balding head peaking out we meet a bush pilot in the Red Dog still a funky bar and make plans to fly to an arctic village called Arctic Village spaced out we have to go back for your scarf and on the way I ask you for a mantra to help with cold driving in my VW bus without heat taking out the battery and draining the oil every night to get it started an unbutchered leg of moose frozen in the back taxi-deepfreeze to transport transmission of Padmasambhava's heart mantra my first mantra oh root poet you had been sitting with Choyam Trungpa Rinpoche and Tsultrim Devi at Naropa and founding the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics

Feeling like you were in another world at the village a full ceremony and feast having trouble integrating beaver tail into one taste a young brave having a copy of *Howl* left by a Peace Corps worker recognizes you this reminding you of being asked by an abo youth in the Australian outback about Dylan and The Beatles small world

Meanwhile I'm on the astral plane pasting up the Polar Star Lit Supplement hearing you intoning Blakean melody *Caribou Blues* with harmonium *Ah* your mantra "Hum Bom! Whom Bomb! We Bomb Them" you've invaded the airwaves US over Cambodia you over the campus at College "How big is the president's prick?"

Setting up the SUB ballroom for your reading I have *STUD ACT* Student Activities which you admire Words for my Perfect Tee-shirt we do up a bowl of grass soaked in hash oil left brain right brain splits and I walk into the sea of abyss ceiling tiles tilt and I see hierarchies of judges stacked in tiers my tears and fears of molestation you calm me in meditation until I come down sensitive to my having been forcibly sodomized Berkeley back room balling and Alameda County Jail solitary confinement terror attack yes there's a lot of cunt and ass out there does love hurt? yes it hurts gobs of swarming semen from throbbing organs against aghast esophagus sweet burning drippings in eyes in ears on breasts across continents Oh City of Fuck I seize your rising scrapers and winding subways the dweller in the body shines with neon forever rapturous illumination rapturous flesh rapturous parking meters rapturous rapturous homage to your sweet street crossings nose and eyes come to me toes and thighs roll with me in asphalt pleasure tongue clit cock to die is to come to come is to die

Ah kind Allen helping me to undo my homophobia revealing the problem to be aggression start with the self be calm and the answer is on the zafu working back to the Beloved your insatiable curiosity leads you me and young Theo grown with kids of his own now to the musk ox farm musk oxen a kind of sheep with long hair called *quivit* softer than silk stronger than wool the care taker shows some prehistoric bones and a researcher shows her diagrams to teach native Alaskans how to knit mittens and shawls for Manhattan Fifth Avenue boutiques

Time for your reading the house packed just like the first time I watched you read at Dwinelle Hall in Berkeley when I was a freshman now I'm a senior many years later and a long way from Cal I mention recently hearing Ciardi say that Kerouac

was an immature writer who wrote psychoanalyst couch ramblings you said not to worry about Jack his spirit survives his legacy is sound Ciardi just jealous and insecure

And then it's time to say goodbye the last time I see your flesh in the sad airport cafe so many times I think of you Allen Allen take this Athabaskan beadwork my favorite "No you keep it if it means so much to you" but I want you to have it because it does mean so much to me goodbye Allen hello Heaven goodbye hello Nirvana goodbye Elysium hello goodbye you crazy kind misunderstood lacklove honeybreasted semen soaked long-haired commie Jew dope smoking gentle little wierdo freak you stopped a war freed the youth fed them with your mind skillful means and compassionate wise heart bodhisattva so many smiles and tears life life life you sang love and life lord of song god of flowers peace and gladness

V

I manifest now as Vajrasattva as you enter the Bardo Realms visualizing the 42 Peaceful Deities the Assembly of the Rig'dzin and the 58 Wrathful Deities sing "Father Death Blues" *Genius Death my art is done/ Lover Death my body's gone/ Father Death I'm going home/ Father breath farewell*

Your dance is the dance of the babe in the womb your dance is the dance of the corpse in the grave your dance is the dance of the spirit veiled your mind dances within all your phone call comes a message on my answering machine at Tara Mandala hoping to contact Tsultrim for one last chat but she's in Nepal and by the time I've faxed her and gotten back you've gone gently into that...into that...

Now you're with Carl Solomon and he can teach you to be dead don't hang out too long in the god realms you know that rich diet is bad for your heart let your queer shoulder rest good graybeard you made a difference golden sunflower visionary holy rolling your way through this world in the active-present *amo amas amat amamus amatis amant*

1998

## **SINGING TO THE COWS**

When I see the moon rising  
I think of a cow I saw in Arkansas  
and I feel sad.

When I think of the years passing  
and worry about my knees blowing out  
I only need to see your cow eyes  
and I'm rejuvenated.

I think of you every day

sweet heifer on the ferryboat  
between Sebastopol and Bucyrus.

Looking through an old yearbook  
I see your bovine face  
and remember you on roller-skates  
at Mel's Drive-In.

### **SINGIN' DIXIE**

You're right, Charles  
the South did win  
the Civil War

and America can't wait  
for the next Texas Bar-B-Q.

### **RISING FROM THE RIVER, FALLING FROM THE SKY**

Nymph, sylph, gopi, elf, seraphim, wild  
and silent, outrageous and innocent,  
you say my poems are notes for poems

a blind shadow looms  
on the door of my tongue  
erecting a shrine to nothing

while ripples of wind on snow  
hang by their thumbs  
for astonishing rewards

an extra inch or two  
lets the faucet flow  
kinder than the ocean

arms and legs spread  
around a cloud learning  
potent remembrances

hang on, baby, wait a sec,  
let me...

## **OMNI-SPATIAL MATRIX**

Fire dances in the hearth.  
Clouds swirl across the sky.  
Water leaps on sand.  
Land rises and falls.

The sky, the clouds, my breath,  
the scent of rabbitear sage.  
*A La La Ho!*  
A feast of space.

## **MANDALA**

Where am I, and how did I get here?  
Why do I feel I must be somewhere?  
Did I miss something?  
When does it start?  
Where will it leave off?

## **I VOTED FOR IKE WHEN I WAS EIGHT**

The Incredible Bureau does not discriminate  
between polished shoes and Greek statues,  
and I didn't always talk with a stutter,  
and I didn't always live in a gutter.

## **HISTORY ON HER HANDS AND KNEES**

She hunts in rubble  
for a way beyond  
novelty

to fulfill the promise  
of organism  
and will.

I've heard it said,  
*Time flies like an arrow;*  
*fruit flies like a banana.*

### **11:55 A.M. ON THIS PLANET**

song  
bird  
word  
word  
heard  
third

I pick up  
the phone and dial  
thyme  
since I'm unhinged  
and can't tell the hour  
from the flower.

### **TURNING AND MIRRORING**

Bliss.  
Not conditioned.  
Enjoying being  
undefined  
by the circumstance  
of sitting in this café.

Ha! Ha!  
This is magical ground.  
I see what this is.  
But whose?

Instant presence.  
A woman sits  
at the keyboard playing  
*Smoke Gets in My Eyes.*

I smile and receive  
a smile.  
I catch myself

looking at my-  
self looking at  
myself.

## **FULL MOON**

Which switch?  
The witch switch?  
You turn on  
the witch switch,  
and what happens?

Archaic  
Old  
Provincial  
Yes, and  
Yes, closed—Yoga  
Concise  
Long Poems

in Latin it means,  
that's strange, DNA  
Enzymes

I am transported to a place of clarity  
and movement.  
She smiles, and I am transfigured.

## **MUSIC OF HER FACE**

making ecstasy  
beating up the heart  
sweat welds  
deep, deep

limp limbs  
plumb line  
what to do?  
what to say?

short sweet  
swing

hard to forget  
what's it to you

blue man?  
chew the  
dog car bark  
swim park woods

### **YES, REPEAT, NO**

What constitutes outer avant-garde?  
inner avant-garde, secret avant-garde?  
innermost secret avant-garde?

Escaping forward.  
Attacking backwards.  
Pushing the river.  
Drinking the clouds.

All oink in the ink.  
All in order on a plate of gas.  
Beuys buys a refrigerator.  
Rimbaud rides a skateboard.  
Tension in a vacuum.  
Hazard in a blank space.  
Sweet unbearableness.

No eyes, no ears, no body.  
No ideas but in my underwear.

### **ACROSS NO DIVIDES**

Dry creek, cool canyon.  
Music from the rocks as you pass.

### **SONG AT MIDNIGHT**

*Hard whites, infernal yellows,  
sulfur and yellowgreen.*

## **EYE ROVING OVER BLUE HILLS**

The *I* merges with the *All*  
but remains *I*.

All is bright red.

## **TRACE-TONES AND AFTER-DOTS**

Smells of fungus and fir  
rough bark and smooth rock  
remind me of a boy

escaping up a creek  
in search of Excaliber  
or ever elusive El Dorado.

Now, on the more traveled path,  
I rein in my passions and  
act on consequence.

Crisp though I am from compromise,  
a salty will o' the wisp  
turned into a vulture snack,

my mind still shifts and drifts.

## **APPROACHABLE BUT OUT OF REACH**

Knocked out, loaded.  
After you left, I drank the wine  
from your cup.

You said it's fine under the stars,  
although we looked into the darkness  
between us.

Pay attention, whatever you do,  
to the grain of the inlay  
and the twist of the grass.

***WHEN MY WORK IS DONE I'LL***

work to live to drink  
to live to work to live  
to work to work.

**LOOK FOR THE SEVEN-HEADED BEAST**

A lot to experience  
in the instant of a sneeze  
or a blow to the heart.

Why assume the sun  
will show tomorrow?

Why assume  
October's final night will not  
trick us  
and repeat—

29, 30, 31, 29, 30, 31,  
and again  
for a thousand years?

This year  
painted jack-o-lanterns  
decorate my block,  
and I am told  
the children's costumes  
have been catching  
fire.

A little girl  
dressed as a Quaker  
wishes me  
“Happy Halloween.”

Her mother hovers,  
stern and protective,  
because there are  
ghouls

and goblins out,  
as well  
as other invisible  
animals.

The future  
and the past  
are shadows,  
and the calendar  
masks  
a cannibal.

I fill my bowl  
with treats  
and invite everyone  
to feast.

### **HEART'S LOVE & YEARNING MISERY**

Sensuality. Intimacy.  
The tastes of the body.

Sympathy in the original sense  
of feeling *with* another,  
which rises within me

when you tell your stories,  
share your hopes and fears.

What ails the maiden?  
Would she like breakfast at Perkins?  
The Grail is in the asking.

### **FLYING WHITE**

Rising with sun,  
arguing with darkness,

I set my hand to move  
willynilly through a repertory  
of cyclic gestures, assembling  
lines which wittily approximate

a sea a tree a hill a face.

This is the best day to be alive  
because if I'm dead, I'm dead,  
and even if I'm dying while I'm alive,  
Creation is receding to its center  
to make room for me.

Glory! Glory! Glory!

## **LUMINOUS FORM**

*for Sito*

I'm looking up.  
I'm looking down.  
I'm looking ahead.  
I'm looking around

among dying shadows and wet leaves.  
I hear vultures argue  
in the topmost branch of an eucalyptus.

An old man with his pockets of pain sits  
on a bench among the white gravestones  
eating snow.

A city full of hungry ghosts is never full.  
I drift off somewhere.  
Later, I hear, "Poetry's useful if it shows  
its emptiness, leaves its skeleton."

Did you see that pale, pasty old fellow,  
wild hair and bloated cheeks,  
dance into the fountain mountain  
star cloud sea tree?

## **AT THE CENTER IS FIRE**

I take note of the naked  
zero

in the spinning fall of leaves

and gauge the browns and reds  
of frost.

### **FULLY AWAKE IN YOUR LOOK**

Fierce dakini shimmering.  
Radiant rupture of my dreamstream.

Misery, mine, I twist and turn,  
caught between the rock  
and the bottom line.

All I can think to say is, “Nice shoes.”

### **FOUND POEM**

*just a transformer  
passing through  
you through me  
me through you*

*I stop—interchange—  
inner core—data—renew—  
just a transformer*

### **TAPESTRY**

Earth assumes,  
fire consumes.

Stars, rivers—  
wind delivers.

The wisdom of the East  
is west of us.

### **THE 12:02**

You're a time passenger,  
someone I've left behind.

I know you're still there.  
You're just out of sight.

I've cried about your beauty.  
I've lied about the pain.

I bought myself a ticket  
on the last thought out tonight.

## **BEAR DANCE**

I am a hand  
unconscious of design  
performing a miracle of signs  
—frozen mind—  
one with the big picture,  
a bear dancing with the sky.

## **FOLLOWING SALVADOR DALI**

*for Claude*

It's a cinch—this  
*paranoiac-critical method*  
*as a spontaneous method*  
*of irrational knowledge*  
*based upon the interpretive*  
*critical association*  
*of delirious phenomena*  
*whereby the double image*  
*may be extended, continuing*  
*this paranoiac advance*  
*to make the image appear*  
*and so on until there*  
*are a number of images*  
*limited only by the mind's*  
*degree of paranoiac capacity*

## **EXCRUCIATING BEAUTY**

*for Laura*

My favorite things—  
flowers, fountains, flags and fireworks

But when I'm near you  
the ground beneath me sways  
clocks bloom, cars flap—  
the whole world is a display.

## **DICEY**

We play without a game board  
both feet off the ground  
flying sideways—a few tosses  
and my life is salad.

## **LOVERS LAIN**

On an old apple tree  
Ken carves his love for Barbie.  
Here they make their bed.  
This is how they wed.

Although the heart be resolute,  
beware of plastic fruit.

## **COYOTE MEETS BODHIDHARMA**

There's more to a Zen garden  
than raking rocks.

Sore in the saddle,  
cobble in my socks.

Gossamer of thought,  
overlay of analogy.

Fight smog—  
turn on a horse.

### **ISRAEL 33½**

I met Yehezquel in the parking lot  
and he said to me, “There’s no way,  
Jose, how the Mayans factored it.  
The End will be in June—  
blow the month of July away.”

He showed me his designs of diamond guitars.  
There’s one in Sagittarius, and another  
spirals out of Taurus. Time and space,  
there’s no death, he said—just a dark river.  
You might call it main stream.

### **BUDDHA’S LAST WORDS**

*This stuff is just stuff.  
Keep on keepin’ on.*

### **BUNKHOUSE AT 6 A.M.**

My boss barges in like a Brontosaurus  
and gives me thirty days notice.  
Says he’s going to get a divorce

Sell his house and horse,  
buy a boat and go to sea  
so he can be fancy free.

Then, Buck shows up  
with a cow elk tied to a string of ponies,  
and I hang the whole thing in the rafters.

This is a lot to process, let alone digest,  
for one morning.

## **COLD OUT THERE**

I heard her complaint.  
The pipes froze. The drain was frozen.  
The car wouldn't start.

My hands are numb. My feet are numb.  
My knees are knocking.  
I had to go to logic class

Which gives me the chills.  
On the way,  
my boyfriend gave me the cold shoulder.

## **FABLE**

The tortoise win? The lady sleeps.  
She signals to move.

Stood up, he carved.  
The huge knife stirred.

## **CLOTHO, LACHESIS & ATROPOS**

These three goddesses  
determine fortune and mortal life.

At the Skyline Café, my dad and I  
discuss Beatnik ethics. It's 1959.

Hermes out of orbit, I fume  
albeit I see a chance of traveling light.

The Fates warp their loom  
to throw a weft of experience.

## **PLEIADES**

Orion chased them.  
Sterope fell into a faint.

Vulcan set a net to catch  
Venus in her embrace of Mars.

Sappho saw the seven sisters set.  
She knew love makes a poet into a boar.

You say, "All's fair,"  
and I, "Boars have wings."

### **A WAY SHE WALKS**

*Fire is water falling upward,*  
says sage Heraclitus.

An old man stutters when he talks.  
A girl in pink flutters when she walks.

What is the limit she'll permit?

Fire is water  
falling upward.

### **SO SUDDEN**

With an eclamptic convulsion  
of cataclysmic proportion

The man in the house  
is no longer a man, and

The house is no longer a house.  
They are parts of a relationship—

And minor parts, compared to  
the woman who's lost her VISA card.

What dress was she wearing?  
What print? Did it have pockets?

The scale of demolition  
is proportionate to the folderol.

### **ALL LOVERS ARE**

crazed. Running about  
looking for poems, and  
here they are  
on the tip of my pen.

Love on the run  
—stolen kisses—the spark  
and the suffering.

Mixed emotions,  
green and orange colors—  
a tree of frozen fruit  
in a winter haze.

It's bargain night at the Raven,  
but you're too tired for  
*Shakespeare in Love*.

### **ANOTHER DAY**

Another day—  
still hot for you.

Another day—rain  
and fresh earth—  
still hot for you.

Another day—vines  
laden with fruit—  
still hot for you.

Another day—grass  
burnt in the sun—  
still hot for you.

Another day—flowers  
freeze, but my desire for you

remains.

## **WIPE OUT**

Nothing I can do  
but let you go.

Am I disappointed,  
you ask? Only that

I want to throw myself  
in the ocean.

I sit on a beach log  
and watch surfers

Tumbling in the waves.  
My feelings exactly.

Mist—then a few drops  
of rain, but this

Heavy coat of sadness  
keeps me dry.

## **KEEP MOVING**

I walk away  
putting  
one foot  
and

then  
the next feeling  
bluer than  
blue

I scope out  
another place  
another face

but my blood

remembers

the tree  
by  
the river

the cup  
the flame

### **NESTLED IN THE ROSE IN THE MEADOW OF MIDNIGHT**

I breathe—  
how certain my love,

And in the window's fog  
I trace your form.

Moonlight gleams through.

Lover, the living  
wears me down,

But I find a luminous  
stubborn joy.

### **INSTRUCTIONS TO MY APPRENTICE**

Plow art  
is never done,  
and rest,

Rest is more  
than time away from work,  
more than that.

Hoe the row, queer the wheel.  
Queerer still, the elf light—  
candle of the warrior.

Were you there  
when the rat came out  
of the toilet?

A memo:  
include the weeping  
and the hilarious colors.

## **SO HIGH YOU KISSED THE SKY**

*for Steve*

Thinking of the past, not seeing you  
in the future, listening to the melody  
of galactic globes at aphelion—snowflakes  
catch me dreaming of white sand beaches.

The mashed thumb of the moon arises.  
Just do a folded-wing snap roll, then soar  
for the horizon. Direct your flight  
towards Proxima Centauri.

Interstellar conditions favoring eclipsing  
binaries are methodologically determined  
by trigonometric parallaxes. Fats Waller  
blows *Tea for Two* on the intercom.

## **MINARET**

Holding sand in my hand,  
holding the world,  
I feel sky space at ocean's edge  
and watch my castle crumble.

## **MOTHER MUSE**

Borne on a snow white goose,  
Old Mother Muse  
when she wants to wander  
flies with wings.

## CALENDAR OF THE MOON

Moon of soft dreams  
Moon of sweetness and smoke  
Moon of wax and tar  
Moon of scaffolds  
Moon of the charnel grounds

Well-hung moon  
Full-bosomed moon  
Moon of a face I sometimes hate  
Moon, Moon of a face I adore  
Moon that turns to flame  
Moon that turns in pain  
Moon that goes as far as I go

Bandaged moon bruised and bloodied  
Tangled-tooth moon with a mouth of cotton  
Babylonian moon hiding in a cloud rack  
Old man moon sitting in a chair

Moon covered with lost socks  
Moon with astronauts in her mustache  
Moon cruising in her black *Mercury* convertible  
Moon dancing in a diaphanous gown  
Moon peeping in at me through my window

Cryptic moon  
Perfumed moon  
Drunken moon

Moon of the raven who sat on the flagpole  
when a bolt of lightning struck  
Moon of the Humpies jumping in the stream while  
I'm doing the venison jerk to the stove rag band

Moon on a hill in a tree in the heart  
Moon in a place I've made  
Moon just beyond my hand  
Moon, will you be free after work?  
But, no, you have to work a double shift

1999

## **NO O ZONE**

deadly rays  
not easy to kiss these off

bodies piled in heaps  
arguing over the sky  
howls coming from shrouds  
totally dismal  
the darker it gets  
something serious  
seriously out of control  
maximum out of control  
a landscape of refrigerators  
wrecked cars and black feathers

tempting to say  
"To hell with it, I'll  
eat while there is food  
drink while there is drink  
love while my flesh is still fresh"

## **TIME SPEED LANGUAGE**

*for Claude*

standing on a street corner  
without sleep for a week  
watching the light change  
a man walking/a hand/a man

a mysterious thing  
a man  
speaking from inside a tree or a rock  
here I look at the sea  
hear the waves  
break upon the shore  
and in my heart

a woman sails by on springs  
and a man pulled along by a dog  
a snake sluggish on the concrete  
a leaf ashamed of falling

time speed language—  
the stones plead with the stars  
and are rained away  
while we watch  
the children's costumes  
burn

I take a bath and wash my hair  
I lay out my dress shoes  
my new tie and a clean shirt  
I'm so happy we're going

*going going way beyond  
going on the way  
on the way to God  
through love*

## **BEING JUST AS WE ARE**

we shall be one  
even when the hollow faces  
on time's screen stare leaning forward  
across the distance between here and there

in morning calm  
we sit at a red art deco glass table  
drinking espresso, Bongnan and I  
along our own 38th Parallel

a story about a water tower  
falling on your head and being trapped  
in the dark and mud for hours  
and you laughed, Bongnan  
at the ghosts eating on festival days  
telling your mother  
the chopsticks didn't move

after you left, I sat where you sat  
with my arms around my knees  
trying to feel your presence  
sitting in your place

## JUST AS IT IS

I watch  
with mystic  
horror the sun  
darken and  
shimmer  
through violet  
haze

dream green  
nights  
and watch  
distances shat-  
ter into foam  
while feeling

slow kisses in  
the midst of  
calm

## SPIT IN THE OCEAN

58 this Sunday, how did I get to be 58?  
taking mom to IHOP for potato pancakes  
seeing a sign advertising one free meal  
with the order of two for senior citizens  
I'm unable to take advantage of the savings  
frustrated insecure low self-esteem low  
grade depression impotency introversion  
freaked out flipped out and flustered

a lot of this going around  
maybe I need mistletoe injections maybe  
I need *Viagra* maybe I need more yang  
in my diet do a few pushups along with  
the Qigong and a class at the JC relax  
quit worrying about what LIFE means enjoy  
my millennial anxieties and Y2K paranoia  
nothing serious here just a momentary  
meltdown

**PASTA IS FASTA ORDERED BY PHONE**

*for Jane*

tucked away in the Missouri hills  
you have heated up this morning's coffee  
and dumped sugar in it  
put on pink bright lipstick

air crisp like a diamond  
the edges of the leaves showing  
you leaf through glue-rumpled pages  
of *Art News* and *Vanity Fair*

cutting out favorite images  
(after removing the perfume inserts)  
slicing and dripping and copying  
bits of poetry in and around

I sit here with a tuna sandwich  
ensconced in country club suburbia  
slicing and dripping and copying  
bits of your letter into this poem

Long live our brilliance!

**ENCOUNTER**

My way  
is a maze in a haze  
a cold front where  
I await an image  
mist or rock.

Outrageous hair  
and a pretty face  
behind the not so pretty  
abstract countenance  
saying, "Touch my ice,  
be tender and talkative."

**A LEAF READY TO FALL**

The stones plead with the stars  
and are rained away  
while we watch  
the children's costumes burn.

I take a bath and wash my hair.  
I lay out my dress shoes  
my new tie and a clean shirt.  
I'm so happy we're going.

### **FOR BREAKFAST**

I take a sheaf of clouds  
from the top shelf  
and a burst of sunlight  
from the pine trees.

I run around looking  
for the croak of a frog  
and find it in the center  
of the earth.

### **FRAGMENTS**

*for Gaela Monamie*

Infinity is a turtle  
on a slow track

Solid void  
a cosmic hit

A touch of ice  
a chunk of winter

Exposed, cold  
drooling

A wide hole  
a vertical wall

Wonderous gash  
sheet metal thighs

“Next”  
means you

## **FREIGHT**

Milwaukee  
Milwaukee  
Milwaukee  
Milwaukee  
Cotton Belt  
Cushion Ride  
For Fragile Freight  
Great Northern  
Great Northern  
Milwaukee  
Milwaukee  
Milwaukee  
Milwaukee  
Milwaukee  
Cotton Belt  
Auto Pak  
Cotton Belt  
Auto Pak  
Cotton Belt  
Auto Pak  
Milwaukee  
Milwaukee  
Milwaukee

## **BELIEVE ME, LAURA**

while listening to children  
singing and swinging in a tree, I think  
a good treeplanter  
can be comfortable even in Hell.

## **TIMBERLINE**

Should Anarchists be given  
U.S. Forest Service contracts?  
Only if they can sign their names.  
Davy signs *Galloping Antelope*,  
*Galactic Emperor, Son of Earthworm*.

This contract is 67 acres,  
a diamond shape on Big Hill.  
We awake at 6, bag up at 7, climb  
a mountain of burns and bramble.  
Green fire—the image leaps out

as the ashes choke us. Who are  
these people to whom we trust  
our forests? Who is this crew  
who sings, *When my work is over,*  
*I'm going to fly away home?*

## **GREEN FIRE**

Green fire is the future.  
The spike brambles and the mountain  
of burns recede, and an oasis of trees  
arises from the ashes.

There's no way into the future  
but flight—take off  
from the tallest Doug Fir  
and spread your tail feathers.

Take a turn and look  
at the next century—hope  
for the next century—turn again  
—can this be easily managed?

## **HEART'S TIMBER**

I see you in profile in this moonlit rock  
at the edge of the cut bank near Ardenvoir.  
Lady of My Thoughts, honor and praise,  
your image powers my work.

A dead forest is a strange place  
to be in evening dress—beautiful  
intensities—the field vibrating  
with the spirits of young trees.

Two year old Ponderosa pine,  
2-0s, there're trying, but it's hard.  
Underground, the work gets done,  
a whispered *AUM* to go on.

### **STUBBORN LUMBER**

Can there be emptiness without awareness?  
Ask George.

Imagine a tree falling and no one hearing it.  
Imagine, also, its twisted limbs.

The trees arrange themselves—I don't  
have anything to do with this.

The trees follow me.  
Imagine them growing.  
Imagine no one hearing them.

If you open the door to knowledge—remember,  
the peanut butter is on the shelf in the door.

### **WHERE ON THE PAPER CHAIN ARE YOU?**

Flaky footing on the high unit  
wind cold, cold snow at 4000 feet a bitch  
but it packs well around the pine plugs  
above Indian Creek in the rocky outcroppings  
not a forest, a farm, slash and burn, a war

We're riding in a crummy  
an orange *International* van beat to shit  
the bad karma tipi that takes us to work  
we've named it L.A.  
so we can drive to work in L.A.

I want my forest cut into chips  
so my grandchildren can have toilet paper

On the other hand, we need air  
and the mountains need cover  
and the animals need homes  
no matter if they're in rows

Breathe into the pain  
or step out of the way

### **PLANTING THE BLAST**

On the moonscape  
of Mount Saint Helens  
I've developed a new technique  
I call the *pumice pump*

Place the tree roots on the ash  
place the hoe on the roots  
and push the roots straight down

Speed planting the last ash unit  
trying to get the trees in straight  
over-planting every plot  
and praying the roots  
find something to live on

Some trees I dedicated to Bongnan  
some to Lulu  
some to the protectors  
of this silicon mountain

Putting the right tree in the right hole  
while picking rocks out of my nose  
made of snot and volcanic ash

The inspector turns up  
"Stop, stop, don't throw  
those rocks  
down the slope, you're  
hurting the trees"  
fantasy of tying the inspector

to the hood of the van  
as a trophy

Lost in a pause—  
where should I be on the unit?  
I should be on the line  
which is always a mystery

Outside the orbit of stars  
lost and found inside  
myself  
creation arises and dis-  
solves  
in  
a magical display

On to the next unit

## **ON TO THE NEXT UNIT**

Tree planting on Mount Baker  
this contract is 180 acres  
long with diamond shapes  
known as Dragon Tail

I fly high, I fly low  
at Concrete Sauk Valley Road  
one mile to orange bridge  
turn left follow river  
to Finney Cumberland Road  
turn right single lane with turnouts  
6 miles tall tree on left  
with winding road sign  
8 miles bridge with guard rails  
9 miles small clearcut with twisted culverts  
10 miles waterfall on right  
mile 11 turn right up hill at white stop sign

When I arrive, I'm no longer lost  
what I've lost I find everywhere

## **WHIP OR WILL**

Your fullness, your feathers,  
something strange, strangely familiar,

one of those things—an affair—  
that will never work.

“Stay faithful, but don’t love me,” you say,  
while I take a flying fuck at the moon.

## **VACUUM PLUS**

Standing in the museum entrance  
an old man, unshaven, palsied, pushing  
a shopping cart filled with bags of cans,  
stuffed animals, coat hangers and the dust  
from clocks—a rag picker in a raincoat  
with the back torn out, beneath that  
is a splotchy trench coat, beneath that  
a molting overcoat, beneath that is what  
those passing by fear he might expose  
from an alley along a dark street.

Not at all, he exposes it right here, now—  
in the sunken recess of his body  
glow the high-polished parts of a machine,  
and raising his eyes to the sky, he croons,  
“You may think I have a vacuum, but this  
is a multi-purpose machine, a vacuum,  
a rug cleaner, a shampooer, it dries hair  
and sucks dead skin from your mattress,  
a drill, a sander, and now, a breakthrough  
in the technology, after years of research—  
the power-driven dildo and buggy whip.”

Vagabond, my brother, you rise up like a ghost.  
I quickly split.

## **FLASH AN OGHAM**

A Druid might use an ogham as a jest, yes, even as  
an invitation to dance—flash an ogham, and see.

Flip the darkness the finger, and the darkness  
will keep it.

### **FIVE IS THE KEY**

Five is the number of change.  
Four are the quarters.  
A fourth is a quarter.  
A quarter is change.

Four quarters make a whole.  
Five nickels in a quarter.  
A quarterback gives the signal  
and receives from center.

Four are the fingers.  
The fifth is a thumb.  
Two fingers is a shot.  
A fifth is a lot.

Five is an element  
beyond the known.  
Here, you believe in æther,  
or you don't.

Four is for squares.  
Five is a head  
high  
above the town.

### **COLD MOUNTAIN**

*for Charles and Nancy*

At my reading  
a man named Neah  
asks if he can say  
a few words.

I say, "No," and

he turns away.  
And then,  
the mist clears,

and I ask him to do  
his thing—  
a bit from Jung  
on the *eternal fountain*.

Try and buy the well,  
and it dries up  
and then springs up  
somewhere else.

My shadow and I  
make a wise choice  
on this western face  
of Cold Mountain.

## **CURIOSITY**

Up with the sun—watch the deer  
on the beach turn their heads,  
twist their ears—listen to a bird twit.

I was digging clams, and a young deer  
crept behind me and sniffed my butt.  
I about jumped through my hat.

## **GO SONG**

Truth swings her hips and argues  
with casual laughter.

She turns the corner and  
leaves the air shimmering.

I watch her  
until my contacts pop out.

## ***ZERO TOLERANCE***

Cumulus clouds cross the moon  
above this dust ball of trepidation.  
I watch TV—another vengeance film.

I know this story by heart.  
I watch and listen as the heroine  
pleads with the hero—  
“You promised to serve and protect.  
Do this, you put yourself on his level.”

City workers uprooted the spruce  
in Altursa Park, and I can see down  
Pine Street to the Liberty’s marquee.

My window opens on a world.  
My TV opens into a world.  
The moon sends down a blessing.

Who wrote this script?  
The show’s not over, even when it’s over.

## **NAPOLEON WITHOUT A BONE**

Politics determines our destiny  
along with mud and the power of romance

tentative  
halting  
difficult  
irresolute  
daunting

mystery, exile  
a bone apart

Not so far to Corsica from here  
Not so far  
Not so far from here

You who lead me  
You who look on my pangs of  
cyclic loneliness and fear

I awake and say, “Good Morning”  
to my bones

## **IRRESOLUTE**

Between thought and act  
Between cause and sequence  
Between fate and abeyance  
Between nature and our hearts

The parable of Self works itself out  
My myth unfolds  
Between the illusion and the confusion  
I swell with strength

To live Nature’s force  
by emulation or by imitation  
to take Life in its green fuse  
with intention  
released from shadow

To study, map, decode  
utter, know

Working ahead of all process  
continuously changing, merging  
while indecision meanders down the river

The root of poet is *poietes*  
Maker, make your luck

## **OPEN ON ALL LEVELS**

The moon rises  
in silence—  
a rose in the garden  
of midnight

Hard enough to explain  
but I’m going to proclaim  
all it takes is a beak

and a few feathers to fly

Shower me with care  
gifts common and rare  
health and happiness  
top my list of wishes

The familiar owl  
has not returned  
I search and find  
funky scat

### **AUTOMORPH**

Being in the body  
being in the world  
curves in space  
I love it all

A tree and a rock  
a sacred spot  
because it is  
it just is

I look  
I think it through  
I do, or I don't—  
two fish meet midstream

### **CALENDAR ART**

*for Claude*

tIME IS  
tIME WAS  
tIME WASN'T

Lunch Wed w/Tamara @ Slice of Life  
Poetry Slam Burbank Cntr 2nd Mondays  
Teens Against Violent TV tonight

I peek through a keyhole of soul  
Been here and gone

/we/they/dispersed thru a black hole  
into reckless space  
leaving only a few after-dots

## **DO OR DOT**

Don't dot it  
Do it

Dot Dot Dit Dot  
Dot Dit

What is more  
is code—

Dash Dot Dot  
Dash Dash Dash  
Dash

Dot Dash  
Dot De Dash  
Dot De Do

Dot De Do  
Do it

## **THERE THERE**

The mirror curves  
toward my dread,  
and I start fading  
because I can't  
face the place.

This time, I know she'll say  
"No," so  
I fail to commit  
to the encounter.

I know there is no there there

but there is a here here, even  
if I feel like I'm nowhere.

Nowhere, and  
now here.

## **THE WART CANNOT BE COERCED**

*head of a boil*  
occurs once OE  
16c. *small lump*  
*clot, a minute*  
*spot, speck, mark*  
1748 *roundish mark*  
*made with a pen*  
1816 *mark with dots*  
*scatter like dots or specks*  
*point used in punctuation* 1858  
*a little child or creature* 1859  
*a woman's marriage portion,*  
*the income of which is under*  
*her husband's control*

.

poets knew it (knew(i)t) little *i*  
newt, no(tat, tit for tat)ed  
knit it (knew it) dotted it down

## **SPACE CONTROL**

Since I cannot rise  
to omnipresence  
or fall to nothingness,  
dull orange sand  
fluorescent sheen of wave  
wave curling,  
I constrict  
and drip from far to near.

Trace tones replenish  
with paratactic breath

the objective world,

The subjective itch.

### **WAY THROUGH**

All clam  
still stor-all  
my gift wrap  
tit, toe  
tell tore six  
live one  
without a muffler  
fuse count  
bell tower  
fake the rank  
wormwater  
former rag down  
the yellow voice.

### **CRAZY AS POSSIBLE**

Line must have *green* in it three times.  
Line must have reverse of earlier line.  
A refrain with time and place.  
A refrain of non-sense words.  
An animal with parts of other animals.

*with snow coming down  
like green umbrellas, I stepped out  
to buy some dog food for the cat*

### **STRESS IN THE FIELD**

I'm waiting.  
I am exploring non-thought  
on Occidental Road  
as I hunt in litter for a piece for my collage.

(Silence.)

I am the world.  
The world is me.

(Sounds.)

I think to say something.  
I try to say something.  
I think without words while waiting.

### **B IS FOR REFLECTION**

I hover above virtual.  
I jack in.  
O O O O  
that Shakespearean tag—

My worm-worn voice sustains  
a single note, a ghost tone  
played on an invisible glass harmonica.

The note floats, folds, flows into color,  
lavender and wrinkled gray  
caressed by ash in the zero sky.

I plod the cross-plowed fields,  
a hard-driving, warbling, woodnote  
sort of guy.

### **INTERCHANGE OF TINCTURES**

Plutonium has a half-live  
of 250,000 years—  
and unless we can raise the tone arm  
and get ourselves individuated  
or differentiated or TOGETHER OR  
on top of it  
we won't have a millennium to stand on.

In spring, bud out.  
Dovetails come later.

This is the later Kali Yuga  
The Fourth World  
The Iron Age  
The Fifth Sun  
The IXth Hell  
The Age of the Hunchback  
The Era of Enforced Disillusionment

## **WHY2K**

in the Springtime, etc.  
to be precise  
1987 was the conclusion  
of the 16th 60 year cycle  
of the Kalachakra System  
and the climax of matter

in the Springtime, etc.  
2012 is the conclusion  
of the Mayan Great Cycle  
and a period of hard choices

in the Springtime, etc.  
I dream of the New Age  
although I know  
it's hopelessly sentimental

in the Springtime, etc.

## **ADVENTURES OF PSYCHE ON THE ASTRAL PLANE**

Venus receives the file  
on the Psyche case  
from Mercury, S.I.D.

Squad detached to precincts  
by Our Lady of the Myrtle  
c/o Aventine Hill, Rome.

The Reward—  
7 sweet kisses and a honeyed tongue  
thrust, exquisite and delicious,

between the lips  
for whomever returns the slave.

Behind the right ear of Venus  
sits the Throne of Vengeance.

Psyche say she ain't nobody,  
but I say she ain't ain't nobody—  
she somebody—cursed with beauty—  
more powerful than the gods.

### **HOW TO PROCEED**

Numb and in a quandary.  
Dazed, disengaged and  
stymied.

Here is your birth chart,  
which I have calculated  
and drawn by hand.

I deliver it by hand.  
One can't be too careful.

There is much here about  
fear and loss of control.

Take this mosaic, these  
jagged bits, disjointed  
and elusive, for in it

I see gossamer sails  
filled with the moon-lost wind  
ride the ragged waves.

### **THINGS CHANGE YET ARE ONE**

Mountain Blue Bird  
Varied Thrush  
Starling  
Stellers Jay

A Jay and a lizard in a fray,  
Lizard tugged by jay.  
Jay pecks yet kept at bay.  
Clap of hands—jay flies away.

Porcupine  
Red Squirrel  
Shrew  
Wood Mouse

Lists never end, nor do difficulties  
and obstacles.  
Not easy to outwit the fox of desire.

### **PRESIDENT BUCHANAN SLEPT HERE**

Expanding Our Dominions  
With Might and Right  
With Axe, Rifle, and Plow  
With Computer and Hydrogen Bomb  
In the Course The Propagandists  
Mark on the Soil and in the Sky  
For the Stars of Empire  
With the Policy of New Possessions  
Beyond the Seas and the Atmosphere  
According to the Logic of History  
And the Duty of Destiny

All for Power, Sex, Money, Death

### **YOUR BONES KNOW YOU CAN**

*for Naomi*

Live on the pulse.  
Drown in life's flow.  
Laugh at inertia.  
Resist—even if you're hustled,  
throw it out there,  
and let come what may.

Life's more than a love story.  
Life's an inspired gamble.

## **CALCULUS**

*for Sabrina*

In this formula there is no limit  
to my feeling— $X$  follows  $Y$   
across an ocean of space.

## ***JUST WHEN PHOEBE DECIDED LIFE HELD NO FURTHER INTEREST***

*for Sito*

This game has four outs,  
Only you hide the extra out  
Under the mound  
Until you have a mound of outs.

Then, every fourth time up,  
You are already out.

## **RULES**

*for Mary Helen*

That which cannot be read  
Shall remain so.

That which we believe to be correct  
Shall, in fact, be correct.

## **SPACE & LONGING & A FEW FLASHES OF LIGHT**

*for Jane*

Early morning in the garden  
different intensities of color  
grass and stone.

So hot—no hurry—heavy air  
water-loaded air moving slow  
across the yard.

Practice no-resistance  
just a fan and a hammock  
in Tornado Alley.

**SUNSHINE WITHIN SUNLIGHT**  
*for Shannon*

Trees to see  
sea to feel—I make friends  
of feather, fur  
and earth.

Magic  
and magnetic

I'm a leaf dangling  
from a spider's filament,

Pointing.

**FLOWERS INSIDE THE PRESENT**

Don't sob—  
it makes the boat bob.

*Yes* means *never*.  
*No* means *maybe*.

Moist words.  
Written kisses.

In place, I'm  
on a roiled lake.

I should shower,  
but I'm too wet.

Fill the bucket,  
and let me boil.

## MUTINY IS FATE

Five times I've left Berkeley.  
First, after my father told me not to  
show my sorry ass at his door,  
and I split for the Big Apple.  
After I got a 0.9 grade point average  
for my year of free speech protest,  
and I regrouped in Aptos.  
After my bust for redistribution  
of capitalist wealth, when I sold  
a copy of *Macroeconomic Theory*  
back to Cal Book Exchange  
without first buying it.  
After a jealous husband took my scalp  
but left my eyes, just for the glow.  
And on my own—kissing the sidewalk  
at San Pablo goodbye, I drove away.  
Then, the weird poem of my life formed.

A sign says Hillside, but I should be bayside.  
I see an emblazoned *Blockbuster Video*.  
I ask a clerk how to get to Richmond.  
She says, "I hardly ever leave Pinole."  
Where's Pinole?

She asks if anyone knows the freeways,  
and a dude in a stocking cap with an earring  
through his eyebrow steps forward,  
and I know that I'm in a timewarp.  
Up the hill, the Parkway has four lanes  
with a street lamp every couple hundred yards,  
no cars, and everywhere outside the road  
in total darkness—signs pointing left or right  
to Sanitation Depot or Landfill.

Listening to *Mister Misterioso*.  
Around a bend, there she is, legs up to her ass,  
tight mini-skirt, bare midriff, a tousle of hair  
and hip bent as she throws her whole body  
into a wave to hook a ride.  
DAMSEL IN DISTRESS///DANGER.

I see the glitter of the *Chevron* plant  
as I sail by, and I know where I am,

but does she know where she is  
and why she is where she is and what  
the odds are of getting carjacked.  
By then I'm a long way down the road,  
and she's a memory,  
bright lit against the cyclone.

Months later, I'm water chasing logs  
on a small island in the Tongass Narrows,  
and I see her—never could a girl  
make my dreams like she did.

**[Attention—in the following series of poems put the poem at the top of the page and  
the prose section at the bottom of the page, like a footnote]**

### **GALACTIC ADDRESSING CODE**

Every heart must have a correct address.  
Because yours is not consistent  
with the established numbering  
it is necessary to correct your address from  
*unknown*.

---

Dear Jack,

Sitting in the back seat of that *Buick* during The Berkeley Poetry Conference, you said, "Go in there and come out with a jewel." It was small, but it was beautiful. My first book, *Breastbeaters*, was an outpouring of adolescent feelings automatically unreflected—jazz jam sandwiches, moveable type sandwiches, the President's sandwich—language up the kabuki—all very far art, you can pause where you please, yet voodoo as you do, winning out against the poem. After a couple bottles of *Green Death* we felt the Dixieland of opened heart and mind. Thank you, man, for removing some of my fetters. I will always believe the birds.

Love, Rychard

### **GIVE ME FAG VOMIT**

Fucks US  
under the stars  
and stripes  
where the Axis  
(no, they don't ask us)

and the Allies  
(of course, it's all lies)

create a suction,  
an enigma  
in the ice box.

You can see  
in the dawn's early light  
his dong is long  
past the pull date.

---

LBJ keeps poking the obvious member of the sleeping dragon of the Orient because, for the life of US, he doesn't know who he wants to invite to his barbecue. Old presidents don't die; they just bloat up.

## **O, THE HELLS RING OUT**

Noriega's sentence reduced 10 years  
British jets hit Iraq  
Ugandan troops kill 15 Hutu rebels  
Record warmth triggers coral die-off  
Three Serbs slain by Kosovo rebels  
74 million saw Lewinsky on TV

I was sitting on the beach.  
The sun was just setting,  
and up walks this gal who says,  
"You have a beautiful shape."

---

Goodbye ceps. This is a story Lu told me. He said he asked her name, and she said it was "Showers," and he thought it best to pass. As for the count, how to count the count—who do these numbers refer to?

## **TRAINS THAT COULD**

I sing  
To cloud to tree to wind to T.V.

I sing  
*Watusi wa*  
*Watusi wa tu*

I see two  
Watusis in tutus

---

Stopping the troop trains, it was a bad day in Berkeley. Some of it was subtle. Some of it was gross. All of it was ugly.

## **APOCYYYLOVE**

Archaic  
Provincial  
Old  
Concise

Yes, and  
even though everyone else is wearing  
their cap backwards in Military Sci.

I focus and try to keep my sights steady  
FOR LOVE.

---

This will be the only appearance of Oliver North in the poem. His escape is forward.

## **WAR SAW**

This is how it is, Sir—  
Sack and burn,  
Rape and pillage,  
Every town and every village.

---

Clausewitz was right—war should be left to the Generals.

## **WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION**

The Fookers were revved all night,  
grounded  
with their canisters of mustard gas.

EXHEXDEXODREAM  
SCREAMCREAM

Poor Apollinaire.

---

*Pour Apollonair* was a face cream frantically sought in boutiques in Paris under the Vichy government in That War. These Fookers are Messerschmitts.

## **NO VISIBLE MEANS OF SUPPORT**

from Ketchikan I wrote

*Life is a backdrop*

the first house governs the body

the next, phenomena

then communication

Death, Sex—to die is to come

Orgasm has been defined

as a long, highly complex molecule

from Ketchikan I wrote

*Love is a prop*

---

The poet objectively considers his materials, his words as energy-vortex (nouns = verbs), and so the poem becomes concrete. This principle operates in the Hammurabian Code and the calligraphy of Medieval manuscripts.

## **GENERAL MacTHUSELAH**

*Genesis V 27*, his days

were nine hundred sixty and nine years.

Forlorn is foul

weather—none

better or

brighter than his

shield.

He returns and returns

and returns again.

Landmines in the sand

are not compassionate.

---

Lu, I would remake the whole universe for you if I could, but the ghosts are hostile. I'm afraid they're dug in and have lots of ammo. It's all the same war. The generals just fade in and out. Beware of the sharp explosions.

## **TERROR ANGEL**

*for Claude*

I press you to my heart,  
Lambmine.

We sit in the light of God's golem eye  
sampling images by Miro, Tapies, Picasso,  
and Mary Smith.

She has such impact—her *vibe*, her *energy*!  
Liable to go off at the slightest provocation.

---

Buster Keaton created mistakes. His mistakes worshipped him as their greatest leader. 1927—the end of the Silent Era. Hard to believe things could get out of control so quickly. *The General* is a mess.

## **ERRATA**

read *lankmines* for *lambmines*  
read *lampmines* for *lankmines*  
read *limpmines* for *lampmines*  
read *linkmines* for *limpmines*  
read *lessmines* for *linkmines*  
read *lostmines* for *lessmines*

In the early morning wind—  
Diamonds and Wild Cherries.

---

Re: form—the same extension which constitutes a body constitutes space. Re: content—a life lived with respect to mistakes, a jest of meaning. A joust.

## **WORN TO A PHRASL**

Blake had tea with me in the garden  
behind Willow Wood Market, and I asked,

“What is there where imagelessness prevails?”

He told me, “Whereas some cosmoses  
are being transformed and some cosMoses  
transfigured, whereas Peter Max paints on  
public transit, some metamorphosis continues.”

“How is this possible,” said I, “where  
there is no imagination?”

“Well,” he replied, “On the Day of Creation—  
upDOWNupDOWNupDOWNup.”

---

The sun was high in the heavens at mid-second light while we talked and drank our Wuli Oolong. The day was a cup of poetry.

## **FLASHBURN**

*Here half my days gone and my light nearly spent.*

The first trickster said, nothing lasts.  
Or was it—you can’t cross  
the same beach twice—or once,  
for that matter.

This morning I couldn’t open my eyes.  
Poured in a dose of sulfate and alcohol,  
and they opened like the doors to a tomb.  
When I closed the lids, a grating sound.

---

Blindness is a deductible expenditure. Some consolation, that.

## **IDEOGRAM**

*for Carolyn Kiser*

A stick figure, I open my mouth—  
two swallows spin out.

## **THE COLOR WHITE**

*for Bob Kaufman*

Salt, snow, endless abominisms—  
my sheets before Lorca.

---

Denise Levertov and Robert Bly argue in the Captain's tower.

## GERANIUMS

*for J.W.*

to the wall up my face down the river  
running rapids without a paddle  
hallway filled with fading portraits  
in the shadows of the corners  
I begin to see things begin to move

damn piss scream belch barf  
down the road I walk with a sign  
NO U TURN with a bottle of scotch  
and my brains in my hands

you cut yourself and saw worlds within  
worlds within worlds

*Burma Shave.*

---

A lifetime under house arrest. Outside I hear the keys of my executioners jingle. If you wear a blindfold does the firing squad exist?

## GWEN

Yes, oh, yes, yes, yes,  
this must stop—my soul is dark,  
and it's flowers are nightshade and wolfbane.

We must put this behind us and get back to work.

Damn the sun and its flowers.  
Damn the glass eye of the moon.  
Damn my weakness and this heavy hour.

My heart quakes. Thank God, it's Friday.

---

This is a transcription of a tape recorded by Linda Tripp. Nothing was ever made of it because the events in Dallas superseded this situation in importance. Camelot is now a wispy memory.

## **PERCY**

O, Joker. Humorous in all situations.  
The center of the pack—the hero  
of transformation, an innocent fool.

He has frightening brightness in the eyes.  
He laughs his bright laughter, and like  
Stan Laurel does something unexpected.

Entranced by a few drops of blood  
on the breast of a seagull in a parking lot  
he shoots a half-court basket without looking.

Half a mind. Half a question. Half a deal.

---

Dotters, granddotters, and great granddotters of President Polk—a dot in her story,  
pinning the head on the dotting Old Fool.

## **I KNOW A PLACE**

*for Robert Creeley*

I attended him as he spoke,  
his logic like a rapier, bent  
in with a twist, then out,  
phenomena trailing from my wound.

Jack, he said,  
which is not my name,  
the next tournament  
won't be held in Berkeley.  
Berkeley is too bizarre.

Better Oakland, it was  
noted for savage eucalyptus  
and wild animal life  
long before there was road rage, let's  
drive to Mel's for cokes and fries.

## **WEARY ELVES**

Lovers abide their time  
in uninterrupted bliss.

Gentle forms  
hovering above the steep hills  
grieving, grieving.

Nature molds a new day  
from filmy vapors and dissolves  
the confusion of joy and pain.

Stars reflect  
in the lake—  
order  
peace.

## **MADDENING**

Those lines  
those lines  
those damn lines

and all this blank space—  
a place with no one in it

and nothing below the surface  
and  
nothing above the surface  
and nothing on the surface  
but a white rabbit

---

One way to liberate the lovers from syntactic-semantic relationships is to encourage them  
not to sleep between the lines.

## **FOREST PERILOUS**

O, wild bubbling brook

in this forest among the ferns,  
naked to the sky and the flowers  
and the animals that drink you,

Your sweet liquid, so pure,  
rising to my lips is purer by far  
than time or the rambling  
of this wooden-worded line.

---

A knight in rented armor (in dented amor) having shed tears and blood and spilt his seed  
in foreign hands pauses for refreshment before continuing his quest for the perfect snack.

### **BILLY MEETS THE CANYON SPIRIT**

Dawn of the manicured fingertips.  
Billy swallows a handful of peyote  
and pulls himself out of bed  
and away from the warm señorita.

He walks up an arroyo and into a canyon  
a mile from his hut. The spirit of a bullet  
ricocheting. There is the hiss of cymbals.  
Billy's hand trembles in the fake landscape.

He blazes away with his *Peacemaker*.  
He fires six rounds. Reloads. Fires.  
He shoots bushes, rocks, holes in the ground.  
He shoots bullets at bullets in the hot air.

Billy the Kid shooting in the chaparral,  
he outdraws his shadow.

### **BOOGIE KNIGHT**

Billy's in the closet checking out his arsenal,  
trying on different outfits—

*A Colt Anaconda and Colt Python*  
to crossdraw under a frock coat

*A Browning Buck Mark* with scope  
and a *Walther* for backup with backstrap

A *Smith & Wesson* Model 640  
with a *Kahr* micro 9 in patent leather

The *Para-Ord* double-action 14 shot .45  
The *Bland* .577—the ultimate manstopper,

Your fresh face.

---

Marc, I dug your article on Rebel Angels, reminding me of Blake's *Your Heaven gate might be my Hell door*. Hard to know which way the angels blow in these poetry wars. So many confused flags.

### **MAYBE A MAIDEN**

Hard to know.  
She lives alone in a castle on a hill  
with a garden of shrubs shaped like dogs.  
Poodles, beagles, pit bulls.

In the second light, she sits by the window  
feeding birds. Surely, they are nightingales.  
No one is ever seen in the garden,  
yet the shrubs stay shapely and tasteful.

Strange, her mode of life,  
desiring nothing, to be left to herself  
in a topiary garden, desiring nothing.  
Quite weird, really.

---

These peculiar settings and puzzling people, it's enough to make me cry, "That's it—let there be fire in the sea, earthquakes, hailstorms, avalanche. Let the sky open and the gods ejaculate."

### **NOT ANYTHING REAL**

I dreamt you entered my tent  
high on a ridge above a clear-cut.  
I thought you'd come, and I came,  
but you were only the moon—  
and I came.

I told this to my Theosophy Club,  
but they didn't think it was mystical  
and were a little shocked. All it was is  
a poem.

I am filled as I am emptied.

---

The Grail is not the cup Christ drank from, but the serving plate from the Last Supper. It is shaped like an eye, a fish, a vulva, and is the geometrical form of *pi*, the relationship of a radius to the circumference of a circle, which can be revealed by two overlapping circles whose perimeters intersect one another's centers, a *vesica pisces*.

### **MERLIN CREEPING ABOUT**

Usually they meet in the woods  
for dark, secret conduct  
in the frenzy of the moment.

I see them often, and I remain  
hidden—not that I need the titillation,  
but it's OK under the circumstances.

So much power in a secret—  
yes, I too come to the woods  
for dark, secret conduct.

---

I was locked up in Alameda County Jail. The ghosts thought I had come to liberate them. They wanted better shit to eat, and they believed my *lambmine* was the Holy Grail.

### **STARS AND TIME**

all  
and  
all  
and  
all

this line  
this rhyme  
this line

dances

on the stones  
in the trees  
to the star

---

Nothing anagogical here. I spent the day painting a nude, who complained of cramps, but I explained she had to hold the pose. Models don't know what they are.

## **HEAR THEM BUZZZ**

*for Jack Spicer*

*With the gums gone the  
words within words, no kidding,  
the birds chatting with other birds,  
are barely heard.*

*And though the nose is  
green and blue,  
it's much too hot to twitch.  
Nothing*

Stirs except a blue-bottle fly.  
*The eye* IN my head  
sees me coming toward the river,  
and a sound says,

“I will die outside your window.”

---

Two rivers—the River Styx and the other one, I can't remember, the Russian, maybe. You're embalmed, and there's no place to go to piss to scream. If you follow me into the Underworld, bring three coins and some extra honeycakes.

## **RISKING THE BOUNDARY**

*for Chanon*

There's somewhere I want to go,  
and so I cruise the limits of the visible.  
I feel the barrier, weird yet familiar  
to my touch—is this a warning?

A car burns beside the road  
where I meet the guardians of the way,  
an old woman throwing bones in the dust,

a young man rolling stones on a board.

“Who are you?” he asks, “Elven queen,  
white witch, she who has trouble  
making up her mind?” If I pass, I know  
I cannot return, but what more can I loose?

The wind carries me—I change.  
I have no eyes. I have no sex.  
I dance to the rhythm of the stars,  
a dance that is older than love.

### **PERSEPHONE’S MIRROR**

*for Beryl*

I am that woman despised  
by all other women  
and most desired by men.  
I am tormented

by the hostile sex  
that saturates me.  
There are days and days  
when I feel ugly,

and no one likes me.  
You say that within  
a golden goddess sleeps,  
although I am forbidden to see

anything but under ground.  
Unfolding as Spring,  
I yearn for whoever  
can understand my pain.

### **HERMES ON HIS ROUNDS**

*for D.C.*

rain hail snow wind  
blow down books blood  
banks banker’s daughters

sweet stain coming soon  
sooner than the rain  
hail snow wind

*help hang hold*

words zing in my head  
flowers tremble at my feet  
can't keep my seat—in debt  
spent—can't repent—  
pay the rent the car to split  
my head

*fish man star*

this is an old tale story rhyme  
line dance tune  
in—here in  
the mind in tune to this

## **HOLOGRAPHIC PARADIGM**

I see a birdman very rigid, very freaked.  
I see a bison also stiff,  
the left foot turned so the cleft is seen—  
eyes, nose, thighs, toes speak to me.

There is a break in the shaft.  
There are breaks in the staff and dart.  
Flickering torchlight and psilocybe—  
best I omit the Cro-Magnon ceremonies.

---

Whether it is argued the proportional harmonies revealed in the Well Scene were arrived at intuitively or intentionally, I want to dispel the notion of a haphazard or awkward placement of the figures in the composition. With God's cosmic dick out in the conversation, His will and testicle on the tongue is revealed in the golden section of the forth part of the first section.

## **PHANTOMS OF THE FAYUM**

I see a man with two birds in one hand  
and a snake in the other walking upon

a bridge above fishes.

I see a woman in the background.  
I see flowers like bird tails.

There's a butterfly landing on the man's foot.  
The butterfly is larger than the man's foot.  
The man is broken like the land.  
kThe woman looks the same as the man.

---

Who was kThe? His wife? She wears a diaphanous gown, carries an Ankh, and has a dildo on her head. The naked, kneeling figure between his legs must be a servant. He beats the bush with a stick that resembles a snake. It is a boat made of rushes and not a bridge. A cat in the papyrus is trying to swallow a duck.

### **NUMBED BY THE RAYS**

of things which are dimensions  
which are worlds

Ech!  
—not rational, eats worms, tastes musty—  
LIFE, LOVE—my honeyed breast  
my hairy ass.

I've ghosts in my closet.  
“Seven for the seven bright shiners, six for the six  
proud walkers, five for the Pentecostal, four for  
the gospel makers...”

“Stop it, or I'm going to kick you in the teeth,”  
shouts a spook from the closet.

“...one is one and all alone.”

---

Back in the hole I eat canned peas, instant mashed potatoes, and mystery meat. Illumined by a low watt bulb in a cage, that's me, naked on a rough mattress.

### ***HE WHO LISTS TO HUNT***

Flower  
Unicorn

Canker  
Ketchikan

what can I say?  
I saw them climb  
Deer Mountain.

I called my friend, and  
he gave no answer.  
I entreated him with

my mouth  
God  
suck  
flower

---

Once Caesar crossed the Rubicon, he never looked back. Part of the legend is we kidnapped Robert Duncan. We made it as far as Vancouver on his *Master Card*. The army still lives off the ransom.

## **NECTAR**

drop drop  
rain on window  
right on time

drop drop  
morning glow  
sun's confession

drop drop  
behind bars  
reading the *Gideon Bible*

drop drop  
news that stays news  
completely confused

drop drop  
and now Paul Harvey  
with the rest of the story

## LATE KNIGHT ON THE GOLDEN GATE

*for Frank*

You were AWOL.  
We'd been out all night  
driving about, drinking stout.

You wanted to cruise the bridge,  
and we said we'd pick you up  
on the Marin side.

They must have thought you suspicious,  
two Highway Patrolmen—you freaked  
and leaped into the fog.

The hill seemed closer than it was—  
200 feet down, you were agog  
when you landed in the muck on your ass.

Man, you were a true stand-up,  
with your last breath saying,  
“It only hurts when I fart.”

## PERFECT

arguing into the early hours  
about the global economy  
and the greenhouse effect  
we solve the world's problems  
for another night  
while the stars shine  
through the colander in the sky

after you leave I continue to drink  
until I'm topped up and tipping over

miserable fuck that I am  
I crawl across a gravel pit  
and down a culvert  
where I find a pinhole of firelight  
and I laugh and laugh and laugh  
happy to find light  
in the middle of the tunnel

## **FOR JENNIFER**

Your smile like a Monet sunrise—  
right from the start we're old friends,  
although only once in three lifetimes  
could I find you.

## **SEEING ANGELS WITH MY INNER EYE**

the river runs both ways  
innocent pristine untroubled  
in a clean environment  
I'm always making the same mistake

looking closer I see sludge at my door  
and the road detour through acid rain  
as the bills of regret mount higher  
I'm always making the same mistake

I read love poems on the leaves  
blessed by the air's deep prayer  
I enter the heart of spring  
I'm always making the same mistake

night feels like a rotten tooth  
to move I have to roll snake eyes  
a million times in a row  
I'm always making the same mistake

let the stones simmer on the lake  
I lay down in sweet pastures  
I take refuge under the dress of a flowergirl  
I'm always making the same mistake

## **IN KETCHIKAN**

walking with Frank Boardman up South Tongass  
from the New York Hotel toward The Beanry  
Frank listens to my recitation of Lu Garcia's poem  
and says it heralds the death of poetry

*Biff!*  
*Bam!*  
*Pow!*

*Holy Cow!*  
*Holy Cow!*  
*Now we know*

*Batman is*  
*God*  
*is*

*the Devil*  
*knows*  
*who he is.*

“Don’t go on like that,” he pleads  
and falls into a funk

## **MARILYN MANSON ON THE RAG**

*for Tamara*

Billy Blake wanders in the chartered streets  
crying *weep weep weep*  
Sylvia Plath lies in a basement  
her cunt full of worms  
Williams Carlos Williams crawls  
to his Asphodel

Dylan slashes his eye  
Villon thrashes on the scaffold  
and the Old Gray Poet  
mad blind gay  
SEES  
all the stars and all the grains of sand  
all the bacteria in the shit pile  
are children born trembling

## **THIS SCRIPT HAS A BUTT SHOT**

*for Jillian*

shooting video in Echo Canyon  
picking up voices of Mexican children  
bouncing off the walls I dance freeform  
in the piñon pines spooking a murder of crows

cut to  
Ghost Ranch  
I'm wearing black  
a man with a briefcase  
walking through the desert  
I work out a bit where my clothes  
are a rippling specter floating on a mirage lake

I jump out of my suit, drop my briefcase  
run stark naked toward the highway  
a car passes in the distance  
dissolve

accidentally left on, the camera sways  
catching our torsos at odd angles  
hands rolling a cigarette  
smoke and mirrors  
hands driving

chatting about freedom and responsibility  
and the need to awaken the sacred  
in our present commercial  
progressively degraded  
mode of being

a wrap, after we shoot the sunflower room  
sunflower wallpaper sunflower hotpads clock calendar  
cups curtains you in a sunflower apron cooking plastic sunflowers  
serving up sunflower soup in sunflower bowls  
on a sunflowered tablecloth without  
a hint of script

## **SUNFLOWER KITCHEN**

sunflower tablecloth  
sunflower calendar  
sunflower curtains  
sunflower napkins

sunflower dishes  
sunflower clock  
sunflower cups  
sunflower vase  
plastic sunflowers in a bouquet

Jillian in a sunflower apron  
cooking up sunflower soup  
her brightness and pulse  
in every spoonful

## **OF SUNS AND WORLDS**

*for Jessica*

pink cotton candy in the pine trees  
my assemblages looking  
FINE  
hanging on my bedroom wall in morning light  
after worrying about their (aughh!) MEANING  
last night

my dried grass imbedded in handmade paper  
with dried grass laid on a photograph  
of dried grass under an ink drawing on  
a transparency and water-colored engraving  
of dried grass entitled *even this alchemy*  
*converting each moment into the next*  
*forges locks on your heart* had seemed  
TRITE  
and a trifle overdone

drawing with my finger in the air  
does any of this exist?

## **HIGH PRESSURE CENTER**

from fair to foul  
wind snow  
moon sun  
a balloon some  
alone

at her weeds  
the raven went  
bent with a drill  
around three trees  
went

turn down the dream  
tear down the drug  
blow down the bank  
soon a sign rain hail  
blow

in the spun bud  
I mark clean  
the naked zero  
that registers  
life

## **BOX OF NERVES**

walking on the sea shore sea surf  
sand dunes sand in my shoes  
salt sun sea sand in my hair  
rock water mist air waves breaking  
sea foam sea weed sea wreck serenity

dearth decay division disaster  
when I come back to town  
I feel like a robot standing in a haze  
tape hiss follows me  
I'm sure a dæmon is eating my wiring

the chair says, "gow"  
the light bulb says, "pfup"  
the bed says, "let the snake coil  
and the tiger bite"

## **AT EVERY LEVEL OF MONTEZUMA'S CONSCIOUSNESS**

Spirit O Spool  
did you punch him for his licoriceship?

did her blondness run out in cold  
thick drops?  
did I fork a virgin zero from the globe?  
foul the cherub cheek winds?  
clog my veins with abuse of 4/4 time?

Behold the new born terror!  
Behold all things new!

.

Pawing through the hospital dumpster  
I find an aluminum Xmas tree  
decorated with gauze and syringes

Insanity and murder, devastation and cruelty  
fatal epidemics and contagion  
O Furies, I look for you  
bringing my Great Plan

## **LOVE'S GARDEN**

I see Eden in fire.  
I see Eden in water  
and air.

Interrupted,  
or alone and still,  
I see her.

## **VISIONARY DESIGNS**

Lu and I drink tea at Nefeli's on Euclid  
then hike around the Berkeley hills  
looking at houses

this is the Lawson house  
built by Bernard Maybeck in 1908  
after the great earthquake  
making a connection between past  
and present  
the house resembles a Mediterranean villa

and links  
the earthquake to the volcanic destruction  
of ancient Pompeii

each linked to each  
I'm planning a house to look like a jet crash  
to connect the present with the way the planet  
will look over the next hundred years

### **AT THE GAME RESERVE**

a drove of binocular  
persons  
observe elk eating hay  
one man's belly fills  
his whole car  
someone says  
"a big sucker"  
but he's talking  
about an elk  
flesh elk  
and belly  
a balsam moon  
at apogee  
when I'm near you  
my sap rises  
and I feel like  
locking horns

### **JOY IN ALL THE LITTLE THINGS**

Cheri Quigley in pink  
a pink pillbox hat, coat and dress  
drops her purse in Howard's Cafe  
and it opens  
and her birth control pills roll out  
and I pick them up and ask her name  
and I think she says Cherry Quickly  
and I tell her I would like to, but

the elfish brightness in her eyes  
undoes me

and she knows it and laughs  
bright laughter

if she has her way  
I will dance to mad atonal music  
made from hitting garbage cans  
and the ringing of cow bells  
while she claps and laughs

## **WAVETWISTERS**

wave twisters  
we'll live forever in bold letters  
worm  
mexlady  
magdalena  
"JoViolent"  
glitter  
rads  
fairygirl  
sicseed  
unknown  
KnightWalker  
WarriorLady  
jabborwocky  
missing  
Dreamy ~(-\_-)~  
cricket  
devildoc  
gypsy  
Mystic-Rain  
Rimbaud  
sinkforil  
starache  
TigerLilly  
wings  
baps  
punkerpoet  
Magichex\_g  
Themis  
siouxgirl  
Olivia©  
negative\_bullshit  
ghosthusky

1SickPuppy  
unicorn  
Neon-Ratio  
AFROdite  
zin  
jvisionaire  
darkpoet  
beatnikig, that's  
beatnik in disguise  
FallenAngel  
nannycate  
rooster  
pokadottie  
Sculpture  
pootzygirl  
standing\_in\_the\_rain  
Teawhisk  
puravida  
NormalBoy  
Akira  
aura  
zane  
eclips33  
Scorpion  
4Play4Ever  
disintograte  
milk\_this  
summer  
orge  
Kolorblue  
2cool  
Bonfire  
scribe4rent  
beauty  
diogeneslamp  
wiseowl in NJ  
willow in Korea  
alex in IL  
Ethan in AL  
}StUPidGirl{  
Michaelangelo  
in the room we come and go

**I AM VIRGIN TO MY POEM**

Gurgling, puking blood  
a toothbrush jammed through my cheek  
bricks tied to my ankles  
a guitar string around my neck  
a fireplug exploding in my heart  
my fingers pinched in a car door  
a cat clawing my eye  
trampled under foot  
stumbling through piss and shit  
with my head through a ladder  
I step on a crack  
and sacrifice myself  
to the immaculate conception of things.

### **SOUL OF THE ANTI-POET**

Spring into movement like 111 or 666—  
it's all in the wrist.  
Take your hat off, and stand alone.  
Wipe that smirk off your chops.

Don't fart.  
Salute the sun.  
The mucus of life is before you.  
Eat up!

### **MY ESCAPE FORWARD**

What's up?  
What's down?  
What's there to do?  
What's done?

It doesn't matter if I go up the Congo  
down the Mekong  
or follow Strawberry Creek  
if I go far enough I'll lose my mind

Strawberry Creek runs down the hill  
past the Cyclotron through Faculty Glade  
I sit by the stream

and my dreams are full of heavy metal

My freshman year at Cal  
Professor Parkinson thinks my essay  
*My Home*  
is the worst thing he's ever read

These squiggles are my class notes  
for Atomic Radiation and Life?  
must be the paths of neutrinos  
no mass, just spin

Frank Chin takes off his Rotey uniform  
and sticks the barrel of his rifle in the ground  
Walking off the drill field in his shorts  
he's no chickencoop Chinaman

The Un-American Activities Committee  
is in town—Black Friday—the police  
fearing they are loosing control wash  
the protestors down the courthouse steps

At breakfast my dad chokes on his toast  
I'm on the front page giving a *sieg heil*  
What he can't see is the mic  
I'm holding for KPFA

A war machine slouches towards Saigon  
I hear the litany of the dead  
A protest movement is born—  
the formation of a hive

Released from the Darkness  
a pair of calipers measures my skull  
Is my brain pan enlarged  
by Tibet, by Nicaragua, by Burma?

A child might wonder why  
the earth seems flat  
note the lines  
connect the lines

Eventually, they form a circle—  
Bosnia—East Timor—Kuwait—  
now that your world map is complete  
the name of the game can be changed to

Genocide for Control of Oil  
The New Super Bowl  
It's an end run...  
the SCUDS vs the Patriots

It's a blitz  
on a fortress, on a mosque  
creating a gulf of blood  
and a nightmare of smashed faces

And in the aftermath  
open sewers and squalor  
with a half million children  
dead because of sanctions

## **I KNOW NOTHING**

Silence before me and behind  
preceding speech

What I am now saying is false

The sky passes  
passes through my senses

Everything smells of mock orange

I skipped today, went  
around midnight into tomorrow

I knew those hours were broken

## **PAGE OF WANDS**

*for Noella*

don't you want to know what is going on?  
black on black on  
black, black dress, black nails  
black eyeliner, blonde hair dyed black  
dog chains  
and combat boots with 2 inch soles

you want to learn tarot  
but don't care about Ancient Egypt  
or what is hidden in the cards  
just how to read them  
gothic  
my mood, your costume  
no need for all this blather  
ok, I'll forget the traditional path  
take you to a coffee house  
look at the art  
here, let you play with the cards  
go off in every direction  
from any vantage point  
correspondence  
with whatever comes next  
that girl's tattoo  
it says *BROKEN* across her back  
in bold letters—  
the coal miners' strike in Harlem County  
Kentucky in the 70s—  
no kidding, things get me down  
better now we're sitting in this café  
note my inflection and the emphasis  
put on precision, value, fun  
coming at you sideways  
first a double mocha, then history  
then a balloon  
inside, I write, "Poot was here!"  
and vanish into air

## **WHAT IS MIND?**

Dad awakes, he's shaking—  
says he's embarrassed, he's wet his bed  
and doesn't know what to do  
Here I am  
bringing diapers to my main authority figure

He also wonders if there is a drive on  
to change the color of the grass  
I can buy into this  
I wouldn't be surprised if there is

Friggin' scary

even a bit moribund—  
feel this way because I am still  
indulging myself  
in life  
and fear the weirdness of dying

### **NIGHT OF MYSTIC RAIN**

I have been watching a cat  
and now it's dark  
and the cat appears blue and yearning  
with claws ready to scratch the night

I am going out  
to look for you on the bench in the park  
expecting to find you wrapped in newsprint  
sleeping red in the dark

Rain in the yellow trees  
there is a song under the table  
I have enough love to make the stars ache  
and I can afford to I buy the silence I become

### **MAGICIAN'S APPRENTICE**

I cough, sweating, knots in my shoulders  
He knows I know where the *drib* lies  
where the energy emanates

My nausea is the key  
Follow my stomach heaving  
find the spot in the earth

He points to a rock  
moves his hand in a circle  
I remove the rock  
He hands me a sharp stick, and I dig

I hear chanting in the yurt  
It's daylight, but it's like a long night

He points to a new place a few inches away  
and I dig there, another address of agony  
He points to a spot a foot away  
more digging, a piece of paper appears  
I can see script bleeding in the damp  
I want to unfold this dark treasure  
but he makes a gesture for fire  
both hands upturned, fingers wiggling  
I build a small fire with leaves and twigs

A wind begins, then vanishes  
although it's still here

I cough and blow on the flames  
as the paper catches  
and curls like a question

My nausea is gone

At the sight of him in his robes and tennis shoes  
doing a playful little shuffle, I can't help but laugh

## **FLOWING**

The clerk at the health food store  
gives me a dead look  
when I order some sweet whey to go

Outside, I see a little dog  
I wonder why he doesn't have any hair  
I wonder why he doesn't have a tail  
I wonder why he doesn't have a head  
I wonder why he doesn't have feet  
I wonder how he trots down the street

I'm a distortion in the fog  
a man without form  
a man with one arm  
a man with one lip  
an old man I finally understand

## **ALL THIS INSIDE ME**

I enter the quiet  
where flies buzz and leaves rustle  
in their immortality

The silence ends at a yellow bird  
a Western Tanager—I looked him up—  
atop a stalk of last year's mullein

### **VISION QUEST: SO MANY RAINBOWS**

The mothers sat by the fire chanting  
I could see them in the lightning flashes  
Rain came down in sheets  
I couldn't tell if it was all rain or the mothers' tears

### **SAMSARA IS AN AIRPORT SURROUNDING A DELAYED FLIGHT**

I'm stretched out with my eyes closed  
listening to the travelers' voices and the intercom

"...want my money back..."  
"...want to be in San Francisco, now..."  
"...really no reason for this..."  
"...is it really raining there?..."  
"...will my luggage arrive?..."

"Will the pilots for flight 2807  
please report to gate A6?"

This presence  
that is all  
that is

Given  
each moment  
each breath

"This is your final boarding opportunity!"

## **HOOKEENA VILLAGE**

Camped on the beach at Hookeena  
an embittered youth goddess, slightly overweight  
says she's been here a month and not been hassled.

A scuba diver surfaces and wades ashore  
and a sunbather rolls off the table she's been sleeping on  
and waddles to the Chew Chew Caboose.

I look around for my shoes and find them on a bench  
where I left them yesterday when I was cleaning fish.  
I'm continually pelted by mangos.

Wind scatters and gathers—  
Buddha sips a beer and says, "All this is transitory."

## **ALOHA MEANS DON'T CRASH ON THE ROCKS**

I sit below the ruins of Pu'nkohola Heian,  
a temple built by Kapoukahi  
on the Hill of the Whale,  
dedicated to Kukailimoku, a war god,  
built with a human chain of rock.

I feel lonely and off-centered  
listening to the silence behind the hum of insects.  
Not questioning,  
just staring dumbly at the water slapping me awake,  
wondering  
what draws me to this savage place, to eel and shark.

I find my way—  
I put on my wet suit, take my spear  
and swim out.

## **AT MAHUKONA BEACH PARK**

I caught a bottom fish off the lava cliffs  
made of winding lava called Pali's hair  
where Pali touches the sea.

The road is closed by a lava flow  
ahaha lava dotted with pink and yellow  
marriage flowers.

*Love* carved on a park bench.  
Buds in the rain.  
Jaws on grasshoppers.  
A gekko in the telephone coin return.

Easy to see  
there is something bigger than myself.

### **EAST WIND, WEST WIND**

A beach bum plays classical guitar.  
I look up and see a girl  
dancing to the last rays of the day.  
Her eyes closed,  
her hips in sync with the strumming,  
her feet pattern the sand.  
I'm transported to a green place.

I turn my head.  
What is this? Where am I?  
Festival day at Spencer Park.  
The natives glare at the howies.  
It may be Spencer Park to us,  
but it's The King's Beach to them.  
Their eyes say *Private Property*.

### **POINTLESS POEM ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF NON-EXISTENCE**

Sitting in Mercy Hospital in Durango  
I wait for Lama Tsering.

An obese lady to my left in shorts and tee-shirt  
paints her toenails copper.

A tall Indian in a set of tails, his hair in a braid  
turquoise and bone necklace

dark glasses and cowboy boots  
paces the floor.

A tough-looking dude with a tattoo on his calf  
blood on his shirt  
his right eye mangled  
bounces a baby on his knee.

*Aliens 3* is on the TV.

### **STORY MY MOM TELLS**

1939: Globe, Arizona  
and in the spring, about May  
we visited some friends  
lived up in the mountains.

That was Geronimo's territory  
and I asked Mrs. Craig  
"How did you ever exist up here  
with no roads and having to ride  
mules to get out and to bring in  
your furniture and Geronimo  
running through the country?"

"You kept an eye peeled," she said  
"and your kids close at hand."

### **CORD CUTTING**

Yeshe asks me to be her surrogate father  
Lloyd, born 1917 in Arkansas  
Shirsten will play the part of Emma  
the mother, born in Peru

We meet at the sweat lodge  
Yeshe is wearing peasant clothing  
a long skirt, a white blouse  
Sparky Shooting Star and Tsultrim  
stand to one side to guide us

The three of us form a triangle

with a ribbon around our waists  
and Emma and I speak to our daughter  
how she has lived up to our expectations  
time, now, for her to be on her own

As she wrestles with this separation  
we cut the cord of one too long in our service  
and her tears fling aside the pretence of the rite  
and hammer home the meaning of being grown

## **REFUGE**

Don't look at this poem  
You are staring  
I stare back  
Your eyes are clamped here  
It is damp here  
but my throat is dry

This poem is a shamble  
down an alley of broken glass  
relief from rowdy talk in The Tav

You are asking questions  
this poem  
cannot answer—  
at best you can rest  
here

I cannot answer  
but I can sing

## **JUXT POSE**

*for Meg*

Here, rock stillness.  
Here, a falcon's free-fall.  
Here, dangling tassels of wisteria.  
Here, a Tibetan mudra mystery.

## **POSTCARD FROM THE STATE OF DISASTER**

These mountains—  
mountains  
mountains.

I read a note in a trail box  
that said there are too many rocks  
in the mountains, so please  
dynamite these obstacles  
into ski slopes.

In the scree of time  
dynamite is a joke.

## **SIT LIKE A MOUNTAIN**

I'm in the tent of self-produced mind  
late at night, candles flickering  
soaking up his mind essence, like  
being in Tibet a thousand years ago  
with Guru Rinpoche, tough and gentle.

He taught 3 words that hit the point  
this old lama doing it the hard way  
sitting on his ass in a cave for 20 years  
until his bone touched the stone  
listening to waves of bliss-emptiness  
crash on the shore of nirvana.

Noise floods in from the street.  
Here in the pure land of Santa Rosa,  
one taste in the supermarket aisle  
and new asanas for highway maneuvers.

## **LOST IN TONGASS WOODS**

Which way?  
got turned around  
drizzle, muskeg and devil's club  
mountains on four sides

Let's see  
I came over that rise  
knelt and backed up  
turned and sat down  
adjusted my gear  
got up  
and...

Fear I'm in Death's maw  
when I hear a shout  
and see the beam of a torch  
Dale at the trail head  
with a bag of trailmix

I'm gobbling it up  
when he tells me he added candle butts  
in case we need to start a fire  
but they're gone

All one taste

### **NIMA'S FIRST SWEAT**

New Zealand  
To the Continental Divide  
At the edge of the fire pit

Vincent tells this warrior  
To sit in front, and Nima sits  
As close he can sit

The scar tissue of an old wound  
The scar tissue of his past  
Blisters in the babbled prayers

Ute and Maori know  
In the beginning something is broken

### **MOTHER OF ALL SWEATS**

*for smallfeather*

It's the equinox

a lot of newbees in the lodge  
maybe too many bodies for 40 rocks.  
In the first round  
a girl behind me starts to cry  
and in the second round  
Jack, a veteran of many sweats  
passes out.

Vincent tells Jack to sit up  
and Jack sits up  
but soon his head is in my lap.  
Third round  
a boy near the door asks to be let out  
and the girl behind me, moaning now  
says her body is numb.  
She is shocked by this big Ute  
spitting water in her face.

We're in the womb.  
No one leaves prematurely.  
Teetering at the edge of the pit  
a man is talking to his selves.  
The spirits are moving.  
He's asking why he is here—  
“Let me out of here, I can't take it.”  
Vincent has never seen such a thing  
but he lets them out.

The Tibetans have a saying,  
*Until the head is cooked*  
*of what use is the tongue?*

## **POISED**

*for Webster*

Why is there a Universe!  
How did the Universe come into being!  
Shouts of joy or fear or accusation.

Bumping my head against the wall  
like La Motta in *Raging Bull*,  
“Stupid! Stupid! Stupid!”

Bertrand Russel's frustration

when, as a child, he asked,  
“What is matter?”

And the answer, “Never mind.”  
“What is mind?”  
“It doesn’t matter.”

The Universe is big  
and getting bigger, expanding fast  
and ever faster—a basketball

crossing twenty-four time zones  
on its way to the hoop.  
Only there is no hoop.

No end to an expanding Universe.  
I drift in infinite space  
(or no space), an illusion

of myself in an obscure place,  
a floating reflection,  
nothing holding me up.

What’s nothing’s circumference!  
*Pi* and *light*—  
the defining functions.

A circumference of no-space expands  
@ speed of light towards a critical radius.  
The impalpable algebra of infinity.

This U  
a sub-atomic structure  
of a larger U.

No U, just dots on a time line,  
or like a bulb on a timer  
on/off.

Vacuum soup. Eternal mind.  
An egg, a holy word, a string.  
Winos and zinos in stasis.

Black bodies, black holes, blue lights.  
Anti-matter, negative space, and big bangs.  
The quarks of love and strangeness

and the quirkiness of God.  
No limits: multiple Universes.  
Limits: a one night stand.

*Singularity* is the instant  
the Universe appears, every region  
squeezed into a single point

on an axis of time.

Poised.

$A = \pi r^2 - 1 / \text{Threshold} + 1 E = MC^2$

Empty: does not exist,  
has never existed,  
will never exist.

Empty: has *potential* to exist.  
Primordial mind pool.  
Heap of awareness.

What is truly empty!  
Every minim has stuff—  
even without mass, there's spin.

Exists and not-exists at the same time.  
Either/or, neither/nor, both and.  
Nothing spinning—no word for this.

Given previously annihilated U,  
then there's *potential*  
for a new U to come into existence.

Things are already out of hand  
by the time the Prime Mover  
produces/invents/creates the U.

Angels cruise by in an '00 *Ford Escort*  
with automatic weapons on their laps.  
I hear them peel out

on the corner of Hall & Piezzi,  
laying down a streak of rubber  
before their *Dunlops* dig in.

A mirror in the void.

A flight of photons  
against the force of darkness.

Can't see the bullets coming.  
A bullet from the past  
and one from the future.

A bullet on the chart  
and one to the heart.  
Spirit tries to reach me,

but it hits an event horizon  
like a bug  
on the windshield of a car.

### **NOVEMBER MIST**

I'll accept the emptiness  
and give  
the sullied figments  
form.

I'll follow these ruts  
back to a field  
filled  
with blue light on snow.

### **DISCOVERY**

Come to this.  
How to know?

I trusted.

I dreamed a bit  
but  
I'm a stranger  
to myself.

### **FACADES**

Night comes, and moving into the heavenly darkness  
I engage in the slow seduction of a woman  
who looks like Louise Brooks in *Pandora's Box*.

We are digging graves in the center of a road running  
through the high, open fields of Umptanum,  
going slow, a problem with rain and with our will  
to dig.

Standing in a shed, looking through the drizzle,  
telling her she can do it, not to leave,  
and convincing myself we can finish the job.

She puts my hand under her shirt and lets me kiss her,  
then puts my cock insider her, but  
when I realize we are in a showcase window,  
I awake.

### **ALONG THE CUTBANK**

I see your visage in the rock  
where you spied some birds  
to add to your Life List  
and then spent an hour  
trying to identify the common jay.

I shut up and squatted and picked my nose.

I roll a rock into the river.  
A new moon shines on all that has vanished.  
It's all here  
including the hole in my shadow.

### **NEW FORMS**

Where do I go from here?  
New will is born  
with the flowering of spring—

A place smaller than the heart  
but bigger than the world.

## **DHARMA TALK**

Blue flurry  
where prayer flags flutter.  
A jay drinks  
from one of my offering bowls.

I try to teach this jay to chant  
without much success.  
He nods inquisitively  
then continues his way beyond training.

## **BUILDING A FIRE FOR THE MEDICINE MAN**

I throw a few leaves in the fire pit  
add a cluster of twigs  
stuff in a napkin  
stir the ashes and  
light a match to the confusion.

A puff of smoke from the leaves,  
a branch catches, crackles  
and goes out.

Horse asks, "What are you doing?"  
"Making a fool of myself," I answer.  
"Just wondering," he says.

## **EURYDICE AWAITS ORPHEUS IN HELL**

*for Sasha*

I wait for Orpheus in hell  
knowing his lyre is on fire

the distance he must go is  
further than a raindrop  
further than a poem  
drips

in either  
world

.

he thought ahead  
when he brought  
three coins  
and  
an extra  
sandwich

I hope  
Cerberus likes  
pastrami on rye

.

Harpy claws pluck his guts  
and our love is carrion  
on the winding stair  
yet

there is triumph  
and tenderness in his last look

## **INSTALLATION** *for Gay*

Turning off Fulton onto 12  
maneuvering to the left  
no, right

Fan belt whine on the freeway  
skill saw whine in the supermarket

Different scripts reverberate  
in the silent inclined  
box with masking  
tape, paint, brushes, pan  
& roller tumbling  
to the floor

The doors to my senses  
open—I see my room  
in the gallery—  
eyes, ears, nose, mouth

Black rectangles the size of doors  
painted on the interior walls  
thin strips of black  
running parallel  
to the black kick board  
using stick pins, black yarn  
mixed with wire & colored cloth  
neither nest nor web

A handful of fog  
mirrors and masks  
a collection of wrapped thoughts  
& small boxed images  
revealing the true phantom  
speaks the truth

## **FRIENDS**

*for Sito*

A man starts a fire  
in a fire place.

Another man starts a fire  
in a fire pit.

Two friends  
are lit by  
a single flame

that  
dances to a sound  
it hears

in a place  
as round  
as it can be—

a circle of fire,  
a circle of friends.

