

COLLECTED POEMS: 1961-2000

RICHARD DENNER

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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 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

The Physik Garden, www.physikgarden.com

Poetry Tonight, www.poetrytonight.com

The Place Around The Corner, www.1freespace.com/art/olgasearch

dIVE, www.pages.prodigy.net/yog-sothoth

The Junkyard, www.thejunkyard.org

The Half-drunk Muse, www.geocities.com/owatagal

Central California Journal of Poetry, www.solopublications.com

Seeker Magazine (The Gryphon's Nest), www.seekermagazine.com

Dream Forge, www.pcisys.net

Niederngasse, www.neiederngass.com

NuFoto, www.nufoto.com

Bardo Burner, www.dedcenter.com/bardoburner

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

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 concocted &
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

as a bored game

Beware the cost!
food, tires, repairs
3 flats in 200 miles
2 ea. 7.35/15s, one
7.75/15, one 6.55/15
& nothing for a spare
added = 2900
divided by milepost
424 is ideogram *Sze*—
indicates how, in the case
which it supposes, with
firmness & correctness
and (a leader of) age
& experience, there will
be fortune & no error

milepost prosyllagism
water is persistent
and hard edged
 whereas
earth is subtle
falling away and rising

Athabaskan beadwork
works strong talismanic magic
given metaphysically camp context
exempli gratia
fossilized mulosk site
behind graveyard of ghost town
near Dawson Creek or now
at SE85PL & 311PLSE
corner 3 blocks north
the center of Preston

the waters of Ragging River
erased the tell-tale of the trail
be it beadgames go on

DIRT

Dirt makes me itch.
Asphalt hurts my feet.

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 as 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 & Ilisa

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 rearried 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 *limpmine* for *lampmines*
read *linkmines* for *limpmine*
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.

