ROOF: an anthology of poetry from the Naropa Institute, Boulder, Colorado, summer of 1976. $2.00
### ROOF

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PREFACE

Roof brings together many of the poets and students who worked at Naropa Institute's Kerouac School in the summer of 1976. Founded in '74 by Anne Waldman, Allen Ginsberg and Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche, the Kerouac School provides a meeting place for several generations of American poets. Too much fine work was written and unveiled this summer to publish in one or two journals, so a process of selection has been part of making public each poet's work. Our collection presents the authors in more or less the order they presented themselves to the Naropa community.

TS/JS
A FANTASY PIECE FOR HELEN ADAM

The pyramids throbbing to the purr of the Sphinx—
her claws digging in, her luxurious gaze
fix on the quivering horizon land
that lists enthralled in her thought as in a heat
where the great Sun by Day
burns with the fury of a lion's head,
and palms of Night—smouldering
surround the Advent of the Lion—
She broods beyond history upon a plan.

"There was a great emptiness where first I came.
It was like the body of a lion with a woman's breast and face.
It was like a woman's smile that penetrates and shakes
Paradise until a fearful expectation uncoils itself
and speaks from the center of that Place."

She watches with a murderous patience for the emergence of Man.
She kneads the sands with her paws
until from their dreaming depths
secret currents of power arise
stirring her fur with an electric wave,
charging and recharging the glare of her eyes,
all Egypt becoming a country of her hair
invaded by moonlight.

"Long before that great Architect and engineer,
enslaving the multitudes, piled up in stone
his dream of my Image
I was here.
He but erected me where I was.
Mine the lust for my own body in stone,
Mine the ancient lust for the enslavement of Man.
Mine the whips and the insurmountable way.
Mine the weights under which the builders groan.
Mine the force. Mine the sway."

From the heart of black Africa
the Nile pours forth
to lie at her feet, supine, spreading,
hypnotized.

TEMPERANCE

Fate
Become
Me. Well.

Time is my wake:
Insinuated stirrings.
Fanning loss,
In sloughed-off air.
Here
I leave
Myself. Behind,
My effects rattle in a void:
My ears cannot return
To the sounds
Of small disintegrations.
Faith
Keep me
Strong. In acquiescence
Wholly will I make myself a story:
When I die my eyes
Will roll back in my head
Like thrown dice.

AFTER CHRISTENING

Martinis for quenches, 
Perhaps I said: munem, &
Clarity, a thing innate in mirrors, 
Hunted
From the still waters
Of my coming delirium/ 
Was I listing 
To meet myself? Dulled reminders 
(A shock of hair "in the drink")
Well composed within the crystal's focal rim.
Buzzed round with peripheral falling light, ha-ha-
To be the transcendental "transparent eye".
A saint, & photogenic.

A SONG FOR ORIGINS

The cry subsumes the cry,
All coincides. The child is faceless,
Then he learns to lie.
The thrown rock parts the water.
Smile the first smile.
The still, unbroken stream
Can't turn the eye. This flood
Is simultaneous, foregone,
Until some single cell deserts the blood.
The child is faithless,
Then he learns to die.
A wrecking wave revives me, & I
Elope where the ocean has never been.
I am the truant’s laughter, the air
Inciting continual origon.

LAMENT

Because I could not see what she saw
I invented the burning city that gives no heat,
I planted the pillar of salt that is no resource,
& now, as their shadows wave at my feet,
I imagine the horrified look she gave
& salvage her look that has turned from me.
I almost forget the pillar, the unfinished temple,
My marriage to impossibility. I keep finding
The fact that abandons me: still turning,
Too violent & rapid to feel
Like colors that blend on a spinning wheel
Whose motion I neither inspire nor postpone;
I want to wear her, to wear her out,
But my face is no more expressive than stone.
Though it shatters me, I must break within
Where she stares beneath my forehead’s drawn skin,
Toward the mended vision reversed past my eyes,
Toward a law I cannot recognize,
To the haven where I am accursed & discarded,
Where the wheel is stopped & I break apart
Into colors that I have never known.

INTRUSIONS

I.
Place: settings
& what I will affixed
Just there, behind my eyes,
Stock
Twin-barreled imaginations
As fluted bullets
Sing the air in torrid revolutions
To lodge
(1n the hinduight)
A transited deer,
Deep in my aims,
Sparking this tableau
Of redshirted weather
& a faint
bloodless
skyletting;
To breathe: I can motive,
At least there is air to battle!,
& recoil.
Somewhere between our faces
“An expression of perfect peace”.
II.
Eternal parallels
Of rigored legs
Fork a pathull air
Stranded with rain,
Gersatz goalposts/
The end of the season.

George Franklin

TUNE FOR MID-NIGHT BELLS.

Clang kirk bells o’ Scotland
For rash vows between
The fierce Earl o’ Bothwell
And Mary, his Queen.
Rash vows binding lovers
Bailth reck’c the bed bold,
While the wrath o’ Lord Darnley
Stars under the mould.
The fair Queen o’ Scotland
Tae hinst she my field.
Since the Deil lit the fire-works
At Kirk o’ the Field,
Cry Murder! Cry Murder!
She sees every place
The wrath o’ Lord Darnley
W’ the pox on his face.

“O! Darnley, my husband,
Forgive me I crave.
If the murdered forgive
Whaur they rot in the grave.
I wish, in the darkness
I lay by your side.
For in a’ my lost kingdom
I’ve nowhere tae hide.”
Tae her grim lover Bothwell
She runs in a fright.
Like iron his arms
In the ghoul haunted night.
“Lie easy, lie easy,
My Queen, and my whore,
Though the wrath o’ Lord Darnley
Lifts the latch on our door.”

“O! fuck me, James Bothwell!
Oh! fuck me, and tell
That you’ll love your poor Mary
In the bon-fires o’ Hell.”

“Whaur flame loups forever
Alane ye mun smart.
The Queen is my doxie,
But my wife has my heart.”

Clang bells tolling slow
For the end o’ that tale.
A crown in the dust,
And a winged pirate sail.
The star o’ royal Mary
Sink dark, and aghast.
In the bed o’ James Bothwell,
That burns in the past.
Hush, kirk bells o’ Scotland
Sat harsh tongued and sad.
Now Beauty’s be-headed,
And Bothwell died mad,
Chained down in a dungeon
In Denmark’s drench land;
That once had the tall Queen
Like a hawk tae his hand.

Helen Adam
Imagined green but it’s brown
Far flung, foot-loose, lapdog town
Like one drunk in an airport
Waiting for the bus.
There is no emergency in the prolific
Just as this water held
Over a constant but low heat
Does not boil.
How can I talk to you
If I do not know who you are?
Or, how is it then
That you seem to speak
So easily to me?
By wind, wind blown
Resolving to pay no attention
To that which had before,
Like thoughts which refuse to become
What we want them to be,
Which follow their own course.
If all the saints were to circle
Slowly around the sun
Would the sky be any brighter,
Could he see what he had found?
Those mountains are not
As close as they look,
They are several miles away,
And you are not here beside me
As I thought you were
As I awoke

ALTHOUGH STUDENTS NOW IS THE TIME

To write a love poem to the balcony.
O’kiwi fruit you are delicious!
But somewhat complicated
Though not the least bit haughty!
Standing out here eating you,
I am reminded of the young boy
Who had studied most of the major dance techniques,
Ballet, hatha yoga, and t’ai chi ch’uan
Before he knew how to read!
What a smart ass.
On the other hand,
Thelma thought to herself,
I wouldn’t be caught faulting her feet either!
Though none of us ever felt comfortable
With that grotesque expression
Appearing on his face.
Who, three years ago, would have thought
That we still don’t know who Thelma is,
Except for what we can gather
From the birth certificate in Sandusky, Ohio?
I for one would have found it
A tasteless joke to look upon.
But suspended there staring, we did
And none of you now alive remember it.

I come to you from the dead,
Where I have been having a pretty good time,
Considering the unique nature of my earthly demise
Through excess of hyperbole.
Today they announced that Thelma
Would be joining us soon.
I cannot contain my excitement!
Though Sandusky, I dare say, is grieving.

APHRODISIAC - STOMATITUS

I should have taken that magenta
Sky when they showed it to me,
But inexplicably, I spent the money
On some unspecified shellfish instead.
How clearly it seems to me now
I should never have bought those shellfish.
They have been a perpetual trouble for me,
And for others, too, it would appear that
“Last year some three million passengers
On the nation’s domestic airlines
Were left up in the air
After their planes landed,
Perhaps the most amazing fact
About that statistic is that
It represents progress.
What no figures can reflect, however, is the cloud
Of anxiety that hovers over all travelers.”

This is a strange country you have brought me
to, I must confess.
Not like the one I came from that had fleas
And plants and other interesting things.
Outside the window mineral rainbows
Imitate speech beside the apple castle
Our Prince lives in, while we,
I and those others, walk the streets.
Between the smoke and some arduous pretext
In the background the lashed midday blaze interrupts
The morning. They are not to go back empty
Handed, they are not to return
In their diminutive form scraped the maidens.
Still, one sees no reason why
The, statues have departed.

I wonder what I am doing sailing away tomorrow afternoon.
I wonder why I had an ancestor like that.
I wonder what Robert meant about what William had to say.
I am trying very hard to figure
This out before those children escape that school
And start smearing their peanut butter sandwiches
All over the sidewalk, so
That I cannot hesitate, but am obliged
Out of honesty
To continue moving.
Dear friends, do not fear,
There will still be reversals in the class struggle!
O You, whom fate has chosen
To be our enemies, take heed, and stop
The foul phrases you've been singing.
Or be prepared to live doomed like the driven hummingbird,
Always on the wing.

You are,
When I said you were beautiful
What I meant was you look like a truck.
He is taking this opportunity
To clear the matter up,
He has abandoned his parallax.

What a Prince!
What a country!
O Dorothy
Surely it was without thinking
You chose to leave us.

---

ALTERNATES TO INSOMNIA: # 1

pull boots back on
grab a friend
walk one block east
five blocks south
International House of Pancakes
get a booth in a corner
& a pretty waitress
order:
coffee (lots of cream & sugar), three eggs over easy,
country ham, buckwheat pancakes smothered in butter &
boysenberry syrup, a side of toast, orange juice.
more coffee
talk & smoke

30 VII: 76
3:00 AM Boulder, Co.
Jap in oxygen mask flying high-speed jet with machine-guns.

All over Europe millions have heard what I heard in high school

Old Theater! of Life!
The melody's so Calm so familiar--

I am a hero in the balcony box, I might have been Steadhal whispering to the police--

& Ezra Pound in the same room with his picture in the Eternal newspapers--

with the Chorus of youths dancing la! la! la! to his silent observe & a box full of Poets feeling mellow! & hundreds audience satisfied to hear the opera tonite--

life looking at life-- Harmonious Music accompanies us all from under the stage.

Giovanni's a simple story he gets angry & gets killed by Hell--

The statue Comes to Life, after many Desires chanted for the living hand--

O Lord of all Music, of all Poets, lord of opera & stages, Lord of Dreams, Lord of Desire, Lord of Illusions, Lord of old whitehaired Men near their Death, Lord of Audiences, Spectators, Lord of Selves, Lord of old Houses, of Stone Cities, Lord of Nations, Lord of History--

Lord of planets circulating in their worlds--

O Lord of All--

Bless every Italian tourist in this theater tonite, as I bless myself and these actors as I bless myself in these Spectators & in Ezra Pound whose tiny pupils' silent Calm answered my Blessing gaze with Tiny Blink of blue space, ocean color, ancient dream

Heaven air, wrinkle-lidded eye--

Spoletto Opera House July 7, 1967

FROM THE JOURNALS

The tiny theater of heads a lighted stage where old Cockknockers sing To rows of ourselves balding, white silken haired, or bearded with golden smiles Sitting velvet chair'd agaze at Mozart's music dream recurring with body - Which is real, the play or audience? Don Giovanni's lived a hundred times our age old Pound with tiny pupils sits quiet in the darkness as the scene backdrop falls behind a figure in black singing to him on the stage.

I've heard this music before
THE FURNACE TENDER WAITS FOR HIS COFFEE BREAK

Tom Swartz

The glow of hot iron
cools to white dust—
Jet engines scream in Chicago
In June, near solstice, he sees
apparition of dust,
sunbeam moving toward east benches
with sunrise
In winter, the mornings are dark
The furnace tender stares at the whistle

THE WEATHERMAN'S APOLOGY

However evaporation moisture cloud drift
It rained on Florida St. Petersburg
But not on the wind phantom white shirt
Not on the man in the grey car
A red pick-up one block ahead
Of the man in the grey car
Not on the Hotel Boulderado
Not where Japonica Way meets Juniper Street

IF I COULD

Leona Foss

If I could stay out of rainbows
I could balance three stop plates
One side-order of salad
Two cups of coffee And an orange-aid
For the inconsiderate rules
Pleasing his inconsiderate wife
That pleases their illegitimate heir
That I smile at For their quarter tip
That do not have the consideration
To stay home and mess together
Their own wet crumbs
That inconsiderate Needing waited on
Keeping me out of rainbows

If I could stay out of rainbows
I could stand behind
An artificial counter
Nonchalantly arranged
With artificial smellings
Colors for the idle money
Of those that stay out of rainbows
And have artificial idle money
Keeping me out of rainbows

If I could stay out of rainbows
I could be Nightingale in a white dress
No Its painted technicolor now
Pretending Tender-Loving-Care
And smile at and the smiling
Right-arm of the doctor
But the doctors
The Doctor's right arm shocks
It is the quickest-way-for-the-doctor-too
Pretending Healing - Empathy
And my accepting right arm is loaded
With sprayed-red roses
And my stretched pounding The hands
Of those that stay out of rainbows
Appraising my rascous aria
Keeping me out of rainbows

If I could stay out of rainbows
I could stuff envelopes Wrap packages
Sack groceries Sell stamps Groom dogs
Say Number please Tan a hide
I could seem a seam
I could strut a picket line
If I could stay out of rainbows
I could twist hair Back-combing the face
So those when they left my shop
Were as unattractive as twisted hair
Leasing me More attractive then they
If I could stay out of rainbows
I could be a school-child teacher
Teaching child to stay out of rainbows
If I could stay out of rainbows
I could soil the seed Mow the grass
Emasculate trees Enuch a song bird
Dad fish from ultimate
I could soar down eagles
And I could swat an ant
Instead of pink-finger rescuing drowning flies
I could baby-talk the world
If I could stay out of rainbows
I could body-foil the pine waftings
Burrow the lava of the hard-core rock
Swim the tidal labyrinth of my era of see
If I could stay out of rainbows
All men's arms would want and hold me
For whenever would one man's arms
Ever be enough ribbon for a rainbow
If I could stay out of rainbows
I could ride a white horse
On streets of gold
With my hair of gold
Exposing only the whiteness
Ovaling my madonna face
And the bead-strings on the horses' toes
If I could stay
YOU TAKE YOUR PLEASURE WHERE YOU CAN FIND IT

Somebody said that
Like saying the sea is a woman
You must know by now
The things that happen
Take on meaning afterwards
Even if chance is the bottom line
Which I don't believe for a second
While I sit in a borrowed leather coat
Eating potato chips in the late, the very latest
Afternoon (nobody needs to know)
Drinking Cabernet Sauvignon
Smoking Camels
Contemplating the stem of my wine glass
What it holds up
What it lets down
North Coast Wine Country
From Sonoma to Ukiah
1976

RIVERSONG

Bodies are important. Why else
Would they drag the river
so long?
The river is a single thought;
it don't stop it for a second.
Brother, jammed in the sluicelips
till the foam breaks him apart,
don't care, don't care, don't care.

TWO DEATHS

The lace
Of spoken breathing fades quite quickly, becomes
Something it has no part in, the chairs and
The mugs used by the new young tenants, whose glance
Is elsewhere. The body rounds out the muted
Magic, and sighs.

Unkind to want
To be here, but the way back is cut off:
You can only stand and nod, exchange stares, but
The time of manners is going, the woodpile in the corner
Of the lot exudes the peace of the forest. Perennially,
We die and are taken up again. How is it
With us, we are asked, and the voice
On the old Edison cylinder tells it: obliquity,
The condition of straightness of these tutorials,
Firm when it is held in the hand.

He goes out.
The empty parlor is as big as a hill.

John Ashbery
PHOTOSYNTHESIS

"... il ne va pas plus loin
que l'oeil son de sa tulipe..."
La Brurye

My good friend helped rent a house,
helped me move in.
Then he left his wife and moved in with me,
brought his brother, cook, and two rooms of furniture
and requested I join his household.
My wife objected and scolded me daily.
Now downstairs in flitting dagnires
these bandits bathe the minister of education.
Trapped in my tower, giddy,
insolent,
with forty empty oil jars
I hear them carouse.

Through the garden I'll escape.
I'll ascend anew, ignite the flowers,
crank birds up, hoist trees from mud
and unroll all before you, O Shahriyar.
But the wall, spike-topped,
blocks me like this
shaved blue politico's chin impedes my progress with the big boys.

Being above gives no advantage.
I can jump only in.
Hack, hack, hack.
Work on the bars.
Throw out all waste filings
next day in my breakfast rubbish.
Take up singing cereal box backs,
seed catalogues day and night to cover my noise.

Hack, hack, hack.
Every stroke of the gardener's hoe
among rows of wrinkled lettuce
drags me purple through the roots.
I gasp for axe
to cut the link to cloth,
to ascent tells where moist loam clings my nose.

Downstairs he walks on Helena,
a British Colonel's big, blond widow.
Between submission and dark madness
rattling down my arn like a head of state's funeral,
nhalf out the window I catch my pants.

In the street musicians play.
The gardener purposely stops work
and how between thighs rubs his hands.
He bends and pries loose a frozen clod
and crumbles it to yellow dust
and catching my eye, waves from oblivion.
Snapdragons stay closed until a strong bumblebee
forces his way into the flower,
to the site of the pollen,
to the pollen catching stigma and rewarding nectaries.

Finally one three a.m.
I sneak to the top of the stairs
and peer down.
"Shh," I say.
"You shh.
"No, you shh."
lavender  chicory  frilly aster juniper
succulent asphodel daffodil asparagus
large quaking grass mustard stalks
goldendrop everlasting nettles tamarisk everlasting
sorghum hound’s tongue periwinkle oleander
pomegranate apple pear plum
sorrel daffodil onion aspen plum
geanum agave delphinium ephedra
zinnia balsam aster portulaca dahila rose
anise orange olive grape
cockscomb alder ash mastic apricot
Sunflower. Sage figs caper.
“Alce, savory buttercup.”
“Hyacinth. Bougainvilia corncockle?”
Sweet alyssum mirits silver fir.
Dutal thistles tear rough dog’s tail.
Primrose brooms snowflake’s orchid buglom.
“Jasmine, mimosa. Honeysuckle narciscus.”
“Gladiolus.”
Retharrow. Judas tree snapdragon rues poppy (somnifernum),
firethorns trefoil.
St. John’s Wort, long tendrilled yellow vetching, palms stonepine . .
Crocan!
Fuchsia: blue-love-in-a-mist.
I was walking a dark street
when an old man passed, hood pulled low.
who twisted his ring and looked at me.
Too much: the man’s fear of me, a stranger, or his power.
A pain went into my back.
I laughed and took to my bed.
Sunflowers, pregnant with next year, bulge.
Sparrows fluttering at their heads devour all the seed
and leave them drooping.
But in frenzy one bean drops.
Black speck, dove, in my eye.
Watering can, broken tooth rake
adrift in a hanging garden.

James Sherry

VIKING MUMMY

big stuff nearing or mooring
swept face
something skiting down sinister side
hangs choy
this is audio news service
we musn’t forget Viking II still exists
if picture confirms what radar tells us
“Flattered I’m sure”
we’re on a time line to land
wee hours
late July
Anubis, please take care of the Mummy!
Dieu Anubis soigne la Momie
my mind is on the static dishes, their daintiness

Anne Waldman

SUSPICION

shank reaching for good book
withdraw recalcitrant bolts
have some desire for provinces, Mathilde
the mean men are kinder there
small streets never worry
to back them up
there’s a place in the middle of me
stalking you
TO ALLEN GINSBERG

The girl whose tits I was admiring
asked me how to spell urge.
His father is dying.
He is wearing a suit.
The other poet is late.
He offers to entertain.
The other poet is always late.
He is always offering.
His father is dying.
He is wearing a suit.
But we are meditators
and can sit still.
His father is dying.
He is wearing a suit.
The pale girl says in a firm voice:
I will say my poem by heart.
I will say it loud enough without standing up.
She says it so softly that only she can hear it.
The man with the tape recorder winces.
His father is dying.
He is wearing a suit.
Now the old handsome Michael is not here.
Now the young handsome Anne is not here.
In spite of everything Allen is here, being
solicitous to the old man in dead white hair
who wanders into the room like an apparition.
That old man is here.
Allen is here.
He has not left his students.
The young man says if I were dying
I would be upset if my son stayed to teach a class.
The young man also asked me if I ever screwed young girls.
Yes, my father is dying.
He may be dead.
His twin just died.
I thought how strange it must be to have a twin die of old age.
My father is dying.
I will wear a suit.
June 30, 1976

CUTTING THROUGH TRUNGPA

You think you are a big shit
just because you realize that you are nothing.
Around here
I am the biggest nothing of them all
and don't you forget it.
June 30, 1976

THE HITCHIKERS

They burn you
like the berries of mountain ash in August,
standing by the road,
clearly defined.
Autumnal brilliant, heads
scored from waiting
in the sun.
How can
you pass them up?
But you do,
and dream each night of a hell,
where you are a hitchhiker,
and no one will ever stop to pick you up.

Excuses:
I'm a woman alone;
I'm moving all my books;
I need the time for thinking;
one of them might murder me;
but really, it is the look each one gives me
of need,
derperate need,
pick me up, I'll fail to reach my goal,
and that need frightens me,
so I look away,
speed on,
dream each night of a mountain ash
with its bunches of orange berries gleaming
like the failures of my life,
burning beautifully on the tree,
Oh, hitchhikers, hitchhikers,
And they remind me
that I drive across country often, looking for your face
in each car I pass,
or which passes me, knowing you would not hitchike,
thinking of the two years I spent with you,
reliving them over and over,
knowing I had everything I wanted,
but like Midas was silent and still with the gold I had touched,
feeling as if I had been buried under a ton of diamonds,
still feel the dust of them glinting on me as I drive across country,
my hair sparkling with the brilliance you left,
and those hitchikers
reminding me of hell.
That I had what I wanted once,
and lost it,
failed, watched myself failing,
still not understanding why I failed,
but knowing I did,
and still passing – 65, 75, 85 miles an hour,
those hitchikers,
burning by the side of the road,
burning
like the berries of the beautiful mountain ash,
burning like my tongue
on fire,
burning me, as I sleep protected in my rings of fire,
the gleaming car which hurries me through America,
and all I have
is not enough,
Mountain ash, not the ash from out of which a bird with glinting neck feathers who flies suddenly up on the road in front of the swift car, would come, not the ash on the forehead of holy sinners, not the ash of immortality.

Ash - a tree, with its berries not the colour of any jewel, not the colour of blood, but a rare and exceptional colour, given only to plants; and I see each one of you, as I pass on the road, burning like the autumn berries, and the beauty makes me pass by quickly.

In my car, is an altar, sacrificial stone and knife, the tears of blame and understanding, and blood; all the blood my body has lost; Oh, hitchhikers, hitchhikers, you would not want to travel with me. You would not want to travel with me.

(c) 1976 Diane Wakoski

PELVIS III

Sky world through bone's seen from other side
ALL space ends
open
facing
a planet bleached to the bone.

Walking white calcinated
narrowbone
drying nicotine yellow porous spongue tongue in crumbs.

Thick depth of light starrched limbs, the pelvis grown by an eye
stretches out of sight.

MALANGA

Those two black circles those black/white lines just five spaces someone has torn the world into strips
and stares at them in darkness

Diane Wakoski

Jan Garden Castro

SO GOING AROUND CITIES to Doug & Jan Oliver

"I order you to operate. I was not made to suffer."
Probing for old wills, and friendships, for to free
to New York City, to be in History. New York City being History at that time." "And I traded my nights for Intensity; & I barter my right to Gold; & I'd traded my eyes much earlier, when I was circa say seven years old
for ears to hear Who was speaking, & just exactly who was being told . . . ." & I'm glad
I hear your words so clearly
& I would not have done it differently

I'm amused at such simplicity, even so,
inside each & every door. And now I'm with you, instantly,
& I'll see you tomorrow night, and I see you constantly, hopefully

one or the other of us is often, to the body-mind's own self
more or less out of sight! Taking walks down any street, High
Street, Main Street, walk past my doors! Newtown; Nympl Rd
(on the Meal); Waveland
Meeting House Lane, in old Southampmpton; or BelleVue Road
in England, etcetera

Other roads: Manhattan; see them there where open or shut up behind
"I've traded sweet times for answers . . ."
"They don't serve me anymore." They still serve me on the floor.

Or,
as now, as flour. Now we look out the windows, go in &
out the doors. The Door.
(That front door which was but & then at that time My door).
I closed it

On the wooing of Helen. "And so we left schools for her."
For She is not one bit fiction; & she is easy to see;
& she leaves me small room

For contradiction. And she is not alone; & she is not one bit
lonely in the large high room, &
invention is just vanity, which is plain. She is
the heart's own body, the body's own mind in itself
self-contained.

& she talks like you; & she has created truly not single-handedly
Our tragic thing, America. And though I would be I am not afraid
of her, & you also not. You, yourself, I,
Me, myself, me. And no, we certainly have not pulled down
our vanity: but
We wear it lightly here,
here where I traded even,

health, for sanity; here
where we live day-by-day
on the same spot.

My English friends, whom I love & miss, we talk to ourselves here,
& we two
rarely fail to remember, although we write seldom, & so must seem
poet forevers.

In the stained sky over this morning the clouds seem about to burst.
What is being remembering
Is how we are, together. Like you we are always bothered, except
by the worst; & we are living
as with you we also were
ished, only, mostly, by changes in the weather. For Oh dear hearts,
When precious bay blossoms her face / it's just our way
of keeping amused.
That we offer of & as excuse. Here's to you. All the very best.
What's your pleasure? Cheers,

Ted Berrigan
L. G. T. H.

Queen Victoria dove headfirst into the swimming pool, which was filled with blue milk.
I used to be baboons, but now I am person.
I used to be secretary to an eminent brain surgeon, but now I am quite ordinary. Ooop! I've spilled the beans!
I wish mountains could be more appealing to the eye.
I wash sometimes. Meanwhile Two-ton Tony Galento began to rub beef gravy over his entire body.
I wish you were more here.
I used to be Millicent, but now I am Franny.
I used to be a bowl of black China tea, but now I am walking back to the green fields of the people's republic.
Herman Melville is elbowing his way through the stringbeans toward us.
Oscar Levant handed the blue pill to Oscar Wilde during the fish course. Then he dapped him.
I used to be blue, but now I am pretty. I wish broken bad person.
I wish not to see you tonight.
I wish to exchange this chemistry set for a goldfish please.
I used to be a little fatty, but now I am President of The United States.

IN BLOOD "Old gods work"

"I gather up my tics & tilts, my stutter & imaginaries into the "up" leg
In this can-can . . . " Are you my philosophy
If I love you, which I do . . .?" "I want to know
It sensationally like the truth;" "I see in waves
Through you pass me;" "But now I stop . . ." "I can love
What's for wear?" "But I dredge what I've bottomlessly canned
When I can't tell you . . . " I love natural
Coffee beautifully . . ." I'm conjugally love
Loose & tight in the same working" "I make myself
Feature by feature" "The angel from which each thing is most itself, from each, each,
"I know there's a faithful anonymous performance"
"It wish never to abandon you" "I me room be" to
"Burn! this is not negligible, being poetic, & not feeble"

Ted Berrigan

Naples, the bay
white sit-down shoulders and
water blue eyes
warm flapping monkey plants
glo-red breeze swingers
beautiful hollywood elephants
hitting reeds
warm Wrapped HEART mountains
hitting volcanoes
GLOWING GREEN hard fishermen
Now floor suits house
up in sleep

REFLEX
iris petaling closed, thin
black scallops
of metal overlapping curve
on curve,
the overlap growing,
center hole smaller and smaller,
glass eye bulging, shining
less, and the
shutter,
light breaking click, dark
framed opposite
of an eye blink
one
heat of light, and
back into the dark cool waiting
room
film wound waiting
I am caught
still.

Tapa Kearney

Ann Vachon
from EXCHANGES OF EARTH AND SKY

WESTERN GREBE
above black, below white
crested on top
neck nearly the length of the body
... (continued)

PIED-BILLED GREBE
podilymbus podiceps
or hell-diver, devil-diver, water-witch,
... (continued)

RED-WINGED GREBE
Agelaius
... (continued)

TRI-COLORED REDWING
Agelaius
... (continued)
pipp-pip

trick

the thing that
hardens my cock the most
is being way
deep inside you
moving
impaling you, until
I could throw myself back
& you'd come up
wiggling in the air like a white
fleshy butterfly
talking in a voice
like your hair,
stuck there

BROWN THRASHER
toxostoma rufum
or
bill curved downward at the end
brown
or
cinnamon-rufous
white/ black
nest: near ground in thorny vines
cage
3 to 5
desperate reddish-brown long
protection--heroic--destroy
Mr. Job's eye
most of the tones
are like those of the flute or piccolo
(the catbird's
includes phrases which are sotto voce)
be sings his song twice over
lest you should think he never could recapture
that first fine careless rapture
really, really?
"my creamy breast is speckled
black and brown"
fox-colored thrush, sandy mocker, mavis, red mavis, song thrush
illness

+ + + + + + + + + +

every thing works in its being, no thing can work outside its being, fire is nowhere able to work as in wood.
God works above the beings in the distance, where he can sit himself; he works in no-being, before there was
being, God worked; he worked being when there was no being yet, coarse masters say God is pure being; he
is as far above being as the highest angel is above a gnat, I would say something not right if I called God a
being, as much so as if I called the sun bleached or black. God is neither this nor that, and a master says:
who believes that he has known God, and thereby would like to know something, does not know God.
if I apprehend copper in gold, then it is present.

LATE SPRING

DaNahari School has a huge boa constrictor snake kept in the fish tank in Doug's classroom. They feed it rats
that Roe gives them. One day in meditation Roe's husband Johnny decides it's not right to give the rats to the
snake. Roe stops giving them. Doug worries the snake is starving and tells Rick. The vet told them a snake like
that could live for six weeks on one rat.

Roe's rats multiply fast. She and the ten year old students do maze experiments with them in Doug's room. Each
student gets a rat of his or her own. The kids name them. "No, Rick, I won't give poor Matty to the snake."

Five and a half weeks later, Doug keeps worrying, 'the snake is starving.' He tells Rick at least once a day. Rick
knows the snake is ok, can go for six weeks without food. But out of agitation, he goes to the kids' rat cages.
One kid offers up his rat: too big a rat. Rick takes it anyway and puts it in the aquarium with the snake. It's
3:00: school's over; the phone rings. Rick goes to answer it. When he comes back, the rat is gnawing at the
snake's flesh.

Rick grabs the rat, kills it. The rat vomits up what he's eaten. It's the partial digestion of two earlier rats lying
still live and a half weeks later in the snake's stomach.

Summer vacation comes. The kids come to school and tell Doug "My mother won't let me take home Matty for
the summer." Rick takes the rats to his house, keeps them in a cage. They multiply quickly. Rick goes to Oregon
for two weeks. Virginia, Ed and their cat house-sit his house. They don't want to spend money on cat food and
begin doing experiments with the rats. Take some out of the cage and take odds on which one the cat will eat.
They start rating them to see if they can get back to the original black mother. Some small litter of rats get
away.

Rick has chickens; it's Fall. The rats live under the chicken coop. They get bold and dash out and eat the chicken
feed early in the morning. They multiply and the young ones, too, get bold, dash out and eat the chicken feed.
Rick starts shooting the rats with a pistol. Puts the feed out, stands 20 feet away, makes it a game and shoots
them mornings one by one.

One female rat is left. Rick says 'What the heck' and doesn't try to get her. Two weeks later, he puts a bag of
chicken feed away and comes to it a few hours later. There is less. He wonders, then forgets. He finds a kernel
of chicken feed in his boot one morning. One in a cup, an open book. The rat is storing food for the winter.

It's Thanksgiving. Rick finds gnawed holes in his wool sweaters--a kernel of chicken feed hidden there; in his
good wool blanket--food stored there for winter. He's tired. In desperation he runs to the door, throws it open.
It's snowing hard outside, the woods around his house. Runs out throws up his hands and yells 'I need a cat!'

Five hundred feet away, in the blizzard, Rick's house deep in the woods, he hears a cat, cut eats rats, 'Here
kitty, kitty.'

Taos, New Mexico
wakes me locked in 
churches of wrath
i follow yr dark path
of prayers knowing
you're honest jesus
raging naked in the twilight
of every season
you'll fuck me

two workaday banquets of video
lost street cries
of "love buy me love"

how it tastes
yr soft tear
moans all night
until the harp of yr voice
makes the morning sway
with our color &
rage of holy sun

— isle of skye

TWO SHOES

1.
Wanting as realy
as shoes rest
not on their soles
— red from Spain—
to balance gladly
not exist in a
simultaneous gorilla
of various plant
hiccups, perjury
of remembering,
a sentimental horror
of not being strange of being strange
— red from Spain red
high platformed, awk-
ward, beautiful
shoes, munificence
of color, down home

2.
Are you a very nice boy?

Last night,
every one could see his fellow soldiers
alive in the future with their mortal wounds
I could see some ones, my companion
could see his entire stricken regiment
in主治 to me, their every wound
and death they displayed
alive in the future

everyone knows there's nothing more
beautiful than an old form, like a
rose returning, you can see it in
the future. I can. You see
the future wounded and dead grinning
the main difficulty in dealing
with their masterpieces is the beauty
of my red shoes and the child's straw chair
they are in composition with. It is shiny
straw, not as shiny as the silver bow
of the dearest river seen aloft
from a holding pattern; a warm shine
not piercing; friend. I dreamed
I found out for sure I wasn't a neo-Nazi
(on the other hand they were as usual executing a
lot of sensitive people in wheelchairs)

I went back
to the alley house where I was 3 through 6 years
and the rooms are so large! dishevelled
but fall, fulsome
and on the chair at my desk
there baby Anselm at baby Edmund's current age
how did he get there already? for me to hug
well he's my baby I forget sometimes he's
supposed to be here. I'm very happy.

Used to think this house so tawdry
where, I used to think,

my father was so naively
patriotic. But now I know he loved
the planet, which is this room in America.
I apologized to him for crying, when he was dying
he told me it was my prerogative.
It was certainly an old form.
If that door is always there nerves restless sea top light on and in the green that encloses distorts the eye watery green door that encloses me will distort me into everyday infinity only distortion will get up through sea into heaven green heaven, the demon, sieved through distortion's formal door, which is second nature?

DULCINEA

It's another, night midsummer. A Puritan girl shopgirl, as the earth as the abode of mankind, considered to be encircled by a serpent. She is proof spirit, A dollar. I am conjectured. I say to her of desire, the regulation dear. A transistor. A deep! She renders a song by singing. This way is how I don't talk though there, there's the pink towel & on this only one the sized misty eye – I'm here; but so constricted by the serpent, she must breathe & intone what is offered, or nothing impure it to the dulcimer

I'm such a pushover for her wrong & clear, like would-be sly eyes—utter dust eyes—dear my dear girl world, we mean it so much, fusing in darkness, to dulcify a court as formally as the tree loses its leaves, to mean it so much

TALKING HOUSE. ST. PETERSBURG FLORIDA.

For hours each day we watched the house.

Palm tree lined boulevards. Remember flying over flat street grid houses— they are squares and are evenly distributed. Sidewalks. Fortified painted green benches for the elderly. I made a right turn onto a wide unshaded street in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Drove the two-tone aqua green 1965 buick sedan up on the scorched yellow brown lawn and parked it diagonally in front of a small white clapboard house.

Three cement steps cracked and collapsing like shifting foundations baking and cooling . . . weeds grow between the parched openings of the steps. Walked across purple grey slate walk– the stones chipped and cracked with crude pictographs. Three cement steps cracked house weeds grow walking across silent village the reeds turning slowly yellow hair boy squatting into the bright black shoes transfixed on slate.

A small boy, white t-shirt, shorts, and black shoes, bored and squinting into the bright sunlight; his attention dulled by the afternoon fever. Soundless daydreams muffled by the gardener's lawn mower, etched on the slate surface with a bent nail the boy had carried around in his pants pocket. I patted him on the head and smiled: he didn't look up.

Ants piled in the shadows under the slate corners. Small collectives scrambled across the path to the house. I stepped delicately for fear of squishing colletto chameleon belly green aspic insides out.

The boy looked up. No recognition. I stared into his grey eyes. Paul Phasia, he had been there for hours each day watching the massacres. Monstrous Madame begs you to tea. The soft red meat carried away by Floridian ant soldiers. In the backroom of the house I found his belly and thighs. Repiles spread terror in small Floridian ant village; panic tore through the uniform lines of orderly inhabitants who had been busily carrying supplies to the Monstrous Madame for the construction of yet another hill, a tribute to her reign.

The yellow haired boy stood up opened his fly and interrupted the battle between the colletto and the ant army with a hot golden shower. His mother, watching from the kitchen window, rapped loudly on the pane and Paul was set to spend the rest of the afternoon sitting beside her in the screened-in porch while she did her ironing.

Dead vines woven into the cross-hatching of trellises on the front of the house dried out. Bits of brittle leaf scattered like hot ashes in the stirring of the thick afternoon air.

The boy sat inside the porch at the right side of the house. The rattan rocker squeaked back and forth like two mindless birds as he stared at two large black flies buzzing around a hole in the screen.

The front door was latched from the inside– I reached my hand through the torn bottom of the screen window beside the door and turned the knob. The door was on a tight spring; it opened out and slammed loudly behind me. A finely polished oak chaise longue with faded flowery print linen cover and a dust covered matching oak side table huddled in the corner of the porch near the rocking boy. Phasia, humming to himself, did not turn in my direction as I walked past him into the interiors.

A traveler within the labyrinths of the ancient vaults where Aladdin found his wonderful lamp while Maugrim, the conjurer, waits impatiently above; Paul Phasia brings back secrets to Dr. Sinn Jarboe who notes everything down very carefully. Dr. Jarboe asks Paul about events and the boy tells him what is written and what is not written.

The living room was sparsely furnished. Several threadbare armchairs, a faded red couch facing the windows, a dining room table and several bookcases standing against the wall up to the low ceiling. The walls painted a dull yellow. Shades down over the windows and the coarse calico curtains drawn together.

I walked into the kitchen. The refrigerator was empty except of a bottle of water, a serving dish with the dried bony remains of a roat, and two cans of premium beer. Opening a can I kicked the refrigerator door shut. On the dining room table: soiled white linen cloth, three cups and saucers containing shallow pools of cold coffee, and a plate of quartered tomatoes, abandoned— the soft red meat shrinking inward from the transparent skin whose edges cringed and curled.

Alice Notley

Richard S. Elowich
In one of the back rooms the doctor sat at the end of his bed, reading a text on sleep disorders. A tape machine on the dresser, the red record button pushed down. Between the patched openings of the steps— a silent village the reel turning slowly be listens patiently with earphones cool reptilian blue eyes three cement steps a woman opens fire a girl rides her black shoes to the battle humming paperback in his hands from the inside behind me remember my next contact swept away like the square houses from the grid. Latent image, return to the grid. I walked in from the outside chasing the alley for hours. Segments of the grid can be cut out and pasted in elsewhere. No one will know the difference.

In the adjacent room a tall skinny boy, naked except for a pair of blue socks, was sprawled on the divan, his eyes closed, feet arched, knees bent slightly. Randall Row. His right hand gripped his cock. Panic tearing through his ribs, thin layer of goosehumped skin quivering, he came; orderly inhabitants out of his cock promised me a ride to the end of the street. Quick milky silver shot out. His hand still gripping it like the horn of a western saddle. Shaking it. Shaking it loose. Hot pearls flying off the end of a string landed in puddles on his belly and thighs. His head relaxed and he slept.

SURFACING

Don't believe it is easy speaking this clearly leaves no room to hide clear water magnifies fishes your hooks rain down more accurately but then through this clearing I can see you better also: your transparent skin your bones standing straight or crouched down inside if I avoid you you will know it was on purpose if I surface you will not be able to avoid me if one of us speaks there will be no excuse it rained they moved away last sunday it rained all morning where they sat discoursing on the meaning of (a good time) and in the afternoons others also snowed and they wrapped it up in afraid of what it might turn out to and in the evening the neighbors and it was difficult, having moved

MOTHER DEATH

In this house of words we are playing cards my mother and myself we came here to do this the floral curtains do not stir though she sewed them the window is closed she broke off the thread she deals me the queen of spades wipes her eyes as she takes the trick with her king her long crescent nails curl up close like irrelevant details engraved on a crisis seeds sprouting on mines what she is thinking thickens the air as she talks about refurnishing my short new hair my surprising success about anything but the hand she holds as if it were forgotten as if she knew anything else

little kid climbing in garbage can behind sacred heart school look at this can ripped it right in half made ears of it look they just use them over again right this is number 60 when i do 260 then i go on to bottles to breaking bottles come on you stupid tin can if they wont rip i flatten 'em or put 'em under car tires to give 'em flats but not new jersey cars i'm from new jersey
“I’m putting you down for additional medication, son.”

“Thank you, doctor. Pushers should receive the death penalty.”

Or such stuff are Do-Rightes made. Get there firstest with the brownest nose. While down in the dim gray wards and day rooms where the Do-Wronges hawk and spit and shiver and vomit . . .

“Fucking crooker wouldn’t give me a good ball . . . asks me what the American flag means to me and I tell him soak it in heroin Doc and I’ll suck it . . . He says I got the wrong attitude, I should see the chaplain and get straight with Jesus.”

And then with the tears streaming down their lousy fink faces the Do-Rightes leap up as one man and bellow out the Star Spangled Banner.

A MYSTERIOUS

phone call a.m.
wrong number . . .
X . . 10 on the Tarot cards . . . the wheel
or the lemniscate
ONE . . . the Magician
my coffee
cup of coffee
reflected on the wall a shimmering hourglass
or X . . .

lemniscate
the figure 8
the man said
(on the phone)
he was answering an ad . . .
in broken English . . .
I listen . . .
“expanding firm?”
expanding from . . .
I listen again
to Henri Coudette’s King’s English
his book of poems
“it rises . . .
I can see it . . .!”
from DRINKING THE BLOOD OF EVERY WOMAN'S PERIOD

the world
is straight
the world is straight
the world is straight
I mean
I mean
straight
as a pin,
and if you ever
wanted
wanted
to hold him
if you ever wanted
to hold him
if you ever wanted to hold him,
and hug him
and hug him
and hug him,
and kiss
and swim
and kiss and swim
and kiss and swim
and giggle
and giggle
and flash
and kiss and swim and giggle
and flash,
a non-conceptual
state,
you were this boy
loving
you
you were this boy
loving you
you were this boy loving you,
every
every
every
night
is New
Year's
Eve
every night is New Year's Eve,
everyday
is Valentine's
Day
everyday is Valentine's Day,
you're the one
you're the one
you're the one,
we do it
all
for you
we do it all
for you,
at MacDonald's
at MacDonald's
we do it all for you,
and Thanksgiving
turkey
and Thanksgiving turkey,
and Thanksgiving turkey,
THE NATURE OF AN ICLICLE

He's a body guard with a dozen red roses. The nature of icicles, voices. We were discussing the nature of icicles over a dozen red roses. No, I was watching a crinkling lie under the eyes. The water is dripping, the snow is falling. The fall is over. The body guard is out of town. Icicles are forming. Pink. A little boy searching for icicles. He runs away. So much depends on what has gone before. The breeze through Gold Hill. A sock on the bill on the table. A handful of icicles with a dozen red roses. A would be lover walks through in black lace. He presses his hips against me. I am aroused. I am wary. He hands me a red rose. Meanwhile back in California the ravager smiles. The telephone explodes. I did not want to be so moved! I did not mean to be so moved! I lied. I wanted it. I always wanted it. It is really snowing now. Hidden in the snow, a building on the end of an icicle. It slides down what has gone before and freezes on the end. Alone I leave Louisville trying not to watch. It progresses on what has gone before. I am discussing the nature of icicles, a handful of roses. So open. So sweet. I am thinking loosely of alone. I have not been careless. So much depends, and I am a little rusty. He presses hips against me. I want him! There, I can be a little careless sliding down the icicle. I always wanted it. It takes discipline to grow an icicle, but I am not an icicle! Sliding down the tongue, the back, the mountain, the breath. Sliding through the phone. Two minutes to 3:00. I have always loved tongues, ears, and red roses.

LITTLE MAN

I don't know why his pockets are bulging . . .
lady with pool cue is shouting -- Pack your bags!
He gave her a black eye.
Pirate with big brown scuffed boots
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
The gentle sin is this back lawn Wednesday 8:15 p.m.
radio's gone static

7-7-76
CONCERNING THE SPELLING

John
Ashberry
Ashbury
Ashbery
Ashbury
Ashbery
Ashbury
Ashburry
Assbury
Asshbery
Ars'pure-ee!
Asp-burr-iy!
Assh-burr-iy!
Amshlary
Hashbury,
Shantih
Shaft-ley
A shown tale of Ismael's mirrors eee!
A shantih sing of Thee!
Ashtrее
dr-assal sonorousness singly free!
Write thou, o bards and lettrists
and foul-ment'ld editors
the simple sonorous song of
Ash-be-ry!

WITH REGARD TO QUILL-GUSH

1. 35,000 other poets
woke this morn in the
American mansion
snorn of wisdom
long on folly
hungry for Stockholom
& uttered their quills
in the glossy black.
Countless vertical shafts of tenderness
placed as pylons upon your crumbled
relationships—
Left wing stories with happy endings—
thymed doggerel chants waving
a wand to a just about sold out
crowd at the Hollywood Bowl—*

2. 35 partisans of Beauty & Art sit in the bistro,
Jittery, excessively needful of fuck-nuck,
Hands clawing packets of everything,
Sigs & Calligrammes (a night spent figuring
the borrowability and aedeness of)
& Earl Grey & Zane Grey and Dawn Grey
& udders full of juice
to stain the dawn grey tongue.

The answer:
to keep an honest diary,
to rise among
the morning,
and to reap
the rapid wheat.
8-12-75
Richelieu Motel
San Francisco

*Hope away, o green-tongued stubble-faced bard

(banging the flag
for the 4th of July)
we lay it beneath us
hot sweating bodies
firecracker sounds
morning
it is silky
and slides
wrinkling
beneath our asses
pull it taut
tack it to the bed
like tadpoles
we squirm
to cover it
flesh all over
colored stripes
me on bottom
moving with stars
we pledge
ALLEGIANcE
up and down
Fourscore
we roll
Me on top
that any nation
SO CONCEIVED
rocking
if a boy
we'll call him Sam
under God
the stainoozes onto the red
on a pink muscle or red beebee body of a friend
it'd like wet green honking on to chime doubting or doubled
or double back breast of yellow lids over lowered eyes, red lips kissing
red eyes looking on and seen on yellow eyes
yellow zero's on yellow reds and yellow missees on dead missiles
riding to dead bases
home plate will be missed
he missed the list or roster of causes
he missed in his life as the rooster red rocket dove dove on the owl
and the sleeping owl said the sleeping fan said the sleeping
or
blinding light of the umpire-aid-to-be umpire a saying he missed
home plate yes we missees or miss or care to money over to the dugout and split right the
or care to miss the stolen base inside the park hit to left and missed home plate
batted on orders made out to like out of order like an incursion his wased
on the calculator 3 and 2 and no one scared enough to care
lost his lip in a head slide
no one not one i didn't hear anyone say not anyone no one say WATCH it
let it slip his mint in swins into a cowboat announced already soaked asked
me that list list list list is lit to or up to kissing
off the kinks he as his as his up the lane as_biis moved over the limbs
his ass never moved during the report or the
order to report enduring his upcoming child his child near
the melodies factory near to his prima lately near 8 mo old in her bubbles and belly
a flush of milk on her hair streaked grit at gray tough cunt sent the stretch
went the customary hitch 12 months a distance of lives
and swollen tissues fronted by pools of missing rain water invisible to snoutlike
clouds
of plastic pellets bouncing off the trees, the helmets, the gun ball machines,
the cabs down second ave, ringing the bedsprings, scooping up rumps of earth, the
children gone home early to school hardly aware of what x-rays miss
or mix into the sound track of a president holding a missing year's catalogue
over his head running out ina firestorm of mum blistering her labia
from sins so sincere as to be missed flattened or be leftout in the rain to rot
from lack of love and her come to coming up child
aching under his white house weight pumping
in his head pure of telephone books
numbers never turned over never fallen over never missed prisoners
missed or misname me mine i me mine i can't tell i'm innocent
im innocent
im innocent
im innocent
im innocent
im innocent
im innocent
im innocent
im innocent
i was a child
i pee
i miss my mummy sometimes
i was a child
i was a child
remember, remember me
im innocent
im innocent
i was a child
i can't help not being about to fuck
i was a child
im innocent
im innocent
im innocent
im innocent

PISSED
there's a time to be timid, there's a time to be conciliatory,
there's a time to fly and there's a time to fight
and i'm going to fight like hell.
BLANKET

The hooker said, "Y'inta gayty?" 
I said, "No, I'm into a light concussion; you got a quarter 
So I can take a bus?" 
The hooker said, "Honey, I'm out here making money 
Not giving it away."
I said, "I don't have any money."
The hooker said, "That's too bad; we could have fun." 
I said, "Yeah, that's too bad." 
She turned into a shadow that turned into a brick wall. 
They told me not to leave the hospital. 
I said, "Hone, toids! Where's my hirees?" 
I was walking in borrowed boots 
Down the star-row of street lamps 
My face covered with dozens of tiny scratches 
Waking in the hospital never did find out what hit me 
And my feet hurt by the miles. 
Just as desperation set in, a kind ride took me to a landmark 
And I re-traced steps of months before 
Meeting on the way 
A halved sprite in a rainy tree. 
Who asked me, all pearl of inner mother glowing 
To jump in the river so we could be together. 
I beat it up the street like a champ, head & heart pounding 
She was so lovely 
And when I got to where I was going, there was nobody home 
So I sat the hours in a freeze by a garbage can 
Until the first light in the building went on. 
From that light I borrowed a blanket so big 
It even fit under me lying down

STILL NO DIAGNOSIS

I've been in Surgery. 
They did something to my insides 
While I was Out. 
They cut something. 
They added something. 
They tied something in a knot, 
And stitched it to something else. 
They bypassed something 
And clean forgot about it. 
They found something they thought they might be able to sell. 
They filled me with memories on the spot 
And with hopeless crazy ideas. 
They reversed the spectrum 
Trying to make the rain bow, 
They argued over all the small shining things 
That keep me alive 
And decided there was plenty for everybody. 
They played mumble-peg on my spleen 
And transplanted a strange way of seeing 
Into my eyes, 
So that now everything looks just as strange 
As can be.

The first time I ever got drunk I drank Roma Port Cooking wine (lightly salted) behind some bushes on a public beach with Chris Lahne and Johnny Morrissey. Chris had an ear-ring and so was our leader until we were all too drunk to think about such things. There in the hot hidden from the crowd shade, Chris broke his empty bottle a vino and held the wicked looking spar against the inside of his fore-arm. "Think I'm chicken?" From the two of us, about all he could get was "Oh, haw haw haw, yet!" Then a deep pearly white furrow plowed eight inches down from the crook of his elbow. Tiny pearls of blood appeared against the tender whiteness like beads of really real sweat, kept together and formed a copious flow. No spurs, thank god.

As I recall, Johnny and I were just on the verge of figuring It all out once and forever when Chris spoke up wanting to go to the hospital. Sitting in a widening red puddle shame-faced like a kid who'd peed pants, Johnny had a motorcycle and I had a motorcycle and poor Chris rode with me as I took a short cut across a golf course that hot blind Sunday, trying to negotiate stretches of twenty feet at a time at forty miles an hour. And instead of pressing the wound like a sane man, Chris held his arm out behind him spraying blood wildly so he "wouldn't get any on my shirt." A true gentleman and how we ever got across a golf course, across a four lane bridge, through all that traffic and into a hospital, is information inaccessable to me, and in emergency as they wheeled him through those flapping doors, Chris called to me "Bill, don't leave me!" and I said I'd be right there and went to the bathroom and vomited until I fell down and heard Japanese wind chimes, curled around the handle on the gratefully cold floor and slept until midnight.

THE PROMISED LAND

They packed up and left
Nothing of value behind
They packed up and left
Nothing of value behind
They packed up and left
Nothing of value behind

DAYDREAM

A stranger comes in
And starts to erase the man next to me
The
Next
To me
I wrestle him to the ground
HERAT

I.

late sunrise trees
horsecart sleighbells sing
to here we are
at Jami's tomb
a tree sings out
from poet's dust
pilgrims watch treeleaves eat
Jami's rock sleep
in desert air.
a Mynahbird jaws in branches
breezes good as cold water
play with my presumptuous beard
as I sing this song.

2.

It's a long hot walk to Gazer Gah.
Birds sing here so you know
where you are. At this pool
of coolness in a sea of heat
tree-growing graves
nourish the sun with water.
A spring rises out of my head
from godsbed back of my eyes.
Swarms of flies nibble my feet
but food for the dead
is in my dirty cells
already.

As everywhere, Westernized youth
come to strip me
of my millionaire's tongue
they learned to worship
at the cinema.
The believers eye me suspiciously
a man who plays with Allah
and writes books in his courtyard!

Inside the mosque is much better.
Poet's words on the wall,
stained-glass windows of breath,
breed shadows here
for sunburnt lovers
tourist or pilgrim
present or past.

In a saint's house full
of graffiti-prayers,
rock hands fold in my brain.
I look for new legs, for a bit of water,
in seven lace-carved stones.
Here precious breath of tree-fed peace
in smiling sun and wooing shades
makes birdsong ricochet off eyelids
while I rest in darkness
behind my eyebrows drum.

my book is my pillow
my fireplace is breath
my friends are my food
the tree-swept air is singing.

Afghanistan, June 1970

JESTER’S EGG: RIGOLETTO

plot from a minor
Hugo play
no one's ever seen
"Quel vecchio maledissi !"
The king amuses
Le Roi s’Amuse
himself.
Bjoerling

Rig a murder, Sparafucile.
Bring me my daughter
in your bag.
The rich get all the bargains.
I KNOW THE DOOR

In spring a young girl returns from the dead
to reclaim her fallow body.
All winter her mother waits in the same wooden chair,
braids the air,
arranges cutlery into a cross on the table.
A lashed hawk struts,
blinking,
head bound
and wings folded beneath leather straps.
He balances at the vertex of knives,
black hope from the otherworld.
At dusk the old woman ties flaming rags to her goat,
sets him running through the streets,
ash rising off his back like burning Jews.
She follows the ibex into night
to sit holding his scared and bloodless heart,
telling it her fucking grief,
ugly as broken glass:
the first day of winter my daughter crawls back
into my quarried womb,
and that night her life seeps from my cunt
like a bleeding dream.
Decembers to Aprils, pregnant
with the lifeless body,
the stench of sorrow, worse as scorched wool,
ever leaves me.
Sometimes in her nest of dust
I feel her work toward my throat:
my breath whistling down her winnowed arms.

Tell me what cycle of life
makes a girl leave her body in an empty hole,
a mother labor yearly for her own child’s birth.

This spring the hawk is released into black air.
The mother boils candles down
as she lies in a helix of wire
loose around her spread legs.
The young girl returns from the dead,
reenters the dark passage, while after her
her mother pours wax to seal her cervix,
then cage against the torsion
of life
that must tear from life.
MEHER BABA AND THE FORTY THIEVES

“...The sun will wink twice
and close his round eye for ever.”
—Meher Baba

Sitting in a country bar on a warm afternoon,
drunk out of my mind.
A slow ache in three back teeth
I am about four people today,
all friends of mine.
At the end of the street a kid on crutches
is tapping the new asphalt.

a billion accidents
stars in a jar
one lonely old lady pushing a shopping cart
down the center aisle of Cala Foods
an ache from the left shoulder to the left ear
a mandala of light
red light
in the night
night springing open
like springtime
like the sergeant’s jaw when he snores.

baseball facts
technical feats of madness
sex take you down
and out of sight
completely out
you shuck a billion possible selves
on the way down
roll over, completely over,
come whistling for air, some lady
grabs you by the hair . . .
can’t get mad at anything
or anyone
anymore.

getting on
but never
getting there.

a lot of poetry
exquisitely defining
was written.
If he was careful
a man could go stark raving mad
at any second.

WHY I QUIT SCHOOL

One day I watched Emily Dickinson
become the Massachusetts State Capitol Building.
JURASSIC

Her hands are like the skeleton of a dinosaur,
So terribly white and sequined,
They look as if they were assembled
By a team of scientists,
As if each part were unearthed separately
( . . with an exclamation
they uncover her left pinky fingernail
and fit it into place!)
The way she holds her hands,
It looks like there's a guardrail around them
to keep people from getting too close
to the dinosaur bones.
Her huge saurian eyes
swallow the room.
If you're in the room
you feel like Jonah
In the belly of a brontosaurus.
She commits dinosaur crimes,
Slow, innocent crimes,
In which every move is perfectly honest
Except the last.
She doesn't suspect her own extinction;
She thinks she'll survive these quick-witted mammals,
Because she had the good sense
To start out as a fossil.

ANAIS NIN

Toasted worms
Rising slowly into form:
Like a duck dissolving the Bronze Sea
She swims with her headlights on.

SOMETIMES THE MOON

Sometimes the moon
always seems
to have the last word.
I put a picture in the window
and now it's raining
down the walls.

THE JEWS IN THE DELICATESSEN

The earth is in the Milky Way Galaxy
And the Jews are in the Delicatessen.
In the Delicatessen,
The Jews shout and mumble
And eat borscht.
The waiters speed from table to table.

In cold Space,
Jupiter smiles,
Like an old man
Ordering
A corned beef sandwich.

THE DEATH OF ARCHIMEDES I. ZZZYANDOTTI

Archimedes I. Zzyzandotti
lies on his bed
gaping.
All around him,
his family is gathered.
The little Zzyzandotti's
buzz with excitement.
His wife, Uralia,
is weeping.
Archimedes I. Zzyzandotti
draws his last breath,
The phone rings.
"Congratulations, Archimedes,"
says the man on the phone,
"You are the last person
in the telephone book."
"No more," says Uralia
replacing the receiver
in its cradle.

saving grace

Grace is in trouble as I suppose
I think
she is done for at the finishing school.
now no word a week and through the loft floor you
can't complain it sounded like they sawed off her
hand I mean raucous yelling and artisan whine w/ earnest
shrinking
it's my day another declared to do what
I wondered poor grace
greyest day was
foaming at the windows they must have looked out on nothing
and no one's better "off"
stood before the cooes and said don't go in there I warn
you sparkling liquor and package drink hot blood slid
down the pipes seeking her own level

2/21/74

James Grauerholz
RENT DUE: FOR THE TINKERTOY

I think I will go
be a REAL PROSTITUTE!

at least I would get
paid

REAL MONEY
for real exploitation
and services rendered
no more pretense of sophistication!
in big Tinkertoy
no more autographed copies!
I'll buy my own books
no more tasteless dinners!
with the put-down Fame
no more manuscripts! bled over un-read
for Flattery spite
no more ten-foot poles!
politely shoved up my ass cuz I'm

TOO HOT!
no more spit in my hate without
payment, cash on this barrel head, buster
So next time,
slide your hate under the door

I got a client
an' he got
or she got

REAL LOOT!
an' don't pretend he's not going home

An' next time,
bottle your spit and leave it in my box

I'm trading tonight for a REAL STEAK
an' enough change to ride the bus

An' next time, babe,
send me your symphonic on a postage stamp
I'm only made of

paper skin
balsawood bone
red dye
an' blue plastic
an' my dentist he got REAL GAS
an' he pretty clean long as he
keep his mouth shut
an' he's on the list tonight, you see?
an' for the last time
DON'T ASK!
about my poetry
only that's
for free.

7/24/76

WORKING GUILT OUT

The breaking glass alarmed me
so I pecked through the slit
in the blind and there I saw

the two of them beating

on the 1968 Camaro
left hand with raised pipe,
the slender one dressed in grey,
shattered the window
he beat it as if it were

the face of a woman
who once laughed
as he was being arrested
for snatch her purse

the taller one dressed in brown,
threw repeated kicks at the car

pounding it with his heel
till he gave a leap,
walked ten feet away
then ran towards the car
giving a Bruce Lee both feet
off the ground jump,

kicking the car with both heels
his face, none first,
slapped the pavement, almost unconscious,
he leaped to his feet,
grabbed his friend's pipe,
rang to the back of the car
and shattered the rear glass plate

with violent blows

all of the time cursing
his aunt out for telling
his mother that he had gotten
his sister pregnant.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Rachel playing the maracas
is the universe becoming fluid
and the Nuyorican Cafe
floor becoming platform
for the shape of art

to mimic so the artifact

becomes direct message
no symbols of
but the very thing itself

the knife in the belly
and the blues singing soft

shoes of pain as my gut
kicks my nerves insisting

on its pain vomiting more pain
about gifts that on a Christmas
day reached a dead child

too late to be played with
but it wasn't the deliverer's fault
it was his uncle who kept forgetting
that Christmas falls with love
not on a calendar but on the tenderest
feelings where the self of all others wants
love and sharp edges that awake
the internal mind into a self created speech
that reaches over into your listener's system
and reschedules his entire psychic set,
I once had a friend in that one afternoon
traced all of my spinal short-circuits
and rearranged my electrical flow
into more fluid work than the switch-on,
switch-off, I'm overloaded crisis
that results in nausea, asphyxiation and the
swallowing of my tongue.

buy algo
bay un epileptic fit
trying to reduce me into a trembling
mass of jelled nerves, forlorn,
shuddering, there, on the subway floor
while hundreds of passengers masochistically
look on both enjoying my crisis and feeling sorry
for me, the poor wretch, lying on the dirty
concrete subway floor imploring my muscles
and nerves to keep cool and cut the short
circuit tongue down my throat menace
out and institute a non-nonsense
coherent I'm a mechanical and predictable
human being behavior modification program
to counter my muscular violence against myself
which keeps calling attention to itself while
the transit cop is almost breaking both my legs
by throwing his full weight on me as he
tries to hold my legs still and my mouth open
grabbing at my tongue, yanking it out,
shaking my shoulders, slapping my face
working to neutralize the short-circuit
in my spine till Dr. Psychiatrist starts
to define my mind and its connections
into a State Asylum where I can get more
medication than I do on the street
or have the medication forced on me by a
well meaning nurse that relates her self to me
through an every four hour give him his
dosage routine

buy algo

it's 11:59 P.M. 1975

and I got one more minute of talk
before 1976 finds me shooting up and down
behind the Nuyorican Cafe but trying to
decide if nuclear war will ravage
New York before I find out just how
to divide the line so that it repairs
short-circuits that block the world
from coming together! it is 12 A.M.
the new year's been bombed and over the T.V.
the hottest news release tells us that at La Guardia
Airport an explosion was so strong that tiny,
imvisible slivers of glass have penetrated the skin
of many but the slivers are so fine that
it can not be detected where they've penetrated the body
and here it is 1976 enters in like a
glass sliver undetected yet causing pain.

INFECTIONS
I walk around the city
matching my feelings
to your mood
just like the lake water
meets the edge of the fountain,
no separation
but real light
leaving no room for air
to divide us
I match every feeling in me
to your contortions
as you dive into your psyche,
pulling out the dirt of your pain
you smear it on your face,
on your eyes, on your lips,
and, as if not enough,
your saliva sprays my face
spreading the moisture
of your infectious pain
showing me your yellow teeth
you spit out poisoned arias
about how you want to get down
with women you despise
and how you want to get down
with your mother but that
you wouldn't tell her
for fear she'd accept.

THE STREET DON'T CARE

Between androgynous wet dreams
I get run over again
and again by a tank full
of screaming Negroes-
in laughter they fire
the machine guns
at rats and policemen in the street
They run over me by mistake, but uncaring
In death/at last I am sexless.
Before that I was switching back and forth
between male and female,
my chest and groin expanding and contracting
permitting concave and convex out of control
So fast I didn't have time
to get confused
There’s an arc in ciel
The entire table top is vibrating
In the immediate future
People will signal each other on “DC” sets
Dropping from one level to another
As they filter through the slats in the floor
Like syrup, except that they retain their faces
But the inside-outside boundary line
Feels like syrup when you rub it between your fingers
As if five letters were taken from your name
And transferred to a hot slice of French toast
Which you are little when measured next to, even the fork
The feelers among us nod and smack their lips
They agree that it is raining, but
Actually just echoing,
the real rain fell
Twenty minutes ago, and fell hard
Like the time I first became aware
They were burning off my fingerprints
By means of electrolysis
Which was the thing that bothered me, I mean
Not that I wouldn’t leave prints anymore
But that I can feel the electric shock
Running up my fingers through my arms as I type
Since yesterday, that is

---

GARRISON, NY

toc
the ball flattens
the sun warm
‘marco!’
impressions
springs back
click
the horseshoe wraps
around
‘polo!’
sun pours into your ear on the
toc
gras
birds sing
smell the herb
splash
‘marco!’
thump
swoop
the bird chases
plunge
woosh
push
beer sweat drips
on cans
clink
a ringer.

---

SHOPPING LIST

cottage cheese
six pack
6 flights of stairs
“your feet just don’t get used to them.”
one sincere nod
assures the grocery man
i’m no junkie
trying to rip off his bananas

---

ILLUSTRATION

My Grandfather had these little pills
He was to take one
whenever he felt a GOOD pain in the chest
Embarrassed
he tried to hide this condition
from his family
He even swore
never to take the pills
in front of strangers
Unfortunately
He once got a pain
on the subway during rush hour
Though he made it to his station,
Bedford Park,
He dropped dead
on the Grand Concourse
waiting for a bus

---

BIOGRAPHY

for diane di prima

Gerard de Nerval studied the Quabbala
and dragged a dark north star
into a french asylum
somewhere tucked away
in the southern countryside
“Well, I’ll tell yaw! something I don’t know whether you ever . . . . You ever been around Mexkins much?”

Curtis asked me.

“She’s been around more Mexkins than you have!”

“Well, I don’t know. She’d have to be around a whole lot, wouldn’t she, Daddy.”

“She’s lived in Albuquerque for years and years.”

“They’s a different breed of Mexkins from what we’ve got out here.”

“Well, they really are.”

“What I was going to tell you, every Mexkin in that part of the country will tell you that if you know the right man he can take a dollar bill and lay it on a pile of newspaper and draw one off. Then he just starts cutting them out! That size. And he stacks ‘em up that high. Do ‘em like that and every one’ll be a dollar bill!”

“They say they can spend that money. Old Luke said he had often done that and he bought everything with it.”

“The guy that told him how to do it said, You won’t live long though, after you start doing it!”

“Old Luke said he bought everything! Said he taken that money and do it like that. And of Ben Sanchez down there, said he seen him do it!”

“Ever Mexkin in this country’ll tell you they can do that. That somebody they know can. Old Ben’s daddy told me that his brother got to doing that.”

“How long did he live?”

“He died when he was thirty-six. Then Old Ben got hold of it and started doing it.”

“What you got to do to worship the devil to be able to do it.”

“Ben!”

“Umm Hmm!”

“Ben Sanchez?”

Yep. And his daddy taken them books, you know he was telling us about that. His daddy found out about his doing that and he taken them books and burnt ‘em!”

“You learn how to do it out of a book?” I asked.

“Yeah. You get this book that tells you how.”

“Sounds to me like the guy that’s sure to be making the money is the guy that’s selling the books!”

“Now this here’s the deal though. You can’t buy the book.”

“Yeah?”

“It’s got to be wrote, see, by you . . . . and then you give it to me . . . . just like him. His uncle give it to him. You don’t ever sell it!”

“Oh.”

“Then his uncle whenever he went to die he give it to Ben. It passes on and on.”

“I’d rather be poor and live a long time than be rich and . . . .”

“I’ll tell you what . . . . him and his wife come to see me and Linda whenever we first got married. One night . . . Linda has heard this story several times, too. Heard them tell it one night. They was setting on the couch and I said, Ben . . . . There’s a lake right out here called Guthrie. You know where it is, Daddy?”

“Guthrie?” I’ve heard of it. I’ve never been there.

“Well, I been out there several times. You go out there to Guthrie Lake and that lake stays full of water nearly the year round. Real pretty lake. It’s fed by a little spring.”

“One night Ben . . . . him and me was here in town . . . . I’ll just tell you the whole story. And he said, Curtis, go out with me to the lake and let’s pray to the devil. He said, Tonight he’ll appear because it’s full moon and it’s right overhead. Said, He’ll be there.”

“I said, Well where he is I ain’t. That’s just what I told him. I thought he was crazy.”

“I said, You’re the silliest thing I ever heard of!”

“He’s still crazy!”

“Another night or two . . . he told me . . . . I said, Did he appear? Yeah! Come out there and told me what to do this week.”

“So, his wife and him got married. They was over at the house one night and I said . . . . her name Emily?”

“I want a bulletproof vest the advantage of forethought.

"Eva," Linda answered.

"Eva?" says, Eva, does Ben still pray to the devil? And she said, Yep, Said, I didn’t believe him, Curtis, whenever me and him got married. Said, He told me about that before we got married and I didn’t believe him. And says, One night he told me he was going out there and pray to him. Said he’d prove it tonight. Said he’d have some birds come and appear to me at the door. And she said, Sure enough, while I was washing dishes there was two birds walked up there and knocked on the door.”

"Walked up and knocked on the door?" I says.

"She said they was as tall as a man!"

"That was probably Ben and some crony!"

"Now! He was in the livingroom, she said. And . . . wait . . . did she say they talked to her?"

"I don’t remember her saying they talked to her."

"I think it’s enough to have a tall bird! I started laughing.

"Get a tall enough bird and he don’t have to do anything else!"

"She said she didn’t deny his word anymore!"

"I don’t believe I could’ve lived with him after that!" Aunt Maxine said.

"I don’t believe I could live with anybody that (laughing) had birds for friends!"

"It’s hard enough when drinking buddies show up!"

"Well, I couldn’t live with anybody that prayed to the devil! That’s horrible to think about! Ain’t it?"

Maxine insisted.

"He don’t do that anymore. He told me that he wished he never had foolish with it!"

"Yeah."

"That’s like those people raising people from the dead. You hear of that? They tell me that’s going on pretty strong in California! I heard it on T.V. here the other day!"

"Let’s just hope they’re making the right choices."

"Who’d be the right choices?"

"It’d be awful to raise somebody from the dead and find out they were boring and you didn’t like them after going to all that trouble!"

"People don’t think of the Devil being powerful enough to raise somebody from the dead.” Curtis refused to lose his train.

"You think the Lord’s raising ‘em up, Curtis? You think the Lord’s raising them from the dead?"

"Well, he can! He is! But he’s not raising them like the devil is!"

"What town were we talking about where you said, Where did all those people come from?"

"They raised them from the dead!"

"New York?"

"In New York I always feel like they’re just got people stacked on top of each other."

"Isn’t there an awful lot of traffic in New York?"

"Yeah."

"I’d like to see that town but I wouldn’t want . . . ."

"Jesus, you believe in that kind of stuff? Like that raising the dead and all that?"

"Now, Do you?"

"I don’t believe it! I know it’s a fact!"
CRACKS

Seen a million of 'em
walking Dyckman down
to Harlem counting cracks
sidewalk cracks ruling fields
"second over
by that big crack"
slid into home crack
cracked leg local crack
let me scream all night wore
cast eight weeks it too cracked
window cracks door cracks china cracks
germany cracks ice cracks
hull cracks bat cracks
finally hit it high note
flute cracks cracks fire cracks cracked
magazine zone yr cracked Al
goskian stone red seam crack
shaman chiseled woman round it
spine crack cracks shell
cracks snakes ooze out of schools
full of 'em desk cracks board cracks
wise cracks Levin
looks up at his living room cracks
crevases ravines
till the ceiling thunders down cracks
heads wired cracks liberty
bell cracks Sam
choking with plaster dust pounding on door
All! All you all right? cracks something
pushing through saxifrage
grass Fleck's
heart
nuclear waste cunt cracks
under fur cracks in time
something pushing
boulder cracks
flagstaff pine

MISS THING LEAVES THE WORLD BURNING MAD

Thing lectures to the sex institute:
"Coke up the ass allows for interminable violation.
if no coke, we Crisco,
if no Crisco, spit on it
and he'll be up your back door so far
you can pretend you're never alone."

"Going down's good too,
unzipping their flies
like the poor digging for turnips,
into the earth of their groins,
pulling tons from their crotch with my mouth."

"Sometimes they rise and quieter when they come
and I think of dolphins through the sea,
how they give you everything, even something of dream.
Occasionally one will call out 'Help me, I'm coming!'
and I always do with the frail ship of my body
carrying them from their little deaths into morning,
as the moon would the sun,
where they breakfast in silence,
and leave for their women."

MISS THING LEAVES THE WORLD BURNING MAD

Thing Wonders:
Some nights Thing was too tired to get out of drag
and let the make-up crack like Ruth St. Dennis.
He would lay on his day-bed near the window
and look into the streets,
seeing someone walk a certain way,
or hear a cough down the hall,
or a toilet flushing,
and he wondered if all men felt lonely at times,
just watching little girls play in the dirt,
drawing circles with a stick that was for her the sun,
hearing her names called to supper,
seeing all the silent space she left,
and he wondered sincerely if all men felt alone at times.
PELICANS AT BIG SUR

Rachel Peters

5 pelicans
trace a wind
struggle to walk against.
they keep a stable V
a light atop a crazy
rock the sea pounds.
and roll above the spray of
waves that finally bore archways
& rumble through obsidian to hidden beach.
Then God said,
"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;
and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea,
and over the birds of the air..."

Genese 1:26
I climb the searock in afternoon
reach the top at dusk
& look down through cold fog.
such fragile triumph—humanity!
no sunset
no fish racing my distemperable jaw
no audience with God
no strawberry as sweet but to the man about to die
no more water in the bill!
no more moon in the water!
no appointment—no disappointment
I see only a huge human asshole
trapped by high tide
7/14/76

PRESS CONFERENCE

Sidney Goldfarb
Pat.......
I'm tired....
These shoes of death....
( The pussy I could never gather )
Henry here every night....
I am suspicious there is something....
But being.....
From California.....
There is no need....
You're better than Mamie, Pat.....
You know that.....
The things we've worked for.....
And certainly better than Bess.....
It's true that Jackie.....
In the Blue Room.....
Was more persistent.....
O hold me, Pat.....

Hold me like Showboat
I mean my hand.....
I mean my hat.....
I mean my watch, Pat.....
My watch and all the watches.....
Of the FFFFFrrrreee word, Patsypoo.

(right)
the fear of lying
holds on to Ohio holds on to syntax
holds the groceries upright in the back seat
of the car
maps and the active necessities flatter
each other
pretending real
to mean normal
50 percent of the population
moves to this balanced suburb
and I submit
I submit with my my
and I submit
because
I know no one else
because I say it
because I say it

THE SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD

As if to tear anything
by being near anything.
As if to watch pieces of
faces falling.
Wanting and
not wanting
to love.
As if cruelty
were not the junta
but the aftermath
of a yawn.
As when men stand outside a bathroom
wondering if the woman inside
is committing suicide.
As if waiting to pee!
As if spelling itself were a sick insult, and poems the fancy ploys of animals shrinking to kill me. 
As if there were light in the corner and not Nana holding her head and Michael crying. 
As if I were not here.

**early october**

maybe to disappear now killer still no man maybe eat currant and egg yellow leaf flash green fingers to edges serrate and mateless to autumn creek pine beetle chickadee bobbing maybe dry thurbrow brown disappearing 
maybe old radishes still over watercan to wash dishes silently in warm of rinse water climb breakthres through rain wet to goat pen in forest 
cottonwood yolk thrust to rust ponderous maybe on elbow watch cat calmly deliver one dead and one living a bee rides the breeze

**HIS VERSION OF THE STORY**

She wanted him to make love to her but she didn’t want him to be her lover because she had wanted him to be her lover and he had left her because he thought he had been in that place too long. So when she started to come, years later, and a deep one it was, for he did love her, she reached over her head and pulled her long hair over her face so he could not see her.

Under her hair her eyes opened wide and the breath from her throat spread over her face.

**A LIST**

Now I see signs of it everywhere! When you laugh when you boogie a little at last when you lay back on the waterbed floating like moons your breasts

under the soft sheet and complain that the baked potato I brought you is not on a plate, The rushed clarity of your analysis of hyperromantic views of peasants your ridiculous mint julep sighs your impeccable waitress toughness the way you grab at my zipper and giggle and cuddle it and suck it till it stands up and looks you straight in the eye.

Your refusal to be stupid as a means of fending off boredom your insane rhythms which zoom off honking avalanches full of grapes and tears and continuous sticky drive-in discovery. I see signs of it everywhere! 
You’re making me want to fuck you all the time now! Like now when you’re not here: just the stars vibrating with your sweet intensity turning and shooting and rolling their eyes back into sleep and the quiet morning which greets me like wine in the mouth.

**MINIMAL VISION**

What you say to one you cannot say to the other, And what one says to you you cannot say to the other.

Finally the head splits into shells and the hosts take note of your reticence.

Blinking stars. Cold repetition. Breakfast alone with my minimal vision.
1135 10th Street (and Giovanina Musili)

How nice it is to meet an old friend
How refreshing to see an old friend
Meeting an old friend is much better than discovering new ones
Passing an old stone
On the winding mountain road
Passing an old oak tree
In the English country garden
Passing a derelict castle
On the French hillside
Passing an old unt
On the sidewalk
Glory be to Giovannina
May be all this is a castle in the air
May this is my conceptualized preconceived subconscious imaginary expectation
May this is just a simple blade of grass
It is all very touching
Maybe it is just glue
Glorified glue
That glues heaven and earth together
Glue that seals great cracks in the Tower of London
However
There's something nice about Giovannina
When she smiles
She cheers up the depressed pollution
When she talks
She proclaims the wisdom of precision
She is somewhat small
But dynamite
She seems to know who she is
She could create thunderstorm
She could produce gentle rain
She could get you good property
She brings down the castle in the air
She is somehow in my opinion well-manufactured
Fresh air of the alps
I think she is fresh air
Which turns into a well-cared-for garden
Free from lawn-mowers and insecticides.

Boulder
July 30, 1975

RMDC, ROUTE 1, LIVERMORE

In the blue sky with no clouds
The sun of unchanging mind-essence arises
In the jungle of pine trees swayed by winds
The birds of chartering thoughts abide
Among the boulders of immovable dignity
The insects of subconscious scheming roam
In the meditation hall many practice dhyana
Giving birth to realization free of hope and fear
Through devotion to the only father guru
The place of dharma has been founded
Abundant with spiritual and temporal powers.
Dead or alive, I have no regrets.
translated from the Tibetan (composed earlier the same day)
RMDC
July 4, 1975

SATURDAY/NIGHT WITHOUT YOU

I dreamed I went through his pockets
Looking for small bills quarters anything
The keys to a red car phone numbers
Four four four twenty three hundred
Hello, Tom, is this really you? I'm at the Shady Court in Winnemucca . . .
SOMETHINGS HAPPENED . . . he won't move
I'm so mad I could kick his face but
he keeps on trembling . . . SOMETHING WENT
WRONG . . . I tried but it's no use . . . you'd
better come and get me

SUSPECT

help- did he shoot? did he shoot? did he shoot?
don't come any closer or I'll call a cab!
when I get bigger I'm gonna leave you!
i'm i'm gonna step out in the street
one leg!

IN THE MORNING

how come you come
to wake me up
without a face
I know you think I should
get up
but the wrinkles are
so old and sure
and without a trace

Translated from the Tibetan by Cindy Shelton
Rainbow you are a wall, Humpty
Dumpty would never of fallen from –
wale cracks in 1/4 –
a man with catchup teeth, ten strings
of speggete wigle from bulding lips –
(can I have)
Fist step on rain bow, now a green
step - now two red steps – now
10 yellow steps now I want a
1,000 purple steps & one giant blue
step, and now 3 giant gold steps,
& ten white feather step (this step
has a tack in it, thro it away) –

NYC

ex-love poem

I hope you choke on words
your radio breaks
and your typewriter keys stick
I hope she doesn’t come
and doesn’t call
I hope you almost come
and the phone rings
... your mother
I hope you drop the tray
while cleaning seeds
I hope it rains everywhere
except on your garden
and all your firewood gets wet
I hope your roof leaks
your house burns
I hope you need me
come to visit
when I’m in bed with three men
I hope you want her
and she won’t
I hope you cry
and want to scream
and can’t sleep
under this same new moon
these same grey clouds
I hope you wet your bed
forget your dream
lose your pen
run out of candles
This backyard still stinks
I can’t read I can’t think
I hope you are happy

from JAI-ALAI

Time that takes all beauty into itself
will ring you up with a job to do.
You and your beauty will set out down corridors
to stand in a smoky room before two desks
with two uniformed employers, one male,
the other female.
They will not ask you to sit for there will be no chair.
And you will be given your task.
To spy. To live in motels. To barely make expenses.
To find out who the thieves are.

Deeper into a slow burn, time is.
Get a burp of a perk in a blake.
Stare out over our metal desks,
our boulders, our humping whales,
and verifiably report that you are at sea,
a sea where the creatures
are pumped through with cartoons
the mechanisms which ring and clack and burr
like so many costumes
for a single shadow filled with fire.

The hand in the scrawl was thick with Friday
fever.
Her trout did not recall how we broached
dead and fizz,
mounting the ruined hillside to intone our oceanic
notions.
Soon the auto will power past.
Soon squalls will ignite, will pass.
Ducks are honking over the macadam lake.
Young coots are coming up to what
they would have done had they known what
was the weather once they had once.

I was in a den explaining how
I was able to speak for God.
My method was to let go of reason totally
and just say simply whatever came out.
Two gentlemen were watching me.
While I spoke, invisible prophets
all clamoured they too spoke for God
and were in need of monies to keep on with it.
From THE NOTEBOOKS

12/75

A discourse on Lilith

who she is
her force her power
that they would call "demonic"
she the woman fought to be
above the man
at least be equal in that game
her sex a thwarted thing
female presence sealed in proud exile

would cry for vengeance
in death of little children
seduction of those men away from home
estranged from Eve the wife our Lady of the Contract

Lilith breaks loose on the other side
-a moon
nightwaiter-
rages in the laundry
roaming through your house at dawn
a poltergeist
she hurl dishes from cupboard
sits among them scraping at your sores
sometimes a comfort
otherwise a joke
an old obsession
like that furry animal who pises in your soup

free spirit

2/76

The rape of Jeremiah

here at the center of the world—
he writes—
the gathering grows most intense
if only the imagination
holds it
sodomites walk past with Jeremiah
perfumed men & prostitutes
show their sex freely
the wind rises over Jerusalem
moves between the women's legs & lifts
odors to the altar seeds & blood
engulf the priest so beautiful
so like a boy bride
in whose smoke serpents reappear
great cherubs creatures of the mind
& will not leave you
lurk in Jewish holes & zantra the message
blown from east to west
rents in the prophet's words
the secrets of their nature again alive
as Yahveh cried out for his lost brides
—o the god that knows all
knows this too—

these women gone two sisters daughters
of one mother whose
that I knew in Egypt they would let men
squeeze their tits would suck
their virgin tits a tender
tender as their names were
— vision of Ezekiel
in the temple built by Solomon
lover king whom the priest's beauty
now recalls
a trace of semen in the mikveh
this power that can lift us to the god

(c) 1977 by Jerome Rothenberg, from A Big Jewish Book (Doubleday)
TRAIN GOING BY

for Rosalie Sorrels

When I was a kid, I wanted to get educated, and to college go to learn how to know. Now old, I’ve found train going by will take me along, but I still don’t know why. Not just for money, not for love, not for anything thought, not for nothing I’ve done—it’s got to be luck keeps the world going round, myself moving on on that train going by.

Fort Collins, Colorado
October 7, 1976

AFTERWORD

Pyramids throbbing with truant’s laughter, “O ersatz goalposts, o fuck me and tell, like one drunk in an airport the saints were to circle, would the sky be any brighter? the pansy’s lip upon the moss.” I fire straight into her kimono, if I could balance three slop plates, drinking Cabernet Sauvignon jammed in the juice lips. I am a hero in the balcony box, tender stares at the whistle opposite Anubis. There’s a place in the middle of me whose tits I was admiring, those two black circles traded evenly & even gladly health for sanity. Hollywood elephant, pied-billed grebe, boa constrictor rage holy, wanting as redly, if that door is always there. Naked except for a pair of blue socks he looks at me, “Thank you, doctor.” My short hair lemniscate, I’m from New Jersey and some Opium in a saint’s house. My friends are my good discipline to grow in icicle: Grab a friend, shaft-leery, seize the rind, the cake, the christ, the spine, call him Sam under God into a light concussion your wife reads. You know Cleveland (ok ok no pictures please) and starts to erase the man wax to seal her cervix. At that moment the sun was eclipsed. Toasted worms among us too hot for free swallowing cottage cheese Mexkin choking with plaster dust. It’s my day. Coke up the ass, five pelicans, I mean my hat-world into a french asylum: How refreshing to see an old friend. I get runover again and want to scream and can’t sleep from bulding lips in a bloke at the center of the world. I quit school on that train.

JS
ROOF: an anthology of poetry from the Naropa Institute, Boulder, Colorado, summer of 1976. $2.00