

**FIELD HOLLERS OF
THE DISPOSSESSED**

Poems By Bill Stockland

BAY FRONT PRESS

Bay Front Press

To purchase a copy of this book contact:

bayfrontpress@yahoo.com

<http://www.bayfrontpress.com>

billstockland@cox.net

ISBN 978-0-615-34712-7

All Rights Reserved

**All characters and events are fictional. Any resemblance
to persons living or dead is purely coincidental.**

Copyright © 2010 Bill Stockland

Published In The United States

today i learned that the birds
most don't make it more than about
a year
and here i sit
intent on immortality
and i can't even fly

TABLE OF CONTENTS

5	ONE CLIMBING PARADOXICAL MOUNTAIN
39	TWO STATIONS OF THE TRUE CROSS
55	THREE WARS MY GODS HAVE ORDERED
97	FOUR COVENANTS AND FADED RISKS
121	FIVE ENLIGHTENMENT AND DESPAIRING DOUBT
157	SIX FROM A DARKENED NIGHT SKY
185	SEVEN THREADBARE IMAGES
205	EIGHT ROAD SONGS
227	NINE FIELD HOLLERS OF THE DISPOSSESSED
239	INDEX OF TITLES

PART ONE

CLIMBING

PARADOXICAL

MOUNTAIN

MINIATURE BROWN SAILS DYING

There is no mistaking the North Wind,
breathless fear comes sweeping,
icy blasts transform as if by a magic—
a magic done without mirrors or rules
epitaphs being the only things worthy to be fixed in stone.
Mild mocking autumn winds know this,
dressed in summer skins they lull us to false serenity.
Victims thus ripe for conquest,
the biting winds come cutting and slashing,
tearing as they will through our lives.
Black birds huddle and mass in warning,
wings moving late the sound of retreat.
Miniature dying sails turn brown and fall out of control,
leaving only us and our innocence exposed
as icy fingers find every loose seam and buttonhole

SLEEP COME ROUGHLY

Now comes the night
slowly,
surely,
calmness draws the first hint
— sharp rays have been dulled for a time,
fierce winds subside as if to rest.
Nighttime comes stealin'
nighttime— death time
fear time— the dark kingdom,
a world of unknown fears and themes
— haunted delusions of well respected realities.
Now comes the night slippin' into its realm
slowly.
Natives retreat to brick huts
wooden huts
thatched huts
safe places once.
The night belongs to the night,
The kingdom seeks its own.
Night calls and night answers
but none now know the sorcerer's words
those sounds and utterances that would have sway—
for now come stealin' comes the night.

BOX CANYONS

Gently and softly it comes
in grinning mimicry of the way worlds end,
sadly,
the travail inherent in knowing too much,
of knowing the big secret
and having to play it out anyway.
The wind whispers of sadness
and the foggy cozy comfort of being alone—
even lonely.
The realization comes too late
of forbidden thoughts and knowing too much,
of box canyons of the mind
and the lost codependent affairs of the soul.
And the pain wearies so soon
from fighting the wind with fists—
being driven to pound a drum
in a season of outlawed sound,
owning a candle—
knowing full well its brevity
in a world where darkness reigns—
from saying yes when to have said no meant sanity
and survival,
knowing all is well because all is wrong,
desperately knowing

(Continue →)

about tales and rumors
of being free and setting free,
of torn sails and heavy anchors—
and more desperately
knowing the cold sweat terror
of waking to your own screams,
heart pounding,
haunted by Stygian images with come hither leers,
and most desperately knowing the folly
of putting pen on paper
and drifting somewhere else inside your head,
escaping only briefly
before the reality of life's blood lost returns
bringing thoughts of love and peace
and how much we long for them,
how they tease us with brief glimpses
and how easily they elude us—
a world beyond our comic opera propitiations,
unreachable,
when we know enough to be desperate,
when we feel too much,
when the unattainable leads us to know enough
to be dangerous—
victims now of self inflicted wounds

(Continue →)

born of forced secrets willingly loved and lost,
dying pilgrims on the road to oblivion,
lamenting the tragic finality of worlds without end
and an end without worlds

VISIBILITY
AN OLD SWEET SONG

A walled fortress fog
gray and unyielding,
a soul dead, world dying view
—no hope on the surface—
a let's build from the ashes kind of morning.
Mixed emotions might be claimed
indeed,
cold and damp to the essence
wafting in the promise of sunshine,
alive and free another day,
once more at the noble pursuit
—little victories in the mind—
for times like these.
The survivor has all he needs
no more, no less.
Wild night creatures will return
to call in the night,
nothing's changed of that terror
for those living consciously
—condemned and cursed—
on the living terror edge of lies.
The hope then,
and only then,
is the morning light will come at last.

ice palace

the world in winter,
waiting,
doing its season of silence.
cold winds at night,
whistling in pines
and warning
that winters aren't to be measured
in terms of ice and snow,
instead,
the scale is made
of slowly lengthened days—
of occasional teasing warm spells—
these are the hints that illuminate.
winters are measured the more
by autumn's contentment
and the splendor of
spring's promise.
winter's palette,
brown and gray
and frozen white,
these are happy colors—
the hues and tones of tomorrow's glory,
these are the colors of hope.

(Continue →)

gray and brown,
earth's winter crown.
crystalline snow and frozen white,
earth's ermine robe.
and the cleansing cold winds are not bitter,
they are the songs and hymns of futures,
the French horns announcing
the wondrous news—the miracle
of a world about to be born again.

FOR ALL SEASONS
—PEOPLE OF THE REALITY

The difficulty lies in squaring truth
with the reality of longevity—
striae roaming across sunset's sky
one more day in the life,
mountains stacked like cord wood
against some heavenly attrition.
Pray Hallelujah
the news from the front is of God:
only a few from our side
while multitudes from the other,
were slaughtered today.
And how much darkness defines deadly truth—
how many smartly folded flags equal success?
Of course peasants are peasants precisely because
(those who direct the accounting assure us,
that our father's God knows this)
these lesser ones,
they cannot multiply one half billion by one million,
besides,
their children also have this potential for limited vision.
Surely and consistently,
there is no such thing as free exercise of incredulity
—it's forbidden, like inquiry into existence—

(Continue —>

it's myth making,
disguised as debates over free lunches
and necessary evils.
The jurors form a circle and are polled,
those on the night watch are assigned tasks
and watched closely—
night sounds are believed the voices
of misguided adventures,
(silence does have a roar—
staccato beats, driving rhythms)
though closely watched
all affectations are to be feared and measured.
Borders too, are a key,
it's a well organized insanity
full circle again
and again,
as the day watch sees that paradise found
is paradise lost.

THE OLD NORTHWEST TERRITORY
— The Profound Meekness Of Prophets

Inspiration drawn from night skies
and stormy skies
—lightning slashes—fear of god flashing
signals of experience the grim teacher
—souls in half bent terror—
the preacher screams there are no safe places
now or ever again—
from here it's an eternity from everywhere equidistant
it's sharing time
making love
yea, it's making love when life and death
say making war or making hate
says more for forever.
See now,
how life without death is death now delayed
or mistaken.
Autumn breath skips a beat
Spring melts,
a Summer solstice field of sad eyed hurrying travelers
so exquisite is the pain
so welcome—
a crescent moon promise fulfilled—
and will there be more moons of any stripe or dimension?
Now can your prophet smile?

CLOWNS AND KINGS

(How Subtle Differences Matter)

The ultimate reality is not a matter

left well to choice

better—

it is a decision of timing and style.

The swashbuckling tenor booms his operatic voice

—bold assertion—

but he leaves the stage by the taped marks

of the sad eyed clown.

Who then decides the issues

of morality and nobility?

Who is thinking,

who prays truthfully for direction,

who is alive?

BELIEVER'S TRUTH

Climbing far above the tree line
forbidden territory for any but declared saints
alone in the wild
on the trail of the way back into a psychotic age
fear now chooses to evolve
chilling realizations from within
— the words and forms of my dedication
have relevance only for me
and a life unto themselves—
of themselves manifested for themselves.

The child becomes the father
and far above the clouds a sacristy forms
a forum for just culminations
a place to effect what's already been commanded
inside the head.

The words come easy when the spirit oozes life's treasure
when the pursuit falls short
— and from the pondering of such meanings comes the facts
the fears were always well founded.

The meaning of it all was nothing and nothing multiplied
compulsions of desperation
demanded the tearing of one's grip
from the earth of clinging cowardice
falling free

(Continue —>)

no encumbrances binding
the most daring act of the age
performed without nets
alone as it was prescribed to be
a statement for these times and those times
for all times and seasons—
bindings confined to one mind—still floating free
hidden for the threefold days
thus proving the point—
an act for laughs because that's all there is
a free form demise in the life of the mind—
a last gasp reach for the light
knowing well of darkness and worse expectations
body and soul disunion interrupted
 only by the mercy of dreams
conscious and unconscious mystical illusions
perfect guides for a metaphysics of the absurd
old dreams in realms of time forgotten—
unconscious thoughts of imprisoned freedom—
stream of the conscious unconscious
rules not needed.
The essence is captured in emotions
only to be lost in instants—
seconds with a strange thought
—an instant to soar—
a glimpse of the kingdom,
and a chance to touch God.

UNTITLED

Insight into the mind of troubled consciousness,
the gift you should have refused
but couldn't—
forced fates for whatever reason,
are none-the-less, fates.

The question looms,
will you surrender to confusion
and be bogged down as in a mundane job,
or will you pursue the dilemma
—turning tables on the predator—
and make the pursuit your life's work?

Sometimes
the survivor is the pilgrim
who chooses oneness with his cross.
One plays the hand he's dealt—
triumph being in the degree of willingness—
or one pulls the trigger;
victory thus expressed by controlling the future.

When it's foggy like this,
you have trouble with distinctions,
for the low road winds and turns
while the high road twists and curves.

The mother tongue is so confusing
you're wonderin' even as you should be wandering—

(Continue —>)

it's a show of shams
and a sham of a show.
At best, we're only performing—
clowns and minstrels,
knaves and scoundrels,
quick steppin' fools wanting to be kings,
studying the skies for directions
and falling in ditches,
testing the wind for warnings and warrants
and stumblin' over sunsets and tumbleweeds.
Yet through it all
despair and despondency are themselves doomed,
failing in the face
of the deep belly growling principled stand.
a tormented soul in consciousness
is at the least and at the most,
in control.
Prophets could wish no more—
the struggle is enough,
to be the delight of the soul.

OLD SWEET SONG #2
(An Endless Road to Nowhere)

I've known being cold and tired,
been wet and alone and scared,
been abused, accused, and confused
been set upon and spat upon,
been down this road so long
I could be the tour guide.
Heads they win, tails I lose,
and someone else gets to keep the coin.
Thusly imprisoned by such great and grand commissions
—captive of proceedings and conventions—
claiming to represent freedom,
I'm left to a strange liberty—
being totally free to pursue as I'm pleased
as long as I please the gods of other's delight,
time and space
to do anything but question space and time.
Thick dungeon walls grow thicker,
each etched with fingernail scratched despair,
dried blood evidence
of the yearning to sketch reality,
even to create it out of mists and smiles,
to paint it in blood if necessary,
all in a world,
where you're expected to recognize it on sight.

THE CISTERCIAN'S GIFT

It's been a lifetime trying
to outrun the rain
and now I'm tired,
my feet hurt,
and I'm soaking wet.
Time it is now
to sit in the downpour
and revel in its essence,
to hear its sound among trees,
to nod and smile
to the rooftop tapping of simple gifts
in a code—
spelling easy comforts for the soul.

LONG GRAY TIME DAWNING

Morning
comes a long gray time dawning
taunting requests of God
as to what it's all about,
asking after so long
and still not knowing.
You've tried it all—
the demons and the drugs,
the gods 'n' the kingdoms of understanding
and enlightenment,
and still you're asking
and lamenting,
wanderin' and wondering
and crying out
against starlit skies—
yet and still,
morning comes,
a long gray time dawning.

WEATHERING THE DAYS

A poem in black and white
because the gray is fading,
it's that kind of world—
with those kinds of feelings.
Train and tracks recede into the night,
elements of necessity in a discordant age,
tumbling one now upon another,
a crashing thrashing entangling of hopes,
lies turned inward
walls closing in
limitations drawing near
and clear.
That for which the effort was made
rings now hollow and wanting,
for the best and worst never change
in realms such as these—
kingdoms of discontent
on the trip of the glass viewed darkly,
weathering the days,
seeing it clearly for the first time,
knowing of warm rain instants on the edge

(Continue →)

feeling it dearly
and agonizing the nights.
Alive now on an ocean
but stranded in the doldrums
with all depth and breadth equidistant
from nowhere and nothing.
And still the war goes poorly—
“It’s only a chemical condition,”
says the expert;
“With only a chemical solution,”
replies the chemist.
And the death toll mounts
where there is no cure
for the human condition.
adrift and vulnerable,
when the death rate is absolute.

THE PARK

A DAY BETTER THAN MOST

“I done it all”

the old man says,

spitting.

“I done it all

an’ it ain’t nothin’ —

none of it.”

Steel gray eyes flash coherently,

briefly,

alcohol—aw, for sure,

but still,

those eyes burning through me.

“I did it all,

I did it,

and it ain’t nothin’.”

TO KISS THE MOON'S REFLECTION

I am from the valley,
and It's being from the valley, my friend,
that changes everything.
We're just hiding out in a niche,
waiting for the big bad Karma clouds
to gather their nonsensical sensitivities.
It's being of the valley.
surviving by viewing peaks
—unknown peaks and paths—
surviving by wishing and planning.
Now I've walked some of those peaks,
and I've imagined the rest.
On the paths I've scented, even tasted, victory--
those late nights and early mornings,
they mean something as never before,
the winds of remorse are weak,
changed into warm soothing caresses now.
Praise now the warm breathing lover's whisper
that no things are forever,
and yet, all things are indeed, forever!

OTHER PEOPLE'S CHILDREN

...A Tribute To Unsung Heroes

So you've loved your own families?
—that's nice—
sadly,
there are no awards for being nice.
You've loved your own children,
—but that too, is expected,
and there are still no medals
for doing the expected.
Besides,
loving one's own is Spring morning easy
and "easy " is never saluted.
But you've loved other people's children,
unwanted ones,
unloved little ones—
and little ones in big bodies
a sick era's throwaways,
hurting confused little souls you chose to want
while the world chose to ignore,
or worse,
dared to hate.

(Continue —>)

It's been a wonder to behold,
all along you kept loving other people's babies
— "society's problems" critics said,
but all you said was welcome,
good morning,
please and thank you,
and you meant it—
every grace filled syllable!
Maybe you can't soothe the hurt of every cruel blow
and slammed door,
but you've loved other people's children,
and you've risked opening your heart to them—
and there are rewards for that.
I know so little
but I know this so surely,
I can close my eyes and see
how He who knows everything must feel.
Close your eyes too,
and feel His smile.

REPEAT OFFENSES
(THE SECRET STATUS OF SYMBOLS)

There are most likely
(by conservative estimates)
well over one hundred billion stars
and now I'm told
this world is defined and figured
by braying fools in dark suits
—spiritual discerners these,
seers,
well grounded in earthly pleasures,
spokesmen for Moses' wondrous simplicity—
guardians of delusions locked in threadbare images—
these are the keepers of marketplaces
set in faux palaces of grandeur.
I am told to stare in awe,
to kneel when appropriate to the situation,
this is the genuflecting sought in perfect worlds,
this is the assemblage of sliding pilgrims
trapped in ignominious slots
and perfected schemes.
There then,
is Shakespeare's sweet rub,
for cries of sleep of necessity,
are cries of death.

(Continue —>)

It's a wonder
that robs the breath from the wayfarer,
how Alpha and Omega
makes no difference,
indeed , sows no seed of discernible deference
—there is the point obscured by perfect light;
why the saints prattle on
'bout why and how
winds blow south or north...
while ignoring the gales that rip forests
and villages
east and west?

ONE OF MANY MANSIONS

Scars amid the stars
dreams they were
they brought us high
and brought us low
free form still with rhymes
free form with crafted words and edges
---pleas of puzzles to be solved
hideaway twisted hopes.
Sometimes I get so far away
—so very high and soaring—
I can pray for those who sent me.
Sometimes I can forgive those whose gods were of
secular stations
leering gods who beckoned with summer come hither leers.
Sometimes I can smile
about those who sent me here,
armed with blind faith—
they said this and that,
and they cursed
but somehow they never knew,
or cared,
that blind faith was really no better
than no faith.

CLIMATE CONSIDERATIONS

Cool,
when I realized I was dealin'
on the world's stage
This was a thing for keeps
and none of my training—
my chops or my feints—
could make a believable dent in this reality.
This one was for what they said,
mattered.
This one was for what warnings failed
This one was for keeps— ahh,
yeah,
—yeah, the spirits
of thine own selves be true.
Of these mystiques and matches
of which none could be true—
how could any have been ready?
But then,
that's part of the dealin'
and I can only remember what I can imagine
and only I can remember paper and limits,
Maybe this is why they sent me

(Continue →)

— why I escaped them—
and their grasp.
Oh how nice the flowers blooming
This is why they can't control rain
and sun
and one hundred years beyond my smile.

CLASS OF '63

Among the lesser animals,
and about things founded on lies—
the difference being we're right
and the other cultures are not.
Declaring a tragedy as one child,
ghetto of the mind born and bound,
goes slippin' outside the fatherland's reach.
Grew up to the Cleavers—
Wally and the Beav,
and Eldridge made three.
It was lilly white,
a world overt
yet somehow insidious.
Still all we're doing is recording
the passing show,
lamenting and regretting,
but changing nothing.
Ya can mix your chemical concoctions
and think of baseball and nature,
and peace.
And I saw Shane leaving
in a big yellow taxi,
the why and the wherefore art thou
was never answered,

(Continue →)

the ways and means never shown
and our Ken and Barbie world
came crashing down.
Revolutionary acts become habits
in strange and forgotten places,
all the while
it is for the stroke of the current season's grip
we yearn and maneuver.
And pimp-in-a-pulpip popped up and said:
"It takes sunlight to make shadows."
—but the crushing reality
filled even the dark rooms,
artificial light also casts shadows
and the fire storm of all ages
-the eminent imminent flash
will be a shadow maker of which
even God will take notice.
Some idyllic journey it was promised
and each remembers where he was
when he heard the news,
yeah, hippie to be
and clown hiding in a disguise he didn't understand,
all dodgin' bullets or something worse.
And the headlines appeared
stuck to a tree by bayonets—

(Continue —>)

it's not the 80 proof glow
but the adrenaline flow
that rules a land that defies metaphor
as it lives out caricatures of its soul's purpose.
Nothing ever changes
when you're schooled in self destruction
—loyal to a wasted group—
a group yearning to get wasted,
though wasting makes little difference.
And depression became sin,
for nothing says it all like nothingness,
and nothingness says more than nothing else...
“M...I...C,
see ya real soon”
—an' you wanted to be Moose Skowron,
blissful days of a mouse and a moose,
an' now a bottle of gin
won't even get you across town.
“K...E...Y,
why?
Why? Because that's just the way it always was,
and always will be. Amen.

ELI ELI LAMA SABACHTHANI

The spires reach into and beyond reality
and forever.

The mystics among us,
stoned, crucified, and spat upon,
humbled, 'cause they didn't know
the words and rituals.

Secretly ya gotta love the mystics,
openly,
you've gotta stare through them
an' keep walking.

And should you now wonder
why the mirror cries for anesthesia
in advance

and absolution in absentia,
study the spires--

they reach toward infinity,
all the while

we've admired limestone and granite
somehow ignoring and neglecting
the mortar.

PART TWO

**STATIONS OF
THE TRUE CROSS**

PREDATORS, PREY AND PERFECT ORDER

The survival of perfection
or the sweet imperfection of inequality and sadness;
It's a tune set in azure tones —
it's light peering into secret coves
and more and more,
it's darkness visiting venues — public places
and private spaces —
points once reserved for special graces.
Ah, the pleasure of dawn —
yet the pilgrim awakes with a startling revelation,
knowing this was the day declared of modern holiness,
a day,
for someone to be executed.

**ON THE FIRST PERSON MIMICRY
OF PERFECT ORDER**

Sometimes I'm so enthralled
by the easy mastery of mystery
I'm speechless;
The prophet's light burning all over me—
shining like it did the years I mined easy street,
skipping stones and skipping steps—
seeds and fruit inseparable,
no threats,
nothing,
nothing but sanguine sunshine and comfortable sunsets
strumming chords,
streaming sorrowful searing soaring—
saving souls in near alliterative allusions,
illusions in warm sundown time signatures.
Oh how it goes,
(quickly and silently says the legend)
but lambs always suspect the slaughter.
For those among the faithful
who thought they'd never play this game—
Did you think you'd play any game?
Let me rearrange the places where subjects kneel,
places where penitents hesitate on bended knee.

(Continue →)

Thus now will be the sunsets—
did you expect this
when you first breathed deep from the storm
of the freedom wind?

THE RULES OF HOSTILE ENGAGEMENT

Being afraid to look in the glass,
 fearing the image of an older Richard Cory
 —such things of astral dimensions
 abstract to the point of absurdity or denial—
 confusion of the motherland's patriotic wail,
 added to the depth of mindless progression,
 first fruits born in contemptuous labor,
 a side show, run now and hide show,
 ten thousand fools claiming legion as their god,
a million words dashed as scorned lover's hopes.
 So the wise dance in hopeless helplessness,
 sons and brothers of the war mausoleum
 doing a lock-step march, a garrison swagger.
Thus it's easy to ignore the dying victim of circumstance,
 child of Patmos crying and setting sail—
 a shipwreck in the making,
 match stick form dashed on Petra shore,
 mind child ever the man child father of creation
tears running in tired creases,
 sardonic wrinkles searching places to hide,
 a refugee with time and place forgot—
 for the lord who said love,
 came running,
 a warlord in sheep's clothing.

**THE AMAZING DEPTH
TO WHICH GRACE SATISFIES**

In this age sunshine kills,
 water poisons and calm wind destroys,
 Isn't it amazing?
Isn't it now a magic confounded in rotting seas
 and acrid summer snows?
 Pearly petals fall just as blooms wither,
 thorns guard thorns
 and bandits now wander the bazaars
 where truth and beauty once guarded each other.

**AN ANCIENT WEEK
OF MODERN REALIZATIONS**

So we know so much more than long ago,
—some of the answers are said even to work.
All that remains important seems to be,
how to acknowledge mysteries
while juggling hopes and dreams.
An ancient voice of wisdom shouts most loud,
"Play the hand you're dealt"
but if you look closer you will surely see,
he's the man who owns the casino,
just as once he also owned
the money changer's table.

THE PROPER INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE

Justice's grand denouement—being waylaid
by invisible things casting big shadows,
So much better to be enthralled
by what we do not know,
to long for what we still may see.
A generation has seen stars
and moons and marketplaces
—waded deep in churning fears,
and for want of wonder has considered the night,
being careful to smile at the blind
and speak with compassion to the deaf.

**HE WHO IS WITHOUT SIN CREATES
A STONE TOO HEAVY TO LIFT**

When the ones called prophets say: "Lastly
and most importantly"
—all would be wise to take cover.

Their truths are devised from splitting elements,
their laws are the dreams of men in dark suits.
When you emerge from hiding,
you'll find they own more than they did before,
and have options on most everything else.

WINDS OF SUMMER SLUMBER

The undirected feast of barren flight,
 all hail the patrons of lost causes,
 the saints salute the saints
 while the fools come marching in.
The reality of the imperceptible odds against permanence
 or any form of survival--
 one million times one million—
 and still the chances shrink
 and still the thirsty seek.
It's dashed hopes at best,
dashed hopes being ever the loving parent of no hopes,
 and false hopes
 and all so many things that arrive in the night.
Hymns and psalms,
 formalized laments,
 unexpected cries and worried glances—
crashing travails of the multitude's lost loving hopes,
 these and all remnants of forgotten dreams
 and stolen wishes.
Hapless hopeless forms stumble,
 hopes spring forever for direction,
 even light,

(Continue →)

and through it all
not even an angry god appears.
Signs of the times hang everywhere,
like so much crepe,
like so many sad clouds—
easy winds swallowed by cross currents
sad winds—
lost hopes mixed with last hopes
dying winds
hidden sunlight
and sounds forever silent.

THE FLEETING STATE OF GRACE

How we longed for your sweet embrace,
how we prayed...precious times we prayed.
Amazing traces etched across a starlit sky,
well desired grace,
out of reach and never found,
dearest life broken low at every turn
by pain and hurt,
by deepest strife.

Old sweet song
how sweet it sounds,
like love and peace blowing across the field,
and like fields and forests of long ago,
painfully forever out of reach.

THAT SCIENTIFIC SEASON

Poles converge in senseless propagation of absurdity
and despair,
pilgrims shuffle, eyes shielded, quick steps to no avail,
Alpha and Omega melt together
and run through the gutter,
scorching and destroying,
leaving seared hollow beings pointing and running,
disappearing in burning mist.

TAKING FLIGHT

— A Lateral Phase Of Discontent —

A generation that took a stand while running at full speed
headlong lunging helter skelter
careening
pinball angling,
speed of light slashing through glaring stares
of feigned daring deceptions.

A generation uncomfortable with comfort—
the myth of plenty multiplied
against delusional skies.
Magnified mystified maddening scenes,
treasures to be gleaned and panned:

THIS IS AN OLD BACK ROAD
AROUND THE FLOODS
I GREW UP AROUND HERE
I REMEMBER THESE THINGS
BUT NOW THE WATER IS
COMING FROM PLACES I DON'T RECALL
I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW THIS HAPPENED

A generation where leaders lead by diversion and division
yet the prophets speak of love

(Continue →)

and sanity smiles through the cacophony

of soft sold hard sells.

A generation finds peaceful calming quiet

cannot be known without first knowing

the torturous noise of an age of the absurd.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

From his mouth

—they said—

came a two edged sword.

We were instructed

—after we were told we were unworthy

to touch his feet—

to kiss his footprints.

Some saw them so easily

but I wasn't ever sure I saw tracks

—even after I was told I wasn't

worthy to question—

Amen.

Holy holy, the Lord is holy,

this was the season we learned of boundaries

and what righteous saints fought to keep and keep out.

This will be the doctrine or many will die

and most will suffer.

Holy holy, the Lord is holy,

this was the time when crowds gathered,

chants came as prayers,

faith and hope vied and tumbled from pious lips

and the greatest of these was the sword.

the risk of stupid gestures

and the clown's clouded mind dwells on rain
but he writes of smiles and silver dollar skies,
things that have no relation to truth
or the section of the road he's plying...
of course it's a joke,
that's why it costs so much,
that's why the fools salute it,
and the wise men die laughing...
nobody cares,
'cept me and you and
the other fools,
the lost ones listening to night sounds
while waitin' for frosty mornings...
nobody cares
or knows,
'cept the people without the sense
to come in out of the pain,
people with knowledge of times and seasons
and meteoric brevity...
and the clown's clouded mind dwells on blue skies,
he paints his face and performs his falls
and hides his secret smiles.

PART THREE
WARS MY GODS
HAVE ORDERED

ALL THE WRONG GRACES

Like some kind of sad-eyed pilgrim
hauled before a strange god,
I prowl the banks of a mist rising river.
The fog's illuminating,
it's being right I find so confusing,
being right, yet no one seems to know
or wants to recognize,
yea, the stuff of insanity dawning—
or maybe just a perceptual dilemma—
but be forewarned of the dangers inherent
in finger pointing
and locating the specks in other's eyes—
dangerous things these,
that come home to roost and rest.
Besides,

(Continue →)

all that glitters...

and all that's tarnished is not the silver cup

of your fashioning

or imagining.

As the man said,

or tried to say,

being right isn't always easy

or even the evidential fruit of the glories and dreams

of this or any clime or feeling

save the long night terror

known only to souls on the run—

souls looking for homes they never knew,

souls dying before their time

but right on cosmic schedule.

Being right means suffering the slings and arrows...

—your hole's been dug around you

and the ethos says you can only climb out

by pulling others in—

forget justice,

this is the big leagues where reason languishes

and the first liar has no better chance

than he had when he tried honesty—

how could the pilgrim thus not fail?

(Continue →)

The crime's that of trying to love
—no wait, that's not nearly fair—
the crime was expecting mirrored feelings in return.
We'll all know better in the new day dawning,
morning is the time when loving hollow folks
are memories,
scrap heap people of another era,
Quixotic folk who said: "make it count"
in an age where the logos said:
"count it."

DARK STAR

Working flooded fields of despair
valleys of and for the shadow
Misting rain soaking the spirit
late winter rain...a mist
with wood smoke in the air
jasmine and sandalwood could soothe no better
Cold and damp
a triumph of what survives when all seems lost
One's very cells draw together
a turned up collar
hands in pockets kind of night
Survival of the fittest says the clown prince
"I'm trying" says the survivor
And wind blowing through tall trees
is echoed in faraway sounds
The survivor does what he does best
"To thine own self" routines—
only with heart and feeling born of pain
routines evoking a finality that says forever
so clearly with each and every step and breath

FOREST SOUNDS

One act dreams and sounds unknown
—the far reaching myths by which we breathe—
and wish to live
this power of things yet to be
against the lure
of that we wish had been,
fateful forces of fierce strange demand,
images of a world berserk,
dawn arriving at an early hour
only to be welcomed by the fortunate unwary.

In an ageless script modern day Druids,
staves held high--
people between worlds—
are caught and accused of dreaming and scheming,
of failing to fear thinking,
of running but not hiding,
ever.

Fearless frightened fliers having no places to land—
searchers failing to find
the experience of rising revelations
and crashing in ultimate trips of despair,

(Continue —>)

seekers,
of sunrises of any age
of any time,
souls ever cognizant of anything Solar—
the rebel and the man illusions joined in division,
experiencing defeat while alive in a vacuum
—defectors from other's truths,
these are the convicted in silent trials.
A homecoming awaits for a refugee of sorts
an ultimate experience,
a survivor's triumph of materialization,
in the mind and dream,
forest sounds in the night,
and in reality.

ACOUSTICS

AN OLD SWEET SONG

It's been a lifetime,
it has
struggling to know a lord
thinking it was required to have some force,
a being supreme to direct the course—
fool's journey it was,
battered badly now,
now so surely I know:
the magic of the mystic is in the music,
and when you can't hear it,
you can't dance except to the tunes
mined deep within your soul.
The singer is supposed to call the tune
yet I'm tired of being' on the stage—
tap dancing a tortured minstrel show
set to other's tunes.
Too long it took to know it,
longer it'll be 'fore I neglect it—
Christ, Buddha, Mahatma
masters
my apologies for the ages and the forevermore
you were used and misused,

(Continue —

it was a world of believers you sought,
a cult of sly deceivers is all you got.
Maybe gods and prophets should know better
or at least know differently,
but then there are trends and shackled flaws,
and greed
—besides,
the magic really may well be
in the music.

OF THE AGES EVER MORE

It was superstition,
passing this way,
icons and idols we met half way
making sense
out of making wars disguised as peace.

Of course it was superstition come crawling,
a savior in rags and royal raiment,
pausing on bended knee—
pausing to take in the scene—
pausing to corral sinners and saints.

Night falls as it always does,
doused in the dreams and desires of blind followers
—a condition defended as the pursuit of true science—
hope disguised as faith and faith just disguised.

Of course it was always alluded to as nature's law,
farcies laboring as forces
with all the power to rock the firmament
and roll
through the thrashing crashing revolutions
of dearest charity.

(Continue →)

Night now engulfs a world of geologic faults
and climates converging in comforts confusing,
lights mixed with shadows
—darkness pervading where light once reigned
and spread.
Hope and faith and charity
and the greatest of these
is light and breath,
it's simple virtue
dissected by walking paths disguised as thoughts
and deeds and worlds
not the least of which are thought to be,
and ought to be,
anyway much with us.

IMPASSE IMAGES

Misled by illusory declinations

guides fit for fools

the master's later period at fruition—

the hound growling at the wrong tree

misread cards

and ten thousand years before the sun,

before that,

a millennium—

and after each episode has passed

all that is,

is.

Real folks in feigned composure cry hidden tears

and hidden men know that what there is,

isn't

—why they didn't inquire of the women

about such stances,

is unclear—

from this point of departure,

all is unclear

and all is forevermore.

The pilgrim seeks purification

and of course,

(Continue →)

failure—
for whatever it is
it falls so very short.
Now smug fools welcome the equinox
even as lambs organize the slaughter.
The fate of being is self-evident
and self-evidence is of the essences,
a fact as sad as it is true.

CLOWNS—THEIR SECRET SMILES

The burdens of life and these times,
the headlines trying to be the death of me.
adrift in a sea that's lost its soul,
an all knowing proof of sad eternal truths—
the fates will conspire against you
if you hold still,
and the evidence mounts,
moving targets fare little better.
Worlds beyond our control
struggle to impose impossible weights to carry
while we stumble
under the baggage we pile on each other's backs
and our own shoulders.
Wind brings the news—
the war goes poorly against relentless forces and ages,
the logical solution arises in perfect illogical scents
—from the battlefield smoke arises—
a practicality of finality,
the option of taking control,
snatching victory (or at least control)
with one clean shot.
A clearer mind sees through the fog of absurdity,

(Continue —>)

and welcomes the inherent humor
—the soul felt comedy of the human condition—
heart feeling joy in the face of ridiculous predicament,
victory disguised as appreciation of an inner nobility.

A man would be a fool to miss this,
the greatest of shows,
to not linger,
to not stick around and see
how this and all the rest is gonna turn out.

THE SETTLEMENT AT TERRAPIN STATION

It's a strange path not frequently traveled,
meandering through tall grass
with wild flowers nurturing bees,
still;
if the world's gods proclaim truth,
know then by definition, there must be lies.
Better it be that their gods recognize questions
and slyly say only the false among us deny doubt,
for when gods are created, limits are sure to follow —
such is the world's way.
Traveled lightly,
it's none the less a worshipful road...
if one but doubts.
Such confusing interludes—
where strengths masquerade as truths
and truths roar in tumbling whispered fog.
Where does it all lead
and how can one measure lies against truth?
Can something be fractionally true
and marginally false?
In such battles who wins?
Are not hours devoured by such minutes and seconds?
Such are Terrapin's choices and Terrapin's glances,
(Continue →)

Such are Terrapin's glories
and Terrapin's chances.
And of the world for you to reside?
Pick the haven in which to want to hide.
In the battle of choices glories are merely glances,
captured chances at brass rings,
pawns and peasants mocking kings.
It's been like this in Terrapin
since wild geese and tumbleweeds graced this way,
it'll be this way in Terrapin by nature and default,
it'll roll and rock like this
when the choice is made to live one's choice.
First thoughts are ever truth's sublime vintage
and in much vintage is much truth.
Ah Terrapin,
to rise, to fall,
to always know we were always there.
Thunder drives and lightning slashes,
the sky opens as winds rip and drive,
Terrapin...
through it all and still further through it all,
Terrapin...
choose the world in which to live
choose the ends and beginnings,
Terrapin.
Terrapin.

OLD NORTHWEST TERRITORY #2

—The Biggest Of Losses...The Greatest Of Gains—

The pilgrim cried so often and so deeply
when he captured pawns,
he couldn't continue the campaign
rank had a privilege that was sad and sanguine still.
Slashing through bishops and knights seemed agreeable
but then end games,
do they justify any games?
If it's never truly over...
what then is the goal?
But then if it can truly be over,
what's the point...what's the gain?
Write the pastoral epilogue,
sing the sweet refrain,
for when it's over,
what in true reality is the gain?
When is the cost a function of the pain?
What now is there in the sky that inspires me
or frightens me?
Sun and sky and stars delight...
moons and tunes and hopes so bright,

(Continue →)

the heroes are dyin' or dead
placed as they are for tryin'
or condemned
for languishing in dread.

I've stolen all I could steal
—the masters left me some—
and I've made up the rest,
now storm clouds of soft striations—
billow about as they bellow and shout
of pauses and warnings of troubles brewing
light dims in such creations,
visions fade,
it's more than plans and rules
—more than this justifying that—
babies cry and children sob
and the best convention
can only advise of the simplicity
of going silently into the night.

I AM WHO AM

I am Siddhartha,

Siddhartha--the one who struggles to be Buddha,
and falls so very short...

Siddhartha who has his heart, if not his spirit,
in all the right places and questionable graces.

I am Jesus

---the one who turns water
into...water.

I am the one who gathers his children under his wing
and cries in despair at Gethsemane.

I am named for Muhammad

but I am the one who can't summon hills
let alone mountains to be moved.

I am Pope this

and Cardinal that,
I'll grant you these for eternity
if you'll sell me those forever.

I loved Joseph and followed Brigham
until I viewed Mountain Meadows.

You thought the rhyme was the thing,
Nature taught you to wait on spring,
the preachers said distance was a key--
stellar watchers--

(Continue →)

you'd have to have known
the heartbeat of closer contact.

I am who am.

I view sunsets paired with dawns,
names inspire even as I conspire,
I can lead only as far as I follow,
dreams carry only to the point of schemes.
Rhyme is said to be the reason,
yet reason pales in measured beats.

I am who am,

as seasons plot and plan.
My life is time magnified and limited.
My spirit is enlightenment
and salvation,
I am justification and despair,
I am who am.

ASH WEDNESDAY

They loved to lay their burdens on me,
they loved
to say this pain and that lament
were things I caused or could cure.
I owed no debts so I had no pains and pallors,
I had no way of knowing
how the mighty abided no slack—
nor pleading
from huddled masses.
There were souls here to be saved,
by suffering
and ragged late night stomach tightening tears.
There was a dynamic here,
to be dredged and scraped together,
and molded deftly into statues.
The causes and the pauses that melted together,
these were the burdens of my benefactors--
they drove me as they prayed they loved me,
there was the mighty chorus from on high,
there was life and hope and faith—
yeah, the greatest they said (and reserved)
was faith
they trained me as they pained my spirit,

(Continue →)

this above any and all
would be the burden they said—
 that of the loving lament that procured souls
 and hearts for further adventures
 and solemn rituals.
 —Fate had thus bought me a piece of the
action victory by association,
would be the epithet carved on the medal--
 if not the epitaph set in stone.
 This was a pain of the long haul,
 this was of permanence.

Walking straight, following the steps,
 pray the burden be unrecognized
 pray the world goes away without memory,
 deftly defiled,
 the elders would have no way
 of knowing of burdens and claims.
Honorable gods,
 —gods without the need of vengeance—
 have no claim or calling on how the caring
 slide like helpless pilgrims
into the hopeless night of all abyss.

Choral shout of praise (with tears and misgivings):

Amen.

TIME TRAVELER

I've been around here before,
the signs and sensibilities drip of déjà vu,
the climate is comfortable and sublime
yet nothing and nobody seems the same
or even reminiscent of the summer breezes I recall.
I think I was raised in these parts and parcels,
the signs of those times weep of nostalgia,
the steps are easy and comfortable,
—summer morn easy—
like the scent and vision of iris and forsythia
—all appears the same,
yet all seems so foreign and discomfoting.
Recollections linger of a life evolving in this place,
there is an easy comfort mixed with a longing pain
images intrude like strange sweet odors—
memories come tumbling like comfortable mysteries,
I think I've walked and loved here before
yet nothing is the same and the faces gaze in confusion.
Flood waters are roiling and tumbling,
there is this shortcut around high water
I remember well
but I've never seen it reach this far

(Continue →)

or be this muddy and turbulent,
I was raised around here—I knew about such things,
these were simple matters to deduce and reconcile
yet something is wrong and out of place,
the pace and dimensions are wrong
and the signs are not right.

AUTUMNAL GETHSEMANE

A chill wind warns of worlds too much with us,
of seasons and ages forevermore in crisis.

Hard winter's coming
so the wise have reckoned.

Aren't they all, the wise say further,
once seasons face the assault of time.

Hard winter's coming
and with its arrival time comes leering,
baiting and teasing of faraway places
and paths not taken,
of conflicting truths locked in battle,
resting,

only to taunt with the agonies of ages past
and the soulful long night terror of calendars
speeding what clocks once slowed.

Hard winter comes slipping into camp
from foggy shadows of fading memories—
old times forgotten, with quiet feet padding
through fallen leaves of labors lost.

And always the chilling taunts;
no mercy shown—
relentless taunts of higher ground and mired dreams.

(Continue →)

Hardest winter comes with newer threats;
terrors worse than empty nests and lonely crowds—
trump card threats of ages ending,
of seasons captured and seasons bound.

RENAISSANCE SONG

Would that I'd been raised by wolves,
simpler it'd been that I'd been born immaculate,
or left heart beating on some desolate doorstep of eternity.
Child of this time in that ethos,
swaddled vestige lost in sunsets of those times,
and those promises,
and those hopes.

North wind it was that promised fancy bound in flight,
North wind it was that first whispered of freedom winds
and tightly bound unfettered dreams.

These are the things that fogged teenage windows
and broke the secret heart of all hearts.

Time heals what time creates and belittles,
time lies, and time mocks,
and time is born immaculate.

West wind it was that promised hope bathed in light,
West wind it was that grinned of long sought paths
and loosely spread unreachable schemes.

Such are the thoughts that burden the flights
and set sails seeking forgotten plots.

Time heals what time creates and mocks,
time lies, and time belittles,
and only time dies immaculate.

**REALITY'S FORM AND
CRYPTIC DENIAL OF SUBSTANCE**

The pilgrim was drunk on sophistication
when he raced home to tell the residents
of how nothing mattered as much as matter's definition—
even if matter was now but a tool of such declaring.

Raised as a control freak,
the pilgrim knew the glory inherent
in staking out territory and fields of wonder.

The pilgrim was blinded by ambition
when he hurried home to share with the denizens,
how everything to the slight of faith and faith's current god,
was but of wind and discarded stem

—even if older wisdom was but the fool of volition.

Raised as a penitent to superstition,
the pilgrim knew the story never denied
in plotting paths through side show fairs and follies.

The pilgrim was stunned by the affirmation of faith

when he flew home to tell the tribe
how the evidence of things unseen—

even things unseen in the contrast of possibility--

could cast shadows across fruited plain and lofty perch.

Blind sided by ugliness dressed as truth,

the pilgrim sensed the folly of preaching hope
or plying faith.

**MY LITTLE BIT
OF WISDOM**

So many years before time was forgotten
 awash in a sea that's lost its soul and position
this way and that—teetering on the throes of perdition
 and the whims of damnation's peripatetic gods
So many ways after forgotten things were ignored
 survivors thrashing in survival swirls
 waves crashing as holy winds direct
 any way bargained for life's vagaries defined
 in defiled sacramental rite
Of course sacred promises are bargaining chits
 in hands dealt in cosmic comic sequence
He would have gathered his young
 like a hen with her chicks
 herding them to safety in the storm
 He would have twisted curses into blessings
 Night would have made a pleasant day
So many forgotten years in tapping rhythmic time
 drifting afar in waters of forlorn consequence
so many stances bargained for gambler's bleak chances
 sweetness defined in longing admonitions
Time and its nature ignored

(Continue →)

time and its qualities ridiculed

Of course deep wounds are merely life's glories

remembered in contrived stories

It would all be a joke if no one believed it

or depended on its existence.

BLUES FOR BROWN EYES

Sweet brown eyes,
the storms we've weathered—
seasons that made war with our souls,
the clowns and kings that thought they owned us
and the times we tried to own each other,
but it's blood shared that's forever
and sometimes forever is just enough.
Sweet brown eyes,
the burdens placed upon us,
and those we placed upon ourselves,
the miles traveled and far places seen
and the nightmares that won't go away,
these and so much more
—our schemes and dreams—
but most of all our love,
this is all there is
and all there is will surely be enough.

THE HARVEST AT TEMPERATE LONGING

I know that you harvest what you sow.—
plant icy stares and you'll reap whirlwinds so cold,
so bitterly cold,
that even those who come later will be chilled.

I know that Alpha proceeds Omega,
but that Alpha does not lead,
and Omega most times does not follow,
and nothing in this or any dispensation
does anything willingly
or without cost.

I know rhymes entertain but don't matter.

I know sight is thought superior to sound,
though neither is to be trusted.

I know so much I know nothing,
and suspect even less...

I'm privy to clues and the humor of gods...

I couldn't predict the weather,
in a rainstorm...

yet I know when it's folly to sail.

Because I know nothing,

I know it all...

everything...

(Continue →)

this wisdom would be a curse if it wasn't a joke.

This wisdom would hurt if I wasn't laughing...

see...

I know what you harvest by what you plant,

I also don't know a plant from a seed...

it's the harvest ball dance you do,

that tells me your right from your wrong.

It would be a joke if I were the only one who sees,

and hears,

if I were the only one knowing

who thought they were leading

and who was following.

THE JOY OF MY YOUTH

'Twas a noble enterprise
she was glory personified
Mary Queen of creation
and our martyred savior
a final mystery revealed
dead in a field...left for our pickings
and left with us having nothing to boast
or belittle

This was the rock upon which we built so much
the rock of ages we relied upon
and hid behind
It was a noble effort
a world sowing the seeds of its own demise
still it was a wondrous run...
a noble enterprise
left in an arid clime
its body for the picking of vultures
and other bitter creatures with issues overcoming
Introibo ad altare Dei
Ad Deum qui laetificat juventutem meam

a joke among the faithful

to get to this point some of us have no cause
or perception,
as to how it got done—
we learned to tap dance and counter punch,
we could bullshit faster than the world could deal,
hell man, we could slide and slip
and dance a jig across your bow
we learned to slip a punch
with dignity,
or at least nonchalance—
forget you (or worse)
if you couldn't take a joke.
we could.

ya gotta know

ya gotta know

transcendent voices have always been my master

they've spoken in codes and currents

they've been there to support with pillars... and explain

all those times i've fallen

and danced.

ya gotta know about the spirits

and yes,

the sane voices...

winds of yesterday, tomorrow,

and all god's good karma rolled into roadways.

ya gotta know how much the voices rule...

but it is reality grounded in sanity...

it's an inner voice

it's tomorrow bright and clear...

it's daylight, dawn and the dark of tonight...

fair skies,

and navigating skies...

ya gotta know...

that's how truth appears,

ya gotta know...

it's all about today, yesterday,

and tomorrow.

THE ROAD

If you've ever had even a little of the road
you'd know what I know...
some of it's a sham
some of it is reality wrapped in ribbons
an' promises.

If you've ever even had a little of pain
and heartache
and things that cause discomfort looking at night skies...

See,
none of it rhymed when it meant anything,
it was soul and slight
visions worthy and unworthy of sight
see,
it can rhyme but it means no more.

ON THE NATURE OF THINGS

Things always seemed to break my way — well,
 maybe not my way exactly.
There was always pain and tears a
 and on long dark and cold nights
 there was always this despair reconciled just this side
 of insanity.
So things always broke my way when I twisted
 and distorted
and somehow saw the embrace of faith and hope
 and charity
 in cold winds and breathtaking storms.
There was always magic in the music
and always just enough music upon which to plan flight,
 music and magic and just enough hope to create faith.
Scripts piling at my feet,
 laments and hurts and still just enough wish
 born of hope and fear.
Paths emerged through North Woods
 oxygen deep breaths swirling from West Winds...
 somewhere in the West...
 someplace in the Northern green expanse...
 but this was easy street,

(Continue →)

we had it all...chickens and pots and autos,
the king's graces traced across atomic skies.
So why didn't the societal things
ever mean anything to me,
why didn't any stake or obligation represent
more than wind
or water rushing past my world?
Long dusty roads meandering on into sunsets,
winds that are now scary still bring an uneasy comfort,
it never changed—
nothing and no time and no king's explanation
have meant even a hope of anything—let alone,
everything promised of a god's reward.
It never changed, it never got better or worse...
things tumbled by driven by winds of every stripe
or consequence...or ambition.
Nothin' changed...
the answers never piled before open or closed doors
nothin' was multiplied by nothin' squared—
two became zero—
and zero has become larger than the wide sky it once was.
Things...yea, things accumulating like so much wisdom
based on folly,
yea, things—and seriousness,

(Continue —>)

things that go fearful in the night,
Three A.M. stuff,
things without even foggy morning comforts,
things,

things of the thoughts of frosty morning breaths...

things, summer morn easy
and summer afternoon hot and humid...

So why didn't any of it mean anything...

why didn't hope count,

or even compare, to delusion and despair?

The search isn't among steeples and cathedrals,

whited sepulcher bones are only a stage of dust...

neither is the search in board rooms or other places

dedicated to perverted power...

the search is shifted among the clouds

it is of dusty footprints on sparsely trod trails...

things only get in the way,

only hide and confuse.

The search is hidden and puzzle-like,

It meanders among weeds and day lilies,

it is friend and mentor to wild flowers

and winds of remorse—

and winds of hope.

Prologue: AN IDIOT AND HIS GOD

This old and he's still writing poetry that few read.

(Continue →)

This old and he's still worrying about right and wrong—
so old, and he's still trying
to compose photos that say something—
or anything.
An idiot and his god are so slowly parted.

THE WARS MY GOD ORDERED

—Tales Of Nothingness And The Honor Of Thieves—

Days and nights,
days, days, and days masquerading as night,
and the nights of no recompense, reward or comfort
shadow lands and summer sea schemes,
light failing dark—even framing despair,
is it for this the prophets spoke?
Solstice springs now for cover,
pages torn from the calendar float free.
And this is that for which the martyrs died,
And this is such that the seasons flee?

PART FOUR

**COVENANTS AND
FADED RISKS**

covenants and faded risks

all the bad karma
 going now
 slipping rapidly away
in its place
crescendos of roaring feelings...
 elation
wave upon wave
 heart beating
uncontrolled
come now words of camus
 tell me of how absurdity pales
of how revolt grants majesty
in the struggle
to the heights
 of mind exploding

(Continue →)

scorn...
 life indeed worth living at last...
scenes wrung from every drop
 of essence
come now road man
 teach by your frantic frenetic chase
 tell me of comfort god
and highways ribboning to forever
 i choose to remember you
anxious and searching
 and living
heroes of my past
 coming forward with welcome leers...
lead me on
 define me
and be me...
show me the steps
 whereby
stars shine through clouds...
 how mists build castles
show me
 sincerity
 in make believe
 drive my pulse to staccato bursts
bury me
 in mists and forests

(Continue →)

and my own mind...
lead me screaming in delight
 of the light
 bless me...
pry into my mind
 to where the raptor reigns
amid spires...
 sentinels forever snow clad
 and beyond dirty air
 and bad faith
release the images
 locked in fear...
 release the feelings
imprisoned
 in images
inject the mind drugs
 natural ecstasy so divine
real delight
 timeless
lead me now my frantic manic
 beast...
 creature i've come to adore
 teach me the steps
to tread on absurdity...
 better...
show me the rungs

(Continue →)

absurdity built
 and i'll climb them
forever higher and higher
 and more free
come now quickly
 words of eternal youth
 time master
 keeper of the sacred scroll
knower
 of the secret truth
that the only rule
 is surely
there is no rule...
it's been a lifetime
 it has
struggling to know a lord
 thinking
it was required to have some force
 a being supreme
 to direct the course...
fool's journey it was
 for battered badly
 now i know
the magic
 of the mystic
is in the music...

(Continue →)

and the singer calls the tune
too long it took to know it
longer
it'll be
'fore
i neglect it
christ, buddha, and surely
all the rest
masters
my apologies for the ages
it was a believers cult
you sought
a world
of sly deceivers was what you got
messengers
bringing only lies
and distortions
of a source
with which i have no complaint
humble respect...
the truth be known
be conscious my soul
one's fate is never avoided
masters of the soul
cry out
where are you now?

(Continue →)

where are you
in contrast
to the depths
from which i speak
and remember...
the magic again
is in the music
and when you can't hear it
you can't dance
'cept
to the tunes
mined
deep within your soul
the pilgrim's tired
bein' on a stage
tap dancin'
a tortured minstrel show
to other's tunes...
not hearing
no,
really not feeling
and now so clearly
not caring
when none can play a tune
any can afford
to follow...

(Continue →)

peripheral game
 on the edge
 pendulum swinging one way
 and disappearing
 only to appear again
 slashing
colliding
 into all that's holy
 seeking victims
 in the sports of kings
and pawns...
jack,
 man
goddamned road man
 i know
 what you know
 or knew
mad?
mad to live,
 yeah, right
 i know the secrets...
all of them
 so what's the point?
 some place to live
 isn't it?
 or wasn't it?

(Continue —>)

i forget
 sometimes
 and that's not always bad
 all things considered
 those secrets
those glimpses
 into what really isn't...
 and what will never be
 they hurt
damn man
 jack, friend i never met
 but always knew
i know those secrets you knew
 and tried to tell
 only to see their spelling twisted
 it was noble
'cause what's in the mind can kill
 if you let it out
 or hold it in...
sorry
 for now i know things
 that weren't your fault
but maybe
 were mine
 but i doubt this too,
only because

(Continue →)

i doubt everything else
see jack,
i learned
ah man
i'm only workin' the angles
slidin' by
and glidin' high
that's my old old story
a combatant indulged in glory
on the trip of the fallen star flashin'
dark star
bright star
morning star
and isn't it all
a set worth dodging?
time sweeps
an eternal montage
fading
oblivion rising around
spiritual mentors
strange folks these
who come promising permanence
and cerebral things
and pawning it all
for a sturdy coffin
and it's a merry prankster

(Continue →)

flying over a cuckoo's nest...
but that's just the age of insurrection
 showing
for i'll fly erect
 'n' sigh direct
 it's a world and word
generations defined by evils
 and glenn miller's band
had its hitler
the enemy is always there...
 and for us,
 we went to our mind
 for ours
daring the risks
 of conscious lament...
the masses in my soul
tell us then master
 of these things and those
 tell us then
of distances defined by forever
 and eternity
yea,
 tell us then
of forevers crying about limits
 ...of distances devoid of boundaries
as gods we're wrongly accused

(Continue →)

as men we're merely damned
forlorn shaken creatures
 meteors
minds set on becoming meteorites
 objects defined
 by final flashes
 and forgotten
it's then for you master
 to tell your old story
 of the solid core foundation of wind
yea,
preach of the foundation
 of convection currents
tell me master
of my stake in morality
 speak to my soul
 of my ground in reality...
fail me and flail against me
tell me of the object of my affections
 and leave me then...
hey man
jack,
 listen
something's wrong
i've been on your road so long
 i'm weary

(Continue →)

what'd you mean
about the road?
was drivin' the mind cheaper?
the show passes so swiftly
it seems
to be out there too long
i know all about the end
some say it wasn't pretty
i'm not so sure
see,
the necessary must be pretty
final statements evoke powerful method
and does the method rule the self?
maybe the method gone berserk?
besides, if folks can't take a joke...
and anyway
too many learn of art from scientists
the vernacular debate gives me no comfort
...it drives me wild...
hey jack
listen,
we've all had our sanity questioned
i know i have
it's just that i don't know
which side of the argument
i was on

(Continue —>)

seems like
i remember winning though
jack
tell me again 'bout bein' mad
to live
i like that part 'bout bein' mad
some would rather die than be mad
or passé
but everyone dies
sorta cheapens the moment...
doesn't it?
maybe bein' mad's not so bad
some say you dug your hole
and couldn't climb out
i like to think
you made your bed
and are happy to be in it
dawn
finally
on a mystical plane
life and death
defining each other
in ageless progression
immortality embodied
in wintry white exchanges
words...

(Continue →)

wings carrying the keys
of the kingdom
of others
and all the ages
the heroes of the soul's support are dead
yet they live
the essence is not
on mt. sinai
or in mecca
not even is it in dissection
or exemplification
for the journey's the grail
nothing else
and art is forever the master of science...
thus the essence
is deep mined cerebral ore
and tumbling mountain
stream of consciousness...
it is because it is
even to the point
of chicken 'n' egg debates
of existence and essence
more than a trick of language
the thought is
and isn't
faith

(Continue —>)

it is the evidence
 of things unseen
 an element ignored
on the scientist's charts
 as faith is a function of doubt
 everything else
 is a function of thought
lightning and thunder
 food for the soul
 wind that bares the spirit
rain
 that washes away the world
a storm comes through near
 most every night
 so what is it i'm threatened with?
 au, fates
you must be kidding
 that's all you have to take or give?
storms in the night?
 i feared you had some secret song
 some thought or threat
 an effort in the wings
 capable of robbing souls
you fall so very short
 you see,
the nihilistic revolt

(Continue —>)

was a revelation from inside
a place where hope doesn't reach
 mine shafts of darkest despair
hidden tunnels
 where the rays don't penetrate
deepest places of the essence
 where even the thoughts are blind
foggy now and unclear
images of times and things
 now gone
piling one upon another
 the leaves of autumn memory
 prepared for an equinox of fire
a spiritual pyre most holy
 and most feared
the easy time goodness when all was well
 seasons of the sun
 of childlike faith
dashed
 against boulders of deepening despair
 flowing lava
melted before the light of reality
 and the heat of what really isn't
the eternal conflict of an age within an age
 never ending disputes among the forces
 quiet confessional sounds

(Continue —>)

ground to the shred of souls
by the tortured ambivalence of paths
and their near mystical allure
time,
purchased with the soul
a price far too high
a convenient peace
and the deadliest of sins
the glad handing contortionist of the spiritual
honoring one and same
twisting the suicide blade in his own back
a side trip
on the road to self
real poetic justice
i'd want the charges read
to a tribunal of poets
of my choosing
thus safely assured of a death sentence
i could go on living
there's only one basic plot
a universal theme
avoiding monotony
only because of the actor's skill
at avoiding consciousness
but never

(Continue →)

ever
avoiding tragedy
it's the fate
 when you come off the road
 ignoring the exposure
risking those fates of vulnerable man
 dyin' the pitiful death
 years beyond its time
 and much beyond its deed
a dangerous fire this time
 when a man signs up
 but knows better
the view is of the short lives
 of insects
 and sunsets
 oh for the days
 when proof didn't matter
and good times now forgot...
 look away...
sending signals to the creator
 self fulfilling prophecy
 when all this
 and all that
isn't going so well
 in and about
 the return of all ages

(Continue →)

ah, for the days
of black and white
two headed coin greatness
 deja vu
and way to go compatriots
 snatching one more whatever
 from the jaws of decency
 way to go
god's on your side
 you made him up
he can be on any side you say
 used to worry
 'bout dyin' before my time
 good old days they were
been around now
quite long enough to be
 parade marshall
an' that may well
 be a war crime
'sides now we worry 'bout stayin' around
 too long
at best we're only slidin'
 an hour in the early afternoon
 with dreams
pleasant enough

(Continue —>)

unless you count the evocations
 of ages lost in bitter times
unless you count
dyin' an' slidin'
 and fearin' to think
 with all things considered
this circus is the show
 of shows
but who considers
 all things?
and with all things considered
 enough is never considered
we're all sliding
 as time slips by
whirring clock hands
 as the poet advised us
 to make it run
but that poet
 died knowing
probably knowing
 that for all there is that matters
there's more
 that doesn't matter
and so what of cries in the night?
you pay your money

(Continue →)

and you take your chances
and your choices
so what's a few losses
among friends
or strangers
you lost control of time
when you first acknowledged it
the rest
was a downhill slide
and when you consider
there are no uphill slides
it all isn't bad
just quick
and all things considered,
that may not be so bad either
the cross ocean ships are landing
on shores
the water's rising
wind blows its melody
a gravel truck symphony
discordant beatitudes
mother mary send us the rain
prairie state blessings
amid courtroom struggles
it's a going out of business sale
a freak show

(Continue →)

in a relentless sense
'cause death is what livin' is all about
and what hand do you play...
the one you're dealt
or the one in your mind?
yea, it's easy
in fact,
it's already been done
go with the irrational
nothin' says nothin' better
for those downplaying the fruits
sayin' they aren't so much
as they were supposed to be
for those who say
the harvest fell short
though watered by excess
consider
all things growin' have roots
hidden fingers
reaching
an' stretching
refusing to die
strip the tree
prune it
shape it

(Continue →)

but the roots live
and spread
and survive
to be far away
on the journey
to where what is
really isn't
ah,
thought dream interludes
of brief respite
fooling oneself
a choice forced by a theater
seating one
play acting with a serious set jaw
the joke's always on the joker
....why not?
survival with a smile
sharing what isn't
and the reverse hopes
with the one loved above all
mirrored image
why not?
it's a dog eat dog world
and is this the diet for survival?
not fully knowing

(Continue →)

still remains
an expression of truth
 or at least hope
 if not faith
or at its most basic
 a quest for the parts of the equation
gut level honesty
 pre dawn style
 one of the small victories
 in an isolated war
something that attracts the ire
 of mighty kings
and parading fools
 to the victor will go death
 a worse
 more cruel
fate
 awaits the grinning loser
 death times seventy
with time off for self respect
and ribald behavior
 smile now traveler
smile no one escapes
 you knew it when you enlisted
you knew you'd pay
 as sure as you knew
you'd play.

PART FIVE
ENLIGHTENMENT AND
DESPAIRING DOUBT
A QUANTUM FIELD THEORY

SO MANY PLACES

I've been to so many places
seen the look on myriad faces,
purple mountain majesties
and plains so long—spreading in expanse.
I've been so far
and yet, not nearly far enough.
I've been so far away in so many places,
places of the mind grounded in saintly reality.
I've studied the countenance
of thousands of worried weathered faces,
faces placing souls in misty sad eyed regality.
The distance from here to there is measured
not in leagues or legs,

(Continue →)

the journey is framed in tears and sighs,
from near to far,
the cost remains the sum of parts
the cost remains
the harm to all,
the life and breath of breaking hearts.

ACTOR'S CRAFT

How sad,
to learn one's part—
a dramatic role in an unknown tongue,
mouthing words without meanings,
memorizing and reciting sounds,
moving about a stage of other's set and sense,
following marks and taped arrows,
stepping to the cue of a leering director.

How sad,
accepting the applause—
knowing it to be meaningless and misapplied
and worse,
smiling and bowing and calling it life.

ANYONE'S DRUMMERS

So high and so far removed,
 iconoclastic meanderings in fields of tall grass,
running and hiding while standing in public squares—
 in plain sight
and in sunlit dark shadows.
So far removed and yet so high,
 marching to anyone's drummers across barren fields,
 through verdant forests,
across wastelands
and Edens,
marching to perdition and salvation—
 not knowing one from the other
but celebrating the length and breadth of both
 and each.
Shams and recalcitrant shames abide and abound,
 choices left for the choosing loom large and succulent,
berries for the picking,
fruit on the vine indistinguishable from distances and directions.
These are the schemes and slight-of-hand maneuvers
that set sailors to climbing masts—
 these are the tenets of tested and untested faith
that send soldiers marching
 and poets crying,

(Continue →)

these are the wails in the night and the battle cries
—the laments and sobs—
such are the rattles in the chests of the dying.
What's real,
what is not?
What's tomorrow's pleasurable pain,
when does everything melt together with nothing,
what is it for which the pained cry,
what's not real and what is so invisible that it casts shadows?

AT LEAST TO LIVE

A Study Of Lesser Positions

Clowns bound and proud,
souls eloping with drunken sailor spirits,
this is the way the world fends,
 survival but a metaphor
for being alive in a gutter
when haughty grinning eyed sports
parade by in limousines and stately coaches.
God knows his even as his are led to define their god
and translate his word into stone.
Breathe hard to take in the gutter,
still alive—
breathing by the created advice of this captain and lord
It would be a stupid generation that didn't learn
not to question this dispensation's creations
 and credits or even its imaginations.
Lesser beings and other sacred debtors
will have other worlds and times to rule
 and doubt
and somehow live.
Lesser beings of more confused and questioning gods—
 gods not so sure of power and power's flowering might
—these are the stuff of patriotic fiber and fabric,
 from here grow the ties that truly bind.

ASCENDED MASTER

He doesn't really say this or that reality is true,
 he might call it fascinating or even intriguing
but he doesn't say more than anything or everything is possible
(listen closely)
all he merely says:
 here it is,
believe it if it meets you
 go on without it if it doesn't
the messenger was never the enemy
 the messenger was never the message.

A BRIEF GLIMPSE OF THE FAITH

Knowing nothing of forever or forever's follies
and failed promises,
the pilgrim walked in wonder—
twenty and thirty and forty years upon his head
and more, so much more—tales beyond wonder or remorse
such were the paths and pains of the pilgrim's pride
Bits and pieces of wisdom and suffering
—suffering fools and welcoming little children---
such are the boundaries and byways of hope and folly
Of these are the kingdom
to these are laughingly given the keys
Colors of the day remind us of forever
forever leers of forgotten stances and paltry plans
All that glitters taunts of forgotten shores
Darkness teases of another path
forlorn and forgotten trails
longevity is swallowed by brevity
and the pilgrim walks in sorrow tinged with satisfaction
—of course it could have played out no differently
the sham wasn't of shame or anything close
All things end as they begin
it's nature's law born of nature's deity

(Continue →)

ashes to ashes and dust swallowed in dusk
The pilgrim walks in wonder and explores the night
so many seasons behind life's remorse
 Less proficient gods would've expected no more
and honored only pains and pale excuses.

COUNTING COUP

Scored triumphs of the first order,
 medal of honor stuff had the generals been aware,
laughing, crying, wailing,
 pleas into night skies—
I knew of desperate and despairing
even when sunshine shown on plain and partíciple.
 This is it for when nothing said nothing better
 or different,
this is for when nothing meant hallowed walls
and cathedrals
 — now is the time
for all good men to come to the aid—
 of castles and chattel,
now is the time for breathless pursuit
 and calmness reminiscent of fading embers
in dying hearts and fires—
Aye and amen,
how far north is North
—and how far into night and night's gods
is enough?
These are the days and consummate plays,
of Jesus this and Moses that,
 The Buddha speaks,

(Continue —>)

Muhammad cries
and a dozen Hindu deities plead.
A world of that and this disorder,
 medals and parades directed by those unaware,
 gales disrespected as mere winds,
This is the way—
 by whispers shouted above the din,
this is the way worlds sway and bend,
this is the way lives come to an end.

COUNTING COUP

**...LATER THAT SAME SEASON
OF DESPAIR**

A Most Suspect Interpretation,

A Most Honest Effort

A Fact Cast Among Strangers

A Plea To Friendly Ears

“When in the course...”

it was then and there that they sold us the dreams

and slipped between the lines

their schemes

and warped misled plans.

As to the popular ethos,

from here to there I’ve done that

and experienced these and those—

I’ve marked and measured path and plat.

Searching will reveal nothing.

Should you brag about threatening me and mine

with last ditch throes of dire and doom

and memories pasted on walls and occasioned tombs,

remember the admonition:

it’s of rhyme and reason the preacher shouts

—in measured meter—

it’s life drowning in not so subtle doubts—

(Continue →)

(These are the replies and cries,
of pilgrims)
weeping,
of judgment and fear—
absurd theater of fear—
a lament of worlds forevermore in a wonder born in the bizarre.
The last gasp is the first,
but in the vineyard,
what is first
and what is last?

**THAT YOU MAY DANCE
IN EACH OTHER'S LIGHT**

You see them trying on this style
and that pattern of discernment.
It's life and the working out of one's own salvation—
you're entitled to your portion of confusion,
though you've dealt in like negotiations
(those were your times and seasons)
and in the deepest of allusions
you thus know of illusions and Summer cloud formations.
Life it is, and all we're about is up for the saving.
You see them day to day—
the big picture isn't your privilege
(forget what you deserve, that wasn't what was dealt)
the biggest of all pictures is being worked out before your eyes
and in precious places in your heart.
All is good 'cause all is well intended.
No savior
—nor any prophet or seer—
could have dreamed it or schemed it,
any other way.
The wheel turns and the big mysteries
—those things of the prophet's delight—
are reserved for those who've earned the right
of dancing in the light .

FOR A FRIEND

(Original version of Blues For Brown Eyes

page 85

Sweet brown eyes,

the storms we've weathered—

seasons that made war with our souls,

the clowns and kings that thought they owned us

and the times we tried to own each other,

but it's blood shared that's forever

and sometimes forever is just enough.

Sweet brown eyes,

FOR THE FINDING

Liberty was the catchword that shook loose the dreams
the church and state laid forth their schemes,
it was of moderate proposals and intemperate promises
—things that waylaid prophets and pilgrims
and weighed so heavily on open highways,
on free spirited waves and winds,
safe parody was allowed to be the disguise
or the precursor
of the critique of the emperor's fine raiment.
The traveler's soul cries out in pain
lament being the ground of such being
the pain of travails of some souls standing
being thus but a lament of such grounded few.
Freedom winds were the catch phrases
that begat the schemes
the open road oozed forth the dreams,
it was of promises and kings
—today as the salvation of tomorrow—
today at least as the puzzle's precise explanation.
The wayfarer's heart shouts of the gain
exaltation being of the clouds of seeing
the glory and story of some hearts sure landing
being but the product of smiles and a mountain view.

JUST PASSING THROUGH

Been living on the edge so long
 it's begun to feel just like home.
And always and ever there have been the forces
 ---things imposed from without and from within---
starving thoughts and raging feelings
things of the spirit born and the spirit killed.
Sometimes I forget
and that serves me just fine,
but nothing changes save the relentless flight
of the irreplaceable.
Had my sanity questioned today
 --no offense taken, I've done it myself.
Been times, when through closed eyes I've seen music playing,
seen the rhythms and felt the colors flashing,
 stood I did in wonder at dark tides rising.
Truth be known,
it's for these times I long,
 and why,
I sometimes waste the days and curse the nights.
And for all that and all this, I get high—
singing laments of what is and what might have been.
With a notebook by my bed I breathe songs of the road—
 knowing beyond knowledge,
I'll do my time right where I am.

(Continue →)

Had to take the long way—
worked it out by shortcuts and quick steps—
made it fair and fast...made it so none saw it coming.
Journeys though,
never see an end when the biggest enemies are the ones
you've allowed to be inside your head.
Starlit nights are no allies—
there's a penalty for living and dreaming
for daring to think—
that's the bullet you loosed not knowing about
self inflicted wounds and no places left to hide.
Homeward bound is a lonely trip.
Home to where you fit—
where you belong,
so simple except,
when home is a place you've never been.

LIGHT SHOW

A man sought meaning and called out to God
to reveal himself for all time.

Hearing and seeing no answer,
he lowered his head to cry

—the lament of all ages—

the quiet despair by which worlds end.

It was then that he felt the sun's warmth
and a refreshing breeze.

Looking up, he saw his child before him.

And man's great search

—the journey of all ages—

found refuge in a smile.

OUR MASTER'S VOICE

I knew the ending before I wrote even the first word,

 "instructed in the ways of creation" said the smug inherited--

 "beaten down" said the experienced.

The experienced were sentenced to Saturday night battles of absurd
drunkenness--

 the higher classes were rewarded with a sensibility that said all was
well

when all was right.

I knew the ending even as I questioned the beginning,

 —the rest was calmly called the penalty phase,

 the smug said it was justice,

the privileged merely smiled

and said it was Tuesday or Friday, or Spring.

The secret was veiled in the skill of writing contracts—

 tightly bound in legal strings

and moral cords,

 —these things were to be enforced by gods

and their consorts.

Of course I could foretell the ending,

a child or a fool could have sensed it looming,

 —captains and kings had tidal charts,

and they'd long since staked seasonal higher acreage

—theirs was the burden and calling to say what was right

and what was well.

TO IMAGINE MAYBE
(Alchemy As A God
Of Abandon)

My people were the Gypsies
 ah, my apologies if the word is a slight,
we were of a Saturday night culture,
 fly free—drink to the dregs—
we were just passing through
 and we were prone to falling for this and that scheme,
Gypsies?
Well maybe just fellow travelers,
 willing dupes and co-conspirators,
innocent bystanders
--maybe just of a Friday night culture.
Life indeed was a strange cacophony of creeds and shouts,
 my people?
yea
maybe Gypsies and maybe not,
maybe just hopeful hopeless,
 maybe all's well that finishes well,
Maybe all's well
on May's day
and tomorrow's days and night.
My people?

(Continue —>)

Maybe just this season's product
Maybe this is all you get—
 all you can expect or dream,
maybe this is all there is or all there can be.
Imagine this (and that),
 imagine the wonder of one's heart filled,
or at least one's heart contented,
 or satisfied.

NEW RULES

There was this confusion
 when the nuns and appointed pundits
transferred the rules and the limits to us,
somehow the voids in the fabric
 and the tears in the sermon's proud wail
came across as significant
 or at least of moral accusation.
This was no doubt an error of prophetic statement--
 a precursor,
of some sender's system error.
How could our god-child have known
 of the working out of such spirit's plays,
 how could one plus one
have been three or any other result
unless periodic tables and rules divine,
 were less than markers and true maps
of players and perpetrators
 of some perverse scheme or deal?
Is order then the origin of confusion?
Is confusion thus legitimate?
Is confusion the god we sought,
 or is confusion
merely what we discovered
 when we sought the divine

PERIOD PIECE

Do you want to win or do you want to be right?
All too well I know the defense,
 the predecessors strained for the barest of comforts,
 security,
paid in pained and sweated blood dedication,
 a discipline as it were,
a discipline for which all be charged,
 and yet,
it's now a comfort praised by security upon the alter.
Do your time
 — years at a false helm —
imparting a departing dying wisdom
and then disappear.
Who has won and who has lost?
Who was wrong and who was right?
A lot of us can name more'n hundreds of places,
yeah, got the king's best education,
but you must know as surely as all must not tell
that the folks in those places live lives of utter despair
 — and the facts of those indictments don't care
where or when they fall.
Do you want to be winning or be right?
Curse the iconoclast as you must

(Continue —>)

—damn fool ought to be happy—
livin' the years and days entrenched in some great meaning,
something transcendent and geared to glory,
lost in familiar love 'neath tall spires,
damned fool could be dancin' as supposed
to the dedication of flags and military marches,
or some monetary predilection transcending borders.
Do you want to see it through everyone's tinted glasses?
Bathe in what the sisters and brothers
—and their kind—
have had and held?
It's there for the taking,
the sane and predictable trinkets and treasures.
But then of Colonial India,
or colonial anywhere,
look and see barren lands looking like the moons of distant planets.
Study your charms in the reflections in sunken eyes.
Do you want to win or be right?

JESUS AND JOSEPH'S JOURNEY

Caught between The Wallowa and Canada,
so many byways and highways,
so long a path of sanguine thought laden flight,
Karmic doubt against steppe and plain,
 lunging in fear,
 headlong toward peaks and canyons,
heart sick and heart strong—
 here it is and surely there it goes,
this is pawned for that
and to the victors belong the rules.
Caught and trapped,
 waylaid, on the road and off the road,
somewhere 'tween here and god's holy smile,
 a place staked out just this side of insanity,
 mountains in the view enough to be outta reach,
mountains now the laugh of despots.
Caught now in mid-dream,
 trudging amid practiced schemes,
trapped now,
in holy rolling tumbling streams,

(Continue —>)

lost and limping
in the rushing path of high country early rains.
Caught between spirits and reality,
 so many ways and troubled means,
here it was and there it faded,
most is lost in hopeless flight,
all is gone in the path of night.

ON THE SMILE OF SAINTS

Laughing lady,
she of the eyes saddened by the terms and times,
 life's blood spent in the mills and mines defining this season's
minds,
laughing Allegra, because it plays easier than tears--
she comes to me with tales and treasures of this time,
 and next time, and those times only imagined and dreamed,
and how paths need to be cut through forests again primeval.
Laughing lips and saddened eyes,
 though they are Alpha and Omega of the same alphabet,
 the same code,
these are the ways and whys giving birth to any season's reality,
 these are the templates of life overcoming despair.
Laughing lady smiles in timeless fashion,
 looks that'd launch honest ships,
these are the eyes that require batons being passed,
she comes to me in wisdom
 and the beauty of hard earned truth,
serious lips and dancing eyes,
she comes to me like Spring welcomed morn,
like Summer 's comforted breath,
laughing lady,
a spirit making life by just one wondrous step at a time.

TAXONOMY

Owl hurrying home
almost dawn
gray flight against a rapidly reddening sky
red sky in morning...

Owl
hurrying wings silently flapping through chilling air
scurrying now, no time to soar
evil wind brewing.

Gray growing dangerous in a black and white world
where hiding in the green and brown
ain't now anyways an option.

The glass grows tinted--
showing everything bathed
in red and white and blue.

And the vine's a gift
but not an escape—
vines tangle and trip
and form nooses,
besides,
either way and any other way
the horizons are gathering,
and narrowing.

Owl
hurrying home against a warning sky

THIS CLOSENESS

—The Joys Of Beholding—

It's been a journey,
steps and stumbles,
this foot delegated to follow that step
and still the strides in the snow show such a contempt
or at least a confusion.
This is how it had to be
—this is how the world passes in summer breezes and
spring hopes.
Of course it cries of bewilderment and intermittent chaos,
of things making noises and fears in the night—
had it been some other way the path would have been clear,
well marked,
and easily trod and followed,
easy as early morning
easy as easy does
and comforts.
It's been of the heart—this journey—
easy never,
yet heart felt.
This is the way of beholding.
Love it is

(Continue →)

love it is never to be questioned or limited.

Love it is—

a grace that knows no bounds or preconceived limits,
winds and rains,

all this flowing into all that,

it of course has been of the heart,

for the heart,

and about the heart.

Closeness,

the joy of beholding,

this is of forever

this is of the why and wherefore,

this is of forever,

this is of our piece of the existence

this which permeates and survives all that satisfies as good,

this...our contact with reality,

our joy that transcends reason and rite.

OF TIMELESS THINGS

I've wanted to see and shout
from mountaintop and plains below,
the view from heights and to heights
is but a painful pleasing time capsule of eternity.
The sum of the parts
is nothing more than the sound of breaking hearts.
It'll be this way in the flames of perdition,
 it'll flow and form like this,
it will roll and rock like this--
 of course one phrase begets another,
these things travel like that
 — these things sink or swim on such comparisons
and likelihoods of despondent glories.
This is how it will forever be—
Forever and ever
 these pages are torn from journals,
 —bloody hands wrote and struggled for these seconds—
this is how icy stairs begat self directed triumphant minutes,
 this is for that
and those,
and for all things that fade in the heavenly embrace of midnight's
hours.
I've been waiting too long,

(Continue —>)

to shout and scream from mountaintop and rooftop
I was on a fool's journey when they organized the missions
—I was seeking holy thoughts and sacred works—
Hell, I was striding and strutting the walk of saintly steps,
I was doing the work I'd begged them to promise.

**THE WAY BACK INTO THE GROUND
OF SPIRITUAL HEROISM**

Hearing Heaven's songs as Nature's sound,
so many sighs and so much beauty found.

Easy rhythms soaring
in cries of earthen windy rhyme.

The wealth of wonder no longer bound,
the glory of all stories freed in time.

Paths of peace
defined in the shade of trees,
life defined and death belittled.

The songs of all times,
rhymes of soaring rhythms,
stories gloried in times and wonders,
nothing bound, nothing hidden—
peace and love in warm embrace,
life and death in paled disgrace.

WIND AND RAIN

It was the wind that always tortured me,
wild wind...calm wind,
it was the free wind that tormented me,
North wind...West wind,
it was where the wind had been
that bothered me,
temperate wind, frigid wind,
it was where the wind was headed
that burdened me.
And then there was the rain,
and then,
all things were good and great,
all things were as they should be.
The wind and the rain,
yeah and amen.

PART SIX

**FROM A DARKENED
NIGHT SKY**

OF WHICH I AM MOST PROUD

It's never been about accomplishments
and related glories.

Our generations were sucker punched
by realizations of folks not being free
in the face of treasured documents
handed down from the very creator.

We heard of bullets flying with no explanation,
all the while a foreign war
devoured some of our best and brightest
...all done without logical explanation
or even believable denial.

Brothers have been pitted
against sister and brother.

We've been divided and conquered by men
(always men)
in dark suits and corporate ties.

(Continue →)

Our pockets have been picked
 while we watched hangings.
Our flowers have been trod beneath wing tipped boots
and hob nailed penny loafers.
We dutifully saluted what we were taught,
 ignoring the spirit of the message
while serving on the juries of discontent.
No, it's never been about accomplishment,
 or even contrived stories or painted glories.
Our time is a throw away time,
 this unwanted chaff traded for that bold declaration,
blood and flesh bargained for market positions
and the comfort of this season's royal families.

another side of the moon's reflection

it ought to be written in blood,
scratched and scorched across the page
in love and hate and primal needs.
the fleeting show,
it ought to be dragged,
digging its heels into turf and field.
broken hearts like shattered dreams,
what could have been
leaning against what should have been...
what might have been.
only the imagination captures the bloody battlefield
—the pain of remorse not offered,
souls locked in a war not of their choice,
not even an event of their season...
so much that could have been seen,
so much
that pales into timeless tragedy.
it ought to be written in blood
and tearful lament,
it ought to be a cautionary tale
and an invitation to taste of dreams.
broken dreams that shattered hearts,
what should not have been
taunting what was
and the future whim of all delight.

WAYFARING STRANGER

He wanted to see and shout
from mountain top and plains below.
The view from the heights and through the nights
...now but a painful pleasing time capsule of eternity.
The sum of the parts
is nothing more than the sound of breaking hearts.
It'll be this way in the flames of perdition,
it'll flow and form lava like,
it will roll and rock...seeking its own level
of course one phrase begets another,
these things travel like that
these things sink or swim in faded stories
and likelihoods of despondent glories.
This is how it will forever be,
pages ripped from journals,
bloody hands write and struggle for such seconds...
this is how icy stares birth self directed triumphant minutes,
this is for that,
and those,
and for all things that fade in the heavenly embrace
of midnight's fleeting foundering grace.
He's been waiting far too long,
he was on a fool's journey when they organized the missions

(Continue →)

..seeking holy thoughts and sacred works...
Hell, he was striding and strutting the walk of saintly steps,
He was play acting the rituals from the promises he'd heard,
his was a stupidity that failed common reality with the absurd.
He tried to warn everyone...crying in the desert,
He was coherent just this side of inconsequence,
that was him in his Third World disguise
Yea, holy shouting conflagration of despair
in sacred chants of amen
and ever after sublime laments of paths not taken
roads not even fathomed, regrets of such forsaken.
Of course he remembers the organ pounding jabs,
He was of the prototypical caste,
...they were going to carve their thoughts
on the face of destiny.
They were going to be the lonely children of forever
and forever's petition with an invisible mighty hand.
What they didn't get wrong
they failed to get right,
They were placed here to warn you,
no,
They were placed here as a warning.
They placed themselves.
Have you ears to hear of avenging angels?
Ignore the wailing siren of despairing alarm,
that is how your kingdom will evolve,

(Continue —>

there it is...
you have mastered life's mystery,
you are free to go,
circulate among your massed congregation,
 ...share the sacraments
you are what you prophesied and conspired.
Nothing matters except matter,
 ...this is how stances become legends,
go forth and multiply,
 ...go forth and declare whatever you wish,
choose your words but remember,
you will arbitrate the definitions...
 'not' and 'no'
these are but flaws in the organization.
There are thousands of ways
 (amid ten thousand things)
to get from here to there
and back,
poignancy drips from every lamp post
 ...and gallows...
the prophet writes one eyed,
his laugh a graveyard laugh,
 he whistles past his own plot and predicament.
The prophet wanders through the woods,
trees begin to look alike...

(Continue —>

the wind seems to blow from all directions
before it is calm.

The moss is on all sides of the trees,
legend says direction is fathomed
by plotting the sunrise and sunset,
but it's cloudy and has been for a season,
the times and signs seem only able to predict problems
— and coexistent disasters.

The prophet is without honor on his own seas,
his harbors are distant and shifting,
he should have known of the why and how of shipwreck
and shipwreck's reason and season,
the child in the midst indeed knew,
but these things had to be navigated by the celestial
...these things were of personal consequence.

CLEAR AND SIMPLE

It's so clear and simple...
 yet it's a thousand miles deep,
 I've sought the meaning of life,
even the face of God, if you will.
I can't get by the morning dew on the grass,
 I can't get past the smile of a little child...
Such an easy journey,
 a clown or a fool could have done it,
a fool and a clown managed it.
It's so clear but no ways simple,
 God's smile is so sad,
and the cold winds blow anywhere
and everywhere.
I can't get by the mountains,
 I can't get past my lover's smile...
there are no easy journeys,
fools and clowns have tried,
their bodies line the road to Golgatha.
It's so simple, it should be clearer...
 the rain is harsh and forceful,
it predicts tough times and cold times,
I can't get past my soul,
 my heart,

(Continue →)

it's a confusing journey,
these times...they'll never come again,
these times are the times.
Bodies and souls
and spirits,
line the road to forever
and forever's Gods.

A PROPHET'S SIMPLE OFFERING

I have nothing to offer but sadness—
 a reality of lament that surpasses understanding,
I know dark foreboding skies,
 I've held sadness beyond cure or caress in my arms,
I know mighty truths
 and heartaches that go beyond existence.
I know nothing even as I know everything.
 Life is defined by death
and death remains a mystery that confounds life.
I can't offer happiness
 ...I can't even begin to feel loving regret,
what I lay before pilgrims is despair
 and its comfort of reality.

fade to pure black

i like the purity of black,
its questions are of eternal things,
black
the color of my true love's hair?
hardly,
is it black then,
 as in the shroud or the arm band?
yea and amen
but everyone dies or is dead,
 the death rate is absolute and unforgiving,
 a net taking in everything in its path...
i understand black,
 it matches the rorschach blots
 you claim explain my soul,
that makes it yours
to debate, lament, contrive,
 fathom or fear,
and mine to explain and explore
 or most likely just ignore...
 you have to love the refuge in black,
a finality of all hues rushing together
giving way to the absence of all color,
the colorless

(Continue →)

pitch dark calm of the cave
and its total disregard for intruding sun,
 a sublime disloyalty to anyone's light...
i'm drawn to formal black,
basic black,
 a statement without fashion,
 fashion without a statement,
deep dark dismal near alliterative
 shade of despairing black,
 its stark companion is the driven snow,
its temper is the gray of age...

So Many

(Chronicles Of The Holy Among Us)

Would the holy itinerants really care
about how they walked and sat
In a world where so many are so close
to living on a park bench,
...where so many
 are just an exhale away
from living on the road
and where so many
are just a sigh away
 from not living at all?
Would the Holy Ones
study their profile in the glass
or practice a smooth entry...
would they if they could,
saunter cool
and speak with practiced inflection?
So this is really, the ways and means,
 the how and why,
of worlds in shattered shards?

SPECIAL GROUND

Ah, my friends,
we played here—on this special ground,
we ran and jumped,
we thought we competed in serious work,
we were oblivious to real worlds looming
and the harder games yet to play,
but for this place and time,
we played—we laughed and trained,
we boasted and bragged,
we became what we are.
Someone said the Battle of Waterloo was won
on the playing fields of Eton.
I don't know much about that...
I've not been to either place,
but I know this,
for a season and a time,
these fields made me happy.
I loved here,
I learned and grew here,
whatever I am began on this surface.
Such places are special ground...
they deserve to be remembered.

SO HIGH...SO FAR

Been gettin' high

most all our lives.

A pattern, would say the crew assigned to explain,

so it goes—a transistor radio in one hand,

a billowing—crazed—"don't give a damn" attitude

in our other.

The child of society in hesitant beat,

would that be right brain or left?

None of it and all of it,

pales and fades,

from here to anywhere and everywhere...

it's a joke only if someone laughs,

it's truth only if someone hides their eyes.

APPARITIONS

Starlit autumn nights

many eyed sky with cold breath come stealing

.—the stuff of literature

the cycle of wonder continues

an argument for summer

if not early spring

yet so surely death's cogwheel churns,

praise the days

and a million memories flowing

—a cruel reminder

that dark always follows light,

a painful joke...

for once,

the night foretold the day.

reason and rhyme

wisdom ain't got nothin' to do with it
when the heart knows of pain
don't go plyin' yer guilts an' crazy fears
when souls struggle in rain
keep yer gold gilded insecurities
where spirits die in vain
hold yer conscious doubts of all the ages
lest even hope be slain
the times come full circle
friend you see
finally and forever it's time
to see about me.

DON'T TELL ME

Then don't tell me it's a democracy
 endowed with self evident rights
and liberties

if you choose to censor
the print, the song
and the bedroom.

If you choose to institute a god
 and a theology,
then don't tell me it's freedom.

And if you choose to make war...
 sending boys and girls after men's gold,
 killing and being killed
in farcical low comedies most lasting,
then don't tell me it's of the true God.

NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCES

Man the meteor
briefly,
the journey that tries the soul
and leaves the truth exposed...
 a raw nerve angered by hot and cold,
by wind and oddly, by time...
slow and fast hands
 of a gargoyle grinning clock face.
The pain of secrets known,
suspected before their time...
false secret myths
 tales by which men live,
excuses to die,
parables of comfort for the living
caricatures of truth for some.
And thus is created worlds...
 empires of the mind
all powerful in narrow limits,
serious subjects of ultimate humor.
Fools gather to watch the unveiling
 of the ultimate secret...
and the fools are disappointed.

OUTSIDE THE LINES

Your secret's not safe with me
it isn't hidden in dusty library tomes
though the journey passed that way.
Your secret is unlocked
 under silvery moon skies,
cold breath of winter on bare skin,
yea, your secret's in the sky...
 geese honking, flying
life's blood slipping in season.
There it is,
 on the rocks of shipwrecked despair
scattered,
amid mainsprings and clock hands,
crashed and dashed by the waves
 of pulsating blood,
yea,
your secret's not safe with me
and you'd be wise not to listen further,
no,
don't tarry here
 even for an instant,
prices demanded here are paid out of sight
but not now or ever,
out of mind.

(Continue →)

Your secret drew its strength
and last breath
from the realization
that maybe no secrets exist
outside a strong willed self taught lie.
Careful now, we're both far too close to the trees
to fathom this message safely...
but it's here and there...
sweet message of equinox mind delight,
faithful beliefs,
born of hoping against hope,
this litany of faith that binds and guides,
chanted by blind men with telescopes
and microscopes...
all manner of glasses through which
lies grow solid and visible.
Ah, the old sweet message,
the malleable message,
hammered and formed to any shape needed
to cover any need...
some kind of strange debt service measured in years
before an artificial throne of mist and rain
and acid bitter haze.
Yea, I know your secret,
the world knows what you've tried to hide
even if the trees still obstruct your vie

TWILIGHT TIME

Do the gods have night?

And if they do,

do they doubt

and fear

and wonder?

Do the gods have night?

and if they do,

do they worry

and strain for dawn...

feigning disregard?

Do the gods have night?

And if they do,

do they hurt

and cry

and die those little deaths?

FOR THE SAKE OF MADNESS

What a shame
that this be the extent of it,
hollow core of essence
and so brief it is,
 far too brief...
some of us have tried looking at it,
 even trying to live it
each and every conceivable way.
And the same conclusions wedge
between the hopes and dreams,
 the self taught lies
and those taught to us,
such visible destructive intruders.
The first thought was the fatal one,
 that one bought the ticket
for a strange journey
 on a strange highway...
exits which circle
and re-enter without fail,
minor diversions that kill time
 and shorten a trip
that no one wants to make.

OLD SWEET SONG #5

It's not fun anymore
 a chilling thought
 three A.M. phone ringing chill
something bad coming
God
it's not fun anymore
punctuation no longer matters
 bad follows good
 and bad follows bad
nature's laws
 include the climatic
as night follows the day...
there may no longer be the substance
 of any kind,
to validate the journey.
The pilgrim suspects he knows
 ultimate truths and big secrets,
why men look down from mountains
and tall buildings,
why men who are strong swimmers
 succumb...
not to currents mind you,
the water no more than the height,

(Continue →)

but to that which is hiding...
the despair of all ages.
The pilgrim tried and died
a thousand times,
feigning success where he could
but knowing what was real
and crying.

STRUCTURES OF REALITY

Folks, come now,
surely you must see
it's all an illusion...
 a farcical world needing
only (and all) our willingness
 to exist.

Folks, it's a sham,
it's shadow more than substance.
And here we sit perplexed
by the heavy blows of mist
and wafting images...
God and man come crawling
in the realm of plastic platitudes.
See now and know now,
by the presence of all gods,
it's a mind's concoction
 built on needs
 and wants
and wishes...
hopes impregnating fears
 and bearing fruit
in the world of rain,
dying souls
 picking the very same fruit
and limping into oblivion.

MIND CYCLE

How easy it'd be
to see their light
and build that city on a hill.
What a deadly seed to sow
to buy their scene,
to enlist in the plot.
Sanity is for sale...
let devils keep the notes!
Such simple acts...
buying minds and selling souls,
spirit deadly pacts,
claiming life in absurd roles.

NOTHING COMES FOR FREE

Wind, rushing—roaring and driving
twisting through canyons of discontent
steep sided despair
torn by deceiving winds...
the source of eternal truth
and the lies of all ages.
Some misty gray dawning
I'll be there
and I'll have the knowledge
of what's hidden...
the key to it all.
The faith that sustains is built
in sand,
bricks made of wind
on foundations of sunshine
and starlight...
the will to believe
in battle with absurdity...
the desire to be real
the drive to simply be alive...
looking in the glass and seeing
eyes that share respect.
One is what one deserves to be
There is no greater exaltation
and no greater lament.

PART SEVEN

THREADBARE IMAGES

A PSALM FOR THREADBARE IMAGES

It's in the headlines and the faces of strangers,

listen carefully,

the night wind carries the cries of children.

The fabric's tearing, you can hear it above the storms.

New clichés for an age on the ropes...

twenty dead here and a family there,

serial murders and senseless terror,

a homeless few so the self appointed thrive,

some must starve so the rest be warned,

a world on the edge and business as usual.

Politicians saunter streets,

leaning against lampposts leering seductive calls

of strength and discipline and death,

"Homage to the greatest country"

(Continue →)

all the while infants starve
and the will to strive seeps from tired souls,
sweat glistening hopelessly,
helpless in perplexity,
lied to by a hideous call to glory and riches,
depressed and repressed victims of a facade,
going through the half dead motions
of those dropped from the rolls of conscious being.
And the churched ones rant of God on our side,
they wave flags and slander as they pander
and of the very love of God they smirk.
And the greatest show on earth goes on.
The thought of world's destroyed becomes a fate
that raises few brows and fewer screams still.
It's tearing,
close your eyes and feel it.
Martial minds insure their peace by preparing
the preemptive strike...
knowing full well,
it's really preemptive murder on a cost effective scale.
And so it comes down to this...
and is this all there is,
a surrealistic collage of emotions and fears,
of forces and farces,

(Continue —>)

a Potemkin Village of the mind self imposed,
the vault of all the ages,
the one,
the one and the only,
the philosopher's goal and the mystic's prize,
unlocked and exposed,
a fable and a myth...
a vast and eternal waiting tomb?

A LITURGY FOR ULTIMATE FREE ACTS

**"Many die too late, and a few die too early.
The doctrine still sounds strange: Die at the
right time!"**

—Nietzsche

Leave it be for what it is,
and more sadly,
for what it isn't.
And in that increasing maelstrom of lament,
most sadly for what it almost was.
The eyes don't lie,
they never did,
and to the artist's chagrin,
they never will.
The eyes of an age turned inward,
easy camaraderie and inner exploration,
the perfectibility of the spirit around every bend,
outward affection and inner tranquility,
chemistry that enlightened and promised,
gone now...
gone, subverted, defiled...no warning rattle.
An age mortally wounded by the perversion of the gift,
a fruit with the seeds of its own destruction.

(Continue →)

From the promising power of flowers
to the antithetical monsters and freaks,
times go the way of Marshall Bloom and Phil Ochs.
The heroes dead and dying,
the prophets gray and balding,
wounded within from forces without,
those times, they have been changing,
one views ahead clearly...
the place where all the flowers have gone.
The vagaries of fate and the certainty of time,
most formidable enemies.
From it all it arrives at this,
the power to live is the power to die...
a Pyrrhic Victory somehow noble,
seeking the way out in the first truth style,
the free choice demise of souls in control,
the act and the essence merged and inseparable.
Strange gods these,
that sentence you to death and then bestow,
the right to choose the terms of execution,
and call it freedom.

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES

— Wanton Places Of The Skull—

My perverse friends see a world rightly divided
among bean pickers and captains of industry.
Jesus, Mary, and Joseph—
to one a plaintive plea said as prayer,
to another,
a mindless curse in the swaddling clothes of an epithet.
My perverse friends clutch bankbooks
and recite from what they claim
are good books
and saintly books—
holy books of inspired exposition.
My perverse friends respect a crucifixion,
indeed,
they'll swear they count on such
even as they mix the mortar
(blood being the bond drenching clay and straw)
to build coliseums of great glory.
These are giants in this earth's dispensation
—creators of good times
disguised as souls in squalid huts—
“this will be bartered for that”
and 'cause hunger is a commodity,

(Continue →)

and pain is the coin of the realm;
to the victors will belong the spoils.
My perverse friends know not of anything
or at least,
not of culpable accounts of what anyone has sown
or has reaped.
My friends in these high places
inherit their rewards
they paint them an' bless them;
and on special days they parade them
through their city on a hill.

THE SUICIDE SEED

A city with big shoulders,
perfect place for an abomination,
germination under a place for play,
irony of the first order.

A seed to be planted in the desert,
a bright and beautiful mushrooming
of the ultimate dialectic,
life gives birth to death
and the will to power goes berserk.

With eyes closed I write of this and all I hate,
and all I fear of all I know to be,
the meaning of it all is unlocked in simple truths
of lying kings and greedy prophets,
of divine missions and sacrifices for glory promised,
of gods who must speak through the mouths of fools,
wind with no spirit,
ill wind,
mind child of hate and the lure of gold,
of gods created in the passion of need,
and passions created by the needs of gods,
the low comedy of pulpit and throne,
the growing graves of gods and kings

(Continue —>)

and all they control,
a moral code for others,
as plastic and elastic as needed to prepare the sewer
as sacrament...
a perverted transubstantiation,
a pledge designed to send the pawn
smiling to heavenly oblivion.
The gods of such sins administered the highest blessing
when was sown the suicide seed
in desert sand and enemy isle.

BROWN SKINNED GODDESS

Beautiful brown skinned goddess of tender years,
a misused spiritual treasure,
unwed and unbroken
though still a child yourself despite the tiny life inside
and just showing.

I hurt for you and that life conceived without sanction
or ceremony,
or the commitment of another's heart.
Your haughty features evoke the best
of a faraway place,
the brightest gift from a long forgotten world...
a world interrupted by cruel indenture.
Dark eyes glisten
and dance to a distant drum,
a tribute to the past, a smile of spirit and class,
in a world which will allow you neither.

Dark skinned child princess,
I fear for your future.
Your life's been lived before and I've seen it.
I've known the sisters you haven't known,

(Continue →)

they preceded you in pain and space.

I've seen your face and fate a thousand times...

the blank stares,

elbows leaning from tenement windows.

I've seen all too often

the weary maids on transit benches,

the hopeless eyes, the broken spirit.

Beautiful dark skinned child,

mother so soon to be,

your fate is the shame of an age,

a soul like yours should save us all,

but how I fear,

so soon you'll be beaten down and left for cold.

Your smiling shyness...such coy liveliness,

destined for despair,

born under a sign of false promise,

doomed to a world of discarded people.

How I wish I could encircle you with my spirit,

and somehow save you.

How I wish you could understand me as a brother,
and feel my love as the father's love you never knew.

ON LIBERTY STREET

Old man leanin' on parkin' meter
blank eyes starin' down the barrel
of ten thousand yesterdays
meltin' into a diminishing pool
of nevers an' nothings...
dollar wine bottle eyes,
back alley freezin'
death beckoning eyes...
an' he doesn't even notice nothin' or anything.
Lupine eyed street hustler...
animal quick flittin' eyes,
takin' in the angles an' the odds...
predator and prey odds,
human carrion goin' down odds
in a jungle of slim pickings
growin' slimmer while he's watchin'.
Mean street Christ image child
of runny nosed bewilderment...
three year old pilgrim in free store coat
of many colors, mostly gray.
Tiny sweet child hurryin' to nowhere,
mama's way,
papa's way,
on his own way on the blank stare Hadj.

GENUINE PLASTIC PARTS

Chemists 'round their caldrons,
 boiling forth their toil and trouble,
concoctions of plastic pleasing poisons,
 potions and fumes,
fatal wisps of all that is wrong and wanting,
 puffs and strings of twisted molecules,
 better bitter living through chemistry,
all the while Stygian ravens...
 leering gawking forms...
stand firm and chant:
profit, profit, profit.
A dark hymn screeched to the beat
 of greedy men stirring forth,
their roiling boiling freak bonded creations.

PENAL COLONY

Macho in miniature,
 small child, street child,
 barely ten lean years,
 a refugee wherever he walks.

Grounded cherub, viper in training,
 trades his body for another's evening swill.
 Lessons learned in youth as the twig is bent.

Tiny victim of mean streets
 littered with broken promises,
 and more sadly,
 with discarded spirits...
 a living legacy of dark prophecy.

Viper in training cries for home,
 secretly.
 Scourge to be mimics and admires
 the man child with muscles more defined,
 father image, brother image,
 any image promising protection.

Fallen nestling never had a chance,
 born bright and briefly cute,
 but never allowed to be sweet.
 A shame and a terror in training,
 and the weakest link weakens more.

ECCE COWBOY

Siege time in the fatherland and all is right,
as in the triumphs of the red hunts past,
time to circle wagons and proclaim,
it's us against them — again.

It's Semper Fi and a dose of apple pie,
open a silo so the big stick's showing,
move a nuke to king's pawn three,
let 'em know the power's growing.

Tell me again of this wondrous place,
where white is so right and all is well...
where soon we forget the body counts
and the rows upon rows of young lives ended.

Tell me again the glorious story,
of the jingo god and his delight,
at the worlds we conquered
and the light we spread.

Sweet country it was once tis of thee,
but now so full of idiocy,
sing it loud mein president,
of safety nets and opportunity...
how the poor have their bootstraps
while the mighty have you.

(Continue —>)

Tell me again the old, old story,
god on our side by dawn's first glory,
tell me the reasons—if we have so much to offer...
why so seldom we're loved
and so often we fight.

PALACE GUARD

Big blue bastards,
is what they pay you
worth what it costs you?
You're the first to leap to their defense,
breaking strikes and busting heads,
"You're all that stands between..."
or so you'd like to think.
Sworn to your flexible law,
justice is just another victim...
your victim,
when you crawl for your paying master.
Jaded conscience turned outward,
you sold too cheap didn't you know,
it's a law, you reap just what you sow.
Pity you're too calloused to feel
what any man should,
pity to defend decaying forces,
to die unlearned and unmoved,
a tragedy but not an injustice,
you see,
you'll reap just what you sow,
it's a law or didn't you know?

OH HOW I WISH

Oh how I wish,
I wish with all my being,
that the lies of the fathers were truths,
if only what I was told...
the many mansioned deceits...
were true.
Oh how I'd fall and cry,
but all there is...
all there will ever be...
is the meteor slashing bright for just a time.
I wish for so much more...
a creation epigraph no less,
how I'd cry and crawl for such.
If one but wish hard enough,
or so the myth is told,
a myth that tries men's souls.

Desolation's song of delight in the heart of one alone,
one crying sadly and forlorn,
and lonely be the prophet forevermore,
a message without comfort,
no other word save this:
death coming with screeching hawk's claws,

(Continue →)

dropping from the sky screaming and unexpected,
but long awaited.

The not proud being...
desolation's comic finality on the wings of white doves
in wolf's spirit.
The end in sight,
whistling like the wind,
a beacon in thick fog shining like the sunrise
on some forgotten plain of the heart.

TO WHOM MUCH IS GIVEN...

My country tis of thee, sweet land of absurdity,
I'd walk a thousand miles—
no, a thousand times a thousand—
if only what I know wasn't so.
I'd do a sober century—a straight an true hundred years,
if only, what it was,
was what it's worth.
Oh my god of hosts say it isn't so,
but don 't you now lie or break it to me some ways gently—
those ways you have of offering death
donning life's raiment.
My God it is the time of final conflicts
my country—sweet land on the exit ramps of reality,
amber waves across the fruited plain,
hard acidic rain upon pilgrim's pain.
You pawned it for a lark
a rich man's day in the park.
You blew it up, a time in the life
—a poor man's shot destroyed in strife.
Oh my God of ancient hopes, say it isn't so,
the kingdom of potential,
that distant glow,
a meteor shot, flashed and gone,
forever.

PART EIGHT
ROAD SONGS

NORTH COUNTRY EXIT

Steady whoosh of tall pines
bending
easily victimized by even moderate gales,
somewhere waves lap against slipping shores
wearing away
relentlessly disfiguring to a degree
based on the strength of both poles,
somewhere souls struggle,
footing slipping slowly away
crying for the serenity
of a stand of stout maples,
tall oaks
and mighty walnuts...
Ah, for any peace
anywhere,
in such lament ends the world
as caring men know it,
crying out to know it matters
or means anything
to anyone.

ROUTE 503

Old farm of Midwestern Gothic
homestead and old man obviously alone
 through forced desertion American style
God, the pain of empty nests
 poignant beyond breaths
Sweat stained hat, gray
 shades sad eyes,
morning sun weary eyes,
God, what of old times forgotten
 old farms and older songs
like loves gone but not abandoned.

TALL PINE COUNTRY

Tall pines assaulted
and winter winds a comin'
said in spades,
 it's comin'
chill wind prelude
you knew from the jump
 it wouldn't come cheap...
as fog closes in,
 cold air dripping
its discontented discomfort...
it's comin'
and no one no how
will slow the dawning
...the day long siege,
 the cold despairing.

FLIGHT OF FANCY

'cause man
ya gotta dig these days
they ain't never gonna come again
so late we learn the lament
and today I learned
another fact
most all the birds...
they don't make a full year
and here I sit
expectin' immortality
an' I can't even fly.

TO JOLT THE SUN AND STING THE MOON

Just a man playing the old tapes
grinning to the sounds
bold discovery,
the tapes will play alone
solo acts for an audience of one
a repertoire theater of the mind
applause and appreciation,
a rolling thunder acclaim
expressed in soft grasses swaying
and driving winds blowing,
some things are
because they ought to be.
A pilgrim limps on
victim of cruel disorder...
truth and those who deny it
conspire,
lighthouse beacons,
viewed in thick fog
or sensed.
And to thine own self...
jolts the sun and stings the moon...
stars too, illuminate memories
and fields of view.

(Continue →)

And to thy own self...
the cure of all that ills,
keys to the kingdom,
a performance for the one who counts
act one and finale...one and the same
no interlude...
it's right,
that for which the heart labors
that for which the soul spills tears,
mirrored thoughts and mirrored images,
the pilgrim feels the truth...
he knows his
and his know him,
unbelievable sunset...
incredible solar show,
relentless
like tomorrow's dawn.

NIGHT SHOT

Working flooded fields of darkness
valleys of and for the shadow
misting rain soaking the spirit
 late winter coolness in the soul
wood smoke in the air...
jasmine and sandalwood soothe no better.
Cold and damp
a triumph of what survives
 when all appears lost
one's very cells draw together
 a turned up collar
hands in pockets kind of night.
Survival of the fittest says the clown prince
 I'm tryin' says the survivor
and wind blowing through tall trees
 is echoed in faraway sounds.
The survivor does what he does best,
 with a smile,
he leans into the wind and walks
 with finality that says forever
so clearly,
with every step.

ALONG PURPOSEFUL HIGHWAY

The sun ain't near settin'
 yet I'm stoned
badly
and I'm supposed to be on the road
to somewhere
 to some time
with some purpose
that now wanes 'n' pales
 yet the sun
ain't near settin'
and the road beckons
 the road cries out
 'n' seduces
still,
 I ain't nearly able.

**LATE AUTUMN ON
THE ROAD BRIEFLY**

On the road
 in the country
 and in my mind
reality
Sunday journey...
on the way to the agonies.
Hawk, free and gliding
 works a harvested field
and possibly...
for the will to believe,
 it being strongest in the morning.
An owl returns late to sanctuary,
Sunday morn and all is well
and good
and clean.
Geese aligned
 and late to their goal
sail in their fashion,
 graceful
and unhurried
patient.
Cornfield feeding deer
 a doe,

(Continue —>)

small but unafraid...
the fear is mine for its safety
for I know of this world.
Rabbit,
stay off the road
and watch for shadows...
I like the raptors and care for their needs,
but this morning,
I need life
and not the truth of death.
Sunday morning
on the road
on the way to the agonies.

IN THE PROVINCE OF THE PAST

Tried to go home today,
a pilgrim ignoring the warnings.
Tried to go back
to a little town and another time.
Mid American boom town
unrecognizable...
sacristy raided and defiled,
a sacrilege
because of what was taken sure,
but more,
because of what was added.
Briefly lost before I found
a tiny house on a tiny lot,
smaller than I remembered
 but I'd expected that
small child played in my spot
by my tree
tinge of envy...
wish he weren't so blond.
To the big woods of my youth
 parked to hike
but ached and stared instead,
had expected it to be smaller too,
worlds and things were bigger then,

(Continue —>)

and more mysterious.
It was the apartment building,
the parking lot and pool
that hurt,
hadn't really prepared for that.
Decided not to see the school
or the old night spot.
Didn't search for the special places
where steamy window secrets were revealed
under starlit skies that promised
the scary excitement
of worlds to conquer and worlds to see
of freedoms and seasons untold
and no limits in sight.

EMPIRE BRACED IN SAND

The rolling fog comfort
of being alive and alone on a beach
a symphony of crashing waves
naturally timed
crescendo after crescendo
relentless for all time
And still I have to ask
...the old sweet question...
What's it all about,
is it about anything
or nothing,
does an essence await revealed
just around the bend
lacking just one more weary effort?

DEMON RUM

Night flight
gliding close to the ground
as it must be
me an ol' John Barleycorn
neither with the answers
 the younger partner
still struggling with the questions...
ten thousand questions
in range from the worldly to the eternal
as if there was a difference
I'll make it, I must
I always do
anything less doesn't play
and is impractical
...even on the edge of the incredible,
borderline impossible
night flight...
I'd have it no other way.

INTRUSION

Winter morning frosty cold and clear
stopped to watch a Kestrel on the wire
Spotted an old man
limp walking toward an old farm house
Sunday paper under his arm
Old man
veteran of the suspender era
stepping toward a weathered structure
„a paint peeling old gray house
partially deserted looking
a house that would see
no more carved pumpkins,
a house resting on floors
that won't ever again feel
tiny feet padding on Christmas morn
a house entombed by lonely walls
with no more living,
nothing but
the waiting out of time.
Damn Kestrel

SUNDAY NIGHT

Tough session for the soul
 a time for self inflicted wounds
 and no places left to hide.
How can something begin so well
and end so mean?
Longings tear and tease
foggy dream images of impossible returning
 to simpler times, simpler spaces
but loves are lost
 and loves are scattered
and the night's so much worse
when you can't forget the day.
Radio plays the memories
while faraway places sing of agonies,
solid night sky emits steady rain...
near perfect staging
lacking only a lonely train whistle...

THE DANGER THIS TIME

Sometimes I get high
 most times just by the power
of the mind
but always just right
that place in the nether world
not incoherent
but on the free side of truth
seeing into reality
no restraints binding
it's these times I'm dangerous
 and it's for such danger I yearn
Freedom
Truth
all that is...
the I Am personified
 from hell triumphant
 from heaven exalted
You see,
sometimes I get high
just enough, to see the light
on distant horizons,
sometimes you see, I get dangerous.

SLIDE SHOW

Slidin' and hidin'
and afraid to hope
trapped back in the Sixties again
You know it's time
and you know the line
when the eyes don't lie
and the mirror deals morbid truth
trapped back in the days of yore
trapped back in the Sixties again
Gettin' higher
than the depths require
ain't no longer possible
when you've been along too long
trapped back there again
In the vine there is truth
in smoke there is light
ain't no longer
more'n another trap...
a disaster makin'
...for the wine
never bought time
and the smoke's a haze
a foggy daze

(Continue →)

when you're half way there
and you ain't nowhere
slidin' fast
trapped back in the Sixties again
The words flow easy
 when you're slidin'
just along for the ride,
hidin' now,
back in the Sixties again.

ALONG FOX RIVER

Tall pines and wonderin'
 peach brandy from a plastic cup
nectar of the gods
A glimpse then
 into the unreal realm of reality
What it is...for what it's worth.
the essence being painted by perception
So if you want to be measured
 ...to be judged and painted...
don't tell of what you've done
 ...the awards gained 'n' such...
tell us only of what you wished
 and how you'd like it to be.

A LITTLE SOMETHING FOR THE PAIN

So you sit around looking
for a patch of blue sky
maybe even a gentle warm breeze,
a little something for the pain.
What you get are truths
...clanging fire truck in the night realities,
glimpses of beasts and burdens,
broad sweeping brush strokes
 dripping in gray and black
and other hues of despair,
 shades you learn to sidestep
 ...to live with...
when you know ugly hollow truths
truths that aren't happy truths,
and 'cause they aren't smiling
wrapped in laughing welcome thoughts,
you keep 'em to yourself.

ROAD SONG

Tell it then to the road and wind
whisper it to a star scattered
diamond night sky.
The truth is out there
somewhere
behind a rock, behind a tree
maybe just in the breeze.
And the purpose of it all
the grand secret,
is buried so deep in the heart
that only a walk in the wild
can ease it to the surface.
The meaning is there,
hidden for all to see,
in the trees and rocks
an crystal mountain tops.
Nature's gods have it all to see,
the images you seek,
they're staring back
from pine needle padded trails.
Tell it then
to the wild and free...
find your soul in the reply
of crashing waves
and tree top serenades.

PART NINE

**FIELD HOLLERS OF
THE DISPOSSESSED**

field hollers of the dispossessed

maybe it was the war
that disgraceful exercise of power and duplicity
maybe it was the assassinations
that rocked our little niche of security
there was always something
i don't know
those three words have fallen
from the honest lips of thinkers and wanderers
i don't know
great religious philosophical and political lament
the first wave of what was to be called
the baby boom
nothing was more certain than uncertainty
pioneers
or more correctly guinea pigs
the rock and roll generation

Continue →)

hiding under desks in atomic bomb drills
told of communist bogeymen under every bed
consumed by so much confusion
the bible read against kerouac on the road
or henry miller read with a flashlight
the brush fire became a conflagration
theology displayed along with the pill
everything was televised and someone on the west coast
knew how to finish a sing song chant
that started from the east coast
the fad and the phenomena
sputniks and puppets
mass culture and home town simplicity
far more questions than answers
transitions became brick walls
yin and yang graying
suffering from insecurity where once it celebrated change
the vine produced nothing of permanence
and the smoke's now a haze
the music struggles with hints of new realities
sex drugs and good old rock and roll
internal themes and half crazed anthems
dancing to external rhythms
and field hollers of the dispossessed

PRETTY POEM

Write me the pretty words
 we'll dissect your technique over brandy
Napoleon,
write me flowery images
to make your point in lace and frills,
tell me how Harold loves Ellen
 or Mary
or Joe
or some other dumb ass
 who plays your game of avoidance
 and fear—
dodging bullets on your knees
Yeah baby,
write me the pretty words,
 intricate little images
of rolling alliterative tripe
 and painful rhyme,
it's a cute illusion,
baby,
fiddle the world away
and your life.

NOTHING REALLY MATTERS

We're in an army friend,
draftees
our likes are inconsequential
conscripts,
'cause it's us against them,
again,
or so the idiot says
some will die,
the sacrifice of soldiers
 and nature,
nature's in our shadow babe,
the price tag cometh
and it isn't pretty
 "it ain't even close."

I GAVE YOU ME

Woman,
I love you so,
I gave you me
 through your tinted glasses—
everyone's tinted glasses,
 greater love hath no man
than state of the art death.

LIFE'S RECKLESS SHOTS

How things can escape the mind,
actually being expelled
while clinging to the memory,

The pain of every day's love lost
the agony of losing one's grip
on reality's thin ledge over the abyss.

Love conquers all,
 in a cruel hoax,
love doesn't conquer
 it lifts and elates,
but only for those who know it's understood
only
when it's not understood.

PROSE POEM

THE PLACES OF OUR YOUTH

The places of our youth still exist. They occupy some sort of Brigadoon in our minds. You took them with you when you left. For your effort, they live forever and ever. They come to life whenever you have pause to reflect—and cherish. They live wherever fireflies (some of us call them lightning bugs) swarm. Teach the little ones about simpler times and those simpler times spring into existence. Kick the can and play at jumping rope—and play hide and seek. Mom or Dad will materialize all too soon to call you in for the night. Always it is too early, but the places of your youth are real and their orbit moves across the sky as surely as the sun. Life goes on. Watch the shadows at sunset—young boys still marvel at why the girls are walking differently. Young girls are still amused at why the boys act like such idiots. Ah, the places of our youth still exist. They are here and there—and everywhere. They can be measured in quantum leaps and little baby steps.

Continue —>)

They are no longer defined by Mom or Dad calling us in, but they are treasured for all time by the sound and size of all things measured from here to forever.

Yeah, my friend...those places still exist. They live on in hearts and minds. They are here when we think about times and spaces—about yesterdays and tomorrows. They are here when we most need them. They exist because we exist. They are wherever we are.

PROSE POEM

THE WAY THAT SURPASSES ALL MEANING AND UNDERSTANDING

You know more than I know but I know everything. You know more people than I know but I know everybody. You have been to more places than I but I have been everywhere. Your faiths and beliefs are stronger than mine but they are part of my spirituality. Your scriptures stretch around the world but they are but a part of what I find inspired. You are my superior in all things but I can give you the most superior of all that is. No matter what, you must never stop searching. The sincere desire to please will please yourself as well as all beings you desire to please. You will find that the path under your feet is the true path if you truly believe. When you are honest with the one who knows when you are sincere, you will have found the way that surpasses all meaning and understanding.

THROUGH ALL AGES

The path through all ages
soul defiled, heartsick
tradeoffs friend of mine,
we make them
and they make us,
It's an attitude problem,
light the night,
the night needs it,
tell me again the wondrous story
of capital's delight,
tell me of maturity,
the modern man's delusion
laboring for what never was
at the command of what isn't,
lacking only a participant
for a fool's trilogy—
an all star trinity,
yea, I love it,
participatory democracy
dripping blood.

LOOK AWAY, LOOK AWAY

People who have nothin'
fightin' over our ideas
 as if they are ideals—
ideals as only we saw them
Yes and yea,
the condition of grass after elephants battle

For people with nothin'
are fighting over our ideas—
 ideals as we state them,
It's a mean mood
running through denuded forests
 I know this,
because we can no longer see the trees of our discontent,

It's a mean mood
 in hand furrowed rows through barren soil,
It's a mean world
that roils through barren water.

**THE DOUBLE VISION INHERENT
IN LESSER WORKS**

Images of forever in a plane
 piloted by real people
on their way to forever or anywhere,
Why don't I see as the others see?
What is my crime?
Damn
I tried, I think I did
How is it then I feel so different?
If only I'd known,
yea,
right,
I would have done nothing different
 it's been an acquired taste,
for all I've done,
I've done to myself.

THE MAGIC OF DOUBT

Livin' the life, in the staring state of panic,
free form confusion
except for those times
of storming cerebral dancing
a dawning
of stone cold heat of deep water stillness,
something for the pain amid the journey
-it's a tale of wind telling tales in tall trees,
and it's about road time in the mind
life on the road style
of the old doubting magic,
anxiety and elation
coming now to rest poles apart
yet united
a product of cries in the dark
and knowing glances
on the road to oblivion.

concluding existential lament

today i learned that the birds
most don't make it more than about
a year
and here i sit
intent on immortality
and i can't even fly

Thus, the circle is complete.

INDEX OF TITLES By Page Number

PART ONE

MINIATURE BROWN SAILS DYING 5
SLEEP COME ROUGHLY 6
BOX CANYONS 7
VISIBILITY AN OLD SWEET SONG 10
ICE PALACE 11
FOR ALL SEASONS ...PEOPLE OF THE REALITY 13
THE OLD NORTHWEST TERRITORY--The Profound Meekness Of Prophets 15
CLOWNS AND KINGS (How Subtle Differences Matter) 16
BELIEVER'S TRUTH 17
UNTITLED 19
OLD SWEET SONG #2 (An Endless Road to Nowhere) 21
THE CISTERCIAN'S GIFT 22
LONG GRAY TIME DAWNING 23
WEATHERING THE DAYS 24
THE PARK A DAY BETTER THAN MOST 26
TO KISS THE MOON'S REFLECTION 27
OTHER PEOPLE'S CHILDREN ...A Tribute To Unsung Heroes 28
REPEAT OFFENSES (THE SECRET STATUS OF SYMBOLS) 30
ONE OF MANY MANSIONS 32
CLIMATE CONSIDERATIONS 33
CLASS OF '63 35
ELI ELI LAMA SABACHTHANI 38

PART TWO

PREDATORS, PREY AND PERFECT ORDER 39
ON THE FIRST PERSON MIMICRY OF PERFECT ORDER 40
THE RULES OF HOSTILE ENGAGEMENT 42
THE AMAZING DEPTH TO WHICH GRACE SATISFIES 43
AN ANCIENT WEEK OF MODERN REALIZATIONS 44
THE PROPER INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE 45
HE WHO IS WITHOUT SIN CREATES A STONE TOO HEAVY TO LIFT 46
WINDS OF SUMMER SLUMBER 47
THE FLEETING STATE OF GRACE 49
THAT SCIENTIFIC SEASON 50
TAKING FLIGHT —A Lateral Phase Of Discontent— 51
INTERCESSORY PRAYER 53
the risk of stupid gestures 54

PART THREE

ALL THE WRONG GRACES 55
DARK STAR 58
FOREST SOUNDS 59
ACOUSTICS AN OLD SWEET SONG 61
OF THE AGES EVER MORE 63
IMPASSE IMAGES 65

CLOWNS—THEIR SECRET SMILES 67
THE SETTLEMENT AT TERRAPIN STATION 69
OLD NORTHWEST TERRITORY #2 The Biggest Of Losses... 71
I AM WHO AM 73
ASH WEDNESDAY 75
TIME TRAVELER 77
AUTUMNAL GETHSEMANE 79
RENAISSANCE SONG 81
REALITY'S FORM AND CRYPTIC DENIAL OF SUBSTANCE 82
MY LITTLE BIT OF WISDOM 83
BLUES FOR BROWN EYES 85
THE HARVEST AT TEMPERATE LONGING 86
THE JOY OF MY YOUTH 88
a joke among the faithful 89
ya gotta know 90
THE ROAD 91
ON THE NATURE OF THINGS 92
THE WARS MY GOD ORDERED —Tales Of Nothingness...96

PART FOUR

covenants and faded risks 97-120

PART FIVE

SO MANY PLACES 121
ACTOR'S CRAFT 123
ANYONE'S DRUMMERS 124
AT LEAST TO LIVE—A Study Of Lesser Positions 126
ASCENDED MASTER 127
A BRIEF GLIMPSE OF THE FAITH 128
COUNTING COUP 130
COUNTING COUP...LATER THAT SAME SEASON OF DESPAIR 132
THAT YOU MAY DANCE IN EACH OTHER'S LIGHT 134
FOR A FRIEND 135
FOR THE FINDING 136
JUST PASSING THROUGH 137
LIGHT SHOW 139
OUR MASTER'S VOICES 140
TO IMAGINE MAYBE (Alchemy As A God Of Abandon) 141
NEW RULES 143
PERIOD PIECE 144
JESUS AND JOSEPH'S JOURNEY ON THE SMILE OF SAINTS 146
ON THE SMILE OF SAINTS 148
TAXONOMY 149
THIS CLOSENESS—The Joys Of Beholding— 150
OF TIMELESS THINGS 152
THE WAY BACK INTO THE GROUND OF SPIRITUAL HEROISM 154
WIND AND RAIN 155

PART SIX

OF WHICH I AM MOST PROUD 157
another side of the moon's reflection 159
WAYFARING STRANGER 160
CLEAR AND SIMPLE 164
A PROPHET'S SIMPLE OFFERING 166
fade to pure black 167
So Many (Chronicles Of The Holy Among Us) 169
SPECIAL GROUND 170
SO HIGH...SO FAR 171
APPARITIONS 172
reason and rhyme 173
DON'T TELL ME 174
NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCES 175
OUTSIDE THE LINES 176
TWILIGHT TIME 178
FOR THE SAKE OF MADNESS 179
OLD SWEET SONG #5 180
STRUCTURES OF REALITY 182
MIND CYCLE 183
NOTHING COMES FOR FREE 184

PART SEVEN

A PSALM FOR THREADBARE IMAGES 185
A LITURGY FOR ULTIMATE FREE ACTS 188
FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES — Wanton Places Of The Skull— 190
THE SUICIDE SEED 192
BROWN SKINNED GODDESS 194
ON LIBERTY STREET 196
GENUINE PLASTIC PARTS 197
PENAL COLONY 198
ECCE COWBOY 199
PALACE GUARD 201
OH HOW I WISH 202
TO WHOM MUCH IS GIVEN... 204

PART EIGHT

NORTH COUNTRY EXIT 205
ROUTE 503 206
TALL PINE COUNTRY 207
FLIGHT OF FANCY 208
TO JOLT THE SUN AND STING THE MOON 209
NIGHT SHOT 211
ALONG PURPOSEFUL HIGHWAY 212
LATE AUTUMN ON THE ROAD BRIEFLY 213
IN THE PROVINCE OF THE PAST 215
EMPIRE BRACED IN SAND 217
DEMON RUM 218

INTRUSION 219
SUNDAY NIGHT 220
THE DANGER THIS TIME 221
SLIDE SHOW 222
ALONG FOX RIVER 224
A LITTLE SOMETHING FOR THE PAIN 225
ROAD SONG 226

PART NINE

field hollers of the dispossessed 227
PRETTY POEM 229
NOTHING REALLY MATTERS 230
I GAVE YOU ME 231
PROSE POEM...THE PLACES OF OUR YOUTH 232
PROSE POEM...THE WAY THAT SURPASSES 234
LIFE'S RECKLESS SHOTS 235
THROUGH ALL AGES 236
LOOK AWAY, LOOK AWAY 237
THE DOUBLE VISION INHERENT IN LESSER WORKS 238
THE MAGIC OF DOUBT 239
concluding existential lament 240

The use of lower case and upper case
letters is intentional as is the use of
spacing and punctuation in all poems

