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COASTAL

Menahem Ali
translated by Matt Alexander H.

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Menahem Ali was a Palestinian-Israeli writer who fled to America at the age of 18 during the outbreak of war in 1948. He lived the rest of his life in exile, mostly as a paper-hoarding recluse in Brooklyn, New York before passing away in 2020. He never published a word in his lifetime, but left behind 15 manuscripts handwritten in a creole of Judeo-Arabic Palestinian Hebrew, including thirteen collections of free verse, a study of poverty in America and a surrealist novel.

Matt Alexander H. was born in 1986 in Northampton, Massachusetts by the Holyoke Range and Connecticut River Valley. He was raised in the Atlantic coastal town of Mattapoissett, which, in the Algonquin language, means, “place of rest”. He lives alone by the Sea of Marmara.

Other titles by Menahem Ali at Fictive Press
as translated by Matt Alexander H.

Verse

Cyclical Wordplay
Exotic Settlers
Sketches of Style
Present Sound, Silent Space
district.Columbia
Full Moons and Dawn's Crepuscules
Asemic Man
Regress
Brooklyn Ridge
Winter Flower
Cairo at 20
Letters of Constantinople

Prose

The American Hallucination
Arson in the Scriptorium

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new york

to

vancouver

EAST

I Still Do

They say:

What is tried, and what is true
And what is tried and true
can be trusted.

Something anyone could count on.

Recurring.

Like the night tremors I've had
These months, weeks, days, hours
minutes, seconds, moments, Without you.
And in the time that has passed, So have I.

All that remains of me is
My absolutely unshakable

insatiable love

For you. My every object of longing
Who I need like the heart, pulsating
regularity. My blood. And the pressure
only increased. And I can't stand it anymore,
I'll faint.

And wake up blind, unable to speak.

One of these days. How I love you.

Who are now a memory.

The only fixed point in my entire existence.

That moment. When I grasped for air. My hands.

Breathless. And going cold. In a winter, the bitterest.

You were, are, our strength.

Leaving us.

For the unknown.

As I wallowed.

Afraid. Slept in other beds.

Kissed and came atop our lonely home

Looking over the edge of a crescent moon.

Waiting in other arms. Walking next to bodies

Warmer than the thought of your distance.

After all. Said. Done. Tried. True

I do. Still.

A People

Half-light

Half-dark

Submerged

In the windowless

Slum chair

From the homeless

Ride to freedom

Alongside the Brooklyn-

Bound vampires of street

Bush meat, live and raw

Masticated whole

Under the chipped incisors

And molar mosaics

A metro wall tiling

Imperfect as untold eyes

Submissions, bracing

The cold underworld rock

Toward a high note

Bridge, rattling above

The overflown river

Strangled by bones

Undead memories gone

Astray in the urban

Wilderness

A People II

As we are
Animal, beast
And human

Mind, forged
By the pressure
Amounting

To the fire born city
New York, a dream
Quixotic, mad, free
Uninhibited by race
Imagination, blooms
Upward as the dance
From a tough island
Soil knotted of stone

A continental sight!
Where armed devils of white ships envisioned a core
Of modern industry, consumed
Throughout the land, by a gaping horror of mouths
Inhaling the sounds of all the tongues
Of the world, and
With ears blocked for the pain of hearing
The metallic screams of the millions'
Lives descending through the lone fortress

An underworld odyssey, ending

The Unfinished Moment

From the moment you begin to feel more than what is seen, heard, tasted, smelled, and even touched, the night becomes open

longed for, even fought for

And then, at break of day, you move out to seek the lip of the horizon to kiss and embrace the mountain from bottom to top like a great human bear welling up with dreams

And on the way, reach a home, a key illusion in the wild, a patch of fog, where the obvious is lost for the absolute lack of clarity

and the moment when grasping, so many, fate

the opaque obscurity,

palm of youth, novel and innocent, the body feels whole

clenched by the faintly lined

is loneliness

though in completion

an all-too-human sensation where life is given to want, the pores of the skin open, untangle the most gnarled of knots to seed the air with a wafting stench, as the first wave of sweat rolls over the nose, to touch the hair

area of the navel, a potent and lush flesh, massaged at the thought of a need, and in the space of a day, the mysteries of humanity, biological, spiritual, social, are tensed

lifting firmly from the

reflex of desire for another, unfinished

in a

At Any Cost

Since before the century was even a thought to the most worldly of elders,
On the street, New York was alive with history, and so
In the year 2015, I sit and drink in a 1927 café,
Cappuccino Italian mornings, predawn, while the light still sleeps
In America, long having awoken the compatriots of old Europe
Who rise wondering about the life and poverty of a world made by industry
Born of culture, grown by immigrants, loved by the world
Haunted in the looming shadows of twin ghosts of Naïve and Native America
And the huddled masses, gone cold with frozen hands against the hearth of a dying fire
And down the same Greenwich road another café of 1915
Also bred by Italy, a people moved to appreciate quality collections of goods
And societies bursting and turning forward through a twisted underground pathway
Where the colorful struggles of the wise hold sway over-raging
Intensity of a new unity, of people sworn to pursue liberty at any cost

Coffee and Liquor

Smooth over the empty night in New York City
Half-inebriated, café visions fill the espresso scent
A humble king low in the dim lamp-lit haunt
Innumerable moments of poetic awe, and dream
As the gay prowler, the sick grave and the healthy bless
Joy of youth drunk on the animal rush of oxygen
Gold flushed through the faceless void of urban sleep
The unconscious life of the source cowering
Into the veins and minds of the proud American
Ghost who saunters unknown down anonymous roads
And unnamed avenues consumed whole by the popular
Imagination bred of sex rites stolen from the villainous
Mass of flesh, and who lies in the silent air, moved
To incriminate the skinned evolution of society
From progress to content, and following a light
A breath, a note, and holding the sound of subtlety
In the furthest rooms of the mind, blown over
And stung by the poisoned fang of the modern voice
Fading into operatic class, and muted from underneath
The clanging machine of organic stimuli, cooked
To a boil, and dripping from a rooted brain

Virgin on TV

Moving through hollow earth
I crack a smile as my train descends
To the core, and windswept
On the nightly bridge
Into midwinter moods
Pitted against the anxious age
Mortal echoes followed
Into the lurching crush of wheels
Grinding on metal in the raw pull
From island to island
Straining to hear the whistling air
Pain to reach home at sea
The deep, folding before yawning
Abyss, where in such absolute silence
Is the cruel demand of life without
A reason to why, as we, the strong
And high people of America submit
To the pursuit-of-happiness myth
At our expense, only to rise

From the spiritual greed, pale Of a sunless eve, with a question
Asking, "Why must we fight To own what is ours, and what
Has been promised?" all people Who have not been exposed
To the salivating mouths of power Mongering hordes on top,
who Decide to humiliate the common Personification of what is
lesser As the artificial evolution of a war Lost by the homeless,
impoverished, The illegal, the resistance... Where faint cries still
heard Over the emergency racket And elitist hubbub of freaks
And pimps who sell and purvey lives With the thoughtless instinct
vomit And come, forcing a new member, Cold-blooded rape society,
exploding Into the country cunt of a midnight Cinderella virgin on TV

Day and Night

She screamed aloud over the treetop sail
A throat billowing like a canvas flapping
Violently in the tempest-tossed seas, New
York to Patras, the return of the sea
Murdered in the cold heart of a voice
Blaring from the absolute high
Of a psycho-activated lung, My breath,
then seen, as the very stuff of love

Calling me, I hear her voice
The ring of a piano string
The hot bellow of an inner city horn
The sirens of the Odyssey
La Curandera singing in streams of color
Her tongue a shipwrecking wave
Auspicious enough to catalyze
The history of a New People

The hyphenated fusion of cultures
By ecological and religious gravity
Touched by a symbiotic intuition
To speak in communal isolation
Of the origin myth, where all of humanity
And all of life itself was birthed
Rebirthed, remembered, the ocean
The grandmother, as mother to Mother Earth

The undrinkable brew that fills the sky
With breath, that has given us a home
By her violent groundswells
The passion of place, the first homemaker
Who gifted us a way to know, be, and pride ourselves
In the immense, unspeakable divine honor
Of our descent, ah, yes, grandma ocean
To you, we owe our day and night

To Give My Heart

I refuse to give my heart away to the blind angry night
That nervous laughter of viral speed and venereal disease
The choked child blasphemed of the Holiday Spirit
Once intoned so proudly against a bandstand of men
And so, I recline, luxuriate to my heart's content
And listen to its beat in the ever delightful silence
Of my choosing, I am one body complete and needless
Of another with whom to ask and beg and bleed, no!
I am here for myself and so give freely my love
That is my freedom, that is my song, that I sing
From Harlem to Bay Ridge, breathing in sea brine
Blowing out the vain smoke of youth into a future
Bereft of mine, where I know I'll one day swim alone
In the sacred pool of a love I found because I let it find me
A precious coincidence, when the stars align ghost-like
In waves of aspiration and foresight, the boundaries we set
Fall at the awakening of a seed yet planted in a most fertile soil
Now perfect, as the cool garden pathway leading us back home

A Forgotten Dream

She is soft. She is hard. She is...

MYSTERY

I know her.
There, she is.
At last. There.
 Where I last found her.
 Not hidden. In plain sight.
 A rare beauty. Too bold.
 For my bright blue eyes.

I look for shade and lose her. One day.
She finds me. Lazing beneath a fanning palm.
At seeing her. I am restored to nature's womb.
Needy to imagine the world again through her.
These imperfect ovular minds of smiling eyes.
And yet she places her hand on me, my chest.
Quaking, excitable, lowering my heartbeat.
To a survivable frequency. She shares words.
Soothing, few. Her voice has a cadence, lilting.
A magic quality that seems to echo until this day.
In its unearthly beauty, like a fallen houri.
Or risen succubus, who is this darling?
A Byzantine seraph? I wonder, curious.
Exuding enlightened naivety, by a charmer.
Her presence so visionary as to pierce into me.
Through my earliest memories, and fish me out.
From the deepest recess of emotion that I could not.
To feel again, and with such delicate self-respect.

She is my strength.
"I am your heart," she says.
And recedes into the forest brush.

A forgotten dream.

Without Belief

Truth is a word, and nothing else, except maybe a belief. Yet, those who believe in truth are true. That their truth is true is not a matter of truth, only of belief.

Yet, I believe in them, while not in their truth.

There are times when I believe that what I believe is true. Only, that never makes my truth true, only believable, if only to myself, who I believe because I must.

And then, I think. I wonder. I ask myself:

“When am I true? When is truth not only a word? When is truth true, even if that truth or those truths are only my own?”

And then, I dig deeper, and imagine truth as a verb, like when I believe, because verbs seem truer than any other part of speech. Nouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, articles, are pure linguistic creations. And then, there are verbs.

Verbs are like the vowels of letters. They are the breath, the movement. The essence. And I step back, and look at myself in the mirror:

“What do I believe? And what can I make true, actualize, realize, without belief?”

Estranged Night

This night is not really inspired. I am saddled with need.
And on my way out, every last nerve wracked by anxiety.

Death
Homelessness
Divorce

I am an aging hypochondriac Jewish New Yorker trying
To make a difference in a world that appears to be more
And more different than I, and the more I express love
For everyone I see, the more I feel reticent and removed
From the great mass and vibrating optimism of being
To that procreative nature, am I sworn? The destroyer
The MOLOCH gorging on his own naked flesh, as I
Knocking my knees against a tightening drum skin flat
Against my back on the faint illusions of ground and me
Who becomes someone else in every untamed instant
Until I say, "YES!" Here I am. A person, clothed, light.
And of speech, a bathed vision of health. The emergence
The very ethnic wisdom of continuity from my voice
And does it sound through the streets of the ancestors?
And where have I made a life? Is this where I pay homage?
To the undead?

I am estranged.

Never and Always

I fly through these visions of pride
Erasing my path behind me

Wherever I go.
Please do not follow me.
Do not even wonder where I am going
Or where I have been.
Because I admit, I am a follower.
And what I truly wish is to go my own way
And to see it through
And know that there are infinite paths
Through this well-trod Earth
Even in a place called New York City
Where the feet of the human world impresses
The renewal of mystery, an individual
Walking again on the same street
As everyone else, ever

Remembering others who did the same
Who were going where they now went
And here, we stop. We stop questioning
On the path, we reflect: *Is this my way?*

Is this where I am going?

Time passes. The face of the world turns.
Even the faces on Delancey and Houston
And again, there is cause to move, return
To be, cause the nature of impermanence
To reveal the two-sided coin and its flip
Perennially changing in the mind of one
Individual, the introspective palm landing
And falling to our feet, the coin grounds
Spinning, before we know this same place
Never and Always

Neither Here Nor There

The smoke burns
And I fade into air
 A faint wisp
The end of a love song
The opening adagio
 And in the masterpiece of harmony and mood
 I wither at the penultimate morning of spring
 And dipping my soiled and bruised feet in
 The slow moving estuary, patient with lust
 For the longest day, I am humbled
By the overpowering gigantomachy
Skyscrapers and people swarming
With the insects and rats, one, silent
Flame of sheer sunbaked stone
 Then, I return inside. Sheltered by light
 And water. Sinking in soft cream
 Beautiful moonlight, I ask myself:
“Is it yet time to sleep?” and drift
To the storied character of old
 The celluloid fantasies of a century
 Passed from grave to lore, and I
 The future, play to the enchanted
 Visions of eternity, masked undying
 In sorrows, and perennial joys
 The human drama, sliding blithely
 From the captivation of my eyes
 Dimming to the god-like genius
 The dreaming mind, as I search
 Involuntarily, a sight-seer, buried
 Tourist intellectual, creating images
 And sparing nothing of reality
 Except the bitter truth of waking
 Yet often the rule is unclear
 As the mind is a trickster, we are
Neither here nor there

Here To Stay

What do I do to indulge in life?
Unemployed, only self-employed
Making money work for me
Without any more physical labor
Than to serve myself, I write
 Firstly, observing and recording
 What is in the world
 With a subjective transparency
 At least ideally, and interpreting
 Through art and prophecy
Reflecting on the intellectual
Feats of like minds who traversed
Such invisible paths to freed habit
Pattern, and the mores of behavior
Unformed, transformed, reformed
 One thought at a time, proclaiming
 My mind is a gift of nature unmediated
 And I am capable of all the glory I reflect
 From my clear soul, polished daily
 And by nightly psycho-spiritual effort
I work at mental refinement, humiliated
To seclusion, oftentimes wearied
By the slight features of human sight
And touched to direct what is heard
As palpably as a taste or scent
 Yet to be in New York demands
 Of my middle-class suburban past
 An upbringing lowered to my knees
 To scrub human waste, molding walls
 Dust-ridden floors, and stifling airs
To rent space in a city begging for more
Room, not to become gargantuan LA
Though to up the value of a yes
And in this way, I remain, a fixture
In a self-revolving urban sphere

Here To Stay II

These islands, where the man who I call Greek for grandfather came into the world
worlds poorer than I and we are still here to stay.

A Moses of the East River

For how long must I beg
Before the sky opens
And the world stands?

Will you forgive my humanness?

You, who can hear me,

A figment of nature

In the way of mind, us

Because in this city of metal and unknowns

The only verdant pleasure, the only rushing stream

Is the treasured communion with another human being

A still free reminiscence of the endless forests

And dizzying mountain peaks that once captivated

My body to a pitch of triumph, lasting the brilliant night

Under the fallen heavens, the starless blinds of a new moon

And its ecstatic rays, the radiant fullness of another round

Followed through to the ends of time, where we begin

Again, anew, as from a sacred womb, issuing natural law

A body of breath and eyes, the coruscant blush of an infant

Torn from the mother, bloodied, intoning the archaic yelp

For perfect joy, a wisdom cry, baby lion of Judah

Storming the rat-strewn chest of indefatigable empires

With nothing more than the conquering smile of wonder

A true thirst for knowledge, brushing her tongue of smoke

Against the pale lift of dawn, to see into the empty page

And scribe an object more valuable than gold, not worshipful

Only cognizant, as a cartographer dreaming in signs

Following through to the prophetic imagination

To see where the world dances on the tips of her

Flowering breed, a man, lost to the vagrant wild street

Inhaling toxic stress and pleading, outcast, spiteful

As a bitter soul tasted at the edge of a cup

A Moses

Born along the East River

A living question

And Spring

I can hear the raw energy, a pulse
Not jarring
Though not so smooth as to be unfelt, soon forgotten.
 What do I hear? A voice?
 Mere frequency, subtle vibration
 The movement of a universe unfolding
In the eye of painted visions
The artful reflections of a stillborn creation
Mourned and blessed by the catastrophe

A people dislodged from millennial comforts
Life lived secretly, lovingly, unencumbered
By the public fight, the glowering mob of trivia
 And tragedy, I can see all that is
 Is now raw with a flagrant energy
 A violent throb
The intimate vanity of love as an infidel
In the aimless test of society, that I am
No more than the chemistry of sensation

And work to my bone, now clenched tightly
In between two loosening rows of cracked teeth
Gums bleeding profusely over the genitalia of her
 Sick sophistry, the callous friend, moaning
 In a loudspeaker too close to my heart, who I have felt
 In the gelatinous arms of wanderlust, who I have
Tasted and smelled in an ebullient ecstasy
That healed my raw raw wounds, purifying
Crystal clear water, the blue gold of the Jordan
 That unearthly liquid chill, ecological anomaly
 Phenom of the landscape, river of my breast
 And tongue, whose milk flows easily
Into her body, my mouth, and tickles my brain
In the moment of our touch, our source

And spring

The Maghreb

We are empowered now beyond scope

Alone, refreshed

And our torso is engraved

With the light calligraphic etchings

A wood block print

The ancient copy of a text

Serving communal possessions

A body, and home, finally lost

To the dream of being, absolute

To that, I cry tears of passion over a blank stone

And watch as the very earth quivers with a response

To the depths of my want-flooded heart

Yet from the inescapable deluge I run barefoot

Over a sea of smokeless fire, and pierce the veil

Of a houri, blanketed in salt and silver

Her pale flesh reddened with the blood of a eunuch

Tearful on a windswept veranda, awaiting his lover

Before break of day, the all-intensifying heat cools

By the dew at our feet, cooling our toes in a rush

Simple bliss, to feel the nourishing kiss of moon

And earth, going cold as the first rays of sun

Searing this our delicate skin of night, and again

We are empty of love, wading in thick sands of beer

And men, irate in the eye of a solar light that punishes

And fires the day beyond that closeness of magic

That once endured under cover of night

So the privileged bear their heavy walls

And isolate their eyes behind opaque curtains

And listen within, to the sharpness of a pen

As it marks and nervously blends the contents of mind

With the infinite fascination of leaves, clouds, gods

On this road that ends

At the Maghreb call

He Sees His Youth

All of his youth gone For a dream, and that he dreams
He is young An earnest lover Bemused by children
 Indulging in the emotional frenzy
Other passions bolder than his own
For he has become nothing more than a kiss
Four lips pressed together
 Silencing the fear of his lust
 To labor and feed on the ends of a branch
 The rotted refuse of an orchard
Bordering his home
And lined with pathways serene
To wander and delight in the canopied
 Mysteries of the world beyond night
 Windows and prophecy
 For his strength has now reduced
To a boil of blood
Deep within his heart
And his speech has become no more
 A substance like evaporating steam
 He wishes to travel, blockaded by the spiritual
 Embargoes of his god-like conscience
That fastidious quagmire of ultimate loneliness
Built by modern man, his own private island
A hell of attachments and evasions
 The warp of an innocent mind
 Driven to imagine a world without him
 As the quintessential version of his place
In the world, a tragic wrench thrown
Into the blasted inner-workings of a steel forge
Blinding and maiming the elderly
 Women, and children, who lay dead
 And violated in the empty, scarred earth of his dream
 To see his self fly past the dim cries of suffering
The pangs of old age, and the opaque solemnity
For in his dream he is immortal And he sees all

Our Prophetic Forebears

Here we are again Where we began 100 years to the week
A room in a tenement Three blocks away Where life in America
became New to a family of Romans, Greek speakers who descended
From the first Jews of Europe And at opening his eyes
What did he see? Night, crime, and poverty

Or day, family and happiness The warmth of a people
So full of love that they placed His memory, and countless lives
Generations to come ahead Before personal security
These were men and women Bred of the mountainous
Northwestern region What was then Ottoman land

And in the sights of independence Greece, with her “Big Idea”
The stout builds and hearty minds Of Epirus, home to sacred traditions
Stronger than the roots of an olive tree, Alas supplanted by the dreams of a nation
Swollen with arms open so wide As to have embraced the old

Christian continent swarming By the tens of thousands a day
Wading over their heads In the tragic flood of humanity
To truly know the meaning of freedom
And immediately stretch their every muscle
In yearning for the definition and course
On which to plod in continuity Through their travails
that once stole past The ancient ranges, fields and seas
An immemorial pride of having belonged

And cultivated that soil For an age, and here we are
Again, giving thanks To our prophetic forebears

Under Jewish Skies

I must raise the pressure point from the temple at my skull
and speak, as we are, as friends,

who know nothing more of one another than we know of ourselves
and together, trust and risk sheer mystery
in all horror and fascination, as our birthright
and to love all:

billionaire homeless
fashionista nudist
hippie conservative
indigenous colonizer
pagan monotheist

like a homosexual transgender
who returns to love their opposite sex
after becoming them
as I have become the love object
the letter of a word in a book
made animate, come alive
by the traces of my heart split
and streaming

under the cloud-ridden New York sky
the visions of the past, returning
to move me from this studio

thoughtless paint
abstract sounds

as the brusque arguments
at the East Side Jewish deli
round midnight, yelling
in the cantankerous hole
about paychecks and Passover

the all-forsaken existential fiasco
cured by a knish, done exactly right
like potato cake and ice-cold lemonade
on a dreamy, dead-tired Manhattan
Sunday night when men become sensitive
and women walk in straight lines away from mine

4 AM Advice

“You’re young enough to be what you dream,”
Says the man from across the bus station café

4am, and not without a sly forecast to the grim
Age when waking is all there is after dead sleep

Exhausted soul still crying at the foot of youth
As the silent drink and his voice, so piercing

Only deafens those not submerged in the self-
Renewing water, not even wholly submerged

But a face, so drinks greedily in the richest
Man of all, who risks blindness at flooding

His head in the magic pool, when all’s needed
Only a sip, but for his greed, all he consumes

The hearts of others, and so he walks sideways
Stands and sits puzzled, a shade of memory

Immortal, yet whose life is a mere mineral
Fleck, invisible, in the clear spring of old

So without style, character, or personality
He slithers, limbless, lost to the aid of others

To gape over the rushing cold, and emerging
One day, sees the gaunt sordid faces abhorring

His wretched state, miserably discontented
To eternity, instead of seeing another human

Being in need, he sees himself everywhere
Aghast, whose differences are not possessed

No One Where

In New York
You go where
No one bothers
You, or where
Everyone knows
You. The corner
Deli. Café, bistro
Restaurant, club

And suddenly
Dawn peels back
Over South Bronx
The spitting image
Of Cairo. In smog-
Blown twilight
Plumes of burning
Gas curling upwards
In thick spirals
Millions exhale

Weighed, crumbling
Mortar and pestle
Unfinished brick
Rough-hewn stone
There, a hospital
Here, a youth walks
Hooded, sure-footed
Into the ambulance
Damaged light
Circling absolute

No One Where II

Base of American
Pyramid, monotheistic
Capital rising to a point
Sharp as any bayonet
Civil War worn
Sleepless eyes staring
Into the endless glare
The ugly artifice
Illusory light, leading
The weak and hungry
Into a hallucination
Beauty, knives seethe
In a free man's sloth
Careless, his palm
Clenched, patient
All-night electric
Spot, in the pigeon
Flown cellar station
Bus across the street

A man above dies
Into the pavement
For a lick of tobacco
Flare, like his youth
Grapples onto a can
Tall malt, eyelids
Flooded like torn
Cigarette paper
In his teeth, brittle
As the overgrown
Toenail of a girl
Half asleep
To the chain-hard
Light, as the floor
Café reopens, 4am

Dreaming Past

“Why?” he asks

“Does the past become dream?”

When all acts, negative
And positive. Merely dry

At the cracked earth
A desert riverbed

Leading to a mirage
Man becomes ponderous

Memories wondering
“Why, in the waterless

Clime of the absolute
Present, does everything

Once had turn ethereal
Noetic, driftwood of spirit

Floating atop open ocean
Horizon to horizon

Blank with nothing
Except the thought of what

Once was, and would be?”
Then the earth turns an ear

To listen to the wise man
Speak of the fleeting

Dreaming Past II

Shades of human life
As we at times stop

To consider where we are
And how the loves, passions

And triumphs of our age
Led us to think back

And in sleep recall
With a similar substance

Stuff we have left behind
To wade in the salt seas

The mind, rolling through
The wafting air, redolence

Chilling as truth, our lives
Passing by ever so gently

With every longing, regret
And stretch into the facades

Novelty. So we recline
As one body wavering

Over the gentle breeze
Blown from a cloudless sky

Mysteriously vacant of sun
Though alight

Simply Because Nothing

“Simply because nothing is being done does not mean that I am doing nothing,” says the man who acts in words and walks by the blanketed bodies of the homeless in the first hours of morning.

“She is a dream,” he once proclaimed proudly and with a full heart, bare to the ends of the sky. When the sky fell, he and his heart were not spared the breadth descending.

They took shelter in corners of the world seeking fragmented shards of the sun, of light and warmth that still could be salvaged, and on cold nights found nothing, only the resonance of a once fiery blaze.

Beating slowly in the tired heart of love surviving, and beneath the ragged cover, one night frigid as no other brought them closer than they had ever known they could come until the fated dawn. When he woke cold, beside a frozen lifeless body.

Over-Boiling Tempest

What sound would forecast the end of night?
A bird, humming at the warmth moving over the land
Ever so gently by the second, to a silent pulse descending
From the predawn sky, a clarity, to the brim of space
Suddenly shadowed by a moment of raw flesh
The unbending regularity of the soil moved with life

At the lightless edge of balance, the ecology
Bred of the visionary orb of day, glowing
Through a solid haze, the substance of fists
Amassing in a slow swarm of time
As the visible hand sets into place
On the point of a mountaintop, crest of a hill
Bed of a field, where through we see our country
The place where human lives rise and fall
To the distant heart of a lord, the vault of privacy
Spoils of historic theft kept safe beneath the gold-hued equinox

And yet at the moment of waking, pure, child-like
Innocence of novelty, we spring from sleep
To tell our dreams to the avian friend perched
And cautionary, who listens with the patience of an elder
And still, exhales the truths of an overboiling tempest

Lasting Impression

The most lasting impression?
Not what is written, only to write
And with what depth into the self
Unfeeling pavement of leaves
Fibrous earth swelling at our feet
By the step over a cliffside death
And falling, at an unknown pace
Through the blind mystery
Awakened only to transform
Vantages of a many-souled persona
Envisioning their death as an eclipse
Reason, high against the moonlit
Horizon, where friends bask
In the dissolving vine, a medium
Of planetary embrace, at once
By right, to behold the core of all
Life, as a filament bursting
With the slightest plume of smoke
Moving through the air as a wisp
Delicate, the fleeting presence
As music, at equal measure
With writing, and all creative acts
Within, subtle, to the touch
To mind the bridge where we know
The way from the world out
As drawn to the world in
The world of yet and invisibility
Where so many live, only to emerge
Hungry and to release the body
A consummate guide appears
In the midst of the worlds
Bridged, to teach the lesson
Of flight, how to create a mind
From the earth, through a symbol
An image, a sound, an act

Night Falls

The sky opened, an ominous circle blinding
As a tunnel of pierced air, exposed by an unearthly light
 As I gaze dumbstruck in awe, at the solar breach
 An atmospheric hole in full blaze, independent of the sun

The road in my eyes wavers, billowing with a swollen heat
And my mind races forward to see the end in flight
 An angelic machine, winged, with opaque shades
 Breathing the hot exhale of jet fumes aglow

And tapering out in an ascent through the heat wave
Steam of the road, a beam then shoots through the absence
 Stunning sky, irradiating downward with direct impalement
 An unforeseen planetary catastrophe, and so I retreat

To the banishment of friends whose hands are worn
By woodworking and raising human life by the soil
 Where times once loved back off and swallow comfort foods
Café deserts, pastries, cakes, all chocolate and the silent swallowing

A hard apple, kept down by bracing the throat, and then to emerge
Above vomit and gluttony, to consume every last creation
 Individual consciousness made, as one digests a book
 And proudly, to enjoy to the last lip-licking drop

Food of the heart, not wasting the slightest morsel
Along the way to preparing a most decadent feast
 Cultivated, grown, raised, harvested and finished
 Myself for the benefit of others, and one day with enough

Strength, for all in so doing by self-made efforts
Bringing the life of a heart into being, night falls

No Shadows Cast

Death was the greatest inspiration
Spelling urgency into existence
By an absolute mystery
A wild ungraspable power
To captivate the imagination
Into thinking, to become a guess
The incredible wonder of where
Memory ceases in the furthest reaches
A mind overwhelmed by nostalgia
 For childhood
 I look back
And in the most distant and faintest places
In my mind, I am there. And I look ahead
And I can only see a landscape, a scene
With myself, in the foreground, looking out
Into an unknowable frame of reference
 And then, I remember

 As I envision
Myself turning around, I see into the place
Where I thought I was or could be different
Entirely, another person, who wants me
To recognize him, and who wants me to think
I am him
 And act in a way to affirm
Our oneness. And he is no more than an object
In my mind, after all, and finally, as memory
Becomes imagination, I
 In my every state
Isolated from the local reality, I emerge
Early, from a teardrop blooming
From empty space, I am
 No more
Than an outline, mere form standing in
A whiteout light, where no shadows cast

New Yorkers Never Die

Some New Yorkers never die

They are the streetwise kids of Brooklyn

Staring out over the East River

Looking for candy, a ride

Over the bridge

Running from toughs policing

Strict by a code of bottled up discipline

Bumping into businessmen

In woolen coats reading papers

And looking down glum

Free with American hope

And wincing as the Upper West Side

Intellectual roves over pastimes

And hobbies, to marital annoyance

The psychoanalytical, the wife

And gawking on the way home

About cleavage over soda

Gum, and dice, visited by an aunt

Who knows all your best hideouts

And sneaks you a nickel for a fat kiss

On the cheek, "Don't spend it all at once!"

She'd say, "Mom's been slavin' away

Over the stove, got mammoth cakes

In the oven," she says with a wide show

Her arms, round enough to hold

The whole bay in one embrace

But she never does

The Ninth Man

A loaded question: Should I go
Or not go to the synagogue?
 An easy answer, an easy action
 To pass away
Yet, not such an easy feeling
To forget the birth of the other half
 The brain, the magic of creation
 Adored for the sheer beauty of a letter
A cloth, an embrace, as the smoky-eyed
Ninth man stumbles outside the front door
 Who does he see in the erased light
 Hundreds of synagogues gone
To the background of memory
A mere curiosity of tourists and bums
 The lonely and obsessed
 Familiar and proud
What does he see?
The ninth man
 Only the grit of pavement
 Shaped by 7 billion feet lost
On an island in the cold lifeless sea
Who gaze upward at their reflections
 The sun in a photographic cloud
 Mirrored metal cascading endlessly
In an artful design, spelling out
Mechanical imagination, industry
 And technology forged without reason
 Except to ascend into the dreamless
Sleep of my average night in old America
Where the minyan is unfulfilled
 And religion is another line
 At the airport, a senseless cause
To search and seize
The mundane lives of the elite
 Who are led, Fearfully

WEST

Whole Again

When we leave one another
We feel whole again
 And whole, are able to love
 The only remedy for distance
Emotional, is physical distance
Homeopathic treatments of heart
 The most apt to fulfill our needs
 Deepest, which is to be seen
Heard, and known, respected
Finally, for who and what we are
 Passage of nothing into mystery
 And the sound of the word
Speaking to us, breathing
Sweetly as the mammalian air
 Over a richly alive sea
 Imbued with mountainous shape
The rising tempest, waterborne
Storms moving the atmosphere
 In a dance of fear, at times we ask
 Who is the choreographer?
Unanswered, there is only one
Reality, that dancer, choreographer
 And dance, are one of the same
 Mysterious source of creation
That clearest of mirrors, that
Causes even the most logical
 To wonder why we are human
 Why are we not light?
Isn't the mind absolutely capable
To identify with rawest vein
 The wildest of natures, that
 First and last, east and west, us
Absolutely opposite directions
Met within

Close as Far

You are now close Yet still as far
We were distanced Separated by the border
That brought us together Two individuals meeting
Who merged in a forge Love so hot that we lost
Parts of ourselves, when We were once distinguishable
Unique from one another Just ourselves, whole

What were we seeking? Did we find that wholeness
That we had so dreamed of Love in the human sphere?
And now, as we come apart Again, realizing how much
Our individual selves simply Melted away, exposed
To the licking fires From our hearts, our skin
Becomes more vulnerable Gentler, more sensitive

With each morning touch When we rise from absurdity
Perennial night, to find peace Between us, that is so rare
Now, been worked over In this disappearing act
We call life, I have seen Your face fall away
With words not meant And I have felt your heart
Grow cold, as my mind Recoils like a scared snake

At feeling a stranger's touch Our love has been cooled
We have been broken Our hearts are victims
This abuse, as immigrants We are same-sex lovers
And we are not proud, We are afraid, we have felt
A lash as strong as war Break our backs clean in half

The Room

There isn't enough room on this page
To fulfill the wishes of a heart
Moving to the feel of raw potential

There isn't enough meaning in a word
To encapsulate the sense and feel
That I hold on my tongue

And from my hand, long clasping a pen
Instrument and sound, to resurrect
The dreams and visions I have seen

The harmony that has pressed me
To yearn and fast into the deep night
Ancient, with a thought, a memory

A sight, a language to tell stories
And remember hearts gone by
To the sale of property

At last from the fleeting
Lanes of the city to the wide stretches
The plain in the chest of the nation

Beaten and heaving with a sorrow
Unformed, coursing with lifeblood
A migrant people, changing names

Addresses, and love like trade
For a record of the past, for a light
And a play, taking laughter for granted

For laughter is the divine closing in
On human life, and cleansing
The mind of consuming passions

This Fallow Field

Longing to trespass across this fallow field
Where the hands of farmers are now clean
Sterile, and soften at the touch of a woman's
Love, her hands imbued with the magic feel
So needed by a man, entrusted to the heart

A lover stolen from the aftermath of our hate
That I am real, and know you is enough to want
To be absent, beyond dead, still alive, paralyzed
By the great mystery, this land taking us warmly
A lost pair, who have stayed the night, reclusive
To bury their secrets in unspoken dreams, calling
To voice the pandemic of art in the marketplace
The sacred living alongside the profane, abstract
To meaningless vacuity, where our love died
In a hailstorm of words too sharp for human skin
Like bloodletting medicine of old, I went
Overboard, too trained in cosmetic repair

And the loss of fluid was staggering
As I sought our union of superstition
To light on the silent flesh of our pace
Intimate, as we walked, mounting the horizon
In a vain attempt to merge with the border
Enlightened, and still, like the land at day's end
Waiting, watching, for universal clarity

The Mirage

As soon as the light
in the bleary mirage
is seen and followed
The vision dissipates

And what appears?
Emerging is only cause, absolute beginning
The place from where all things come
The quest of why and how infinitely mirrored

In a desert cascade, blinding
Until a voice clarifies the light
Into an apparition of home, saying:
“Where did we go?”

And a bird sings above a crow
Deep in thought, cocking its head
On the ground, nearly fainting
So consumed with wonder
At last witnessing the dreamless
Grace of dusk over the Pacific

Where large birds also stare into ruddy brine
And wish for another second chance
To see the end as the most beautiful
And sacred version of the story of us
And to be swept away in the lost ocean
The inhuman distance, I did fall into that
Gaping chasm, where I found my body
To be as light as a feather, gradually touching
The ground, with a most gentle brush with fate
And torn, at the slightest sense of possession
In the arms of a grown child, wanting
Such wonder, for her to be

The Fog of Mind

My mind is a fog And my heart blank
Wading in the rushes A long dried creek
Where we used to feel The nourishing current
Running clear off The back of our tongues
Where the living waters fell Into our bodies,
and we held Onto the ground kissing
The banks like lips And catching our breath

No more than a second's notice Before the flood of pain
Unsurprising, overwhelmed We did love the flow
Because it made us feel one With each other, with earth
Our minds strapped To the edge of our seats
As we watched the sky change And the water stream
The ground shake Yet our hearts stayed
And so wildly unbroken By the change of our need
We heard the sound of purity In screams and echoes
Along the mountainous shore Like a fantasy,
a place on earth Deep in the temperate rainforest

Beneath the cooling canopy
There, beyond our sight
The moving war-torn hollows
A night estranged to nothing
Except the silent kiss of grace
Feeling fully immersed
In the aural landscape
The lone beauty, smiling
At the reflections of waves
She spares her own life
By not entering, only to drink

We Rise

Do you still laugh the way you had me going?
From the tip of my tongue to the next step
Wondering why our art had become nothing
More than the veil concealing our faces
From the hard wind stolen away from the start
To the fire of a long vain day under the skies
Breached by a hand, and the empty spaces

Our cruel undead minds were full of blood
Our open hearts pleaded to be let out of our skin

The tempestuous night lingers beyond the dawn
Under the arctic light, where we espy the sun
And earth spirals in a kaleidoscopic vision
The human eye looks out over the gaping open
And here I am, fixed. Entranced, relating to earth
And star, the great cosmic dance entertaining
The universal human soul, Shiva, Shekinah
The lesbian lover of feminine creations
Pure spirit animating the lust-inspired act
Embracing by the sheer awe of sea and time
Letting out the call to simple trust in motion
Beauties of us, when we first met, and knew
That the answers of truth were given to us
Especially, for the sake of our happiness
And health. And may we know that we are
And so.

Rise.

The Starry Sight

I have longed for the sight of a star since the earliest moment I remember, and searching through the endless obscurity of electric pollution, thoughtless against the constant engine of my city, I have no sense of direction

Yet ahead, I am called forth toward the horizon, to feel the edge of light, to trade with a wise lover, pearls, gems, tastes, bodies of texts and spices, teachings, and songs

And in the eyes of the travelers who leave and arrive with momentary sights of such authentic human gravity I know I am alive

Here, where forests peel back along the plain and the sheer rocks of earth are dizzying with high lust and the people of the land are fearless

I hear cries of hidden insight in the visions from common hearts trailing beyond the lake and rivers, where we hear the past singing in the serene brush, shaded by the calming sway of a limb wavering like a man at sea

Forever lowered into the mass of water and invisible air, shot with piercing rays, I hear the lost youth of my mother's home proudly announcing his return

I see the faces I know

A Fleeting Consummation

Is all that we desire here?
Or, in our desire, are we taken?
 By the ruse of a mind
 To delusion

“What is desire?”

In the spiritual vanity of our intercourse
We sink in the rushing course of a wild snaking stream
The rapids carry us over cliffside vistas
Through tropical waterfalls, along desert valleys
And into mountain caves, we emerge in the absolute
Center of an ocean, and feel the blindness
Of gravity

 And we fall from consciousness
Deep underneath the sunlit caves
Where beings of lightness graze
The seething boils of Earth's own
Blood, a molten flesh, burning us
And at the sensation causes us to wake
Atop the filmy waters, bathed in moonlight
And the fluorescent traces of nocturnal marine
Life flashing in the lonely awe, that is us
Drifting past the fiery dawn, broken
And wailing for help, wanting something
Someone, to remove us from the feeling of purity
From raw mystery, so we desire satiation

And consummate the fleeting

A Drink of Ash

Even though we spoke to one another
So carefully, every audible whisper
Handed over, love-smothered
Attention to our every detail, the way
Your hair fell and how your braid seemed
To come undone effortlessly
At the slightest move of your curling
Fingers tempting every last strand
With a caress, and in the daily discoveries
Your most sacred passions, I saw
How your face changed in the dim light
How the hair on your face lifted
From the disguise of personality
And showed a woman, sincere
Reading with shadowy cheeks
In the flickering candlelight
The steam of your tea rising
With the smile on your lips
And how in your seated grace you spoke
Words enough to charm the fire
From its embers and light
The entire room only the slightest
Increase in temperature yet imbued
With a brilliance alluring
In the fragrant woody hearth of gold
Where you sometimes slept
Whisked away by your thoughts
Weighing on you like a dream
Remembered at first light, when I saw you
Rising from the cold ash to drink, sleepily

Looking at Graves

From here we see the night fade in
With the loss of an eye, perfectly
Shaped, undisguised, a nude
Circle of fire, without a single lick
Over the edge, flat against the wild
Smog blankets the city in a dry film
Wondering why the whole environment
Breaks from the tops of trees, and why
In the soil of the scorched plains
Do the animals still eat poison and die
Mindless to their delicate mortality
Because we are nothing more
Than the lightest wisp of a spark
Falling, just one strand of fiber
With the sear and flash of a reaction
Chemical, instantaneous decomposition
The magic disappearance of life
By the primordial elements of absolution
The void lost to empty space, great
Blinding erasure of existence
A swarm in black dressing, the ghost
All that has gone and will never return
The haunts of youth now ashen
And defamed of bodiless humor
To wear nothing more than a bald head
On two sagging shoulders, hunched
Over, looking at graves

The Entrance

Open the entrance

Flooded with a strange light
Breathe through the wading
Trespass of a million nights
Glowing with hot aspiration

When the heart molds

With pure need, a sensation
Love, in action, flesh wounds
Healed by time, a slight pressure
Falling back like a feathered freedom

The eagle born of an atmosphere

Touched by the fear of humankind
Surviving this age of fire
Society as the combustible mass
Parts spewing smoke and ash

Through the body held close

At knowing there is grace
In the impassable universe
Cycles and follies, the grandiose
Mind of cloudburst gravity

Provoked to near illusion

By a revolutionary thought
To grieve the horrors of war
To feel the feet of a refugee
And drink with the workers

A world gone cold of heart

Following nothing but the word
Dictator's unholy aftermath
A religion finally saved to the end
Days of this turning globe

I catch a flame atop the kindled void

As the solar disk burns
Affixed through smoke haze
Circled

The Inhuman Void

A mind unstained by the icy gorge of waste
Operating on the body, bold with light
A kernel of a grain, the seed of a life
 Born of the entire spectrum of color
 And texture, enlivening the seer
 To pierce through the veil of mind

And embrace the world
With eyes raging and bleary
With grateful tears of magnified love
 An intense horror of loss then pours
 Over the face perspired
 Through with the liquid of summer

Excess, drinking a concentration
Extracts opening the arms wide
Back to the sand, to envelop sky
 Within a single human wingspan
 Flying solo on the ground of being
 Awake to the whole universe

Fibrillated stars, a porous onrush
Water and flesh breathing, open
Grace, feeling the galactic absence
 Other life, a gag reflex of the cored
 Mind, a figment of belief
 Pressed against the body of what is

Real, and truly seen, divergent
Shields of gleaming protection
Before the tragic immensity
 The inhuman void
 Unfathomable
 Transfixing

Her Neck Like A Tree

She cranes her neck like a tree
Bent over a seaside cliff
And her face is one of many
On the totem of airs, a canvas
Blank, smothered with soul-
Animating hues, lush
With immense care
Gorgeous, the promised touch
A most gentle feminine grace
To arouse the sleeping passion

A man set in his daily dream
And nightly work, pronouncing
The sacred name repeatedly
Over bodily flames, caught
In a scope of gestures, looking
Out over the flighty mass
For a way, a scintillating crest
Oceanic harmonies distending
Like the belly of the world
One great decomposition
In salt and water, the integral
Elements of life dawning
Beneath the stationary queen
Who opens her breast to the sky
With raised arms and speaks
With gravity, "I have come
With many, see us, we are
Free, liberated beyond measure
From this world, our exhibition
Of freedom may shed the skin
Of stone and dirt"

A visceral chaos

Sunlight Stretching

These long stretches of sunlight
When time is walked off
And the mind runs ahead
Seeking to impress itself
Into wood with stone
Engraving anonymous
Line, the remnants of a heart
Voicing union among the wild
And staggering, foregrounded
Human triumphs, wishing
To grapple with the neck
Of meaning, and bring substance
To its knees, a flush pallor
Reddening by the second
As the blood fills the head
Like a balloon inflated
At the tank, until the pop
Sends dizzying waves of fear
Distrust into weary veins
Workers groaning in the narrows
Suffocating into tragic ambiguity
The cold rushing fount of water
Self-guided as an ocean river
Gliding through the ethereal
Realms beneath the heat of sun
Where life moves to the rhythms
Of pure matter, animate, sacred
The chemistry of two elements
Disparate, the gendered fate
Of being awake to the age-old
Deep, the young trench forming
The movements spewing flames
Of molten stone, the lick and kiss
Of earth bubbling with gore and pain

The Sense Of A Path

Which way will we go when all sense of a path fades?
Like the edges of a riverbank in the midst of a flood

Who will live through substance and light, knowing
Well of the final trip, taken like the coming down

A lifelong hallucination, one believed so intensely
As to fear the cruel and ubiquitous truths of existence

As expressed in the inquisition of sanity, as our dreams
Modern, freedom and democracy subside

To a belittled consciousness, for those without power
To scream in the back of their minds and listen

For the echo of a way out, not going forward
Only back, through nostalgia, reminiscence, history

To give up the brain of sensation and pour over
The troubling lusts of individuality submerged

By the loveless streetscape of a Pacific universe
Shocked with the confused disarray of perfection

And self-blame, talking into the night, conversing
Words, exchanging ideas and then leaving the day

For the slick body swimming so gracefully
Toned with musculature and enough fat, alive

What Is Most Beautiful

I had a dream. That I was sick with need. Wasted of flesh. The earth called me. To return back into her womb. To be nourished by the direct and permeating heat of a motherly body from within. And to have the very top of my scalp doused in flesh-warm milk.

Though, now I am awake. And the night sleeps soundly in the silent recesses of memory. I am moved by music. To dance, sing, and fill my cup with a refreshing draught. The summer is rife with languor and temptation.

The longest day. And here. I take a gram. An ounce. A pound of substance. Of matter. Of concern. And I trade with the fortunes of life. A shared truth. Of the passage of things. Of the meaning of hands. To buy and sell. What is needed.

With the most gorgeous of hosts. Basking in the divine lush of earthly paradise. The elder haunts every last swarm of fate. Every greed. Envy. Sloth. The whole gamut of suffering. The disease. Old age. And death of the religious taste at first light.

In the thick rays of the Pacific sun. The freedom to be and become what is most beautiful in life.

Where We've Always Gone

Emboldened by thoughts of a seed
The little strength broods of wonder and emotion
A play of the sweet night, turning about face
Bitter with the acrid taste of morning
In the hungry light, the dried sweat of old love
Betrayed by the grace of souls falling
Through life without reason or faith

Tied hands behind our backs and howling
Into the sheltering day, a longing trust
In the sun to move ever so patiently
Into solitude of night, a proud glow
Mounted on the plain open sky
Quieted by an excess of space
The present dragged along beyond sight
To where we kiss and strengthen our breasts
With the health and confidence of all humanity

Because I am from a damaged land, fragmented
Into countless pieces, the heartache of the world
Ballasted on all sides by nothing
Except sheer girth, the torso and thigh
An entrapment of the flesh-faced to rise
With fist raised high, and to say with every last affirmation
That we know this road, and it leads far from home
And that this is just where we've always gone

The Embraceable Beauty

What is misunderstood is drowned
In a cascade of stone, the hail of a thousand angry penitents
Accosting the yoni aroused like rapists born of murder
And disease, what is misunderstood is silence
By an earthquake, avalanche of words
The repetitive selfish conversation of what is understood
Dry as the bone left behind in the absolute middle of the Sahara
The sand gleaming with pure solar intensity

And I gravitate to a hum, breaking pitch
In the sweltering heat wave of endless dunes
And sheer lifelessness, a place haunted by spirits
Who have never known birth
And for whom death is a long last memory

The forgetfulness of what is misunderstood
By the imagination, painting involuntary strokes
Of blotchy paint, to obscure the empty impetus
To think originally, to hear the fingers move
Smoothly over canvas like skin
That melts and turns to ash after a slow extinction
Of all form, leaving the sapling barren of fruit
And wanting the human mind to embrace its tragic beauty

Dear Sister

Sister, are you in pain?
I am breathless, knocked out
Down for the count
My blood boils, my chest heaves

We are nearer than we have ever been
To one, how the royal air weighs
Down on our every thought
The passing feelings
Molestations of the mind
The groped heart

I see the end in your eyes
What do I know, we are equal
No man, woman or child is better
In any way than the next
But their music, how they tap
The secular wailing wall, feeling
The rain sinks into their pores
Open, letting out the grime and salt

The bitter and dirty brain, prepared
At the flick of a chopstick, for Cambodians' stew
The ape touch grazing along the neck
A lover of food, one so fat with greed
As to thin like the waning moon
To become as the crescent of Ramadan
Almost new, and to see who we are
In the open sky, in the palpable humidity
That we touch as we waver through
Like a single blade of grass, cut
Like one wave driven into the rushing tide
A shoreline beckoning for the sun to again light
On the soaked, granules of the naked Earth of flesh

Through Again

We go through this again, and again
Like two children, a boy and a girl
Unaware of gender, dancing
Under monkey bars, and getting stuck
In the middle of a slide, playing
Hide and seek until it's dark

When the night belittles us
To a slow dream of separation
From body and youth
Into an ageless illustration of lore
And the storyteller has the voice
Of our mother, the lilt of a songbird
The cadence of a cricket, the howl
Of a tree ape swinging beneath
The bunk bed that we share
With the absent sibling on the way
From the stars, through the womb

And there she is, facing us
Until morning, whispering like a purr
When we grow older, we miss her
We miss the union we felt
When she held us through, endless
Empty obscurity, the long mystery
Pain of unknowing, throwing us
Through many tempestuous loops
A love that will never marry
Our minds with our hearts, the sane
Harmony invoked by the voice
Our one nightly, only storyteller
This eyeball Earth asleep soundly
In a silent universe, waiting to be
Woken by the cosmic wink

Taste of a Seed

There is no greater exaltation
Absolute humility, the swollen
Universal power within
 Than the poet
 And musician of spirit
Love and trust flying untethered
Into pure sky, a cloudless dream
Remembered as a lucid vision

Visitation by the sound of friendship
A harmony of being, the ruthless ground
On which the dirtied feet of the soldier walks

Longingly, lusting after the winged
And finned creatures with nothing more
Than a single shot, and a thirsting vocal rasp

To feel the palpitating crust of hard-packed soil
Blending with the rich manure of fresh brains
Invigorated by the recoil and shock of serpents

Longing to pierce the skin, as howling insects
Fall and escape the bleary haze of midday sun
A traveler brushes close to insanity

Along the edge of the path, looking out
Over a field of sharp grass, to a place of shade
And knowing there, is home, a cool spring

To flow from mountain to air, through body
An impersonal fragment of stone, lodged
Between eroding banks that grow further apart

 After each season recedes
 Into the bitter taste of a seed

Field of Creation

What is that happiness?
That so blatantly, publicly, flamboyantly rushes ahead
Wanting to face the open field of creation first

To feel the private connection, with greatness as a cause to embark
From the dizzying flat beneath the sky, towards a transcendent meeting
Eye to eye, along the shaded spectrum, a subdued arrangement of colors
Blooming from the floor of a wild host, the play of pure sound
Unintended and faint with a mind yet raw and moving

The brush with tastes absolute, an incontestable sensation of sweetness
The bitterest of roasts, and the cracked salt delicately balanced
From leaf to bone, a crescent mind, resting on the angular tip of treetop spines
Curling back to rest the mycelial mind by the lowering of a pace
Swapping our fingers to listen for the rare answer, from a hermit
Feeling for us from afar by the shield of our minds, and as we stand
For the seconds to go by, the hermit recedes in a mute hush of warning

Foretelling signs, the book of trees, thoughts of clouds, words of leaves
And the way, a path in the densest wood, parted by a visionary look
Through to where the spring laughs in the fresh cool of an eternal sleep

The Falling of Pages

I write poems Removed to some Far-flung province

 A long-faced poet Submerged in starlight

 Under the Pacific horizon

I am joined in matrimony

With the forests and planets

Still brilliant on the tragic Earth

 I read envious of young women

 Fugitives of the American twenties

 When the century was still lost

In the youth of modernity

When the roar of a millionaire

Transfixed an audience

 With every last hair standing on end

 Those powerful cries that rung

 From the white knuckles of the worker

The woman, an untouchable obscurity

With sod-ridden eyes pulsing high

Beneath a bearded visage

 Entrained to peer effortlessly

 Into a mirrored sound

 The wilderness echoes

Vibrating with solitary trust

To return, where the lone hoarse voices

Beaten and braving the empty silence

 Nonetheless, as she, microcosm of the goddess

 Shuffles pages in the mystery of current trends

 The sunken vein bloodied, sour with neglect

And sacrifice, like a weary pilgrim bowing

His head, until dawn as the day

Morning smokes and life breathes

 In showers of hormonal pain

 The greed of the body

 The natural hunger and nightly thirst

Patient as the waning moon I am becoming a seer

 Lost to the sound of pages falling

A Woman Smokes

Breathable, the humid lair of a home
Lived to all disrepute, a lowly forecast of pleasures
Looms like a rain cloud casting away all sense of looking
Into the horizon flat against the first light of summer
The sun at its height, awake with pride, full, glorified
The rays of strong herbs and the motherly wisdom
From the ground seething with the fuming passion
Like humanity in heat, as the fearful wade
In the tremors of a stolen partnership, that custody
Earth as a friend, independent and unique from the rest
Whose eyes open at the great dreaming, ceremonial taste
The question of a wise aftermath, retrospect praise
Feeling outward into the mess of a heart's implosion
In the force of worldly gravity, the string of being
Weighed by the test of a body grasping in the high
Sanctified air, the globular and nebulous atmosphere
The druggist, who smiles from an air unique to the novel
Space in which a man and a woman smoke so calmly

The Ancestral Presence

Space is invaluable. Its measurement is the definition of possession. Trade. Stuff. And vision. A double-sided mirror. Through which an otherworldly trust emerges.

The fold of a gambler caught. In the madness of unlimited passion. For a future that had been known. The brilliance of the imagination come alive. To the unfathomable test. The core of a listening. A right. Fame. Aroma. Texture.

The senses merged. And erased from the light. Untainted by the tragic. Beautiful hostess of the land. Who breathes through the trees. Whose rivers, streams, creeks, brooks, rivulets, ponds, lakes and estuaries and rains are the unspoken wings of time.

A grace that falls with the blood of a sacrificed mage. The temptress engraved by the masculine stress of age. Flattening the face of her nightly calls. The howling passages inflamed by a cavernous yawn of meaning. Of spirit. Of reason.

The right and left brains run through with a cannibalistic spirit. Gorging the pig stomach distended and flexed. To consume the raw meat of ancestral presence.

Dying again. To die.

The Chair Where I Sat

Standing, the chair where I sat is fixed
On the edge of the carpeted floor
An orange peel is splayed and dying
Beside the back left foot
And the plastic casts a shadow
The shadow is real, and so is the sound
A car passing on the wish of a street
The downtown corridor enlivened
And hollow. The dead end of summer
Weekend drowned in cold fear
The hot lusting trespasses of a lyricist
Blooming over the empty fields
Golden under a cloudless cerulean tint
On the margins of a city, the placid
Lakeside retreat, buildings shaved
And denuded to splintering wood
And whispering knolls. And there I sat
A plastic corner where I vacate
The final substance of mind
To allow my body as one whole
Being to transcend the other with pleasure
As the unfortunate, useful homelessness
A brusque creativity, the skill, talent
And then, breakfast. All that a man brings
To the table, on such a fine day as any
To take often and give back nothing
Only the note, the symbol of global greed
I am drugged. An addict, Westernized
So much misdirection in flight

On Rootlessness

He was a bisexual Jew
A communist intellectual
The kind who revolts
At the slightest inkling of fate
And jeers often at the smoke light
Falling over the edge of the sky
That wide-brimmed hat
That shades even the longest nose

Who is the manikin of flesh and dream?
A savage glory buttressed by bald stone
And the glittering façade of youth fading
I who am stoned and bathe in sunlight
And ambiance, the sound of pure heart

Nerves wrangled over the white-knuckled
Grip lost secondarily over the sea walk
Railway where I walk beneath bridges
And sight the coruscant bay blazing
Like the Salish cedar at midday alone
Tracing the mind with impressive drink
Lazy cloud-passing visions of the fleeting
Beauties, the chests and limbs uncut
Trunks swinging a threatening breeze
A quiet tempest boiling with smoke-
Screen wisdom, the psychoactive high
Splendor, the drummed up awake eyes
Looking above to see a sculpted leaf
Ashen,

rootless

Cosmic Burst Blooms

What is this low, immoveable state?
Depressed? The technical knockout
After so many rounds of alcohol
Opiates, and now THC, should I
Self-medicate? This struggling horde
Of zoos, the blind bat swung through
The toothless grin of the addict
Gorging on a fix, of place and time
All the years veering off into distance
The faintest pulse, is that my heart?
Still beating for who? In this city
Of drowned, asphyxiated beings
The mad deluge breaking out
Beyond the cool ocean mind of a seer
The spirit of an exile's wandering
Banished horror, the rust building
At the seams of a sick, cold flesh
My eyes bulge on hearing a story
The one of my life, give to guilty pleasure
Swimming pools, internet photography
And popular music, where am I?
No more, and become raw with need
For another body beyond the plague
This street, these walls, where?
Our skin guides us from silence
To know the answers to a mystery
Greater than we have felt behind
The Rocky peaks. We are breathless
Stoned with wonder in the air
How empty it all looks, yet teeming
With chemical potency, hormonal
Jungles of love rushing through
Our infinitely layered mentality

Cosmic Burst Blooms II

The lush gorgeous awakening
To being as I relate to her, my only
One in the faceless crowd
Of monogamy and bank accounts
The identities we carry that bind
And gag each and every wish
That emerges from our naked heart
So wanting to say the perfect phrase
To sentence the ambiguity to night
Eternal before the cosmic burst blooms
again

From First To Last

From first to last, the greatness of the day goes cold
Before the prominence of a star, I burn
In the invisible watery Earth of air and cloud
The billowing atmosphere like a sail tight
And necessary. The only guide of life
In this mystic desert of wonder and ignorance

So we look out and catch an eye
See the chest and face of a lover
Taunting above the cool tranquility of a sky
Blue pool motioning lightly in the wellspring
In the bird-flown air, as I meander
A mind full of history, curious enough
To stare at the trails of blood that have issued
From snake to snake, whether in this garden
Of illusion, or in the ripened figments
Of a Big Apple stolen past the frayed horizon
Tugged and coiling on the quay
As we load and unload the busy tank port
Soldiers of a bygone future wasted
In the presence of the all-consuming
City rat, whose flat mind occasionally bubbles
At the hand of psychotropic experimentation
And visions imbued in the aquamarine azure
The cerulean cobalt fixture of heaven
Over the dancing ground not stirred
Under the feet of such glorious
 human
 beautiful thirst

Us Separate

There's a wild hollow gasp I hear
Breaking out through the face of a cloud
And in the ineffable utterance I can nearly make out a word:

BREATHE!

Is it saying? I pitch my head forward
Uncomfortably bending my brain to listen
To the movements of moisture that make the air appear
And bring visible nothingness down to these sights
What do I see?

“No,” I think it says:
BE

It loves what is simple. And so can love.

Then I poke my head up toward the heady daze
Light above, and sing, “AH”

How unable to sing am I who breathes in this silence
A way to be, the only finding of a life breaking at the seams
Pulled forth, through, riddling like water in stone
And magnified a thousand times, blind
In a blank colorless world of voids, the angry crow squawks
Territorially immersed in an aural vibration
The eternally beached mind housed by walls and paint
Meanders like a word in a life sentence of doubt
Denial, and dreams, this impersonal tragedy of me
Of modern life, and wasting away my limbs
Now I see out of clouded eyes, to the faceless
Inebriation of a gaunt husband cloaked in smiles
And wading in the sewage of a thousand years
Gone cold in the stagnant pool of late youth falling
Away into the separate parts of us

