

PICTURES FROM CATHEDRAL PEAK

Selected Poems

DAVID PAUL BOAZ
(DECHEN WANGDU)



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**For Kathleen Denzel Boaz
and
Denzel Deloris Massey**

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What Does it Matter What Poetry Is?

What does it matter what poetry is, after all? All that matters is the eternal movement behind it.

—Dylan Thomas

What is this movement that matters? How may the poem reveal it? Enjoy it? Praise it?

Energy (*prana, lung, ch'i, spiritus, pneuma*) arises from its basal source as light or motion, a flux of continuous change. This ground or basis of motion is changeless Reality Itself. It has many names. None can describe it. It is simply primordial awareness, Consciousness Being Itself, the very sourceground of the eternal mystery of all that is.

So energy arises as light, motion, change, matter, life, mind, breath, voice. This great mystery cannot be grasped by the mind. It is profound. It utterly transcends yet embraces the understanding. Thus, the understanding may touch it. As the great tradition of humanity's Primordial Wisdom Tradition attests, that Being Itself may be experienced directly as it is, prior to thought—concept and belief—by the feeling-emotional nature, at the Heart.

From such a ground the poem arises, with the mind, upon the breath, through the voice, witness to that primordial presence that all that is, arising as our relative spacetime realities, given each moment, each breath, from this primeval source of the great memory of our kind.

The heart of the soul is where the inner world and the outer world come to meet. At this boundary, it is present at every point.

—Novalis

Of this great mystery, the arising of light/energy/motion from its supreme source, there arises the Three Mysteries of the existence of Body, Voice and Mind. Voice is AH, the poem arising upon the breath-energy of the mind of the basal primordial awareness itself. Spirit-energy as voice links all beings together. Voice—*vox, vak, vani*—is Sarasvati, goddess mother, wife of Brahma the Creator, mirror and witness to all that arises in this

Interbeing that is Dōgen's Being-Time. Voice is the Hermetic/Orphic/Vedic/Hebrew song of God, divine voice, *Corpus Hermeticum*, OM our body together, animated by breath of all beings in this numinous participation in nondual godhead. This voice sings of the Orphic transcendence of the dualities of the Apollonian and the Dionysian, of being and becoming, of all binaries in their luminous sourceground—*cittadhatu*, Tao—atavistic presence at the Heart (*HUM*). OM AH HUM. "Like that it is."

For Nora Chadwick:

Everywhere the gift of poetry is inseparable from divine inspiration. Everywhere this inspiration carries with it knowledge... uttered in poetry which is accompanied by music... music is everywhere the medium of communication with spirit.

As form, our body arises from this perfectly subjective Spirit—*apeiron*, Tao, *shunyata* (emptiness)—Orphic voice as music/poetry reveals the truth of the mysteries: All things participate in That. We are not separate from That. Tat Tvam Ami, That, I Am!

And if that of the earth betrays you, say to the still earth: I flow. To the rushing water speak: I am.

—Rilke

For Sakyapa scholar-master Buton:

*The voice of the Buddha arises,
being called forth by the mind
of all living beings.*

Voice is mantra, breath of all-embracing Spirit descending and ascending throughout this great *cosmic* mandala, circulation of the light that holds us together in it. Voice is the instant self-liberating *Ah!* of experience. Voice is the shaman-poet-singer dwelling in mythtime at the root of attention, just prior to the world, in naked awareness, sings:

*Everything is alive!
The trees, grasses, wind dancing,
guides me. I understand
the songs of the birds!*

Voice is wind, breath of many voices deep within us. Listen to this wind through the silence as it carries us across the deep night.

In the Tibetan Buddhist *Shambhala* teachings the essential energy that gives rise to these mysteries of Body, Voice and Mind is *Lungta*, the Windhorse. *Lung* (wind/*prana*/energy) may be harnessed and ridden (*ta*/horse) via the wisdom teachings (*sutras* and *tantras*). Thus is the wild horse of the mind tamed. And the result/fruition is *drasbu*, the realization of the numinous outshining prior unity of the apparent dualism of this continuum of arising energy forms. "Form is emptiness, emptiness is form." Upon this breath the voice of the poem arises.

At its heart, the poem, like the many truths appearing through it, is transparent allowing us "to see and keep what the understanding touches intact—as grapes are round and come in bunches" (William Carlos Williams). Thus the poem arises through the still bright mirror of mind, reflecting appearances, witness to the supreme source, abiding always at the heart, prior to the perennial drama of Narcissus, the egoic self-contraction, causal knot that is our thought and physical form. Here, the life in the poem reveals who we are. *Tat Tvam Asi*, That Thou Art. The poem lives us. "One no longer dreams, one is dreamed" (Henri Michaux).

Because the poem springs from the very sourceground that is Being Itself in whom life arises, and because it is given, received and then given again upon the very breath-energy of this Being, it must be life affirming.

*Poetry can do a hundred things... but there is only
one thing that all poetry must do; it must praise all it
can for being and for happening.*

—W.H. Auden

The poem reconstitutes the naked immediacy of that "eternal movement" of energy given to sensation, perception and cognition into "news," or pictures, a way of seeing, little truths earthed or anchored in feeling. "Only the heart endures." The natural, innate intelligence of the poem, its form, its grace, its internal gravity exists in relation or tension with the naked image or idea of the thing directly perceived, *samadhi* of the *ding an sich*, the pristine, untainted neumenal thing-in-itself. This priority of image and idea, subject and object, *noumenon* and *phenomenon* is the *relationship* of the poem. Ultimately, it is the dualism of this very relationship that we transcend on the transcendental breeze that is the breath of the poem. The poem points to or intends the great Source, yet this source is not transcendent, but abides at the Heart as the always already present now of every arising form. Thus the poem itself cannot transcend everyday reality, and avoids transcendental logocentric absolutes (God). But it can illuminate the beauty of the natural things—ordinary mind—that is everyday reality. "Leave it as it is and rest your weary mind. All things are perfect exactly as they are" (Shakumuni, the Buddha).

The trouble with most poetry is that it is either subjective or objective.

—Basho

The poem prefers the naked natural image or idea of that perceived, to the abstract concept, ideal or sentiment of it. Abstraction betrays the natural direct image or idea.

Arising, musically, the diaphanous idea itself, the flower missing form all bouquets... To name the object is to delete three-quarters of the enjoyment of the poem... to suggest, to evoke, this is what charms the imagination... the poem is a mystery through which the reader finds his own way.

—Mallarmè

"My understanding has nothing to do with your understanding, (Hakuin Zenji).

For Wordsworth, the movement of this primordial energy through nature's forms "were all like workings of one mind, the features of the same face, blossoms upon one tree..." For Baudelaire, "nature is a temple where living pillars let secret words escape..." For Blake, "Energy is Eternal Delight."

Because the poem is given to be given again, "a poem on a page is only half a poem." To get the poem off the page it must be voiced, by the poet, or by the reader.

"Each poem is a performance as well as a script, the performance being both a realization and a criticism of the text."

—James Scully

The poem in this relation requires an opening to receive what is directly given, before it can be given again in the poem. This opening is prior to expression. This opening is a choice. Grasping, clinging and cognitive or spiritual seeking are not the poem. *Poesis* is process, not substance; receptive, not creative; nondual primordial wisdom (*gnosis, jnana*), not mere dualistic knowledge; openness, not activity; path, not goal. Thus the poem arises as we open, just for a moment to receive, surrender (*wu wei, pistis/faith*) and relax into the presence (*vidya*) of that always present, this primordial awareness ground that is our own original face. Here the poem is purely transparent, luminous and bright beyond the dualism—the binaries of relationship, of subject and object, you and me, spirit and matter. This post-transcendental, postmetaphysical understanding was told by Soto Zen Patriarch Dōgen 800 years ago:

*Midnight. No waves
no wind. The empty boat
flooded with moonlight.*

—Dōgen Zenji

Thus the poem is Nemerov's "Protean Encounter", our coming to meet with the shape-shifting formless form of the eternal truths arising from transconceptual, nondual Spirit Itself. It is our primordial awareness wisdom that recognizes this wisdom

presence—by whatever name— deep within each human Heart. All this, without excluding past and future, in the timeless now, through these little pictures that are the poem. These truths transmitted through the poem may be viewed as "what oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed." (Pope). The truth of the poem is, for Keats, a remembrance "of one's own highest thoughts."

The work of art has always been to demonstrate and celebrate the interconnectedness: not to make everything "one" but to make the "many" authentic, to help illuminate it all."

—Gary Snyder

Although the world's religions derive from sacred poetry, the poem itself cannot be conventionally or exoterically religious, and offers no consoling message or doctrinaire idea or image of the divine to which we may cling. Such a feelgood poem may serve as an appealing or inspiring sentiment, but cannot transmit the nondual, transconceptual ego-self-transcending truth that is our heart's desire. Yet, it is the esoteric/mystical tradition of the world's religions—religion as *religio*, yoga, union of spirit and matter—that provides the Orphic ideal of sacred, participatory self-transcending art that is the very essence of the poem itself.

It is the privilege of poetry to preserve us from mistaking our notions either for things or for ourselves. Poetry is the completest mode of utterance.

—I.A. Richards

Indeed, such art offers a brief antidote to those two great ego-ethnocentric evils of the modern/postmodern age: the separative violent dualism of religious provincialism, and life-denying, spirit-denying massmind Scientific Materialism (Scientism).

The greatest poetry sings always, at the end, of transcendence; while seeing clearly and saying plainly the wickedness and terror and beauty of the world, it is at the same time humming to itself, so that one overhears rather than hears: All will be well.

—Howard Nemerov

Yet, in order to suggest this ultimate truth of the ontic prior perfection of arising spacetime reality, poetry must also speak to the *relative truth* of the subtle impermanence of all things of the world, and to the fearful, destructive denial of this, the denial of our own death.

For Soto Zen Patriarch Dōgen Zenji, light energy motion is but an eternal continuum of the moment to moment arising, abiding and passing away—the change—that is being in time.

“Being is time.” For our Great Wisdom Tradition then, being in the world is this temporal continuum of impermanent finite phenomenal reality arising from its infinite, changeless primordial awareness matrix base, our “supreme source”—by whatever name,—that is infinite Being Itself. And arising herein is our diaphanous impermanence that is the very essence of life and therefore of the Beautiful; is the soul of art, and of the poem itself. Thus does the poem reveal and celebrate this unborn, deathless luminous nature of mind, in the brightest and simplest of ways.

There are many ways of conceiving the poem. The history of criticism is full of them. Novalis speaks of the two stages of the self-expression of the poem: “The first stage is introspection; exclusive contemplation of the self. The second stage must be authentic observation outward, spontaneous sober observation of the external world.” These two stages or aspects of the poem are the two faces of self-transcendence: self-observation, inward and upward (meditation/*dhyana*, *zazen*, *gom*), and compassionate ethical conduct, downward and outward (*zenkan*, *gsal rig*, *jyodba*), into the everyday lifeworld of sentient beings. The first stage is inward, non-conceptual contemplation and meditation upon the primordial wisdom presence—by whatever name—that is our actual identity. The second stage is bringing the “heaven” of this

divine nature, into the "earth" of everyday lifeworld compassionate thought, speech and action; realizing and demonstrating the presence of our divine nature while "hewing wood and carrying water." And doing poetry. "What you are is what you have been; what you will be is what you do now" (Shakyamuni Buddha).

In due course, in the poem and in the individual, Narcissus, the self-limiting ego-I, and the selfless *mahatman* that is our actual noself are known to be identical, which was their essential nature from the very beginning. This is the nondual view. "Seeing into one's self-nature is seeing into emptiness (*shunyata*)" (Hui-Neng). "Without past, present, future; empty awake mind" (Mipham Rinpoche).

Initially, the first stage is narcissistic. We are absorbed in ourselves, desiring, seeking something, reduced and seduced by our addictions to the material mass culture comfort zones of "not hearing" and "not seeing." When the poem arises at, or matures into the nondual merging of the first and second stages, the egoic self cannot understand it. Here we long for the intense, the dramatic, the romantic, the beautiful, the conceptual or the ideal. We long for the comfortable but separate self-stimulating "I" of the poem. Egoic touchstone. Here the poem urges us to leave the house and enter in its numinous, transcendent brightness, beyond the trappings of our human sentimental and conceptual *impedimenta*. Here the poem mirrors its bright source behind or ontically prior to the reflected shadowy movement of its objects. Here, knowing subject and object known are not independent. Are not separate. Through the poem, just for a moment, we can be the mirror! Too often we stay in the house.

*The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling, doth glance
from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven.*

—Wm. Shakespeare

When Rilke understood that his poems lacked the authentic, transcendent "seeing" (*satori, zenkan*) of the images of the objects of the external world, he began his "seeing poems," and lost

much of his following. But the images and poems became transparent, and revealed little pith pictures of their bright source.

In the initial narcissism of the first stage, the poem often omits the object, or the image of the object altogether; or the direct "thing in itself" is lost midway to the intuitive, introspective "I."

*If the senses are called upon only to embody intuition
about ourselves, they die. They don't want to be
slaves of our intuition.*

—Robert Bly

*I should be content to look at a mountain for what it
is, and not a comment on my life.*

—David Ignatow

Thus the "I poem" gives us "news" of the primordial voice of the mind as intuited by the fearful, grasping compensatory egoic structures of the personality-self. The I poem grounds itself in the realm of Narcissus, the ego-I, which is old news insofar as the ego, by definition, has separated itself from the supreme source of the mind—by whatever name— through which it arises. The I poem often reveals this aesthetic ego, the antithesis of participatory self-transcending art. Such art is all too rare.

The human realm is truly interesting only as a part, a participation or an outpicturing of natural things, that profound and ultimate mystery of nature, that luminous empty silence through which nature's appearances arise. The subtle, emotive spontaneous context of the poem itself must intend That (*Tat/Sat*).

*Only that which does not teach, which does not cry
out, which does not persuade, which does not conde-
scend, which does not explain, is irresistible.*

—W.B. Yeats.

Such a poem, in contrast to the I poem, is a "mind poem" in that it does not derive from the fear and desire of Narcissus, the ego-I. It does not seek to teach, persuade, enhance or dramatize. It seeks nothing at all. Rather, the mind poem reveals and transmits news of the primordial source of the mind, little pictures of

the great mystery of the essence of the luminous nature of mind that is ontologically interdependent Being Itself (Interbeing) in which or in whom this all arises. The mind poem intends and is grounded in, and facilitates our participation, recognition then realization of *That*. Why? Because that is our actual identity. *That* is who we are.

*Everything is already accomplished. The nature of
mind is Buddha from the beginning.*

—Garab Dorje

If all nature, everything, is Buddha from the beginning, then the poem is ordinary, "nothing special" (*wu shin*). "The ideas of a poet should be noble and simple" (Tu Fu).

This apparent self that is Narcissus does not live in reality. It dwells in its self-created mythology, the skeptical and alienated *mythos* of the commodified materialist massmind. While the dualistic intelligence of Narcissus identifies and defends the limits of its habitual perceptual, conceptual and belief systems, the mind poem provides an antidote: the "beginners mind" (*shoshin*) the momentary "bracketing" (*epoché*) or placing in abeyance of our constitutive cognitive operations upon reality, such that we may open to receive what reality gives directly, prior to the filtering of it through the atavistic logical and conceptual elaborations and operations of the linear, bivalent, bipolar perceptual and conceptual cognitive structures from which our dualistic languages are derived. "Who are you between two thoughts?" Who is it that shines through the mind and abides at the heart of all beings, forever liberated and fully awake? The mind poem intends *That*.

The mind poem then, may transcend the ego-I, its destructive denial of death, and even the mind itself, referring or pointing back to that presence which is always present (*vidya*), witness to that luminous matrix/base of the mind itself. Here egoic existence and the very essence or nature of mind are a prior unity. And now, at last we can see it, and know it, and be it beyond any doubt. The mind poem intends *That*.

The mind poem may be a poem of images of things, or a poem of ideas, objective or subjective, but it always refers to or intends or notices in some small way, directly, beyond sentiment, concept or belief, through natural things the great mystery that is given nakedly and directly to the mind through the senses and the Heart. This inherent intentionality of the poem does not require or presuppose any epistemology or ontology, or any conceptual structure, elaboration or dilemma whatsoever. It is simply the transconceptual, pristine, direct and subtle witnessing or praising of the self-liberated movement/ energy of this great mystery that is the interdependent, unseparate bright source of mind, precisely at the instant of its arising, and nothing more. It is merely *That*, that is to be experienced and realized through the poem itself.



Pictures From Cathedral Peak is a selection of little pictures of that great mystery; little mind poems, and didactic I poems, arising upon the voice of the mind, bright mirror of *That* which abides just prior, *That* which transcends yet embraces it, deep in the silence in whom everything arises.

Cathedral Peak is a great granite spire arising from the California High Sierra, just across the trail from Cathedral Lake—a magical, pristine alpine lake—two day's hike or ski from Yosemite Valley. Cathedral Peak is a place in the mind where this presence of the primordial source of the mind is strong and bright.

for Gaia

my dearest madam
with your whiterose breasts
almond eyes afire

here's a belated but earnest plea
to free your lovers and your poets
from airy whores of ideality

to work with power and light
polemic streets and brothels
of clamorous reality

Narrow is the Gate
(at Hanakapei Beach)

I'll come here and build a hut
just upstream below the falls
alone for a few months.

In sun and cool moon fog
sit in warm pool and think
of perfectly nothing

Naked shining in the light
sing and dance
perchance to die here.

Chaos of joy
now sleep in orchids and ginger
with only the whispering water.

Grace

(at *Puuhonua O Honaunau*
Place of Refuge, Hawaii)

Day ends in fine misty rain.
Descended from new mountains
it deepens fluent black
lava fingers meeting
endless salty waves.

Listen.
Great spirits move now
in ancient earth.

Here wise men and murderers
were lifted up together
just for a moment
free to move.

Now we
glad rosy waves
warm rain on our faces
receive this peace.

New warriors for earth arise
arise to meet this
fearful night.

Vidya Maya

Early in the morning
in predawn darkness we sit
together enchanted
in the silence.

In spring we rise up
brew strong tea. Warm Kona winds
portend the storm.
Misty rainglow upon our hut.

In summer the sky is nearly black
inviolable abyss palpable.
Wind-driven rain drenches the island.
Fire in the stove a crucible.

By twilight a watery deluge
has engulfed the world.
Our fire rises up
the roof nearly gone.

In winter all that is
a fiery maelstrom.
All that we are
surrendered to the storm.

Now at dawn burnt ashes.
Bright moon sets over silvery sea.
As light fills the world
we sit together
enchanted in the silence.

Returning

Returning late
from Hanalua Bay.
I see you
sleeping in tropical heat
wet and bright
in soft moonlight.

I should sit alone
tonight with that moon
but press my face
to your sweet belly.

You awake gently
urge me inside
again to earth.

Cogito
(the bridge)

To know “the love which moves
the sun and stars.”

—Dante Alighieri

i

Hanalua Bay
beneath feathery Ironwoods
pulsing white clouds
that old blue dream
of tropical sky

Sun and earth
and endless salty waves
whorls and eddies in
eternal wind all celebrate

Infinite mass
to the light
and its darkness
silent creator
and destroyer of worlds

Celebrate our light ascending
through warm rain
descending upon
this luscious form
singular body of god

Through thought
this form intends that one
prior and perfect ground
filigree of airy garments
skyblue body of god

Joy and hurt
through this form is love
time-threaded heartstrings
binding the worlds
great heart of the body of god

Hanalua Bay
tonight a little beach fire
crucible of earth
so sweet the woodsmoke

Te Ra Cruciform

(Ke Kau O na Kea, Ki'i O akua
Cross of Lono, presence of God)

From Haleakala summit
beyond ancient red cinder cones
across the Alenuihaha Channel
horizon Mauna Kea vertical

thrust up from womb of Uri-Isis
great phallus of Yahweh-Ra-Kane
praised by Cetaceans and wisemen
and known to the Sun.

Perfect Mauna Kea in cold wind.
Tropical snow touches deep blue sky.
Earth meets heaven
a cross in the mandala.

Pele
(at Halemaumau)

Steamy sulfury moonscape
takes my breath
becomes soft wind
rattling bamboo
in cool rainforest
above the falls
where she waits
in orchids and ginger
I am now.

Just before dawn
we sit alone in the bath
in a gentle rain.
The Night Blooming Jasmine
perfumes the warm air.
My little cats are asleep.
There is no sound but soft rain.
Remember the night
we loved in such joy
that we couldn't stop crying?

For People

Ah People!
Big brains
big hearts
small minds
weak backs

We will not
be happy
And like cats
we don't last

nor do avatars
nor planets
nor even stars
if you think
about it

Yet we are
this light

rainbow bridge
(for Alan Watts)

from love's sorrow
joy harmony
confusion escape

utterly through being
that given now
swaddled in moonlight

paradox of peace
clear brightness
of our laughter

earth spirit
(after Navajo prayer)

I am
spirit in earth
all
in beauty

earth
my legs in earth
all in beauty

earth
my heart in earth
all in beauty

rainbow earth
my mind

now my voice
in wind and light

all in beauty
all in light

Only Hit
(for Roshi)

Attention!
Gird up your loins.
We're off to see
untainted rose of truth.

Fear, unbidden
not unwelcome
is the rub
polishes the tile
this perfect dance.

"All that can be
shaken shall be shaken."
Bright world opening
only shines
all the way
to the end of it.

MU!

surrendered utterly
prior unity that rose
that all that is
not this bright face
in quiet moonlight

Who is it?

Who is it that desires to know
and to be happy?
Who is it that is afraid and angry?
Who is it that is born suffers and dies?
Who is it that shines through the mind
and abides at the heart of all beings
always liberated and fully awake?

the bright

sunface Buddha
moonface Buddha
everyone Buddha
everything Buddha
one face
all buddha yes
so beautiful

Ox Tail

Tat tvam ami
that I am
zennier than thou
as categories harden
stonier than stone
Maui Merriott Buddha
cannot hear
Joshu's dog clapping
mu thru the silence
Just so
have a beer

ten thousand waves
(for Suzuki Roshi)

sit in the bath
think about time

sakura sakura
sweet koto memory

the more I think
the sadder I get

shoshaku jushaku
shin ku myo u

night rain cool
upon my head

Tao

(after Lao Tsu, *Tao Te Ching*, Chapter XXV)

There is that being itself
Prior to heaven and earth.
In stillness it abides.
Ever changeless it is also becoming.
It is Mother of forms rising.
It can have no name.
We may call it God
But it is only Tao.

Tao continues to infinity
But is always here.
In a circle all follow this way.
We follow earth
Who follows heaven
Who follows Tao
That only being
That we always are.

Identity

“...and we enter into relation with the light of the gods.”
—Ta Chuan, *I Ching*

now
we are
bright waves
flowing like the river
through abundant forest
coming to meet
by the lake
delivered
in gentle wind
at peace
at the still mountain
in the good earth
in the crucible of the sun
in infinite sky
in that great love
we are now

The Secret

(for Ari)

A month before you died
while reading Lewis Carroll together
you asked, "What is the true secret?"
Not knowing I replied "It lies beyond
our thoughts about it."
You said "I heard it once
and I know what it is but
I'm not supposed to tell."

the river

from deep sleep
night river rises
streams *fantasque*
throughout the dream
infolded bright
cascade I flow
carried away arise
again forever
awake.

Is It Just Me
Or Is It Hot in Here?

In the beginning
was probably some cool dark
stochastic little photon
of ineffable awareness
in deep silent night.

Sloughed off from god
knows what and for perhaps
no purpose at all one
of the first monads is.

The old Vedas Genesis
and postmodern metaphysics agree
the resulting flash and bang
took until just now to get here.

That's why reality
moves so fast and every
thing seems to die.
A fiery flux chaos
is an orderly situation.

Bright Spring morning.
In the wasteland birds sing.
And here are wildflowers
And frantic people to love.

Crucible

“We are a sun and a moon
and a heaven filled with stars”
—Paracelsus

this light
in the sun
is life
in a cell

is
fiery galaxies
burning
at 3° kelvin

stellar alchemy
utterly empty
burns brightly
as trees and stars

is
this light
we are now

Order

“Certain bounds hold against chaos.”
—Robert Duncan

Thermodynamically speaking
time is running out
will consume us all
everything utterly devoured.

Order to chaos
entropy of reality
nihilistic protocols
postmodern metaphysics.

In whom
does this time arise?

Before Genesis

Before genesis was great peace.
But now what'll we do?
In a jiffy, an archetypal Cetacean
(from a parallel universe) advises:
"Contemplate the quantum
emptiness of all That is. Be this
dizzy spinning fugue rising
recursive crescendo cascade
ex nihilo. Be
the fiery pulse of it.
All that is
after all only us
diaphanous body arising
playing in light
of the eye of the beholder."

no matter

“...say to the still earth: I flow.
To the rushing water speak: I am.”
—Rilke

fractured symmetries
broken promises
the quantum dice
are thrown
objectivity & causality
are kaput

yet arising
the things
in this light

it takes two
to tango
but the crux
of the matter
is the singular spin
of the software
of mind
ruddy bright waves
encoding awareness
of the paradox of light
in the particle
of the form
of the implicate order
of the whole

that one
lives us
no matter at all

Hello and Goodbye

Lying here naked
shining in the great love
deep inside were scared as hell.

Sweet scent our body
together our breath
already consumed
by grace we have it at all.

Masters say
surrender each thing
the moment good or bad
let it be.

Some sunny day we'll give it up
sacrifice our effort
choose to be goodbye
and hello all the time.

Plucking the Fruit

“Tu souleveras le Rideau
Et maintenant voila que s’ouvre la fenetre”
—Apollinaire

“The window opens like an orange
lovely fruit of light”
streams like breath
through this aperture
to perfect the luscious form.

O lift the veil and taste and touch
each touch afire
each orb a sun
each sun an opening
like an orange
lovely fruit of light.

headpiece

light a light
to heads of state
to headshrinks
to head hunters
to head trippers
to dickheads

yes heads everywhere
mirror Eliot's headpiece
filled with straw

cerebral gleaners reap
dark images of perfection
never enough

so wise up
and get rational

light a light
at the crown
of the head

and the whole body
shall be full of light

Gone Beyond

Twenty years ago she said
“You have the heart of a yogi
the mind of a philosopher.
I hope you get it right.”
Incommensurable paradigms?

Now she's gone. My horses
gone. My youth gone.
Most of my self gone
gone beyond. Yet
this impetuous brightness.

flow

I cannot hold you beloved
for even now you're gone
gently in weeping rain
somewhere to remember again

Lama Walks with Loma
(for Rinpoche)

Cold rainy morning sit
before this wise old face
a thousand suns
bright is my face
all enfolded
perfect space

Tonight lotus moon sit
in snowy wind
weep for hours
all unfolds
outshines glad
Mantra I am now

the circle

endless circle our breath
days seasons kalpas
arising ceasing here
this blue eyed little lupine

the touch
(for Carol)

through this
we arise
from the dream

I am you
luminous bodies
yabyum dance

descend
on our breath

bright river
arrive forever
at the heart

Being Here

In the end the beginning.
Alpha omega each breath.
In May bright roses rise
from deep silent night
many voices here
among the stars

In October wistful roses wither
fall with autumn leaves
return to empty silent night.
These colors here
all the light that
moves the worlds

we are
rosy salty waves
so bright
luminous ones
consume the night

great love
that binds the worlds
lifts and heals
we are this light

Sky Dancer
(for Gabriela)

In this lovely rosette of the mind
we dance in the delicate clouds.
Can we be this presence
that space of sky
in the bloom of our splendid earth?

Good Company

Wesak moon tonight
condone our gentle
self-congratulations.

This sad face put on
Narcissus folly
heart failure
to be.

Charcot once spoke
to young Freud
“See the data
again and again
until they themselves
begin to speak.”

Said Jesus
“The rest shall be
added unto you.”

And long before
“Wonder of wonders
all beings are Buddha.”

Remembering again
we laughed and cried
for we knew
we had forgotten.

Roots
(for Kathy)

“The joy we share as we tarry there”
arises this alchemy of light
upon dry red dirt at dusk
on the 7th day outside Jackson.

Kathy and me, with the old folks
and pea pickers sing “I Am His Own.”
This our body risen in light
walks with me then and again
through the valley
at the bright water
at dawn.

When We Dream

When you laugh in your sleep
I hear seed syllable
old mantram AH HA!

When we sang OH AM HA!
Arising on paleographic wings
from deepest silent night

When ego and eros
were just this breath
arisen from primeval sleep

Now when we dream
and laugh out loud

Back Country

The water is cold
mirrors sun and moon.
In these new mountains
live wise old spirits.
They speak
through wind in the pines
if you listen.
The white clouds
and little flowers
will keep you safe

My Blue Heaven

Long Summer's night
at Cathedral Peak.
The day's trials past.

My last log dims
falling falling sleep.

Ho! Sudden crack!
Hot sparks upon my feet!

Ha! Awake!
Yogic fire up the middle
wondrous leap of worlds.
Good boy!

O treachery pride.
Give up that
and that
all the way
to the end of it.

Nocturne

Bright moon on Bear Creek Spire.
Late October snow covers my tent.
The wind blowing down from Morgan Pass
is cold. Smells clean like winter.

Next month the lakes will freeze.
Then I'll ski the bowls above Dade Lake.
Tonight this presence is strong
and bright in my heart.

The Teaching

Autumn snow on Cathedral Peak.
But I miss gigantic sweet cherries
we ate last summer.

My fire is warm.
Then the ashes.
There is nothing at all
that I know.

These old mountains.
Listen. Wind and water
rive primeval granite.

There is nothing at all
that I am. Now wet
new snow upon my face.

Abundance

Cold October dawn.
Alpenglo on Cathedral Peak.
Three day's rations
now in the bellies
of an old sow
and her cub.
My breakfast
water and chocolate bars.
We laugh together
in abundant earth.
In whom does this all arise?

Autumn Wind

October again.
Smell it in the wind?
Thin mountain air
makes me see stars.
Icy water numbs my hands.
My hut flooded with Autumn sun.

Evening alpenglow
on Bear Creek Spire
and new snow.
Early winter in the
high meadows.
Deer and bear prepare.

For a billion Autumns
these great mountains
arise and fall in this
eternal wind
breath of one
who holds this all
gently in the hands.

Christmas Eve Blizzard

(for Linda)

Two days whiteout
near Mammoth Pass.
White wind
High Sierra sings
“Cast out our sin
and enter in”
this old carol rings
a touchstone.

God is metaphor
yes is love
light of the world
breath of many voices
deep within us
speak and enter in
now when we listen
to the wind.

New Snow

(after Osarqaq, Inuit poet)

Wondrous to see
these old mountains
fill with new snow.

Great Earth infinity.
Her seasons
lift me upward
fill me with joy.

These old mountains.
The pure whiteness.
Wondrous to be.
Yai ya yaia!

Denali

Pale old winter sun
over Denali.
Soft redgold shades
early evening alpenglo.
The white wind is still.

From a great height
bears and wolves
rule this earth.
Aperture.
Just for a moment
perfect peace.

An Old Hunter
(for Dersu Uzala)

Sun and Moon are powerful men.
If one of them dies
all beings will die.

Wind and water and fire
are old men and powerful too.
In fire the forest is reborn.
Wind and water give us life.

In my fire tonight I see long ago
my home and garden in spring
all in blossoms and light.

Now I am old
and my wife is gone.
But we will meet again.

Winter is here.
Soon I will be
buried in new snow.

whiteout

cathedral peak
white days alone
and cold black nights

thin air
mind at the margin

now
I am that
pure white

I am
here
at dawn
all the color
in the light
that fills the world

Generation

Ancient Thule people
traveled 3000 Arctic miles
in supple skin boats
still hunt whales in icy seas
sing in smoky twilight
about love beneath this
pale old sun
who never sets

Climax
(for Lou Welch)

Ancient granite
primeval ice
eternal wind
do you know
vast boreal forests
as they rise and fall
in your infinite seasons?

As To Polo

500 years before Jesus
Cyrus and young Darius
used our human heads
less brain case contents
as polo balls.

One wonders how
given that obliquity
peculiar to our Homo skull
one would ever hit
the bloody thing straight!

No Matter At All

One snow-flurried night
in Lone Pine
I stopped by a sleepy
cattle truck to talk
with a beefy Hereford.

Felling guilty
I said "I'm sorry pal."
His eyes blazed
electric blue
and spoke

"No matter
we are food together
all consumed
no matter at all."

guru

from time to time
these precious old beings
blow your mind
utterly demolish all
reasonable strategies
who you are gone
threadbare reticulum sit
by grace if you're lucky
bright mirror that you
from time to time

Many Voices

In the East
Summer moon rises full
over Sandia Crest

Pale horse
cock crows
dogs bark

Sundown colors dance
through earthy air
and rain

These many voices
whole body
full of light

Nothing Absent
(for Adi Da Samraj)

Midnight.
April rain.
Solace of rain.
Peacock's cry away off.
"What is absent from your happiness?"
haunts me. *Tat Tvam Asi.*
Eternal mystery That
"flower absent from all bouquets"
already present forgotten
to remember again.

5:00 A.M. Again the dawn.
Thunder from Sandia Crest.
Wet Juniper in the wind.
"Submit Now To Be That!"
Be that one always
perfectly obvious
I Am. *Tat Tvam Ami.*
Tam Aham Bajami.
"God cannot possibly be hidden."
Nothing absent
from our happiness.

nyingpo

give up again
a dream abright
along a rosy way
to give our heart
away asleep awhile

it is as
if we all
were not at all
that one left out
in rain a rose
arise a song

from deepest downy
spacious heart
awake I dreamed
primeval dream
O heart enwombed
receive a one

from whom all
roses open are
I am again

Shunyata

The crux of the matter.
More stable than mountains
it abides at the heart of everything.
Through love and time it waits
in silence at the margin
beckons us across
to the shadow realm
aperture
to our source.

thank you
(for Beth)

from above
earth receives
sun and wind

gives me breath
fills my spaces
with light

opens me
to receive
who you are

I give you
poems and
a red rose

Voice

(for Russell Paul Schofield)

Listen to the wind, and the twittering death
at the bottom and the top of each breath.
Open this burning door each now enter in
a secret place that deep
sweet dream of sleep wherein
we are a bell ringing the end
again and again in bright silent night.

Listen to the wind, and the twittering death
as the sun rises and sets upon the brushwork of our lives
this silk itself embedded in lovely rosette of the mind.
Open this burning door enter in dark house of the moon.
Here embrace the monstrous shadow spread upon the face
of all that is. For there is no other. *Vani, Tat tvam ami.*
This great wind sweeps us across the deep night.

Listen to the wind, and the twittering death
within this breath of all that forms and moves
fugue of roses and butterflies cascades and falls
like falling stars broken symmetries we are risen
each breath angelus of light to meet that fearful night.
Thus do we enter in and shine ever at the Heart
when we listen to the wind.

Tulips
(for Paul Boyd Boaz)

Tulips in old Mimi's garden.
Many colors. "Blessings" she called them
round our lives. In spring fill us up.
In Winter too when we will not receive.
"By Grace" she said
"We shall have our tulips."

Horseshit she threw upon the little bulbs.
It smelled like dirt. Like earth.
Like earthworms in a can. *Oligocheata*
who turn the sweet humus for us.
All of it carbon from the stars
stainless ground of all that is.

After the rain when the air was sweet
with earth those worms would copulate
hermaphroditically
under the old rose trellis.
"See that!" said old Paul laughing.
"They're stuck on each other
and that's what gives us the corn
and the trees. You've got one
of them in your pants right now!"

That seed in me.
Flesh water breath. Stardust actually.
Seed planted here goes on
through small pelvises and big brains.
Sweet nipples give the calories. Goes on
in horses and worms. In perfect spring tulips.
All these many colors
here among the stars.

puja
(for Carol)

jasmine and quiet rain
embrace us
sweet earth our body
together

self portrait

amateur mystic
macho mind warrior
interdimensional dilettante
and gourmand
of cosmic stuff
always here
in love
with earth

Self Portrait

Middling old yogi
amateur philosopher
not much of a poet

May I just be
for someone
a dear friend

Consummation

Gentle cooking for heaven in earth
the *samadhi* of the *Anschauung*

(for Salvador Dali)

Alchemically speaking
we must eat
all that given.

Mythtime fruits and pits
edible grist these
"atavistic vestiges"
linear sins of generations

form a crutch that is a cross
bright imprint endlessly
upon the whole old cabal
"delirious reality" itself.

Earthtime roses and flies consumed
fiery crucible of desire
distills Proustian egg divine
womblike citadel of mind

descends vortically lifts
our vernal earth from time
her nubile hypercubic gooseflesh
ripe greeny fig opened by the sun.

And the pits pricey pearls
philosopher's stones
devoutly wished essence
these sins in earth
little sweets of heaven.

Vertigo

In the first grade old Miss Gibson screamed
“You’re stupid!, stupid!” when I froze up
in the reading circle. Screamed “Stupid!”
at me. Later I joined Mensa
taught philosophy got a guru.

This fear is a circle. Aches in my back.
Spins on and on in the head.
Spinning meatwheel vertigo smells
like cotton candy. Old Burgundy. Ripe
strawberries in summer when you remember.

In every dimension a line becomes a circle
wistful silence whispering the end.
Some kind of brightness binds us us together in it.
Curious order spins on and on.

Trees and biomass keep us safe
from solar radiation. Give each one
time to attend to opening.
Some sunny day perhaps today
we will all shine with it.

“It Ain’t No Big Deal”

(for Patrick and Jerry)

“All of this, yet to die.”
All of this gone
gone utterly beyond.
Before the light
primordial darkness
perfect womb
of all that is. Yes
return to the light
and its liberating darkness.
Now return again awake
and heal unbroken
perfect worlds.

Stromata

(Quartet in A Minor)

In the end the beginning.
Alpha Omega the cycles.
Fragments of the whole.
Our hope in a minor key.

In Autumn's drizzle
wet roses wither.
Brief antidote given through the light
emblem of our starry root
specter of the coming night.

Clamorous reality binds
us to the wheel.
Yet at the heart
this impetuous brightness.

Flooded with Spring
glad tulips arise.
"Verde que te quiero verde."
Cycles and pauses filled
with nothing but space.

Arising herein
a garden of light.
O wonder of wonders
all beings delight!

Notice to Quit

Now is the time
to quit trying
to be

As it is
already liberated
now is the time
to give up

As it is
already present
now is the time
to enter in

Perfect as it is
now is the time
to be

Genes

“Yesterday’s buds are today’s blossoms
which we draw with a brush on silk.”

—Lu Chi

Eternal totems vortical descend
through voice of sky
penetrate abrosial womb
imprint the dazzling form.

Mythtime messengers alive
bear seeds of our salvation lightly
on *Lepidoptera* wings encode
the sacred carbon.

In salt and blood
these earth elements
burn brightly
with trees and stars.

Mute music of tomorrow
in fiery seeds from above
deep within us.

For Coyote
(for Gary Snyder)

I know you Coyote.
You eat my cats
and the rabbits
even skunks!
Everything!
Eat it all up!

Great earth consumed.
Only you sly coyote
survive this chaos
as we cycle together
celebrate your song

tonight
to the moon
tomorrow the dawn
to laughing earth
to luminous sun
to wondrous stars
all forever Coyote.

Breath

Summer moon rises
full over the Panamints.

Warm desert wind
whisper of wind.

In the distance
heat lightning
brightens
redgold shadow peaks.

Flow up still earth
arise to meet
the perfect night.

Here soar
off the edge
deep blue space.

Sweet wet sage
in the wind.
Breathe it in.

I am lived
everywhere
at once.