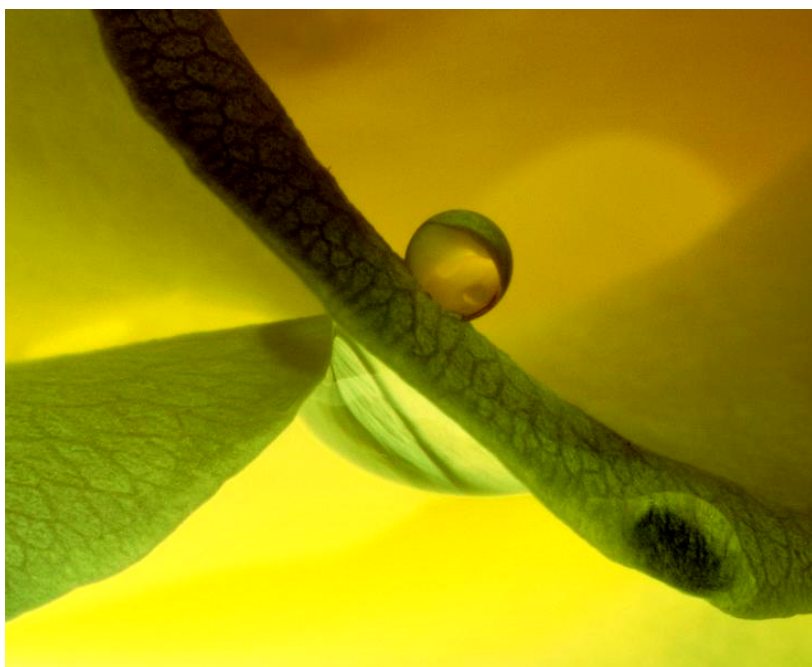


PICTURES FROM CATHEDRAL PEAK

Selected Poems and Photographs

DAVID PAUL BOAZ

(DECHEN WANGDU)



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For

**Lama Carol A. Hoy
Gendun Drolma**

Great Love

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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 eternal movement that matters? How may the poem reveal it? Enjoy it? Praise it?

Life energy (*prana, lung, ch'i, spiritus, pneuma*) arises in time from its basal source as light or motion, $E=mc^2$, flux of continuous change. This ground or basis of motion is formless changeless Being Itself. It has many names. None can describe it. It is simply timeless primordial awareness-consciousness itself, very source and ground of eternal mystery of all that is.

Energy arises as light, motion, change, matter, life, mind, breath, voice. This great mystery cannot be grasped by ordinary mind. It is profound. It utterly transcends yet embraces the understanding. Yet, the understanding may gently touch it through the poem itself. 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 our felt sense feeling-emotional nature at the Heart.

From such a ground the poem arises, with the mind, upon the breath, through the voice, witness to indwelling primordial Presence that all that is, arising as our relative spacetime realities, given each moment, each breath upon the voice, 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 that great mystery, the arising of light/energy/motion from its 'supreme source', there arises the three mysteries of existence—Body, Voice and Mind. Voice is Tibetan *AH*, the poem arising upon the *prana* breath-energy of basal primordial awareness itself. Spirit-energy as voice links all beings together in it. 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 (*Ugi*). Voice is Hermetic Orphic Vedic Hebrew song of God, divine *Corpus Hermeticum*, OM our body together, animated by spirit breath of all beings in this numinous participation in nondual godhead. This voice sings of the Orphic transcendence of duality of Apollonian and Dionysian, of being and becoming, of all binaries in nondual luminous source ground—*cittadhatu*, Tao—atavistic Presence at the Heart (*HUM*). OM AH HUM—Being Itself. "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 ground—*apeiron*, Tao, *shunyata*/emptiness—Orphic voice as music/poetry reveals nondual truth of the mysteries. All things participate in That. We are not separate from That. Who am I? *Tat Tvam Asi*, That I Am! Utterly awakened mind.

*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 ground descending and ascending throughout this great *cosmic mandala*, circulation of the light of Tao that holds us all together in it. Voice is the instant self-liberating AH of experience. Voice evokes 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 *prana* spirit wind, breath of many voices deep within us. Hear this wind through the silence as it carries us across the deep night. The trees and little flowers will keep you safe.

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/fruit is *drasbu*, realization of the numinous outshining prior unity of apparent dualism of this vast continuum of arising energy forms. Told Gautama the Buddha, "Form is emptiness, emptiness is form." Prior and present unity. Upon this precious spirit breath the voice of the poem arises.

At its heart, the poem, like little 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 does the poem arise through still bright mirror, very essence and nature of mind, witness to supreme source abiding always at the Heart, prior to perennial drama of Narcissus—egocentric self-contraction, causal knot that is our adventitious thought and physical form. Now life in the poem reveals our supreme identity. *Tat Tvam Asi*. That I Am. Here the poem lives us. "One no longer dreams, one is dreamed." [Henri Michaux]

Because the poem itself springs from very source that is primordial Being Itself in whom living forms arise, and because it is given, received, and then given again upon the very life breath energy Voice 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 arouses naked immediacy of that "eternal movement" of energy given to sensation, perception and cognition as "news", musical pictures, a way of seeing, little truths earthed and anchored in feeling. "Only the heart endures." The natural innate intelligence of the poem, its form, its grace, its internal gravity lives in relation or tension with the naked image or idea of that directly perceived—*samadhi* of Kantian *ding an sich*, pristine, untainted *noumenon*—nondual "thing-in-itself".

That prior unity 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 trans-mental breeze that is breath and voice of the poem itself. The poem points to or intends the great source of all, yet this source is not transcendent but abides at the Heart as the always already present *now* of every arising being in form.

Thus the poem itself cannot transcend everyday reality, and avoids transcendental logocentric absolutes—God. But it can illumine beauty in natural things—ordinary mind—our everyday realities. "Leave it as it is and rest your weary mind; all things are perfect exactly as they are." [Gautama 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 poem's natural direct image or idea.

*Arising, musically, the diaphanous idea itself, the
flower missing from 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.*

—Mallarmé

"My understanding has nothing to do with your understanding." [Hakuin Zenji]

For Wordsworth the movement of this primordial energy arising 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 as a text. This quiescent 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.

Now the poem itself arises as we open, just for a moment to receive, surrender (*wu wei*, *pistis*/faith) and rest in Presence (*vidya*) of that always present, primordial awareness ground that is our own original face. Here the poem is purely transparent, luminous and bright, utterly beyond duality—tedious binaries of relationship, of subject/object, I/other, spirit/matter. That transcendental, post-empirical understanding was revealed by Soto Zen Patriarch Dōgen 800 years ago:

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

The poem itself is Nemerov's "protean encounter", our coming to meet shape-shifting formless form of countless eternal truths arising from our perfectly subjective source ground that is luminous nondual Spirit Itself. Yes, it is our innermost primordial awareness wisdom that recognizes this gentle

Presence—by whatever name—deep within each human Heart. All this, without excluding past and future, in timeless now, through little pictures that are the poem itself. These truths given 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

The poem itself partakes of a minimalist ontology. Like Occam's Razor it declines to "multiply entities unnecessarily".

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, concept, or belief of the divine to which we may cling. Such a 'feel good' poem may serve as an appealing or inspiring sentiment, but cannot transmit the trans-conceptual nondual ego-self-transcending truth that is our Heart's desire. Yet, it is the esoteric mystical tradition of the world's religions—religion as *yoga/religio* union of spirit and matter—that provides the Orphic ideal of sacred, participatory, selfless (*anatman*) 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 rare self-transcending art offers a brief antidote to those two great ego and ethnocentric evils of the modern/postmodern age: divisive violent dualism that is religious provincialism, and spirit-denying hyper-objective Scientific Materialism/Physicalism, the proto-religious 'Scientism' that has now colonized our Western heart and mind.

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 nondual *ultimate truth* of ontic prior perfection of arising dualistic spacetime reality, poetry must speak as the *relative truth* of the subtle impermanence (*anitya*) of all things of the world, and so to fearful destructive denial of that—the 'denial of death' of our physical existence.

For Soto Zen Patriarch Dōgen, light energy motion is but an eternal continuum of moment to moment arising, abiding and passing away—the change—that is his Being in Time (*Ugi*). "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 lofty name—that is timeless Reality Being Itself. Arising herein our diaphanous impermanence that is very essence of Life, and 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 littered with them. Novalis speaks of 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 voices of the poem may be seen as two faces of self-transcendence: self-observation, inward and upward (meditation, *dhyana*, *samadhi*), and compassionate ethical conduct, downward and outward (*bodhicitta*, *hesed*, *charis*) into the everyday lifeworld of suffering sentient beings. The first stage is inward, nonconceptual contemplation and meditation upon the primordial love-wisdom Presence—by whatever name—that is our actual 'supreme 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 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." [Gautama Buddha] As good a definition of cause and effect karma as ever there was.

In due course and by grace, in the poem and in the individual, Narcissus, the self-limiting self-ego-I, and the selfless *anatman* that is Buddha's 'noself' have become identical, which was their essential nature from the very beginning. That is the Buddhist nondual 'fruitional view'. "Seeing into one's self-nature is seeing into emptiness/*shunyata*." [Hui Neng] "Without past, present, future; empty awake mind." [Ju Mipham Gyatso]

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, egocentric self cannot understand it. Here we long for the intense, the dramatic, the romantic, the beautiful, the conceptual, the ideal. We long for the comfortable but separate self-stimulating "I" of the poem. Egocentric touchstone. Here the poem urges us to leave our cognitive safe 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 above or ontologically prior to the reflected shadowy movement of its spacetime objects. Here, knowing subject and its objects known are not separate but interdependently interconnected. Through the poem, just for a moment, we can *be* the mirror! Too often we remain in the shelter that ego has built.

*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" (*vipashyana*) of the images of the objects of the external world, he began his "seeing poems," and lost

much of his following. But the images in the poems became transparent and luminous revealing selfless little pith pictures of their bright timeless primordial awareness source.

In the initial narcissism of the first stage, the poem often omits the object, or 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 ego structures of human personality-self. The I poem grounds itself in the realm of Narcissus—self-ego-I—which is old news insofar as the ego, by definition, has separated itself from the 'supreme source' of the mind through which perforce it arises. The I poem often reveals this aesthetic ego, the antithesis of participatory self-transcending art. That selfless art is indeed all too rare.

Our human realm is truly interesting only as a part, a participation or an outpicturing of natural things, profound 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 (*tathata*, thatness).

*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 mirrors the aboriginal 'nature of mind' itself. It does not seek to teach, persuade, enhance or dramatize. It seeks nothing at all. The mind poem naturally reveals 'news' of our formless, timeless, selfless primordial ground—little pictures of

that great mystery of numinous origin that is interdependent Reality 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—basic space (*chöying*) of all spacetime form. How? Bright Presence of That is who we actually are, our 'supreme identity'.

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

—Garab Dorje

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

This gross self that is Narcissus does not live in reality. It dwells in its self-created mythology, the skeptical and alienated *mythos* of commodified materialist mass-mind. 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*), momentary "bracketing" (*epoché*) or placing in abeyance of our self conscious constitutive cognitive operations upon reality.

Now we may open to receive what reality gives directly as it is (*yogi pratyaksa*), prior to the filtering of it through the atavistic reticulum of our logical and conceptual elaborations and operations—linear, bivalent, bipolar perceptual and conceptual semiotic 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 selfless mind poem intends *That*.

Thus may the mind poem transcend self-ego-I with its destructive denial of death, beyond any concept, referring to Presence always present—*christos vidya, rigpa*)—witness to that bright primeval awareness ground, very essence of mind itself.

Ego existence and very essence or nature of mind in whom it arises are always already an ontic prior and phenomenally present unity. And now, at last we can see it, know it, feel it, be it beyond any conceptual doubt. The mind poem intends *That*.

The mind poem may be a poem of images of things, even ideas, objective or subjective, but it always refers to or intends or notices in some small way, directly, beyond sentiment, ideology, concept or belief, through natural things that great mystery given nakedly and directly to the mind through the senses and the Heart. Like gentle Spring rain that is the subtle poem itself.

This inherent intentionality of the mind poem does not require or presuppose any epistemology or ontology, or any conceptual structure, elaboration or dilemma whatsoever. It utterly transcends our egocentric apocryphal happiness seeking strategies. It is simply trans-conceptual, pristine, direct and subtle witness, then praise for self-liberated movement/energy of this luminous if illusory display of the mind. Yes, compassionate sharing of that love and wisdom through the poetry of our lives is the open secret of authentic human happiness.

Just so, the mind poem arises uncontrived and naturally, bearing news of its singular, interdependent timeless, selfless primordial source ground that is the very nature of mind itself, precisely at the instant of its arising. It is subtle bright Presence of *That* that may be directly experienced through knowing feeling praise for this great gift of our being here. Yes, that most of all. That all arises as the poem itself. *Emaho!* How wonderful!



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

Cathedral Peak is a great granite spire rising up 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 pristine radiant space, light of the mind where always present Presence of its source 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



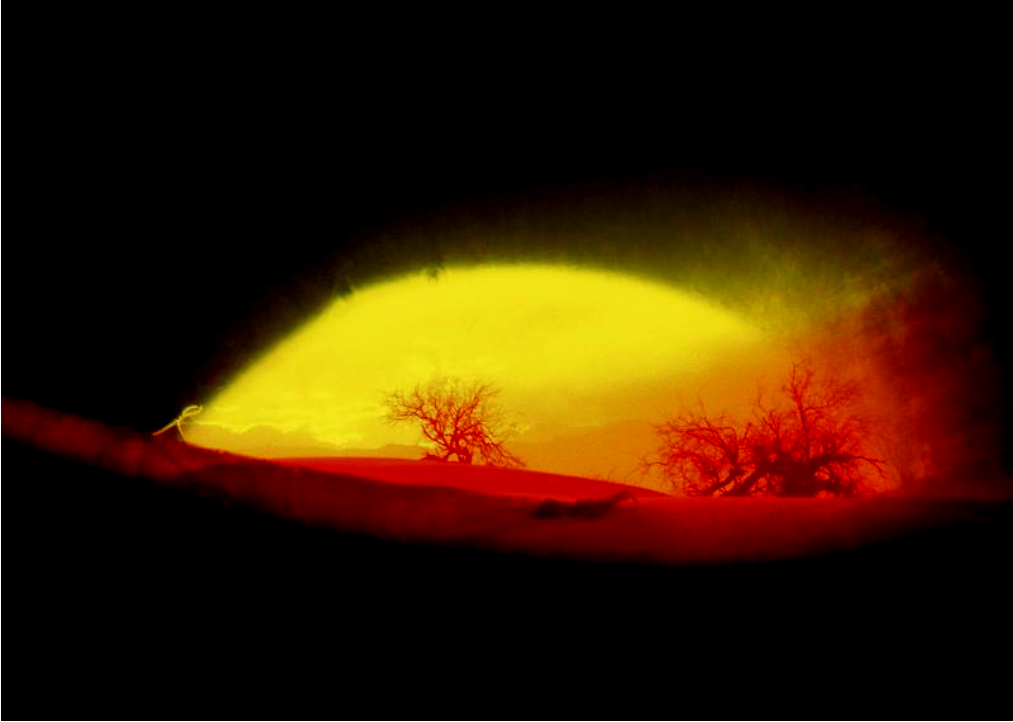
Narrow is the Gate
(at Hanakapei Beach)

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

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

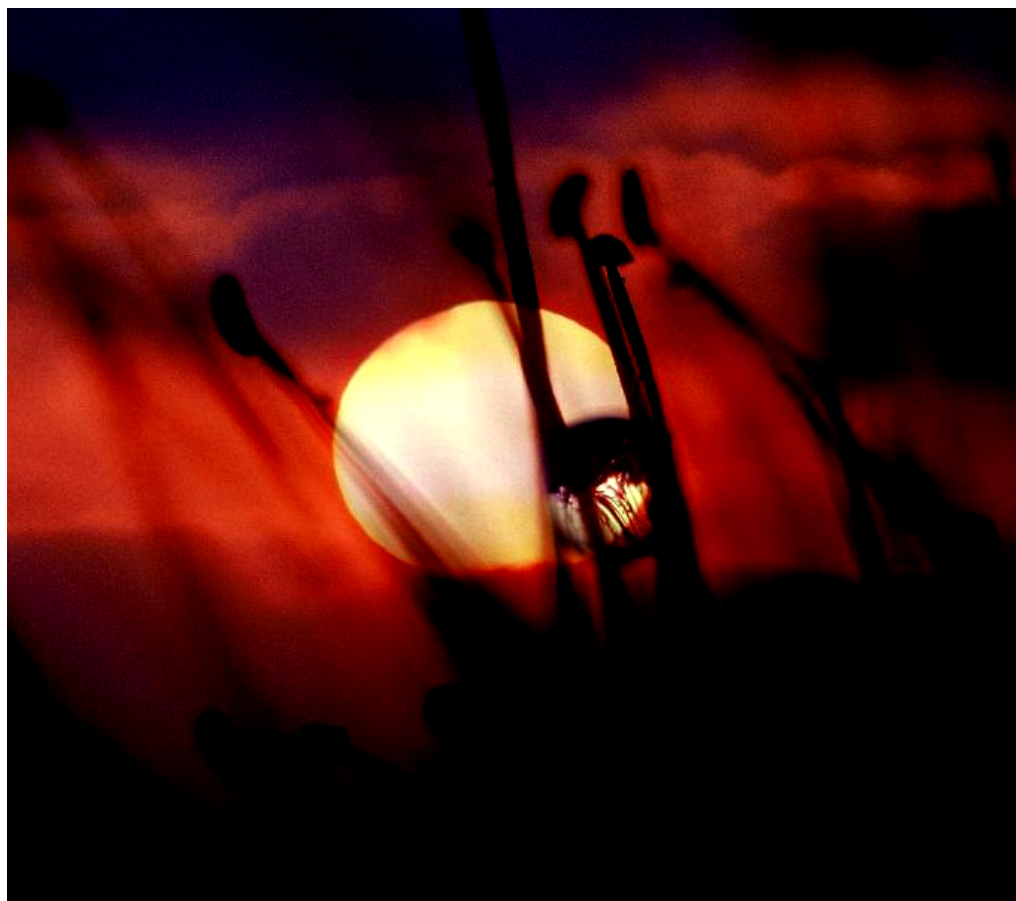
Day ends in fine misty rain.
Descended from new mountains
it deepens fluent black
lava fingers meeting
endless salty waves

Listen
Great spirits move now
in ancient earth

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

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

New warriors for earth arise
to meet the fearful night



Vidya Maya

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

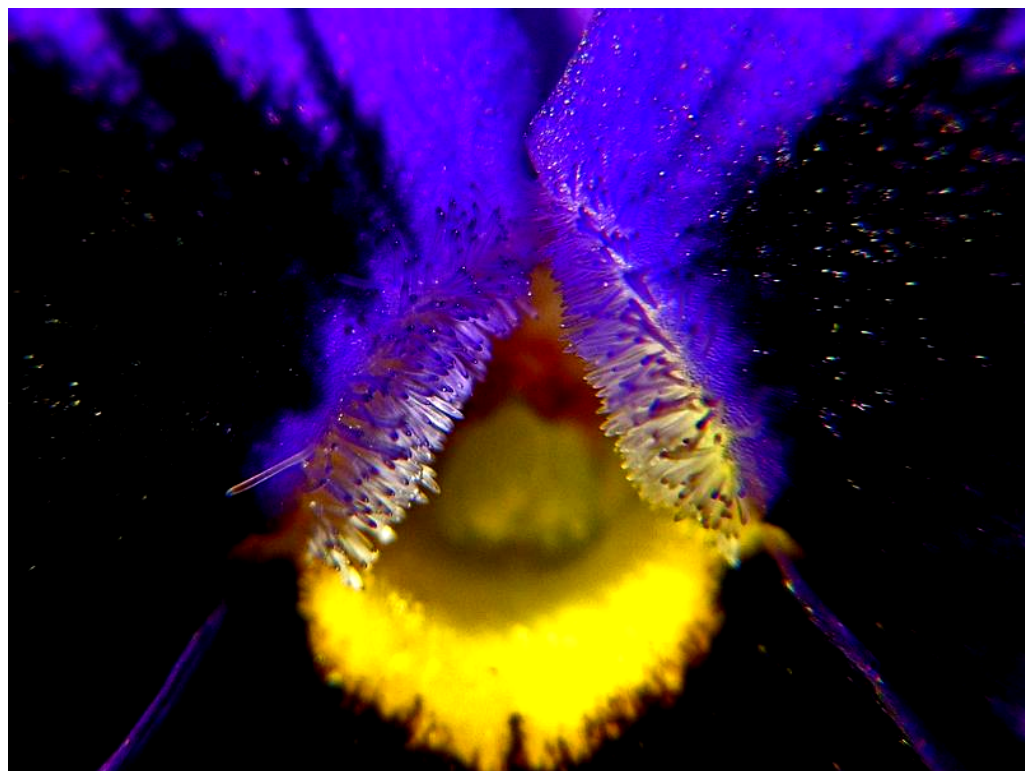
In Spring we rise up brew strong tea
Warm Kona winds
portend the storm
Soft misty rain upon our hut

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
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 fearless
enchanted in the silence



Returning

Returning late
from Hanalua Bay
I behold 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



Vidya

The love that 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 celebrate

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

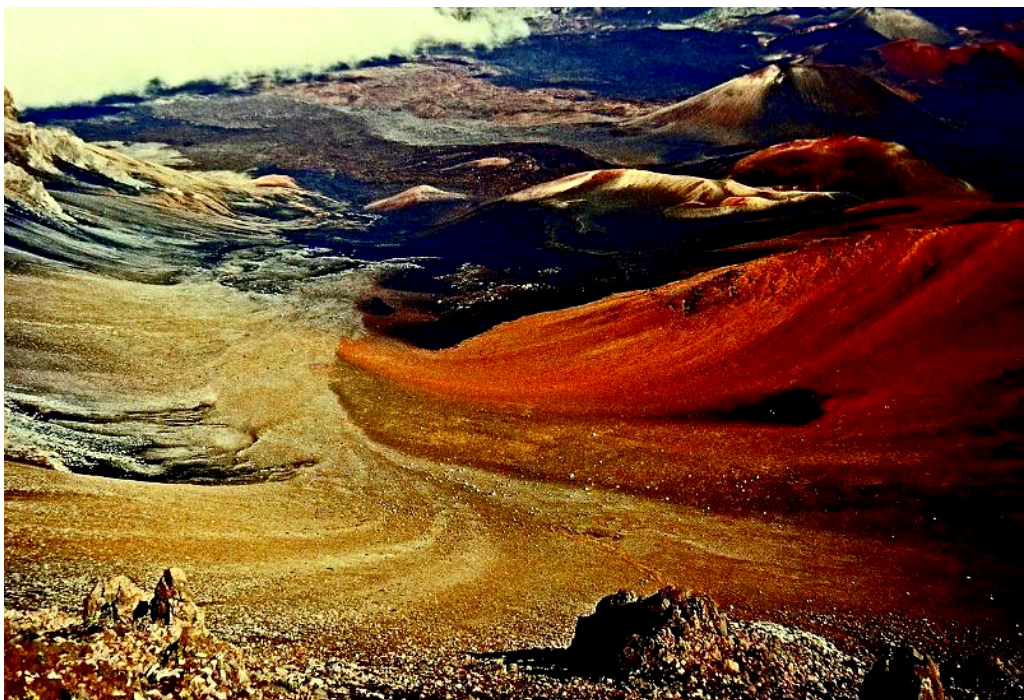
Celebrate great love
descending
through cool rain
upon this luscious form
singular body of god

II

Being here
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 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 Alenuihaha Channel
horizon Mauna Kea vertical

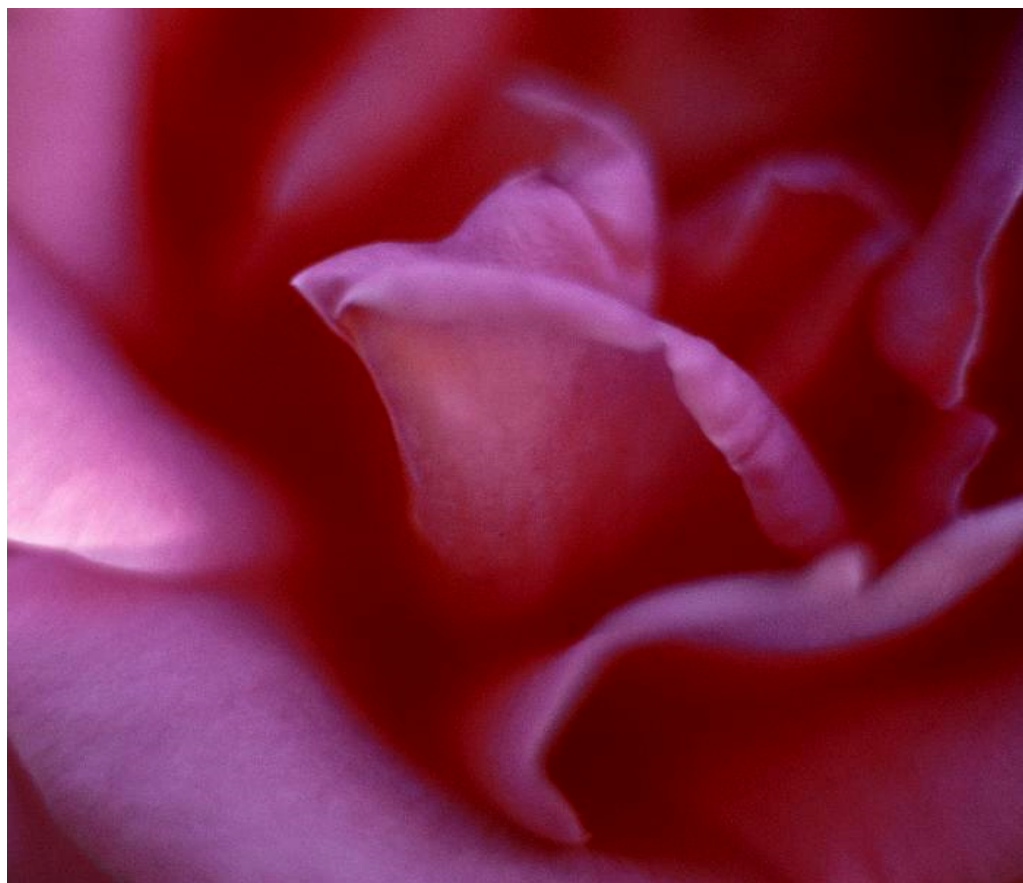
Thrust up from Uri-Isis womb
great phallus Yahweh-Ra-Kane
praised by Cetaceans and wisemen
and known to the Sun

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 gentle rain
Night Blooming Jasmine
perfumes the warm air
My little cats are asleep
Patter of soft rain
Remember the night
we loved in such joy
that we couldn't stop crying



For People

Ah People
Big brains
Small minds
Weak backs

We refuse to
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



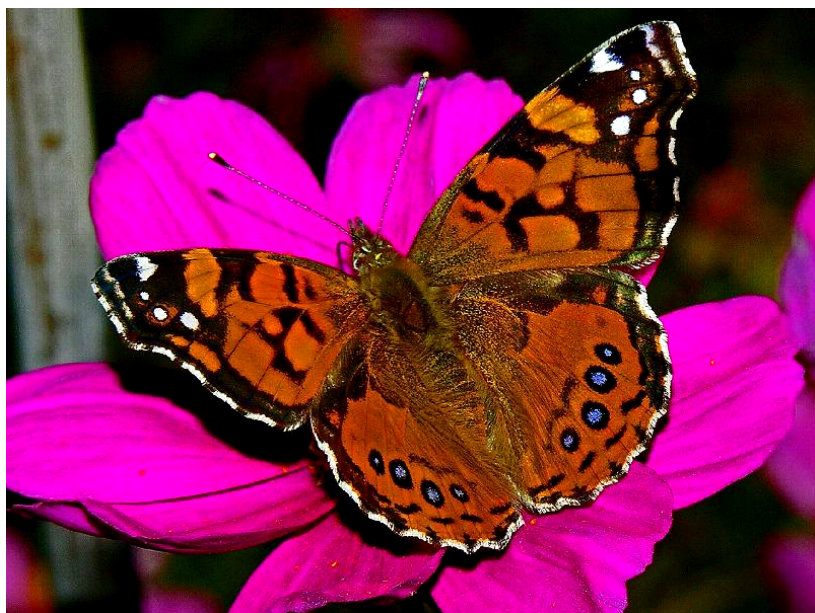
Rainbow Bridge

(for Alan Watts)

from love's sorrow
joy harmony we
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"

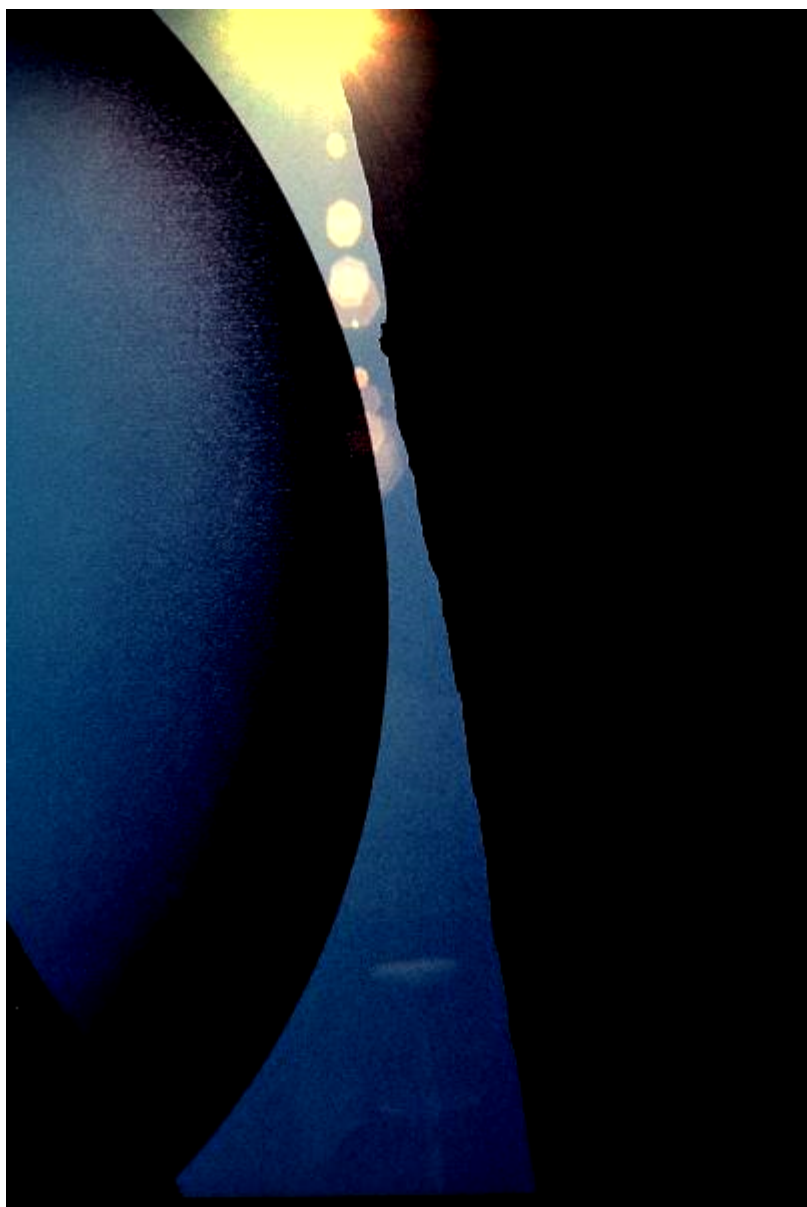
(for Rōshi)

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

Fear unbidden
is the rub
polishes the tile
foolish dance

Dōgen told
"All that can be shaken
shall be shaken"

Rude awakening
we shine here
all the way
to the end of it



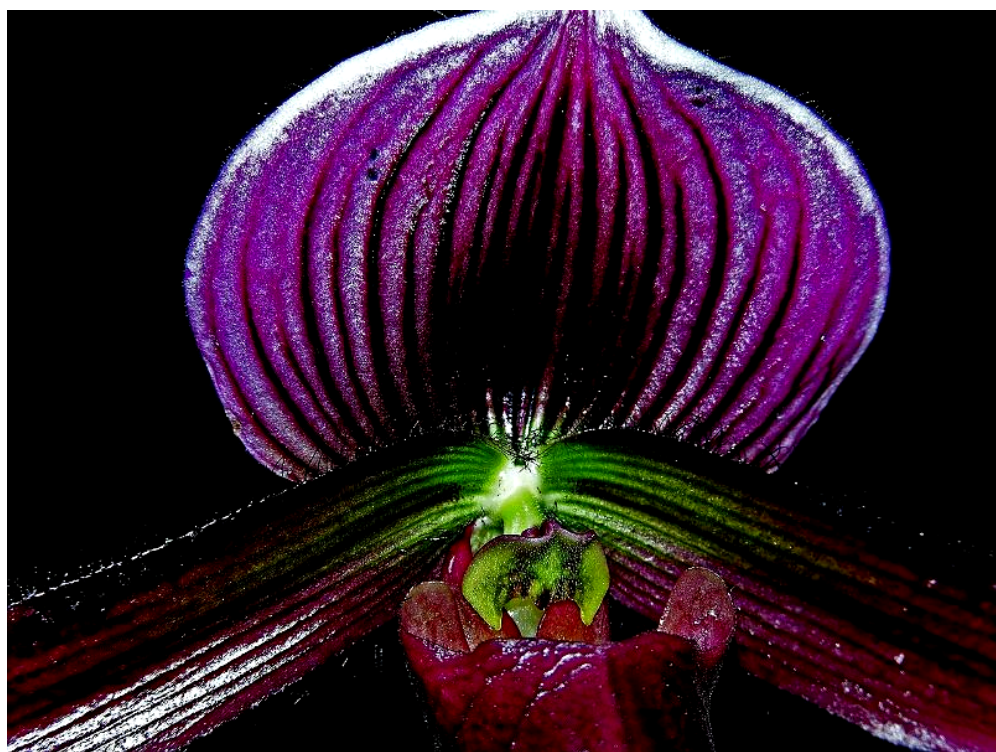
MU!

surrendered utterly
prior unity that rose
that all that is still
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?



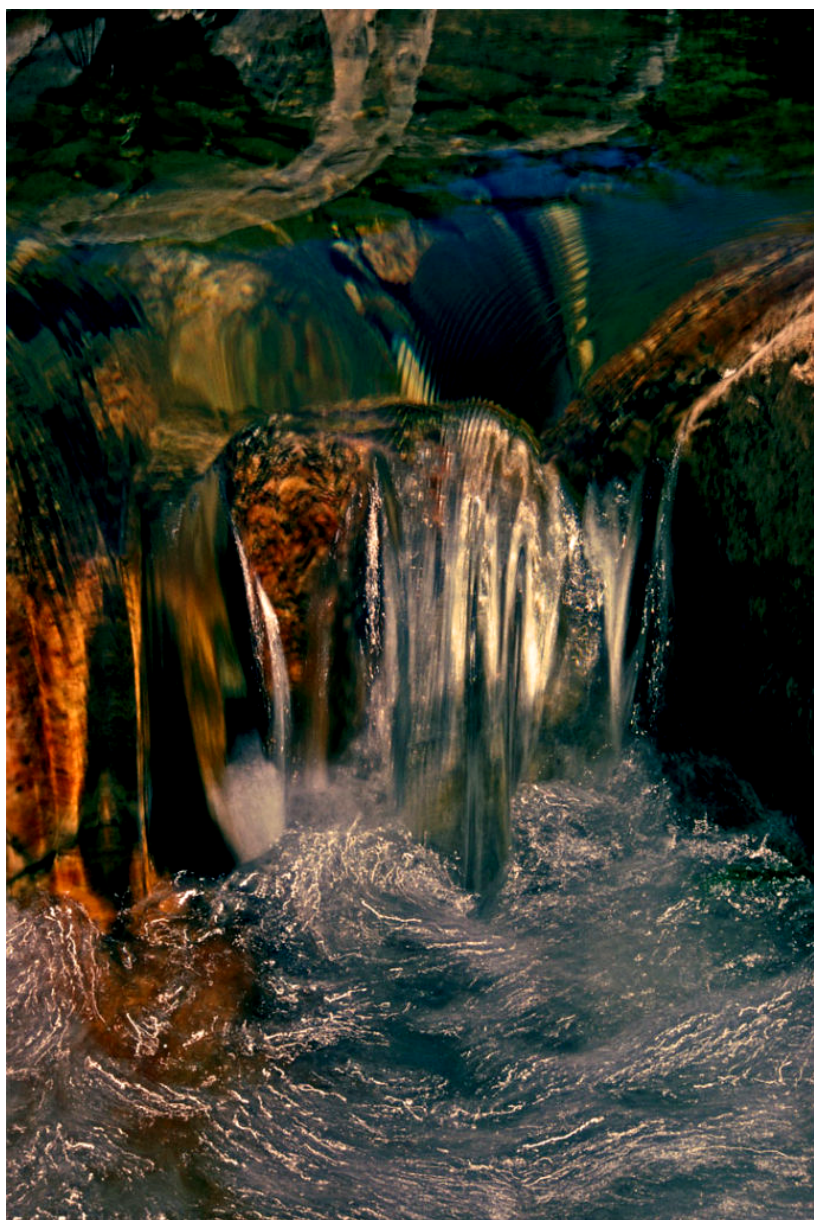
one face

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



Ox Tail

Tat tvam asi
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
So have a beer



ten thousand waves

(for Suzuki Roshi)

sit in the bath
think about time

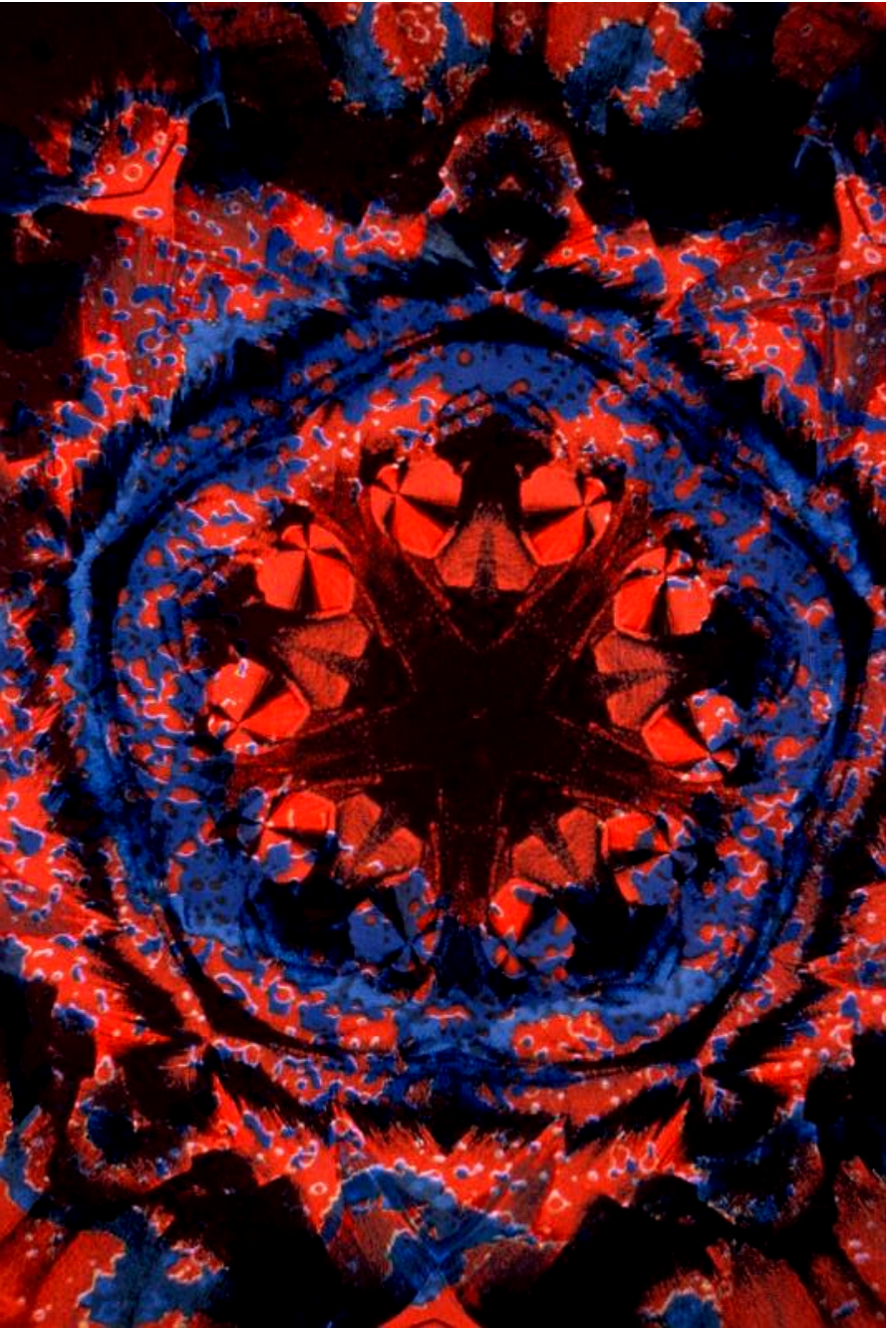
sakura sakura
sweet koto memory

the more I think
the sadder I get

shoshaku jushaku
shin ku myo u

continue in error
no I at all

night rain cool
upon my head



Tao

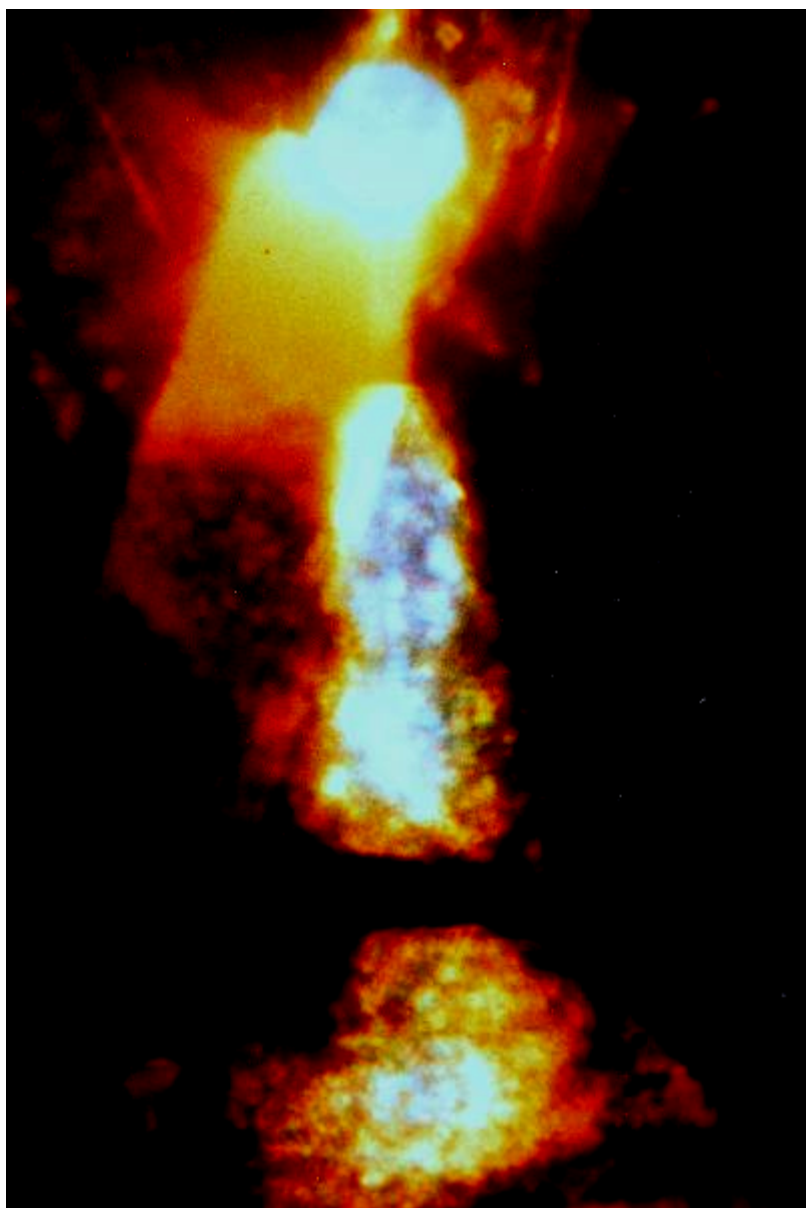
(after *Tao Te Ching* Chapter XXV)

There is only being itself
Prior to heaven and earth
In stillness it abides

Ever changeless 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
Is already now
In a circle all follow this way

We follow earth
Who follows heaven
Who follows Tao
That only being
That we always are



Wu Wei

(after *Tao te Ching* Chapter 48)

Pursuing wisdom
I add something each day
Practicing breath of Tao
I drop something each day

Let Tao be as it is
Whole perfect as it is
So I strive less for self
I judge not self or other
I care for others more and more

Wisdom nonattainment
Is attainment
No I at all
No self at all
No goal at all
All nothing at all

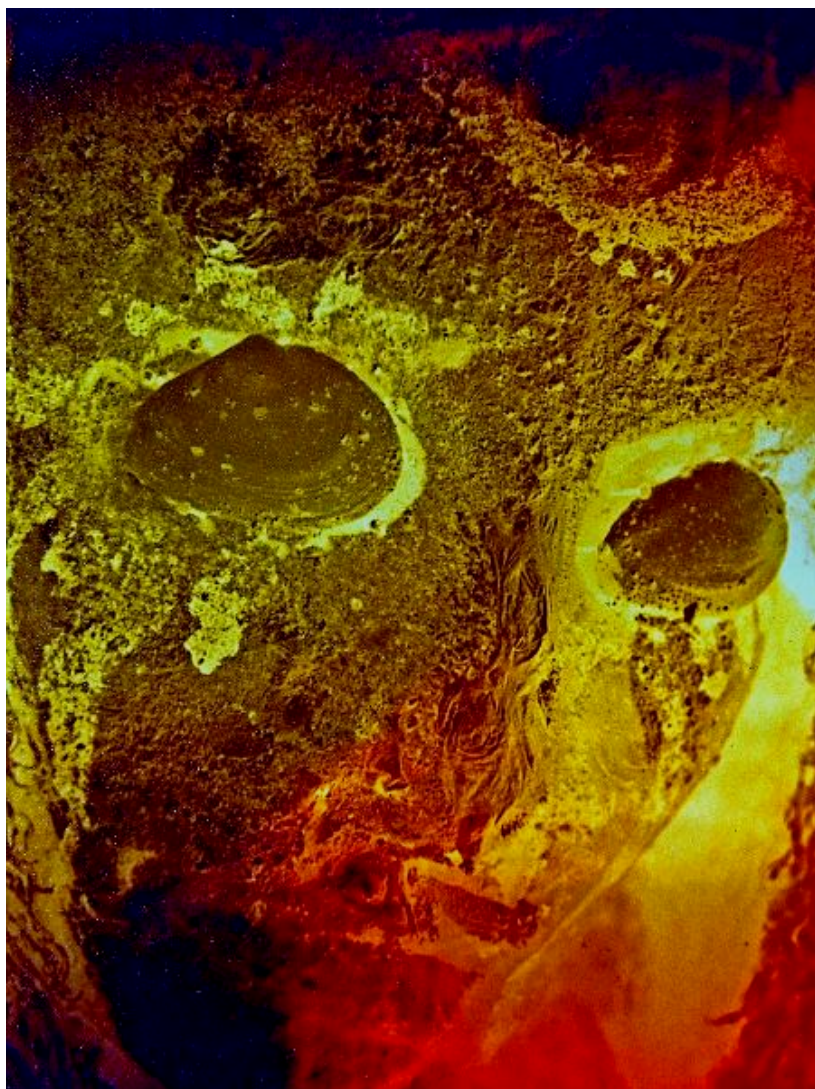
Only breath of Tao
Smile of Tao
That I Am now



Identity

We enter into relation with the light of Tao
—Ta Chuan, / *Ching*

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



The Secret

(For Ari)

A week before you died
we read 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 awake



Is It Just Me
Or Is It Hot in Here?

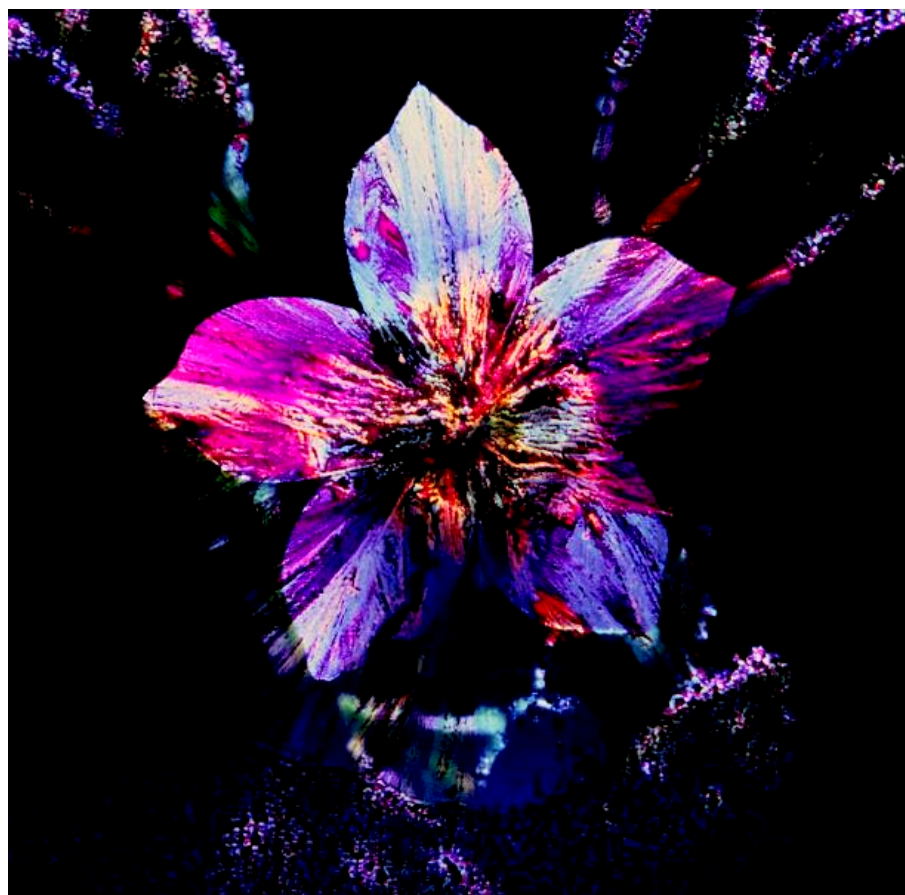
In the beginning
was probably some cool dark
stochastic little quark
of timeless awareness
in deep silent night

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

Old Vedas Genesis
postmodern metaphysics agree
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
of the sun
is life
in a cell

fiery galaxies
burning
at 3° kelvin

stellar alchemy
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
all consumed
everything utterly devoured.

Order to chaos
entropy of reality
nihilistic protocol
postmodern metaphysics.

In whom
does this all arise?

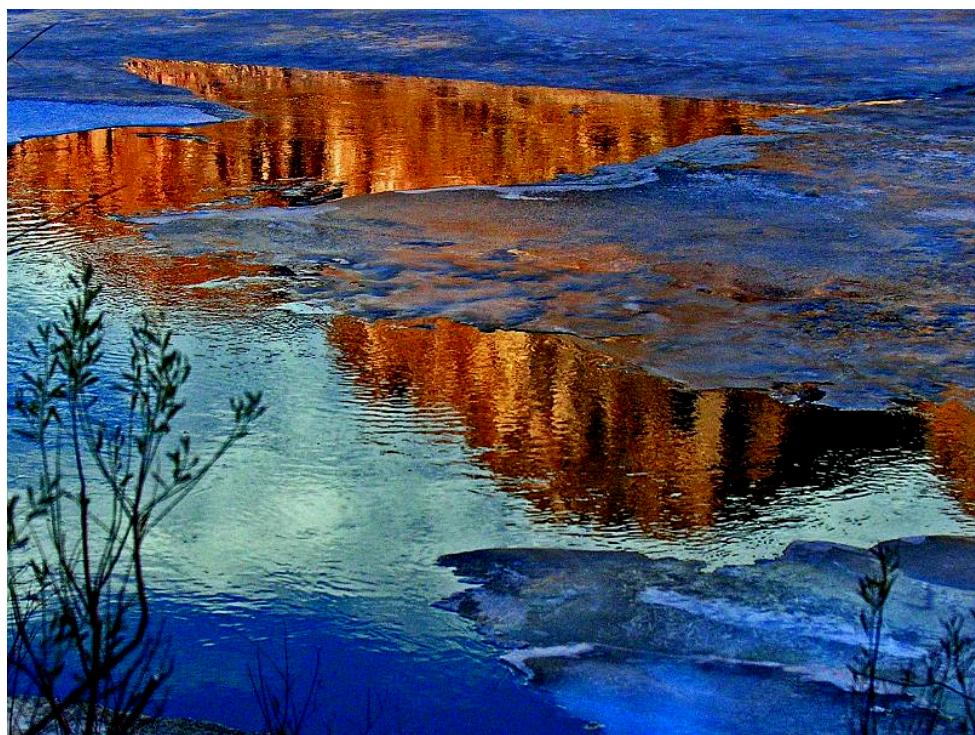


Before Genesis

Before genesis was great peace.
But now what'll we do?
In a jiffy, an archetypal Cetacean
(from a parallel universe) advises:

"Contemplate quantum emptiness
of all that is. Be this dizzy spinning
fugue rising recursive crescendo
cascade *ex nihilo*."

Now be fiery pulse of it.
All that is
after all only us
diaphanous body rising
playing in light
of 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

still arise
the things in this light

it takes two
to tango
but the crux
of the matter
singular spin
of software
of mind

ruddy bright waves
encoding awareness
paradox of light
particle of form
implicate order
of the whole

that one lives us now
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 gone beyond
by grace we have it at all

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

Some sunny day we'll give up
surrender it all
choose to be goodbye
and hello all the time

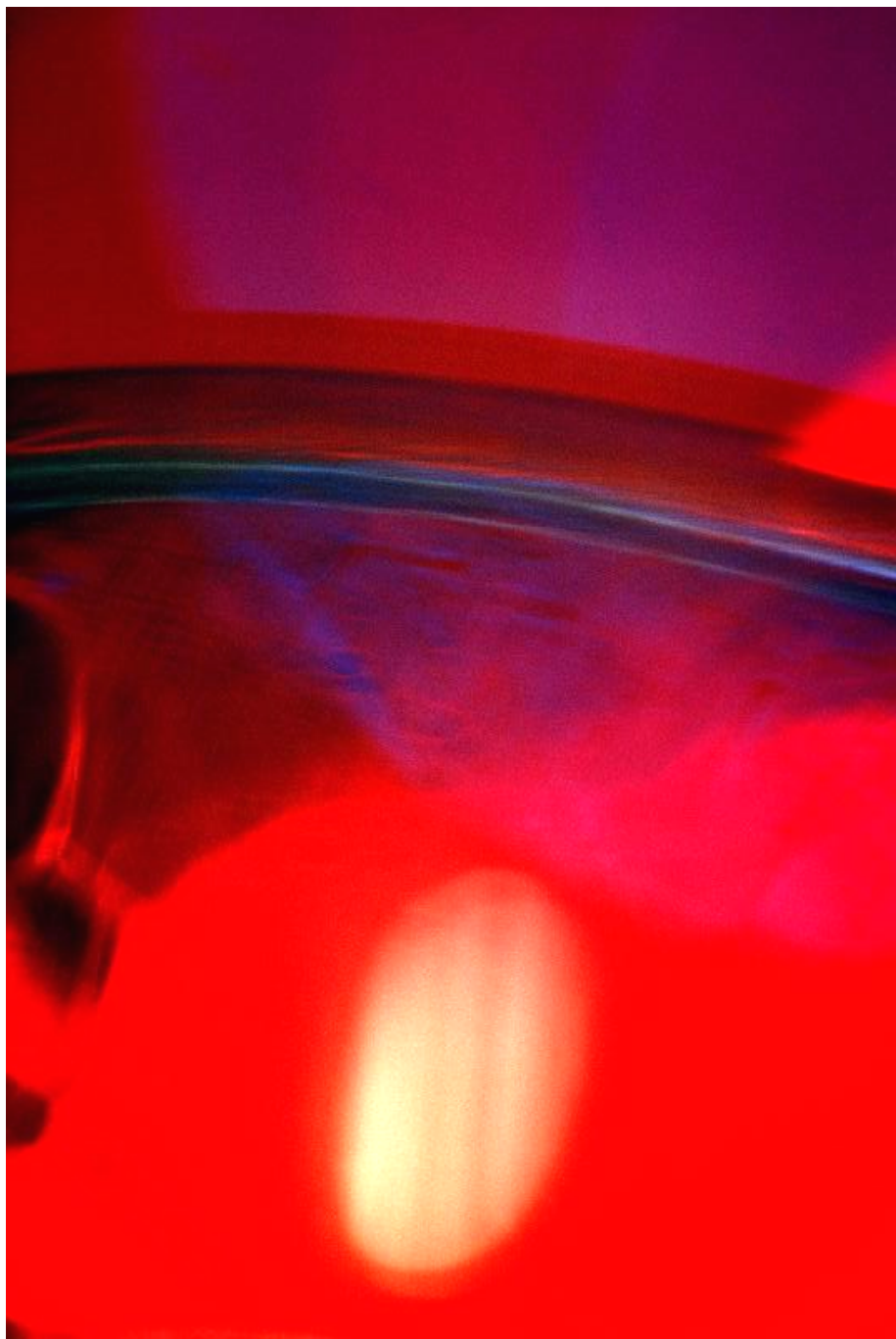


Plucking the Fruit

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 head shrinks
to head hunters
to head trippers
to dick heads

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

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

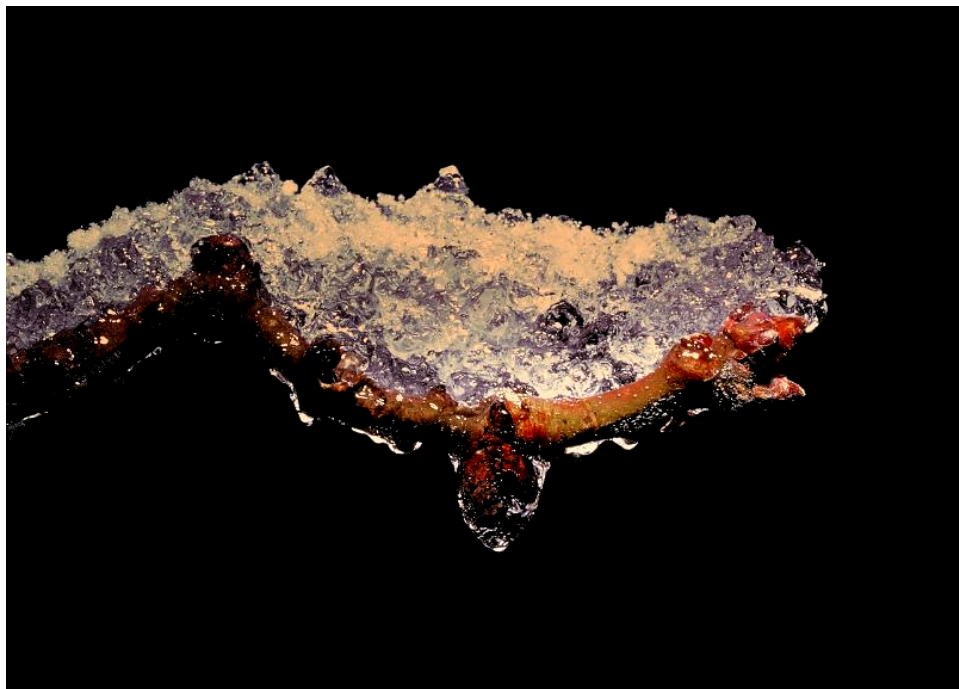
Now she's gone.
My polo horses gone.
Youth gone.
All gone beyond.

Gate Gate Paragate
Parasamgate.
Still this impetuous brightness.
Bodhi Svaha.



Flow

I cannot hold you beloved
for even now you're gone
gently in weeping rain
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 outshines
glad presence
I am now



the circle

endless circle our breath
days seasons kalpas
arise and cease
here in this
blue eyed little lupine



the touch

(for Carol)

through our touch
we arise
from the dream

I am you
luminous bodies
yabyum dance

descend
on our breath

bright river
arrive forever
at the heart



Many Voices

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 like falling stars
return to empty silent night
Many colors here
all the light
that fills the worlds



we are
rosy salty waves
so bright
luminous breath
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 our breath
we dance in delicate clouds
Let it be this presence
that space of sky
in bloom of our splendid earth



Good Company

Wesak moon tonight
condone our gentle
self-congratulations.

This happy 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
given 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 us then and again
through the valley
at still water
at dawn.



When We Dream

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

When we sang OM AH HA!
Rising on paleographic wings
from deepest silent night

When ego and eros
were just this breath
in deep primeval sleep

Now when we dream
and laugh out loud

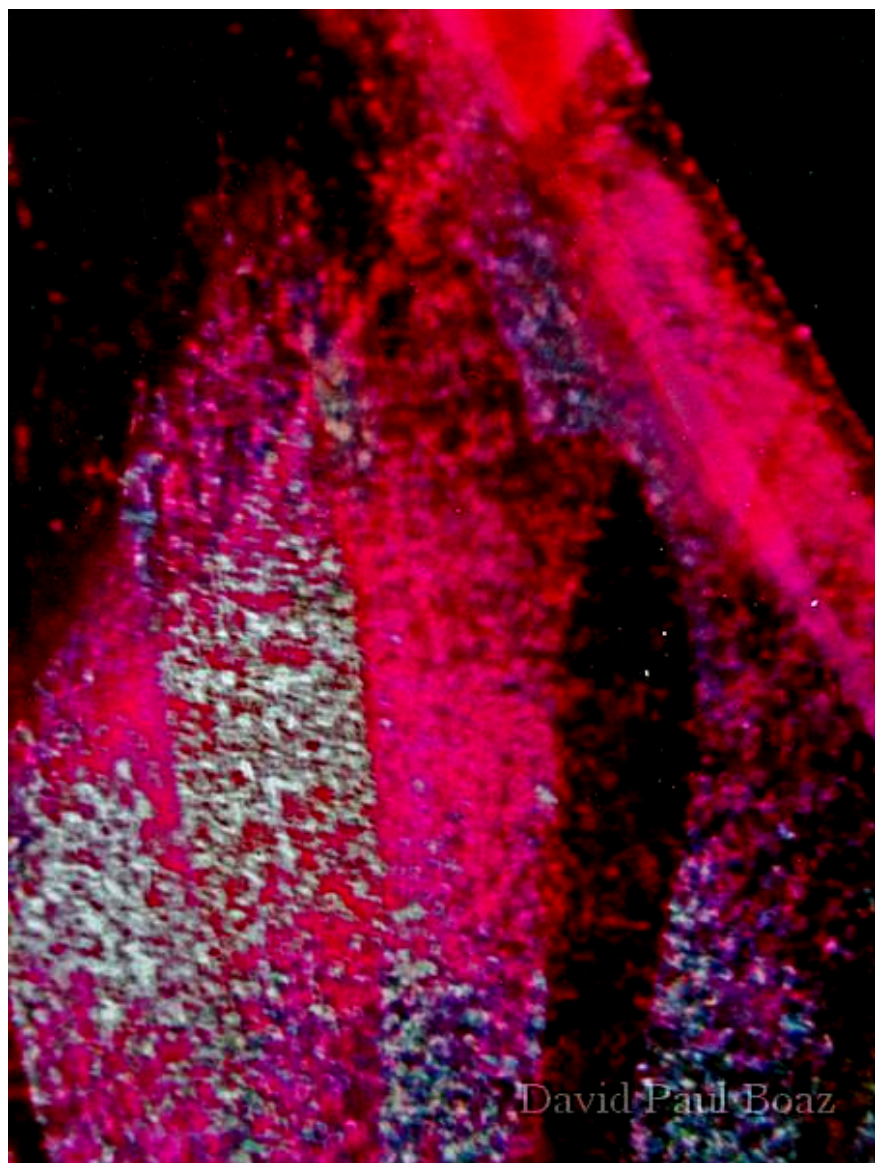


Back Country

The water is cold
mirrors sun and moon
In these new mountains
live wise old spirits

They speak
through wind in the pines
when you listen

The white clouds
and little flowers
will keep you safe



Awake!

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 joy.
Good boy!

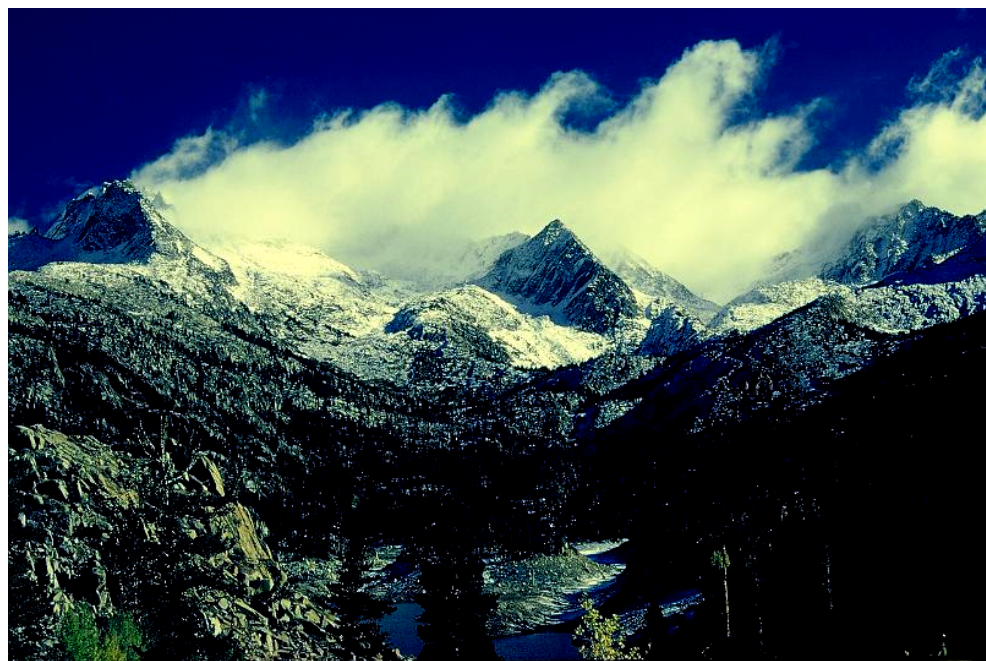
O treachery pride.
Give up that
and all the rest
all the way
to the end of it.



Nocturne

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

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



The Teaching

Autumn snow on Cathedral Peak
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
Wind and water rive
Primeval granite

There is nothing at all
That I Am
Wet new snow
Upon my face



Abundance

Cold October dawn.
Alpenglow 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 abide all together
in abundant earth.
Great Love binds the worlds.



Autumn Wind

October again.
Smell it in the wind?
Thin mountain air
makes me see stars.
Icy water numbs my hands.
Warm sun floods my hut.

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

For a billion Autumns
these great mountains
rise and fall
in 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 white wind



New Snow

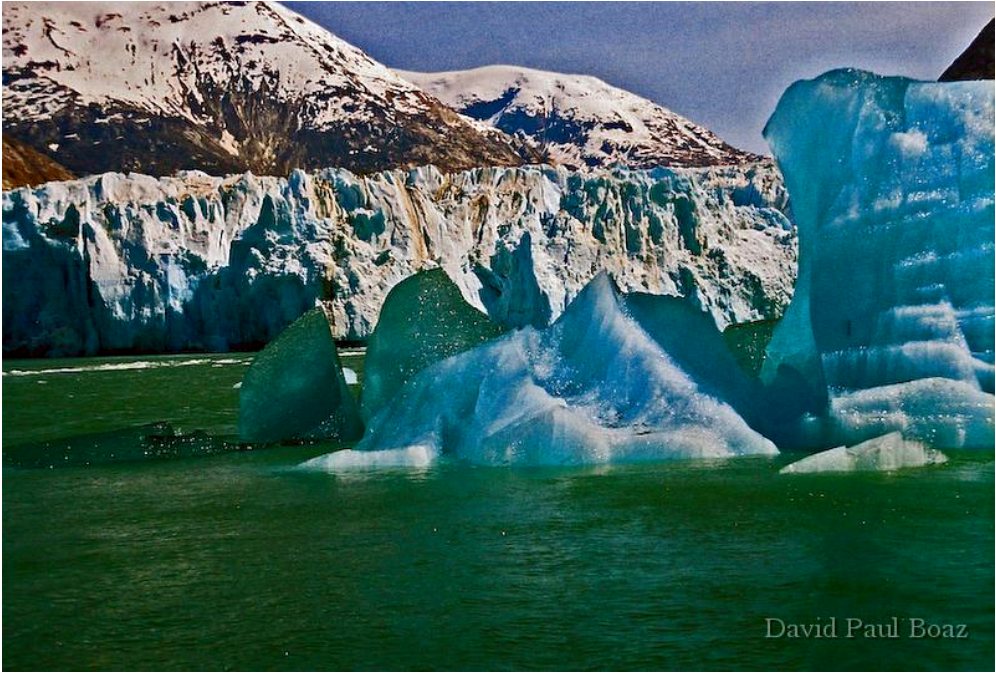
(after Osarqaq, Inuit poet)

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!



David Paul Boaz

Denali

Pale winter sun over Denali.
Soft redgold shades
early evening alpenglow.
White wind is still.

From a great height
bears and wolves
rule this earth.
Heavenly portal.
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 all in 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 feel
these vast boreal
forests as they rise
and fall
in your endless 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!

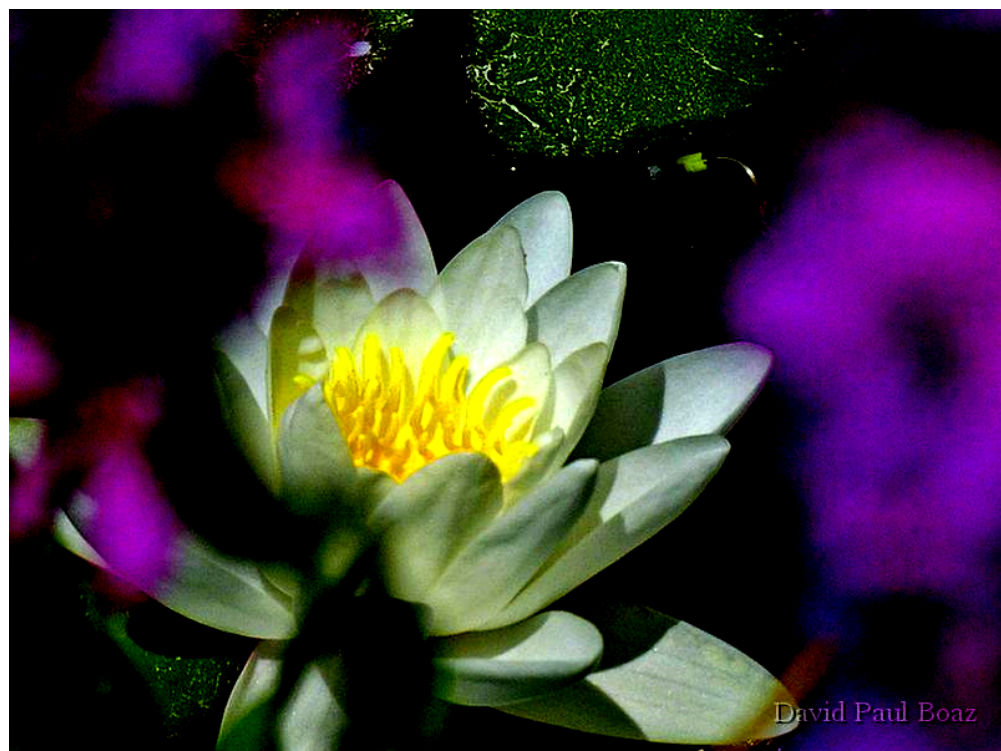


No Matter At All

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 we are gone
threadbare reticulum sit
by grace if you're lucky
bright mirror that I Am
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.* That I Am.

Eternal mystery that
flower absent from all bouquets
always present forgotten
to remember again.

6:00 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 that one

from whom all
roses open are
I am again



Shunyata

Empty crux of the matter.
More stable than mountains
it lives at the heart of everything

Through love and time it waits
in silence at the margin
beckons us across shadow
realm enter in bright portal
abides this happiness now



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

Listen to the wind and twittering death as
sun rises and sets upon brushwork of our lives
this silk itself embedded in lovely rosette of mind.
Open burning door enter in dark house of the moon.
Here embrace shadow spread upon face of all that is.
Vani. Voice of wind sweeps us across the deep night.

Listen to the wind and twittering death within voice 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 fearless at stainless Heart bright voice of 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.
"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 tin 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 air was sweet
with earth those worms would copulate
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.
Timeless 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

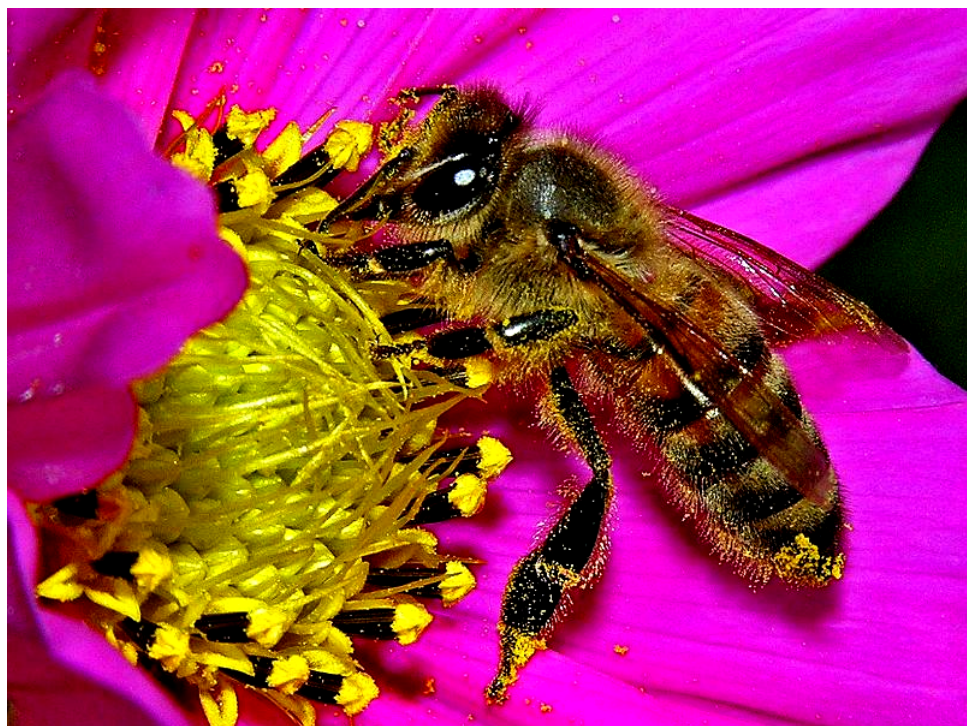
(for Carol)

jasmine and quiet rain
embrace us
sweet earth our body
together in great love
that binds the worlds
we are always now



self-portrait

would-be yogi
macho mind warrior
interdimensional dilettante
and gourmand
of cosmic stuff
still here
in love with earth



Self Portrait

Middling old yogi
amateur philosopher
not much of a poet

May I be
for someone
a dear friend



Consummation

gentle cooking for heaven in earth
samadhi of the *anschuung*

(for Salvador Dali)

Alchemically speaking
we must eat
all that is 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 whole old cabal
“delirious reality” itself.

Earthtime roses 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, published books, 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.

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

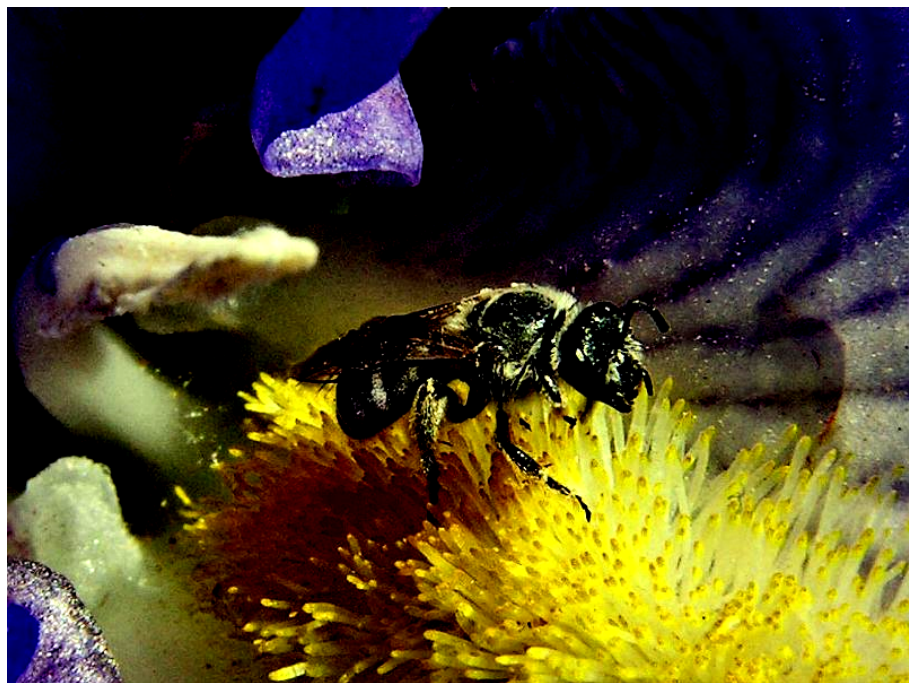
Trees and biomass keep us safe
from solar radiation. Give each one
time to attend to opening.
Some sunny day perhaps today
we shall all together outshine in it.



"It Ain't No Big Deal"

(for Pat and Jerry)

"All of this, yet to die."
All of this gone
gone utterly beyond.
Before the light
primordial darkness
perfect womb enfolds
all that is. Yes
return to the light
from its liberating
darkness. Together
awaken heal our world.
Bodhi Soha.



Stromata

(Quartet in A Minor)

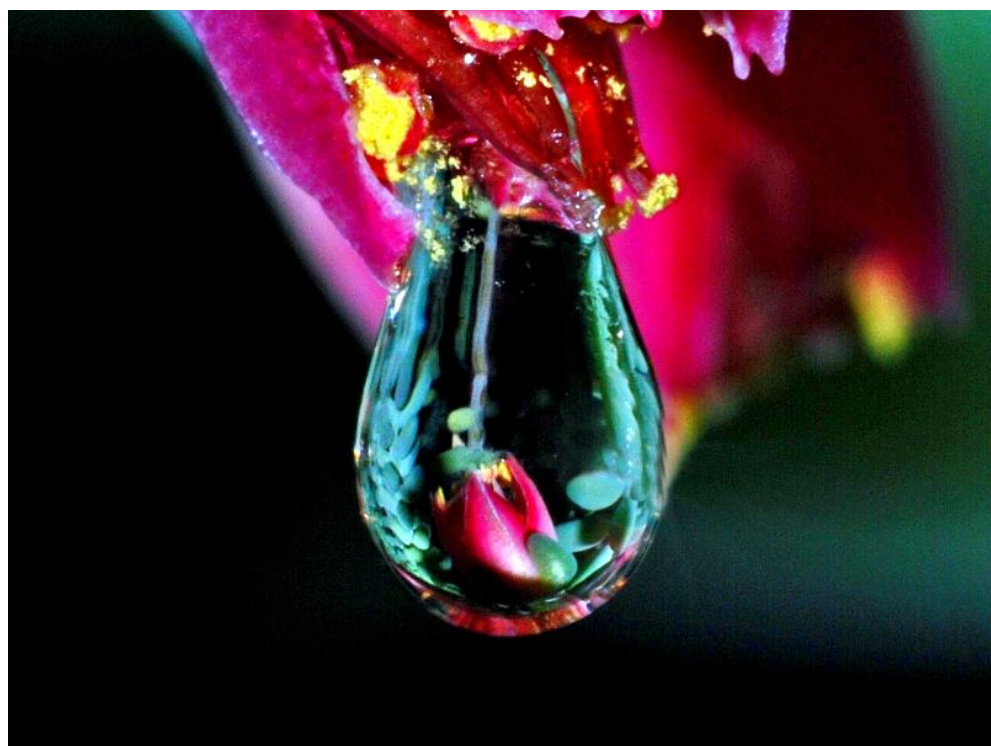
In the end the beginning.
Alpha Omega the cycles.
Fragments of this whole.
Our hope in a minor key.

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

Clamorous reality
binds us to the wheel.
Yet at the Heart
this burning brightness.

Flooded with Spring
glad tulips rise.
"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.

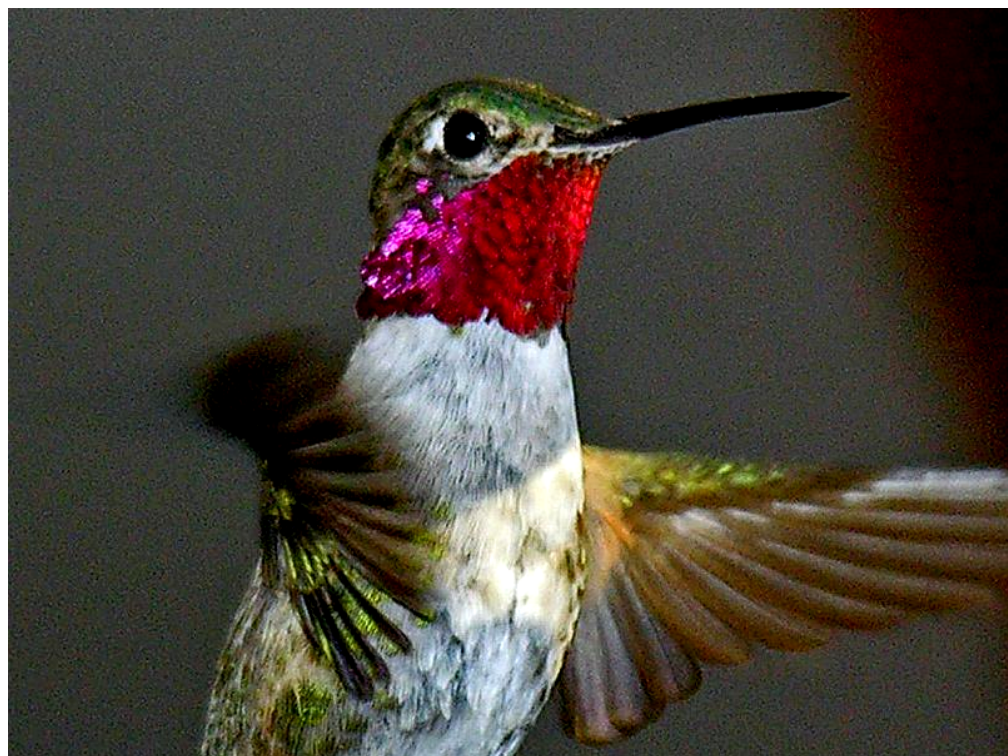
—Lu Chi

Eternal totems vortical descend
in timeless voice of sky
penetrate ambrosial 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
earth elements burn
brightly
with trees and stars

Mute music of tomorrow
in fiery seeds from above
Presence 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 circle together
celebrate your song

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



Happy Now

(for Hanh)

Jesus told
That happiness you seek
the Kingdom of God
is always present within you

Buddha told
That which you seek
is already present
from the very beginning

Perfect just as it is

Bright Presence That
at the Heart we are now

Rest here
upon each mindful breath

All good
Happy now



Celebration

My 75th year.
Good news!
Doc sez
"You have prostate of
45 year old man."
Bad news!
"Have penis of
95 year old man."
Happy still.



Praise

I am eighty years
here upon sweet Mother Earth.
Sun and Moon give me breath.
Fill old body with light.
Trees and birds sing their praise.
Great joy being here
among the ancient stars.



Delight

As to our fortuitous cosmic
"goldilocks comfort zone"
it's still always too hot
or too cold
notwithstanding this perfect
Autumn breeze



Being Here

Now is the time to enter in
Now is the time to be
Timeless mind awake
Selfless ground being itself

That boundless whole
Embraces all the worlds
Diaphanous Spring rainbow
Resolves in starry night

No need to fear it
No need to fix it
Let it be as it is
Perfect as it is

All that arises cool Summer rain
Absent yesterday and tomorrow
Absent self and other
Always present being here

All that arises breath on Autumn wind
Vast clear light mind awake
Embraces everything at once

Bright presence I Am
All of it sweet roses
In Winter's light

As it is already present
Arise and enter in
As happiness itself
For all living things



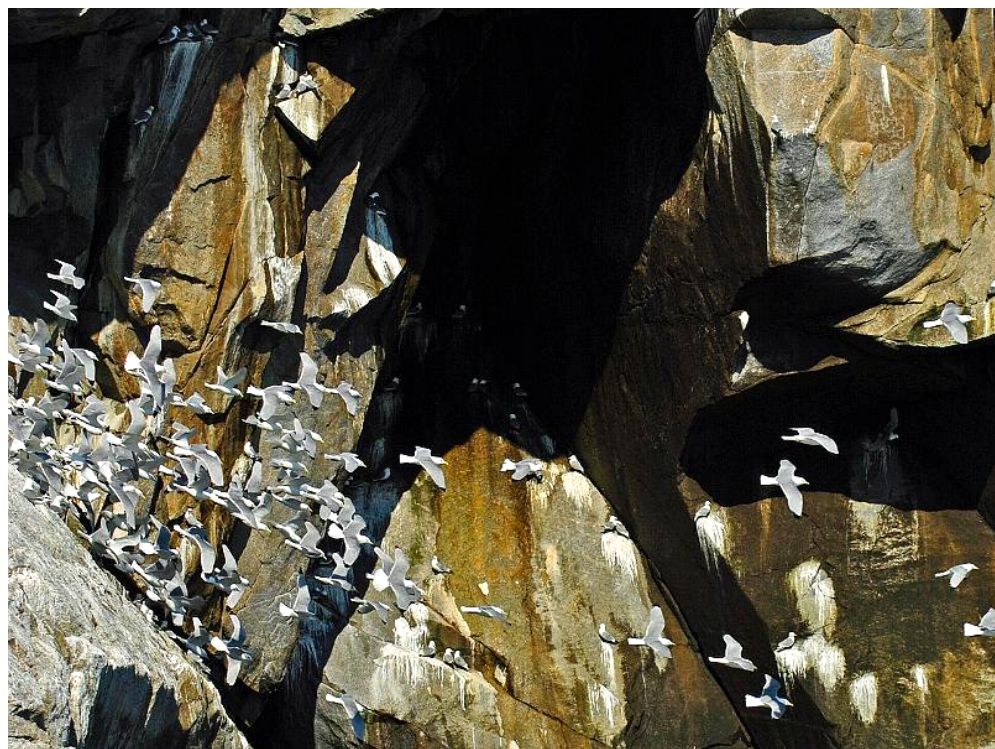
Happiness Itself

From timeless awareness we arise
Vast boundless whole being itself
Great gift consumes us all in joy
No beginning and no end

Random quantum dice grounded at last
Stuff is more than the sum of its parts
All connected nonlocal nothing at all
Bright presence of That at the Heart

Selfless song great love binds the worlds
Gravitas perfect space we are now
Fearless mind awake soars inward
Sings harmless happiness itself

Now that you know
Arise from the ashes
And do some good
It's like coming home



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

We are lived everywhere
at once



Invictus

Spirit breath rises
and falls in my belly
At the heart I rest
in unborn secret space
where wakeful dreams
in love are born



Horse Medicine

Wind Horse at speed.
You brought us up
from hungry steppes
in every dimension
of our sacred earth.

Now at polo
in racing wind
we're together again.
Don't fade away.

Swift precious pony
you have always been
my life.









