



# KING AMOUR

Jack Foley

*Argotist Ebooks*

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This book is a collection of new and old work. “King Amour,” “Litanies of Satan,” and “Turning Forty” appeared in my book, *Exiles*. “Litanies of Satan” also appeared in *Poems for the Millennium, Volume 3*, edited by Jerome Rothenberg and Jeffrey C. Robinson. “The Skeleton’s Defense of Carnality,” “Portrait at Sixty” and “Forty Times for Forty Years” appeared in *Greatest Hits 1974-2003*. “The Skeleton’s Defense of Carnality” is inscribed on a tile on Addison Street in Berkeley and appeared in the anthology documenting Addison Street’s poetry. “Fragment for Fran” and “Fifty” appeared in my book, *Adrift*. “Coda” appeared in *Ash on an Old Man’s Sleeve*. “Eddy Lang” appeared on Al Young’s website. Everything else in the book is previously unpublished.

# KING AMOUR

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

This book is haunted by history, both my own and the history of the time in which I have lived. These poems range widely. The earliest were written when I was in my twenties; the latest as I near seventy. The poems have not been arranged in chronological order, but each poem has been given a date—sometimes exact, at other times an approximation. Stylistic strategies are multiple. They suggest that my understanding of what constitutes a “poem” also ranges widely (though the book does not offer my “complete” stylistic range):

*J'aime les nuages, les nuages qui passent...*  
As for poetry:..  
It gave me something to do...

“Style is the man,” observed Sainte-Beuve; in this case, *styles* approximate the author’s distressingly multiple understanding of consciousness. While I understand why some people believe in “development,” I find such a notion less than convincing. I don’t think anyone ever “comes of age.” To quote from a poem which is not in the book:

As you are complexly selved  
so you are complexly old  
various ages manifesting  
none wholly dead until all die

Here is fifty years of work. I have called it “King Amour,” but, remembering the etymology of the word “verse,” I might have called it simply “turning.”

### THE CHOO-CHOO TRAIN STARTS UP

one shoe  
one shoe  
one shoe  
wan choo  
wan choo  
wan choo  
wan choo  
want you  
want you  
want you  
want you want you want you want you want you want you  
one shoe  
one shoe  
one shoe  
wan choo  
wan choo  
wan choo

# CHARMES

'...here

in the sun - -

nothingness

gathers

what? of it wet roll come &

what? of it wet roll come &

eat -ting

wheel

at

what?

•

the rain

it rains

•

carriag

beautiful it moves & answers

where?

in?



II

The ALL

123

2

1

32

1

3

3

59 4 3 8 6

7

1

2 5

3

0

1

3 2

123  
2  
1  
32  
1  
3

3

59 4 3 8  
77  
1  
2 5  
3

0

1

3 2

32: my age, forwards & backwards

### III

randy belly • look & come • there are clouds in the - -

•

hardly the ice • ends

•

folding lines

quiet is the

•

cross-ing the

crossing toss-

crossed

IV

rake under some be silt      dark render dack      -fog-  
linger (look -sop-      sigh in marvel      almond medium      un m

Dream .

Drift .

Bender (ing)

---

suckle

some

V

moment to      undo      in andro

(which is the inundation there is to)

-bone halve what-

pick

Telling So Whitely

---

bending over the in the the  
that

birds 'spire and spear'

those blues utters leaves utters black barleycorn

---

berries &

VII

sphincter •

torn in •

tacitate •

*be*

*bold* •••

Spelling

Wind

Razor

•

“Silence I come

Upon”

## VIII

Frontly!

(... he's back)

IX

BLACK SHEEP!

He began to say to say to say to say. I am. back from a walk. I shall be.  
back from a walk. back what she. to say. said. was.

I am. am back. am. back. back back. black backening. halt shove.  
or back.

I am. she. back. she.  
am. am. back. she. back.

---

loose.

In the forest blackening.  
sponge. (or back.)

---

she began to sail all

weigh.



X

STILL

given take      log runner      tell - -

Look.              & Throws.

Screens.      This rival.      Screams.

IN

ECHO

WHEELS

---

shove head tonner bone suck

DARKLING NOW THE DAY GOES . . .

strut & trade

who relegate!

-here!- with another page of m

anuscript

to add to •

'to silence the sway in my . . .

COLD GULLS IN

cloudy looks (look

(physical violence of)

portent in RIVEREND

marvelous utterance

of.

something lined &

AMPLE

(phenol veins in) :

---

Drone •

---

WORD UPON WORD OF

NOTHING

(1972)

## KING AMOUR

—I was told the story of a rat. This rat died after 3 days of breathing in the exhaust emissions from the cars which passed on the Champs-Élysées.

thinking

of you(r)—con

stantly, ob

sessively, dis

turbing

everything—

had I remembered to ask you?—

Leaving, she bit his hand—

On his way to **Honor**'s tent **Desire** is glad to have found help so soon but sad that the great **King Amour** has so many enemies and that the **Lady Sweet Grace** is being held captive. At **Honor**'s tent he has dismounted, removed his hat, and is down on one knee. (Note that his horse is also bowing its head.) **Honor** is emerging from the tent, his barons behind him. (These are **Renown** and **Valor**.) **Desire** greets the general respectfully, then reports that, alas, one of **King Amour**'s most faithful servants, **Coeur**, has been captured by the infamous **Lord Sorrow**, who has been in league with the notorious **Lady Dalliance**! (Again the scene is bright with color.)

I remember (he said) every inch of

where we walked—words we

spoke— Lucienne ("light" –

infinite

longing—

She said: Don't **TOUCH** me!

## SILENCES

"I do not see them here but after DEATH  
God knows I know the faces I shall see!  
Each one a murdered self, with low last breath  
'I am thyself—what hast thou done to me?'  
'And I—and I—thyself' (lo! Each one saith)  
'And *thou* thyself to all eternity!"

From their central European homeland

the Celts continued to carry out their raiding and migrations from the time of their invasion of northern Italy and the sack of Rome in 400-390 B.C. By 279 B.C., Celts were making for the sanctuary of Delphi and driving into eastern Europe and beyond to set up what was to become the Galatian kingdom in Anatolia (one chieftain was buried with his chariot equipment in a re-used Hellenistic chamber tomb in Bulgarian Thrace). Celtic mercenaries also served in foreign armies—in 368 B.C. in Syracuse and in 274 B.C. in Egypt, where a well-preserved Celtic shield was found in the desert sand. Successive immigrations into the British Isles took place from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century onwards, and trade established further connections. The Celtic threat to Massilia led to the Roman annexation of the southern Gaulish province in 121 B.C., and the uncertainty and impermanence of Celtic coalitions and alliances,

coupled with the mobility inherent in populations in which pastoralism was gaining ascendancy, made them uneasy neighbors for the Romans. The circumstances of the movement southwards of the Cimbri and Teutones from the Baltic area soon after 120 B.C., the subsequent move of the southern German Helvetii into Switzerland and their threatened mass-migration thence in 58 B.C., and the move of the northern Suebi south-east to the Rhine, are all well known as the prelude to Caesar's Gallic campaigns and the final extension of Roman rule into barbarian Europe.

Rossetti walked through the long London streets, disconsolate—

orgasm/presence  
orgasm as a  
substitute  
for presence—

Amongst Jesus' friends and disciples, stunned as they were by the appalling outcome of the journey to Jerusalem, there spread after a few days the news of his resurrection and reappearance. The impression of this news on such souls and in such a time can never be more than partially echoed in the sensibilities of a late mankind. It meant the actual fulfillment of the entire Apocalyptic of that Magian springtime—the end of the present aeon marked by the ascension of the redeemed Redeemer, the second Adam, the Saoshyant, Enosh, Barnasha or whatever other name man attached to "Him,"—into the light-realm of the Father. And therewith the foretold future, the new world-aeon, "the Kingdom of Heaven," became immediately present. **They felt themselves at the decisive point in the history of redemption.**

(The imagination seems to work—or *my* imagination seems to work—by the perception of imperfect analogies—)

The way in which popular songs tell you—subliminally & sometimes not subliminally—to remember them. Subliminal: "I'll be loving you—*always*." Unsubliminal: You *must* remember this," "you *forgot* to remember"

How can we  
"speak"  
to one another—  
what is  
"between" us—  
(words  
or  
looks?)

*you gotta hickey?*  
*oh that was SO*

**GROSS—**

a dialectic of presence & absence—the figure of the mother ("figurations" of body)

at 43  
she has grown  
regressive—  
her wish:

to be thought of as a  
“child”—

“No, I don’t have children” (Once I have identified a woman with the figure of the mother her absence becomes) “I have nieces”

to be a flower / to be absolutely identical with oneself—

**For this reason Being must be experienced anew from the bottom up and in all the breadth of its possible essence if we are to set our historical being-there to work in a historical way.** “Consider the lilies of the field” means: “Give no heed to riches or poverty, for both fetter the soul to cares of his world.” “Man cannot serve both God and Mammon”—by Mammon is meant the *whole* of actuality. When wealth affrighted him, when the primitive community in Jerusalem—which was a strict Order and not a socialist club—rejected ownership, it was the direct opposite of “social” sentiment that moved them. Their conviction was, not that the visible state of things was all, but that it was nothing: that it rested not on an appreciation of comfort in this world, but on *unreserved contempt for it...*

To outsiders, the question of who held power over movies was a simple one: it was the men who made them, the balding little men in dark double-breasted suits—Laemmle, Fox, Zukor, Goldwyn, Louis B. Mayer and a few others—who peered mildly at the camera in photographs from the 1920s, hardly noticeable alongside visiting royalty or one of their stars. No one who feared or contested their power, however, would have been fooled by such diffident poses. Behind those affable masks, lurked ruthless calculating minds, vast ambitions and imperial life styles; palatial mansions, chauffeured limousines, private tennis courts, million-dollar incomes. These men were the moguls whose daily commands shaped the national consciousness.

In Cézanne’s  
painting  
two old men at a table  
bend over their  
cards—  
“For better luck you’ll have to wait till winter”

these words  
equivalent  
to what I *cannot*  
say—

distance—always  
“I love you”  
always—  
it is the beloved now who “travels”—

wild geese & swans—  
mallards—

loons & spoonbills—  
grebes—night-herons—cormorants—

You can die only once, and whether death is as weighty to you as Mount T'ai or as light  
as a feather  
depends  
upon the REASON  
for which  
you  
die—

Ssu-ma Ch'ien, "Letter to Jen An"

*And J— had her R— story too. J—, it seems, knew T— before R—, just friends, not lovers, etc.  
R— was "terribly jealous" ("and she had no reason to be"). J— came out of the water. "I tried  
to be friendly." R— ignored her, wouldn't  
respond, wouldn't **speak**  
hatred  
burning  
out of her silence*

(and in this heat  
to maintain  
"distinctions")

"Sound-conscious" literature, as Daniel Boorstin termed it,  
writing

inviting

"memorization"— (the "chaos" of history is mirrored  
by the "chaos" of the poem!)

(time dissolving—fading—uncertain—)

*About to be invaded by the 5<sup>th</sup> grade! Not looking forward to it. Maybe they won't come. 8<sup>th</sup>  
grade a dream—that period was cut a little short—*

## STRANGERS

*And now I draw the conclusions:*

There is a plurality of prime  
symbols. It is the depth-experience  
through which the world *becomes*,  
through which perception extends  
itself to world.

(...The Faustian soul—whose being  
consists in the overcoming of the  
visible, whose feeling is loneliness  
and whose yearning is infinity...)

who goes there?  
where is the bottle?  
what is the name of that tall hungarian?  
I seem to remember the scent of mothballs  
when there are two there are generally  
several more who are lurking about in the  
vicinity.  
Al had a terrible day at the shipyards.  
I hope that one of us finally arrives  
at the realm  
of the triple  
changer.

His name was Arthur Helps. *And does he?*

—He spoke of his old friend, who had contracted AIDS.

[why should I attack **literature**  
to an audience of **illiterates?**]

Clear autumn—

*vision is boundless!*—

It seems that there is someone over there, in that fold of the hill—

Clad in creepers, with a belt of mistletoe—

How

is it possible to speak to you?

We stand

in different dimensions if we stand at all—you

in that darkness on the “other side” (flow into it!) What is it?

“The bareness of the mind the glitter of certain states”—

Dusk. What I can see of the sky is gray. Colors darkening. Everything failing.

Hope is inseparable from Delusion (Love)

On m’a dit l’histoire d’un rat (peut-être un rat américain, un rat touriste,

je n’sais pas) qui est mort après trois jours d’aspirer des fumées des voitures qui marchent le long  
des Champs-Élysées

I wash my hair every day (love) that seems excessive

You’re very opinionated. And you always blame the other person.

**Burke’s the butcher,**

**Hare’s the thief!**

### **ALVIN & DALILAH**

*It was*

*Al & Dal*

*Al & Dal*

*Each was the other’s*

*all-in-all*

*Al had a pal in Dal*

*It was Al & Dal*

*Dal Et Al*

*Dal was a regular Wall*

*Street Gal*

*Al said I love you*

*love you*

*gal*

*They entered a union*

*conjugal*

*Now Dal had dough*

*But Al had no*



*Which was the cause of a certain row  
Cause Al had a troop of debts to sow  
And he sowed them faster than RKO*

*It was Al VS. Dal  
Dal SUEDE Al  
Al got another gal to pal  
They ended their union  
                                  conjugal  
And that is the end  
of the tal'  
I tal*

**Burke's the butcher, Hare's the thief!**

In the

Nine Songs

the typical form is this: first the shaman (a man if the deity is female, a woman if the deity is male) sees the Spirit descending and goes out to meet it, riding in an equipage sometimes drawn by strange or mythical creatures. In the next part of the song the shaman's meeting with the Spirit (a sort of mantic honeymoon) is over. The Spirit has proved fickle and the shaman wanders about love-lorn, waiting in vain for the lover's return. Between these portions may have come

the

main ecstatic dance—

in the basins of the Yangtze and Han rivers—

after leaving this plain of sighs the three companions come to a forest. They cross in a day's riding—

good harvests, immunity from floods, and so on—

The accident of history documents these European population movements of the late first millennium B.C., supplying dates and naming the protagonists, as with the Sea Peoples of a thousand years before, and again with the migrations of the northern peoples of the post-Roman world that began some 500 years later. They are a few historically recorded incidents among a mass of anonymous movements of peoples, who in prehistory can be identified only in terms of archaeological cultures. Yet they are important, for they indicate that the state of flux and shifting populations which the archaeological evidence so often implies was a reality in the ancient barbarian world of Europe and Asia. So far as Europe is concerned, temporary stability was achieved over parts of the Continent only through the imposition of Roman rule; it relapsed again into the ancient pattern of barbarian folk-movements upon the relaxation of this alien authority.

—Seven years passed, and during that time Rossetti began to think with pain of the aspirations as a poet which he had himself renounced, and to cast backward glances at the book which he had buried in his wife's coffin. That book contained the only perfect copy of his poems, other copies being either incomplete or unrevised; and it is hardly to be wondered at that he asked himself at

length if it could not be regained. Was it not his duty to the living, to himself, and perhaps even to God, to recover and publish the poems? According to his own account given to me twelve years afterwards, the preparations were endless before the work could be begun. But at length the licence of the Home Secretary was obtained, the faculty of the Consistory Court was granted, and one night, seven and a half years after the burial, a fire was built by the side of the grave of Rossetti's wife in Highgate Cemetery, the grave was opened, the coffin was raised to the surface, and the buried book was removed.

The volume was not much the worse for wear!—

Why should just a few hours make such a difference? Am I so lonely? Is your sense of presence so strong?

how many hours—lonely—  
spent in parks—on benches—the light fading—looking—

to fall into the **DELIRIUM**  
which we call love  
is the mind's attempt  
to *know* itself  
not by the way of reason  
by the way of  
**EROS**—

Rossetti returned about eleven o'clock. He found his rooms filled with the odor of laudanum. His wife was breathing oddly, unconscious on her bed. He called a doctor, who saw at once that she had taken an overdose of her accustomed sleeping draught. Other doctors were summoned...

After lingering for hours without recovering consciousness for a moment (and therefore without offering Rossetti a word of explanation) towards seven o'clock in the morning

*she*  
*died*

(a dialectic of presence & absence—  
the "figure of the  
mother")—

sweet

arrows  
drawn  
to us—

+

The dark blue of the night sky is yielding to the radiance of the sun rising just behind

the dark-green trees of the hilly horizon fast brightening along its entire length—  
—Desire has been riding riding riding riding

riding riding riding riding

riding all night to find help for Coeur!—

(1986)

# LITANIES OF SATAN

—Charles Baudelaire

*O toi, le plus savant et le plus beau des Anges...*

O Thou, most knowing and most beautiful of Angels,  
God betrayed by fate, denied praise,

O Satan, take pity on my long misery! [poverty]

O Prince of Exile, wronged,  
Who, vanquished, stands up again (stronger!)

O Satan, take pity on my long misery! [poverty]

You who know everything, great king of the underground,  
Familiar healer of human agonies,

O Satan, take pity on my long misery! [poverty]

You who, even to lepers, to damned pariahs,  
Teach through **love** the taste for Paradise,

O Satan, take pity on my long misery! [poverty]

You, who begot Hope—that charming madwoman!—  
On your old and powerful lover, Death,

O Satan, take pity on my long misery! [poverty]

You who give to the outlaw a look so high and calm and bold  
It damns the people *beneath* the scaffold,

O Satan, take pity on my long misery! [poverty]

You who know in what corners of envious lands  
The jealous **GOD** hid precious stones,

O Satan, take pity on my long misery! [poverty]

You whose clear eye knows the deep arsenals  
Where sleep, shrouded, the people of metals,

O Satan, take pity on my long misery! [poverty]

You, whose vast hand hides the precipices  
From the sleepwalker wandering on the edge of edifices,

O Satan, take pity on my long misery! [poverty]

You who make supple again the old bones  
Of the drunkard out late and trampled by horses,

O Satan, take pity on my long misery! [poverty]

You who, to console frail man who suffers,  
Teach us to mix saltpeter and sulphur,

O Satan, take pity on my long misery! [poverty]

You who place your mark, O subtle accomplice,  
On the brow of the pitiless, vile Croesus,

O Satan, take pity on my long misery! [poverty]

You who put in the eyes and heart of girls  
The cult of the wound and the love of rags,

O Satan, take pity on my long misery! [poverty]

Staff of exiles, lamp of inventors,  
Confessor of the hanged and of conspirators,

O Satan, take pity on my long misery! [poverty]

Adoptive father of those who in His black and angry guise  
God the Father drove from the Earthly Paradise,

O Satan, take pity on my long misery! [poverty]

### PRAYER

Glory and praise to you, Satan, in the heights  
Of the sky where you reigned, and in the depths  
Of Hell, where, vanquished, you dream in silence!  
Allow my soul to rest near you one day,  
  under the Tree of Knowledge,  
At the hour when, on your brow  
Like a new Temple / *its* branches

**GROW!**

(1986)

## TWO CHORUSES FROM THE MUSICAL PLAY, *TOM JONES*

1.

AT THE END OF ACT ONE

Lady Bellaston fixed her eyes on Sophia whilst she spoke these words. To which that poor young lady, having her face overspread with blushes and confusion, answered, in a stammering voice, 'I am sure, madam, I shall always think the honour of your ladyship's company—' 'I hope, at least,' cries Lady Bellaston, 'I interrupt no business.' —'No, madam,' answered Sophia, 'our business was at an end. Your ladyship may be pleased to remember, I have often mentioned the loss of my pocket-book, which this gentleman having very luckily found, was so kind to return to me with the bill in it.'

'And is it possible, sir' said Jones (*witless*) 'that you can have resided here from that day to this?' (*spread it out among them*) 'O no, sir,' answered the gentleman 'I have been a great traveller and there are few parts of Europe with which I am not acquainted.' (*a great amen*) 'I have not sir,' cried Jones, 'the assurance to ask it of you now. (*bird is singing*) Indeed it would be cruel, after so much breath as you have already spent. (*ye cannot enter*) But you will give me leave to wish for some further opportunity of hearing the excellent observations which a man of your sense and knowledge of the world must have made in so long a course of travels.' (*nearer my god to*) 'Indeed, young gentleman,' answered the stranger, 'I will endeavour to satisfy your curiosity on this head likewise (*the love that loved me*) as far as I am able.' Jones attempted fresh apologies, but was prevented, (*at the earliest tide*) and while he and Partridge sat (*on the san francisco hills*) with greedy and impatient ears, the stranger proceeded.

the language became something other than

layers of stone

lift (*lime-*) one (*stone*) shrine (*shine*) mirrors (*mirrors*)

instruments of space

who is called "Invictus"

the coastline of Greece is the most varied of the Mediterranean, the most indented,

they began: they turned out in ships, sight and contour, for sign of  
rain

manifested himself by clouds, thunder, lightning, and storms. The groves

which crowned the dewy summits became his sanctuary, and hence they were marked by  
rude altars, rarely by temples, because the sites were too remote from the haunts of men.

The sanctuaries were often associated with near-by springs and  
wells, reminiscent of the older worship of the gods of the underground waters;  
and these waters figured in the cult of the rain-god as another sign of his  
presence

the pitiless sun    the crops  
dying

Mr. Western proceeded to search the whole house, but to as little purpose as when he had disturbed poor Mrs. Waters. He returned disconsolate into the kitchen, where, he found,

resurrected their greeting

and resolved to make court to the young lady, when she arose; for he had now (he said) discovered that she was no other than Madam Jenny Cameron herself.

The sun (for he keeps very good hours at this time of year) had been some time retired to rest, when Sophia rose greatly refreshed by her sleep; which, short as it was, nothing but her extreme fatigue could have occasioned; for tho' she had told her maid, and perhaps herself too, that she was perfectly easy, yet it is certain her mind was a little affected with that malady which is attended with all the restless symptoms of a fever, and is perhaps the very distemper which physicians mean (if they mean anything) by the 'fever on the spirits'

We build a cage in the corner of the basement. We line the copper wire walls with sheet iron on the inside, in order to reduce to a minimum the contact between inside and outside air. We leave just a few cracks or holes to admit air for breathing. We sit down in the completely darkened cage and allow our eyes to accustom themselves to the darkness.

Over the course of approximately half an hour, the blackness gives way to an indefinable glimmer

'Pugh!' answered the husband. 'This is nothing. Dost think, because you have seen some great ladies rude and uncivil to persons below them, that none of them know how to behave themselves when they come before their inferiors? I think I know people of fashion when I see them. I think I do. Did not she call for a glass of water when she came in? another sort of women would have called for a dram: you know they would. If she be not a woman of very great quality, sell me for a fool; and, I believe, those who buy me will have a bad bargain. Now, would a woman of her quality travel without a footman, unless upon some such extraordinary occasion?' 'Nay, to be sure, husband,' cries she, 'you know these matters better than I, or most folk.' 'I think I do know something,' said he. 'To be sure,' answered the wife, 'the poor little heart looked so piteous, when she sat down in the chair, I protest I could not help having a compassion for her, almost as much as if she been a poor body. But what's to be done, husband? If an she be a rebel, I suppose you intend to betray her up to the court. Well, she's a sweet-tempered, good-humoured lady, be she what she will, and I shall hardly refrain from crying when I hear she is hanged or beheaded.' 'Pooh!' answered the husband,—'But as to what's to be done it is not so easy a matter to determine. I hope, before she goes away, we shall have the news of a battle: for if the Chevalier should get the better, she may gain us interest at court, and make our fortunes without betraying her.' 'Why that's true,' replied the wife; 'and I heartily hope she will have it in her power. Certainly she's a sweet good lady; it would go horribly against me to have her come to any harm.' 'Pooh,' cries the landlord, 'Women are always so tender-hearted. Why you would not harbour rebels, would you?' 'No, certainly,' answered the wife; 'and as for betraying her, come what will on't, nobody can blame us. It is what anybody would do in our case.'

made many millions of men travel ceaselessly from east to west and from south to north  
has driven the white people of Europe to the ends of the Earth

& as for the birds, a great many of them move from one place to another

I humbly beg your pardon, said the parson, I assure your worship I meant no such matter

tempted for a long time by the  
cloud-moving wind  
filled with a strong  
desire to wander

all night I have sat up & thought of that poem  
getting more lifeless by the moment  
thought is a calamity, a violence  
“give heed, my son, to my agitations”  
her name was Janet Morisoun, the name  
God gave her  
“concatations”—well, what does *that* mean?

to feel again the  
wind in my —  
new  
voices

2.

SQUARE & THWACKUM, alternating:

hasten him submit himself to the pleasure  
chasten him (crush him)  
thrash him to discourse so wisely  
quash him  
give their opinion (quash him) nor afraid to own  
behind the scenes (chasten him)  
myself at liberty thoroughly kindled is soon no doubt  
refuse him anything (chasten him)  
the man of hill  
in his chamber reading (chasten him)  
heard no comment somewhat too hasty & violent aunt  
would heaven give thee arms sweet gravity of countenance  
thrash him on account of another world and its effects  
I find, cries the old gentleman, you have a very just opinion  
WHIP HIM, man  
he sighed bitterly & grunted at every step thrash him  
he was not carried off to bed till long after



extravagant diversions

WHIP HIM

guilty of a falsehood once suffered to close her eyes

the whole succeeding night he lay

by some condemned as “unnatural”

mother more satisfaction, warmed her heart (quash him)

present anxiety

one so gentle or sweet-tempered appear trivial at least pardon

imagine so well as you

many contending passions were raised chasten him

have I not reason to think

the whip of candour and true understanding

WHIP HIM

this ill success in our profession solely owning

displeasure the colonel

set forward with history chasten him all these plays or “pretendings”

KNOWLEDGE ASSURANCE ACCEPTANCE BEAUTY

procul, O procul este, profani (chasten him)

(quash him) proclamat vates, totoque absistite luco

(chasten him)

(1970s)

## THE SKELETON'S DEFENSE OF CARNALITY

Truly I have lost weight, I *have*  
lost weight,  
grown lean in love's defense,  
in love's defense grown grave.  
It was concupiscence  
that brought me to the state:  
all bone and a bit of skin  
to keep the bone within.

Flesh is no heavy burden  
for one possessed of little  
and accustomed to its loss.  
I lean to love, which leaves me lean  
till lean turn into lack.

A wanton bone, I sing my song  
and travel where the bone is blown  
and extricate true love from lust  
as any man of wisdom must.

Then wherefore should I rage  
against this pilgrimage  
from gravel unto gravel?  
Circuitous I travel  
from love to lack  
and lack to lack,  
from lean to lack  
and back.

(1960s)

## CONTRA ACADEMICUM, GENTILLIES

She whispered, saying *Love*  
and so I loved  
and layed a lovely time  
She laughed and said *I do*  
and so I did  
and did she too  
She said *O heartless one, O wretch*  
because I strayed away a stretch  
because I would not stay

I hung my hark upon a limb  
I would not listen to her whim  
I rumbled like a cloud and roared  
For forty nights I poured and poured  
Until she said *Re-turn*  
And so I did and made a 'bow  
And layed her high and layed her low  
And left her then (a lass!)

She said *Come back* but I said *No*

I left her weeping on the grass  
And softly said *ado, adoo*  
*For who can join a Jill and Jack?*  
I turned and saw:  
And told the bundle on my back,  
There will be other loves to lack

(1960s)

## INGEBORG BACHMANN AND PAUL CELAN

Ingeborg Bachmann  
*Ingeborg Bachmann*  
And Paul Celan  
*And Paul Celan*  
Problematical woman  
*Problematical woman*  
Problematical man  
*Problematical man*  
Had an affair that rang their bells  
*Had an affair that rang their bells*  
Though Paul was married to someone else  
*Though Paul was married to someone else*  
Though Paul was married, their love was a tide  
*Though Paul was married, their love was a tide*  
Till Paul committed suicide  
*Till Paul committed suicide*  
This sad story we tell and tell  
*This sad story we tell and tell*  
They might be in heaven they might be in hell  
*They might be in heaven they might be in hell*  
They loved each other—and they ran and ran—  
*They loved each other—and they ran and ran—*  
Ingeborg Bachmann and Paul Celan  
*Ingeborg Bachmann and Paul Celan*  
“Wherever we turn in the storm of roses,  
Wherever we turn in the storm of roses  
*the night is lit up by thorns, and the thunder*  
*the night is lit up by thorns, and the thunder*  
*of leaves, once so quiet within the bushes,*  
*of leaves, once so quiet within the bushes,*  
*rumbling at our heels.*  
rumbling at our heels.”

(2010)

## ASCENSEUR POUR L'ÉCHAFAUD / ELEVATOR TO THE GALLOWS

who writes  
*who writes*  
of the sadness of lovers  
*of the sadness of lovers*  
of their  
*of their*  
loneliness when apart  
*loneliness when apart*  
Jeanne Moreau  
*Jeanne Moreau*  
in this magnificent film  
*in this magnificent film*  
wanders the night  
*wanders the night*  
streets of Paris  
*streets of Paris*  
finding  
*finding*  
nothing  
*nothing*  
her love is sincere  
*her love is sincere*  
but her punishment  
*but her punishment*  
later  
*later*  
is worse than her  
*is worse than her*  
lover's  
*lover's*  
Miles Davis  
*Miles Davis*  
watched the film  
*watched the film*  
with those deep deep eyes  
*with those deep deep eyes*  
and named  
*and named*  
the nothing  
*the nothing*  
she felt  
*she felt*  
as he leapt  
*as he leapt*

beyond  
*beyond*

the frenzy of bebop

to the pure  
*to the pure*  
sound  
*sound*

of the heart of the world  
*of the heart of the world*

in a woman's  
*in a woman's*

longing  
*(longing)*

(2008)

## PIAF

Black dress...  
Luminous smile...  
Sparrow...  
The tiny woman  
Gathers life to her as she sings  
One is drawn into  
The vortex of her consciousness  
Her songs express  
Obsession, violent love,  
Self-delusion so intense  
It is an alternative reality  
We long to share—  
Her marvelous eyes  
And that incredible, bone-revealing voice

(2010)

## EDDIE LANG

This is Blind Wille Dunn talking to ya (G7)  
Nobody else (Am) you can see my  
Nimble fingers even if (F major)  
I can't see yours what happened  
What happened I'll (E9) give ya  
The straight dope (C major) I got no  
Reason to lie Eddie I sd Eddie (Em)  
I don wancha (C major) to go into that  
God damn hospital you know (C major 7)  
People die (G7) in hospitals Jesus Blind  
(Wch is what he called me) (Am) Crosby  
Said to do it and (E9) I tell ya Crosby  
Knows what he's talking about and Kitty (Cm)  
Sd it was ok so why (G7) should I  
Worry Christ (D7) nobody worries about tonsils  
Gimme (A major) the racing form I wanna  
Pick a winner (G7)  
And (I Am) (I Am) (I Am)  
He died

(2009)



## LAMENT

Leslie Scalapino  
Dennis Hopper  
gone to their maker  
proving that dust  
is only dust  
no matter what or what's—  
Dennis Hopper  
Leslie Scalapino  
actor and poet  
we are all dust  
even Hopper  
even Scalapino  
no matter what or what's  
to this grave truth  
we make obeisance:  
mortal are we  
like Leslie  
like Dennis:  
Close their eyes

(2010)

## CONSTRUCTION 10/9/78 (COLUMBUS DAY)

that absence-  
void

by  
which  
sickness

shows  
itself—  
*filled*

with  
nothing—  
consciousness

vacating  
consciousness—

these  
are the  
conditions  
I  
sit at my desk,  
writing

“an entity  
which places  
its own  
being  
in question”

*strong wind  
and the smell of  
ashes*

*What lights in January*  
Tell him that

The mind  
seeing nothing but  
fatigue ahead of it (*oh I don't know, never mind it*)  
catches in that go-ahead  
minding nothing but its headways—

The head  
lifts out of watery

*something  
not coming, pressed*

into silence, *wishing*  
silence, mastery,

Writing  
*is* that go-ahead—

Columbus  
Day the great  
beginner (but there are no  
beginnings only a series of  
afterwards  
and after *words* what? obviously: silence  
The REST (otium) is silence,  
I had hopes once to rest  
in a great house on a great  
peak but there are no great  
peaks (abstraction) here only  
Columbus  
day the great  
beginning words (obstruction)  
begin to repeat in my  
fatigue, my great haste,  
anger, —and circumstance,  
bring

## CHORUS: CANCER *for two voices*

The beautiful young woman has contracted cancer.  
The young man will die of it soon.  
This child has cancer.  
This middle-aged man has cancer.  
Cancer is fully democratic in its destructive impulses.  
It is willing to kill anyone.  
You or I can get it  
Even if we do not smoke cigarettes.  
Even if we try to take care of ourselves with exercise and good diet  
Some cancers can  
Be cured others can  
Not.  
In the past few weeks I have heard  
Of two people—two friends—who  
Have pancreatic cancer—  
In  
Curable.  
The friends are of different ages.  
Cancer kills  
Anyone  
Cancer is willing to consider  
Death at any time in any circumstance  
The brilliant poet  
Can die of cancer  
The great musician  
Can die of cancer  
The dull uncle who bores everyone at wedding receptions  
Can die of cancer.  
You can die of it.  
I can die of it.  
Timor mortis  
Conturbat me  
Cancer is furious if you try to ignore it  
Cancer insists on your full and respectful attention  
Cancer is a magazine to which everyone submits  
Cancer is a tune you can't get rid of  
Cancer is full of the love  
Of everyone it touches  
(Loves you to death)  
Some cancers can  
Be cured others can  
Not.  
Can  
Not.

(2010)

## TURNING

*As he climbed the podium for a third round of applause, cellist Augustinas Vassiliaukas of the Soviet Vilnius string quartet tripped and fell on his 300-year-old instrument, shattering it, Finnish newspapers reported yesterday. The incident occurred at the Kuhmo musical festival in central Finland. The papers said there was no way of repairing the prized Ruggieri cello.*

*yes, yes, turning forty, it  
is necessary (at forty) that  
at least some kind of speech  
should come—*

An opening.  
A stirring among others.

*(The two dwarves...  
The daughter who is the mirror of the mother...)*

## SPORTS

I hit his arm a little bit and then we got some breaks and they got some breaks.

I helped him clean up the blood.

But instead, Vandeweghe had given it to Louisville, and the Cardinals were not about to let their coach, Denny Crum, become a two-time loser to his Alma Mater in the Final Four.

“When I came to Louisville, I said we’d win a national championship,” Griffith said. “I had a commitment to fulfill, and I don’t think I let many people down.”

In fact, he let no one down—

Unique creation—  
Sleek, feminine poise—

“There was no foul called,” said Vandeweghe, “but I’m not trying to use that as an excuse. He made a super defensive play and saved a basket.”

I stared at it for a while and it didn’t *do* anything.

Let us say  
Let us save your life before it is too late for us to do so

The spectacle of the great changes  
The spectacle of the great changes

Mike, at 83, has many insecurities about his masculine, adult identity. He worries excessively about rejection and humiliation within the context of a changing and a challenging intimacy.

Once when he was paying a visit to the chief of Agweh, one of the wives of the chief was brought into the house by four priestesses. Her face was bloody and her body was covered with stripes.

Each person is a network. R U?

Through the unbroken shell he held the egg against a source of bright light.

Two ways led down to it in antiquity. Both of them cut through the rock. One was a tunnel which is now obstructed. The other is still open.

The spectacle of the great changes  
Like a petrified Niagara

The causes  
of transformation—

Patterns, repetitive experiences, are rarely accidental. They betray motivations within us, whether beneficial or not.

An opening—  
A stirring among others—

Professor, Wife Gunned Down in Guatamala

Unidentified gunmen shot and killed a university economics professor and his wife yesterday as they drove towards downtown Guatamala City, officials said.

New Violence Erupts in San Salvador

At the White House, Alfred Friendly Jr., spokesman for the president's national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, said the committee's request would get "careful consideration," particularly "its relevance to the committee's role in legislative oversight."

When asked if there would be any problem in turning over the notes of the Lackland conversations, Friendly responded, "if there are any notes."

"Definitely not," Armao said.

These  
are the causes  
of transformation  
the sovereign ghosts—

I am bombarded yet  
I stand

At the back d

door the man  
who knocked said  
nothing but

the “blue deceit of sky”

becomes (he thought) a form of deceit the night falling the bird wheeling the

Which brand do you drink?

<i>Ambassador?</i>	√
<i>B &amp; L?</i>	√
<i>Ballantines?</i>	√
<i>Bell's?</i>	√
<i>Black &amp; White?</i>	√
<i>Chivas Regal?</i>	√
<i>Clan McGregor?</i>	√
<i>Cutty Sark?</i>	√
<i>Cutty 12?</i>	√
<i>Dewars White Label?</i>	√
<i>Glenlivet?</i>	√
<i>Grand MacNigh</i>	√
<i>Haig &amp; Haig?</i>	√
<i>Hudson's Bay?</i>	√
<i>Inver House?</i>	√
<i>J &amp; B?</i>	√
<i>Johnnie Walker (Black Label)?</i>	√
<i>Johnnie Walker (Red Label)?</i>	√
<i>King George IV?</i>	√
<i>Old Smuggler?</i>	√
<i>100 Pipers?</i>	√
<i>Passport?</i>	√
<i>Pinch (Haig)?</i>	√
<i>Suntory?</i>	√
<i>Teachers?</i>	√
<i>Ushers?</i>	√
<i>Vat 69?</i>	√
<i>White Horse?</i>	√

Tim (Time!) is experiencing frustration from not having any control—control over his father’s dying, control over his own life. A sense of control is significant to a feeling of well-being.

Tim had been booked for investigation of 3 counts of bus theft, but, after considerable discussion with the district attorney’s office, the charges were lowered to reflect the consensus that Tim had been taking the buses (and driving them with considerable skill) only because he *wanted* to drive a bus.

The necessity of carrying on without benefit of **SUCCESS.**

Death and dying are usually covert rather than overt topics in most families. The knowledge of death and dying is too often treated with ritualized, expected behaviors such as stoicism, or the opposite, excessive grief and sad mourning... What is needed by both the dying and the surviving family members is *access to the truth of the depth of feeling specific to each person*. And too often this is a time of respectful silence when what is most needed is open communication.

The teenage daughter of the French consul awoke one morning to the familiar wail of the air raid siren. It became suddenly clear that this was no ordinary air raid. (Hiroshima!)

“I don’t know how to hide my anger and frustration,” cried Tim.

Later in the evening Big Bird neatly coped with having a drink.

Where there is domination there must also be resistance.  
Where there is domination there must also be resistance.

An enormous slide yesterday afternoon posed a new threat to areas downstream from Mount St. Helens: the cataclysmic eruption of the volcano—which geologists say is the most violent in its 30,000 year history—began to slow—

“These clouds  
will dissipate”

As it moves east the cloud will disappear, depositing only traces of ash along the ground, or none at all.

“I didn’t want to come out,” Halicki said, “but then, I never do. Bristol had his mind made up, and he makes the decisions.”

Within moments the game was tied.

Despite his performance, Abdul-Jabbar finds no pleasure in facing the Dawkins-Jones combination. “Caldwell’s a little more mobile, but Darryl uses his strength to keep me out of certain positions. Either way, it isn’t easy,” Kareem said after annihilating both of them.

But unlike Norris, Marichal rarely threw it—only when he needed it. Norris throws it with the consistency of a man living in dread that it will be declared illegal before he goes to the mound for the next inning.

Two hundred Cuban refugees had an Air Force breakfast of scrambled eggs and grits in Florida.

A wave of terror swept Uganda’s capital, with mobs burning suspected criminals alive in the streets.

unending need  
for it to arise  
from the WORDS



the cultural move  
-language

Under warm, powder-blue skies and before a crowd of 18,217 the Oakland A's and Detroit Tigers traded shutout victories yesterday at the Coliseum, a former mausoleum turning into a place to be.

To steer the defenders off diamonds, declarer won the opening lead in dummy as East followed with the two and promptly led the ten of diamonds. East and declarer followed with low cards, and West won the Jack.

Bulging biceps and washboard stomachs.

Orser was released on his own recognizance after being booked for investigation of attempting to sell a person, conspiracy, and operating an unlicensed adoption agency.

“He was in a good deal of pain—he said he was ready to go and he showed extreme courage.”

He sat in the middle of the parking lot.  
Ho, he set out for the car.  
Bang still whammer in the teapot.

“She started telling me she knew this girl who cheated in the New York Marathon by taking the subway. And I started to tell her how easy it would be to cheat in Boston. You know how it is when you're trying to put the make on a girl. You try to impress her. I told her winning the Boston Marathon was \$100,000 in endorsements for shoes and stuff.” Meanwhile, Will Cloney, the Boston Marathon race director, said officials had watched film “taken from a dozen vantage points from a helicopter.” “She doesn't appear except crossing the finish line,” Cloney said.

“I'm full of hope,” said Hugo Landa.

Adonis: their surface, broken into a thousand thousand fantastic forms

Do you yourself drink it?  
Who usually decides which brands of blended whiskey or rye you drink?  
Which brands do you drink?  
About how many drinks or glasses of rye or blended whiskey did you have in the last 7 days?

An extra head was removed from a two-headed farmer in an “exceptionally rare” operation recently in the city of Kun-ming, the official Chinese News Agency, Xinhua, reported yesterday. The patient, Zhang Ziping, 40, had a second head protruding from the right side of his face that was about the same size as a normal head. It had hair and 12 teeth, but no fully developed eyes, mouth, or nose, the report said.

Inside the skull was a brain about the size of an egg that “did not function,” it was reported. The operation to remove the parasitic head was performed successfully in Kun-ming by Wang Damei of the Beijing Medical College, and Li Bingquan, deputy director of the Neurology Department of Kun-ming Medical College.

Zhang is deaf and cannot speak, but is mentally sound and now plans to look for girl friend to marry, he told Xinhua. He lives in a remote mountain village north-east of Kun-ming in China's Yun-nan Province.

In the air

brightness— moon there, again—

The second grade is to be identified with actual occasions for which 'presented durations' are important elements in their data, but with a limitation only to be observed in the lower moments of human experience. In such occasions the data of felt sensa, derived from the more primitive data of causal efficacy, are projected onto the contemporary 'presented locus' without any clear illustration of special regions in that locus. The past has been lifted into the present, but the vague differentiations in the past have not been transformed into any precise differentiations with the present. The enhancement of precision has not arrived.

The delicate activities of self-preservation are now becoming possible by the transference of the vague message of the past onto the more precisely discriminated regions of the presented duration. Symbolic transference is dependent upon the flashes of conceptual originality constituting life.

One reason for the philosophical difficulties over causation is that Hume, and subsequently Kant, conceived the causal nexus as, in its primary character, derived from the presupposed sequence of immediate presentations. But if we interrogate experience, the exact converse is the case; the perceptive mode of immediate presentation affords information about the percepta in the more aboriginal mode of causal efficacy.

The immanence of God gives reason for the belief that pure chaos is intrinsically impossible. At the other end of the scale, the immensity of the world negatives the belief that any state of order can be so established that beyond it there can be no progress. This belief in a final order, popular in religious and philosophic thought, seems to be due to the prevalent fallacy that all types of seriality necessarily involve terminal instances. It follows that Tennyson's phrase,

...that far-off divine event  
To which the whole creation moves,

presents a fallacious conception of the universe.

The attainment is partial, and thus there is 'disorder'; but there is some attainment, and thus there is some 'order.'

According to the ninth Category of Explanation, *how* an actual entity becomes constitutes *what* that actual entity is. This principle states that the *being* of a *res vera* is constituted by its 'becoming.' The notion of the 'green leaf' and of the 'round ball' are at the base of traditional metaphysics. They have generated two misconceptions: *one* is the concept of vacuous actuality, void of subjective experience; and the *other* is the concept of quality inherent in substance. In their proper character as high abstractions, both of these notions are of the utmost pragmatic use.

Apart from any reference to existing religions as they are, or as they ought to be, we must investigate dispassionately what the metaphysical principles, here developed, require on these points, as to the nature of God. There is nothing here in the nature of proof. There is merely the confrontation of the theoretic system with a certain rendering of the facts. But the unsystematized report upon the facts is itself highly controversial, and the system is confessedly inadequate. The deductions from it in this particular sphere of thought cannot be looked upon as more than suggestions as to how the problem is transformed in the light of that system.

Opposed elements stand to each other in mutual requirement. In every respect God and the World move conversely to each other in respect to their process. God is primordially one, namely, he is the primordial unity of relevance of the many potential forms: in the process he acquires a consequent multiplicity, which the primordial character absorbs into its own unity. The World is primordially many, namely, the many actual occasions with their physical finitude; in the process it acquires a consequent unity, which is a novel occasion and is absorbed into the multiplicity of the primordial character.

The temptation to overlook the finitude of the primordial and authentic future and therefore the finitude of temporality, or alternatively, to hold '*a priori*' that such finitude is impossible, arises from the way in which the ordinary understanding of time is constantly thrusting itself to the fore. If the ordinary understanding is right in knowing a time which is endless, and in knowing only this, it has not yet been demonstrated that it also understands this time and its 'infinity.' What does it mean to say, 'Time goes on' or 'Time keeps passing away'? What is the signification of 'in time' in general, and of the expressions 'in the future' and 'out of the future' in particular? In what sense is 'time' endless?

If everything 'good' is a heritage (against it, and yet again for it, seized upon in one's resolution) and the character of 'goodness' lies in making authentic existence possible, then the handing down of a heritage constitutes itself in resoluteness. The more authentically Dasein resolves—and this means that in anticipating death it understands itself unambiguously in terms of its ownmost distinctive possibility—the more unequivocally—less so does it do by accident—Only by the anticipation of death—Only Being-*free* for death—Stand and sit as fits your rank which was assigned to you the first day. Do not trespass—you will be turned back....And when they drew near and saw him dead they laughed from joy; but seeing Fin with his wound they began to mourn

Structure—

Or Size—

It is the mark of an imbecile  
to be always judging  
things in esthetic

terms. They ran to the door. They opened the door. The jackal entered.

which Lucienne would I seek to seize and know again? The naked amorous one flushed with ardour? Or the friend, the comrade, she who walked by my side through the long streets? And more simply still, Lucienne, the creature who bore that name, never seen elsewhere, irreplaceable? What would be most important then: the memory of having possessed her or the assurance of faithfully owning some earnest, some inimitable signature, as though an imprint of our tiny being on common space (that harsh space identical in substance with separation and

with death)? Yes, to see again in all its precision the act of smoothing the hair, or flicking a dress to smooth out the folds (merely to think of that is to want to weep aloud)

Beauty that places  
too many conditions  
upon itself  
ranges, heart-felt, into reasons—

place-names  
stun us, as if,  
(misting,)  
the darkest liars' evidence,

in bright sunlight, brighter  
resonance of  
circumstance,

appeals, holds us, darkens—

even as we  
darken

but for this  
who would have felt—

*Powerful talk!*  
when the last day comes  
will you be ready?  
she asked me, speaking rapidly—  
Overhead the air  
was shifting already  
clouds blown  
everywhichway—  
we live in  
a museum without walls (Malraux)  
a world  
without walls  
ready to change  
at a moment's notice  
the mind  
is the true shape-shifter      voices  
enter it, are amused and      ready—  
**SPEECH / COMES**  
to those who have no need  
for anything  
but air—

(1979-1980)

*yes, yes, turning forty, it  
is necessary (at forty) that  
at least some kind of speech  
should come—*

## CHORUS: FIFTY

The Irish language  
is alive and  
thriving  
in a former flax mill  
in West Belfast.

Alone.  
1-2-3-  
Anything for You.

Prosecutor Jon Goodfellow is seeking  
a first-degree murder conviction and a finding  
of special circumstance of murder during  
the commission of a robbery, which could  
result in the death penalty for Turner.  
But (said Ennix)  
Turner killed Washington  
in the heat of passion.

newspaper article  
*The Tribune*  
3/28/90

“The first blow of the hunter’s steel  
Caused the poor girl’s mind to reel  
‘Hunter, dear Hunter, what have you done?’”

on edge, waiting for Grifo to arrive, he’s late,

I may be misrepresenting the depth of your feelings towards me. But separation  
should make that clearer. We need to clarify

Blue Bayou  
Cryin’  
Desperado  
Lock Stock & Teardrops

We have come a long way (Magi)  
from what we felt  
only a short time ago

possibility at any rate  
sleeping with Dan  
*and this has coincided with your*

You must let me be

“exploratory”

Love Is A Rose  
San Antonio Rose  
Pink/Cadillac

she thought maybe the problem was she hadn't slept with him so she did that  
she said sleeping with him was  
“exploratory”

You Ought To Be Here With Me  
Be A Lion  
Ooh, Baby, Baby

*these are  
solemnities  
of light!*

this stupendous increase in mass!  
whenever he attempts to “locate” it  
the spiritual has now retired from the “outer”  
connected to the experience of *cities*  
spectator's process of association (here) in view of these changes

read, & was chilled (Call me “Johnny Church”)

At the Hop At the Hop  
the fiction of the innocence & purity of the adolescent self

what she told me she *did* / ran counter / to what she told me / she *felt*

*your presence  
floods in upon me*

It's So Easy  
Long, Long Time (you're a fuckin *queen*)  
Teardrops

The greatest gift of a garden is the restoration of the five senses.

Everyone knows to what an extent women are afflicted with nervous disorders.

During these years—both of us working at home, both of us sharing in chores  
(cooking, cleaning, splitting wood, canning, sewing)—we also raised three children.

Betty & I were married in 1919 and came to live in Edgartown, Mass.

The first strawberry shrub I ever saw was given to me as a small child by a red-cheeked boy just as I went into church with my grandmother.

Jerusalem Artichoke, Earth Apple, Canada Potato, Girasole, Wild Sunflower—  
has an interesting history similar to the dark-centered common /  
“garden”  
“sunflower”

In a musty old tome printed in 1649 and entitled “A Perfect Description of Virginia” we read that—

After many gardens have been considered (and their inhabitants located and scanned) it often seems that those in which the “individuality” of the owners had run riot are the ones to live longest in the memory

but failed utterly in *permanent* influence

#### OLD WOMEN AFFECT CLOVER

The speaker argued that old women kept cats; cats killed mice; mice were prone to destroy the nests of the bumble-bees, which alone were fitted, owing to the length of their proboscises, to fertilize the blossoms of the clover. Consequently, a good supply of clover depended on an abundance of old women.

To many of us, said Dr. Holmes, the unique aroma of the  
Box,  
cleanly bitter  
in scent as in taste, is redolent of the  
“Eternal Past”—

I find Sweet Peas can hardly have too rich a soil, provided always that they are kept sufficiently wet. They *must* have moisture...

Flowers are the expression of God’s love to man.

—That image came straight out of my unconscious.  
—Your unconscious draws like Picasso.

It is now ten years since we put in our garden: four hundred trees, several hundred paintings, four books, and three children later.

Are drifting apart—she has been very “busy”

What she wants, she sd, is in-  
timacy, what she’ll settle for is Power—

Children! she said bitterly, CHILDREN HAVE NO MEMORY!

Magick

Tracks of My Tears  
I'll Always Love You

frame piece *never* blood arch blood bone semen oil

meeting *him* I remembered very well how I had loved *you*           Time!  
(after all these years)

I came to call Betsey the “rabbi of the trees”

Judy Grahn, yesterday, seeing my mother’s photograph: “She was beautiful.” I said (& thought): “Yes, she was.”

*fearful*  
*fearful of intimacy*  
*she lay back—*  
*Sweetness—*

This is Jack Foley  
and Benjamin Lindgren  
telling you about a KPFA Marathon special

Kundalini, climb, bend, as it were,  
this power *upward*,

*What is it like to be a poet at this moment in the United States? To what extremities & myths are we driven?*

When Will I Be Loved?  
You Took advantage of Me  
You’re No Good

she is at the *edge*  
of everything

J’ai appris hier...  
Violence du langage, extreme intensité des cris, apparente incohérence de l’ensemble!

The split between the claims put forth in the introduction and the actual accomplishment of the verse might profitably be compared to

THE GRAND CANYON

—Never confuse effort with results!  
—Never confuse clichés with remarks!



The paradoxical state of the mind itself—its limited/unlimited nature, its ability to consider absolutely anything under the sun—what Jake calls its source in the “everywhere”—matched against the limitations *everything in the world places on it*.

I hear them in the folds of air.

look  
at the way  
that woman’s  
dress  
folds  
as she sits,  
revealing  
but concealing  
the curve  
of her  
breasts—  
(Presence in Absence)—

It was an  
“Innocence of the Flesh”—  
an awareness  
that Desire itself  
was  
Innocent!—

She’s only spoken twice, and both times she said: “Dr. Rex Morgan!”

A mien of surface decorum masking a mind on the verge of chaos, about to snap, a world of quiet comic desperation where nothing works the way it’s supposed to and everything is about to fly apart

speaking with you was like making contact with a side of civilization I am not used to here in New York where suspicion seems to rule and kindness is an exception—

speech-based poetry  
which tends to be rooted in what can be spoken only  
in  
the  
“neighborhood”

She phoned me on Friday to tell me she loved me.

a speech-based poetry  
“Don’t worry, the car can find its own way.”

I hear them in the folds of air. We both get out. She says, “Don’t worry, the car can find its own way.”

Earthquake. Tuesday, 10/17/89, 5:04 p.m.

The second time only I came.

I was less present, she said, *I have begun to break away from you.*

Any individual word, any part of the languages which were scattered with the fall of Babel, contains within itself the potentiality of returning to its source: once awakened into life, any word may, through its infinite connections with other words, its “inflexions and movements,” return us to the divine. The poet “listens” to the Logos; the poem is “dictated”

she wanted *me* to feel that pain

I want to be independent of you  
You *are* independent of me  
I want to be independent of you  
You *are* independent of me

In *The Cult of the Black Virgin*—a book I read with considerable interest and would recommend to others—Ean Begg writes of Pope Sylvester II (c. 940-1003):

Although this unorthodox and Gnosticizing Pope exuded the odour of sanctity from his incorrupt body, he was never raised to the altars of the Church. The first Frenchman to be Pope, he acceded to the throne of Peter in 999, fortunate inversion 666, the number of the Great Beast, at a time when the world was awaiting the dreaded millennium. According to one legend, he seduced the daughter of his alchemist master in order to learn the secret of secrets and was expelled from Spain. In another version he met a maiden of marvellous beauty, brilliant in gold and tissues of silk, who told him her name was Meridiana (“the lady of the south”) and who offered him her body, her riches and her magical wisdom if he would trust her. Gerbert agreed to the bargain and in a short time became successively Archbishop of Rheims, where Clovis was anointed, Archbishop of Ravenna, where Mérovée spent his youth, and Pope. As well as being the first Christian alchemist, credited with achieving the great work, he also had a talking head, which seems to have operated like a primitive computer. He introduced Arabic numbers to the West and invented the clock, the astrolabe and the hydraulic organ. In the realm of politics, he attempted to raise a crusade for the liberation of the Holy Land and established the Church in Hungary, ancient Sicambria, making Stephen its...king.

## A REVIEW

(1986, Routledge and Kegan Paul Inc., \$11.95)

a woman about my age, bored, on the street—  
suddenly her eyes look up

she loved me for the space of a demisemiquaver

I was in the 3rd from right lane—pouring rain!  
car in front of me hits brakes  
I do also but they don't seem to take  
I'm heading straight for him—skidding  
I turn the wheel to the left, cross over the left lane,  
& hit the dividing wall with the left front end of the car.  
Stop.

*[a true incident  
but a metaphor  
for the poem  
itself]*

a speech-sourced poetry

fold  
as she sits  
revealing  
but concealing  
the curve  
of her  
body

my stupe-  
stupe-  
he said: Forgive my stupefaction!—

WE HAVE HERE—AS WE HAVE AT THE CONCLUSION OF “THE ECHOING GREEN”—A KIND OF GRADUAL FADING OF THE LIGHT IN WHICH THINGS ARE NO LONGER SEEN CLEARLY AND IN WHICH THE SOUNDS WE “HEAR” TEND TO BECOME SOMEWHAT DISTANT: “ALL THE HILLS ECHOED.” AT THIS POINT, I THINK, LANGUAGE BECOMES SOMETHING CLOSE TO PURE POTENTIALITY, TO PURE “SOUND” OR “MUSIC,” TO THE “SONG” THAT THE PIPER PIPES. WHAT BLAKE IS ATTEMPTING TO MAKE US DO, I SUSPECT, IS TO TREAT ALL OF HIS WORDS IN THE SAME WAY THAT WE MUST TREAT THE NAMES OF HIS CHARACTERS: WE MUST CONTINUALLY RECOMBINE THEM, MUST TURN THEM AROUND AND AROUND IN OUR MINDS UNTIL THEY BECOME WORDS WHICH, THOUGH DIFFERENT, INVOLVING OTHER LETTERS, RETAIN IN THEIR SOUNDS THE ECHOES OF ONE ANOTHER. BLAKE HIMSELF USED WORDS OF THE BIBLE IN ORDER TO CREATE NEW HARMONIES, HARMONIES WHICH “CHIMED” WITH THOSE OF THE BIBLE, AND I THINK “HOLY THURSDAY” WAS MEANT TO SERVE THE SAME PURPOSE. TWAS ON A, FOR EXAMPLE, MIGHT EASILY BECOME TWAS HONOR, HOSANNA; THE SEATS OF HEAVEN, THE SAINTS OF HEAVEN, THE SEEDS OF HEAVEN; BENEATH THEM SIT, BE NEATH THEM SAID; WHITE AS SNOW, WHY 'TIS SNOW, WHY 'TIS NOW; TILL INTO, TELL UNTO, TOLL UNTO; THE VOICE OF SONG, THEY VOICE HIS SONG, THEIR VOICE IS SONG, THEIR VOICE, HIS SONG; THE FLOWERS OF LONDON TOWN, OR LAND ATONED, OR LENTEN TIME; BUT MULTITUDES OF LAMBS, BUT

MULTITUDES OF LANDS, BUT MULTITUDES OF LIMBS, BOUGHT MULTITUDES OF LAMBS; THOUSANDS OF LITTLE BOYS, THOSE SANDS OF LITTLE BOYS; O WHAT A, O WATER; THE HUM OF MULTITUDES, THE HOME OF MULTITUDES, THE HYMN, THE HAM, THE HIM OF MULTITUDES; THEY LIKE THAMES WATERS FLOW, THEY LIGHT TIME'S WATERS FLOW, THEIR NIGHTTIMES WATERS FLOW; RADIANCE ALL THEIR OWN, RADIANCE ALL THEREROUND, RADIANCE ALL THEREON, REGENTS ARE THERE CROWNED; THE CHILDREN WALKING, THE CAULDRON WAKING, THE CALLED ARE WALKING; HARMONIOUS THUNDERINGS, OUR MOAN, HIS THUNDERINGS; THE VOICE, THE VOWS, THE JOYS.

—Not before or since. This woman had the secret!

Lady Meryon, with her escort of girls and subalterns, came daintily past the hotel compound and startled me from my brooding with her pretty silvery voice. “Dreaming, Mr. Clifden? It isn't at all wholesome to dream in the East! Come and dine with us tomorrow. A tiny dance afterwards, or Bridge for those who like it.”

Had an orgasm with him but wasn't quite present  
told me she planned to have sex casually, “as a *man* has sex”—

“It's you I love”      Beauty!—

I'm uncertain of your life. It frightens me.

She sighed. Was it for the lost dance or for the lost soldier lying out on the barren hills in the tremendously dying sunset?

not to see each other for a while. You may find you miss me. You may find you don't.

thundering horses!—

“Life”—

You say one kind of thing to me, another kind of thing to him. You need to clarify, clarify—

*Dear Heart!*

I think that love is a Freudian slip. I think it's a necessary experiment. I think I don't need to revise a whole lot. I think there must be something to what he says. I think there must be something to what he thinks. I own your comb. How are your teeth doing these days? I think you're the most wonderful person I—

dreamlife

And in grace and elegance of manners, in skill in the arts of Poetry and the Lute,  
who could surpass them?

Fungus and a dish of slugs entrapped

here, she said, listening to him, intently, here, here is my heart!

At 50  
a testament—

Still, once upon a time, at the beginning of Western thought,—  
*the essence of language “flashed” in the light of Being!*

“Ethnic” utterances presuppose a *context* out of which they arise. They are never statements of an “isolated ego.” This, she sd, is the point at which *genetic* inheritance becomes *cultural* inheritance.

After Flossie and William Carlos Williams had ended their interview with James Joyce, they left the apartment. The renowned author referred to them later as “*beati innocenti*,” blessed innocents, innocents abroad. *This story is misremembered*. It was himself and Nora that Joyce referred to as “*beati innocenti*”! (*Where are the innocents we slaughter?*)

“immature”

“relationship”

What is it, dearest?—dissolution?—yes—  
the face I had, you see, will come a  
gain, yes,  
she—

(a woman, dead at 55)

it is time to make a will. What piece of fruit to eat?

The family, music, harmony, dissonance—all seem to move together in this highly  
“sounded” piece, turning “grief”—some family quarrel probably (SHE GIVES ME  
NOTHING BUT GRIEF)—to “music”

silence— susurrations—  
Don’t listen to him—he’s just my televersion!

“I would leave, not a record of something realized...but...”

how can we / speak of the  
“heart”?

what possibilities of  
“tenderness”

In her bleeding, she insists on my presence at all times. (She is afraid)

Larry says the last word of his poem must be *past*. I suggested, since it was p-a-s-y, it could also be *easy*. But he pointed out that the y and the t were next to each other on the typewriter and so *that* typo was more likely.

My favorites are PARABOLA: MYTH & THE QUEST FOR MEANING, RARITAN QUARTERLY, and BOMB MAGAZINE— that last should perhaps be BOMB A MAGAZINE

These are the signs of a failing relationship!

You might be asking, “Why are people consulting me about property values?” You inspire confidence, many seek reassurance by being with you, obtaining guidance. You exude qualities of mysticism, intellect.

The world is damned

—in the crowded  
dept. store  
hope  
blossoms  
in the  
underwear  
aisles—  
leave out the vowels—like Hebrew—  
Yr eyes  
search me out—  
they want to have a  
“relationship” a  
“relationship” don’t they?  
High above,  
clouds lour—  
fragments—  
as the mind?  
moves *around* objects, not into them  
or else  
centers in NOTHING  
this dept.  
store this  
crowd:  
*nothing*  
Forgive me,  
them—  
people  
pass & smile  
clouds,  
like  
mind—  
meditative

but not ecstatic  
mind awake  
but not  
intensely so—  
“born to shop”  
the poem a  
response  
to the boredom  
& the weight  
of  
bodies  
which is  
what I feel  
as these  
strangers  
walk about me  
“These pants are WET!”—  
I  
close my eyes  
to

SLEEP

(1990)

(gesture: indicates  
audience: “strangers”)

## PORTRAIT AT SIXTY

*for Anthony Holdsworth & Leonard Breger*

This man looks out at me  
eyes full of interest and perhaps suffering  
whatever he looks at registered on his face  
It was not the actual circumstance the artist painted—  
me, posed, at ease, happy to be with an interesting friend—  
but something “other” which only he saw  
and which makes me look over and over again to see what it was  
Is that *me*?—that whirl of light in which red (fire) predominates?  
It is only the sun reflected on my forehead  
but perhaps the artist sees me as the sun—  
Apollo? The poet?  
The artist is my friend,  
but it is not our friendship which is reflected here  
but some inward, powerful thing  
which manifests even in these public circumstances—  
a café, a little table, my glass before me.  
It is a gloss  
I guess at.  
Does *he* know, does the artist  
or was my face a passageway  
into an underground  
in which he was as lost as I?  
It is vivid life  
I look at with such intensity  
and which looks back at me,  
life neither “in” me nor “in” him  
but something shared with the sun,  
life all around, in my glass, in the lamppost behind me,  
life insisting on its own facticity, its utter presence  
so we cannot look away  
but stare  
into this heart.  
“I’ll paint you so you’ll know what you really look like,”  
said the artist, smiling.  
What he painted was not “what I really looked like”—  
though everyone says, “It looks just like you”—  
but something like the real  
something like life itself  
leaping and dancing.  
When I hung the painting,  
I put it in a place  
where the light shines  
deeply.

(2000)



# FORTY TIMES FOR FORTY YEARS: AN ANNIVERSARY POEM FOR MY WIFE, ADELLE

*forty lines, each line a speaking of her name*

Forty years? what are they? dust  
memories  
“I think I’ll get married,” someone said  
when I was young, “it’d be a cool way to spend a year”  
It wasn’t, for her.  
Forty years. Who is married that long  
except someone’s parents?—  
a couple cordial enough  
but hardly real.  
If I remember,  
you are always there  
except for my very earliest life  
I have a friend  
with no marital history  
no history of “relationships”:  
he remains in rapt wonder before his childhood  
My own history  
is a violent severance  
of the child—  
and then you  
You held your hands out to me before I knew the need  
Without knowing, you kept my imagination  
clear and in the world  
You gave me a son  
who has grown  
into a loving intelligent man  
No one can tell my life  
without telling yours  
No one can say my name  
without adding yours as well  
What are the throbbing intricate ways of love?  
We barely know, nor should we  
It flings us here and there  
It opens us.  
In all this clamor,  
in the rubble of my affections and my grief  
I say your name, “Adelle”  
and say it  
forty times  
for forty years.

(2001)

## TWO SIDE BY SIDE

I lived with guilt  
    O body hiero  
A little animal  
    you capture your craft  
That gnawed at me  
    & your clevercoined cart  
Was never minimal  
    in 24 / sec  
And often maximal  
    “Effect” is “Affect”  
I shouted TILT  
    & all’s Effective:  
But nothing turned  
    Electric!  
For it was guilt  
    Multiple Enyas  
In which I burned  
    sing thy way  
Guilt was the animal  
    back to the Mamawave:  
That took my animus  
    Onto the guiltless water...  
And all my animosity...  
    *Journey’s Joy!*

(2010)

the antiquing of my visage  
    you’re not worth  
noted in photo and video  
    the powder  
if not in mirror  
    to blow you up  
tells me of the possibility  
    you’re not worth it  
of death  
    not worth the power-  
the antiquing of my visage  
    ful powder that could  
noted in photos, videos  
    blow you up  
but not in mirrors  
    you  
tells me of the possibility  
    you’re not worth it  
that I shall die  
    not worth it at all  
that I shall not escape  
    not worth powder  
antiquity  
    not worth the powder  
that I should not be anti  
    that could  
death  
    blow you up  
which is a natural thing  
    oh you  
for everyone  
    you’re not worth powder  
but me  
    oh you  
the antiquing of my visage  
    not worth it  
noted in photo and video  
    not worth  
(unseen in mirror)  
    worthless you  
gives me evidence  
    you’re not worth the powder  
of how my looks  
    to blow you  
are lies  
    up  
  
    *to blow you*  
    *up*

## FRAGMENT for Fran

To which my Lord responded:

That though for his part he cared not whether there were witches or no; yet his opinion was: That the confession of Witches, and their sufferings for it proceeded from an erroneous belief, *viz*, That they had made a contract with the Devil to serve him for such Rewards as were in his power to give them; and that it was their Religion to worship and adore him; in which Religion they had such firm and constant belief, that if anything came to pass according to their desire, they believed the Devil had heard their prayers, and granted their requests, for which they gave him thanks; but if things fell out contrary to their prayers and desires, then they were troubled at it, fearing that they had offended him, and not served him as they ought, and asked him for forgiveness of their offences. Also (said my Lord) they imagine their dreams are real exterior actions...

I leave it to you, O Nut of Knowledge  
The Girls at home and the Boys in college

“Promise me that you won’t do it.”

So

I promised her.

But

I did it.

Rip cord of the sky’s acetylene.

It was a raft of purposes, who could have told what came of it

After the night, expenditure  
at the high  
what clouds this morning  
who could have said—

you

are neither Substance nor Shadow

The roar of Thor Gadwa’s chainsaw shattered the spooky silence of the ashen-gray wilderness around him yesterday. Rip cord of the sky’s acetylene.

Good morning, Carolyn! Rip cord of the sky’s acetylene What are you doing up so early? Great blue I’ve got to be out of here by seven! All We’re taking a group of our special ed kids out to the island on a field trip! Out of proportion You like your work don’t you? It was a raft of purposes who could have said what came of it It can be the most frustrating—but also the most rewarding when you see the results you can get with slow learners Rip cord, rip cord of the sky’s acetylene

There is a certain kind of light which can be seen only at certain times of day. I had tried to find it then but was not able. There is a certain hint of dusk as well which can be seen at times though rarely written of or praised. I had hoped to see you. Afterwards it was necessary to begin, again and again.

Dearest, neither you nor I in this late sun can be seen more clearly.

In Crete there was the procession of the Sacred Heart

He was a boy of high spirits and impatient of rest; but at the age of seven he fell head first from the top of a ladder to the floor below, and remained a good five hours without motion or consciousness. The right side of the cranium was fractured, but the skin was not broken. The fracture gave rise to a large tumor, and the child suffered much loss of blood from the many deep lancings. The surgeon, indeed, observing the broken cranium and considering the long period of unconsciousness, predicted that he would either die of it or grow up an idiot. However by God's grace neither part of his prediction came true, but as a result of this mischance he grew up with a melancholy and irritable temperament such as belongs to men of ingenuity and depth, who, thanks to the one, are quick as lightning in perception, and thanks to the other, take no pleasure in verbal cleverness or falsehood.

From flock and from down to rise—  
Take it to heart!—were folly for thee

This is the oppressor. This is the oppressor's language. The wind, the wind cut short the speech of George W. Bush to a GOP delegation at the Hilton Inn near the Detroit Metropolitan Airport, yesterday, at four o'clock, here, in the capital of Hatred and Bitterness!

Dignity and Good Luck be yours

After biting the mouth merges with her skin

Flock upon flock—up  
in the sky

one feels that he would have agreed with the Duke of Newcastle who, in his discourse with Hobbes, affirms in the clearest fashion his belief in the religion of witchcraft as a fact

'contrarie' rites and ceremonies

look, at the first rift of the sky he  
turned his head and  
severed his attention clouds  
rammed into clouds the dark

and com and daunce with me  
in Irlonde

“Faggot, I burn thee”

Love speaks, barely, in this century. He kissed her hard upon the mouth, thrusting his tongue inside. Her hands were caressing his ass then pressing his cock against her cunt. Uh.

They are images of longing, she said. Often sexual. They were walking, quickly, away from the building. She spoke without design, spontaneously.

Her hard eyes followed him along the corridor. Darkness

having in the name of the Holy Trinity, sprinkled a little water, quelled the

I am become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all

This  
is the ship I am  
building  
It is  
a ship of death yes  
Harvest. Darkness. They  
split the air with their cries      Love

There is nothing self-contradictory in the thought of many actual entities with the same abstract essence, apart from the reiteration gained from never societies. In proportion to the chaos there is triviality. There are different types of order; and it is not true that in proportion to the orderliness there is depth. There are various types of order, and some of them provide more trivial satisfaction than do others. Thus, if there is to be progress beyond limited ideals, the course of history by way of escape must venture along the borders of chaos in its substitution of higher for lower types of order.

Speak, animal,  
ere I be brought to ground

The depression  
in your voice stays with me  
What to do when there is something  
always hanging over your  
head "And the weather is cold."  
Dockside, the boat is moving  
How to express anything  
Look, there is a possibility over there on that far  
island, and a tree, which,  
once gazed upon, can barely be  
forgotten. Leaves fall, even in California.  
How do we look when once those eyes  
which others praise more finely still than  
I  
cease looking, and the word "change"  
and the word "kill" and the word "cold"  
come close, and your voice,  
which was only a projection of the  
telephone,  
comes close:

(1980)

## LINES

what was the purpose  
if purpose there was?  
why all this fury?  
did you hope to change  
the perceptions  
of people at large?  
Yes, foolishly...  
did you believe  
that anything you said  
could affect the immense  
misconception  
people call “reality”—*quelle erreur!*  
Yes, it was a mistake...  
so what did it do?  
did you teach anyone  
anything?  
No  
were you able to change  
the nature of poetry  
even in the smallest  
way?  
No  
so what reveals itself,  
admirable author,  
at this difficult point  
of your being?  
Nothing:  
*J’aime les nuages, les nuages qui passent...*  
I love the passing  
clouds  
As for poetry:  
*ça m’a donné quelque chose à faire...*  
It gave me something to do...

(2009, read at The Berkeley Poetry Festival, 2010)

## CODA

loved rivers winding  
suns failing  
all falls into the sea  
and the speech of lovers  
garlands of praise  
whatever sweetness life brings  
(lovers who cannot tell  
their love)—in a flash  
all yearnings  
turn and she  
for whom our speech is present  
smiles in the morning sun  
for only a moment  
(till morning turns  
moaningly to mourning) she  
whose body  
moves with grace  
amid the vanishing grass  
or as she dries her hair  
or stares at the early morning light—

she who is mistress mother wife

touches us and tells  
the sweet speech of what is

as the morning fails  
as the sun fails  
as all falls  
as all  
    fall

(2009, read at The Berkeley Poetry Festival, 2010)

# NOTES

## CHARMES

This sequence was written in 1972. The poems in “CHARMES” are, I believe, different from other experimental work of that time, though they were influenced by writers such as Clark Coolidge, John Ashbery, David Melnick, and Larry Eigner. The title was meant to recall both Paul Valéry and a kind of candy from my childhood. I was also aware of the etymology of the word “charm”: Latin, *carmen*, song—and of course a spell. The poems tend to center in words which are simultaneously nouns and verbs. Fenollosa: “A true noun, an isolated thing, does not exist in nature. Things are only the terminal points, or rather the meeting points of actions, cross sections cut through actions, snap-shots. Neither can a pure verb, an abstract motion, be possible in nature. The eye sees noun and verb as one...Like nature, the Chinese words are alive and plastic, because *thing* and *action* are not formally separated.” In “The ALL”—my numbers racket—the zero should be at the very center of the page; I imagined “1” as “one,” and the “all” I had in mind was influenced by Emerson’s essay, “Nature” (“I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all”). “All” numbers are generated by the sequence 0-9.

## KING AMOUR

Some of the poem’s sources: *King René’s Book of Love*, with introduction and commentaries by F. Unterkircher; Dante Gabriel Rossetti, “Sonnet XL” from *The House of Life* (the book Rossetti retrieved from his wife’s coffin); Grahame Clark and Stuart Piggott, *Prehistoric Societies*; Robert Sklar, *Movie-Made America*; Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*; Arthur Waley, *The Nine Songs*; *The Oxford Book of Literary Anecdotes*, ed. James Sutherland. About RKO Leslie Halliwell writes, “Despite severe financial vicissitudes, it struggled on for twenty-seven years (*The Filmgoer’s Companion*). Irish immigrants William Burke and William Hare were notorious Edinburgh “resurrection men”; I found their story in Daniel Cohen, *The Body Snatchers*. There are a number of historical passages throughout the poem; one of the poem’s purposes is to raise the question of the status of such passages—never intended to be spoken—as speech.

## LITANIES OF SATAN

A translation of Baudelaire’s “Les Litanies de Satan” from *Fleurs Du Mal*. Satan appears here as the patron saint of consciousness, and particularly of self-consciousness. Baudelaire’s word “misère” is a problem. Cognate with “misery,” it means “poverty.” (“Les misérables” are the poor people of Paris.) But Baudelaire’s “Litany” also conjures up the Latin “Miserere,” as in the 51<sup>st</sup> Psalm and the Roman Catholic liturgy. “Poverty” is a correct translation but loses the overtone of “Miserere”; “misery” is an inaccurate translation but keeps the overtone. When Adelle and I perform the poem, I say “misery” and she says “poverty.”

## SQUARE & THWACKUM

My chorus has fragmentary quotations from Fielding’s novel as well as a famous quotation from Virgil: “Begone, O uninitiated ones”—*profani*—“said the Sibyl, and stay far from this place.”

## INGEBORG BACHMANN AND PAUL CELAN

The lines in quotation marks are by Ingeborg Bachmann: “In the Storm of Roses.”

## ASCENSEUR POUR L’ÉCHAFAUD

refers to Louis Malle’s wonderful 1957 film; the film’s score is by Miles Davis.

## EDDY LANG

A poem for guitarist Eddie Lang. His last words are included in the poem; he died at thirty as the result of a tonsillectomy. The symbols in parenthesis are guitar chords, which I play when I read the poem. I was interested that the “sad” chord, A minor (usually represented as “Am”) had the same spelling as the word “am.”



as in “I think, therefore I am.” “Blind Willie Dunn” was a pseudonym Lang sometimes used. Kitty was Lang’s wife; his friend Bing Crosby had advised him to get the tonsillectomy.

### **CONSTRUCTION 10/9/78 (COLUMBUS DAY)**

“An entity which places its own being in question” is from Heidegger and refers to human beings; otium is a Latin word translated as “rest,” but it is really part of a pair: “otium” is everything that isn’t “NEGotium.” The latter is the one that made it into English.

### **CHORUS: CANCER**

*Timor mortis conturbat me* (“the fear of death disturbs me”) is a Latin phrase commonly found in late medieval English poetry. The phrase comes from a responsory of the Catholic Office of the Dead, in the third Nocturn of Matins, and appears most famously in William Dunbar’s “Lament for the Makers.” It reappears in Kenneth Rexroth’s “Thou Shalt Not Kill,” where I first heard it. I had the sense when writing the poem that every time I said the word “can,” it could have become “cancer.”

### **TURNING FORTY**

Sources: several newspaper articles from *The San Francisco Chronicle*; *The Golden Bough*; a Census Bureau questionnaire; several passages from Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality*; Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*; Jules Romains, *The Body’s Rapture*; E. Wallis Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*; Jeremiah Curtin, *Myths and Folk Tales of Ireland*. These quotations are by no means necessarily accurate. Even in the case of those I have not tampered with, the meaning of the words in the source is often quite different from the meaning of the same words in my poem.

### **CHORUS: FIFTY**

Sources: This poem has a number of popular song titles scattered throughout the opening section. There are also quotations from newspaper articles (*Oakland Tribune*, *San Francisco Chronicle*). Articles appearing in *The American Gardener*, *A Sampler*; the opening line of Antonin Artaud’s radio play, *Pour En Finir Avec Le Jugement de Dieu* and a comment about the play; a letter from New York sent me by someone for whom I had done a small favor; the comic strip, “Dr. Rex Morgan”; Ean Begg, *The Cult of the Black Virgin*; L. Adams Beck, *The Ninth Vibration and Other Stories*; a letter, quoted in *Young Robert Duncan: Portrait of the Poet as Homosexual in Society* by Ekbert Faas, from Robert Duncan to Mary Fabilli (Mary tells me she never received the letter); a letter I wrote to James Broughton in which I mention one of Larry Eigner’s typos; my horoscope as it appeared in the *Oakland Tribune*. The “highly sounded” piece is “A-11” by Louis Zukofsky. The passage in capital letters is a commentary and play upon William Blake’s poem, “Holy Thursday” (*Songs of Innocence*); it comes from a long paper I wrote for a course taken at UC Berkeley during the 1960s.

### **TWO SIDE BY SIDE**

This piece contains a response to Mary Ann Sullivan’s wonderful videopoem, “The First Poem of Summer” as well as to a friend’s complaints about his experiences with guilt. “You’re not worth powder enough to blow you up” is a line from Thomas Wolfe’s *Look Homeward, Angel*. Bruno in Jean-Luc Godard’s *Le Petit Soldat* remarks, “Photography is truth...and the cinema is the truth twenty-four times a second.”

### **FRAGMENT FOR FRAN**

Sources: Montague Summers, *The History of Witchcraft*; *SF Chronicle* (the now defunct comic strip, “Apt. 3G”); D. H. Lawrence, “The Ship of Death”; Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Nature”; David H. Greene, *An Anthology of Irish Literature*; *The Golden Bough*; an encyclopedia article on exotic fish; H.T.F. Rhodes, *The Satanic Mass*; Vico’s *Autobiography*; Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality*. The typos in the passage from Whitehead—beginning, “There is nothing self-contradictory”—are not errors but intended. Stephen W. Hawking suggests that what we call “time” is the same as what we call “entropy.”

## **PORTRAIT AT SIXTY**

The poem refers explicitly to Anthony Holdsworth's portrait of me but also suggests an earlier portrait painted by Leonard Breger. Breger's portrait is the cover of this book.

### **LINES**

I'm quoting (and translating) a sentence from Baudelaire's prose poem, "L'Étranger." Andy Warhol said of his life's work, "It gave me something to do."

*I can't get it out of my head that, though I may be "unique," I am not an "individual." The word "individual" comes from the Latin individuus—indivisible, something which can no longer be "divided." If I think of myself as a political entity, then I am happy to be individuus: the rights of the individual are everywhere to be respected. If I think of myself as a thinking/feeling entity, however, I am something very different: I am not at all individuus; I am as divided as I can be. This collection, like all my collections, is a testimony to ways in which that perception (obsession) has followed me throughout my life.*