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COASTAL

Menahem Ali  
translated by Matt Alexander H.

BiCoastal

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

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

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

Verse

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

Prose

The American Hallucination  
Noetic Sojourns

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Fictive Press  
[www.fictivemag.com/press](http://www.fictivemag.com/press)

Logo design by Serra Şensoy

new york

to

vancouver

EAST

## I Still Do

*They say:*

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

Something anyone could count on.

Recurring.

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

All that remains of me is

My absolutely unshakable  
insatiable love

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

And wake up blind, unable to speak.

One of these days. How I love you.

Who are now a memory.

The only fixed point in my entire existence.

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

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

You were, are, our strength.

Leaving us.

For the unknown.

As I wallowed.

Afraid. Slept in other beds.

Kissed and came atop our lonely home

Looking over the edge of a crescent moon.

Waiting in other arms. Walking next to bodies

Warmer than the thought of your distance.

After all. Said. Done. Tried. True

I do. Still.

A People

Half-light

Half-dark

Submerged

In the windowless

Slum chair

From the homeless

Ride to freedom

Alongside the Brooklyn-

Bound vampires of street

Bush meat, live and raw

Masticated whole

Under the chipped incisors

And molar mosaics

A metro wall tiling

Imperfect as untold eyes

Submissions, bracing

The cold underworld rock

Toward a high note

Bridge, rattling above

The overflown river

Strangled by bones

Undead memories gone

Astray in the urban

Wilderness

## A People II

As we are  
Animal, beast  
And human

Mind, forged  
By the pressure  
Amounting

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

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

An underworld odyssey, ending

## The Unfinished Moment

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

longed for, even fought for

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

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

and the moment when grasping, so many, fate

the opaque obscurity,

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

clenched by the faintly lined

is loneliness

though in completion

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

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

lifting firmly from the

reflex of desire for another, unfinished

in a

## At Any Cost

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

## Coffee and Liquor

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

## Virgin on TV

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

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



## Day and Night

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

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

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

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

## To Give My Heart

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

## A Forgotten Dream

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

### MYSTERY

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

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

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

A forgotten dream.

## Without Belief

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Estranged Night

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

Death  
Homelessness  
Divorce

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

I am estranged.

Never and Always

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

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

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

Is this where I am going?

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

## Neither Here Nor There

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

## Here To Stay

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

## Here To Stay II

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

## A Moses of the East River

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

Will you forgive my humanness?

You, who can hear me,

A figment of nature

In the way of mind, us

Because in this city of metal and unknowns

The only verdant pleasure, the only rushing stream

Is the treasured communion with another human being

A still free reminiscence of the endless forests

And dizzying mountain peaks that once captivated

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

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

And its ecstatic rays, the radiant fullness of another round

Followed through to the ends of time, where we begin

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

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

Torn from the mother, bloodied, intoning the archaic yelp

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

Storming the rat-strewn chest of indefatigable empires

With nothing more than the conquering smile of wonder

A true thirst for knowledge, brushing her tongue of smoke

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

And scribe an object more valuable than gold, not worshipful

Only cognizant, as a cartographer dreaming in signs

Following through to the prophetic imagination

To see where the world dances on the tips of her

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

Inhaling toxic stress and pleading, outcast, spiteful

As a bitter soul tasted at the edge of a cup

A Moses

Born along the East River

A living question

And Spring

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

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

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

And spring

## The Maghreb

We are empowered now beyond scope

Alone, refreshed

And our torso is engraved

With the light calligraphic etchings

A wood block print

The ancient copy of a text

Serving communal possessions

A body, and home, finally lost

To the dream of being, absolute

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

And watch as the very earth quivers with a response

To the depths of my want-flooded heart

Yet from the inescapable deluge I run barefoot

Over a sea of smokeless fire, and pierce the veil

Of a houri, blanketed in salt and silver

Her pale flesh reddened with the blood of a eunuch

Tearful on a windswept veranda, awaiting his lover

Before break of day, the all-intensifying heat cools

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

Simple bliss, to feel the nourishing kiss of moon

And earth, going cold as the first rays of sun

Searing this our delicate skin of night, and again

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

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

And fires the day beyond that closeness of magic

That once endured under cover of night

So the privileged bear their heavy walls

And isolate their eyes behind opaque curtains

And listen within, to the sharpness of a pen

As it marks and nervously blends the contents of mind

With the infinite fascination of leaves, clouds, gods

On this road that ends

At the Maghreb call

## He Sees His Youth

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

## Our Prophetic Forebears

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

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

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

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

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

## Under Jewish Skies

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

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

billionaire homeless  
fashionista nudist  
hippie conservative  
indigenous colonizer  
pagan monotheist

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

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

thoughtless paint  
abstract sounds

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

the all-forsaken existential fiasco  
cured by a knish, done exactly right  
like potato cake and ice-cold lemonade  
on a dreamy, dead-tired Manhattan

Sunday night                    when men become sensitive  
and women walk in straight lines away from mine

## 4 AM Advice

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

No One Where

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

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

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

## No One Where II

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

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

Dreaming Past

“Why?” he asks

“Does the past become dream?”

When all acts, negative  
And positive. Merely dry

At the cracked earth  
A desert riverbed

Leading to a mirage  
Man becomes ponderous

Memories wondering  
“Why, in the waterless

Clime of the absolute  
Present, does everything

Once had turn ethereal  
Noetic, driftwood of spirit

Floating atop open ocean  
Horizon to horizon

Blank with nothing  
Except the thought of what

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

To listen to the wise man  
Speak of the fleeting

## Dreaming Past II

Shades of human life  
As we at times stop

To consider where we are  
And how the loves, passions

And triumphs of our age  
Led us to think back

And in sleep recall  
With a similar substance

Stuff we have left behind  
To wade in the salt seas

The mind, rolling through  
The wafting air, redolence

Chilling as truth, our lives  
Passing by ever so gently

With every longing, regret  
And stretch into the facades

Novelty. So we recline  
As one body wavering

Over the gentle breeze  
Blown from a cloudless sky

Mysteriously vacant of sun  
Though alight

## Simply Because Nothing

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

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

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

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



## Over-Boiling Tempest

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

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

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

## Lasting Impression

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

## Night Falls

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## No Shadows Cast

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

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

## New Yorkers Never Die

Some New Yorkers never die

They are the streetwise kids of Brooklyn

Staring out over the East River

Looking for candy, a ride

Over the bridge

Running from toughs policing

Strict by a code of bottled up discipline

Bumping into businessmen

In woolen coats reading papers

And looking down glum

Free with American hope

And wincing as the Upper West Side

Intellectual roves over pastimes

And hobbies, to marital annoyance

The psychoanalytical, the wife

And gawking on the way home

About cleavage over soda

Gum, and dice, visited by an aunt

Who knows all your best hideouts

And sneaks you a nickel for a fat kiss

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

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

Over the stove, got mammoth cakes

In the oven," she says with a wide show

Her arms, round enough to hold

The whole bay in one embrace

But she never does

## The Ninth Man

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

WEST

## Whole Again

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

## Close as Far

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

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

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

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

## The Room

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## This Fallow Field

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

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

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

## The Mirage

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

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

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

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

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

## The Fog of Mind

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

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

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

## We Rise

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

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

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

Rise.

## The Starry Sight

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

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

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

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

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

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

I see the faces I know

## A Fleeting Consummation

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

“What is desire?”

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

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

And consummate the fleeting

## A Drink of Ash

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

## Looking at Graves

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

## The Entrance

Open the entrance

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

When the heart molds

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

The eagle born of an atmosphere

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

Through the body held close

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

Provoked to near illusion

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

A world gone cold of heart

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

I catch a flame atop the kindled void

As the solar disk burns  
Affixed through smoke haze  
Circled

## The Inhuman Void

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

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

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

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

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

## Her Neck Like A Tree

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

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

A visceral chaos

## Sunlight Stretching

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

## The Sense Of A Path

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## What Is Most Beautiful

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

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

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

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

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

## Where We've Always Gone

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

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

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

## The Embraceable Beauty

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

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

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

Dear Sister

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

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

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

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

## Through Again

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

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

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

## Taste of a Seed

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

    After each season recedes  
    Into the bitter taste of a seed

## Field of Creation

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

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

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

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

## The Falling of Pages

I write poems Removed to some Far-flung province

    A long-faced poet Submerged in starlight

    Under the Pacific horizon

I am joined in matrimony

With the forests and planets

Still brilliant on the tragic Earth

    I read envious of young women

    Fugitives of the American twenties

    When the century was still lost

In the youth of modernity

When the roar of a millionaire

Transfixed an audience

    With every last hair standing on end

    Those powerful cries that rung

    From the white knuckles of the worker

The woman, an untouchable obscurity

With sod-ridden eyes pulsing high

Beneath a bearded visage

    Entrained to peer effortlessly

    Into a mirrored sound

    The wilderness echoes

Vibrating with solitary trust

To return, where the lone hoarse voices

Beaten and braving the empty silence

    Nonetheless, as she, microcosm of the goddess

    Shuffles pages in the mystery of current trends

    The sunken vein bloodied, sour with neglect

And sacrifice, like a weary pilgrim bowing

His head, until dawn as the day

Morning smokes and life breathes

    In showers of hormonal pain

    The greed of the body

    The natural hunger and nightly thirst

Patient as the waning moon I am becoming a seer

    Lost to the sound of pages falling

## A Woman Smokes

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

## The Ancestral Presence

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

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

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

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

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

Dying again. To die.

## The Chair Where I Sat

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

## On Rootlessness

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

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

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

rootless

## Cosmic Burst Blooms

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

## Cosmic Burst Blooms II

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

## From First To Last

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

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

Us Separate

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

*BREATHE!*

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

“No,” I think it says:  
*BE*

It loves what is simple. And so can love.

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

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

