

Wisps

by

Daniel F Mitchell

Gray Matter Publishing & Design Company

Athens, Georgia

Contents

WISPS

First Hardback Edition 2000

All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction in whole or in part in any form.

Copyright © 2000 by Daniel F Mitchell

Manufactured in the United States of America

ISBN: 0- 9673849- X- X (to be assigned)

Library of Congress Catalog Card No.:

TX - xxxxxxxx (to be assigned)

Publication Services provided by



Publishing & Design Co., Inc.

<http://www.gmpublishing.com>

<i>I. Prodigy</i>	1
Golden Morning	3
The Breath Of God	3
I am the sky	3
Fly	3
Sage Minstrel	4
Subjects of the Pond	4
Surprise At A Lake	5
Builder.	5
Angels In Green	5
Poem From An Elm Branch	5
March	6
April Showers	6
The Colors of a Ray	6
A June Bug	6
Dandelion	7
Robins Are Singing	7
Garden Jester	7
Feline	8
A Bird In The Hand	8
Wish On a Starfish	9
arizona rope	9
Heart Of Wood	9
Morning Has Broken In Idaho	10
Closed For The Season	11
Those Winds	11
Feathered Fairies Of Midnight	11
On A Magical Night	12
Winter's Hand	12
Teeth Of Winter	12
Diamonds	13
Lady Winter	13
Marauder	13
Goblin	14
Denizens	14
Meadow At Midnight	14
Among The Thronging Flowers	16

II. Dream	17
A Kite	19
An Apricot Tree Grew	19
Huckleberry Picking	19
Hunting And Finding	20
Walking On Holy Water	20
Warm, Wet, Embrace	21
Blowing Dandelions	21
Salamanders	22
Picking Up Pebbles	23
The Promised Land	23
Treat Or Trick	23
Sport	24
Tree House	25
Toy Soldiers	26
Puddle Jumping	26
Motorcycle Ride	27
The Camp	28
We Had Fishing	28
The Swimming Hole	28
Summer Nights	29
In The Hollow	31
We Built A Castle	32
Late Harvest	33
The Haunted House Of Mink Creek	34
A December Night	35
The Learning Tree	35
Hay-Hauler	36
III. Illusion	37
Master Of The Day	39
The Moment	39
The Nature of Things	39
What I Came For	39
For A Day	40
Distraction	40
World of Glass	40
Snail	41
Opulence	41
Once Burned	41
Praying Mantis	42
Herculean Herald	42

Benign Invasion	42
Orchestration	42
This I Pray For	43
Happy, Happy, Birthday	43
On The Way	44
Tumon Bay	44
A Blue-Eyed Crow	44
One Lunar New Year Morning	44
Mississippi	45
On The Pend Orielle	45
In the Sawtooths	45
I've Never Looked On Heaven's Grace	45
Soil To Soil	46
Final Fruit	46
Enchanted Grove	47
A Tale	47
Oracle	48
On A Utah Flight	48
Cherubim	48
Ice On The Moon	49
Waking Dreams	49
Strawberry Fields	49
Titans	50
Viking Ghosts	50
Phantom Vigil	50
Sonnet For A Distant Neighbor	51
Delusion	51
IV. Song	53
A Lasting Mark	55
Stirrings	55
Facets	55
My Task Master's Beckoning	55
No Market	56
Dangling Phrase	56
Pencil Marks Only	57
Shy One	58
Ventriloquist	58
Clear Confusion	58
Euphemism	59
Grammar	59
Doggerel	59

What Was That Word?	60
Moon	60
For Whom it Shines	61
Compulsive Wisdom	61
On The Tip Of My Tongue	61
A Word Of Advice	61
Ah, Shut Your Damn Poetry!	62
Originality	62
Peering Into Ginsberg's Toilet	63
Perhaps	64
3000 AD	64
Student	64
A Poet's Prayer	65
I Am Your Muse	65
Bard Erratic	66
Lingering	66
As Ye Elizabethans	66
The Words Of My Heart	67
verse in an old man's notebook	67
In My Words	68
Poets	68
Singer	72
V. Trance	73
Clover Ring	75
Roma	75
Mona Lisa	75
I Have Found You	76
On The Pinnacle Of The Afternoon	76
Time Limit	76
Thy Spirit's Effervescence	76
Reluctance	77
Nocturnal Butterfly	77
In The Heart Of A Wild Night	77
The Roll Of Rhythmic Rhyme	78
A Tart	78
Queen Of The Night	79
The Magic Cave	79
Helen's Valley	79
Cease Not This Exalting Fire	79
Wild Flower	80
Nymph	80
Can You Take Me Higher?	80

One Last Taste Of Fire	81
Specter	81
Am Main	81
The Light Of Your Presence Shall Always Be With Me	82
I Will Remember You	83
She Was Young	83
Just Like You	84
My Goddess	84
Portrait	85
VI. Awakening	87
Good Boy	89
In The School Yard	89
Comprehension	89
Sweet Child, Innocence	90
Haiku	90
Roses	90
A Point Of Cacti	90
Mutation	91
Flower Wilted	91
Overindulged	91
Snowflake	91
Narcissus, Who Loves You?	92
In The Eye Of The Illusion	92
Toadstool	92
Mosquito	93
Sovereignty	93
Power And Glory	93
Simple Menu	94
Let Us Prey	94
Garden In Disarray	94
Vegetable	95
Rosemary	95
By Way Of Confession	95
Michelangelo's Child	96
Finias Cuckold	96
The One That Got Away	96
Snake	97
Smart Pills	97
The Shallow End Of The Pool	98
In The Genes	98
Bomb	99

Good Neighbors	99
Utility	99
In A Cozy Hornet's Nest	99
Cute Little Scorpion	100
leaping	100
Clair	101
The Vicious Beast	101
Disfigured	101
Production	102
The Other Cheek	102
Lieutenant Governor Morgan	103
Pecking Order	103
In Oklahoma	105
Night Fire	105
Kwang Ju	106
Tinian	106
Two Boys	106
Lebanon 1983	107
The Hundred-Year War	107
Sophistication	107
Taking Up Cudgels	108
The Notion	108
Final Battle	108
Tired Tiger	109
In Storage	109
Longevity	109
Yea Sayer	110
Tongue Unleashing	110
Sizing Up The Tooth Fairy	110
Rhinoceri	110
Worm's-eye View	110
Bad Samaritans	111
Sincerity	111
The Pretenders	112
Mani, I Name You	112
Mother Shipton's Prophecy	113
Blinded By The Light	113
A Mystery For The Sphinx	113
Having Believed	114
Where's The Resurrection?	114
Thy Only Kingdom	114
Straight Dose	114
Gathering Perspective	115

La Brea	115
A Sage Shall Find	115
Goal	116
Attrition	116
Play Time	116
VII. Comedy	117
For Amusement	118
Law Of The Jungle	118
The Most Stones	119
March Of The Stone People	119
Only So Much Sand	119
Virus	120
Hypocrisy	120
Lord Of The Rule	121
Power Man	121
Parasite	122
Web	123
in your honor	123
The United Snakes	124
Ex-president	124
Legacy	124
Pigs In Gold	125
Sing With Pomp And Circumstance	125
Some Day In Bombay	125
Twinkle Twinkle	126
To The Neon Gods	126
The Root Of It	127
The Ragged Line	127
Monarch Of The Street	128
The Aroma Of Poverty	128
Entree	129
Superstar	129
Poor, Rich, Man	129
Niggard	130
Black Bird	130
Fink	130
Behind A Dumpster In Baltimore	131
Cartoon Man	132
Some Eat To Live	132
Eat, Piggy, Eat	133
Thar She Blows	133

The Empty Can	133
Bimbo	134
A Busy Bird	134
Gossip	135
Speech Therapy	135
Mama's Boy	135
The Man/Woman	135
Mummy	136
A Mean Old Witch	136
Fruit Of His Loins	137
Dead Dinosaurs	138
Survival	138
Ship of Fools	139
The Mud People	140
The Factory	140
The Movement	141
correct me if i'm wrong	141
White Man Overburdened	142
Ego Man	142
Fair-weather Friends	143
A Shallow Sanctuary	143
Chameleon	143
Philanderer	144
Golliwog Logic	144
Pessimist	144
Mystical Magical Men	145
The Chosen One	145
Missionary	146
One On Every Mountain	146
Order According To Thomas More	147
A Fool In A Mire	147
Blanket of Ignorance	147
Saint Machiavelli	148
A Note On Linguistics	148
April Fool's Day	148
Pride Of John Duns Scotus	149
Idiot School	149
Academic Aspirations	149
Paper For Sale	150
Education	150
The Death Of The Book	152
Of Asininity	152
Hear This Harmony	153

The Song We Sing	153
Oriental Medicine	153
VIII. Confusion	155
A Viking	157
The Vicissitude Of Fate	157
Tribute	158
A Page Turned	158
Along A Street In Incheon	159
Hillbilly Bill	161
The Night Janitor	162
Less Than A Movie	162
Woo Woo	163
Sunday School Teacher	164
Junkyard Man's Dog	165
One-Eyed King	166
Katzenjammer	166
Dental Tyranny	167
Witch Grass	167
Moonshine	168
Water Witch	168
Under A Culvert	169
Go The Spoils	169
Baptism	169
A Fairy Tale	170
Middle Ground	170
Shades	171
Newspaper Romance	171
Slash Burning	171
Frost On An Art Gallery Window	172
A Saucy Lass From Malta	172
City Girl	172
Sorry, Bane	173
An Angle	173
Raising Ned	174
Hit Man	174
Badge	175
Taking Free License	175
Having Not Understood Five Pages Of Shakespeare	176
The Poet Thief	177
Guilt While Eating A Pork Chop	177
Blessing On The Food	178

Thankless Giving Day	178
While Eating Tortellini	179
Happy Weed	181
Mary Jane	181
The Cure	182
The Connection	182
Fellow On The Sidewalk	182
Stages	183
Searching	183
The Ultimate Question	184
Supplication	184
Watcher	184
Writ Of Apocalypse	185
Paranoid	185
Mixed Signals	186
driftwood	186
Pacific	187
What Shall You Be?	187
On Becoming A Golden Statue	187
Reflection	188
In The Basement	188
Intangible	189
To The Morning Sun	189
Sage	189
Form	190
IX. Shelter	191
Looking Back On It	193
Pedigree	193
Passing An Old House	199
In A Garage	199
Mothers	200
Ogre In The Armchair	200
Horseshoe-Nail Ring	200
Cat Lady	201
Shelter From The Storm	201
Puppy Street	202
Fame For A Plain-Jane	202
Toy Story	202
In A Pile Of Leaves	202
The Ripening Of Delight	203
Ten Tenets Of A Roman's Meditations	204
Preston School	205

Through Preston	206
Reunion	206
Album	207
Witch Spell	207
Cuckoo Clock	208
Adventure's Track	209
Broken, Old, Man At The Windowsill	209
I Believe In Christmas Eve	209
Vision From My Porch On A Starry September Night	210
X. Conflict	217
Just After Dawn	219
Thinning The Crop	219
I Did Not Shoot An Albatross	220
A Watermelon	220
Self Worth	220
Wasted Words	221
Drought Season	221
Mediocrity	222
Rebuttal	222
Sins Of Omission	222
What To Say	223
Rebel Without A Clue	223
Be Prepared	223
Pertaining To Rage	224
Rage Against The Machine	224
Retort	224
Renegade	225
Run, Monster, Run	225
Computer Man	226
Sylvia	226
Until the Wind Blows Again To Frankfurt	227
A Mouse In A Mouse Trap	227
Today	228
Laborer	228
Machine	228
Companion	229
Fugitive	229
Toying With Joy	230
The Heart Of My Mind	230
No Where To Go But Up	231
Lonely Crow	231

Pantomime	231
Warbler On The Wing	232
From The Top Of The Tree	232
Phoebe	232
Schism	233
XI. Price	235
I Will Make A Snowman	237
Webster's Lair	237
Sweet Poisonous Dreams	237
Bait	238
Flower	238
Tread Softly My Heart	238
Quiet Suffering	239
Bleeding Heart	239
Absence	239
Turtledove	240
Breath of Heather	241
Solo	241
If I Could Melt Your Heart	241
Somewhere Along The Way	242
Remnants	243
The Price	243
I Don't See An Easy Way To Get Out Of This	243
Postscript	244
Parting Seas	244
She Had To Fly	244
Will O' Wisp	245
One Twilight Apparition	245
I Will Wait For You	247
XII. Oblivion	249
Free Falling	251
Flying High Once More	251
I'll Be Hiding Behind A Cloud	252
I Am The Silent One	252
Into The Arms Of Morpheus	253
On My Bed Sleeping	253
Life At Twilight	253
Swiftly Flowing	254
Off To Find Paradise	254
Rock	254
In The Library	255

Silver Lining	255
Do you feel like I do?	256
Pumpkin Patch	256
To An Unknown Woman	257
Iron Cross	257
Pipes Calling	257
Our Little Life	258
In The Jubilation Of My Zenith	258
A Snowflake Has Melted In My Eye	258
Here, Before The Cold Hearth, Weary	260
XIII. Lamentation	261
In The Beginning	263
The Initial Thought	263
Thy Will Be Done	264
Ugly Monkey	264
Before I Slip Into That Faraway	265
Beneath your eye of gold	265
Candles In The Wind	266
Animal Crackers	266
Tree Of Life	267
The Way And The Light	267
Eye To Eye	267
Warlord	267
Pandora's Box	268
Death Of A Parakeet	268
Ceaseless Yearning	269
Milk Of My Beginning	269
Rearing The Paradox	270
Prophecy	270
The End Of Days	270
New Year 2000	271
The Year 2000	271
Beneath All Things	272
Must Be Madness	272
Bring Omnipresence To Me	272
XIV. Fear	273
Genesis	275
Jack-o'-lantern	275
Bedtime Rhyme	275
All Hallow's Eve	277

Bones	278
A Ghoul Next Door	278
Mary	279
Wishing Ghost	279
Axeman Bill	279
Rock-A-Bye	280
Rotting Flesh	280
About The Headstone	280
Waiting For The Worms	281
Shadow Man	282
Dream Weaver	282
The One True Word	283
Calamity	283
XV. Stumble	285
Tower	287
Reckoning	287
The Waking Of The Ghoul	287
When She Passed	288
Silver Dreams	288
Milk Of Rilke	289
The Final Lines	289
Sandman	291
The Memoirs Of Susan Duncan Clark	291
The Best Of Worlds	292
Welcome To The Arena	293
Terah	293
A Shallow Grave	294
Earth's Shadow	295
For Lorca	295
Aubrey	296
Billy	296
Hunter	296
Silly, Silly, Me	297
Rag Doll Clown	297
Poor Thin Ferris	298
Funeral For A Crone	298
Maria	298
Myung Ji	299
Alligator Doll	299
Shattered Purpose	299
Box	300
Hand Of Justice	300

Vacuum	300
The Magic	301
Broken Soldier	301
From Where The Sun Stands	301
Mirage	302
No Going Back	302
From The End Of The Hall	302
How Shall I Teach Them Horror?	303
A Rabbit Prayed	304
All The World Shall Never Have Been	305
What's In Your Head?	305
Balanced On A Razor Blade	306
XVI. Fall	307
Who Cast The Rock?	309
The Feast	309
What Were You Thinking?	309
Allah Smiles Tonight	310
Funny Man	310
Inventor	311
Blasphemy	311
Halo	312
storm chief	312
Own Up	313
Demons	313
Vengeance Is Mine	314
Objection From The Bottom Of The Pit	314
Worm Berries	315
Therefore	315
The Bottom Line	316
Zombie	316
Volcano	316
Rape Me	317
I'm A Train	317
Montage From A Madman's Mind	318
The Leak In The Dam	320
Dark Side Of The Moon	321
Mother	322
Go To Sleep, My Little Baby	322
Siren	322
Dictate Of Oblivion	323

XVII. Abyss	325
Last Of The 222nd Terrestrial Assault Battalion	327
A Land	329
Shall I Join You?	329
The Answer	329
Lights Out	330
The Chamber Of The Spurious Dust	331
Surprised?	331
Conclusion	331
Enter Then, Mystery	332
The Suicide Society	332
Tea Time	333
Term Paper	333
The Final Cut	333
The Sarcophagus	334
Croon	334
Forever Home	334
I Must Go Alone To My Bed	335
Oh, Sleep	336
I Go, Yet I Stay	336
May Or May Not	336
My Soul Take	337
A Minute To Midnight	337
This Dark Night	338
Scream Of Silence	338
Home No More	339
Eternal Romance	339
Spirits Of The Mist	339
Surrender	339
Sad And Sleepy Twilight	340
The Struggle	340
Until I Sleep	340
Embarkation	341
Your Fire	341
Dry Leaf	341
XVIII. Redemption	343
The Measure Of Victory	345
Protagonist	345
To A Better Day	345
Refusal	346
A Few Steps More	346

Firmly Rooted	346
The Writ Of Creation's Power	347
Exhortation	347
Demon Night	348
Awake	348
Alive Again	348
Stand Your Ground	349
Oath Of Defiance	349
Hail Caesar	349
Oh, West-Charging Charioteer	350
Fabric Of Existence	350
Star Burned Out	350
Weep O Stars!	351
For The Going	351
Make Joy My Monument	352
A Man Went Forth	352
The Final Fence	353
A Plan	353
The Fifth Element	354
Trace Of Passing	354
What It Comes Down To	354
Making Peace	354
Rose For A Nightingale	355
Gardens Of My Dreams	355
Cathedral	356
Visions Of Eternity	356
Redemption	362
XIX. Emancipation	363
Someone Painted Stars	365
When I Was A Child	365
Peeking Beneath The Door	365
Beyond Night	365
Intangible	366
Lighthouse	366
Shine On, Yellow Flower	366
Here, Where A Star And Stream Meet	367
Stepping Stones	367
Time And Place	367
When I Was Hungry	368
I Dreamt I Walked With Yeats	368
Didactic Garden	369

Compost Pile	369
Sit With Me	370
Make Me Free	370
Wasn't That A Mighty Storm?	370
Ghost Lights	371
In A Wisp	371
Tender Autumn Light	371
Fire On A Wintry Night	372
Ghosts Array	372
Open The Curtain	372
Ship Overladen	372
Measuring Up	373
Consolation	373
The Sum	373
From The Lost Dead	373
Where Is The Pine Bow?	374
Here, We Passed	374
Paradise Bird	375
Afternoon shower	375
Transformation	376
Kindred Light	376
Tranquillity	377
When I Am God	377
Spanning The Gap	378
Measuring The Gain	378
Pressed Rose	378
A Blending Of Souls	379
The Trick Is To Eat Lotus	379
The End Of Your Choice	380
This Is A Gift	380
Here Is Your Canvas	380
XX. Reconciliation	381
Out Of The Fire	383
Across A Field Of Clover Running	383
This Day's Refrain	383
That Pact	384
To The Victor	384
Live For The Day	385
A Wish	386
Spring Side	386
Elusive Taste	386
The Wind Is Good For A Soul	387

The Spring Of Our Origin	387
Under November Clouds	387
Given A Will To Rake	388
Pluck	389
Miner	389
Here Is A Dream To Dream	389
I Don't Want To Wait	390
Today As Forever	390
Ahoy!	391
Furious, Headlong, Beast	391
Depiction	391
Train Departed	392
Here And There	392
To Show You Me	393
Embodiment Of Perfection	393
A Friend True	394
Cassandra	394
I Long To Abide Forever There	395
I Passed A Garden	395
Good-Bye, Lady Sunset	396
To You, When You Are Old	397
Across a million miles of heaven	397
The Edge Of My Divination	398
One Last Deed	398
Say That It Was Not In Vain	399
Wisps	399
Assessment	399

L. Prodigy

Golden Morning

Oh, golden morning!
Oh, glorious day beginning!
The face of the sky is miraculous!
The sun is awakening, Eden awakening,
Rays filtering through trees and fence posts,
Twinkling in silver-wet remnants of the past night,
Waking the heavy-eyed garden, the terraced vines,
Where newborn blossoms are radiant in emerging day.

The Breath Of God

Sing away. Float away.
Lay a soft whisper in my hair.
Upon an ocean fly,
Across a sea of endless blue,
Across an azure day.
A wisp of white upon the air,
A fleecy blanket on the sky,
The breath of God are you.

I am the sky

I am the sky.
I am the stars above.
I can fly
On the wings of a dove.
I rejoice
With a windy voice.
Hear me cry.
I am the sky.

Fly

Walk on the clouds,
Among the crowds
Of cotton birds,
The marshmallow herds

Of gossamer opossums,
 And fawn blossoms,
 The fleecy flocks of sheep
 Floating fast asleep.
 Step on them one by one,
 Until you reach the sun,
 And claim a piece of the sky.
 Fly!

Sage Minstrel

Song of a little stream
 Babbling obliviously,
 Transient Summer dream
 Flowing mindlessly to the sea,

Over stones and moss calls,
 Merrily piping and singing.
 Over gay cascade falls,
 Tunes of existence are ringing.

Play on, thou, fearless sage,
 Though thy tones fall on deafened ears!
 What words might truly gauge
 The earnest wisdom of thy years?

Subjects Of The Pond

Silver is this dance at dawn,
 A splash of white upon the glass,
 And spark of sun on thrashing fin
 That tumbles through the mirror once more -

Then as before, the gentle trance
 Of murmur lapping on the shore,
 And pass again to swish and crash.
 So spirited, this slippery spawn!

Surprise At A Lake

A lumpy guy among the weeds
 Has passed me by in hurried hops.
 Towards a pool,
 He leaps
 And drops.
 The water breaks
 In silver pieces.
 A flash of moss slips in between,
 And kicks a wake of rippled creases
 To the cress along the reeds.

Builder

I've found a pool
 Where one did not use to be.
 I've found a mound
 Beneath a cedar tree.
 I hear a sound
 Like the churning of the sea.
 The fronds surround
 And hide the poet from me.

Angels In Green

There are angels in green
 Dancing on my window sill,
 For an afternoon sunbeam
 Streaming in from the day.

A soiled soul they clean,
 For a bit of water will
 As the earth's fair children gleam,
 And in my heaven stay.

Poem From An Elm Branch

The poet laureate of an elm
 Sang to me his poetry,
 Trilled his sweet verse
 In appreciation of a tree,
 That he and I might converse
 On the meter of his realm.

March

In March, the first warm raindrops fall,
 In hint that spring's front troops do call,
 But marches in a winter squall
 Like drumbeats on the roof and wall.

April Showers

Sprinkling of the May queen!
 Iridescent showers
 Attiring her in green,
 Awakening flowers,

Come a day raindrops sing,
 Praise a new maiden's birth,
 Raise the lady of spring,
 Grace the mother of earth.

The Colors Of A Ray

It looks like rain today.
 The rolling clouds are on the way.
 The sky is turning fast to gray.
 A rainbow comes to stay.
 Fairy veils begin to fray,
 In silver mists begin to spray.
 Wind sprites have come to play.
 They have sent the sun away,
 But kept the colors of a ray.

A June Bug

A june bug came in September,
 To wait out winter's harm
 In the kitchen window sill,
 In the potted plant sanctuary,
 Until the days grow warm,
 Through October,
 November, and December.
 And in January,
 It was there still,

Extending its stay
 Until May,
 Never wandering away,
 Until one fine June day.

Dandelion

There's a yellow one
 Among the grass,
 Too mellow for sun -
 But could for gold pass.

Above the domain
 Of the flower bed,
 A tooth and a mane,
 A dandy lion's head!

Robins Are Singing

Robins are singing.
 Robins are waking.
 Robins are bringing in the day.
 This glorious morning,
 With spring in the making,
 Robins are singing
 Of sun here to stay.

Garden Jester

A little rabbit beneath the rose,
 One ear up and one ear down,
 Shows his silly-wiggling nose,
 Lifts his ever-happy frown,

Leaps across the garden floor,
 Prancing as a racing steed,
 To itch his chin upon a weed,
 And settle in the grass once more.

Feline

Sleek is this stealthy dragon.
 From a sofa
 Springs she
 Upon a sunbeam.

Swats an evasive dust,
 This shadowy specter,
 Arches up,
 Sweeps low again,

Tame once more then -
 Only tranquillity;
 A serpentine tail
 And hymns softly hummed.

A Bird In The Hand

A bird in the hand
 Must be worth any
 Two in the bush -
 Much more grand
 To stroke a head,
 And feel a beak
 Give your finger
 A trusting push.

Unless, instead,
 You might convince
 The two in the bush
 Not to linger,
 Since two in the hand
 Would be as nice
 As one, at least twice
 The worth of a bush
 With many.

Wish On a Starfish

Make a wish on a starfish.
 Find a dream in a sky of sand.
 See the universe in a dish.
 Behold, a light I can hold in my hand!

arizona rope

sliding gliding
 lithe and slender
 escaping from sun bake
 between cool stone
 nest home
 you
 leglessly running
 vacuum cord retracting
 into case
 with a rattling
 behind

Heart Of Wood

My tree has budded anew,
 Has donned her morning attire,
 A delicate waking hue
 That only spring can inspire.

She wears the green of waking.
 She will weave a tapestry,
 A dress of summer's making.
 She will bear a quince for me.

She is as my sylvan child.
 I raised her to tree from seed.
 I espoused her from the wild,
 And care for her every need.

And she repays all my care
 With a vitality fine,
 With leaves and fruit, scents my air -
 Has rooted her life in mine.

I greet her as my friend true.
 She would answer if she could.
 I'm sure that she loves me, too,
 Deep down in her heart of wood.

Morning Has Broken In Idaho

Morning has broken in Idaho,
 Along a fold of glacial grain -
 And pine trees growing row on row -
 Upon the high-rolling hills and mountain peaks rising -
 Eastward, westward, the coming sun surprising
 Shy host of woods wandering tranquilly along the roadside,
 White-tailed, lingering for confirmation,
 Dashing away into the underbrush -
 Dew on leaves and grass, shimmering diamond-silver-white,
 Abandoned jewels of passing night -
 The twittering tongue of thrush -
 A cottonwood taking in a golden ration -
 A sleepy owl on a sweeping wing of cedar -
 Wildflowers, paintbrush-fresh, scattered freely among the grass -
 V-formation of geese in high-held pass,
 Holding fast to the point of their leader,
 Upon a sunbeam riding,
 The highest rays of day to meet -
 Clover, knee-high and sweet,
 On a breeze blowing -
 A song from the creekside flowing -
 Brisk perfume of conifer -
 In the treetops, the wind's glorious sound -
 A flash of red wings, fluttering,
 Feathers in a fir,
 A hawk settling from his sky, riding,
 Following a current down to the end -
 A grasshopper on a thistle hiding -
 A ground squirrel searching out a friend -
 A ruffled grouse standing his ground,
 His courage fluffed and sputtering,
 Ruffled and drumming the cadence of the day -

A caterpillar in the dry leaves finding its way -
 A monarch butterfly upon a daisy come to play -
 A crow rowing at the tail of his brother -
 Awake all for the show!

Morning has broken in Idaho!
 Ah, to live to see another!

Closed For The Season

These woods are closed for the season.
 The trees do not care to be seen.
 Fatigue is likely the reason.
 They are tired of being green.

When you're the biggest thing to grow,
 Nothing else has much of a say,
 If you want to put on a show,
 Then sleep the whole winter away.

Those Winds

Those winds that blow down southerly,
 Bring icy air from the northern sea;
 A wicked, prickly, needle cold
 That makes the landscape stark and bold,
 That makes the children cease their play,
 That makes the birds all fly away,
 That turns the pines to frosted cones,
 And skelps the skin right off yer bones.

Feathered Fairies Of Midnight

Spirits of the highest air
 Beneath a lunar noon fair,
 Beneath a cedar bower,
 Have come to visit this hour,
 Heaven's earthward-blown daughters,
 Stirring the still pond waters,
 Breaking in silver slivers,

Delightful sightly givers
 Of show and song compounding,
 Magical trumpets sounding,
 Dancing madly in moonlight -
 Feathered fairies of midnight.

On A Magical Night

On a magical October night,
 The porch is a delight
 With a jeering jack o' lantern bright.
 Cornstalks in the fields murmur a fright,
 When the wind is right.
 A breath blown down from mountain height
 Carries a leaf like a brittle kite.
 And when the moon is right,
 Shadows seem to shape the light,
 But not quite.
 One can see the trees, bone white,
 As gaping jaws prepared to bite,
 Or a demon free, or a witch in flight.
 With luck, a spirit might come in sight,
 With a little luck and magic, it might.

Winter's Hand

Winter, fiendish hand of destruction,
 Slowly steals the green from every leaf -
 Ruthlessly crushes life's production
 With the touch of a murderous thief.

Winter's blow feints high then creeps low,
 To spread a most malignant disease -
 Dragon's teeth sown in the guise of snow,
 That raise skeletons where there were trees.

Teeth Of Winter

Icicles gnash along the eave,
 Aligned like rows of icy fangs,
 A point of bitter luck to grieve.
 In a balance, cold and hot hangs.

Snowflakes, hardened by their chill lot,
 Put their jagged teeth on display,
 Their hearts frigid, their tempers hot,
 Until sun warms their hate away.

Diamonds

Diamonds glitter on the lake,
 At a winter morning's break.
 The value that such wonders hold
 Is more precious than any gold.

Wealth made in a single night,
 Formed in an hour, and gone as fast,
 Gems that but a season last,
 Are indeed a treasured sight.

Lady Winter

A maiden has arrived,
 Spread her ephemeral vestiges in the stealth of dawn,
 Enswathed the threshold of morning with her frosty gown,
 Attired the world in bridal white,
 To wed the groom of first beholding,
 Abiding unblighted, for the caress of flesh fingers,
 For the blood-warmth to take up a portion of her veil,
 To abide as one substance,
 She and I,
 For a moment of courtship.

Marauder

A marauder has breached the cabin floor,
 Turned a crack between the planks into his pantry door,
 There, ransacked a sack of roasted cashews,
 And left the shells piled neatly, having taken his dues.

He wears a mask to disguise his design
 To share as his own what I deem to be mine.
 Though, from time to time, he appears quite bold,
 On the stump of a tree, my intrusion to scold.

Goblin

Something's out in the garbage bin,
 Too loud for just the rain,
 And not quite in rhythm for wind.
 But it's too hard to tell in this din,
 With the moon gone and the stars turned in.
 Almost impossible to catch a fiend!
 By morning there will only be muddy paw prints
 And fish fins left over from dinner,
 Scattered around the bushes by a goblin.

Denizens

Tearful hymns from midnight gate,
 These fallen spirits expiate
 Their nightly deeds with doleful cries,
 And wear the wit of ancient guise,
 And catch the moon on moon-disk eyes.
 Who? Who?

Meadow At Midnight

I rose at noon nocturnal and cast a glance beyond my window,
 Beyond my window pane, beyond the glass, to a sleeping day.
 I bade it greeting, bade it say what it would say,
 With a light touch raised the sash, stepped lightly outward,
 Across the threshold into the twelfth-hour radiance,
 Into the dew-wet grass,
 Across the grass, treading lightly, to the garden path,
 And passing to the pasture sweeping low at my knees.
 And a goose called out lonely from the night far above me.
 There I observed the moon for a time,
 Entranced by the nimbus radiance.

The pale moon is luminous upon the treetops.
 The pale moon is unrevealing beyond the treetops.
 There are shadows beyond the trees,
 The night is not revealed beyond the trees.
 There is deep mystery behind the trees, entrenched in the branches.
 There are shadows enveloping the branches and leaves.
 And there is a cat creeping or a raccoon out on expedition.

But there is no other adumbration but speculation from the woods.
 The moon speaks only of the meadow directly this evening.
 All else is oblique to my understanding,
 All else obscured from my vision.
 The moon is luminous upon the meadow, radiantly betraying.
 The moon is luminous upon the grass, intimate and revealing.

The green is gone from the grass, silenced by the moon.
 Silenced are all colors.
 The grass is gray and divested of pretension.
 The bones of the grass are revealed both lusty and circumspect.
 The nature of the grass is revealed -
 The present rising from the past,
 The present subsiding to the past.
 The grass is possessed by a presence of moonshine.
 On the grass there is a stirring, rising upon a moonbeam.
 Palpitating is my heart at this unseemly revelation.
 My heartbeat is unsteady, failing and overpowering.
 My breast is beating life and curiosity.
 My curiosity is tangible, most tangible and marvelous.

There rises a form from the grass, a fluctuation of luminosity.
 There rises a gossamer form or a form without substance,
 Neither wrought by moon or shadows alone,
 Nor brought forth a spirit born on imagination's whim,
 A flicker, a tremulous whirl rising then subsiding,
 Settling down in the meadow grass,
 As a veil torn away from a secret lover's face is cast aside,
 As a spotless gown might settle round a bridal procession,
 As a delicate moth fluttering might light upon a blade of grass
 But rise again to dance in the lunar morning,
 To reckon with the stars for the moon's affection.

I rose at noon nocturnal and cast a glance beyond my window.
 I stepped straightway to the meadow in my passion.
 And in the light of a midnight moon, I am entranced by curiosity.

Among The Thronging Flowers

Stand upon the highest garden stair,
Among the thronging flowers.
In the most spacious of bowers,
Sow your affinity to the air.

Gather a glittering bouquet
Of blossoms blooming in endless space.
Harvest a twinkling nosegay,
And hold it against your starlit face.

U. Dream

A Kite

I saw a kite caught in a tree -
 A dream I thought belonged to me.
 I lost one there, some years ago,
 In autumn wind, before the snow.

It left me for an urge to fly,
 To ride a surge into the sky.
 I dreamed it sailed across the sea,
 But someday would return to me.

An Apricot Tree Grew

An apricot tree grew
 In the backyard of my youth,
 Blossoming in spring -
 Lightly floating downward flowers,
 Bound earthward,
 Branches reaching for truth,
 Greeting young eyes with symmetry,
 And the sweet sweet scent,
 Succulent with season,
 Bearing fruit for the eating,
 There for a reason.
 And what was meant
 By the view,
 Who's to say?

Huckleberry Picking

Let's go huckleberry picking, shall we?
 (Like we did before up on Cedar Saddle)
 We'll hike the peak to the snow line,
 With thoughts of huckleberry pies to motivate us,
 And the going as much as the eating,
 Until we find our prize;
 A world of bountiful underbrush,
 The tart red ones, the sweet black ones,
 And the dark ones beneath the cedars
 Alive with pine essence.
 We'll battle the yellow jackets for their claim,
 The day completely forgotten until evening,

When stomachs and vessels are filled to capacity.
 Then we shall concede, as Alexander,
 Our hands stained from conquest,
 That there was too much territory to conquer,
 Too much treasure for the looting,
 Bearing our berries, like Sherpas home from expedition,
 Blue lips joyful and singing,
 We will find our way homeward in the growing shadows,
 Still thinking of huckleberry picking -
 And the pie only an afterthought.

Hunting And Finding

I hunted deer in my youth,
 And found one, as elusive as truth,
 Come from the shadows
 To drink,
 As I sat near a stream

- And my Winchester there,
 Forgotten, at my feet.

Walking On Holy Water

Do you remember when
 We followed a stream down through a glen,
 And found a wheat field growing there
 Like golden waves of angel hair?

And blew a breeze of heaven sent
 Across the flowing tides of grain.
 Across an amber sea we went,
 Across a magic plain.

Then from her bed, leapt up a fawn,
 Like Neptune's agile daughter.
 And we followed after her till dawn,
 Walking on holy water.

Warm, Wet, Embrace

With a voice of sirens she sings,
 With broad bold lips,
 Whispers from a distance,
 Smiles with perfect teeth,
 Beckons me, her silken face,
 Skin smooth and azure,
 Wraps seductive fingers around me,
 Spreads her skirt fro
 Voluptuous rolling hips,
 Draws it back a bit to show
 Her petty coat beneath,
 Edged in silvery lace,
 Luring and retreating
 My inordinate lust to entice.

I succumb without resistance,
 With unconfined wings
 Sail out to meet her,
 I the holy ghost, and she
 The virgin entreating,
 Rolling me off to paradise,
 Into her warm wet embrace.

Blowing Dandelions

Some say the dandelion is a weed.
 But I insist it is a golden star
 That turns from sun to quasar,
 And sows the earth with celestial seed.
 The notion may seem farfetched at first,
 Until one realizes a dandelion's thirst
 For life and proliferation, the desire
 To go from seed to heavenly fire.

I smile when I spy, on some manicured yard,
 A dandelion sun shining brightly on the sward,
 Prying up through a lawn in glorious form,
 Through the most thunderous gardener's storm,
 Defying the mower's effort to darken skies,
 Like some immortal escape artist's surprise.

Late night, when stars twinkle remotely,
 Like dandelion parachutes floating across eternity,
 I think, possibly, that somewhere out there,
 A boy has been blowing dandelions into the air.

Salamanders

My desire
 Was to catch fire -
 Salamanders in an alpine lake.
 I had made the same mistake,
 Numerous times before,
 Of trying to wage elemental war.
 And there I was, once more,
 Seduced by mythical lore,
 Armed with fire bucket and resolution,
 Believing I had a solution
 All worked out.
 I had no doubt
 That this time I would succeed
 In capturing the fiery breed.
 I stealthily stalked,
 On hot coals walked,
 Until I was so near
 I could feel a salamander's heat sear
 My feeble attempt
 With burning contempt.
 At the edge of the moss it blazed.
 For an instant I was dazed.
 Then I made my move,
 Snatched, felt fire in the groove
 Of my palm, then only mud, moss - smoke,
 A salamander's joke.
 Again, I had been spurned.
 My fingers had been burned.

Picking Up Pebbles

She said she would look for rocks,
 Pretty pebbles, and shiny stones,
 To arrange as border blocks,
 To order her garden in zones.

But she saved a fallen star,
 Gathered up fragments of lost space
 Where they had scattered afar,
 And gave them a pertinent place.

The Promised Land

We pilgrimaged hand in hand,
 Along the straight and narrow streets,
 To the promised land,
 In an exodus for sweets,

To the gates of paradise,
 Where a heavenly angel waited
 Behind an array of flavored ice -
 The blessing we had anticipated

There in the counter glowing,
 The fruits of our desire,
 Like milk and honey flowing!
 Manna to cool our earthly fire!

Treat Or Trick

Candy was no good for Halloween treats.
 It made trick-or-treaters misbehave, gave them tooth decay.
 And so she vowed to do away with sweets,
 By giving away something wholesome, in the way

Of scones, cold unsweetened scones.
 Scones would put the white in their smiles,
 And a righteous marrow in their bones.
 Folks would hear of her wisdom for miles.

My brothers, and sisters, and I went
 Under duress - our mother's threats of pain in hell

If we did not willingly assent,
And politely wish our well-meaning neighbor well.

Thus, we accepted our neighborly obligation,
Chirped Halloween wishes, gleefully assertive,
And waited out the tedious parable, considering incineration
In hell as an acceptable alternative.

With uplifted goody bags, we accepted shortening bread,
Grateful, at least, that we had costumes to mask any insincerity,
And that we could then be moving on, instead,
To certain Halloween trick-or-treating prosperity.

I even took a bite for my mother's sake,
And for my neighbor's delight, even insisted my brother
Give his a try, then and there. Like birthday cake!
But I kept moving for fear she'd offer me another.

In the rustle of autumn leaves, it isn't hard
To spit without your mother hearing,
And clandestinely throw a scone across a yard.
With so many other scones thrown about, there was no fearing

That anyone would ever find out whose scone was whose,
Unless teeth marks and dental records were investigated,
And a thorough search was done of treat baskets for clues.
And then, the whole neighborhood would be implicated.

For there was always a trail of bread in every direction,
Scattered along the sidewalks and lawns in ghoulish cheer;
A map laid out by ghost and goblin insurrection,
To help them find their way back next year.

Sport

We called it nigger-knocking,
But whether niggers knocked and ran
Was nothing we could know, having no niggers in town.
But we served as diligent surrogates.
We set our sleepy town rocking,
Evenings, after church, enough to make them ban
Meetings on weekdays, afraid we'd pound the doors down.
But where opportunity knocks, effort never abates.
Old ladies were against the rules,

And gentle folks who smiled and wished us well
Even if we chided them from down the street.
And we never picked on the poor, for fear they'd take it too hard.
Employees from any churches or schools
Were prime targets, those who would damn us to hell
From their porches, those who kept their lawns too neat
Or put up signs to keep neighbor kids out of the yard,
And especially the toughies who were really determined to catch us,
Waiting up nights in ambush, ready for the chase,
Angrier each time we foiled a clever plot
By infiltrating their Maginot Lines, and tearing their egos apart.
The primary object was to raise enough fuss
To pick up the monotonous small-town pace.
The sport was to not get caught.
And the escape bordered on art.

Tree House

It wasn't very square,
But neither was the tree,
Both formed of deviating wood.
To say it was haphazard would be fair,
Speaking purely of symmetry.

We had done the best we could
To make it practical,
From a boy's point of view.
View and concealment were what really mattered,
The main consideration being tactical.

For materiel, we had to make do
With slivery planks that we found scattered
Here and about, along garden fences and back doors,
Nicked from behind neighbor's garages and sheds,
And rusted nails accrued from boards, pulled, and pounded straight.

We scraped up enough scraps for multiple walls and floors,
A semi-watertight roof over our heads,
And a rope ladder, with a trap door for a gate.

And when we had it made, we had it made!
We had a castle in the shade of a Norwegian pine,
High in a pine, where no adult meddling could reach,
A sanctuary from injun siege and pirate raid.

We stayed always vigilant, on watch for the first sign
Of invasion, with imaginary cannons at each
Corner, pine-cone hand grenades, and fence-picket swords.

Though we were attacked by more than a score
Of prowling cats, and robins singing out our position,
No external force ever conquered our tree or boards.

In the end, it was the enemy within that brought us to the floor,
The passing of age that took the blast from our ammunition.

Toy Soldiers

They thrashed the cotton-headed weeds,
Withdrawing strategically, again and again,
As the enemy dispatched new armies of parachuting seeds
To reinforce the battlefield for some latter campaign.

They were beaten, they knew, their numbers too few
To take on an entire ditch bank.
For among the legions arrayed against them so rank,
All manner of hideous imagination grew.

There were hydra-headed grass monsters whose powers surpassed
The efficacy of any common warrior's blade,
Poisonous spores, man-eating vines, dragons massed -
Multitudes of the most malevolent grade.

But the heroes stood their ground for honor's sake.
With lattice-strip swords tempered by childhood consecration,
They made the weeping-willow swamp creature's tentacles break,
And saved the world from utter annihilation.

Puddle Jumping

Days of rain,
Our mothers forbade, in vain,
Our getting wet.
If there was water on the ground,
It was a sure bet
That we would soon be found
Jumping mud puddles.

Mud puddles are not mud at all.
Mud only muddles
The water a bit - the rest is pure rainfall.

And what's the use of heaven pumping and dumping
All that rain, if nobody's jumping?
Not to jump seemed a sin,
Not over, but in,
Right smack in the center!

Position of the feet was the key,
Knowing how to enter
With complete authority,
So that most of the water splashed sideways
Instead of filling our shoes.

Sure, our mothers made us pay our dues,
But we still got the best of rainy days.

Motorcycle Ride

Grab your brain bucket. Put your brains inside.
Because you won't need them much anymore.
Replace all thoughts with a maddening roar.
You're going on a motorcycle ride.

Now squeeze that crotch rocket between your knees.
Your murder sickle is all set to kill.
You discard better judgment for the thrill.
Lack of discretion is your mad disease.

Hear the frenzied humming of angry bees.
Smell the gasoline nectar. Taste the dust.
Boldly kick the stinger, and feel the thrust.
Take off, aimlessly flying through the trees.

From all your worries, you merrily glide.
With a twist of your wrist, your world is grand.
The whole world is in the palm of your hand.
You're going on a motorcycle ride.

The Camp

There's a meadow in Idaho,
Where the pines circle round and meet,
And the grass is trod low
By little city-learned feet.

There, young eyes were wide
In discovery of paradise -
To be outside,
In freedom's device -

For a few weeks, then done -
As all good things, gone too fast -
But the dream graven clear as sun
Into the lessons of their past,

As wisdom's consecration,
So that when they are old,
They shall see their final destination
Without being told.

We Had Fishing

We cast our lines in a summer lake,
Not really knowing what was at stake,
Unsure of what we might take,
Our bait as unproven as truth,
Dreaming and aimlessly wishing.
But we had our hooks firmly in youth.
And for a summer, we had fishing.

The Swimming Hole

It rushed out between rocks and moss,
As if it was in a hurry to go someplace,
Maybe eager to get out from under a mountain boss,
And be free from the starting block to run a fair race.
It seemed to know just where it wanted to go,
And went with a fantastic show,
Over gray mountain bones gurgled and hissed,
In a lusty voice sang,

Danced forth from a curtain of mist,
Where ferns, and cress, and myriad emerald spectators
Congregated along the banks for a good view
Of trout gladiators
Flipping in the shadows of overhang,
Against the current's skew.
It built up enthusiasm as it unified in one force
With sister springs, through a hundred yards of willows pried,
Then roared along a gorge, until it found course
Liberal enough to keep it pacified,
There, meandering and meditating, slow and deep,
Along a tortuous track,
Like a giant serpent might creep,
Until it coiled radically back,
As if it had changed its mind about flowing out to sea.
And there, there was our swimming school,
In the leisure of a creek's uncertainty,
Where water's deviation had carved out a pool -
A pool the hue of sky refracted in a drop of dew -
And cold, as near to ice as liquid can be -
Much too cold for swimming, but too
Beautiful not to at least try and see
How long we could stay under
The spell of a serpent's thumb -
Flying out like lightening, shaking like thunder,
Whooping and leaping to keep from going numb,
Bracing ourselves for another cleansing of our souls.
For to do otherwise, seemed to us a terrible waste -
Not to spend the jewel of all swimming holes -
Ambrosia poured generously, and refusing a taste.

Summer Nights

We spent summer nights in the backyard,
Congregated friends and brothers,
And sisters when we had to,
Waited with shoes on, in similitude of sleep,
Until our mothers were in bed.
Then freedom was ours,
The town ours for the taking,
Exclusive rights to everything within reach,
Though we rarely took more than the thought,
Preferring to dream of safaris in far-off lands,
Of adventures and mystery, of exotic places,
But none as grand as our neighborhood.

The lights of a late-night, fast-food, joint
 Beckoned to us from several blocks away,
 Like a desert mirage -
 Root beer for the taking,
 And not a dime between us.
 But we discussed our plans,
 If ever we got a dime or more.

And on occasion we made raids,
 To appease our appetites,
 On neighbor's gardens,
 With commando stealth, stole
 Fresh peas and raspberries,
 Ate by moonlight till stomachache set in,
 Drank water from the hose,
 And pissed our names on the side of the garage.

With the enthusiasm of Stratford bards,
 We performed flashlight melodramas
 For each other, with no regard for script,
 Raw emotion let loose,
 Till lights from the porch silenced us,
 Brought the curtain down too soon.

With unrelenting vigor, we scrambled
 For cover, for sleeping bags wet with dew,
 A lump beneath each, a stone or pine cone,
 To perturb ribcages and elbows -
 And no use rolling aside,
 As there were always more elsewhere.

Mosquitoes hovered at our faces,
 But we lay in exquisite repose,
 Breathed the scent of grass,
 Hoped we could stay forever,
 Without sleeping or waking,
 In the hush of summer night,
 And the ebbing rhythm of a sleeping town
 To lullaby the cares of Earth away -
 A distant hum of cars on the highway,
 A cricket playing in the arbor,
 And another beneath the back gate,
 The rustle of a tom cat prowling the lilac bush,
 From the trees above, the melancholy hoot
 Of a mourning dove confused by the street lights,

In lazy intervals a hound baying in the distance,
 Answered by the yelping mutt three houses down.

The sky was our final bedtime story -
 There above us, the awe of firmament to reckon,
 The vast domain of our deepest thoughts
 On summer nights.
 Bats darted across the moon.
 Clouds passed the deep blackness of space.
 And we lay in contemplation,
 Attempting to divine the meaning of Cassiopeia.

I saw a shooting star once,
 And made a wish,
 But I can't remember what it was.

In The Hollow

We met where the road dips down the hollow,
 At the edge of old-man Hart's orchard,
 Laying low 'till he went to his reading -
 Not that he'd begrudge a few apples for eating,
 Even stealing forgiven,
 But throwing, a sin, a blatant waste of food -
 Food turned to weaponry
 More irony than an upright man should abide.
 So we'd hide for a while in his tree -
 A tree like no other, with a crotch wide
 Enough for five boys and five again -
 And the orchard beyond - such fine apples,
 As much for eating as throwing.

We gleaned only a few from each branch,
 So as not to bare any one branch too much.
 And such seemed fair, since those that remained
 Had more tree to grow on for the effort.
 Then with piles at our feet to tide us over
 For a while, we declared war, no malice intended,
 Nature taking course, mischief orchestrated,
 In unison the wind up, and concerted release,
 A moment of anticipation,
 (Time reduced to its lowest possible component)
 For the allegro thud-clank of apples on metal,

Pulverized, blown to pulp and saucy spray
 Across hood and on over windscreen,
 A shrill shriek of brakes screeching,
 And run!

Made for the trees we, up the hill,
 Knees weak, legs wobbling, hands shaking,
 Cider bubbles percolating in our veins,
 Then waited out the passing terror,
 Intimate with the grass, momentarily
 Considering the error of our ways,
 Lungs bursting, hearts leaping, dew seeping
 Through the knees of our trousers,
 Ready to go at it new, thirsting for more,
 Unless enough fury was raised already,
 Then such hopes were deferred for the night,
 For another evening - another life.

For on occasion we were caught,
 Captured outright and brought to justice.
 Beaten at our own game, with heads low-bowed,
 We confessed our sins, and in truth swore oaths
 Of repentance no all-mighty could hold a boy to,
 Nor we ourselves, when autumn wind stirred
 The trees in the hollow and the error of our youth.

We Built A Castle

I entered a gate to the county jail,
 With keys rattling on an iron ring,
 Inhaled the metallic air imprisoned there -
 Breath of tenants long moved on to bail.

I was just a boy then, but wise enough
 To taste the ghosts of stagnant hours wasted
 Behind broad, bulking, doors, in gray dimness,
 Sun-barred beneath rays of electric bulbs.

The place had outgrown the law that made it -
 In need of kinder locks and encumbrances,
 The country sought an artist to reshape its fist.
 The sheriff said I might suffice with a friend.

Karl was a cripple with a bowlegged hobble,
 His bones as brittle as the matches
 We used to light our cutting torches,
 But he could hold steady enough to melt steel.

And I dragged out bars, and braces, and stalls,
 Fulfilling the dreams of so many behind walls,
 As odd a team as ever was we were, too innocent
 To understand the machine we built,

But we put sweat and soul into it,
 And welded new doors and stainless steel toilets
 With the pride of any king's masons,
 And lent it new color like God to azaleas.

Our wages we gave little thought of.
 Small coins seemed silly in those halls.
 Satisfaction was as sweet as strawberries
 As we wiped the sweat off our brows.

Karl finished the job but not the year.
 The jail is still there, I understand,
 His magnum opus and mine -
 As significant as any song I've ever sung.

Late Harvest

Upon the frosted sward,
 I see
 The closing tenant of fall's yard -
 A sparrow-laden plum tree
 Blustered by twittering
 Fruit, last flowers,
 On silver-embellished towers,
 Low sunlight glittering.
 Through summer's fallen estate,
 As instrument of landlord winter, I
 A northerly wind instigate
 With my passing,
 My effect surpassing
 All threats of snow,
 Like tempest gales blow,
 Pluck the final harvest bare,
 Scatter blossoms to the air,
 Into an apparition of November sky.

The Haunted House Of Mink Creek

Below Mink Creek Steeps there is an old homestead,
 Or was - now just a square of foundation stones
 That ranging cattle sometimes use as a bed.
 There is half of a chimney where the wind moans
 On November nights, as it must have back then.
 But the old house burned down a long time ago.
 The locals don't seem to know exactly when.
 Many claim to remember the story though.
 They say they came from back east. But they won't say
 Their name. There seems to be power in the name
 That folks feel best left unspoken. Anyway,
 They all agree it was from east that they came.
 They carved out a cattle ranch on the hillside,
 Where the ground was too rocky to take a plow,
 Up until the man committed suicide.
 Nobody ever knew why or even how,
 But he came back to make his widow's life hell,
 Terrorized her until she was unable
 To keep from throwing her baby down the well.
 They found her hanged above the kitchen table.
 The house was bought and sold until none would buy,
 As nobody could stay inside a whole night.
 Eventually, locals decided to try
 And join together, to give the ghosts a fight.
 Twelve men stayed there in a show of rancher's might,
 Till the lanterns went out, and they were beaten.
 Whatever lived in that house could scratch and bite.
 And the ranchers ran, rather than be eaten.
 All the men who helped burn the house to the ground
 Said they never stopped having terrible dreams
 Of the way the wood burned with a hissing sound,
 And the stench of burning flesh, and the faint screams.
 There is still a hollow where they filled the well,
 And a strange weed that creeps on the cellar stairs,
 But no recent cases of biting to tell.
 Dark birds and bats flutter from their evening lairs.
 Fog often shrouds the hillside like a curtain.
 Whether restless spirits still abide as hosts
 Is not anything one can say for certain.
 But boys haunt it from time to time, hunting ghosts.

A December Night

On a December night,
 Hushed and blanketed white,
 We crunched out across the snow,
 Pulling our sleds as fast as we could go,
 The heavenly flakes floating around,
 Spreading more blanket on the ground,
 Our pant legs stiff and creaking,
 We, like wandering shepherds, seeking
 A sign, something divine,
 Beyond a field afar,
 A snow-covered hill,
 A ride, a thrill.

We might find it again, by and by,
 Were we to seek, were we to try.

The Learning Tree

It warsled up from a craggy crotch,
 A noteworthy notch
 Where one mountain crossed legs with another,
 And held the earth
 Like a child embraces it's mother -
 A sapling heart in a giant's girth,
 A child of earth and universe,
 Babe and sage,
 Innocence come to wise age.
 And I had come to converse,
 To weigh
 All a king had to say.

It may have been a pact of friends
 Joined together in a force of common ends.
 Though, I'd like to believe it was a single entity,
 Wise in youth, to bend, so as not to break
 Under the test of ax or ice,
 And wrought, by triumph over adversity,
 Into a monumental device -
 The lesson there for me to partake.
 But it was not my point

To anoint
 As my undertaking
 A king's making.
 I had come for wisdom
 Beneath an ancient kingdom -
 To observe an enduring ruler's tool,
 As he nurtured those he would rule.

Wild raspberries
 Seemed to understand the nature of good.
 The squirrels in their pantries understood
 All of good there is to know.
 In a kingdom of fairies,
 Truth achieves
 It's point with ease.
 I alone waited to understand,
 Cupping my ear with my hand,
 Listening wishfully on an evening breeze,
 To hear dryads whispering in a whiffle of leaves,
 And a whippoorwill's nocturnal woodnote lingering, long and low.

Hay-Hauler

I will remember you, boy man of years ago,
 In the last lavender glimmer of summer day,
 Walking out of the back field in a golden glow,
 Wearing the perfume of sweat and newly-baled hay.

I will recall your thoughts as you looked behind you,
 Beyond farm and fences to the wandering sun,
 Wondering what would be, years after you were through,
 And if time would still remember what you had done.

III. Illusion

Master Of The Day

I am master of the day.
 I am lord of all I survey.
 The world is my subjugation.
 I am a god in my own way.

My designs I cannot Suppress.
 My yearnings I cannot redress
 With anything but creation.
 My passion is akin to madness.

The Moment

Seize this splendid moment.
 No monument can stand as may
 The seconds of this day
 Against eternity.

Seasons, history will say,
 Were written on daisy scrolls,
 Sent as sun upon sand,
 As golden pieces of eternity.

The Nature of Things

Straight and twisted is
 This Emersonian wind -
 Supercilious in the head,
 And language to the heart.

What I Came For

I've seen it, Henry,
 Beneath the numbers,
 Beyond the cumbersome lies,
 Put delusion aside,
 Sucked marrow a while,
 Gave deliberation a try.

And there it was - a poem,
 In a flowing stream
 Pebbled with stars.

For A Day

They say a butterfly
Lives only a day,
That to live and die
In a day is rough.
But who's to say
To play for a day
Is not enough?

Distraction

I have been chastised
For chasing butterflies
When I should not,
Should be watching a phone,
Or figuring figures,
Or configuring configurations.
But there's a bright moth
Fluttering past the fence.
And I can fathom nothing more intense
Than floating after it for an afternoon.

World of Glass

In the center of a field,
There is an old pump.
And the handle won't yield
For the years and the rust.
So it no longer fills
The water trough
Cut from an old stump -
Yggdrasil, it may well be,
Where algae grow,
Sustained by snow and rain,
And water striders skate listlessly
Across the surface of their domain,
And suppose themselves to be alone,
On a world of glass,
In the center of a field.

Snail

All other domiciles pale
By comparison to one;
The shell of the lowly snail,
A shelter second to none.

A snail is always at home,
Even when he is away.
No matter where he might roam,
At home he can always stay.

If his neighborhood is bad,
He can soon find another.
He can never be made mad
By an overstayed brother.

His nook is fluid and quaint,
His house always on the go,
Though, his pace is somewhat slow.
But when was speed his complaint?

Opulence

There are honey ants called repletes,
Who fill up their bellies with sweets,
Like bottles on a cellar rack,
So their bon vivant queen can snack
Whenever she feels so inclined,
Or be thoroughly wined and dined.

Once Burned

They appear curiously benign;
Slender pagoda stalks,
Delicate leaves with whiskers silky fine,
And a righteous posture that mocks
The wise, and welcomes fools
To touch, to test the mettle,
To discover the rules
Of stinging nettle.

The nettle demands liberation,
Teaches mental self-purification.
Once burned, lesson learned.
Twice burned, lesson spurned.

Praying Mantis

She kneels before the judgment chair,
Arms folded in reverent prayer,
In the heart of her saintly lair.

A pilgrim passes by in quest,
Is fast transfigured in her nest,
As lay against her loving breast.

Herculean Herald

At dawn I woke to song of finch -
A bird with bulk of but an inch.
He sang a note with all his might,
That freed me from the clutch of night.

Benign Invasion

There strode in step a line of quail,
A hen with four chicks at her tail,
In quest for spoil of bugs and grain -
A horde of five birds in the rain.

Orchestration

Grasshoppers
And cicadas
Are lying in the grass,
Are hiding in the weeds.
And in the trees,
Play a symphony
From the laced score
Of the winged strings
That each summer brings,
And till autumn rings.

And from the fields,
Join the harbingers.

And at the corner of the barn, in a crack beneath the window,
Wait the crickets for the curtain of the coming night to fall.

What do they sing?

What does it mean?

This I Pray For

This I pray for:
A little stone cottage
With an unlocked door,
And for pottage,
A garden to till,
An orchard of trees,
A wood box to fill,
A meadow of bees,
A forest behind,
A god without sin,
Life's secret to find,
For content within,
A clear sky above,
For friends that care,
For devotion and love,
And kindness to share.

Happy, Happy, Birthday

Happy, happy, birthday!
I sing this day to you.
It seems the least that I can say.
I hope your wishes all come true.

I celebrate your years.
That in life you always may
Find more laughter than tears,
And know true happiness, I pray.

On The Way

On the way,
 Day broke in newborn hues,
 Clues profound in her eyes,
 Cries of purpose weighed,
 Laid in radiant dawn,
 On the way.

Tumon Bay

There is no beginning to the day,
 No end to the sea or sky -
 No separation in my eye.
 Perhaps that is why
 Stars twinkle in Tumon bay.

A Blue-Eyed Crow

A blue-eyed crow called to me,
 Sang a raucous melody
 From the top of a pine.
 The notes it sang,
 With a discordant bang,
 Slammed down the base of my spine.
 But sincere was the melody,
 The message clearly divine,
 Straight to my heart rang.

One Lunar New Year Morning

One lunar new year morning sight
 Of children with a dragon kite,
 Doll-girls in their dresses bright,
 And a magpie calling out in flight,

I took up a sunrise endeavor,
 And painted the picture in my heart forever.

Mississippi

Rhyme rides upon an ancient snake,
 Glides to a boisterous bullfrog's tune,
 On a June night, for a thousand years,
 By the light of a Mississippi moon.

On The Pend Orielle

If I could stay for just one more day,
 I'd while away on the Pend Oreille.
 On the Pend Oreille, I'd pass away.
 On the glassy sway,
 I'd sail,
 And sail,
 And sail away.

In the Sawtooths

Let's get some fresh air, shall we?
 Shall we search for it together,
 Take to the trail if you have the inclination,
 See the sun on Alice Lake as we pass?
 We can ascend a peak in the Sawtooths,
 If you, too, share the desire,
 Climb as high as we can climb.
 There is truth blowing there in the breeze,
 In the roots of the trees,
 In the branches and leaves.
 You may see it too, my friend,
 Spread out at the foot of the Sawtooths.

I've Never Looked On Heaven's Grace

Where the gates to paradise are,
 I'd have to guess in vain.
 My best wager would be a star
 Or here in Coeur d'Alene.

Whether angels tie up their hair,
 I really cannot say.
 But how hawks ride upon the air,
 I witnessed just today.

What is the look of saintly dress?
 Which scent is most divine?
 Both, I would say, were I to guess,
 Would have to be a pine.

How to conceive the maker's face,
 I grant I do not know.
 I've never looked on heaven's grace.
 But I've seen Idaho.

Soil To Soil

Cherry tree,
 Bury me
 In pink satin.
 Pear tree, Bear me
 As fruit again.
 Spoil.
 Foil.
 Coil from
 Soil to soil.

Final Fruit

Bury me shallow,
 In a field lying fallow,
 Just beneath the grade,
 Where over-plowing has made
 The soil turn to dust.
 And I, with my mold and must,
 Shall make new crops grow.
 Spread me around with a hoe.
 Watch me live once more,
 Even better than before.
 My blood and my meat
 Shall make the tomatoes sweet.
 My brains and my skull
 Shall make the melons plump full.
 My bones shall abide,
 And all the marrow inside,
 In lank cornstalks keep,
 Rattling my soul to sleep.

Enchanted Grove

A pillar of silver, and one of gold,
 And one of solid emerald stone,
 Surmount a secret mossy fold,
 At the foot of the fairy queen's throne.

There, nymphs of water, and sylphs of air,
 Gnomes of earth, and salamanders of fire,
 Folk of siren, sprites, and elves fair,
 Gather at sunset's shadows to conspire.

And of all things present, I alone
 Am formed of flesh, marrow, and bone.

A Tale

I wish to see
 A unicorn -
 I wish to be
 A man reborn.
 I dream of her galloping
 Where ancient forest grows,
 And air alive,
 A sparkling stream
 Glittering in the radiance
 Of her horn,
 Purity of breath and heart beat,
 Sparks flashing from beneath
 Her silver hooves,
 Crystal eyes radiant,
 (She knows me)
 And snow white mane
 Blown by a tempest
 As she moves,
 The fluidity of her gait
 Through immortality.
 I wish to be there
 When she rides.
 I wish to see
 A unicorn.

Oracle

This vessel was christened with blood,
 Assigned a guardian spirit
 To divine a direction and destination.
 And no shield for the wayfarer,
 No steel blade girt at the side,
 Nor strength at the rowing oars,
 Can turn back the pending storm,
 Can steer a straighter course to Odin.
 The spirit of the christening alone,
 The mystical oracle at the helm,
 Keeps watch for an omen of the voyage.

On A Utah Flight

I saw on a Utah flight,
 Flying off to foreign lands
 To serve a banner of right,
 With Smith's bible in their hands,

Boys leaving a golden tower
 To broadcast a hopeful word,
 Believing in their god's power,
 World opinion yet unheard,

Made unafraid by faith's might,
 A hymn of trust as their song.
 I saw angels one long night,
 Out to put right before wrong.

Cherubim

Row to me delicate bloom of the sky,
 I would time spend with you than any guest.
 Grant now your feather care unto my nest.
 Forsake all the wind-swept branches and fly.
 Upon one path our destinations lie.
 Draw close my cheek against your downy breast.
 Lay low this heavy head in peaceful rest.
 Sing, sweet requiem. On love's wing I die.

Ice On The Moon

On the moon, they've found ice.
 I hope it's lemon ice. Lemon ice is nice.
 It would give space a special spice,
 Because lemon ice is nice. (I've said it twice)
 But even twice can't suffice.
 Ice on the moon is a clever device,
 Probably reserved for God's afternoon rice.
 I'd like to go up there to share a bit of ice and advice.
 Unless they've also found mice
 That heard of cheese and went for a slice.

Waking Dreams

I dwell
 In a pastel
 Cottage of stone,
 All alone
 In a surreal stead.

I dwell
 In a pastel
 Painting of a fountain,
 At the foot of a mountain,
 By a lake in my head.

Strawberry Fields

We will sit us down in strawberry fields
 To talk of things we remember.
 We'll measure the worth of our mortal yields,
 And feast on them clear through September.

You can step out a lively beat,
 While I try to sing a tune.
 We'll gather up fresh strawberries to eat,
 From winter till half past June.

We will vanquish time as an earthly foe,
 With immortality as our shields.
 There will be such joy where we will go,
 When we frolic in strawberry fields.

Titans

I stand all amazed, cast upward my gaze
 Into a haze beyond my mortal daze,
 To lofty curtains billowing as nigh
 To gods as anything earthly may lie,
 Too far to touch and too near to deny.
 On high, moving between the earth and sky,
 Titans, restless in their highland abode,
 March in parade, upon a mountain road,
 Along the stepping stones to higher space,
 While I watch from my inferior place.

Viking Ghosts

The wind is wild tonight.
 It fills the billowing breaker sails,
 And rows the ocean white.
 The vanquished water weeps and wails.

Tonight I fear the sea -
 An invasion of fearsome hosts
 Come back to conquer me,
 Upon a storm ship - Viking ghosts.

Phantom Vigil

She holds a phantom vigil tonight,
 Rises slowly from the creeping fog,
 Fluttering and murmuring, takes flight,
 Lifts in a spectral glare from the bog,
 Whispering to those who remain chained,
 Her brothers and sisters who still dwell
 Imprisoned, by bars of brake detained;
 Damned souls trapped in temporal hell,
 In the depths of the rank mold beneath,
 Drowned in bottomless pools of despair
 Where heavy-hearted spirits bequeath
 All that they are to a murky lair.

She swirls among the bulrush crosses,
 In a passion of prayer pleads and glides,
 Whirls hope aloft, above all losses,
 And in a holy vapor abides
 Until her righteous fervor inspires
 The quill of redemption to rewrite
 The accounting of will-o'-wisp fires
 In a mystic volume of moonlight.

Sonnet For A Distant Neighbor

Oft have I gazed across the sea at you -
 The lonely void that limits our discourse -
 Space gone unmarked by no lack of remorse -
 Too far for all but starlight to get through.
 If it were within my power to do,
 I would take hope's reins like a mighty steed,
 And stride to your pasture in my due need,
 That I should make my inquiry anew.

Has your kind arisen from swamp and sea,
 To gaze in wonder at the vast expanse,
 And consider how it all came to be?
 Weighing the infinite odds of pure chance,
 Does your regard ever wander to me,
 As you watch the beacon of my sun dance?

Delusion

He had a vision of happiness,
 On a timeless, sunny, day.
 He dreamed of lush cypress
 Draping lazily over a sway
 Of moss, soft at the river's edge.
 Joyously, he danced with swans,
 Along a high July hedge.
 Upon far-fabled lawns,
 He had an afternoon and a life,
 A religious ecstasy
 With a daughter and a wife -
 An apparition and a fantasy.

His thoughts were filled with daffodils,
His gambol to his knees
In dandelion-imposture windmills
Gone to seed, sailing with the breeze -
Figment ships, floating on the bosom of nirvana,
And he with them, eternally bade
United in the house of manna,
In the shelter of universal shade.

W. Song

A Lasting Mark

Mozart had his music.
 To Socrates wisdom went,
 Greatness to Caesar,
 And Christ eternal life.

I ask none of these,
 To my words immortality only -
 In three hundred years hence,
 Regarded on some student's desk.

Stirrings

What are these things
 That need freeing -
 Dreams, or feelings,
 Or demons that no
 Words know or speak,
 Like bird song caged in bars -
 Seeing diamond shards through infinity
 But having no arms to reach for them,
 Only seeing and searching
 For words they might wear.

Facets

Poet youth,
 You are a jewel
 Fresh from the mine
 Of truth,
 A diamond in the rough.
 Under the proper tool
 And polish, you would shine.
 You are made of the right stuff.

My Task Master's Beckoning

With a whisper, I could be free.
 I could float mindlessly across my time.
 But my resistance is gone.
 I stroke to his cadence,

Flailing an impassable sea,
 As he commands me, wherever he withers.
 He stands over me, merciless master he,
 Driving, beating the drumhead,
 Motivating the living until dead.
 I am his servant.
 When his whip snaps,
 I jump to the task,
 To my task master's beckoning.
 And all that I can ask,
 Is to affix my name to the effort.

No Market

Shall I give up verse, Ezra,
 Nothing to it but words it seems,
 (Like Mussolini's empty promises)
 Dream of an unfinished Mexican cruise
 Lowering gloomy as a bell jar round me,
 And die, if there's nothing in it?
 - A minor poet from Idaho, like you.

Should I claim total insanity,
 Cast pen to fire, and will to oblivion,
 Set Shakespeare aside, and turn a dial?
 Yet media is an enemy to me.
 Treason is not in my blood.
 Complacency is a devil,
 Mine a cause against a mundane tongue.
 I am no ally to the majority roar.

With this defiant banner tied to my forehead -
Self evisceration before surrender.
 The sword is drawn, mighty or not, for war.

Dangling Phrase

Before exploring the desert waste,
 Before replenishing the water jar,
 Before getting a good taste,
 Before journeying very far,
 Before thought was denuded,
 Our poem was concluded.

Pencil Marks Only

to put pencil to paper
 why not an ax or fire
 chisel to stone more so
 tablets of stone could last
 with a holy finger to burn
 a thought or ten into them
 but
 god
 in this finger burns no divinity
 again pen to parchment
 all meaning obscured
 in the morning fog of consciousness
 no morrow for the sentence
 an arrow
 gone awry
 no apple to split
 or village to save from tyranny
 only the weak pelvic thrusts
 of mind searching
 for immaculate conception
 driving a point home
 in a moment of madness only
 only a madman's itch
 a monkey scratching charcoal on bark
 a moment passing only
 a lunatic's laughter
 appreciated by cockroaches
 hours after lock down
 a dog vomiting
 a drunken rage shouted
 staggering home at midnight
 marks as fleeting as years
 regarded as parakeet shit
 down the back of my chair
 no more than a painted buffalo
 on a cave wall
 more a cave than a wall
 a gaping chasm
 abysmal hole of soul
 and mind
 defined
 by pencil marks on paper

Shy One

For the sake of your sanity,
 Say what it is you have to say -
 No need to preserve vanity.
 Don't save words for another day.

Just say what you believe is true.
 Tell the world how it is you feel.
 Don't fear the crowd will disarm you.
 Shout right out what you think is real.

Ventriloquist

Why should I speak with one voice?
 It seems an impossible choice.
 Is there some indispensable need,
 Something irrevocably decreed
 In the book of poet's laws?
 I have never found a voice because
 I have never lost my voice.
 Though, I have lost my mind.
 And I tore my heart out long ago.
 Yet, my tongue I never had to find.
 You ask me for a voice even so.
 I speak as I feel.
 I voice what I deem real.
 I've never thought of putting up a fence,
 Or taking lessons on how to make sense,
 Or voicing catechisms deep in a sacred grotto,
 Paying the gods of verse some tithing.

As my soul trembles in violent vibrato,
 So my voice changes with the writhing.

Clear Confusion

Oxymoron,
 You ingenious fool!
 Your truth lies
 In yin yang
 Solidarity.

Euphemism

Cast your vote for mirrors and smoke,
 Artful themes a canary spoke.
 Where are the thorns on this rose?
 I can't see the face behind the nose.
 Call this spade shady,
 Eye shadow on an old lady,
 Brahma pirouetting in a china shop.
 This fleecy wolf will never stop.

Grammar

Grammar brushes back her gray hair,
 And wags her crooked cane,
 Directing down a straight and narrow lane
 All the ideas that pass,
 Herds them into her Sunday school class,
 To box their ears, and teach them such fears
 As needed to keep them square in their pews.
Shame on that color, you tramp!
Bite down on those words, you scamp!
Straighten that tie, and shine those shoes!
 Then she stiffens into her rocking chair,
 To give her arthritic knees a rest,
 And conjugate some verbs for a while,
 Showing her toothless smile,
 Knowing that Grammar always knows best.

Doggerel

Doggerel has been chewing at my rhyme,
 Dragged my craft to the dog house one more time.
 Bad, doggerel, bad! Sit, doggerel, sit!
 Will that dog in the manger never quit!
 If I kick it, it might just go away.
 Believing that every dog has his day,
 I shall give my verse one more doggish try.
 And doggerel might let sleeping dogs lie.

What Was That Word?

A flower in my window,
 A rose, though I'm not sure,
 Blown by a soft wind,
 Modulating in iambic pentameter,
 By any other name is as sweet.

But a name is not so easy
 Without any anapest to keep it in,
 Like a fine vase or a suitcase,
 Or lyric, or a pyrrhic - a bit ironic
 That there's no ionic for it.

Tribrach, amphibrach, bacchius,
 Iambus is not what I am.
 I have no suggestion beyond
 Alcaics, sapphics, and asclepiads.
 And avant-garde is out of the question.

A spondee it is not, nor trochee.
 And I can't see it as cretic,
 Perhaps a dactyl or minore.
 A choriamb might agree.
 But I can't get it in. (I tried before)

There is no meter available,
 And not a caesura in sight.
 Oh, Mephistopheles,
 Offer me a contract,
 Ah, stay, thou art so fair -

Far more simple
 To appease a demon,
 Or simply plant a daisy.

Moon

Make a statement to the moon.
 Observe for a while,
 With a cheesy smile,
 Beneath this lunatic's noon.

For Whom it Shines

The moon is for the poet,
 To know it,
 To bestow it,
 To crow it.

Compulsive Wisdom

A picture in rhyme
 Brings on nine in good time.

Poetic intention
 Is the muse of invention.

A song in the head,
 And a meter to hone,
 Wear a bard's fingers
 Down to the bone.

A poem a day
 The poet must pay,
 To keep the demons
 On the bay.

On The Tip Of My Tongue

On the tip of my tongue,
 I held a delicate phrase.
 And now on my ear hung,
 The articulation stays.

A Word Of Advice

A word of advice:
 Speech is not free.
 Thought is the price,
 If meaning is to be.

Ah, Shut Your Damn Poetry!

If every bird twitter,
 Every cheeping jitter,
 Every raucous squawking
 Of embittered starling
 Were considered good poetry,
 We'd have a noisy tree.

Only eagles reach height
 As they screech in flight.

We also esteem nightingale song,
 And the whooping crane, sad and long,
 And the swallow's trill,
 And song of whippoorwill,

But no one wants to hear a common sparrow.
 Please, at least a poison arrow
 To end my mundane misery!
 Ah, shut your damn poetry!

Originality

I am damned to limitation
 By forerunners of thought and speech.
 They've forced me to imitation,
 My claims of invention impeach.
 My attempts at precedence fail.
 Originality is through.
 My words are a thousand years stale.
 My quest for substance wholly new
 Is just a foolish obsession.
 Inception ceased long, long, ago.
 There has been no new expression
 Since the first caveman stubbed his toe.

Peering Into Ginsberg's Toilet

2 day I looked in your toilet
 bowl at 2 A.M.
 gazing methodically at clogged garbage pail
 hallucination below

& mind blow
 ASS blow

what
 if
 I
 ate
 your
 feces
 and
 shat
 it
 out
 all
 over

pass gas
 out the ass
 you go

phosphor alley stink
 turned raw side out
 and porcelain canned

I can do that now! No cops! No cops!

No one gives a crap

stink...rises...rises...

shrinks to nothing

plop

plop

plop

Bard Erratic

He was consistently inconsistent,
 Never certain in his song,
 Right on rhyme and meter, for an instant,
 Then he'd get it all wrong.

He poured forth from his earnest throat,
 A verse much out of key.
 But when he hit the proper note,
 It was as good as song can be.

Lingering

More than the thought
 In initial inspiration,
 There is wrought
 Constant marvel,
 Hope of fame
 Enduring, an eternal
 Love of life, in the abbreviation
 Lingering in a name.

As Ye Elizabethans

That hand wherein the deepest thought allays,
 Pining of creed and kind therein expends,
 Tradition in all forms never betrays.
 In this the movement formulates all ends,
 And speaks a common tongue all free souls must,
 Preserves the sacred flame of will's desire,
 Else molder now beneath a shroud of dust,
 And birthright in posterity expire.
 Death's mute and barren edict cannot seal
 The depths and heights humanity has known,
 While minds still yearn and burning hearts yet feel,
 As ye Elizabethan's have us shown.
 This we perceive to make our effort worth,
 And derive noble purpose of our birth.

The Words Of My Heart

I write in an empty book.
 I paint on an empty page.
 I sit in an empty room.
 I live in an empty age.
 I search for words and colors and ways
 To lend meaning, to lavish my days.
 I will fulfill, before I depart,
 To stand up, and see beyond the wall,
 To color the bleakest hues of all,
 To record all the words of my heart.

verse in an old man's notebook

he wrote there on yellowing note
 musty and moldering
 fresh as a crisp heart
 could bite into a subjective fruit
 a line of verse I found
 meant not surely for a shelf
 blanketed dusty what he
 poured
 from his soul
 trembling fingers for the passion
 walking among buttercups
 and seeing her in yellow reflection
 leaving the blossom unblemished
 better left thinking to
 spare the touch of fingers
 for a firm unwithering stem
 being overmuch into spring
 and she blooming there on the pillow
 beside against him
 there finalized
 the beginning middle of his poem
 and surely not meant
 to go unspoken

In My Words

When I am tired and feeling cold,
I hide in my words to forget the day.
I dream of the words I want to say.
I repose in the meaning, and there I lay.

When I am torn and have lost my hold,
I hide in my words to forget the day.
I dream of the words I want to say.
I search for meaning, and find my way.

When I am worn, when I am old,
I'll hide in my words to forget the day.
I'll dream of the words I want to say.
I'll close my eyes, and drift away.

Poets

Poet, there is more to my speculation than I can measure.
More than my whole is this torch taken up involuntarily.
There is more to my meditations than you,
And more to me than yours, but the chorus is ours for eternity,
And the spark ours, and the warmth ours,
And the knowledge ours partially,
And the wisdom what we make of it.

The spark is mine for the moment -
I bear the light, feel the warmth, mine
For a time only then passed on
To another, one of us, another perception,
Perceiving the same with different senses,
Framing it with a different mind, but the spark
Always a constant flame, always, mine, yours, ours.
Poet can you see me?
Find my reflection in a pool of clear water -
I am in you. I possess you.
But no more is my control or less your domination over me.

Poet, we sing as one. We sing together, a song like none.
Eloquent elocutions offered for show are set aside;
Exhibitionism, vain repetition for vanity's sake.
Our tongues cannot bear manipulation.
Purity we speak, pure even in our vulgarity,

Lifting the lowly to greatness, reining in greatness to a sentence.
We view all things objectively and subjectively -
Our creed detests limitation, demands impunity.
We cannot bear regulation.
Diverse is our singularity, irregular, and diverging,
But always mutual our cause.
Mutually we lift, we seek, we sing.
Search for a rift in our solidarity and there is none.
Our unity is solid.

We can share a salad, and remark simultaneously,
Good gray poet, you are a man of fine taste,
Or make no remark, and know without saying,
Speaking nothing of the significance,
Being one in the same we,
Knowing who we are, but wondering what we mean,
Ever searching for, but ever missing, the song
Beneath our boot soles,
Our evocations, souls, and syllables rising superbly
To occasion a moment of our burning, to frame a mind,
Or a fraction anyway.
This we need for survival,
As our blood feeds our limbs and brains.
The price of omission is our very souls.

We are poets,
Sharing verse with a drawer, or an hour, or a universe,
And gaining only our sanity for the effort.
We are poets, living, and dying, and dead.
We are poets - reading or writing.
(I praise all who read or write with us)
What we appreciate, what we esteem above all else,
Of this we sing. Of this we are, this element, this radiation.

Poets living, let me adore you.
Let me love you as I breathe.
Let me see through your eyes if I have become blind.
Lend me your thoughts if mine have gone dry.
Share your life with me if mine is concluded.
Living, I shall not wait for you to meet me,
I will, but shall not.
If we meet, we meet. It is irrelevant.
Maybe I am gone already as you hear my entreaty.
Yet it is done, this gospel I speak.
It will live on through my living colleagues, my brothers in arms,

My saviors and redeemers.
 But as I write, I live. As I speak, I breathe. For now, I have life.
 There is marrow yet to suck.
 Now is my breath, and I will breathe a little
 For the living and for the dead.

Pioneers who put flint to steel,
 I am here, abiding my time.
 While I may, I will bear the spark.
 I will rekindle the flame of your yearning,
 Until it eclipses the sun with its radiance.
 Oh, dead poets, I sense you within me,
 Feel the chilling frost in my bones, yet warmth, nay, heat.
 I need a word for it. I cannot find it. My idiom is irate,
 Like profound exclamations of a crane too meticulous,
 Dickering with my tongue for a remark,
 Walking a silver path, witless man I am to say how so,
 Hand shaking on a pencil shaft to spear a name for the feeling,
 A raven gloomy for a right turn of phrase,
 By a run of poor craft, oft stinking foully of mediocrity,
 More rank than a kippered herring drawn dank from a barrel,
 Brought low as ash for my ineptitude.
 But, Oh, how the spark burns within, scorching me, scorching me,
 Consuming and clarifying, so much more than my sum.

If I were to bend a knee, bow low to another human being,
 Living or passed to history, years gone or centuries,
 It would not be as a disciple to a god,
 To pray for favor, or revere with a blessing in design.
 (Not that reverence is beneath me, or humility)
 But to bend a knee or two, put stature away for a time,
 Set ego aside, ego away, and share the same mind,
 As an equal or unequal, inferior or superior,
 In comparison and contrast with a shared perception,
 One in our purpose,
 One body this continuity of spirit, past, and present, and future,
 A single vehicle,
 This is equal to any prayer or bearer of gifts, surpassing any.

But I need not say what I feel. I have no words for this.
 What I feel you feel, my dead and living connections.
 You know as well as I, as well as any.
 Your soul wears my emotion. We are one.
 We need not meet to enjoy intercourse -
 We are interconnected, *compagnon de voyage*.

Inseparable are we, our creed.
 Poets living, should you see me in the street, embrace me.
 If we pass too late, if fate rules my death before your birth,
 Then I am a dead poet and still one of you, immortal through you.

Poets living, when I am dead, I will sing high praise of you.
 I will sing always in your song.
 Know my ghost will overtake you.
 I will stand at your shoulder as you create,
 Whisper a word in your ear, if you cannot find a word.
 If I have no word for you, I will find it.
 Others will answer if it is above me.
 The word will be ours, no shame in it.
 We all see spirit to spirit.
 Ours is yours, and yours ours.
 All I have I bequeath to you - all do.
 Both a borrower and lender be.
 Keep the edge of our husbandry keen.
 Husband our possession, our progressing purpose.

To be is the answer.
 Not to be is out of the question!
 No greater profit to be found!
 This table is spread liberally before us.
 Will you not feast? Let me feed you just one morsel,
 Or more if there is appetite enough.
 Poet are you hungry? You must be hungry.
 Poet you are angry, enraged, passionate, raving mad,
 Or maybe only craving something.
 But you are not lonely, not unknown or forgotten.
 I am with you. We are with you.
 I write your song now and your praise.
 My brother, let me succor the pith of your weary heart!
 Oh, my sister, my sibling, bear not this burden alone!
 I am acquainted with your affliction.
 If I could impart a single thought to your inspiration,
 My soul would rest untroubled, least for a while.
 The lines in your spare notes are more precious to me than fine gold.
 I read them with a relish of ambrosia,
 From my kingdom above, my cloud, or tomb.
 You are not unknown to me, to my reckoning -
 I expect you feel the same as we all did in our time.

Cast the lead weight of your doubt aside -
 Your words are not lost to posterity.
 Trust your instincts. Follow your inclinations.
 I appreciate them now as they spring from your hand,
 Flowing pure from your soul, undiluted.
 I read them from your shoulder.
 Can you feel me at your ear,
 Feel my lustful breath on your dear neck?
 I am near to you my companion.
 I will linger here while you hesitate,
 Until the word finds you, while you fumble,
 While you hold a match to the lamp.
 I will abide in darkness with you,
 Raise your gaze from mud to stars,
 Never forsake you,
 Witness the awakening awareness of what burns in you.

Poet, how will you sculpture your words, and temper them in the heat?
 Poet, what body will you give the spark,
 A bird, or a planet, or a nova, or a song?
 Simply a phrase is fine, or a thought without words -
 A perception of a sunrise or sunset.
 Even a spark alone is something of divinity.
 All are the same in a way.

Singer

Praise him who bides the day
 With song on his deeds,
 Not sure what to say,
 But knowing his tone exceeds
 All measure of mortal boundaries -
 That his notes shall linger on the morrow,
 When forever takes time's foundries,
 And dust has done away with sorrow.

V. France

Clover Ring

She made for me a clover ring,
 With a sweet blossom for a gem,
 Sealed my matrimony with spring,
 For a day, with a loop of stem.

She wed me to a sunny day,
 Tied happiness to me with string.
 For a time I was joined with May,
 United by a clover ring.

Roma

Let me tell you about an evening
 In Rome - wandering aimlessly, finding
 Row upon row of old shops, veni, vedi,
 Caesar, steepled streets, Benedictus,
 A trace of Medici and Raphael,
 Michelangelo in every cobblestone,
 Music from the Spanish steps,
 Figaro, Figaro, Figaro,
 An olive-skinned girl at a fountain,
 And Mediterranean sunset
 Opaque on my face.

Mona Lisa

MOna lisa,
 moNA lisa,
 mona LIsa,
 mona liSA,

Speak all
 Manner of intrigue.
 Enthrall
 My mind to fatigue.

Show
 You know,
 In style.
 Smile.

I Have Found You

In the vast areas of desolation,
 The endless expanse of universe,
 Against the pride of race and nation,
 Thwarted by the religious and perverse,
 Across the tides of time and space,
 I have found, at last, what is true.
 I have gazed upon your face.
 My dear friend, I have found you.

On The Pinnacle Of The Afternoon

He awaits her at the subway station,
 His legs shaking with anticipation.
 He knows it will be soon.
 Then her face takes his breath away,
 On the pinnacle of the afternoon.
 And he could not ascend higher in a day.

Time Limit

Higher than a mountain high,
 Deeper than the deepest sea,
 Wider than a summer sky,
 Endless as infinity,

Surpassing all is my love,
 Broad as the heavens above.
 And time, knowing all of this,
 Limits my love to one kiss.

Thy Spirit's Effervescence

Tiny bubbles in this fine wine,
 Speak to me of fire in my blood -
 Thoughts of thee bubbling truthfully
 Through my heart's vessel.

As I hold this glass to my lips,
 As I take a sacramental sip,
 I taste the sweet essence
 Of thy spirit's effervescence.

Reluctance

While I watched your shy gaiety,
 Rain swept gently my face -
 On my uplifted admiration,
 On my heart burning like fire.

I consider the passing of lithe hand across your smile -
 The moon dipping behind an alder branch,
 Little brook rushing for the sanctuary of the willows,
 Until the sun slips away into a curtain of mist.

Nocturnal Butterfly

Ah! Light on the corner of crimson and yearning,
 Sweet flower in bloom at the deepest of night,
 The moon shines down full on the crest of your bosom,
 And captures the grace of a poem in flight.

The trees in the sway of the wind rise to meet you,
 That glisten of dew on your pink satin wings,
 To ride on a whispering silk magic flutter,
 Unbound 'til the sunburst a new dawning brings.

In The Heart Of A Wild Night

A jungle beast
 Came forth to feast
 In a show of savage might,
 In search of meat,
 In steaming heat,
 In the heart of a wild night.

A savage queen,
 Supple and lean,
 In search of a feral rite,
 Brought odor sweet,
 Something to eat,
 In the heart of a wild night.

A storm ensued -
Lust unsubdued
Rose to a salacious height,
Put out the fire
Of brute desire,
In the heart of a wild night.

The Roll Of Rhythmic Rhyme

Unfold, scintillating pastel dream!
Glow golden magical device!
Flow, subtle senses in a silken stream!
We made it through to paradise.

Riding forever on a poignant mist,
On the ebb and tide of endless bliss,
Beyond our bounds, we bend and twist.
We know no more than pleasure's kiss.

We lie in a trance that disposes
All passing of tears and time,
Upon a bed of satin roses,
Within the roll of a rhythmic rhyme.

A Tart

A tasty tart
Is good for one's heart.
A succulent strawberry pie
Can certainly please,
Can soothe the sore of any disease,
And ease one's troubles by.

I really think
To pay with a wink
The price of fine cuisine
Is...a considerable art.
And to taste a juicy tart
Is to win the heart of any queen.

Queen Of The Night

Queen of the night,
I bow to your might,
The way you toot
That magic flute,
And that steed you ride on.
You touch with a lightning jolt,
Astride a thunderbolt
Until dawn.

The Magic Cave

The magic cave is plain to see,
Once the veil is torn away,
Once you unveil the mystery,
Once you reveal it, you may.
In the cave, lambs and lions lay.
As one delight, all abide.
There, dragons on warm kittens ride.
Fiery serpents and mice play.
Together trees and grass sway.
But in or out, none can decide.

Helen's Valley

Schliemann, peel silken lace
From this nectar-wet oasis,
Plant a rigid palm in
Flowing milk and honey.

Cease Not This Exalting Fire

Love-afflicted, I am filled to bursting with ether,
Transubstantiated by her sweet inebriate;
Her boundless embrace - my dream incarnate.
I taste her! I breathe her!
In all forms I see her magical gaze.
She has strewn her smile upon me
Until I am sheathed in sparks of ecstasy.
I am wrapped full in a passion-induced daze,

Resigned to complete capture.
 Up then! Away wherever you desire!
 Cease not this exalting fire -
 Least linger a while that I might die in rapture.

Wild Flower

Wild flower, public bower,
 Fragrance of late hour,
 Blossom of the field,
 Generous thy yield!
 You set the bees quaking!
 Honey for the taking!

Nymph

Form on my pillow, O dream,
 O picture of lustful desire!
 Within a burning moonlight stream,
 Set my waking night on fire!

Press softly to my wanton embrace,
 O corporeal embodiment of aching want!
 With churning modulations trace
 The contours of my deep-hour haunt!

Let itinerant winds caress your hair,
 Blow gently the waves wherein you lie.
 In a licentious flow of summer air,
 Cool the fever of my longing sigh.

Can You Take Me Higher?

Can you take me higher,
 To a castle in the sky,
 Fulfill my desire
 To sprout silken wings and fly?

Can you take me higher,
 Nigh unto the morning star,
 With your look inspire
 Me to glide where fairies are?

Take me to eternal rest,
 Where I may always sigh,
 Lie my head upon your breast
 Forever - never die.

With my soul I inquire!
 Can you take me higher?

One Last Taste Of Fire

Give me one last kiss.
 Give me one more taste of fire.
 Share a bit of bliss.
 Fulfill my final desire.
 Before you leave,
 Please let me believe
 My love goes warm to the pyre.
 Give me one more kiss.
 Give me one last taste of fire.

Specter

From my window, I listened for your sigh,
 Thought I sensed your breath in a night breeze,
 In the trees, your tremulous breast -
 The rising and falling palpitations of your soul's beating.
 Illumination, upon the tip of my mind's touch,
 As a curtain, lifted for an instant, radiating.
 And from a distance, I heard my name distinctly whispered.

Planets shall pass,
 Stars rise and die,
 Yet shall I remain steadfast,
 Determined to embrace what eludes my grasp,
 Determined to reveal what I sense from my window.

Am Main

Along a riverside we walked,
 She and I, beneath an azure day,
 Sun shining golden on the morning,
 Glorious on the grain fields.

(Barley still painted with spring)
 And Church bells rang clear and clean
 From across the way,
 Beyond the emerald-ribbon Main -
 Bells not for us,
 But as much ours as Bischofsheim,
 And the water ours,
 And the day ours, seized,
 Time uncounted,
 Eternity the hours
 Passed as currents
 Into the Rhine, with no Lorelei to sing,
 And no one to hear the history,
 Dawn become yesteryear.
 But in my dreams,
 The Main still flows languidly.

The Light Of Your Presence Shall Always Be With Me

I dreamed I saw you walking upon a bright blue ocean.
 It seemed that you were floating on azure emotion.
 Near or far,
 Wherever you are,
 You'll always have the power to still my heart's commotion.

Once, I thought I heard you singing in a soft breeze,
 Out across the grass, and up beyond the tallest trees.
 High or low,
 Wherever you go,
 The notes of your kindness shall always set my heart at ease.

When I thought I'd lost you until the end of all days,
 When my hope had melted into a cold and glassy gaze,
 I saw light.
 Wherever my sight,
 The song of your spirit unto my aching soul plays.

Now, I know you're out there, floating as a cloud, free,
 And truest devotion abides the tides of eternity.
 Now, I see,
 Wherever I may be,
 The light of your presence shall always be with me.

I Will Remember You

I will remember you,
 When time has turned to dust,
 Never to say adieu.

Though death erodes all trust,
 My will, I must believe,
 A memory shall conceive
 Beyond this mortal lust.

When the stars are but few,
 When the sky has no blue,
 When the heavens are through,
 I will remember you.

She Was Young

She was young, and looked at me with bright eyes,
 Companioned my lonely heart with laughter,
 Seeing the world as innocent and full of surprise.
 She led me through a graveyard, to a mountain height,
 The wind there fresh, coming up from the valley.
 And she surmised a future as bright as the day,
 Playing, giggling softly, so joyful in being.
 She told me that a wish is only a wish,
 That what we pray for falls on deaf ears,
 But we can dream.
 A dream is free to wander where it will.

She maintained a resolute smile at our parting,
 Holding to false hope, forcing cheer, refusing sorrow,
 Braving the pain, persevering in the face of fear.

Sometimes after a rain, late in summer,
 When night brings cool air into my room,
 I reflect silently, staring at the ceiling,
 Hearing distant cars out on the highway,
 My dreams reaching out across time
 To innocent days passed away,
 And her eyes sadly searching, refusing sorrow.
 Her smile undaunted is all I recall of her face.

Just Like You

She was young inside
 Till the day she died.
 She had a heart as wide
 As a mountainside.
 She was clear, and crisp, and clean,
 As the sky is blue.

She took life in stride,
 Though her flower dried
 And washed on the tide
 To the other side.
 The stem lingered fresh and green,
 And the fragrance true.

She gave the sun pride.
 She made rain clouds hide,
 She made humming bees glide.
 With the stars she vied.
 She was an immortal scene.
 She was just like you.

My Goddess

In your eyes lies a light of hope,
 A warmth that helps me cope
 With this world I despise.
 I see stars in your sparkling eyes,
 A thousand points of grace.
 I find quietude in your face.
 My goddess, you are my belief,
 My only source of relief.
 If I ever lost my faith in you,
 My empty soul would soon be through.

Portrait

(One morning in Bischofsheim, 1983)

I walked on a crystal morning.
 I browsed a color-strewn path -
 The clear dawn of
 A certain dream,
 The vapor of reality evaporated,
 To her palace, her cathedral, her cottage,
 Amber in the morning's subtle rumor.
 And rabbits pranced,
 Joyful at my flanks,
 Within a low fog,
 In a mist of innocence,
 On a lawn of twinkling emerald,
 In paradisiacal frolic.
 And pranced my heart with them,
 In clover perfume.
 And saw her my fervent eyes, at the window,
 As the first effulgent ray of gold adorned her cheek -
 A fairy,
 The face of love,
 Child of joy,
 Above the primrose arbor,
 A radiant smile.

O peace, I have witnessed your most refined gesture!

While evil slumbered, and misery slept,
 I trod in mirth,
 Shod in rapture, in the sunbeam of her adoration -
 My jubilee, my joyful serenade.
 My spirit is free -
 My scarlet heart,
 My spotless soul.

Despair,
 Your night is futile!
 In my most infirm moments, I am immune.
 I have seen a portrait of joy.

Vl. Awakening

Good Boy

Do-good boy, always doing what you're told,
Always keeping to the road,
Do you feel used?

Do-good boy, always keeping to the fold,
Always carrying your load,
Do you feel abused?

Do-good boy, if you've done what they told you to do,
Tell me, through and through,
Why do you feel so confused?

In The School Yard

Did you sit
On the grass,
While others played,
Notice the sky's color,
The hue of a day?

While children's laughter
Arose around you,
Did you see
What the horizon
Had to say?

Comprehension

On a speck of universal momentum,
I raised my hand to my gaze,
In hope of discovering some index
To my maker's intention.

And I beheld the patterns at my fingertips.
But exceeding this, I could not fathom.

Sweet Child, Innocence

Sweet child, innocence,
 Lost in the jungle of experience,
 Has been blinded by knowledge,
 Impaled on a thorn that was once her flower.

Haiku

Along the Ginza
 A girl smiled -
 Crooked teeth.

Roses

Roses have thorns
 That poison the blood.
 Roses deceive,
 Bloom stained from the bud.

Do not believe
 The promises spoken,
 As vanity's token
 A tender touch scorns.

A Point Of Cacti

Alive where most things die,
 Thrive the fearless cacti.
 In a sharp tongue, they say,
We are here! Keep away!
Sing on, coyote howl!
Blow, arid desert sands!
The cactus lifts his hands,
His cantankerous scowl!

Mutation

I witnessed you bathing in napalm rain,
 Baptized into being,
 Outgrowing immortality,
 Sprouting serpent scales
 Where there was skin as smooth
 As innocence,
 Shedding your egg tooth altogether.

Flower Wilted

I saw a flower wilted,
 Her fairness browned away.
 She had her nature quilted
 In full obscene display.

No longer would the bees abide,
 Her nectar to obey.
 No longer could her petals hide
 The meanness of her way.

Overindulged

Pampered palms stand high,
 Pressing pompous heads to the sky,
 To show everyone
 They deserve to be served more sun.

Snowflake

A silver-white star
 Cried, "How great we are,
 Me, myself, and I,
 Up here in the sky,
 The quintessence of divinity,
 Masters of infinity.
 We are here to stay,
 While all else melts away."

Narcissus, Who Loves You?

Fragrant cherry blossoms are the rave
Of spring, vestments of branches and leaves,
Cast off and floating like snow from above.

The pumpkin blossom is a plain variety.
Yet, what she ultimately achieves
Is a fruit immeasurably handsome.

Rosemary has no flowers to speak of,
Offers only her essence as a greeting,
Departs humbly, bequeaths a healing piety.

Narcissus, your pride is fleeting,
Soon withering to a shallow grave.
Narcissus, you are empty. You are loathsome.

In The Eye Of The Illusion

Dulcinea afforded charm beyond measure,
At least enough to dazzle quixotic aesthetic pleasure.
Don Quixote must have seen something in the slattern belle,
Qualities that pleasure senses, that only the senseless can tell -
That he should believe her lovelier than Cleopatra in her day.
Who's to say she was not as pretty as any superficial delusion?
In fair objectivity, a judge of the subjective is compelled to say
That beauty is in the eye of the illusion.

Toadstool

Toadstool,
Traacherous thy rule
Of feeding and deeding
Thy poisonous function,
Void of compunction!
Take breath from breath!
Make death from death!
Yet, in your creed,
Stand alone!
No toad king
Will ever sing
Praise of thy breed,
Or use thee for a throne.

Mosquito

Demon of stagnant water,
Pandora's foulest daughter,
What twisted architect's plot
Contrived thy devious lot?

From what rank cesspool of hell
Did such evil bud and swell?
What foul fiend's forge formed thy sting
To bring pestilence on wing?

Mosquito, thy name is death,
The sole purpose of thy breath
To bleed and taint on thy stave
Souls to agony and grave.

When thy creator formed thee,
Did he mindfully agree
To loose a scourge of thy kind,
Or act in a fevered mind?

Sovereignty

A lone tumble bug
Met a dung ball thug,
While twiddling dung.
To the prize both clung,
Claiming possession.
For this transgression,
The bug killed the thug,
And banned fiddling
With bugs twiddling.

Power And Glory

Meat-eating orchids speak freely of supreme being,
Eloquent tongues licking at fleas,
Declaring power and glory.

One would fare better to heed the humble wisdom
Of morning glories, plain and simple,
Truth-bearing fellows.

Simple Menu

Cats like meat,
 Consider it a treat
 To feel heat
 And small feet
 And the flutter and beat
 Of meals in fast retreat.
 Cats are never discreet
 About the food they meet.
 They care not if they cheat,
 Or if their lunch can tweet.
 They just eat.

Let Us Prey

This fine hour,
 Let us devour.
 Let us eat,
 As we are eaten.
 Let us beat,
 As we are beaten.
 Let us thank
 The living food bank.
 This wholly new day,
 Let us prey.

Garden In Disarray

There were tomatoes to be washed.
 The roses all needed spray.
 There were slugs to be squashed.
 There were squash on the way.
 There were posts to be staked.
 There were piles of mulch to lay.
 There were trimmings to be raked,
 Laying there since May.
 There is gardening to wage.
 Who will fill the birdseed tray?
 Who will put rocks around the sage?
 Who will keep the squirrels away?
 Who will set up the blueberry cage?
 The weeds are here to stay.
 The gardener didn't wake today.

Vegetable

A vegetable should be planted,
 Or thrown on the compost pile.
 A rotting form is vile.
 There is no gain in waiting for rain.
 And it should not be taken for granted,
 That where there is wilt, there is not pain.
 A vegetable suffers without sound,
 But longs to be again underground.
 Cut the loss, nail the cross,
 Into the incinerator toss.
 Mow! Bring out the hoe! Throw!
 You cannot sow what cannot grow.
 Cull it and lay it in a row.
 Hell to be a carrot! I could not bear it.

Rosemary

Rosemary is an incredible lady.
 But in question is her virginity.
 She likes it where it's always shady,
 Out of view of the Trinity.

Simply smell her racy perfume.
 Her sharp fingers get right to the point.
 From her rigid posture you may assume
 That your wildest desires she will anoint.

By Way Of Confession

It should be mentioned by way of confession,
 Without apprehension, the splendid remuneration
 For a measure of cash,
 The intimate contract
 For a bit of contact,
 A feeling of sealing a bargain,
 Penetrating a market share,
 Stocks, bonds, mutuals,
 Economical ups and downs.
 It's only fair
 To pay the debt due,
 Credit the service industry
 For an historic deal.

Michelangelo's Child

David turns his head aside
 At the mention of his name,
 For the loss of pride,
 In legendary shame

At his maker's oversight,
 That formed his manhood so small,
 And exposed him to fame's light
 With no clothes at all.

Finias Cuckold

Finias Cuckold went out to see,
 Where the Dickens, his wife might be -
 Perhaps the barn or beyond the shed,
 Planting red peppers with young Jimmy Ned.

The One That Got Away

Come with me, and we will see
 What this jungle has,
 Together, I schemed.

But you said *never*,
 Like a rhino tromping.
 Bigger game you had in mind;
 A king or nothing.

Yet, now my roar is loud.
 And you've locked yourself
 In a zoo
 No safari will ever come for.

Snake

A poisonous snake is gliding
 Along a tortuous track.
 A poisonous snake is hiding
 And sliding behind your back.

Her tapered head is drawing slack.
 Her gaze is glazed with guile.
 She slithers with a knowing knack.
 Beware her crafty smile.

Smart Pills

Whatcha eatin'?
 You ain't gettin' any.
 What is it?
 Stupid kid!
 Didn't you ever have a smart pill?
 A what?
 A smart pill.
 I can see you ain't.
 What are they?
 They grow wild,
 usually
 in the spaces between cornstalks...
 like berries,
 but not exactly.
 What do they taste like?
 Huckleberries,
 almost,
 with sort of a chocolate aftertaste.
 Can I taste one?
 Find your own.
 What do they look like?
 ALL RIGHT...
 you can have some of mine.
 But next time,
 you gotta pick your own!
 They taste good?
 They don't look that great,
 but they're sweet.
 If you don't want 'em,
 just give 'em back...

Come on,
 stop being an idiot.
 That's why they call 'em smart pills.
 They don't look very good...
 but once you find out how good they taste,
 you're smart not to tell anybody,
 so you can eat 'em all yourself.
 That's it!
 Pop the whole handful in your mouth,
 all at once!
 That's the way they taste best!
 Gahhh!!!
 How come you spat 'em out?
 Don't you wanna be smart?
 Those aren't smart pills!
 They're rabbit poo!
 See...
 you're smarter already!

The Shallow End Of The Pool

Survival of the fittest
 Is not a guarantee
 That a species' very best
 Will climb the family tree.

The will to proliferate
 Is the genetic rule
 Of breeds degenerate
 In the shallow end of the pool.

In The Genes

A man who frequently stuttered,
 Bred a dame who only muttered.
 They produced a child,
 With a tongue most wild,
 Who constantly hissed and sputtered.

Bomb

A spreading brand of greed
 Produced the Asian fantasia.
 The way the Chinese breed,
 There'll be more euthanasia.

Good Neighbors

Good fences make good neighbors,
 Divide up interests in suits.
 But nothing better dilutes disputes
 Like the rattling of really sharp sabers.

Utility

When man wielded his first stone
 To crush a bone,
 Little could he know
 Where this utility would go -
 From stone, to iron, to fission,
 From clan, to national, to nuclear division.
 Now what should he do with his stone?
 He could crush bone,
 Or build a future for his fellow man -
 Move on, or go back where he began.

In A Cozy Hornet's Nest

Hornets have no room for anything
 That doesn't buzz and doesn't sting.
 They carry this message on the wing,
 With scintillating fury sing

The praises of their glorious breed.
 With colors blazing bright, they fly,
Death to all, their mutual creed.
 Against all foreign foes they fly.

Who can reason with such a nation?
 Who can reason with such a lot?
 Nothing can still a furied congregation,
 When regional fervor is burning hot.

All swarming hornets feel
That home, sweet, home is best,
And thus their animosity seal
In a cozy hornet's nest.

Cute Little Scorpion

A cute little scorpion climbs from his nest,
Steps into the desert heat,
Licking his lips, ready to eat.

Mother always knows best,
Puts her nipper back in the shopping cart.
Hungry little tike! Bless his heart!

leaping

two of them
at least a grade more

i
scared to rage
sure
as they were twice my age
they would tear
the other frog in half
like the other four there
for a laugh

one second-grader and a frog
against two bullies tried and true
and not even a bullfrog from a tough bog
a scrawny little leopard frog nearly through already from the fright

but the frog mustered his might
and made a desperate leap

too
leapt
fell over him in a fearful heap

they beat me black and blue
kicked my mouth red
spat on my head
made me piss my pants

but the frog got his chance
slipped under my chin
and disappeared into the hedge
smiling a big green grin

Clair

The telephone was a tool of fun,
In a rude and riotous way.
We would dial up folks, one by one,
With a wit of cruel things to say.
But the night we dialed
A mother's lost child,
Took the heart right from our cheer,
When Clair's mother said,
Through the distant wire, "Clair's not here.
He's dead."

The Vicious Beast

A bull mauled the matador,
One afternoon in the sun,
Stomped him into the bloody floor,
Declaring he had won.

Deviation from the norm
Impressed mercy not the least,
Dispatched picadors, in good form,
To kill the vicious beast.

Disfigured

A man, in Bangladeshi tradition,
Threw acid on a little girl's face,
And burned beyond recognition
My faith in the human race.

Production

Pigs put in pens of mud,
 Fed to be dead,
 To shed red blood,
 Dread
 The prodding rod -
 The power of god
 Moving them along.

Pigs smell wrong
 Through the slaughterhouse door,
 On the kill floor.
 They try to understand
 The feeding hand,
 But their minds are dry,
 Muddled by insanity.

And with their souls they cry,
In the name of humanity!

The Other Check

Judea,
 Remember how the chosen
 Purged gentile cities,
 Loins girt with entrails,
 Praising Abraham,
 Exclaiming,
Hosanna, hosanna,
 Swords raised
 To circumcise
 The dead?

A pound of flesh
 Is a high price
 For zeal.
 Did you cry,
An eye for an eye,
 When they goose-stepped
 You to Dachau,
 Appeal to idolaters
 For mercy?

Were there any
 Uncovenanted to save
 The Jews from drowning?
 Where was Moses
 When the gas flowed
 At Buchenwald?

A tooth for a tooth
 Seems extreme,
 When so many
 Are piled as high
 As mount Sinai.
 (Thou shalt not
 lust for blood)

Lieutenant Governor Morgan

Jamaican winds blow hard astern.
 And he takes by land what he can't by sea,
 With a yo-ho-ho and an eye to the blade,

Drinking rum while the Spaniards burn,
 Storming their walls with bloody glee.
 Then it's yo-ho-ho with a will for the trade.

Shielded by nuns like Saint Elmo's fires,
 He wins for a bounty what pure greed inspires.
 Then its yo-ho-ho and the legend's made.

With a yo-ho-ho and an eye to the blade.

Pecking Order

"On your feet!
 Formation on the street!

Trainee Anderson, you better move your sorry ass.
 You got another inspection to pass
 Today, son, or your ass is mine.

Gregory, looking mighty fine!
 Got your stuff squared away.

Puhl, what did I say
 About that sorry-ass shirt?
 You better get your shit together.
 You're gonna hurt so bad it's gonna hurt
 You're mamma. I don't know whether
 To use you to mop the floor,
 Or throw your goat-smelling ass out the door.

Pines, what the hell you doing?
 You better get your ass off that bed,
 Unless you're dead.
 Just keep screwing
 Around on my time, trainee!
 And you're gonna see
 A whole world of pain.

Bates, you're here to train,
 Not bebop like some disco clown.
 Give me twenty! Get down!

Move it up girls. Make your buddy smile.
 We've got a mile
 To run before chow.

Gibbs, you want to tell me how
 The hell you're gonna run
 With my foot up your ass?
 Take your hand off your gun,
 And shoulder that weapon, you knucklehead!

Girls, keep in mind what I said
 About weekend pass.

All right, dress it! Space!
 Attention! Left face!

Oh, here we go. We're at it again.
 We're moving out. We're moving in.

Oh, here we go. We're at it again.
 We're moving out. We're moving in.

Your left. Your left. Your other left, Rouse!
 Get in step, you sorry-ass louse.
 What the hell you think this is, a cancan show?"

"I don't know, drill sergeant, I don't know."

In Oklahoma

They taught me how to kill in Oklahoma,
 Made me blend in with the green and the polish,
 And sound off, *one, two, three, four,*
 Made me mean, a fighting machine,
 With no regard as to why I must be inclined so,
 To go low, and go high, and snatch, and mask,
 Without missing a beat or smelling the gas,
 Perform all tasks in a military manner,
 Stand at attention, stand at ease, hurry and wait,
 To the rear march, company halt, forward again.

They taught me how to kill in Oklahoma,
 To string a lanyard so as not to blow off my hand,
 The mathematical precision of tangents and trajectories,
 How to place a projectile for optimum radius,
 This is my rifle, this is my gun,
 To sling and unsling fast as a blink,
 Field strip any weapon with closed eyes,
 To crawl low like a snake and strike swiftly,
 To run through a mine field in my sleep,
 To jump from a helicopter without breaking,
 To take the blow with the shoulder,
 To go for the throat with a standard choke hold,
 To pierce the kidney so it bleeds sufficiently,
 To catch a bullet without crying out,
 To die without denying I did it like a pro.

They taught me how to kill in Oklahoma.
 But all I wish to remember,
 Was sitting on a howitzer one evening,
 Watching the sky turn from peach to lavender.

Night Fire

Pigeons are burning,
 Lighting up the night.
 The flames are churning,
 Turning the blackness bright.

The sky is falling,
 Ringing with fright.
 Hell is calling,
 Bringing on the fight.

Kwang Ju

The sandbags are gone from the post office steps -
 Now clusters of school girls in navy skirts,
 Waiting for friends on a sunny summer day,
 All oblivious of horror, free and chattering,
 And a boy with a runny nose and a ball cap,
 At the door, testing his top on the granite entry,
 And an old woman selling snacks for refreshment
 From a yellow and green handcart.

Two decades of rain has washed the blood away,
 But not the stains of the memory, of the wrong.
 My soul reels before an assault of memory.
 I still see democracy retreating,
 Fearful faces from a bookstore window,
 A soldier in a black beret distinctly
 Sneering at me from his machine gun nest.
 And my heartbeat feels cold in Kwang Ju.

Tinian

Tinian, this jewel of tranquillity,
 Mother of glorious evisceration,
 Innocent bearer of justice,
 Deliverer of divinity's message,
 Silenced the iniquitous winds,
 Made ash the cherry blossoms.
 Sacrosanct are these shores
 Washed by the turning tide.

Two Boys

A boy from South Carolina,
 Hoped to be a U.S. Marine,
 Keep peace, and win wars,
 Make his folks proud,
 And get off the farm.

A boy from Palestine,
 With delicate brown eyes,
 Heard too many cries of *jihad*,
 Prayed five times to Allah,
 And strapped himself with C-4.

Lebanon 1983

Just before dusk,
 A mortar hit a mosque.

When concrete falls,
 And floors become walls,
 It smashes and squeezes
 Life from bodies,
 Like whey from cheeses.
 Jesus!

The Hundred-Year War

For a hundred years they killed each other,
 Turned their plowshares into spears and swords
 And all manner of implements for the harvesting of a brother,
 All out of confusion as to which gods and lords
 Gave whom the divine authority to turn the other cheek.
 In the name of love they amassed a hundred-years worth of dead.
 One would think it should take no longer than a week
 To sort it out, or a simple discussion over bread.
 But to come to some term of forgiveness was too hard after all.
 For a hundred years they slugged it out.
 They must have had extraordinary recall -
 To remember what the hell they were fighting about.

Sophistication

Now we fight a bloodless brand of war.
 More sophisticated than before,
 We battle at thirty thousand feet.
 And our foes we never have to meet,
 Nor agony on a dying face.
 Ah, the progress of the human race!

Taking Up Cudgels

When you claimed a portion of the sky,
 Jupiter and Mars to impeach,
 Jumped, and pissed your territorial markings high
 And wide as undulating ambition can reach,

Wholesale slaughter of lives wantonly wasted
 In futile investment, when ego tasted
 Victory, grew drunken with lust,
 Was but a subtle shifting of cosmic dust.

The Notion

"In God's holy image all men are cast,"
 Said the king to the leper at the end of his fast.

William Shakespeare and Attila The Hun
 Had an identical inclination to share a good pun.

"We both do our duty with feisty spunk,"
 Said the callused old farmer to the sodden young drunk.

"Listen to this verse, how the melodies come,"
 Sang the opera singer to the moron, deaf and dumb.

"A cripple is a champion, an eagle a hen,"
 Thought Adolf Hitler and all his kind men.

"God's sheep should be cleansed in water and fire,"
 Claimed the priest to the heretic as he burned on a pyre.

All men are gods, each son a sequel.
 Without a doubt, all men are created equal.

Final Battle

The Korean man next door
 Fought for the North in the Korean war,
 And for the Japanese before,
 And unwilling to risk any more,
 Not daring to even the score,
 For thirty years, swept the floor
 In the neighborhood grocery store.

Tired Tiger

On a stone beneath a tree,
 Near the grass beside a street,
 In the eyes of an old man,
 I thought I spied hope
 Searching sadly for its soul.

In Storage

Things are useless in the rest home, you see?
 Burke has no use for them there.
 He's going to be there indefinitely.
 'Cause he's too tired to go anywhere.

All of his things are too old to use
 But too good to throw on the trash pile.
 So, I thought we'd choose
 To put them in storage for a while.

Longevity

An ancient Chinese king
 Gave his servant a sealed ring,
 And bid him swiftly bring
 The secret of youth.
 For this great truth
 A reward he might take -
 For failure, death at the stake.

The servant searched far and wide
 For a place he might hide.
 For he knew in truth
 The impermanence of youth.
 He sold the sealed ring,
 Found a Korean wife,
 Led a quiet life,
 And indeed outlived his king.

Yea Sayer

Overindulgent words of praise,
Shine the pride of small men's heels.
Shameless licks the forked tongues raise,
Fall as nought 'neath vanity's wheels.

Tongue Unleashing

Slash, saber, slash!
Cut clean and quick
As a lightning flash!
Heart, turn to brick.

Sizing Up The Tooth Fairy

If I pulled all my teeth,
We could be rich, Daddy.

But how would I chew my meat?

Rhinoceri

Rhinoceri
Never learned how to fly,
Never gained a long neck
To reach up high,
No camouflaging speck,
No mane to flap,
No claws to trap,
No special joint,
No ferocious cry.
They developed an eye
That sees only the point.

Worm's-eye View

Any young worm will soon find
That a worm's-eye view is blind.
The scene from down in the ground
Pictures little more than sound.
'Tis a rocky life to dwell!
The early worm catches hell!

Bad Samaritans

The ditch bank looked higher by a yard
Than reality would prove to be,
There in a torrent of rain so hard
I had to test with my boot to see.

The rank weeds seemed a soft enough weave
To cushion any slip in my pace.
But, oh, how nature loves to deceive,
And remind mortal fools of their place!

It was too late when I saw the cheat.
I grasped at straws, willows, but found briars,
Slid a yard down the hill on my seat,
Offered a hand by a band of liars.

Sincerity

There are few lies as coy
As a show of open joy.
A smile can be vile,
A brand of wanton guile,
A broad cover for many kinds of greed.

And a show of anger or disgust,
One should never heed.
Never ever trust
Any ill or well-seeming deed -

Human singularity
Is usually duplicity in need.

Truth is a rarity.
What is meant is rarely spoken
By all but those in agony, or the heartbroken.
And even pity is often taxed by vulgarity.
(Pain is feigned as easily as breath)

But there is no mistaking sincerity
In the glassed eyes of death.
Sincerity is something everyone can eventually achieve.
I've never met a corpse I didn't believe.

The Pretenders

They sat peacefully at their meal,
 Ate heartily their bread,
 And said
 Anything to appeal
 To the spirit of the occasion.

Through gentle persuasion,
 I hoped to discuss
 Desert,
 Without raising any fuss
 Or any hurt
 To the host.

But they drowned out the question,
 With a unanimous suggestion
 To raise a toast,
 And drank deeply draughts of breath.

Of the rancid dish of death
 They did not partake,
 For merriment's sake.
 As a matter of formality,
 They considered it a bit too hot.

They left it to simmer
 On a back burner, under a lid -

They, the madmen who did not
 Concern themselves with mortality,
 And I, the madman who did.

Mani, I Name You

Mani is still with us,
 Divested of titles,
 Lenity his vestment,
 Salvation in simplicity,
 Martyred by Zoroaster.

His spirit is freed from
 The bodily catechumen,
 Transubstantiated,
 Now growing tomatoes
 On a lake in Burma.

Mother Shipton's Prophecy

Children, have you heard the news?
 Better mind your P's and Q's.
 In eighteen hundred eighty one,
 The world to an end will surely come.
 Time has all ran out, you see?
 Since Mother Shipton's prophecy.

Blinded By The Light

Blinded by the light,
 Afraid of finding bogies in the night,
 He holds his tattered blanket tight,
 Says, "I'm no ape.
 There must be some mistake.
 Just look at the way my banners drape.
 I've had all the truth I'm going to take.
 Of mud I'm made.
 I'm a higher grade
 Than other animals are.
 Why, if I had an ark,
 I'd take all the believers and embark,
 And find a twinkling star."

A Mystery For The Sphinx

She takes a self-righteous stand,
 Upbraids Cheops for his pile of sand.
 The futile waste of energy,
 The gross abuse of liberty,
 A pyramid of lies,
 Within her raging head, she decries.
 And with her moral sensitivity writhing,
 She walks in a church, and pays her tithing.

Having Believed

Somnifacient den of thieves,
 Pernicious lies are poison,
 False hope a dying contagion.
 The garden's trees have many leaves.

A serpent's bite is quite fatal,
 Plain bread the only anodyne,
 Veracity the finest wine,
 And dulled conscience merely lethal.

Where's The Resurrection?

Where's the resurrection?
 It's time for insurrection!
 Listen, all you seers!
 I don't want to blow your optimism.
 I have no use for moral schism.
 But, God, it's been two thousand years!

Thy Only Kingdom

Solace thy thirst in wisdom.
 Succor thy mind in learning,
 For riches of knowledge yearning.
 Let truth be thy only kingdom.

Straight Dose

I'll take mine undiluted;
 No water, no ice,
 No sweetener, no spice.
 Give it to me straight.
 It's more easily computed,
 Bitter and pure
 As a prepaid whore.
 A straight dose is better to follow;
 Harder to stomach, but easier to swallow.

Gathering Perspective

I live in a realm of thunder,
 Where the elements rage,
 And deities plunder.

Here, all certainty is blunder.
 Molecules reach an age,
 and crack wide asunder.

It seems to me no great wonder
 That in the final stage
 All shall be swept under.

La Brea

Bubbling, troubled, multitudes wash
 Restlessly from ancient depths of slime.
 Lives lost in the steaming mists of time
 Swell up on a gurgling burbling swash,
 Yearning to be free as air, from scum
 Churning, loosened from their sludgy slum.

Arise, antediluvian hosts!
 Avaunt forever, primordial ghosts!

A Sage Shall Find

"Son," said the sage,
 "Some age with age.
 Some find a wage.
 Some find rage.
 Some find themselves in a cage.

But a sage is sage,
 Sees just another page,
 Sees time binds all things
 With strands of sticky strings,
 And freedom no longer rings,
 Except the kind that death brings.

In the end, my friend,
 A sage shall find
 That when we attest to see things best,
 We are blind."

Goal

How empty is fame!
 What did Alexander gain?
 A few deeds in books remain.
 Naught is the worth of a name -
 A footnote, a blotch, a stain!

Then for what should I aim?
 For tranquillity I shall take pain,
 Peace of mind never wavering, never wane -
 The universe and I, one and the same.

Attrition

Poised against eternal night,
 The sun burns forth volcanic light,
 Dauntless in his titanic fight.

Darkness, wise with senescence,
 Bides the raging luminescence,
 Knowing the limit of essence.

Play Time

Puppy, prancing on the lawn,
 Nestling, sniffing at the air,
 Wobbly-legged suckling fawn,
 Curious warm kitten there,

Beware the danger! You should
 Not stare wide-eyed at the sky.
 Do not play with bad and good.
 Stay where you are. Don't ask why.

Vll. Comedy

For Amusement

It has always been my contention
That life is a foolish waste of time.
There is no need for apprehension
As to the true meaning of a mime.

In my limited comprehension,
All human convention is a farce.
Effort is a futile pretension,
The resistance of a stubborn arse.

But then, I have a sense of humor,
A downright happy-go-lucky style.
I just laugh at this silly rumor,
While I amuse myself for a while.

Law Of The Jungle

Who will speak for the creatures beneath my feet,
The beetles trod into the dust,
The army ants fleeing in retreat?
I do only what I must.

Souls of lesser size
Deserve no great regard.
Small lives I discard!
Survival is my prize.

Bugs feel no care for me.
I am above blame.
With a greater egocentricity,
They would do the same.

I strut with awful glee.
I stay my reckless course.
I wield my might freely.
I tread without remorse.

The Most Stones

The monkeys divide their land in zones,
And decide which monkeys get the stones,
By making clubs of sticks and bones,
And beating other monkey drones.

For stones the monkeys live or die.
For Stones! The monkey battle cry
Rings out across the monkey sky,
When for more stones the monkeys try.

The number of stones is the ultimate test
Of which stone monkey is truly the best,
Which glorious monkey can pound on his chest.
The monkey with the most stones wins the quest!

March Of The Stone People

The stone people are marching.
The cold-bone people are marching,
Advancing everyday.
The go-along people are marching,
Chilling all warmth away.

From behind glass stalls,
And concrete walls,
And painted plastic clay,
Their pliant flesh is starching,
And freezing where they lay.

Only So Much Sand

There was only so much sand,
And no room for another ant to stand.
But the ants didn't seem to understand.

*If it must be, we will drain the sea,
Face any impossibility,
To get more land,
To expand,
For anthills very grand.
And don't tell an ant that he can't.*

Unlimited ants was their demand.
But they didn't seem to understand
There was only so much sand.

Virus

It is a virulent strain,
A complex organism of protein
With a limited brain -
More prolific than we've ever seen.

It spreads exponentially,
Destroying all other life forms,
Ravaging everything eventually,
Violating all understood norms.

There seems to be no viricide
To stop the infectious spread,
Without leaving all other life forms dead.
We'll just have to hope for mass suicide.

Hypocrisy

You are greedy.
I am not.
You have more
Than I have got.

You are bad.
And I am good.
It makes me mad -
And well it should.

You think dark thoughts.
I cherish light.
If your deeds don't kill you,
I think I might.

You do wrong,
While I do right.
Don't sing that song!
Come on, let's fight!

Lord Of The Rule

A mere bug,
A thug,
A bugging bug,
Climbed on another bug's back,

Gave him a whack,
Said,

Look at me!
Don't you see
How great I can be?

He longed for power,
And built a tower
Of bugs, lesser thug's
Might - the height of limelight.

How glorious a bug he had become,
Lord of the rule, on a mongrel dog's bum!

Power Man

Shame on all you damned old men,
Reigning totalitarians,
Who herd the sheep into a pen
To feast on vegetarians.

You spread your lies like poison spores,
Empowering all your wretched whores
To lick your boots submissively,
And champion human misery.

You gather glowing lives to drown,
Forcing all who smile to frown,
Cracking down on stalwart cheer,
Binding tongues up tight with fear.

You stomp the life from every flower,
Extending power another hour,
To taint all sweet, and make it sour.
From the very hint of bliss you cower.

Yet, this late in your evil game,
 What's the purpose of your breath?
 When all below await your death,
 What then is your final aim?

When young wolves steal away your fame,
 When innocent children curse your name,
 When common folk dare call you knave,
 And earnestly piss upon your grave,

When your vile existence finds an end,
 And worms and maggots call you friend,
 When your flesh is gone without a trace,
 How then shall you save your face?

Parasite

He is an idealist - his ideal self-idolatry,
 advancement by any means.

He is a realist, an opportunist,
 always on the prowl for a real opportunity.

His style is smooth as a snake,
 as he slides through his lies.

His smile is a pile of polished pearls
 to camouflage his fangs.

His hands are anaerobic sea serpents,
 limp and fetid appendages extending
 to shake the hesitation from the hesitant.

His face is a mask molded into manipulation.

His words are predigested bane for the herds,
 chewed and swallowed, chewed and swallowed,
 puked into toothless mouths.

He spews his leadership from poisonous glands,
 too rapidly for simple tongues to taste the lack
 of meaning between his words.

He is a pustule swelling with venom,
 inconspicuous in his itch and irritation,
 one pinprick away from eruption.

He is a spore-spreading sickness.

He is a disease,
 a politician.

Web

The spinner's principle code is order,
 Regulation from center to border.
 Intricacy is the law of his loom,
 Care to give every legal precept room.
 He weaves with heedful uniformity,
 Achieves a spinneret's enormity,
 With rules and restraints threaded everywhere.
 The spinner weaves an entangling snare,
 A sticky web of injustice and doubt,
 That even the spinner cannot sort out.

in your honor

i object
 to your honor
 self-righteous
 gestapo
 lawmaker
 breaking
 might is right
 wielder
 contemptuously
 in those robes raping
 draping over liberty

your honor
 if it pleases
 court
 humanity
 make a law
 against lawyers

and liars
and little egos
blown up so big

abjection sustained

The United Snakes

The united snakes
Are wound in a ball,
Bound up in great might,
So none can recall
Lost liberty's stakes
Like justice for all,
No concern for right,
No space for the small.
The grip is too tight.
The pact is too strong.
Now no one dares fall,
And part writhing wrong.

Ex-president

Ex-president,
Extra worn,
Extra torn,
Exanimated and spent,
Expended fame,
Exhausted name,
Exclamatory exclusion,
Excoriated delusion,
Excruciating conclusion,
You've exceeded your day.
No extending your stay!

Legacy

When Abraham Lincoln expired,
He possessed a confederate bill,
And a pair of reading glasses
Repaired with a bit of string,
Threaded with the same kindly touch

That brought together divergent classes,
And binds them still.
It seems a marvelous thing.
I wonder if any other president since retired
Has taken so little, and given so much?

Pigs In Gold

Pigs in gold
Appear quite bold,
Make a row
Wherever they go,
Put on a show,
So no one will know
They're pigs in gold.

Sing With Pomp And Circumstance

Sing with pomp and circumstance,
You silly man, you silly fool.
Do a self-deluding dance.
Ego is a giddy tool.

Descension from a famous name
Is your only claim to fame.
The march you do appears quite lame.
Such a willy-nilly game!

Some Day In Bombay

Untouchable,
Weigh the toll of your apathy,
Rise and piss on Shiva,
Resist this bleak oppression,
Light a pyre high and bright,
Ascend to the day,
Push back the night,
Swathe thy feet in fine linen,
Anoint thy crown in glory,
Stand tall and unswaying.

Untouchable,
Extend thy fingertips to mine.

Twinkle Twinkle

Silly woman at a counter,
 What is this
 Glittering on your finger?
 A Mayan god so mighty fallen
 From a ditch in Sacramento,
 A nail that shod an emperor's stallion,
 Or speck of Spanish bullion?
 Or it might just be a remnant
 Molar straight from Dachau,
 With a bead of Afrikaner's sweat
 Upon it as a coronation of lust -
 A glimmering star of avarice,
 But no more than stone and ore!

And the truth is
 It's been in and out of sight
 For five billion years.

Yet you perceive it new,
 Slip inside fresh and scintillating,
 Invigorating as your wedding night.
 You view it uniquely
 Because you possess it,
 Crying angel's tears, you think,
 As you linger in admiration,
 In greed and joy mixed,
 So proud of yourself!
 So vain!
 Silly bitch!

To The Neon Gods

Bow low to the gods, in reverence.
 Kow tow and partake of their benevolence.
 Their commandments are all of right and wrong.
 Don your vestments, and play along.
 Sell your body for the highest price,
 In bondage to bonds, a roll of the dice
 To determine your destiny in heaven or hell.
 The neon gods reward the faithful well,
 Afford them every material desire,
 But burn blasphemers in inert fire.

Market your life to the time clock.
 Sacrifice your soul on the auction block.
 Pray fervently to the neon gods for mercy,
 Or suffer a pauper's fate for heresy.

The Root Of It

I don't know if money is in evil rooted.
 But there has been more bad done than there has been good
 To get it, more that shouldn't have been done than should.
 For those who seek power, it seems to be suited.

Maybe money is merely a root, and power
 The main stem, ambition the leaves, greed the flower.
 Too much wealth, then too little, history has shown,
 Made Rome decline and fall - though not money alone.

Hitler got his pound of flesh by selling just hate.
 Mao murdered millions without spending a red cent.
 For the most part, rulers of gold, at any rate,
 Carry more rule than any golden rule ever meant.

Revolutions come and go with the same old lure
 Of gain, until all things are the same as before.
 And there's only one thing I can say for sure:
 More have tried to get rich than have tried to get poor.

The Ragged Line

The long ragged line files in at the door,
 And paces the distance across the floor,
 Not for a handout. They came for a hand,
 For a tender touch that will help them stand.
 They come for a chance, and for nothing more
 Than to beat poverty, and win despair.
 They ask for rules to be a bit more fair -
 For the rich not to sneer and stare, to share.

Monarch Of The Street

As far from heaven as hell may own,
 In glory he reigns,
 On a urinous blanket-throne -
 King of inebriate domains,
 Emperor of defeat,
 Monarch of the street,
 Ruling spacious thoughts of ether and air,
 Royal inhabitant of everywhere,
 Deeming it enough estate
 To trade his face for a crown,
 Esteeming it such privileged fate
 That legions of narcotic stupor cannot bring him down.
 Beyond the reach of any god to further banish,
 Unless to make him completely vanish,
 He renounces all divine claims to paradise,
 Content in the ceremony of hallucinatory device.
 And no inquisitor's threat of eternal unrest,
 Nor blasphemous angel's supplication,
 May presume to divest
 His majesty of grace, or speed abdication.

The Aroma Of Poverty

Silly skunk to think
 There is any chance
 That some charm besides stink
 Is the essence of acceptance!

For a majority of friends,
 (The fair weather variety)
 Free association depends
 On the raised nose of society.

The odor of wealth galore,
 The scent of possible gain,
 Is what most nostrils sniff for,
 Like fresh air after a rain.

But a poor reeking skunk
 Has no affection to squander,
 Like an itinerant drunk,
 Is destined to wander.

For a stinky skunk,
 (Barring notoriety) in the end,
 Is cast out with the junk,
 And has but pity for a friend.

Entree

I watched them drinking chilled Bordeaux,
 And dining on crab as white as snow.
 I saw their names in headlines glow
 For putting on a pretentious show.
 But not I, oh, no!
 When it came to wealth and fame,
 I, begrudgingly, had to feast on crow.

Superstar

Who do you, what do you, think you are,
 Man, whom the crowds call a superstar?
 There have lived many better by far
 Than you - with your chauffeured car,
 And silly sunglasses, and cigar,
 And that disposable bimbo you call a wife,
 And the shallow existence you deem a life.
 What great deed have you ever done?
 What makes you believe that you outshine the sun?
 You'll shine no more when you're out of electricity,
 When the fickle fools' hearts turn.
 Hanging upside down, crucified on the cross of complicity,
 How dark you'll be with no more light to burn!

Poor, Rich, Man

Poor, rich, man
 Did not get his way.
 The big plan
 Did not change with pay.

A fine stone
 He got on his head -
 No more loan.
 His credit is dead.

Niggard

Carefully, he totals up his tea
 To see if every leaf is in count.
 He wants there to be
 No discrepancy
 In the amount.

One,
 Two,
 Three -

None
 For you.
 And two
 For me.

Black Bird

He lurks along the rookery edge,
 A bird as black as night,
 Born and bred on a tenement ledge,
 Ill-fed and refused light,
 A rook,
 A crook,
 Slinking along a shadowy groove.
 This ghetto scalawag
 Prowls the back streets, poised to make his move.
 Rookery is his bag.

Fink

He is a nark, a snitch,
 A son of a bitch.
 He sells out for the highest price.
 Like an infestation of lice,
 He sucks his host dry.
 He is a stool pigeon spy,
 A squeaker, a squawker,
 A friendship hawker.
 He is a pile of scat,
 A vile stink.
 He is a rat,
 A fink.

Behind A Dumpster In Baltimore

On my way to the parking lot,
 I saw him,
 Behind a cafe,
 Behind a trash bin,
 Behind a cardboard box,
 Looking directly at me.

And had he looked away,
 I would have looked away too.

But he stared.

And I stared,
 And thought of the food in my stomach,

Said,
 "Would you care for a bite to eat, my treat?"

He eyed a while more,
 Not sure if I was just rubbing him wrong
 For amusement,

Answered,
 "Nah," resolutely.

Then softened some.

"I'll be just fine.
 I found a pizza a while back."

"You're sure?"

A nod.

"But if you can spare the change,
 I'd appreciate a couple of bucks for some wine.
 My joints ain't what they used to be.
 And the rain's been pretty bad lately."

"Sure, I think I can arrange that."

I produced the cash,

Became bold.

"Why don't you find some place to go?
 There are shelters, aren't there?
 Don't you have family anywhere?"

He was still for a while,
Then sobbed,
Or maybe only hiccuped in anticipation of wine.

"I was married before, had a baby too,
Just couldn't hold a job,
Got abusive to my wife,
And lost everything.
I guess I had my fill of life."

I nodded, trying to understand.

He eyed the cash in my hand,
Surprised at the denomination,

Edged close enough to share his breath.

"Bless you, friend. Bless you."

Cartoon Man

He walks the supermarket isles
With an animated gait,
At the packaged commodities smiles,
As if each were a long-lost mate.

Driving his shopping cart,
A complete basket case,
From higher primates driven apart
By an intellect so base,

This gargoyle of humanity,
Bipedal infection,
In the bliss of idiocy,
Roams the produce section.

Some Eat To Live

Some eat to live.
Some live to eat.
Some strive to make their time complete.
Some give.
Some take.

Some undertake to make a meal their greatest feat.
Some find a purpose for their breath.
Some feed their mouths until their death.

Eat, Piggy, Eat

Eat, Piggy, eat!
Stuff your face with meat!
Wolf it down like a mongrel mutt!
Who more deserves a treat?

Go, fatso, Go!
Give that cake a throw!
Open up, then let it shut!
No one will ever know.

Oh, glutton, oh!
You fill an extra row
With a bulging butt and sagging gut!
Your greed is starting to show!

Thar She Blows

There she goes.
Thar she blows,
All blown out of proportion,
No hope of an abortion,
The sake of too much cake.
She needs to partake of self-control.
Watch her pitch and roll.
She can't hesitate, can't wait,
To eat another treat.
She never slows.
Thar she blows.

The Empty Can

The empty can emits the most sound,
Grates one's nerves like a broken fiddle,
Because there's nothing in the middle
To keep the thoughts from rattling around.

Naught to say the moment you begin,
 And so many words to say it in,
 The words you speak are tinny and droll.
 Empty can, close your useless noise hole!

Bimbo

There she is,
 A hormonal quiz,
 Filled to the brim with pleasure,
 Molded clay,
 In a sumptuous way,
 A genetically aesthetic treasure.
 She's too dumb to know
 That her season will go.
 But she knows that her fruit is in season.
 So she teases the boys,
 For the pride of her toys.
 And for them it's a good enough reason.
 For, a cherry to pluck,
 The sweet juices to suck,
 Is an undertaking truly delicious.

Boys, never stop,
 Till you harvest a crop!
 Boys, always be ambitious!

A Busy Bird

A dizzy nosy busy bird
 Could not stay in her nest.
 She had to spread her busy word
 That busy birds know best.

She sang her tune all day and night
 Of what is right and wrong,
 Chastised the other birds in flight.
 She wanted all to hear her song.

Against all forms of heresy
 She proudly took a stand.
 She sang her tirade endlessly,
 And thought her tune was grand.

Gossip

If you don't have anything nice to say,
 Be sure to bring your words my way.
 I possess a very eager ear,
 And find all rumors a pleasure to hear.

Speech Therapy

A worrywart once rode a windjammer.
 The crew bore five days of her yammer.
 She filled up their ears
 With a torrent of fears,
 So they filled up her mouth with a hammer.

Mama's Boy

"He'll be a fine man.
 A mother can tell.
 It's clear that he can
 Do everything well.
 I'm sure he will be
 A dentist someday.
 My boy tries to see
 All things mama's way.
 He's my pride and joy!"

He's a mama's boy.

The Man/Woman

She puts her skirt on sideways,
 Pretending that she has pants,
 Living in a gender daze,
 At the mention of men rants,
 Spits out hollow quips she learns
 From other man/woman types.

But clandestinely, she yearns
 To have different water pipes.
 She spurns any female trait,
 Her natural place recants.
 Of a man, she has but hate.
 Yet, she longs to fill his pants.

Mummy

Her delight is painted to perfection
 On her mummified hide.
 Her robes are a queen's confection.
 But she is shriveled inside,
 Embalmed slowly
 In the temple of vanity,
 Stuffed with the souls of the lowly,
 Puffed by a despot's insanity,
 Wizen heart, withered liver,
 Eviscerated and discarded,
 A weltered quiver,
 Hollow and disregarded
 But for a core of self promotion,
 A balm of blame,
 A black flame.
 Her sincerity is moldy powdered rust,
 Humanity turned to dust,
 And pasted into place,
 To form a papier-mâché face.

Like a dry Egyptian wind she cackles.
 And her papyrus design crackles,
 As the inner bane shows clear
 Her Gorgon reflection in a mirror.

A Mean Old Witch

She was a mean old witch with the heart of a saint.
 She kept it on her desk, in a jar of red paint.

She ate a daily meal of half-roasted rat,
 And hid the bones from her death-skinny cat.

She went to bed for one hour each night,
 Waking every minute to curse the first light.

She bathed once a year to wash her clothes,
 And clean the crust from the end of her nose.

She wheezed when she talked, and laid her teeth bare,
 Trying to get her fair share of air.

Her house was built on the backs of the poor.
 They made a good foundation but a really lumpy floor.

And she was never one to lend a hand,
 Though she had a fine collection on her bedside stand.

"Give me your ear," she'd always say.
 And if given one, she'd take it away.

She was a mean old witch with the heart of a saint.
 She kept it on her desk in a jar of red paint.

Fruit Of His Loins

There was a man in our town
 With an exceedingly productive wife
 Who bore him seventeen children,
 Though not for lack of trying
 For more, for twenty-four,
 For two for each month.
 And whether this was for want of fame,
 Or a need to multiply his self-interests,
 To pass on his genes sufficiently,
 Who's to say but he?

Perhaps a profound philosophy
 Motivated him to procreate,
 A benevolent philanthropy inspired
 Him to take it upon himself
 To populate the world single-handedly,
 To fill an entire prison ward
 With his numerous sons.
 (His wife's tired - she won't deny)

I can say for sure,
 His youngest daughter spent much time
 Crying at her hand-me-downs.
 I heard she moved away,
 Married an electrician,
 And changed her name.

bone-strewn, airless, and void of light,
 where Ho Chi Min awaits with devil's horns
 to ram a red-hot poker up your past.

The ship of fools is sinking,
 sinking, sinking.
 The ship of fools is sinking.
 (I watched it on TV)

The Mud People

The mud people feed on filth.
 They sniff out waste as they go.
 They're useless for all but tilth.
 They find dung, and make a show.

When they find soil in their pants,
 They mold it into a wall,
 And wait for a nasty chance
 To see others take a fall.

The mud people feed on dirt.
 They live to throw pies of mud,
 No mind if anyone gets hurt.
 It's clear they are all quite wud.

The Factory

News Flash!
 Bring out your cash!
 The factory has a story!

Give glory
 To a monopoly
 On words!

Oh, no, so
 The paper can fold
 And be sold!

Hold!

The market needs a new load
 Of words
 Full of nothing,
 Sold at your local
 Bookstore.

The Movement

"Follow the movement," said the lemming to the sheep.
 "Follow the movement," said the worker to the drone.

"Society has conventions to keep.
 Go with the wind where you are blown.
 Just abandon all thoughts of your own.
 Don't you know
 That we go with the flow?
 The uniform is prescribed here.
 We have made it perfectly clear
 That your hat is too pointed.
 You haven't been anointed,
 And certainly can't play our game.
 We don't even think the same.
 And where is your license to write?
 Are you looking for some kind of fight?
 Well, you won't get it this way!
 We don't fight. We obey.
 And we ostracize.
 We despise
 All who do not do what we do.
 Left face! Hup two!
 We have a movement to keep!"

Said the lemming to the sheep.

correct me if i'm wrong

nigger nigger
 spick chink honky honky
 tonk white boy
 fag wog wop wop
 and a nasty word
 oh my cry
 fly so high
 like an injun powwow
 scalp my tongue
 burning books
 under hitler's thumb
 beating war drums
 jap jap jap

and attack
 those bad word
 saying
 communist pig hate mongers
 scouring
 clean as a
 jew mormon
 wrapped up in
 generic
 plastic wrap
 and sell it in
 a package
 for 9.99

White Man Overburdened

Take my place.
 I'm tired of taking up space.
 My history, my culture,
 My language, my literature,
 My civility, my government,
 My scientific enlightenment,
 My inheritance I bequeath to you.
 Take it, and tread it beneath your shoe,
 Along with the facts you've been misconstruing.
 I'm through with doing
 All that you think I must.
 Instead, give me your homeland.
 Let me fill my own mouth with my diligent hand,
 Or like you, search for bugs as I sit naked in the dust.

Ego Man

He wears it like a latex balloon,
 Floating his feelings in inert gas,
 An insulated sort of buffoon,
 Inflated by delusional sass.

He is oblivious to trouble,
 Till sharp wit or biting suggestion
 Punctures his prodigious bubble,
 And bursts his cognitive congestion.

Fair-weather Friends

Oh, the kindest things they say,
 When the wind is blowing my way.
 When fair weather shines on me,
 They are the best that friends can be.

On friends like these I can depend.
 They are loyal to the end,
 Unless storm clouds come along,
 Then they flee to a sunny throng.

A Shallow Sanctuary

I have to hand it to you,
 The originality of your superficiality is grand;
 Swift to change your stand,
 To rearrange what is true,
 Your style, your crocodile smile,
 The way you hesitate a while before you reply,
 And condescend in the end,
 Friendly, but not a friend,
 The way you pass the world by,
 A shallow sanctuary,
 A fast-drying estuary.

Chameleon

He slips from friend to friend,
 Showing a talent to bend
 His colors of loyalty,
 One moment royalty,
 Then right in the insurrection,
 Displaying his affection
 For constant deceit,
 Avoiding all-out defeat
 By the way he hides,
 By never taking sides,
 Never showing what's within
 The distortion of his skin.

Philanderer

Philanthropic in his affairs,
 A fleece of lambs he wears.
 This wolf, this masher,
 This courtesan thrasher,
 In amorous pursuit of flirts,
 Lunges into the lunch cart
 For a lush and luscious tart,
 To luxuriate in luxuriant skirts.
 His lust is a work of art.

Golliwog Logic

A golliwog tripped on a log,
 And fell headfirst in a bog.
 With glowing, gleed, eyes he glared.
 With a sullen frown he dared
 Anyone he might promptly flog.

He spied a goggle-eyed hob
 Sitting on a gnarled cypress knob.
 His lip protruded in a pout.
 And teeth-gnashing mad, he set out,
 A lone frog its peace to rob.

With a growl he leapt headlong.
 But the frog was gone in a song.
 He gnawed on a Lilly instead,
 Took a cypress root to his head,
 Dashed by a slippery frog's wrong.

Pessimist

Calamity disperse!
 Always in reverse,
 You are a curse,
 An adverse,
 Perverse,
 Hearse!

Mystical Magical Men

Self-delusion, dogmatic conclusion,
 Transpersonal paradigm,
 Stick 'em together, and fill 'em with vim -
 Mystical Magical Men!

The Gnostics of healing, the nature of feeling,
 The gospel according to Jim,
 For a credulous mind they are yours to enjoy -
 Mystical Magical Men!

For a minute of fame, they will teach you their game,
 The incarnation within,
 The interpretation of imagination -
 Mystical Magical Men!

Take all belief of the higher self, and put it out on the floor.
 Put air in your head, and your brain on a shelf.
 Now one more time, we've been here before -
 Mystical Magical Men!

The Chosen One

"I am the chosen one,
 Blessed son of the son
 Of the one who begat
 The one true gnat!"

"Indeed! The very one
 Who fathered the chosen nation?"

"As glorious as the sun!
 The object of solemn consecration,
 Here by way of proxy
 To teach you orthodoxy
 In things of matter,
 Before our numbers scatter!"

"Master, let me be not forsaken!
 Teach me what I must do.
 May I sit here with you?
 Pardon, but is this stool taken?"

Missionary

A man of remarkable Zen,
Sought to feed less fortunate men.
He took his book, bade farewell to his nook,
And sailed straight for the darkest den.

His new brothers did not readily obey,
Still received him with no great delay,
Indeed found him a refreshing entree,
Even loved him in a culinary way.

They consumed him without any waste.
And though none had digested his text,
Each disciple remarked to the next,
He was truly a man of good taste.

One On Every Mountain

The holy ones built a temple ten years ago, no more,
And erected a sign, made in fourteen ninety one,
And put in a sacred shrine with a statue of gold,
And lit incense to revere the ghosts,
And bade the tourists come.

And come the tourists.
And the tourists take their photographs,
And get a moment of antiquity, (for a price)
And eat lunch during prayers,
And purchase picture postcards.

And the monks pose for shots,
And offer sage advice,
And for laughs sell souvenirs in a shop downstairs.
And a television antenna waves on the dormitory roof -
And enough karma at the Buddha's place for satellite link.

And the tourists come,
And get tickets at the gate,
And take their photographs.
And the monks meditate,
And find enlightenment.

Order According To Thomas More

Mustn't be disruptive!
Harmony at a price
Is our prime directive
Here in God's paradise!

We keep the fires hot
For Smithfield zeal. Forsooth!
Utopia is not
For heresy or truth!

A Fool In A Mire

A fool in a mire,
Cried daily, *liar, liar,*
I've got truth right here.
The mud makes it clear.
When I stand upside down,
I may look like a clown -
My face turns red,
And my crown falls off my head.
But I can really see.
So, bend your mind to me.
I'll feed you bread and wine.
Come on in. The water's fine.

Blanket of Ignorance

Whimpering at the searing lights shining round their heads,
Wondering at the heated truths that roll them from their beds,
They hold tight to their blankets, quite torn in tiny shreds,
And curse the souls that dare to speak their deepest darkest dreads.

It says here in my book!
Take a look!
How can you deny?
You dare ask why!

Oh, no!
Long ago, it was so!
Never doubt!
If I weave my story well enough, you'll never sort it out.

Peering through the blanket holes at all their dreaded fears,
 The whites of their wide eyes glistening,
 Their fingers in their ears,
 They pray, *I'm not listening. I'm not listening.*

Saint Machiavelli

Saint Machiavelli sits on a throne,
 Somewhere in the air,
 Singing a soothing tone
 To popes and dopes
 And those with hopes for hell,
*No need to yell, dear friends,
 No fire here.
 We're all on an equal plane.
 Now, cease
 Your weeping and wailing
 And flailing about in pain.
 Sit up straight.
 That's the spirit!
 Take your truth like good boys and girls.*

A Note On Linguistics

The Asians all beat a loud drum,
 Claim their speech is a glorious sum -
 I can say with no doubt,
 Without getting it out,
 I can make better noise with my bum.

April Fool's Day

Fools are what fools say.
 Fools are as fools do.
 Need there be a fool's day,
 When wisdom is in disarray?

Unless to limit stupidity this way,
 So that, once again, thought can ensue,
 We give imbeciles twenty-four hours to play,
 Exhaust mental deficiency before May.
 But it all seems...foolish anyway.

Pride Of John Duns Scotus

Through history we find few wits
 So phenomenally sharp
 That the greatness never quits
 Ringing brilliant as a harp.

Of mankind, there are few
 Who achieve complete fame,
 With an insight so true
 That memory never forgets the name.

Mister Scotus should be both proud
 And humiliated all at once,
 That of all the idiots in the crowd,
 He should be the one true dunce.

Idiot School

In idiot school
 They learn to be cool.
 They make it a rule
 To champion the fool,

Make idiot speech
 An adjective tool.
 Just one thing they teach -
 To say, *cool, cool, cool.*

Academic Aspirations

Georgie Rogers went to school,
 In pursuit of higher learning,
 So he wouldn't be a fool,
 Marched where he went like a military band,
 Had a painter's cap that he thought was grand,
 Wore a whistle on his belt,
 And a bunny canteen,
 And a nut from the axle of a big machine,
 Had some socks made of felt,
 And some keys on a string,
 Wore a rocket badge
 And an elephant ring,

Filled his pocket with flowers,
 Filled his shoes with sand,
 Had a laser gun that he taped to his hand,
 Spent his classroom hours
 Wiping boogers on his books,
 Drawing space cartoons,
 Giving girls silly looks,
 At the recess bell,
 Gave an Indian yell,
 Threw his books at his feet,
 Marched promptly to the street.

Georgie Rogers went to school,
 In pursuit of higher learning, so he wouldn't be a fool.

Paper For Sale

University schools
 All the brightest mules,
 Sets them on stools
 To learn jewels -
 The rules.
 Fools!

Education

Come, one! Come, all!
 Jump to our beck and call,
 Our monopoly on education!
 We're here to train
 Your empty brain
 To heed our accreditation.

In our upper-ring tent,
 We bring you an event
 That legitimizes our social position,
 By making status quo
 The only thing to grow,
 And to teach you the value of tuition.

Come, one! Come, all!
 Heed certification's call!
 Don't waste another minute!

Come give us your mind,
 So our masters can find
 Something worthy for you to put in it.

Come see our clowns,
 With their pseudo-serious frowns,
 Who can't wait to set you straight,
 Who paint your face the proper shade,
 Make sure your dues have all been paid,
 And herd you out the turnstile gate.

In our splendid ivory tower,
 We administer our power
 To separate the cream from the chaff,
 By maintaining at large,
 To administer our charge,
 A marvelously self-aggrandizing staff.

Our knowledge, you see, is all that there can be.
 And knowledge sets you free.
 We who know all, know this truly.
 You can know too, unless you break our rules
 And find yourself thrown out with the rest of the fools.
 Because, our freedom cannot abide the unruly.

Come, one! Come, all!
 Come to this hallowed hall,
 Where it has always been tradition
 To fill up our mold,
 And gather more gold,
 So we can build a new addition.

Come, one! Come, all!
 We'll make you feel quite small.
 Our glorious banners are unfurled.
 Come on and see our show!
 We know best what you should know.
 We are the greatest show in all the world.

The Death Of The Book

They put it in a deep dark nook,
 Where ne'er the light of sun partook,
 Nor eyes in wandering curiosity.
 They were above books, above literacy.
 They all agreed to vanquish words.
 They wandered in mindless herds
 To their shopping centers and malls,
 Closed the trees beyond the walls.
 The call of verse, none did heed.
 They had all agreed that none should read.
 They had television to see,
 No more use for characters on a tree.

Of Asininity

A drunkard is an ass with eyes of glass.
 A teacher is an ass with a class.
 A preacher is an ass at mass.
 An actor is an ass with sass.
 A salesman is a lying ass, able to pass off shinola as brass.
 A banker is a massive ass trying to amass more ass.
 A hooker is not necessarily an ass.
 A lawyer is classed lower than an ass.
 A reporter is an ass sniffing around for signs of other's gas.
 A critic is an ass unable to think,
 Sniffing other asses, unaware of his own stink.
 A politician is an ass of asses
 Passing gas and smiling as sweet as sassafras.
 A president is an ass surpassing all asses and classes.
 Last to class as an ass is the incompetent poet,
 Who writes asinine verse, and doesn't even know it.
 Ah, how the ass stank!
 An ass by any other name would smell as rank!

Hear This Harmony

Hear out this agelong harmony:

Eliminate the ones we hate.
 Cast out the diseased and the weak.
 Let there be no debate.
 Let those with lots of muscle speak.

Declare lies in open season.
 Make sure that we settle the score.
 Prepare to make war on reason.
 Rise up on the backs of the poor.

Let philosophies sour.
 Let there be a pursuit of might.
 Trample opponents with power,
 Until there's no one left to fight.

Do this, and today is where we would be.

The Song We Sing

If every tongue that ever spoke could speak a common phrase,
 If every voice that ever sang could sing in harmony,
 If every heart that ever beat could join as one in praise,
 If every soul were joined as one, we'd still all disagree.

Oriental Medicine

A learned physician of Korea,
 Sought to cure his fair king's diarrhea.
 He thrust forth his thumb,
 In his majesty's bum,
 And fingered a remarkable idea!

VIII. Confusion

A Viking

A Viking went a wenching
Beyond the northern sea.

A Viking went a pillaging
With bold audacity.

A Viking went a sailing
Across from Normandy.

A Viking in a drunken rage
Begot my family tree.

The Vicissitude Of Fate

Varus sacrificed his legions
On the altars of Mars,
Praying for territory,
Lusting for glory,
Dei gratia, dei gratia,
All for victory,
Aut Caesar aut nullus,
Aut Caesar aut nihil.

But Siegfried was someone,
And his creed significant,
Passing the sword of fire
To Arminius, and eagle wings,
That he might stand ground
For Germania, ringed round
By fair-haired giants - barbarians
Sworn to die or stand,
Despising life without liberty,
Swearing to defend a forest,
Freedom ringing in their steel,
Desperation of dragons cornered,
In their eyes crying *Woden!*

Nibulungen rallied to defiance,
Flanked by Valkyries,
Fury their breath,
Independence their aim,
Through victory or death.

And in one campaign,
 The Romans determined
 The power of the Norse,
 The vicissitude of fate,
 And a future waiting
 For destiny in the Teutoberg.

Tribute

Oh
 Who
 Were you,
 Who left grand
 Sand piled up high
 Against the desert sky -
 This act of some giant hand?

A Page Turned

A page turned
 On a mechanical gear.
 An automobile rolled out of a factory.
 The big band swinging gleefully,
 Machines with wings took to sky,
 The Prussians restless for territory,
 Banks in disarray and unable to pay,
 Some trouble of sorts in Sarajevo,
 The rising sun rising and setting,
 The Huns beating at the door,
 The warlords storming the theater,
 The chosen gathering for gas and incineration,
 The masters stumbling over their ambitions,
 The atom cracking open so terribly,
 The dark continent a little brighter then dimming,
 The red-eyed dispossessed taking the farm,
 Plow shares formed into swords to carry the red word,
 Protestation silenced and renewed, silenced and renewed,
 Books burned and preserved,
 Passion whispered in fear of retribution,
 The little monsters rising up and falling down,
 Lines drawn and erased,
 Walls rising and falling,

The blemished ones finding a place at the counter,
 The moon coming to the backyard,
 Flowers blooming and wilting,
 Voices reaching to all points at once,
 Someone assassinating a prince and a president or two,
 Gold turning to black,
 Painting with the wrong colors,
 The beat and rhythm rocking about,
 Freedom reigning supremely when the markets allowed,
 The Samaritans still unlearned in the parables,
 Illness going, and illness coming,
 Moscow coming to New Jersey,
 All the places filled up and used up,
 Eyes looking up to the frontier,
 Steel pounded into plastic,
 Language mingling universally,
 Verse flat and unrhyming,
 Good and bad blending into gray,
 The cross-bearers stumbling on their robes,
 Mohammed confined to the dark ages,
 And Galileo finally had a say.
 All happened on a page.
 Then the page turned once more,
 And passed into a closed book.
 And the poem was concluded.

Along A Street In Incheon

Along a street in Incheon, there was a youngster with a snotty nose,
 Abandoning a ball to come closer to me for a moment of curiosity,

And high school boys walking three astride, greeting me boldly,
 Then elbowing each other in the sides for impropriety,

And high school girls coming along in uniforms, four at a time,
 With smiles concealed behind cupped hands, waiting to pass before giggling,

And the policeman, just out of high school, with his crisp shirt,
 Inexperienced and uncorrupted, at the curb, smiling,

And a savvy businessman in his suit, thinking to conceal his thoughts,
 But the concept written cryptically on his wry lips,

And a man in a fine suit, balding and overweight,
 Incapable of winning a mate by charisma alone,
 Linking arms, escorting a female half his age,

And a street man, tattered and filthy, the seat of his pants soiled
 brown,
 Retreating before a perturbed restaurateur from the tavern door,
 And no lower to go but into the earth once more,

And a woman balancing an aluminum pan on her head,
 Wearily trudging, selling rice cakes, singing out price and ware,

And a cluster of faceless women at the bus stop,
 Pushing to get into the bus door, to get a seat,

And the taxi drivers lined up behind the bus,
 Patiently awaiting the afternoon rush hour,

And the lady in front of the red window barred for the day,
 Stale and disgruntled from her previous night's labor,
 Scrubbing the walk with a brush and a pail of water,

And the clothing merchant suddenly warm and patronizing
 As a customer in fine apparel hesitates for a look but passes,
 Then relapsing into competitive hardness as before,

And a common laborer between jobs or on lunch hour,
 Sunburnt and squinting, searching for an opportunity,

And an overindulgent mother leading her child son by the hand,
 Obese and grotesque, to an ice cream vendor,

And a blurry-eyed man in a wrinkled shirt, smelling of alcohol and
 sweat,
 Struggling to get his briefcase through the throng,

And an office girl from the bank, overripe before her season,
 Pudgy, and cradling a folder to her prominent bosom,

And a grandmother sitting at the corner with a box of cucumbers,
 Toking fatalistically upon a cigarette,
 Her wrinkled face conformed to facilitate the cigarette,

And a young beauty with a sideward glance at me,
 But pretending not to see, only wanting to be seen,

And the middle-aged housewife, excessively dressed and painted
 To compensate for her plainness, surely wanting to be seen,

And an old man shuffling along, with a remote gaze,
 Perhaps in deep thought, still searching for a wish,

And the many passing too swiftly to see anything but a brief glance,
 Occupied with their pursuits, hurrying on to the next objective,

And here am I, in the midst wandering, observing and mingling,
 Yet distant, a part yet not a part, apart, alone in my thoughts.

Hillbilly Bill

Hillbilly Bill lived up on the hill.
 His trailer is there still,
 With the roof sagging low -
 Not much of a trailer,
 But as much as it ever was
 Before Bill went to federal prison.
 (It seems he showed excessive affection
 To his granddaughter)

Weeds have reclaimed the driveway,
 Covered up the mud and the ruts,
 Erased everything but one path
 To the outhouse -
 Clever how an outhouse can resist
 The onslaught of nature.

There's a stack of beer cans
 Where the porch used to be,
 As a legacy of sorts,
 And a refrigerator on its side
 That never ran for Bill,
 And an ax head in the grass,
 And a five gallon can of something,
 All just waiting to go to county auction
 For back taxes.

Now a mouse has moved in,
 Breached the floorboards
 And left a small pile of wood dust

Just outside the hole.
 (I suppose every creature,
 Regardless of how diminutive,
 Leaves a mark on the world)

Bill's truck is still in the meadow,
 In the middle of the spring,
 Where the sheriff ran him down.
 It should rust for a while,
 Maybe holding the answer to a riddle,
 With the water flowing around it do-si-do,
 Making a musical sound,
 A banjo pickin'
 And a fiddle-string harmony,
 Like a chicken in the bread pan pickin' at the dough.

The Night Janitor

I used to leave my sponges behind the door,
 But people kept taking them away.
 So I just don't do it anymore.
 You wouldn't think folks would steal,
 Not old sponges least way,
 Specially ones I used to clean the floor.
 But some people just don't care how other people feel.
 That's the way it was when I was in the navy,
 Couldn't leave your mop for a minute
 Or it'd be gone before you knew it,
 Then the officers'd be on you bad.
 They did that anyway, steppin' on you always,
 Give you beans, and take the gravy.
 But there were some good times.
 You should have seen Manila after the war.
 Man, them was the days!

Less Than A Movie

He was an uncle to me,
 Somewhat survived Nam and the Sixties,
 Never turned to drugs, resorted to calories,
 Came to eat turkey at Thanksgiving, and play Frisbee,
 Was disposed of by his wife after thirty years of marriage,
 Stayed employed as a janitor, made it a career -

Setting up chairs in a church auditorium,
 Consoled by a cassette player with ear speakers,
 Listening to Jim Morrison and The Doors -
 Not much of a life, not enough to base a movie on.

Woo Woo

Woo Woo,
 There you go,
 Too slow to escape
 Our cries of
Woo Woo.
 Do you enjoy our fun?

Woo Woo,
 We are thrilled
 To cheer you.
 We see the fear
 In your eyes.
 We've filled your blood
 With ice.

Running from our song,
 On your motor-cart,
 To mow someone's lawn,
 Wondering what wrong
 You've done,
 Do you shame at your lowly state,
 Our neighborhood disgrace?

We've got news for you,
 More fun in store,
 Another surprise.
 We despise you.
 Shall we throw eggs
 Or tomatoes
 At your house tonight?

So delightful to see
 You've boarded up
 The windows now
 That you're too old
 To give us a chase.

We've been told
 You'll see no one
 Any more,
 Too scared to fight.
 And we've killed
 Your cat stone cold,
 Like your mother.

Well, we're not so sure
 What to do now that
 You're only a ghost.
 We don't know how
 To bury the mold,
 Or whether we'll face you
 In another hell,
 Woo Woo.

Sunday School Teacher

He wielded his knuckles
 Like the jawbone of an ass,
 Kept his class in reverent occupation,
 But without malice, sparing the rod most of the time,
 Righteously reproving us for our mortality,
 Had faith in charity, and saw to it
 That we were baptized with fire and immersion,
 Exhorted us to trust in God and Joseph Smith,
 Insisted in Noah, and Adam, and Eve,
 Related how Lazarus rose from the dead,
 Told us Jesus was resurrected a savior,
 Illustrated Jonah with furious sweeps of his arms.

There was often thunder in his voice,
 But never anger.
 Only twice did we see him angry -
 Once for blasphemy, and once when he caught us
 Invading the church porch like Joshua at Jericho.
 He could stop a fight with just a look,
 Would sit us in a foyer, and make things right again,
 Chastised us patiently, and bade us apologize
 To the bishop and to ourselves.

From time to time, he invited us to his home
 For a piece of peach cobbler,

Let us pet his sheep,
 And feed it lettuce and carrots,
 While he fed us spiritual advice,
 Gave us bread his wife had baked without spice
 To teach us about the salt of life.

He could stretch Sunday hours into days,
 Pleading for our souls as if in Gethsemane,
 Memorizing scriptures,
 Explaining the significance of a steeple,
 Meticulously passing out hymn books,
 Sparing no effort to mend our ways,
 To correct our behavior,
 To teach us to choose the right.
 He always hoped we would choose the right,
 Unlike his daughter who worked the strip in Vegas
 To support her habit.

We saw him cry when his son went to prison.

Junkyard Man's Dog

The mangy cur was worthless,
 Sagging,
 Toothless,
 No good for nuthin', nagging
 Me for food all the time,
 Always lying around
 On the dirty ground,
 Covered with dust and grime,
 Shittin' all over the place!
 Never barked a single time at a stranger or cat!
 It had the ugliest damn face,
 And was always in the way
 No matter where you was at.
 It's fur was turmin' all patchy and gray.
 Hell no! I didn't care
 That it went.
 I was glad to get it out of my hair.
 Anyhow, the damn thing didn't cost me a cent.
 Why should I throw a titty fit?
 My wife cried
 When it died,
 But not me.
 I just buried it under that maple tree.
 And I've already forgot all about it.

One-Eyed King

He ruled the alleyway,
Behind a Chinese restaurant,
Invisible by day,
Invincible in his night haunt -

His kingdom of trash bins.
He was a stalwart defender,
A magnate of fish fins,
Banishing any pretender

To his egg foo young crown.
Many cats had challenged his rule,
Only to be struck down
By this cat who was no cat's fool.

His armor bore the mark
Of triumph over suffering.
He was lord of the dark,
A truly-noble, one-eyed, king.

Katzenjammer

One summer plight, at half past midnight,
While I lay in slumber on my bed,
There arose a blight, a dreadful fright,
Like Cadmus rousing me from the dead -

A hideous clamor of abuse,
A hot kettle of fish sort of spat
With no possibility of truce,
A war head-to-head, cat against cat.

And I, having a stake in the brawl,
An earnest wish to end the debate,
Howled forth my fiercest tom caterwaul,
In hopes one side would capitulate.

Dental Tyranny

I had my wisdom teeth extracted.
Perhaps that's why my mouth is muddled,
And the remaining teeth befuddled.
Their leadership has been impacted.
They've been led astray by a molar
With politics radically polar.
The dentist says the tooth is abscessed.
But my guess is that it is possessed
To the roots with absolute power.
Dental tyranny's darkest hour!

Witch Grass

My father cursed the witch grass in his strawberry bed,
Crusaded with hoe in hand and fury in his head.
With fierce oaths of war, he kept the invasion at bay.
But being mortal, he could never completely sway
The fight in his favor, not against a deathless foe,
Being armed with only will and a temporal hoe.

Once witches wore trappings of human weakness and form,
But found their craft thwarted by an angry human storm.
Thus, they sought through witchery, a true embodiment
Of evil to wage war against human settlement.
They conjured all the demons of perdition's estates,
To consult in conference the wisdom of the fates
And all dark souls gathered in a cauldron of evil,
In the name of human tranquillity's upheaval.
With wicked delight, on one long, malevolent, night,
They forged a masterpiece of utterly vicious might -
Demons that would never rest in their unholy graves,
Living pitchforks with uncountable, ravaging staves,
That no mortal power could ever hope to surpass,
Vindictive witches who had taken the form of grass.

Moonshine

By moonlight, the old-timer led the way,
 Over a bare patch in the tomatoes,
 Winding round the outhouse and back on the path to the barn.
 I had been there a couple of times during the day.
 But the way he took us around the end of the corn rows
 Had me disoriented, sort of like when he told a believable yarn.

The root cellar door groaned, woefully old.
 He'd built it new, back in his sixties, but that was some time back.
 The darkness below was cool, even in late, West Virginia, June.
 In a sliver of silver moon, I spied rings of gold.
 On a pine-board shelf lined with spider webs and an old burlap sack,
 Wide mouth jars shined like mystical crystals, reflecting the moon.

"Is that what you've been up to?"
 I accused, amused, city boy confused.
 The old-timer wheezed in exquisite delight.
 "Just a little bit of good, old-fashioned, mountain dew.
 What's the point of having a cooker if it ain't never used?
 And here's the thing about it: I figure we could use a nip for the night."

Water Witch

Here's the thing about it:
 Witching ain't something everybody can go about doing.
 About one in ten, maybe, can make it work.
 And there ain't but a handful of them
 That can really get a good feel
 To tell how far down the water's gonna be.
 A good witcher don't even need a proper rod.
 He can dowse with just about anything,
 As long as it springs with the pull of the water.
 Welding rods bent at the ends will do in a pinch.
 But a good willow crotch is what you really need,
 Or an alder fork carved right after a full moon.
 You want to cut it when the spirit is real strong,
 Right above the thirteenth life ring.
 My granny said it's akin to soothsaying and prophesying.
 Not everybody has the power, you see?
 It's a divine gift.

Under A Culvert

I've spent a lot of nights thinking about a duffel bag.
 After all these years, it's probable just a scrap of rag.

The old man said he had spent his share of restless nights, too,
 Wondering whether to take a trip back to Uijongbu.
 There'd be no chance of finding it, but looking wouldn't hurt.

Three GI's had buried it beneath a sewer culvert,
 Two of them eliminated by North Korean lead.

Shorty Shank was so shell-shocked there was little in his head.
 But he could remember looting the strongbox in a bank -
 A half a duffel bag of cultured pearls, and half of cash,
 Pearls and greenbacks bundled up neatly in a secret stash.

He was sure it was buried where it could never be found,
 Under a culvert, in a prime piece of Korean ground.

Go The Spoils

Mighty men sought fortune and fame,
 Wilderness lands to tame,
 Adventure bitter and sweet,
 Indian spice and Chinese silk.
 But some fought for tasty things to eat.
 Thank you, conquistadors, for this glass of chocolate milk!

Baptism

He peed on me!
 That nasty rabbit
 Jumped and peed!
 Did you see?
 Such a disgusting habit!
 And you don't need
 To laugh like a twit!
 Look at my shoe!
 How would you like it
 If he did it to you?

He does it almost every night,

When we're playing,
 He's not doing it out of spite.
 It's just his way of saying
 That you're all right.

A Fairy Tale

Mikey was a girly boy
 Who always stole the show.
 Everywhere that Mikey skipped,
 The macho crew would crow.

Mikey wore nice cowboy clothes,
 And helped the drag queens play.
 Mikey caught a nasty row
 From a fairy in L.A.

Middle Ground

Down in a cave, in a hollow narrow cave,
 In the deepest darkest depths of a hill,
 Lived a tired old bear and a kobold knave -
 One always sleeping and the other never still.

Said the knave to the bear as he poked him with a bone,
 "I haven't slept a wink, and I think you've slept enough."
 The bear growled back, "Troll, you'd best leave me alone.
 Move away from me or I'm gonna get rough!"

So the knave took a nap, and the bear hugged the knave,
 And neither remembered why they 'd grinded their mill,
 Down in a cave, in a hollow narrow cave,
 In the deepest darkest depths of a hill.

- Compromise is found somewhere in middle ground.

Shades

Spicks and spades may break my bones,
 But shades can never hurt me!
 My heart is spick-and-span, you see,
 A mosaic of colored stones!

Newspaper Romance

My bird is a bachelor,
 Not born one - bred
 For love - a love bird
 With no lover other
 Than a tissue wad
 On his cage floor.

He's got no hands for
 Caressing, and bird lips
 Are too hard to kiss,
 But he doesn't mind,
 Nor does his passion cool
 For this cold bitch.

Slash Burning

I burned twenty slash piles today
 With kerosene and tires.
 And happy not to have to stay
 Amidst my own hell's fires,

I staggered out, stained black with sin,
 A demon free to roam,
 And smiled an unchained angel's grin
 In my heavenly home.

Frost On An Art Gallery Window

It must be a joke,
 Jack Frost come to poke
 Fun at would-be art;
 The attempts at an imitative style
 In the gallery window.

He has set his craft apart
 With a rendition of his glistening smile
 That makes all other painting seem so low.

A Saucy Lass From Malta

A saucy lass from Malta, went swimming in the sea.
 Impertinence was the bottom line of her philosophy.
 She strode the shore so daringly, to show her olive skin
 To all the folks who dared not know the biting wit within.
 For just the slightest turn of head was met with harsh remark.
 But she found no phrase that might appease the wit of a great white
 shark.

City Girl

To get away from the city,
 She took a trip to a farm.
 In the picture, it looked pretty,
 Quite void of city harm,

Away from the crowded bustle.
 She wanted to leave the taxi war,
 The confusion, the opportunistic hustle.
 Though, she had never been there before.

At first, she didn't shirk,
 Too much, at inconvenience and work,
 Or the yellow jackets swarming about her hair,
 Or mosquitoes and gnats bustling about everywhere.

But soon, she saw elevators in the cow's stall,
 And meadow where there should have been a shopping mall.

Sorry, Bane

Every young imp needs a girl to torment.
 That's why you were tormented by me.
 I believe the punishment heaven-sent,
 The arrangement a divine decree,
 That put us in the same Sunday school room,
 So that I could put chalk in your hair.

You realized I had sealed your doom,
 When I first tied your sash to the chair.
 You did your best to trade shots with me,
 Though nothing you tried could quite do,
 Except vowing to hate me eternally,
 As I vowed to hate you, too.

I must have been your nightmare come true,
 A noxious childhood disease.
 I'm sorry, my bane, that I teased you.
 But, I'm glad that I had you to tease.

An Angle

Remember when
 We sat on a hillside
 To discuss physics, then
 Became mad when you tried
 To trip me up with just arrogance,
 By asking me what I had no chance
 Of answering; something about an angle?
 Radical slope made my teenage mind tangle
 In a formula of basic pseudo-intellectual wrath
 Over the abstractions of philosophy, pride, and math.
 Aggravated into the fundamentals of a radical tangent, I
 Oriented the argument in the direction of hostile declivity,
 Out of answers, and quite unable to slant an appropriate reply,
 Took the path of least resistance by rolling you down into the gully.

Raising Ned

Ned was a handful,
 Giving things a push
 When others meant to pull -
 A thorn in the tush
 Of establishment.
 He saw no where to run,
 And no where to hide,
 So he had fun,
 With everything to deride.
 Wherever he went,
 He took a prank with him -
 The public lake naked swim,
 At scout camp the forest fire,
 An air horn in high school choir,
 LSD in Sunday school,
 An exception for every rule.
 And I'll wager he rolled his truck
 Just to let them see him press his luck.
 Still sneering, with his neck broken,
 When they pulled him out,
 So the authorities would have no doubt
 That he left contempt as his final token

Hit Man

I am coming after you,
 To give you a nasty whack.
 I've been beaten until I'm black and blue.
 Now it's time for me to hit back.

Your laws mean nothing to my creed!
 In nature's law I trust,
 To see me through my instinctive need,
 To turn your life to dust.

You're going to meet your maker,
 For making this unjust game.
 I'll be your undertaker.
 Remember well my name.

Hear my saber rattle.
 My battle cry abhor.
 I shall win one major battle,
 Though at last, I lose the war.

Badge

When pride still mattered,
 And no one flattered
 Weasels and hogs
 For a little bit of currency,

Before honesty and integrity
 Was thrown to the dogs,

When there was shame,
 And a man held his name
 To be honorable,

Before the noble
 Sold out for fame,

Men held their heads high,
 Looked valor in the eye,
 Shunned cowardice,
 And were dauntless,
 Though they die.

Taking Free License

From the moment they spanked my taxpaying bum,
 I wanted nothing else but to be free.
 One might say, I sought certified freedom.
 Unfortunately, the government wouldn't license me.
 They gave me permission to breathe and eat,
 As long as my blood and fingerprints were classified.
 And they let me work, if I pay taxes, and don't cheat.
 But everything else has to be certified.
 Some miserable, little, fascist, automaton
 Has to tell me what form I'm supposed to be on,
 What rules to follow, and what choices to make,
 What to learn, what to believe, what to think,
 What drugs to take, and what drugs not to take,
 Where I can build my house, when to drink in a bar,
 How much credit I can have, and how much cash,
 How to operate a bike, boat, truck, train, car,
 When to fish, trap, shoot craps, or shoot a gun,
 How much water I should have in my toilet bowl,

What shots to give my rabbit, when to let my dog run,
What to do with my septic tank when it becomes full.

They even forbid me to end my own existence,
Decry it as an act of civil disobedience.
Even when I die, bureaucratic demands don't cease.
I can't be legally dead until they've certified me.
I cannot even rest in peace
Unless I pay the proper fee!

But I am putting my foot down for good!
And I don't need anybody to tell me that I should!

Now, I declare anarchy as my only oratory.
Now, I am standing my ground, marking my territory!
I am freely taking free license for free,
As I stand on the edge of my back porch, and pee.

Having Not Understood Five Pages Of Shakespeare

CHARACTERS

I, a fool, worried about unpaid bills

HAMLET, a tale of bygone ills

*
ACT I
*
SCENE I
On my bed

Enter confusion in my head

Two bee ore knot two bee...
What was the question?
(Two scenes of Hamlet read during mental indigestion)
Cast off these trappings of bewilderment, thumb back, and see!

The Poet Thief

He found no opportunity
Aside from grand larceny,
So he plied his trade,

Worked his way to the highest grade
Of skill, mastery of his craft,
Piloting his ship forward, never looking aft,
Towards a new undertaking -

A pirate of a whole life's making,
A technique taking years to build,
Childhood was his apprenticeship's guild,
With only his wits to steer him straight
Beyond the next locked gate.

To him it was well known,
Long before he was grown,
That there is no wrong or right,
No colors, no heaven or hell, no cold or hot.
There are only those who have or have not.

His clothes are black at night.
His face is pale by day.
All else belongs in shades of gray.

Guilt While Eating A Pork Chop

I am a carnivore,
As were my ancestors before -
Once but a crunch
In some saber-tooth's lunch!

But we fought back,
Went on the counterattack.
And here we are,
Come so far,
Enough to walk into a butcher shop,
And thoughtlessly pick up a pork chop
For dinner -
An evolutionary winner!

We've worked our way up to civilization.
 We really don't need any other rationalization.
 We did not battle through prehistory
 To feed on lettuce and celery.

Blessing On The Food

God may be a holy dude,
 But I'm the one who bought this food.
 I paid for it with a life of toil.

It may have been God's soil
 From which it all grew.
 But soil is a stew
 Made from people who toiled like me.

Food doesn't come free.
 God made.
 We paid.
 The credit, I refuse to share.

It hardly seems fair
 To thank God for my meat,
 Unless to curse when there's none to eat.

Thankless Giving Day

Every year we gathered at grandma's house
 For no roasted goose, or pheasant, or grouse,
 But for an old turkey bird roasted as dry as a shoe,
 And raised our watery punch glasses anew
 To praise our kind fate till our faces turned blue,
 Offering vain and repetitious blessing
 To instant mashed potatoes and boxed onion dressing,
 And secretly wishing it just weren't true.

I was never thankful for lima beans, or collard greens,
 Or the wide variety of disgusting things in fruit cake,
 Things that are bound to make
 The most fervently thankful people shake
 To the core, maybe even deplore the day
 That offers thanks without any say,
 Without consideration for flavor,

Thanksgiving with no explicit waver
 To the things some folks bake.

Macaroni salad and candied yams surely rate,
 Indeed necessitate the need for more debate
 On the mindless thanks the thankful pay
 On a thankful Thanksgiving Day,
 Choking it all down, fighting back the frown,
 Never asking why a pasty pumpkin pie
 Should not inspire a greater desire
 For a Thankless Giving Day,
 A day for riotous living,
 A day for thankless giving,
 When all can harvest what they hate
 And give it all away.

While Eating Tortellini

In an Italian restaurant in Dietzenbach,
 An old man with a leathered face
 And dust-colored hair
 Came from a corner
 In the back of the stube,
 Drew to my uniform,
 Slowly, so as to weigh me up.

He discerned the man within the suit,
 The soul behind the uniform,
 Raised his arm to salute,
 Settled for a nod the last minute,
 Pointed with his uplifted hand to a chair.

"Mind if I join you?"
 He mentioned as a formality,
 Taking the seat across from me,
 Squaring his shoulders proudly.
 And his eyes probed me,
 Deep blue eyes,
 With a trace of Mediterranean sand.

He said,
 "You come to fight the Russians
 When they come,
 For Deutschland and freedom.
 I thank you."

Then he craned his head round stiffly,
 To see if the Abwehr were listening.

"I was a soldier too,
 With the 21st Afrikakorps,
 Not a Nazi,
 A panzer commander for Wehrmacht.
 No Nazi, never!"

"I did not heil Hitler,"
 He added as an afterthought, passionately,
 "Not by will!"
 And there was fire in his eyes to prove it.

"I did not murder Jews.
 I was a soldier, like you.
 You remember Rastenburg, Ja?"

And he shook his heavy head
 To settle the thoughts,
 Could not get Rommel from his head.
 In his head it was still 1943.
 And he could see only Khaki,
 And seemed determined to make me smell it too,
 As he did, to taste it with him,
 Needed someone to hear his case,
 To reason with his former enemy for a while.

"When we lost Tunisia, that was the end.
 The British was damn fools.
 But we ran out of gasoline.
 Can't run panzers with sand.
 Even the Fox can't do that, nein!
 Kein benzin, ach du!
 What's to do then?
 El Alamein, mache mir nichts!"

"The Field Marshal was a considerable man."
 I conceded willingly,
 "With greater resources, who knows?"

I earned a twinkle in his eye.
 And he smiled at my tortellini.

"Ah, better we lost.
 Better you won, Amerikaner.
 This Hitler was no good."

"We all won," I consoled.

"Ach," he sighed resolutely,
 Folding the wrinkles on his brow,
 "Der Krieg ist vorbei.
 Der Krieg ist vorbei."

Happy Weed

Saint John's Wort
 Is a weed of a happy sort.
 A cheerful mood it does impart -
 Music to a heavy heart.

When you've taken too much rue,
 And no other weed will do,
 Seek this celebrated mark,
 On an upward leaf embark.

Mary Jane

Girl of high fulmination,
 Listless in the grass,
 Stunning her inspiration,
 Her kiss can surpass

Any mortal affection.
 Mellow is her mood,
 Her influence lewd.
 Cryptic is her complexion.

The Cure

When it snows in your nose,
 There's a blizzard in your brain.
 When you wrap your arm with hose,
 It's sure to ease your pain.
 When you swim in a bottle,
 Your hurt goes down the drain.
 Try giving your neck a throttle,
 And never be sick again.

The Connection

There is no beast so blindly bold
 As to bear no angst of being.
 There is no heart so blindly cold
 As to feel no pity at seeing

Another life suffering life.

My life is your life.
 Your strife is my strife.

Until all are free, my freedom is in vain.
 Until the emancipating gate has arisen,
 While one creature suffers the least pain,
 My heavy soul remains in prison.

Fellow On The Sidewalk

Fellow on the sidewalk,
 Is it so unbearable below?
 What blindness makes you so ride?
 Senseless, I dare say!

Rain will not hold the sun
 Away an hour more.
 Best make for the daffodil bed,
 Moist soil beneath the weeds at least.

Bold friend, show some prudence!
 Your track seems precarious,
 Too slow, I fear, to beat the afternoon.

There's no future here.
 Soon meat for a swallow you shall be,
 Or baked by the rays hard as tack.
 The heat of this day is not yet begun,
 And the crack ahead a deep canyon is.

Turn away from this ill quest!
 One grass is as green as another.
 What difference forward or back?
 There is no end to your folly!

Stages

I am a flower in a desert waste,
 Color on a tender stalk,
 My bloom soon to be petrified -
 Of life given a taste,
 Then dried,
 And turned to rock.

I am a rock on a desolate plain,
 Besieged by relentless foes,
 Engaged in war until I die.
 Resistance is in vain,
 But I
 Endure the blows.

I am an island in a raging sea,
 A distant desert island.
 Currents, relentlessly dreary,
 Render the rock in me
 Weary,
 To crumbling sand.

Searching

Tell me truly, weary soul,
 Would you trade your chances with eternity
 For another moment of youth?
 Would you discard the rewards of iniquity,
 For a single sentence of truth?
 What would you give to see beyond the door,
 To know what tomorrow has in store?
 What would be your goal?

The Ultimate Question

Who are you?
A line of news!
A drop of dew!

What shall the world lose,
When dust has claimed your pride,
And your blood has rusted and dried?

Supplication

Paradise,
A hint of truth would suffice
To see me through life's harms
And into your arms!

Watcher

Do you feel my eyes on you -
A gaze that dazes and surprises
The soul clear through?
Walls, lies, and disguises,
Hide nothing from my view -
Your thoughts, desires, all that your spirit surmises.
Wherever you go, whatever you do,
I am observing. I am watching you.
I see you, sitting in your arm chair.
I see you, malnourished specter of humankind.
I see you, earnestly hungering for knowledge.
I see you, pompous in your masquerade.
I see you, pride on parade.
I see you, lying whore of untruth.
I see you, mindless passing of time.
I see you, malcontent killer of compassion.
I see you, rolling cloud of dust.
I see you, lover of yourself.
I see you, ants crawling to your duties.
I see you, insincere mime.
I see you, swine-hearted greed.
I see you, pretentious friend of self-advancement.
I see you, counter in your counting house.
I see you, lonely soul reading at your lamp.

I see you, hopeless lover of rhyme.
I see you, deepest inner beauty.
I see you, cold consternation.
I see you, dreams lying fallow.
I see you, thoughts of silent tongues.
I am with you, child, at your every whimper.
I hear you, sweet-whispered prayer.
I am everything. I am everywhere.

Writ Of Apocalypse

Granny says the sky is through.
Gardyloo!
Soon it shall run out of blue.
Gardyloo!
God has filled his bedpan up.
The bon vivant shall spill his cup.
Icky!
Sticky!
Gardyloo!

The time has come to say adieu.
Gardyloo!
What more can one mortal do?
Gardyloo!
Pour me another drink for now.
I can only die one time anyhow.
Screwy!
Phooey!
Gardyloo!

Paranoid

Just because I'm paranoid,
Doesn't mean I shouldn't hide
From worries I should avoid.
There is nothing on my side.

Everyone is out for me.
The spies are closing in fast.
There is a conspiracy
To make my dreadful fear last.

Wherever I try to run,
They run me like an android,
Give me worries just for fun.
I'm afraid I'm paranoid.

Mixed Signals

I'm a schizophrenic.
I'm afraid I don't know why.
I'd rather laugh and cry,
Stand and lie,
Crawl and fly,
Live and die.
We've talked it over
But can't agree.
I can't seem to listen
To me.
I promise to try
And change our way.
We might not, but we may,
First thing Monday morning,
Or Friday night.

You see, I'm a schizophrenic,
And so am I.

driftwood

drifting doleful woeful wood
i
shifting sands misunderstood
why
lifting hands of surf and sand
ferry
the burden of being me
carry

no tiller but the tide
just out for the ride

should you see me stranded
throw a line until i've landed

Pacific

Pacific, I could lie untroubled on your calm,
Find a broad measure of apathy
Within the ebb and flow of tranquillity.
Your water might still me to a certain degree,
But I've pain enough to form a sea.
You could easily win my heart.
But you could never defeat my misery.
At last, we would storm and part.
I would gladly give myself over to be
Made one with your agelong fame,
But forgetfulness would swallow my name.
Your shallow love would soon forsake me.

What Shall You Be?

What shall you be,
When your reflection sees
The sun turned to ashes,
And the dreams faded away?

What shall I find in me,
When mortality flees,
When blue eyes close their lashes,
And the gold has shaded gray?

On Becoming A Golden Statue

What else can I be
Through eternity?
I am only me.
Where else can I flee?
Shall I make a run
To the sun,
To the source of the pun,
And erase my memory, take away my me and you -
Abracadabra, become something new,
Hum, hum, hum,
Come apart, part the sum?

Buddha, I am growing old.
 Turn my brain to solid gold,
 So I can see
 Eventually,
 Peer through a clouded why
 Until I
 Can't feel anymore,
 And wash ashore.

Reflection

Who is this intelligence I see
 Staring in disbelief at me?
 O soul, O mysterious fire,
 To what do we aspire?
 Is this all that we are -
 A reflection of a star?
 A teardrop upon the water of endeavor?
 A concentric ripple fallen across forever?

In The Basement

Someone is down in the basement,
 Sitting all alone in the dark,
 Deep in a silent encasement,
 Beyond any outside remark.

Safe from external intrusion,
 Abides a restless sort of haunt,
 A nervous ghost, a crazy aunt,
 Putting order to confusion.

In the recesses of her room,
 She seeks security in gloom.
 I understand her brand of rue.
 I once sat in the basement, too.

Intangible

I reached for the ethereal,
 Sought, with earnest tenacity,
 Tenuous substance beyond feel,
 Omniscient sagacity.

I relinquished audacity,
 Dispersed foliage of surreal
 Beyond reason's capacity,
 And solicited no appeal.

To The Morning Sun

I've never opened my soul this way.
 I never quite knew what to say.
 Let the words settle as they may,
 For this is how I feel.
 O beat of my life power,
 Heart of all that is real,
 Seat of my pulsing blood,
 I am but a tender flower
 Blooming from a mysterious bud.
 I wake from my sleep,
 Put forth color in every sector,
 From the seed of hope I creep,
 Pour all into my nectar.
 Tell me, whether to renewed breath
 I blossom, or to death
 And withering demise.
 I have not strength to surmise.

Sage

A man ascended a hill,
 Wishing to gain wisdom,
 Had a hunch
 He was near enlightenment,
 Sat upon a rock for an afternoon,
 Contemplated the firmament,
 Considered his being,
 Concluded that he could only see
 What he was meant to see,

That a man can only be
What he is meant to be,
That it is no use complaining,
That he could not change things,
Only accept things,
Attempt to gain wisdom
To explain things.

A man sat upon a hill,
Wishing to gain wisdom.
His feet were sore.
It was getting cold.
And he wished he had brought a lunch.

Form

I march to the beat of my own drum.
I drum out my rhythms as they come.
I hear the music of my own rules.
I refuse to sing along with fools.
I do my own thing.
I bow to no king.
I plow my own road.
Freedom is my code.

To hell with you, who tried to mold me true,
To fold me square,
And shape me fair,
And make me just like you!

I revel in my deviation from the norm.
I disparage you with my unshapely form.

IX. Shelter

Looking Back On It

I stood on a mountain top of home,
 And witnessed the sun setting on a day,
 Saw the colors of a different morning written on the horizon -
 Exotic hues, emerald isles, and black forests,
 Maybe answers, the end of a road, or a beginning at least.

From a wall in the Taunus, or north of Peking,
 Roaming like Marco Polo to hear what Confucius had to say,
 I heard the wind speak clearly from Jungfrau,
 With the same voice entreating the beaches on Saipan.
 And ultimately I discovered the Yellow Sea lusterless.

Heeding now the sunrise only, dreaming of Idaho,
 Wondering what I sought but never got around to seeing,
 Not sure what it was I was looking for, or why,
 I surmise this Korean sky from a gray rooftop,
 Surprised I ever left home.

Pedigree

My blood was formed in primordial mists, and persists to this day.
 My blood is a legacy of millenniums uncountable.
 My blood ascended mountains by the hundreds,
 And empires a thousand fold,
 And lived lifetimes without number.

My blood died some in Hastings,
 And in the Battle of the Lillie in 1054,
 And defeated the Saracens,
 And gained honor and glory in battlefields now unmarked,
 And bled for countries now rendered to moldering pages,
 Yet endured and progenerated.
 The blood of Charlemagne flows through my veins,
 As does that of Pepin,
 And Clovis,
 And back through the ages until time is lost.

I share a past with Otto the Great,
 With knights and pagans,
 With plunderers and philanthropists,
 With soldiers and scholars.
 Powerful my blood is -

A saint and a barbarian am I,
 And proud to be of both creeds,
 Of all manner of my antecedents.
 I am beholden to all,
 And proud of the deeds of all my ancestors recorded,
 And prouder still of those unrecorded who lived in obscurity,
 Whose names defy time's recollection.

I am the stock of chamberlains, and dukes, and barons, and earls,
 And kings praised to heaven or hell,
 And paupers who reached a wretched demise in dark corners
 Unwitnessed and forgotten,
 And no marker to keep the earth where they fell,
 And no song, until now, to sing the lives extinguished.
 But the line persists.
 And kind begets kind.
 And the blood is tenacious.
 This blood, my blood,
 Sustained the princes of Scotland who stood by Duncan.
 Ulford, Justice of Ireland, was my blood,
 And Llewellyn of Wales,
 And Elvira Sanchez de Gamboa of Toledo,
 And Don Sancho Garcia de Salzedo, Lord of Ayala Fifthlord,
 Who fell at the battle of Alarcos,
 Sir Piers Peter de Mauley, Sheriff of Northampton,
 Maud of Brittany,
 Maurice Fitz Maurice, Lord Justice of Ireland, Lord of Offalyin,
 Gerald of Windsor,
 And Sybill de Salisbury de Everlaux.

My blood passed from Hersent,
 To Charles,
 To Louis "The Fair",
 To Charles The Great, and Hildegard of Swabia.
 Mine is the line of Welf, Duke of Bavaria,
 Odo, Count of Orleans,
 Count Giesselbert, and Regnier,
 Robert le Frison, Crusader, Count of Flanders and Artois,
 Fulk, Count of Anjou, King of Jerusalem,
 William The Conqueror, son of Robert "The Devil",
 Malcom Canmore, King of Scots,
 The original settlers of Wethersfield in 1635,
 Richard Goodrich, High Sheriff of Yorkshire,
 And Mary, only "Mary", no other title survives,
 Killed by Indians in 1677, and I know no more of her.

I am descended from John Wilt of Lynn, Essex, Massachusetts,
 And Routrou, Viscount of Chateaudun,
 Giselburt, Duke of Lorraine, Lay Abbot of Echternach,
 Henry The Fowler, who married Matilda Ringleheim,
 Henry I, King of England,
 Rulf I,
 Fulk II,
 Charles III, King of France,
 Louis IV, D'Outre-mer,
 Edward Atheling, "The Exile", betrothed to Agatha Halt of Hungary,
 Sir John Ferrer, 1st Baron of Ferrers, born June 20th, 1271,
 Godfrey, Count of Namur,
 Conrad I, Count of Luxembourg,
 Ida of Saxony,
 Gospatric, Lord of Workingham of High Ireby,
 Aubrey de Vere II, Sheriff of London,
 Premyslava and Ladilas of Hungary,
 Rogneide of Polotzk,
 St. Vladimir, Grand Prince of Kiev,
 Olag of Novogorod,
 Walter de Burgh, Earl of Ulster,
 Isobel Bigod,
 Richard Mor de Burc,
 Isabel of England,
 And Richard the lion hearted, son of Henry II, King of England.

Duncan II, King of Scots was my ancestor,
 And Athelreda of Northumberland,
 Daughter of the sister of Edmund,
 And Robert de Rumely, Lord of Coupland and Skipton in Craven,
 Agatha of Ravensworth,
 Ansfred the Dane,
 Hrollager,
 Rognvald Eysteinnson,
 Aseda of Jutland,
 Sveide the Viking,
 Rognvald Olafsson, son of Olaf Gudrodsson,
 Cecily Avenal, Lady of Bicknor,
 William Malet, Baron of Curry Malet,
 Sir John Hastings,
 Dambrowka of Bohemia,
 Boleslaus "The Cruel",
 Borivorius, 1st Christian Duke of Bohemia,
 Edgar the Peaceful, King of England,
 Lady Ethelfleda, daughter of Alfred The Great,

Joan de Tateshal,
 Who received Tateshal for her share of her father's estate,
 St. Luitgarde Count of Cleeves,
 Curopalatis, Emperor of the East,
 Josceline of Denmark,
 Walravius, Count of Nassau,
 Dunlaing, King of Leinster,
 Armod Arnvidarsson, born in Onundfjord, Norway,
 John De Hastings of Leamington House,
 The Earl of Arundell, beheaded in 1326,
 William De Warren, who died in a tournament,
 Don Galindo Valasquez de Ayala,
 Who was at the conquest of Saragoca,
 Sancho Velasquez, to whom Don Alonzo VI, King of Castile,
 Granted the lordship of Ayala in 1074.

I am of the line of the infante Don Velade Aragon,
 And Alphonso, King of Portugal,
 James, King of Aragon,
 Ferdinand III, King of Castile,
 Cynan ap Gwaethfoed from Wales,
 Eric VIII, King of Sweden,
 Skoglar Tostem, whose lineage has been lost,
 Bruno, Bishop of Augsburg,
 Skjold, King of the Danes,
 Odin of Asgard,
 And Frigg, born in 219,
 And Cadwalladr before him but unrecorded when,
 And Snaer, King of Sweden,
 Vanlandi Svegdasson,
 James Weeden and Isabel Winch,
 And Iodine de Camville,
 Who married Sir William Longespee, Earl of Salisbury,
 Who was slain in battle with the Saracens,
 And Isabel Mauduit of Elmley Castle,
 Who died in a nunnery at Cokehill,
 And Charles "The Bald", who died on Mount Senis in the Alps,
 And Thomas De Clare, who fell in battle in Ireland in 1286,
 And Hugh de Moreville, one of the four knights
 Who assassinated Thomas A. Brecket, Archbishop of Canterbury.

My lineage comes from Walter de Gant,
 Commander in the Battle of the Standard,
 And Sir Richard Fitz Allen, Beheaded in 1397,
 From Constantine II, slain by Norwegians in battle,

Refil Bjornsson,
 Murcertac O'Toole, son of Gillacomghall O'Toole,
 Thomas de Monthermer, lord slain at the battle of Sluys in Flanders,
 Sir Richard Woodville,
 Lord High Constable of England, beheaded in 1469,
 Ursanus Nobilus,
 Auda the Deep Minded,
 Thorstein the Red of Rogaland,
 Ketel Wether of Romerike,
 Vedrar Grim, Earl of Sogne,
 Skaan,
 Svyar,
 Stelmi,
 Ketel Flatness, Lord of Hebrides,
 Walpert, Count of Ringelheim,
 Ragnhildis Ludmilla,
 William Seylard, citizen of London, merchant and tailor,
 William Carpenter, who came to America from Southampton,
 Mary Petty,
 Colonel John Whiting of Hartford, Connecticut,
 And Matthew Allyn and Margeret Wyatt,
 From whom President Grover Cleveland descended.

I am of the clan of John Bullard, born in 1485,
 Whose name was recorded on the militia muster roll in Suffolk,
 And William Wilson, buried in Windsor Castle,
 John Smith, a quartermaster in the Netherlands,
 Who sought the new world in 1635,
 And the Reverend William Wilson,
 Now resting in Saint George Chapel in Windsor,
 And Hugh Heath of Huxley,
 And John Warren, who came to Boston on the Arabella in 1630,
 Gilbert de Clare, a red crusader, wed to the princess Joan de Acre,
 Hugh Magnus, a leader of the First Crusade,
 Hugh, Count of Paris,
 Borelo, Count of Urgel,
 Captain James Leonard, who built "The House of the Seven Gables",
 Where he and his wife Lydia Dwelt.
 And he was a friend to the Indian chief Massasoit.
 And under the foundation of his house,
 He secreted the head of Massasoit's son.

And in my genealogy, I have found
 Isaac Learned of Middlesex,
 And Running Deer, born about 1715,

And Mary Lewis, with dark eyes and hair,
 Given a beaded dress and moccasins,
 And Edwin Whiting, who passed away in Mapleton, Utah in 1890,
 And Benjamin Averett in Springville in 1888.
 And thirteen volumes of names from my father's childhood home.

All these have passed,
 And my grandmother, Myrtle Bernice Holt, has recorded their lives,
 And through her diligence left the knowledge for me in her books,
 That I may claim entitlement to the memory,
 That I might seek and find in a single evening,
 All my kin, my kind, my ancestry,
 That I might stand proud,
 That I might bear my blood with honor,
 My nobility and peasantry,
 That I might concede my heritage eagerly.

And here then is my tongue to stir the memory,
 To wake the spirits of all my forbearers, my ancestors,
 To seal this past to my name,
 To write an epitaph with this remembrance.

Rise, oh, ghostly kin and kind,
 Rise on the wind, on my breath,
 Upon my notes and tones.
 Possess me, this mortar yet sustaining the foundation.
 I am your hope.
 You are my treasured names and records.
 I revere all.

And if I lack a name for some,
 With no limit to my enthusiasm
 Do I embrace these nameless brothers and sisters,
 And sing their praise.

Had I omnipotence,
 I would grave all this history,
 All these life experiences,
 Upon a planet,
 Or yet a star shining brilliantly,
 And cast it spiraling heavenward for all time,
 A radiating celestial body,
 An inspiration to the darkness.
 And I would watch from a space between the trees.
 And I would sing softly to myself.

I am Daniel F Mitchell, beneficiary of all my predecessors.
 I was born in 1960,
 And will never die.
 And I shall rise tomorrow, and teach children these words.

Passing An Old House

Whose house this was, I cannot say,
 The family has gone away.
 Yet something lingers in the air,
 As if to beckon me to stay.

The amber rays of evening light
 Illuminate the chimney's height,
 Near set on fire the sagging eave,
 Give glory to attrition's blight.

No plow to cultivate new seeds,
 What grew before is gone to weeds,
 Along a path to an empty door -
 An avenue of bygone deeds.

Across the fields, a solemn breeze
 Stirs lifeless leaves upon the trees,
 Like ghosts of faded memories,
 Mere ghosts of faded memories.

In A Garage

In a garage, in the dust,
 I saw a face. I found a photograph,
 Like some mirage of a boy in a laugh,
 in the space between a box and the wall.
 It must have fallen there long ago,
 When laughs were free to show,
 And photographs were meant to preserve
 Happiness, reserve it for a latter day,
 Not to be thrown away in a dusty mess.

Mothers

Strange that this nostalgia should seem so clear,
 So natural, now that it is too late.
 What words might state your praise?
 All the hardship, the bereavement,
 The injustices suffered,
 All failing to crush your spirits,
 Or leave any rancor.
 You endured so much,
 With such wit and bravery.
 How could we equate it in a simple poem?

Ogre In The Armchair

My grandfather was a broken giant, a toothless old bear.
 His toil had reduced him to the world of an olive armchair.
 It was hard for him to walk, but he was too tired to care.
 He sat waiting all day like a worn-out ogre in his lair.

Against his strong pride, he roared us into his great embrace,
 Demanded our young kisses on the side of his granite face,
 Wrapped love around us that only a lifetime could amass,
 And babbled out his affection as if the chance would soon pass.

Horseshoe-Nail Ring

In her late-hour reminiscence,
 She saw him against the sunrise,
 Strong upon his chestnut stallion,
 Tipping his brim to her as she smiled -
 She, the schoolmarm, daffodil, poem-worthy soul,
 As lovely as the yellowing photograph upon the mantel.

Young was she, serenaded by bird song, morning song,
 Wrapped in rapture -
 The cowboy stepping down to the dew-fresh grass,
 Holding his hat upon his chest, over his heart to keep in the emotion,
 His rock-hard hand presenting the ring as delicately as it was able -
 The iron ring, pounded from a horseshoe nail.

In her sagging dresser drawer,
 She kept a horseshoe-nail ring.

In her late-hour reminiscence,
 A cowboy brought her the wealth of Eldorado,
 And placed it in the palm of her hand.

Cat Lady

Cats are all about,
 Climbing in and out
 Of windows and doors,
 Prowling back room floors,
 Perched on corner chairs,
 Hid in bed-stand lairs
 From countless toy mice,
 Gathered for a nap
 On the lady's lap,
 In cat paradise.

Shelter From The Storm

Now and again, I remember the garden that was childhood.
 In a fog, I sometimes sense what I never quite understood -
 That watercolor dream of all things real and most that are not,
 Filtered through the haze of dawn into a clouded melting pot.

The taste of the day was ambrosial nectar from a spring,
 The dew drops fresh on the grass beneath my feet. And the bee sting
 There and painful, was diluted by comprehension too deep,
 All care beyond the touch secured in a peaceful sleep.

Mornings pass, afternoons come and go, evenings give way to night,
 And beneath the stars I stand and secretly wish that I might
 Gather up enough wishes, and dreams, and hopes, to fill a sea,
 And paint them in a never-ending, mystical, fantasy.

Childhood was just a fuzzy rendition of time on my heart.
 I watched the show but I never really seemed to play a part.
 Like a sky clouded then blue, I am not what I was before.
 Now that my mind has cleared, I can't see the shapes anymore.

Puppy Street

I had so many things to do,
 And so many places to go,
 Where to run first I didn't know.
 It looked like I'd never be through.

The way a puppy looked at me
 From the window of a pet store
 Has made this busy bee now see
 Things from a happy puppy's floor.

The schedules I had to meet
 Can meet themselves for all I care.
 I'm staying here on puppy street
 Where life's as good as anywhere.

Fame For A Plain-Jane

You were a plain-Jane
 Looking in vain
 For popularity.
 I never knew your name,
 But the sincerity
 Of your smile
 Made me feel glad for a while.
 Here is your claim to fame.

Toy Story

The old man browses the toys,
 Marveling at each device.
 I recall when boys were boys,
 And a good stick would suffice.

In A Pile Of Leaves

We swam in seas of maple leaves,
 Splashed in a wake of rustling waves,
 Gathered golden treasure like thieves,
 Buried ourselves in living graves,

But burst forth in resurrection,
 Undaunted by death's brittle chain,
 In riotous insurrection,
 Kicked up a storm of skyward rain.

In autumn winds, we went our ways,
 Entered dreams wherein we hunkered,
 And spent the better part of days,
 In mountains we raised and conquered.

The Ripening Of Delight

There was an orchard on a hillside,
 Like some sweet oasis in a hay field,
 And a rutted track of road to divide
 Jurisdiction, and separate yield.

A boy wandered, instilled
 By the crisp-biting scent
 Of cool luscious jewels - thrilled,
 Through heaven on earth went.

There was a robin's nest,
 Built in a season's rent,
 On an apple tree's crest,
 But with no inhabitant -

Abandoned on a fledgling's whim to wander
 Off to see the wide earth,
 All universal mysteries to ponder,
 And weigh a single apple's worth.

Perhaps, intending to return someday
 On a one-way ticket,
 A bird lost its way,
 Caught in some thorny thicket.

To any experienced fool made wise
 By retrospect and regret,
 It comes as no surprise
 To find a bird flown far away, yet

Longing for a nest in orchard trees,
 Riding out the sway

Upon a pear-scented breeze,
With no inclination but to stay.

Frost glistens on apples and pears,
A little past harvest time,
Twinkling magically, shares
A bit of alchemy's rhyme,

Wages reason to keep any reasonable sort
Standing there year after year, waiting,
Abiding no other sport
Than the ripening of delight, never abating..

Ten Tenets Of A Roman's Meditations

I.

If I am nothing but a product of chaotic brew,
Why should I wish to tarry in universal confusion?
And if the supposition of a governor is true,
I need only have faith in the order of his profusion.

II.

O dear Zeus, on plowed fields rain, rain down on the Athenian plain!
In truth we ought not pray at all, else hope in vain.
Let us accept what the gods give us, whether pleasure or pain.

III.

Be like a cliff against which waves constantly break.
Stand firm, though the furies of the oceans quake.

IV.

When you rise in the morning, let this thought be with you:
The labors for which I was created, I am going forth to do.

V.

Be not unhappy or discontent if you fail where you have failed before.
Renew your philosophies, review your nature, and try once more.

VI.

The multitudes admire material things - of metal, stone, and wood.
Men a little more rational admire things that are founded upon good.
Men more instructed admire the principles of an aspiring soul.
He who is above all values his soul, and strives to make it whole.

VII.

Think no thought or deed beneath you.
By base people's words be not perverted.
From principles you know to be true,
A wise and tranquil course, be not diverted.

VIII.

One man, having performed a service to another, calculates it as an
outstanding debt won.
A second, accounts another's debt owed to him, but for payment asks
none.
A third, like a bee making honey, does good without thinking what he
has done.

IX.

How am I now employing my soul ? - What question is greater in the
least!
Whose soul do I have now - that of a child, a man, a tyrant, or a beast?

X.

Observe how ephemeral all human beings really are.
What today is breathing, tomorrow is ashes in a jar.
What did it avail conquerors to wage battle in their day?
How great now are Herculaneum and Helice and Pompeii?
Pass through your short moment of time in harmony with nature.
End your journey in contentment, as an olive when mature,
Blessing the power that produced a crop as wondrous as you,
And thanking the tree, the earth, and the sun from which all grew.

Preston School

In Preston there's an olden school,
Abandoned by its faculty,
Forgotten by the golden rule,
Long crumbling to obscurity.

The timbers carved by caring pains
Are warped and parched by ruthless rains.
And seeps the weather through the seams,
And bows the rafters and the beams.

The blackboard waits as if to say
Why are there none for school today?
Why has the master stayed away?
Where have the children gone to play?

Through Preston

If ever you pass through Preston, friend,
Shout to all you see,
With heartfelt zeal vocally lend
Your acquaintanceship with me.

If you should walk the streets I wandered,
See if you can find
Some of the thoughts that I pondered
When I was in the same mind.

See if Preston can remember me.
If you should pass through,
Please tell everybody you see
That I once passed that way too.

Reunion

So, we meet again, at long last,
To reminisce about the past.
You are still you, and I'm still me.
Though we can never again be
What we used to be way back then.
I still clearly remember when
We were so young and so naive,
When we had so much to achieve.

Now your thoughts have become dreary.
And my wit has become weary.
You, long past your life's pinnacle,
I, so doubtful and cynical,
Seek a reunification.
We need reconciliation
With our lost dreams and ambition.

Our goals well beyond fruition,
Our youth gone on a one-way trip,
We search for our long lost friendship,
Again, my sister, my brother.
We still see hope in each other.

Album

Silhouettes amidst the fog of past,
Misted figures in a photograph,
Of life's gaiety are all that last
Beyond the moment of the last laugh.

Witch Spell

The house is so silent now,
I cannot bear to sit any longer.
Alone on this stump, I am cold,
Colder still to feel the sun
Of that morning
When these roots had life.

I hear a gust of wind picking up,
No branches for it to sway,
Just the gate hinges recalling the days
Of shade and laughter on the grass.
I think I should rise, meet it, him -
The old man gone from his arm chair.

Were his knees newer, maybe he too
Would rise to see it.
He saw the colors it had before.
He rose on other days,
And walked the garden path
To the field beyond the shed.

The plots are fallow now,
Unplowed for some time,
Rows of posts still tied by rusted wire,
But not so tight as in times past -
A few winters away from complete emancipation,
Though they must be too warped and weathered to care.

I fear the hedge is grown beyond hope.
No shears will bend its ways now.
The dead spot where the old tabby used
To bear her kittens has widened some,
Not so much that it wouldn't still do
For cat shelter, or even a mouse.

The ghost should be gone since
 He dragged the skeleton out with his hoe,
 And buried the soul beneath the walnut tree.
 He'll not need the space any longer.
 He's hoed no more than tabby's bones
 For many summers.

A fine patch of fuzzy weeds grow
 Where the strawberries did.
 Memories of pumpkins, and grape vines,
 And frosted plums come to mind.
 A few rattling corn stalks are still standing
 Like some deserted, Navaho graveyard.

A wind blows long and low, across the open rows -
 A conscience burdened with past vice,
 Or mirth simply expired,
 As the whispering of witches,
 Not in spell and conjuring,
 But in repentance and remorse,
 Or maybe just the cat.
 I think I'll rise and find it.

Cuckoo Clock

There's a sorrowful moan of a cuckoo,
 Who dutifully keeps each hour
 And half, awaiting silently between
 For the mean pendulum to swing,
 To dispose the seconds, tick-tick,
 The forest round growing old,
 The flowers petrified at a quarter to spring,
 While the woodcutter stands listlessly,
 Too aged to swing his ax anymore,
 Watching the waterwheel turning round,
 Awaiting the cuckoo's declaration.

And only the cuckoo knows the reason,
 Awaiting to moan sorrowfully the hour.

Adventure's Track

Into the home,
 Adventure calls.
 The urge to roam
 Pervades the walls.

But then the track
 Soon bends and turns,
 Soon doubles back,
 And homeward years.

Broken, Old, Man At The Windowsill

A broken, old, man at the windowsill
 Watched the sky,
 Saw the world go by.
 Maybe he is there still,
 Wondering at the change,
 Trying to arrange
 The thoughts that pass,
 And frame them in glass.

I Believe In Christmas Eve

The spirit here I think I see,
 Reflected from the Christmas tree,
 Across the crisp December snow -
 A beacon of security.

Watching from my frosted window,
 I think that, finally, I know
 Why I believe in Christmas eve -
 That light that makes a pine tree glow.

Safe in this silent-night reprieve
 From a troubled world, I believe
 In peace on earth, good will to all.
 Here, it is easy to achieve.

Watching herald angels fall
 As snow beyond my glistening wall,
 I wait for Santa Claus to call.
 And like a child, I feel so small.

Vision From My Porch On A Starry September Night

Svernson lay in a dream.
 In a dream he lay in a sod hut,
 In the fold of Lampa Runa,
 Where his life once was.
 And he envisioned his mother,
 His mother sitting at a wheel
 Spinning fleece into yarn for barter.

His mother hummed a soft melody
 To the rhythm of the treadle.
 And her hands fed fleece into the spindle.
 And ashen strands of yarn curled down
 Around her legs to a mound on the floor.

The floor shimmered in the flame flicker from the hearth.
 The floor timbers were parched and polished smooth
 By the passing feet of many generations of family.
 And his father sat in a rocker near the hearth,
 Clenching the stump of a cob pipe in his toothless gums.

His father was a grizzled man,
 And wordless since the loss of his eldest son.
 The dream showed clearly his father,
 Sitting there in a rocker near the hearth,
 Weighing the papers in his hands
 To see if there was some significance he had missed
 In the orders for his youngest and last son's military obligation -
 A death sentence for the last son of the line.
 This he weighed there in a rocker at the hearth.

The old man's face was traced with sorrow,
 Wearing years far beyond his years, for the sorrow.
 His eyes were distant, lost in grave rumination.
 He stared into the fire, seeing things far past,
 Seeing days before time took his dreams away,
 When the sun was bright, and the days sweet.

Svern, father of Svernson, had passed away soon afterwards,
 Ascended in a feverish sweat to the halls of Monlathia,
 Certain, before his ascension, that his posterity proceeded him,
 As if he had never been - only memory waiting to be forgotten.

All of the family line had passed but Svernson.
 All of the life of the line was but a memory.
 And Svernson, alone of the line, remained to bear the memory,
 With nothing to base the memory on but his recollection
 And the old sod hut in the fold of Lampa Runa.
 Only the house remained of the former times,
 Now home to barrow rats and transient ghosts on windy nights.
 And all else was illusionary and unreal like all other dreams.

After this vision, the dream passed on to darkness,
 Receded into a dark recess of his consciousness,
 Forced away by the reverberation of a machine.
 And he searched for kindly faces but saw no more,
 Heard only the harsh whine of jet engines.
 And steadily intensifying was the din,
 In his head pounding.
 Grenades exploded in his head.
 Lead-slingers sputtered from the past,
 And heavy guns shook the ground tempestuously.
 And proton clusters brightly screamed across a night long ago.

And he felt the searing heat of a bullet wound,
 The flesh long-ago healed, but not the wound.
 And he writhed in agony.
 In his head there were screams of the dying never dying.
 And a cannon flashed too near to be heard.
 And a body fell at his feet,
 The head half gone from the body,
 But the eyes intact and staring,
 The eyes imploring his assistance,
 The trusting eyes of a companion fallen.
 And the screams were too loud to be heard,
 And the words incoherent to his understanding.

But the turbines drowned all other sound out.
 The turbines whined and forced the visions away for a time.
 And a cloud passed his mind's eye for a time.
 And his eyelids parted for an instant, then were open full.
 And he fumbled for a weapon but found no weapon.
 There were no more weapons.
 The war was over and the weapons no longer tangible.
 And the dream was finished.

He observed, through the murky expanse that separates dreams from waking,
 A whirlwind of dust rising from the crest of the hill beyond the pasture.
 And there was the whine of engine turbines winding and winding.
 And there was a hovercraft setting down in a whirling torrent of dust.
 And it was no dream at all.
 The machine was as real as the hill it was landing upon.
 And he, unable to will it away, accepted it as reality.

But he arose as if in a dream.
 He arose and went to receive his visitor.
 And he could not believe that which he could see.
 But he went to receive it, whether it was real or a dream.
 And he saw there on the crest of the hill,
 On the crown of a grassy knoll,
 A man.

The man was very familiar,
 As if an incarnation of a past life at last rising to meet him,
 As if an image in a mirror,
 A pillar of a man, clad in chestnut battle dress,
 With shining gold lightning bolts emblazoned on each sleeve,
 Federation Elite Forces insignias,
 And amber colonel's clusters shimmering at the corners of his chin.

The colonel wore a red beret, studded beneath by steel-blue hair,
 His hair cropped to a stiff bristle against his scalp.
 And his face was shaped like an alpine boulder,
 Pounded out by tempest storms,
 Formed by the weathers of war,
 Hard as granite, etched with tight lines like a battle map.

Svernson stood off a distance from the Elite Forces officer,
 And studied him for a while.
 And the colonel studied the Lathian in silence for a while -
 The wild hair and beard, and the raiment of animal skins.
 And he nodded his head in approval,
 Then advanced toward the Lathian,
 Not as to an inferior, but as if towards an equal, or superior, or son.

The Federation colonel snapped to attention,
 And touched his fingertips smartly to his beret.
 And Svernson returned the salute and a remorseful smile.
 The colonel's wrinkles unfolded as his face softened for a moment,

Then he scowled once more.
 He looked out past Svernson,
 Out across the emerald hills rolling away and away beneath an everlasting sky.

The wind picked up,
 Coming in gusts against the hill,
 Whipping Svernson's flaxen hair about his head.

A gust caught the colonel's beret and blew it out across the sward.

The colonel ignored the beret,
 Grimaced,
 Said,

"Smells like winter's blowin' in."

Svernson agreed with a twitch of his brow,
 Watching the Elite Forces beret twirl away in the breeze,
 Twirling away in the breeze like an Autumn leaf.

And he held his peace for a time more,
 Then said,

"Coming early this year. Got the first frost a few days back.
 Expect the snow will fall before Raven's Tack Eve."

The ruddy colonel's eyes brightened some.

"Good thing I didn't wait any longer to come
 Or I'd of had to grow my hair out like yours."

Svernson patronized him with a weak smile.

"Yes, sir. We Lathies would be in bad form without our hair.
 Now if we just knew how to grow it so well on our arses,
 We could braid it all around our legs
 And save the trouble of wearing pants."

The colonel grunted his approval at the humor.

He said scurrilously,

"You remember that blizzard that caught us on Alderon?
 Stars in heaven!

We all could have used some Lathian hair on our arses,
 All of us laying around Jimmerson, tryin' to keep the poor bastard
 from freezing.
 And all that snow blowing around.
 Stars!
 What a night that was!"

Svernson looked down at the mirror finish on the colonel's boots,
 Searching for eternity reflected there.

"Jimmerson's gone," he said; a measured observation.

And the colonel conceded with a quick nod of his head.
 He ran his hand over his face and up over the stubble of his head.

"Goddamn," he said, "Goddamn."

Svernson offered him another smile.

"Anyway, it's good to see you, Colonel Zacharia."

The colonel looked away and drew a deep breath, a breath of chill air,
 Sweet air as if a breeze had carried it over a field of honey clover.

"How you been, boy?"

Svernson answered with silence.

Colonel Zacharia shook his head ruefully.

"I know I should have come a long time before now.
 It's just...I thought you'd want to try and forget it all."

Svernson inclined his head as if bore down by a great weight.

"Ain't no forgetting, boss."

The Elite Forces colonel considered the flock of Naeru grazing in the
 valley below,
 As if the point of conversation lay there.

"No, there sure as hell ain't no forgetting.
 You know,
 I never even said good-bye to you before they shipped me out to
 Mesron.

I guess you heard what happened to us on Mesron.
 Goddamn! What a bloody waste that was.
 I never quite got over it.
 I sent most of the condolence letters to all the boy's folks myself."

He bared his broken teeth, and looked out across the green fields.
 There were dark clouds looming on the edge of the sky.
 The wind was growing frigid, from the north and west, howling.

Svernson waited for a lull in the wind and said,

"I wanted to come to the retreat ceremony last year,
 But I didn't have the fare to Tyrus.
 I had to use all my separation credits to pay the back taxes on my
 family's spread."

Colonel Zacharia turned his face into the wind,
 And scratched at the pink lump on the side of his head where his ear
 had once been.

"Well, you've got a nice place here.
 I forgot how beautiful it was here.
 I haven't been to Lathia for so many years
 I don't remember how many years it's been.
 I recruited for the Fed over in Landur until the Elite went on total
 recall.
 That's when I hand-picked all my boys, everyone of them.
 You Lathies were the damndest sort of wild men I ever saw in my
 life,
 Goddamn giants all clad in animal skins, and eating meat cooked on a
 open fire,
 Gone back to a better way of life just like nothing else had ever
 happened in the universe.
 I was impressed enough to man an entire battalion with your breed.
 I never saw such a proud lot, strong, fast, smart, quick to learn, slow
 to forget,
 Loyal to your last goddamn breath.
 I was proud to fight with you Lathies.
 I'll say that for goddamn sure.
 I would have taken a bullet for any one of you.
 I wish I had. It would have been a lot easier that way.
 As it stands, I'm the one that has to live with the blame.
 I took away all the best sons of Lathia and shipped their bodies back
 to their mothers.
 What the Fed let happen to my boys, I can never forgive.

But all else aside, I was the one that found them.
And I was the one that trained them.
And I watched them all die,
All but you and the Emmerson boy.
And he bought it last year - some damn virus I've been told."

Svernson looked his colonel straight in the eye.

"You did us nothing but good, boss.
None of us ever wanted to fight for anybody else."

Colonel Zacharia grimaced,
And the corners of his mouth contorted with grief.

"The blame has to go somewhere though.
And I ain't gonna run from it."

Svernson felt a tightness forming in his chest.
He brushed the hair from his face and aligned the soles of his feet
together.

"You never ran from anything, boss."

Colonel Zacharia looked away, to the sky as if to contemplate.

"I guess I never knew where to run."

Svernson nodded tacitly.

And Colonel Zacharia shifted from side to side,
And blew into his hands to warm them.

"I'm going to freeze my arse off out here.
I'm getting too old, too soft.
I guess I've spent too much time in a cushy office.
There ain't much for an old dog to do in the hitch anymore.
I'm just driftwood, just passing time -
Another nine months to full pension.
Now I just got to decide which coffin farm to be shipped out to.
Never thought I'd go from old age."

And he grunted,
Indicating that the situation should be viewed as humorous.

X. Conflict

Just After Dawn

She came to him just after dawn,
 Stood before him in the doorway,
 Until he saw something wrong
 Written in her stare.

"The crow is gone," She declared.

"Gone? Out of its box?"

"It's dead. Poor thing."

Silence

"Do you think I killed it?"

"No. You saved it from the cat."

"Then why did it die?
 I fed it every time it cried out.
 It was warm.
 No harm came to it."

"I guess it just died for want of its mother.
 I can't think of any other reason."

"Poor thing."

"Yeah, but you tried.
 All stories don't have happy endings."

"Crows eat other baby birds, anyway.
 I'm going to throw it away."

"Go give it to the cat."

Thinning The Crop

Unfledged violet,
 Plucked unblossomed from life's stem!
 Fruit of maternal failing,
 Nugatory incubation,
 Snatched straight from thy phlegm!
 Purgatorial station,

Thou of marauder's gullet!

Hatches the call of triumphant thief!

Cracks the granite cliffs with grief -
Antigone's muffled wailing.

I Did Not Shoot An Albatross

I did not shoot an albatross.
I did not wake a dog.
I did not break a holy cross,
Nor brave a hallowed bog.
I did not stir the dead to hate,
Nor see a crossing cat.
Yet, still a stroke of vexing fate
Has found me where I'm at.

A Watermelon

A watermelon swelled up round,
And dropped down,
Rolled around on the ground.
A watermelon was abandoned,
Lost,
Grew old,
Started withering,
And never made a sound.

Self Worth

In the human body, from birth,
There are minerals, I've been told.
There are trace elements of great worth,
Even platinum and gold.

There is wealth in a body.
Though the arrangement somewhat shoddy,
There are enough minerals to forge a ring.
And my father said I would never amount to anything.

Wasted Words

An ode I offer to the foulness
Molded in subtle contour along my way,
Bejeweled by winged metallic settings -
The crowning achievement of my day.

To what aesthetics might I lay claim?
There is no novelty I see -
Only the stink of mediocrity
Aborted into temporal fame.

Drought Season

Mold on the wallpaper,
Just over the window,
Has turned to dust,
Dry as the phrase I must speak,
Dry as the phrase I have spoken,
That our time is almost done.
And we are almost done,
Not wanting to know,
But waiting to know
That the promise of life is soon broken.

Woeful is this thought.
Woeful are my thoughts.
Wayward are my thoughts,
Wanton my schemes.
I am neither sitting or lying in my chair.
My feet alone are elevated.

The afternoon is waxing on
With but a fly to cheer it,
Tracing figure eights about the ceiling,
Fanning the air, stirring the air,
Haunting me, fearless and feckless,
Buzzing, *quo vadis, quo vadis?*

Mediocrity

I think if ever there was
 Something to write home about,
 Any run-of-the-mill cause
 I could champion, beyond doubt,
 Nothing could be as great
 As the quite medial way
 I always stay middle rate.
 One might accurately say
 That I try, so-so, to be
 Content with mediocrity.

Rebuttal

Oh, my! You say you don't like my verse!
 Why, you've cataloged my fault
 In a scathing two-page curse!
 I believe you've tried to scratch and rub in salt.
 But why the morass of mock literary critique,
 When you're just pissed at my biffing your religious mystique?

I would offer a steaming response, with ample adduce,
 But, unfortunately, I've already flushed it down the loo.
 So what's a bitter critic and a foul poet to do?
 We'll just have to agree to disagree.
 Don't shake your aspergillum at me.
 And I won't piss on you.

Sins Of Omission

Wherein have I done wrong,
 When there is none to make account?
 I haven't taken anything that didn't belong
 To me, never harmed, in the slightest amount,
 Any creature, being, substance, or creed.

I have spent my time in meditation,
 Avoiding even the least questionable deed.
 Innocence is my vehement annunciation.

My talent was mine to discard,
 No obligation at all to be a bard!

I confess, I never sang my song.
 But wherein have I done wrong?

What To Say

Have you found a voice?
 Have you discovered a tongue
 That might articulate the thoughts of your day?

Do you wish another choice
 Than to hear the bells rung
 For you, still wondering what to say?

Rebel Without A Clue

A little boy grew his hair long,
 And listened to a rowdy song,
 Painted mad tattoos on his arm,
 Outright refused to work the farm.
 He pondered what he had done wrong,
 And wondered who had done him harm.

Be Prepared

We pushed your boathouse in the lake,
 Razed your Boy Scout camp to the ground,
 For retribution's sake,
 When we found
 You had taught us honesty, but lied.

For an award we were denied,
 We destroyed your camp and your pride.

You tried to catch us with idle threats,
 To make us pay our moral debts.

But we were not scared.
 We knew where to hide.
 We had learned to be prepared.

Pertaining To Rage

If we could focus our rage,
 Measure with a pressure gage,
 In its incubation stage,
 We could make the right package,

Lock a tight Pandora's box,
 Treat it as a deadly pox
 That eats a mind full of holes,
 And leaves behind wasted souls.

But I suspect I could not
 Contain my wrath when it's hot -
 Pressure must soon overload,
 Would just build up and explode.

Rage Against The Machine

Rage against the machine.
 Demand to be heard.
 Demand to be seen.
 Utter a single word.

Raise your angry voice.
 Silence the grinding gears.
 Make known your free choice.
 Cast aside your fears.

Strike your hardest blow.
 Break the laws that demean.
 Stand against the flow.
 Rage against the machine!

Retort

A critic who knew not his place,
 Was determined to rearrange space.
 He threw up his scheme,
 Tied fast to a beam,
 And got back harsh words in his face.

Renegade

A hateful vengeful renegade,
 With irons at his side,
 Cursed the life his mother had made,
 And stripped of all but pride,
 Vowed the scales of justice to raid.

A hateful vengeful renegade
 Embarked upon a ride,
 To bring his maker to the grade,
 To feel dignified,
 To prove that he was not afraid.

A hateful vengeful renegade,
 Feeling his hands were tied,
 Took his anger out on parade,
 His wrath unsatisfied,
 Along the path on which he strayed.

Run, Monster, Run

Run, monster, run!
 The town knows what you've done!
 They have you under the gun!
 They'll skin you just for fun!

Go, monster, go!
 Too late to make a show!
 The upright folks all know!
 You're in for a nasty blow!

Hide, monster, hide!
 No time to think of pride!
 The people see inside!
 This is the end of the ride!

Fate, monster, fate!
 It has always been too late!
 No time for a debate,
 When you're the point of hate!

Computer Man

He made a computer game to amuse himself,
 Countless megabytes of animation
 Fighting it out on a computer shelf -
 All a product of programmed determination.

The computer's electronic creatures
 Thought that they were to blame
 For all of the nonsensical features
 Of the randomly destructive game.

This made the computer man smile,
 Until he turned it all off for a while.

Sylvia

Sylvia, you Nazi Jew!
 Why should I feel pain for you,
 And wear you like a worn-out shoe?
 But I do.

You, you,
 Who are you?
 Nightmare come true,
 Come to take the heaven's blue,
 And paint the grass with ghastly rue!

You suck life from me.
 I drink pain from you.

Call me a knave.
 Roll over in your grave.
 Though I am sure you will see
 That what I say is true.

We fought the same war.
 We loved the same whore.
 But I am still here.
 And you have no fear.

You rotten-tongued bard!
 You've decayed in some yard.
 Long ago, you died.
 But when I heard you cry, I cried.

Until the Wind Blows Again To Frankfurt

I wear a cross of red fury broken.
 No Messerschmitt roar can ever drown out,
 Nor songs of over all and praise spoken,
 This blitz terror wailing in my cold heart.
 Random ack-ack has found its mark no doubt;
 On tragic stage, the Nibelungen part.

An eagle never again taken nest,
 No martyr's wreath on Brandenburg to pass,
 I had a dream before my fiery rest,
 To hail just one more dawn on growing grass,
 To work, or walk, or waltz, of jackboots freed,
 No care where the father's footsteps lead,
 No epics more to curse my wretched creed -
 A cause for which so many nations bleed.

If ever again my name is token
 Of bold and brazen goose steps beating ground,
 And zeppelin parades on earth now broken,
 (Forgotten bones beneath some Norman mound)
 Know the current carried me against my will.
 No honor or Teutonic glory may
 Grant eternal peace, nor make my soul still.
 Memory barred, then let lips of truth say:

Hanukkah candles shall not sing my praise.
 Beneath this foreign soil there is no rest,
 But wandering until the end of days,
 And pain pillowed against an iron breast.
 Until the wind blows again to Frankfurt,
 Bringing fair gods to redress my hurt,
 With olive branch, the vanguard point I'll roam,
 Till wings of doves shall bear me swiftly home.

A Mouse In A Mouse Trap

A mouse in a mouse trap,
 Caught by the tail,
 Gives the bait a frantic tap,
 But to no avail.

There's nothing to do but stay,

A writhing dying rat,
Unless to chew his tail away,
Or call out for the cat.

Today

I was asked what day it is today.
And I had to say,
That today is today,
And will stay today,
And can be no other way.

Laborer

Your hands are hard as stone,
Your skin a leather hide.
Your muscles feel like bone,
But you have grown soft inside.

Is it from the heat, or the cold,
Or knowing you'll never grow old,
Or the tedious days you spend,
Or the mornings that never end?

You are strong, but you are sick,
Like a broken-handled pick.
But perhaps you'll sleep better tonight.
Just one more day, one more fight.

Come on, you can't be through!
To give up is a crime!
Stand just one more time!
It is all that you can do.

Machine

Every morning as I'm waking,
I can feel my hands are shaking
From the turn this cog is taking,
From my work the day before.

Should I pull a different lever?
Can I make the quota? Never!
Will I see the belts run ever,
Hear the gears spin ever more?

Will this cog continue taking
Sprockets grinding without breaking,
Ever turning, ever making,
Making, making more and more?

Shall I pull a different handle,
Both ends burned now from the candle?
Widget, gadget, ratchet, hatchet -
What's it?

Wrench it. Drop it.
Stop it.

Companion

Pain is no stranger,
A doorman without shame,
Dutiful attendant he,
And no one will disclaim,

Forsakes all other dignities,
No curtesies he spares,
To honor with his presence,
Meticulous his cares,

Faithful in his calling,
Intimate this friend,
Responsibilities embraced,
Devoted till the end.

Fugitive

Sitting at the ocean side,
Underneath a tree,
I spied a little hermit crab
Running from the sea.

Clinging to the jagged rocks,
Hunting for a lee,
It spent the chief part of its will
Running from the sea.

Toying With Joy

Let me tell you about despair.
 I have plenty to share.
 It is everywhere, like air.
 I hold my breath to postpone death,
 Try not to let the darkness in.
 But I've found no way to win.
 I always breathe in again,
 Find another heart full of pain.

If you have joy to spare,
 Perhaps you might share,
 Perhaps barter for my despair.
 But what would I do with joy?
 I would use it like a Christmas toy -
 Use it, abuse it, and break it straight away.
 Toying with joy is a game I cannot play.

The Heart Of My Mind

In the heart of my mind,
 One can usually find
 That emotion has no license there.
 The thoughts are quite blind
 To matters of despair.

My cold-hearted mind
 Pays no mind to the silly things
 My frail-minded heart sings,
 The axes it has to grind.
 It takes heart to leave such troubles behind.

My mindless heart cries often.
 Heart-stricken, it bleeds.
 But my mind never heeds.
 There is nothing that can soften
 The cruel heart of my mind.

No Where To Go But Up

It appears you've fallen down
 Like a bolt from the blue.
 Your fears have come true.
 You must swim or drown.

Think of how to sup.
 You must take to live.
 There is nothing to give,
 And no where to go but up.

Lonely Crow

There is a solitary crow
 Perched on a tombstone.
 He's been called a raven by some.
 He is silent now,
 But bitterly weeping inside.
 And there is no one to console him.
 He is alone and surrounded
 By cold wisps of snow.

Pantomime

Whose destiny is this?
 Whose fate is this
 I am sealing?

Whose dream of bliss,
 Whose mocking bliss
 Am I feeling?

Whose deathly kiss,
 Whose deadly kiss
 Am I stealing?

Will I wake and discover
 That I have simply seen
 Through the eyes of another,
 Find that I have always been
 Acting out a pantomime,
 Wasting someone else's time?

Warbler On The Wing

Sweet songbird, do not leave me.
 There is no need to leave
 For the shelter of a tree -
 Nothing you might achieve.

Your song is all I impart
 Of happiness this day.
 Might I cage it in my heart?
 Might I coax you to stay?

From The Top Of The Tree

From the top of the tree,
 It is easy to see
 The world go by.

It must surely feel free
 To sing so merrily,
 And not know why.

I cannot disagree
 With a gay chickadee -
 Her happy cry.

Her sights are high.
 She sees better than me,
 From the top of the tree.

Phoebe

Phoebe, can you hear a whisper lift up to your ear?
 Phoebe, can you feel a lunatic's radiating fear?
 I sing to the moon - a loud and languorous tune.
 I sing with the loon, that twilight comes too soon.
 Phoebe, I wish to see what I shall be.
 Phoebe, will you lend an ear? Will you hear me?

Schism

Whose face is this that I am seeing?
 Who wears these myriad masks - these many countenances that glower
 And bicker by nature, and wage war in colossal storms?

What is this awful being
 Who vies with itself for power,
 Whose supremacy shapes so many contrary forms?

Which hand, if not contending powers, creates a schism?
 If not conflicting forces, then what purpose, what reason
 For a single mind, so broad, to follow an aimless quest,

To refract will and light through a prism,
 Never coming to conclusion or proper season,
 To struggle so, never finding rest?

Creator, O my creator! My eyes are weak!
 The body of my comprehension is fractured.
 The foundation of my spirit shakes with instability.

If a god must be so wicked, then where is a simple soul to seek
 The station of a servant enraptured,
 And on a calm tide of benevolence, find tranquillity?

Xl. Price

I Will Make A Snowman

I will make a snowman.
 I will make him out of snow.
 For him, I will do all I can.
 I'll strive to let him grow.
 I'll give him eyes of coal,
 So as to let him see.
 And he'll need to feel free,
 And have recourse to me
 And to heaven above.
 So he won't be lonely,
 I'll make him a friend.
 And I'll give him a soul,
 So he won't fear the end.
 He will never grow old.
 And I will let him feel love,
 To help him bear the cold.

Webster's Lair

Webster's lair lies on the air,
 A tangled weave of angel's hair.
 All is fair in her care.
 Beware -
 All ends lead to nowhere.

Sweet Poisonous Dreams

Sweet poisonous dreams of yesterday,
 When shall the aching want cease?
 When shall the specters fade away?
 Is there no reconciliation with peace?

Warm painful memories of you,
 That no conviction might surpass!
 When shall my affliction amass
 Sufficient hurt to be at long last through?

Bait

Love is a disease,
A rat-trap cheese,
A moth's desire
For candle fire.

Love is a drug,
Pheromone for a bug -
A kiss and a hug
Like beer to a slug.

Love is a lie,
An attempt to deny
That chemicals control
An animal's role.

Flower

Flower in a vase,
I want to keep you here,
But you need more space.
You need a garden to grow,
To give your blossom a good show,
Where sun is shining,
To propagate your cheer.
I'll not clip your root's entwining.
I will respect your place.

Tread Softly My Heart

Tread softly my heart -
The petal path I strew
Delicately at your feet!

Through blossoms I impart
My reverence of you!
With flowers I entreat!

Pray thee, do not cast
My tear-wet words aside -
At your mercy I lie!

Without care I can't last!
Without your gentle stride,
I would soon wither and die.

Quiet Suffering

Cease this silence!
Halt your troubled calm,
These wordless thoughts
Wearing thin my resolve.
The peace is torturous.

Pray, speak a phrase,
A tone of reconciliation.
Mend our dialogue.
Dissolve our differences.
End my quiet suffering.

Bleeding Heart

My heart is broken.
But you have some glue.
Help me to paste it.
It's broken in two.

My blood as a token,
I offer to you.
With one more slit
The vow shall ensue.

My soul has spoken.
If wishes come true,
Wish one to fit,
To make me feel new.

Absence

Absence makes the heart grow harder.
Absence makes the blood run thick,
Chokes the life-beat like a garter,
Makes a healthy yearning sick.

Absence makes a fire burn colder,
 Numbs all senses with its pain,
 Makes a promise hard to shoulder,
 Makes all words of love in vain.

Turtledove

I am only a bird
 With a fluttering heart.
 Sorrow is my true word -
 A song of mates apart.

I'm just a turtledove,
 Perched on a steeple cross,
 Come to coo of foiled love,
 And mourn of loss.

I am sadness on wing,
 Here to bring my drear tale.
 For a lost friend I sing,
 I softly wail.

Oh, where are you, my mate!
 The weight that you must share
 In this horrible fate,
 I cannot bear!

Oh, loneliness, you are
 Sitting on a far church,
 Or on a distant star,
 Far from my perch,

Singing your pure heart out,
 Pain your sole earning,
 But never any doubt
 Of your yearning!

Know that I sing for you,
 Though you are far away!
 To my soul I ring true,
 Until someday.

Someday, maybe a song,
 An echo loud and clear

Enough to right all wrong,
 Will bliss reverse.

But now I sing sorrow,
 And hope the song will stay,
 Just in case tomorrow
 You pass this way.

I will leave a low note
 On every mountain top,
 Pour forth hope from my throat,
 And never stop.

My song will always be
 On the tongue of the air.
 When you remember me,
 I will be there.

Breath of Heather

Heather, will you not speak to me,
 Whisper some consolation
 Of my heart to me,
 To my dim eyes explain
 What it is you see?
 Tell me of love that could not be.

Solo

Where have you gone, my friend?
 Where do I keep my trust now?
 I thought you'd be here till the end.
 I'd sing alone but I don't know how.

If I Could Melt Your Heart

If I could melt your heart,
 If I could touch your soul,
 If I could open up your mind,
 My words might make you whole.

Slowly, the ice shall start

To soften into love.
The tangled barbed cords shall unwind
And free a heavenward dove.

If only I could show
You the deep snows that bind,
Then, my friend, you would truly know -
If I could melt your heart.

Somewhere Along The Way

Somewhere along the way,
She left her romance.
She passed up her chance
Somewhere along the way.

Somewhere along the way,
She hardened her heart.
She postponed her start
Somewhere along the way.

Somewhere along the way,
She found a hard face.
She stayed in her place
Somewhere along the way.

Somewhere along the way,
She thought she would fail.
She did not set sail
Somewhere along the way.

Somewhere along the way,
Oh, maybe someday,
She'll make out okay.
Somewhere along the way,

Along the lonely highway,
The tones of distant travelers bay.
Candles light. Saxophones play.
If only, they say.

Remnants

From former years,
A rose in a vase,
A radiant face,
The lingering trace
Of a gentle embrace,
Is now but vacant space -
And nothing to displace
The memories but tears.
Remnants have no place.

The Price

Boldly bear the chains of thy love.
Bravely face the hurt of thy loss.
The mires of despair, rise above!
Let the storms toss!

Love's passion was meant to be felt -
As spark, as flame, as dying coal.
Fires burn and die. Snows freeze and melt.
There is a toll!

Was it better to have loved so,
And lost so much when love passed by,
Or never to have known such woe?
Love must soon die!

The shackles of a heart must be.
Pain is the forge of love's device.
The end of love is misery.
It is the price!

I Don't See An Easy Way To Get Out Of This

My flesh is worn, my spirit tired,
My reason torn, my will expired.
But I don't see an easy way to get out of this.

I love too much the souls I share.
I cannot bear to leave them there.
And I can't see how I'll ever part with a last kiss.

To stay is pain. I can't remain.
 Yet, if I wane, it's all in vain.
 No, I don't see an easy way to get out of this.

Postscript

Grieve not for me when I meet death!
 But forgive me for leaving you behind
 To close the lid on my last breath.
 There seems nothing more unkind
 Than to depart by myself for the great unknown -
 Shed my mask of life, and leave you still in disguise,
 Enter the darkness all alone,
 While you watch the light fade from my eyes.

Parting Seas

A salty sea
 She has cried for me.
 Her profuse tears,
 Gathered over years,
 Lap at my feet,
 To my soul entreat.

I wade in the tide,
 My allotment abide.
 In waters of no tomorrow,
 I asperse my sorrow.

She Had To Fly

Standing at the threshold, she promised from her soul,
 To put a candle on the sill to light the way back home.
 It was not the kind of night that he should be alone.
 He said, *All things cool with passing years,*
The fire flickers then it disappears.
 His face was wet with flowing tears.
 She stood at the window and watched the rain.

She kindled a flame in the hearth in vain.
 Her face grew pale and lines appeared.
 Her breath blew out in a passing wind.

She raised her voice and called out to him.
 She lifted her hand to reach out to him.
 But her voice went up to a passing star.
 She tried to stay but she'd gone too far.

The curtains closed, and a mist arose.
 Her hand unfolded into a wing.
 She cried out loud that she couldn't sing.
 She was caught up in a cloud.
 It was time to fly.
 A lightning bolt lit up the sky.
 And she had to fly.

Will O' Wisp

She saw there on the bank, in the mist,
 His vigil kept as he had declared before his death.
 He had promised to keep his candle lit.
 He said he would never leave her side unless he must.
 She trusted him to come to the river where they had walked.
 They had talked many afternoons there in the grass.
 They had once talked of restless ghosts,
 Of will o' wisps rising and flitting in midair
 As a token of remembrance of the love of days passed.

One Twilight Apparition

Mist-veiled riverside, a place of the low-weeping willows,
 In that transient space between day and night,
 In a faded maiden-hair hue of twilight,
 Stays always, sways and droops on shaded sward pillows,
 The breeze-hosted eve,
 Where ghosts conceive
 A reenactment of a long-ago day.

Come from faraway, to pay
 Homage to their secret place,
 Invoked by the betrothal of yesteryears,
 The lost spirits return to trace
 The sacred space where spilled their heart-sent tears,
 Where once flourished a garden of longing,
 Where myriad dryads spriteward leap to meet

XII. Oblivion

Free Falling

I am free falling,
 Silently sailing,
 Floating weightlessly,

 And softly calling,
 Forever passing
 Through eternity,

 Forming a vision
 Of my thoughts within,
 Falling away

 To atomic fission,
 Swirling around in
 Molecular stew.

 I have formed no plan,
 My efforts failing.
 I have no calling.

 Back where I began,
 Silently sailing,
 I am free falling.

Flying High Once More

Here I go, flying high,
 Once more, walking in the sky.
 The wind has blown my way.
 And though it might not stay,
 I feel no care,
 Up here, floating on air.
 I have no worry at all,
 Of luck changing, of taking a fall.
 All danger I spurn!
 Anyway, flying and falling are almost the same.
 An unruly game!
 Why draw a line?
 Falling is just fine, divine!
 Hitting the ground is my only concern.

I'll Be Hiding Behind A Cloud

Nina und Manuel came knocking at the door,
"Can you play with us, Daniel?"

"Not anymore.
Not today.
I have to go away.
You already know.
I told you. I have to go."

"But we want to play monsters in the rain.
Can't it be like before?
Our parents went to Spain.
And they came back again.
That's how we got our names."

"Sorry, there's no time for games."

"But we don't want it to end."

"It never ends. It all depends on your mind.
Memories you can always find.
I'll always be your friend.
I'll always play monsters with you.
Whenever you are feeling blue,
Listen in the wind for my howling.
Listen for me growling.
I'll be hiding behind a cloud,
Calling your names out loud."

I Am The Silent One

I am the silent one.
I am the one behind the smile.
I am the voice when there is none,
The sigh behind the joke,
The unspoken love,
The wise pause between sentences.
I am sitting silently in the shadows,
Searching for a purpose.
I am a book amidst the stacks,
Amassing experience in volumes.
I am listening and observing.
I am here in the sadness.
Search for me deep within my eyes.

Into The Arms Of Morpheus

I want to sleep in a deep and dreamless repose.
I want to blossom like an evening primrose -
Close my eyes to day, and enter night,
Recline irrevocably into the yawning might
Of eternity's tranquil splendor,
Completely surrender,
Of oblivion's somnolent wine partake,
Safe in Morpheus' keep.
Oh, how I wish I could sleep -
Doze for a moment, and never wake!

On My Bed Sleeping

Who would waste tears weeping,
Lying on a bed as mine,
Untroubled head on a pillow fine,
And a blanket to shut out the pain?

Whether morning shall dawn again,
I know not.
But I care not.
It cannot trouble me.
Nothing can trouble me,
Here on my bed sleeping.

Life At Twilight

Life is clearer in twilight than in the bright of day.
A picture is simpler in black and white, and varying shades of gray.
Children have rich imagination and fairy tales to tide them by -
But at twilight, dawn is too distant to recall which was left or right.
We pray in make-believe, biding our time until we die.
Thoughts of another morning have passed.
But fear of closed eyes won't last.
Gone are the colorful questions of why!

Twilight!
Subtle shifting darkness to conceal the aims of night!

Swiftly Flowing

My life is just a dream
 In universal flow,
 And matter but a stream
 That only time can slow.

The hours are swiftly flowing.
 The time of youth has passed.
 I don't know where I am going,
 But I'm going there fast.

Off To Find Paradise

The air, discontent to remain still,
 shifts around to find a better space.
 The larches groan at the disturbance,
 sway begrudgingly out of place.
 The fire hisses, angry to be so hot,
 spits and sizzles with disgust.
 The wet logs whine at becoming a bit of steam and heat,
 light for a while, then ashes and dust.
 Sparks drift up to the night, with ambitions of becoming stars,
 soon dying from doubt.
 The crescent moon leans to one side,
 trying to prevent more shine from pouring out.
 I am here, watching,
 wondering what at last is to become of me.
 A squirrel on a near branch seems to disagree
 with my choice of bed, offers some scathing advice.
 And high above,
 A goose honks out a rusty declaration that he is off to find paradise.

Rock

Patiently it abides,
 Learned observer of eons,
 Silently derides
 The temporal peons
 For their foolish ways -
 Their attempts to change,
 In the course of several days,

Completely rearrange,
 The nature of the universe.
 The rock understands
 How absurdly perverse,
 How trivial is the work of mortal hands.
 The rock is undisturbed,
 Stands unperturbed
 At the buffeting of the human sea,
 Observing another lesson in longevity,
 Waiting to see what humankind shall be
 After a few thousand years' brevity.

In The Library

No light burns in the library tonight.
 Dusty history books set on the shelves.
 The weary librarian cannot quite
 Bring himself to order them, so he delves
 Into stacks of fiction and fairy tales.
 He reads by a slight glimmer of insight
 Into what might bring order to the bales
 Of anecdotes stacked to the ceiling height.
 There are too many stories out of place.
 Someday he intends to set them all right.
 There must be some way to find them all space.
 Someday he will do it, but not tonight.

Silver Lining

Being -
 I can say
 Little good
 About it,

Except
 For a little girl,
 Who sat on my knee,
 And asked me to read her a story.

Do you feel like I do?

Do you feel like I do?
 Do you feel life when you sigh?
 Do you feel like green is blue?
 Do you feel like you could cry?
 Do you feel that too?
 Do you feel a bit high?
 Do you feel your lies come true?
 Do you feel you should fly?
 Do you feel you don't know you?
 Do you feel like you will never die?
 Do you feel like I do?

Pumpkin Patch

A pumpkin patch is a magical plot,
 A lush supernatural garden spot,
 Where goblins and ghouls meet to masquerade
 As plain orange pumpkins out on parade.

A pumpkin patch is a rendezvous place,
 Where summer disappears without a trace,
 And autumn turns down a dark narrow lane,
 To hide in vines on a parallel plane
 With all of the past seasons come and gone
 To their final spring on a wizen lawn.

A pumpkin patch is paradise on earth,
 A haven for friendless spirits to roam,
 To which all drifters are destined from birth,
 A home for ghosts who never found a home.

Come, lonely wanderers, rest from your day.
 Rolling, rustling, leaves will show you the way
 To gather together with a drear host,
 And join in chorus with the silent throng.

When some night, I become a lonely ghost,
 I will haunt a pumpkin patch the night long.

To An Unknown Woman

To an unknown woman
 Who lived ages ago:
 I wish that you could know
 The thoughts that I summon.

When your man did not return,
 When the roof thatch got too old,
 When seasons began to turn,
 When you became deathly cold,

Tell me, dear misery's wife,
 Did you hope to see Spring?
 How did you finish life?
 Did you dream of anything?

I would have helped you stand.
 I would have stilled your heart.
 Had the years played no part,
 I would have held your hand.

Iron Cross

With last breath of blood-corrupted lungs resisting collapse,
 And Mauser aborted in mud, rusted and no longer needed,
 Not settling willingly to that dark, deep, and thoughtless rest,
 Persevering in valor for a lost cause, never surrendering,
 Never compromising conviction for convention of any measure,
 Thoughts put aside of your mother weeping bitterly years hence,
 You, here is the recognition for your courage extraordinary.
 Such tenacity deserves a remark, an Iron Cross at least.

Pipes Calling

Bagpipes are blowing on a clear afternoon,
 On a north wind bringing
 Sad notes flowing in timeless tune -
 Against the white cliffs singing.

Salt rain falling from a cloudless sky,
 As an ocean crashes upon the shore,
 Induces a heavy heart to fly,
 To depart land, and return nevermore.

Our Little Life

Out beyond the pasture's edge,
 On the path to the springhead,
 Near a lilac hedge,
 In a sagging woodshed,
 On a golden carpet of straw,
 Away from the reach of any law,
 Behind a bale of hay, I hide,
 A gentle rabbit at my side.
 He and I found life there best,
 My little friend and I,
 While the world passed by
 Without our interest.

In The Jubilation Of My Zenith

The ship sailed westward,
 High and blown
 On billowing clouds, across the day,
 A fiery hull taking the azure ocean away,
 Bringing in its wake a low light.
 Creeping up from the east came a schooner,
 Riding on lengthening shadows,
 Rising upon a tide of dusk.
 And from remote places,
 The beacons of distant ships,
 Scattered out across the endless seas, glistened.
 And I, in the jubilation of my zenith,
 Was but a drop of water,
 But a grain of sand.

A Snowflake Has Melted In My Eye

Sweet to remember, sad with the years,
 Are December evening tidings and cheers
 Ringing clearly, bringing out yestermorn,
 In hazy snow-falling remembrance born -
 A day far too near to be easily dispelled
 By a heavy heart so sorrowfully swelled
 Like seasons come and gone away again -
 Snows fallen and melted to again begin.

Where do you wind, oh, north wind?
 Wherein has a soul then sinned
 A measure sufficient for a storm like this -
 This soft-on-the-forehead-long-evaporated kiss,
 Lingering so, as a low-hanging sunset,
 Refusing to abide, in dire regret,
 To the declaration of the stars
 That a shining sun must give way to Mars?

Oh, golden, golden, morning passed away,
 Wrapped up and displaced by a dimming day,
 A glimmering crimson coal of light,
 A summer stream springing into night,
 A dream to be taken literally,
 Relished and savored liberally,
 In a sinking memory painfully setting,
 In a weary mind is still begetting.

Oh, how we had our day!
 The colors we had before the gray!
 Fawns pranced in the warming sun!
 Always, life had just begun,
 And the succulent softness of youth
 Yet to be hardened by truth!
 Oh, for a moment more on that grass!
 Oh, that time should never pass!

Life is a mysterious device
 That turns a blossom into ice,
 A sweet flower rising in spring birth
 Then falling fatefully back to earth,
 The dew having lost its stake,
 Leaving misty minds to quake.
 Do not believe that I simply cry.
 A snowflake has melted in my eye.

Here, Before The Cold Hearth, Weary

Here, before the cold hearth, weary,
 I've nothing simple words might say
 To meet the falling night's inquiry
 Of moonlight dimming in the bay.

Beyond the dripping window pane,
 Ancient pipers are softly playing
 Rhythmic notes above the rain,
 To the gods of tempest praying,

For the souls of bygone yearning,
 For the want of lasting memory,
 For the loss of life love burning,
 Singing of what used to be.

Once they piped a tune so merry,
 Echoed upon mountain heights,
 Called across the rolling prairie,
 Played upon such wondrous sights.

Once they danced upon the morning,
 Saw life wake so long ago,
 Songs of temporal creatures scorning,
 In the time-long score they blow.

Now the tune so melancholy
 Carries out across the trees,
 Blows the notes of mortal folly,
 Moaning low the mournful breeze.

Bringing on the dark so dreary,
 Shadows from the threshold creep.
 Here, before the cold hearth, weary,
 Slowly drifting off to sleep,

In my final thoughts of waking,
 I hear an ageless symphony,
 Instruments of heaven's making,
 Play a midnight song for me.

XIII. Lamentation

In The Beginning

In the beginning, there was darkness.
 And then there was light.
 Intelligence thought - therefore it was.
 And intelligence sought wisdom,
 And found wisdom for evermore.
 Ever changing, never constant, always arranging,
 Intelligence decreed
 That its wisdom would not be finite, but eternal.
 Intelligence yearned for experience.
 It made atoms, and suns, creatures,
 Cells, heavens, and hells, to abide in,
 To confide a portion of the spirit in.
 Intelligence dwelt in water and fire,
 Rose higher and higher in quest of light,
 Of more creation, more evaluation.
 And the sum of the whole was the one.
 And all was fair.
 All shared in a portion of the spirit,
 Only seeing and perceiving differently.
 But the spirit saw that it was good,
 Saw through many eyes, perceiving all
 That creation was achieving.
 And knowing that all things flow back into the one,
 Intelligence was pleased with what it had done.
 And God called this the first day.
 And the first day was eternity.

The Initial Thought

That an intelligence could so rise,
 Set supernovas brightly burning,
 Comes as no great surprise,
 Given countless measures of learning
 At the end of an evolutionary trail.

There is awe at such power.
 But all imaginations fail
 In wonder of the initial thought.
 The light of that first hour,
 How indeed was it wrought?

Thy Will Be Done

Thou shalt not kill, roared the lion to the bear
 As it pounced upon a wolf that was chasing down a hare.
How dare you kill for a thrill!
It's alright when you need to eat
To take a life to use as meat,
Or when you think you're in the right
To kill an opponent in a fight.
But to kill without proper cause
Is against all of the greatest laws.

And a monkey in a tree
 Listened to him intently,
 Picked a louse off his head
 And squished the bastard dead,
 And waited for more.

And...what those who are right really deplore
Is someone who always does wrong!
Won't you join me in a song?
Praise all that is good!
Let's do what we should!
One nation should love another nation
As a cat should befriend a rat.

Then he swatted a daisy flat
 To punctuate his very clear declaration.

And the monkey jumped down, and shouted, *I believe!*
 And the bear left, seeing there was nothing to achieve.

Ugly Monkey

There's a fear that sits on my shoulders like an ugly monkey.
 He loves a slow parade, and a sleeping masquerade,
 And the shade beneath the ground,
 Entertaining frequently, for his own amusement.

His drama goes quickly, a surprise jump, and gasp at his antics,
 Or comes on slow as years, long, and then strong,
 With a twist of horror at the end, and a heavy song.
 This way or that, it's always the same lame act.

He always aims at bringing sorrow - quite droll in fact,
 A show that grows cold, a dull nuisance pulling a boner.
 I've seen enough of the plot to know his lot.
 He's always howling a reminder in my ear that I'm getting older.

All attempts to tame him just make him bolder.
 I've tried to tame him.
 I've tried to rename him.
 I've tried to blame him.
 I've tried to shame him.
 But this ugly monkey is out of control,
 Gone stark raving wild,
 And bound to take his toll.

Before I Slip Into That Faraway

Before I ease into that final sleep,
 Ease away into the close of day,
 Slip inexorably into the endless deep,
 Before I slumber, I have something to say.

Can you tell me why I am here?
 Can you tell me where to go?
 Can you make it very clear?
 God, I'd really like to know.

And so in fervent fear, I pray.
 I fall to lamenting fears.
 I lay my soul on deaf ears,
 Before I slip into that faraway.

Beneath your eye of gold

Beneath your eye of gold,
 The centuries unfold,
 The seasons pass on by.

Beneath your eye of gold,
 All reasoning grows old,
 All praises to the sky.

Beneath your eye of gold,
For summer days untold,
You've watched your children cry.

Beneath your eye of gold,
You let our hearts grow cold.
You've never told us why.

Candles In The Wind

A crocus bloomed in early spring,
Like a church steeple, confused by reality,
Rising up to meet heaven's humility,
Thinking it might hear loving bells ring.
But it burned its candles in the wind.
It learned that it was lost,
That it had sinned
By giving a mad god its trust.
It was caught by the frost,
Went from ashes to dust,
Perhaps to hell's fiery pit,
Until a redeeming day in May,
When the sun comes to resurrect it,
And reason comes to stay.

Animal Crackers

How entertaining it must be
To sit at the top of eternity,
Watching the circus just for fun,
Judging performers one by one -

Marionettes doing funny loops,
Midgets jumping through the hoops,
Lions and tigers merrily
Playing with monkeys in a tree.

Such fun it must be to watch the show,
To laugh at the silly mummer troupe,
To applaud the amusement down below -
The animal crackers in your soup.

Tree Of Life

With woe my heart is swollen,
From thy licentious truth.
My blind faith has been stolen.
A withered bud of youth

Cultivation has induced -
A cultivar so crude.
All my seeds of hope produced
A tree utterly lewd,

A vine hopelessly tangled,
That reason cannot wrest
From trust that it has mangled -
This thorn thrust in my breast.

The Way And The Light

I would choose to follow the right,
If it were unreflected, unrefracted,
Clearly shining to progression.
If there were perfection,
I would seek, undigressing.

Eye To Eye

I could not bow my head
To a god. (In terror)
And any god should be dead
To demand such an error.

Warlord

Hear the roll of distant drums!
Behold, the mighty warlord comes!

Behold karma burning upon the bush!
Speak of sweet miracles and crush
The tongue of truth into the dust!
Vanquish forever simple trust!

Roll the holy wheels, and hear
Hyena prayers of doleful fear.
With inspiration call divine
Soulful vomit and putrid wine.

Behold the grace of cobra king,
With regal cannon prepared to sting
Reality into the infant face,
And call the end a glory place.

Grave this truth in words of rock:
To slaughter the shepherds lead the flock.

Pandora's Box

Woe! Woe! The spell has been spoken,
And no finger to plug the leak -
The hatch open, the lock broken,
The repairman gone for the week!

Was it just curiosity
That opened up Pandora's box,
Or perhaps animosity
That cultured mortality's pox?

We know that we reap what we sow.
But who the hell sowed all of this?
Was it the work of friend or foe?
Who put the poison in the bliss?

He who boxed it once, can again.
But what hand has power to snatch
The sun from her fiery refrain,
Or even put flame in a match?

Death Of A Parakeet

Upon the final evening of the year,
My friend lay down her small head in my palm,
And found therein an everlasting calm
That I shall never share with her, I fear.
To me, no means can justify this end,
Nothing replace her warmth on my shoulder.

Without her sweet song it shall be colder
Than any cool remorse the gods might send.

Omnipotence cannot silence my cry.
This shameful deed be upon someone's head.
I have searched for a divine reason why,
But found eternal quietude instead.
On this sad night, a parakeet is dead.
Has heaven marked the passing, as have I?

Ceaseless Yearning

Ache of ceaseless yearning,
My bosom's raging fire,
What sets thy flame burning?
What maddening desire?

What power can pacify?
What celestial cloudburst
Might quell and satisfy?
Gods! Quench my mortal thirst!

Milk Of My Beginning

Milk of my beginning,
An overpowering taste,
In a vile churn is spinning
Into a curdled waste.

Milk of wretched misery,
Nectar of suffering's flower,
Hold this morning's delivery.
Something has gone quite sour.

Milk of my existence,
I'm weaned of your addiction.
I seek the wine of deliverance -
The redeemer of all affliction.

Rearing The Paradox

This wretched life I love,
I would free from my tight hold,
Were it not for the gold
I am digging up above.

Prophecy

On the unsheathed falchion of divine leave
Death coils his merciless fingers of ice,
With a broad sweep of his falciform sleeve,
Reaps a swath of souls unto his device.

The virtuous, along with the tainted,
To utter oblivion are fated.
And naught but time and darkness is sainted,
When spirits to ashes are translated.

The End Of Days

(December 1999)

I live in the last of numbers,
When time will soon run out,
When the dawn of mankind slumbers
On the eve of dark doubt.
I live on the calendar's edge,
On the book's final page.
The world is on the dismal ledge
Of the extinction age.

This is my last proclaiming breath,
Song of the final day,
Before all humanity's death.
I thought that I should say,
Before there's no lingering trace,
Something of poets and their ways,
Simply tell the cold silent space,
I saw the end of days.

New Year 2000

One second into the new year,
Outside in the street I hear
The celebrants' raucous roar,
At the opening of the door.

Some souls must be truly relieved
To find they have been deceived,
Expecting catastrophe
And the end of humanity.

Many are utterly amazed,
Loud, and irreverently dazed,
Taking part in a fable
On a numerical table.

But I give no weight to numbers.
A millennium slumbers,
And a new age has begun,
While I still amount to just one.

The Year 2000

A millennium is turning.
Was there some misunderstanding
That another would follow?
Let us purse our lips to bid
The old away, and utter prayers
For instantaneous transfiguration.
Impelled by frailty are we
To accept mystical decrees,
To abide declarations of Valkyries,
And vainly-worded mythologies,
Drinking holy grail prophecies at tea time,
Keeping eyes to sea and stars,
Lingering, lingering in benediction,
Murmuring incantations, hum, hum, hum.
And in the moment of our beseeching,
It is done, come thief-in-the-night,
Razed by Hades' fires, and consumed,
Frozen silver-white,
To sing valediction in my fortieth year.

Beneath All Things

Beneath all things great and small, I lie,
 Among the hungry creatures feeding.
 And having no path to take, I die,
 My soul entrapped, my sore heart bleeding
 Warm and salty streams upon my cheeks.
 Earth's stifling prisons have conquered me.
 Heaven in mocking sibilance speaks
 Of true happiness that cannot be.

I am forced to taste
 Living out a mime,
 While all goes to waste
 In the tides of time.

Must Be Madness

A Lunatic is in my head.
 He's asking something more instead
 Of fantasy, and fallacy, and tragedy, and death -
 The youthful green of early spring,
 And golden light that mornings bring.
 He never sings of anything
 But breath.

Bring Omnipresence To Me

People of my past lives!
 Ring them all around.
 Sing of hope that time deprives,
 Run the mortal ship aground,
 Unto a homeward shore,
 Where past scenes as reality seem,
 All memories lingering evermore,
 Where all abide in a neverending dream,
 In paradisaical harmony.
 Braid the frayed edges into one tapestry.
 Set imprisoned days, at long last, free.
 Bring omnipresence to me.

XIV. Fear

Genesis

Goblin of festering womb,
 Let it be thy tomb!
 Loathsome conception,
 Pathos' vile inception,
 Seed of fecund rue,
 Beyond the corridor,
 There is horror in store,
 And nothing more for you.

Jack-o'-lantern

There is a shadow in the glass,
 A spirit in the candle light.
 There is a ghoul's sneer in the night,
 A specter on the window sash.

We are not alone in this room!
 In the jack-o'-lantern's dim glow
 Burns a hint of impending doom.
 Does he know something we don't know?

Bedtime Rhyme

There's a scullywumper in my closet.
 It only comes out at night.
 I hear it crack the closet door
 When my mother turns out the light.

There's a sneaky peeky shadow man
 Hiding beneath my bed.
 When he hears me fall asleep,
 He floats about my head.

There are sock creepers in my drawer.
 They hide beneath the socks.
 When I open up to see,
 They stay as still as rocks.

But when I sleep, they creep, creep, creep,
 And gleefully cheep, and in a pile heap,
 To watch the wolf-bat from the deep
 Who comes to feast on counted sheep.

When I am sleeping,
 Terrible things come creeping!

There are carpet seepers,
 And lock peepers,
 And hairy fairy moonbeam weepers.

There are tum tum singers,
 And gum gum slingers,
 And oochie-coochie yum yum bringers,
 And sometimes even dingy wingers
 With long and crooked bum bum stingers!

There are hallway creakers,
 And outside-the-window peekers,
 Buzzard-rat beakers, from-other-room speakers,
 And in the corner, squeaky squeakers,

And even sticky icky-poo reekers.
 (Who are only once-a-weekers)

There are smoky jokers with a terrible cough,
 And blanket-pullers who pull the blankets off,
 And gleaming ghosts with stickers beneath,
 Making steaming boasts with long and yellow teeth!

When I go to bed at night,
 When I sleep, I sleep in fright.
 Every scary living and dead,
 Comes to gather round my bed.

But of all the scaries great and small,
 Of all the scaries there might be,
 The scariest scaries of them all,
 Are the scary scaries I cannot see.

There's a scullywumper in my closet.
 It only comes out at night.
 I hear it crack the closet door,
 When my mother turns out the light.

All Hallow's Eve

'Tis from the hollow, mists arise
 To drift beneath the autumn skies,
 To usher in a dark surprise -
 The night of righteousness' demise.

Upon the rising moon they spread,
 Like shrouds upon the waking dead,
 The trappings of a silver bed,
 From which all evil things are bred.

When wind blows through the barren trees,
 There spreading as some foul disease,
 There piping fearful melodies
 Of never-ending tragedies,

When mischief-laden fingers snatch
 The pumpkins frosted in the patch,
 And in them fires of brimstone light,
 And make the souls of darkness bright,

When ghouls awaken in their graves,
 When vampires burst forth from their staves,
 When fleshless bones arise to war,
 And venture from perdition's store,

When banshees howl out from the mire,
 When werewolves sing their wicked choir,
 When ghostly rites all souls inspire,
 And magic sets the moon on fire,

When wake the monsters yet untold,
 When zombies march the open road,
 When demons lurk beyond the gate,
 And darkness holds a dreadful fate,

Then know the night of doom is here,
 The dawn of everlasting fear,
 The opening of an evil door -
 All Hallow's Eve has come once more.

"All Hallow's Eve!" The beasties cry.
 On Hallow's Eve, the witches fly.
 On Hallow's Eve, hell's creatures spy.
 On Hallow's Eve, all good things die.

Bones

I love to eat bones.
 They taste like scones.
 I love to munch and crunch
 At a midnight lunch.
 They taste better by night
 Than they do by day.
 And they're best eaten
 When the flesh is all rotted away.

If you're lacking chow,
 I'll tell you how
 To find a great meal.
 You'll have to steal.
 But a bit o' grave thieving
 Never hurt anyone.
 It's quite fun!
 It keeps a soul believing
 In the beauty of a casket,
 Just like a picnic basket!

A Ghoul Next Door

There's a ghoul next door.
 She's quite a bore.
 She just lies silently, six feet beneath the floor.

But man, when I catch a whiff of her perfume!
 I wish my coffin had a bit more room.

She smells so ripe!
 A sweet little tripe!

I'd call her up, but we've got no phones.
 Still I'm spending death well.
 At least I enjoy her smell.
 But if I got a chance, hell, I'd jump her bones.

Mary

Mary was a remarkable girl,
 The talk of all the town,
 The kind of superhuman girl
 That death could not keep down!

Mary had a flowing shroud.
 She always dressed her best.
 She had the front cut really low,
 To show her gaping chest.

Mary had two eye sockets
 That dripped with icky slime.
 And even though her eyes ran out,
 She had a dandy time.

Mary had a lovely butt
 All covered with green crust.
 But when she wagged her bum one night,
 She fell to bits of dust.

Wishing Ghost

Ghost gray, ghost white,
 First ghost I see tonight,
 I wish I may, I wish I might,
 Die a horrid death of fright.

Axeman Bill

Axeman Bill
 Crept down the hill
 To fetch somebody's daughter.
 Bill sneaked down,
 Right into town,
 And by the throat he caught her.

Rock-A-Bye

Rock-a-bye, baby,
 In the tree top.
 Sweet little thing,
 It's not going to stop.
 You're fast turning red.
 And try as you might,
 You're going to be dead.
 The rope is too tight

Rotting Flesh

Rotting flesh hot!
 Rotting flesh cold!
 Rotting flesh in a box, nine years old!
 Some die young. Some die old.
 All die hard and dry, covered with mold.

About The Headstone

Here I lie with a pleasant view.
 I'll be glad to roll over and make room for you.

Here I lie.
 I have always been a liar.

Here I lay.
 And I must say,
 I've had better lays.

There is one last thing I would like to get off my chest - YOU!

If you think things are bad up there,
 You ought to smell it down here!

Beneath the grass,
 Still full of sass,
 I watch the living pass.
 And, I'm still an ass.

My last remains,
 They've buried complete.

Now, bugger off!
 Find something else to eat!

Life was great.
 But death is divine.
 Climb on in.
 The dirt is fine!

All right, so there's nothing left to write on the headstone!
 But I thought you said to carve it on the head.
 You didn't say a damn thing about any stone.

Here I lie,
 Not moving a stitch,
 Now rotting in hell,
 A son of a bitch!

Our beloved friend
 Has drank his last cup.
 Don't pull out the stake
 Or the fiend will get up!

Remember, dear friend,
 When you stand on my tomb,
 It once was my flesh,
 And shall soon be your doom.

I lie here forever
 A horrible goon.
 Remember me well,
 You'll be here with me soon.

Waiting For The Worms

Waiting for the worms and the mold!
 Waiting for these bones to grow old!
 Time is festering like a pox.
 They will pack me away,
 Quite force me to stay,
 In the hold of a dark pine box.

Waiting for the worms and decay!
 Waiting for the dawn of doom's day!
 My flesh is going to rot away.

My eyes are going to turn to clay.
Then, but a single debt to pay!

No more waiting for the worms to call.
The worms are scratching at the wall.
The worms are knocking at the door.
The worms are coming through the floor.
They'll not wait another minute more.
The worms wait for no one at all.

Shadow Man

There is a shadow man beneath my bed
Waiting there until the night.
He fills my waking hours with dread
Anticipation of his fright.

He's waiting there to ambush me,
And show me a macabre sight.
But the wait to see what it will be
Is much more dreadful than his bite.

Dream Weaver

Dream weaver, weave a dream for me.
Carry me across the endless sea,
To the timeless land of fantasy.

Dream Weaver, build a magic ark.
Keen achiever, brighten the dark.
A believer waits to embark.

Dream weaver, stand fast as my friend.
Don't let this dream come to an end.
On you alone I can depend.

Dream weaver, weave with all your might.
Weave the fibers of this day tight.
I am so afraid of the night.

The One True Word

Song of the lich owl,
Serenading banshee's howl,
Wind in the church gate yearning,
Corpse-candle brightly burning,
The late night comet's dearth,
Those silent mounds of earth,
The shadow man on the moon,
All speak the one true word.
Haven't you already heard?
Listen carefully. You shall hear it soon.

Calamity

Sing, unspeakable choirs of perdition.
Stay not thy pernicious hand.
Keep thy blood-corrupted threat.
Mow an awful harvest.
Lay low the heavens in contrition.
Make irrevocable reprimand.
Forge the foundations of eternal regret.
Kindle sulfurous hell.
The luminaries, of light divest.
Place the first last, and the last first.
In heinous execution,
Let thy prodigious ranks swell.
Loose thy relentless riders - thy henchmen.
Quench thy abominable thirst.
Strike, apocalyptic instant of obliteration!
I am beyond trepidation,
Forever, AMEN.

XV. Stumble

Tower

A forlorn gleam of evening sun now glistens on the dew
 Of maiden days and youthful haze when memories were new.
 The windows, like deep sullen eyes, look on the world below,
 Still seeking newer pastures where more crystal visions flow.
 Beyond forsaken mounds unmarked, among the rank-grown weeds,
 The voice of song and ancient tales of long-forgotten deeds,
 A stalwart wind moans long and low across the gate stones there,
 And pipes the tunes of summer nights when gardens grew more fair -
 Spry minstrel chimes, and sweet perfumes, and tantalizing wine
 Of dreams, and days, and destinies, upon a tendered vine.

Abandoned by the architects that gave the arches name,
 To fall away to depths below, from whence the masons came,
 Last taste of life, and love, and lust to watch the starlight pass,
 And merriment in lily fields, and rapture on the grass,
 So loath to go in silent dust with no one nigh to hear,
 And take to ground in mournful turn without an offered tear,
 Precarious upon the edge of end's abysmal stage,
 Besieged by all the fury of the elements in rage,
 It stands against the armies of attrition, though in vain,
 And holds to form for moments more, as none will come again.

Reckoning

Reckoning -
 This I pray for,
 But fear most.

The Waking Of The Ghoul

They take all that they can take.
 But all fragile things were made to break -
 A muse not of mortal making,
 A colossal being's undertaking.
 Could sadism be the utmost core?
 Pain the universal whore?
 They all feel so confused,
 All abused, so sorely used.

They have seen clearly
 What it means to see,
 Shudder at eternity,
 Wondering if to be or not to be.
 They have found no useful tool
 To alter the endless rule,
 To rend the great hypocrisy,
 To end eternal misery.
 Helplessly they watch the clock,
 And mend their ever-fraying frock.
 They want to forget their days,
 Think their thoughts in sleepy haze.
 They pity the newborn fool,
 And loathe the waking of the ghoul.

When She Passed

She consoled me when I lost a coin in the grass,
 Cheered my child games, though I lost.
 She negated my fears,
 Dried my tears,
 Bore my conflict with me.
 She was only a year my senior,
 But she shouldered her responsibilities willingly.
 She was all that a sister should be expected to be.
 She was a fine friend to me.
 And I missed her when she passed.

Silver Dreams

No sun in my head,
 Frozen it seems.
 All colors are dead.

My heart esteems
 Green petals, instead
 Of silver dreams.

Milk Of Rilke

Das glaube ich gern. Das blut ist schwer,
 Manchmal glaub ich, ich kann nicht mehr!

I could use a dose of redress,
 A goblet of succulent cheerfulness
 To suckle my spirit's gall,
 Some crutches to prevent my fall.

But my heart, I fear, is beyond repair.
 I bear the chains forged by despair.
 I am too weary to fly anymore.
 I think I'll just lie here on the floor.

Ich habe träge flügel. Das blut ist zu schwer!
 Of this I have become aware.

The Final Lines

"And the barbs and screws, the torture, is it necessary?"

"As I've said before, I ask the questions.
 I don't answer them."

"But, I've agreed to say anything you want to hear."

"There is nothing you could tell me that I haven't already heard."

"I mean, you can compel me without the agony."

"Now you are presuming to tell me how to compel you?
 I am in a position to do anything I want to do to you.
 That should be evidence enough that I know more
 About compelling you than you do."

"But why the chains and shackles?
 What are you afraid of?
 I can't get away."

"Chains?
 They are really not chains at all.
 It's just the way you look at them.
 A stage has to have props, just as an actor has to have a script."

"But what's the point?

I mean, a charade is a charade regardless of text.
It's pointless, meaningless in the end."

"Perhaps that is true for the individual actor, yes.

But taken as a whole, it's a considerable show.
I'm quite pleased by the whole production.
It can be very amusing at times.
And my amusement is the measure, after all.
If you just play your part, keep things uncomplicated,
Be dedicated, follow the script, and don't ask questions, it makes for
fine entertainment.
And what's to worry as long as the show goes on?"

"For you maybe..."

"Sure, but it's my show!"

"But have you ever considered that I didn't try out for the part?
What if I were to say that I didn't want to perform?"

"Abstractions, distractions, so delusional!
We have been through this over and over.
Just accept your fate!
You are what you are,
Regardless of how you choose to perceive yourself,
No matter what philosophical puzzles you invent
To amuse and confuse your silly fancy.
The bottom line is that it comes down to survival of the fittest,
One intelligence against another.
I just happen to be superior."

"I'm aware of that.
That's why I am appealing to you.
I thought you might be fair."

"Fair?
What's fair got to do with anything?
When you're on top, you don't have to be fair,
Because you get to decide what fair is.
That's the beauty of being number one.
Still, I've always made it a point to deal as justly as possible,
Just as a point of professional pride.
There are values to uphold, you know?
Sure, I make the rules,

But I must also follow them, in order to appear...perfect.
Sometimes my part is in the capacity of duty.
I have to follow the script, too.
You might say, that in a way, I am an actor just like you."

"You're not an actor.
You're a demon playing at being God."

"That may well be so.
But in any event, I do have the final lines."

Sandman

The sandman sows the seeds of sleep
Upon a fertile field of eyes,
Thus piles up heaps of souls to reap.
It comes as no big surprise,

That the sandman's final caper
Gathers up sleepy dust from bone,
Turns tender eyelids to paper,
And sleeping children to stone.

The Memoirs Of Susan Duncan Clark

"Twas a bitter winter that year,
As severe as cold can be.
Some snows fall harder than others.

Uncle Mon started for the barn,
But stopped at the porch for a bucket,
Said to your mother,

*This storm is bad, Martha.
I don't think John will try
To come out of the canyon tonight.*

And you only five, Susan,
So young to see an uncle's prophecy come true.
No one should have witnessed
The scene that came to you,
In eighteen hundred and seventy seven,
When you heard Brother Brotrell whisper.

They are bringing him down the bench now,
 (Two hundred men to dig him out)
 So that his wife can view the corpse.
 And you standing there on the porch,
 Wondering why they had boxed him so.

Ah, but it was so long ago,
 And the remembrance gone with you!
 What could it all amount to in an eternal scheme?

Go to thy rest in peace, Susan.
 Forgive the snow its trespasses.

The Best Of Worlds

What should one wear to the best of worlds?
 Fanbenito is suitable, dear Candide.

Where should one walk if one could, pray tell?
 Just go where they tell you to go, Candide.

What should one do with a gift of speech?
 They'll tear out your tongue if you do, Candide.

What should I do with this sweet young thing?
 She's dripping with pus from the pores, Candide.

How can one know what is right to believe?
 Believe what they tell you is so, Candide.

Strike up the chorus and sing along,
 la la la,
 la la la,
 la la la la.

Light up the incense and vanquish wrong,
 la la la,
 la la la,
 la la la la.

Round and round it whirls and whirls,
 la la la,
 la la la,
 la la la la.

That's how it goes in the best of worlds,
 la la la,
 la la la,
 la la la la.

Welcome To The Arena

Welcome to the arena.
 You'll not get out alive.
 You belong now to Athena.
 You've taken a perilous dive.

You've joined the hoard.
 They've taken you in.
 Take up your sword.
 But don't hope to win.

They'll take your head,
 And roll it away.
 They'll see you dead,
 To see another day.

Welcome to the arena.
 Just try to catch your breath.
 With luck, perhaps Athena
 Will give you an easy death.

Terah

Welcome to Terah.
 It has been waiting
 for millenniums to receive you.

Step into this stagnant underworld,
 beneath a canopy of tangled
 branches woven to keep all
 but the darkest rays of sun
 from shining through.

Join the unholy ghosts,
 incomprehensible life-forms caught
 in a primordial struggle.

All are prepared
to embrace new contestants.

Enter swirling mists of stench
your predecessors bubble up
from diseased algae crust.

Try to discern which is water
and which is not.
Ebony roots will little ease
your choice to step here or there.

It is all one, passive or active.
Death is the essence of life.
It is written
upon the rank and corrupted air.

In this world,
your culture is useless.
The accumulation of wisdom you master
is no match for antediluvian patience.

From far-off lagoons, reality remarks
in lugubrious-croaking refrains,
a mocking dirge to your passing.

Did you think there would be kindness here?
Did you really expect mercy,
now that you are no longer at the top of the food chain?

A Shallow Grave

The wanderer descends a rocky track to begin the end,
must keep to the rocks, taking care not to fall in between.
In between there are things ready to bite and sting.
All wanderers must be ready to fight and not deny.
All wanderers must depend on wit as a friend and guide.
And what of the needs inside? All will pass in time.
The wanderer must leap from one high point to another,
discover the way with his myriad facet eyes,
balancing again so as to avoid the fall into the ravine.
He gags at the stench of decomposing matter,
supposing that he is different,
feeling the heat coming off the rotting excrement,

seeing the heaps and heaps of rotting excrement,
hearing the buzzing swarms feeding, breeding, teeming,
the squirming foul splendor of collective being,
the half-eaten creatures lying and disintegrating,
perceiving old wine bottles as glistening-jewel security.
There is an old ale cask burst asunder and forgotten,
with no markings anywhere to explain the purpose.
Thrusting his foot back to catch his weight,
he pushed against a skull black with decay,
and crushed the shape into dust,
then turned fast away, trying not to recognize it as such.
And much to his dismay, he discovered more horror,
and no gloves to protect his mind from the touch.
But it gave him incentive to climb faster, even risking a fall.
He took a deep breath, and went on with apprehension,
finding the answers not at all to his liking,
finding only a fine line between the sane and the depraved mind,
finding his course winding back to the first desolate yearning,
finding no water to quench his burning thirst,
finding life is viewed best from a shallow grave.

Earth's Shadow

My sight is sullen.
The bright god is red.
The night has swollen.
Apollo is dead.

For Lorca

Wrong conspired at five o'clock in the afternoon.
It was conspired at five o'clock in the afternoon
To spill a poet's might,
To kill a poem outright,
Without reaping a moon.

The moon is weeping the wrong -
Pale silver light.
The moon is contrite
For the loss of a song.

Aubrey

Aubrey,
I've come for mutton stew,
Found some rot gut
In the dirty hut
Of a warrior I once knew.

Aubrey,
What happened to you?

Billy

Billy pushed the weak ones to the wall.
Billy struck the fear into us all.
Billy feeds the worms beneath the crest.
Billy felt the cold truth rend his breast.

Hunter

Once, I shot a mourning dove,
And watched its mate circle above,
Like a lost cherubim,
Unable to go or come,

A soul wandering away,
To perch on a wire,
As if to inquire
Why her love should stay,

With tremulous breast,
Equating her sorrow
In song dark and melancholy,
For her mate there at rest,

To mourn her grave fate,
Or mourn my damned soul,
My murderous hate,
My cold-blooded toll.

Silly, Silly, Me

I saw a place where hate was fun.
Who are you to speak of pain?
I saw a man bury his son.
Who are you to speak of pain?

I saw a girl step on a mine.
Who are you to speak of pain?
I saw a gray grandmother pine.
Who are you to speak of pain?

I saw boys killed in foolish wars.
Who are you to speak of pain?
I saw a life with gaping sores.
Who are you to speak of pain?

I saw an ancient widow mourn.
Who are you to speak of pain?
I saw a newborn baby born.
Who are you to speak of pain?

I saw a man blow out his brain.
Who am I to speak of pain?
Silly, silly, me!

Rag Doll Clown

Danger he scorns
On a rodeo ground.
Ride those bull horns,
Rag doll clown!
Round and round,
Up and down,
Blow my mind,
Bones to grind!
No stopping the ride
With life inside.

A boy in the front seat
Is watching the rising heat
Flowing red from limp meat.

Poor Thin Ferris

Poor thin Ferris,
 Poor tired man,
 Felt one last kiss,
 Then it began -

The final sleep
 As cold as frost,
 A wife to weep
 A long life lost.

Funeral For A Crone

A crone fell in the snow,
 And whether softened by the blow,
 None shall ever know.

But the softhearted ones crooned low,
 Lamenting notes of sorrow,
 That she was gone, and they tomorrow.

Maria

She ignored her mother's warnings
 Of talking to strangers in the market place,
 Staying far away from the bull,
 Never to play near the fence -
 The dangers of large animals.

She was complacent, let her mother
 Wash her face, without complaint.

Her mother brushed her hair,
 Laid her best dress out on the bed.
 She tried to form Maria's mouth into a smile -
 Made her appear happy,
 While her lips were still pliant.

Myung Ji

She sat in class
 tranquilly.
 But I saw
 a razor blade
 pass between her lips.

The text said
 those who cry for help
 don't really want
 to die.

But sometimes
 they try,
 and succeed.

I'm sorry,
 Myung Ji.

Good bye.

Alligator Doll

I once saw a girl
 fall
 beneath her kindergarten bus -

While her mother looked on,
 a tire crushed her head
 like a gourd,
 left tread marks
 in her brains and blood.

And she still clutched
 an alligator doll,
 lovingly in her grasp.

Shattered Purpose

Adulterated is this glass
 Set on a grim table.
 Demise alone spills

From these broken seams.
 How now shall I salute life?
 What drink can drown my anguish,
 What hand return the wine to this vessel?

Box

Substance of maple, alder, oak,
 Bone of shelter, heart of hearth,
 How cold thy bosom now,
 Beneath this frosted earth!

Hand Of Justice

Society, have I repaid thee for my deviation?
 Oh, master, why hast thou made me, this blemish?
 Lead me away, swift away, to reconciliation.
 Vanquish my trespass against the rule.
 With triumphant roar spread the news.
 With raucous cry lead me to the gallows.
 Yours is a case for justice, a cause justified
 To spill blood for, more just than my cause,
 More just than causes gone before you.

Exultant conqueror, thou hast prevailed,
 Reaped thy justice with a tumultuous sweep of scythe.
 Was your grip tremulous on the blade as mine was in my passion?
 Did you glean some satisfaction that I did not find in killing mercy,
 To appease conscience, offer a bitter cup or last supper,
 Paint the blame upon a sacrificial lamb or monster?
 But your golden daughter is violated, slain, and dishonored.
 Who has deflowered the vine of compassion?
 It is not I alone. It is not my debauchery.

Vacuum

How shall we fill
 the empty spaces
 where we all
 used to pretend?
 How shall we all
 chart our places?

How shall we
 define the end?

We are all
 just dust specks
 spinning
 round and round.
 Now who's going to
 save us
 when we fall
 to the ground?

The Magic

I have seen magic
 Yield a mysterious light,
 Illuminate the day,
 Animate the clay.
 And it seems tragic
 That I cannot wield its might.

Broken Soldier

Broken Soldier, the war is over.
 Lay down your arms.
 Set aside your scars.
 Your march is done,
 Your battle never won.
 Broken Soldier, what do you aim for?

From Where The Sun Stands

I have seen my final battlefield.
 I'll go quietly as a sheep.
 The hills I thought to be my shield
 Turned out to be too steep.

Surrender is my last endeavor.

I will fight no more, forever.
 I shall hide my face, and weep.
 The courageous ones, sweet freedom's sons,
 Now, all have gone to sleep.

Mirage

Out on a lost and lonely road,
 Across a desolate stretch wandering,
 Parched, and pithy, and pitted,
 Driven by thirst for an oasis,
 At the head of a spring bubbling
 Upon the mossy rocks,
 Finding refreshment from the journey,
 On a green-grass bank reclining,
 On crystal waters drifting freely,
 Pining for the blue blue sky,
 Flying on a fleecy cloud, floating
 In timeless and exquisite repose,
 I stare down at the stars,
 Hoping for a mirage.

No Going Back

A fairy has fallen from grace.
 A fawn has ingressed mortal space.
 Pure was innocence, unravaged by years.
 Peerless was her fair face, now wet with tears.

She now walks a dark track,
 Black trees where elfin lawns were.
 Meadowlarks cry for her,
 But there is no going back.

From The End Of The Hall

I'm down here at the end of the hall.
 At last, I can read the writing on the wall.

I see you behind, not embarking yet.
 Listen very closely to my echoes of regret.

Seek a different corridor, one with dimmer light,
 One where all the hues of truth will not be quite as bright.

Find a hall that's not as straight, with lots of side ways showing,
 That twists and winds about, so you won't know where you're going.

Take the one that people take who claim to have found the door,
 Even though they bear fake maps, and have never been there before.

Walk a hall that branches out in wild, digressing, ways.
 It should keep your curiosity occupied, searching through the maze.

But this hall that I have taken, there's nothing here, my friend.
 I've journeyed here most arduously, and found only the end.

How Shall I Teach Them Horror?

How shall they learn wisdom in paradise?
 How can they gain knowledge in bliss,
 How then obtain omniscience
 In the blindness of nirvana?

With a slight of hand I will delude and enlighten,
 With illusion make truth clear to them.
 I will show them pain,
 For a while, and an end to illustrate forever,
 A clever guise to deceive them,
 A trial of sanity,
 A total absence of rationality.

I will cast them in a prison dark and dank,
 Corrupted as the foundation is laid,
 Corrupted and corrupting,
 And the all of existence for a time,
 Sentence them to mortality,
 Exile them with endless space
 Traversed only by elusive twinkling possibilities,
 Offer no security,
 Remove all surety of emancipation,
 Let them decay
 Yet fear to shed the rot,
 Beg to stay,
 To eat and be eaten,
 And always fear.

I shall cause mystery to weaken their dogmas,
 Give love to mock them,
 Unsatisfiable passions
 And wrath to kindle and burn irrepressibly,
 Quench all lasting affection,
 Suppress joy with despair,
 Offer no hope to surpass the wait for demise.

I shall give them reasoning but no answers,
 Direction with no impetus,
 Seasons with no certainty,
 Despondence as they witness
 Their existence waxing wane,
 Youth wasted then longed for,
 Until they can bare no more,
 Until they abhor the composition,
 Until they see the struggle is in vain.

How shall I teach them horror?
 I shall ignore their prayers,
 Answer with tragedy,
 Make them go friendless and alone,
 Give them an end
 So they might appreciate
 A beginning.

A Rabbit Prayed

A rabbit prayed to a lion one day -
Lord, Lord, save me from the fray.
Make all the eagles go away.
Bless the grass to be green and sweet.
And give me a bit more clover to eat.
Make thistles grow without any briars.
Protect me from snakes and prairie fires.
Limit the encroachment of man.
I guess I've been as good as any rabbit can.
I have kept all the rabbit laws.
I've wiggled my nose and licked my paws.
Make my warren a fine place to hide.
 But the lion gave no answer, just smiled inside.

All The World Shall Never Have Been

The king casts away his crown.
 The neighbor puts away his frown.
 The drowning sailor reclines in repose.
 The dew drop dries on the withering rose.
 The canary sings no more in her nest.
 The madman finds a gentle rest.
 The ocean accepts the sky.
 The mourning mother stills her cry.
 The stars are all wiped away.
 The night embraces day.
 The philosopher no longer wonders why.
 The soldier sits down to die.
 The cancer eats away the pain.
 The wind washes away the rain.
 The moon blots out the sun.
 The poet sees the poem is done.
 The lamb and lion lie in peace.
 The hopeful prayers all cease.
 All shall rest in a meadow green.
 And all the world shall never have been.

What's In Your Head?

What's in your head?
 Does your memory fail?
 Unbury your dead.
 Tell me a tale.
 Weave me a song
 Of your happiness and strife.
 Sing of your life long.
 Relate all of your life.
 Bring out the memory.
 Yell out the history.
 Oh, what I would not give
 To once more live.
 I ask you to show
 From your death bed,
 All that you know.
 What's in your head?

Balanced On A Razor Blade

Balanced on a razor blade,
A mind becomes incisive.
The inclination to grade
One's position becomes persuasive -

As hanging so, in limbo,
Weighing the virtue and crime
Of either side below,
Is a pertinacious waste of time.

Ultimately, the balance shall sway,
To one direction, commit all.
Will must push lassitude away,
And prepare to take the fall.

XVII. Fall

Who Cast The Rock?

Who cast the rock?
 Whom shall I mock?
 He's got no face,
 Just empty space,
 And stones thrown
 All over the place.

The Feast

These grapes sore quench my thirst,
 Burst blood-red within my breast.
 Best kill the fatted lamb for another beast,
 Least bring me fare that may satisfy.
 Cry foul this invitation forced to honor,
 Whore-son the butler, gruesome the cutlery,
 Deviltry the host who will not show.
 Go I then without a lasting trace?
 Face me first, I pray thee, please.

What Were You Thinking?

Silence,
 Are you listening?
 We see your myriad eyes
 As we sleep.
 You are watching.

Can you pity,
 As we?
 Do you know that
 Cats eat mice?
 Mice eat birds.
 Birds eat worms.
 Worms have no bones
 But eagerly consume them.
 (Leprosy eats cats)

Why then are you smiling
 Like a crocodile?
 And these tepid tears?

Do you pleasure
In our doom?

We know how
To kill, too.
We would roast you
On a steel spit,
Slit open your guts,
Spill blood and bowels,
Hang the cold heart
On a hook,
Roast that speechless tongue,
Have the skin for a book.

Why did you give us pity?

Allah Smiles Tonight

Allah smiles tonight
With a jaundiced eye,
Too blind to consider the maxims,
Too stingy to bestow a flask of oil
To anoint the gaping wounds
His scimitar has slashed wide open.

Allah's smile is barbed tonight,
Another wakeful night wresting
With his magnate bearing, his knavery,
Indulgent in the impunity of power,
Licking his lower lip in lustrous denial -
His only innuendo, a reflection of his fiery soul.

Funny Man

Is it really some sleight of hand
That makes this spinning globe stand,
And pits nation against nation?
(There's never been an explanation)
Your broad lips never spoke
Of this silly side show.

But I would like to know.
I never understood the joke.

Inventor

Inventor, tormentor,
What of being sent,
Rent,
Bent,
Discontent?
What is meant?
Repent!

Blasphemy

Oh, God!
The ephemeral,
Hollowed be
Thy name.
Thy will,
Be done!
Shall i kiss
Your ass
Some more?
Shore up
Blessings for another life -
Win a deal
With my zeal,
Shall not covet,
Shall not steal?
And if piety
Doesn't turn out
Just right,
Will you burn
Me for being
The monster
i feel?

i wouldn't trade
Places with you -
Seems you should
Be in hell too,
Cursed like me.
Well, where
Do you think
i've been
"Til now?

Perdition can't be
Much worse.

In any case,
This ain't heaven.
And i can't see
How kingdom come
Will make things even.

Halo

Heigh-ho!
Hail, oh,
Hollow
Hellhole!

My birth
To earth
Decry!
No worth
Am I!

Hello!
Hell, lo!
Hell, oh,
How low!

storm chief

blame rain
on clouds
clouds on storm
storm on
storm chief
cold pelting
trunk shuddering
wing tearing
wickedness wearing
contempt relentlessly
viciousness violently
thunderbolt making
sinister creator
you

Own Up

Excuse me,
but who's in
charge here?
Is there anything
that might soothe
these scars?

I've tried all
the advice -
second sight,
come around,
go around,
birds in flight.

(Geese honking
on an icy day
are nice but
hardly suffice)

And there's no ointment
in the stars - nothing works,
no remedies do.
Everything misses
the point.

Isn't anyone going
to own up
to this?

Demons

Demons, Demons,
Demons of deep despairs,
Who stain the sight of morning sun
With black and gloomy lairs,
Will bind and lead a sickened soul
Down dark and winding stairs,
And drag a heart in heavy chains,
To hell's most dire nightmares.

Vengeance Is Mine

My favorite demon,
Your terrible semen
Made this hell that I'll get you for!

Your favorite birth,
Your fine daughter Earth,
Is a foul universal whore!

All your fair creatures,
Your horrible features,
Better know what's in store!

I'll come back as thunder,
And mow them all under,
Leave their twisted up flesh in a mound!

I'll come back as water,
And drown your fair daughter,
Leave an ocean of waste all around!

I'll come back as fire,
And burn you, damn liar,
Leave a blanket of ash on the ground!

Until I get to,
I won't forget you,
Until you have your pain!

Until I do,
Until I'm through,
I have the comfort of being insane.

Objection From The Bottom Of The Pit

Did you think there was anything more
Than the moment of your suffering?
Set aside the lore.
A little pain, a bit of flesh - it is all you are!

You are dying. You have always been dying.
No heed is given to the grief you are crying.
What would heaven's truth tell

Of the legendary buffeting
Of the fallen star?

The truth is you have already seen hell.
It is your flesh. What greater punishment
Than horror and banishment?
From the bottom of your soul, yell,
And never cease until your time is through.

God, damn you!
You, damn God!
Damn you, God!
Damn God, you!

Worm Berries

"Worm Berries," the Ama guide said,
Brushing the other's hand away,
The white clusters pale and pure
In the dying rays of second eve.

"Edible? Well, quite palatable in tea -
I've been told though never dared try -
Embyros, you see? Legions in each!
Microscopic 'till they reach intestines,
Then they grow like no other known!

No pain at all, just numb toes
And warm repose when the roots
Find the nerves. Then it's done -
Seen a lot of fine bushes growing from
What were once fine friends.

May I suggest a different snack tonight
If it's all the same to you?"

Therefore

When I no longer think,
What am I to be?

I'm a...I'm a...I'm a...train!

Oh!
Watch me steam away!

A train is loose...
here comes the caboose.....

Montage From A Madman's Mind

flashbacks in a supermarket line
smell of cottage cheese
moronic woman with a magazine
ornery usher in a movie theater
hey, asshole, leave the kid alone
drone of horseflies
spring melt at Willow Flats
squirrels dodging M-16 bullets
cobwebs in the fruit cellar
just get the hell out
move move move
Cambodian strip girl
harem dancers shaking
jingle of sacrament trays
breath of a drunken barfly
feel of dog shit between my toes
a look of rejection
passing face of a friend of a used lover
fat fish-seller with a maroon tub of mackerel
amusement at the foreigner
no front teeth
jade celadon run under an overloaded bus tire
the smell of Christmas eve
white-haired countenance of old man benevolence
angels singing on high
alleluia
glory be
from sea to shining sea
this is not my street
too far from home
just take the goddamn money
my hands don't bend that way but fit together neatly

I SEE CLEARLY NOW

give
said the little stream
redneck farmer in a bad suit
and if I don't hurt her she'll do me no harm
ignorant suspicion
intercom from the principal's office
the people's party has found you guilty of treason
fold your arms, young man
reverently
quietly
torture is the mainstay of our diet in
paradise
I pledge allegiance to the flag
blow that trombone, band boy
dumb nigger can't tie his combat boots
take your beating like a man
I didn't break the fat man's lights,
but I crushed his toilet in retribution
a scout is trustworthy
how many ways can I cheat on a merit badge
gum machine in a German train station
a hell of a roundhouse
I can kick the sky
there is no pain
the blisters have healed
good boy
good dog
an Iranian girl with thick lips and a seductive gaze
musty scent of magazines under the bushes of a middle
school
not another peep out of you
peep
silent walk to the execution chamber
drive in the president's car
to the end of the hall
the face of dark sarcasm
IMPORTANT MAN behind the desk
fuck you
Jesus wants me for a sunbeam
I've seen a head come off
like cow tongues in trays
singed dogs in a restaurant alley
you wake up in the morning at a quarter to five
and brush your teeth
just brush your teeth

if I had a gun, I would use it
 now
 stop the music
 the *moon* is asymmetrical relative to the
 porch rail

The Leak In The Dam

The maniac forgot to duck,
 And found himself a bit moonstruck.
 It knocked his marbles down a well,
 And made a crack form in his bell.
 Now the bats are in his belfry.
 And the smoke won't go up his chimney.
 And his ducks are swimming willy-nilly.
 And the Bedlamites are acting really silly.
 Someone forgot the back gate latch.
 They did not close the booby hatch.
 They left a screw loose in the wall,
 And a screwball took a doting fall.
 The madlings must have been around,
 Broke the lock without a sound.
 The cuckoo sang a crackpot tune,
 A wacky cry like a crack-brain loon.
 The bug house door swung open wide.
 The ravers all raved free outside.
 It was fun time at the funny farm.
 A hare brain rang a fire alarm.
 The neurotics were feeling paranoid
 Of ding-a-lings they should avoid.
 But they danced all day with the gaga wacks,
 Stepped on bricks, and watched for cracks.
 And the nuts all played a mad card game.
 But the cards they had were all the same.
 So they couldn't win and they couldn't lose.
 They could only draw short straws to choose
 Which nut could never go back in
 The non compos at the loony bin.
 No more room for the psychopath.
 No more asylum from his wrath.
 It was too late for Tom O' Bedlam.
 Too late to stop the leak in the dam.

Dark Side Of The Moon

I'll meet you on the dark side of the moon.
 I'll be going there soon,
 To a quiet corner of the sky.
 The time is drawing nigh.

Soon the dam will thunder open wide.
 The lunatic, free to run outside,
 Will dance a jig upon the grass
 And wait for the afternoon to pass.

The lunatic is going to dance.
 The lunatic is going to prance.
 The evening shadows shall certainly enhance
 The changing direction of his trance.

Soon the thoughts are going to flood,
 Foreboding waves come crashing down.
 The lunatic must swim or drown.
 He'll bathe his troubles all in blood.

The lunatic cannot stay.
 The lunatic must go away.
 He has to leave. He has to run.
 The grass and flowers, at last, have won.

I am going to fly.
 I am never going to die.
 I'm going to hide from the sun.
 Very soon now, it should be done.

And when your time is through,
 You can join me too.
 Together we will sing out of tune.
 I'll meet you on the dark side of the moon.

Mother

She bore,
Should have
Dropped me
On the floor -
Let me be
Unborn
As before.

How
Could she
Adore,
Another
Minute more,
The misery
She bore?

Go To Sleep, My Little Baby

Hush-a-bye, don't you cry.
Go to sleep, my little baby.
Shadows creep, up from the deep,
Come to take away my baby.
The sun will cease. Rest in peace.
Go to sleep, my little baby.
Cold, wet, earth to cradle your birth -
Off to sleep now, little baby.
Hush-a-bye, all things die.
Go to sleep, my little baby.

Siren

Sweet bringer of ominous calm,
I listen diligently for thy distant call,
Prepared soul-through to take the final fall,
Wrapped irrevocably in thy alluring balm.

For thy seductive embrace I long!
Siren, save me from this sea of sadness!
Serenade me softly to peaceful madness!
Intone my destiny with lips of silent song.

Dictate Of Oblivion

O dictate of oblivion, master of eternal never,
Almighty judge, omnipotent magnate,
Damn my wretched being to fate -
This existence expiring in a rush towards forever.
Blind are my eyes to all but your face.
I await your dreadful kiss,
Your utter embrace -
Precarious my soul, resigned to totter at the edge of the abyss!

XVII. Abyss

Last Of The 222nd Terrestrial Assault Battalion

In exquisite repose he lay,
 Upon a hillside knoll of home,
 The soil of his motherland,
 Substance of his marrow bone,
 The core of his fathers gone.
 Highland grass grew lush beneath,
 Drew out the fire of memories,
 Absorbed the ache of foreign deeds
 And blights upon his noble creed.

Aroma lay upon the breeze
 Of herb and flower gone to seed,
 Beneath a blue infinity of
 Lathia's tranquillity. Of Lathia
 The finches sang, and drank
 Sweet drinks from crystal streams,
 And brought to shock late autumn dreams
 From demigods upon the sky.

Peace, said the world.
Peace, said the day.
Peace, said the way of Lathia.

"Peace," Montrog uttered to the world.
 And from his lips warm breath unfurled
 That lifted on the chill of air
 Like spirits come in misty swirls.

Of peace he thought and felt the pain
 Of battles fought and lost in vain,
 Of mockery contrived to stain
 The will of gods and words of men.
 No peace in life, no peace again,
 Until all life's oblivion,
 Until the gods of Lathia
 Explain away the days.

In his mind he said, *no more* -
 No more to pain and horror's ways.
 The holy writs all spoke of peace,
 Mortality a testing place of right
 And wrong and holy grace.
 Good Lathia the gods had made

To justify a sore disgrace
Of lesser worlds they wrought in shame,
Of lesser worlds that lost their way.

On Lathia death came as light,
No horror from the other side,
A friend to usher swift away
A soul to sleep on winter night,
The ugly death of other worlds
No jurisdiction here to wield,
No frightful screams of agony,
Nor gurgling cries of blooded lungs,
Nor e'er the pounding of the guns.
No horror here, the horror done.

He reached and found the greenery,
And pulled a handful by the roots
And held the fragrance to his cheek,
The sweet spice of his ancient race,
Not else but wholesome gentle life,
Yet blinded by a cannon flash,
And stench of fire within his brain -
Foreign grounds now beaten down
Before the hand of anarchy,
A body fallen at his feet,
And half a head, the eyes a stare,
A friendly gaze that was no more
For honor seeking in the blaze,
Long led astray by godless men,
While all gods turned their face away.

No honor in the death of friends.
No honor in the bloody ends for
Which the worlds of others waged,
For interest sons of honor paid,
Honor all the while betrayed
By faceless, godless men.

Says the Writ, *What is man to ask
Why rivers flow into the sea, into the deep?
What is for the gods is for the gods.*

And so his mortal conscience clean,
Montrog released the priming pin,
And held the foreign tool of death,
With shaking hand, upon his breast.

"Dear Lathia," he cried aloud,
From deep within his wretched soul.
And gods gave ear to his distress,
Thus sent a gust of winter breath
To clear the tear drops from his eyes,
And soothe the blood upon his chest.

A Land

There's a land where I cannot go.
There's a visionary place
That time doesn't know,
Or there's only space.
You've gone there, I fear.
And I am here.

Shall I Join You?

Shall I join you there?
Shall I forsake air?
Shall I shed my weight?

Dear light, what is true?
Why must I hesitate,
Before I join you?

The Answer

What I seek, I cannot say,
For I have vainly searched many seasons
All diverging into winter.

When I was a boy,
I caught a fleeting glimpse
Upon a sunny summer's day.

In the fragrance of an arbor rose,
I thought I saw the answer there,
Drifting to me upon the transient air.

I tried to understand but it was gone.
Now I have grown, the dream is done.
I know no more than I knew then.

I cling to remnants of autumn days,
Now that spring is merely rumors of breeze
Blowing through the trees at evening.

Should I shed tears for you?
Shall I despair for you?
Or have you found the answer there?

Beneath the earth and settling snow,
Has truth eluded you eternally,
As I fear?

Lights Out

Splattered brains
Are no more gruesome
Than a day
In a rest home
With cheery bulletins
To stare at on the wall,
The wait for pleasant nurses
To clap my hands for me,
And wipe my shit for me,
And making believe
There's more than clean diapers
And strained peas for supper.

Why rage against the dying light,
When night has come?

I think I'll go out with a bang -
No Beethoven refrains to end the comedy,
Just one staccato note I'll never hear -
Idaho air and a twelve-gauge,
Hemingway's ghost in my ear,
Good shot, man, very clean.

The Chamber Of The Spurious Dust

In the bowels of a chamber tower,
By the glow of a sulfur lamp,
The haggard one moved languidly
Through the beads of the floor stone damp.

By the flicker of a brimstone fire,
In the curl of a genie smoke,
The damned son took freedom form,
As the grating of a door bolt spoke.

All the shackles of a thousand years
In a sparrow's hour fell to rust,
And a stiff hemp wick freed an ancient power,
From the chambers of the spurious dust.

Surprised?

There is nothing more dismaying
Than an architect's debacle -
The 'élan vital decaying,
A stench of decades reeking,
Never speaking of demise,
These tabernacle walls crumbling,
Depending on self-deceit to cope,
Mumbling words of comfort,
Sweet placating lies
To disguise a disquieting truth,
Stumbling about in ignorance,
Seeking hope in decadence,
Fumbling for assurance of youth,
Then awakened from a trance,
And surprised that it ends.

Conclusion

Eternal wind,
Upon this threshold breath
Draw forever cold.

Enter Then, Mystery

I will not yield,
 Yet shall yield,
 Will not but shall,
 Opposing not,
 Abetting not,
 Powerless to oppose,
 Loathe to abet,
 Resigned as I am.

Close then, curtain.
 Enter then, mystery.

The Suicide Society

Hear ye! Hear ye!
 The Suicide Society
 Semiannual meeting
 Is now in session.
 To all, a hearty greeting!
 Though by way of confession,
 I must confess
 That I profess
 To be the only member
 Since last December.
 The others canceled membership.
 They took the trip
 We've all been planning.
 So much for the banning
 Of personal initiative!
 Now there's no alternative
 But to replan our itinerary,
 Since the funerary
 Expenses really blew our last dime.
 Oh, well! I'm still here to pay.
 By the way,
 Can anybody take the minutes for next time?

Tea Time

I think I'll drink some hemlock tea
 To chill the warmth inside of me.
 I think I'll steep a bit of bane
 To help me sleep this afternoon.
 The hour is coming soon.
 Off to sleepy lane!
 I believe I'll put on the pot.
 Some arsenic should hit the spot,
 With cyanide biscuits on a flowery plate.
 It's time for tea. I shan't be late!

Term Paper

To whom it may concern: Don't concern yourself at all.
 I'm just preparing my scholarship for the up and coming fall.
 I believe it's time to graduate,
 Or withdraw completely if it's not too late.
 The prerequisites have all been met.
 My tuition has been paid.
 I'll await my final grade.
 But don't worry about my transcripts just yet.
 My cap and gown feel a bit too tight.
I. Refer to bibliography, How To Grade A Grave Site.

The Final Cut

Practice has been long and intense.
 But practice makes for a perfect performance.
 You've rehearsed a thousand times in your head.
 So, get out there, and knock 'em dead!
 You've honed your talent to a razor edge.
 Now, you must ascend a monumental ledge,
 Before the curtain can draw shut.
 It's time to make the final cut.

The Sarcophagus

The sarcophagus retains
 An exacting likeness of youth.
 For a moment, it maintains
 A living element of truth.

The sarcophagus still smiles
 As if in everlasting trust,
 Although creation reviles,
 Though its soul has long turned to dust.

But the sarcophagus decays.
 On the mercy of clime depend
 All surrenders to time's forays.
 And death gloats, blissful, to the end.

Croon

Croon, croon the ancient tune,
 The loon-note moan the ancients croon.
 You view the song within the moon,
 The melody, the meter, the rune.
 Croon of lost bloom,
 The soon coming doom.
 Slowly groan of flesh and bone.
 Lowly go and croon alone.
 Swoon long and low at nocturnal noon.

Forever Home

Rest, my weary friend.
 At last you've found the end
 Of all suffering and strife -
 The conclusion of this life.

Is that not what you sought,
 After all the battles fought -
 Respite from mortal foes,
 In exquisite repose?

You've made your last stand,
 Quite conquered pain's dominion,

With a final sweep of hand
 Silenced the world's opinion.

Your journey is complete.
 Sound the last retreat.
 No more must you roam.
 At last, forever home!

I Must Go Alone To My Bed

I am a weary wanderer
 On a lonesome and winding road.
 I am a daily ponderer.
 I bear a ponderous load.

My shoes are worn down to the soles.
 My pants are rent with gaping holes.
 But I still maintain my feet
 And earth as a temporal seat.

I have nothing to call my own.
 All I possess, I do on loan.
 All my possessions I shall shed
 Down to the last verse in my head.

And whether I'll taste victory
 Before I face my last defeat
 Is an unrecorded story.
 But gain and loss I shall both meet.

I have a few more miles to go.
 I have a few more thoughts to know,
 And my destination to see
 When I arrive at destiny.

Shed no tears when I pass on by.
 We must face both drought and rain.
 It is only torture to cry.
 Perhaps our paths may join again.

Every road eventually ends
 As love passed far beyond our tread.
 Each friendship leads to parting friends.
 I must go alone to my bed.

Oh, Sleep

Sleep comes not easily in the ensuing day.
 Rest comes on as a numbing sensation.
 Eyes turn to crystal but refuse to dim.
 Stand at my shoulder, oh, sleep!
 Terminate this waking restless day!
 Come, dreamless night!
 Bring thy lusterless paler.
 Still my palpitating agony.
 Drape my agitated face with shadows.
 Dress my pain, my aching distress.
 Oh, sleep, where is thy sting?

I Go, Yet I Stay

I am here, and you there, and distance in between.
 I go.
 And you stay.
 But lingers my heart eviscerated.
 I must leave my treasure, my jewels.
 I depart in poverty.
 I embark in despair.
 My diamond, my emerald, and my ruby, I leave.
 This day, I weep bitterly.
 But I have no tears to shed.
 My eyes are barren and blind.
 I have abandoned my life.
 I am torn from my love.
 I go, yet I stay.

May Or May Not

Is it better to burn out than to fade away?
 Which is better, night or day?
 Should one be morose or gay?
 Should one work or play?
 Is it better to leave or stay?
 To live might not be best, but it may.

My Soul Take

I often dream that this dream has passed,
 See visions beyond my final breath -
 Mere glimpses of concluding despair,
 And onward to a blackness so vast,
 Eternally wandering the borders of death,
 Earnestly searching for an end to this nightmare.

Oh, God! Please let me wake!
 Oh, maker, my soul take!

A Minute To Midnight

Gone, gone, gone!
 The final day is done.
 Pain, pain, pain,
 And only fear remain!
 Life, life, life,
 Is nothing more than strife!
 Rue, rue, rue,
 In knowing it is through!
 Dark, dark, dark,
 Without another spark!
 Cold, cold, cold!
 The coming of the mold!
 Rot, rot, rot!
 Decay is all I've got!
 Woe, woe, woe!
 Where did the moments go?
 Past, past, past!
 My time has gone so fast!
 Tock, tock, tock,
 Like ticking of a clock!
 Fright, fright, fright!
 A minute to midnight!

This Dark Night

How alone I am in this crowd!
 The memories of those I love,
 In my head, are speaking aloud.
 I therefore, to be heard above,

Raise my voice in lonely reply,
 Say the things I want to say
 Before the chance crawls away
 Like some worn dog gone off to die.

Oh, how lonely is solitude!
 How sorrowful is memory!
 How capricious this attitude
 Of my long bygone history!

The ghosts awaken from silence,
 To the forefront of consciousness.
 I can offer no recompense
 To the restless souls I suppress.

Oh, solitude, what frightful might!
 How fretful is my mumbling!
 How inept my mind's fumbling
 For a companion, this dark night.

Scream Of Silence

Someone, please listen to me!
 I am out here in a black sea.
 Eternal darkness has swallowed entirely
 All that I shall ever be.
 Though I shriek, or whimper softly,
 No one ever notices that I am here.

I would try to get back on my feet,
 But I am so cold and wet with fear.
 Like an eviscerated lamb, I hopelessly bleat.
 I roar like a lion, like a mad hyena laugh.
 I squeak like a mouse, caterwaul like a snot-nose calf.
 I squeal my rabbit-in-a-trap pain.

I scream out my terror in vain,
 But no one shall ever hear me.

Home No More

Home no more!
 Silence beyond the door!
 What wayward wind
 Blows as a host?
 Which moments sinned
 Are measured most?
 To naught entrust
 What here has passed,
 When bones are dust,
 And graves are grassed.

Eternal Romance

I am in love with death,
 My only redeemer of breath,
 My only true lover,
 His vow like no other -

Our betrothal from birth.
 I shall take him to bed.
 Forever shall we wed,
 And elope from this earth.

Spirits Of The Mist

Does anyone see me floating here?
 It seems I've become lighter than air.
 There is no need to feel fear.
 I just came to ask if you care
 Enough to tell me how to go.
 I want to pass on, but I don't know where.
 Listen, up above the trees, up in the leaves there.
 It is I, passing as the wind might blow.

Surrender

I surrender to the seeping glass,
 Twilight creeping fast upon my wisdom,
 My eyes dimming at the shadows shifting,
 The sands sifting past my fragile grasp.

Sad And Sleepy Twilight

Sad and sleepy twilight,
 Lie your head upon the breast of night.
 Weary time has come and gone.
 Pillow your soul on tranquillity.
 Make your bed a starry flight.
 Beneath a blanket of eternity,
 Slumber until dawn.
 Slumber until dawn.

The Struggle

Sleepy twilight ceiling,
 Hazy dreaming evening,
 Pass away, oh, pass away
 Into oblivion!

A song of old,
 To sing the heart to stupor,
 Sinking there, is sinking
 Off to rest.

Oh! Avid voice of ambition,
 Still thy quaking tone!
 The day is done!
 The night has come!

The struggle, at last, is over!

Until I Sleep

Can you hear my heart weeping?
 Can you feel my soul seeping away?
 I cannot stay.
 The night is deep.
 Hold me close, until I sleep.

Embarkation

Embryonic entity clinging feebly to these fetal bonds,
 Against these powers wrought to tear it outward into darkness,
 Struggling, reluctant more than any word to face this final birthing,
 Clinging, clinging feebly, deeming this fleshly womb all of being,
 I resist with tremulant cries my departure.

Your Fire

Where did your fire go -
 That last candescent glow
 Of light, of life, of thought,
 That once burned so hot?
 That final spark of divinity
 Lifting in a wisp to infinity!

Dry Leaf

Oh, dry leaf, insignificant and transient,
 Formed so, and abandoned so,
 That your passing should have a fixed course,
 That your rustling might linger for a time more,
 That remembrance of your passing might linger,
 This is the core want of my substance.
 This is the dire need of my soul, oh, dry leaf.

XVIII. Redemption

The Measure Of Victory

What is in a name but empty, echoing, veneration?
 Honor is no more than a withering garland.
 On the widespread earth there is no lasting fortune to be found.
 All roads lead to fate.
 All things equate to moldering ashes,
 And fools laughing and quarreling and straight-away weeping,
 And mongrels dueling for a bone.

Choosing not to pass life away in a calm flow of bliss,
 Not waiting in tranquillity for extinction or removal to another state,
 Roaming foreign legions in Olympic defiance,
 A gladiator enters the arena alone,
 And the coming and going put aside,
 Seizes the opportunity to rule the day.
 And how he stands his ground for a time,
 This is the measure of victory.

Protagonist

A protagonist am I,
 An actor upon a stage.
 Each drama passes me by
 As a script that I must wage.
 I don't yet know the story.
 I can't influence the end.
 But I can choose my glory.
 On my act the scenes depend.

To A Better Day

In his prison cell,
 In his walls of flesh,
 In his living hell,
 In his earthly mesh,

He found inner might -
 An eternal light
 To brighten his way
 To a better day.

Refusal

In the midnight hour,
I screamed, *no, no, no!*

With a raging glower,
I looked down below,

With a bloody cry,
I'll take your hardest blow!

I refuse to die!
I won't take this woe!

I intend to stay!
I will not go!

Give me one more day,
To see the world glow!

In the face of hell,
I let my anger flow.

With a rebel yell,
I cried, *no, no, no!*

A Few Steps More

Of dust I am. Yet in the sand,
I shall leave a well-defined trail,
So others, come to where I stand,
May proceed further, where I fail.

Firmly Rooted

Ardent vine of mine, wither as all things must!
But death shall dull his blade before thou art dust!

The Writ Of Creation's Power

Time, stay thy stand a moment more!
Spare my soul a lasting thought,
A concluding prayer before
My supplication is naught!

O Allah, Buddha, Christ! O God!
O Demon of the dark deep!
Hold my trembling hand, while I nod
Away to the final sleep!

I go as a lamb to slaughter,
My spirit as pure as fire,
My heart flowing as clear water,
With hope as my only choir.

And whether to heaven or hell,
Or to some cold, dreamless, space,
What prophetic savior can tell?
Or if my tears will leave a trace!

Away childish consternation!
I go where forever goes!
Let faith be my consecration!
I meet eternal repose!

Let peace be at my side - my guide
At this long-awaited hour.
My destiny I will abide -
The writ of creation's power.

Exhortation

Look heavenward, O earthly creation,
All souls since time's foundation!
Crawl no more on this lowly floor!
Cast thy gaze upward for evermore!
Arm in arm, let's to eternal expansion!
Aim for the stars - our celestial mansion!

Demon Night

O demon night,
 God of twilight,
 What do these visions tell,
 These scenes you've sent of dismal death,
 Of sorrowful sorrowful hell,
 Blown to my soul on your sulfurous breath?

I have dreamed through your eyes,
 Seen through your murky lies,
 And set my sight on a tranquil end.
 Do not mock me with your gruesome blight.
 I wear the shrouds of eternal light.
 In me you have no friend.

Awake

Awake, sleeping one!
 Shake the gossamer dreams from your eyes.
 Morning has begun.
 Push the shadows aside, and arise.

So long you've been gone,
 Slumbering for listless yearning's sake,
 Through night without dawn,
 That you have forgotten how to wake.

Through infinity
 You may sleep, but for now face the day,
 The divinity.
 Take it, and make of it what you may.

Alive Again

Alive again! Back from the dead!
 I have arisen from my tomb!
 I've cast aside all shrouds of gloom,
 And face the rays of life instead!

I breathe once more! I walk on high!
 I tread on shadows of the past!
 Who cares how long this light shall last!
 For a time, I can touch the sky!

Stand Your Ground

You can choose to win or loose.
 You can roll with the blows,
 Or fall to your knees.
 You can laugh naked in blizzard snows,
 Or blow in the breeze.
 The fight is here!
 Stand your ground!
 Show no fear! Make your sound,
 Unless to scream in silence, in utter defiance.
 Rave, and rant, and scratch, and bite!
 Don't go down without a fight!

Oath Of Defiance

Gods, titans, bullies, I'm calling you out!
 How you once scared me soul-through -
 Made me run, tail-tucked, for a sanctuary of doubt!

But now I see clear through you.
 I have grown older -
 Much bolder!

Here, I make my stand!
 I have drawn a line in the sand.
 I dare you to cross, to knock the chip from my shoulder!

I won't back down - no surrender, no retreat!
 I vow defiance, till victory or defeat!

Hail Caesar

There is no way out
 Of this colosseum -
 This, our mausoleum.
 Let there be no doubt.

We must stand and fight,
 Though we die in the ring.
 Our form is everything -
 A show of soul might.

O god of the arena, this day see,
 We who are about to die salute thee.

Oh, West-Charging Charioteer

Oh, west-charging charioteer,
 Driving with your lightening spear,
 Sower and destroyer,
 Stone-hearted lawyer,

I will not go,
 Not as the falling leaves must blow,
 Though you command it so,
 Not without a show!

I will have my say,
 While I have my day.
 I will make you pay,
 Put your colossal ego at bay!

Against your omnipotent hand,
 I shall make a stand.
 I shall not run with the driven herd.
 While I have tongue, I have word!

Though you wrap me in your dark embrace,
 Cast me out in deepest space,
 Snuff me out without a trace,
 With my last breath, I spit in your face!

Fabric Of Existence

Here is my thread, Clotho.
 Weave me as you please.
 Intertwine my destiny
 As you see wisdom.

Star Burned Out

Star burned out,
 You were divine!
 There lingers no doubt
 Of your shine -
 Enduring space
 Where blazed a brilliant light,

An eternal shadow trace
 On the epitaph of night.

Sun lit and extinguished in a day,
 Passionate energy spent
 Not to languor dim and wax cold away,
 But for a radiant moment meant,
 To glory you did aspire,
 To searing fame,
 You, born of fire,
 Consumed by flame.

Weep O Stars!

Who better knows the worth of bliss
 Than one who has lost it outright?
 How the sullen skies truly miss
 Daybreak, at the coming of night!

Weep O stars! Bewail our fate!
 Alas! The light is done!
 The time is too late!
 Consolation we have none.

O lost friend of mine!
 O passing soul fire!
 Your radiance was divine,
 Shall forever inspire!

What measure of grief can I impart?
 This much let me avow:
 For the warmth you left upon my heart,
 I leave a lingering kiss upon your brow.

For The Going

What is worth my words? I ask!
 What worthy thought or notion or task?
 Should I sing of loss or love,
 Of life and light, or darkness and hate?
 Should I simply wait
 For inspiration from above?
 Should I pray to gods to grant me power

To reveal the secrets from on high?
Should I set my faith in a flower,
And lose it when wilt comes by?

My simple words I will share
With you, my sister, my brother!
One soul links arms with another,
And makes the going easier to bear.

Make Joy My Monument

Make joy my monument.
No pyramid I seek.
When I die,
I will go.
Give me no coffin, no tomb,
No crypt's dreadful gloom!
Burn me on a rainbow.
Throw my ashes to the sky.
Shout from the highest peak,
To eternity I was sent!

A Man Went Forth

A man went forth to change the world,
Constraining his will not to wander from the course,
Armed only with his senses and his aspirations,
Undaunted by his perceivable human weaknesses,
Undaunted by the prospect of failing abysmally,
Undaunted by the emptiness surrounding his habitation,
Beseeching the muses to alleviate his desires,
Discovering all he'd ever thought already written in philosophy,
Gazing at the agelong track trod barren before him,
Seeking to cultivate something more than he could see,
Sensing an elusive word he wished to taste -
An acacia fragrance, ambrosial in its essence,
Alliaceous on his tongue, bitter and intimidating.
Yet he drank the bitter cup he was compelled to drink,
And swallowed his pride for his passion's sake.
And if he perceived shame, he could not accept it,
Though his appendages were naked in the daylight
For the world to mutely witness his ambulating,
And taunt his mistakes should he stumble.

The Final Fence

The ancient fish crawled out of the sea,
And whispered in my ear to me.

"What difference in an eagle or flea,
What significance in how we came to be,
Why I became you, and you became me?
Evolution is eventuality.
In a year or a day,
Who's to say I shall not fly away?
To whom shall I pray?
Fact is, I shan't stay.
I have legs to grow,
Wings to show.
I'll be a man someday,
And in a million mornings hence,
Perhaps a god, when I leap the final fence."

A Plan

Chance chemical rendezvous, you say,
Or mud molded into ribs,
Maybe just madness spinning
Wildly on its axis -
No beginning or end.
But I see design -
Here a shape,
There a color scheme,
A dream for some,
Nightmare for others,
Still a plan,
A solution plotted,
Evolution from what to what,
From a cell to a god,
Or just oblivion.
Heaven or Hell,
Still a plan!

The Fifth Element

Life is bright with this dreamy light -
 Heart of fire, water, wind, and earth -
 A faint sheen of prismatic white
 That suffuses muscadine mirth
 Into inert bodies of mud.
 What might animates flesh and blood!
 Perchance an element abides,
 A fifth part of the greater whole,
 That forms the substance of the soul -
 A power that over all presides.

Trace of Passing

Transient rustle of wind in dry leaves,
 Heave up sand in mountains!
 Let arid blasts of passion howl,
 Raging against the granite!
 Make a trace of passing.

What It Comes Down To

Sucking marrow is too passive for me.
 I'll grasp life by the throat,
 And squeeze 'till there's utterance.

Making Peace

Which path to take from here on out,
 What things a broken soul must do,
 All questions of a mortal's doubt,
 Who can better perceive than you?

All rites of worldly angst forsake!
 Heed well your inner beckoning!
 All souls must a pilgrimage take,
 And with peace make a reckoning.

Rose For A Nightingale

Nightingale, thou art not forlorn,
 Thy sacrifice not made in vain -
 That hung thy life upon a thorn,
 And tempered true love with its stain.

Purity, thou art not slighted
 By the spurn of a thankless sway.
 Thy charity stands unblighted,
 Though the whole world withers away.

Nightingale, thy sweet notes impart
 The tenets of a godly role.
 I hold thy bloom against my heart,
 And sing thy song within my soul.

Gardens Of My Dreams

In my dream, I dreamed we dream
 That what we see is what we deem
 To be real - we esteem as truth.
 I had visions of endless youth,
 Of daisies in a sunbeam,
 Of sun beaming from my eyes,
 Of perfume-scented skies,
 Of blossoms blooming in a kiss
 On my cheek in eternal bliss.
 What difference night or day?
 What wise intelligence can say
 That what I see, or seek, or seem,
 Is less real than flowers are,
 Or the light of an afternoon star
 Warming the gardens of my dreams?

Cathedral

The meadow was wide and flowing
 To the end of mortal domain,
 Then woods directed the going,
 Led me down a meandrous lane.

The track had been trod much before,
 Through carpet of clover and grass,
 A trail worn through the forest floor
 By lost pilgrims off to find mass.

The birches formed a corridor
 Of branches bowed into an arch,
 Leading to a cathedral door
 At the end of a morning's march.

There, in a cathedral white, light
 Consecrating pious flowers
 Who congregated in plain sight
 Of truth's most holy of bowers,

I advanced like a solemn nun
 To the center of reverence,
 And stood at an altar of sun,
 To pray for a while in silence.

Visions Of Eternity

Whispers waving grains of this mystery.
 Dry rasping in golden canes of reeds it sings.
 On heather it breathes such gentle breaths,
 And sways green conifers at solstice
 With powdered wisps of white.
 In whispers that no years suffice measure,
 Flow these currents beyond the oceans of days,
 Articulate what words might not utter,
 Speak of powers turning planets and forming stars.

Sings this theme
 From all twinkling shards of infinity.
 Sings this of power and intelligence.
 Sings this of design laid down in laws,
 Gives form purpose, and purpose to form,

Weaves the course of planets into one fabric,
 Beginning at the end and rolling again into itself.

Sublimely this veil is draped,
 Yet parting at a soft breath.
 An omnipresent curtain is this,
 And a web in the corner of a barn window.
 Measure the strands of glistening silk
 With your intuition and your senses.
 Observe the momentary form of this wonder.
 Weigh it with hourglass precision.

Science, set your instruments to the task.
 See if it fails expectation, or exceeds it.
 Put your best minds to the task.
 Put nations to the task, and worlds to the task.
 Dissect the manifestations of your curiosity,
 If it pleases you, if it need be.
 Tear the heart out straightaway.
 Take it from the man, and hold it to your eye.
 Hold it in your hand and in your mind,
 And with your deepest consideration,
 Tell why it fails to pump eternal life -
 All this and then some to find only simplicity,
 That it comes back to one drop of dew on a morning grass,
 And life come anew in spring,
 And new seasons to push the old aside, away,
 The night to move aside day,
 And on to an adjacent second and minute and hour,
 And onward forever, to eternity,
 Everlasting.

Everlasting are the days.
 Everlasting flow the tides of time.
 Everlasting flow the springs on the hillside,
 To the streams,
 To the rivers,
 To the seas,
 To the sky,
 To the rains,
 To the springs on the hillside.

Will an hour change the rising and falling of the tide?
 Will a timepiece measure the day?

Can a standing oak alter the sky more than the flutter of laced wings
in a storm?

Nay speaks the speechless rustling of cottonwood.
Nay speaks the churning water beneath the mill wheel.
Nay speaks the drone of cicada at noon.
Heed or be not.
There is no spring in timeless realms!
No death in eternity's fire!

See the street dog wag a heavy tail.
Weighed down is this fiend by blackened bowels.
Despise the sight if you must,
Deplore the foulness dragged along behind,
Or love it, and encourage the autumn leaves to linger.
But take the day as it comes, and lay down with peace in the evening.
Embrace the temporal end as a sweet, bosom, friend.
Sing the disease, heed the myriad legions feeding.
Divine are the organisms breeding in your blood.
Teeming are they and consuming.
Number them all and weigh them up.
Make a toll of the besieging elements.
Measure and record the deterioration of youth.
Drink deep depths of profundity until you are giddy.

Roll in the truth, you street dog,
Savor the elixir of reality.
Wag your heavy tail in fury.
Eviscerate your festering carcinoma with a single slash of a saber.
Cut to the bare bone with a blade keenly honed.
Tear these moth-eaten shrouds away from you.
Break asunder the bonds of ignorance with a single nod of your head.
Silence the specters of superstition with a smile and a sigh.
Take the threads of truth as they unravel.
Take the whole and hold it to your breast.
Is it not what you are, or not what you wish?

Wish for no more than the whole of reality.
Does a sparrow not have as much truth as a star or a tree?
Call a tree yours if you must.
Or make no claim at all.
It shall still be when you have become dust.
By the law that gave you sight, esteem it free.
Take a saw to your core, and expose the rings within.
Sharpen your senses on the gritty edge of reality.
Cut to the bone.
Cut to the soul.

Sing as sweetly as you can.
Sing all the tunes you know.
With all your ephemeral breath, sing sweetly.
Sweet is the life springing from death,
Sweeter still the day before death.
Spit on sorrow.
Damn the remorse with a tempest rage.
Curse the end, and curse the beginning if you must,
But live for the day,
And sing as sweetly as you can.
Listen not for the bells that ring on the morrow.
Make your music while you may.
Write joy as an epitaph, while life burns bright.

Night will not terminate the yearning of mind and soul.
This light will burn in the fires of infinity.
The color of the morning is painted on darkness.
(Suns will blacken and give way to other suns)

Constant is change,
Ever breaking the shackles of attachment.
Ever turn the cycles of change.
There is death only in the stagnant cesspool of constancy.
Life lies in creation.
Ever brings creation new change!
Ever blossoms spring through winter!
Where is wisdom if all has been said?
Where is learning if all things are known?

Glory ever to the moments passed!
Glory then to the moment!
Glory then to the moments not yet arrived!
Epic heroes rise to this occasion, to this moment!
Occasion this moment and write it for the morning to come.
Seize the sands before they slip away.

Glory to the man who carved an antelope on a rock in the desert!
Glory to the antelope, and glory to the rock!
Glory to the desert, succulent cradle!
Refreshing stage in the eternal scheme!
Glory be to the cacti! Glory to the sandy waste!
Glory in the darkest holes beneath!
Glory be to the scorpion, and to its sting!
Sting away life! Sting to death! Sting for life!
Sting clarity into the nature of all things!

Rise in the morning and see frost on the willows.
 Witness the fog lifting from emerald waters of a northern lake.
 See your reflection in the wing of a dragonfly.
 Hear the words of your life
 Sung on the scintillating tongue of lark and whippoorwill.
 See them lift on a skyward monarch.
 Touch this song, the snowflake wonder on your eye lashes.
 See the widow black spin gossamer miracles in the eaves.
 Sings the wind of this in the trees, in the leaves and branches.
 Sings all creation.

Sing sweetly then.
 Sing then of swamp and bayou, of all mountains and hills.
 Sing of step and prairie, of plateau and frosted arctic.
 A song for all is your breath.
 Take the moon on a tail of fire.
 Make higher still for Venus and Jupiter.
 Aspire to them.
 Tie them to you with your thoughts.
 Feel them bound to you with molecular cords.
 And still the earth will have you,
 And the worms your flesh,
 And the rocks your bones.

Take your place where it is.
 Wear your skin without shame.
 Eat your meat, and sing your day.
 Hallowed be your breath and song.
 Hallowed be the confounding day of your birth.
 Hallowed be the stench of demise.
 Hallowed be the lion springing on gazelle.
 Hallowed be the waters flowing from the well of life.
 Take life from it and return it again in the same measure.

Kiss the pale pallor of demise
 With intimate lips,
 With familiar lips.
 But do not linger there while you wear life,
 While you still sing sweetly.
 The gleam is gone from the eye of a corpse,
 The gall is rich, the youth spoiled, the meat sour,
 An appalling meal for maggots, flower to a dung fly,
 Why to a philosopher, an end and beginning, or only an end,
 Or only a beginning,
 But only transient.

Eternity waits eternally.
 Enter this night with song on your lips.
 Enter this splendid day with harmony on your lips.
 Rest and be reborn.
 On the morning of the deep night,
 Awaken from this sleep as a soul.
 Ever burns the spark of your consciousness.
 Ever burns the spark of your spirit.
 Ever shines the light of your mind.

Cast your burden down at the end of the road.
 Harbor weakness no more than you must to gain strength.
 Awaken the spirit from this marrow spent.
 Mark the finish of this day with the sweetest song.
 And in the fall of night, shed salt tears if you must,
 If you cannot trust your instincts that the weary will find rest.
 In a new morning hour
 Throw off this disgrace,
 These trappings of mortality,
 And embrace a celestial dress.
 When this burden is born sufficiently,
 Time-tempered to imperfection,
 Displace this millstone weight.
 The fledgling has flown the nest,
 And in years will be forgotten,
 And in eternity be ever remembered.

But for this moment of eternity,
 Walk upon the grass, the blood of your kin and kind,
 Green in the veins, flowing effervescence of youth.
 Sit upon it, spread out upon it, within it.
 Voluptuous against your soul it feels, and one with it for a time,
 Then passing on to another, growing other blades.

Would you have all at once?
 Would you be forever young or forever old?
 Would you be a flower forever in bold bloom,
 Or the budding day of youth, tender and green,
 Or sweet perfume scent as petals fall to soil again?
 Are they not all the same?

Will you not witness your defecation?
 Will you not void your bowels in proud glory?
 Will you resist your intake,
 Make a meal of shame,

Spurn the fruit and meat,
 Retch at aroma of bread,
 Make no cake for the day of your years,
 Watch the morning only, and dispatch the eve away?

Take this day for its all -
 For upon this day infinity is founded.
 And on this day lies the spark eternal.
 And this day is all that life is for this day.
 Life is this day.
 Live this day.
 Hail the sun that shines on the earth this day.
 Hail the rains that wash its soul and wake its children.
 Hail your birth and your death with equal wonder.

Would you have it in a poem?
 Could a book hold it or ten volumes more?
 I should put it in a word for you,
 If I might find letters to correspond -
 This gift I would grant you,
 For good or bad,
 If only I were a god.

Redemption

Take a breathtaking step away from these shackles,
 Crucified or uncrucified, unfettered and free from liability,
 To revel in creation and being, abiding miraculously,
 Untethered and at ease to extend limbs unencumbered.

With an unrestricted tongue speak freely
 The recognition that no breath is without regret,
 But no moment without consolation,
 That these mingling sounds and meanings
 Constitute all that needs consideration and reconciliation,
 That the tragedy of demise, in season or prematurely occurring,
 Is accounted well before the end of awareness,
 All suffering and appreciation measured well before expiration,
 The conclusion justified only in the action proceeding.
 The sum of all parts proceeding is the whole.

In this reckoning alone lies redemption.

XIX. Emancipation

Someone Painted Stars

Someone painted stars on the ceiling.
 Someone put lights into the sky.
 Someone made little points of healing,
 And hung them for a poet's eye.

Inside, I have a warm feeling
 That someone with incredible might
 Painted all those stars on the ceiling,
 So that we would not fear the night.

When I Was A Child

When I was a child,
 I feared the dark.
 I feared to leave my home.
 I feared to embark.
 I feared to boldly roam,
 When I was a child.

Peeking Beneath The Door

Peeking beneath the door,
 I see a bit of floor,
 And a little light from the other side.
 But from where I abide,
 I can see no more.

Until I go beyond the door,
 Step inside of evermore,
 I shall cling to hope -
 A crack of light to help me cope,
 Until I find out what's in store.

Beyond Night

I see the sun, all darkness scorning,
 Cease the trappings of mourning,
 Assume again a heavenly position,
 Remind me that night is but a transition -
 That beyond darkness there is light,
 That morning surely follows night.

Intangible

You within the fire rose,
 I see your formless form there.
 One could well-enough suppose
 You are the morning sun's glare.
 But I see an aureole shine,
 A burning bush sort of light,
 That kindles all things divine,
 And makes petal flames ignite.

Lighthouse

To helm the heartened sailors rouse.
 Cliff-side and raised against the night,
 Shines the beacon of the lighthouse,
 Bearer of guiding light.

Hark, all travelers of mortal fate,
 Blown wayward on a raging sea,
 The lighthouse marks the harbor gate
 Across eternity.

Shine On, Yellow Flower

Shine on, yellow flower!
 Upon another day!
 Blossom another hour!
 Upon your azure garden stay.

Sing your warm and golden verse.
 Mingle with the universe.
 Cold eternity disperse.
 Shine away the blackest curse.

I appeal to your bloom.
 Shine away my pining gloom.
 Take my soul upon your rays.
 Abide with me beyond my days.

Here, Where A Star And Stream Meet

In the darkness, I hear a stream
 Flowing through the trees below,
 From whence to whence I do not know.
 But it really can't flow too far.

In the night sky I see a star
 Shining down on the trees below -
 For what reason, I do not know.
 Perhaps it is only a dream.

In my bosom, I feel a beat -
 For what purpose, I do not know -
 Pulsing so my life blood will flow,
 Here, where a star and stream meet.

Stepping Stones

A stream separated me from home,
 Much too wide for me to try and leap.
 Limited in the space I could roam,
 I sought stepping stones across the deep.

I can cross anything in my dreams.
 Stars make proper stones for stepping on,
 Provide a path across cosmic streams,
 Over the flowing night, into dawn.

Time And Place

I sit on the back stairs, leaning against the rail,
 Gazing up at constellations,
 Failing to see any I know a name for.
 But I have seen nameless stellar nations before,
 That rise and fall. I shall never see them all.
 Yet, I know that I am here, and they are there.
 And name or not, none of us will fail
 To be where we are,
 At least until we find ourselves in another spot.
 There are lots of spots. And there is lots of space.
 And one spot seems as good as another.

A star is as close as a brother,
 Or a friend, or beginning, or end.
 There is a rabbit on the moon,
 Carving out some ancient rune
 About relationship and one's place,
 And how time is relative to all.
 There is a small rabbit between my feet,
 Waiting to go to his hutch for the night.
 We might fair as well as anything.
 For now, he listens. And I sing.
 And out in the valley, a freight train
 Wails like some cow lost in the rain.
 I wonder why a train wails so, going up the grade.

When I Was Hungry

When I was hungry, you did not turn me away.
 When I was in darkness, you lifted up a light.
 You opened up your mercy, and bid me stay.
 You took my hand and guided me through my long night.

You offered me your cloak, and broke your bread with me.
 You tore your hope in twain and shared it liberally,
 Bestowed all the warmth of your hospitality.
 You were a torch, that through my blindness helped me see.

Oh, good Samaritan, you anointed my pain.
 How now shall you question the purpose of your birth?
 Oh, angelic host, your life has not been in vain.
 You have clearly shown the measure of your soul's worth.

I shall sing eternally of your charity.
 You did not turn me away, when I was hungry.

I Dreamt I Walked With Yeats

I dreamt I walked with Yeats.
 We spoke of Celtic feats,
 Of swans and woods,
 Of druid hoods,
 Of towers, and roses, and wind in the reeds,
 Of wanderers' unrecorded deeds,
 Of shadowy waters and crossways,

Of dancers, and funerals, and bygone days,
 Of old age, and moon beams,
 Of unwritten songs, and lost dreams.

I dreamt I walked across the past,
 Across an ocean vast,
 And embraced my dear friend.
 And he prepared me for the end.
 He turned my sadness into strength,
 And filled my dream with hope at length.

Didactic Garden

Tears of despair water
 The seeds of tuition,
 Rear time's daughter
 To a blossoming fruition.

Life is only arid sand,
 And breath but gainless gloom,
 Until a lavish heart lays hand,
 And makes a flower bloom.

Compost Pile

When in some far corner of a weed patch,
 I come across a neglected compost pile,
 I tend to believe I've made a rare catch,
 Like the first discoverer of the Nile.

There lies mummified tomato history,
 Weed cities raised and destroyed in a day,
 Grass executed for complicity,
 Dew from a rose that bloomed and passed away,

The remains of a pumpkin king's season,
 Thrown in a pile, moldering and musty.
 The age of a story is no reason
 To disregard a good book gone dusty.

In every gardener's cultivated ground,
 No matter how vast or eternal, must
 Be a compost pile in a corner mound,

Turning, and collecting stories and dust.

Sit With Me

*Sit with me, beside the river.
Must you leave so soon?
On some mountain's granite sliver,
Our lamp stand is the moon.*

*Has your life become too hurried,
As a stream against a rock?
Has your way become so flurried,
That you find no ebb to talk?*

*Sit with me a while longer,
Piped the river to the brook,
Time can make a course flow stronger,
And wiser than the deepest book.*

Make Me Free

Tenderly, I touch the point of possibility,
Inwardly expanding, and moving outwardly,
To recognition that answers are there eternally.

Heaven, wake in me.
Make me see.
Make me be.

Vast tranquillity,
Wake in me.
Make me free.

Wasn't That A Mighty Storm?

Wasn't that a mighty storm
That blew across the sea?
Wasn't that a dandy form
That followed in the lee?

Wasn't that a searing fire
That flamed into the dark?
Wasn't that a heavenly choir

That sang such glorious spark?

Wasn't that a godly force
That gauged eternity?
Wasn't that a wondrous source
From which all came to be?

Ghost Lights

Beneath these remotely-twinkling lights,
Dispersed long before the foundation of my discerning,
Burned out long before my soul had spark,
And lingering for my momentary beholding,
I stand in awful yearning,
Feel the radiance arriving, from beyond the limits of my reckoning,
To illuminate for an instant the molecules of my transient form.

In A Wisp

Perception descended upon me as a wondrous mist,
As a breath of angelic whisper at my ear,
And kissed my cheek softly with gentle lips,
And awoke my soul to the translucence of my understanding,
And awoke my soul to the fire of my making,
Embracing my heart as an aura of light might embrace a star,
Seasonless as cosmic dust risen and descended.

With a heavenward sigh, I cried my joy,
And wished I might straightaway vaporize,
Ascend as transpiration in a wisp.

Tender Autumn Light

A tender autumn light
Shines luminous as day,
Illuminates the night
As if to say,
Why do you weep?

As a song the heaven sings,
In promise of other springs,
Her twinkling gently clears

My misty eyes of tears,
And bids me peaceful sleep.

Fire On A Wintry Night

The wind is ruthlessly sharp.
But my heart is warm and bright
With song as a flaming harp,
Like fire on a wintry night.

Ghosts Array

Ghosts array on a frosty night.
Ghosts twirl in starry flight.

*Hush, weary world.
We will blanket your sleep.
We will lie soft and deep.
Beneath our sparkling white,
No more are you troubled.*

Open The Curtain

Open the curtain, and let in the day.
Bring the afternoon shining through.
Winter is over and half into May.
There's a bright day waiting for you.

Wake up the daisies and the grass!
Sun will soon make the ice crack!
Don't fret! The clouds will pass!
Get back onto a sunny track!

Ship Overladen

Frigate, how can you bear
So many skeleton's bones,
And in rough water hope to fair
Better than Davy Jones?

Jettison the feats
Of yesterday's notoriety.

Trim the sheets
Of tomorrow's anxiety.

Measure your cargo's worth,
And sort the stowage.
Widen your berth.
Get on with the voyage.

Measuring Up

A man should strive sincerely to live,
From the foundation of his soul give,
That when he enters his final sleep,
Even the undertaker shall weep.

Consolation

Without loss,
Without pain,
There is no worth,
There is no gain.

The Sum

In my reckoning I am insignificant in the vast scheme.
In my reckoning my essential needs can never be achieved.
In my reckoning my dreams are inconsequential.
In my reckoning my thoughts are finite reflections of bottomless depth.
In my reckoning my voice is meek and faltering - too weak to cry out
my fears.
In my reckoning my words are wasted and disregarded.
In my reckoning I am cast adrift in the empty blackness.
In my reckoning I stand cast away in desolation.

With beckoning arms outstretched to the space that embraces me,
I reckon what I can of it.

From The Lost Dead

In the bedside light warming my hand,
The voices of bygone spirits spoke,

That my sleeping mind might understand.
Existence's never-cooling brand,
In form, on a silent page awoke.

In the words on a page, I wrote
The thoughts of minds from antiquity.
And the words are borrowed, I should note.
Not that I would be moved to gloat,
But reverse this discovery -

That surely spirits emit their light
From the other side, their knowledge shed,
Awaken when summoned beyond night,
And lend true disciples second sight,
As a legacy from the lost dead.

Where Is The Pine Bow?

Where is the pine bow drooping low and cordially?
Where is the snow-drawn chariot swooping down to take me up?
Standing in the clouds, I thought I could see
The place where I am returning once again.
This splendid foresight of my recollection lends substance,
Gives form to the mist of my existence.
Where is the pine bow drooping low and cordially,
To lift my spirit heavenward forever?

Here, We Passed

This path we choose,
This course we walk,
These temporal rose-smelling hours,
This foolish old mime,
This breaking news,
These tongues that talk,
These frail arbors blooming with flowers,
All wither in time.

Could we hold all the songs that we sang
Of friendship dear,
Fast come and gone,
And grave all in stone,

Forge gain before the final bell rang,
It would be near
To a fight won.
(And not won alone)

The silent stars will remember well.
Of our fine friends, only they will tell,
And the many smiles we have amassed.
The stars will record that here we passed.

Paradise Bird

For a time
I could not speak
Of birches and paths diverging,
And depths of crystal Ponds,
For there was only city -
Gray cement walls,
And despairing sky.

But every morning,
A sparrow came to my window
To drink a dew
From my flower box,
Assuage the day,
Sing of contentment,
And renew my determination.

Afternoon shower

What is more significant
Than a rainstorm to wash
The sunny glaze from this day -
A cloudburst to break the daze
Baked hard to my soul!

Transformation

Snake, shed your skin.
Show those shiny scales within!

Caterpillar, shatter your cocoon.
Become a butterfly boon!

Hermit crab, discard those jewels.
Abandon the way of possessive fools!

Cicada, how long shall it take you,
For your form to renew?

Pack rat, in your cluttered nest,
Your mind from baggage wrest!

Oyster, you are not just a shell upon sand.
Hold your pearl close at hand!

Molting soul, sail the open blue.
Cast off all that is not true!

What is a glorious tabernacle,
If not a spirit's debacle?

Kindred Light

When I foundered at my making,
When my heart was near to breaking,
At my life's foundation quaking,
When my heart could take no more,

Came a spirit at that hour,
Wrought by some unearthly power,
Raining tears in mournful shower,
Anointing my heart's gravest sore.

I fancied angels voices calling,
Saw a veil of darkness falling.
Stilled my soul's most wretched galling,
My kindred light, for evermore!

Tranquillity

To stay for a time in silence,
And rest by the flickering fireside,
In a glow of embers from the hearth,
Or stand at an open window,
A scent of rosemary from an open window,
And salt air blown from far across the sea,
In the darkness of night, stars to shine,
To cheer the darkness infinitesimally,
And out beyond the sleeping meadow,
The soothing rhythm of the seashore,
Gentle waves lapping at the sandy seashore -

I harbored this dream within me.
I have seen this,
Achieved tranquillity for a moment,
For an evening at an open window,
With the song of night and sea
To cleanse my soul.

When I Am God

If I were a supreme being,
I would need wisdom
Of an end, if there is only eternity.

If I were a king,
I'd heed the lessons of pain
And pestilential imprisonment.

If I were a prisoner, I'd plead for
A vision of release and entitlement
To anything but grand torment.

If I were a soul,
I'd seek freedom
To be without appeasing mortality.

If I were to reign divinely,
I would endeavor to understand
The worth of euphoria forever.

Spanning The Gap

I sought the solace of the stellar fields,
 And therein discovered myself,
 And in myself discovered the universe.

Measuring The Gain

When he thought he had learned
 All there is to learn in his kingdom
 But wisdom,
 He sought wisdom.

In his quest,
 He tasted experience.
 He saw dreams achieved, and wasted ambition.
 And he questioned the necessity of his death.

Then he measured up his gain.
 And it did not slip away from him.
 He had gained the wisdom of a lifetime,
 And saw clearly that what remained
 Was merely faith
 That his efforts had not been in vain.

Pressed Rose

Take heart, red rose
 Pressed into love's device
 Between the leaves of forgotten prose.
 Now that passion cannot suffice,

Your withered bloom is redressed
 In the memory you harbor.
 Your perfume is expressed
 Far beyond that summer arbor.

A Blending Of Souls

Rending of the fabric
 Sends the life force separate ways -
 From the start, homesick,
 Wanting only former days.
 Far away, far apart, all go,
 Across vast seas, beyond distant shores,
 Separated by insurmountable walls and locked doors.
 And where and how to meet again, they do not know.
 But deep in the song of the heart,
 A subtle knowledge burns -
 That like matter cannot be kept apart,
 That each droplet to an ocean returns,
 To a common point in space,
 Turning and returning
 To a primordial place,
 For a oneness yearning -
 A unifying of goals,
 And a blending of souls.

The Trick Is To Eat Lotus

Still cursing the sun?
 No up and down digressing!
 No fair confessing
 Any hint of discontent!
 Who cares what is meant?
 Hold to the track!
 No looking back!
 The Fruit of your season swiftly take!
 It cannot be kept, so eat the cake!
 Enjoy the cherry around the pit!
 Swallow the oyster with the grit!
 - Since the trick is to eat lotus, and not think about it.

The End Of Your Choice

Here are your words, poet - make them rhyme!
 Lend a blend of song to your voice!
 Here are your days, soul - use your time!
 Spend it to the end of your choice!

This Is A Gift

This is dew on the grass,
 As some heaven-sent anointment.
 My joys truly surpass
 The inward disappointment,

For a transient instant.
 This is a surprise.
 This is a disguise
 For my aching want.

Now I see the sky!
 Now I feel the day!
 Gone is my dismay,
 And thoughts of why.

I sing the day's exaltation.
 To heaven my airy phrases lift,
 Exclaiming my sudden inspiration
 That this is a gift.

Here Is Your Canvas

Here is your canvas blue,
 Rainbow colors too.
 Touch your brush to it -
 Long flowing locks of flaxen gold.
 Send your soul through it.
 Paint your day, your moment.
 Set your image glowing,
 Knowing it shall pass
 As all things do -
 But surpassing all things for a moment.

Here is your canvas.
 What picture will you paint?

XX. Reconciliation

Out Of The Fire

Out of the fire,
 Into the great-black ocean,
 Out of the mire,
 Out of the commotion,
 I move onward to destiny!
 My only conflict is choice -
 How to wage eternity,
 How to raise my voice.

Across A Field Of Clover Running

Across a field of clover running,
 Through the dew-wet sward I go,
 Laws of earth and heaven shunning,
 Through the streams of sunshine flow.

Bees on nectarous blossoms dancing,
 Butterflies upon the wing,
 Witness all my aimless prancing,
 Hear the joyful song I sing.

Out across the emerald ceiling,
 Soaring out across the green,
 Like a swooping swallow feeling
 Light as I have ever been,

Above a glorious clover field,
 I move between the earth and sky.
 To no element will I yield.
 Listen to my exuberant cry.

This Day's Refrain

Sparrows and robins nestled in their trees,
 Throat forth joyous song.
 Upon the buttercups hum earnest bees,
 Content the day long.
 Wind coos to me, passionate at my ear,
 Lullabies of love.
 Earth in her daily rotation doth hear
 Sun sung from above.

Every garden needs a bard to impart
 A rapturous strain.
 I sing this for the garden of your heart,
 As this day's refrain.

That Pact

Wherever thy life beats,
 Wherever thy blood flows,
 Whatever thy love entreats,
 Whatever thy yearning knows,

Weigh well thy inner role.
 Act well thy part,
 That pact with thy soul.
 Betray not thy heart.

To The Victor

Death, I defy thee!
 My passionate breath
 Warms thy sunless embrace.

Taste defeat then,
 You uncompromising fiend,
 For I rebuke thee!

My victory is won
 Before I have lost,
 For I have lived!

And eternity's darkness
 Cannot erase the mark
 My soul has engraved upon it.

Live For The Day

Do not let this morning die!
 Do not let this moment fly!
 Live while you may!
 Live for the day!

Ask the suckling babe at breast.
 Ask the child what is best.
 Give the dying man a test.

Surely they will say,
Live while you may!
Live for the day!

Thank the sunshine, on your knees.
 Hear rejoicing in the trees.
 Hark the phrase within the breeze.

Live, live, live while you may!
 Live for the morning! Live for the day!

See the rose there bleeding red.
 See the weed's uplifted head,
 Green grass growing on the dead,
 Knowing life before they go.

Surely they all clearly show
 How to live - how to live for the day.

Hear it in the eagle's cry.
 Ask the one in prison why.
 See the oak reach for the sky!

Do not let this morning die!
 Do not let this moment fly!

Live while you may!
 Live for the day!

A Wish

Were I to make a wish,
 Were I to wish upon a star,
 It would be upon a shooting star,
 Though such a wish is fleeting,
 Burning brilliantly, and fading instantaneously,
 Not enduring as a common star
 Or a common wish -
 Lingering only for a moment of illumination,
 But surpassing all stars for a moment.

This is the wish I would wish:
 To shine brightly,
 If only for a moment.

Were I to wish on a star,
 I would wish for a shooting star -
 The moment of its glorious passing
 To share as my own.

Spring Side

Fair is the day,
 Fairer still the company,
 And the caress of clover against my cheek,
 And the lichen scent from the spring side,
 Where water, silver and flowing, forms a pool.
 And the stream below, pushing toward the sea,
 Praises effervescently the heart that will not be thwarted.

Elusive Taste

That fleeting moment of youth,
 Wherein lies emancipation
 From wearisome truth,
 Wherein simple joy is honed
 With anticipation of bliss
 And thrill of the moment,
 Therein, being decries all anxiety.
 Therein, lies a feeling worth renewing,
 A worthy angle of perception -
 A palate for marrow without pith.

The Wind Is Good For A Soul

The wind is good for a soul.
 Feel the brisk breath blow
 Upon a gradient knoll.
 The turn of leaf will show
 That wind is good for a soul.

The Spring Of Our Origin

In the gurgling stream of our youth,
 How simple our course,
 Meandering with the flow!
 The rocks were clear to see,
 The falls certain -
 Our mutual assurances of truth,
 Though ignorant all,
 Sublimely taken by the current,
 The discourse deepening,
 The channel widening and digressing,
 Opposing tangents to choose,
 Low here, and low there,
 And whether to turbulence or stagnation
 We went, there was no way of knowing,
 Only faith that some force controlled our destiny.

At the delta of our arrival,
 We stared into a vast sea of eternity,
 And longed to return to the spring of our origin.

Under November Clouds

We have spread the compost, and cleared the weeds
 From the back quarter, just in time for rain.
 To set out tomato starts, or sow more seeds,
 While frost nips at the squash vines, would be in vain.

We have reaped bounty from the tilth of our soil,
 Improved our sowmanship with each year's repetition.
 And through our unwavering application of tool to toil,
 We have worked our field to prime condition.

A garden needs no other purpose or care
 Than to tend the needs of the crop there growing.
 Let the fruit of each coming season bear
 As they bear, with a principle harvest in knowing

That a gardener should hope for no more
 Than to cultivate a garden that never grieves,
 To walk under November clouds, and look for
 Tulip bulbs beneath the fallen leaves.

Given A Will To Rake

Such a marvelous gift
 To arise and wonder!
 Let eyes heavenward lift,
 When day breaks asunder,

Rises above the night,
 Bursts the horizon's hold!
 Unsurpassed is the sight
 Of infinity's gold -

And there for the taking,
 Given the proper tool.
 There's joy for the making,
 But give and take is the rule.

Happiness has a price.
 Perfection has a stain.
 Summer has winter's ice.
 - Always a loss for gain.

The putrid stench of pain,
 And despair's heavy musk,
 Fury's winds, tempest rain,
 Rumor of coming dusk,

All so trivial are!
 Slip through a spirit's tines!
 Yet, the leaves of a star,
 Falling as sun shines,

Can be gathered at will,
 Can soon a mountain make,
 And can an abyss fill,
 Given a will to rake.

Pluck

Take the tree by any twig.
 Trace from twig to stick to limb,
 From limb to trunk to root, then dig!
 All the dirt, cast aside. All the weeds, trim.
 Seek the harvest there within,
 Whether broad or thin,
 A fig or figment.
 Grasp, firmly,
 The fruit.
 Pluck.
 Tuck
 Whatever suit,
 Texture, or pigment,
 High on the granary shelf.
 Search deep, to know thyself

Miner

Dig, miner, dig!
 No mountain is too big
 To find a vein within.
 Begin, soul, begin!
 Cast away the stone.
 There is treasure in the core,
 An infinite store,
 Deep within the bone.

Here Is A Dream To Dream

Did you ever dream you were free
 To seek spring in all regions,
 Wandering earnestly, finding green in all things?
 Did you ever gain a day of glorious contemplation?

In a tulip bud there rings a hue of truth -
 A sign of making the day not altogether unpleasant,
 Waking color where there were gray shades
 Like ashen drapes on a dead man's face.

A trace of truth paints away the stale and dreary way.

Cultivate a bud to blossom and array!
 Here is a dream to dream, to scream heavenward -
 To be free and never imprisoned again!

I Don't Want To Wait

I don't want to wait until my life is over.
 I don't want to wait until my time is over,
 To say the things I want to say,
 To weigh the thoughts I want to weigh.

I don't want to wait until my day is over.
 I don't want to wait until my chance is over,
 To play the games I want to play,
 To lay the plans I want to lay.

I don't want to wait until my life is over,
 To dance the dance I want to dance.
 I don't want to miss the chance.

Today As Forever

Ascend to a magical afterworld.
 Once the immortal veil has been unfurled,
 Dreams shall be as real as they seem.
 Climb through the stars in a sunbeam,
 To the land of eternity,
 Where unicorns and fairies frolic with infinity,
 Where mermaids wait out beyond the reef,
 And the night owl has disavowed grief,
 Singing the morning abreast robins and space,
 Where lambs and lions embrace.

Fly away, fast away, over the cliff side,
 Through the cascading mist, beyond the temporal tide.
 Make a leap of faith upon the endless grass.
 Abide in spring realms that never pass.
 In the garden, never wilting, endeavor
 To live tomorrow today, and today as forever.

Ahoy!

Ahoy! I cry,
 In a headlong hurry.
 In the fight I'll die,
 Or live with fury!

My steel will unbroken,
 I charge forth at my needs,
 With fiery oaths spoken!
 Passionate are my deeds.

Furious, Headlong, Beast

Leap up from this creeping pace!
 Set your heart racing,
 Your soul facing no bounds!
 What have you found in your being?
 Rush forward, O furious, headlong, beast!
 Better to live one day as a tiger,
 Than a thousand years as a sheep!

Depiction

Lawless as snowflakes, I spasm,
 Examine the cross grain of my tongue,
 Render soft-spoken tones,
 Glean runes by my petrified eye.
 What is seen is affected.

I sing of song,
 Prideless and sacred, flowing from lustrous lips.
 Swarthy and white-haired wild man prancing on a hillside am I,
 Infused with utterance,
 Revolting, and melting silently.

Train Departed

I held the ticket in my hand,
 And watched with sorrow
 My train passing along the band.
 In vain, I checked a ticket stand
 For another train tomorrow.

But as few trains follow the same track,
 I found a place near the turnstile,
 And put my luggage on a rack.
 Seeing I could not go forward or back,
 I busied myself there awhile.

I could lament, brokenhearted,
 Shedding age-old tears,
 That my only train departed
 Long before I had started
 Out along the track of my years,

But with forced consideration
 Of how the course of trains is set,
 I see it was an initiation
 Into the seat of my proper station,
 And that my schedule has been met.

Here And There

A star shone down from the northern sky.
 And knowing I could not abide there,
 And still see it with my mortal eye,
 I observed without wondering why -
 The arrangement being more than fair.

One can marvel at a star's queer light,
 Study the paradoxical rhyme.
 Yet, being mortal, try as one might,
 One cannot be day, and still have night.
 They must be taken one at a time.

All things seem to work out in the end.
 All stars in their proper places fall.
 (That seems to be the most common trend)
 Though, all possibilities depend
 On the poet god who made it all.

There is always my far-reaching dream
 That I may ride on a star some day,
 And shine down in an earthward star beam.
 And by going that course, it would seem,
 I could be both here and there that way.

To Show You Me

Were there an ancient forest way,
 Where you and I might be free
 To sit within a sunbeam's ray,
 Beneath some timeless, Druid, tree,

Were there a long-gone poet's rhyme,
 Where you and I might dwell,
 And hear the stories moonbeams tell,
 Could we abide there for a time,

That sad secret place in my heart,
 Where friends, and love, and memories impart
 A refuge from the world's insanity,
 Here, would I take you to show you me.

Embodiment Of Perfection

Perfection, what is thy name?
 Embodied as a decree!
 Conceived above any blame
 Is this picture of beauty

In form of snow-pure rabbit.
 Gentle child of innocence,
 Clothed in angel-knit habit,
 Delicate creation, whence

Hath thy creator formed thee?
 Art thou solely flesh and blood,
 Union with divinity,
 Or atonement for the flood?

What god hath made thee, that made
 This wretched world's upheaval?

Hath the artist now forbade
The painting of more evil?

Immaculate conception,
Remorse for all saintly lies,
The rosen hue of redemption
Is in thy forgiving eyes.

A Friend True

I would breathe my last breath into you,
Shed my flesh, spill my blood, extinguish my fire,
Rend my eternal soul in two.
Stand on my shoulders, if you must go higher.
I will stand by you, till my life is through.
And in death I will swim from hell's mire
For my oath to be a friend true.

Cassandra

What voice comes whispering from the halo of a rainy moon!
Angel, fairy, harpy, demon, sister entity!
Song of oasis within the eternal dune!
Miraculous that one molecule might find another,
As a leaf finds its brother,
Blown wildly in a swell!
I extend my tremulous fingertips
To your lustrous face.
Pray thee, launch a thousand ships
To my lowly place.
I shall read your words with rhapsody,
Dream the tales you tell!
Cassandra, I will heed your prophesy,
Drink your soul, believe your lies,
Kiss your poison lips to my certain demise.
Lead me to heaven or hell!
I will follow earnestly.

I Long To Abide Forever There

I have loved a measure far and above
Any measure a mortal should be part of.
I have roamed a world so vast,
And seen such scenes go past
As to make me believe I am free
To conceive thoughts beyond mortality.

There is a spring flowing in the dale,
Filling a pond in a vale
- Mine to behold, mine to ponder -
And marvelous myriad things to wonder -
And a sky unclouded and clear -
And spiritual eyes to see beyond my fear.

I have walked on grass, on the sea,
Floated beneath eternity.
And where does one begin or end?
On what does paradise depend?
What poem might sing a dream?
What song articulate a stream?

What words might suffice?
I have lived in paradise.
I have known a love fair.
I long to abide forever there.

I Passed A Garden

I passed maples rusted with season,
Dispersing and dispersed, splendidly carpeting
Earth and the light trod of my footsteps -
Sepulcher and womb to winged birth
Springing anew, hence sprung thither,
And whether again afterwards a mystery.

Beyond this, regality showed,
Quaking aspen columns rising alabaster,
And crowned golden as before a reign falls,
And unassuming wind to herald the glory.
(This I witnessed but did not linger)

And passing on to pine forest, evergreen
 Lest life should have no say in winter,
 Silver the streams rushing beneath
 Overhang of branches, slipping between
 Rocks and ferns, searching for sea,
 I drank there a draught of mountain nectar.

Resplendent thence forth, I discovered,
 Magnolias ringed round, blossomed white,
 There encircling floral magnificence -
 Foxgloves and violets, peonies and pansies,
 Patchworks of campanulas and snapdragons
 Congregating to meet the emanating rays of morning,
 And lilac scent and acacia blending with
 Honeysuckle, and striped bees courting
 Orchids rigid and swathed in elaborate, morning glory embrace,
 And sunbeams lending aura to hyacinths, and round all
 Fairies pirouetting, gay butterfly dress theirs, delicate they,
 Redolent their flutter and dance of spring eternal.
 And a dove called to me silver-breasted from a willow branch.

This is the quintessence of my poem:
 I passed a garden,
 And for a time abode there.

Good-Bye, Lady Sunset

She brushed against the ceiling
 As she floated through the door.
 The room began reeling
 As her feet lit on the floor.
 She smiled a thousand smiles
 All condensed down into one,
 As she crossed a million miles
 On a single beam of sun.
 I thought I'd seen her once before,
 Though I couldn't recall her face.
 I raised my hand to touch her,
 But she left without a trace.
 I saw her in a distant blur,
 Changing colors on the sky.
 She blew a kiss of warmth to me,
 As I lay me down to die.

But for evermore, I could see
 A radiant life-giving fountain.
 As I closed my weary mind,
 I saw her on a mountain,
 As the eve was passing behind.

To You, When You Are Old

To you, when you are old: remember
 Childhood wonder, the morrow's surprise,
 All the seasons before December,
 The youthful amazement in your eyes.

When your kind gaze has glassed in despair,
 When the green has gone from the clover,
 When your lips find a shortness of air,
 When you find the joy is all over,

Oh, when you are old, then remember
 The days gone by, the lighthearted breath,
 The hope of love's undying ember
 To brighten darkness, and defy death.

Across a million miles of heaven

I always feel that I have fallen from my homeland,
 Across a million miles of heaven.
 I'm only waiting out the days as they are measured,
 Across a million miles of heaven.
 There has to be some way
 To see beyond the light of day,
 To find what I am searching for,
 To cross beyond the bolted door,
 Across a million miles of heaven.

How shall I ever find a single burning candle,
 Across a million miles of heaven?
 Somebody had to leave a beacon for the children,
 Across a million miles of heaven.
 I know it's waiting for me in a field of starlight,
 Across a million miles of heaven.

The Edge Of My Divination

The edge of my divination,
Keener than the finest molecular edge,
Has measured sublimation,
And discovered no limitation or boundary.

I am content to my core,
To measure the subtlety,
To weigh the mystery,
To penetrate the radiance
With the edge of my divination.

One Last Deed

Darkness has fallen on the day,
So swiftly fallen down.
Midnight has whisked the light away.
The burning fires fast drown.

The heat of stars has turned to ice,
The light of Mars turned dark.
Yet, lingering flames of hope suffice
To leave behind a mark.

The light of conquered stars still rise,
Though burned out long before.
They shimmer out across the skies,
And shine for evermore.

The fire of unconquered will,
As surely as true love,
Shall warm the cold and endless still,
And forever rise above.

Bow not love to earthly sorrow!
Though with heavenly speed,
Time brings forth the last tomorrow,
Today, live one last deed!

Say That It Was Not In Vain

Say that it was not in vain.
Accept the loss. Endure the pain.
Let the dice fall where they will.
May your troubled heart be still.

At the ending of the day,
When all hope has passed away,
Though time leaves no lasting gain,
Say that it was not in vain.

Wisps

Songs of my being,
My sweat, my blood, my soul,
My fears, my joys, my tears,
Inked in passing,
All wisps are -
Mere wisps rising
And dissipating into nothing.

Assessment

I am an insubstantial bit
Of thought, a wish, a pondering,
A fleeting wit, a wistful wit,
In a welkin realm wandering.

I am the figment of a rhyme,
On a flight of fancy drifting,
A slight handful of sand sifting
Slowly through the fingers of time.

I am a whisper of rumor,
Litany uttered with a lisp.
I am a few drops of humor.
I am a frail and fleeting wisp.