

WITHIN
-AND-
BEYOND

THREE BOOKS
OF
POETRY

by

thomas perez jewell

BOOK ONE

CIRCLES, ANGLES & CURVES

BOOK TWO

S T I L L
M O V E M E N T S

BOOK THREE

I M P E R M A N E N C E

September
2017

thomas perez jewell
1 5 2 0 5 - 1 1 1
Federal Correctional Institution
P.O. Box 9000
Seagoville, TX 75159-9000

C I R C L E S

A
N
G
L
E
S

&

c u r v e s

poems by

thomas perez jewell

to
l o v e r s
o n e
&
A l l

*The whole truth
Not hid by matter; not by mind revealed
(more than all dying life, all living death)
and which has been or will be told
sings only — and all lovers are the song.*

e. e. c.

circles

FIRST KISS REVISITED

In early spring
under the laurel tree,
immense and protected,
Our lips coupled
and kissed
for the first
of many millions. . .

FLUTE LOVER

The kiss of our lips
pressed and tense
against all resistances,
keeps our music
fresh and permanent.

BEING TRUE TO OURSELVES

At the time, I didn't consider
us lovers, but we did
what lovers do: sharing
in our private trusts
and public risks as natural
consequences to weighing
how much we must
dare as a couple,
in the worlds we surround,
to remain inseparable
being true to ourselves.

LOVE'S FOREVER ESSENCE

Nothing exhausts
that energy I first felt
coupled as one.
The bond's still strong.

My inner world reels
with every gesture since.
I am its pure madness
being love's forever essence.

I AM THERE BEING HERE

I am there
where you are
as long as
I am
being here's
everywhere.

TO LOVERS ALL THE SAME

The eye inside my eye
is your eye which doesn't
blink or go to sleep.
Those timeless touches shared
continue to feel what
all of us felt and feel
within ourselves so one

STIRRED BY A THIN REED

Shocked into awake
by the loss of everything
at once.
Nothing more to find
after our mutual departure
from this separation.

IN THE STORMS PRIOR QUIET

Our farewell embrace
in reverse,
now, I was the first
to leave and receive
those awkward traces
of emotions unspoken.

Both of us frozen
in the storms prior quiet.
Rigid against
our own private moments.

AS LONG AS WE LOVE NOW

Your birthday in San Francisco
Thirty-four years ago, we celebrated "Nineteen,"
when the world welcomes dreams.

What did the passing years bring
in the scheme of life's impermanence?
Did your true love tested grow ageless,
like mine, as our youth turns decrepit,
making us forgetful, deaf, and blind?

What stays young is a love
that grows ancient
with every moment's change
a day, a year, a century
as long as we love now.

TOTALLY CONSUMED

In that cafe
where everybody stared,
their eyes illuminated
by the light we shared.
We ate each morsel as ourselves
as diners dined on our remains.

FAR BEYOND OUR SUMMER

The world inside me shifted
into a balance that has lasted
far beyond our summer affair
and marks my life's time:

When imagined dreams turned real
to taste and touch another's feel.

Now I am what is now
because of our what, why and how.

STILL IN LOVE

Still in love
being in love
with you.

Always aware
of your presence
which lingers
and mingles
in ever fresh vanilla,
spice, and citrus.

ON FIRE

On fire
from the delirium
spring fever brings.

Side by side then
heart to heart inside
each other's every each.

Drunk on the madness
of what our touch can reach
One in the one of our onefulness.

STILL AM I

Still am I perplexed
about what I felt and feel
making no sense how our touch
transcends reason's why?

All I know remains unknown except
the sum of our touching's bliss:
immeasurable and permanent.

AUTUMN'S DAWN

The crisp autumn's dawn
awakens these sleeping lovers's
arms, hearts, legs, and eyes
already inside their openings:
moist in each other's joys as
their need to never need arrives.

OF ALL THAT IS

After the evening
of our first coupled touch,
my ecstatic response
still shocks me alive.

Neither of our former selves exists,
but love's intense life as is. . . .

IN THE NOW OF WE

My true self
can only be
in the present
as always already.

Anything else is not
Who I am,
nor is it being
One with everything
in the now of we.

WHAT A MINDFUL KISS BRINGS

Freedom's a mindful kiss,
infecting everybody near,
being every one there is,
bringing everywhere to here.

REALITY'S LOVE

Handfuls of yes
this being in love.
You pull and I push
so we can emerge.

Armfuls of more
We beings in love.
There's always enough
when everything's us.

Hearts full of room
all beings in love.
Everyone's welcome
no matter what happens.

YOU ARE THAT KISSER

Whoever keeps kissing
your original heart until it opens
is showing you the beautiful truth
if you listen.

You are always already that kisser.

RIPPLES OF JOY

Ripples of joy release
my madness with your touch
and all resistance
surrenders in liquified bliss.

Every fiber of being intertwines
with the madness of our embrace
and all existence
enters its timelessness.

Every texture of love's ecstasy
expands the madness of our kiss
as all the universes at once
share in our us as is.

LOVE DISCOVERED

All that is good and gold
and god
unearthed in
one Mexican.

EMOTIONS INCLUDED

Love is the knead of bread
collapsing all existence into one
with hearts and hands.

What is its opposite,
unfolding folds
everywhere it is? Love

enfolds the ingredients
with everything included:

Heights of fences, densities of clouds,
depths of emotions, infernal obstacles.

Doormats and powerful warriors,
Hateful opponents and compassionate sages

knead bread. Love is
all inclusive and ever-present
with hearts and hands so clasped.

SUN SHONE EYES

Golden olive meets
hazel green
for a sweet singular
eternal blink.

IN MOVEMENT STILL

Again our walk,
Again our share,
Again, again, again
until again becomes nowhere.
Not lost, not found,
where we are is now:

 In this moment's walk
 In this moment's here
 In being One with All
 this everywhere.

FRESH AFFECTIONS

Everywhere that energy.
Everywhen we meet.

Our evening walks
 in the past stay present &
 alive in me as we
 round the path again
 and again
 sharing rich laughter
 and fresh affections.

NO I OR YOU OR ME

We kissed on the bed
that last afternoon,
the first time I realized
that love is not outside myself.

On the bed we kissed
that first afternoon
the last time I realized
that no matter what truth
we say or do
the opposite is always true.

On the bed kissed we,
first and last, the only afternoon
I ever felt
no I or you or me.

NOT OURS ALONE
(for Vera)

An ecstasy not ours alone
by the campfire's light
we coupled as
I became the redwoods and
you the open sky:
One in the communion
of stars
as every night arrives.

BEING MIRRORS

After births, breaths and deaths of selves;
minutes, hours and years of lives;
mountains, streams, and rivers of others,
I am still learning how to be in love.

What I thought of love and felt
for lifetimes was wrong,
making the ones I love better than
and separated from what I am
by striving to belong.

When all the while
Love emerges
in the one who loves as one,
as both the lover and beloved
being mirrors
for the other
reflecting all there is.

AN INDELIBLE FEAST

Sitting transfixed
eye to eye,
now to now, across
our table for two
holding still
the movement of us,
complete as is, we celebrate
our aftertastes,
sharing an indelible meal,
morsel by morsel,
one by one,
delectable and delicious.

ALL ALONG
(for Vera)

Lovers in each other
 all along
 finally meet
 eye to eye,
then desire to desire
 asking:

"What impels this impulse
 for complete surrender?"

No longer opposites in one world:
 Awkward words counterbalance
 genuine gestures.

All along and ever after--
 lovers in the other.

ONE FACING ONE

Tremble, quiver, kiss
 in open grace.

Our faces

 touch & touch & touch
Taking's give & giving's take.

 Our "We" falls into
never's space;
 satisfied in All's
 dissolve:

One facing One.

COUPLED TIMELESSNESS

This "I" who is no longer
that form as then
continues to awaken
to that morning in
early spring, all
windows open,
and the "you," no longer
that form of you,
lies beside me in the cool
against our gathered warmth
and coupled timelessness.

EVER ONEFUL

Exes no longer
now beyond the alphabet
of happiness;
otherwise, the "I" conjures
up images of inaccurate
realities.
Partial truths unequal
what's actual and lasting
No longer a couple,
only ever oneful.

ANGLES

BEING THE PEAK

We, not just you and I,
 climbed that mountain
through seasons, sun
 and shade
along those trees
 that leave and keep
 life's cycles true
to do what lovers do
when unafraid to be so one.

We kiss each other's fears
 into surrender's born
to do what can't be done as two
in a world that so opposes
 what we separate.

NO WORDS CAN CAPTURE

No words can capture,
 nor photograph expose
any memory fashioned which matches
 the light when our eyes meet,
 oceans within oceans,
 inviting this connection to be
 before this awakening.

So easy if mutual, yet
 so difficult when it is. . .

THIS GIFTED TRYST

Now our gifted tryst
continues to outlive
any resemblance of forget.

Any birthday hence we dare
outstrip is
death to this memory
we can't contrive.

NOT SINCE MY 40TH BIRTHDAY

Our second tryst
never occurred.
You missed the train that
would have made
our second celebration.

ENTICED

Enticed by desire's
tiny waist of time wrapped
around the body of illusion.

Trapped in its elusive capture
encircled by such slender wrists
holding on to a rapture
that doesn't even exist.

I'M SO SORRY TO APOLOGIZE

My world now unblind
I'm sorry to apologize.
The depth of my delight
was grandiose and all alone.

So overwhelmed was I
by the body of your charm,
I no longer do presume
a mutual shine.

A TRAGIC BALLET: ACT I

Two dancers in the throes of Act I,
center stage, positioned
for the turn. She pirouettes
around their single heart,
touching her lover's reach and
spinning in the ecstasy.

He stands stock still, fear frozen,
unable to let go in the moment
to reach his lover's touch
numb from the misery.

REGRET

My lover a feast
I didn't enjoy
until hungry with want,
yet after we shared
with intentions to please,
her empty reached full
while my fullness
stayed empty.

NOVEMBER FOUR

The anniversary of our doom
when that ancient institution
we served dismissed both of us
for acting out our beings.

I don't know what you remember
about what we discovered in love
because sometimes couples don't hold
the same memories as dear
as they once held each other.

BEFORE WE SLEPT

Just what happened
that night before I left
when we made a dream
come true before we slept?

Was our touch mutual then,
or am I the only one
who still feels ecstatic?

IN THE DRAGON'S RESTAURANT

Both of us hungry
entering the Dragon's restaurant
in Chinatown.

You feel at home surrounded
by Chinese
as you recognize your language
from the kitchen.

Your eyes alive with surprise
while visiting the menu and familiar.
While sitting across the table,
my eyes embrace your beautiful expressions,
as always, bringing near what you offer
only from a distance.

Our hearts respond to this happening's dance
though nothing ever settles from the dust
we arouse.

Both of us touch love
but at different depths, yet
everything we experience as us
remains unclaimed and nameless.

I wonder to myself, as our meal arrives,
if we will ever share those secrets?

I wonder looking into you so clear
if you can see me as your lover?

AS LONG AS I AM I

My burden and self-imposed
promise grows
in all the hidden places
my heart cannot hide,
keeping our love secret
for as long as I am I.

MY LOVE AT 26

Such
a tender love
you gave.

Such surprise
alive in your touch
to allow such
graceful gifts to be.

At twenty-six,
my heart's capacity
was inflexible
so small, and still
too ignorant to receive.

THOUGHTS ARE KNOTS

A million knots
my body winds.
A billion knots
my mind does bind.
A trillion knots
undone by one's
ever-loving presence.

CONFESSING OUR BETRAYALS

Remembering's painful shadows cast
their light on our betrayals.
No more did we couple
 after your betrayal
of what I'd already betrayed:
The trust of our exclusive touches
as we both searched in others
what we didn't find in ourselves.
I confess my regrets to withstand
what I couldn't fulfill, trusting enough
 in what forgiveness allows.

A NON-STRANGER'S KINDNESS

Your kindness still abides
 as our worlds collided
 with love desires.

Your kindness remains
 a constant reminder
to my own blindness
 whenever I stay wrapped
 in my selfish wiles.

WE DID THEN WE DIDN'T

My
"thick as a brick"
years when
hit and hit again with
feelings too uncomfortable to embrace,
but with you
my heart instantly surfaced.
Your guitar in hand and voice
put the world to music
as I listened, breathed-in and felt
rhythm, soul, and grace converge.
Could we be
feeling identical stirrings?
I get it now, after years of thens,
as thin as a moment we did
then we didn't
as I heard you sing
at the center
of my wishful thinking.
Open, oPen, opEn, till closed
by painful misinterpretations.

TWENTY-NINE APRILS AGO

Twenty-nine Aprils ago,
we lived in the world of "ours":
From summer to spring
Four seasons possessed
by mine and yours.

Romance's answer
to life's desires?
Yours and mine did not survive
intimacy's demand of how
for twenty-nine Aprils of now.

A TREACHEROUS SWIM

Returning to life
from a dolphin to a human
has been difficult. It's a treacherous swim
in the ocean of words and sentences and
paragraphs and stories. The effort seems endless
when you want to be heard,
when you want to express what's misunderstood,
when you want to be one in a world made separate,
when you want to be loved in this world of opposites.

SOIL OF BETRAYAL

These violets
in those moments
of spring
never fully bloomed for us,
and the purple promise
of our love's pure joy
with regrets
turned sallow
in your spoiled
soil of betrayal.

A KISS WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION

What to make of the mess we've made?
The deep feelings into deeper questions:

"How delicious!" speaking for myself.
What was your favorite torture?:

The feelings you didn't share or express?
The withholding that wasn't alone?
Our restraint against the madness suffered?
The hits and misses carefully concealed
or the touches and brushes only chance allowed?

WHAT "WE" MAY MEAN

This is a love poem
about two friends
who thrived for four
seasons:
summer to spring
but did not blossom.

Both afraid of what
might've become
of these intense buds
exposed to the sun.

Both afraid of what
"we" may mean
for that "you are," and this
"I am."

UNBOUNDED INVITATIONS?

Missing the trains
that have long
left the station.

Their faces and names make
for crowded goodbyes and
countless hellos.

"Where would we have gone
and together how far?"

PERFECT MEETS PERFECT

Perfect meets perfect
in the moment:
Exquisite this
and ecstatic that,
but fear of not
being enough made
what we shared
what it wasn't.

CERTAIN TRUTHS

This world while in love
feels different
as certain truths kissed us
on the lips.
A world of made unequals
a world of born:

What we're supposed to do
versus what comes
so natural.
The conflict within and be-
tween us was fierce
for three years facing
what's real against what didn't exist.

After more days of changing
with the changes we became,
we chose the choiceless
to never be the same.

INSIDE EACH OTHER'S SKIN

With summer heat in spring
two fools, naked in love, swim
toward some freedom
they've discovered in each other.

Diving head first into the world's pool
wild, wet, fearless, stupid, and young
with plenty of wisdom yet to ripen.



JUNE & KEN

June & Ken
a couple coupled with
eight children between them,
and here I am celebrating again
the non-anniversary of my "parent's
wedding" in February.

I thought they were married
on the date they stated--

his second and her third.

He the father of two girls and two boys, and
she the mother of three boys and one girl, joined
in Holy Matrimony. Instead,

they lived in "sin" for over a year,
but they kept it hidden since their divorces
weren't yet final.

I discovered the secret while
sifting through my own pedigree
for my seminary approval twelve years later.

Instantly feeling the fool for being true to a lie,
angry in the face of the deception
and hypocrisy,
hurt until I understood how to forgive
the difference between
living in love and maintaining an image.

TERRY & CAROL

Terry and Carol
a couple in trouble,
friends of the family, renters
in a neighborhood of owners.

What made him go so crazy
from manic to panic to frantic
to antic?

What kept them together
but their little boy Rusty?

Surviving the cycles of cycles
in dramas that spiral,
moving away as well as toward
the simultaneous.

No more crazy than
the sanest of neighbors.

CATHY & MICHAEL

Cathy & Michael
a couple that's subtle?

He puts a pill on the pillow
and she receives it with
a smile -- augmented
by his wordless gestures
as each of them reach
their pleasures worthwhile,

though often vice versa
with what's on purpose,
enraptured they are

with ecstasy's laughter.

CANDY & KEN

Ken & Candy
 coupled beautifully
Save all assumptions
 and every projection.
Generous endowments each,
 yet something lacked
they couldn't reach?

Both of them love
 but not enough?

Fulfilled hands
 out of grasp?
Empty or full
 what went adrift?

Whatever happened
 Candy & Ken?

Remember what a separate-self forgets:
 True love shared always exists
 in fluxes unfixed without opposites.

WILMA & BLACKIE

Wilma and Blackie

an unconditional couple,
saviors to lonely soldiers,
making their presence and home
a sanctuary. . . .

Devout Catholics without a doubt
and compassionate by example.

MARGARET & BUSTER

A couple but not a couple
just two beings coupled
by their mutual challenges.

Margaret mild and docile.
Buster stubborn and wild.
All their needs got met
sharing life in one apartment.

Margaret measures success
one task at a time.
Buster's seven feet one
with a third grade mind.

Together their struggles
monumental yet normal--
naturally beautiful
this mutual couple.

FRANÇOISE & DIRK

Françoise and Dirk

an unconventional couple,

expatriates from Belgium

in the jungles of Gabon,
where everything challenges convention.

Welcomed into their world of survival:

Nietzschean discussions, cross-bow
excursions, jazz-like improvs, and friendship's
laughter at the absurdities of our unique disasters.

We traveled our travails through the opposites,

through our shared hearts of darkness toward
the light that comes from a reluctant surrender

to what isn't so.

curves

LIFETIMES AGO, YET NOW

Remember our tea ceremony
complete with cherry blossoms
 in spring,
Lifetimes ago, yet now,
in this memory filled to the brim?

Did we teach each other what Emptiness is,
you and I, before we knew ourselves
 in the moment,
before we unraveled living's
 unkept secrets:

When to pour the vital ingredients and
how to receive what's being offered?

ONE PEACE

Your curves
My contours
 cradle us
 into
one peace.

THE DANCE OF DANCES

Our dance and ultimate touch
reverberates through all movements
in us since the truth,
our shared light now reveals,
shines through our dark fears
that this moment isn't real
but is
despite the fright that comes
from the frightless feel
being in love releases.

OUR CAPTURED FREEDOMS

Shocked by the recognition
of our first meeting
five years prior to this now.
Smiling by our similar aftertastes
and how we shined then, while
remembering once again
in each other's arms, how
our spins and holdings reveal
the depths a genuine touch
out-reaches any regions of forget.

EMPTY YET FULL

So vice versa we are.
Two different images
 in the same mirror.
Beauty translucent reflects
 Wondrous Being.

Empty to why nothing
 we touch ever holds,
yet so full of our
 plentiful potentials, while
 constantly falling
 in and out of how
to love what in us
 is permanent.

OUR MOMENTS AROMATIC

Your fragrance creates
 my world aromatic.

Fresh life breathed
 into every death
 experience,

and every moment
 shared in the dark,
 our after essence
lingers luminescent.

INTO THE MOMENT'S SURRENDER

What happened to me
at Lincoln Park still is
when moved by earth itself
standing near the cliff
under the trees kissed
by the fog's own tender mist.

RICH MEMORIES

Rich memories still stream and keep
your lean awkward grace encased
in a fragile strength.
Wise ignorance meets confident confusion--
wrapped sleek in golden hair
and silver smile.
Cool warmth at times on fire,
even tender.
Close but distant in retreat
from our shared denial of feelings felt
when our hearts in silence
would sometimes meet.

DEPARTURE IN THE PARK

Two former lovers, captured
by the awkward comfort
of several separated years, sit
as one in reunion
holding eyes:
sun drunk and
moon intoxicated.

In the chill
both resist each other's
resistance
to the inevitable death
of what once was.

UNTIL EVERYTHING'S GIVEN

My door opened with your call
every time you wanted in after dark.
Though invited every time we shared,
you never stayed the night.

Both of us stayed hidden by choice.
Both of us safe from going further
than enough. . . until
our mutual love emerged, wrapped in each
other's secret, until we gave
what we received.

"SMOOTH OPERATORS"

Every glance deliciously edible,
Every moment a dance,
intoxicating beauty with intelligence,
All our boundaries collapsed.

We moved "through space
with minimum waste,
maximum joy,"
feeling our ever essence
in every moment since.

MOVING WITH THE EARTH AS ONE

That moon invisible night,
we coupled until,
turning toward the visible sun,
rose together separated
as one
sharing in the morning's mist.

THE EVOLUTION OF WE

I
I am I
I am am I
am I I am
?

You are so I
I am so you
You so I so I so You
I so you you so I

so I so you so we
!

OUTSIDE IN

Remembering the birthday
of one I love.
The first love ever touched
from the inside out,
and love's first touch
from the outside in.

WONDERFULLY MUTUAL

That trip to get your visa
 revealed a secret
you didn't need to keep.

Your leaving "us" allowed
our mutual feelings to surface
as our world in that instant
turned wonderfully delicious.

ESTOY TE ENAMORADO

You whispered in my ear
"Estoy te enamorado."
Frozen in my response as
this happened in our dance. . . .
"How much farther do we go?" I asked.

Now face to face in one embrace
both of us naked in-side-out.
We see within our open hearts
a world so up-side-down.
How open will our fears allow
this love we share to grow?

WHEN OURS FELT ALL OURS

What luck from Lubbock
What touch in Texas
 Finer than fine
Smoother than smooth
All angles and curves
as one we did move
When yours felt all mine
and mine felt all yours.

SOUL MATE?

At the train depot
 in perfect poise,
the nameless stranger arrives
 at my departure or
departs at my arrival:
 out of reach,
a dream to pursue, or
 an ideal exposed
to the stark naked truth?

UPON A ONCE

That's all:
your smile
and a
beautiful
way
of engaging
the moment.

A SLIVER OF MEMORY

Of all the parts of you
I can remember,
it's your tapered fingers
that often linger
and soothe my memories.

THE BALLISTICS OF A KISS

After the seismic reaction
of our first touch,
Let's investigate
the ballistics of a kiss:
The velocity of our lips
against the weight
of their softness.

BREATH TO BREATH

I sang "The Wind" given
into your ear while
in your arms
you received
my song.

IT'S YOUR SMILE

I still see
 that smile
 you wore
in Sebastopol.

This moment
 we shared
reaches everywhere.

 Since our being
one,

it's your smile
 that I wear

COMPOUNDING INTEREST

Potential lovers met
 never realized
 beyond that,

but my interest
 alone
keeps compounding.

EACH OTHER'S REACH

Our end began the moment
we opened our play:

For ten thousand hours we lasted,
until the night, we touched
each other's reach
which ended us
in sweet release.

AUGUST 4

Your birthday continues
to be
the death of me, and
all that remains,
of you and I, stays
remembering. . .

WITNESS TO A KISS

I didn't know those desires
existed within them
since these two men,
touching lips,
are not strangers to me.

Deep and impassioned
for each other, they
appear found together
in the moment
fearless toward any selfish
risks or dangers.

Isn't this heroic?

"YOUR ALREADY" MEETS "MY NOT YET"

Our first time was my first time
when we entered
what can't be entered alone,
when we let go of letting go,
releasing all that we'd ever held.

My first time was our first time
when we entered as one
what two can't know.

ALL PARTS WHOLE

This life, this place, this us
the same but not equal
in all parts whole
in the middle of this ocean's
ocean surfing
our own waves home.

LOVE IMMEASURABLE

Who can count the gifts
in love received or given
without return in need?
When does the endless ever end,
so in this moment isn't
everything fulfilled?
Since nothing's owed
to any soul, but
the one who's selfish still--
Love itself is immeasurable.

S T I L L
M O V E M E N T S

POEMS
BY

thomas perez jewell

to
E & T

Not only
born but
always so.

Be the beauty
your living-
self unfolds.

Learn to trust
Love's embodiment.

tpj

PAININGS

CELEBRATING "LA DANSE"

(Henri Matisse)

Blue sky touches ground.
Earth's deep green meets sky.
An all nude humanity dances
hand in hand in circles and circles--
foot by foot, heart to heart.
All natural colors imparting,
All music, All movements,
All silences remain invited.

CELEBRATING THREE O'KEEFFE'S

I

("Two Calla Lilies on Pink," 1928)

Side by side,

same not equal

Beautiful beauties

as natural as breathing--

ever expanding.

Soft, fragile, firm

delicious delicacies

edible to their core's

unlimited reach.

Touch them touch

into contraction, endlessly

permanent

impermanence

feeling perfection.

II

("Two Jimson Weeds," 1938)

Wholly exposed
no shame, no hesitation, no regrets

for this portal of joy's opening.

"Yes, yes, yes, yes"

come the whispered invitations.

Their proximity of flesh--

no accident.

Enter and exit the neither regions

of no and yes.

Go beyond's

temporarily Gone.

III

("Oriental Poppies," 1928)

Layers upon layers,
no separations,
Folds within folds within folds
unfolding
into yang and yin
yin and yang expressions.
Inhale and exhale all humanity.
Feel the ecstasy
and tender, sweetness of being:
Your very own breath
now wholly one
in one another's breathe.

"BICOLOR TROMPETNARCIS. . ."

(Acrylic and Ink by
Sebastiaan Bremer)

Delicate petals galore
Unfolded bicolor yellow:
 butter, golden honey, and sunshine.

Flower within a flower.
 A brain within a mind.
 A joyful mystery inside
 a fragile solidity

 always already so empty.

"LADDER TO THE MOON"

(Georgia O'Keeffe, 1958)

Like the finger when
we point toward
what we can see,

This ladder to the moon
is not necessary. . . .

We apologize Miss O'Keeffe
for any misinterpretation.

Just let us join you
on your journey.

MURDER OR ACCIDENT?

(To van Gogh's Self-Portrait)

"Don't accuse anyone else,"
you said before you died.

Whose life did you protect, Vincent,
if not your own?

Your suicide doesn't fit the facts
nor a century's worth of history.

So answer me this?" I whisper
into your un-injured ear:

"Did you receive that bullet
to harm your self or
was your aim to take
upon your self full blame?"

AFTER THE DEVASTATION

(van Gogh's Irises)

After the devastation,
I found myself
standing in the field
of van Gogh's Irises:
timeless and still I am
while he is painting them.

You are also alive
in these rainbow hues
for inside the stems we live,
reaching for the roots,
while they reach for us
always alive at forever's depths.

"THE BLIND MAN'S MEAL"

(Pablo Picasso, 1903)

What is this but a painted poem:

A jug sets alongside an
empty bowl.

A loaf of bread hand held.

This man as thin as thread
wears a single gown.

Colorless to taste, hears
what's unseen, and
feels the smell
his eyes can't see.

"THREE BALLET DANCERS"

(Degas, Trois Danseuses, c.1878)

Three that are one,
 one that is three:
light, shadow, shapes--
 a holy trilogy?

Paint, painter, painting.
Circles, angles, curves.
Poise, grace, release.
Movement that is stillness
 a stillness so exquisite!

Dance, dancers, dancing:
 Three plus all of us,
moving with such oneness.

THE SKY OF MIND

("Dream Within a Dream" by
Ralph Albert Blakelock)

Where live the people
but in trees and leaves

in this "Dream within a dream."

Nothing enters or exits
but in the dreamer's mind
whose mind feeds the dream.

Everything exits as it enters
the dreamer's images
from the mind of his own mind.

"LE FEMME AU MONOCLE"

(Francis Picabia)

Le femme au monocle with eyes
that melt like icicles on
a face laced with traces of tragedy?

Masked white, her pearls and pendant against
pink neck, blue dress, spotted gloves
on hands that resemble paralysis.

The color of her voices wear
the voices of her color, but what
do they whisper? What do they scream?
what do they keep silent?

Can words paint what paintings can't?

Just look to listen!

"Does an object always point to something's subject?"
asks the seer of the seen.

What does Picabia, as the current seer see
or hear while wearing this one lens
on the woman he's become?

A PRIOR TIME?

("Peasant Woman Sowing With A Basket"
van Gogh, 1881)

A prior time that's only now.
In the foreground
of muted golden-yellow hues,
a peasant woman sows alone,
with a basket, while standing
in an empty field, seeds
one by one, with a hand
the same color as the earth
and just as huge. . .

"CITY NIGHT"

(Georgia O'Keeffe, 1928)

Skyscrapers

razor-sharp monuments

toward progress make

the sky our only natural

escape?

The only light visible is moon.

We've all been here as adults

wanting comfort as children

in the city at night.

Labyrinthine paths

from simple to complex. . . ,

and the only way out or in is

where we stand.

LIGHT STRIKING OBJECTS

("On the Bank of the Seine, Bennecourt,
1868, Monet)

Indestinct impressions
with hints of clarity
Light striking objects
creating colors on stone
near a boat on the bank of the Seine.

A chateau reflects its facade
upside down.
Livestock graze in a haze
on the opposite shore,

and a duck or goose or some flock of white-
fluff flurrys itself in the foreground
around the feet of the color filled observer at rest
from the anima perspective
in an animus infused world?

POPPIES IN THE SUN

(Georgia O'Keeffe, 1950)

Same source

different colors,

born from the same womb of being.

Fully vulnerable and exposed to one
another's roles and claims,

yet we're mirrors to everything that is:

Reflections of the world,

we together make. . . .

Poppies in the sun, poppies in the rain
weathering every whether.By touching our own Source, over and over,
we co-create all the world's waves.

SCULPTURES

"THE THINKER"

(Auguste Rodin)

Huge hemispheres
of thought
as he sits.

His existence
as solid as
creation is fluid.

THE STATUE OF DAVID

(Accademia gallery, Florence,
Michelangelo)

Viewing the viewers view
The Statue of David through
naked eyes and camera lenses.
Do they see what I see?
Can they feel the marbled
hand prints of Michelangelo?

How many millions have witnessed
his genitals,
with reverence or contempt, and
admitted to themselves or others
either of these truths:
Being one with his nakedness, or
shamed by their embarrassment?

THE UNEXPECTED

("Fragment of a Queen's Face,"
ca. 1353-36 BCE)

The upper quadrant chip
creates a blemish

on her lop-sided, luscious lips

becoming the center of her gravity
and precious beyond what we humans

consider royalty.

Disappeared the eyes, the nose, the
ears, and any hint of hair or brow.

What remains of lips and chin meets

the unexpected surprise of what's

considered beautiful.

"L'AIR"

(David Altmeyd)

These four hands
 feel suspended
 in despair
holding on to air.

One pair in prayer;
 The other offers
a blessing, palms downcast,
 almost touching
the other's enfoldment
 for mutual solace?

WHAT OR WHOSE GREATNESS?

("Fragment Colossal Head of Youth,"
Second Century, Greece)

What or whose greatness?
No elevated status for this
ancient marble fragment,
which always has existed in the present,
crafted by the hands of a master,
now broken open--
diagonally sliced in two--
smooth and jagged--
Half-whole, half-solid, yet all of him
shines this moment.

"LA MARIPOSA"

(Aluminum by Manolo Valdes)

Lighting on a human head:

Letting go or letting in?

In full-wing spread

as what it was

or what it is?

So everlasting its beauty

as in life

so in death?

PHOTOGRAPHS

STARTLING NOW

(Photographer Unknown)

Pathless, I stand silent
in the midst of the wilderness
and witness
a wild mustang **feed** on a bush--
one with his meal.

The morning mist is wild with sunlight
startling all living beings into now
as every movement stays still
and nothing more beautiful
need occur in the world.

MOMENT FREE

(Photographer Unknown)

When wild horses
visit us
among these tamed hills
in stallions, mustangs, and mares,
a majesty and freedom arrives
as all time dissolves,
making the present an ancient space
for a mystical meld:
Being one with them
moment free
in Spirit felt.

BLUE CROSSES

(Robert Haas, Brazil, 2007)

Fifty or more
blue crosses adorn
this beach cemetery
at Rio Negro.

The tide line now dry
reaches the slopes
sandy boundary.
Eternity with an ocean view?

BIKINI ATOLL

(U.S. Navy, 1946)

The second atomic bomb tested
in "Operation Crossroads."

A mushroom invasion on water--
clouds galore,
the only visible evidence
of its invisible menace.

NARCISSUS REVISITED?
(Carol Walker)

Narcissus revisited
in equipoise:
Two Camargue males stare
brow to brow
into the water's mirror:
mesmerized not transformed.

MANE UNFOLDING
(Carol Walker)

Equine grace
Beauty released
flexed in gallop
with mild resistance.

Black charcoal just after
ignition:

Volatile, powerful
every ounce a stallion.

"EL CAPITAN," SUNRISE PHOTO
(Ansel Adams, 1968)

These trees cragged branches
 set against
"El Capitan" reflecting
 sunrise mists
 as ancient fresh
pine needles reach
 for open-air's embrace.

CLIMBING MT. FUJI'S MIND
(Photographer Unknown)

Climbing
 out
 of
 time
 into
 now
all of a sudden
 snow.

WESTERN WALL IN JERUSALEM

(Cover of Sun, March 2016)

"Why a wall?" I ask
 as witness
 to a praying man,
 head bowed, with
 yarmulke dressed.

Blocks bigger than big.
 Stones smaller than small.
 Hands open faced,
 forehead pressed
 into a profundity only
 he can grasp?

STEVE JOBS, (1955-2011)

(Time Cover)

Artist in progress--
 scientific artistry.
 Ever expanding processes
 offer eternal opportunities.

A double-edged iconic example
 of creativity's paradoxicals:
 A life and death in timelessness.

IN PANGANDARAN, 1971

(National Geographic Photo)

Java born in this Indian Ocean,
The Pangandaran Villager's catch
begins before the sun sets,
casting nets and expectations
hundreds of feet from the shore.

After dark in their canoes,
rigged and ready for the bountiful,
they lure the fish by lantern light
until they reach capacity.

PANGANDARAN VILLAGE PHOTO, 1971

(National Geographic)

Triumphant smile
tired muscles worn,
stands a fisher boy
and fresh catch,
half his body weight
now shoulder slung
for the carry home.

"FANNY"

(Jack Sturgis)

Fanny in the wet sand

at low tide.

Both her eyes hold the ocean.
Her hair all wind tangles:

A symmetrical smile she smiles
to an asymmetrical world

in angles.

Everything tips into balance
when being what you witness.

POST VICTORY POSE

(Photographer Unknown)

A universal perhaps.

Eyes averted upward.

Chin uplifted statuesque.

Bold shoulders exposed
at water level.

Rivered droplets return
into his ocean.

Success or failure
measured in tenths?

Pain and pleasure
beyond all measure?

"STRUCTURE OF THOUGHT 30"

(Doug and Mike Stern)

Dendrites and limbs,
circuits and branches,
neuronal like stems feed
this tree in winter
all year.

One on the earth of many.
One mind, open as sky,
so all creation,
whatever the weather,
whatever the season.

"PASSAGE THROUGH LIGHT, 1963"

(Hector Garcia)

No door, no closures
more like
a key hole
to all universes.

She enters
the light
leaving behind
only
shadows.

PRESIDENT DUTERTE'S WAR ON DRUGS

(Photographer Unknown)

Killing's in season
throughout the Phillippines.

On this street in Manila, she clutches
her husband's dead body in her arms.
One shot to his head without witnesses.

While cradling her beloved, this mother
of four, as on lookers look onto and into
death's dark abyss relieved it is
not them,

A bystander's camera captures the scene
complete with the sign everyone may read:

"Drug Pusher," whether true or not
this victim remains just one of the three thousand
found executed for reward and punishment.

FAMINE IN SOMALIA, 1992

(James Nachtwey)

A woman uneasily rests,
skeleton like with hand outstretched,
nearly dead from starvation,
in a well worn wheelbarrow
prepared as her vehicle, taking her
closer away or further toward?

A VIETNAM SNAPSHOT
(Photographer Unknown)

Immersed in the murder
of human beings called
"Casualties of War":
now half-submerged
in an irrigation ditch. . . .
Taste the smoke and smell the stench?

Horror worn faces on a little girl and boy
clinging and contorted toward
two ancient grandmothers in terror themselves,
in silent-screams, in mid-cling
when shocked dumb
surviving the percussion?

Where went their village? See no evil?
No wonder that war still touches what
innocent slaughter and suicide can't resolve.

CONVICTED FOR SEEKING THIS
(B&W from U.S. Federal Prison)

Hands folded on the other
side of the bars,
worn by "dirty" work,
a captured immigrant,
ill at ease on this side
of the border,
wants a home
only true freedom offers.

FAIRY PITTA
(Photographer Unknown)

Fairy Pitta
on a limb
in the scrub-jungle under brush
of Indonesia.

Red underbelly, brown lid,
banded eyes in natural disguise;
Wing of blue green and aqua tints
with powder blue of sky.

RED FLAMED I'IWI
(Cathy and Gordon Illg)

Feathers a flame
on a limb
beautifully vulnerable
siphoning the sweet nectar--

This delicious reward
for the long distances flown,
savoring his extraordinary role
as an ordinary pollinator.

STANDING ROOM ONLY

(photo by John Moore, Time, 2016)

Standing room only
on the border in Tijuana:

"To talk and touch fingertips"

con su familia.

Why such offense
for an exit or entrance?

Why honor a fence
that's built on pretense?

No wall can serve this intended purpose:

To keep out the world
that can't be divided.

A WARY, WEARY WORKER

(B&W of Martha by Matt Black)

"Why don't they work
in the fields?" Martha questions
to herself after carrying
the "white" locals' accusations
on a daily basis.

Also harrassed by the sun and her aches
in trenchant rows of lettuce, or
tomatoes, or cabbage, or countless fruit
trees, or whatever demands her hands
and heart produce
for everyone's benefit,

she ages in her efforts to complete,
since eight,
a work that seems endless. . .

"ABSTRACT CONCRETE"

(Gertrude Altschul, 1950)

Wet cement.

Spirals require

fluid movements.

Where? Its end unlimited. . .

Spirals within spirals.

We, whether we like it or not,

Waves within waves,

create create.

"INTERIOR YARD"

(Malcolm Varon, 1976)

An adobe

in the desert.

Roof access

by ladder on a slant--

Access to the stars and beyond. . .

Now filled with their falls

amidst a trillion rises.

WHAT'S THE STORY?

(National Geographic)

What's the story before and after
this photograph was taken or given?
Fistfuls of edible daylilies, as
smiling rivals in Delaney's hands,
picked from the mountains
in eastern Kentucky.

Flues of fire-reds and oranges
bursting with forest freshness
and promises to enhance
perhaps a salad, a stew, a granish,
or spices for a memorable meal. . .
Already succulent, already delicious,
already ready for consumption.

TWO EGRETS

(Melissa Groo)

Two egrets
above the water
in adversarial stance,
wings outstretched
in mid-flop,
beaks open,
prepared for
each other's
flesh?

YOUR TARGET IS YOUR MASTER

(Sandeep Kesavan, Myanmar)

A mindful rubber-banded
target practice?

One stands as witness,
the other red-robed monk
aspirant,
totally armed with
multi-colored ammo
from his wrist to mid-
forearm, aims
cocked and ready
to fire.

What's this little boy's
target?

ALLOWED TO LIVE

(Soe Zeya Tun, Myanmar)

Allowed to live life's wonder
this swaddled baby girl,
weeks
alive not years, a pulsing bundle of potentials,
contemplates the sky while
in a make-shift hammock suspended
in a shift-making world.

Mommy's at this work place
tending the kiln for hours,
brick by brick by brick,
one at a time, stretched
in rows by the thousands

like all of us born to die for centuries
earning our own existence?

A NABRASKAN HAPPENING

(Erik Johnson)

Cloud to cloud
lightning over
an abandoned house.
Where do we finally land?
Every story's our own
story,
whether storm occupied or
awaiting rainbows.

FOND OF BEING LOST

(Mathilde Crepin)

Fond of being lost
like leaves enjoying their own
arrivals, searching for the ocean's
while on Kauai Island
where paths point up and down,
inside and out,
under sky.

Over there--

a couple's already engulfed
as I follow in the shadows
toward a moment enriched
by knowing
what comes next.

THREE PHOTOGRAPHS READY TO FRAME FROM NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

(February, 2016)

1

Mother and child on a bus in Mauritius
during an evening mid-storm,
dressed in elegant wrap,
face unveiled, eyes downcast, with her
baby-boy cradled in her lap
asleep, she,
chin upon his crown, contemplates
with beatific gaze.

2

The Grunwaldzki Bridge--
an instant captured: a refuge
for a triumvirate of fowl
fed by a solitary human being:
White swans, dark-plumed ducks,
and coots gathered in the frigid
waters of the Vistula River.
Nothing else fills the panorama
but snow and emptiness.

3

Solitary un-confinement
nearly all is trees
traversing the Rennstag Ridgeway
on skis:
630 kilometers to trek
through the Thuringian forest
where freedom's already met
ski by ski, moment by moment.

IN TANZANIA

(Christopher Wilson)

In Tanzania,
 yes, that large
and small, standing under
 the baobob tree,

the night's stars

 resemble twinkling
ornaments
 attached to its branches

while looking up
 into sky.

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES OR ONE?

(Jay Huang, Bishop, CA)

Eye to eye
 as the photographer inside
 the cab shoots
a girl standing on the desert sand
 playing peek-a-boo with the
 camera's lens.

In the passenger's side-view mirror
 a toe-head blonde prepares
 to launch himself into out-stretched arms
from a truck bed's wooden frame.

 What did you capture?

GORILLA ENRAPTURED

(Central African Republic)

This lowland gorilla's
current rapture?

Being laved
in uncaptured
butterfly
madness.

AXILLARY AMPLEXUS

(Mathieu Fonlquie)

Axillary amplexus
another name for making
whoopie underwater.

Mating season in France
sans the wine
and Eiffel
Tower.

Acquainted in the shallows
two common toads swim
in reproductive embrace.

THREE PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE UNIVERSE OF DIANE ARBUS

I

"Man with a Curious Baby on the Subway"

An outfitted baby girl
 locked in the arms
 of her father, curious,
 spies the eye of the camera,
 without an expression to offer
 on a subway car
 in New York City: vintage
 nineteen fifty-six.

II

"Woman in a Mink Stole and Bow Shoes" (1956)

No Oz
 on the streets of N.Y.C.
 Ruby slippers
 meet concrete reality.
 Perhaps theater bound
 with a stole on her shoulders?
 Perhaps black attire and dour
 expression awaits a funeral parlor?
 No way to know where she's now going
 but the lines on her face
 map a universe of stories.

III

"Kid in a Hooded Jacket Aiming a Gun" (1957)

On the receiving end
 of his unholstered
 pointed revolver

 His barrel and finger
 steady on the trigger.
 These threats surreal
 not innocent
 fixed his aim and
 stare of menace.

LEAFLESSNESS

Unsheared sheep, (Newsha Tavakolian, Iran)
leafless trees, graze
during the spring equinox
in Masouleh as the river
runs down hill
along the grassy knoll.

FIVE SISTERS IN GABON

(B&W, t. 1. perez)

Suspended over a river's ocean,
Five sisters grip
a rope wrought bridge,
then smile their prayers
into the len's abyss
surrounded with
a jungle nimbus.

I M P E R M A N E N C E

poems

by

thomas perez jewell

f o r
those of us
who know remorse. . .

Impermanence
is what makes
transformation possible.

Thich Nhat Hanh

SPRING OVERTURES

Gray clouds
and rain
pass
as red birds
gambol
on
golden
grass

LATE WINTER'S WALK

The startling creek
accompanies
the falling
snow
on
crinkled
winter
leaves.

BY INVITATION

In what is called
afternoon,
the wind
turns, dances
and swirls
with trees,
leaving
us
colorful
paths
to
lead

EVERY DROP

In this moment's
 warm storm
sudden rain hands
 embrace
 every upturned
open face.

A WEBBED WORLD

A spider web wedged
 in the doorjamb,

wind and shadow
 indifferent,

catches every movement
 this world's creations

can't feel.

EMBRACING ESSENCE

Storm winds whip
and whistle clear
 one's pure
ecstatic essence
 here

EMBRACED

Wrapped around
all worlds,
the sun
becomes
the moon
through
earth bound
clouds.

WHAT AM I?

Shoulder deep in every ocean
I am the sun
inside the waves.
I am the ocean
inside the sun.
I am the clouds
inside the rain.

EARLY SPRING

Listen to the garden's
early arrivals
collude with spring.

Hear the daffodils ring
bright yellow while the violet's
purple kisses the wonder-colored tulips

as dandelions roam the lawn
preying on the sun's beams
in early morning dawns.

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

The sudden shock of the obvious.
The effortless release
of all things preserved.
If always already an I,
what loss of life?
What right or wrong?
What cataclysm?
What catastrophe of joy is this?

What does your self
tell it self that only
the silent Self can answer?

TO NOW HERE

Sacred texts read
like sacred texts lived
question our direction
at every turn.

Our wisdom of without's within
fills the path
from Emptiness to now here.

BEING'S LISTEN

We create
our own
labyrinths of
communication.

Truth lives beyond words
and is deeper than silence.

Stop doing what can't hear
your Being's listen.

I DON'T MIND

I don't mind
 when autumn arrives,
when fall leaves fall and
 the hemispheres balance.

I welcome more blue sky
 for empty branches.

The view enlarges all my eyes
 as vast as oceans
 as bare as deserts
 as wide open
as I am autumn.

TOOLS FOR BEING NONDUAL

Some think life simple,
 death complex.
Others think life complex,
 death simple.

It's both and neither.

Stop thinking this or that
about life and death, death
and life.

 Be the moment
just what is.

MIRROR LAKE

Early morning lake,
 The sun rises twice.
Here I am, that face
 you see in the water.

BEYOND BEYOND

For eons I have played
witness to the autumn-
colored butterflies dancing
on air as
envoys of the miraculous,
heedless
as they fall
from the sky
like leaves
not falling
after all,
but gliding to the ground
with a light every
sentient being invites.

DECAY GIVES WAY

Consuming the earth
as the earth
consumes me while
eating an apple
from skin to core.

As I am chewed into molecules
from something invisible
eating me inside out
the decay gives way
to life itself.

BE AWARE!

Prison is a mockingbird world
unless, until. . .

until and unless you become
your original song.

SPINNING

Spinning out of
and into thin air
clouds rise high
like erected monuments
and glorious temples
surpassing the heights
of mountains and
belief systems
just as temporary
and momentous.

WALKING UNDER AS ABOVE

Walking under as above
the half-moon
at mid-sky.

The sun sets behind
a shutter of clouds
being inside out and over
all that's ever come before.

THE WE OF OUR WE

The i of my i
is ever readier to let go
of what holds the you of
your you from the we
of our we.

COASTAL REDWOOD FOREST

Walking among the giants
we claim agelessness:

The results of our breathing
before what we call ancient.

One breath continues
this moment and the next
in this timeless dust, and
in the filtered sunlight
streams our endless
flow of being.

RADIATION BALMS

During this morning's sun
explosion,
through a muster
of cloud formations,
rays rain over the plains
and mountains.

Radiation balms
falling down,
falling down.

WHAT ELSE BUT THE MOMENT

By the slant
of the evening sun
clouds billow
and pillow without rain--
so the sky.
Even that white round cloud
now fully waxed will wane.

What else but the moment?

IS EMPTY

Always full the moon.
All the same the sun.
Always not solid.
Never vacant space.

Before the moon
was, I am.

Beyond all jargon,
wisdom's silent.

What we take
for granite
is empty.

TWO LESSONS UNDERSTOOD IN MEDITATION

I

Following the flight of the fly
trains me
to be the flight of the bee.
Following the fate of the leaf
inspires me
to bear the weight of release.

II

Being aware this very now,
frees myself from
prison's then.

HEARING TO LISTEN

A birdsong's volume
in spring
is not the same as
it is in autumn.

JUST BE IT

Talk, talk, talk,
 forward then reverse
 past into future
 and then vice versa.

So much invested
 in signs and symbols
 in movements away
 farther than what
 exists in the moment
 for so little return
 for so much confusion.

Be silent, still and listen
 everything real doesn't
 require any mention:
 just be it.

SELF'S INSTRUCTIONS TO SELF

Be still and let
 time undo time.
 Nothing intersects
 what's already whole.
 Be all spaciousness.

NEARLY INVISIBLE

Three blackbirds
 in the shade
 of an immense oak, pick
 in the grass for nourishment,
 shadowless and surfeit.

A HAWK ON PRISON GROUNDS

This predator on the premises chooses
the bare maple tree to roost,
blending well his winter plumage,
and observes.

Perched upright and still,
zazen on a limb,
just beyond reach
of any hindrance
to his freedom.

ONE AFTERNOON

A warm reprise
as birdsongs return
one afternoon
during winter's silences
in this particular
hemisphere.

A LESSON LEARNED IN MEDITATION

Silence is not silence
And still is not still
until you don't name it
until you be still
until you be silent.

MAKING SHALLOW DEPTHS A JOY

Bird after bird arrives
after the rain makes
a wonderful puddle.

Bird songs, at intervals,
sing their discovery.
Swallows and sparrows alight
five, six, seven at a time.

Dancing wings flick out and upward
as their feathers aflutter
create splashes as showers
with themselves falling under.

PARADOX VISITED

Open spaces
sparse and spare,
enveloping the desert's
countless stares.

WINDS IN THE COURTYARD

The winds invite the dance:
Flowers and leaves
lift and lilt,
upturn their limbs
in ready response.

MAY MID-DAY

Mockingbirds dance
 on the green, green grass
 A hop and a land
 as their wings expand
 into collapse
 for a peck, a bug,
 some grit to digest.

Dressed to dine
 in their full spring plume.

NATURAL HAUNTS

(Pacific Grove, CA)

The ocean's incessant reach
 and fathoms
 comfort only those who dare
 its swim. . . .

The winds carve cypress trees
 along the cliffs
 as foggy phantoms envelop them.

THIRSTLESS

I used to thirst
 with unquenchable want
 because the fountain I sought
 was outside myself
 until this insight
 within me emerged:

The essence of live resides
 inside every outside's alive.

A WINTER PERSPECTIVE

Winter roots
Spring dews
Summer typhoons
Autumn frosts
abundance comes
from winter's
constant presence

SO BURGEONING

Every day in April rain.
Every rain in April fell.
Every tree a forest green.
Every flower burgeoning.

WHO ARE WE?

Our hearts are ancient mirrors within
where deeper secrets await reflection.
Who are we in truth and essence
that mere belief will not reveal us?

AT THE BORDERS OF JOYS

Caught in the beautiful shower:
Monarchs like meteors flower
the sky over Mexico.

Cliff hanging bushes and brambles
inherit their colors.
What wonder
becomes our eyes stilled silent
with their aliveness.

ARRIVE AS LEAVES

In the distance
through evening mist
a cloud of birds
arrive as leaves
on that barren tree,
filling all empty spaces,
this January freeze.

THIS MOMENT'S NOTICE

In a moment's notice,
I witness the many
depths of red as one
in this full autumn rose.

AS IF WE KNOW

I am and I am not
beyond yours or mine
in our world of thought.

I am not and I am as if
these rumbles of chaos,
splashes of insight,
and flashes of emotions
are separate from
our everything's ocean.

THE SUN'S RISING SET

The sun alights
on the limb of that tree
as big as the world:
setting there
as an ample autumn apple
dangling
down.

HOW DO WE CONTROL?

This is
a simple test
beyond a no, yes or guess:

How do we reconcile
the sad joys of terror
we create for the sake of success?

A MATTER OF ESSENCE

How do we embrace
every difference at once?

The sages say
it is a matter of essence
how we reach
the unreachable each
of every single piece
that is the whole--

North, South, West, East
as birth enters alive's eventual death
letting go into who is us
Being one with our own opposites.

THE RISE AND FALL OF AUTUMN

Everything living is dying's leaf
from green to gold to red to rust.
Enfolding truth and faith's belief,
the young and old for love or lust
augment their joys to relieve their grief.
All rise and fall to autumn's must

SO ORDINARILY BEAUTIFUL

Under the umbrella
called rain,
at the end of April
came
a beautiful miracle
named May.

SHOWERS OF DUST

I enter this sequoia forest
where nothing's my enemy.

Everything I am touches
these majestic beings
reaching for sky.

And, I am the clear creek
advancing in rattlesnake fashion,
gleaming sun-filtered light.

Pure rapture's presence
inside who am I?
As these giants in silence
rain showers of dust.

AN ABSENT PRESENCE

Alone on the train
to nowhere special,
he is the lonely stranger
between departures and arrivals.

He is the noisy silence
moving still, an absent presence,
staring reflected in the window
at some other stranger's harrow.

BEYOND A THOUGHT INSIDE A FEELING

One moment a tree
the next a forest.
In that moment fragile
and in this one powerful.

I DON'T KNOW

I didn't hear your conversation
about nothing, because
I wanted it to be about something.

You go on and on and I go
off and off to find an answer
to this question:

When does the Zen of nothing
equal the sum of something?

"I don't know" emerges
the answer to my self now
dumbfounded between
a forest of words and
a desert of silence.

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF BREATH

O how we squander
the significance of our breathe,
making this simple truth's oneness
about not enough
instead of living
every life and death.

BLAMELESS RAIN

This moment's rain is the same
as the first rain ever felt. . . .

Little boys and girls get drenched
from home to school and back again
for umbrella opportunities not taken.

SUPERHUMAN OR SPIRITS?

Growing old is how we know
the man of steel is not real.
The world is filled
with fact and fiction
True feelings and pretend.

How do we understand
who we are unless we learn
who we are not by our story's end?

SPRING ENTERS

Just when
at the very end
of living winter's
lingering deaths,

Spring enters
all weathered beings
bringing with her
a sweet, fresher breath.

LIFE REQUIRES DEATH TO LIVE FOREVER

Remember well human energies
life requires death to live forever,
and many deaths in living emerge
into every dying's disappearance.

DO NOT KEEP OFF

The grass springs
 and becomes lusher, yet
 I am admonished I am
 to "keep off the grass"
 for the sake of someone's self-
 righteousness.

Why? I am a part
 of its root system and beyond
 and both of us thirst for just
 such communion.

NIGHT'S SHUT DOOR

Predawn
 before the sun opens
 the door.

Dare you venture
 into a world that does
 disappear once

evening closes
 night's shut door.

DESERT CHARMS

The sun arrives
 in fresh alarm
 illuminating
 all the desert's charms.
 Empty as it is full
 embracing its own infinite
 existences paradoxical.

SPACE STATION INTERNATIONAL

One with the entire universe
 among so many ones,
even in this human-made star
 creating space,

we exchange our waste.

Without quarrel,
 we share our sweat and urine
 for communion and survival.

Still not convinced of our interdependence?

AGAIN?

"Again?"

"Yes, that's what
 we humans do

again and again
 and again

until again."

YOSEMITE

From grand to miniscule,
 from "El Capitan" to
 the valley's basin,

I now understand
 how I am
 from microscopic to human.

HUMANS AND TULIPS

Tulip worlds
 emerge.
 Colors blossom
 so human faces.

Textures cup
 the sun
 into delicious--

How perfect
 every imperfection.

Life's fragile
 not reality.

A PEBBLE IN THE SKY

A pebble in the sky compared
 to Openness.

Not even the source
 of its own light,
 the moon still illuminates.

Nothing in this Universe
 that exists on its own
 is ever what
 you think it is.

WHEN YOU WANT TO BE FREE

When you want to be free
 just understand
 what now is.

Be at peace
 with all the pieces
 that make us whole
 without exception.

DESERT BEAUTY

Desert sand and sun
 both shape-shift the horizon
 through the day until dusk
 when a myriad of hidden
 creatures emerge for the night.

High and low, dry and wet,
 the desert reaches life's
 pinnacle of opposites.

The desert reveals earth's
 own deeper secrets and
 its darkness invites the sky's
 trillion galaxies of wonder.

CIRCLING EMBRACE

Hawks hover & circle
 overhead; their
 wings kiss
 the wind's
 Original Face
 all over
 again and again
 and Graceful soar
 into this moment's
 singular
 embrace.

A UNIQUE CASE

A winter flower's
 charge to the senses
 causes a battery
 of beautiful sparks
 and in each shines
 a unique case
 for a physics experiment
 in reverse.
 The observed may now use
 the observer for its
 own particular purpose.

AN OCEAN'S SONG
(Santa Cruz, CA)

Tide inspired music
from ocean waves
playing through water-eroded
flute-holes of stone.

Fountains flaunt fantastic
on cragged cliffs
from spouts and flumes
forming verses and refrains
of sonorous sounds.

Myriads of mist flutter
ready for reprise
for an ocean's song
in each resides.

LIQUID WORDS

Let's not flatter ourselves
about how dangerous
our death is to live.
Just listen to our liquid words
argue "Hell as rational" and
"Heaven" in the sky
as a better alternative.

UPHILL DESCENDING

Walking uphill towards home,
I rest on the crest
looking back to where
I've already traveled.

The clouds all of a sudden
open up
on this path of my ancestors.

The torrent in floods descends
in streams, in rivers, in oceans.

ENCHANTED

My room still lives
 in a house that's died

Still alive is that child
 who no longer exists.

Absent the floors, the doors,
 the dark.

Present the panes, the windows,
 the light.

STORMS

Watching from
 inside
 the storm develop--
 see-hear-feel
 everything gather at once.

Such abundance
 in the midst of renewal
 and ruin.

RAIN WALLS CLIMBED

This present rain
 is the same
 as when
 this little boy played
 in puddle
 wonderful
 joy.

AS I SIT UNDER

Not a leaf left
 this November
 on the tree that
 I now sit under.

Not a star stirs
 over our canopy.

Trees are not like people
 but people are like trees
 populating the world
 with their leaves
 as arrivals.

IN THIS INSTANT SKY

Huge and half and whole
 trunk and branches
 empty or full. . .

Northern or
 Southern hemisphere
 influenced. . . .

The earth's location
 in this instant sky.

OPEN AS SKY

Free from the doubt
 of all belief. . .

Open sky
 clear mind
 mind clear
 sky open

FULL OF WORLDS

Awaken into pre-dawn's concert

Grackles,
 songbirds,
 owls:

Full of worlds and free,
 at half moon,
 as this hemisphere greets
 the sun:

Whippoorwill,
 mockingbird,
 robin.

LUCIOUS LIGHT

Lady bug on a human being
 which one lights on which?

Which one travels
 as the passenger?

A wonderful waking to what's
 already awake. . . .

ON THE MOUTH

Sitting as a Zen pretzel
 "Being meeting being
 in being itself."

Smiling from the inside out
 after kissing my non-self
 on the mouth.

LIMBS AKIMBO

With limbs akimbo
the branches dance
Leaves and wind
dip and swing
into incessant whispering
as partners part
without the distance.

IS NOT THE WORLD?

What gender do you
assign the moon?
Now waxed in partial view.
What is is not what we see.
Is not the world what
the universe is?

ON THE YARD IN SPRING

On the yard
in spring
"Prison"
our word--
Not for birds. . .