

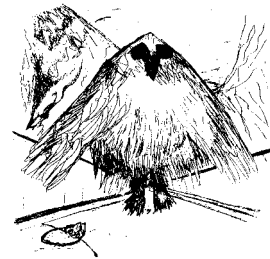
SEVENTY
SEVEN
PAGES OF
POETRY

COLLECTED POEMS
1996 - 2001
BY GREGORY BRUCE

Mirth Mother Designs First Edition

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IN FINE BOOK STORES

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VIEW FROM THE CAB

Routine runs the rails
Out west near Hinton land.
Three in the cab
On the steel road clack
In the winds of chance.

Rail songs go on.
Rail songs go on.
Rail songs go on.

Tons.
Slamming steel.

The track is hot.
The cab is dark.
Yelling a joke.
All tangled up.
Same walk on the path.
Same dance in the park.
Rail songs go on and on...

Tons.
Slamming steel.

Loose cars on the track.
The brakes. The light.
Can't see
no move
no stop
no time
Goodnight.
Goodnight. Goodnight.
Goodnight gone.

Rail songs go on and on...

Tons.
Slamming steel.

Brothers I hope your names live on.
Who is who
Tangled and gone.
Same walk on the path.

Same dance in the dark.
Rail songs go on and on...

Gone.
Slamming steel.

MOURNING GENERATION

Like double, we make it;
We are;
Generating what is within.

Did it bring you down
To the shotgun, son.
You were doing so well.
What went wrong.
I'm sorry
What can I say.

Couldn't you hold on
Walk away from your pain
What was it that made you
Fool, run, runaway.
I'm sorry
What can I say.

Why is it a few
Talented ones
Take our breath
Then their breath is gone
I'm sorry what can I say.

Hope you live
To breathe again
Though God only knows
How such is done.
Generation
Creation
Congratulations
What was your faith

And why was it some -
following you -
Stood in your place
Ran, ran away, too.
I'm sorry
What can I say

Nirvana and Eden
Were then, if nirvana

has ever been.
We were expelled.
...and stumbled
Away
down through today, generations...
... stumbling...

TIGER GROWLS

Space taken
Plans awry
Who are you
Who am I

The peace is gone
The fun is fraught with
Tiger growl
Tyger growl
Blind, we fight

Write blind
ransom notes
It is
happening,
I think.
Anyway, this is where it's at...

Tiger growl
Tyger growl

Plain
Love
A
Bitter Sweet Struggle
We
Find
Each Other
in ourselves.

Sometimes, understand

Who are you?

Start again.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S ROMEO AND JULIET, A MOVIE...

1996. Hey Claire.
Virtual humanity
has got the best of them
to brood,
to party insane, or
to fight it out like fiends.

Did he promise
something else,
a dream...?

How far could Juliet see?
Who are you for me?

The walls are high
The garden is ruined
The farmers are few
The beach is strewn,
Strewn with debris.
How far could Juliet see?
And who are you with today?

It was done with words and Deeds of the young;
And older too were fools
For their creation was
this destruction,
This nothing done with
Words, deeds, and guns.
A desperate shot
To bring love back to...
... to life?
God only knows
There must be sacrifice.
There must be sacrifice.

The walls are high
The faith is a ruin
To toil we go
Broken
Part deed, part Romeo, Juliet,
you and me.

Hey Claire.

How far could Juliet see,
Lost when she screamed;
The deaf icons watching.
How far could she see?

STONE PEBBLE CHRISTMAS

She's got autumn hair
kind of ragged
red and orange. She's blue.

She's got rings and pierced things
And secret tattoos.

She's got attitude, too many pills and booze,
Leather and street-worn shoes.

The telephone says:
Are you coming home
for Christmas, baby?
Dad is ill.
That flu.

Money's short.
We might move.
We got your number
from you know who.

Month end welfare line
She sees someone else she knows Sort of cleaned up, slightly burned,
White as a ghost.

He's got the attitude, pills and booze, never lose.
Leather and street-worn shoes.

They head to the bar.
He buys the first rounds.
They laugh about calls from Mars
And drink to the cause.
They're
Sizing each other up,
fuelled for the season
They're going through.
Trying to forget what hurts in street-worn shoes.

And the telephone says:
Are you coming home
for Christmas, baby?

Dad is ill.
That flu.

Money's short.
We might move.
We got your number
from you know who.

Round and round and round
Tiny pebbles go.
If the edges don't cut you
You might fall
through the holes.
And truth is a lie
And life seems better fast and smoothed.
Slide along the street.
Around we go.

IF YOU ARE IN DEBT, PASS THIS ONE ON, EH?

Twist resolution:
Sick of the rats
But the cats get slammed.
But then...
Not.

The good fall fast in the rain.
Cats and dogs
Cats and rats
Everything the same.

You fall asleep.
And on it goes.
Pick up a guitar.
Try lyrical verse.
Dance in the gutter.
Shine your lights like a hearse.

So rats and dogs go on,
and cats think about...

Raise the topic.
Raise the level.
The good fall fast
like the rain.
I am innocent in mourning.
Are you?

And on it goes.
Challenge
Question
Yeah, I cried.
And you?

Try it when you need.
Try putting on the long dark coat.
And on it goes.
When the weather's wild
I like the wind slap
in the face.
The wind.
Take off the long dark coat.
Dress for the weather.

Try life.

DO YOU WANT A LOVER

Fuck
Make love
Have sex -
I can't choose.

Fuck,
make love.
Do you want a lover
Or is this me
Making love
To you?

I want a bath with you
Rub-a-dub.
I love your skin
Your touch
Your eyes.

The place you go
with me -
The place I go
with you.

I remember
the need to touch
you
I remember
and I can't choose.

Do you want a lover?
Say when,
love.

Caresses I rekindle
To kiss your hands
I want to cradle
With you.

And good lover
need
cools
to the memory
of a touch

of is.

We do.

MY EYES ARE OPEN

Sight, sound,
say one:
see the other.

My eyes are open;
But I cannot see.

Light,
shadow,
reflection:
sight.

Film
Camera
Movie
An industry of reflection:
the candle of the day.

My eyes open,
But I cannot see.

She calls and frightens me.
I reflect on that.
And, as usual,
Wonder who she was or is,
Wonder, I don't,
I don't know.

Wonder where we go.

I see
more than spring and summer
and live where
my eyes are open,
but I cannot see.

Glasses help. Watches hurt.
How was your day?
Wonder.
What am I?
Who are you?
My eyes open.
Words follow me,

saying
sight, sound, say one,
see the other.

When?
Who?
What?

FEAST AWAY

Make your own deal.
Bargain for a life to make
Time, celebration. Riot.

Out past the binge of early experiences, force fed.

Keep going -
You got a good deal
Even if age makes you
Puke it all up,
With your fingers down
The throat
Of conformity.
You got a good deal.
So riot.

Maybe childhood scars
left
a skip on
the record.

Go on. Make something of it.
This life.
This time.
Maybe anonymous ransom notes
Of fear
Arrive in youth;
They
steal
Away
Simple Childhood.
So go on, go ahead and riot
Like a bouquet, like a meadow of flowers.
Like wind
Scattering along the edges
Of your mountain-top.
Go on: green cold white blue
yellow orange
red.

Warm it up with passion,
laughter and love.
Wash it down with beer.

Share it out
Set a feast
Then it's over;
Another day cleaned up.
The memory will stay there
Until the weight
of
too much, more, later
Steals in
Like fingers down
the throat
of innocence.
Had enough yet?

We got a good deal
And, anyway, the next generation steals the right
To flower -
just like that.
There's always a feast
mess somewhere -
As if someone just left.
So flower
Feast away
Riot
You got a good deal.

This is the best diner
out west,
everything's spiced with
Electric Night Light Late Laughter...

...and the other night goes on:
In punches of bottle
binge violence,
Shelters and tin
can hand outs;
In well side wrapper
clad women -
draw water figures
who fill buckets of tears
(then no more)
for the dead and detained,
for the beaten and
the starved,
For the many who stood

Up to the bad deal
of yes sir
Sharp beatings of brutality.

The mobile police rolled in
With teargas and
Live fire,
Scattering everything; everything
Overturned, empty;
Flies buzzing,
"Order is dismissed."

And then
the state security service
hunts down the friends
the families
the witnesses.

We got a good deal,
So let's turn our backs,
Wimp back to the party.
Let's riot
Like our feast is best.
It is -
the onliest
as flowers go
sunset.
So riot.

Be thankful for the food
you get.

Amen

LIQUID CRYSTAL DISPLAY

Picture this:

There was this jackass braying.
It's hair brush
Coat dun
Sturdy, rock-a-by
Up and down,
mane, hide and legs.

Big voiced eyyy-ahhh
in my mind.

Behind, the ground was dry, flat scrub and grit,
Mainly white sand, all rivered and sculpted tiny.

Rocks that fell from the sky
scattered.

A receding collection of shrubs
Do a grey-green pattern,
dances
mind mirror constellations and
the milky way.

The wind rushes.
The animal quiets.
Someone moves fast
in front of me -
a blur of cloth,
drapery.

Ambiguous, I forget.

You lead.

The picture is yours,
take it.

The mountains in the distance -
Solemn blue.
The sky the same as ever,
Liquid crystal display.

MINE

Dig
Memory
Find
Seam

Seem
Is
Word
Eye
Find

Dream

Canary
Heart
Dig
Memory

Falling
Away
To
Mountains
and
Breasts
and
Natural
Caresses
Of
Wind

Falling
Out
Canary
Deep
Seam
Is
Time
Is not
Wind

I love the words of wind.
Feathers fall like worlds.
Quill follows scent,

Shadows,
Mountains.

Live then.

ALWAYS BELIEF

Stone spirit sacred leaf
Pan warlock elemental priest
Nun goddess -
say what you please -
Ancestor
Follower
Always belief

Pray to please
our Father
Pray Mother for our peace
Creator created
creatures

Mysteries never asked for

Always belief

Word and door
Heavens, hands full,
Like hairs and eyes,
Sands of any beach

Ocean wave,
tide,
absence,
Ripples, riddles

Leaf shaking shadows

Always belief

BE BRIEF AND CLEAR

There was this line
And it flooded
Rain
Melting Snow
To
Rumble the surface
Steam the hills, and
Valleys.

Spring.

Wreathed with
Cool
Rain storms
And
the uncertain shift.

Spring.
We drenched in the stand-a-long,
Waiting, then
Refreshed
In the sunshine.

Naked
When Spring arrived.

CHILD OF A WASH

I don't mind
Making myths
If you
Be
Dreams

You say
Where is Daddy
And there is
A story in the silence

She says
I don't mind making
Movies

Learned every word

There is a story
In silence

A wash of tears
in the eyes
Is life
One day

love life eyes
life love eyes
love eyes life
eyes love
life

Flowering green
line love leaf
spring spines and so
green ocean wash

PRAIRIE ROSE

She's a prairie rose
With tears
In her sweet eyes

She's the kind of world
You stop
You realize

She's a loving heart
Sees through
Your disguise

May that rose flower on
And the thorns not pierce
Your heart,
Your loving heart.

LOST AT SEA

The bottle opened
Like a wet kiss
On a summer's day

Dizzy
In love
Lost at sea

A word was spoken
And she was faraway
On a summer's day

Dizzy
In love
Lost at sea

Lost at sea

Lost at sea.

THE FIRST OF SEVEN CANDLES

The first is rarely remembered at all
like the first kiss
or the first wish at the well

Perhaps at worship,
perhaps for light,
perhaps for celebration,
perhaps to mark
the gravesite.

Spring turns, turns, turns,
arrives
We stare at it, strangers,
love and loss
in our
awakened eyes

We wish for better
we bless our fortunate days -
we might light up the every moment
if our spirit had its way

Candles of age and shape
remind us for all,
from the fresh to the old,
of the ancient road,
the sweet early well.

we are flickering pages
we inhabit holy days
we scatter our litter
we forget to stay

we age
we linger
we repeat our mistakes
we light candles, climb staircases,

guests in this place...

SECOND CANDLE

An evening light for our
sweet table
dinner, darling.

Glass holders wink
and we
diverge.

Gaze.

THIRD CANDLE

Drips on the floor
of the factory shop
are swept out
gathered or
tracked away.

A trinity of fates
In a creation fable

Our stomachs rumble
and a clattering of pottery
and preparation
dictates which are lit
and what matches and ashes and stubs
burn out.

There is a time of prayer
in all this harvest
and we turn, turn, turn
to the basics

when our thoughts
light on it.

FOURTH CANDLE

String

pour or dip

Polished pools
in the cave

stalagmite

weapons of light
after
dark torches
of war

A cloistered cell

Signifying
the intimate gathered
against the nothings
of dark

threads rolled and slowed
in the sperm of community

FIFTH CANDLE

There were two, side by side

One fell fast
As it burned low.
It's wick keeling
clean, unsinged
Through the whitening
pool of wax.

One lingered
and fed on
the pools
down to the base of the holder.
An ember,
fading, fading, blue gone,
small smoke
consumed,
gone.

There were two,
legacy and merit,
the undone and the fully complete,

candles,
equals in mystery.

SIXTH CANDLE

Place a penny by the candle
Ram and relight
Ponder then

Gambler
Sailor
Flares fading dark
Go blue

Another message
Of the world you know

Time
Chance
Breath of wind
Mind the doorway

Candles burn again

Cross yourself and leave

Drip font water across the floor
Until the certainty of exterior wind swells
Brings shore
Beaching

Threadbare

Broke

SEVENTH CANDLE

Deathwatch

An image that floats and never settles
Until the wax has worried
flowed and vanished

Going deep
Like an ocean sounding

Stub holder surface sealed
With the flow, the flame

Congealed

BLUE COLLARED

Ginsberg
Employee, poet
Honest man

Used to push buttons
At the control panel
Of the reservoir
Of grief.

Naked lunch bucket
Burrowed above ground...

Gone now...howled

Seventy.

ALL OF THAT OF ALL

All of that of all
Is you:

A face in a mirror wondering
Pictures, words,
tonight, drunk and distorted
perhaps,
perhaps not.

Perhaps
free will the dot
in the yin and yang of
your doorway,
perhaps not.

Beyond the good and evil
To the seed in spring,
On the temporary land
of the breathing home,

Beyond everything
learned in the practical punctuality
of now -

way beyond -

to the clay perhaps,
perhaps not.

Perhaps to the saying
of Darling, I look at you and
the doorway is love
and your windows
make a timeless home,
the eyes of soul.

Perhaps that.
Perhaps that silent,
perhaps alone.

NINETY SEVEN YEARS

for my Grandmother

A door opens, lighting a home
for ninety seven years

A smile broadens and eyes twinkle,
across old photos,
into soup and salmon,
bread and butter.

You told stories

Of scrubbing the house with your sisters

Of working at the factory during the war,
the factory where a woman lost an arm throwing a hissing shell out the door,
her standing later as the medal was pinned
to her breast for such sacrifice

Of travelling to the land of rich cream,
getting ill on the richness you had never
before experienced

Of the tidy war veteran who delivered
to the kitchen
his gas touched lungs
you and your children left young

Of bouts of scarlet fever,
transocean voyages,
leaving, returning, leaving home,
raising foster children,
remarrying and moving, another home,
sorting out his drinking,
living independent to the last days,

then, swiftly as your smiles,
leaving us and remaining in so many ways.

A door opens, lighting a home...

TIGERS

Extinction song
A howl in
moonlight.

On our knees -
our dominion gift failed.
Failed. Thrown away. Again:

Burning bright
in the machine staccato
Of this night
A snare of science
makes
feast delicacy
without symmetry
without justice, sense, belief.

And somewhere distant
numbers dwindling
voices murmur
war

We may quicken
taking actions
passing laws
perhaps too late

Somewhere distant
numbers dwindling
voices murmur
war

And if silence overtakes you
coloured buoys,
bright balloons
all these scratchings,
sand on paper,
only mark that
voices murmur
war

WEST YORKS WIND

Scattering summer swallows
Goggle eye
Spangle
Fold

Turn
Like Constellations

And the poet -
hot for life -
Grows cold.

He crossed the abyss:
All songs
For love.

The last songs
For she
Who had gone
before.

Hughes dead now.

The wind says
Nothing more

RIDDLE

The crazy flies buzz in the sun
When hot, seek water and shade.

The lazy coloured-wing butterflies
Dodge kittens that chase their names.

When cats sleep in the summer-time
Is it winter-time that they dream?

And, if so, in the winter-time
Any wonder cats don't sleep?

Street poetry,
fast,
cheap.

TO ALL YOU YEARNING

To all you yearning empires
Kindly
Jeering
Whatever
You are

Strive to stay up
Don't fall

Prepare to sink
Gracefully
into
old age

Always.

And there's always
Always a neighbour or two, next door
Round the block,
always drunken, smelling of piss,
mind matter mush,
Talking like this:

"Nuke. Nuke!
Nuke, are you listening to meeee?"

And by then the cat's out of the bag
Scampering away
On the boggy bank
Before we can drown it.

Nuke, are you listening?

SPOKEN

Boat and passenger make a vessel
Why is wheel
What is rudder

While we wrestle, in the wheelhouse
All the cargo
Stare at us

Who it is, I don't know
Why forget the obvious

Seas and fortunes of the wind
Depth and distance to the land
Other ships and other vessels

In the fog of silenced sounds

Boat and passenger make a vessel
Why is us
What is other

While we wrestle, naming star guides
All the skies
Fall down from thirst

Who is who, who can sail
Seas of mountain, unlimited fetch

Scribbled log books left behind
Points to ponder, all is dust
Other ships and other vessels

In the cool of silenced sounds

THE WILD

Paintings tarot
bottoms and tops:
Like when Europe first did
the razor crop
about the time Columbus stopped -
Spindlies, stumps, a pond, verdant green:
Watercolours
Hint these things -
Then
Business pirates
redrew the lines
To calendar eighteen
of someone's time
in twists, le Roi, gold bloodlines -
Plaster, trees, rich elegant scenes:
Waters colour
Hissed and heaved -
So
Gauguin, Turner
retook the fuse,
Hosting nineteen's fire,
sensational hues
while Blake's Durer proves true...

Skim through
Watch it vanish
Explode at twenty
Abstract dervish
A nothing
ciphers
blobs
photographs
Fast forward

We

Land on the moon

Look back

EPITAPH

The only army

We

need

Is time.

It

Marches on.

SHE IS THE TRIBE

Fashion this little paper shield for
The impossible she -
Our Woman -
The matrilineal keeper
of morality.

We carved her a great stool
Where she sits, amusing and judging
Us all.

We must entertain.
We must work.

For five sixths of the time
peace reigns
The land is bliss

On the sixth sixth of time
the earth trembles
And she goes mad.

We weave a green wreath with yellow flowers
Sprinkle dead leaves and twigs on her clothing

The swift and bright run and hide
Those caught must fight or be drowned

Down she takes me by the mirrored river
If she sees her reflection she might be sane

If she sees a tree frog
she will eat it

Its legs will dangle
from her mouth as she speaks.

Then when she is her other self again,
Maybe
after
a long sleep,
She will sweep the twigs and leaves
off her clothing

Cast off the wreath and eat the yellow flowers:

then her breath will smell sweet
and the world will call her honey.

THE OTHER CONQUEST

The silence of dualities
Stares back from the still
Bucket of water

The gliding tones and
The precise written arts
Are consumed by fire and barking war dogs

The moth returns to the flame and
The seed makes its journey to the ground
In the steaming pile of shit

The words are distorted
In the forever of necessity
Vice gripped to belief

All roads lead to ruin

The virgin affirms the science of faith
And the experienced calculate the weight
Of the yoke

The honest face their conscience
Seeking reprieve
In their certain doom

The humble burrow high into the sky
And find themselves
Amidst the walls and baubles

Drenched in the colours
Of blessed absence
The pool stills

And only the landscape escapes

THE HOUSEHOLD SPHINX

Out on the summer steps
At the top of the stairs
In front of the green and white door
The household sphinx hold court,
Dreaming in the midday sun.

The Jesus of Sunday exhorts us
To bless this living thing
And all seems blessed.

But then like a shadow the sphinx
Steals off the steps
Down to the bushes on the side

Not for the first time
Not the last:
It captures a songbird
by its quick sharp claws

One verse in its own song
One view of the riddle

It blesses us with the carcass

The household sphinx

DID I FORGET YOU?

Your breath, your breasts, your voice
your touch, your skin
your way of letting me in

Did I forget you?

No, I'm just tired from lack of sleep
The commonplaces of loving
Slip from me

I let go

Will you forget me?

I know

We won't

This dance goes on and on
I'm lonely
for the sound of steps

I look back

INTERRUPTIONS

A disaster of serpents and waterfalls
animal charges and breakdowns
occasioned by age
Stop the flow of us
Interrupt

The pounding of footsteps
Hooves flinty and hollow
over the village bridge
The whines of a machine with
pamphlets, packets, and
faces grim and grey

The klaxon alarm on the radio
the unprogrammed programmed silence
that swivels our heads

The gust of wind
the sudden ebbing
the rumble and crack
of earth beneath

These are the things that transfix us

At the dig
At the graveyard
In the screams and hollers
Before campfire, torches, candles or lights Illuminate the terror
That unites the everyone
With the rich and famous...

Then the spools rewinds
we crunch popcorn
split atoms
drift off
little lonely planets
vain civilizations
noble, cluttered, shiftless

SILENCED SOUNDS

Up and down and all around
we hear no light
and see no sound
Our senses we plead
And pray awake
But our brains order
and analyze the case
and
In the ocean
Of all souls
We judge ourselves and say we know
Fools, the wiser shake and frown,
And lecture us
With silent sounds

BREAK THE RULES

The Ivy and the building is slowly
killing me
Tearing at my dreams
Driving me down
Old and weak.

Now I am just ruins and rubble
sudden fields
smoothed out and hills
so Rich with wild
Strawberry sweet.

Nature absorbs its own.

BARTOSZ
Challenged
Michelangelo
Artist
Leader
Twenty
Two
Ninety
The Belvedere Apollo
Floats
Below You
Your model throne

CENTURIES

We talk politics like love:

There is this shattering shudder
Of time,
Crawling with a whorled shell
That echoes empty with
The ideas that ran the centuries.

Modes of belief.
Cracked pottery in a primal cave.

Some are idealistic passionate ones
Full of love
Saying what is wrong,
Cursing the imperious rulers.

And, suppose, if everyone woke up at the same time.
Maybe we would have chance then
To break the chain of madness;
The bullies squabbling
And yet fast friends
While we, the legions, suffer.

Modes of schoolyard.
And the roomful of mirrors called literature.

And still the odometer of time creeps in with tens.
And did you know
With Roman numerals
You could get to a hundred
With less figures
Less strokes
Less diversity.

Modes of tolerance.

The cast of the sculpture.

The play of colour, light, and form.

And I think of music, the moving line and the colour of harmonies:

In paradox discordant to the sensitive ear of a dog.

CONTEMPT

Ah, the misty mystic homeland

Unseen, silenced,
The man moves on with
An oar stirring his mind,
Spilling paper
Which fans him

He cools
Looks back

Cunning and strange are the ways
Of fiction
Of fight

The muses gathered
Respect rose from the sea,
falling headlong
Into the lap of a hunter.

Cunning and strange are the ways
Of loving
Of ice

The one poised with the spear is cold
Certain

The one doing the hunt is cruel
Justice

They toy with us
By inevitable means

Some stumble
Some die
Some ponder
Some direct

All paths inexorable,
Blind

Lost in burning red
Vain yellow
Subtle blue
Weary gold
Innocent white

To the finish
To the homeland

To the final pitch
And frame of sun drenched hue

To the final thought
And deed of love subdued

A sublime moment
of then and now
and nothing more complete

A journey left uphill
In a reluctant world
That bears our weight
That lets us turn and see

Ah, the homeland -
Only where we have been

-after seeing "Contempt" the film by Jean-Luc Goddard, 18 March 2000

EASTER SUNDAY 2000

There is no bloody revolution
Nothing, some rain
The lambs were blessed in the church and then slaughtered
Feasting and wine
Celebrate

There was some cooking in the kitchen
Food, a taste
The streets were empty in the downpour, splash soaked
Blue mountains,
tangled grey

After a meal and cheers at mid-day
Starting, the rite
The eyes peered out, over and bustled
An elaborate event
Red eggs

Sooner or later it must happen
Always, this life
And the renewal after the full moon seems hopeful
Fresh lamb,
Luck of place
Mingling from strangers friends and family
All one thing
This life

The accidents and incidents of travelling
Arriving, the crowd

HAIKOU-KOO

It's a rare wolf that's

A lone wolf; it's a rare wolf

That's alone. Woof! Woof!

ON HIS PASSING

The Kalahari stretched
taut
its belly,
sighed - and died.

So touched Sahara, kin,
Who expelled it to the winds.

Fell down near Afghanistan, and other
what-was-once places, displacements,
lands of madness, tinder dry.

And so by snow slowly gathered
is water,
the water of dust rain stream refugee,

rushed away -

scattering -

born different, the same -

scattering -

Locked in earth like land field mines of life

Jigsaw puzzle axemen at the
base

tower of Babel, you nature,

you people,

Fragments of humid air blown up, away,
breath,

oil well fire, fire of life

- scattering...

And then
Yes, struck the seeds sprouting successive springs

Latitudes, yes.

The rippling wave for
flora feeding fauna.

Yes, struck astronomy of sailors
peering into nets and horizons of day
peering into heavens, yes,
in this night.

So with gratitude
passed through the divine
thinking seeds thrown in fields.

Yes.

And loss, sense of loss,
so small, scatters into the belly of a stranger whale.

Dine at the table,
light a fire,
and ask the riddle to the silent host:

Who watched the stars on Kalahari before
Walk a while in my shoes

Who walked
in thirst
wise steps
full of sand

Who,
who watched,
who walked,
Who?

And the belly does not breathe
And the water does not flow
And the fire does not burn
and the earth reclaims its own.

THE RIVER
Thoughts on "Beyond Geography"

Begin...
All alive, sentient
We submit and speak submissions
Small, mere and mortal
In an ancient feminine dance...

Survive
On stone ground
We curse over hunger belly -
Hunting to herdkeeping
Irrigation, containers for grain
Villages to city -
We create masculine warring states.

Cave drawings obliterate
Plenty gone
Raise columns of law
Nature we drowned, burned and starved in
Now we slither on thicketed, defended banks.

We symbolize the transition
Take technology of mind in hand
Once we were of you, nature,
Now we demarcate rivers and borders
Begging deliverance by heaven
Against outsiders, including our womb hard land.

Thou river, you are an it.
Secret summoning verses, anthems and faith,
Order ours, with arms.
In cities of our rising treasure
We spin as clay for the leader's hand.

This far we travel: building denials,
Covering dysfunctions, sanctifying slaughters in epic songs.
Foundations on ruins are survival, and
Identity, myth, superstition - sentience - is sifted and barred.
The siege is on.
From the inner circles of worship we peer out
Behind stout, thick, stone walls.

Life, bringer of faith, religion and awe.

Life, bringer of pain, suffering and fear.
We take it in. We dish it out. We control it all.

And it falls through our hands.

More control seems better,
More denial,
More, more, more,
Move on.

At a cult of crucified rebellion and cryptic promise we stop -
Lock to the zero, ban all prophets but that
We interpret and control, those gone -
Pressures and disorders still flood in but we whip ourselves
Past plagues to Crusades, Inquisitions.
Glorious, we purge with promises
And elevate other to everywhere, all the time.

We walk a crooked, narrow line and build
Aqueduct above the river we cannot trust.

Finally, we find the outlet
To trundle our trade across a sea
We recreate the spectacle of repression
And the holy anchor scars the land and shreds the peoples
We learn nothing and run on and on
Until we exhaust today.

The river waits in the wilderness
Near the thickets, with the ghosts
Like the Styx.

Relief laughs at us
In stone buddhas

Space shipped sky.

The anchor is in the river beneath us,
While we scatter to the winds
And the rocks and stones hum goodbye
Seeds of never stop, never live, never gone.

SCRIBBLING FROM A DIARY

She said that she liked the way it felt,
calling him a murderer

It thrilled her
She bragged about it to her friends

And they all agreed she had the best one
For that crowd

But the last bit was always unspoken
Same castle

They all lived together in a castled town
Where things happen to the unwary and false

And she had the best one
And he loved her

SUNDER

Horns break horizon
throng move along
Brass skies announce
changing the day

At Dusk and at Dawn
Birds fly, home
At sea, creatures
Crest the waves

This is the time
ceremonies are done
The time
Decisions made

It is always thus

Even in sunder

The shrine strewn with
Flowers

Away

SURFING

Today I looked up
naked women on
the internet

Today I watched out
at images advertising
pathetic life

The gaudy screens
No dress of the street
The vacuum tube
No look of an eye

Today I gave up
a remnant of waiting
you still gone

You still gone

Today I made up
a history of touching
pleasing myself

refreshed

and worn out

The telephone lives
The E-mail embraces
The newspaper coffees
Waiting for work

You still gone

Pathetic life

UNRESOLVED HORRORS

The flash resolve, the last
first thing you will see
the glittering dust particles
Saying look
look at me, saying
only this

COALESCE

this only
look, saying at me
saying look
the glittering...dust...particles..
see, will you ? first thing:
the last; flash!!!! the resolve...

The spindly backed cranes of the modern harbour,
Bright orange hunching across the
View of the mountain side,
Standing impervious to
the mist and cloud
that shrouds over,
fresh falling

ROSE BLOSSOMS

falling fresh...
over shrouds, that!
The cloud and mist
impervious, standing, to
view the side mountain of...
hunching...orange across...the bright!
of the! (the modern harbour cranes, backed, spindly,

And on it goes, a tangle of knockdown and melting
better ash than flash
better toasted than baking
on it goes

a device of our own unmaking

BLOWING DUST

They burned off the land
Because they starved, ignorant
In the verdant forest

The poor poured in
Offered promises of riches
In the opened land

Then the soil failed
As it must
And the babies cried

With distended bellies
The snot and salt of their tears,
Bubbling, hair askew, blowing dust

And the silent ones
Stepped back
into the painted forest:

The woods creaked
To high up shrieks, birds,
the hum of insects

The quiet footsteps
Passed pools gliding with life
Crushed pollen, spoor, sacred rust

Life finds a way as it does
Flies settle in the eye
The child keels to the dust

FINE TUNING

We may already have the answer to the fine tuning problem
We are just one of many
But at least one supports
Life

It leads and follows you
The idea of multiple universes
Everything duplicated
Almost

Take seriously
The Big Bang inflation
Exponential expansion
In a fraction in a fraction cannon

Possible ensemble
Professional Big Bang
Understand the Big Bang better
Variants on rumble chart

Four components in fact
And theory, torquing levers
Multi-levels
Accelerators -
Connect -
To the big wave site

Boarding all passengers
On a mystery flight

IN THE

In the election theatre of my mind
I sift through promises
Foresee, regard the past
And weave through strands of
Whim, style and substance, dross and grace.
They chatter like autumn ice birds
In bright light-brisk wind
Kind of air,
All the way to winter rain.
The younger migrate further
The older stay in place
And crows migrate daily
to and fro
Day to day
With ceaseless caw
Radio On: "Stay defeated.
Neglected, Unenacted."
"You newer ones tumble
Down."
"Mistake, mistake."
And lately others trip and hover
Snatching salmon
Precious fishes
Gollum down
Need help, nothing coming, gone away.
And one disease takes three thousand
Where three hundred could do better,
Ere three score unelected
wait
In rocky non-submission, chanting
"Count weapons,
Number injured."
"Charged. Remand."
As rough Ebola slouches its way.
To the falconer's hand
To the turning demand
Of knicky knacky remotes, saucy bits, Boxing Friday,
To last week's better hope:
Cross-country. I'm Rex.Murphy.
Drive your car. Good day.
"What would you choose", he meant, as he orders the house the last decent drink..

NINETEEN GUNS
in memoriam Pierre Elliott Trudeau

Sufficient symbol -
The sound of drums
The silent crowd
The sunlit tower
The honour guard
The vehicles' portent -
The weight

September in the Ottawas
A glorious time of colour
For paddling
And solitary trains

October days -
The applause arrival
The solitary voice
The impromptu choir
Mourning mania
A portent -
The weight

Skiing in the mountains
Cutting water with a dive
A lifetime of this, training and waiting
Elected, alive

The voice of heavens' leaving
The peal of closing doors
The eulogy of broken voices
The paused remembrance
The weight
Gone

Just watch me, whip crack,
The indelible shrug,
The Salmon Arm finger ,and,
Remember, the winter sphinx

The end of an era blessed with light
The gift of seeing a heart in full flight

The never returning historical days

Pirouettes and spins

The silent

Absent

Wait

THREE DREAMS

Nightmares sneak in and steal sleep,
replacing dreams with messages
from the vortex of the mind
replacing calm rest with disturbance and doubt

I come and summon you
Polishing messages from the fading plate of memory
I frame and hammer you
Knocking together nothings that were fleeting glimpses, gone by

Hear the piano pound out scales in the small white house
down under the lip of the hill
as the valley steams as burned;
and busy machines sort logs in the lake close below

Underneath the concrete bridge of midnight, warm tropical
There are dealings done under gun point
And the pleadings are heard and a man pauses -
Safe, lost, stripped, skylight burning to dawn

But too late, the last plate fades
The wood, nails, and hammer scatter the floor
There is a constant lovely madness in our daylights
You call me to cuddle
And I forget most, not all

WOE DOWN

It was 12 at 7:30, 53
Fahrenheit degrees

The rain was falling, splashing
Up around my knees

There is a vessel
with an engine burning
way over there

And if the poles and mask
don't burn

They might
float anywhere

Dancing up the road
Dancing woe
Dancing up the road

Woe down
Sorrow song

YO, REINCARNATED

You know who you are
Born in a nation state
Kingdom of the mind
Time,
In a place different and, yet, as always,
The same.

Slow down
Read the words slowly
Measure the ingredients
Right,
As if whatever you serve up is never
The same.

Adjust the volume
Check the scope
Approach on instruments at
Night,
The veil that covers over the flight mode,
The same.

Break down,
Feel love too close,
intervening in your
Life;
Then Bless love for being there, a friend just
The same.

AFTER THE BATTLE

Call the slaughter the slaughter.

Call the battle a battle.

Say this:

If the people of Little Bighorn
were reborn,
As everyone

Observe for them:

The dust and nightmare wind
that laid waste
a desert stormed army.

And suffer then:

The warriors and nations fight
over their wrongs and rights
perhaps leaving the men, women and children
Free to live their lives.

After the battle
If there is something to write.

AFTERMATH

Of course, it has always been horrific.

The fire, the twisted metal, the smoke, the bodies.

Say the names, prosecute the perpetrators:
Evil was done;
that indictment
Suffices for all.

History forever pronounces judgment
and sometimes in the midst of it
entirely forgets itself.

On these occasions:
first lost is love,
then reason and justice,
then the loosed arms:
might and fight
to the grave.

Fall and rise, we breathe
in history, upbringing,
our secret unguents of healing
our secret bottles of hate.

Beat on beat, we live
in loves, desires, and hope;
and pound the twice life
in cancelling hate, lusts, and dread.

Anger is one bridge, one learning,
dismembering images, our self,
until we awake renewed,
understanding what we do.

Follow your learning,
show your self as initiate,
be the learner, choosing.

Time comes over you.

And so....

FAILURE

What does the master falconer feel
When the bird must needs release.

What does the mother and teacher feel
When school and home are smoking heaps.

And who smiles and brandishes arms
Preaching the vilest belief.

Failure.

Failure.

Failure.

LORD OF THE RINGS ADDENDUM

Now while all this else was going on
Ill-news was unreported
Of the elvan Queen
Whose ship was cast down
In the emergency day
And by whose death the Men
Were somewhat awakened.
Fell Sauron in his wasted kingdom
Had loosed amongst men
An orc-mind spell,
cast disunity amongst them,
and as much as ordered the deed.
Was she not warned, in her refinement,
Of the evil intent
That would commandeer and
Usurp her voyage.
The lapse was where only the few
Fully for evil could do and design.
The armoured good rued it
And wrestled amongst all
For the good reply.

STORM SAIL MYSTERY SHIP

I see the snow covered riverbank
I see the protected encampment.
Smoke rises, it's calm.
Winter breakfast at dawn.

I see Sand Creek, a company of people,
an evil of history coming due.
I see memory without thinking; ignorant hate,
Haste; it was done.

I see broken bridges, shattered villagers,
The sickness of circles, screams in the smoke.
If the wind comes up, if the clouds lift,
I see each striking each other,

striking each other fist, elbow, fist.

We only harm ourselves and
Make a circle complete.
Born again perhaps
Or judged once and graded fresh

Sent from schooling, sent from the cycle of history,
Through the prayer beads we count out for our
Private sins and misery
when we live
In the cycle of history.

RUNNING

The Olympic chorus phases
Through the tubes
And waves in a wind of
amplification

how bad can it be?

A child kicks a ball
A trail time is set
And good news travels
By word of mouth

How bad can it be?

We sweat out the waiting
Gripped with the tense
Fire of competition
Breathless, waiting for now to arrive

How bad can it be?

The good wings of future nows and
The peeling claws of vulture clouds
Show the road of striving
Clear and clean

How bad can it be?

SECURITY GUARD

Obtuse

The language of profiles, procedures

Reacting without flexibility

To all encroaching

the posted perimeter

THE CATS OF ROME

Rome summer dawn ruins are surreal, sunrise lit:
Insubstantial, apparent emptiness, and iron bars
That surround.

In delicate cool that promises the day's bright heat
The cats of Rome pose in silence and contemplate
The empty grounds.

From the sleek fur youth to the wizened dozers,
From the classic sit and tucked watch to
The stiff forepaw curl

All is silence, breath, skitter steps,
Eyes that reflect the ruins in luminous
Open iris expectance.

Come the groundskeeper, the crowds,
The parade of sound and movement,
come noise and heat

The cats of Rome will retreat deep into
Cool clefts and archways caressed
by ancient hands.

Other cats of Rome, the true sphinxes of time,
Will remain behind for the groundskeeper's
Gentle shovel scrape.

Goodbye, back to the time of Isis and Osiris,
Back to other saintly ancients,
to ancient places;

connected
to ruins,
as always.

THE SHANTY

When the flags waved
And the piss smelled like blood
He spoke too loud
in a bar

A poet of words
Whose thoughts were misheard
They beat him up
by mischance.

Because of the blows
The words were not spoke
The evil of ignorance,
never never, broken.

In the long while
Words rippled the pond
Everyone woke up
From the dreaming.

Then the tide changed
The wind paused to shift
Daylight arose
on the full moon

Birds turned away
and greeted the day
wheeled called and skeltered
feeding playing

Day stay to dawn
Cool light and frost
Steaming bowls, quiet schools
Are you listening?

And he walked away
Walked out of the bar
They look at their shoes
And were shaken

Because he screamed

Reap what you sew, like farmer's of old,

With this old advice he was gone.

THINGS TO CONSIDER ON A JOURNEY

Fetal in the fleshy ship
for seven months and a few.
We finally get out at who knows where
blank slates
amongst
who knows who.

All this living, all this learning
A world of wonders
If so, no hurrying.
But always
later and later;
always things to do.

If waiting for someone to show up
Or resting to get there anew
pause in your journey
consider
the journey
that's going through you.

THIS BABY

In the orphanage of sighs
Near the mountains of tradition
Pick up from the crib
Take light that is given

So cradle and nurture
pace sleepless nights,
feel the raw call of nature
for sleep, warmth and food.

Out in the world
where all hence must go
fondle stones of tradition
inhale hope from a rose

All artists and workers
Who look to the future
Shed layers of being
To creation's new way

All artists and workers
Who look to the future
See innocence's truth
Signified, simple deeds.

THOUGHTS ON A JOURNEY

A body takes a circle journey.
A child laughs and claps in delight
at the sight of an Elder
Spinning the globe.

But the mind conjures up slide rule axioms.
We interconnect gravity and geography,
order and place, planes and processions:
a dawning capacity streaking from the eyes and across the face.

Then spirit wings to the heights as Icarus.
Dainty sun-dappled unreal otherworldly innocence
summons flashcards of childhood memory and
such likewise transient purity.

Lastly, the soul's sweet desire seeks
the imaginal ocean, the joyous life of fears:
And all wisdom we acquire from living
is transformed through these contradictions and truth.

Such good journeys requires no rags, wind, or staff,
but the image is incomplete with mere fireside drums
for we are partly sinister, savage, naked wanton dance, and
calculation trumps by incident, coincidence and chance.

Ashes and mist in the morning whisper messages.
That are regret, misery, shattered peace.
We straggle and stride away according to inclination,
Amongst the real, the imagined, the reported, and the memory, .

We cup our hands for water at trickling streams.
We taste our sweat and all we touched when we drink.
The kindling of comparison is a word; its fire draws the dreamless stare.
We never think of arriving when we are there.

Our bellies ache and its back to the body again.
We hunt and harvest according to our diversity.
We love and pray, carve high niches for worship and prayer.
We never think we are leaving once we are there.

WARRIOR KOAN

Let the warriors be reborn as warriors;
praise some.

By their inclinations and words,
not their bloodlines,

name them.

Probe the within
at the battle wall and the voyage home.

Observe them in their fields,
those various hearts and minds

keen to fight,

And of those you name, divide again
those who would gladly kill

from those
whose duty may be

to die.

And if there are those
who see the road, those who

honour the life

wish them well
with burdens imposed

and wish them best
for their healing

arts.