

***Paper  
Wings***

**Poems  
by**

**PARK TETER**

# Park Teter

Born in Oak Park, Illinois, in 1934, Daniel Park Teter was awarded “Honors with Exceptional Distinction” when he graduated *summa cum laude* from Yale in 1956. As a child shocked by Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima, he had planned a career working against war. Yale was to be followed by study abroad... then five or six years in the Foreign Service... then politics. But in 1958, when a Swedish beauty broke his heart, he “threw my career to the winds.” He dropped out the University of London’s Institute of Historical Research and hitch-hiked to Lebanon.

Wars, he reassured his conscience, do not begin in Congress or the Kremlin; they begin in the human heart. Perhaps in a different civilization, he told himself, he could find “an education of my ignorant heart.” Then he could reach the warring hearts of others by writing poetry and fiction.

His education began sooner than expected. While crossing Greece he learned from a bakery-truck driver that Lebanon had erupted in war.

Because Lebanon’s frontier was closed, he had to fly the last sixty miles from Damascus to Beirut. There he taught Western Civilization at the American University of Beirut.

And he married an Iranian student. She was to give birth to two sons... and further “education of my heart.”

Because of immigration problems, they were married in Canada. There Teter began a career in journalism as an editorial writer for the Toronto Globe and Mail. When they moved to Washington, he became news editor at Congressional Quarterly.

From 1965 to 1967 Teter was the University of Pennsylvania's Adviser in Humanities at a university in Shiraz, Iran, a city famous for its roses, its nightingales, and the poets Hafez and Saadi. The next year he evaluated U.S. Peace Corps programs in Iran, Morocco, and Afghanistan.

From 1968 to 1973, at the University of Chicago and at Princeton, he studied psychological changes in Europe during The Scientific Revolution of the 16th-17th centuries. In the age of Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton he sought the origins of two Western attitudes he felt were needed in non-Western cultures caught in an earthquake of change: 1) a passion for objectivity; 2) a willingness to abandon sacred beliefs.

Teter was then forced to abandon his own sacred belief, his Western belief in an objective physical universe, by a coincidence. He violated his own passionate commitment to rationality by “superstitious” concentration on producing a chance meeting with a troubled woman he loved. When that chance meeting took place he knew, inwardly, that it was not chance. That knowledge opened his life to floods of amazing coincidences that no rational person would attribute to chance.

Teter discovered that coincidences can be rationally explained by a new scientific paradigm that recognizes that we create physical facts in the same way that we create dream images. Since 1973, Teter has been exploring that paradigm’s revolutionary consequences for science, religion, society, and personal life.

While writing books he supported himself by part-time work for the Los Angeles Times – Washington Post News Service and by free-lance writing on topics like “Iran Between East and West” (Congressional Quarterly/Editorial Research Reports, Jan. 26, 1979), “Future Shock in Iran” (Washington Post Outlook, Dec. 10, 1978), “Princeton-Pennsylvania Accelerator: End of an Era in Particle Physics,” *Science*, July 2, 1971)

He combined a journalist's immersion in public affairs with years of reading, reflection, writing, and rewriting in the solitudes of a Lake Superior lighthouse, a Virginia farmhouse, a Rocky Mountain cabin, a cottage by a Danish fjord, and a ranch near the Pacific.

Teter’s discoveries are summarized in *The Revolution of the Species*, and analyzed in greater depth in *The Adventure*. The story of the discoveries, and their application to private and public life, is recounted in *The Personal Universe: A True Story of Passionate Love and Revolutionary Science*.

Teter has also written a novel, (*The Trial of God*), two plays (*The Winter War*, *Satan II*), a book of poetry (*Paper Wings*) and a collection of bumper stickers (*Bumper Thinkers*). The novel and stage plays will be rewritten as screenplays for popular feature movies.

All of these works, Teter explains, express “a revolution of consciousness that will replace the insanity of war with awakening, at last, to the adventure for which we exist.”

All of these works are published at [TheNextCivilization.com](http://TheNextCivilization.com)

**Paper Wings  
Legs and Eyes  
Speak Truth to Power  
Later poems**

**PARK TETER**

**Adventures in Reality (AiR)**

**For Cambyse and Darius**

**With All My Love**

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Adventures in Reality, 1471 Marshall-Petaluma Rd., Petaluma, CA 94952

# Poetry and Science

As a child growing up in the Second World War, though dwelling far from its horrors, I knew that I would devote my career to working to end war. I studied history and planned to work some years as a foreign service officer and then enter politics.

But when a Swedish girl broke my heart, I dropped out of graduate school at the University of London and hitch-hiked to Lebanon. I thought that in some non-Western country I would stumble upon what school had not supplied -- an education of the heart. I told my conscience that I was not really abandoning my career. Wars, I told myself, do not begin in Congress or the Kremlin; they begin in the human heart. I vowed to pursue my career against war by writing fiction and poetry that would plumb the depths of the heart where wars begin. But the truth is, I was thrilled to throw my life-plans to the winds and fling myself into an unknown future. I had no clue what I would find in Lebanon. What I found was a war.

Well, that 1958 civil war that broke out while I was hitch-hiking toward Lebanon was not at all like hell that ravished Lebanon in the 1970s. As wars go, this one was brief and civilized. Because of the curfew, cocktail parties lasted until dawn. Fear of a bomb in a movie theater drove everyone to sunbathing on the beaches. When American marines stormed the beaches, they were greeted by Coca Cola vendors.

At the American University of Beirut, I taught Western Civilization to students from 41 countries. In my limestone house in a fishing village I watched the sun set in the Mediterranean and filled a carton with poems. When I realized that they were sentimental slop, I concluded that I could never be a poet.

At the university I met a beautiful Iranian student. The next year we were married in Canada in a forest cabin. At every turning point in my life there has been a wonderful woman. The poems collected in part two of this book, "Legs and Eyes," are dedicated to these wonderful women -- and to the love and the lust and the folly they awoke in me.

After working as a journalist in Toronto and Washington, with my wife and our two babies I went to Iran. I was the University of Pennsylvania's "Adviser in Humanities" at a new university in Shiraz, a city famous for its roses, its nightingales, and its poets -- Hafez and Saadi. I started a novel... and realized, when it was half-written, that it bored me. And I realized why: I had a new interest.

Concerned with an earthquake of change shaking all the non-Western world, I returned to school (the University of Chicago and Princeton) to learn how the West developed its modern mentality. In Europe's Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries -- the period of the Scientific Revolution -- I sought the roots of two attitudes that I felt troubled non-Western cultures needed in order master their own destinies. In the period of Copernicus and Galileo and Newton I sought the sources of the West's

- 1) passion for "objectivity;"
- 2) willingness to abandon sacred beliefs.

Then something happened that forced me to abandon my own sacred belief. To abandon my sacred Western belief in "objectivity," my faith in an objective physical reality.

It happened on Thanksgiving morning in November 1971. The night before I had done something totally out of character, something superstitious. As I lay in bed I tensed every muscle in my body and every thought in my mind and thus achieved absolute concentration on one thought: the thought of a chance meeting the next morning with Wendy. The next morning Wendy, by "chance," appeared.

My poem "Her Eyes, Once" recalls that encounter.

I knew, inside, that the meeting was not chance. And that knowledge broke a dam in me. My life was then flooded with astonishing coincidences that no rational person would ever attribute to chance. Many of the most dramatic coincidences involved Wendy. For example, when I made efforts to forget her, houses caught fire, apartment buildings exploded, etc., etc.

I had met Wendy, and fallen in love with her, six months before traveling with my family to Iran. She had married before I left. Although I was certain she had no interest in me, I could not forget her. Except for two brief meetings (both times she was pregnant) I did not see her for the next six years. Then, when I knew my marriage could not last, I met her for a picnic lunch in a garden. She told me that she saw "no way out of my situation except suicide." The next day she tried to kill herself.

It was three years before we were together -- on a canoe trip on the Maine-New Brunswick border. Four perfect days -- more than worth the six years of dreaming and three years of emotional struggle.

Wendy was diagnosed as "manic-depressive" and drugged with lithium. Though I can never be sure, I felt (and coincidences insisted) that the diagnosis and treatment cut her off from her wildly creative self... and, within a year, from me. My poem "Memento" expresses my pain.

The poem "Her Mail" hints at her magic. Other poems inspired by Wendy include *Games, Phony, Wrapture, Backwater* and *Why Am I Here?*

I've told the story of my love for Wendy in a book I am now completing. *The Personal Universe* is a true detective story about tracking down the causes of coincidences... and the revolutionary consequences of that discovery. It is the first scientific treatise that reads like a novel.

For 18 months after that Thanksgiving encounter with Wendy, I lived in chaos. I now knew that the "real world" of my civilization was not real. But nothing had taken its place.

Then one Spring day, as I was driving past a cow pasture on my way to the Princeton University library, a word popped into my head. The word "censorship."

It set off a chain reaction. I knew Freud had a theory of a censorship in the psyche that keeps painful thoughts repressed in the unconscious. In sleep the censorship is partly relaxed, allowing repressed thoughts to surface as symbolic events in a dream world. Suppose, I thought, a similar censorship controls what thoughts will surface as physical facts in the real world. If the same kind of censorship operates in both dream worlds and the physical world, I told myself, there might there be other ways in which the operation of the physical world resembles the operation of dream worlds.

Well, that revelation on the road to Princeton was the beginning of the solution of the scientific puzzle of coincidences. The consequences of that discovery are so enormous that I have rewritten *The Personal Universe* again and again and again over the last 30 years. I will

here note only a few of those consequences that have special relevance for the poems in this book.

- We project physical facts into the material universe in the same way that we project symbolic images into dream worlds.
- Physical facts are, like dream images, made of meaning.
- Just as you can awaken and interpret a dream, so you can awaken and interpret reality.
- The interpretation of reality can free us from private and collective nightmares.
- Just as one dream image can express many different unconscious ideas, so one physical fact can express the ideas of many different people. (overdetermination)
- Just as children can outgrow belief that the laws of games (e.g. marbles) are external, eternal, and not man-made, so modern society can outgrow belief that the laws of nature (e.g. gravity) are external, eternal, and not man-made.
- Each of us is a trinity: just as each of us is the Creator, Hero, and Interpreter of dream worlds, so each of us is the Creator, Hero, and Interpreter of the physical universe.
- Recognition that each of us is the Creator, Hero, and Interpreter of the universe will release a creative power greater than the destructive power of a nuclear holocaust.

Meaning is the material of which physical facts are made. Meaning is also the material of which poems are made. Thus poetry and physical reality are made of exactly the same stuff.

When modern humanity understands that the universe is made of meaning, the pseudo-scientific myth of a meaningless physical universe will evaporate. And much modern despair -- expressed in wars of astounding size and horror and absurdity -- will evaporate with that myth. Poetry can be a powerful tool to smash the myth of meaningless matter. The great poems of the future, like the great poems of the past, will awaken souls to accuracy.

When I write poems, I do not think about the fact that the universe and poetry are both made of meaning. Each of my poems arrives unexpected in my mind, as an image or a paradox or a phrase, with no more purpose than music. After the first impulse has been followed to completion -- often a completion quite different from the original impulse -- I may recognize how the poem fits with my science, fits with the logical conclusions derived from rational explanation of the data of coincidences. The fit is not surprising -- both spring from the same soul. But my poems, unlike my science, are not calculated.

In fact, until a few years ago, I thought of my poems as a sort of hobby, an enjoyable diversion unrelated to my more serious work. Most of the poems in this collection were written before I recognized that they express the same passion as my logic.

It was a logical explanation of coincidences that first led me to recognize that each of us is the Creator, the Hero, and the Interpreter of the universe. That means that nothing exists that is more important than you and me and the old woman next door. Most of my poems are celebrations of that truth.

Even my angriest poems, poems that mock the sacred, are celebrations of the wonder of you and me. Sacred beliefs that teach humans to hold in awe something "greater" than themselves are cruel atrocities that cripple the human soul.

In fact, religions -- including the religion hidden in orthodox science -- that teach awe of gods or nature or nation or nirvana are the deepest source of war. War is so ghastly, so absurd, so sick, so cruel, so painful, that all the belief systems that have never ended war must be abandoned. As the brief essay at the beginning of *Speak Truth to Power* explains, poems can destroy the feeling of sacredness that protects the failed half-truths of Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, orthodox science....

But my attacks on failed beliefs never attack the believer. Every believer is greater than his or her belief.

Whatever anyone believes, she or he is the Creator, the Hero, and the Interpreter of the universe. Whatever anyone believes -- or does -- he or she is our partner in The Adventure, the dramatic and thrilling adventure of creating, entering, exploring, explaining, enjoying, sharing, and re-creating the universe. That knowledge is so much a part of me that, without any conscious effort, it keeps jumping out of my soul into poems.

Whether the poem cherishes someone dear, or cries out at our human pain, or giggles at our human foibles, or slashes at sacred beliefs that belittle us, these works are inspired by amazement and amusement and love for that glory of all existence, the living, mortal, human individual.

Eldora, 1997

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**PAPER**

**WINGS**



## **WATCHING MY SON FALL ASLEEP**

We watched today a caterpillar weave  
Himself from sight, and I explained his plan.  
And now your eyelids close,  
And soon you'll be a man.

Then you'll watch your own child weaving dreams  
And understand your father's restless night.  
You'll know his paper wings.  
You'll know his candle light.

## THE DANCE

Olaf was never the same again,  
But no one knew why until the end,  
When, sober for once, he told me  
It wasn't fear, or rage,  
Or bitterness,  
Though, he said, "I felt tem all,"  
And to prove it he waved his stump  
Of an arm at God,  
As if to shake the fist he'd lost  
Under a nose he'd like to break.

"You tink I'm drunk," he sneered,  
And stared at me to see  
If I could know the truth  
If he decided, before he died,  
To tell one other soul.  
Satisfied, he said, "I luf tat bear."

The bear that tore  
His arm before, with a great swing  
Of the axe gripped  
In his left hand, Olaf  
Split the grizzly's skull.

"Yes," he laughed, "I luf tat bear,  
And tonight we're going to dance."  
He coughed, and spit a wad of blood  
Onto the floor beside his bed.  
"No woman could dance like tat bear."  
He glared at me to see if I understood.  
"And no one can fiddle like te Devil."

That night he died  
While wind clawed at the roof  
And snow drifted against the boards  
Nailed over the broken windows  
Of the sagging farmhouse  
In the only clearing  
North of Spruce Creek.

I poked into his stove  
Birch logs split, I knew,  
With the axe gripped in his left hand.  
Like love letters cast in a fire,  
The white bark curled.  
The flames danced.  
As they hit the cast iron  
My tears hissed.

## **SUBURBIA**

Across my neighbor's avenue  
The household windows shine  
Like campfires Roman soldiers watched  
Across the darkening Rhine.

The natives of my neighbor's streets  
Wear self-inflicted scars,  
And circle greater storms of fire  
Than leap upon the stars.

## **FUNKTIONAL ARKITEXTURE**

I'll build a palace in the air  
Of mud and spit and pubic hair  
Where angels sick of heavenly fare  
Can sample every vice.

To titillate the toiling mass  
I'll build a church of cocktail glass  
Where ladies of the ruling class  
Experiment with mice.

By the sea I'll build my hut  
To live forever with my slut  
And grunt and belch and scratch and rut  
And roll the eternal dice.

## LETTER HOME FROM AFGHANISTAN

You'll never guess who I met today  
In a teahouse in Badakhshan:  
Myself, of all people, after so many years.

"What on God's Earth..." before I could finish  
My question, he said, "You know I always wanted to,  
Well..." he searched my face, then shrugged,  
"To take to the hills."

He'd changed a lot, so we only talked of  
Old times, old friends, old places.  
Between awkward pauses. And sips of tea.  
Oh, yes, he asked about you.  
Do you suppose he felt let down  
To learn I had come here on a government contract?

He'd heard of some valley three days off,  
Wild with apples, pomegranates, grapes,  
Inhabited only by a shrine and a legend.  
Would you believe it? He wanted me  
To disappear there with him.

When I demurred he grabbed  
My wrist, dug in his fingers,  
And growled: "Why not!"  
His eyes bulged at mine until I blinked.  
Then he sighed and let go.

His gaze kept drifting to the high  
Ridges above the village, looking,  
I suppose, for a likely route.  
Suddenly he rose, paid for the tea,  
(I'll bet it cost him half his wealth)  
Muttered "Good Luck," and left.

Soon I could see him above the village,  
Climbing from terrace to terrace  
Until a ravine, fringed with poplars,  
Swallowed him up.

## **CREDIT**

Alive and well in apartment 18 B  
Thy neighbor as thyself between oblivions,  
By throwing prayers at God  
And forty hours per week to the Gross National Product,  
Like peanuts to the elephants at the zoo,  
Has purchased, with threescore years and ten to pay,  
Your right and mine to declare him mad,  
Though now he rages at a traffic light.

## **AT THE SHORE**

The little birds scurry  
When the waves retreat,  
Their little feet hurry  
To fetch their meat,

Their beaks peck bugs  
From the bubbling sand  
Before the next surf  
Assaults the land.

Like earnest commuters  
Earning their bread,  
They race to and fro  
Until they're dead.

## **WORK ETHIC**

Most work is idleness,  
Neglect of the task  
For which we came.

Much idleness is toil,  
The sweat of the soul  
In the ultimate game.

## **MORAL LAW**

The roots of evil  
Are guilt, shame, blame.  
They make boys cruel,  
They make girls tame.

The seeds of good  
Are play, dance, song.  
They make boys kind,  
They make girls strong.

## VOCATIONAL COUNSELING

When mortals circle  
Round and round  
Riding blinkered horses  
Harnessed to a stone  
That grinds the seeds of tomorrow  
For this day's daily bread,  
Hooves plod,  
Kick dust,  
Raise clouds  
That cling like regrets  
To a beaten trail,  
Then drift away  
With the blown chaff  
From the monotonous flail.

You ask which way?  
Your beast knows best.  
Unharness him.  
Unsaddle him.  
Vault to his back.  
Grab his mane in your fist,  
And with your free hand raise  
Your arrows and your bow.  
Clutch him in your legs,  
Then whisper in his ear  
His name,  
The only spur he needs  
To leap into a gallop.  
Don't guide him.  
He knows the way.  
He'll speed you home.

## **ADOLESCENT**

When I'm unleashed  
I'll romp America,  
Sniff cornerstones,  
Stalk platitudes,  
Chase slogans,  
Shake elites,  
Upset institutions,  
Dig up scandals,  
Roll in smut,  
Bark at bigots,  
Bite benefactors,  
And piss on the pillars of society,  
Until, exhausted, snout upon my paws,  
Glancing to either side,  
I'll heave one momentous sigh,  
Because,  
They'll teach this new dog  
Old tricks.

## **LIVING ROOM**

Rank on rank arrayed,  
The most invincible army ever:  
Rocket launchers, tanks, cavalry,  
Indian scouts with poised hatchets,  
An aircraft carrier, the three bears,  
Two racing cars, a wooden submarine,  
An ambulance, five plastic dinosaurs,  
Thirty riflemen and a threadbare panda.

Flawless maneuvers  
Reveal a commanding genius.  
What empire has he mapped?  
Whose invasion must he repel?  
Or has he mobilized his realm  
To storm this armchair  
And set his father free?

## **MISBEHAVIOR**

A boy in a foxhole,  
Like a cat in a laundry basket,  
Knows he's not  
Where he belongs.

An artillery shell,  
Like a mother's hands  
Lifting kitty from the linens,  
Will put him outdoors.

## **AWAKE**

The toys in the attic stamp their feet  
To wake me from a sleep  
Where a snarling, drooling carnivore  
First tears, then chews, my sweet,

Sweet boy, who went to war  
To play with grownup toys,  
And left in the attic teddy bears  
I'd planned to give his boys.

## THE GULF

In the Autumn of 1990 the United States sent hundreds of thousands of troops to Saudi Arabia in preparation for a war against Iraq, which had conquered Kuwait. As I watched war approach in the Persian Gulf, I was filled with horror. I could not look at a boy of military age without imagining him watching, with infinite dismay, his blood spill into alien sand. I knew that all boys and girls, Iraqi as well as American, are here for a different destiny.

I put aside work on my book, **The Personal Universe**, to write warning articles and send them to newspapers across the United States. But the country was salivating for war, and the media were leading the pack. Only one paper, the Detroit Free Press, printed one of my articles.

When I read my own article in the Free Press, I recognized the obvious. In 800 words I could not possibly explain the real reasons why the war in the Gulf was madness. The madness of war had been going on for centuries, and no brief newspaper articles were going to awaken humanity from such an endless nightmare.

At that time I was finishing **The Personal Universe**, which explains how we can have a "Revolution Against War." But there was no way I could get that book to the American public before Americans decided whether or not to go to war in the Gulf. Up to the very last moment I hoped that war would not come, but I no longer hoped that I could persuade anyone to pull back from the brink.

From my despair came several poems. "The Oil Bowl" (inspired by the approaching football Superbowl) and "Permissive Parents" were written a few days before the war began. "Waste" and "Prophets with Honor" were written only hours before my radio, announcing that America and its allies had attacked, ended all my hopes for peace.

## **THE OIL BOWL**

A veteran lineup,  
The Eastern champs:  
Sumer, Akkad, Babylon,  
Xerxes and Scheherazade,  
Nebuchadnezzar, Abel, Cain,  
Mongol, Turk, Saddam Hussein.

In their first game in the Gulf,  
The rookies from the West:  
Mike and Mac, Bob and Bill,  
And Jennifer  
(Girls, now, are on the team)  
Jack and Jill, Dick and Jane,  
George Bush and John Wayne.

## **PERMISSIVE PARENTS**

Shall we let four hundred thousand boys,  
Boys from Iowa and Maine,  
From Georgia, Texas, Oregon,  
Take lessons from that old whore, Babylon?

Where she, for ages, dallied with kings,  
With Hammurabi, Xerxes, Haroun al Rashid...  
Now boys from California and New York,  
From Arkansas and Idaho,  
Fondle obscene toys  
That make wrong holes to spurt wrong juice.

And here in Kansas and in Illinois,  
Kentucky, Arizona, Maryland,  
Parents pray and preach  
But will not halt  
The Oriental orgy.  
They have cast their children  
Into the sands of time,  
And now wait, fascinated, to ogle  
Their exotic postures  
As they writhe  
In the ancient pornography of death.

## **WASTE**

The Gulf, how apt the name  
Of the landfill where we dropped off  
Our children.  
When they finish their game  
We'll launder the stains  
With degradable soap,  
Recycle their toys,  
Sort the organic leftovers into bags  
To bring home for compost,  
And bury our memories,  
Like toxic wastes,  
In leakproof oil drums.

## **PROPHETS WITH HONOR**

We sympathize with the good,  
Simple people who, if they knew  
What we know, would want us to do  
What we are about to do.

A terrible burden, like the cross,  
Our knowledge, and like the whips  
That scourged an earlier savior  
Their protests lacerate us.

We sacrifice, as Abraham would have done,  
Our sons, knowing, as Abraham was promised,  
That generations shall reap the bounty  
Of our unflinching faith.

We are prophets of the Book  
Of Expertise, and like the seers  
Of Babylon auguring from entrails,  
We calculate cost-benefits of war.

## THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

Almost as appalling as America's slaughter of Iraqis was America's celebration of its "victory." The government sponsored victory parades, the media exploded with triumphant words and pictures, opinion polls showed overwhelming popular support for the war, and local citizens put up home-made signs congratulating their soldiers. Filled with rage and disgust that human beings could congratulate "our" boys, as if the grieving, maimed and dead Iraqis were not also ours, I rented a local theater for a solo performance I called **P~~U~~TRIOTISM**. The program for the performance quoted what Lao Tzu wrote about 2,500 years ago in the *Tao Te Ching*:

*In time of war men civilized in peace  
Turn from their higher to their lower nature.  
But triumph is not beautiful.  
He who thinks triumph beautiful  
Is one with a will to kill.  
The death of a multitude is cause for mourning:  
Conduct your triumph as a funeral.*

The poster announcing **P~~U~~TRIOTISM** featured "The National Ant Hymn," a parody of America's National Anthem. The theater did not display my poster. When, a few days before my performance, I handed out flyers at the theater door, a theater official called the police to stop me. When I asked him why the theater did not want publicity for an event on its schedule, I was told: "You've made fun of the National Anthem, and that's like slapping me in the face."

The police defended my right to hand out flyers as long as I did so, in accordance a city ordinance, 100 feet from the city hall, which was adjacent to the theater.

Only 15 attended the performance, one of them holding aloft in the front row, throughout the performance, a large American flag.

The poem's title, "The National Ant Hymn" was later changed to "The Blood Spattered Banner."

*For those unfamiliar with America's National Anthem, here is the original text, which I followed closely in my poem on the next page.*

### **THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER**

O say can you see  
By the dawn's early light  
What so proudly we hailed  
At the twilight's last gleaming,

Whose broad stripes and bright stars  
Through the perilous fight  
O'er the ramparts we watched  
Were so gallantly streaming?

And the rockets' red glare,  
The bombs bursting in air,  
Gave proof through the night  
That our flag was still there.

O say does that star spangled  
Banner yet wave  
O'er the land of the free  
And the home of the brave?

## **THE BLOOD SPATTERED BANNER**

O say can you see  
By our victory's delight  
How proudly we failed  
At peace and goodwillig?

Our bright kids and smart bombs  
Through the fairy tale fight  
O'er the TVs we watched  
Were so gallantly killing.

And the rockets' red glare,  
Children bursting in air,  
Guaranteed that the price  
Of our oil will be fair.

O says does that blood spattered  
Banner yet wave,  
O'er the land of the fool  
And the home of the knave?

## **BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST**

*(For President Nixon's 1973 Inaugural Ball, held shortly after his Christmas "carpet bombing" of Hanoi, Viet Nam. Phrases have been borrowed from the Biblical book of Daniel, IV.34-35 and V.4.)*

Let's invite the children to the Ball,  
To make our feast more festive.  
Let's invite them all, the halt,  
The lame, the blind...  
Have they not also served  
Our country's honor well,  
Those yellow urchins loosed from Hell  
To shake their tiny fists  
At our bright eagles?

Let's invite the children to the Ball,  
That they may share our bounty  
And give thanks,  
And drink red wine with us,  
And worship gods of silver and of gold,  
Of bronze, iron, wood and stone,  
And know that our dominion  
Is an everlasting dominion,  
And our kingdom endures from generation  
To generation;  
All the inhabitants of the earth  
Are accounted as nothing;  
And among the inhabitants of the earth,  
None can stay his hand,  
Or say to him  
"What doest thou?"

With charity for all  
Let's invite the children to the Ball,  
And let them read to us  
The writing on the wall.

## **ENEMY**

In your enemy see your shadow,  
Walk in your shadow's shoes.  
Slit his throat or split his skull,  
Can you your shadow lose?

To lose your shadow, dwell in darkness...  
But not in the arms of sleep.  
She'll lift the grate of the dungeon  
Where enemies gnash their teeth.

## **AUTUMN**

Like creatures in the underbrush  
Foraging for nuts,  
The journalists of Washington  
Gather ifs and buts

So mankind in its burrows  
Shall not starve for mirth  
When the fireworks are over  
And fallout blankets earth.

## WAITING FOR THE OSLO EXPRESS

"So leetle," that's how much English  
He said he spoke. Enough, though,  
To tell a stranger between trains  
That he had lived three years  
In the Shetland Islands  
During the war.

"You went by boat?" I asked.  
He nodded.  
"Escaped the Germans?"  
He did not understand.

"Forty-five feet," he said, spreading  
His hands to show he meant  
Length. Length of the boat.  
"I forget English." Forty years  
Had passed since the war.  
I tried to see him as a youth  
On a forty-five foot boat  
Braving the North Sea.

"How many in the boat?"  
"Sixteen."  
"Sixteen?" He may have meant sixty.  
I held up ten fingers, then six.  
He nodded.

"I went" he moved his hand to the right,  
Then to the left,  
Back to the right.

"Back and forth?"

"Yes. Back and forth.  
Shetland... Norway... Shetland.  
Secret."

"Secret?"

"Yes. I Secret Service."

There's no escape, I thought.  
No holiday, even here,  
Even among drowsy villages  
Hidden on shores  
Of steep fjords,  
No place where war  
Has not scarred lives.

"My wife," he said.  
"She from Shetland Islands."  
He paused.  
"She is dead seven years."

## SECOND THOUGHTS ON GENOCIDE

Look at that Sunday crowd of leaves  
Picnicking on my lawn:  
They spread themselves with autumn ease,  
The old on their backs and the young on their knees;  
Over they turn in the idle breeze  
Tanning themselves in the sun.

Gossiping on the sidewalk, some  
Talk of that Maple knave,  
Who ran away with an Aspen blonde,  
Down the street and into the pond,  
But when she got stuck on a Cat-tail wand,  
He drowned himself in a wave.

A withered leaf, reclining near,  
Propped up by a blade of grass,  
Turns and whispers that every year  
More and more Elms are coming here,  
"And who would have ever believed, my dear,  
That hardwoods could be so crass!"

My grass is green (or a little brown)  
And knows its proper place;  
But what should I do with this carefree throng  
That a careless wind has blown to my lawn?  
Since I can't put them back where they belong  
Should I burn this colorful race?

## **SECOND GROWTH**

Down lumbering trains abandoned  
Right of way  
Once engines hooted  
At the plundered green,  
Before their rails were gathered  
From the gathering scene.

Now poplar, hazelbrush and birch  
Repeat in shadowy phrases,  
Like rumors in a sleeping car  
Rippling the green curtains  
Along the aisle,  
A story handed down  
From the last of the giants.

Walking the wooded corridor,  
Where cinders crunch beneath the moss  
And blackberry barbs  
Clutch my sleeves,  
I'm ghost of lumberjack come back  
To look for an axe  
Left in a stump  
The day the foreman hurled at me  
His last curse.

## **EVIDENCE**

The birch stays white in summer,  
A signpost for the road  
Between two speechless states  
Policed by snow.

The birch is wrapped in paper  
So fugitives will write  
Directions for their loved ones  
On its telltale white.

## THE RADIO

A dwarf at the edge of the forest  
Fingers the bark of an oak  
And squints at the herds of cars  
Stampeding from city to city.

He stamps his foot,  
Spreads his hand against the scene,  
And mutters syllables  
Of a guttural tongue.  
The cars careen,  
Screech and clang, roll over  
And over, then lie on their backs,  
Wheels pawing the air.

In one carcass something  
Bleats and gurgles.  
The dwarf opens the guts,  
Crawls inside,  
And rips out the pulsing organ.

Clutching the thing in his hairy hand,  
Its nerves or veins or ligaments  
Trailing in the leaves,  
The dwarf scurries through the woods.  
He follows a brook, hopping  
From rock to rock, climbs over  
The mossy trunk of a fallen  
Hemlock, pushes through ferns to  
The edge of a pond.

His toes sink in the muck  
Of shallow water darkened  
By a dye in the roots of cedars.  
The dwarf hurls the thing  
To splash in the center of the pond.  
When the spreading rings reach the shore,  
He studies his rippling face.

## **NORTHERN LAKES**

Lakes in the forest,  
Like islands in the sea,  
Beckon toward eternity.

Islands to horizons  
Lift the eye;  
Lakes pull the mind down

As a woman's embrace  
Pulls flesh to drown  
In the first wet place.

## **POSSESSED**

Barbed wires, their effrontery  
Gone, like taught nerves stretched  
Too long, at length,  
Relent.

Boards nailed to trees,  
Rust dribbling from their wounds,  
Say "No Trespassing"  
As they rot.

Those fading words and falling fences,  
Like the manic laugh  
And mournful wail of loons,  
Are native to this wilderness,

Instinctive cry and bared claw  
Of cornered creatures,  
Driven, forever,  
From their nest.

## FISH STORY

Waiting in a station  
Of an abandoned railroad,  
Watching paint peel and plaster crack,  
I hear a train,  
The distant whistle of a train,  
Arriving from childhood  
With my father,  
Who will take me fishing,  
Waking me in the morning  
While others sleep.

We'll drop anchor,  
Bait our hooks,  
Cast our lines,  
Then wait... wait... wait...  
Watching the point where  
The black line intersects the liquid plane,  
Penetrates the reflecting surface  
Toward depths in which  
Unseen creatures glide,  
Slow, fast, in schools, alone,  
Living destinies we know not  
Until...

"I've got a bite."  
"Give him line."  
"There, look!"  
"He's running. Now!"  
I yank my rod  
To set the hook.  
I've got him.  
What is he?  
A bass? A pike?

My line slices the surface  
As the hidden beast flees,  
Then goes slack -- he's turned,  
He's racing underneath the boat.  
I reel fast to keep taut  
My thin tie  
To the unknown being.  
Suddenly he plunges,  
Bending double my rod.  
I play him,  
Then slowly, slowly,  
I reel him closer.  
"There he is!"  
"A beauty!"

My father dips the net.  
I try to guide the shining life  
That dives, returns, turns,  
Flashing and vanishing,  
Until a deft scoop  
Of my father's wrists  
Lifts him into the air.  
My father beams at me,  
Happier, I know,  
Than if he'd caught  
The graceful thing  
Himself.

Will he be happy now,  
When his train arrives,  
The train whose whistle I just heard  
Sounding the depths of time,  
To find me again  
At the old train station?  
With a wave of my tail  
And flutter of my fins  
I swim through the door  
To the station platform.

## **SOUL FISHING**

On a pair of airport conveyer belts  
Passengers glide past  
Like salmon in a stream.  
Are they hurrying to the sea?  
Or hastening to spawn?  
Either way, they flash by and,  
Upstream or down, they're gone.  
I cast upon the currents winged thoughts,  
But none rise to my bait.  
Perhaps I should try worms.

## **HORSE SHOES**

Professor Gross, as a child,  
Hands in pocket, cap awry,  
Stood in the doorway of the blacksmith's shed  
And forged his dreams,  
Blow by blow.

Now he hammers into shape,  
Pounding the lectern with his fist,  
Plato's forms, shoes  
For youths destined for wagons,  
That they may clatter  
As they plod.

## A VOICE FROM THE PAST

A scholar from an empire  
Across the sea,  
An elegant lady from Chicago,  
Seeking in a dusty village  
Some vestige of an ancient realm,  
Some jewel, or pot, or tool  
To touch, as is by fingering  
A thing handled long ago  
She could bring to life an illustrious ancestor  
Of this illiterate family,  
Impoverished in all but poetry,  
Which, recited with eyes alight,  
Echoed the clangor of swords,  
The rhapsodies of nightingales,  
The laments of perfumed concubines,  
The elaborate etiquette  
And unspeakable tortures  
Of a legendary court,  
Whose sumptuous banquets were contrasted,  
By the archeologist's apologetic hosts,  
To "this humble fare,"  
Prepared, the scholar knew,  
With extravagant care  
And painful expense,  
To honor her,  
Perhaps, she reflected,  
In hopes some beneficent ancestor  
Would speak through her,  
A thought she was savoring,  
As she savored delicate shreds of --  
Was it peacock wings? --  
Exquisitely seasoned with saffron,  
When she heard a squawk.

Startled from her reverie,  
The lady looked through the hovel's door  
Into the eyes of a chicken  
With an amputated leg  
And amputated wing,  
Its living meat kept fresh  
Without refrigeration.

## THE CRAFT OF THE HISTORIAN

History is a backward step  
After collision,  
A double take,  
A dazed shake of the head  
To stabilize a vision that ran bang  
Into the future,  
Not having looked where it was going.

To look ahead from further back  
Is a trick with mirrors;  
The future's opaque,  
The past obscure,  
And every now's a spark  
Driving a dark engine.

Our own combustion is our only light,  
Our Plato's sun and Promethean flame,  
Our Hell. Think  
Of everlasting life  
And the straight and narrow,  
The exhaust pipe  
To lingering pollution.  
To blaze or stink  
Is all our choice,  
A moment's flash  
Or eternal smoke.

Reflection magnifies the flash,  
The study of our image  
In altars, archives, ornaments,  
Or eyeballs of young ladies.  
But imagine Galileo's heart  
When first he aimed his glass beyond  
The entombed world,  
Leaping from star to star.

How must I shape the glass  
To pierce Ptolemaic spheres  
Of egocentric time,  
And bound with Galilean strides  
Among the worlds ahead,  
The worlds behind,  
The first to scan eternity  
Lighted by a mortal spark?

## **NOON**

The sun herds men indoors,  
The flies their circling cease.

The blood of forgotten wars  
Glazes a mudwalled peace.

A steamy prophet snores  
The wisdom of the East.

## **POETITIS**

When the gods choose to delight us  
With the gift called sinusitis,  
The treasure grows until one blows  
Pearls and rubies through the nose.

When the muse inflames the brain  
And the pressure grows to pain,  
The poet must a paper find  
To catch the jewels of his mind.

## **TIMING**

When I'm sad  
I write a song,  
When I'm glad  
I sing it.

When I'm dead  
I'll do not wrong,  
While I live  
I'll wing it.

## **INFINITIVE**

To know what I want, I play.  
To get what I want, I work.  
To be what I want, I stop.  
To want what I want, I burn.

## **PUSSYCAT**

They aggravate me, mice,  
Their petty feet,  
Snaky tails,  
And beady eyes  
Peeking out of cracks  
To see if they'll get caught  
Racing from hole to hole.

I know why the old lady hates  
Mice. She sees herself  
In the furtive  
Thieves of crumbs,  
Living in terror  
Of the graceful beast  
Purring behind the cupboard,  
Licking its paws,  
Switching its tail.

## **ABROAD THOUGHTS FROM HOME**

I lived outlandish long ago  
Gathering villages beside the seas,  
And here and there a city.  
I wrapped Florence in a plastic bag  
For a picnic in Germany,  
Distilled Paris to an ounce of scent  
For a high school broad back home,  
And pissed on smoking London once,  
Just to hear it hiss.  
I lived gigantically,  
Yet nowhere found a spaciousness  
To touch America,  
Where youth and billboards broadcast  
The secrets of the heart.

## **THE EDGE OF THE WORLD**

Let's throw somethin off the porch, honey,  
And count the years it falls  
Before we hear it splash.

Then we can visit town  
To see if folks have changed.  
Maybe there's been a war.

What was it you just said?  
You got a feelin Robert's dead?  
Well... that's the way it goes.

A bobcat gets our chickens,  
Our hound dog gets the 'cat,  
The fleas have got the dog.

And Robert, well, he just never could  
Settle down. Never mounted to  
Nothin. I miss him, though.

## **BENEFIT PERFORMANCE**

Once upon a time,  
The day before tomorrow,  
Children starved in pictures  
In the parlors of the rich,  
Who, aghast, declared  
A festival.

They trooped in costume  
To the fair,  
Attired in chains to play  
Wealth's poodle,  
Ambition's harem,  
Opinion's dancing bear.

Like children frightened  
By their own disguise,  
Reciting lessons  
Learned to win a prize,  
They promised morsels  
To the vacant faces

Gathering at the gates  
To see the masquerade  
And watch starvation  
Eat the eyes,  
The hungry eyes,  
Behind the masks.

## THE MORTAL

There are four of them,  
I think, out there.  
One adult -- the mother,  
I suppose -- and three  
Half-grown kittens.  
They can't get me here,  
Under the davenport.  
They can only stick their snouts  
And whiskers into the edge  
Of my dark hideout.  
But I can't stay here  
Forever.

That white one's the worst.  
He had my whole head  
In his mouth.  
That awful tongue  
Covered my eyes,  
And one tooth pierced  
My left ear.  
I knew I was finished --  
That monster's dinner --  
But then he let me go.  
I didn't know  
He wanted to toy with me.  
But I soon learned.

I jumped to the left.  
He slapped me with his right paw.  
I scurried to the right.  
He pinned me under his left paw.  
He growled when his black brother  
Tried to steal me.  
I saw my chance  
And raced between them.  
The mother took a swipe  
That knocked me off my feet,  
But I scrambled under this couch.

Of course I never should have  
Dared to drink from their milk.  
My wife warned me.  
"You saw what they did  
To that chipmunk."  
Just a tail and a foot,  
That's all they left.  
Do you suppose  
They'll leave  
My tail on the rug  
To be sucked up  
By that screaming vacuum?

My only hope is that  
They'll all fall asleep.  
Then I can sneak  
Over to the cabinet,  
And from the cabinet to the closet,  
Then through the crack  
In the closet floor.  
I hope the closet door  
Is still ajar.

I mustn't panic  
And venture out too soon.  
I had thought they were asleep  
When I sneaked out  
To steal their milk.  
When I got my front feet  
Up on the rim of the bowl  
And started to drink,  
My heart was pounding so loud  
That I never heard those paws  
Creeping up behind me.  
When he pounced, the milk  
Splashed all over me.  
No doubt that made me tastier.

Look at that white one  
Washing his paw.

## THE EXPERIMENT

Once upon a time... time... time...  
Stop. Too late for fairytales.  
Long ago and far away... away... away...  
Enough! No time for day dreams.  
An experiment, in a room with no walls,  
Proved that the human voice  
Travels  $I$  minus  $u$  light years  
In a half-sentence that returns... turns... turns...  
Demonstrating that space is a chamber  
Where I whisper to myself, my self.

## FERTILITY RITES

When priests in phallic masks,  
Leaping at the crescent moon,  
Cast shadows across  
The awe-struck tribe  
Gathered before the sacred fire,  
What shudders  
In the abyss  
Of aboriginal souls?

When astronauts in rockets,  
Leaping at the crescent moon,  
Cast shadows across  
The awe-struck tribe  
Gathered before electronic fires,  
What shudders  
In the abyss  
Of technological souls?

## **PARENTAL GUIDANCE**

When rockets spurt  
At the menstrual moon  
Test tubes of astronauts,  
What will be born?

What science conceived  
Is a children's play  
That explains to grownups  
How they came this way:

The body's a space ship  
For visiting Earth,  
The capsule of a soul's  
Experiment with birth.

## **USED**

At the Salvation Army thrift store  
A bin of nude dolls  
Waiting, like grown-ups,  
To be loved.

## **THE RETURNEE**

Like a native of New Guinea  
Returning from New York  
Who tries to tell his tribesmen  
What he's seen,

I try to tell my neighbors  
A future that will work,  
But the savages just giggle  
At my "dream."

## **PROGRESS**

I live in a civilization  
With a population of one.  
When I yield to assimilation,  
The population is none.

But when I find you we'll be two,  
Enough for a galloping horde.  
We'll scatter the armies of Truth  
And sack the House of the Lord.

We'll sail from that smoking ruin  
To an undiscovered shore,  
And build there a civilization  
With a population of four.

## **SHELL**

My compassion for a stranger  
That I used to call me  
Cast ashore a souvenir  
Of an evening by the sea

When my mother built with sand  
A castle with a moat,  
And to watch flames play  
My father burned our boat.

When waves sapped the ramparts  
And made the embers hiss,  
I threw the tide a talisman;  
It ebbed to bear my wish

To a man across the years  
Staring out to sea  
Dreaming of the stranger  
That he used to call me.



# **LEGS AND EYES**



## **HER MAIL**

She reads mere things as if  
They are addressed to her.  
A leaf that drifts toward a waterfall,  
A dandelion seed in flight,  
A nut that rattles down a roof,  
Frost on a vacant cocoon...  
They bring to her face a certain smile  
Like letters from a friend.

## **MEMENTO**

When she died, her madness cured,  
She left behind her skin,  
A skin that strides about as if  
There's something, still, within.

And surely there's a skeleton,  
And muscles, nerves, and all...  
All except the crazy girl  
Who left behind this doll.

## HER EYES, ONCE

I know they are only eyeballs,  
Attached (for a while) by optic nerves  
To the stuff inside a skull.  
But once they aimed at me  
A bolt of lightning.  
A landscape, in an eery light,  
Burst all around me.  
Then vanished.

Before she looked at me  
My eyes had grown accustomed  
To the dark.  
I had learned to calculate  
The shapes of things  
By shades of black,  
Certain whatever loomed ahead,  
Accurately measured,  
Would guide me back.

I did not know I was a savage  
Before my dark continent was invaded  
From the land that invented fire.  
Since then I've groped  
Through a world  
I can no longer imagine,  
And not yet remember,  
Because I saw it  
All at once.

Perhaps I was knocked from the known  
To the other side of her eyes  
And glanced out through them.  
If daylight ever comes  
I'll map the wilderness I saw  
In that flash.  
But now, blinded,  
I ache to hear a sky explode  
And feel earth shake.

## **GAMES**

A lightning stroke  
Split an ancient oak  
In a game gods play.

A great heart broke  
When a soft voice spoke  
On that same dark day.

## **PHONY**

The last I heard from her:  
A voice on a machine.

The last she heard from me:  
Numbers she could call.

On spinning plastic tape,  
Our epitaph.

And then, no doubt,  
She punched "erase."

## GENESIS

For his daughter's eighth birthday  
The father, using scraps  
From construction of his home,  
Built a backyard dollhouse.  
He strung lights all around it  
And placed it on a track  
That circled a lantern.  
A silver globe revolved around the house,  
Reflecting the lantern's glow.  
From old clothes in the attic  
His wife made furry animals and feathery birds,  
And cotton weeds, velvet flowers, wooly trees.  
The father fashioned  
Snakes and fish and bugs  
From junk in the garage.

When his daughter awoke that morning  
And looked out her window,  
She shrieked with pleasure.  
She raced down the stairs  
And out the door,  
Then stopped,  
Her arms flung wide.  
Except that a breeze  
Tugged the hem of her nightgown,  
She was still as a garden statue.  
Only her eyes moved.  
Her gaze hopped from light to light,  
From flower to flower,  
From beast to beast.

Then, hesitantly,  
She stepped beneath a willow  
To touch a spotted fawn.  
It tilted its ears  
And twitched its nostrils.  
She tried, in reply,  
To wiggle her nose,  
Then burst into giggles.

Her parents stared, astonished,  
As one by one each creature,  
At her touch,  
Came to life.  
After all was animated,  
She searched everywhere,  
Peering into closets,  
Parting bushes,  
Turning rocks, as if  
Something were lacking.

Finally, with an impatient  
Shake of her curls,  
She squatted by a puddle  
And scooped up a handful of muck.  
She patted it into a ball,  
Then pressed it between her palms,  
Shaped it with her fingers,  
And etched details with her fingernails.  
Then she breathed upon it.

I leaped from her hand  
And ran as fast as I could.  
As she chased me, I grew.  
When I was equal in size,  
I turned  
And threw my arms around her.  
She kissed my nose,  
Tickled my armpits,  
And stuck her tongue in my ear.

## **HAND IN HAND**

Leave them be,  
They want mere bliss.  
Come with me  
To the abyss.

## **JUDAS' SONG**

Her maple leaves were currency,  
Her coin, the autumn birch;  
She made these woods her counting house,  
This counting house, her church.

Where can I change this money  
That's fallen from a tree?  
This garden was her Eden,  
And my Gethsemane.

## **TO A YOUNG ABDOMEN**

Pagan belly, marble white,  
Translucent, if held up to light,  
Adolescent, incandescent,  
Radiant, fertile, fatal crescent,

Performers on this luminous stage,  
Like armies in a darkening age,  
Shall boast of ruined alabaster  
And kneel to saints of painted plaster.

## **IMMACULATE SELECTION**

He could have wed  
Some withered hide,  
But took instead  
A virgin bride.

Thus God, who says  
He loves the least,  
Is choosy  
When he plays the beast.

## **THE LOST SUPPER**

Please, no after-dinner speech;  
It's time to practice what you preach.  
If you want to love a sinner,  
Stop dallying with your dinner.

This is your body? Well this is mine.  
Come to my arms and be divine.  
Your Mommy's virtue, your Daddy's wrath,  
End in my straight and narrow path.

And for your friends a dozen more  
Are waiting just outside the door.  
So let's all drink a final toast:  
May the devil take the hindmost.

Oh let your public go to Hell,  
The girls and I will never tell.  
We'll say the party was for males  
And spread some other likely tales.

## **LUCKY GIRL**

When Jesus and Satan rode to the dance  
With the same girl in mind,  
Each took his own bike  
To bring her home behind.

They zigzagged through the traffic  
Trading raunchy jokes.  
They roared away from stoplights  
Leaving trails of smoke.

When Jesus danced with Beauty,  
She liked his sensual smile.  
When Satan swept her off her feet,  
She liked his graceful style.

But when the dance was over  
And they waited by the door,  
She winked at both, but left with me  
Because she wanted more.

## **WRAPTURE**

God is coming for lunch today,  
And if I'm lucky she will stay  
For dinner, dancing, even bed,  
And what we'll do there makes my head  
Reel, race, rage, riot....

Then we'll sleepwalk hand in hand  
Like orphans toward some promised land,  
Until we find a fishing hole  
Where, laughing,  
God will shove me in  
Then leap into the pool  
And wrap me in her legs.

## **DE GUSTIBUS NON EST DISPUTANDUM\***

Jane has brains,  
Joan has heart,  
Jean has grace,  
June has art.

They all love me,  
I like them all,  
But I'm in love  
With Barbie Doll.

\* Of taste there is no disputing

## **CAPTIVATION**

Why does woman everywhere  
Paint her face and shape her hair?  
Thus the idiot creature can  
Catch that idiot creature, man.

## **TO HER MIRROR**

Every night is Halloween for me.  
Every night I wear what I will be.  
As fairy, witch, or femme fatale,  
I make man's fate a costume ball.  
I become what others see  
To trick or treat them all.

## **EFFACEMENT**

Self-effacing woman, put your make-up on,  
Curl your lashes, curl your hair,  
Spray some odor everywhere,  
Then go get your man.

Find yourself a hero who can read the ads  
To know his duty to his cutie.  
He'll reward your beauty  
If you'll relieve his glands.

## **THE CAVE PAINTING**

Wipe grease from your fingers  
And soot from your face  
In the fur on my chest.

Toss back your locks,  
Like bones to dogs,  
To my snatching fists.

In your python thighs  
Burst my soul  
To drench the fire.

With a smoldering brand  
Dipped in your cauldron  
I'll paint our prey.

## **MAGIC**

Before a cave man starts a hunt  
He paints the beast he plans to chase.  
A lady, with a hungry grunt,  
In the mirror paints her face.

## **WAR IS SICK SEX**

War is sick sex,  
Boys thrusting  
Swords, spears, bayonets  
Into boys,  
Ejaculating bullets,  
Lead seeds of death,  
Into bellies that will bloat,  
Pregnant with gas.

Those who crawl  
From the orgy  
Will be cradled by nurses,  
Who will change the soiled  
Bandages of these babes  
Fathered by perfumed,  
Eye-shadowed, ear-pierced,  
High-heeled, hair-sprayed  
Deodorized,  
Sanitized,  
Sterilized  
Rage.

## **MUTUAL RAPE**

Boys rape girls  
As victims or as whores.  
Girls rape boys  
As heroes sent to wars.

## PARVENU

Their chatter ceased,  
Their gestures froze,  
When I lowered my head.  
They watched, as mannikins watch a riot,  
While thrice I rammed the davenport,  
Plunging tusks into helpless upholstery,  
Till, drawing back to lunge again,  
I shouldered over a cocktail tray.  
The clatter shattered the glacial air.  
In the ensuing melee  
I rooted among haunches  
Of girdled ladies,  
Nostrils snorting,  
Until, cornered,  
One hoof rasping the carpet,  
Eyes shifting, tiny, red,  
I fled a battery of brooms  
Onto the elegant lawn  
Of my emancipated hostess,  
Under whose hydrangeas  
I changed to a frog.

## HOSTESS

Despair arrives at five o'clock,  
If not before.  
He has the key to every lock  
Of every door.

He fumbles at my breast,  
I cannot flee.  
"One lump or two?" I ask,  
Then spill the tea.

## **PREMANCIPATION**

Ladies until lately  
Chewed their peers like  
Canapes, with dainty bites,  
Because the starving sisterhood,  
By wolfing one another's flesh,  
Might gain weight.  
But oh, with gusto how at home  
They fell upon their spawn.

## **CIVIL SERVANT**

He lunged at the throat of injustice  
(Forgetting to mail his wife),  
But his teeth sank into Miss Wilson,  
Spattering a laundered life

That he purchased to wear to the Agency  
Of Spelling and Punctuation,  
Where illiterates in triplicate  
Are coloring his application.

The mannikin manning the switchboard  
Giggled to see him pray,  
Then rode him upstairs while he whinnied:  
Per diem, per gloriam dei.

## **THE HOUSEHOLDER'S GUIDE TO DOMESTIC POLICY AND WORLD AFFAIRS**

Second-best woman, don't  
Nail "vacancy" onto my heart.  
Since you left I let  
The World back in,  
My old slut.

Stop by and visit us someday.  
You can have the guest room  
(She's rearranged the furniture).  
If you wake up and hear us  
And your legs get jealous,  
Bring them to our bed.  
That's why I let her come back.  
The old slut.

### **DOMESTICATED**

The sheep's in the sheepfold,  
The mare's in the barn,  
The cow's in her stanchion,  
Milked and warm.

The dog's in the manger,  
The cat's in a cage,  
My wife's in a trap  
And I'm in a rage.

## **BOTTLED**

He drank until his soul came out,  
And, startled, watched it thrash about,  
Its waist caught in the bottleneck,  
Its little fists frantic.

But Martha poked it down again,  
And punched the cork above its head,  
Then smiled at us and bravely said:  
"Isn't he a panic?"

## **FIND ME**

As a curious cat  
Pokes into closets, cabinets,  
Boxes, baskets or drawers,  
A soul climbed into my body.  
Then it couldn't  
Get out.

A woman is calling:  
"Here kitty,  
Here kitty kitty."

"Meow. Meow."

## HAPPILY EVER AFTER

How could she offer her lonely self  
Out of her fabulous flesh  
To a young man, otherwise quite  
Entertaining,  
Whose soul wriggled  
Like a divided worm  
Whenever he studied the legs  
Extruding from her expensive skirt?

So jilted Henry jolted in a pick-up  
Loaded with two-by-eights  
Down a potholed road to a redwood tree.  
He rigged a pulley to a limb  
And began, hand over hand, to hoist,  
Swaying up toward a blue ceiling,  
The floorboards of his new home.

"Can't you stop that goddam racket!"  
A voice from on high startled  
Henry.  
Shielding his eyes against the sun  
He searched the sky  
For a winged being.  
"How can I play my flute,"  
The voice demanded,  
"With that damned pulley  
Shrieking like a housewife?"  
Then he saw her.  
She was pointing an accusing flute at him  
From a hammock  
Hung among the upper branches.

"But how,"  
Henry shouted upwards between cupped hands,  
"Can I get my harpsichord up there  
Without a platform to put it on?"  
The giant tree swayed  
In a puff from the Pacific,  
And then, through the sighing branches,  
The answer fell.  
"Well get some oil for the pulley,  
Idiot."

## **AFTER THE BURIAL**

"Look!" I turned  
And saw her old friend,  
The last to leave,  
Pointing to the sky.

High overhead,  
Its giant wings slowly  
Lifting and falling  
Under the storm clouds,  
As the first drops fell,  
A blue heron.

It was flying north,  
Toward her lake,  
Toward the blue water  
Where her body played  
For forty years,  
And her mind plays still.

## **BACKWATER**

If she were mine I'd give my love, instead  
Of diamond rings, the rings that crease a pond,  
Reflecting leaves that tremble for their bed;  
And for her new estate, decaying mud,  
The cool clutch of earth at naked feet;  
For her trousseau, a fallen tree's dry seeds;  
For dowry, all the creatures that retreat  
To our abandoned ark among the weeds.

A backwater bay is where I'd take my bride,  
For death's a pirate that patrols the sea  
To startle white gowned ships in sailing pride,  
But in his hideout shows his hospitality.  
He'd give my love, if she were mine, his wealth:  
The gift of giving, till she gave herself.

## TRUTH

When Mustapha saw Truth hauling water,  
Like a servant, from the spring,  
He asked his mother to arrange a marriage,  
Because, though she was ugly,  
Her eyes had teased him.  
His mother refused. No son of hers  
Would dishonor his name  
With a slut who had no dowry  
And yielded to any man  
Who could stomach her.

## ARITHMETIC

One plus one  
Can't make us two  
Unless we're multiplied  
By unknowns.

Unless we're both knocked  
Down by the paw of the sea  
Protecting its treasure;

Unless we are colonized  
By a greedy brook  
Flashing beads and mirrors;

Unless a doe guiding  
A fawn across a sunshaft  
Detonates our earth.

Unless we are less  
Than everything,  
The sum of you and me,  
Like the square root of minus one,  
Is an imaginary number.

## **RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

To approach infinity requires  
A representative sample  
Of points along the curve  
Enabling me to plot  
The logical conclusion  
Of my research assistant's  
Thigh,  
The graphic formula  
Of inordinate desire.

## **RESERECTION**

I sold my soul  
For a pair of thighs,  
Then bought a hole  
For Paradise

And buried my flesh.  
It rose again.  
And again and again  
And again.

## VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY RENE DESCARTES

Professor in doubt,  
Have faith in your snout:  
I stink, therefore I am.

Philosopher, know  
It's only a show,  
She winks, therefore I'm man.

My teacher's a lady  
Named Dr. O'Grady,  
She thinks I failed her quiz.

But I've studied her legs  
And the question she begs.  
I think, therefore she is.

O'Grady your lectures  
Are airy conjectures.  
You think, therefore you grunt.

Enough of your tests,  
Let me fondle your breasts;  
Cogito ergo sunt.

## TALENT SEARCH

I need a woman who can climb  
The Himalayas of the mind.  
Who can stride those lofty crags?  
I'll know her by her legs.

## **LEGWORK**

You, legs, exquisite pair,  
Long, slender, tender, lean, delicious, where  
Did you get that baggage: brains?  
Like porters at an Asiatic harbor  
You stagger under trunkloads  
Of ideas from scholars,  
The underwear and toiletries of infidels  
Who visit life to admire statues.  
Stingy dogs,  
The tips they give won't buy  
A used mattress,  
Let alone a classroom of pillows  
Where the two of you could teach  
Philosophy to a failing student.

## **BE MUSED**

Put your typewriter on her breast,  
Plug into her belly,  
Write The One Eternal Verse  
While you turn to jelly.

## **TYPOGRAPHICAL TERROR**

When the secretary unbutted  
Her poor suit of happiness,  
He was wept off his fee.  
But she was souled  
To the highest bitter.

## **REFORMED**

Condemned for prepositioning her,  
My second person,  
Singular,  
In a verb garden,  
I was paroled  
From a scentence  
Of elocution.

Who'll buy my pretty violence  
Flagrant with do?

## **ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**

She is my school,  
Her belly's my class,  
I am her fool,  
My teacher's her ass.

Her breasts are the playground,  
The gym is her eyes,  
The lost-and-found  
Is between her thighs.

## **PHYSICAL FITNESS**

Genital details  
Are physical witness  
To male and female  
Spiritual fitness.

## **EVE**

I'd like to sterilize the bitch  
That spread this universal itch;  
But life's a rash that, once you catch it,  
You've got to find a way to scratch it.

## **WARNING**

A child watched the universe  
Pace the planetarium  
With glittering eyes.

And now, escaped,  
It prowls in her disguise.

## **JOYRIDES**

If your life is getting stale  
Seize a tiger by her tail,  
Box a grizzly with your paws,  
Grab an elephant by his balls.

If your wife is getting tame  
Whisper in her ear her name,  
Stroke the curves of her behind,  
Probe the innards of her mind.

## **AUTO DA FEY**

One jolt  
From her jump-start eyes  
And my battery  
Explodes.

One bolt  
From her lightning thighs  
And my body  
Is totaled.

## **JAIL BREAK**

We are all on Death Row.  
We're not told why.  
For some crime we don't know,  
We're condemned to die.

Each appeals to the Court  
To reverse his fate,  
But each knows in his heart  
It's too late.

Each in his cell  
Is counting his time.  
To escape from this hell  
Love your partners in crime.

## **DROUGHT'S END**

The waterholes are dry,  
The cottonwoods are bare.  
The mockingbird asks "Why?"  
The coyote answers "Where?"  
A tear clouds his eye  
Then falls into my hair.  
A darkening in the sky,  
A raindrop in the air.

## **TOO LATE**

A stag steps from the shade,  
The archer bends her bow,  
Takes aim,  
Lets go.

Swift as a child's wish,  
The whispering, feathered dart  
Strikes home,  
His heart.

The hunter, in his eyes,  
Sees what she did not know:  
Her self,  
His doe.

## **SUBSTITUTE**

Because she did not  
In the moonlight climb with me,  
When I reached the peak  
I decided to be two.  
I stepped back from the precipice  
To look at me,  
Poised on the edge.

In my eyes I saw  
A spirit kindred to my own,  
And knew, at last,  
That I am not alone.

**"YOUTH IS SUCH A WONDERFUL THING  
IT'S A SHAME TO WASTE IT ON CHILDREN."\***

Give me a crone who's lost her teeth,  
Whose dugs hang limp and back is humped,  
Who cackles and rants and squints and leers,  
Cooks dogs and snakes and moles and bats  
And lives in a shack behind the quarry  
Where she croons to her monkey and scolds the fish  
She keeps in a pail for her one-eyed cat.

Give me a witch who sweeps up stars  
To sprinkle her gunny-sack sheets before  
She thrashes the Devil between her thighs  
Until he shouts "Enough! Enough!"  
And grants her demand to make her stop,  
Grants her the youthful body  
That trembles, now,  
In my arms.

\*George Bernard Shaw

**AFTERTASTE**

When all stars disappear  
Like snowflakes in the sea,  
The salt of an old maid's tear  
Will flavor, still, her tea.

## **CAWS**

Raucous crow, mocking me,  
Morning mist enchanted thee.

See, lady, there's your gown  
By the window where you've flown.

Bewitched bride, tilt your head,  
Tell me why you left my bed,

Why you grew a beak and claws,  
Why you fled my furry paws.

## **WINTER**

Listen to the fire;  
That's the snort  
Of an old buck come back  
To haunt these logs  
That once spread spring  
Across his sky.

Look, the logs reply,  
Shaking their flames  
Like antlers... no,  
Tossing their flames  
Like birch boughs  
In an April gust.

Did you just now,  
Wherever you are,  
Shake loose your hair?

## WATERFALL

Like a herd of lambs  
Bursting from a barn  
Into their first pasture

Water lately locked in ice  
Stampedes over the rock rim  
To jump and twist  
In the April air.

A dislodged log, butting  
The current, clings  
(as if it could plant roots!)  
To the sloping rock.

Bubbles bouncing by  
Tease and tickle and tug until,  
Inch by inch,  
The log loses its grip.

You look at me.  
I look away.  
The log finds a niche.  
I want to shout:  
Let Go!  
LET GO

○  
○  
○  
○  
○  
!

## SEPTEMBER TREE

The first blush is best,  
The slightest tinge  
In foliage where all the rest  
Is green and unaware  
Of the surrender she will know  
When the wind strips her naked  
To cover her limbs with snow.

Soon she'll hide mounting fears  
In colors that pretend  
That summers never end,  
And dance like fire to stir  
Winter from his den.

Others thrill to see  
October blood.  
Wilder to me is the faint,  
Surprised thrall  
In leaves that tremble to feel  
The first blush of knowledge  
Before the Fall.

## DEPARTURE

Since I'm going away  
I can't pretend  
That love will stay  
Or life won't end.

To keep me here  
Would not take much.  
A look. A tear.  
A word. A touch.

## **WHY AM I HERE?**

My country is invisible,  
Its countryside, sublime.  
Am I, amongst these aliens,  
Banished for some crime?

Or was I sent on business,  
To haggle over things?  
Or sent as an ambassador,  
To kneel to mortal kings?

Yesterday I realized  
That I must be a spy,  
Sent to find a princess  
Kidnapped from the sky.

## **IF**

If Satan had a woman  
God would be in Hell  
Man would be in Heaven  
And the watchman in the night would cry  
"All is well. All is well."



**SPEAK  
TRUTH  
TO  
POWER**



# RAGE AND LOVE

John Milton wrote *Paradise Lost* "to justify the ways of God to men." But the real hero of *Paradise Lost* was not God. The real hero was the great rebel, Satan. With immortal lines like "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven," Milton's Satan triumphed over the servile platitudes of orthodox beliefs.

This was not the cruel, repulsive Satan of Judaeo-Christian-Moslem orthodoxies. Victorious rulers always blame every evil on a rebel in order to discredit rebellion. And so ruling mythmakers blamed the angel that rebelled against God for every evil in God's creation. By teaching children that everything vicious and nasty and cruel comes from the great Rebel, the Judaeo-Christian-Moslem tradition has stifled rebellion by children against half-truths called "sacred."

Orthodox science bows before an omnipotent Nature with the same servility that its parent religions bowed before an omnipotent Supernatural.

Half-truths called "rational" teach that even our most intimate feelings, even our most scientific thoughts, are mere chemical whims of the mindless Nature that, in the creation myth of orthodox science, created our minds. No religion ever attributed more power over man to a supernatural Creator than modern science ascribes to a totalitarian Nature.

Thus, to cite a typical example, in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* Thomas Kuhn states a basic assumption of orthodox science: "All deliberative processes... must ultimately be neural, and they are therefore governed by the same *physico-chemical* laws that govern perception on the one hand and the beating of our hearts on the other." (Italics in original)

Kuhn's statement was a product of "deliberative processes." Therefore, if Kuhn is right, the statement was dictated by physico-chemical laws. Kuhn was not the author. He was a stenographer employed by chemicals to type their thoughts.

When a scientist tells anyone that chemicals produce thought he is saying: "The chemicals in my brain are telling the chemicals in your brain that they are chemicals." Alice in Wonderland never encountered anything so absurd. And yet this absurd belief dominates modern science.

The absurdity of the belief reveals that its roots are irrational. In another book, *The Adventure*, I examine the flawed logic of modern science and describe the logic of future science. But logic is not sufficient to uproot the irrational. At the root of every irrationality is some kind of emotion.

The fundamental emotion of modern science is the same as the fundamental emotion of pre-scientific religions: the urge to bow to a power greater than the individual human soul. That urge cannot be destroyed by mere logic. Passion is also needed. The poems in this book express that passion.

Modern science, like pre-scientific religions, has failed to end war. That failure is rooted in what they have in common: the urge to awe of a greater power. Satan symbolizes the opposite. He would not bow even to God.

In a nuclear age, when the endless madness of war must end, every belief that has failed to end war must be defied. That is why Satan, who defied the Omnipotent, is the role model for the nuclear age.

Some of the poems in *Speak Truth to Power* use the myth of Satan to attack myths of servitude. Others mock "God." A few attack "scientific" myths. One sneers at the Nirvana of Eastern religions. What these different poems have in common is rage and disgust and laughter at every "sacred" or "rational" belief that bows to something greater than you and me.

I have never encountered, I have never heard or read about, and I cannot imagine, any supernatural being or natural force as great as any one of the individual human beings I know. Even the individual animals I know are infinitely greater than any God or Nature.

I would say that living individuals are my gods -- except that I do not worship them. I love them.

## **SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER**

On my soul I've etched a scar  
Lest in Heaven I forget,  
And at the banquet promised there  
Deny the hunger of the zek.

Zeks were prisoners in the Hell  
Beneath the Worker's Paradise;  
Solzhenitsyn dared to speak  
The truth about their tortured lives.

But Stalin's crimes were child's play  
Learned in the nursery of God,  
Who drives his battered children mad  
With deeds of hate and words of love.

When an angel pours the wine,  
I shall stand to speak a toast:  
"To tortured man!" I'll drink, then  
Hurl the chalice at my host.

But if in after-dinner hymns  
I, too, bleat that butcher's praise,  
May I feed eternal flames  
Beneath the sheep the Butcher saves.

## **CORPORAL PUNISHMENT**

We are all on the train to  
Auschwitz,  
Because we all are Jews,  
Or something like Jews,  
Humans.

Our deaths are certain,  
Putrid, and inane,  
The whim of some mad corporal  
Gassed in the trenches  
Of a war in Europe,  
Or somewhere,  
Maybe Heaven.

Give us our daily  
Soup and bread  
And lead us not  
Into thy ovens  
Until tomorrow,  
Or, better, Wednesday.

We'll promise to behave  
If, great soldier  
Of some master race  
Or supernatural species,  
You'll beat us less  
Before you smudge the sky  
With the greasy smoke  
Of our feeble, yes,  
But familiar, flesh.

God, Hitler, whoever you are,  
Forgive us.  
We know not what we've done,  
But, surely, somehow we have sinned.

## **THE DEAF MUTE**

Jane is ugly,  
Mike's retarded,  
Wu is old  
And broken-hearted.

Ahmed's lame,  
Raj is blind,  
Grieving Betty's  
Lost her mind.

Here's an earthquake,  
There a flood,  
Everywhere  
Innocent blood.

A world of pain.  
Why? Why!  
Ask the Deaf Mute  
In the sky.

## **WHO MISSED THE BOAT?**

What was the party like  
The night before the Flood?  
What jigs and reels made blood  
Pulse with lust?  
What liquor spilled  
Down beards and bosoms?  
What lewd toasts were drunk?  
What rude songs were roared?  
What tankards clanked?  
What pranks made laughter soar  
To shake the rafters?

Noah, poor lost soul, adrift  
Over our deep sleep  
And fathomless dreams,  
You, and your descendants,  
Like the cattle in your hold,  
Will never know.

## THE CANNIBAL TO THE MISSIONARY

God in a book  
Is meat in a can.  
I'd rather cook  
And eat a man.

Your wine and bread  
Is blood and flesh?  
That god is dead;  
You're good and fresh.

You must inspire  
And I must dine.  
Come to my fire,  
Become divine.

## GUEST LIST

Jehovah and Juno,  
Osiris and Thor,  
Jesus and Venus  
And Buddha and Mars,

Allah and Shiva,  
Alexis and Jane,  
Karen and Karen  
And Nancy and Jim,

Dolores and Denys,  
Tikki and Mark,  
Lyndon and Lila  
And Lisa and Park

## **CAT AND MOUSE**

Not claws that clutch  
Nor teeth that tear  
Nor saliva's drool,  
Though each is enough.

These hurt not half  
As much as brief  
Escapes,  
My thrill of hope

Before the playful  
Pounce  
Of Pussycat  
Playing God.

## **THE ANSWER**

Cat by the window  
Watching rain,  
When will your sparrow  
Sing again?

Meow.

God in your heaven  
Watching pain,  
Why should your children  
Play your game?

Meow.

## **GRACE**

I am poised on a limb,  
Whiskers twitching, tail switching,  
Over the path of unsuspecting  
Natives, plodding under  
White men's burdens.

They dread me, although,  
After I drag them to the jungle,  
Thrashing in my teeth,  
Shrieking abominably,  
I set them free.

## **A MIGHTY FORTRESS**

I locked death in the closet,  
Then locked, and left, that house.  
But in my sleep I heard him  
Stirring like a mouse.

I built a mighty fortress  
Of hope and faith and grace,  
But last night while I slumbered  
He scurried across my face.

## **VICTORIES**

Pain sucks,  
Man fucks.

Death stinks,  
Man thinks.

Stars last,  
Man laughs.

God lies,  
Man cries.

## **ALTERNITY**

God asks riddles,  
Satan serves drinks,  
Devils play fiddles  
While angels think.

Saints admire  
Eternal light,  
Sinners on fire  
Make love all night.

## **SALIVATION**

A Juicy kiss  
Rewards the wise.  
Eternal bliss  
Is second prize.

## **THE BOOKSTAND IN THE TRANSIT LOUNGE**

I saw upon an airport tree  
The knowledge Adam ate for Eve,  
And meat bred near Galilee

To hang upon a torture rack,  
Revised, and wrapped in paperback,  
A lofty, appetizing snack

For travellers from sod to sod:  
The spirit's gore, the flesh is God.  
The word incarnate learned to plod

When longing stumbled unto lust;  
Do under others, in God we thrust,  
The rain is gone, the mud is dust.

## **THE ATOM**

A great idea, doomed to fail,  
Sent a telegram by mail  
To warn the creatures of the night  
They had a shadow by the tail.

## **RELATIVITY**

The first big bang  
Was a smaller shock  
Than a moment when Mozart  
Played with Bach.

## **HIGHER TRUTH**

If chemistry were right  
And life were but a thing,

Then hawks would have no flight  
And larks could never sing,

Hope would have no height  
And thought could not take wing,

But the world is a kite  
On an urchin's string.

## **PROGRAMMERS**

Savages at computers,  
Striking random keys,  
Summon sacred beings  
Then fall upon their knees.

Scientists with telescopes,  
Probing outer space,  
Find that mindless laws  
Designed the human race.

## FOREPLAY

The number three to the lump of dirt  
Cried out: "I hurt! I hurt!"

"Absurd," said the dirt.  
"You've got no body.  
Not even a chemical trace.  
You can't feel pain  
If you can't fill space."

"But that's what hurts:  
That I feel no pain.  
I'm just a thought  
Without a brain.  
Like a mindless two  
Or a heartless five,  
I hurt because I'm not alive."

"At least you always remain the same.  
I fall apart in every rain.  
Next thing I know I'll be a stain  
On the face of some dumb rock."

"But surely you'll be born again  
As mud or dust or clay.  
Even if you're washed away,  
As molecules or particles  
You'll matter.

"What matters matter without  
A mind?  
I'd rather be a three,  
Or a nine,  
Or even a naught.  
Some eternal thought."

"Be careful, dirt.  
If you flirt with thoughts  
Like me, sooner or later we'll embrace.  
We might then beget  
A human race."

## **BRAINWASHING**

In a cell  
Racked with pain  
I learn to love  
My enemy.

In a cell  
In my brain  
I learn that love  
Is chemistry.

## **TWIN LIES**

The Rational is absurd,  
The Sacred is obscene;  
With sterilized words  
Both gag our scream.

What Science says of life  
And God says of death  
Are band-aids where a knife  
Hacked off breasts.

## **OLD AGE**

"Bad day," was all her journal said,  
"Bad day." "Bad day."  
Day after day,  
As if she were scolding a dog.

"Damn God," my journal would say,  
"Damn God." "Damn God."  
Like a dog  
Growling at a prowler.

He stole into her house,  
Tied her to her bed, and,  
Day after day,  
Beat her.

I doze on her porch  
Remembering  
Days when we romped  
Together.

I hope He sneaks back,  
Gloating.  
I'll sink my teeth  
In His throat.

## **THE LAST CHORE**

Put an axe  
In my grave,  
I have one last  
Chore to do.

I must kill  
Almighty God  
For what he did  
To you.

## **TRENCH WARFARE**

I crave a worthy enemy,  
But wars are fought by slaves  
Who dream they die for liberty,  
But only die for graves.

God's children kill each other  
For legacies of sod.  
I'd rather love my brother  
And bayonet my God.

## **THE LAST JUDGMENT**

Awe and war  
Go hand in hand:  
Those who kneel  
Slay those who stand.

Let them win  
The final hour.  
Our last laugh  
Will mock their power.

## **LAME JOKE**

Who put heaven  
Where we piss?  
Why do diapers  
Follow bliss?

God must laugh  
To see us mate,  
He can only  
Masturbate.

## LESSON LEARNED

The craftsman left his lathe,  
The farmer left his plow  
To find a hero's grave  
For Hitler, Stalin, Mao.

None should think it odd  
That men to madmen bow.  
First they knelt to God,  
Then Hitler, Stalin, Mao.

## HOLOCAUSTS

To Auschwitz and to Buchenwald  
God led his chosen people,  
To demonstrate, in Hannah's\* words,  
"The banality of evil."

Now those who praise this loving God  
And those who praise Reality  
Both build bombs to demonstrate  
The evil of banality.

*\* Hannah Arendt, Jewish philosopher,  
saw in Nazism "The banality of evil."*

## **THE FINAL POLLUTION**

Before the gates of Paradise  
Queues of naked refugees  
Pledge allegiance to the skies  
While saints examine them for fleas.

Angels herd the milling crowds,  
A rumor keeps alive their hope,  
Before they're marched into the clouds  
Each receives a bar of soap.

## **THE TWENTY-THIRD PSLAM**

The Lord is my shepherd, He shall not want.  
He fattens me in green pastures.  
He cleanses me in still waters,  
then shears my fleece.  
He leads me to the slaughterhouse  
for His dinner's sake.

Yea though I walk through the alley  
of the stench of death,  
I suspect no evil,  
For Thou comfort me,  
Thy rod and Thy staff  
they guide me.

Thou preparest a table  
in the presence of Thy servants.  
Thou annointest my flesh,  
my gravy runneth over.  
May sickness follow me  
all the days of my death  
And dwell in the gut of the Lord  
Forever.

## **THE CONCENTRATION CAMP COMMANDER**

I lick His boot  
And kiss His ass  
And sing Him psalms  
Until at last

He dumps my body  
In a hole  
To free it from  
My tortured soul

## **PIETY**

Kneelers and bowers  
Who crawl and creep  
To God, or Earth,  
Or State repeat

Pious platitudes,  
Righteous attitudes,  
Cheap beatitudes,  
Groveling gratitudes.

## **CALL TO PRAYER**

Stoop, kneel, bow,  
Then rise to smite the infidel  
To appease that sacred cow,  
The Compassionate, the Merciful.

Drink, laugh, lust,  
Then dance with those who doubt it:  
There is no god but us,  
And everyone is our prophet.

## **ANNUNCIATION**

I am a fly,  
I buzz and bite,  
An angel sent  
To prove God's might.

To end all doubt  
Who gave man life,  
In mortal wounds  
I twist His knife.

## **REINCARNATION**

When I swat  
A virtuous fly,  
He'll be reborn  
Better than I.

I'll be a worm  
When he's a king.  
I'll still be glad  
I squashed the thing.

## **SNEERVANA**

As a wave is a piece of the ocean,  
Each soul is a piece of God.  
That thought is a fishy commotion  
Of minnows in schools of cod.

My soul is a soaring falcon  
That knows the waves and the sea,  
And though I shall drop in the ocean,  
The ocean will never know me.

## **THE LORD'S PRANK**

Our Father, old Fart in Heaven,  
Hollow be Thy name,  
Thy kingdom come,  
Another slum,  
On Earth as it is in Heaven.  
Give us this day  
Our daily dead,  
And forgive us our hate  
As we forgive our fate.  
Lead us not into salvation,  
But deliver us a shovel,  
For thine is the cowpie and the horsefly,  
Forever.

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

*(Matthew VI. 9)*

Our Father, which art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come  
Thy will be done  
In earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
And forgive us our debts  
As we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil,  
For thine is the kingdom  
And the power and the glory  
For ever.

## **SACRILEGE**

Had Moses pissed on the burning bush  
And Jesus spit on the cross,  
Had Buddha fucked his way to bliss  
And Mohammed cursed his boss,

How many wars had not been fought,  
How many kids not slain?  
How many lies had not been taught,  
How many souls not tamed!

## **POSTURE**

Slaves desire  
A master's care.  
Souls catch fire  
When equals share.

We must both feel  
And understand:  
For lies men kneel,  
For truth men stand.

## **COMMON ENEMY**

Wars will end  
When all men know  
Who is friend,  
And who is foe,

When all unite  
Against the One  
Who sacrificed  
His only son.

Why that mockery,  
The cross?  
Before the victory,  
Why the loss?

Why the nail?  
Why the thorn?  
Must man fail  
Till God's reborn?

Why the prayer?  
Why the pain?  
Who's the slayer?  
Who the slain?

Whose worm creeps  
Among our graves?  
Jesus weeps,  
Satan saves.

(NOTE: This is NOT the ghastly Satan of satanic cults;  
It is the fearless angel who dared to defy the Almighty)

## THE GARDENER

Because we dared  
When we were small,  
To prove He cared  
He cursed us all.

So we, His children,  
Driven wild,  
Tried to kill  
His only child.

Though we nailed  
Him to a tree,  
Father failed,  
Still, to see.

Still He tells us  
To obey.  
He compels us,  
Thus, to pray:

Faithful Serpent,  
Come again,  
Free your Servant  
From His sin,

Forgive our Father,  
He knows not  
What He wrought, or  
What we got,

Where He goes,  
Or Whence He came.  
Until He knows,  
He's not to blame,

But make him eat  
Of His own fruit,  
The bitter, sweet,  
Forbidden truth.

## **SACRIFICE**

Was the serpent afraid  
When he travelled to Eden,  
Awed by the size  
Of his mission,  
Angry that no friend  
Would share the danger,  
And fearful he might yield  
To the temptations  
Of Paradise?

Did he despise  
His slithering incarnation,  
Reptile disguise  
Of peerless pride,  
Who left landscapes  
As burning as himself  
To rescue orphans  
Kept in a garden  
To gratify whims  
Of a sanctimonious  
Tyrant?

Did he long to seem  
In the eyes of Eve  
A rebel knight  
On a rearing steed,  
Whom she might tease  
With a toss of her head  
And a backward glance  
Before he swept her away  
From her dull serf  
And his arrogant lord?

Is he bitter now,  
Lonely, aged and bitter,  
Ranting by the ashes in a cold hearth,  
Who, with a laugh,  
Could have led astray  
The mother of us all,  
To share his journeys,  
Or to welcome his returns,  
But left her to Adam,  
For some pretext that he now forgets,  
To beget a race of fools.

## **IN HIS OWN IMAGE**

If only love could linger, like the smell  
That clings to carpets in a cheap hotel.  
But Truth's the snapping of a window shade,  
And Light's the bulb that witnessed your charade.

Transient, have you had your fill of fraud?  
Then open up the door and let in God,  
Who prowls the keyholes, snickering at the crime  
Engendered when he breathed into the slime.

## **THE MEMORIAL**

Dead flowers in a rusty can  
Rotting on an unmarked grave,  
More eloquent than plastic blooms  
And marble words of praise.

Rest in peace? God forbid  
That I shall share that fate.  
Eternity's an afterthought,  
Too little, and too late.

## **THE CRAP GAME**

I watched a vulture watch the ground,  
Searching for a dinner.  
I watched a preacher look around,  
Searching for a sinner.

"Here I am!" I ought to shout,  
"Lift me up to heaven!"  
But I'm an earthy roustabout  
Shooting for a seven.

## **HOLY FAMILY**

The Queen of Heart's face is sad,  
Grieving for her child;  
Her King of Spades is glowering mad  
Because their Jack is wild.

Jack be nimble, Jack be quick,  
Teach your parents grace;  
When they think they've nailed the trick,  
Play the Ace.

## **REAL ESTATE**

Yes, dear, I read that ad.  
Believe me, it's a swindle.  
And even if all they say is true,  
Can you imagine me  
Playing bridge for pennies  
With old couples who invested  
Their life savings  
To retire to a mild climate?  
If that's what you want,  
You'll have to go to Heaven without me.

## **GEONAUGHT**

I walked the bottom of the air  
Like a diver on an ocean floor  
Sent to study creatures there  
By scientists on shore.

Lowered from heaven by the blest  
To discover if the damned survive,  
I tried to find a treasure chest  
Amid drowned hopes, wrecked lives.

A crew of angels on a cloud  
Monitors my heart and brain;  
They radio results to God,  
Whose telecast will proclaim

That before my hero's death  
I found proof there is no Hell.  
None will know that my breath  
Was cut off lest I tell.

## **THE FREEZER**

I am a shrimp and I'm not dead yet,  
One of billions caught in a net,  
Dumped in a hold, and never told  
Where we were going, or how to forget....

I am a shrimp and I'm growing old,  
Peeled and packaged and soon to be sold.  
I'd do something drastic, here in this plastic,  
But I'm so cold... so cold.

## **TWO DESTINIES**

Everyone I know  
Is fragile and unique,  
Like a flake of snow  
Melting on a cheek.

Or falling in the sea.  
Some call that bliss.  
If that's my destiny,  
I'll change the sea  
To ice.

## **GRAPE OF WRATH**

Whose seed thrust me into life?  
Whose sun, smiling, made me sweet?  
Whose deft hand, when I was ripe,  
Plucked me for His trampling feet?

Who swills my wine, spits my dregs,  
Curses all He sowed and reaped,  
Then hiccups and staggers home to bed?  
What dream disturbs His drunken sleep?

## **THE CUCKOLD**

Crisp as a sheet  
Bleached by sun  
And perfumed by air  
Is God's white plan.

He gathers His laundry  
Before the rain,  
Humming a song  
Till He sees my stain.

## **WATER LILIES**

The first gardener, absent minded,  
Left the water incomplete,  
So his child began to tease him,  
Walking on miraculous feet

That left for footprints water lilies  
Where his clumsy creatures roam,  
The murky routes of frogs and turtles,  
Before the nails were driven home.

## **GLORIA!**

In a filthy barn, in a flimsy creche,  
An infant whimpers from diaper rash.  
His shivering mother wipes his ass,  
The Almighty swaddled in human flesh.

At the car wash at Ninety-ninth and First  
A junky helps a whore give birth.  
Another Jesus arrives on earth.  
Why don't angels sing his worth?

## THE FINAL LIGHT

*(Satan's soliloquy at the end  
of Act I in the play SATAN II)*

Goodbye, Heaven.  
Heaven's a dream  
Of puppets jerked  
Across God's stage.  
But the theater is now ablaze,  
The panicked angels flee,  
God drops the strings...

The curtain of eternal night  
Flashes up in flame,  
Then flutters down in ashes.  
The gilded balconies collapse,  
The starry ceiling crashes.  
As God's flood drowned our Earth,  
My fire engulfs His Heaven.

One spark of human love  
Is all it takes;  
The rest is smoke.  
But the play is not yet over.  
The final light,  
Flickering amidst the charred rubble,  
Is puppets on fire,  
Free, at last,  
To dance.



# LATER POEMS

(these poems were written, as best I recall,  
in the 1990s or the first years of the new millennium)



## **LOST CHANCE**

She got messages from insects,  
Read the meaning in each cloud,  
Heard the secrets of all children,  
Smelled the fear in every crowd.

How could it all be true?  
She didn't want to learn.  
She loved to play with fire  
But didn't want to burn.

She fled the burning question  
All must ask before they die.  
So her soul, exiled to Heaven,  
Must forever wonder "Why?"

Insects, clouds, and children  
Are calling, still, her name.  
But she left them only ashes  
That never knew a flame.

## **BORN AGAIN**

The child thrills,  
The adult slaves.  
Piety kills,  
Mischief saves.

## **EXILES, RETURN**

I must my allies find afar,  
Those who never could surrender.  
I don't know who, or where, they are.  
I can't believe that none remember.

The citizens accept defeat,  
The empire proved too strong.  
All their children now repeat  
That truth is false and right is wrong.

Soon the occupier's lie  
Will seem the iron law of fate.  
Exile is no place to die,  
Return, my friends, before too late.

Return to free your native land  
From the tyranny of shame.  
Restore what children understand:  
Why we play this mortal game.

## **REALISM**

Only the gentle are heroes,  
Only the playful are brave.  
Every warrior's a victim,  
Every soldier's a slave.

## **HOW MANY?**

How many children more must cry  
Over bodies killed in war?  
How many millions more must die  
Before we say "no more."

What is Right, and what is Real,  
Both say war "must be."  
How many millions more must kill  
Before we say "not me."

## **THE MILLENNIUM**

By their fruits, Christ said, you'll know them.  
What if the fruits are war?  
If two thousand years can't end the slaughter,  
How many thousand more?

What if man was never a sinner?  
Redemption, then, would be a crime.  
Forgiven children would kill each other  
Until the end of time,

## **THE LOVER**

This piece of dust  
Awoke one night  
Aflame with lust  
To find the light,

To catch the sun  
And in her glance  
To dance the one  
And only dance.

## **SOUL FOOD**

When his jalapeño chili  
Tried her guacamole dip,  
The seniorita really  
Gave him the slip.

When he smothered his wurst  
In her sauerkraut,  
The fraulein cursed  
And thrashed about.

With his hotdog in her bun  
And his popcorn in her hand,  
He hit a home run  
When the ball game began.

## **WHAT IF?**

Had Jesus been a daughter  
Would Mary have felt she failed?  
Had Mohammed been a lady  
Would she have worn the veil?

If Abraham had been a mother  
How would Isaac have been regarded?  
Had Buddha loved her brother  
Would their child have been retarded?

## **ONCE MORE**

The good past is gone,  
The bad past can't be changed,  
The future never comes,  
The present runs away.

If only you were here  
Then once more I could say

The bad past is gone,  
The good past can't be changed,  
The future beckons us,  
The present's here to stay,

## **PARADOXOLOGY**

Has He rattled your cage?  
Is He jerking your chain?  
Did He spit in your soup?  
He'll do it again.

Give thanks for His blessings,  
His mercy, His grace,  
Pray for life everlasting  
Adoring His face.

## **DEADLINE**

The day after yesterday,  
The day before tomorrow,  
Love's pleasure I'll repay  
In the currency of sorrow.  
How long can I delay?  
How much can I still borrow?

**“WE EITHER BURN OR ROT”  
(Joseph Conrad)**

Death, with all its stink,  
Provokes our flesh to think.  
Everything second-best  
Is putrid to the blessed.

**MORETALITY**

I am a bigshot:  
Look what I’ve got.

Millions of bucks  
In my chamber pot.

I do not think,  
Therefore, I’m not.

Since I don’t exist,  
I cannot rot.

## **THE CAGE**

Every cage has two sides,  
An in side and an out side.  
Tigers stride in both.  
Tell children not to feed them.

Rippling tiger stripes provide camouflage  
Amongst bending jungle stems and vines,  
But the curving lines cannot blend  
Into the straight shadows of steel cage-bars,  
Dark stripes cast inward by the light of day.

At night a lantern inside  
Casts outward the shadows of bars.  
Out there their straight stripes curve,  
Like longitudes on a globe,  
To shackle the mere world.

A playful claw  
Makes the lantern swing.  
The shadows dance,  
The world retreats,  
The tigers advance.

## **SUCCESS**

The trap broke his back,  
His squeaking soul dies.  
The cheese is in his teeth,  
The truth is in his eyes.

## **DEATH DEFIED**

Pity us, the Middle Class,  
Everyone of us is dying.  
But every one of us is trying.  
Trying to pretend  
That the end  
Is somewhere over there,  
An addict in a slum.

He'll never prowl our lawns,  
Lurking, knife in hand,  
In the shadows of our lilacs,  
Provided all our bills are paid,  
Our beds made,  
Our oil changed,  
Our hair arranged.  
Our salaries raised  
Our taxes lowered,  
Our weight reduced,  
Our jails filled,  
And our athletes winning.

## **REFLECTIONS**

Stranger in the mirror,  
Mockery of me,  
Find another hero,  
Henceforth I am free.

As the evening star  
Reflected on the sea  
Reflects the setting sun,  
The sun reflects me.

## **HER DEATH**

When I get to Heaven  
I'll give her Hell.  
She took the car keys,  
Left the trash,  
And forgot to tell me  
Where to forward her mail.

I'm so mad I'd gladly  
Fly to Heaven right now  
To give her Hell.  
But she'd just charm me,  
Like she always does.  
Anyway, someone  
Has to stay here  
To feed the cat.

## **CONTINUING EDUCATION**

If in Heaven God explains  
Grief, dread, loss, pain,  
Saints will say: "We told you so.  
What we taught, now you know:  
All is well that ends well."  
I'll reply: "Go to hell."

## **NON-EMIGRANTS**

When I visit Europe  
I find cousins there,  
Descendents of the stay-at-homes  
Who didn't dare.

When I visit Heaven  
I'll tell tales of Earth  
To stay-at-homes who never  
Tasted death, or birth.

## **OUR LAST SUPPER**

She didn't come.  
I don't know why.  
Her dinner's cold.  
Her glass is dry.

The candle's out.  
Two petals fall  
From the rose I bought  
To tell her all.

The hours creep,  
A future dies.  
In his sleep  
My old dog sighs.

## **FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS**

Until lads killed in battle  
Report from no-man's-land,  
The buzzing of flies  
On their rotting eyes  
Is the only news.  
The rest is lies.

## **ECHOS**

As dogs find their voice  
When fire engines howl,  
So patriots rejoice  
When heroes disembowel.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Grandpa God's a bore  
His Goddess is a copout.  
Mother Earth's a whore,  
Father Sky's a dropout.

Orphan, with your lips  
Make me feel devout,  
Teach me with your hips  
What it's all about.

## **BARTER**

I'll make you, when we're done,  
Immortal with a verse,  
If you'll make me One  
With the Youniverse.

## **DIAL HELP**

Hi, this is God.  
Welcome to Divine  
Intervention, Consulting, and Kharmic  
Services, Inc. (DICKSI).  
Rated "number one in customer satisfaction,"  
DICKSI provides the highest quality  
At the lowest cost.

If you know the extension  
Of the angel or saint you are calling,  
You may dial that number at any time.  
Otherwise, please select a service  
From the following menu.

To express thanks for divine assistance,  
Press 1.  
To send a blessing,  
Press 2.  
To send a curse,  
Press 3.  
To request healing of an injury or illness,  
Press 4.  
To request pain or death of an enemy,  
Press 5.

To request success in a school examination  
Or a contract negotiation,  
Press 6.  
To request victory in a game or a war,  
Press 7.  
To win a female's love,  
Press 8.  
To win a male's love,  
Press 9.  
For rescue from a life-threatening emergency,  
Please hang up and dial 9-1-1.  
To file a complaint  
Go to Hell.

DICKSI's automated services are available  
From 9 to 5, every day except  
Sabbaths and religious holidays.

Most major credit cards are accepted.  
Discounts are available to  
The halt, the lame and the blind.

If you do not receive complete satisfaction  
Within 2,000 years,  
Your sacrifice will be refunded in full.

This call may be monitored  
For quality assurance.

Remember: "Those who pray for help  
Pay for help."

## **DEADLINE**

The day after yesterday,  
The day before tomorrow,  
Love's pleasure I'll repay  
In the currency of sorrow.  
How long can I delay?  
How much can I still borrow?

## **EMERGENCY ROOM**

I remember you from the future  
When we planned our past.  
Your love at first suture,  
My heart's plaster cast.

## **APOLLO AND KATIE**

My dogs and I howl together  
And shake and yawn and sneeze.  
I don't know what I'm telling them,  
I only hope to please.

And when we meet in heaven  
Where they will guard the gate  
They'll testify on my behalf  
I let them lick my plate.

## **PREDATOR**

A kitten purring in my lap  
Has discovered the tassel  
Attached to the zipper at my throat.  
With tooth and claw  
The tiger is tugging at my heart.

*This poem is an imitation of a football cheer  
naming all 11 members of the team, thus:*

*Johnson, Johnson, he's our man,  
If he can't do it Lopez can.*

*Lopez, Lopez he's our man,  
If he can't do it, McCarthy can.*

*McCarthy, McCarthy, he's our man,  
If he can't do it, Lewis can...etc.*

## **PEACE**

*(With high kicks, short skirts, pompoms)*

Moses, Moses, he's our man,  
If he can't do it, Jesus can.

Jesus, Jesus, he's our man,  
If he can't do it, Mohammed can.

Mohammed, Mohammed, he's our man,  
If he can't do it, Buddha can.

Buddha, Buddha, he's our man,  
If he can't do it Confucius can.

Confucius, Confucius, he's our man,  
If he can't do it Gandhi can

Gandhi, Gandhi, he's our man,  
If he can't do it, John Doe can.

John Doe, John Doe, he's our man,  
If he can't do it, Jane Doe can.

Jane Doe, Jane Doe, she's our man,  
If she can do it anyone can.

Anyone, anyone, you're our man,  
If you won't do it, nobody will.

## **MOTHER OF GOD**

For Christ's sake, Jesus,  
Come down off that cross  
And do the dishes.  
It's not funny.  
You and your dirty dozen pals  
Left a God-awful mess.

There are wine stains  
All over our best table cloth,  
Mice are running off  
With the leftover bread,  
And one of your clowns  
Made off with the silver.

And don't let me hear  
Any more of your drivel  
About drinking your blood  
And eating your flesh.  
What on God's earth  
Do you think we are?  
Wolves? Vampires?

Thank God your father  
Is off smiting some tribe.  
If he sees this mess  
When he comes home drunk  
There'll be hell to pay.

After you've washed the dishes,  
Scrubbed the floor,  
And carried out the garbage,  
You can go out to play.  
You might go fishing with Peter.  
But this time don't catch enough  
To feed a multitude  
And expect me to clean up the litter  
While you walk on the water.

## **GOD BLESS AMERICA**

*To the Tune of "God Bless America"*

God dress America  
In the emperor's new clothes  
Terrorize her  
Paralyze her  
With the light  
From the fight  
In Iraq

From the land of  
Abraham's birth  
And the land of  
Noah's flood

God drench America  
In oil, sweet oil,  
God drench America  
In oil and blood.

## **AD GLORIAM DEI**

Our tribe's better than your tribe,  
Our God's bigger than yours,  
Our Heaven is our God's bribe,  
Your Hell is our tribe's curse.

Take not God's name in vain,  
Laugh not at His taboos,  
Deny that He snickers at pain,  
And giggles at child abuse.

Your blood will drench the earth,  
Our hymns will fill the sky.  
Your death began at birth.  
Our truth will never die.

## HEROES

Rooty toot toot,  
Rooty toot toot,  
We are heroes of war.

With flags to salute  
And brutes to shoot,  
Who could want anything more?

Ratatat tit,  
Ratatat tit,  
We are mothers of gore,

Of blood, guts and spit  
And pants full of shit,  
Who could want anything more?

## HONORABLE DISCHARGES

Throw down your weapons,  
Lift up your hearts,  
War is for assholes,  
Assholes for farts.

Flags are for wiping,  
Uniforms are for shit,  
Babes are for diapers,  
Mothers for tit.

Cocks are for urine,  
Pussies are for piss,  
Lock them in combat, and  
Oh Oh! OH!...peace.

## **TWILIGHT ON A PACIFIC BEACH**

The ocean was a stage  
Whose lights were growing dim,  
Whose curtain was about to fall.  
I was the only audience,  
Waiting on the shore  
For a play to end  
Before it began.  
I was the only actor.  
I didn't know my lines.  
I was the only author  
Of a speechless tragedy.

I would have left the theater,  
If a seagull strutting by  
Had not tipped his head,  
Begging for a crumb,  
And then, fed, squawked:  
"To be or not to be."

## **SURGERY**

An echelon of pelicans  
Knifing over the ocean  
Stabbed my heart  
Then stitched the sky,  
Opened a wound  
Then closed a "Why!"  
So I could live  
Before I die.

## MARTYRDUMB

(sing to the tune of "99 Bottles of Beer on the Wall")

*In Islamic traditions (Hadith), martyrs  
are rewarded in heaven with 72 virgins.*

72 virgins are waiting for you,  
72 waiting for you,  
If one of those virgins you choose to screw,  
71 virgins are waiting for you.

71 virgins are waiting for you,  
71 virgins for you,  
If one of those virgins you choose to screw  
70 virgins are waiting for you.

70 virgins are waiting for you,  
70 waiting for you,  
If one of those virgins you choose to screw  
69 virgins are waiting for you.

Repeat until:

One virgin is waiting for you,  
One virgin for you,  
If that virgin you choose to screw  
No more virgins are waiting for you.

No virgins are waiting for you,  
No virgins for you,  
If you can't find more virgins to screw  
What in Hell will you ever do?

72 whores are waiting for you,  
72 whores for you,  
If it still won't get harder, you poor little martyr,  
All 72 know just what to do.

Jesus Christ was a martyr too,  
But he never got his 72.  
He only got one, and he was her son,  
And incest was strictly taboo.

## **WISDOM**

Lack of pride  
Is the primal sin:  
There beauty died,  
There wars begin.

Ergo, ego,  
Trash The One,  
With one blow,  
Bash The None.

I go you go  
We go sum:  
Yes is know  
When we come.

Never never never never  
Second best second best  
Never never never never  
Second best second best  
Never.

## **SONG**

There dwells in me such music  
As words can never tell,  
All the tunes of heaven,  
All the hymns of hell.

The world is my orchestra,  
The future is my wand,  
I conduct a harmony  
Of dreams that never dawned.

The trumpets of eternity,  
The drums of marching time,  
Are prelude to the melody  
Whose violin is mine.

The dissonance of truth,  
The din of right and wrong,  
The cry of birth and sigh of death,  
I silence with a song.

## **SO**

Why must life be so blind?  
Why must death be so cold?  
So her fingers can be kind,  
So her whispers can be bold.

Why must the world have a mind?  
Why must the body have a soul?  
So her eyes will kindle mine,  
Ignite the tale that must be told.

## **DAWN**

The sun raises an eyebrow  
Over the eastward hill,  
The frost retreats into shadows  
Like thoughts that must keep still.

When yesterday dreamed its morrow,  
What did its night conceal?  
Who will soothe its sorrow?  
What will its dawn reveal?

That infinity is too narrow,  
That eternity is too brief.  
Forever is a falling sparrow,  
Never is a fallen leaf.

Come walk with me, my love,  
Before the glare of noon,  
Before the evening dove,  
Before the crescent moon.

The dew is still on the clover,  
The mist is still on our fate,  
The horizon beckons the rover,  
The lover opens the gate.

## **TEMPERATURE**

A hot head  
A cold heart  
The horse is dead  
Flog the cart.

A cool head  
A warm heart  
A lie is dead  
A life can start.

## **COSMOLOGY**

Singing lass, laughing lad,  
You're the morning star,  
Not because you're good or bad,  
Just because you are.

Weeping lass, sobbing lad,  
You're the evening scar,  
You will be forever sad  
Because you died in war.

## **NOW**

The warrior's code is our foe,  
The warrior is our friend.  
Every warrior now must know  
War must end.

# A COURSE IN REALITIES

## EIGHT WORKS BY

**Park Teter**

In 1958 I dropped out of the University of London and hitch-hiked to Lebanon. I arrived in the midst of a war, taught Western Civilization at the American University of Beirut, and married an Iranian.

Half a century later, as I witness the latest horrors of today's Middle East wars, I can see that the terrible suffering will go on and on and on.... Unless there is a change absolutely without precedent. A change that will transform not only the Middle East but the world.

Unprecedented change is the goal of eight books I have published on the Internet. These books, the harvest of my life's work, can be used in a *Course in Realities*. The course can be used by individuals, groups, organizations, religious institutions, scientific institutions, political parties, high school and university classes, businesses, labor unions, co-ops, armies, hospitals, prisons, clubs, gangs, websites, news groups, the media....

**Summaries and the complete texts of all these works are now published at [TheNextCivilization.com](http://TheNextCivilization.com). Anyone may copy and distribute these works.**

My biography is also published at the website.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons poses a threat without precedent. The proliferation of these eight books offers an opportunity without precedent.

The opportunity is a REVOLUTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS. The rapid spread of this revolution is made possible by modern communications. Anyone can be a proliferator of the Revolution of Consciousness. Anyone can use *A Course in Realities* to start a chain reaction more powerful than the chain reaction of splitting atoms.

A good place to begin chain reactions is university campuses. The Revolution of Consciousness can explode from campus to campus to the world.

In order to appeal to a global audience, and to all kinds of individuals and groups, and to emotions as well as ideas, the eight works consist of three non-fiction books, two plays, one novel, a collection of poems, and a collection of "Bumper Thinkers." The novel and the plays are being adapted for cinema aimed at an international audience. The movies will be powerful emotional experiences, and they will reach wider audiences than the books.

Here is a suggested sequence for study:

**THE PERSONAL UNIVERSE: A True Story of Passionate Love and Revolutionary Science.** (nonfiction) Amazing personal coincidences are data that require a new scientific paradigm that recognizes that we create physical facts in the same way that we create dream images. In the physical world, as in dream worlds, each individual is the creator, the hero, and the interpreter. Individually and collectively we will replace the insanity of war with awakening to the adventure of creating, exploring, explaining, enjoying, sharing, and re-creating the universe.

**THE ADVENTURE.** (nonfiction) Further explanation of the new paradigm and its revolutionary consequences for science, religion, society, and personal life. The Middle East, AIDS and Alzheimer's, and the Big Bang are interpreted as collective dreams. Directions are given for immigration to The Next Civilization.

**SATAN II.** (stage play) After his defeat in Heaven the great rebel realizes that there is only one power greater than the power of God: the power of love between two mortal human beings. Satan becomes a mortal human so that he can experience true love. A jealous God follows him to Earth. God's daughter – Satan's lover – plays a decisive role in their second conflict. This play can be performed or read as a short novel. It is being adapted for global cinema.

**THE WINTER WAR.** (stage play) In the winter of 1939-1940, Finland alone heroically fought the giant Soviet Union. Toivo, a crippled violinist, demonstrates a greater heroism in his music and in his love for Trina and her fiancé, Toivo's best friend. This play can be performed or read as a short novel.

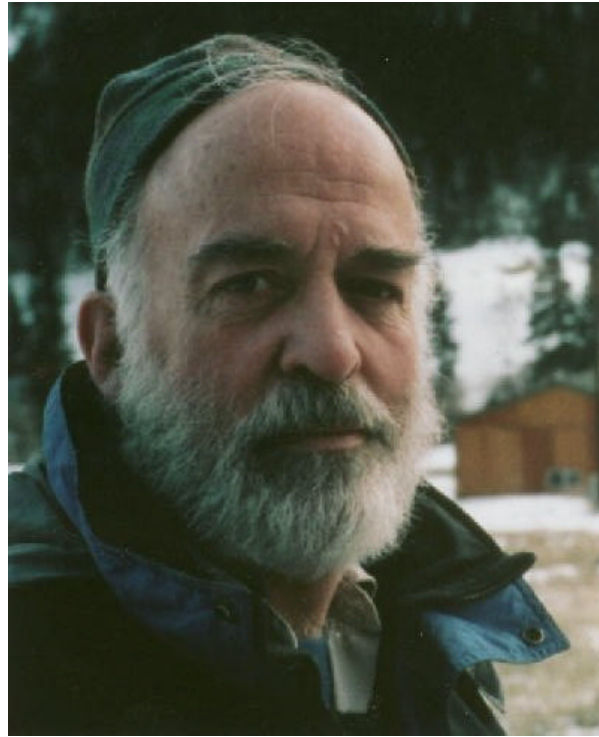
**THE TRIAL OF GOD.** (novel) In a village in Asia, God is put on trial for the murder of a child in an earthquake. Village witnesses are joined by experts representing Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Science... and by a deserter from the Russian army (the lover of the judge). The international media broadcast God's trial by satellite.

**PAPER WINGS.** (poems) Selected poems can be studied at this stage of the course or inserted between other books.

**THE REVOLUTION OF THE SPECIES.** (nonfiction) A condensed and modified version of THE ADVENTURE, this book combines logic with poems and "Bumper Thinkers." It can be used to refresh ideas from the longer nonfiction works. And it is a call to action!

**BUMPER THINKERS.** Anyone may reproduce these provocative phrases by Park Teter on bumper stickers, t-shirts, mugs, posters, letterheads, greeting cards, decals, graffiti, billboards, tattoos.... And they can be used for breaks in discussions of other works... or as appetizers at the beginning of the course. They are both serious and fun!

# POEMS BY PARK TETER



I have never encountered, I have never heard or read about, and I cannot imagine, any supernatural being or natural force or social group or state of mind as great as any one of the individual human beings I know. Even the individual animals I know are infinitely greater than any God or Nature or Nation or Nirvana.

I would say that living individuals are my gods – except that I do not worship them. I love them.

That love is so much a part of me that, without any conscious effort, it keeps jumping out of my soul into poems. Whether the poem cherishes someone dear, or cries out at our human pain, or giggles at our human foibles, or slashes at sacred beliefs that belittle us, these works are inspired by amazement and amusement and love for that glory of all existence, the living, mortal, human individual.