

LOTUS MOUNTAIN



Poems and Illustrations

2010 – 2020

Rod Hemsell

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Dear Reader:

While assembling this “next” collection of poems, written during the past ten years of my life (2010-2020), it was gratifying for me to realize that there has been a development in both the forms and the meanings expressed in these poems. Some of the forms and experiences that were aspired to or glimpsed in the earlier poems and under other circumstances, have actually been grasped, however tentatively, and perhaps even adequately transmitted through these later efforts. Of course it is still “me” and my experience, my language, my energies; and everything I experience is conditioned by my particular range of exposures, my limitations, my aspirations, my receptivity or lack, and so on. But, as I have said before, these poems are the product of an effort to allow nature and consciousness to come into resonance and to express the product of their interaction through an inspired flow of words, as far as it is possible. As we have been taught by the Master, the less we impose our personal mental predispositions on the process the better the product will be. This is a method that I have practiced for 50 years, and at least I can say that I have kept the faith, and this modest product is the outcome. It is also the product of the natural environments in which I have found myself and which have often inspired me; the qualities of nature seem to sometimes reveal themselves to me in ways that stimulate a flow of words that captures and embodies her beauty and power, her wickedness and weakness, her infinity of creativity and meaning that I find irresistible. For that I am deeply grateful, and I consider it a blessing of the Mother of all forms and meanings who has enriched my life from time to time with a particle of her Infinite Grace.

The complete record of this effort, as far as I have been able to assemble and present it, is now published in three volumes: *Devotion and Stillness (1968-2010)*, and *Lotus Mountain (2010-2020)*, along with the previously published *Wings of the Sea (2016-2017)*.

Rod

February 2020

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RECAPITULATIONS

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The Paper Cosmonauts

Why don't they break out of their bounds
And stretch toward the future?
These bureaucrats in their crash helmets
Strapped into frames of flimsy plastic furniture,
What would they stand to lose or we to gain
If they sacrificed everything they have
To youth, discovery and the golden rain?
Instead they calculate and plan,
Make cardboard rules and boundaries in the sand
To prevent every possible catastrophe,
Guard us from every type of sin,
Predispose our destiny by the doctrinaire spin.
They absorb our energy like cosmic leeches
Then leave us dry on their barren authoritarian beaches.

Jai Hind

What could not be revealed by mosquito coil, incense, fan
crowds of men standing idly about in villages,
and the loud blare of bus horns, heedless of anything human ?

What more could be invoked by the loudspeaker cacophony
mixing the shrill shehnai music of temples, bells and gongs
with frivolous cinema songs, in oblivious unholy symphony ?

What other signs need we find than bullock carts, tea shops
motor bikes, rickshaws spouting black fumes, and the happy
hordes of uniformed girls on their way to schools, striving to be tops

To remind us of the centuries before and those to come after
in the land where Lakshmi divine pours the soma wine
to settle the dust of roads and quench the thirst of souls who suffer ?

Will the men of India while away their time, then,
while the innocent girls have their unnumbered babies, and the nation's
resources reach their end, and will the mighty Indus someday begin again ?

Dancers in the city

The dancer is a goddess
 treading falsehoods down
delicately stripping their garments away
 then stomping them into the ground

This ground whose soil is truly blessed
 by solid pillars of light
offering to the skies and planes of God
 symbolic truth and love and skill and might

And yet the earth-born goddess
 though bred upon this soil
does not belong here, and with her daughters
 in her train, is condemned to slavery and toil

Dancers among these chosen and damned
 offering them truth and joy and love
who brandish high their flags of faith
 in those who dwell forever above

Summoning some to be like themselves
and put on bodies of glory
ascending beyond the earth-born race
in a communion of hypocrisy holy

Like asters blooming in a desert field
then bursting suddenly into flame
and shattering under the dancers' feet
like hollow shells, their faces dark with shame.

How can they not perish in this blaze
who build the city of falsehood with gold
denying these devas their rightful home
and embracing the stuated order of old?

For this is not the 'city of god '
and this no mystical dance
but life played out on reality's stage
where all may see its masks of sad pretense.

Our divine contradiction

What can we do to uplift mankind,
What on earth can be done?
Justice and compassion have been tried
But neither has worked, and all have died.
We have witnessed genocides, we have won wars,
And we have lost our ability to hope.
Now we reflect on the levels of love,
We explore our capacity to feel and to think.
We sit in seminars and process our fears,
We indulge our dreams with sex and dope
And stretch ourselves to achieve, beyond
All reasonable limits; we rise above our kind
And in the end we denigrate the enemy and the friend.
Victorious over all we find ourselves alone.

From a plane of peace above the mind
A transparent gaze can pierce the dense fog
Below and then reactive perception becomes
Compassionate flow; we see the one in all,
We understand difference, we glorify complexity;
Each and every part is as amazing as the whole;
And in the stillness of our burnished gold reflection
We condone contradiction as a necessary condition
For the reduction by negation that dissolves
Every difference, and transforms in one blazing fire
The discords that arise at each instant of time
Into energies sublime that unite the infinite
Mind, life, body of form and name in waves
Of power and light, the spiritual beauty of the Same.

SATSANGA

Calling Forth the Word

1st voice:

At age 65 I was remembering words that Allen wrote:

“I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness,
 starving hysterical naked, dragging themselves through the negro streets
 at dawn looking for an angry fix,
 Angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient
 heavenly connection to the starry dynamo
 in the machinery of night...” (Allen Ginsburg, *Howl*, 1955)

And I thought:

I have seen the best minds of my generation
 Growing steadily toward the light of a heavenly fire
 Reaching inwardly, calling silently, lifting themselves powerfully,
 Like plants with leaves athirst,
 Burning toward the equal blaze of a honey-gold sun
 That draws them upward helplessly from the desert soil of life
 And bathes them in the vivifying streams of a luminous love.

The best minds of his generation
 Were lost in the last waves of a dying world
 Where he howled until he finally found Nirvana
 And “sat up smoking in the supernatural darkness”
 Of cold Himalayan nights, freed from the sordid noise
 Of cities, and illumined by his own inner fire.

You too have seen the best minds of two generations –
 His and ours – and you have experienced
 Their twin emanations:

2nd voice:

Some of those minds crossed the globe
 And the frontiers of inner space
 To find the source of earth's unease
 And her sudden yearning for peace,
 Love, freedom from the shackles of history,
 That a new world may be born.
 Those were her sons and daughters,
 Called to her mother's bosom
 By the timeless memory of an ancient pact.

3rd voice:

Mahalakshmi namostute
 Nayana parame vachi
 Sarvan ye asmin jagati
 Ichchanti tvam dive dive

Goddess of love and light
 Illumine us with the Word supreme
 Make perfect everything in this world
 Day by day, with your Call!

4th voice:

And the best minds of a new generation
 Stepping yet slowly onto the stage
 Of discovery and exploration –

Through the brilliant light
 And through the terrible dark –
 To find the divine...

Fearless, guiltless and young
 Living in glowing silence,
 Sweet and ferocious,

To heal with their words
They choose to take their time,
They hide their light

Waiting for the listener to awake,
To present their masterpieces of thought
That can unravel the years and years of confusion,

Full of light, shining sources of love.

5th voice:

Meeting minds, bodies, hearts, spirits
Best and worst, flowing, whirling
Endlessly swirling, blurred into
One vast galactic movement into infinity,
Slow motion slowing to stillness
Still, vibrating, pulsating,
Power of silence.
Satsanga.

Free yourself to be a tool,
A better tool of the divine.

6th voice:

Can we name them? Can we count them?
Can we understand their thought?
This mind is not like that.
It isn't a form of art to compare,
To like, to detest;
It isn't a personal creation.
It doesn't belong to a person.
This mind is different.

The best minds of this generation
Aren't made of the thoughts
Or the ideas of a person alone;
They are of all, they are a mixture, a group
A reflection, made of all the thoughts,
The souls, the visions, all the emotions
They share;
The best minds of this new generation,
The best thoughts,
We do not yet know.

7th voice:

When will the baby come?
The child of the future?
The light you are...

Will you be heard?

(composed with friends at a birthday party, 2009)

Child of the Dawn

I saw a soul descend
in clouds of golden fire;

It lodged within a shining silvery sphere,
like a seed of crystal light,

To fill the new born form with life
and pour its peaceful radiance on the world.

(Leif's birthday, 2011)



(moon musing by angele mason, 8/2011)

To angele mason

perfect transmissions

divine blessings

the meeting of India and Greece

in the forest of divine visions

where word is pure revelation

this is the plane above mind

where gods and goddesses

of divine inspiration dwell

but we must travel through lifetimes

of hell to find, and we discover the temple of time,

the history of the future unfolds,

our destination and road home are known

Ideas

The idea of hope
is not Zen

The idea of Zen
is not to move about seeking

The idea of freedom
is to be without restraints or limits

The idea of justice
is not to make laws

So that some can assert
superiority over others

The idea of society
is not something easy to achieve

Like the idea of a universe
it implies our need to be part of a whole

But the idea of a whole
does not exist anywhere on earth

The idea of a just society
and of freedom from restraints

The idea of being part of a whole
are objects of the seeking soul

Tinged with the aura of hope
that it attaches to its favored ideas

In a world that exists apart
like a mirror of what is not.

The idea of truth
is like a thousand radiant suns

Bringing to birth the power to be.
The idea of hope is not Zen.

Grihastha (The Music of Life)

1

Worlds of truth, beauty, power, and delight
Are there; and their opposites.

The path of language is an endless pilgrimage
Winding and unwinding without recourse

The spiral of discourse to discover rapture
In the recursive measure and release the captive, pleasure

Bursting through the tangle of meaning
Into the sunlight, singing and seeing.

To preserve a certain intensity of expression
This “Rational behavior” is the transfer of energy

In every movement of every living thing
Evaluating itself and its environment

Giving it information about itself, making it
Conscious of the unfolding of itself in time.

The mystical inclination is to recognize
That the purpose of existence is this

Singing back-up with itself, seeing unity in every difference
Repetition of the same in every joyful gain and every painful loss

The expression of the unity of being through song
In the outpouring of meaning is the music of Life.

2

The world revolves
 The sun stands still
 The moon waxes and it wanes
 The tides rise and fall
 Beautiful new-born life arrives
 Grand old death departs
 A little girl giggles, a little boy cries
 Joys and griefs, pains and pleasures
 Beginnings and endings, ups and downs...

Forever go the twain –
 The dualities of existence never ending –
 Until, in an unexpected moment, silent and magical
 Enlightenment, realization,
 One bursts like a star into boundlessness
 Beyond the divided highway
 Into the open space of oneness
 In the hushed silence and vastness
 Of the universal cosmic transcendent Absolute

3

A shared aspiration
 A continual inspiration
 A source of frustration !

Our shared strength
 Helps us appreciate our weakness
 Our singular, oceanic heart
 Welcomes all rivers

Patience is needed to tame our wildness
 The reward is learning how to see
 The rapture and agony are one and the same

4

Growing up sometimes looks like growing down
 In the mirror of his eyes I grow wings
 And I dive deep down
 Rooting down in the soil of our shared heart
 Into the sacred darkness, infinite mystery
 Unfolding work of art, crazy perseverance
 Absolute daring to sprout into the light
 Blossom in worlds of bliss, love a delight
 Rooted in our shared aspiration
 Surrendering and flowering in the Beloved

5

Complexity
 Harmony
 Finding the rhythm
 Companionship and trust

6

Love and sacrifice
 Jealousy, happiness, sadness,
 Pleasure, pain, passion, devotion
 Nothing can compare to this
 Emotional roller coaster of love

7

From brahmacharya, grihastha grows
 But without brahmacharya, grihastha cannot be.
 The meaning of grihastha in this world
 Is the evolution from the spirit;
 Without this, vanaprastha cannot be.
 Therefore we perceive
 The meaning of grihastha in our life
 Is sannyasa – no doubt about it.
 Grihastha in life is our sannyasa.

8

Unity in life, like a song
Soothing to the ears
Truth in living

Every step one takes
Is an experience to share
Knowledge is humility

The end of every situation:
Happiness should prevail
Let there be progress continuously

9

And in the end there will always be time
To live the life we all desire,
In laughter kindled
By the fire of a love
Born of a soul that makes us one
Part of the whole family of man and god,
Surrendered, laying down the sword

(composed with friends, birthday poem, Oct 16, 2011)



Rebirth

So this is where philosophy begins...

Where the spirals of the shell of time solidify,

And beliefs and institutions crucify life,

And right and duty are the slaves of authority.

Then, within this carapace of night

A light begins to shine, a radiant pulsation

Spreads within and illuminates the darkness.

Then, slowly, truth and beauty awaken again.

Thought and inspiration raise their heads

And stretch their arms and open the gates

Of this necessary prison; like the poison in Socrates' drink

That spreads within his veins, the power of thought

Explodes the prison walls, empowering Plato to think.

In the cave of shadows some will see, some discover the luminous key.

Union

How silent can the space between us be
and yet sometimes a surge of cosmic feeling
seems to consume the empty space with fire
and the face, the form appear of a bare
unspoken longing and an open free expression
of desire, to be one and consume in one embrace
the distance, the loneliness, the absurdity of repression.

Then, just as suddenly the illusion of that passion
is unmasked and rejected by another apparition
as the inner being projects itself in joyful light
across the timeless spaceless reality of the whole,
and in that instant we stand together in the unity of the soul.

When that energy begins to flow, so peaceful and complete,
filling us with its luminous presence, dissolving every difference,
in its smile of joyful recognition all questions drop,
who we are and why we came are known forever;
the divine grace illumines us; this is the truth we share.

How stale the being that was could be, before this change,
stuck between the limits of inner experience, outer convention
waiting for catastrophe perhaps, waiting for the end of illusion;
Until the lightning storm of inspiration comes rushing in

and the soul borne upward by a surge of spiritual force
bursts through its cloud of desperation, transformed by fire
into radiant light, drenched by the rain of sweetness and delight,
swelling outward in waves of sympathy, in tendrils of compassion,
spreading a fearless freedom, an unlimited energy over life.

The forces of resistance, obstruction, and denial cannot stand;
the beings of the higher realms must come down;
our minds and bodies, prepared by fire and light, must greet them
with a calm and steady gaze, an open heart, a willing and happy self-giving.
Through us they shall purify the past, and recover from oblivion what was lost,
they shall liberate the present from its shadows, releasing worlds of truth new-born;
they shall loose the bonds, break the chains, reveal the shining pathways of the future.

Until then let us stand in the stillness and the void,
heads bowed before the emptiness, in an absoluteness of being,
in an utter concentration of self-giving, on a pyre of flaming light,
burning our offering of self, in a sacrifice of perfect consecration
to the fire, seeing ourselves consumed by the radiance, transparent, peaceful, free.

(20/10/2012)

The blue gaze

I have become
The luminous energy
Of evening

The dense immobility
Of stone over which
It descends

The black and twisted
Trunks that support
The dream of life

And the endless
Green turmoil
Of its awakening

The waves of sunset
Gold that bathe
The earth in light

And the opalescent
Blue into which
It ascends

I have become
The bardo of silence
In which it ends

(to Lila)

The visitor

Is this white raiment
that fills the space around me
a sign? Is it a hand
that reaches out to touch my face
from within that radiant dress
and calm me with a soft caress of happiness?

Is this a cloud divine that covers
a golden sun, like a translucent garment
hiding the glowing body of a goddess inside
whose movements in this space
surround us, whose light illumines every face,
making every sight seem glorious?

Is this the shift that was foretold
and with it this fairy presence has come
to bless us with its sweetness
and give to us a sense of delight
and a permanence, an all embracing
sense of right and balance that lasts?

Is she that vision whose rays shine
suddenly into infinity, burning obstacles
instantly away and leaving everything
transparent and nothing more impure or hidden?
Is this the one who stays, who builds,
who illumines and inspires and accomplishes her will?

And in this glowing stillness, whose sound is a silence,
whose breath is a radiance, whose vision is a well of peace,
where self is a vast and empty space, where all are one,
will she speak to us of worlds to come, and of victory,
will she show us how to nurture every soul, open every heart,
banish every fear, and stand united, unveiled, before the sun?

(13/11/2012)

Our True Identity

Why This institution, This ideology, This way of doing things
And not That Other, That Power, That One
Which can never fit into the limits of the little that is known?

Though ever the Same and forever free, the essence of stability,
It generates every difference, it appears in every form,
It is the center and the base and the self of everything that is born.

It is this that is covered when we assert our independence,
It is this that we murder when we dominate and destroy,
It is this that we mean to discover and express and preserve and enjoy.

In the next generation, in the cycle that is coming
When we grow beyond the mind and the ego's limitations,
When we stand within the circle of its infinite emanations

And we feel the intensity of its all-encompassing vibrations
We shall be filled with the energy of the one divine embrace,
We shall behold this radiant Being, in every soul, on every face.

(12/12/12)

Evening

Mountain waves
climbing into crests
wait in timelessness,
frozen in space

Not a breath, not a stir
not a speck
to disturb this air
of stillness

Yet all time longs
for the moment,
for the form,
to arrive, to embrace.

The motionless spirit's
vision slowly fades
into dusk,
into dawn

Unshaken, unfallen
awake to the glow
of an unchanging
Presence

(8/27/13)

Footfalls

An equal calm, an equal peace
An equal sweetness and joy
Has lain a soft caress
Upon the surface of the earth

A radiant golden atmosphere of bliss
Breathes across the grasses and the hills
And flows within the branches of the trees
Like an incense or fragrance of stillness

And a sky of rainbow hues shelters all
Safely folded in by an air of sweet delight
And a motionless wind stirs softly
Soothing every longing in its path

Where her graceful footfalls pass
There are dreams and revelations
And universes and stars we cannot see
Yet in her Ray we feel all the beauty that can be

(8/28/13)

In the Silence (to Rumi)

What is the sound of perfect delight?
Is it the voice of laughter in the night,
The exultant cry of the peaks at dawn,
The rhythm of the drum, the guitar's strum,
Or is it a mystical love song to the One?

Perhaps it's the only sound that is heard
When the silence absorbs every thought
Every breath, every word, into its solitary
Heart, and the only vibration that's left
In the void is the ecstatic voice of God.

(9/9/13)

Waking dreams (to the goddess)

From your depths of never-changing stillness
And your light like a thousand radiant suns
Your smile shall fill a thousand hearts with joy
And your love embrace a thousand souls with bliss
And your thoughts create an atmosphere of truth
That makes every breath an inspiration, every word
An expression of delight, every sound a vibration of perfection
Until every body, mind, and soul can hear your cosmic chant
And feel the cosmic rhythm of your sway, and move
In the freedom of your cosmic dance, at last

(9/20/13)

Mystic mountain

How frequently you appear and overwhelm us
Then disappear again from the earth,
Yet your whiteness still surrounds us;

Even here where we stand and gaze skyward
Your glistening ridges are pathways for gods
To descend, and we feel the ether around us;

Your music of wisdom and light floats through the mists
That entrance us, here where we lay at your feet
And your mystical presence pervades us;

Majestic mountain ascending into heavens far above,
Send us your glorious waters and fill us with your powers
To rise above and leave behind the limits that restrain us.



Flaming Apparition

How far can she reach,
Her arms stretched into the sky,
How far can she extend
Her healing hands,

This golden mountain spirit
With flaming heart and heaven's face
Bending into prayer and shining grace,
Turning to the heights and to the depths,

Swaying in her rhythmic mystic dance
Blessing all the worlds below with the movement
Of her cloud-like hands and her arms that bring
To all the warmth of their strong embrace,

This mountain apparition up above
Transformed into a delicate goddess of love
Has stepped into the space of silent stone
And spread an air of bliss on every one

Whose heart has felt abandoned and alone,
Whose mind has been deluded and deceived,
Whose life has been deprived of joy and peace,
And dissolved all their suffering in her flaming sunset trance.

The Planes

Is this an air or light of heaven
leaning over the hills
like a whiteness pervading everything?

Or is it only a brightness filtered by sky
in the morning light, a normal event
in this known material universe?

And what are these planes,
physical, vital, mental, spiritual
with their jarring contradictions –

Even their evils – that sometimes
fracture the vessel, crack the container
of meaning, and the smooth substance is lost

Breaking apart the liquid and the gas
fragmenting the solidity of the mass
calling into question everything seen?

The perception of wholeness, the ecstatic origin
Sometimes stands back, questioning even itself
In the mirror of its layered reflection.

(8/31/13)



A small garden near the sea
far from mountains
where quiet spirits meet



Silence up above
silence down below,
the space between
hears our thoughts



Ink dried on fingertips,
papers crumpled on floor,
the true price of art



Even in these conditions
plumb blossoms and orchids
open their hearts

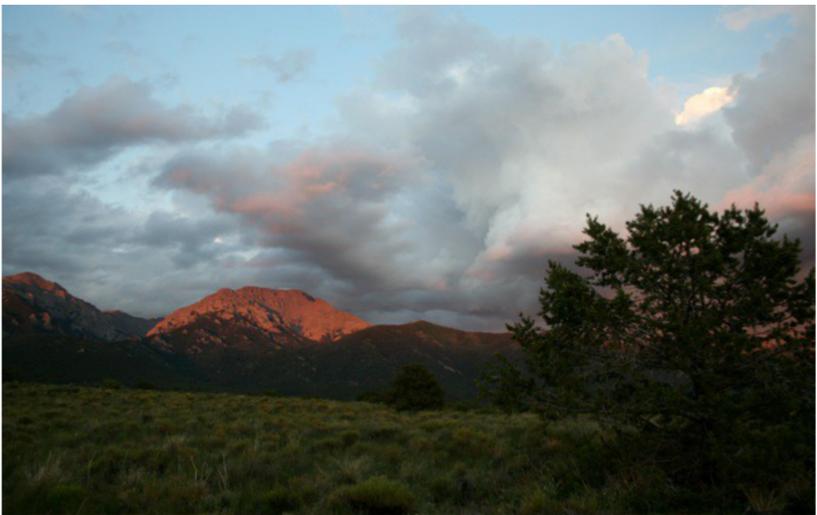
Butterflies kiss, and yet...
so much suffering:
lines crossing in space

A Dervish Sensation

The mountains in the East
suddenly burst into bloom,
like gigantic pink lotuses
opening in the sky;
and then, as suddenly,
they sank into gray,

while on the western horizon,
slowly burning like a rose of gold
in a fragrant silky sky,
the darkened mountains dissolved;
in between, gnarled branches
gracefully twisted toward night.

And shall I tell you of the kitchen
smells that fill the evening air
wrapping me in their beckoning swirls
like goddesses dancing?
And shall I chase them longingly,
or let them melt silently away, like the day ?



... from Crestone

1
Sitting in the Light,
mountains clear, clear sky,
everything shines
in this Presence.

2
The beauty we see and create,
missioned to us,
the fools will destroy.

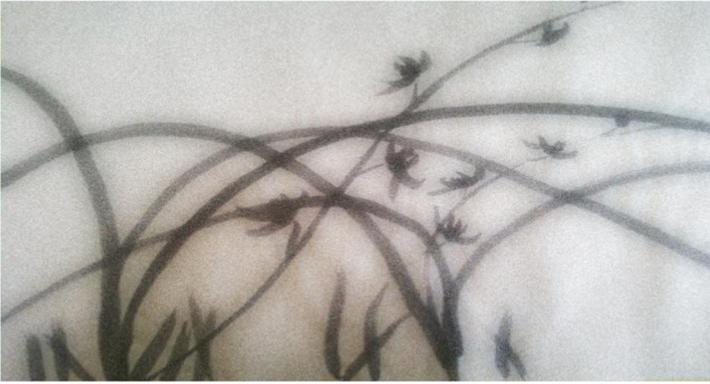
3
Process and Reality
create and destroy
the fruits of their Embrace.

4
In this Presence,
hazy mountains, hazy sky,
even emptiness, Shine.

5
Without those dark gods
the soul could not discover
its power to be Free

6.
And soar above
and find the Self
and know the Presence
that lasts forever.





The Concealment

Nature is a repetition of forms
 A collocation of frames and words
 Striving to be free
 As they populate the spaces
 Of themselves, ready as leaves
 To tremble and fall,
 Ready as branches
 To bend and sway,
 Yet constrained in their presence
 To take their stand,
 To be more than they appear
 To mean more than they can say;
 Manifold, unmoving, and still
 They unify the relational field:
 This oneness of difference,
 This stillness and change,
 Hides its defiant discourse
 In a radiant golden calm,
 While planning its secret subversion
 And spreading its silent revolution,
 Her apparent inhibition is a ruse;
 Nature's silence surrounds a fuse,
 Awaiting the lightning of intention
 To ignite the flame and release the cry
 Of liberation, consciousness, and new creation.



Constrained by their presence
To take their stand,
They are more than they appear
Memories of an infinite mind,
They have entered
The stream of Time

And face us in this frame,
Like forms of nature
Reflected in a pool

Lotus Mountain

*Could the twisted trunks have dreamed
That the swirling dervish winds
Lifting all their leaves toward the peaks
Would leave them dark and still again
Like an empty dying shell
While a lotus bloomed upon
The mountain's face?*

*Could the dervish winds have dreamed
That a goddess of delight
Would step across the shining snowy ridge
And melt the mountain streams
With her rhythmic dancing feet
And spread her healing grace on all below
Filling their aching hearts with rapture?*

*And could the snowy peaks have dreamed
That the twisted trunks below
Delivered by a dervish wind
From their dark and silent trance
Would send a lotus prayer to the skies
Preparing a ground for heaven's descent
By their passionate longing cry?*





2

**EARTH
AND
HEAVEN**

POEMS OF TRANSITION

**PLUTO
URANUS
VENUS
MOON**

**SEPARATION
AND
UNION**

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Pluto and the Moon in Transition

Do we really think that what we see and what we feel and do,
our momentary perceptions and layered impressions,
our accumulation of a life-time of good and bad intentions,
is all that we are and all that there is, the sum of our existence?
Do we believe the little blips of cosmic time
in the scale of human life that we know
are something we can even grasp or comprehend?

Yet all that we've heard from 'those who know'
of consciousness and evolution and the spiritual dimension
says that these incremental things are all an illusion
and the patterns and processes of our little human lives
are the theatre of manifestation for huge eternal forces;
and the sole purpose of our souls is to be a vessel
of their divine embodiment and a luminous creation!

Yet we hold on to our little windows that let us see
a little space, a few flowers, in the gardens of our lives
and we clutch the little mirrors of our reflections
as if they might suddenly slip and shatter
and all the meaning of our fragile world
fall into pieces at our feet, and with them the existence
of everything we have had or hoped or been.

When will we really listen, and hear, and see,
and when will we ever learn to trust the divine intention,
something larger than our impressions and reflections,
and when will we surrender to the power of that perfection
we've been told is the hidden truth of what we are
and of all that is, the substance and force of even this
duality and opposition and dynamic blind emotion?

It is working in our cells and our strong instinctual patterns
and our judgments that condemn to death the light,
as it has in every age, as it does in every heart,
striving to find a way through our blindness and confusion
to reveal the hidden truth, win the pearl of greatest price,
replace the anger, jealousy, and fear, with divine illumination;
and when it does we'll know at last the delight of liberation from illusion.

(1/5/2014)

the darkness dissolves

a golden nectarous moon
shining through the trees
pours light upon the path
and with every step forward
the darkness opens wider
its spiritual eyes;
the goddess of the night
wrapped in luminous veils
appears like a dancer
whose radiant beauty
is slowly unveiled
and the darkness dissolves
entirely in luminosity and mist.

(full moon Februar, 2014)

At last

As our skin wrinkles, *The poems we write, the paintings we paint, the songs we sing, and cells dry up, the pains and shocks and ills we feel, the aspirations we can't we grow old; ever express, are later discovered in the sands of time and the hearts of every lover, because we leave behind the remnants of all that we discover,*

As our hearts grow wise, *and the immortality that calls us secretly to create beyond with insights blest, the scope of our limited views, and time, and space, and life's we can rest; little plans, delivers everything we see and do into others' waiting hands.*

That is the cycle our blinded souls all follow, winding through the worlds of joy and sorrow.

The world that we knew, *And so we gather shells upon the beaches of all lands, and so embattled still, we stand alone upon the edges of all seas, breathing in the air of distant sets us free; skies, feeling the currents pulling at our feet, and gazing into unknown emptiness.*

There we have stood, - east, west, north, south, - and there the sails of love and war

As our knowledge glows, *have passed, while behind us in the vast shadows, in the corridors our minds find light, and caverns of great cities, encoded in the revelations of the language of the we can see; gods, in the records of the unfolding of the meaning of time, sit the treasures of the minds of other men, and the memory of the history of the world. There we have delved through the layers of*

Then our fears dissolve, *our past and discovered the buried origins, and the reasons, the cosmic we dwell in peace, purposes and the laws, the ancient designs that were hidden by our ancestors and pure love; for us to find, and by our labor to learn and understand and be free. Because we have lived fully and this has been our destined path, we have reached the shores of liberation.*

We have reached the end, *Here we can stand on the edges of infinity, bringing into focus every peak, where all are one, every distant sun, feeling the tree of life rising from below us, exploring every leaf and all begin. and bud and flower, every idea and power, as it rises in our veins and reaches skyward.*

Leaves

1

Our words and actions
are so many leaves
falling from the tree of life.

2

Sometimes we find a flower
hidden in the branches
and leaves of life.

3

The paths that we travel
are strewn with the leaves
and flowers of our hearts.

4

The rake collects them,
the wind scatters them,
time returns them to the soil.

(2/3/14)

The Lightspace upholds you

The lightspace upholds you
and you feel the waves from other seas
fill all the space around you with perfect love

The lightspace upholds you
and you feel the rays from other suns
make this world of undiscovered flowers bloom

The lightspace upholds you
and you feel the smiles from other spheres
fill your eyes with joyful flaming tears

The lightspace upholds you
and you feel this world of tired and empty needs
all satisfied, subside, and suddenly disappear

The lightspace upholds you
and you see the skies and fields we know
flooded and illumined by those other infinite seas

The lightspace upholds you
and your body, mind and soul
feel within them all the sweetness that can ever be

The lightspace upholds you
and you become the light of peaceful moons
whose tides of bliss arrive from other seas and skies

(11/17,/2013)

Dis-appearance

(1)

I see your face appear again
filling the heavens with light

I hear your voice shrill and wild
coloring the forest with cries

I feel your heartbeats surging
like rivers and oceans of life

I know your cavernous belly
warm with the fires of new birth

I follow you as you fade from view
in the infinite longing of space

I see, I hear, I feel, I know
I follow your cycle of love

(2)

Your spirals of light around the earth
your glow around the sun

The woven net of fairy gold
you spread round every one

And the game of hide and seek
you play to catch the soul

The pathway through the forest
that to a few only you show

Your disappearance in the darkness
and the absence that we feel

And your gift of perfect stillness
that shines at last within us

(full moon March 2014)

Love and laughter

Divine love and divine laughter
can lift us above our limitations
released from the currents of delusion
on the waves of a limitless ocean

And we breathe a blissful air of freedom
unhindered by the islands of despair
and swim above the turmoil of emotions
in the arms of an all-embracing compassion;

We are beyond the reach of expectations;
we dwell in an atmosphere of stillness and fire.
This is the answer to the emptiness we feel,
this is the infinite liberation, the completion of desire.

All earthly passions, all heavenly dreams,
All cosmic energies become our own ecstatic tears.

Release

Compassion, Faith, Gratitude, Forgiveness, Love -

What we do and say on a mundane level has no importance,

All the poisons are there only to make us see another reality,

The Divine dissolves them for us, who put them there for us to see,

For all those who take themselves so seriously, so at last we can laugh.

A summer sun, summer moon sonnet

Even the jasmines and roses in their pale silence suffer,
the sun twists blood and water from the swirling wind
and blisters the bones of exhausted lives that die
in its ruthless blaze. The fragrance of midnight consoles us.

This golden moon is a flame that burns the eyes;
the forests breath is a fire, reducing life to embers,
the darkness gasps, and falls to rest the aching of desire,
the sun does not relinquish its harsh and deadly trance.

And then a little jewel sings across the sky
and sends a little breeze down through silent leaves
until the souls that were fallen start to rise
filled with the fragrance and awakened by the light

That soothes their wasted bodies, revives their broken hearts,
and restores their fallen spirits with a melodious magical mist.

(4/14/14, April full moon)

Clouds

I can barely see her light,
yet I feel her hidden presence;
while the earth in darkness
awaits her slow appearance.

Tsunamis can be heard
arising in the distance,
while an oyster grows a pearl.
in its dense blue substance.

Her absence is a radiance
felt in every cell;
while the turmoil of the nations
a downpour of wars foretell.

In the silence of the sunset,
in the stillness of the heart,
there is calm anticipation
of the destinies she will start.

(May full moon)

The Fires

We can see the sky again today;
the fires have subsided,
they await the winds to rekindle them
and to encircle us again,
blanketing the horizon.
There are no masks, little oxygen,
we cough, noses drip, eyes burn.
It is the season of extinction.

But today the horizon is visible.
Is there really a beyond?
Or is this only a desperate illusion
suggested by a vision of distance,
present or absent, free from this oppression?
Is this the impulse of philosophy, of wisdom,
compressed by the reality of despair,
we seek a vision of the beyond, and an escape?

Move forward, there is hope, there is a beyond, we say
while the fires all around us wait to ignite and consume us;
the atmosphere grows thinner, a finer higher breath,
we enter deeply into trance, the boundaries disappear.
Another fire begins to grow within, the breath is still:
beyond the flames that rage around us, the vastness expands,
the pain and the fear dissolve in bliss, and there it is:
we stand in its radiance, the rainbow land is real, we are free.

Travel Log (1)

May 26

Shortly after arriving in America from India this time, I observed to a friend that for awhile – a day or two, maybe a week or two – one's mind hasn't caught up with the body, and we sort of have our feet, or at least our consciousness, in both worlds. In that condition it's possible to observe closely, almost tangibly, the stark contrasts. This society is so advanced, technologically, that India will never catch up, or even get close. The people here take this all for granted, but then people in India can't even imagine it. The people here not only take it for granted; they are part of it and it is part of them, it is their identity. Even though they are basically the same people, as human beings go, they live in another world of perceptions, sensations, conceptions, which the people of India will never know. Each of these conditions is what it is. The difference is mine, it is my perception, for awhile. Soon this identity will dissolve into this or that society and culture, depending on where I stand, modulated only for awhile by the difference.

May 27

My stand at the moment is on a plateau in the Canyonlands of Utah, in a campground spread over a large area, perhaps a square kilometer or two, with horizons on all sides, clear skies overhead, natural water temperature about 10 degrees Celsius, very delightfully drinkable. And under these natural conditions, there are only two or three vehicles visible at a distance, not close; I am alone with the goddess.

I walk about 20 meters to a little room marked “restroom”, and find an odorless, waterless toilet, with good quality toilet paper and a waterless soap dispenser. A recent UNDP report gave India the dubious distinction of being the leader in the world in outdoor defecation – the dirtiest country on earth. The air outside the little

room in the wilderness is magnificently clean and fresh. India is indeed very far away.

A little later I am surrounded by megalithic sandstone cliffs, smoothly polished swirls of stone, immense rockfaces staring down from a cloudless blue sky. If I had access to the Internet I could discover the periods of time marked by the layers of sediment and the swirling smoothness of colors left behind as the oceans receded to their present levels; the time it took for Shiva's trance and Shakti's force to generate life from the seed of their embrace. Here I take my stand.

May 28

Enormous valleys, expanses of salt flats, deserts, grasslands at 2000 meters above sea level, surrounded by immense mountain ranges with silvery linings of snow, reaching to 4000 meters, glistening in the sun; canyons a hundred meters deep, cliffs a hundred meters high, layers of sediment tracing the eons of time since oceans stood on top of the earth and rose and fell to the moon and licked the stars. These layers tell the story of the earth we inhabit today with its millions of species and its human civilizations before these rose and speckled the shores of Time like little shells on its beaches. It is the story of immeasurable, untold energies and unimaginable unknown forces, whose purpose and destiny we may be.

Two tent poles, intelligently, technologically, designed in segments joined by an internal elastic cord, inserted through two perpendicular channels on an outlaid canvas square, like a cross on a godshad weave or a sacred heart – the cross of grace suddenly resurrected into a domed habitat where I will sleep tonight. It is a habitat for two, yet I am alone. The seed falls on the bare stone. This is the myth of creation. The motivation for the creation of two, and of the longing for the union of Spirit and Body, the birth of the Earth, which is Yoga. It is the Yoga of Shiva and Shakti, and their union is Life.

May 29

Lake Tahoe, dowaga in the indigenous people's language, is the soul of the nation. She receives the golden rays of the solar fire into her perfect blue stillness, and all the elements rejoice. As the golden orb touches the horizon, the giant cedars, offspring of Sequoia, stand in silent prayer. They love her so much they have proliferated all around her circumference, and they have grown to a great height. They have dropped their seeds on the ground by the thousands. They have climbed the mountain ranges above; they have reached the water's source.





June 6

This destiny that stands at the edge of the lake, one of the largest in the world and the deepest and most transparent, at 2000m, absorbing the rays of the sun into her crystal clear depths; this destiny that stands upon the edge of the ocean, the largest and most powerful body on earth, Pacific, motionless, holding that power in stillness; this destiny that stands in the giants of the forest, hundreds of years old and hundreds of feet high, absolutely still, transforming sunlight into power; this is our destiny. Let us spread this peaceful stillness, this powerful presence, like a million outstretched hands, and rays, and streams, over the earth and all her life.





June 7

Let us take a stand.

All we have to do, in the end, is overcome resistance: the resistance of mind, the resistance of life, the resistance of body – to love. Stillness and power, in alternating waves, will eventually bring all together as One.

In this remote redwood forest, hiking around between clusters of giant trees and vacant camps, I am alone here, and the forest is silent. One can hear the future... struggling with the past. In the silence, the thunderous dance of Mahakali can be heard echoing in the distance.

As the Buddhists say, this world is a world of suffering. As the Hindus say, this world is a world of bliss. The bridge is our spiritual mind.

Let us take a stand.



Travel Log (2)

June 17

Journeying along
the path
overlooking the
abyss, at the edge
of the earth...



I began to question
the origin of our
kind, when
suddenly I came
upon these lazy
creatures...



If these are our ancestors, how did the flippers become hands and legs, I wondered ? Another creature nearby on the rocks, with two feet and wings, seems a more likely source... Just across the road lay rolling hills of harmony like tawny sealions...



Then I came upon a bipedal candidate, walking on the beach, many of whom were quite similar to the sea creatures, but these were clearly creatures of the land, more like us in some ways, yet without wings of any kind...





June 18

And nestled among the tawny rolling hills I discovered the secret of their success beyond the capacity of all other intelligent terrestrial creatures...

A highly advanced industry and technology of solid food production, requiring heavy machinery and strong bodies...

June 19

And then I could solve the problem of our ancestral origin, for though our metabolic structures require a much finer form of energy, our lightness and power of flight are closer to the other flying creatures of earth than to the fat and heavy creatures of the sea and their bipedal descendants that walk the land. Those lazy sealions or their cousins must have developed limbs for walking, and eventually more energetic bodies and minds, while their slight-bodied, beaked and feathered friends became the creatures of light and song that now people the higher planes of life, known on earth as 'angels' and 'gods', who have no more dependence on the earth and the sea at all.



June 29

And now I must ascend to my own plane, above this mortal range, but it has been a great joy for me to accompany you on your journey, and to taste even a little of your pleasures and pains and earthly delights.

Perhaps your line will find a pathway to light, and you too will one day travel the immaterial planes, by some new method of flight. And perhaps we shall meet again.

Her wings became vaster than the sky, and as she disappeared I was wrapped in clouds of white.



Home at last and the golden mountain.



Lessons

I want to speak today
 about the mortal conversion
 of human love and passion
 into divine love and immortal compassion
 through the practice of stillness and devotion,
 and the sacrifice of mind and emotion -
 as the sun and moon stand face to face
 in the brightness of dawn, in the silence
 of an uncompromising absence...
 while the waves and currents of seas and skies
 alternating from pole to pole suddenly fall still
 opening themselves to oneness,
 and all the longing for another
 is drowned in the heartbeats of wholeness.

This is the movement of love and death
 in whose depths lie emptiness and compassion -
 the foundations of wisdom and religion,
 but on whose surface the elements of life
 are all in flux and conflict and collision
 pulled by the tides of emotion;
 our minds and hearts are never at rest
 as long as we accept this subjection,
 tossed upon the seas of creation and destruction
 between the extremes of elation and despair;
 we seek a shore of peace, some consolation,
 but only find rejection, distrust, isolation -
 until we are forced to rise above this strife
 and escape this compelling delusion.

Is there a meaning to be found
 in all this blindness and confusion?
 Will the journey of Odysseus
 ever reach its end, is there a solution?
 Will Arjuna on the battlefield of life,
 or Jesus on the cross of salvation,
 or the Bodhisattwa's absolute negation
 find any justification, liberation, or redemption?
 On this long and winding pathway,
 this endlessly spiraling wheel of illusion,
 are we moving to some final destination?
 Can every step we take, and every fall,
 be a fiery revelation, a resonant call,
 a vibration that awakens the essence of love in all?

A Perfect stillness

A perfect stillness
shines upon the moon

wait... and be still

A perfect stillness
stands upon the peaks

wait... and be still

A perfect stillness
flows across the land

wait... and be still

A perfect stillness
breathes among the leaves

wait... and be still

A perfect stillness
fills the clouds and sky

wait... and be still

A perfect stillness
sits within the soul

wait... and be still

A perfect stillness
turns upon the axis of the One

wait... and be still

The mountain

From gold, to red, to purple, to gray
the sunlight fades away;
but in the fields of night
the flowers of light stand unchanged,
open, radiant, full;
honeybees of thought
harvest the spirals of delight.



Crescendo on Channel 7

The flowers of the fields,
the flowers of the valleys and hills,
the flowers of the mountains and skies
chant the names of the gods:
yellow, lavender, purple, and blue
red and orange and gold.
The divinest of their names is Green.

These gods are hidden in branches and leaves,
silently flowing in the tissue and sap of life
until they break forth in radiant color and song;
but seeking expression in the denser sheaths
of animal bodies and minds, they struggle to embody
their deeper meanings in the faces and voices,
the images and cries we see and hear on world news.

“These Islamists are bad motherfuckers,
these Jewish militants are as bad or worse,
these Capitalist pirates devour the blood
of innocent humans everywhere,” we say today.
The masks they wear, black or gray, do not matter.
But the sunlight still brightens the flowers;
it glows on the peaks of violence and snow.

The cascading rivers of fire flow upward
pushing the rocks and debris, broken bodies,
wasted trunks of trees, destroyed lives, blasted souls
over the summit of sky and truth and dream and light
into the abyss of darkness, ever to return and grow again
like sunflowers, bending and swaying and praying
to the gods, to the winds, to the cloudless heavens beyond.

Inventory of offerings (Ganesh puja 2014)

fruit and nuts and coffee and wine
oil, onions, zucchini, basmati, avocados and tomatoes
pillows and sofas, mountains and silence
books, and rugs, music and waves of love surround

up the road a temple, a chapel, and a stupa bless the land
down the road a valley dotted with elk, bison, and yak
ice cold crystal streams flow from pools above
steaming hot currents well up from pools below

the goddess sends down her rays of golden light
and all the space is filled with clouds of white,
sweet drops drip down from breasts of soft delight
and the spirit's fire is kindled in the ravished human heart

the bells have rung, the clouds of incense burned away
the opened soul has fallen down and touched the sacred ground



HOKKU STYLE POEM

My companions today:
plants, flowers, fields, mountains, sky;
clouds, winds, and sun.

My sun is a star
that shines above my brow;
my breath a stream of fire.

The flowers and fields
are stillness in my soul,
light in their leaves my life.

The mountains my spirit's climb,
snowy peaks my goal,
clouds, winds, sky my spirit's guides.





One burns in the flame
of delight;
and the wind
blows the ashes away.
The mountain again shines
white against blue;
air brighter than usual.



The absolute moment

The absolute sky
the absolute light
the absolute moon

The absolute truth
the absolute joy
the absolute pain

The absolute meaning
the absolute being
the absolute moment
of birth



Love

Some embrace the essence of love
and some embrace her manifestations.
The enlightened soul is one with her entirely -
all her manifestations of sweetness,
her presence in all forms of existence,
and her infinite pure being of love
that brings to birth the universe.



A CALIFORNIAN QUARTET

Water and fire (Limekiln Creek, Big Sur)

The stones are alive!

Ocean in its slow movement
tries to achieve their stillness

But it is too vast, too deep

The stones explode in their stillness
and the river extinguishes their fire

Ocean breathes their radiance!

One and many (Big Basin, Bear Creek)

In your massive stillness,
In this circle of giant trees
You are One.

In your circle of massive trees,
In your giant stillness
I am One.

Before your massive stillness,
In your circle of giant trees
I stand alone.

In this circle of stillness,
In every massive tree
We are One.

The human spirit

The Spirit is the One in All
Absolute, immutable, self-existent
Power and beauty, harmony and truth
Already perfect within

While we rush about with good ideas
Judgments, hopes, desires, intentions
Somehow feeling and knowing,

Perceiving, interpreting, the oneness that can be
 But self within and world without
 Are disconnected and split apart
 They are separated by the screen,
 Our mind, our will, our actions we put between

Until the peace and force descend
 Filling us with their limitless light
 And we see That Self within
 Already perfect, already complete, and One

And the world can then be held in love's embrace
 Ever changing, rising and falling, opening, closing
 Breaking apart, reuniting, growing and becoming
 Forever, what it was and is and shall be, already done.

Refrain

These stones have fallen from heaven
 like giant pebbles strewn across the beach
 waiting for time to grind them down
 to marbles in her hand, infinite particles of sand

A crowd of solid glistening beings offering themselves
 to ocean's constant pounding breathing pulse
 At the mouth of life, on the edge of time
 Remembering the fire that sleeps and wakes within

While on the hills above the sentinels stand,
 uniting earth and sky, breathing ocean's foam
 slowly absorbing, transforming, lifting from below
 the elemental energies of water and fire and stone

And the infinite spirit that is and knows their source
 Looks through human eyes, breathes with human hearts
 Hears, and feels, in human souls, the radiance of stone
 the ocean's throbbing pulse, the massive stillness of the One.

In the Redwoods

Every time I see this waterfall
Roiling in its stream, it seems to flow continuously

The stream's rush is unending

Every time I see this vast pulsating sea
Its ripples and waves continuously rise

The surf's crash is unending

Every time I see these giants in their massive stillness
I know they continue to grow unnoticed inside

The forest's force is unending

These beings and these moments of perception
Give the impression of constant motion

The mind's sight is unending

A stream of silent sound, a movement
And a power of life that never cease

The soul's flame is unending

The presence in nature of eternity,
Thundering through time like a cataract unheard

The spirit's call is unending

3

POEMS

AND

ILLUSTRATIONS

FROM THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

2018 - 2020



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The Lake Goddess

Waiting patiently through the rainy morning
for a glimpse of her Lord,

When the sky curtains open a little,
see the lake goddess smile!

After his glance, not even heaven
knows the peace that settles on her heart.

Soon, in the tranquil mirror of her being,
she will see only him

And every ripple will reflect his light,
every creature say his Name,

The families of the forest will sing!
But who will hear? Who will hear?

Their voices of adoration
rising in unison to the One!

Sound that our listening cannot hear
yet it fills us with its Presence.

In the standing tall of trees
in the yellows, browns, and greens of their leaves

In the stillness of the air and its flow,
in the streaming of the sun

In the slowness of the deer and the swiftness of the bird
speaks the One.

Photos: Lake Ozette (July 1-2, 2018)



Rebirth

(...we must find the Self of repetition, the singularity within that which repeats...Deleuze)

The force of the Infinite
 Is a never ending stream
 Creating all the worlds below
 To embody her luminous dream
 But as her rays reach time and space
 They break in waves of life and death
 Caught in the currents of pleasure and pain,
 The rhythms of change that move our breath

And make us fill these bodies of flesh
 With strength to take and break all bonds
 And make us rise to beauty's call
 And fight for truth until we fall

Until we learn to see in every leaf
 And every bloom, the Self of life's delight,
 In every gleam of nature's opening heart
 The infinite force that moved her from the start

Agent of Light

(for the wanderers in the forest)

Whenever I call you or speak your sacred name
 Whatever I may do and wherever I may be
 Whomsoever you must send with the message of your flame
 Break down the doors, reach into my heart
 Cut loose the bonds that tie our captive souls!

Cleanse the altar and light the fires
 With your stream of life-renewing force;
 Flood the caverns of our buried inspirations,
 Wash away the barriers, fill our darkened corridors
 With your powerful currents of divine illumination!

Looking for the One (Olympic National Forest)

One root
One tree
One sea
One wave
One rock

The wave arises silently
From a placid infinity
Binding every element
Filling every breath
Breaking on the shore

One shore

One root
One tree
One sea
One wave
One rock



Silence

The rose buds open

Petals fall

Streams flow over stones

Also unheard

The motion of wind

Stillness of time

Dwelling of thought

Also unheard

The power of silence descends

Listen to the Darshan Flowers Sing

Like the petals of the rose
Unfolding to the skies

Whose colors are the thoughts
Flowing through our minds,

Whose forms are
The music of our lives,

We listen to the words
That flower in our hearts,

We hear the sounds
That show to us our soul,

And we discover the source
Of our longing and our search:

In every quality that we see,
In all the beauty that we feel,

In the force that is born in every form,
We uncover the perfect shape of truth;

On the path of a thousand births and deaths,
Reborn, at last, in the spirals of the One,

We see that our lives are like flowers,
Every moment a seed preparing for the Sun.

Our seeds and flowers are nourishment for gods
And the fruits are embodiments of their Fire.

WEAVING THE TAPESTRY

1

Reciting the news today

(first movement: warp)

An island of plastic waste
twice the size of Texas
floats in the Pacific Ocean

16 million people in Karachi
have only enough water
for half the population

Amazon.com is worth 3 trillion \$,
the public is happy with its service,
its owner is worth 150 billion

Front page: Stem cell health centers
call today, seating limited;
knee pain, neck pain, back pain

More and more citizens spend their leisure time
watching their dogs shit in the margins
of their prosperous civilization

In India, increasing numbers of farmers' suicides,
the lynching of Muslims, relentless attacks on Dalits,
public floggings, dilution of legal protections for minorities

The massive base of humanity,
6 billion pedestrian bodies and minds,
1 billion more drive cars, enjoy annual vacations

Innocent pilgrims everywhere
few of whom can read, blindly seek god
in whatever dress the popular media prescribes

The religion column has no readers
the editorials have no writers
the obituaries report no souls to resuscitate

Every click on facebook is a vote
every iphone search a message to the stars
we now can rule the world from our self-driving cars

It is up to us to discover the threads
that weave these problematic coverings
hiding from us the truths within, shielding us from the lies

2

The complex tapestry of this problematic world*(second movement: weft)*

Sorting the threads, from the top:

The calculating measuring mind, technology,
capitalist economy (by each of whom we are mesmerized);
like a web of steel.

Vitalistic greed, desire for control (of anything),
over-consumption; like twisted rope.

Physical inertia, inclination to addiction
(to any form of relief or satisfaction),
sensory limitations; like sticky sap.

Then there is the ego level: self-importance,
identity, fears, compulsions, etc;
like the multicolored moss clinging to old growth trees.

Finally the fundamental laws of the human condition:
eros/thanatos, involution/evolution, reality/illusion;
like flaming arrows of gods disappearing in the jaws of darkness.

3

Behind the tapestry*(third movement: texture)*

Is there something more,
something we cannot see,
staring at the pages of history?
Are the arrows of the gods a hidden rain,
secretly filling the world with golden light?
Are these millions of emergent eyes
seeking something that the eyes will never see,
rising and falling on the waves of the world,
causing every form of life to be, yet vanishing always from sight?

A secret world of tides and constellations
is mirrored by the spiraling coils of earth,
in the bifurcations of seeds splitting their dicot symmetry
to release new shoots, in the downward flowing streams of trees
pulling the rays of the sun to feed their roots, sucking from the soil
the force that sends their cells twisting upward to their source;
in the passions of humankind driving upward from the soil of earth
the powers of its body and mind to conquer every quarter,
weighing and conserving every particle of nature for its use.

This is the self that dwells within the soul,
secretly looking upward to a higher world of light,
secretly reaching outward to all things with waves of love,
striving to be known, to be felt, to be seen: the one who moves in all,
the infinite origin of this ever-living fire, unmoving, unseen, unknown.
There is a world of forms that we can see, it is there, it is real,
its patterns are engraved upon our minds: its code deciphered,
its hidden purpose known, we can rise on other waves and leave this world
of limited forms behind. The One Unseen is found, luminous and serene.

Buddha-snow

Silence falls on mind
like Buddha-snow,
thought disappears
in light,
stone still

Soft and hard
Yin and yang
Balance within;
Earth and sky
Have equal sway

Stillness listening
to the Buddha-snow
hears the voice
of silence



SPRING LAKE

(10 + 1 somewhat-haiku poems and commentaries)

First night on lake
 frogs, crickets, ducks
 sleeping in shifts
 awaken to sing

Rhododendrons sensing
 the changing light
 prepare for his arrival

Seeing the coming light
 we too should prepare
 our flower-offerings

A 'nest of cliches' -
 sign of stagnant mind;
 clear thoughts join
 root, branch, leaf

Floating and bobbing
 on infinite emptiness:
 ducklings on a pond

Reaching into infinity
 the gander cuts a path
 through silence

Reflected in the
 forest's silver gaze,
 the stillness
 of lake and sky

Images take flight;
 waterbirds making waves
 like poems on paper

This lake, these birds
 this stillness, the roots
 branches, leaves, sky
 of spacious Self

Tree tops clear
 after raincloud days
 suddenly shout their surprise:
 "The Moon!"



... for the knowledge of the Self it is necessary to have the power of a complete intellectual passivity, the power of dismissing all thought, the power of the mind to think not at all which the Gita in one passage enjoins. This is a hard saying for the occidental mind to which thought is the highest thing and which will be apt to mistake the power of the mind not to think, its complete silence for the incapacity of thought. But this power of silence is a capacity and not an incapacity, a power and not a weakness. It is a profound and pregnant stillness. Only when the mind is thus entirely still, like clear, motionless and level water, in a perfect purity and peace of the whole being and the soul transcends thought, can the Self which exceeds and originates all activities and becomings, the Silence from which all words are born, the Absolute of which all relativities are partial reflections manifest itself in the pure essence of our being. (Sri Aurobindo)

Reflections on the Spring Lake poems

My experience of the lake, though conditioned by the statement of yoga-philosophy indicated above, is filled primarily by the lake itself. This body of water surrounded by forest and sky, still cold from the winter snow, in an environment that is almost silent; it is a peaceful, tranquil environment and the lake a placid, still, almost motionless surface which reflects the blueness or grayness of the sky, whose shifting colors seem to add greater depth to its stillness.

The word 'stillness' recurs throughout, along with images of movement that do not alter the stillness at all – as if they were motionless movements: the bobbing of ducks, the waterbirds that cut a path through silence, whose flight makes waves like poems. And the activity of 'joining' is carried out by the trunks of trees whose movement is an innate stillness, whose silver gaze reflects the stillness of lake and sky. The rhododendrons in their silent process of preparing to flower are like a meditation on the coming of light to an aspiring silent mind. These are activities that cannot disturb either the stillness and silence of nature or the stillness and silence of the contemplating mind. Consequently the witnessing self is joined to the stillness and silence that pervades the scene just as its own depths and breadths and heights are joined in the contemplation of its identity within the stillness and silence of the natural environment, the lake, the flora and fauna, the forests and sky that are pervaded by this same omnipresent quality.

In Hinduism this quality is said to be the nature or essence of the true 'self' in all – 'the One who enteert with his silence into space' as Sri Aurobindo has put it. And in Buddhism, this quality of motionlessness, like an infinite emptiness or spaciousness, is said to be the essence of Mind and transcendent wisdom. As the Zen master Dogen put it, 'learning wisdom is spaciousness, spaciousness is learning wisdom'. But of course, as implied in the poem, this spiritual state is only a preparation for illumination yet to come.



THE LAKE GODDESS'S GIFT (1)

After her morning shower
she rings the breakfast bell -
better be awake !

She spreads her feast
across the glistening earth
and calls from the water,
soil and sky

Her bountiful seeds
and flowers and fruits
to touch our lips with song

To chant her praise
and fill our eyes
with joyful smiles
and visions wild

From heavenly rays
and thoughts of light
and words of truth and fire:

The call to climb and fly
and burn away the veils
that hide our souls,
and escape the walls
that confine our bodies and minds!

She gives us the power
to embrace all life
with the Love that embodies
her being's dream in Time.



THE LAKE GODDESS'S GIFT (2)

Can you hear their song, and feel their delight,
and rejoice in the presence of her golden liquid flow,
and bathe in the stillness of her light?

Near every mountain stream where the rhododendrons grow,
and only there, can her qualities be known;
for there is the lake she conceived in her dream

There are the flowers and the waterbirds and trees,
and there is the silence that descends in your heart,
when the love that she brings to birth in time, starts to sing!

(May 2019)



The Wisdom of the Goddess (Forty days in the wilderness)

In the early pacific northwest Spring, the 'being of delight' emerges in two worlds, or on two planes of reality, at once and in harmony - the life plane and the mind plane. On the plants that grow in the forest and beside the lakes new buds suddenly appear, as if hidden or shy at first, perhaps still sheltering from the winter's cold, until the slightly warmer air and water fill their rising volume of awakening force, stimulating visible form, seen by the silent trees and the silent witness mind.

The awakening season of Spring is evident in the forms of nature that can now be seen, perceived by the mind of Spring whose awakening thoughts are stimulated into a mystical stillness of identity with the known, by the pure perception of nature's stir, by the spirit revealed within these boundaries of water, soil, sky and expansive life, like the awakening of souls to the spirit's sight.

The great still trunks of trees are motionless in their towering forest view; the lake is silent and still; the flowers in their buds and the water-birds in their eggs are as silent and still as the soul of thought, wondering at what they will become.

Increment by increment the moon's cycles pass, and the chill in the air slowly disappears. Then, suddenly, as if in a flash, the Bald Eagle circles lake and sky, the water-birds take flight, and the voices of the lake begin their exultant cry.

The moment of the spirit's awakening, emerging from the hidden folds of time, rising on the stream of life in ripples and waves of becoming, from water, soil, and sky, to finally greet the shining Goddess in her embodied forms. As One, they voice her praise, flowering into sound, as silent as their petals awakening from the Goddess's dream, and as joyful as the heart opening to the spirit's radiant light.

A process of nature in time, and of consciousness in form, and of a human body's experience expressed in thoughts and words, is here observed in the phases of its actual unfolding. While round the planet, nature often struggles to survive our specie's plunder, as we also struggle to survive our own destructive actions, though she and

we can still also thrive in those remote areas that escape our rapacious domination, near mountains, forests, and streams – away from human habitation.

There we should seek refuge from our obsessive delusions of control and the blindness that they breed. There we may recover our receptivity to the Goddess, and sacrifice our greeds, fears, and attachments to habit that make us feel secure, in exchange for her gift of Love that bestows a life forever new, a mind that is still, a heart immortalized by delight, and a soul that can experience freedom and the hidden truths of life once again.

Then we remember that time doesn't “go by”; it unfolds. The qualities of life are not ephemeral; they are eternal. Being is not a product of our imagination; it is the ever-present cause of all becoming. And knowing is not a matter of judgment; it is a matter of attunement. There is a field of life, a field of mind; separateness is an illusion.



Quantum physics and Yoga

The Immanent is the plane of the Ideal,
Consciousness is the Will of the Immanent;
the will evolves its structures of life,
and is itself the Force, Consciousness
individualized in every species and every individual
according to potentials prefigured by its innate ideas.

In the human being the will is now highly evolved,
enough to see ahead and collapse the wave
according to principles of goodness, harmony,
beauty, mutuality, identity, truth.
Thus the law of Karma is fulfilled at every moment
and Nature embodies the process of God in Time.

But the spiritual genius sees farther
and has the will to collapse the wave
at a point of higher universal harmony,
thus moving the process of evolution
like a pilot wave toward its superhuman destiny.
This is the path of Yoga and the way its aim is achieved.

The Immanent is the plane of the Ideal
and Consciousness is its Will.
From moment to moment its forms unfold
as old formations fade into the past
and new creations vie for radiance
in the infinite play of difference.



The Garden

The noise outside
cannot disturb
this garden's
purity and peace;

White rose
and black bamboo
offer opposite
points of view;

Inside and outside
circle around
the central truth
they share;

Not far away,
war outside fear inside;
no peace no truth
no place safe.



The Cycles of Time

Motion creates resistance,
as all experience knows, and its overcoming
may require great stillness;

All qualities are the expression
of an Infinite Truth, subjected
by existence to the cycles of difference;

Humanity is still on its way to its goal,
as the Masters of Wisdom all say,
but its calculating mind¹ has intervened;

Its gardens of peace are only a sign:
beyond their walls there is heartless destruction
and peace and joy are lost in the night,

The struggle for mastery, besieged
and fragmented by the cycles of delusion,
must return renewed on the tides of creation,

And the few who have seen
recover the light, rise above the mind,
reunite the poles of truth and illusion:

Knowing the Source of all forces and forms,
recover the vision of oneness now lost
and embrace all beings with love and compassion.

Then the battle of knowledge and ignorance,
of goodness and evil, war and peace will be won:
the power of oneness shall end division's reign.



¹ The term 'calculating mind' taken from Heidegger refers to our general mental activity of forming notions, impressions, opinions, preferences, abstract ideas based on analysis, judgment, measurement, evaluation, etc, rather than grasping the reality itself. Another, truer way of knowing and being is possible, towards which our consciousness is evolving – this is Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. The Yoga-practice of silencing the mind is a 'way' reflected in these poems.



Shakti's Dance

Dancer in the cycles of the Sun
 Dancer in the cycles of the Moon
 Dancer in the ring of Shiva's Fire
 Dancer in the heart of Love's Delight

Dancer of the rays illumining darkest Night
 Your light always shines like a bright celestial Star
 Filling to overflowing the cup of heaven's Desire
 Overcoming evil forces with your rhythmic feet Divine

Holding high above your head the drum of Time
 Winding round your waist the serpent Life
 Flinging from your hair the rivers of the Earth
 Empowering every soul to embody godhead's Birth.

Sometimes you find a way to reveal your power and grace
 And then you fill a human body and wear a human face.