

## NATURAL FORCES

Somewhère far off, unknown, a change in temperature drives unseen movements in the air,  
 And differences of hot and cold set moving substances of air displaced, then shift their vectors  
 ‘Cross a landscape bleak and void of life or populated by the webs of men and women’s voices,  
 Generates a wind that blows across it all, without a thought, and moves unseen into the night.

And when those winds reach dusk-lit shores, somehow the warmth and pressure find their way  
 Intó the tiny rills and valleys there and move along the inner paths of currents to their source,  
 So every surface feels the touch and beckon of the wind’s caress and cannot help but shiver,  
 Quake, as winds from distant lands arrive with forces unexpected by the waters or the shore.

Underneath the warmed surface of the seas that pèrturbate such sentient currents in the air,  
 The sea floor shifts abruptly, rifts and splits to even deeper earthen consonants within its fit,  
 Moves up into the water's flesh, displaces worlds of deep sea creatures, ‘cross their world  
 A wave moves out as small as hands can grasp, molecular concussion tumbles out ahead.

And when those speeding molecules are somersaulting faster than they pile upon themselves,  
 Eventually they reach a shallow place and rear up like a dragon dripping with its hiss and spit,  
 Rear up and crash upon the unsuspecting shore where welcome sands absorb uncounted blows  
 To finger out the tiny salt-washed macroscopic gems of mica, agate, garnet, jade, and quartz.

These winds have blown into my valleys, shaken even tow’ring trees, the hidden fern unsettled,  
 Pried, finessed the thinnest fissures free of dirt and sand accumulated over time, accretions  
 Built up mindlessly now scattered somewhere else unseen inside my deepest grotto long ago  
 Neglected, disregarded in its dark, where now the winds from far-off swirl the space alive.

Inside the space exposed now, hidden colors shimmer in my marrowed crevices and darkness—  
 There, where waters rush from warmed seas, as so they must, to fill the empty wonder there,  
 Where wetted colors glisten and reflect a sheen of burnished luster from their matrix stone,  
 Fill up with living ocean, vortex historied from a scoured sea of ancient reliquary dreams.

*The eagle soars on wings so light, the porpoise surfs the swells' delight.  
 The shore attracts the sea break's blast, the winds that blow through life hold fast.  
 My inner worlds of swell and surge, my heart with you I fain would merge.  
 The natural forces in my world, against my steady compass hurled.*

*In you, another force confronting, wind and sea’s cold fury blunting.  
 Would that you could overflow your river, waters inundate, I’d never shiver.  
 The forces that contend in you, I could embrace, I would pursue.  
 Deepest deep’ning waters flow, filling up their worlds below.*

## UPON AWAKENING

Endless tallies on clay tablets,  
 Hapless numbering of stars,  
 By reckoning, each forgets,  
 The sequence of our precious hours.

Each haggard night when I set out  
 To singly sail these sleepful seas,  
 My compass and my charts without,  
 I'll end up with the sour lees.

Each morning I again awaken  
 From darkened distant ocean shores,  
 To find the boundless measure taken,  
 And closed, its winsome siren doors.

I stumble up and out the gate  
 Returning to this conscious past,  
 Recalling details of a fate  
 I know could never leaf or last.

Chaos at Virginia Tech,  
 Water faucets quickly burst,  
 Every day an auto wreck,  
 Terror at its sudden worst.

Walking down this endless hall—  
 The sweat on each man's tortured brow,  
 Accumulates, unfolds its pall,  
 And no one knows the when or how.

Darkness, darkness, emptiness,  
 Sleep and shadow rule the day,  
 A piece upon the board of chess,  
 Picked at food, a cold buffet.

Pass by, let go, walk empty on,  
 Without affection or delight.  
 Drown in mystery, dawn withdrawn,  
 Look out, look out, into the night.

## THE CLINGING FIRE

Electrons in their valence shells  
 All spin at speeds beyond our sight.  
 This wheeling of dimension gels;  
 These particles take flight, incite,

Invite amalgams, merger's key—  
 Relinquish, integrate, absorb,  
 Reflect their melding force in me,  
 My sphere of life, the atom's orb.

I'm drawn to people deep and strong,  
 Must find their charge, their spin, their link,  
 Revolve within their fusion song,  
 Find harmony of hearts in sync.

I Am The Ardor, need to burn,  
 Create, Destroy, The Clinging Fire,  
 Experience to ashes turn,  
 The deepest heights of life aspire.

I cling to life, its fleshly form,  
 Embrace and yield to passion's call.  
 Delight how surfaces transform—  
 Respire, enkindle, flame, enthrall.

And like electrons with their force  
 My spirit flies up to the stars,  
 The planets circling 'round their source,  
 Reflect our fate and history's scars.

Burn up, burn in, I cling to life;  
 My embers smolder constantly.  
 To feed my fire I hone the knife  
 Of will to sculpt intensity.

Electrons, planets, nimbly gyre  
 Around my daily routines' pyre  
 Of people, feeling, yearning's din—  
 Love's conflagration deep within.

## TREES LEAF

Effortless, their movements oscillate, pirouette  
 Without thought around their connection's pinned glissette.  
 Leaves flutter, with natural cadence, beat meter's  
 Blithe periodicity, nonchalant, sweeter.

Look again at the trees' green apotheosis.  
 Your eyes pull you into an unspoken gnosis—  
 Seraphic, multiplicative and entrancing,  
 Disappear into mind's hypnotic leaves dancing.

One might think watching trees is an act best slighted  
 When there's so much to do in a world so blighted...  
 Contemplate natural rhythmical energy,  
 Plunge to the still point, find action in synergy.

Because of such evil and history's burden,  
 What to do with oneself is one's only guerdon.  
 In the leaves find fractals of form, and seduction,  
 Iterate chaos, there find your instruction.

Soft soundings, leaf rushes, vibrations' clarity—  
 Afferent molecules resonate voicelessly.  
 All echoes and cellular reverberations soothe, appease,  
 Calm even the calmest, on a cooling journey's breeze.

The mantra of watching simplifies selflessly,  
 Leafages shimmering, scintillating breathlessly.  
 Seeing leaves shuddering, consciousness liberates.  
 Emerald waves of consonance emancipate.

## TRANSUBSTANTIATION

I take the host and sip the wine,  
 Body blood of Christ transformed;  
 Touch your temple so sublime,  
 Your yielding, breathing body warmed.

Mystery is that God persists  
 'Midst mundane human features,  
 Our passion or belief assists,  
 We are such forlorn creatures.

How can God detect our hearts?  
 How can we make connection?  
 Some people answer with the arts,  
 I answer with affection.

The priest can change the bread to Flesh,  
 The wine to Blood of Son of Man.  
 I say when hearts and bodies mesh,  
 We consummate creation's plan.

Transubstantiation, yes,  
 Alchemical tersanctus.  
 It's not the lead to gold's caress;  
 But tasting God in flesh that's thus.

Aloof and unconcerned is God,  
 Accessible through rituals,  
 Breaks through mind's conceptive façade,  
 These symbols, thinking's victuals.

Body is the self's expression,  
 Mirror of the universal,  
 Takes the world for its possession,  
 Faultless action, no rehearsal.

Embrace the flesh of moments' scope,  
 Love people in your touch's call.  
 It's there God climbs down time's steep slope,  
 And grants you treasures' wherewithal.

## WHO WILL CARRY LIGHT

A horn of fire, burning embers,  
 Passed from rider's distant travels,  
 Outposts, darkly he remembers,  
 Urgency his time unravels.

Carry fire, carry light, for  
 Someone up ahead the trail,  
 Anyone with tinder store,  
 Move the fire on, prevail.

Darkness stalks elucidation,  
 Wanton subjugation's face,  
 Find your horror's depredation,  
 Defiled centripetal embrace.

Look ahead and to the side,  
 It lurks in the periphery.  
 Arm yourself with weapons tried,  
 Move through wastelands, run, flail, hurry.

There is no time for condescension,  
 Glory, reverence disemboweled.  
 Waste no time on blind succession,  
 Touch not those whose heart is fouled.

Move on ahead to find a way 'round  
 Imperium and degradation.  
 Destitution so profound,  
 Then mastery, and extermination.

Not Vishnu, Shiva, Christ, can come  
 To put back landslides, glaciers, seas.  
 Don't call on them, the tune they strum  
 Evanesces on the breeze.

There is no plan nor rubric bright  
 To offer hope or consolation.  
 The only glow that pierces night  
 Shines in the heart's deep desolation.

## SHIELDS

The metaphors for night decamp,  
Pack up their tent, provisions, lamp.  
They douse their fires, every spark,  
They leave no traces, sign, or mark.

And when they're gone, I'm left alone,  
Shelterless in land unknown.  
Impending storms will pummel me;  
I'm helpless, like a deportee.

I need those metaphors to speak—  
Ransack the night with their technique.  
But now there's no protection left;  
I face the night with shields bereft.

The night descends upon my land  
With demon hoards at its command.  
Confusion, feral chaos' reign;  
Wan depredation, dreams insane.

Without a metaphor I'm mute,  
Helpless at night's fey pursuit.  
I must strike out at night's attack,  
With fire in words, bring order back.

I'd speak of how it feels to live,  
To act, create, make love, forgive.  
My metaphors would fly, defend  
Me from death's yawning end.

The only other weapon sharp  
I clasp, like music from a harp,  
Is my heart's in tune intention  
Wielded with a poet's invention.

Like horses graze bucolic fields,  
The silence that their absence yields  
Makes metaphors attenuate:  
My heart anneals my shields' estate.

## THE YEARNING LURKS

The yearning lurks, words fall apart.  
 The chaos sours in my heart.  
 A distance broadens uncontrolled.  
 I need an answer to unfold.

I want vibration, rapture deep,  
 Cathexis when I wake from sleep.  
 I want it ever, want it now,  
 Want it if it's in the Tao.

The way is open, four-lane highways,  
 Pass a hearse with stiff and bouquets.  
 Drive right on, wide vista opens,  
 Roam a beach, take shells as tokens.

Detritis by the freeway off ramp,  
 Time clicks off by LED lamp.  
 Daily work, an endless sidewalk,  
 Postal worker brings his new Glock.

Phone poles rush past as I'm steering,  
 An abstract death forever nearing,  
 Apples on the counter linger,  
 Santoku knife cuts through my finger,

Coruscation of distant stars,  
 Bulerías from three guitars,  
 Water shimmers psychedelic,  
 Twilight flushes rouge, angelic.

This yearning lurks, words stumble past.  
 Chance episodes uncoil at last.  
 These puzzle pieces mobilize,  
 The guise of God before my eyes.

God's fulgent darkness flickers on,  
 Fractals blaze out, then are gone.  
 Thirst for water, daylight hasten,  
 Eve's sin cracks the crystal basin.

## MOON POEMS

Moon poems come a dime a dozen,  
 Punked up like the Pope's sixth cousin.  
 Da' moon come up, you feel your oats,  
 You reach down deep and scribble notes.

Lunar madness creeps over you,  
 Animals fleeing from your zoo—  
 Lion, elephant, snake, ferret,  
 Giddy poet from your garret.

This poem's different (or I think so);  
 This will prove it, so here we go...  
 Not romantic, melancholy,  
 No discussion of man's folly.

The moon is empty, full and round,  
 It rises without human sound,  
 Independent, like birds that fly,  
 No one cuts up lunar pie.

The earth beneath shines silver here,  
 An eerie feeling, really queer,  
 No, not gay, but other-worldly,  
 Whites out the penchant to be surly.

Mind trip is that we're here; it's there—  
 A spinning game of solitaire.  
 We're not alone; we feel we are...  
 Religion helps? It's so bizarre.

Pray to God, or bow to Buddha,  
 Sail your yacht to chic Bermuda.  
 The moon there shines on rich and poor,  
 So pick up Costco's trip brochure.

It ain't a stretch to get the point  
 That this moon poem will disappoint.  
 Now get your bones from out the house;  
 Watch the moon then kiss your spouse.

## AZTEC MARKETS

Aztec markets fill Texcoco,  
 For art and ritual, rococo—  
 Quetzal feathers, cala lilies,  
 Green bamboo, ancho chiles,  
 Peyote buttons, tourmaline,  
 Mayate beetles emerald green.  
 Sharkskin, conch, obsidian, jade,  
 Abalone, limpets trade,  
 For grasses, reeds, datura plants,  
 Incense herbs, flutes, drums and chants.  
 Sellers, buyers, royalty, priest,  
 Sorcery from the jungles East.

This market metaphor transmits  
 The power choice of words permits.  
 Change of consciousness, invasive,  
 Shift of focus, so persuasive.  
 Eyes take in the world's circumference,  
 Words prescribe which prey the mind hunts.  
 Select your wares, go into trance,  
 Your God is chosen not by chance.  
 Flow into the object's essence,  
 Totems, talismanic prescience.  
 In Aztec markets all are trading,  
 Welcome, ecstasy invading.

“... if conscious mind is a spatial analog of the world and mental acts are analogs of bodily acts, and it is all generated by metaphor on the basis of language, a rather startling deduction can be made as to the origin of consciousness...only humans are conscious, and ...we became so at some historical epoch after language was evolved.”  
 (Julian Jaynes, *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*)

## MIND SPACE

Open book upon the table  
 Fondled by two hands so able,  
 Page by page creates a mind space  
 Built on words that fell from gods' grace.

Once we heard the gods speak to us:  
 “Do this, go there, solve that...” No fuss.  
 Then with trade and travel flowered  
 Words' hold on metaphor, empowered.

Men traveled seas to distant lands,  
 Saw idols, gods, sphinx in the sands,  
 Learned language new, smelled women strange,  
 Heard their god's voice start to change.

Upon return with visions new  
 They sought new concepts, what to do,  
 With new beliefs, concepts distant:  
 Old words newly used, persistent.

Now all language takes for granted  
 Metaphors in brains are planted.  
 The mind with which we think we think:  
 A map of life that our words sync.

The space we see, from words create,  
 There is no “there” you can relate  
 To your “I's” home, the “me” you see,  
 Your life's film on mind's marquee.

Our consciousness is like a map,  
 Subjective analogue, a trap:  
 It's not reality, concrete,  
 Just our perceptions, they're discrete.

Loose the mind of idle thought-flow,  
 Let crystal mind with ease bestow.  
 Let metaphors fly, merge with light,  
 Let gods return, to their delight.

## DIGGING

Digging gives my spirit rest from  
Thinking, feeling's anxious loud drum.  
Sharpen shovel on the grindwheel,  
Test edge's bead with finger's feel.

Push the shovel into earth's earth;  
Resistance shows my body's worth.  
Lever out what's been there eons;  
Lift earth up like countless peons.

Pile it in the wheelbarrow waiting;  
Lift it without hesitating.  
Struggle with the wheelbarrow's handles;  
Think of all life's empty scandals.

Inane rumors, turpitude vain,  
Empty compared to digging's pain.  
Wrestle barrow, dump this dirt there,  
Sweat runs down from dripping hair.

Digging clears the mind from its dirts,  
Makes my heart pump blood 'till it hurts.  
Skyscrapers, tombs, and pyramids—  
All rest on dirt, all lives undid.

*July 2007 excavating for the fountain*

**STANDING IN THE BOISE RIVER**

Standing in the Boise River,  
Rushing water makes me shiver.  
Yellow iris' graceful bending,  
Leaves along the surface sending.

Qualities of mind and spirit  
Disappear in water near it.  
Eyes defocus, seek the treetops,  
Merging in this cosmos, thoughts stop.

Cottonwoods in chorus shimmer,  
Conscious not of outer, inner.  
Losing touch with time and limit,  
I let go, dissolve within it,

Up beyond the trees' horizon  
Azure vistas pull my eyes on.  
Past and present rushing through me;  
I am my island in this sea.

Walk lightly on the river rocks,  
Welcome harbor, inland docks—  
All waters rush downstream in time.  
This moment infinite is mine.

*July 2007 with Carlo, Jesus, Robertillo, Gere, and Roberto*

## IDLE THOUGHTS

“So clear your mind of idle thoughts,”  
Said Zennist master, Alan Watts.  
When as a youth, I studied Zen,  
I read the masters, now and then.

Upanishads, the Gita too,  
Huang Po and Dali Lama knew  
That mind is clouded in its hold  
Of concepts coursing uncontrolled.

Those clouds in mind’s sky disappear  
When let go, then the mind is clear.  
“Each day becomes a new day,” thus,  
On tape the master did discuss.

I’ve lost that tape but not the jewel  
Unearthed from life, but not in school.  
Now when I fly off in my mind  
I say the mantra, then I find

The cooling breeze across my skin,  
The flowers’ colors’ joy within,  
My muscles stinging when I work,  
The love I feel as memories lurk.

A million million humans breathed,  
Sought meaning in beliefs believed,  
Resisted with their iron wills,  
Lashed out with intellectual skills.

The master said to be yourself,  
Take down your Buddha from its shelf,  
Find suchness in your nature’s gift,  
This party passing much too swift.

So clear your mind of idle thought,  
Find the treasure you never bought,  
Each day becomes a new day, yes,  
The richest prize you could possess.

## MEN WORKING

There are few men with whom I've worked  
 Who love the challenge, never shirked  
     The impulse to create anew,  
     Creation that our wills pursue.

    Be it tiny— jewelry, drawing,  
     Share a vision, languor thawing.  
 Often large scale— metal, concrete,  
 Timbers, fittings, four-by-eight sheet.

    Tools that in their boxes linger  
     Come to life because our fingers  
 Give them purpose, drive, direction,  
     As we wield them with reflection.

Imagine, sketching, measure thrice,  
     Construct a jig to be precise  
 That does what it's supposed to do:  
     Patterns that the world subdue.

Rolled up our sleeves, moved step-by-step,  
 Dismissed the fear with thorough prep,  
     With humble guidance, mastery, joy,  
     Each other's skill, our plans deploy.

We moved ahead, pushed through the doubts,  
 Maintained the goal, with jokes and shouts.  
     Suggestions offered, tips and nods.  
     Creation is the gift of gods.

    I oft' recall these men with heart,  
     When on a project I depart,  
 Their spirits move within my hands  
 Although they've gone to distant lands.

    Great Spirit, move our minds to make  
 The things with which our lives partake.  
 These men, so few, so strong, so dear...  
     Their work is art in God's rare sphere.

## WHEN LIGHTS GO OUT

When lights go out and sun departs,  
 The spirit stripped from out our hearts,  
 The minute hand still moves around  
 The numbers that our life surround.

Time melts away to form the past,  
 We grab for life that doesn't last—  
 Oblivion from pleasures' swoon,  
 The last warm light of afternoon.

Obituaries on a page,  
 Comfort yields its place to rage  
 At sickness, absence, emptiness...  
 Where is the God for us to bless?

In the silence lurks our demon,  
 Enemy of slave and free men.  
 Fear of pain and senseless dying,  
 Mourning, grieving, trembling, crying.

Meditation's calming power  
 Practiced every minute, hour,  
 Cannot fill the yawning chasm,  
 Makes my heart and mind both spasm.

Death will come before its time,  
 Drop your glass of sweetest red wine,  
 Crash your car against some trouble,  
 Aneurysm bursts your bubble.

"Best not dwell on death and dying..."  
 If I agreed, catch me lying.  
 Shift from one foot to the other,  
 Stand in line, lament your mother.

Darkness, darkness, makes us humble.  
 Some lash out, and some just mumble.  
 Face the shadows' darkest heaven.  
 What is bread without this leaven?

## SUMMER CONTRASTS

Colors in the distance shimmer—  
 Is it surface shine or inner?  
 Contours juxtapose with backgrounds;  
 Puzzle piece fits in or confounds.

Geese in cut alfalfa cluster;  
 Stabbing grass hones dark bills' luster.  
 Pigeons wheeling figure-eights high;  
 Who is following whom awry?

Lex cuts back canal's dense thickets;  
 Tractor waits near listing pickets.  
 Purple loosestrike, such noxious weed,  
 Its comely blossom is indeed.

Ducks in squadrons, stragglers quacking;  
 Boys in caps buck bales, are stacking.  
 Two signs announce summer sweet corn;  
 On bed of Ford One-Fifty borne.

Passing corner, house dismembered;  
 Turquoise backhoe crawler, absurd.  
 Construction work detours traffic;  
 Drivers mutate, anger graphic.

Last boys swinging into river;  
 Snow melt water makes them shiver.  
 "Le point vierge" 'tween light and dark;  
 Sunlit shadows' protean spark.

Two horses flank to shoulder stand;  
 Share secrets lost to shifting sand.  
 Summer fades to autumn's light;  
 Regrets give way, nostalgia's plight.

Another summer's endless bliss;  
 What have I lost that I'm remiss?  
 How much more... the seasons shifting,  
 When I die, my soul set drifting?

## ANTARES UNDER JUPITER

The time I saw my father cry,  
His mother'd died when I asked why.  
He'd always been a man reserved;  
I saw his soul as I observed.

His death took place when I was gone;  
Divorce had made my soul withdrawn.  
I was not there to help him leave,  
For which I do not cease to grieve.

My mother's mother died in pain.  
She idolized her, she'd explain.  
She held me, grandson, as she died,  
My mother would so oft' confide.

Her death was witnessed by her brood,  
The morphine had her pain subdued.  
The last I saw her, on a slab,  
"Yes, it's her," my heart did stab.

My finest friend, a monk, austere,  
With whom I'd worked and persevered,  
Referred while walking one last time  
To pain that took him in his prime.

I touched him on his dying bed,  
Unconscious, love and thanks I said.  
I and my wife and children saw  
His spirit rise in whirlwind's awe.

My other friend, a healer deft,  
A craftsman, gardener, artist, left  
His voice and strength, diminished so,  
Got MLS three years ago.

So many friends went to his wake,  
With eulogies and pictures spake  
Of his joie de vivre delightful,  
With such calm he suffered, frightful.

The brilliance these four souls create  
Across my mind, my will, my fate,  
Illuminates my sky at night  
When I feel death, my hope contrite.

Antares under Jupiter  
That night in August did occur.  
Its twin conjunction guides my heart  
'Till I to stellar lands depart.

## MY DEATH LOOMS

Darkness in the morning, whisper,  
 She does not wake, they do not stir,  
 Into the darkness of the hall,  
 I stumble through my mind's bleak squall.

Schedules switch on, lists to do,  
 Life shows itself for my review.  
 I try my best to slow it down,  
 Must clear my mind before I drown.

The same routine presents itself,  
 Complete one thing, put on the shelf,  
 Pick up another challenge, fight,  
 Work on it till I get it right.

One week of five blurs into past,  
 Sweet weekends disappear so fast.  
 Projects left undone, forgotten,  
 Unpicked fruit I left is rotten.

Love I left to find one better,  
 Chattel bought now makes me debtor.  
 Freedom comes at such a price,  
 Don't apprehend what will suffice.

Get the paper, read the headlines,  
 Check Internet to meet more deadlines.  
 Grab a coffee, drug my senses,  
 Make excuses, build defenses.

Muscles ache, my organs flutter,  
 Try to speak but only stutter.  
 No crying in this wilderness;  
 No one attends to such distress.

I practice dying everyday,  
 Obituaries' point the way.  
 I'll never learn it, stubborn me,  
 'Till from mind's prison I can flee.

## RICH UNGUENTS

Each morning on my hands and face,  
 What time removes I will replace,  
 Applied to skin that dares the world,  
 Rich unguents by my hands are swirled.

Jojoba oil, the balm of choice,  
 My skin absorbs, I do rejoice,  
 When other's outer body stroke,  
 The softness does some spark provoke.

Argent moonlight, cosmic lotion,  
 Bathes me in its soothing ocean,  
 On my face and hands anointing,  
 Refulgent appanage appointing.

I'd only step outside to find  
 The lunar face of God entwined  
 With starlight, baptize and absolve,  
 My petty brooding does dissolve.

Another lotion, chrism, salve,  
 Artesian flows of flame I have,  
 A love, devotion, liking, lust,  
 Removing oxidation, rust,

Decay, corruption, rot, and mold—  
 Life melts as unguents' gifts unfold.  
 Intense love swells, o'erflows these bones,  
 Warm oil quickening slumberous stones.

To touch another's skin, your own,  
 To stroke the flesh that covers bone,  
 To soften callused hands, caress,  
 The balm electrifies finesse.

Be it liquid, light, or love, it  
 Ravishes, makes us submit.  
 To ecstasy's blind passion, fall—  
 Resplendent unguents' silken call.

## MARS EURIPHON

Unconscious realms have broken through,  
 My conscious world could not subdue  
     The forces coalescing deep  
 That forced their way up during sleep.

At first, those legions marching forth  
 Presented inner weapons, North.  
 A man I woke up from that dream  
 From subterranean depths supreme.

From that time on, Polaris led,  
     On inner discipline was fed.  
 Marched deeper still, with weapons sharp,  
 Feared nothing, marched up every scarp.

Life moved quickly, full of voices,  
 Led by will, fulfilled by choices.  
     Deep I dove into the ocean,  
 Led by heart and one devotion.

I swam in springs of beauty pure,  
 Ate soma, flew to lands obscure,  
     Discovered inner forces still,  
 Suffered separation's wounds until

Came forth another dream so stark  
 It issued from my depths so dark,  
     Mandala, icon, hemispheres,  
 Heard "Mars Euriphron" in my ears.

The planet Mars, red warrior sphere,  
     Equator halved, so crystal clear.  
 On waking drew it, knew it meant,  
     Not rising up, but deep descent,

    Into a power geared for war,  
     An inner struggle, not of gore.  
 I cut the papers, red, brown, black,  
 Transparent windows, glued in stack,

I made the image, idol, god,  
Into a psalter rather odd.  
I gave it to best friend, Kap,  
Who formed his clay into a map.

I kept the fired and hardened ring,  
Until he came one day in Spring,  
Returned the gesture, and the round,  
Bowed to the power we had found.

I keep the papers, he the clay,  
We rarely speak, but when we say,  
“Remember Mars Euriphron?” Yes,  
We’re meant for power to possess.

This Mars Euiphron means for men  
To seek the inner guide, our ken,  
For only men know men’s deep need,  
Men helping men, be gods indeed.

*For Kap*

## CUTTING TOMATOES

Sudoku diamond sharpened blade,  
 Tomatoes by its edge are splayed,  
 Upon the cutting board they yield,  
 Luscious colors now revealed.

I planted seeds in winter late,  
 Inside so they would germinate,  
 Tiny seeds the size of gnats,  
 Layed out in cups on plastic flats.

Watered, left in light all day,  
 The sprouting seeds did Sun obey,  
 Up they came, they moved towards light,  
 I kept them covered through the night.

When Spring arrived, last days of frost,  
 I planted them in ground well tossed,  
 Watered, waited, prayed for growth,  
 Up they came with dahlias both.

In sixty days round orbs of fruit,  
 Red, purple, orange, and green to boot!  
 We've been picking all summer long,  
 From heirloom vines deep green and strong.

We ate ambrosial love fruit ripe,  
 We ate so much but did not gripe,  
 With olive oil, ground pepper, salt,  
 Their taste exquisite, found no fault.

So now these last days, Autumn's flush,  
 They ripen slow in cooling hush,  
 We pick them daily at their time,  
 And brush small shrubs that smell like thyme.

So now I slice them to reveal,  
 Whorled colors mixed into a meal,  
 Tomatoes, sweet symphonic song,  
 Imbibe their nectar slow and long.

## WRITING POEMS

Without it I would shipwreck quick,  
Break up on boulders hard and slick.

I sail in waters dark and deep,  
Prefer these storms instead of sleep.

Writing poems, a compass bearing,  
Maps of currents traveled daring.

Astrolabe for navigation,  
Saves me from life's desperation.

Want I to see the famed Cathay,  
Exotic ports-of-call survey,  
Lift the outer veils from Venus,  
Divine Her inmost passion's genus.

Am I this selfsame poet? Yes.  
I yield to life, cannot suppress  
Elemental forces surging,  
Human harmonies emerging.

Each poem a weapon, vista, shield,  
Poems acquiesce, my fate is sealed.  
Each word, my respiration's pace,  
Sonance beckons, flushed heart's embrace.

I rush to poem like wind to sail,  
Run with its tempest, then exhale.  
Look back at such equator crossings,  
Plot my course for swells still tossing.

Addiction to this private nectar,  
Poems become my soul's protector.  
I seek fulfillment, longing's vice,  
Protect my heart from fear's chill ice.

Focus for this silent sentry,  
Rift in time for my soul's entry,  
Writing poems, compassion's glance,  
Rent sentinel's hypnotic trance.

## THE END OF POETRY

Like silence calls my heart's attention  
 From the world of man, convention,  
 Letters, words, my poems are crumbling,  
 Losing connotation, stumbling.

They are just symbols, pointers, paint,  
 Used with artistic style, restraint.  
 Yet now they lack the function, power,  
 Instead of sweet, they taste so sour.

It's not my muse that cedes control;  
 Her whispers still provoke my soul.  
 But lists of words, taut, ordered, spare,  
 That rhyme and meter— my despair.

The kite I flew once overhead  
 Fell to the ground like birds of lead.  
 Where once I soared with passion's wings,  
 Imprisoned now by mental strings.

The poems no longer fill my heart,  
 They're atrophied, some body part,  
 Contracted virus virulent,  
 Then withered without my consent.

Let go of love, let go of hope,  
 Slide down longing's tear-slick slope.  
 Forget what once was beauty, grace;  
 Abandon harmony's sweet embrace.

This poem is painful, strained, and cold;  
 The end of poems, my spirit old.  
 It represents lost loves forlorn,  
 A threadbare coat, a pocket torn.

Put down the pen, it's ink dried up,  
 Put up sweet liquor's empty cup.  
 I pull my collar 'round my throat,  
 Gelded, wordless, in lands remote.

## MY FEELING WORLD IS LEFT TO DRIFT

The morning freezes soundlessly;  
 These dahlias, pumpkins, linden tree,  
 All cringe and recoil from the ice  
 That chokes them in its frigid vise.

Their leaves' betray the shock, they cringe,  
 Curl up, turn brown and crisp—a twinge  
 Of death distorts the season's shift:  
 My feeling world is left to drift.

Surfaces reveal confusion,  
 Bruises, empty words, illusion.  
 Wrinkles, furrows eloquent,  
 Compose their song, a dirge, lament.

Below this epidermis flows  
 A world of worn, familiar clothes:  
 Images turned grey by time,  
 Gestures like a eunuch mime,

Spirits, visions, fantasía,  
 Sweet, rhapsodic aphrodisia.  
 No one knows such worlds I share.  
 Secure a ticket, pay my fare,

Then travel out of time and space,  
 Find love and passion, leave no trace  
 Behind me, I become mankind,  
 My heart's arms with yours entwined.

The gift of poets, curse divine,  
 To feel life brimming, so sublime.  
 And when no ewer holds such cream,  
 Fall on my knees, write poems, I scream,

“My feeling world is left to drift!  
 Depart! Sweet Muse, forsaken, shrift,”  
 Take down your candles, démodé,  
 My altar's heart's in disarray.

## SHOOTING STARS

I had a dream and then awoke:  
 Flowed down a river, never spoke,  
 But watched the houses as we passed,  
 My guide and I, we sailed so fast.

The river flowed by houses near,  
 A family slept outside, so queer,  
 Outsider there, I felt detached,  
 Then from my dream was quickly snatched.

I stumbled into shower, clothes,  
 And tried to let the dream expose  
 Its meaning, origin, portent,  
 From where and whom was that dream sent?

I did the morning rituals,  
 Made tea and people's victuals,  
 Walked out the back door mindlessly,  
 Night constellations there to see.

I scanned the sky, Orion there,  
 Dog stars, Pleiades, aware  
 Again that I was watching pass  
 Another river, looking glass,

Mirror for my meditation,  
 Reflection of some revelation.  
 Then from the constellation Lepus  
 Flashed an explanation thus:

A shooting star from East to West  
 Blazed slowly 'cross the sky, "I'm blessed,"  
 I thought, so large the star, ablaze,  
 And then another miracle, I gaze.

A smaller star below the first  
 'Cross heaven's face did also burst.  
 I realized so quickly there,  
 I to those stars my life compare.

Both shooting stars left streaming tails,  
Reminded me that life soon fails,  
And better lived than watched from far,  
Loves launched in life more precious are.

Both stars--my life, one is its twin,  
The life that's seen, the life within.  
I burn across my river, sky,  
I live and love and then, good-bye.

And yet, within, much smaller still,  
Flows water, starlight, there until  
That smaller star soon arcs away,  
Becomes the larger everyday.

Those shooting stars I'll always see,  
The mind's eye launched from my heart's lee.  
That dream of vistas flowing swift,  
Transcendent cosmos' fleeting gift.

## EMPTY SPACE

Moon halo, silver, round, it rings  
 An empty space enclosed by light,  
 Mirrors my heart's dun furnishings,  
 Walk through the ring, it does invite.

I need that empty space for clouds  
 To float upon their azure field,  
 So far away from senseless crowds  
 I soar with clouds, my heart is healed.

I need that empty space for rain  
 To fall on parched yet waiting earth.  
 I open up, cannot refrain  
 From penetration, patience, birth.

I need that empty space for waves  
 To break and wash on inner shores,  
 Then inundate my deepest caves,  
 I swim down deep, my hand in yours.

I need that empty space for winds  
 To swell against my mountain range,  
 To feel the blasts strip bare my sins,  
 My heart's raw forces do derange.

In awe, the halo 'round that moon,  
 Obeisant witness, I, that morn,  
 Did to that lustrous light attune,  
 My spirit indigent, forlorn.

I stood there transfixed in the glow,  
 I felt the moment clamant, dire,  
 Beseeched the cosmos to bestow  
 More light to fire my dark desire.

I summon forth all cosmic guides,  
 Convoke their wonders tangible,  
 Largesse in empty space resides,  
 Inside a heart infrangible.

## THE GLASS BEAD GAME

A fluent edge of carbon steel  
Cuts through as if there is no cut.

Pomegranate juice spills to  
Silence— dimensionless witness.

Emptiness from empty flowing—  
A crimson, crystalline essence  
Revealed on edge of marked time—  
Coursing through as if not coursing.

Fingerprints left where I let go,  
Dust, remnants, vestiges cover  
Hammers, micrometers, debris  
From conative construction zones.

Newspaper inserts fall to floor,  
Time-leveraged whiffs of coffee cake.  
Cut grass sticks wetly to your shoes,  
First-class stamps from an ATM.

Analog personalities  
Make love to vicarious screens,  
Become some kind of magician,  
Say, “There is nothing up my sleeve.”

Monks in their turn at Vespers bow,  
Water seeks its deepest level,  
As they must do, as they must do,  
All in the course of time, of time.

The day’s radiance whispers out,  
Follows grey geese stretching southward,  
Tracking a wordless GPS  
To sheltered fields of corn stubble.

A transparent game, bit by bit,  
It is. Synapses fire, then quit.  
Master of the game, attending—  
Each glass bead, play— his will unbending.