

## **Daughter of the Excision**



**Rhymes and Songs**

## Part One

*i am going to give you poetry...poetry...poetry--*

No! I shall give you poetry--with-out end!

[Alas.....

Those two have come too painfully--  
much too painfully!--to the river bend:  
the *i*, a child mute, never to be given tongue;  
the I, a child patriarch in feminine form.  
It's time that they accept each other, and moved on--]

*Even when i'm not looking at the spider on the baseboard on the other side of  
the room, its legs are casting shadows....*

I vow, never again to succumb to a flood of feeling to the heart--

*Stone soldiers wear tennis shoes or sandals, it doesn't matter where they  
sleep. Stone soldiers eat only what they are given, and cry crystal rock tears when  
they weep--*

But, see? The spider is crawling across the floor toward where we sit, behind  
the never-again-opening door!

[And, since a spider can distract them, anything can....]

*Mornings hurt. The coffee would have been perking before long—memories,  
too, an infant singing its morning song. But everything is going to be okay, soon as i  
forget each good old day that i let myself play a pawn in life's game, when  
consciousness and action were one and the same. Hard rain....nice.... But it's the  
human sounds i miss, along with an occasional kiss, factored out of this reality:  
food, bed, roof overhead, but only spiders for company....*

It wouldn't have minded me so much if I'd been treated with some respect;  
and I hated you, alone in the driver's seat all the time, thinking you were the more  
probable fool! If only once he had protected us—let us cling to trousered legs the  
way *you*, so often, him to flowered skirt, I wouldn't be feeling this inconsolable hurt.

[Yes, the war stemmed from much more than simply his being  
taller and having shorter hair—from Man's deep-down  
knowledge of his own hiding hound, and its wearing on the  
tethers to which the two of you were bound.....]

*i wished him to be the glass and me, the wine; i wished him to be the fence and me, the climbing, clinging, heavenly-blue flowered vine. i wished me to be the meadow and, him the towering pine--*

Not what *he* needed!--I, the stone, and him, the moss upon it limed.

*Night or Black Day--it's any hour when the lights come on, like when he first smiled at me and our teeth matched. i knew he was not just one that I could not avoid loving, but all; and i was undone--*

As anyone who saw would know.... You were his footprint in the snow....

Deep Purple Dreams...

*Downtown San Francisco, early '50's, a nighttime Saturday....  
Black waiters wearing black ties—"Table or a booth? Step this way!"  
Barely seventeen... "Whatcha doin' here, Girl?--not knowin' what life's all about? Hanging out with the 'in' crowd at Fack's--do your Daddy know you're out? (Hey, take a look at that waistline--) Watch that zombie, now; it's got clout!"  
Blue mirror wall made all the bluer by a blue veil of smoke, reflecting a bobbing base fiddle black fingers pluck and stroke....*

[Don't wanna think about whatcha gonna find, ay?---  
elbow on the table, chin pointing to the show.  
Jus' wanna sway inside a vacant mind,  
and be a beautiful somebody in mood indigo....]

*Sarah, singing soft and low, Standing Room Only, no other way i could go, to follow the traces of that melancholy trill, up, down and over an electromagnetic hill-San Francisco, the Coliseum, and Jazz at the Phil.*

*Leaning on a balcony rail, once again all thought suspended, while the eyes tried to catch light off of just one of a thousand mesmerized faces upended.*

*Buddy Rich threw down his gauntlet. The drum duel with Krupa was on! The crowd gave a roar; it was what they came for, prepared to stay until dawn. Spotlighted silhouettes loomed on the backdrop--two gargantuan Goliath boys, at whose feet a couple of demented dwarfs sought to destroy their quivering toys....*

*Step right up! Let me tell you how i feel: like i just hopped off of a ferris wheel.... Bug-a-boo eyes, southwestern skies and the Big Bopper. Throw me around, nail me to the ground--gently, though! 'Cause like Buddy i know: True Love's surely comin' my way--hey! hey!...*

*"Where you been, Girl, all these years"*

*Workin', man! A kid or two--keeps me busy all the day. No time to swing and sway--but, hey! Sergeant Pepper sang my song again, just yesterday—*

[*"Monday morning comes without a soup case—seeeeeeee how they runnnn....?" You've been away too long, Girl. Close your eyes, Girl; look inside, Girl....]*

*i learned too late that a girl could go to college, but i knew how to make a typewriter type very, very fast, and noisily, so that sometimes 'they' shut their doors and left "us" alone a moment--one, one, oooooooonnnne moment....*

clack, clack; clack, clack, clack....

[Do you hear what she is thinking? Who among you understands?--the many forced to live all life agile mind chained to hands....]

clack, clack, clack; clack, clack, clack....

[See the papers—leaves and sheaves and seas of papers! The trees from which they were born--tall, taller, tallest—shorn, mighty trees all cut down, so that she could pound and pound and pound, and place upon their flattened millions meaningless-- Man's most meaningless--words...words...words--]

*Can't let the typewriter be quiet too long! Got to be in motion, motion, motion... Roll into it a piece of paper; make it sing its rhythmic song. Type...type!-- anything that comes to mind, searing it, so that 'they' unconsciously hear a machine as they have been conditioned to hearing it....*

clack, clack, clack, clack; clack, clack, clack, clack...

[The child she once was wished at times for true adventure; she had been to Treasure Island and Oz, to Pamplona with Hemingway, and dreamt Bradbury's Venusian dream. She hadn't asked to become a mother at eighteen...]

clack, clack; clack, clack, clack...

They don't believe we're working unless they hear the sound!--

*But think! We could be digging coal underground--eating out our soul for the very same sake as the father of that guy who wrote Finnegan's Wake--*

Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their country...

Although one cannot hope to turn again...

Around the rugged rock the ragged rascal ran...

Although one does not hope to turn...

She sells seashells by the seashore...

Although one does not hope!--

Now is the time now is the time now is the time-- now! now! now!—

[The life of The Laboress: hunched over a machine morning light to just before night, hurrying home, feed the baby, sterilize bottles, make formula, scrape feces from diapers and toss them through two rinses before a final hot-water wash—]

clack, clack; clack, clack, clack...

*It wasn't supposed to be forever--  
(YOU said--)*

*Just until we made it, together--  
(HE said--)*

*Two children; a house; twenty-four years in the red—*

(THEN--just when light appeared at tunnel's end--the marriage wound up dead!)

clack, clack; clack, clack, clack...

[Thus the *i* plied its way between office and apartment,  
dispensing traditional duties of its station--a typical woman  
of its era; a typical parent of its generation. While more male  
workers' laments have been written than poor women's songs  
sung, too many lives lived undone....]

Mother's Day, and the orphan sang to its shepherd:

*One body*  
*One voice*

*a shrine for renewing hope*  
*the figure contains an inward scope, unpleasured.*

*Not an 'I',*  
*a 'me',*  
*in whom self-discipline burns*  
*as oxygen to the void returns, unmeasured.*

*Just a face and a form,*  
*freely foregoing fame and lover,*  
*for a fate the child, itself, will discover too-treasured.*

Oh hungry heart from which the needs of Life's flower devour the core of  
every hour! Will it love its mother always, for giving it golden fall days of meltingly  
soft beans in a bowl, before its turn to be alone in one soul?

Comfort me, now, who in parenting I lack the partner who also has been  
there and back. With whom I could exist where we would not be seen, knowing and  
loving what we were and had been, thinking our thoughts and drinking our tea,  
mated for eternity. Then through our *joined* will would all be done: a final daughter;  
a final son....

Father's Day, and Idealization hums to its perfecting child:

*Come to me; happy be! i promise you*  
*no scatology, pornography, perverted twists of psychology.*  
*Happy be! Come with me!*  
*Marvelous vistas i'll help you see,*  
*body and mind devoted to thee....*

Bitter Christmas!

I, for one, do not want to roam. I shall remain here in the warmth, the  
popcorn-smelling hearth-blazing color-lit comforts of "home." Drink your hot  
toddies, Gentlemen! Be grateful all bastard children are beyond earshot. Infidels!--  
lending not one word or inflection; salting Truth away for your own resurrection!  
Hand me a present. Let me pull the slip of its bow. Let me lift the lid--I'll love it, I  
know!

DROWN THE BASTARD!--

Aluminum... hardened water...water-heavy water in the shape of a rowboat....

The poor woman who lived at the top of the hill owned the whole place once--  
all that had begun with waterfowl and a waterfall.

The King and his court below at a dais were certain of their retaining wall.  
My sister and I, alert to the Truth, stood at the base of the fall....

Blue aluminum, with some green in it--that other color water isn't, before it gets hard. The rowboat came coursing 'round a tree at the top, before which we knew was a very weak spot. I went near to the stage; I felt a duty. I covered my womanness; I issued my plea. Returning to higher ground I called out, "WERE YOU LISTENING TO ME?"

But not enough time was left for the King to ponder, how very heavy water can be....

*How green was my valley, when snow covered the grass. i was not yet old;  
split-pea soup bubbled on the stove. My valley was greenest then, in January's hold-  
-children squirming at table, bowls ready for the ladle. A bay leaf, the New Year  
ham bone, a pinch of thyme--how green was that deep valley in the bowl of my time,  
when four of us set down to dine—*

While I cannot stop crying from frustration and rage; I've lost sight, it feels permanently, of better worlds, a brighter age. Father I vowed a daughter would rise and do your will. There, at the corner of the desk, your legacy awaits me still. 'Til then, ten thousand tomorrows exactly like today? Fighting just to say aloft, nothing left to give away?

I'm sorry I got broken, Dad; I want to check clean out of Time--without climbing another mountain, or drinking any more wine. Without sin to pull at my bit, or shades to cut the sun, without a pistol or a shivvy or a repeating gun. I think I'll let the midnight hand strike me full on the face, pause, light up one last smoke, and swallow the final ace--

[BUT REMEMBER HERE, what Jung and Reich took as true:  
insanity depends on one's point of view. The lone bird  
flying against the blue could be saner than sane, for all  
they knew. So draw all of your selves in, if you can;  
an end approaches to one concept of "Man." There'll be  
a change of guard at Saint Peter's Gate; so, should you be  
planning to die, Ladies, I suggest that you wait....]

## Part Two

*Pen between fingers of one hand, a burning cigarette, the other; each helps  
to break the electromagnetic band where those incorrigible in-between forces  
hover—*

Some people call it 'horniness,' a term without emotion. What's in a name? The current's the same, with or without devotion. And all the time and formulas, utilized to deduct it, have not, thus far, reduced one bit the impulse to conduct it....

*Line's still busy....*

Well, plug in a tape. Don't expect me to sit and wait, just 'cause you're contemplating biting the bait.

*It does feel as if this one might be the one, now, for me--*

As possible as accepting God's made up of only three?  
*His phone number drags my brain like a rake through a plot--*  
When will you gain in strength, woman, to overturn your lot? For it does seem to me, if you'll excuse this addition, you're verging us again on a slide to perdition.

*If Society doesn't change, how the hell can i progress?—*

[**My** lot would be simpler if you two together could manifest!]

You mean the tortoise can catch the hare, if we close distance two-dimensionally?

[No, no, no, and NO--make that two-dementionally!]

(Too bad it wasn't the very first time...)

*The hot bathwater is running; the body, in better shape than ever. But i don't stop in front of the mirror. i whisk the red dress off of its hanger. A slip, knee-high nylons, the silver shoes....*

*It's late. People most likely already are arriving but i take time to make every centimeter outside as clean as in. Three fluffs of powder and i'm dressed, running a comb through my hair. Pinning it back simply, i remember it in rollers, my face in heavy makeup, father's admonition-- "What's wrong with being natural." But can any parent wield a power equal to Madison Avenue's? A handkerchief, a few dollars, the car keys--i won't need anything else....*

(JC the Younger will be there!)

*Don't! i'm not thinking about that!*

*A parking space out front, how lucky can one be? Coincidence (is it?) he's the first one i see? "Come! Sit with me. Come! Drink wine with me!" The flowers, the silver, the women's dresses; the bright white linen of the tablecloths. The first self i knew is perceiving anew, clarified lustres of every hue....*

*"Come with me! Laugh with me! Come with me! Dance with me!" The past is slumbering; the future, undecided. Neither concerns me now--why not be delighted? There is not one thing to taint this night: no commitments to be spoken, no promises to be broken. No child can be conceived; no fear to be alleved--*

[Purely, in friendship, "love" to be seized?]

*The eagerness with which he touches my breasts as we kiss in the car is as great as that which awaited the touch. i know where i am going and why, and what we are going to do....*

*In the living room Rod Stewart sings, "I can see by your eyes that you've probably been crying forever." Where we are, time has arranged that the moon's light fall at my feet as i sit on the edge of the bed and slip off my shoes. But i barely have time to see its light glint off their silver straps before he lifts my hair high and kisses my neck. His fingers fumble at the ties of my dress but together we manage to loosen them, and then his hands are cupped 'round my breasts and his lips are running down my spine....*

*It is as if the soft sheets had been waiting to be smothered by our bodies as we lay back and somewhere there are pillows, but he draws his hands down my hips and thighs and i close my eyes to realize his first desire also is mine, for he gently places his lips where i most desire to be kissed. And i do not know i have forgotten*

*my breath until his mouth reaches mine to catch the small sigh as his fingers caress where his lips had left and his words, my ear, as he whispers, "How I love that sound...."*

*i could have kept forever the silky feeling of his soft thick hair sliding through my fingers but he lifts my arms high. And it seems as if gravity itself is defied as i come to rest with my lips on his breast; and then it was i, sliding upon him, and my heart was singing the Song of Solomon.*

**How beautiful and pleasant are you, O Love, in delights! Never shall I forget this night of nights....**

*One sphere of the void carries us perfectly, bonding our skins together, so evenly i cannot not feel where one begins and the other ends....*

**Come, Beloved! Let us go out to the countryside. Let us lodge in the villages and rise up early, to see if the vine flowers....**

*Through the semidarkness i see his curved whiteness, arm overhead, light-dark ridges of brow and black depths of eyes. Thought now separated is floating free, free from the body that moves without thinking--but the mind cannot be! For there is where sensation is felt sweetly, known instantly. Finally, no longer able to summon any image, i focus thoughtlessness upon the inner universe and there, in total forgetfulness amid starpoints of its light, do all that most pleases a beloved, causing him to do the same, for me.....*

**Darling I have saved for you the old delights and the new....**

(The sun was going down already on just another short story, when they headed north along the shoreline to the grassy high hill, the night of the longest lunar eclipse of this lifetime, to make love and sleep away the dark to buttercream dawnslight....)

*Did you see his face?*

*I saw his lips, his smile.*

*His head, resting on my thigh?*

*Yes--nestling 'twixt calves; I caught his eye--*

[ENOUGH!--I needn't hear it ALL, need I?]

The morning's seashore sun was weak; the social scene at the coast, bleak. I saw two women of the town meet. "Maybe it's just my Oil of Olay," I heard the taller one speak, a suggestive smile framing the words. But the bag under the beak of a low-flying pelican was more interesting. And I wondered, too: *did oral sex make woman's face muscles sleek?*--

*Look...how he holds my hand....i might be twenty--*

The Self empty of old sense of identity yearns for regress?--long-flowered dresses, carefully worn tresses, once-buyable covers for venial transgresses. Reawakened, that Old Belief--in a 'one and only' who would understand! You know it's not *Love* that's kissing your hands--

*So what if it only is Need that beside of me stands? Is there anything wrong, with simply letting me pretend?--making love can be so pretty, when "free"--*

[Only when both of you come to **ME** on bended knee!]....

Whoever said one couldn't go home again was wrong; one just can't rely on what one will find. Predictably....

*i sat down with a fresh cup of coffee in the corner of the living room's second sofa—*

my sofa!--

*and i looked a long time at him sagging on his.*

She couldn't tell him how she got caught in a storm on the sliding freeway, missed the turnoff, and wound up in another town....

*He was slouched over to the left, head hanging down, chin on chest. Breaths came in gasps between rise and fall of breast constricted between beard and belly.*

She couldn't tell him how she almost called to ask him to come get her, because all of a sudden she felt so very tired, and vulnerable....

*At the end of his sprawled legs the ankles of their sockless feet almost touched the floor, the outside edges of his heavy boot soles etching the pile of the carpet.*

She had run up the front stairs happily, home finally safely--not expecting a roaring fire, but certainly the casserole she had prepared in the oven, as promised....

*Thick red laces haphazardly half-threaded betrayed the need, when he decided to make one last trip to the corner store for the contents of the empty pint bottle keeping warm in his crotch. All that was visible was its crown; i had to peer down, to discern what it was that he held onto so lovingly with both hands. i thought of babies, those i once had made, falling peacefully to sleep without a cry; and of their encircling little fingers after sucking their bottles dry....*

Dinner in the oven didn't matter, just him present: a hug; maybe saying, "I was worried," so she could respond, "Jesus, i'm glad to be back here with you." As he slept dreamlessly like one dead I thought, what difference--between this watching, or over him in a hospital bed dying? Neither state admits empathy. Would my sorrow be different? My pity?

*An hour later, coming back from the kitchen where i checked on the casserole's progress, i thought, "i should not have turned on the oven when i got home. No, he will not want dinner, when his eyes finally are forced open again to reality. He will go straight to bed without speaking, with feigned guiltless formality..."*

But she didn't fall to past history this time! She did not think, "It's my fault for not being everything he needs; i should not have gone out about affairs of my own; i should not have left him at home all alone."

Night of the Grizzlies....

*When present moments are beautiful one cannot entertain thought of their demolition, any more than that of one's best friend, i thought, as we slowed down to watch a waterfall fall. Green water-green reflected off green leaf onto moss, and a raccoon rock; and look!--a moss-eyed fish! Down wind, down; downwind rain, arabesqueing a pine cathedral, yellowed leaves skipping its asphalt aisle...*

Boomtown, Winnemucca, Council, New Meadows, the Little Salmon River, and a watermelon breakfast, followed by a Clearwater dip—

*Faraway mountains' clouds, seen between wildflowers' stems making love out*

*of sight....*

One-handed tooling along the Lochsa, double rainbows and, at an historical site, cars passing, fogged windows deflecting the light. Split a salad at Ardlee? No; at the 7-11, take a pee, get some gas, and drive up into Big Mountain's pass....

*Porcelain glaciers; out the rider's window see, deep down the gorge's V and all the way up the rising peaks, that cut pale blue horizon with jagged teeth. Skirting Saint Mary's Lake, "Wow, isn't it great? Who needs to worry about tomorrow," he says, "with all of this in our wake!" He jumps from the car like forged steel shiny bright at the two-thousand-thirty-three-meter height, to touch the iced mountain walls beside three softly weeping waterfalls--*

But if she hadn't been in Montana she would have walked on home. He made her sing sad songs again after throwing her a bone. Why, she let him use our body 'til she was blue in the face--had to tell him time, and time again, no one ever'd take his place--

[A hungry man stealing a calf is not of the same cut as an overfed one slaughtering the lamb. The difference is like between dame and cow—as, in citadels, the difference in gunpower twixt man and woman now....

[She'd given him a home and good cookin' until he purred; but "the Man" in him kicked her heart again after giving it his word. So, there on a Montana mountain, I had her sing him a silent poem: It said, "You had your chance--go back to Hell, and climb the last one alone."]

Antique Saturday Night...

*i hadn't been in love like that before, not since i was a child--the touch that melts two into one, young and mother mild. Play that guitar Pete! Play it soft and strong. I'll never see my baby again—*

I won't say he did her wrong. But he had a natural mother; why did he need to find another?--

*Keep me comin', with your music, Pete....*

Red lights white candles vacant eyes, the opposite of Paradise; she's been sent here by leaden lies, she's been robbed of all her lullabies--

*Play that piano, Morgan. Play it loud and clear. It's all that i've got for company; my baby's not comin' here.*

She's between nothin' and no one, Lord, 'cause you've shown her she can't win--that through everlasting eternity she'll be living without 'him'.

*Play that music, Flash! Blow today away—*

If she can't see him now, let her live in yesterday. She should have been his natural mother; he wouldn't have needed any other. Keep her comin', with your music....

*You know?--you have legs like a football player, i remember my friend, Frankie, saying to me.*

He was the one boy not embarrassed to be seen with her at the elementary school picnic.

*And just a few years ago, as i slipped into my shoes, the 'Cardinal' said*

(kiddingly, of course?), "You must have been standing behind the door when God gave out ankles."

The Cardinal wasn't a friend, however; he only was a lover, beneath the tutelage of whom she grasped the distinction between one and the other--in those days before sex politics became embraced by due cause, when Darwinism equated still with natural laws, and Montague's file had not begun, yet, to hasp at Man's claws--

*When the gossip reached the top, i said, in the Cardinal's sanctum sanatorium—*

(Unwittingly to its paneled wall--)

"Who needs a replay of Dr. Zivago? Let our good works be all."

But be damned, a Spirit alliance. In absentia, commonness of foe. In the coolness of the 'morning-after,' as he considered the status quo, the Cardinal replied without flinching: "I stay; you go."

I had seen his brain like fruit half-buried in the tree 'til summer's end--the side where a parent sun had touched, ripe, ready; the other, green, unyielding....

[But archetypical constellations, reflecting obversely, meet unconscious sacrificially self-projections perfectly!]

*So Love is nothing i once thought it to be; i'm through with it plugging into me, just when i believe i might get free--to be my Self; fly to the moon, or sit on the shelf....*

She loved several bodies and she loved several minds; they refused to travel with her to live in other times: when neither was poor, or both rich; when one was whole like milk, and the other, a bitch; or one was being bastardly and the other, neurotic; when they were one and everyone else was deemed to be psychotic--conscience, pure; consciousness, virtuous: comprehending why it never should end--happy, e'er happy! Lover and Friend....

*Yes i'm done with Love's cloying at me and all that it can't but thinks it could be....*

Just yesterday, she thought she saw another one at the side of the road, and she said, loudly to the windshield,

*HO, HO, HO. HEE, HEE, HEE. Not this time; not me!—*

Ten-toed crazy-eyed curly-haired Jack, dancing down any railroad track. Skip to my Lou, Our eyes are blue; but it'll take more than a reefer to get US back!...

When We were seventeen We dreamed a story about two children, foster siblings, who spent the last night of one with one another, on the wind-whipped beach of Aquatic Park--

*No, remember?--along those slimy pilings west of Marina Green. The quiet one remained within the dream, likening Life's moments to atoms held fast by impersonal electrons--*

While one went on living, wearing low-cut silks, high-heeled shoes, and long sheer hose—

*Except now We wear sensible shoes and opaque hose—*

[as everyone who thinks they know the *total person* knows....]

Hair once silk now straw, diamond-patterned skin wobbles at the jaw and crinkles where muscles squint the eyes, so smoothly lifted when lullabies softly rose on high. Down beneath the rafters wide, all of reality was captured inside the heart of us and the hearth of home--young motherhood's joys, briefly known. But seminal love transcends the hue and drape of the outer mantle's shape, whene'er to breast woman is given to take a babe out of whom a 'man' she must make.

The "i," traditionally conditioned spirit, wished even when dead to hear, "She was a saint--the type for whom a dragon would fly to die at her door." A fly played a fugue on the strings of her universe, and she knew what she knew but never could speak it. The "I's" core was 'Man,' also stereotyped as afore--decision-maker! Bread earner!--while both of us subconsciously implored, "If this is the way 'I' was meant to be, how come you made me so hyper, Lord?"

But 'in here' now--ah!--all is Light; no more old tracks need we plod. Call it a *parapsyche menage a trois*, each on her proper side of 'God.'

Come look through the wings of the dead dragonfly, through which the winds of thought once blew, driven by the gyro of the heart--all stilled, before that Unknowable Cause that governs still unrevealed natural laws! It's no mysterious force that keeps one alive, only the thrust of the Universe's drive....

Empty skeletons are all that remain of their forms; the shadows that dogged them forever gone--to haunt, perhaps, other persons and things: black marble queens and ebony kings. Physics shares one law, at least, with Psychology: the nearer that aggregates come to one another, the less amenable are they to discrete perception....

### Part Three

They had come and gone--reverends, bishops, cardinals, and popes; human traits in masculine coats--while I unconsciously the bear's choice, the grisly grizzly bear's, longed to be the eagle's, the soaring lone eagle's, waiting in a snow-lipped crevice above the sliding ground, hovering in chill wind over my brood-- only two!--perfections, male and female; waiting for the flushing wings, the winging sound, when my companion in mystery, in all the mysteries within mysteries that abound, returned....

The carpet needs to be vacuumed...(who changed The Word of Isaiah, and made a 'virgin' of his 'maid'?) The dishes wait to be done...(“almah” and “bthulah” never needed to be as one!) LOOK--I need to yell--things are getting out of hand: no food in the refrigerator; get on top of things again!

I pause before the old glass, that very same, in which so many mes had looked at Me from without its oaken frame: optimistic girls; hopeful, lips to brow; chestnut locks of many styles, worn from then to now. This time I saw a middle-aged gal who looked fresh out of luck, and I couldn't help thinking, "Momma, asking for a f\_\_\_!"--should I be perceived, that is, by a male sexually repressed, who would see only long hair and t-shirt over braless breasts.

Failed debts of first-night previews seized this one Self then; real marrow joined the virtual in every one of them. Image bled on image; disappointment's venom-- squashed on a glass ceiling, just because they'd looked like Woman?

But it's only after dark that Freud's theories fit: Genderless Consciousness caught between its latent opposites, in a mirrored body unlit....

*To Hemingway for Joy Adamson:*

The shoplifter said: "It felt as if everyone had robbed me, so my impoverished spirit

took something it didn't need to take." A soldierly act: bolstering the ego with defiance, to bear the separated Self until peaceably let go. Noble end!--the warrior's way. Why, then, be aggrieved? Well, a fitting death's not by paws of a lion, even if left behind is only one who still believed.

### *The Old Woman Under the Fig Tree*

...has everything she needs--around her, a symmetrically perfect plot of ground and enough shade to cover her most times of a summer's day, requiring just a small shift of position as the sun makes its round. Between tending her vegetable patch and doing laundry with water from the rich poet's well, she might speak some things that make one think her very wise. In fact, it's that she's old, only, that there's so much to tell.

Not all of her stories are captivating; but during their less enchanting moments there's a wealth of private thought to be entertained. What would it be like? To be the old woman under the fig tree, never seeing television; going barefoot so much of the year one's feet were permanently brown. What would it be like? To have no name heard called out by friends in the town....

Memo as the Labor Union's Past-President:

Cleophus is dead. I heard only today. He won't need to wear orange shirts no mo'....

Dead, the story goes, Cleo did become.

Notice?--some black men are blacker than others among them, but they all look good in the color orange.

Dead, the story goes, killed by some kind of cancer.

How good he may have looked in a white shirt, Cleo never got promoted for me to discover. What it was, that really did him in, is a question the killers will need never to answer.

### *White rice in Mazatlan...*

"Only One Peso," the poor man's sign said. "I will write your name on a single grain and seal it in a glass tube to hang from your neck on a golden chain."

Blue sky...green surf...sand white with frothy foam... How many names 'round the neck does it take, I wondered, to feed the children at home?...

This is my Autumn-Summer if you know what I mean. Life's more than half over. There'll be an Autumn-Autumn yet, before that uncomfortable Autumn-Winter that precedes Deadly Winter's Spring.

But, first!--

Into the computer pour the Qu'r'an--let "Only the truths!" be the command. Next, the Testaments, Old and New-- the best of them only, 'Christian' and 'Jew'. The Baghavad-Gita, and the Mayan codices--if the Conquistadores left any but the vulgarist; North American Indian legends, any revered texts that you like, from the Upanishads to Eskimo tales off an encrusted stalagmite. Merge all together for the First Rule of Dying, *per se*, absolved from never trying: it makes no difference what one believes one goes toward, so long as no grudge is permitted, afterward....

Life is witness to the word as the word is witness to the Dream; yet both Life and Dream are created unconsciously. For proof we need only to dissect the Dream.... Empires have ceased to exist, inexhumable. Rome nevermore shall meet Byzantium,; the Ottoman Empire long, long dead. Yet Humankind waits still for parity, not lived long enough never to dread.

Legacies cultured over time, however, cling as dust inside the curtain of existence when there is insufficient land to sustain the Dream. Within Life, where there are no real borders, the sons of the Lost Dream draw lines while crying words of the self-same fathers. Most horrible, the parading nightmares of children, whose ancestors would not have traded the wine of their own families for all beyond shores or mountains. Give a child nothing in which he or she truly can believe, and raise a thief--if not of things, of emotions. One must have it proved that *Humankind* can be relied upon, before one can trust in anything.

A wedge in Zebulun.... Lead-grey cloud-cluster blown apart, its front wafting bottom upward, and raining death, probably, beneath. But we are too far from the hills and deserts of our origin to see it, or inside of us feel senseless death become a tolerable concept.

*Merely a psychical catharsis...*

I met a muslim in Wadi Musa. He wore a handsome black moustache, and his skin was the color of succotash. An Arab christian of Hierusalim, who lived in the Muslim Quarter, had steely green eyes set in paler skin; and we found ourselves joined up with him at coffee with a Hebrew girl, wed to a native Palestinian, whose parents had disowned the both of them, in that their love surpassed the hate which had consumed the prior generation.

As Fate would have it (as the saying goes), their friend, an Arab Israeli, stopped by and revealed his woes. "Why should my card show a religion? I, too, was born in this nation! Why am I a singled-out pigeon?"

How great must a loss be, to drive one mad?--seeing one's innocent child caught in crossfire of men equally sad. Hamas! Abba! Fatah, or Hezbollah! Sons of Isaac and Ishmael-- rabbi, priest, or ayatollah. And a stone's throw away, there loomed above, a mount the world claimed a cradle of Love....

"Yeah!--what about that Dead Sea copper scroll?--" the girl gave an ironic laugh. "Are we to suppose that it plays no role? Yet not one word, in all the polemics--"

"I doubt the commonweal knows," I said. "The Word belongs to academics."

"I know a man," the cafe owner said. "How many bombs would do the job? We would warn everyone! We want none dead--"

"Not even those who have forgot, holy wars serve only to kill off their flock?" We others looked warily toward the doors. The childless man's voice cut like shaved rock. And I, "christian," thought of Faith, tenets versus hypocrisies; polished words emanating from its lathe; and of all its history still unknown to simple folk living by it, whereby rules changed by men, and false seeds sown, negated the death of its prophets, who died not for church dominion but defending the very opposite. I recalled with what temerity, 'God's' rules the dead died to live by, were seen changed arbitrarily in a later century. I had sifted religion's history many a year; when one reaches rock's bottom, Belief's foundations disappear....

I was ushered, then, into that blackened soul of a revolutionary: those who ruled no longer superior; so well-fed they could forget what they ate, nor cry for land to grow their bread, nor hold key to their now dispossessed gate....

"How much time would it take?" my mouth was dry--"to tunnel beneath, and set them? How long before we saw it blown sky-high?"

Yes!--we called Death, that day, to Religion--sheiks and kings, princes and papacies; headdresses, staffs, robes of fine linen. Decreed rebirth of human legacy: man on the naked threshing floor. We would send that mount to infinity!

And I cherished the thought of what would be if, robbed of that ancient relic, Man relied on his own divinity. I saw all of 'God's' women joined to me, my eyes dusted by memory of their powerlessly suffered history: Hagar, Keturah, Tamar, Azubah.... Adah, Maachah and Ephratah; Narah, Shuah, Elischeba and Dinah--all forced to endure the slaughter, lifted from one huge sandy grave: the Spirit freed to speak through The Daughter! Jaladah, Rizpah, Ahinoam, Zeruiah; Merab, Michel, and the wife of Uriah!

And that sudden, newly-fated me felt a surge of satisfaction, imagining exactly what I'd see: every tile, every bush, the roots of trees; stones and rocks spewing history; icons, prophecies, satanic furies, atoms of sin and molecules of bone--vengeance shall be MINE, this time, oh Lord!--no more of my children shall die for a soulless home....

## Part Four

Noonday high, full moon neap--light unperturbs gravity, nor ellipse of the planet's sweep through Michelson-Morley Sea...(*Energy!*)

Sound twangs while shade relaxes the herringbones of Its fret, from which the Constant's

bounty can be caught just net by net...(*Invisibility!*)

Starshine strikes, rain descends--a sheeted stairway huddle, exchanging ionic glances  
summed up in a puddle....(*Unity!*)

Thinking tacks where time ticks could eyesight but perceive, the ebb and flow of quanta  
wherein tracks of particles cleave...(*Eternity!*)

'God' is Nature's baffle melded plane to pane, dividing by uncertainty the quotient from its  
name...(*Infinity!*)

Backward's forward; up, the same as down, theorizing spatially 'neath the relativistic crown.  
Nothing can happen *there*, in the labyrinth of quantum mechanics, without something  
happening *here*, in a welter of particle antics.

Is all a simple Gestaltian collage--we only imagine trains or rain? Or is it a Structuralist's  
reality--one-on-one connections, eyes to brain?

Space: grand illusion to the eyes of man. Something greater than gravity has me in hand,  
where a volcano erupting on a distant planet's land dimples a beach of Terra Firma sand.

Perhaps Q.E.D. finally will draw for me a picture of *h*'s action on *v*, so at death I may fuse  
contentedly, with that which I did and did not see....

Unified Field, Unified Thought: Thou art that lightening-quick compassion I seek to ground--  
*Oh how I yearn to get into it, into it, into it.*  
*Oh! How I yearn to be into it, all the way....*

I adore you; I adore that universal tongue that makes no sound.  
*Oh how I wish I could, I could;*  
*Oh! How I wish I could.*  
*I know it would be so good, so good;*  
*I know it would be so good!*

All is One--mother, father and issue--differing forms of the same tissue--

*Why do I still believe that I can, I can?*  
*Why will I always think that I can?*

Because **we** are Woman-Man-Woman, not Man-Woman-Man....)

The Wedding Choir:

Come speak the words my soul longs to hear; repeat them again, holding me near.

I've waited too long for you to reappear; drink with your lips the last falling tear....

Come, take the hand that wishes to hold the feelings of now, the longings of old;  
come spin the tale that waits to unfold, come claim the heart that never has been sold.

Then give me a kiss, or two, or three; I've waited so long for this from thee! Sing me  
the song of our Memory, waltz me into Eternity....

The Wedding Ceremony:

ALL SCRIPTURES REPEAT THEMSELVES OVER AND OVER, LIKE HONEY  
BEEs THROUGH WILD CLOVER--

We wanna c-scape  
We wanna c-scape  
We wanna c c c a c-scape....

WELCOME FRIENDS!--TO FRIENDS OF THE FRIENDS OF THE FRIENDLY  
CHURCH OF FRIENDS...

YAY, 'GOD' GIVETH AND 'GOD' TAKETH AWAY, AS US THROUGH ITS

SUBSTANCE IT DOES SWAY--SOMETIMES ON YOUR TERMS, SOMETIMES, MINE --  
OUR POINT OF VIEW MAKES IT ALL DIVINE!--

An' how about a lan-scape  
A lan-scape  
A lan lan lan lan lan-scape?...

WHEN THE ONE TRUE LIGHT BY BEVELED GLASS IS CLEAVED, THE COLORS OF ITS  
RAINBOW EASILY ARE PERCEIVED. YET OF ITS DEGREES NONE TO THE EYE  
APPEAR, AS IT DETERMINES AND GOVERNS OUR EVERY YEAR-

It shapes the c-scape  
the c-scape  
the c c c c c-scape  
that forms the lan-scape  
the lan-scape  
the lan lan lan lan lan-scape...

TO RIGHT AND PROPER MAJESTY HAVE 'BRIDE' AND 'BRIDEGROOM' COME, AND  
WE CELEBRATE THEIR UNION IN WHICH TWO SHALL RULE AS ONE: FROM STATE  
TO STATE, IN ETERNAL EVOLUTION, CONSECRATING EACH OTHER WITH  
UNENDING ABSOLUTION...

So if u want to s-cape, s-cape,  
s-cape to the c-scape  
up from the lan-scape, the lan-scape  
where u can scan scan scan the  
pan-state,  
whatcha gotta do is  
whatcha gotta do is  
whatcha gotta do is

*Ac-cent-u-ate the Positive (thought),  
e-lim-i-nate the Negative (thought),  
latch on to the Affirmative (thought)--  
and don't mess with Mister (or Ms!)  
In-Between....*

Birth of The Daughter....

First, a quiet gathering of energy in the small of the back, followed by more at slowly decreasing intervals, each subsequent one of greater intensity.

She is determined to walk as long as she is able, but now the involuntarily summoned energy has the muscles surrounding it in torturous grip. She crouches on the balls of her feet, knees bent, heels lifted....

SUBMIT!

Submit??--to this thing so apart from my control, happening of itself at its own device and rate?

BIRTH AND DEATH: TWO DAYS NO ANIMAL CAN ESCAPE--

But, *giving* birth, one could!

DOES THAT MAKE THIS MATTER LESS?

'Matter less?' ...Ouch!--funny, that! I'd take being 'matter-less' right now, and one t-less, as well.

'MATTER' NEVER WILL MATTER ENOUGH AGAIN FOR YOU TO TELL, THAN IT DOES THIS VERY MOMENT--THAT IS, UNLESS YOU BELIEVE IN HELL--

A refuse dump, a graveyard--the original meanings of 'Hell'--get thee to Sheol and Gehenna! Get thee to Hell! Well, keep me out of graveyards and dumps if you will; keep me in gardens colored in frills. Then I'll do all that the Body wills! Don't think that I see this as earning redemption. Hah!--losers all, east to west, no exception.

We're offered either a one-and-only chance, because we defiled a beautiful morn, or permission to try again, and be reborn until, eventually with luck, we get sucked back up into one identityless supreme entity, to exist unwittingly for an unknowable eternity. No--count me out of the redemption game--'resurrection,' 'reincarnation,' one and the same--

Ouch, gosh darnit! Ouch...Ouch...OUCH!....

They would have me contemplate the end prize an ever-retreating Paradise that outdistances pure humanness; or, absent individual thought, dissolution into existencelessness. Now I, like my Brother, wouldn't punch you out to prove it; but, be it church or state, WATCH OUT--should my daily bread depend upon it!--OH...can't...talk...anymore....

## TAKE IT AS IT COMES.

How odd...to hear myself grunt.... But!--Jesus Christ! In the name of God!--  
HIS NAME, YOUR NAME, ONE AND THE SAME; WHETHER EARTHLY HEAVEN  
OR NIRVANA, NEITHER'S EASY TO OBTAIN.

My brother killed for healing on a 'Sabbath Day'?--who could believe that, anyway?.... *Pant*.... Believe that *now*?... *Pant, pant*.... When merchants trade every day of the week? Believe, now?--when meat is eaten every day of the week? *Pant...pant...pant*.... Pity my little-girl brain, into which was beat: 'Woe a Friday memory lapse and your tongue tastes of meat!' A mortal sin--think of it-- I believed that sell: die before confession or a true 'Act of Contrition,' burn in Hell, they said. Oh, how I worried; what if a brick fell on my head?—

*Pant...pant...pant...pant....*

To have cared so much! To have borne such dread!

IT WASN'T GOD'S WORD THAT SO RESTRICTED; IT WAS THE VERY SAME 'AUTHORITY' THAT YOUR BROTHER CONTRADICTED. HE, THE VERY FIRST TO ASK, WERE HE HERE NOW, WOULD 'GOD' FORBID ON THIS, OR ANY SABBATH DAY, THE LABOR DELIVERING ANOTHER OF ITS CHILDREN TODAY?

Aghhh--

WOMAN...FORCED TO HONOR THE FIRST CAUSE, FUNNELED THROUGH LOVE'S CONUNDRUM. THIS DAUGHTER IS BORN TO TEACH MEN: ONE HOLDS THE FIRST LAW, OR KEEPS NONE....

I am empty; tie us off--quickly now! I'll point to where; I'll lift my head to show you...there, and there: six inches from Her, and another along the cord that fed. Tie! Tie!--using the silken thread....

Now give me the silver scissors. I will sever this firstborn's cord--psyches connected forever, never to bow to any 'lord.' Cleanse Her body with scented oil; swath it loosely in soft cotton; then place into these outstretched arms my first sun, 'only-begotten.'

## MUSIC, MAESTRO, PLEASE!:

*Fudge, fudge, tell the Judge,  
Momma's got a newborn baby.  
Wrap it up in tissue paper,  
send it down the elevator,  
upstairs, downstairs, out the back door!*

## The Daughter's Retort for Mary of Magdala:

A certain fellow issued Woman a challenge, 2,000 years ago. This is how it ran: "If Woman wants to enter the Kingdom of God, she first must liken herself to Man." It was not Her time, then, to respond (despite nobility and proper intention), "And before you can be a part of Only One God, you must understand how it is to be Woman!"

I, too, from my beginning loathed thought of division, between a male and a female psyche--as opposed to consciousness simply processed through varied forms of materiality. I conceived consciousness purely without gender--whether Father God, Mother Mary or He upon the water; and, of the predetermined course of Time's events, It was destined to appear in the form of Daughter. She completes the Spirit's quanta summed within Mass Relativity--in which, of all Its androgynous siblings, not one retains eternal identity.

Far removed is She from any pious novice in white, as far as from any saviour hallucinated--by each breath forced to think, *Her* thought taken to the brink, demanding *its* existence be validated. Not a collective psychical adolescent, She intuits Nature's total skill--its matrices all inexorably driven by more than an after-thought labeled "free will."

The All coparticipates in a dreamless physics; and, when kineticism explodes into fission, a choiceless concentration of self is hurled into yet another planetary mission-- into a body strung keenly, feet through cortex, by the same substance that constitutes its essence,

like the wood-carved Pinocchio no less a puppet, no less helplessly soldered into existence.

I...! I...! I...!—this face or that—Woman's form does live, yes! But what of the self who wielded a sword as Joan? The Knowing Knower, who once danced as Grahame, spoke as Simone? The same baying hounds, the same muted calls of the clowns, chase every soul with insatiable want. Look for total spirit in the form of man, as well as Madame de Grandes of de Maupassant.

Amid rising smoke and feathers that float, I rest certain in that solid-state sea; within Its ever-exchanging imperceivable net is Consciousness wedded, never free. And now four of us now are present when my Sister and I are together; a mutual silent society have we—two entities Nature intended and the two Experience created, a private club beyond The Word's accessibility....

And I do believe, if Man and I could take our bodies away, the realms of Consciousness would meet again in perfect form—like Mayan lovers climbing at morn, full-aware as they were of breeze-brushed grass and scent of air—thought joined forever, indivisibly, in Eternity, traversing loadstone, glancing off diamonds.

There exists Possibility! Who can tell? An ellipse could be just a pendulum's swing, taken to its widest ring. We'll rent a castle; there, out of Memory's midnight deep, those prior selves might creep back while we sleep. Having had to spend our precious youth heedfully, do we each not wish for freedom to look again, and see? Together we well would will, with all of Future's field to till. Love, unlike Convention, never changes, never bends. Only that matters which we know at our core—alone is to be half of existence and time; unions of Spirit transcend Humankind.

Come swim with me. Come 'sin' with me! And for your pure company take unto you all of *my* realm. Listen! Santo Domingo chimes. Awaken, Beloved, another of your days is mine. Jupiter or Juno; spectrum or rainbow; an unfaceted gem: two hides of one Self; true sides of Its Self—kiss me! and let's start over again....

#### *The New Day....*

I want to give thanks to the confluence of Thought and Time that brought me to the river's end, where Society does not reach. The setting sun frills space with ultraviolet light, so that a slowly turned gaze absorbs silver disks through the trees' leaves, riffling in cadence with sparkles on the water's surface. A swan drifts there, and I ponder its obliviousness to worldly quests. It will float until it needs food or rest, and find them. And I conjecture about the lilies which need not toil, and how we, vulnerable humans, repeatedly are given to forget: our courses also are preordained; and how to accept simply the beauties which, beyond our influence, any moment can contain....

Love is not God's or another's for me alone, nor does it need any circumstance. Brother for brother, sister for sister, husband, wife—love requires no labels. We bind it to them; and that which can help heal, heighten all, is restricted—a tied bird. Timidly, we substitute a word. If I want to touch your hand, fold you in my arms when I recognize your suffering; clasp you to me if you bring me pleasure, whose permission should I ask?

Garden of Eden, Garden of Earth.... Tree of Knowledge, Reality's Tree.... Your fruits are sustenance, only, for the journey through the devil country, before which lies innocence. And in that lake many choose (some have no choice but) to stay—forever children, they retain the primary state of grace. Beyond lies non-requitable love—not sainthood, as possibly inferred; in the Platonic sense, by which all can be admitted and cherished still.

Do not think, however, this to be my Apology. Measure by mortals or gods unknown, summarily rejected. Either way, Determinism versus Free Will is something that only can be talked about.

\* \* \*

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