Adenocarcinoma

& Other Poems

Together with
One Hundred Aphorisms
ON THE NATURE OF THE SPIRIT

by

Colin Ross

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VARIOUS UNICORNS

I see in the mist
Of rings and things
And various unicorns
A chunk of marble
Hard and stern
And so I turn
And fade away
To mists of soft
And warm and smooth
Whispers and smiles
And loving ways in
Endless, cloudless days
And then I seem to
See your face
And feeling your
Soothing hand
I slip, I sigh and
I fade away
To join a silken
Day, away I fade
To mists of rings
And things
And various unicorns

I see in the mist
Of boats and moats
And various unicorns
A piece of glass so
Sharp and stern
And so I turn
And fade away
To mists of love
And kiss and love
Laughter and you
And resting here and
Sighing, flying near
And as I seem to
See your face
Be feeling your
Soothing hand
I slip? I sigh? Do
I fade away?
In loving, sharing
Stay? I cannot fade
To mists of boats
And moats
And various unicorns

EPISTLE

I your humble servant, bowed, shameful,
Have today met another.
Walking in the streets of the sinful city
Robed, holy and white collared
I chanced to stumble and fall.
The binding of your book torn,
The skin on my cheek scraped and red,
I hoped not for a Samaritan's passing
But thought of the roadbuilder's guilt
And cursed the immoral grinning mailbox.
Then I felt upon my arm
A helping, a blind man's touch
And I marvelled to think of his mercy
And I blessed him in your name.
He rebuked my word as he washed my cuts
Saying he cared not for salvation.
His hair, Lord, was that of a wild man
Though his speech was that of kindness.
His eyes were those of a drunkard
But his walk was straight, his breath sweet.
His mood was one of detachment
As I pained at the garbage in the street
And asked your forgiveness for the careless litterer.
I say he was blind for he saw nothing
He saw your book, my robes, but he cared not.
I sit here writing in your house, Lord,
And the time for hourly prayer draws near.
I asked you to forgive this man for his ways
He knoweth not what he do.

LONDON TO WINNIPEG

Sorry Allen, it's not there
No proposed Lon Don to Win Peg title
No radar distorted, propelled mutated air
No jets in these streams
Not even a hashish bathroom smoke
Just thoughts
Alexis' package opening, *gage d'amitie* joy
Game playing at international drug smuggling.
Your lifejacket is under your seat
Surprised finding my London mental lifejacket gone.
Low on mother-ignited duty-free Gitanes
No filter, seemingly without end this flight
Without consoling sea-dive (*mourir)* fantasies
I wander
To Canada sans BOAC lifejacket.
My best small round inkball friend scratches
The occasional *mot francais (isoler*) le boredom
But even *Larousse* plots inarticulation.
O *Milton* that you could sit here now-
You'd be bored.

UNDETAILED NEURON UNDERGROUD SKETCH

Electronic unconsciousness flashes
Constant neuron word mind images-
Train-filled Northern line passenger thought carrying
Leicester Square Pre-Frontal Lobes
Hidden High Barnet Darkness, up
Narrowing conscious tubes interconnecting
Baker Street, Picadilly Circus, South Kensington,
Returning commuter realities home from outward stimulus
Edgeware, Memory, Wood Green, Sexual urges near
Neurotransmitter Tunnel Building Project (well underway)
Loading existentialist, sprung-rhythm cars,
From Shaftesbury Avenue, descending
Bowler-hatted minds maintain green-pea fog
A new-wave thought tides beyond N.W. 37, S.E. 29
Associating bus lines with Bakerloo, Marylebone Rd. with Circle,
Dust free, smoke sweetening ventilation sweeps
Upper dirt, smell from its surreal source.

TREES

Sheetlightning forms pierce upward
Green life, brown trunk based
Rents in air
Strained arm grasps height light
Light light
No deepset roots we shooting buds
Ambitionfilled footbased insecurity
Gale force winds we crumble
Down missingribbed, dust finish.
Ancient boltcharge branches breathe
Brown trunk strength
Living, grasping, touch.
Crumble down we come
Root digested, memory fainted shrubs.

BOXING

Heard radio boxer
Speech thought foreign
Realized speaking English
Incredibly
Bad profession

WALKING PARK

Walking trees park sky
Green leaves misty rained
Walking trees between
Around by grassy feet
On sky
Alone today not one
But one no walking
Trees park glimpsing coming
Blonde-haired legged smile
Slowly moving in from
Outer into me I find
I’ve found! I’ve found!
Now one still one attached
To skin for touch
I long long wait
No more.

I DARE

I go down go I, I dare?
Dare I go down to town
To buy a dare down town?
Or down to town to dare.
To down the town in dares.
Dare I?

MOVEMENT STILLNESS FIRE

And I am alone inside
Where words are spoken I watch
From far inside the words
But I am still
And he can never cease
In the outer place
If not for me he'd wander
Endless drifting movement
And between us is the fire

But the fire can be forgotten
And the movement can be lost
For eternal stillness
But this is not the highest place
For when the sun and the moon
Burn in the same movement
And there are two stillnesses
This is the greatest fire

And the stillness is the inner place
And the stillness is within words
And the movement is the outer place
And the movement is beyond words

But where is the fire now
In this dark place of movement
Where there is no sight of stillness
And there is only movement
Without direction without hope
There is nothing in words or action

There is no stillness in the modern eyes
And there is no fire in the rotting skin
And yet the two parts shall be joined
Around the word which is fire
Then will the word have been spoken

But the inner and the outer are one
And between them is the fire
And between the sun and the moon
Is burning for all is fire

And movement and stillness
And these are the three places

IMAGES OF HER

Near the bent over lamp
And the cup on the desk
With the wine bottle
Beside the wooden deer
The newspaper in the drawer
In the drifting air
And the downward falling light
In the silent time alone

Caught between the descent and the fall
Between drifting and flight
Between the flame and the fire
Turning to ash without hope
In the onward journey
Still by never ceasing to move
What can seemingly be will be
Many branches of one trunk
And many trees in one soil
There where the two men crawl
On the trodden path
And swimming in many streams
From the same sea
Where the waters meet
And there is no light in the depths
Looking over the shoulder
In a turning around to return
On the empty plain in the barren land
Where there is only one tree
And there is the sky
Traveling in the darkness of night
From the eyes of the owl
When the music plays
And there is someone watching
Seeing from the unseen place
The footsteps leading onward
Not far from the door of home
And the clouds part
And there is the moon
The ever inward closing dark
Far from the village streets
There are no others here
The owl is feathered asleep

The last cry has been uttered
Someone is watching

Straying from the many shadows
The coming of the day
Gone from the drifting sands
The oases in memory gone
A voice in the distance calling
With the rustling in the grass
Ever softer the fading light
A slight glow in the dying black
To the unforeseeable place
Behind is that last unseen
There is a new stirring in the wind
Somewhere there are eyes
It is now the evening or dawn
With another word to say
A bird wheels in the air
Where is the going to

From the many other sides
The place in the inbetween
From the never knowing
And the all unknown
Where the many images are
In the fire where the burning is
From the indecision and never sure

The quiet lady touching her finger
In the dusk darkening sky
Many colours in vision
The smell of the cactus
What is it below the eyebrows
The current is swelling
There not further off is a fish
Softness is in the air
A whistling in the trees

We have known your watching
And we have come
Though we have walked in many rooms
And been in the longer passage
We have never turned from your voice
Here in the endless place

We shall wander and never leave
Though the days are short
And the hours long
And the distance is far
And we are very near
We have known the sound of calling
As we came and will come again
Here without staying or leaving
We have come
Here where there is no past
And where the future will never come
And it is here that we are met
And this is the calling we hear

The falling away and down
Where the darkness can never end
In a turning around to return
The still room and the fading light
The drifting smoke and a cigarette
Near the many books on the floor
And the hard chair
With the six walls
In the four sided room
And the mattress on the floor

THE WORLD OF PAN FLOWING

Like the blind man
Never seeing colours the forest
Is deep the forest
Is dark with night
Which falls
And which is falling
And has fallen
And will fall
But under the tree
Where its soul flows
About the human flame
And they meet
Man and tree
This is where the forest
Is day

When the branches grasp
At the sky
And speak into
The skin and the eyes
And that which feels
When eyes and ears and nose
Are closed
And the chest puffs out
To touch the tree
Which knows and knows
There is another
Which knows

The earth underneath the feet
Below the blue
Moves slowly onward
Flows backward and up
Where far away the rocks
Thrust skyward into
The air where trees are
And the ancient grass

There are black forms
Unknown blackness wheeled
Parked parking and unparked
Which stretch out

And push back the trees
And the stream which slides
And flows in the lowness
But there are other exuding
Forms of death
And their air halting remains

But this is the air
And shouting at the clouds
As the grass answers
Where a tree shoots up and out
Or a rock thrusts into the flow

Down swooping a bird
Glides up and over and is pushed
And pushes and is carried
In the soul of the sky
Where the clouds are
And where clouds were
Where they have been
And will be and are
And are flowing

EDMONTON SONG

How Indians die is no joke;
White man kills white man
But has no mind to see it
The mind that is dollared
Has its outward notation
But fixity is on every cheek.

Most about the world I see
How that world is abstract
And floats on the real world
Tourists tour their sensations
And scientists tour the world
Looking at the eye's inside skin.
An Indian in Norman Wells
Is his own world's centre
And shares no common world.
Another Indian almost came
Who I kissed surrounded by God
But she never quite emerged
Out of creation into creation.
City folks and country folks
Maintain their disconnection
And are dĕbris in the wind.

Old world apocalyptic images
Have no force on this continent.
That notion a private guide
Toward future experimentation

CONGREGATION

Pews seated robe-watching
Contentment ritual involvement
Misconception doctrine based
On century order decay
Ideas hardened unanchored.
Are seeing movement people
Meeting minds through
Eyes mouths touching
Close being close
Skyseeing more?
Or darkened portraits
Old ideas truthing?

DIMENSIONS

Most simple mathematics operating
Most simple religion mouthing
People importance.
Finding minds formula fitted
Religion founded no significance.
Better living new dimensions friends glimpse
From opportunity physical overlap
High buildings wide streets long time
Passing through it.
Later drifting out from boundary
Changing all filling
Only opportunity individual investigation
No later individuals dimensions all
In one.

MONOTHEISTIC SONG

Christian based
Society belief prevalent
Stealing wrong concept
Glamorizes stealers
International secret thieves
Stealing foreign work hard
Achieve sincerity.
Ending love you
Myself more better
Best myself there
Writing much to do.
Love you all love God
Loves all am he
New thought realization
Continues progress
Far below being.

T.S. ELIOT SONG

The steel tongue of a machine
Can titillate like no woman can
The spirit of contemporary man.
It can fascinate the catskinner
Who carries the torch of male touch
Once carried by Druids, Shakespeare
And the common English working man.
Our metal machines can speak to us
Deeper than the statistics registered
By dutiful men behind oak desks.
Why then can man not touch his God
Or any other organic being that moves?
The knowledge is a spring of water
The source of power that made great men
Great work, great civilization, yet
Ther can be no outward sign, no God,
Not yet, for not enough bones have broken.

SCHIZOPHRENIC SONG

Even the king's horses
Mounted by modern man
Exponent of such perversion
Could patch no culture
Under a metaphysical quilt
Not of fields or fragments
Seen as by the Pratt-Whitney
Eagle of contemporary genius
More like a pair of snakes
He, man, recharges his will.
Indeed a subject for study.

Consciousness has no access
To the blacked eyeball
Or the black ball that rolled
Off the table of production
Into a sub-Freudian pocket-
This bum sleeps in pants.
Ah, 'tis true my friend
This bum is free to ride
The track that leads north.

Let us not maintain fertility
To be unacquainted with doom
Death, or other imponderable
X-factors not to be equated
With the statistics of the mind.
Ah no, let instead the black wing
Of the raven communicate
With the eyes of the black stomach.
In that pit lies one catatonic
Whose shadow spirit walked
From the culture of the modern
To the first fireweed blooming
Where the wooden tree burned.

IN CANADA CAN MEN WRITE POEMS?

In Canada can men write poems
Or just cut trees, the bark, leaves, phloems,
Trap fur, drill oil or mix cement,
Making tax for the government?
In Canada one man can sing:
Richard Outram, the poets' king.

CANADIAN POETS

Hear this: rejoice! No pope, in Rome, or rhyme,
Can tell our men the foot, the stress the line.
Their pens leak tears like taps. But worse, the sinks,
The drains, are brains, with which the public thinks.
Watch out! Wit rides, and then you poets die.
You cut the tree and then you told a lie:
You said, “No, no! The tree held not the sky
The earth, or hell.” But look, I ask, then why,
Why then, have words lost sap, man God, and earth?
You cannot know the dead and not give birth:
The great are life, the living death. Their words,
Their breath, would cut the tree, I know in thirds.
The root, the trunk, the leaf: all three defy
The axe that writes; all three are standing by.

GOING INTO MEDICINE

Medicine, the ambition of my brain,
Like late autumn metabolite of leaf
Will deep in my body, my soul, restrain
For my soul's ambition a jewelled sheath
My books are tombs. Like trunks of trees they life
And sap contain. Buried in books, I yet
Can write the truth, ordained to be midwife,
To grab an M.D. by its howling feet.
The truth? Not that, just marks, facts, grades, scores, nines.

My soul, my plan to plant your word in men
Is seed, is sap: studies have built confines
Round you, me and the work that should begin,
Therefore I pray: though school is my mistress,
Grant, God, next spring, rebirth, M.D. success.

Line 2: In the fall sugars, proteins, chlorophyll and other leaf constituents are transported into the trunk of the tree for storage.

DISSECTION

True, a smart man could have built it, I think,
So I watch it there. Could it kiss or wink?
Hardly: it is deceased: the man is dead.
(Maybe I should have entered law instead)
But no, I'm here, though not prepared to cut
This ingenious model of limb and gut.
In one week, skin flayed back, I see he looks
Like a rabbit, not a man. I take my books
And steer the required course. The heart and head
Hold neither mind nor soul; the man is dead.
The man, one time, could breathe, but now he's what?
A specimen that I must probe and cut,
And memorise. I know what I must learn
And need not ask if soul can bleed or burn.
The man was alive, once; what is he now?
Body and soul, one part down here below?
Not that; I've cut him into bits. Ten parts
Make up his lungs (the same is true of hearts).
I just can't tell quite what it is, this thing,
About which, once, our churchmen used to sing.
The priest, his curse and choir, his plough, his sword,
His faith, have lost their God, wisdom and grace;
They're not discussed in lecture, on the ward,
Nor here, where I dissect head, neck and face.

PETER BRETSCHER AND HIS THEORY OF IMMUNE CLASS REGULATION

He made the fulcrum signals one and two
Then brought into balance something quite new.
His work of art is more than a theory;
It is, in fact, the gift to see clearly
Man's design: Immune Class Regulation
Is a product of imagination.
Order, balance and symmetry, valued
In any field, are his. He has argued,
Which few men do, with force, which few men can,
This student of thought, science and of man.
His range is wide; once he remarks in jest
On Aquinas, having found what the best
Thinkers have dug for in their books: true weight
To enrich modern logic and debate.
He begins with stated axioms, clear
And concise (at that few men are his peer)
Then he concentrates on our white blood cells
To learn how they work. And, with ease, he quells
Objections by foreseeing them. His mind
Differs from most not in degree but kind
The intellect, not data or technique,
Has guided him. His new understanding
Of human inner structure is unique,
And therefore difficult and demanding.

DEATH IS A MARATHON

If God is great,
Man his image,
Why is man's state
To be so poor,
To just endure,
No hope of cure?

We need our pain.
Our suffering
Is how we train
To earn God's grace
In the long race
Toward his face.

EPITAPH

Here lies Colin. He will leaven
When the Christians go to heaven

KNIGHTSBRIDGE

I sat at the foot of rocks,
In the brown light with blowing wind.
The traffic crawled around
And shadows vanished before me, scurrying
I knew no-one.
The sun was a low red
So there were no stars, only the floor.
Which was growing with moss and lichen.
Below, in the tube, the mindless crowd
Was flowing through the halls,
Up the steps, towards the furnace,
Guarded by creatures, convulsing into the heavy, steaming air

I was a wind without force, a voice of sadness,
Dweller among rocks, seeking the rhythm of autumn.
Orku, wild from between the stars, had come
So autumn, delicate and trembling, spoke:
“The body of man my alter, I honour you,
With smells that he may be glad,
And colours that he may rejoice.”

The men of the city shuddered and dissolved
To reappear on streets of metal.

LANDSCAPE

Here in these rivers, fresh water to the sea
We are fighting the tides
Bending down they go, showing
Dark lips in flickers, breathing
Old gusts from wind, and
Cold upon these lands, adding larch to the fire
And we are not consumed

Eyes of sight look, forwards from brim to
Bottom, brimming towards bottom
To brim hearing of ears, far and near and overflow
This cup of waters, this I.

AMERICA

Happiness! Bird thou never wert
Nor blithe spirit, nor man smell
But extra-human, built on thought.
I recall your white summits mounting
Europe, cleaved by that line, surrounded
By walls of that flesh, that Mother.
Dear Shelley, the guns of America survived
That orgasm; that American nervous system
Did not make an end of complexity.

THE SIXTIES

The sixties bred little men,
Little Kennedy, and little
John Glenn; above all
There were no tragic men.

OBSERVATION

Dogs men bred with iron genitals
That consume metal; men become
That consumed metal: cars live on
The nervous system of the occupant.

NORMAN WELLS MELODY

A crescent moon rising in the south,
Over the mountains, early in January.
The arctic sun rising in the east, late,
And setting in the south early.
Moose feeding in the thick willows,
Ptarmigan running over hard snow.
Two ravens twisting around each other,
Falling, twisting, in the hard blue sky,
Two black geniuses of North America.

THE THUNDERBIRD

The plumber's revelation
Is not longed for here.
Kuno climbed the stair
But made no contact,
The labyrinthine fetus
In a galvanized womb.
Organic degeneration
Is preferable to this
But is less tolerable.
Hence the averted eye.

Poetical concentration
Impregnated this century
No linguistic womb,
Fathered no tragic muse.
Silence, waiting, fasting;
Ineffective procedures.
But the solar plexus
Of the pre-cambrian core
Inhabits the mythological
The living world edge.
On this granite summit
Cloud, tree, sky, bird, spirit
Of a two-legged carnivore,
Can kill the dead Canada.
"Sun worship" misrepresented
By being modern vocabulary.

TWO FISHERS: ONE OF FISH, ONE OF MEN

The net cross hatched to catch the jack,
Caught not Great Jack, a bullet killed,
That fateful day, Man-Fisher's catch,
But fish: jackfish, grayling, catfish,
By working at the northern creek,
The trapper feeds his family,
The fish condemned to but one soul,
Vegetable not rational.

WINTER SONG

If children die
Their parents say
“Why is God cruel?”
They don’t know why
That holy day
He used a mule.

Before judgement
Men cannot know
God’s true meaning,
The firmament
Is white with snow,
The star shining.

John xii. 12-16

ADENOCARCINOMA

For Penny and David

A broken arm meant death would get him young;
The bone marrow showed cancer of the lung.
He smoked too much, quite unaware that Fate
Watched his live unravel. It was too late
For therapy when his arm broke. For years,
No doubt, the tumour grew: he shed no tears
While the demon lurked inside him. His face
Gave out no hint. The burden of our race
Was borne by him. Toward the end his pain
Was eased by pills that did not dull his brain.

Another man once lived in Galilee.
He talked with Satan and walked on the sea.
The Lord above chose Him to die for men.
Later he beat the odds and walked again.
Martyrs have died for Him and women knelt
On wood for him. David, now he is felt
No more in the churches. Men die alone
From heart attack and cancer in the bone.
Yet still we hope that death will bring God's grace,
That leaves which fall renew the living race.

MEN GO MAD WITH CAUSE

If Charles weds Diana, the churchman said,
The land will crack, crops fail, the birds fall dead.
O jealous man – observe! Our robin sings,
Our crocus blooms: expect much less from kings.
If King or Prince is weak, we doctors find,
There is much more disturbance of the mind
But not the earth. We learn in books that Lear,
Who raved at night, in rain, felt morbid fear.
Doctors can state the cause: Not God, not Fate,
But infantile conflict – love turned to hate.
Yet, the churchman said, men go mad with cause:
They know no better myth than Santa Claus.

THE ABORTIONIST

The surgeon faces a tough dilemma:
“Driving taxi was too dull: better this.
While I try to get the sarcolemma,
It doesn’t hurt my pocket if I miss.
Look! – these girls can bump and bang, crumpling sheets
And clutching backs. I cut so quick they wake,
Or die, by noon – sure, squeeze their empty teats.
Each one got pinched – I’m always on the make
(That’s how I earn my bucks). I treat poor, rich,
Black, white without prejudice – their insides
All feel the same: screwed in a car, a ditch,
A bed, the womb will still get scraped. Besides,
I tried, I learned; I know it never pays
To quit, to lose the clients, fees and praise.”

line 3: sarcolemma, a term from muscle anatomy misused by the abortionist

ORATION FOR MONSIEUR LAVECK

So you're Lavek. They call me Colin Ross.
Laveck, your win could cause a fatal loss.
Laveck, translate these words I've written down-
Here-while you eat pea soup and curse the Crown.
You know, Laveck, a few good men aren't French.
Now, forget tobacco, forget the wench,
For once; consider truth while I tell it.
Laveck, I can't say your name, can't spell it,
But you know what? You can't dethrone the King.
You cut his throat but, still the bird will sing.
Because Lavick, my family is part frog,
Your scheme would split me-like an axe a log.
What kind of man are you? You've chirped, pecked and scratched.
The dirt, yet your new nation has not hatched.
It can't and won't. The egg was never blessed.
By God, King and country. If you confessed
To impotence, all could be forgiven:
Sterile masquerade is useless. Heaven
Will learn the truth, if men do not. Therefore,
Laveck, I say, put down your axe, before
You cut yourself, or me. Whichever part
Of me you might claim as King of Quebec,
After the referendum, my one heart
Cannot be cut: claim something else, Laveck.

ON D. H. LAWRENCE

Lawrence is great: I at best can be good
At using words. When I first understood
His books, they matured me and instilled me
With conviction. Then I started to see
That by letting Lawrentian mind and eyes
Be mine, I never could learn to revise;
My words came not from me but another:
Those words were fetal; he was their mother.
Lenses built either of glass or Lawrence
Sharpened the world. A student of Lawrence,
Twice-over myopic, I got insight
Into truth and lies, into wrong and right,
By reading, and yet, unlike spectacles,
He changed my eyes, providing tentacles
That could enter things. Then reborn centres
Quickened my being, as they had my mentor's.
A decade later, the exploration
Of my mind, begun, has meant creation
Or a shaft, of tunnels that can connect
To strata other than the intellect.
Peg, nail, shovel, brush, chisel, and pick, string:
He provided the tools. Now, more alone,
I write and read, but don't forget one thing:
My blood required red blood cells from his bone.

COLIN A. ROSS: THORACIC SURGEON

Colin A. Ross got captured in the war,
Around Dubrovnik. I should know much more
About his life. He ran ten miles a day
And parachuted, but his heart, they say,
Was bad. Unable to slow down, he died
In outpatients. He could not be revived.
He managed to leave behind him true art;
He was a sculptor of the lung and heart.

ON AN OLD FRIEND

We called him Pete. Some men called him Peter.
When he came near wives got renamed cheater.
He taught me well, though others taught me more
About language. Pete felt it was a whore,
At best. Cambridge could not get him a wife
So he will never find one, in this life:
He’s too perverse. We must engage ourselves
Before women will. His art sits on shelves,
Unloved, in a brothel. He leaves it there
At night. If Peter can’t, we need not care.

THE MED SHOW

Each year, they dance and sing
While some bad, wicked thing
Is done upon the stage.
Although they're all of age,
They laugh when plastic pricks
Are shown, or when one sticks
A scrub nurse in the ass.
After she lets out gas-
That causes laughter too.
They won't believe it's true:
Their show, and wit, and skits
Are really just the shits.

GRAFFITO

I'd screw a duck
Before I'd fuck
His kind. A queer
And bugger, peer
Of men that slink
Inside the clink
From can to can
To feel each man
With a flag up-
A buttercup!
What can be said?
He should be dead-
Six feet under.
It's no wonder
The church is sick.
Our choir boys stick
It here and there,
In fur, in hair,
In dogs, in cats.
They should know that's
Bad for the health,
Bad for the wealth
Of our church. God,
They blow their wad
At will, by hand
By mouth. Command
And threat have no
Effect, although
They fear the strap.
I'd beat the crap
Out of those guys.

THE WINNIPEG LIP

Bill Shakespeare ain't so hot
And *he* knows that. I've got
More punch, more speed, more rhyme.
I'd take him anytime.
He's got no jab, no hook.
He never wrote a book.
As good as mine. No way
He can win: I'll just play
With him five, six rounds.
I'll give the guy no grounds
To say he got no chance.
I'll jab and jab and dance
And let him try his luck.
I'll weave, I'll bob, I'll duck,
Then give the man his licks.
Look out! A ton of bricks
Is gonna break that chin
In bits. Hey, man, begin
To train right now-and hard.
This could be the last card
You're on: you should retire.
Hey, man, you watch my fire
Burn you. He acts real white
Right now, but when that fight
Is finished-he'll be black,
Burned, and flat on his back.
Oh yah, he'll know the lip
Gave his white mitt the slip.

MAJOR POET

Major poet has no Latin or Greek
He publishes a new long poem each week
And one novel a year. Eastern eggheads
Ensure he gets a grant; God made the feds
For him-the day he made udders. His verse
Was bad enough but fame has made it worse.
In his bad books, bad poems abound. No sprung,
No living rhythm or rhyme could be sung
By him or by his like. Dear friends publish
His books, dear friends sell them. They are rubbish.

SPRING LANDSCAPE: NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Tense, vital and ancient in tone, the bush
Contains spirit. The eye looks to Kee Scarp.
Black spruce stand on its back. On Kee Scarp
Cold blood runs in arteries, ice and slush.

In town all men work, because they have to,
Each Saturday morning. They quit at noon.
Meantime children play and wait, till, at noon,
They ride the painted antigen, skidoo.

DERAILMENT, HITHER GREEN, NOVEMBER 1967

Thought lost mind wandering
London train bound
Homeward going.
Flying gravel oddness thinking
Then rattle shudder still.
Debris covered scream hearing
Disbelief.
Outward climbing the light
Blood blood mangled faces
Death scream trapped
Blood blood blood death
Death screaming death. No smiling
Dying bloodeyes noseclogged screams
Smell death then agony then dead.

We who climbed out
Through the blood-speaking corpses
We who held the dying hands
And spoke to the trapped in pain
Let us know what it is to live
Let us live the lives of Him
Who saved us
And let us speak only
Of our salvation.

THE BODY-SOUL DICHOTOMY

Any battle Wellington fought at
Was short work for journalists;
That living squeezed into highschool
Made the stubborn soul kick out
And pack no more packs for men;
Grand Canyon mules demand rights
And the touring world collapses
To the laughter of dancing mules.
So read headlines of the press
That reports events of imagination
And admitting the world imagined
Not thought of, explained, watched,
Organized in consciousness, eats no
Raw stuff for the artist's salad.

These reveries were fact-motivated
For no dreamer screams to wake
In a world that is not bounded
By waking, by day, and imagination.
The working world would be dreams
Unless some men had religion.
But religion is hard to define;
You must make do with action.

The body soul dichotomy presents
A tricky challenge to the juggler
And theologians who ride bodies bareback
Are considered vulgar by the gods.
Every soul puts a blanket on the beast
That is self-respecting and informed.
Listen to any American saying "body"
With his watchful tone from the head.
Body is the soul's temple; if it ails
A pill will cure all aches and chills.
The productive soul is to be maintained.

VALHALLA SONG

Transmuted blood, the nerve vapour,
Communicating no rhythmic intent.
Sleary's Circus, Bailey's dollar;
Moses led his flock to a convent.

Politics printed the readable paper;
Truth is solitary mind the spring.
Jack Frost put diagram into event.
The new world decapitated the King.

Dreamt by men Carl Gustav Jung;
World mechanical displaced the throne.
Cuckoo clock spirit ticked the time,
Mind, after Freud, drank not blood but bone.

Suggested trump cards of thinking
Created no knowledge in the eye,
Yoked together, like oxen without roads.
Ancient poets quaff mead; then must I die.

SONG OF SYMBIOSIS

Soon as the queen ant copulated
Her mechanical lover became God.
The rest of jewdom manipulated
Money the day it had been outlawed.

Devoured drones became desert rats;
The vital but bleached bone gnawed
By further motion of inverted bats;
The timber of the mind fell, sawed.

The genius that the world created
Crosses no more the welcome mats
Of enclosed households inebriated
Or billeted on Bonneville Salt Flats.

If the ice-aged pane were thawed
By the new principal I just related
Residents would think the world fated;
Justly for Christ, the cock thrice cawed.

If once Hoenir's head began to nod
The age would have no cure for that
Having forgotten legendary Jack Sprat
With his love buried in the one sod.

THE MOTHER EARTH

So truly a penal institution
The brothel is the modern jail;
In there as if in amputation
A whore gets knocked up with a nail.

Around about two thousand years ago
Before bodies spirits began to quail.
Lest body be born a body had to go;
Like Jonah Christ lived inside a whale.

The prisoner gave Ceasar absolution;
Christ at Oxford could not learn to row.
He conquered no country, led no expedition
Into the interior; he had no crop to sew.

Fear of physicality drove the nation;
“Faith built on soul could never fail.”
Sand, it could be at best but shale.
Our Lord died, celibates ruled creation.

Professors bowed down before ideation;
Men cheered as jets outflew the crow.
My god lies buried under the winter snow
While I speak with my pen of revolution.

NANOOK THE WHITE BEAR

Lit up by bulb light in the dark
I canoe still the river that is fate;
The mind is this flood's only ark.
The water is not that which Eve ate.

Lice that infested aboriginal hair
Repulsed the Church and the State.
Convinced the sky could for Crowfoot care
I do seek therein to choose a mate.

Former poetry had for song the lark,
The new continent propagated the bear.
Since the English God is now a clerk
Nanook emerges from its winter lair.

But I strive not to build with bark
Or contemplate origins of no fixed date
Nor do I practice for St. Peter's gate.
Where I walk foot has etched no mark.

Heraclitus responsible for that remark
Encountered no new-world hybrid pair;
When he met Charon he paid the fare.
I will pay in blood but not for the lark.

ON FLATUS

Good day. We have conducted our studies
With help from students, Ph.D. buddies,
And our dear wives. We report on five years
Of work, believing in review by peers.
There are certain chemicals in flatus
With suspect carcinogenic status:
Called safe by the big companies that sell
Junk food, we think, judging by the foul smell
They make in our presence, that they may be
Unsafe. Slide number one. As you can see,
Eating such food means accumulation
Of the agents will occur: stagnation
In the gut compounds the situation
Till we establish alimentation
Which is pathologic. It took five years
For us to find this out. We think our fears
Are well founded. Cancer will increase-and
It will not stop until we understand
The function of flatus. Carcinogens
We think, will not become gut antigens
If they are farted out: the white blood cells
Need not respond; those hated anal smells
Prevent cancer, a flatulent defence.
The implications of this are immense.
Men eat poor food, and won't change their diet
So we made a plan; we'd like to try it
On a large scale. We think we could detect
Early cancer, and then we could effect
A cure, in certain cases. But, we need
To screen the gut. We're here today to plead
For your quick approval. We will retrain
Each doctor so that he can ascertain
Whether his patient has cancer, with ease.
If so he then could treat the dread disease.
One simple test will do the job. No day
Need pass in which the doctor does not say,
"Bend over, please, and fart in my face;
But don't be shy: a fart is no disgrace."
The trained doctor could spot cancer by smell
And say, either, "You, sir, are doing well",
Or else, "My dear good sir, you have, I think,
Produced just now a true malignant stink."

Smelling many farts in medical school
Would make the test a diagnostic tool
Of great precision. Such well-trained noses
Could interpret what each gut discloses.
Though men are made from sinew, mind and heart,
We believe they are best known by their fart.

T. S. ELIOT SONG II

Language gave birth in Greece, it's said, and yet
Men find in Thales truth they half forget:
Chaldean and Chinese science of dead
Men they have never seen, or heard, or read.
The mind has roots in its history and
In its body too; yet, where men began,
In dust, is where they end, in dust: the truth
Is men are barren in both age and youth.

The god with oaken head, with head broken,
The bracken-coated god, was a token,
Once, or a totem, I think, of power,
Of life few words measured. Until the hour
When spirits die, men say the god resides
In no man's brain, and no man' mind besides.
Lord, the big bear hunts night berries, so still,
And Cygnus flies when it should-at your will.

W. B. YEATS REVISITED

The sky at night is black, the stars are white
And arch is silent stillness within sight.
The Milky Way is built of stars, and bright:
It was a road when priests could judge it right.

Aquila the Eagle may spread its wings
When Altair burns, a bird that never sings,
Then in that star the mind sees many things:
A light, hole or crook on which the bird clings.

Casseopia chose a place on high,
An intense, bent *w* in the sky.
The mind will look, the mind will wonder why,
Like stars, women were made to live, then die.

Gemini are two twins. They make a stick
With burning ends, upright, rigid and quick.
The man who made them twins pulled quite a trick
With his star mind: for me it doesn't click.

Draco the Dragon, thin and much too long,
Crossed a zone in which no beings belong
And broke the symmetry of the sky: strong
Myth making might fix that, or star-mind song.

ON LAVERNE'S PREGNANCY

Say nurse, that guy who knocked you up, called Lance
He might faint when he sees the head advance
By station three. No sweat. Some smart M.D.
Will catch the kid. I guess it won't be me.
Should junior need the counsel of a shrink
I'll be waiting: I swear it now in ink.
I take child-shrinking in a year. By then
The kid might need his head screwed tight again.
I see you're swelling bad. Maybe a pill
Would keep that kid from making you more ill.
You want a scrip? Or maybe just a drink?
Some alcohol would help a bit, I think.
Bad back? Nocturia? (I read the books.)
Baby is a girl, judging by your looks.
I heard that boys have hearts that beat real fast,
Or is it girls? Anyway, it won't last
Forever, eh? The kid is bound to pop
Sometime. And don't forget to push, then stop,
Then push again. You might need deep breathing
Twice; in labor and when baby's teething.
Well, that makes up the sum of my advice.
I'd say you're doing really good. The curse
Of a woman is birth, tummy in a vice.
But don't forget, for hubbies it's much worse!

FURTHER COMMENTS ON CANADIAN POETS

The work is hard, the pay is poor, in fact
There is no pay. The men who made a pact
With Mediocrity get paid. They live
On grants and the TV talk shows. They give
My tongue dysarthria: English. I write
In it a too-stuff medium. What right.
Have those guys got to cause my Mother pain?
This point, once made, should then be made again.

ON RECEIVING *THE GADFLY*

I looked. I saw. What could it be?
A little candle sent to me.
And then I saw within its flames
My friend and me, familiar names.

THE SNOW RUNNER

The day is cold and the sky is blue. Two feet
Contact the earth, and there two spirits meet,
One of them human, one the earth. The run
Will be eight miles for fitness and for fun.
The wool toque is green and the track-suit grey.
His hair is brown but hidden on this day.
The mitts are brown. a white surgical mask
Protects his mouth. He needs it for his task
Which is to travel in time and space
On a physical mission for his race.
The shoes are red and blue, the socks are white,
His build muscular, athletic and slight.
He has glasses and he has a black beard.
He runs. He knows that once most men were feared
And that they ran. Feared for what they could do
With a knife and what they were. They were true
Men and rooted. Those deep roots brought power
Into the mind. He will know for an hour
Such roots again, as men have since the dawn
Of mind. The man trains for a marathon.
A wind comes from the north, and the cold snows
Drift in white lace patterns the north wind blows
Across the flat hard earth which here is white.
The snow crunches and in this sun is bright
With myriad sparkles. And that is good.
All men would do this if their spirits could.
The cold is here. It is a clear presence
And a quality: it has an essence.
It changes sound and air, body and mind
Making them sharply bounded. Human kind
Could benefit from that. The runner feels
The hard surface give but then take his heels
To give them back again. He runs with ease.
He checks in case his cheek or brow should freeze.
Twenty below Celsius. And in his heart
The fire burning is warm. And from the start
The run is good. He'll see no ptarmigan
Here and no grouse but it he had a gun
Two white rabbits would have crouched, and have fled.
Yes, if his mind was clear one would be dead.
Their white bodies on the hard snow, alive
Are in one way like snow; they are alive.

The snow if flat or else in drifts. Motion
Is apparent when he looks. The frozen
Snowdrifts move here in motionless white waves
Of sunlight, frozen, bright. Yet one behaves
Like a solid, supporting these creatures.
I won’t record their animal features.

ON LEAVING THE OUTPATIENT DEPARTMENT

Patient, friend, lover or mistress? Not one
Of those, but all, and yet, of all those, none.
We talk an hour a week, or some weeks two,
About your soul, your life, what you could do
To change. I interpret the hints you give
Me, when, within the play we act, you live
The themes of your marriage. You felt you bored
Me, till, with the treatment, your strength, the Lord
And luck, you learned not to punish, to blame,
Yourself so much. He drinks. He was the same
When you married; he'll be the same next year
And in five years. We analyzed that fear
That you made him a drunk; you knew how hard
It was that he was drunk and a drunkard
So much, and you his wife; how hard it was
For you, daughter of a drunkard, because
Your soul fit his so tight. And yet you made
Rewarding changes, week to week. You stayed
With him eight years, then broke from him, and bled
But that was better than that death instead.
And so, Karen, goodbye.
And, old Ruth, goodbye, whom the mafia
Pursued, police harassed: paranoia
For sure. Who talked of sex, rape, crime and drugs,
Who got photographed, got winked at by "thugs',
Who is seventy-three. Who took her pills
When she wanted, only: among her ills
She lists arthritis too. The last few times
I saw her, Ruth spoke of old things, of times
Abroad, her sons and life. She once confessed
To me, in tears, what no man had ever guessed
About her: a coat hanger soaked in lye
Fed through her cervix made her fetus die
In nineteen thirty-three. She's told no one
But this doctor too young to be her son.
Now you too, Ruth, goodbye.
I also met Suzanne, now long since sealed
In her fate: Suzanne, who cannot be healed.
I watched her husband die. Six weeks he spent
On the cancer ward, before his soul went
From her, in death and in pain. I could wear
His pants-they're new, she said. I wouldn't dare!

Good luck, Suzanne! Goodbye.
Though pregnant for eight months, Lisa has gained
No weight. Metis, single, she has ingrained
In her this lie; sex is dirty. The birth
She waits for, for her is shameful. Her girth,
She hoped, would not change much, would stay the same.
We talked. She cried. I wrote beneath her name,
Dysthymic disorder. Lisa is sad.
She visited me just four times. Not mad,
Like some, Lisa responded to our talk,
It seemed. I still think of her while I walk
To work, or lunch, sometimes, her pretty face,
Her mixed-up feeling, her lips, and mixed race.
My little girl, goodbye.
Ten years older, aged at twenty-eight,
Rita is a Metis. She should lose weight.
She had her uterus cut out in June.
That stopped her heavy bleeds. That was too soon.
No dew on grass, no nightingale, tears or
Rich melancholy for Rita. What's more
No thrill to sex. Strangely, only in dreams
Can she find warmth in bed, only, in dreams,
With me. For years the risk of pregnancy
Gave her sexual pleasure: that's gone. Fancy
Her fine logic! She turned her guilt and hate
Inward as well as out. She'll not be great
Again with child, I know. Perverse, she lives
With her "old man", a lout, who never gives
Her much. She says she'll leave the guy some day
But won't. I could have Rita if I pay
Her, or I don't. She spoke of her dreams, then,
Our bond established, did not come again-
What did I do wrong? She could never face
Herself, here in this psychiatric place.
I planned her therapy, her task and work
In my office: she'd rather love that jerk.
Well then, Rita, goodbye.
Mary got an abortion. She's twenty
And good to look at. She has got plenty
Of tears as yet unshed. I talked an hour
With Mary twice. Here, the curing power
Of talk won't do the trick, I thought. Instead
I gave homework. She'd learn to lie in bed
And to relax body and mind. Before

We met she had been tearful, tense and sore-
Then our contract was struck. We would meet six
Times, I said, but I would not try to fix
Every problem; that would not be my chore.
We'd talk a lot but then I'd close my door.
She said "OK", then changed from OPD
To the longterm treatment program, with me.
Now she has learned to relax. And one day
She will learn to love. So I need not say,
Quite yet, Mary, goodbye.
And Nan; I met your husband first. It seems
You married Narcissus, not him. He dreams
Of self not the other. But Nan, the case
Is too complex. I'll publish in a place
That prints long poems, the anguish and the hate,
The love, you've known with him for years. Just wait.
For now, Nancy, goodbye.
Ladies, women, daughters, lovers, wives;
It gave me joy to touch your souls, and lives.

SIX MONTHS ON THE INPATIENT SERVICE

Down then down then down the sick mind can go
Driven down by angry super-ego.
Up, up, up and further up it can climb
Till all sense is lost, person, place and time:
Mania. The vicissitudes of mind
Are legion. Cases are not hard to find.
I met many: adjustment reaction,
Brains that had psychotic ideation,
The benzodiazepine abusers.
Some, in normal words, were just plain losers.
On call, I'd give a label, pill and bed
Or crack the skull, examining the head.
Some were not mad, but all were sick, so I
Proposed a metaphor (you will ask why):
Their sickness is our strength. It's said the brain
Lacks this or that, till nature rules again,
Crutched by a noradrenaline uptake
Blocker. Drugs can correct the bad mistake
Which a gene made. Or else that we should block
Transmission in the ticking mental clock.
Haldol will do just fine. It's said also
That our profession has one way to go,
That we should pray each Sunday to Descartes,
That chemicals comprise our proper art.
O hear all the singing! O hear the choir!
"On stelazine her self-esteem is higher."
That is no hymn but ideology
Distorting our human pathology
To make the mind the brain. The drugs relieve
Much suffering but I still must believe
In the old gods: spirit, wisdom and grace,
In all the old foundations of our race.
Which is to think that science too, like art,
Will help me heal the problems of the heart.
(A man perceived the greater good: the Lord
Sent him to cleanse and deify the ward.
God talked to him on the television
And lithium cured him that admission.)

NIGHT CALL

His brain his brain it's burning in his brain
Where hell's gear wheels are turning where the main
Spring broke because the sun has so much burned
That no man's mind could stand it then it turned
And then it turned again therefore since that
It has some company: Satan's black cat
Provides it. People come to talk so I
Must say the what the when the where the why
Of them then give them pills, safety and beds
Because of the kind of worm in their heads.
God gave me his great gift so I could use
It hear in this place the cursed ones choose
To come at one a.m. I am awake
Yet I'm sleeping. Do I care what they take
For their psychoses much although I choose
What blood to draw? I think I paid my dues
But the small sun must burn must burn some more
While I listen and talk. He closed the door
On forbidden impulses then found dark
Sanctuary in sleep. There is a mark
On his forehead and there is in his eyes
Insanity. Lithium fixed his brain
Last time but now beneath flat painted skies
His face tells me he is manic again.

MONOLOGUE AT THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

Some men when they are cut, bleed blood that's red:
I bled spirit when cut, and life instead.
Her knife is made from unearthly metal
Which can cut spirit, silence or petal
With ease. She rejected me lots: that hurt.
And when I bled she filled those cuts with dirt.
She held me tight, she would not let me out.
Might she vanish if I am not about?
Her need has no limit. It merged with me
So that, for her, I was not there to see.
Her anger knows no cage and ten long claws
Provide it strength to kill. Mere human laws
Cannot restrain her mood. It swings at will
From minute to minute: I've had my fill.
Do textbooks describe her? I bet they do.
She loves me and she loves me not. That's true.
That's much too true. She's been psychotic thrice,
Driven by jealousy without cause. Twice
Was twice to much. Was it my fault her fat
Did not come off? I sure got blamed for that.
Her father beat her mother up, one day;
She never gave him shit! Yet if I say
One word that's wrong I'm threatened with the knife.
She needs treatment. Doc, good luck with my wife.

NIGHT LOVERS SONG

Buried dramatists have written that lust
Differentiates brute beast from dead dust,
Said that lovers can incarnate ancient blood,
The heave and thrust of the primeval mud,
Give birth to forms of life that live and breathe,
While two entwined night lovers hug and heave.
Thus these two lovers touch the ancient wild
And they thereby create a living child
Out of nothing, though *nothing* is a word
Raised out of the primeval mud, I heard.

ON WAYNE GRETZKY

Gretzky is great, that is for sure. He plays
Hockey and has excelled in many ways.
He has performed so far beyond his peers
That only he could break his records. Years
Might pass before we see such skill again.
What makes him great is neither brawn nor brain.
Game after game he can threaten to score.
Yet, we might ask, what is Gretzky's gift for?
It is to score goals and assists. But what's
That for? For money? Or fame? In my guts
I feel there's more to it. But what? The puck
Might be a symbol, a black Lady Luck-
We men are said to sublimate our love
(We think that grace is given from Above).
That round black object on a sheet of ice
Just could be for cathexis of our vice.

ON MARITAL HOMEOSTASIS

I think marital homeostasis
Requires an equilibrated basis.
Nan balances me. I balance her too.
Therefore I’m scientifically true.

SIMMY SIMMY KO KO BOP

Simmy Simmy Ko Ko Bop, Simmy Simmy bop
Simmy Simmy Ko Ko Bop, are you gonna stop?
Throw out your cap and comb your hair. Hey Simmy
Simmy Simmy bop. Now Simmy Simmy
Simmy stop. Comb your hair, throw out your cap,
Simmy Simmy bop. Birthday boy, no nap
Today. It's time to party, time to play.
Simmy Simmy ko ko bop. Simmy Simmy, say.
Ko ko ko ko ko ko boy, Simmy Sim
Or Simmy ko ko ko bop, ko ko him
Simmy Simeon. We sing we shout we say
To him, happy happy Simmy birthday
Birthday Simeon. Cap or no cap, top
Capped Topkapi his top not capped, he's top
With us, with us he's top. Right now we say
Top boy top bop. Hey! Have a Happy Day.
Simmy Simmy ko ko bop. Simmy Simmy bop
Simmy Simmy ko ko bop. Don't you ever stop.

DANA DANA DANA DO

Dana Dana Dana Do. Danna Do
Dana day. What you gonna, gonna show
Gonna show to Dad today? Show to Dad.
Show to Nan, show if you are good or bad.
Bad or good, good or bad. No! Neither one
Neither two, just that we can have some fun
Have some fun, Danna Do, Danna Day, Hey!
Fun to work, fun to sing, Dana Birthday
Birthday Do Dana Day Dana Do, sing
Hippy hoppy happy Do. Everything
Is full of fun, fun for you, fun for me
Time for riding, time for joy, time for glee
Time to eat, time to play, hey Birthday girl
You are our own round white precious Dana pearl.
The world is an oyster Miss Dana Do
And you get prettier the more you grow.

DANA DO IS BACK IN TOWN

Hey! Here comes Dana Dana Do!
When that girl goes, she sure does go.
For six long weeks she went away
But now she's back and we can play.

Hey! Dana Do is back in town!
Now Dan and Nan with never frown.
We like it when she reads or sings.
Now she is back, let's do some things.

SIMMY BOP IS BACK IN TOWN

Hey! Here comes Simmy Simmy Simmy Sim!
It's been six weeks since we saw him.
We missed that boy, we missed that kid.
We wonder where that kid was hid.

Hey! Simmy bop is back in town!
Now Dad and Nan need never frown.
Unless of course Sim grew too fat
Or tall or short. He might do that.

HARD WORK, HARD WORK, HARD WORK

Hard word, hard work, hard work. That's all I do.
I have to huff and puff and scrub until I'm blue.
And my darn mum is always in a rush.
She says "Clean up those teeth. Your brush, you brush."
She says, "You make that bed. You comb that hair."
My dolls agree-they say it isn't fair.
But then I guess it's really not that bad-
In fact there's just one time, I think, I had
Hard work, hard work, hard work I had to do.
One day I had ten gum at once to chew.

COLD CAULIFLOWER

Cold cauliflower, cold carrots and rice,
Skim milk and cheese. That isn't very nice
For lunch. That's just what my mum makes me eat.
And she gives me vitamins for a treat!
Yuk! Yeck! I'd rather have ice cream and pie.
Instead I chew cold carrots till I cry.
Oh well! I guess it's really not that bad
Cold cauliflower, cold carrots and rice.
That was enough-I wouldn't want it twice.

ON MY SEPARATION

The law is this: we men have got few rights
Concerning home and kids. Our legal fights
Are lost before begun. O.K. Instead
I'll win on grounds that lie inside my head.
The scar will heal, the broken heart will mend,
And I will survive, happy in the end.

ON DIVORCE

Newton once said: for every reaction
There’s an equal and opposite action.

MEN SAY THEY SHOULD SEEK A FOREIGN ZEN

Men say they should seek a foreign Zen
To live to breathe like living men again
But I say no: John Donne and Lord Jesus
Can bring their ancient breath to earth for us
If we can read, can live our tradition
Which is not bankrupt, yet, though no nation
Now steers by it. Men fear they feel the heart
Grown cold. Their days have got nowhere to start.
They do not live, consequently their Fate
Is sealed: no god can hear them, not of late.

MEDITATION ON BLAKE, ELIOT AND YEATS

What seas, what rocks and what islands. Water
Lapping the bow, and a voice: “My daughter”.
My life is light, my Lord, it is a breath
On the back of my hand, it speaks of death.
I, like Phlebas, who is a fortnight dead
Who fornicated on a broken bed
I too am tiring of my life. And, those
Who live here are not my people: I chose
The dry desert instead, thinking that You
Would be there. That’s something Eliot would do.
God, I would love to be published and read
Like him or Yeats, yet I’m obscure instead.
Since things are so I think of William Blake
Who got from God what a great man can take
Which is what God gave him and what he gives
(The man who died is the true God who lives)
God back, great wit, great faith, great work, great song,
May-time music, or a cathedral gong.
And Lord the moon shines bright on Hanrahan
Who has floundered at night since time began
His deck of cards, the bitten ear, the hounds
Tormenting Yeats on his ancestral grounds.
And I could bring back all the memories
Of all the moon-begotten poetries
Which Yeats produced, but won’t. No, here the sun
Is bright, and here the work has just begun.
To be a North American is to sing
Poems which are clear, and unlike anything
Three dead men wrote. I can’t be forgotten
In the great bog of Cloone. The begotten
Fish, flesh and foul are living but he’s dead
Who wrote of them. Flames that feed on faggots
Cannot touch him nor can earthly maggots.
Immortal Yeats! Yet he is dead to me.
I cannot learn from Yeats to think or see
The world anew. Blake thought a grain of sand
Is too big for man’s mind to understand:
Yeats is too small. There’s not enough matter
In him. The ear brought in on a platter
Cannot help me or the tormented sea.
And Eliot is not adequate for me.
I turn to Blake. He and the starry floor,

The rose, the sunflower, the wat'ry shore,
Have given me what Yeats and Pound could not,
A desire for purity of thought
In the language which Blake once burned, his flames
On living spirit, not mythical names
Or his orthodoxy. Blake can provide
To use however I or God decide
English language spirit Deus poet
Divine. His spirit lives. I will show it
In my writing, should his God's grace be mine.
May Blake breathe his spirit into this line
And the next one, as in the next world now
He breathes. Do not ask why, nor ask me how.

One Hundred Aphorisms:

On the Nature of the Spirit

ONE HUNDRED APHORISMS:

ON THE NATURE OF THE SPIRIT

1. There are two modes of being: male and female. There is one mode of non-being: we call that atheism.
2. "The dry soul is the wisest and the best," said Heraclitus. But the fire feeds upon water. If it did not, the water would quench it.
3. There are two classes of men: free spirits and clerks.
4. Commonsense, extended to its limit, encounters the irrational.
5. Periods of migration are measured in weeks, of metamorphosis in generations.
6. There are two organs of intuition: the hand and the soul.
7. These two understand the bullet: the hunter and the hunted.
8. There are men who understand just two languages: the vagina and the machine gun.
9. Law, by definition, cannot account for all the facts. Some facts are mysterious.
10. Plants have sap, animals have blood, and men have religion.
11. Men pray for water. They should also pray for a cup.
12. "We tolerate anybody who will tolerate us." The motto of the liberal.
13. The atheist said, "Dark is the absence of light, cold is the absence of heat, and death is the absence of life." I should have replied, "What about the conservation of energy?"
14. Only one animal breeds faster than the rabbit: we call it "the question".
15. Most men are simple-minded. They try to measure time with clocks.
16. Men measure the performance of intelligence, and call that I.Q. But no one has measured intelligence itself.
17. There is a freak show for scientists: the contortionist has built a model

which explains everything, plus itself.

18. Against science, against man.
19. Technology has provided two roads to self-knowledge: the telescope and the microscope.
20. We reject foreign tissue, but do we reject foreign spirit?
21. The motto of the Dionysian: “We sing to God’s instrument, for God is not celibate.” Subtitle: the big bang theory.
22. Horses run and men write.
23. There is only one necessary axiom in religion: the source of my life lies outside myself.
24. Ordinary men believe that engagement comes before marriage.
25. *The Man Who Died; or Jesus Given a Pattern*.
26. Lawrence knew more than Poe.
27. Cezanne’s apple: an allotropic state of carbon.
28. There is a god in electric light, but it is not friendly.
29. In the desert, an oasis. In the city, a desk.
30. Age 30

    Race: North American

    Occupation: spiritual guerilla.
31. Faith possessed is faith destroyed.
32. Against intellect, against life.
33. Examining the skull of Piltdown man, Nietzsche commented, “In search of the missing link, my colleagues travel abroad, but I stay in Europe.”
34. The Americans paid $24.00 for Long Island. The Alaska Land Claim Settlement cost them $4 billion.
35. Pheasant, rock and white man: of these, only the white man is monolingual.
36. Preface to the *Textbook of Alchemy*: “To reach the sun, build wings, the moon, fins.”
37. From William Blake’s Proverbs of Hell: “Listen to the fool’s

reproach! It is a kingly title!" *The Times Library Supplement* called my essay "highly irregular."

38. In Europe men hunt pigeons: in North America they hunt meaning.
39. Two substances demonstrate the properties of a magnet: iron and soul.
40. In ancient thought, common principles permeated the world. One was the female: today it is manifest in earth, women and mutation. Maleness we see in sky, man and natural selection.
41. According to Thales, water is everywhere, not just in water.
42. The criminal, custody; the judge, freedom: an argument for evolution.
43. From rock, protoplasm; from protoplasm, spirit.
44. Now men talk about "the right to freedom from the fear of war".
45. Lawrence said, "Obey your deepest instinct." I replied, "It tells me not to obey any law."
46. The logician, a sculptor; clay, a vital fluid.
47. Obsessive? No; fanatical.
48. Christ is this, state the philosophers, and that, state the theologians. one thing for sure: he is not monotheist.
49. The infinite cannot be recognized.
50. Only two things evolve: matter and soul.
51. Plants grow in two directions, upward into the light, and downward into the dark. Therefore man is a plant.
52. Man the maker is represented by: surgeon, novelist, bio-chemist. Man the destroyer is represented by: advertising executive, mercenary, alcoholic.
53. Encountered at the hospital: a female to male transexual, with a beard, deep voice and a phallus built by plastic surgeons. Poor Laius! Now his daughter can make him cuckold.
54. Our discipline is spiritual; theirs is intellectual.
55. Asked what he trained so hard for, the marathon runner replied,

"Analgesia."

56. Since Darwin men have agreed on one philosophy: animism.
57. Only one parameter differentiates man from rock: rate of flux.
58. There are only two roads: degenerate and religious.
59. The primitive have neither discipline nor spontaneity.
60. The world is a port: it harbours more mouths than voices.
61. Aboriginal speech rhythms: an enemy anemone enema.
62. Wanted: death or life.
63. Three things are difficult to escape: Gulag, the city and the self.
64. For this job, loss of memory is a prerequisite: scientist.
65. In all of history only two men have treated God as a postulate: the monotheist and the atheist. Today, the church is run by atheists.
66. We recognize Atlas by the development of his muscles, the priest by the development of his spirit.
67. When the ignorant leave the road, they get lost.
68. There are only two axiomatic instincts: preservation of the species, and religion. From the first are derived family and self-preservation, from the second, art and science.
69. We hold this truth to be self-evident: that some men are created more valuable, evolved and more human than others.
70. Fish, water, birds, air; doctors, sickness.
71. These can be distinguished by their rate of action: cancer, low intellectual standards and nuclear weapons.
72. Slate, virus, turtle and man lie on two continua: a spiritual and a physical.
73. Seeds are made out of earth, and earth out of seeds.
74. Intertwined, these three make a braid: meaning, work and spirit.
75. The mathematician: below 6000 feet he can neither think nor breathe.
76. Men have constructed many idols; among them, the phallus, certain inedible plants, and lately, human reason.
77. First principle of psychotherapy: the way is divided.
78. An aphorism is: words on paper, a thought on thinking.

79. How man evolved from the animals:

    God was angry and He said, “Man, you will carry
    a burden called death.” The next night an angel
    appeared in Man’s dream and whispered, “Be careful;
    the burden unlocks many doors.”

80. The white man’s crime: cerebral arrogance.
81. Concerning taxonomy: the agnostic cannot name his own faith.
82. There are many ignorant professors.
83. Avascular necrosis commonly occurs in two places: the head of the femur, and the soul.
84. Some men have touched electricity. Other have touched genius.
85. A new medical subspecialty: intravenous logotherapy.
86. Man can take root in two places: the uterus and work.
87. Among those incapable of good and evil we list animals, insects and gods.
88. Overheard at the shipyard: “You have to build the anchor of language.”
89. On Epicurus: the *atomoi* are not atoms, but quarks.
90. The criminal, a hacksaw blade; the judge, thinking.
91. From the seventeenth edition of The Textbook of Pathology: “The knee jerk, sleep, alimentation, orgasm, prayer, conversation: these may be deficient or excessive.
92. Accepted for early publication: “Masturbation. Its Dosage and Side Effects”.
93. The projectile: man. The goal: fluidity of spirit.
94. The professor: Monday to Friday, nine to five, very serious.
95. Mankind is a broken urn, yet joined, two fragments make one.
96. “The pen, we observe, not the man, he writes.” A foreigner’s remark.
97. Depth of feeling and intellectual rigour: a monogamous couple.
98. They give drugs, but I give meaning.
99. For the eyes, light; for religion, being.
100. Two things can echo: a mountain and an aphorism.