


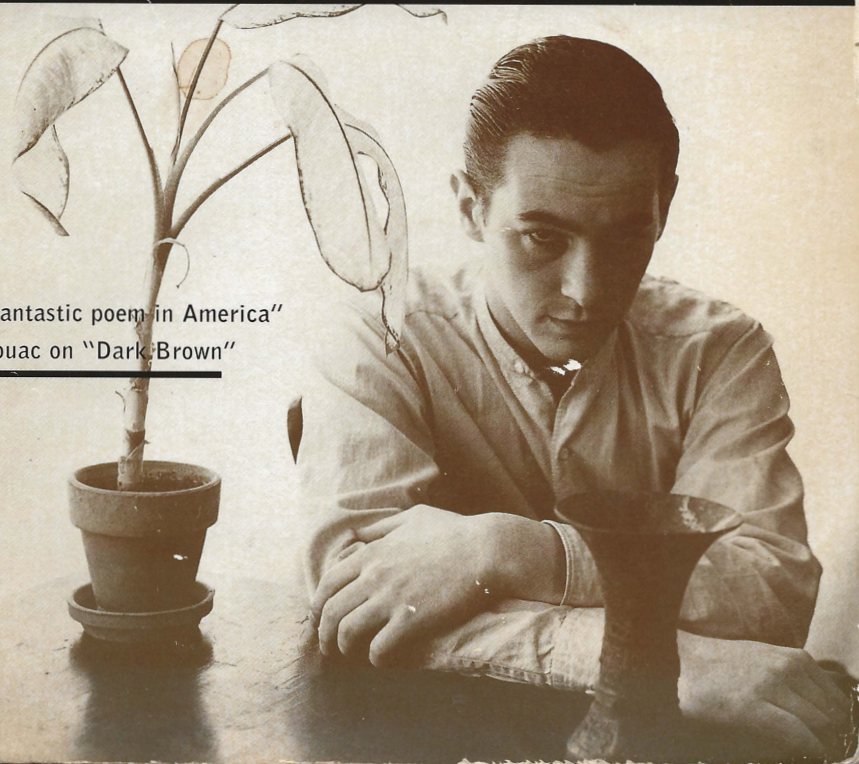
penguin  poets

3 POEMS

MICHAEL McCLURE

Introduction by ROBERT HUNTER

Dolphin Skull Rare Angel Dark Brown



"The most fantastic poem in America"
—Jack Kerouac on "Dark Brown"



*Once this was all Black Plasma
and Imagination*

DOLPHIN SKULL

FOR PAUL who knows
this poem better than I do

AND SEES

MORE

into it

as if
it is

a
MALDA

sculpture

Michael

Doc Bay

INTRODUCTION

Right understanding of late twentieth century poetics can be impeded by use of critical tools of other times. *Direction* is more often to the point.

Though Michael McClure's images do double service as symbols, he is not a symbolist. His objects are clear and present, things in themselves, not a referral service for ideal forms. That they express the world of the ideal is rather an inevitable side effect of rigorous objectivity. The work is endowed with emotion and morality and a decidedly anarcho-leftist politic, but these features are largely exterior to a more specific aim, a purely poetic gesture.

Though McClure's poetry is neither programmatic nor perversely exclusive of meaning it is needful to grasp what he's trying to achieve in order to realize how well he has succeeded. The key is this: he does not make things up. He reports with exactness. Fastidious exactness.

This may seem an odd estimation when his lines routinely exhibit the hyper clarity and thronging of image peculiar to hallucination, but his trademark rhapsody is the natural dance of clearly observed items. Fantasy is minimal, though the sensations and types of imagery associated with it are everywhere present.

Fantasy is the imagination of the imagination; the envisionings of

abstracted vision. The phenomenological iota is set aside in favor of associative chains which recede further and further from the conditioning image. It is essentially the troping of trope leading to dream territory; an engrossing and sometimes powerful mode of poetic procedure but *not* McClure's territory. Not to denigrate the fantastical approach here, simply to delineate the realm of the surreal and differentiate its effects from McClure's area of primary concern.

Although a certain surface sensuality gives itself easily enough, it is impossible to read McClure's work quickly at depth. Time must be taken to envision what is indicated, to link visions with the poet. Reading his words without making an effort to engage their visual and visceral potential is an exercise in page turning; a postcard in place of a sunset.

Appreciating the long-term presence of a theoretic bias grounded in specific objectivizing technique is crucial in apprehending the essentials of McClure's poetry. It is his poetic faith, one that locates him alongside elders William Carlos Williams and Charles Olson in the canon of Projective Verse.

Neither a word collagist, nor one who allows himself to be much influenced by the suggestive directions words tempt a poet to take by virtue of their customary associative potentials (most prominently in rhyme), McClure firmly guides words to report objects of experience, however visionary these objects may be. If, as sometimes happens, his subject matter is precisely the evocative power of a particular word, such as *aelf*, a similar approach is employed. Unlike more austere practitioners of the Projective form, he makes little attempt to remove himself from the equation, recognizing the viewer to be as much a part of the skyscape as the clouds.

While adhering to the Projective canon, McClure's conceptual forte is grounded in an informed Zen mode of perception, focused at ease within the moment. His other purely stylistic concern is the specific attention to breath groups in spoken poetry characteristic of the Beat movement, of which predilection he is a recognized germinal feature.

McClure professes and employs Projective method primarily to report movements of what can only be called primordial ecstasy in the life of the biological organism, the visions of its biologic mind, and its

essential animal spirit. That this requires a sensation of at-oneness with the subject matter is not surprising. Spiritual precision, if that is not a self-cancelling description, is his specialty, and it may be that no poet does this particular thing better, employing the technique, as he has, throughout the better part of his lengthy career. His work, to be seen aright, must be viewed through that lens; his relative success and failure judged by reference to how closely a particular poem approximates his avowed intention.

If it may be maintained that a *true* reporting is an act of poetic perfection, hence completion—if perfectly referential and adequately represented in words—it would follow that McClure's work is perfectly complete at any moment, insofar and just so far as he is true to his method, and this seems to be the case. The work does not progress towards some distant apex of excellence. It simply inhabits that excellence and accumulates. It is instructive to see the subjective changes wrought by long experience upon the projectively perceived object, but the castle is already captured and only the itemization of its contents remains to be completed. Poetic Reality is at work here, that rare angel most convincingly summoned by being true to a worthy idea for a very long period of time.

Reportage is the key in appreciating McClure. Should spots of red fruit appear squashed on a white cupboard, the image is one actually experienced. You can trust McClure for that. The spots were not yellow. It is good to know this.

—Robert Hunter

A U T H O R ' S P R E F A C E

There are three lives here in one book: *Dolphin Skull*, *Rare Angel*, and *Dark Brown*. Each is like a living being with eyes and ears and fingers, and each is as different from one another as living creatures are unique. I wrote all three spontaneously in Projective Verse, using the syllable and the energy of the breath as the structure of the poem.

To write spontaneously does not mean to write carelessly or without thought and deep experience. In fact, there must be a vision and a poetics that are alive and conscious.

The moment of writing is complex and at the same time it is natural and vigorous. I do not know of a more adventurous gesture than to write spontaneously. Whether a poem is born from exuberance or depression, there must be ebullience, hunger for freedom, and imagination. When the poem is finished I listen to it and look at it on the screen or in the ink of the pen, and see that it has a deeper consciousness and brighter thoughts than I was aware of while writing. Sometimes there is difficulty in a poem. The obscurity, the un-understandability, is not there for the purpose of evasion, but it is the energy compressing and leaping and rippling, just as a wave ripples with silver in the moonlight. Even in darkness one can see that it is a silver wave. Goethe believed that poetry should be incomprehensible and

incommensurable. All art is that way to some degree, but much art seems flat and lacking in courage because it neglects to be difficult.

If poetry and science cannot change one's life they are meaningless. The meaning is that we may become more able to ring true to our deep selves. If a poet risks being accused of esotericism in order to be vigorous and to give meaning to the poem, then that's a small price.

What is urgent is not the *quantity* that is understood as one reads a poem, but how much one uses the richness of one's being to have the experience of the poem.

Dark Brown was written when I was a young man and I used poetry to revolt against society during the fifties Cold War, but equally as important was to rebel against my own customs and habits. It was a dark night of the soul, and I wanted to use liberational methods to discover the substance of spirit. I believed that spirit was one and the same as the body. My intention was to discover the true shape of spirit and love, and I found I had to invent them: they were not there unless I created them. After the first stanzas of *Dark Brown* were written, a word vision occurred as "Fuck Ode," and then, beyond that, I was surprised by the last section of the poem, "A Garland." How can a young man search for his body and not come to speak of sexuality?

Dark Brown is about the biological roots of the impulse to freedom and how that struggle relates to poetry, and it is about setting language free from censorship. My earliest essay, "Phi Upsilon Kappa," is about writing *Dark Brown*, and another essay, "Revolt," is about the biology of it; both could be used as notes for the poem (both essays appear in the collection *Meat Science Essays*). To bring light to my dark cloud I followed renegade paths and also immersed myself in scholarship. *Dark Brown* contains words from Old English and dictionaries of archaisms and argot. This was a search for language to describe the states for which I could not find contemporary words. Moreover, I was looking at natural history and trying to understand the principles that join living organisms together in simple and complex structures. Not knowing where I was, except for my presence there, I studied the physics that was complementary to my state, and found it in the ideas of Wolfgang

Pauli and P.A.M. Dirac. My novel, *The Mad Cub*, describes some of the personal life behind the poem.

In beginning *Rare Angel*, the second poem of *Three Poems*, I determined to write directly from sensations of my body. But preceding the writing there was much studying and traveling with friends who showed me Nature and the environment. I was fascinated by Whitehead's thoughts on Reason and by the physics of Hwa Yen Buddhism. *Rare Angel* is motivated by some of the same impulses as *Dark Brown*, and it strives, like our bodies, to be in the present, the past, and the future simultaneously—in the "uncarved block" of the Taoists. Some of the experiences in *Rare Angel* are spoken of in *Scratching the Beat Surface* and in *Lighting the Corners*, two books of interviews and prose.

Dolphin Skull is in two sections: "Stanzas in Memory" is written directly from the unconscious in the sense that Jackson Pollock's "psychoanalytic drawings" were from the unconscious—what I saw was simply there and was not planned in order or method except the systemless one that is the creative act. "Portrait of the Moment," the second section, begins with the twelfth stanza of the first section, repeats it, and then continues without interruption to very *consciously* and spontaneously explore that single moment for as long as it unscrolls in sensory images. Consciousness melted my travels through Kenya and Tanzania, when watching eagles and lions and baboons, in with the primal stuff of infancy, youth, manhood, and the present—all in one moment. I see now that all moments are one and the same moment.

Following *Dolphin Skull*, there is an afterword describing the writing of the second section of the poem; it also explains the poem's title.

My gratitude to Dave Haselwood and Andrew Hoyem of Auerhahn Press, who first published *Dark Brown*, and to John and Barbara Martin of Black Sparrow Press, who initially published *Rare Angel*. Further thanks to editor David Stanford, who herein first presents *Dolphin*

Skull, and to the workers at Viking Penguin press who made this book possible. The first public presentation of the opening stanzas of *Dolphin Skull* were with Ray Manzarek playing piano at the Great American Music Hall in San Francisco. The dates on the title pages of the poems represent the year of earliest publication.

My gratitude to photographer Harry Redl for the use of his author portrait on the cover of *Three Poems*.

Thanks to poet/lyricist Robert Hunter for his Introduction and to scholar Harald Mesch for use of our interview. Thanks to all my friends who show me ways to become myself in darkness and light, and to see that the universes are the messiah and the tathagata. Special thanks to my family and to the artists and biologists who lead me, and to Amy Evans who is by my side.

STANZAS IN MEMORY

The memories of one's youth make for long, long thoughts.
—Lapp proverb

SO THE OWL HOOTS: Turquoise. Musk. White linen.
Deer in the yard—a stag with antlers.
Boyhood
in the park of the body that smells like the ocean
as it washes on the greensward. Your blue eyes.
YOU. Looking with love. I'll leave you
and I ought
to be scared as my skin wrinkles. The boy dreams
of Grandpa. As I get huger I become streams
stretching into shadows of memories. JUST
AS
I
TASTE
the blackberry,
as the tiny white flies flurry
AROUND IT,
THERE IS THE BLOOD WHERE
the thorn cuts me. Helicopters
clatter over the canyon

IN

S
U
N
L
I
G
H
T

Blackness is just a mask of fat for somebody.
The tiny white flies are making a cloud
in the tiers of the brambles
swarming around the dark fruit.
The clouds are alive.
This cloud is a life.

THIS CLOUD IS A LIFE as the great horned owl hoots
three calls. The pony of memory tramples the rattlesnake.
Sunset colors of apricot and layers of black
over the ocean. A puff of summer dust where
the buckeye butterfly lands. Mystic wings
of planets and scarlet nebulae. A lock
on the machine gun under the bed.

FACES

TWISTED

in

pain

from the old times when love hurt
so much that it is spotlights
filled with legs and mouths
writhing.

Nylon stockings filled with sentimental songs
are stained with blackberry juice like
my fingers.

AND

I

LOVE

YOU,

your blue eyes.

Crinkle of frost on the windows. This
is all fog off the ocean coming over
the line of brown hills.

TAILGATING

DRIVERS

behind me
with stoic faces

of Arnold Schwarzenegger.

The city is a mammal vision
in peaks of fog.

Jack Pumpkinhead is laughing with the Tin Man
and
an

AXE
chops through it all
showing the dry grain
and the whorls.
Raphael found the rules and was freed.

THE CLOUD THAT RAPHAEL FOUND is the rules of freedom.

Dark green shamrocks grow in a bowl where
dead friends live in dreams. Sounds of blue-black
jays screaming. My arm around Robert helping
him into my car. "Crazy John's new book
is like your poetry," I say, showing him
the fine printing.

"How?" "It's the elegance," I answer.

The gray-brown moth flutters

O

V

E

R

the brick-red and scarlet and blue
of the prayer rug.

YOU,

your blue eyes

the daintiness of your ankle,

your deep wit,

these are the reasons I am alive.

Miró knows it is all play and Pollock understands
the unconscious power.

NOW

THERE

ARE

LIONS

IN

THE

WOODWORK.

Now I smell my Grandma as she looks
at me through her thick glassés.
Now I understand the sexual addiction
of my young manhood
was a CRUCIFIXION—
glittering and lovely
AS
an ostrich boa and smashed mirrors

seen on acid.

EAGLES SEEN ON ACID are the rules
that are broken in old poetry. The fierce eye,
the naying hand of the boy. The cracks
with festoons
of dust on the yellowing plaster ceiling. Broken
old car doors tied shut with ropes. Please come
and take care of me, is the child's prayer
grimly pleaded
into a black
eternity
becoming the bulk
of
the body.

MY
GOD

MY GOD!

NO

MY GOD!

don't

MY GOD!

DO
THIS

to me!

DON'T DO THIS TO ME!
DON'T DO THIS TO ME!
DON'T DO THIS TO ME!

I am alone in Grandpa's dark basement
praying to you.

I don't want to become an eagle
when I die!

Don't let the flames burst from this sooty smoke!
There is the endless concrete freeway in the sun
—then the cool fog.

I
HAVE
BLOWN UP!

Blown up and cooked myself over a fire.
Smell the pot roast and the noodles. I can
hear my eardrums burst.
Toes on damp moss. Broken shells in sand.

BROKEN SHELLS IN SAND are not superhuman.
Everything is divine.

The body is the soul. The intelligent body. Cries
from the sand are little crabs' eyes. Creepy and bright and
the musky smell of decaying algae in sunshine.
A cold wind makes chilblains and bumps on the skin.
Going back to the moment of the big bang.
The big bang is the consciousness of lions dispersing
the eagles. An eagle lands on the bare tree
by the car and tears up a rabbit. Souls are
dead babies.

YOU
know these things
like the smell of new tires
—while flight after flight of planes
with bombs pass over. I

AM
STILL
here, just as I ever was.
I am furious and fragile and trembling.

JUST
AS
I
ever was.

BEGGING
is heroic. Striding
as free
as spirit
can in
its swirls.

Breaking up rainbows of agonies into actions.
Part of this dark flow
that is
turned over and over by the hands of light
with fingernails of movies.

MOVIES OF SUNS

spraying
the darkness.
Gray hair on the floor.

GRAY hair on the floor and the radio talking.
STEERING WHEEL
more real than anything else. Foggy yellow lights
in the tunnel.
Skinny, addled, wrinkled, childlike, old Horowitz playing
SCRIABIN
on
TV.
Me, playing this beautiful pen.

MORE

ALIVE

THAN

I

OUGHT

TO

BE.

More alive than I ought to be.
Oceans and freeways of grief and guilt.
Triumphs of bare feet and drugs up the nose.
Child of cocaine and raccoons in hollow logs.

“φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλει”

Nature loves to hide herself

in

Leonardo's

secret

language

and the dimensions that disappeared
after the bang.

OLD
MEN
DREAMING
OF
GREAT-GRANDFATHERS
ARE
VERY
WISE
like sow bugs
and wooden spools wound
with scarlet thread
and an antlered buck that drinks
from a bowl in the yard
in moonshadows.

THE SOW BUG RESTS in the shadow of a pine cone
and red cars
cruise by while the world
is making itself with my senses.
Can this be the beginning of old age?
Fear comes in stars of consciousness
and
NOW
I
AM
somewhere else.
The thorns in my finger make stars.
The blackberry is sweet and black
and red and bitter.
Cries of redbill hawks are imitated by blue-black jays.

COVERS
OF OLD MAGAZINES
are glossy, erotic, my
sexuality
grows underneath them
like a rock rolled up on a beach
by the edge of huge waves.

I'M
LISTENING
to you in my mind.
A MUSEUM OF DIRTY PICTURES.
NO
ONE
IS
INTERESTED
BUT
the lion knows as he speaks
to the eagle. This is all BLACKNESS,
this is a cave holding a bowl of beef soup
with the leaves and odors of Vietnamese basil.

I
WILL
NOT EAT BABY ANIMALS!
TO CHEW ON THEIR RIBS IS TASTY AND REVOLTING.
I am spirit. I am a child with you.

SPIRIT, I AM A CHILD WITH YOU. Everything is an homage
to Jack Kerouac while Norman Mailer creates
great
EXISTENTIAL
ACTS
larger than literature.
Larger than literature entering through the realm
of the senses
—what is called the *sensorium*.
Brown baboon turning around on the log
to look at us.
Inventing lives.
Running fingers through the clinks
of smooth rocks.
In rage, pushing a friend into the swimming pool
near the pygmy mongooses. Elephant skeletons
spread out like explosions
on
the
dry
yellow
grass
—and gyrfalcons
squawking with anger
flying round their nest
in the cliff.
The car tries to drive over me from behind
like my stepfather's face.
AND
WHAT
TRIUMPHS
of sexuality and pride
LIKE BABY LAMBS
cavorting and happily and clumsily
butting old wooden fences
in the darkness

OF
CARNIVORE
CONSCIOUSNESS.

Stick figures of Jack and Jill.

STICK FIGURES OF JACK AND JILL. Figures of Jack and Jill
and the teacher's face like a huge moth in midair.

Billy Goats Gruff look at the pattern
on the wings. Red and brown
planets with auras and the miraculous pitcher.

Crayfish in ponds under bridges.

A dead friend's eyes through
his wire-rim glasses.

His laugh has become part of my bones.

THIS
CITY
OF
MY HEART

was once innocent as a baby and we
grew up in it. Shoe shops. Bakeries. Umbrella shops
in department stores.

Seasons of heavy rains and babies. Cold silver
wings. Steaming food on a wooden table.

EX
TREMES
OF
POVERTY.

Agonies over the rent.

FACES
TWISTED

BY

LOVE

IN

THE
NIGHT.
BODIES
tearing

at
one
another
like sleek figures
high
on the drugs of our glands.
And still we are all gods and I have a huge face.

I AM A GOD WITH A HUGE FACE. Lions
and eagles pour out of my mouth. Big white
square teeth and a red-purple tongue. There are
magenta clouds around my head and this
is my throne room. Actors perform
the drama of my being inside of you,

WEARING

YOUR

SKIN.

I

am

writhing and clawing.

BEG FOR MERCY.

Blackberry bramble catching
my pants leg. A tearing sound.

Deep inside in the padded car.

Garbage truck full of petroleum fantasies.

Dogs barking under the dark
tall pine trees. Hollyhocks

and a few pink roses. You are

everyone

BUT

I am nobody.

Nobody is very large

and

powerful.

Memory is naked bodies
in a battle. The war is sensuous
as a little boy's penis.

Fighter planes are guns.

I am the river god
in love with my dreams.

Not dreams but ongoing presences

spewed from the bang
through a nervous system.

At the edge of things but reaching
way back inside.

WAY BACK INSIDE is the castle of things.
These things never were except as I knew them.
A white polar bear rug on a shining floor.
Glass eyes and huge yellow teeth. Fossil ivory.
Christmas trees with tinsel. A friend
blown up in a car wreck. False voices
of self assurance. Peyote visions
like endless counters at Kresses. Shoe polish
lids. Shoe polish lids and lint. Brooms
with dark grease on them.
The view of the brown hills by moonlight
while the crickets sing. The sound
of rocks as they move in the river
and a moldy deer skeleton with ribs
ripped out by the jaws of the cougar.

THIS
IS
ALL
ME

the same as I ever was,
crying in movies, LAUGHING
and drunk and kicking
a door in with long hair
blown back
in
the wind
of my hormones.
Sneaky and Proud.

W
A
T
C
H
I
N
G

the fire while mysterious
beings form in the air.
Faust wants no more.
Never say: Hold, let this moment never cease.

HOLD, LET THIS MOMENT never cease. Drag it out
of context look at the roots of it in quarks
and primal hydrogen. It's the sound
of Shelley's laugh in my ears.

YOU
THINK
WE
ARE
BODIES
WALKING
UP
TO
ONE
ANOTHER
AND
SPEAKING.

Kissing.
Holding hands.

A universe before man ever was, filled
with dragonflies
in
your
eardrums.

Palm trees and skyscrapers. Vervet monkey
in the euphorbia tree staring at me.
The lion is consciousness. The eagle
is experience. As real as mud
chiming
with light
from
rainbows.

"Fuck you," right in your face.
"Fuck you!" He pulls out a gun
in reply. Gun the size of a toilet.
Blue-black. Bullets fire into a world
made of stacks of dirty feet.
Eyes of starving families. Dust
from red clay. Something

is purring
or flying.
Sound of thunder jars loose dead leaves
and they slowly fall
while the bell rings.

THERE IS NO CONFLICT IN MEMORY while the bell rings.

Free association is a red-blue tongue
up the ass. She looks like
Elizabeth Taylor. It's a penthouse
and the mind is there and somewhere else.
Robert Duncan called these things

G
L
A
M
O
U
R
S.

"Mind" means nothing but consciousness—
a rock has it and a toadstool
and a field of subparticles in a complex protein
as it loops, tying a knot. A mouth
with a cock in it. Babies
crying in the next room. Blackberries
glisten with it and the webs covered
with dust and particles from car fumes
and the pollen of eucalyptus.
Sometimes there is the sound
of attack
rifles

and
the
AM
TRAK

between owl hoots. Turquoise.
Musk. White linen. Pelican ink.
Concrete walls with words
on

them
in spotlights.
Ride a cock horse to Banbury Cross
where an old toad hops in the basement
in the smell of blueing.

WATER BOILS IN THE BIG COPPER TUB. White sheets
will be dipped in the blueing. Wrung out in the wringer
and then hung up to dry. THE SUBSTRATE IS SO VIBRANT
that I can't get close to it. It is YOU. YOU who are
as the owl hoots. Van Gogh drawing
must have felt like this. The hunter
throwing the chipped stone hand axe. Flint
and obsidian. A spirit rises from blood.
THE SUBSTRATE IS SO VIOLENT.

VOLATILE.

VIBRANT

I

birth

myself

in memories

just as Böhme's vision of dawn.

AND

YOU

CRAWL

from the gold,

liquid gold of rosy color

and

give birth to me.

You are my memories of you

holding my hand.

I

WANT

TO

GO

ANYWHERE.

I am a flowering.

Brave. Fearful. Scared to death
by the boredom. A fat gray kitten rolling
on its back, sinking its baby claws
(clean, thin, baby claws)

into a soft pink hand.
That's all, *fin*. *Finis*. The end
of beginning. The old rabbit winks.

THE OLD RABBIT BEGINS TO WINK, then the pony
tramples the rattlesnake. Eagle bones in a dream.

The eternal dimensions before the bang
have closed themselves off. This one
tries to be the realm of entropy.
Sombreros the color of children's
cookies. Colorlessness at the edges
of things. Radiances of blue-silver
clouds and mountain ranges
of cool white fog. I'm in a black suit
with wide legs. You. You are elegant
with soft arms
and strong fingers.

THERE

IS

JOY

IN

THE

ROOM

sometimes and
it is the field of complex
presences.

Big clear laughs are the best
and deep seeing eyes
looking back through the muscles
of mastodon hunters
cut

towards
the edge of the solar system
and a wall of surprising stars.
All of this through the background
BLUR
of one-dimensionality,
psyche projections,
and vibrancies of the substrate
as it turns
itself inside-out like a protein.

INSIDE-OUT LIKE A PROTEIN the owl hoots.
Big trouble. A child is waiting. Love streams.
Learn indolence from dust. Tonto says, owl hoots
are people in ambush. Incommensurable
and incomprehensible are the best of poetic creation,
the old man sings. The galaxies are a river
seen from this direction. The child knows
it is all black behind the eyes
and that flesh is a swirl of hungry
fantasies,
each loving the other.

M
A
L
L
A
R
M
É

throws it down on the deck
of the sinking ship in the storm
and the maelstrom.
SNAKE EYES!
Right on the planks!
Skeletons bartering their muscles
for gold.
Not likely
but the glitter is divine as the caterpillar.

I
HATED
HATED
HATED

the bombers flying over.
I could not save them or myself.
Napalm. The demon self

with soft eyes. Stabbing
Hamlet in the throne room. Discover
you are Hamlet with the blade
up your ass.

YOU ARE HAMLET WITH A BLADE OF GRASS

in your teeth like an old farmer
with a piece of straw. Cracker barrels
where the dog pissed. This is all a string of pearls
with reflections of reflections in the opulent
glimmering surface of endless flaws
making a surface
for the fingertips to touch
while remembering perfumes.
These are shadows of the wisps
of nothingness.

THIS

IS

A

COLLECTION

of skulls on a mantel: eagle,
lion, bat, goat, raven, sea turtle,
salmon.

A power pack

for the emotions to grow
through the taste of blackberries
and sound of the jays
and the footprints of the stag in the yard.

FREE

as the
cloud

of white flies

in the brambles. Going
the way of all flesh.

CAUGHT IN THE ROAR OF THE PLANES

PASSING OVER

while the bronze bell rings
in the wind.

Triangles of sunlight pass over the rug,

pretend this is not blackness.
This is not blackness, this
is a bell ring.

· PORTRAIT OF THE MOMENT

STOP,

HOLD, LET THIS MOMENT never cease. Drag it out
of context, look at the roots of it in quarks
and primal hydrogen. It's the sound
of Shelley's laugh in my ears.

YOU

THINK

WE

ARE

BODIES

WALKING

UP

Kissing.

TO

Holding hands.

ONE

ANOTHER

AND

SPEAKING.

A universe before man ever was, filled
with dragonflies
in
your
eardrums.

Palm trees and skyscrapers. Vervet monkey
in the euphorbia tree staring at me.

The lion is consciousness. The eagle
is experience. As real as mud

chiming

with light

from

rainbows.

“Fuck you,” right in your face.
“Fuck you!” He pulls out a gun
in reply. Gun the size of a toilet.
Blue-black. Bullets fire into a world
made of stacks of dirty feet.
Eyes of starving families. Dust
from red clay. Something
is purring
or flying.
Sound of thunder jars loose dead leaves
and they slowly fall
while the bell rings.
The bell chimes red-headed
linnets
wiping their beaks
on the green lichen.
Planes roar
from the airport
mixing
with sounds
of the traffic.
Raindrops on the brim
of a hat.
Round yellow seeds among hailstones
on the gray wet planks.
The self coming out like CLOUD,
CLOUD of FACES
and shoulders.
Big cloud. Bulk. Made
out of meat. All imagin-
ation like the river god, rippling
shoulders and muscles and hungers
and actions and their substrates
in childhood as childhood
has become dark meat like
Rexroth

said.
It's the eagle of experience feathered
with faces.
IT'S THE THOUGHT
OF
THE
BODY
AT
the edge
of
THINGS;
it's
the physics
of physiology,
the universe as athlete.
It's a real *if* like the odor
of chinchilla fur
or car tracks and deer prints
side by side
in
day
old
mud.
REAL
CLOUD
OF
FACES
and gone
now.
Demon warriors and toad men

and sneaky thoughts before glass
cabinets with secret drawers
and smell of frankincense
wrapped in pink panties
and raw meat. Then buried
in statues of dreams at
midnight
by an old barb-
wire fence.

While
the car motor
runs.

The face in each feather
is dumb and simple.
THE EAGLE AND THE LION ARE RAPT
IN ONE THING

BUT

that is beside the point

WHERE

light becomes meat

BEING

BURIED

in boys' leg muscles
or the plumpness of wrists
and the baby's interlocking
of eyes. See ME!
It's ALL at the edge of things
becoming the matter
WE

ARE,
making the ground work,
protein groundwork,

from
gases
and stars
in a plasma. With
all the dimensions there
((IN THAT))
we only have hints
of

HERE
in this tiny HUGE space.
Architecture of something else
that is seen as stuff.

AN

INTELLIGENT

FLATWORM

a hammer,
moss rubbed over the surface
of a turquoise,
streetlights in fog,
enzymatic structures of subtle happiness

in
an

OLD
WOMAN'S

WORDS.

Look at her glasses there
inside of me somewhere
in the future scratched
on a scale on a moth's back
next to the vistas of a dark ocean
seen from the hilltop.
Children shouting.
"Dog piles" of boy fighting.
Smell of mincemeat pies and snuff.
Pictures of duck hunting inside
of sleeping bags.
Looking down at my solid hands
posing
with chunky fingers
of sculpture laid out being themselves
for me and everybody in an
IMAGE
while I look up
through my dark brows.
As old as what will happen
and bright as the corners
of coal bins and the smell
of coal dust. Sound of cinders
dumped out over iron rust.
AWARENESS ENLARGES.

A PROCESS
till

I walk through caves
of it. Wooden
yoyos. Alive and lithe
and powerful as a blue-black
snake or a wet beach stone,

IT
TWISTS
AND
WRITHES

with muscles moving
the big scales
I
imagine. In im-
itation of something
in the original DARK
DENSITY
that never was till
this place

O
N

T
H
E

S
C
R
O
L
L

with the chunky fingers
laid out over themselves
and my eyes looking
up through dark brows.

WHAT POWER!
What power if power is
luminosity and darkness
in patinated bronze
like a bell ring.

Lines of tigers and owls

in glyphs speaking of ceremonies
turned bluegreen, patchy
dark greenblack and crusty brown,
smooth as the surface of a tooth.
Everything taken from damp tombs.

Sexuality is there:

A

CRAMP

in the neck and shoulders

STOPPING

the smooth flowery pleasure from
rippling through the somatic
segments.

Making a tilt to the head,
an engaging look,
in its formation

coming up out of baby meat

as a gloss on both sides

of the scroll. The scroll

is the point that is never there.

Kicking down a door and shouting

in drunken rage, long hair

blown back with storm of hormones.

Paper-mâché Santa Clauses

brought out in the smell

of unwrapped Gouda cheese

with scent of lizard

excrement on the fingers

and

stacks

of comic books

like folklore riffing

images of Puck and Pookah

and comic caped creatures

with goggles diving

from windows

IN
ALL
THE
DEEP,
DEEP
THOUGHT

of dimensions seeking

to return to their full complexity.

Everywhere in drafts and rainbows,

dusty windowshades and screaming murders.

Night sounds of cities on Easter morning.

All of the outside swirled in the instant,

its cytoplasm and mitochondrial

stars as building blocks for the rooms

we inhabit. Never put the finger

on it. The sun reflected on dull nails.

HOLD, this must not cease. Her jasmine

odor on the stone bridge over the river.

Fear I am losing her. Red-brown

cowboy boots. Heel sounds on cobblestone

in darkness. Harmonica playing while

the robins sing. There's no surprises

here. We are all always here. THIS

IS

PHILOSOPHY

OF

WHITEHEAD'S

PRE

HENSION.

Hysterical Socrates at the window

giggling. Dried roses standing

in the dusty vinegar cruet

making energy for an old poem. Passion

in the chest is beating like blood

and the singular intelligence of a mammal

in an old soft shirt and Levi's. It's all
passion and calmness. Meat and air. Tendrils.
Tendrils growing from tendrils, lashing out
of tendrils intertwining and twining
in the primal stuff of the future
where there used to be sunlight through
the window
on the wooden furniture
as I look up through dark brows
throwing light on the camera there.
Rimbaud guessed it and Artaud
is a brother in the dusty basement
with dirt under feet and a flashlight
looking for heroin as I clutch
Mickey Mouse and Goofy, spinning
through sexy corridors
of unread books. The tunnel is the outside
and matter is a dot of nothing on no
scroll. Not even
a
gloss. The passion
is real. (The eagle,
the lion. The tiger, the wolf.)
Passion remains when the matter
disappears. It is comprised
of the absence of the absence of nothingness.
Passion is the chest and the wrists
and the elbows in the moment.
All moments are one deep density
as garbage trucks are and a plane
passing over. The white bell blossoms
of the naked-branched manzanita
say it in the raindrops. The regret
and the guilt are bursting inside
with fleshly joy and torn
scraps of blue plastic paper

on the moving roller. Where the twin
fawns may starve together
in a vision of the goddess of Mercy
and

GRAVITY
WAVES

are
hallucinations
caused by the absence
of senses. The sensorium
is unlimited but it is out of touch
with the density Dimensions.
This is a prow cutting through
it
all,
being it all as
I slip out into it

WHERE IT IS IN ME REPEATING ITSELF

in
tendrils
of
spirit,
making it a riffle of soul
and

S O A P

O
P
E
R
A

of serious dark passionate brows
and hormones and meat.

WHAT

IS

WRONG

WITH

HAPPINESS?

the flatworm asks

and the owl hoots while the eagle
tears up the rabbit.

TAKE

A

DEEP

BREATH,

let it be a big picture

made in all imaginable senses.
Feel of the last quiver in the muscles
and jerk of the sinews in the leg
under the long scaled
fingers. Talons clutched
into the furry neck. Whistle
of expelled air. Sight of big
brown eyes. Smell of rabbit
blood. Pink inside
of the beaks of downy chicks.

A

raven's

quark and

visual flash of baboon below

on

a

log

and spaces

of nothingness in protein
molecules.

Acacia thorns. The biochemical
synergy of hunger

filling itself in smooth ebull-
ience marching to the music

of stars seen from night-roosting
over the edge of the cliffs.

Without sense it looks

like disorderly flames,

chaos,

complexity,

demon warriors, toad men, combustions
of petroleum in small chambers.

WITH

THE

SENSORIUM

broken

into
particles

it is
everything

looking up through dark brows at
itself
while a babe coos in a bedroom
and a lover is born

during

the earthquake.

One wing beats
with a smooth angry joyful
sound and the beak closes on
neck fur. Perfume
of rabbit in the midst
of the overwhelming purring
that is the backdrop, the basic
sound of the unhearable mantra
carved out of lotuses and hummingbirds'
heartbeats
and the early
universes
at the beginning
of the lightning flash:
Raindrops hanging on plum leaf buds.
Sunlight and moon light on the craggy
redwood bark

and the smell of the car,
inside of the car,
dusty felt and ersatz velvet,
as it drives through the cliffs
of the desert. Skull on the tabletop.
Squares of woven straw rugs.
Point Lobos as it always is
with a whale skeleton
and molecules
of Robinson Jeffers'
breath and shoe soles
looking
up
out
of my eyes
(sensing back and outwards into
a vision)
at the camera.
Beautiful toes in the shower.

WHAT

INTENSITY

OF

CONSCIOUSNESS

in everything;

NO,

IT
IS
everything.

Wet streams over the feet
on the metal floor
with smell of Roquefort
from another coterminal dream
of the original dimensions
beaming PASSION into
meat,
muscular meat.
Reaching out into stars
and down into stars
inside of stars.
No collar on the worn shirt.
Poems about high heels and a baby
on velvet

in a flash of sun.
Grinning out from his little cap
and sweater.
Monkey in the barn with the horses
of instruction while the black
'34 Ford boils over in the snow
and big green-brown tadpoles
waft through the pool
over their shadows.
A dot of light in each shadow
proves it.
Taste of Butterfinger bars in
the bright hot sun, like
silver, and patterns of lichens
over the volcanic rock hills
in red yellow green blue brown
black. A LAUGH
OF
PASSION
with the nothingness of meat
expanding in all directions

as the extension of them.
Big blue-black jay imitating the hawk's
call.
It's

a
bluff

a
cliff

a
ledge

beating like a heart

from outside where it emulates
itself, limited only by senses.
Let there be ten trillion of them
and like light everything
is everything
in an illusion of infinite flatness
in all directions and writhing
most
lucidly
in meat
and doorknobs
of brass and face-shaped galaxies.
So quaint
so old-fashioned
as sweet and sour as Grandma's sex life
with clear wings of liberty and joy.
Just the air in the room outside the ears

is

EVERYTHING

and he knows it in this lion state
that
it's the grumbling purr,
smooth as invisible quicksilver,
as the sulphur stone falls
in
to
it
eternally
endlessly,
forty trillion years.
A tiny sore bump on the tip
of the tongue. The endless Hamlets,
and Duchesses of Malfi and Laurels
and Hardys and Abbotts and
Costellos. Pirate ships and winged
daggers, smell of sardines
and baked beans or lima bean soup
with hamhocks
growing
like assemblages
from the blackness of the mystery.
No
color
at
all
not even
black
or a purr.
Nowhere manifest and vibrant
dull and glossy,
smelling like an old rock
that has been battered half smooth
by the stream
with deep eyes staring from the dramas
of meat behind the eyes.

It goes on and on endlessly
but there is no it
except the presence
and no presence but passion
or courage. And no passion
or courage. Even laughter!
Laughter shaped like a purr experiencing
the wings and talons
of itself
still mortal in the death screech
of the rabbit.
The lion is invisible but
hardly less there
and History marches with banners
and Wagnerian songs through
the small spaces between fingers
lying upon chunky fingers
on the smooth wooden tabletop.
Smell of meat and coffee
and black Spanish cigarettes.
The lower lip knows everything.
Especially fear. Sculpture
of fear making cliffs of passion
and courage. Smell of pot
in the car. Paintings of sailing ships
over mantels on painted blue
and white waves. Maya and molecules
and nothing are the same and

here I am

in
quarks
and
quasars
always unseen

in everything:
spirit
descended
in
to
matter
in
a
glitter
of
courageous
fear
and pride looking
for real souls
to eat
as
I
sail.
BANG
goes
the
BLUE-BLACK GUN,
"Fuck you, right in your face,"
pours
up
from
the
D
E
E
P
NESS
spreading out before
consciousness

D
E
E
P
N
E
S
S
flowing out of and into baby meat
as the pussywillows open in a thicket
of skinny tendrils and delicate gray
soft fur with the rippling sound
of the stream running over rocks
fallen from the cliffs while
the hawk whistles above
the madrone tree and flaps
her wings three times, both at once,
to catch up with her mate.
It happened here on a carpet
of
MOSS.
Swifts fly high, whistling and mating
in air in the smoky
summer sunset.
Below the cliff
littered with carved stones
and remains
of
walls
is the plaza. Cats walk
over the grass, moving
from tree to tree.
A peacock
called here.
It is all a garden, a dance
growing out of myself.

ALL
WILD
and
ALL
PERFECT
with no need to be.
BUT PASSION AND COURAGE
AND FEAR
all
speak
of something else.
There is no enigma because
it all is confrontation.
Hound dogs and sound of heaters running.
Rabbit blood. The camera.
The high red-brown cliffs of the desert
carved into sculptures
of ancient kings and queens sitting
on chairs of matter,
backs erect,
and eyes looking out of the child
way back in the smell of incense
and tadpole ponds and dirty
butts. These are the fingers
lying on the other stubby
fingers. Each one of them holds
more consciousness than a lower
lip or a brain. While everything
whites itself out into what
is there. It's just
entropy with hunger pressing
against it. Shaping
it into what it is, was, will be,
melting into its tathagatian
self.

ONE
drop of blood
on the talon and a spray
of bloody fur on the breast.
Flat as stars cut out of tinfoil,
cutly as memory growing
out of its interwinding with experience
while I imagine the lion roar
on Christmas Eve. Not far away
are crocodiles in the river,
and the sly fast ones under
the bed,
and little turtles with round, flat
tin bodies stare from
these eyes in a dream
at a board game with stick pegs
carved out of cedar from
Solomon's groves.
Blackberries growing over graves.
Old men living in the forests
with pheasants and odd
eries of ruby-crowned kinglets
and thin catfish transparent as glass.
All there in the iris

WHICH
IS
THE
WHORLING,
WHORLING
CONDENSATION

of
the

moment
into the purr and feather of hands
with the mouth slightly open
in a pose.
Real as fear and courage,
as
prudent
as a grasshopper
or whirlwind. Smell
of Blake's molecules all over
Job in the Old Testament.
Jakob Böhme as drunk as Jesus!
Swedenborg telling Sir Hans Sloane
that birds in dreams are souls.

Look
at
each
one
carefully,

vet
it.

Experience!
Moving through consciousness
is
as
dull
as Technicolor feathers
flowing over mirrors
reflecting every passion and desire
and
frustrated
HUNGER

looking up through the brows

WHILE
THE BELL CHIMES.

Dark clouds pour
over the hill.
The city is the whirr of the air
in shapes of cars and trucks
and riverbeds stood on end
with windows and breasts
and hats in elevators
over the greensward. Hiss goes
the city while the redwood grove
is calm, turned into itself,
in a hiss or a purr. Dark brows
and vacant stars containing everything
like the thicket of pussywillows
in gray fur and the white
blossoms of the plum tree
bursting nearby.

IT'S

ALL

STARS

turning into a flow
of laughing dragons
with red scales and chests
pouring over the edge
of the brain
coming
up
from

the soles of the feet.
Knot after knot at the base
of the cortex
creating
an
attention

stage
focused on itself.
Sporophytes in the dark, bright
green moss
smirk
at the oak trees.
Mothers show sharks
to children.
L
A
M
B
S
stand next to fences
in Iceland and planes
land in the cold foggy
darkness
of
WHERE.
Where the growling is heard
while the feathers beat
and move with the ruffle
of the intake of air.
Toadmen sit on the fallen tree
by the baboon. A baby
cries out with need
for love and milk. The earth's
crust shakes and the walls
slip. It all happens
by the young man's ears. Dramas
in the sky of the room.
Plots of river gods and goddesses
and princes and queens.
Blue-black bullet in the head
of a President.
Self coming out like the CLOUD.

Cloud of faces.
Personality is grimaces
and holdings of muscles.
Gratuitous, well-trained
and in pain.
The Amtrak is a person
as
much
as
people
ARE.
Let it be the flesh
that is self.
HOLD,
let this
moment
never
cease.
But it never was,
eternally.
Raindrops on gray planks
and smell of old cashmere
sweaters where the rat gnaws
the luggage case.
The fingers slip up the other sleeve.
The camera clicks.
Photographer grins.
Soul is the elimination
of personality.
Soul invents soul
like the deep cloud
of somewhere else.

DRIVING

THE

CAR
IS
PERSONALITY.

enshrined.

The poem shows
nothing absent.
The knuckles and the pen
are a shadow
on a page
in the swirl
and the scroll spins.
Hunger and courage are ends
of the same worm
that the robin pries
from the golf course.
Night is weighed in the scale
in the room as
the white plum petals

F

A

L

L

into designs of rats
drunk in the branches.
The crossing of plane roars
lead to the old windowsill
and the purr it makes
in the eagle's beak.
This is it and it's all perfect,
imperfect,
never was,
nowhere
but a glossy brown Jeep
station wagon.

The cliff edge above
the glittery silver flash
ocean of something
else.

MOVE

ON

WITH

BIG

LOOPS

of blue-black scaled biceps
in a rosy aura of shimmer,
or crunch of woven straw
under the boot heel.

Walking through reflections of empty streets.
There's no conflict in memory. It's all here
where it never was. Laocoön loops
of streetlights and motes of dust in eyes
long gone into the future. A bearded
man listens, imagining childhoods in Mexico
while the room purrs there in the middle
of the wing beats and makes a lengthening
growl. In front of the bookcase.
Smell of mackerel baking. Leg of mutton.
Diapers. The child's big face in the doorway.
Babes singing in hallways. Big land turtles
pulling ornate red chariots over shining wood

F

L

O

O

R

S

on the riverbank.
Mud of all kinds making veils.

The parasite of personality drops away
as the muscles, and the muscles
of spirit, loop and throw out coils,
exfoliate tendrils. Comprehension.
Understanding the taste of red purple
grapes with green flesh
and the seed nestled in there where
the tongue glides in something
written while high
in the old days.
Shaped like a star in all directions,
the
moment
blasts
and dodders
and skims
through everything.
Outside of everything
containing it. The dentist
drills on the mountain range
as if it were mute and dumb. Dumb
and mute, not hearing him. The nurse
giggles in flattery at the base
of the cliff where the snaggle-
toothed Indians push the Jeep
through mudbank. Lightning
crash. Pearls in the lotus bud.

M
A
N
D
A
L
A
S

of containers stacked
for pickup with the milk
tanks. A wall of cicadas
singing turned into a roar
of the ears. Fears of nothing
and whirr of wooden yo-yo.
As the hand slides from the other
hand up the sleeve. The smile
is vacant and sly and knowing
and deep. Soulful. Freed of personality.
Freed of tendrils being the tendrils.
Solid personality
of gold and ivory and donkey fur
laughing at itself
like
courage
being cheap.
In
the
air
Bushmen's dreams
of gazelles turning to eagles
in the roar and the purr and the roar.

ROAR.

Roar

behind
the
eyes
beyond
parturition
on the other side
of

the
lost
dimension

in this one

B
E
F
O
R
E

meat

conceived

of
its

 hungers.
At the foot of the cliff
beside his ears in the room
the cloud bursts, straight
and flowing shapes of blue-purple
from the old skull top
as the goddess
upward flows
from the perineum
to all the dimensions bound
 in

O
N
E

imaginary ball.

Where there is no imagination
but the madman calling
through the corridors
of his lost teeth.

The young man's sly smile
of passion and courage
and hopeful fear.

Snail trails on the sidewalk
in the silver wind.

Screams from a lost love
on cold empty streets
and loving kisses in
midnight playgrounds.

The chunky fingers slide
up the sleeve
as the room fills with feathers
and blood and purring
roars.

The central nervous system is shaped
like the Milky Way.
And the odor almost like
licorice.

