

CASCADIAN

bioregional writings on cascadia here and now

# volume one

Paul E. Nelson Jason M. Wirth Adelia MacWilliam with Theresa Whitehill editors



Watershed Press Seattle, Washington, Cascadia MMXXIII

Bear

# Three "Dharma Poems"

# Ι.

his vision or not? gone is the authority w / which he opened his fan.

# 2.

raindrops melt in the pond & it's hard to say just what "lineage" is

# 3.

my faith what is it but the ancient dreams of wild ones in the mountains?

# To Boldly Go...

I'll never stop missing the ducks in the round black pond in front of Sangha house, or the Salvadoran child who fed them in the rain Francisco Bay

in a red sweatshirt six sizes too big for him I'll never cut through nostalgia stop dreaming about Millbrook, Fourteenth Century Venice Andalusia, the Orkneys, Crete, or African wisdom I'll never stop seeing the harbors of Atlantis cut out of white stone or licking my lips in the rain to taste again Lemurian luau on a wilder solstice

I'm a sentimental wombat, unlikely proponent of emptiness. I keep reaching for alphabets so old we call them geometries. Or DNA. or quarks. I'll never stop trying to make sense of it all in a wind too cold to think in nor find my way out of this magic but chilling California to something more ample & satisfying—warm

vast subtle generous jungle civilizations I wanna get back to, transparent & hedonistic

or swim on the edges of galactic time with a Sufi angel, rampant scarlet & ready

while the lights of the Five Buddha Families play like sheet lightning around the manifold & I set out w/the rest of the fleet for more....

—June 1995

# I Fail as a Dharma Teacher

I don't imagine I'll manage to express Sunyata in a way that all my students will know & love or present the Four Noble Truths so they look delicious & tempting as Easter candy. My skillful means is more like a two by four banging on the head of a reluctant diver I then go in and save what pyrotechnics!

Alas this life I can't be kind and persuasive slip the Twelve-part Chain off hundreds of shackled housewives present the Eight-fold Path like the ultimate roadmap at all the gas stations in Samsara

But, oh, my lamas, I want to how I want to! Just to see your old eyes shine in this Kaliyuga stars going out around us like birthday candles your Empty Clear Luminous and Unobstructed Rainbow Bodies swimming in and through us all like transparent fish.

# Cartography

# OUTER

Bow. This part is easy. Keep all thoughts even slightly questionable to yourself.

It is probably better to color within the lines cross at the crosswalk. Never stare into a stranger's eyes. On the map assume north is where they say it is.

# INNER

feel the dance, it never stops. nor do the winds. they blow from inside out.

Remember, there *are* 2 norths distinguish between them

# SECRET

you take whatever direction you take. Not out of indifference or nonchalance.

You love the maps. Tho they lied they got you here.

MOST SECRET

perhaps you dreamed the maps. perhaps you burned them. Anyway they're not here.

And north is everywhere.

I woke up at about 2:30 this morning and thought about Philip's hat.

It is bright lemon yellow, with a little brim all the way around, and a lime green hat band, printed with tropical plants.

# It sits on top

of his shaved head. It upstages every thing & every body. He bought it at Walgreen's himself. I mean it fortunately wasn't a gift from an admirer. Otherwise he is dressed in soft blues. And in his hands a long wooden string of Buddhist Rosary beads, which he keeps moving. I ask him which mantra he is doing—but he tells me in *Zen*, you don't have to bother with any of that. You can just *play* with the beads.

Unlimited Growth on a Planet of Finite Size

The brisk spring wind sets in motion the wheel of mind restless as five monkeys running in place 30linas Lagoon

At least it's entertaining when there are dreams of many

energetically bringing "Zen"

from India to China to Japan to California and New York riding on a wave of understanding

> and like sunlight arriving without a sound

—April 3, 2010

# Take a Deep Breath

Can't seem to get the fire started this morning need to add dreams so flames rise quick as thoughts and drift out

> into the overcast sky Mind here and now is Buddha says Dōgen

Appearing in front of the bright and temporal poppies about to open against the perfume of a small gold Narcissus

just searching for information from the air waves a gentle moment from tiny plum leaves the day with barely an adieu

—March 22, 2012

# Wide Mind

Occupies a wide mind, a wide consciousness, front page, editorial page The winds of spring are cold and keen from the sea Can one bring dead people to dinner? Constantly opening up those dark arms 'I'm having a ball sleeping with my skeleton' Allen before he dies

A harsh hawk-like call from the cypress hedge entrance come out come out! I am I am never been here before See me? Steller Steller

Jay jaunty blue black

'Do you suppose it's him?' 'I was thinking the same thing.'

Day after A.G.'s passing —Sunday, April 6, 1997 We are the Ancestors

We would still gather faithfully around the last standing beam of Old Man House (1903)

disassembled, barely eyeing the camera in our Victorian collared clothes.

One young man aside his unicycle, straight-faced

another swinging a bat!

캮

Casting edges the pattern in the shine Kitsap

it never trails off, when the rock

is shaken rain will fall

샦

We are here and will find you,

We will comb back through the sky for all traces, again

it is our pleasure

Starting from Old Man House (What did you learn here?)

for Joy Harjo

How to fall asleep easily on the beach,

to dig clams, to dream a net made of nettles.

A medicine of marsh tea boiled out to the open air,

a memory of cedar bark coiled,

resting for months in cold water

to be fashioned into our so-called lifestyle,

clothes for ceremony

as well as daily life, canoe bailers,



GC<sub>4</sub>



diapers, we used the wood for our half-mile longhouse and totems, dried fish, a hard

smoke wooden oval plates that hooked together filled with clear oil of salmon,

to wet our palates and smooth our bodies. A shawl of woolly dog (now extinct) they were bred on tiny islands we can still identify,

Tatoosh Island off of Cape Flattery where there were whaling tribes too,

the Makah,

one of whose villages collapsed, preserved in silt (later unearthed) and how else?

Which other ceremonies or necessary edges of objects?

Our ivory needles, otter pelts, mat creasers, our dances.

What else do you remember dreaming of?

A kind of rake to skim the waves, to catch tiny fish on rows of twisted nails.

In and around Port Angeles

Crescent was the lake

and Air-Crest

#### a motel,

mind stuck at my sources

A flimsy strip

of rooms painted, spotless insides.

A blossom curled to its drink in the glass jar,

fluid as past saviors and poet explorers

Philip Whalen

with the shade of Miss Kids

"Any rough land rises with light"

A peeling red house rotten wood trim

It felt empty from across the river

I was a giant

bent at the waist

with massive reach

(through lines of rain)

combing knots from the fog

Cascadian Zen: Basket One, The Buddha Way

clear down

through the pine

tiny points of bloody lime ink rejoined

every image

# meaning light pressed

the day long...

menacing chord

congested

hall of mosses

bump

and narrow bridge

I fell out alone and

so solid

reciting my crystalline

little head off in slick

and banded verse.

"O the air

from the valve

that burns

which glyph"

# Sourdough Mountain Lookout

Tsung Ping (375–443): "Now I am old and infirm. I fear I shall no more be able to roam among the beautiful mountains. Clarifying my mind, I meditate on the mountain trails and wander about only in dreams." —in The Spirit of the Brush, tr. by Shio Sakanishi, p. 34

# for Kenneth Rexroth

I always say I won't go back to the mountains I am too old and fat there are bugs mean mules And pancakes every morning of the world

Mr. Edward Wyman (63) Steams along the trail ahead of us all Moaning, "My poor feet ache, my back Is tired and I've got a stiff prick" Uprooting alder shoots in the rain

Then I'm alone in a glass house on a ridge Encircled by chiming mountains With one sun roaring through the house all day

Francisco

& the others crashing through the glass all night Conscious even while sleeping

Morning fog in the southern gorge Gleaming foam restoring the old sea-level The lakes in two lights green soap and indigo The high cirque-lake black half-open eye

Ptarmigan hunt for bugs in the snow Bear peers through the wall at noon Deer crowd up to see the lamp A mouse nearly drowns in the honey I see my bootprints mingle with deer-foot Bear-paw mule-shoe in the dusty path to the privy

Much later I write down: "raging. Viking sunrise The gorgeous death of summer in the east!" (Influence of a Byronic landscape— Bent pages exhibiting depravity of style.)

Outside the lookout I lay nude on the granite Mountain hot September sun but inside my head Calm dark night with all the other stars

HERACLITUS: "The waking have one common world But the sleeping turn aside Each into a world of his own."

I keep telling myself what I really like Are music, books, certain land and sea-scapes The way light falls across them, diffusion of Light through agate, light itself...I suppose I'm still afraid of the dark "Remember smart-guy there's something Bigger something smarter than you." Ireland's fear of unknown holies drives My father's voice (a country neither he Nor his great-grandfather ever saw)

A sparkly tomb a plated grave A holy thumb beneath a wave

Everything else they hauled across Atlantic Scattered and lost in the buffalo plains Among these trees and mountains

From Duns Scotus to this page A thousand years

("...a dog walking on this hind legs not that he does it well but that he does it at all.")

Virtually a blank except for the hypothesis That there is more to a man Than the contents of his jock-strap

EMPEDOCLES: "At one time all the limbs Which are the body's portion are brought together By Love in blooming life's high season; at another Severed by cruel Strife, they wander each alone By the breakers of life's sea."

Fire and pressure from the sun bear down Bear down centipede shadow of palm-frond A limestone lithograph—oysters and clams of stone Half a black rock bomb displaying brilliant crystals Fire and pressure Love and Strife bear down Brontosaurus, look away

My sweat runs down the rock

HERACLITUS: "The transformations of fire are, first of all, sea; and half of the sea is earth, half whirlwind.... It scatters and it gathers; it advances and retires."

I move out of a sweaty pool (The sea!) And sit up higher on the rock

Is anything burning?

The sun itself! Dying Pooping out, exhausted Having produced brontosaurus, Heraclitus This rock, me, To no purpose I tell you anyway (as a kind of loving)... Flies & other insects come from miles around To listen I also address the rock, the heather, The alpine fir

BUDDHA: "All the constituents of being are Transitory: Work out your salvation with diligence."

(And everything, as one eminent disciple of that master Pointed out, had been tediously complex ever since.)

There was a bird Lived in an egg And by ingenious chemistry Wrought molecules of albumen To beak and eye Gizzard and craw Feather and claw

My grandmother said: "Look at them poor bedraggled pigeons!"

And the sign in McAlister Street:

"IF YOU CAN'T COME IN SMILE AS YOU GO BY L♥VE THE BUTCHER

I destroy myself, the universe (an egg) And time—to get an answer: There are a smiler, a sleeper and a dancer

We repeat the conversation in the glittering dark Floating beside the sleeper. The child remarks, "You knew it all the time." I: "I keep forgetting that the smiler is Sleeping; the sleeper, dancing."

From Sauk Lookout two years before Some of the view was down the Skagit To Puget Sound: From above the lower ranges, Deep in the forest—lighthouses on clear nights. Zenshin Philip Whalen

This year's rock is a spur from the main range Cuts the valley in two and is broken By the river; Ross Dam repairs the break, Makes trolley buses run Through the streets of dim Seattle far away.

I'm surrounded by mountains here A circle of 108 beads, originally seeds of *ficus religiosa* Bo-Tree A circle, continuous, one odd bead Larger than the rest and bearing A tassel (hair-tuft) (the man who sat under the tree) In the center of the circle, a void, an empty figure containing All that's multiplied; Each bead a repetition, a world Of ignorance and sleep.

Today is the day the goose gets cooked Day of liberation for the crumbling flower Knobcone pinecone in the flames Brandy in the sun

Which, as I said, will disappear Anyway it'll be invisible soon Exchanging places with stars now in my head To be growing rice in China through the night. Magnetic storms across the solar plains Make Aurora Borealis shimmy bright Beyond the mountains to the north. Water

Francisco Bay

Closing the lookout in the morning Thick ice on the shutters Coyote almost whistling on a nearby ridge The mountain is THERE (between two lakes) I brought back a piece of its rock Heavy dark-honey color With a seam of crystal, some of the quartz Stained by its matrix Practically indestructible A shift from opacity to brilliance (The Zenbos say, "Lightening-flash & flint-spark") Like the mountains where it was made

What we see of the world is the mind's Invention and the mind Though stained by it, becoming Rivers, sun, mule-dung, flies— Can shift instantly A dirty bird in a square time

Gone Gone REALLY gone Into the cool O MAMA!

Like they say, "Four times up, Three times down." I'm still on the mountain.

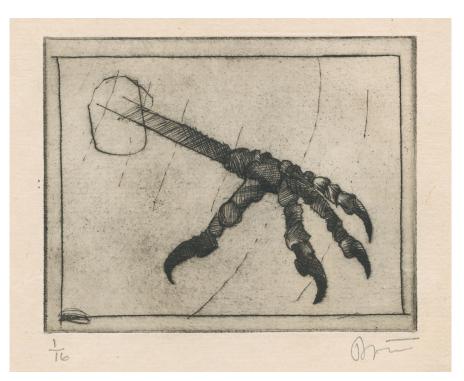
# Mahayana

Soap cleans itself the way ice does, Both disappear in the process.

The questions of "Whence" & "Whither" have no validity here.

Mud is a mixture of earth and water Imagine WATER as an "Heavenly" element Samsara and nirvana are one:

Flies in amber, sand in the soap Dirt and red algae in the ice Fare thee well, how very delightful to see you here again!



Left Foot

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# Mid-August at Sourdough Mountain Lookout

Down valley a smoke haze Three days heat, after five days rain Pitch glows on the fir-cones Across rocks and meadows Swarms of new flies.

I cannot remember things I once read A few friends, but they are in cities. Drinking cold snow-water from a tin cup Looking down for miles Through high still air.

For Philip Zenshin Whalen d. 26 June 2002

(and for 33 pine trees)

Load of logs chains cinched down and double-checked The truck heads slowly up the hill Yuba River Water

I bow *namaste* and farewell these ponderosa pine whose air and rain and sun we shared

for thirty years, struck by beetles needles turning rusty brown, and moving on.

 decking, shelving, siding, stringers, studs, and joists,

I will think of you pines from this mountain As you shelter people in the Valley Years to come

# Where

Shoot an arrow into the secret heart of the monster I once said. But the Airports, Skyscrapers Markets had no secrets just more places that won't die.

No use shooting there—

Seek the *secret heart*. The core, the center, of the monster's power —not where we thought. It's elsewhere, hidden in a harmless-looking spot

If you've wiped somebody's nose, untied a knot, searched for a lost key maybe a little bird or mouse will point and whisper in your ear

shoot there

# Atomic Dawn

The day I first climbed Mt. St. Helens was August 13, 1945.

Spirit Lake was far from the cities of the valley and news came slow. Though the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima August 6 and the second dropped on Nagasaki August 9, photographs didn't appear in the Portland Oregonian until August 12. Those papers must have been driven in to Spirit Lake on the 13th. Early the morning of the 14th I walked over to the lodge to check the bulletin board. There were whole pages of the paper pinned up: photos of a blasted city from the air, the estimate of 150,000 dead in Hiroshima alone, the American scientist quoted as saying "nothing will grow there again for seventy years." The morning sun on my shoulders, the fir forest smell and the big tree shadows; feet in thin moccasins feeling the ground, and my heart still one with the snowpeak mountain at my back. Horrified, blaming scientists and politicians and the governments of the world, I swore a vow to myself, something like, "By the purity and beauty and permanence of Mt. St. Helens, I will fight against this cruel destructive power and those who would seek to use it, for all my life."

### 1980: Letting Go

# Centuries, years and months of—

let off a little steam cloud up and sizzle growl stamp-dance quiver swell, glow glare bulge

swarms of earthquakes, tremors, rumbles

she goes

8.32 AM 18 May 1980

superheated steams and gasses white-hot crumbling boulders lift and fly in a burning sky-river wind of searing lava droplet hail, huge icebergs in the storm, exploding mud, shoots out flat and rolls a swelling billowing cloud of rock bits, crystals, pumice, shards of glass dead ahead blasting away a heavenly host of tall trees goes flat down lightning dances through the giant smoke

a calm voice on the two-way ex-navy radioman and volunteer describes the spectacle—then says, the hot black cloud is rolling toward him—no way but wait his fate a photographer's burnt camera full of half melted pictures, three fallers and their trucks chainsaws in black, tumbled gray and still, two horses swept off struggling in hot mud a motionless child laid back in a stranded ashy pickup

roiling earth-gut-trash cloud tephra twelve miles high ash falls like snow on wheatfields and orchards to the east five hundred Hiroshima bombs

in Yakima, darkness at noon

# Albert Saijo

# **Bodhisattva Vows**

BODHISATTVA VOWS TO BE THE LAST ONE OFF THE SINKING SHIP—YOU SIGN UP & FIND OUT IT'S FOREVER—PASSENGER LIST ENDLESS—SHIP NEVER EMPTIES—SHIP KEEPS SINKING BUT DOESN'T GO QUITE UNDER—ON BOARD ANGST PANIC & DESPERATION HOLD SWAY—TURNS OUT BODHISATTVAHOOD IS A FUCKING JOB LIKE ANY OTHER BUT DIFFERENT IN THAT THERE'S NO WEEKENDS HOLIDAYS VACATIONS NO GOLDEN YEARS OF RETIREMENT—YOU'RE SPENDING ALL YOUR TIME & ENERGY GETTING OTHER PEOPLE OFF THE SINKING SHIP INTO LIFEBOATS BOUND GAILY FOR NIRVANA WHILE THERE YOU ARE SINKING-& OF COURSE YOU HAD TO GO & GIVE YOUR LIFE JACKET AWAY—SO NOW LET US BE CHEERFUL AS WE SINK—OUR SPIRIT EVER BUOYANT AS WE SINK

# Mushim Patricia Ikeda

Waters

Creek

mescal

because emptiness

I need you

lies down

flows into late summer, less quickly now I need you, deep and cooler pools in your silted bends I need you, thicketed small birds the smell of leaves dragged in water something unnamed, unexpressed

green and joyous river not yet grown old,

does not stay

where sunlight skims surfaces and for a moment

practicing deeply the wisdom beyond wisdom

because although you are no longer form, remind me with brilliant fragments clouds bird wings slow chords your voice your mouth both resolution source

gone beyond and beyond and beyond

On August 6, 1945, during World War II (1939–45), an American B-29 bomber dropped the world's first deployed atomic bomb over the Japanese city of Hiroshima. The explosion wiped out 90 percent of the city and immediately killed 80,000 people; tens of thousands more would later die of radiation exposure. Three days later, a second B-29 dropped another A-bomb on Nagasaki, killing an estimated 40,000 people. Japan's Emperor Hirohito announced his country's unconditional surrender in World War II in a radio address on August 15, citing the devastating power of "a new and most cruel bomb." —*history.com* 

heart sūtra fragment 1 august 6–9, 2018

before sleep because form

because in Hiroshima everything including horses burned *no color no sound* because headlines again read war cruelty stupid torture waste

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mescal Creek Water

# heart sūtra fragment 3

for arthur mcgee, d. July 8, 2018

the red thread the damaged heart no suffering no cause no cessation no path

this morning I must love the uncontrollable 10,000 things

> red tea in a glass adamant ravens their cries outside the stain of blue fruit from a half-eaten pie piles of unread books the couch where you sat

when I took the blurred photo Thanksgivings ago used this year for your funeral

no smell no sound no taste no touch no old age and death and also no extinction of them no suffering no cause of suffering

"I'm always angry," you said no cessation no path

you died alone "of natural causes" at 51 were found on your littered floor the body livid ashy

"a proud Black man" your friends said but did we somehow fail you, Makani asked me

can anything now be saved from the fire the sea levels rising heart sūtra fragment 5

gate, gate, paragate, parasamgate small and large vessels navigate

mountains and rivers creeks, spillways, marshes, sloughs

trickledowns and whitewaters gravity is impersonal we all return to ground

but tonight I think rebirth is simply this: from these small vessels, our bodies

we naturally overturn and spill out into vastness and return

unsui, lit.: cloud water

ten years ago, when the injection instantly stopped our sick cat's heart

she was ready, crying in pain the night before and I wrote my child of this small death

she has returned fully trusting to the Source

Mushim Patricia Ikeda

# heart sūtra fragment 7

...my dream of you is not yet over. —Montale, "The Prisoner's Dream"

all dharmas are marked with boundlessness do not appear or disappear do not increase or decrease

at the funeral in the jazz nightclub in Oakland for a civil rights attorney I recited the Diamond Sūtra's last verse

tonight, from memory, I hear

like a flash of lightning in a summer storm, foam on a wave, a dewdrop, or a dream so should we look on all conditioned things—

it says we should

but I am as yet unable

so today, in the lines, on the ground that is always burning, this prayer

Creator of my life, grant me freedom from greed

give me eyes to see the radiant mountain the compassionate sea have not been dreamed by me alone

unpredictably: a thank you note

Unpredictably, it was brilliantly sunny though I'd packed for winter rain and mud on the trail through wild mustard and lacy masses of green hemlock with their purplish scooped stalks—opening

to the crisply churning long line of surf, and, quieter closer in, the edge of Her body, the sea. And how was it possible, from what little we'd packed in, before we spread my father, my mother's ashes in the sea

that you made the smallest of fires, and tea tasting like tree resin, warm soil, another country's rain, then thirteen years of patience?—definable: the long and faithful wait, but not its grace.

for Chris Lauf Point Reyes National Seashore Kehoe Beach —February 17, 2019

# Cascadian Zen Haiku

at the intersection

Buddha statue on the altar the young monk picks his nose

morning birdsong so much bigger than feathers

Fourth of July the scent of barbequing forests

Kubota memorial the heart stone still beating

another birthday

ancient tree rings

counting the

winter retreat peeing outside the cabin another full moon

snail on my doorstep you arriving me departing

deep winter even in sadness morning star

berry season the plump ripe one just out of reach



Platter

Seattle Zen

The crane some weeks later took itself apart after putting itself together—

how convenient if we could follow suit, readying our atoms

for the self's reboot.

# CASCADIAN Zeli

Cascadian Zen: Bioregional Writings on Cascadia Here and Now, Volume I

*Cascadian Zen* was typeset in Dante and Adobe Caslon Pro with titling in Albertsthal Typewriter and Franklin Gothic, Han characters in Adobe Kaiti, and ornaments in Mrs Eaves. The book was printed on 80# book paper and perfectbound into soft covers, including a tipped-in fold-out map. A portion of the run was casebound in cloth over boards with foil stamping and tipped-on image.

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Adelia MacWilliam Box 2514, Cowichan Bay British Columbia, Canada VoR 1No terrapoetics@gmail.com



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