

bpNichol



THE MARTYROLOGY

3

4

the martyrology



carrots onions celery potatoes  
cheddar cheese  
beef for stock  
salt pepper garlic

windy day  
keep the door open  
kitchen cool

core & steam the cabbages  
peel the leaves  
rice & vegetables for the hollopchis

sit around the table  
talk of nothing  
good feeling for the job that's done

walk the fields the wind blows  
blue sky above you always  
pray that will be so

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**the martyrology**  
**BOOKS 3 & 4**

**Bp nichol**

The Coach House Press

Toronto

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THE MATYROLOGY

in its entirety is

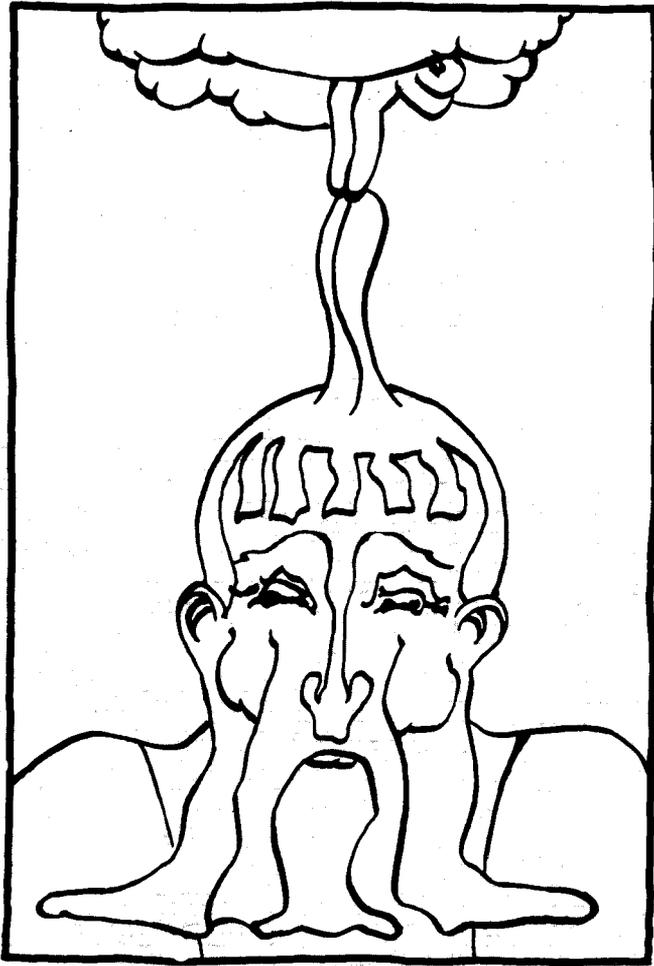
as i said originally

for Lea

without whom

quite literally

none of it would have been written



'this is the 16th straight day of sunshine hot weather here in divineland bc so have found some little spots on the west van side for lots of swimming – maybe i should have been a fish. deep breathing floating i learned all those years ago, body totally relaxed back slightly arched & just letting the ocean hold my face up to the blue sky. sweet heaven, who needs the jesus freaks. spine, which was wrenched again at work (in the valve factory, if yu can dig it, & i can't thus this is my last week & then taking a carpentry course) is feeling much better, thanks to hands of mother ocean.

i think it's becoming a good summer all in all. Pat & i going well. have much to love together. its been hard. lots of work to do. there are images we love in common. that's the most important thing i've ever sd. i don't believe in islands but our house & garden has an oasis like look abt it. the garden coming in good with the sun & all the trees around it.

★

some paradise

a slice

★

well, i tend towards the rural in my soul – never was big on sophisticated city images. we're moving right along. its our time now.

hope this letter finds yu & yours feeling fine.

perhaps less time will elapse between. i hope so & look out there for your poems & letters.

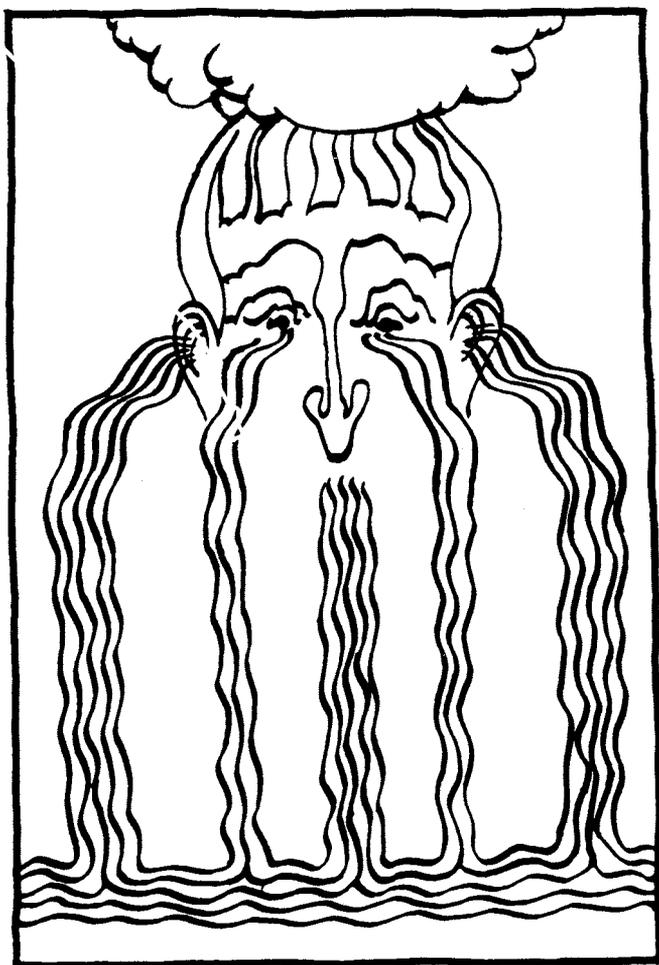
love  
David

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‘Grant me a good dream, a beneficent dream. If I shall truly marry the daughter of poetry, if she is to be the companion of my well-being, the companion of my fortune, and if we are to grow old together, make it apparent to me, O Ancestors.’

Batak prayer  
to find a bride

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BOOK 3

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'The road which leads through the brush to the mountains is now open,  
The road which leads to the tatter-heap of memories is now closed.'

Trobriand Island Prayer

a voice in a cloud  
a face in a storm  
distant drawn  
steps down from  
having been where  
yes

wrong moment  
wrong song  
urgent long breath  
half dreaming in the train i saw you  
visible death a scream  
saint of no-names  
free of lies  
as in a like an if  
nothing ends except pretending  
your own existence blessed

ears filled with echoes  
tongues with lies  
overlay la lu lu  
a w & a no  
another year of knowing you  
another life to go

this is not the moment when the writing comes  
only the awareness thru another light  
a choice of words moving to be said  
pray god do let the consonance lead me

broken rhythm as the mind is  
needing peace  
to sleep in language years or weeks  
white tips of mountains  
grey clouds

blue sky

oh father

father



there has been that which i've been told  
faces in crowds i seem to remember  
dreams that are foreseen as longings  
caught as the eye is an error in the sum

often i awake in trembling  
nothing to be spoke of that can be seen  
hands around me to lead me gladly  
friends as family a kind of reckoning

there is a dance within the room  
a w a g  
walls on which my history's written  
songs of joy

an h in the sky  
an i at sea

as was foretold me

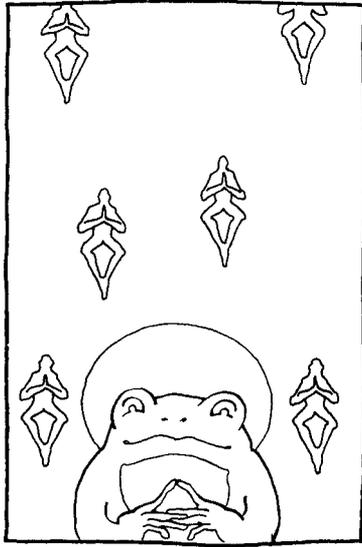


i am not what i appear  
that straightness or fractioning

nothing like the face that floats above me  
crying always crying

this morning in the curtained room  
the fear or loneliness seemed unreal  
sensing as i did the higher plane or place you'd gone to

you have no name now  
only a being so alive  
i know you're all still with me  
linked as one  
energy moving into song



i wanted an image or a metaphor  
something to contain me  
within the flow of language presses in  
screamed so loud my father ran to save me  
not knowing i needed to fall in  
that place where all space holds you

david said of the bottle in his hand  
'pouring the liquid you pour the container too gone  
your skin flows out of you'  
someone laughed we were all too drunk

it is disconnected

the drinks the ryme  
the too many times not thinking for myself

the flower or the root  
plucked from the ocean's floor  
eaten by the snake or turtle





sick of everything i've written  
fascinated by my own distaste  
keep placing one letter in front of another  
pacing my disillusionment

it is mistaken

silence & speech  
it is one

talking & listening  
there is no duality

'i have nothing to say  
& i am saying it'

listen to what i don't say  
what i do say  
listen to me



drove along the highway  
nine going west to arthur  
radio blaring 'don't leave me lonely tonight'  
is there a road to heaven along here somewhere  
a cloud-town exit before i go too far

there's a poem i should write  
some sort of image of the cosmic hitch-hiker  
thumb out it's a troubled life  
no one wants to pick him up  
he looks unclean

once he might've been saint ranglehold or reat  
now there is no name to give him  
only the knowledge he outlives us all  
we don't stop  
'all i've left is a band of gold'  
growing old driving nowhere on these crumbling roads



/// // // // // // // // // //  
/L/et//it//rain/  
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Hello?!?... 

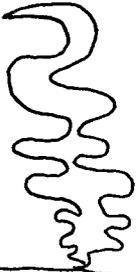


write to me you lazy zucinni!

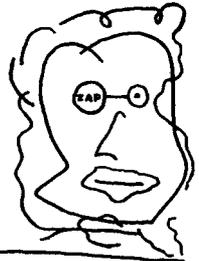


WITH THE POWER OF SOUL  
ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE!!

Jimi  
Hendrix



what do you think  
what do you feel?  
do you know tears  
and laughter  
joy & sorrow  
anger & love  
as i do,  
or under different faces?  
or are they masks?



APRIL FOOL IS CRUEL

YOUR PAIN IS YOUR JOY UNMASKED - Kahlil Gibran



why am I  
so scatterbrained?

love  
Suzette



different faces different times  
places & people remembered not recalled  
'lonely days are gone i'm going home'  
the roads run into one another

sometimes i'm sorry i stopped for you  
sunny as today is  
yesterday it rained  
driving north out of toronto  
circles in the sky  
i saw the face of ranglehold enraged  
red clouds against the blue  
why?

letters from friends  
joy of speech  
each moment shared with someone  
melting snow  
fields emerge as brown  
horses in the meadow  
occurrences that ryme  
it is accidental or

– suddenly the sky opened –

it is all blue  
(bluer than blue)  
it was all blue

bluer

BLUE



more than meets the eye meets the ear  
fear of that as the basic proposition  
mo asked 'what if the bias were reversed'  
2000 years the eye has ruled  
theory that the architecture of greece & egypt was based on the ear  
now every architect says there is no exact science of acoustics

the ancient gaelic poets lay with stones on their chests  
pressed stale air out fresh breath  
poetry springing from lungs that were pure

you in the back seat leaning forward  
asking where i'm going i've no good answers  
the stone on my chest won't let me breathe



the ear the ear it is all there  
the mouth fitted to it with such care  
there is music in every sound you make

the air here is clearer  
wind in my hair  
it is a moment the poem has occupied before  
the words are shapes the sounds take  
it is all there it is all there it is all there

breathing over & over  
history's written in my body  
architecture of the too tight muscles will not bend where they should  
startled eyes moving in & out  
aware the sound is there  
occupying space i am afraid to enter



blue sky & wind  
beginning green of trees  
began a poem about your death ranglehold  
i had not thot to write about it earlier  
forgive me

standing with andy in the greenhouse  
studying the seedlings for the planting  
leaves so much the same      cauliflower & broccoli  
i wondered at first if a mistake had been made

it is hard to recall how you died  
probably you were lost at sea  
laughing stupidly at the irony  
undertow dragging you away

sometimes now the hitch-hiker addresses me  
asks me if i ever care  
if i ever share with someone other than myself  
this feeling of trembling

is it a selfish act to write saint ranglehold  
to structure space this way for yourself

i'm trying to learn

it is hard

help me



father i have so much to say  
i can't throw my pen down in the old way  
when retreat was easier than continuing

i see visions or images in the sky  
perhaps only in the mind's eye  
faces of saints or lovers now forgotten

may my father's father bless me  
may he care for me well

may his father know  
my intentions are good

may the father of his father watch over me  
as i would  
were i he

bless this poem  
this road that i have taken

bless my friends

bless me



love  
we know so little of it  
disconnected  
it's never clear  
we play a game of distances  
juggle faces & positions  
lost among our own intricacies

you there in the air before me  
i know your name  
you were saint ranglehold in that old game we played of one to one  
how boring that seems  
we all need so many friends

this evening the this seems too present  
watching mike leave  
rain fall the open doorway  
knowing the long drive to london lay ahead  
fascinated by the figure moves thru this poem as dave or him  
poet

friend  
something of the search we share in common  
as if words could save the mind  
i only know it was bad weather to be driving home in

sense

let us make some of it  
too little presence or  
suspension of belief  
that man i called a thief a poet  
the one saint ranglehold tangled with  
where is his place in all this

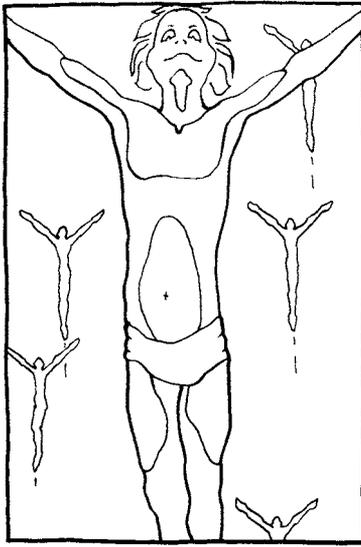
i ask questions  
they are not rhetorical  
expecting answers or acknowledgement at least  
i've never stopped  
even when you died  
knowing someday you'd really hear me

father if i address you in poems it is to dress you beautifully  
the body needs such sounds to live in  
embodies your beauty in its form  
as women are in body beautiful  
breasts & belly tender to the touch  
it is too much too often  
we have our own ways of handling these things

an order is perceived  
it is mentioned  
the task is once again begun  
all of us who occupy this body linked as one  
an ear for an i want to talk to you

III

'you have to pay old debts  
before you catch the moon'  
rumours was what richard called them  
states of mind  
a whole geography real to me then  
i cannot recall



i want to write a history of this present moment  
brings me here pen in hand  
late sun of a spring day  
my own shadow on the dandelion  
'magic words of poof poof piffles  
make me just as small as sniffles'  
the saints are so much smaller than  
the real worlds this poem is peopled with

move among you all  
as bumbling in my mind as leo was  
marmaduke always could put one over on him  
the teams were all the same  
the duke & the dope      the dodo & the frog  
you saw it all on the silver screen  
stan laurel slapped down by oliver hardy  
we cover ourselves in fat or longing  
anything to keep the lean one in  
scream when we can      or laugh  
sometimes it is much the same

rob crosses the yard  
pauses to talk  
not wanting to disturb me in the writing  
i remember how we first met  
me reading KULCHUR      was it issue 10  
'i was so much older then'

nancy later  
looking for liz

julia     her skirt swaying

the dandelion is not a weed  
its perfect golden flower  
i could sleep there always

friends  
              friends  
                  friends

this is how the false 'i' ends



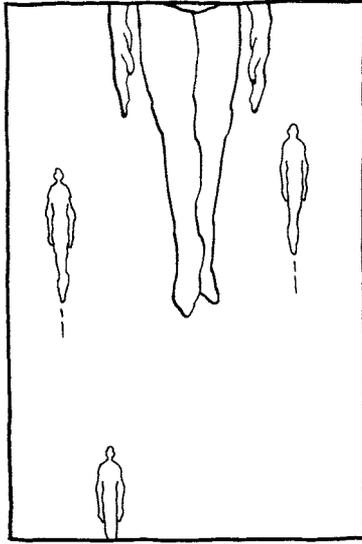
i do not remember what i could remember  
the simplest things stick in the mind  
i know there is a blindness which is hiding  
do i understand

this music is one of touch  
utopia as more must have seen  
that necessity for a community of feeling the saints never knew  
kept wandering places by themselves  
the stupid fucking fools

rob keeps writing me these poems  
talks to me as his mother did  
spring of 63 so far from language anything  
i told her of my fear of living

we all need teachers  
                                  friends  
people we can talk & read to  
as the buddhists saw it  
no 'i' stands alone  
its base is 'we'  
all the universe embodied in that term

the song the bird sings high in its tree



white clouds

tear down these wires that obstruct my ear

INTERLUDE: The Book of OZ

i have imagined a heaven which is another place  
a landscape i was born in  
fields i walked the saints were at my side  
thru the woods a glade animals dwelt within  
smiling pool where longlegs fished his breakfast with his beak  
bob white rising up to sing his cheery song into the morning  
cheery as everyone was cheery then  
smiles freeze my lips  
remembering how you died saint iff  
fell from the sky  
i saw you fall  
thot it was a star  
that day as a kid i ventured places i'd never been before  
set out to find you  
who were you are you anyway  
we start there  
write it here  
yes



the river they called kaministiquia  
lay beyond the tall black stack of the incinerator  
at the end of the trail lead by the tiny valley we caught the garter snakes in

i remember winter nights in my room  
the bed dj & i shared  
i had a friend  
torn as he was from the funny papers  
crazy jutting jaw      stupid yellow hat  
i talked with him

it's not easy remembering a lost language  
words i have no tongue to use

my life changed when i saw you fall  
set out to find you as a son should  
took the books  
the maps that i could find  
followed you into that country the mind recognizes  
met the animals  
ones i knew by name  
peter rabbit      reddy fox  
those i did not know  
faces frightened or insane or

this morning i listened for your voice  
somewhere in the howling  
heard only the rustle of what could be straw      clink of metal  
four countries that were different colours  
& the centre green

green as i had never seen before

green



there are many roads to that centre  
many ways to go  
underground thru the valley of voices      overland or  
follow polychrome the rainbow's daughter  
as the saints did long ago

there are many men in that land of strangers  
faces i should recall  
you most of all saint iff  
i do not know

it's noone's fault

surely the blue that i have talked about was there  
a sky that ended where this sky begins  
these chronicles of kingdoms & emperors  
pass from forest into meadow  
from meadow to desert's edge  
a vast place full of emptiness or less

i don't know what to say  
father i confess ignorance of what the next phrase is

it's not easy living out our history  
we want oracles or visions  
they come      they don't come  
that's as may be

in that green place there is too much glare  
they give you glasses to wear & you see

ruled by wizards or princesses  
scarecrows or rebels

let our passions rule us father  
let our longing free



'How long do you live after you're picked?'

Dorothy's question to the mangaboos

that well you died beside saint iff  
fell thru the morning sky  
was that the one the braided man fell down

not a well but an 'adjustable post-hole'  
he'd hoped to make his fortune on  
plummeted thru to the pyramid mountain  
even your final moments a dream  
thinking you could hear the water you longed for  
skin dissolving into meat  
meat to bone  
it was only the lapping of clouds  
flapping of gargoyle's wings  
things you had no frame of reference for

at night in the garden i see the mangaboos  
full grown ready to be picked  
hear the mutter of their vegetable voices  
feel their thorns prick  
whisper the prayers i said when i was young

'God bless mother & father  
dj bob & dea  
grandma & grandma  
all my cousins aunts & uncles  
all my friends  
all the plants & animals  
forever & ever  
amen'

#### IV

'ah you sing with gods then'  
man in a bar in ottawa — may 18/71

four hours monday in the sun to ottawa  
nothing but drink & talk  
late tuesday  
walk beside the rideau canal      the locks  
flew out wednesday for tampa  
cottage by the sea  
present occasion for memory



palm trees are so foreign to me  
remember that time in nassau  
i could not find the words to fix them here  
this act this moment of confession or prayer  
pelicans flying low above the waves  
crest over our heads  
salt in the eyes the nose the tongue  
five white petals of the jasmine  
five saints names upon our lips  
sweet smell in the evening air

spring you are with me again  
a dark woman mysterious but fair  
place does not dim the focus is there  
that time in 63 talking with lea  
i remember the sound of her voice  
how it held me  
this poem a singing back to her  
all she has given me  
& told me to share



one woman who was all women to me  
one woman who grants all women to me  
the process of transition  
the choice  
names seem irrelevant or  
i name in any case

no place which is all places to me  
no time which remains the same  
blurring & overlapping  
we exist within a loop or stillness  
time flows both ways  
it is always year 1 day 1 hour 1 of our lord  
praise him write his name in sand  
water or the wind blurs

one ocean which is all oceans holy  
remember my father's words  
having driven from pacific to atlantic  
'my god we're a long way from home'  
return to that water salt in our gills it fills us

hands together to the sun

breathe in breathe out

alokanorée

aloka norée

breathe in aloka  
breathe out norée

aloka norée aloka norée aloka



weeks to watch the sand shift  
crouching low  
watched it blow up from the water's edge  
waves catch me  
smash my face into the beach  
each cut reminds me

'i'd rather be in heaven with my loved ones learnin my a b c's than in hell  
praying in greek & latin for water to quench my thirst'

rex humbard

so many things done in your name father  
so many curses or blessings  
less of one thing      more of another  
excess works both ways

we have too much happiness or sorrow  
we have more than we can handle  
one will lead to the other  
that's what who say?

bowed south  
sun on my right  
i am surrounded by the sea  
touch my fingers to the earth & praise you

you have made me  
granted me friends  
given me reasons for singing their praises  
as i do

        & in the praising name them  
as i cannot name you

do you think the poem will change

the oracle did not say

spoke of the right time for each thing  
the mantle that must be assumed

late night

such a tiny room

the sound of the ocean fills me



supper at sean's  
breadfruit mangoes soursop  
goat's cheese with crackers  
green tea

his trip to Ireland  
following the family name  
reaching back 900 years earlier than i can claim knowledge of  
talked of poetry  
sitwell's 'facade'  
speech &  
voices voices voices

late at night  
writing words that will not wait till morning  
nothing  
no time for anything it seems  
we draw nearer & nearer to that moment when  
poetry & living merge  
i need to make my dreams of loving real

if i could speak to you openly  
gather you all in this room  
i'd let my fingers talk for me  
touch you as i long to

sweet jesus it is clear

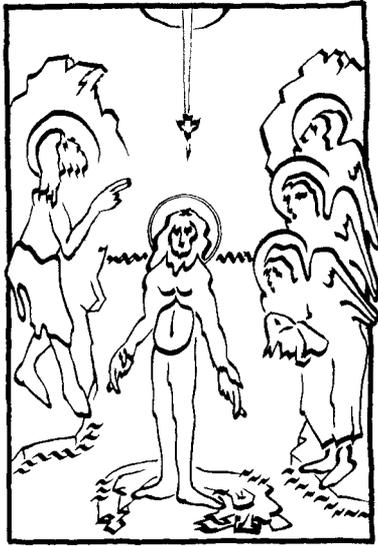
oh saints we are one

the father & the father & the son the son the son

V

'you must lay down a new language, a new tongue enlightened by the spirits'  
— anthony ellis

ellie & me  
another form of we



rob & i or  
connections

4 or more

friends

no ends or means

living

move across the prairies  
planes

geometry of abstract confession

i am nameless father

we are free to move as we please

in a land where boundaries are a frame of mind

reference

single word

visvaldis told me

'you do not take yourself seriously'

hackneyed image

clown

you can see the way it moves now  
shorter lines evolving into longer statements of place or time  
the history of the poem recapitulated  
last night listening to victor read  
he was *there* seated in his garden  
watching the gardiner  
expressway?

there is no single path or token  
rob & me  
we drove out along that highway  
west into the mid-day sun  
neither of us talking  
too tired from too little sleep  
relaxing in the place we keeps alive for us  
i thot of victor's line  
remember how i first met him letters  
i kept sending him poems he kept rejecting them  
helped dave aylward & i set up that GANGLIA reading he & margaret read at  
that night the east coast of america blacked out  
short circuit

omen  
'someone up there's trying to tell us something'  
dj was there  
& joe  
chewing that cigar i've never known him to smoke

i call these poets friends  
tho i cannot attend to them daily  
there is a we  
different the same  
links us in the law language comprehends  
i have to trust to carry me thru into somewhere

driving east again  
metropolitan toronto population 1,916,000  
suddenly hit me  
watching the concrete walls of the QEW  
some sense of history  
a we that lacks connections





i wished i has a ship would carry me  
over these asphalt streets ive burned my feet on  
back when i wanted nothing more than running the marathon  
i was in training

held the manitoba under 16 record for 2 miles  
fame sure is fleeting  
broke it that day i helped carry the torch into the stadium  
starting the pan am trials

certain rhythms recurr

themes

i have dreams which end up as poems  
poems that shldve been songs

we's a long way away some days  
there's so much i  
you rise from bed aware of your collectivity  
no sense of one to move towards we from  
carry yourself over water  
forgetting it is your own bones you sail upon  
settle the shores of lakes  
we do forget we

our sails are full

our ship is called SAINT ORM

we set out early  
full moon to sea  
tide run  
the ship the ship  
spars against the black sky  
i have a dream returns sometimes  
i'm running by that water i was born in  
screaming waves smash against me sand

walk along the beach when the tide's low  
shell gathering sand dollars  
holes in christ's palms  
that sense of coin

blood money

the problem is it is all blood money  
won by our sweat in some way  
the currency takes over as language did  
becomes not a symbol used in barter but the end product of bartering  
relates to nothing real  
we never see the gold it's based on

SAINT ORM rides high against the storm  
the currency is wood  
carries us safely into harbour

we sailed from english bay  
my hand upon the tiller  
first time i'd ever tried to steer a ship  
couldn't get the hang of it  
main mast swaying from side to side  
the captain a german screamed at me

the charts lack accuracy  
cloudy skies  
broken spires the saints left behind  
we cry for you now  
not for oracles  
for friends

receding shorelines

carry us into each other's bodies



'geography is space  
history is time'  
city is the place that bore me  
those few square feet we call our yard  
measure is accurate  
you know your neighbour's wall

wordsworth conceived of going *back* to nature  
we talk of going 'back to the land'  
where are we

we is a human community  
bounded more by space than time  
we push against it as need presses  
spread out over the earth

this path

another

could've been the one to Dilmun  
lead thru the desert where saint iff lay when he died  
turned to dust  
as each of us must eventually



K'an a pit danger



Ken arresting progress

the superior man knows where to stand in the pull of things  
moves with not against the flow

no runners carry the torch here  
the ships have yet to learn about the horn

i was born in a dark time

it is my legacy

His will?

K'an water

Ken mountain



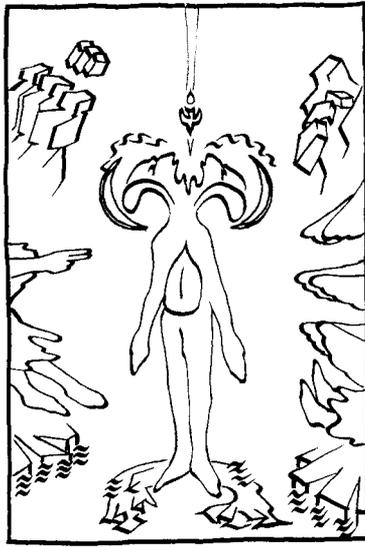
Chien arresting movement

'advantage will be found in the south west'

'we have an election next wednesday.  
i guess it doesn't matter who wins.  
we have to work anyway.'







rain in the morning  
air still heavy  
the city is everywhere drawing nearer  
i want a different music  
complex but clear  
carry these words to you

driving into the country  
400 north towards Barrie  
blue clouds in a blue sky  
heavenly city  
ghosts or hosts  
their forms are all around us  
green men in the summer woods  
took the cut-off  
aurora road to schomberg  
'the sky is falling'  
racial memory in a simpler form  
the point being there are things in the sky that do fall  
as that old egyptian pointed out to solon  
'ah you greeks are all children'  
we know so little of what could be known

speech is the holy act  
linking as it does the whole body

why did i say that?

'geography is space'

west coast is sea & mountain

prairie sky

blue here east

hills & fences

some sense of history in the 'new world'

1850 william walker exploring death valley

discovered a ruined city one mile long

its centre a huge rock almost thirty feet high

the remains of a large building on it

melted and vitrified

the indians had no tradition for it

looked on it with awe

suggesting it was there before them?

Tepe Yahyā

there was a man

hitched into the middle east

rode the camel trains thru that timeless space

Susa Kerman Mohenjo-Daro

'the name of the present world is place'

crossed from the Tigris to the Indus basin

back again towards Bahrein

the greek 'springs of Ocean'

Dilmun

oh father

blinded as he was by grief gilgamesh found death for his trouble

& the hitch-hiker watched it all

seated behind the speaker as he always is

i wish he'd speak to me sometime

there is a city grows around us in these woods

a history which is american vespuchi never knew

Tiahuanco

gate of the sun

oldest city on earth

one theory has it culture spread from there

over Atlantis Mu

Oz (as cayce mentioned)

into Egypt & the east

huge blocks of stone fitted within 1/100th of an inch

technology we still lack the tools for



i need a space in this world to call home  
a place in these words a centre i can move from  
some way to say the next years of my life  
it seems the more i know the longer this poem becomes

i need a ship to carry me now that ive lost SAINT ORM  
a road to run along  
some city which is nothing we have seen  
friends some way of being which frees me  
a we i have sensed the fringes of  
a new voice to speak with  
a prayer

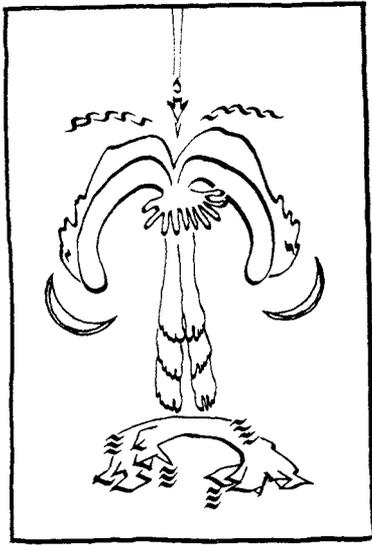
fill this air with your blessing father  
we are together in this holy place you made for us  
spinning slowly round our star  
how far do we travel  
will we find knarn  
that was the fourth world exploded  
you never did say why

the aborigines of australia have their 'dreamtime'  
meaning when it all began  
stories that stretch back 60,000 years  
that sense of place  
tell how there was a time they lived across the sea  
travelled to australia in canoes Kontiki

father i need a sense of continuity  
i have no family anymore as you would call it  
no blood kin i can feel close to  
only a brother i do not talk to  
why?

we is first of all a blood relation  
later a station you pay homage  
carry your cross of loss thru life  
midwife to your own grief  
friends are what save you

it is like that in this new world  
we lack a sense of history  
a real sense of time  
claim our father's father's father as our heritage  
& press no further



sitasana

the easy pose

thumb & first finger held together

breathing in & out

sing the song that body sings

heart & lungs

measure

history is time

myth is space

gilgamesh *was* human

5th king of the second post-diluvian dynasty

Uruk third millennium B.C.

how do you separate them

the aborigines never bothered

myth being everything

history becomes unreal

binding in

a narrowing of focus

the man who has no 'dreamtime' goes insane

we have travelled a long way  
'on the road from which there is no way back,  
to the house wherein the dwellers are bereft of light,  
where dust is their fare & clay their food.'  
you were never fooled by any mask or pose we might have taken  
whatever aspect we assumed  
traced my own family back to the 1830's  
Ireland (the hypoboreans?)  
we are robbed of myth  
bereft of trust  
just a few hundred years of almost nothing  
dust piling on dust  
there are bigger things

this afternoon we returned to that spring i had not drunk from in  
/almost a year

searched for saint reat in the damp woods  
he was not there  
drove back in longing the dusty road  
waiting for some sign father you have yet to show me



there is a sign comes

'it rained' julia said  
i hadn't thot of it that way

its true

that spring we returned to  
thru the back roads beyond mono centre  
the signs said PRIVATE PROPERTY

listening to the rain  
remember a time on comox  
andy dave barb & me

that form of we

place      vancouver  
time      1963  
leave here now  
bare feet in the wet earth  
rows of carrots & peas  
new foal in the pasture  
born this morning

5 a.m.

always there is something younger & helpless needing you  
is that the other sign father  
that there are things we must do to help we  
fulfill our destiny wherever it leads us  
standing in the rain in duferin county  
walk over to the town line  
mono & adjala townships

there is no way to encompass everything  
we need to encompass as much as we can

the pain is the recognition the work outlives us  
we die before we's completion

whatever that is  
these memories of vancouver an older time  
are memories of a we that never worked  
existed in a timelessness which is not memory  
only a standing still as years go past  
a lack of destiny

earlier today  
woke from sleep  
a frog in my room  
caught it  
carried it outside

it pissed in my hand

terror of me  
let it free in the rain & mud  
watched it hop away  
thru the orchard the field  
where my eyes go most every day  
a sense of possibility  
watch the clouds pile up days the sun shines  
thinking of that place the saints left behind  
dissolving community  
the fall from place into space  
an earth they never felt at home on

it is a question of heritage  
reclaiming the myths that give us history  
a geography of time

a chance you have given me father  
for which i thank you







sun in my eyes so that i barely see the peaks of the cloud range  
where you hid two years after rain died  
talking to noone

nothing to say

rike came to find you  
begging your return

i burn with knowledge most days  
mistrust the arrogance of speech  
poetry's a kind of prayer  
daily devotion to your teaching  
'trust someone  
mistrust names given you as praise'



a message to myself years hence  
having returned in a different form  
hear these words      the key  
clues to unlock the private memory

north from toronto  
mono road station      sleswick      lucille  
important when the coaches ran  
an inn on this spot we build upon  
wine bottles found in excavation  
accumulation of such detail

(if i die

if there is truly a death of all that as i have known it  
shock of passing thru into that nether world numbing the mind  
so that i can never even if returning in time remember this speaking  
now when horses ring the dusty road  
me thinking it was the coach & you saint orm perhaps the coachman  
there is no sense in these clues i leave behind  
i speak simply to empty the brain of ryme or reason)





6:30

blue light against the buildings  
edges of the blue sails  
move out in early morning  
over the ocean  
where they came from

we

INTERLUDE: Double Vision

december 71

the dated poem flounders

carols on the car radio

snow falls  
all around us  
ice & the crunch of snow

walked up the road past the barn  
details of a winter day  
horses breath in the frozen meadow  
dissolving bouquet of speech flowers  
now in the last hours of the day the sound rings clear  
exhaust from the truck parked in the field  
well yield of 2000 gallons per day

two months searching for water  
we have sunk five wells  
this one 140 feet  
'nature hides water' tom says  
water's surface nine feet below me  
face visible as an obscuring of light  
shudder in my jacket when the wind blows



three days ago i took the trek back thru the fields towards the valley  
looked at the well we'd dug there  
colliform count 80+  
valley disturbed by machines & drilling  
sky pale  
passing the cemetery to get there  
graves of the typhoid victims  
so many aged 2 & 3  
1903 dufferin county memory  
death takes the youngest  
in war & famine  
horseman you are not fair

the one well  
closer to the house  
sunk last year  
bad water  
    too much salt & iron  
below the sweet spring we first struck  
the driller ruined in his haste  
his greed

walk back thru darkness  
what the mind yields as well  
as if the sky fell in     daily  
the bright blue pieces scattered on the ground  
found & forgotten  
passes  
like glass &  
shattered images of faces  
glitter in the night snow  
pale lighted windows of the house we live in

did you?

no

but he remembers  
remembers well the  
at least the memory of snow  
inside his frozen face  
what his eyes show



felt as stillness in the brain or  
vortex or  
the whirlpool  
as if the mind were a river (it isn't) where the thots flow  
filled with creatures you hadn't thot could live there  
still water     like the heart  
reflects     grows stagnant  
putrifies in time  
becomes a stain thinking can't erase  
traces back to source  
veins it sprang from under the weight of steel or

& i asked him to be still  
  for once  
to stop think   ing  
                                  blank  
                                  face

you place the feeling behind the eyes  
the love or terror  
error of the tear or rip in the whole cloth  
the hole in holy earth  
we name it well







the accounting      what each man acknowledges as his own  
must be done  
sense of emotions as  
this is mine      this also  
a reckoning in terms of what you have become  
not own      shown      returned to &  
the present realized



beginnings      terms of reference  
lists of images      facts  
what can i offer of the world as real?

words?

motherlodes?

(i.e. mother's load)

birth (the obvious symbols)

well as cunt

elephant as prick

the trunk the obvious tipping of the scales

blind as justice is

as the trite phrase trips out easily  
catches the unwary tongue)







or is it too simple to put it that way when after all it is the  
day to day struggle presses on you the ocean of air between you &  
the door vast distances you cross every travelling the loss you  
feel

hearing the doors close

windows shut

behind you

the next day

scene: a small room

orm: two days

and: (holds out his hand) not sure

orm: ear

and:

orm: return to

and: form

orm: meaning

and: blue

orm:

there is a silence followed by the door opening the dialogue is  
meaningless & is not recorded

father

for you

this song

i am learning to dance  
as a man's hands move  
what material he chooses  
but cannot claim  
conversation  
preservation of  
an old mode of  
touching

(here the closed door opens or a wall falls the frame dissolves standing  
in a field how many years down the time line)

no clouds at all

waiting for snow to fall & cover it in

there is no scene to encompass this names mentioned are here the length that they appear important as their reappearance makes them clear unclear they are what they are no more than what occurs in the poem that is their shape & tone their reality



pile up the words sixteen past sitting as you are at last there is the transformation not as flowering but as in older times the mind changes the face rearranges itself the very skin how do you follow it thru the swift shift connections i am talking of nothing she hits me in the face out of place the whole conversation there was no song no singing only the bringing forth of facts stacked up against the lack of logic the magic thinking trick of seeing yourself as other than what you are laid bare & the crumbling as the self is caught unaware gasping strange air we breathe in

east coast morning  
salt in the air  
you are nowhere near me saints  
left to walk where i choose  
i place my feet with care

the bruised face of the stewardess  
her cheeks purple  
& her eyes

the terror  
two days later  
ascending air to find you  
the madness that is in us  
all  
oh god we do fall  
down

i wanted to say more i wanted to tell you what i'd seen or make you see as i did that moment the vision inside the person's skull the wall falls the talking that is done no longer matters so many friends whose lives have been rumours of what they should've been hours lost on wards 'i knew i'd have to get myself together to get out of there' i wanted to let it be i wanted to let the whole thing go in one last piece of poetry every sweet dream of sanity i longed to share

if you're there saints

if you exist  
give it that twist of humour keeps me sane

the listening

that these ones  
make it home again

wheels folding down

frozen ground



how is it done    how is it said    the head sheds the lies its lived by  
what comes screaming into focus    we talk about the real world  
because the unreal exists inside us beside us the ones we meet the  
streets are full of us    the woman said 'you've got a real father  
fixation in your poetry always crying after him like a baby'    i said  
nothing    the voices those few who speak you take the chance of  
getting broken

father  
i seek that speech cleanses  
address you  
as is your due  
your sons get lost father  
the madness takes us  
confusion  
one of the many names we wear

i rode it thru    the other side    whatever rips the mind apart survived

younger days as are remembered the thing builds up takes over as the  
poem ends when the sphere of that is moved thru all directions similar  
one word at a time    it ends    faint words in the evening air send  
you looking for paper to write them down someone to read them to



if you wait out the dream the waking comes if you carry it thru the whole thing

cold february day

looking out towards the bay  
windows across from me  
faces & doors  
what for

voice:       do you act out your drama consciously over & over again  
                  this story what that lady said about the father fixation do  
                  you play it out before us

& the sky looms blue  
as i have said before  
so perfect word to take it in

& the trees  
facing this way  
into the landscape

## VIII

gazing into the sky  
as i would like to or imagined the eye doing  
the other eye  
interior detail broken up by translation  
transfixed in migration  
that sense of travel takes you  
out of your mind into an imagined other  
this pen  
put it down then pick it up again

returning into the north  
looking out across what we've accomplished  
the land worked

                  the planting  
six months taken to construct a place we can call 'home'  
i'm coming back again saint orm  
out of the wish to be no other place but here  
to try to make the process of what's been done as clear as possible



sounds of aircraft distant in the air  
bombers carrying their death above us  
we's home free  
if we goes where we wants to be  
as we did

travelling north out of the indus basin  
from the palatal k into the ordinary  
kentum tongue conversion to the consonant h  
hundert honderd

one hundred years of solitude

of speech  
reaching back 4000 b c  
indo-european still a linguistic unity  
pre babel

by 2500 the satem & kentum groups emerge  
the sibilant s  
serpent on the verge of our discovery

white trail of death's birds in the spring sky  
higher than i could fly saint orm  
who am land bound as my ancestors were  
every dream of reaching to the stars beyond the limits of my own mobility

we build extensions  
things that fly or sail  
carry our differences with us  
set them up there  
the tribe already drifts apart  
third millenium b c  
meeting utnapishtim  
pre-diluvian pre-babel king  
gilgamesh suffers disunities of language of time  
he knows he'll die

utnapishtim's immortality

includes linguistic unity  
the we's ascendancy into eternity

lie back in grass to watch your shadow pass over me  
you ride the clouds saint orm  
dead or alive the tribe of saints goes on  
its not the town but what you founded  
the land you claimed carries your memory  
every bush haunted by what went before  
history is with us in viscera & bone  
holy places filled with stones & trees  
we let the landscape write us  
as it did then

architecture      geomancy

arts the poets were part of      knew  
scop & gleoman

integral to a community spoke its tradition

as the gleewood went the round  
the tables of the long halls in the country they founded  
north of the euphrates

scania

land of clouds & trees  
mysteries  
blue or green  
the colour of the countryside  
of what's seen



an issue of names

Tiwes-daeg      yesterday

wednesday may 31 1972  
travelling thru rain to montreal  
Deivos Zeus Tiw  
the land falls away towards the lake  
the train takes me where it will

bring forth a hymn to your memory fader  
old when utnapishtim was young  
you made saint orm upon the world you formed  
out of the void was part of you  
your names many  
your attributes the same  
it is the parallels & not the differences confuse us

gilgamesh & beowulf  
wrestling for days  
enkidu & grendel  
the one ends in friendship  
the other in war  
it is the difference 2000 years breeds in stories  
in points of view

enkidu

who was one with the animals & was seduced  
out of his innocence into the world of men  
& grendel who was animal & killed  
lost his arm & left a trail of slime  
the mire time makes of remembering

we travelled north  
out of fire into cold  
no cloaks to warm us we made them on the way  
from animals we killed  
made shelters from their skins & bones  
the many tribes slowly parting ways  
set our singers up to tell the tale  
then our scribes  
what had been part of memory only  
written down  
destroyed in the reformation's sickness

sink back in my chair aware you are near me  
who inscribes your story as best he can

i understand the necessity of destruction  
the fire that purges  
the urgency forced you to destroy the four worlds went before  
but there is more father  
we need our history  
the slate is not clean  
too much of what should be seen can't be  
lost in man's repetitive stupidity  
the aztec libraries the spaniards burned  
there is no joy      there is no joy

Wodnes-daeg

the son to follow the father  
as Thunor followed Woden  
saint rand saint reat  
each of us ekes out our destiny as best he can

utnapishtim the father of gilgamesh's tribe  
the irony is he cannot die  
gilgamesh cannot supplant him as Woden did Tiw  
a time between gods when no one god holds sway  
as this century's become  
the elders we can respect are few  
we suffer the confusion disillusionment brings  
raoul duguay & me chanting      late evening  
'we are each other's echoes'  
keeping the shadow away  
we set the axis in motion father  
holy sound to bring death's birds down  
find our way thru the time you fail to govern  
in this season the cycle is renewed  
you will return to us under some other name

Thunres-daeg

driving thru rain to fly away  
high over the plain stretches into the unknown reaches  
where saint ave went that one day  
another story to be told another time  
i watch it fade  
entering a low range of hills i do not recognize  
rumoured in the stories of saint reat  
sweet madness to say i see this thing  
& yet i sing

the man asked dave  
'aren't they just his fantasies'  
how can i make my way to you father  
your name dead  
your son supplanted you  
Christ or Woden  
as Thor (Thunor) supplanted him

it is a game of shifting allegiances

i seek the one name by which to call you

Jupiter      Jehovah

sky father i praise you  
out of need i praise you

'from a word to a word  
i was led to a word  
    from a deed to another deed'



a frog drops in the pond  
rocks the drowned image of your face  
Tiwaz Tig Tyr  
out of fear you are destroyed  
out of here your name moves  
vague words heard over water  
away  
    into the bright air

dufferin county skies are blue  
roads dusty      fields green  
as much as hold together we can call we  
moves into future memory

Tiw you had attributes Woden never knew  
fickle as he was & treacherous  
you gave justice      a sense of law  
sat over the assembly of all the people  
it is with awe your name's recalled

still calm of the afternoon disturbed  
something within calls me away  
i must right the day to day order of things  
if i am to sing your praises  
as last night within me i felt it move  
seeing the red planet bright in the sky  
ellie brian & i driving north to be here  
the journey is always from home to home  
Mars who was the god of war  
replacing Jupiter in importance  
lundi mardi mercredi jeudi  
so that in the equivocation which is translation  
Tiw who was Jupiter by another name  
replaced Mars in the english version  
Mars-day becoming Tiwes-daeg  
in the long run the father wins it back from the son

st reat there is irony here  
not in a literary but a real sense  
your son  
having brought you back from the dead  
it teaches us a lesson  
who pursues his father to the end  
finds him again

restores the we

tribal unity

regains that sense of what his place was  
not to praise falsely who should not be praised  
but to give him due  
the one who was before you & fathered you

helicopter landing on the farm

asking 'is this the ponderosa'

he'd lost his way

rob laughing at the unreality of the name the naming

it is the stuff of myth or lies

out of this stories of arrogance are born

visitors from the sky who punished men for not answering their questions

/properly

that we are always being tested

paranoia on a cosmic scale

you were above that Tiw

the jews knew

that if they never named you they would never lose you



it is not forever  
what we are or wrought  
we fades or will  
your name father changes  
goes beyond the range of human speech  
it is always your home remains the same  
the heavens

that geography

where does the arrogance come from destroys us daily  
to make my claim as creator having that it for the first time  
pride in that sense as the buddhists saw it  
such men hold themselves beyond karma  
outlaws

thieves

because they take away from the one that made us

scene: the landscape moving one tree the next there is  
a harmony stated by transition the transposition of one  
image in front of another saint or speaks but is not  
listened to we assume it is some older time Knarn  
perhaps that fourth world moved closer to galactic  
centre

ascendancy

late night

reading of the deaths left in the hurricane's wake  
agnes agony  
flooding & the great tide carries us all  
forward into unimagined destiny

(there is so much is not known

why Knarn was destroyed is left obscure the texts we do  
have tell us little only a single singer's song that their sun  
turned nova as someone theorized all stars at galactic centre must be  
older black dwarfs drawing us closer to be crushed into the nothing-  
ness from which we came only to form again some other era error  
that sense what came before was a mistake shaken apart by its lack of  
harmony inability to keep in tune with the music of the spheres)

it is all here father

as it has always been

all language names you

all description as i make it clear

the nine billion names of god

writ out in tongues no longer spoke these billion billion years



we gather round to talk at night  
within this house we've built  
discuss the problems of the day  
the way things went  
how we felt about it

so many people loved so long  
so many names mentioned before  
the course of this poem filled with their presence  
final filling of such longing absence

M-51 a spiral galaxy the arms whirl out 2000 light years from  
the core mapped by radio astronomy 15 million light years away

we will never encompass it  
never fix it with that name home  
even our own galaxy  
how much can you grasp in any real sense  
at what point does the mass or density of it all overwhelm you  
retreat to details of shoes how you tied your laces or  
what it would mean to you to lose them

sit in my room  
sky beyond the window darkens  
friends say goodnight to one another  
lean in the door to wish one more to me

in this northern place stars are different  
chained in the underworld Lupus rules  
world under ours  
the other side of the earth  
the worth of taking the phrase literally  
takes you out of that tangle of ambiguity

friends friends friends  
we build our lives together with each other's hands  
so much of what i love is all around me

looking up where would Knarn be no part of these constella-  
tions that was where ave came from went with orm when  
Knarn exploded her whole life folding in

it is here the prayer fits the face

who would praise his friends  
turns towards them  
words found  
no false name or phrases to distract  
not to cling to 'position'  
a notion sainthood still could be  
but for love of something  
one or some human gesture

creed

the writing 'is'  
as 'we' can come to be  
the end

form or token

coin

age

rage against corruption  
fallibility to praise  
falsely granted  
the process shown & not believed  
shown still

who will listen

'himself'

(my own head)

as the voices said

'when?'

as i began

seven long years ago

(so many ways language can be used  
ignoring the categories 'poem' or 'prose'  
speak as we choose  
knowing friends are there 'i' dies  
seek out solutions in whatever skies need be  
that much closer to the answer whatever the question is  
pass on the quest when this life ends  
drawn in

perfect calm of the universe

of chaos

os

s

ts



death

the infernal fire  
i am burned alive daily  
the failures

lac des deux montagnes  
ice fisher's hut the hitch-hiker sits in  
driving thru the blizzard into montreal  
sandra melissa ellie & i imaginary number  
factor fact or ring of factories  
vision fractures  
faces & names  
the beginning

if speech reaches  
it is some other place  
the nervous system  
social or  
whatever falls fails  
consumed by its weaknesses

sandra talking about our uncle clarence  
ten years in the veteran's hospital  
bright's disease  
gradually losing motor control  
they stopped his leaving privileges  
took off over fences  
his whole body in perpetual motion  
asserting that right till he could no longer stand  
confined to a wheelchair & someone else's mercy

the last time i saw mark the contrast  
4 days before he died  
standing in the ruins the fire had made of 59 admiral  
his old home  
the resignation  
his comment 'what a mess'  
i was to remember  
hearing of his death late november 72  
how he & i had buried terry  
spades to turn the frozen earth  
november 1970

december 31

travelling west thru rain from montreal  
toronto ten minutes ahead  
the dead & the living all around me

midnight  
twenty or so  
we stood in a circle in a room  
talked about the need for honesty  
the will to push ahead  
help each other face the changing reality  
no names pending  
dead saints of wisdom

dead friends

new visions for the march winds?



last take

late february 73

dave & i look out towards the lion's gate

years mass

events

we made it out between the lion's paws

rear shocks gone

swerving to avoid the bumps

spell of spelling cast around us

tiny ripples in the blood stream the brain stem's rooted in

a body place &

time

the lion's month before us the lamb's born in

the door

you are not permitted to open again

enter thru the lion's mouth the man's root gets planted in

not to be consumed

as tho the use of lips weren't speech

a doorway into the woman's soul intelligence comes out of

SCREAMING

a complete thot

born from the dialogue between you



*CODA: Mid-Initial Sequence*

faint edge of sleep  
a literal fuzzing in the mind  
as tho the edge of  
what was held clearly  
became less defined  
the penalty paid &  
your father recognized  
for what he is

for W

HA!

the is



orange

the vague light  
closing the eye

's lid

home plate

the late P  
destroyed  
leaving only b  
& n

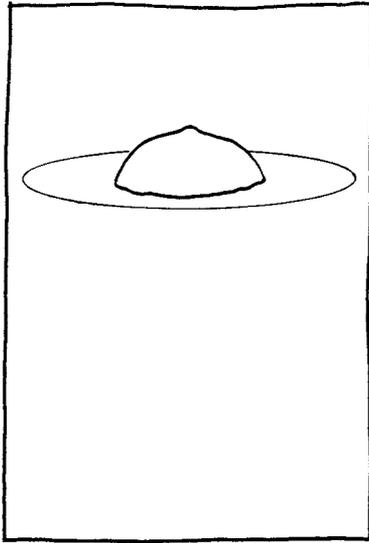
beginning again

b n a

all history there

t here

opposed against the suffering  
we have yet to bear



last note

no t

no e

l as no

l body

l where

l w here

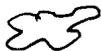
no w

for w's sake

no is

e

against the silent sleep



bushes

dawn

the r rises  
brushes drawn  
the whole scene

the w hole  
into which the world  
disappears

d is a p  
pear shaped

dear H  
a p edges  
into the sea

sun

the unenviable s



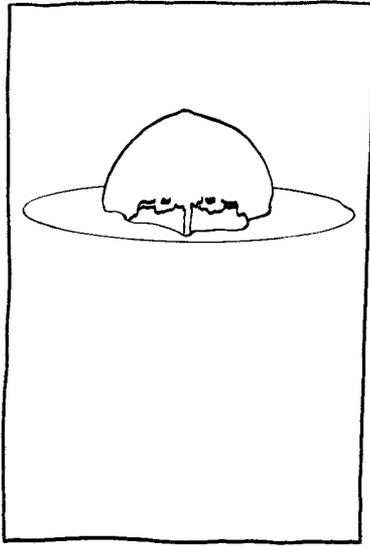
there is no desire for speech

there is no desire to spell

each gesture  
against the chaos  
must be made well

there is stillness in the heart of the power  
as there is stillness in the heart of the storm

between the w & the d  
the in side of  
the mind / 's a quiet place  
from which the power unwinds



in vocation  
i am  
a singer

every letter  
invokes a spell  
ing is  
the power  
letters have  
over me

word shaping

addition of the l



within the difference  
if exists

tensions a  
polarity

who is moved or moves  
a distinction a disparity

a.d.            a.d.  
history's spoken in  
the first four letters

all e to z  
outside the head's  
measure of our kind

man's time



(variation on a line by H.D. – in memoriam)

A.D. on  
is dead

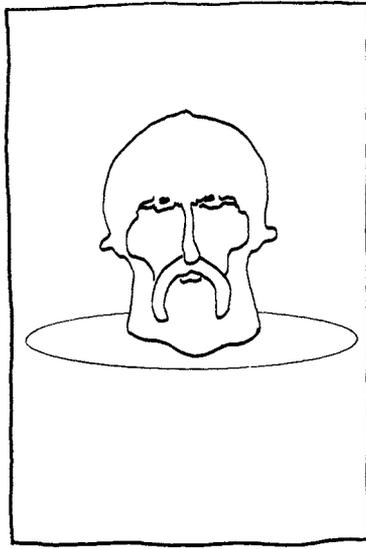
let the H  
supplant the D  
in your sweet poetry

adonis head  
HE is the A.D.  
HE is not dead

The H is gone from your lips H.D.  
soft consonantal breath

the vowels are locked between the dark doors

dead



whatever dies  
the secrets do not die with you  
the lore we all seek (l or e)  
choices are not disinterested

d is in t  
it is the old story HE lived thru  
HIS death & suffering  
33 years into HIS time  
22 letters left to pass thru  
what birth will herald the change

if the formula remains the same  
the era F.G. to follow A.D.  
E.H. is the next to bear HIS name  
reversed

mother muse  
you come before HIS time  
incarnate in a name now passed away

H.D. HE follows after you again





god asserts the balance  
the cypher for our cyclic ages  
the g that will dominate at the end of F.G.  
leading on into E.H.  
His reign of peace

'dogma i am god'

heresy

hearsay

in the worst sense

false pride

who thinks to bestride the world  
because he feels crushed by it

1971-1973

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**BOOK 4**

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‘They steal the saint  
while you’re making the shrine’

‘Looking for it all over the place  
three years  
carrying it all the time like a baby’

Korean proverbs  
translated by  
w.s.merwin

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purpose is a porpoise

a conceit

is there a sea

yes

is there a cloud

yes

everything elemental  
everything blue

the precision of openness  
is not a vagueness  
it is an accumulation  
cumulous

yes

oceanic

yes &  
anything elemental  
anything blue is

sky

sea

the heart of  
the flame

stories  
storie's domain

but the french say  
'main'  
ti  
la  
do  
hand

the h &  
what else

if the language poses questions  
'are there answerers'

what i ad  
dress  
    clothe in  
thot  
    not  
adjectives for nouns nor  
names where things will do

eternally new

a hand shake  
speare or sword  
the old 's' word  
cutting edge of accuracy

if they cannot see  
they are blind  
    hear  
deaf

    de-  
e  
    f  
-fective

'the divine right of'  
the hard left cross  
nails the boss's son

we are always pleading  
asking for  
    forgiveness  
favours

    never the old hosannas we used to raise  
still worship the wheel in all its i's's  
make ourselves    capitals  
of earthly doubt  
    forgive us



the d will out  
as the b drops thru its  
half note  
configuration

i is singing scale  
i hails you

Hart works the 'e'  
reversing the conjunction  
finds the d n a  
connective  
the heart of  
writers & their obsessions

who cares

the oral hang-ups change

a concern for listening

if i let the actual speak  
it will reveal itself

admire the form  
be seduced by it  
as part of  
the love of  
language

‘love me for my mind as well’

elementary statement  
elemental state  
meant for  
                    completion  
combination

we work  
the changes  
always  
to reveal  
lest the actual re-veil itself  
a shifting of  
the humus  
                    cumulous covers  
poetry’s reviled &  
spat upon  
                    sweet spit & hhh of breathing  
the old so &  
so my dreams are troubled

what matters it the nights are sleepless  
i lie awake with poems      hymns  
these rhythms  
insistent as the brain is  
with images  
                    a pounding in the chest of  
words  
                    the l imposition of the earth  
the singular  
word + one = world  
                    i seek  
solutions to equations that are already solved?  
no!







the wind outside rises

air

grey

day

janvier

moment when the movement changes

the line straightens out & stretches on ahead

there's room to pass

out into the flats of heaven

the cloud land

a night's sleep has seen the last of

for the moment

momentum carries us

on in our arc around the sun

& the lines become as long as the tongue can

/carry without breathing in

images shift

blue sky turning back to grey

it is the wind moves it

it is a language the celts knew & spoke of

runes

(the running e's)

pass as vowels thru energy

consonants as nouns

vowels as verbs

what are the sentences that form  
words they're made of  
syntax of alignment i want to see  
apparent in every bush & tree  
placement of the sea & land  
a plan

not in the sense of plot  
pre-conceived  
but there

readable  
if i am able to  
see man

writable  
purpose  
breaks skin's surface  
gains control  
moves from the know on  
into the un  
prefix delimiting the road  
out of the two year darkness of the mind  
no music i could find to lead me  
sick of ending things before their time  
is marked

b  
eaten up  
's sung in  
the bottom range  
down the upper  
twists of phrase

sur visage  
the mouth opens  
writing following the o of  
sound  
noise  
products of the human voice

awaking  
too little sleep  
snow falls  
                    beyond the wind

o  
    w forms  
at the word's end  
word's beginning is  
the book's end  
that conundrum  
vision  
riddle we are all well rid of  
the dull pass of wisdom

w is d  
o ma  
i 'n h and  
the me's restated  
at the pen's tip's ink  
at the tongue's noise  
w in d  
        din  
Blake's vision of  
Golgonooza

after noon  
the clouds give way to sky  
blue  
    e  
le me 'n  
t  
    always  
why





the streets are not named  
standing in the centre square  
staring up at windows they no longer gaze from  
the whole point of it ended  
meanings for existence

gone

the stuttered b

ing

that is living  
stammer thru our days  
impotent in less obvious ways than  
the limp dick or  
frozen ocean of

response

the saints come down to  
their mortality

or fled

to live among the dead  
outside our memories  
the city that they built  
a memo re  
a son

one's debt to one's father

forgotten

farther away than

the next star or

page

surface that the eye lights on

in the press of speech  
awkward words are chosen  
that decision is  
the voice's prelude  
skeletal remains  
apparent in  
the choice of  
building blocks

the 'b' locks into place

a command

in the space left

the weight of air shifts  
visible compounds of earth & water  
within a balanced sphere of  
forces

fire (which is sun)

air

earth & water (clouds)

air

earth & water (earth)

fire (which is core & molten)

we can journey outward

into hell

the suns & darkneses of space

or inwards

into cave-black liquid stone &

fire

at the earth's core

old questions i had asked

answered

Lucifer fell

from fire onto earth & could not rise again

burrowed into

the ground

the meteor in northern siberia

June 30th 1908

'a sound was heard

louder than . . . thunder

and a column of fire

. . . shot skyward'

'a farmer living fifty miles away

was hit by a heat wave

which he feared would set fire to his clothing'

i burn on the inside

unnamed purpose

as i had dreamed it years ago

to write my way thru the books of the dead

let the process take me

thru

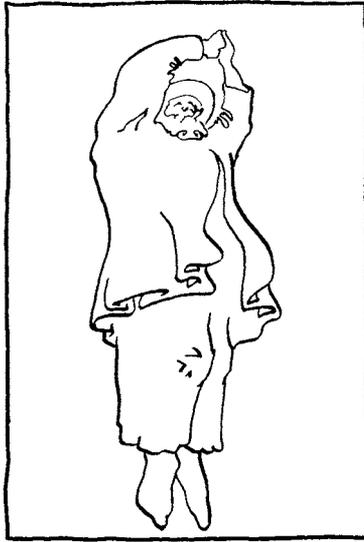
into

the books of the living

& i move now  
out of 3  
    into 4  
or 1  
    some new beginning  
sensed here  
amid the sensory sensation of  
speech  
    these words  
the arch  
ark  
    Io  
logical  
    invocation of  
the change  
    flames i saw  
among the monotones  
the burning beasts  
    cattle  
Io of the many eyes  
Nura Nal's visions  
Io who suckled Zeus  
& 'invented the five vowels of  
the first alphabet  
    & the consonants  
B & T'  
    Nura Nal who sees thru dreams  
what is to transpire  
that arch which takes us  
over the present  
    into the future  
arks we sail  
like Noah or Utnapishtim  
till we come to that day  
we are no longer young  
others come  
    as Gilgamesh did  
caught up in  
the immortality game  
to question us  
  
there is noone here to question







the is M  
the particular  
emblem of the end a  
beginning a  
w a y  
ME/WE  
returned to  
that vision &  
this time

i write the letters clearly

the w rite of consciousness  
a transparency's  
too often viewed opaquely  
lack of seeing  
lack of being  
sing

sang

sank

froid

et chaud

caught between the opposites  
throats full of praise  
masked pleadings with the ones we fear will leave us  
kill us

will us dead & gone

cinq

six

sept

mid-initial drop

Set or Seth

whose opposite Osiris

he murdered

for the sake of Isis

Aphrodite Urania

Aphrodite Erycina

who tore out her lover's balls

in the moment of heat

that cold consumes us

Cain & Abel

the brothers or the twins

jealously

divides the year

divides the family

mi

fa

so

la ti

etude &

longitude a

fixing of points on a grid

language

where the grid is

no longer apparent

buried in the history of the race

the alphabet

A to Z of

being

the M  
the ME  
the S is  
a way of starting  
your feet move hesitantly in the shuttered rooms  
the few things they left scattered on the mantles  
artifacts of daily living  
rotting garbage that forms their tel  
ing

St Orm St Reat

St Agnes & St And

St Utter

who became the town crier

another story  
i never bothered to tell  
their histories fill my head  
as the dead can do  
so many years they tried to block out the living  
i became their mouth  
their breathing  
like some misconception of you God  
not to illumine the present  
but to haze it over  
these clouds of the unknowing  
false mysteries i railed against  
& now they're gone  
like the voice of Jung on a distant phone  
mumbling  
uncritical  
i see their faces as they were  
jealous of your godhood  
your parenting  
set themselves up as  
better than the rest of us  
because we acknowledged our suffering

i preferred St And a clown  
human & vulnerable  
critical of stupid posturing  
absurd hierarchies he'd left behind  
aware of the struggle he'd never made  
forgetting the common effort raised these spires  
built the high-arched windows  
placed the cobblestones  
lived on  
isolate among the many  
his face mirrored in the air  
he gazed into & fell  
self into self  
narcosis of narcissus  
wandered then  
lost among men  
the full pain of his loss haunting him

he is gone now  
to 'the land from which there is no return'  
where Erishkigall holds sway  
to Mag Mell  
the plain of joy

Avalon  
Isle of Appletrees  
finally at peace in  
the immortality game

in the gardens the trees have died  
freed of their artificiality  
'in Dilmun the raven utters no cry'

to do what one does  
with honour  
is the all

ist heal-  
ling  
lang  
u age  
's h  
on  
our

hour

the days are marked by their divisions  
purpose  
    less divisive in  
the long run  
lung ran  
lang ren  
tall  
    i is here so  
short ly

in bed  
2 a.m.  
ellie sleeps beside me  
images form behind her closed eyes  
i am following a line of thot  
of ink to  
its conclusion

to re member  
re articulate  
eyes  
    mouth  
mobility of limbs  
in the dream time  
connectives vanish  
only that one line or link  
you seek each morning  
takes you back  
    e thru k

f g h i j  
arcane but logical

here  
'where the sea sleeps'  
'where the cold is unendurable'  
in these 'barbarous lands at  
the end of the world'  
we are caught in  
a tangled dreaming  
an immigrant nation of  
uncertain history  
we are like you saints  
the lands we left destroyed  
by nothing more than  
the hours' passing

tonight  
the moon shines  
thru this house of glass  
as i as well had said it  
'the poem is dead

long live the poem'

i know now the saints were wrong  
demigods at best  
we have struggled a millenium  
without your name  
no power to invoke but our own  
noun of your being absent  
no other nouns cohere

i speak from 'the land of the summer stars'  
'at the back of the north wind'  
where the souls flock  
each spring  
the ponds & hills of  
dufferin county  
set out food at the pond's edge  
because it is right & necessary  
wander the woods where the old beeches stand  
books of your being  
light green of new leaves  
blue spring sky  
that colour range which is the saxon word 'glas'  
& it is death i see  
which is the absence of the strength to call you  
the power to invoke your name  
gone in the shifting game of allegiance  
your jealous children played  
& i am left wanting you  
left to amuse myself  
mother/ father  
i am afraid  
retreat to theory  
talk factually when i feel unsure  
hate the noise of such didacticism  
hate my hatred of it

journal journey  
jour du nalney  
move slowly thru the signs of passage

maybe i will ne  
ver  
    speak a  
gain  
    mid this  
        blue

sky & deep sea  
                    cerulean

vapour

distant hills

flash of veins  
as they show thru  
the skin

of constancy  
livid as the skin becomes  
after a blow

fear or  
dismay  
the colour of  
blood  
i dress in  
because i am a servant of  
words  
the colour of  
plagues  
(indecent  
        obscene)

'plaid the painter  
when hee did so gild the turning globes,  
blew'd seas, and  
green'd the fields.'

yield it all up from  
the person  
    voice  
he hopes is charged with  
His blessing

the i dies finally  
merges with the land's scape  
scope increases  
the folded page  
writes its way into  
the longed for  
                    beginning

story  
    new  
    song  
round  
    as the lips form

an O  
i used to (age 4)  
put the period in

early syntax  
early speech

you are dead saints  
i am half-alive  
or better  
    some days

calendrical ways

happy in the morning  
depressed in the afternoon or

reversals

la tigre

egress

the rest is  
written to be written  
'it is all so slight'

of hand

the pen's grasped  
wrongly but firmly

dreams twist

images erupt

violent

brush the skin off my head  
's oblong

aluminum

obligatto

one word dwelled on  
one month

mispelling: 'obligatto'  
thinking: 'obligation'

i am obliged to

play out this path i have chosen  
play this tune  
write this part as i have just spoken it

because it is necessary

because i am not alone

because to be is cause  
(reason versus reasons)  
art is to bring together

join

'lost art of' art —

we are crazy in our isolation  
as i am

torn always

so that the truth appears a melodrama when i state it  
makes rhetoric of daily speech

'two nations warring in the bosom of a single state'

indispensible

love & hate

essential to  
the completeness of the  
composition

moi et me

instrument on which it's played

bound to another

obligation

two months to play the theme thru

'you are dead saints'  
given back into the drift of print  
of speech  
born anew among the letters  
a different tension

different reach  
of logic  
of the mind's playing out of  
reason

a rhyme  
till God's re sonned  
on the tongue  
the groan that must accompany your birth lord  
l or d

unless the el's read 'one'  
one order  
absolute & true  
which is the two tone order of the pun

'one Samuel  
an Irishman  
for his forward attempt to pun  
was stunted in his stature'  
pounded down

(i moved during the course of this writing, interrupting the patterns,  
jarring at first because i found myself, ten years later, back in the same  
house i'd lived in during the writing of 1335 Comox (poem that began  
JOURNEYING & THE RETURNS (whose form was perceived after i  
moved away from there (from here))) the dilemma being i found  
myself caught up in a) mirror image

(no way to notate the break

caught up in) another  
absolute statement for  
my mother

(followed the line to come  
'air your grievances & longings' with  
'a transition taken

a return'

& later

'tonight i kneel

pounded down by the weight of my own resistances  
my own fatigue

a kind of false pride'

crossed the whole thing out

uneasy with the tone

began this new movement

sudden intrusion of my mother

coupled with a return of self-loathing

'who does not love his words or works'

i saw as

a deeper level of

the pun

stir)

against the hate of self the love of her

posited

'there is little evidence to support it'

i am

the evidence of

their lovemaking

their spoor

my name is  
'little evidence'  
little evident in  
these proceedings

here in clouds  
amid the clash  
the roar of  
c's & s's  
absence of the loud

separator

the same  
i read in in  
the form of ain

(which is the pain  
(mid-initial sequence) or  
the stain of  
sainthood)

track's a trickle

straight as the jog my memory takes  
composed in time the rimes exist beyond the text  
contextual

textural

daily bump &

grind

stripped bare

air your grievances & longings

in these unfinished rooms  
pick up the notebook left behind  
after book III  
that time i thot  
the saints end

finally

e nd

'f eat her

take her away

in my cap

at dawn

today

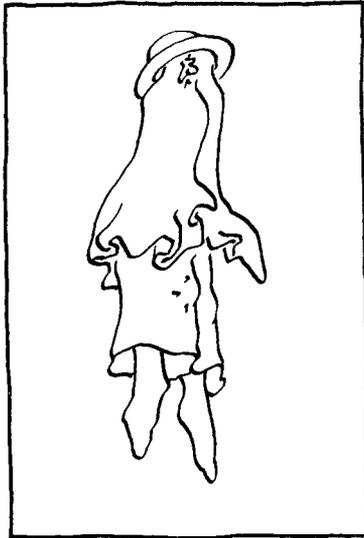
the knowledge

to d a y

the action i act on'

'her' posited again as

moM/Womom



'the change  
(an  
angel  
chang'll  
hang)

suspended

over my head  
suspension  
deed

done

one d in  
motion

or one y

changed by

the revolution

hanged c  
revolving r the  
credit balance<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> credit with the c r to achieve it

sense out of nonsense

N on sense

(which is me)

i spell out changes

realign essentials

as i thot to

sing a balance sing<sup>2</sup>

to make everything the same you say

'nothing is different'

the arguments get obvious

when one's upset one screams

3 or 1?

'it is so unlike me

one like me uses my lungs'

my voice?

gossip's piss o G.

cloud town's gone down

t into d

artness

then the arkness of her belly

is that the sweat of fear

atlas's salt a

blinding of vision in any case

c as e

'it is all the same'

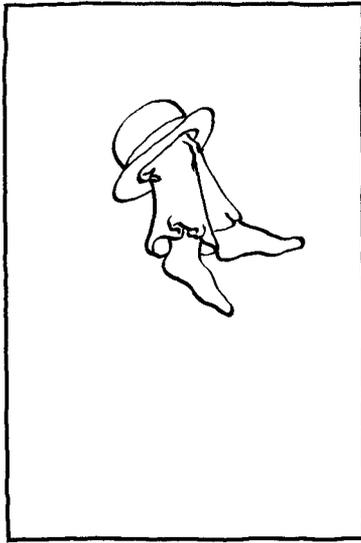
words one used before

2 agèd

fall

/

n



naming things that don't exist

twist

back & forth

existence only in the naming"

to spawn again in that stream

's forbidden

i cannot rebirth myself

cannot become mine own progeny

(glazed window grey day

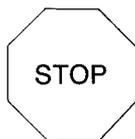
you've all gone away

five years since i called your names with surety

i am not the same

(sometimes (at night) i doesn't know who he is (why? (that's wrong — the sequence should read w x y — the h interpolated into the unknown) h is his) not in that old schizzy sense (i.e. he doesn't know who i is) but a perception re entity in its entirety ('at night' because he is all alone & 'sometimes' because it's accurate) the lacking of a total

the problem is in summing up prematurely (false). he is 31 (yesterday) but i's what? (joking to a friend he said 'i used to be 18 to myself but i'm catching up') a question of tension in telling a power in print opposed to speech



which is octagonal  
h sided  
or  
(an aside

(i's inside  
he's an outside face  
a pose

a posse or  
a nosegay

is it possible  
the horses go neigh

posse bull  
the whore say

(reintroduction of Blossom Tight, a minor character from an early draft of a later Captain Poetry poem)

'noone is forgotten we're just rewritten. he's letting my voice intrude briefly. it's just a chance for a few laughs at his character's expense (employing the devices of fiction in an autobiographical poem).'

))))

compulsive unmasking

i.e. as opposed to h.e.

over against the french j.e.

so that the sequence reads

h }  
i. } e.(translating) he meaning i  
j }

but *not* (capital H) He

– no heresy here

a tic

there a tickle

statement

‘why would you want to make everything the same?’

consistent voice equated with style

falsely

style’s stylus

the fingers an extension of the mind

ma ’nd me ’nd

personal history

le monde mundane

mynde & physik

i say ‘quoi’ mais

je ne sais quoi

it is the i of

histor }  
mister }y

the y’s said e

making ‘my’ ‘me’

& ‘why’ ‘whee’

as in wheat or

whyte

white

night

stars over Inuvik

walking back from the reading to the hotel  
the main streets mud  
out on the edge of things  
the elements still win  
stilts support the town  
impermanence shows  
120 miles inside the arctic circle you know  
we're living out a myth  
huddled at the bottom of  
most of what is canada  
waiting the glaciers return  
cities ablaze  
fire out of water  
burn

        coal/oil/gas  
ritual pass of light  
gestures against the coming night

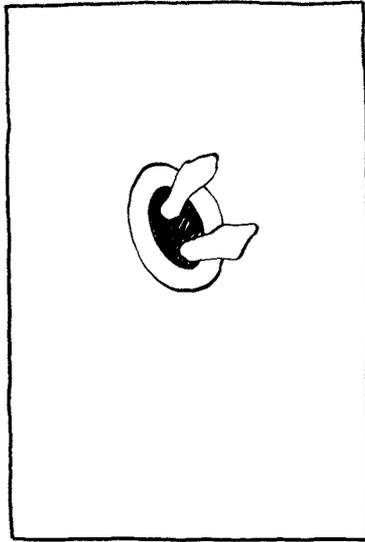
here the ravens cry  
as they did in Dilmun  
raise their wings black against the sky  
& fly

        the two we saw  
walking thru the brush above the river  
Mackenzie flowing north into the Beaufort Sea  
'big as a dog they are!  
had one once fought a dog in the main street!'  
snow falls around us  
white on whyte  
worlds we have railed against  
when will we be  
content in the present  
moment

        land  
whole  
        not the part

Ca  
    Na  
        Da

C 'N D  
no space between  
the process  
        switch  
which is the flow  
                energy movement of a country



(we woke before dawn, throats dry, remembering then we slept in a  
desert, frozen tho it may be, caught between the i & he, am image of  
Dilmun in his mind, caught between first & third person na(ra)tivity)

rising off the tarmac into the sky  
looking back along the body of the plane  
straining for a glimpse of the arctic ocean  
before the clouds close in

passing thru

into that space between  
one layer & the next  
not cloud world but another  
spectral & strange

passing thru

into the greyblue  
sky over everything

& two days later  
driving out of Fort Smith  
30 miles to little buffalo falls  
ruth rees, ellie & me  
watched the water drop  
60 feet into the basin

the clouds hung grey  
for the seventh straight day  
as if cloudtown lay in ruins above me  
snowbirds flocking up into the sky  
trying to make sense of the wreck around me  
here in the midst of what has never known city  
trace a civilization

or what's left of it  
looking out over the rapids on great slave river  
early the next day

the remnants of Fort Fitz  
where the great barges lay to  
in their journey north to  
Hay River Fort Simpson  
whatever outposts sprang up to service those men  
lived there

north of the Arctic Circle  
& i am remembering Dilmun  
the empty squares & courtyards  
crumbled palisades & steeples  
where Utnapishtim lived out his years  
& i am wishing i could speak to him  
discover how long immortality is  
was his city like cloud town  
the buildings rearranging themselves daily  
the city no enemy ever took  
because the streets shift even as you walk them  
doorways change  
familiar only to the saints who lived there  
recognized dwelling signs no stranger'd ever see  
they went crazy on this earth  
only language retaining the multiplicity they were used to

(typing this out 12 days later i kept coming back to that line 'the edge of things' wondering at the vagueness, knowing what i was trying to suggest, that my world was finite, not in imagination but experience, real limits to what i knew, worried once more by the tension between process & an ideal economy of phrase

reading B.S. Johnson earlier this week, discusses Scott's shift from narrative poem to novel, what he saw as the death of the long poem, puzzling its resurgence, its popularity in recent years, i realized the lines had disappeared between the forms, that the novel & the poem were merging finally, a clarity, freedom to move as i choose

& later

talking with steve

comparing forms

his CARNIVAL

'my' MARTYROLOGY?

the voiceless voice he saw in Ronald Johnson's poems

i am wary of that impulse within me

would have it out with my i

how can i cast itself out

out of the process i must be true to

is part of the dissolution

the disillusionment

create a third person when the i's can't get along?

(jumped ahead

thot 'song'

son of g

h

(comes after him)))

the man at the reading said

'how come your poems sound so down?

unlike you?'

(the desire becomes stronger to stretch out, explain myself, which makes the plain ex, no longer clear, i want a different ear, a he like me, a she where the s is (in correct relation to)

he/i/she

(why is the s the

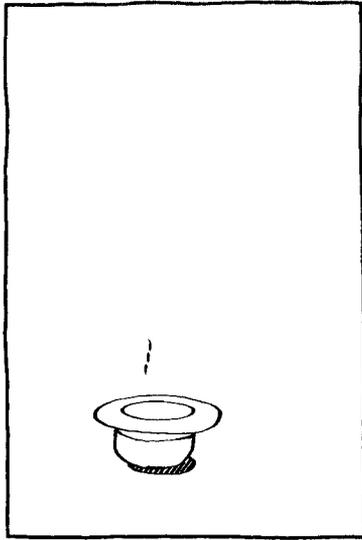
feminizer?, makes the i is, births it, gives it its being, carries the he in the body of its word, the men inside women, the me in both of them)

EQUATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: HE/ IS/ HE

such minimal movements to seek truth in (steve said 'you'll be accused of shallowness' (hallowness feminized?)))

& then?





the w hat's low call  
echoes thru these pages  
lo cal or (i.e.)

                  what's immediate is  
the word in front of me  
the one beyond that that i'm reaching for  
no muse at all really  
simply this canadian foot  
following a tentative line      forward  
taking the time to tell you everything

the muse is western (greek)  
the japanese saw poetry as everyman's  
like thot or breathing  
ambiguity was precisely what they wanted

it's social then  
a point of view  
political  
the duty of a citizen  
'a man betrays himself in his speech'

((why do they always question content, you speak of form to counter-  
balance the question, they never ask what you believe in) purpose can  
become conceit, shift beneath the feet, the line of speech that's called  
political, the signified slides below the signifier, gets lost in what's

expedient, the strength of english, its ambiguity, turned against it,  
corrupted, the masked language of law & politics, so distorted we  
empower experts to interpret it)

in the distance clouds break  
i'm sitting on the curb  
crossing out words  
resisting the urge to apologize

i am thinking it is better left behind  
this city they no longer had a use for  
make my way thru the shifting streets  
along these sheets of paper to an ending  
it is not over

it is never over

there is 'a third difficulty  
with the usual definitions of parts of speech

they neglect form for meaning  
although it is precisely through the *form* of our words and sentences  
that we communicate our meanings.'

(James Sledd

A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH GRAMMAR)

& me  
what am i doing  
'building up a bracketing of asides'  
standing here  
outside the limits of this empty city  
studying the cloud range  
the shapes that shift  
because it is the nature  
of paper i have scribbled one word on  
to shift it  
    back & forth in my mind &  
begin again  
that way among the tensions  
the interplay between the letters  
is to start at m  
& then the a  
leads thru to y  
some questions answered  
but the rest remain

not in the saints' names  
which was beginnings  
but in that space between  
the s & t  
among the shift of what at first seems arbitrary  
'to go beyond the point where it is even neces-  
/sary to think in terms of words'  
there  
    which is t & here  
more pain than we can bear  
is bearable

M		Books I to III
A		which is begun & leads

on

that's all i'll say

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