

Gary Snyder

Regarding

Wave



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REGARDING WAVE

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A New Directions Book

FOR MASA

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REGARDING WAVE

I

WAVE

Grooving clam shell,
 streakt through marble,
 sweeping down ponderosa pine bark-scale
 rip-cut tree grain
 sand-dunes, lava
 flow
Wave wife.
 woman—wyfman—
“veiled; vibrating; vague”
 sawtooth ranges pulsing;
 veins on the back of the hand.

Forkt out: birdsfoot-alluvium
 wash

 great dunes rolling
Each inch rippld, every grain a wave.

Leaning against sand cornices til they blow away

 —wind, shake
 stiff thorns of cholla, ocotillo
 sometimes I get stuck in thickets-

Ah, trembling spreading radiating wyf
 racing zebra
 catch me and fling me wide
To the dancing grain of things
 of my mind!

SEED PODS

Seed pods seen inside while high,
trip of fingers
to the farthest limits of the thigh

waft of sticky fluid, cypress resin
from peach valley
under walls of rock

Ferghana horses
archt rearing, fucking

tiny seed pods
caught and carried in the fur

foot-pad fetlock
slipping tongue
A pawtrack windfall
if my seed too—
float into you

colord blood and apricot
weavd with thread
girls
moons
later let it be
come—
staind
on their soil ledge tilth
fucking bed.

seed pod burrs, fuzz, twist-taQed
nut-babies

in my fucking head.

ALL OVER THE DRY GRASSES

Motorburn, oil stunp dirt smell
 brake drum
once deer kisst, grazed, pranct,
 pisst,
all over
California.

household laps, gum tea
 buds.
 new houses,
 found wed on block pie.
sa.
bring back thick walls,
 (cools my poison,
 poison,
 Scorpio itch, tick—)

dreaming of

babies

All over Mendocino County
wrappt in wild iris
 leaves.

SAND

From the desert?

—when will be sand again,
blowing sand drifting sand—
dunes at Bandon
Oregon sheltering in a shed of
driftwood, naked, kelp whip
“driving sand sends swallows flying—”

shirakawa. “white river” sand.
what they rake out at Ryōan-ji;
clean crumbled creek-washed rotted granite
quartz & feldspar sand.
—I went there once to check the prices
bulk white sand to buy
black-burnt workers spade it thru a flume

the sands of the Ganges
“all the grains of the sands of the sea.”

blowing sand
running water.
I slept up on your body;
walkt your vadleys and your hills;

sandbox
sandpaper
sandy.

BY THE TAMA RIVER AT THE NORTH END OF THE PLAIN IN APRIL

Round smooth stones
 up here in the weeds
the air a grey wet,

Across the Tama river
 a screen drum turns sorting gravel:
 dumping loads in
dump trucks one by one.

Deep in the hills
 the water might be clean

Grilling raw squid over smoky twigs
 a round screen perched on broken bricks
Masa bending on the rocks
Staring close to the water,
Nanao and Nagasawa
 with their lifted cups of shochu.

Friends and poets
Eating, drinking in the rain,
 and these round river stones.

THE WIDE MOUTH

A thick snow
 soft falling
the whole house open.

 Snowflakes build up on a
single dark green spray of pine

 The sparrow
 swung and shrieked
in a swish of snowy clustered points.

 Shew
 his wide pink mouth.
house-cleaning.

 Not a sound,
 white world,
great trouble.

IN THE HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN

Skinny kids in shorts get cups
full of rice-gruel—steaming
breakfast—sling
their rifles, walk
hot thickets.
eyes peeled for U S planes.

Kyoto a bar girl in pink
with her catch for the night
—but it's already morning—half-
dazed, neat suit,
laugh toward bed,

A guy I worked at logging with in Oregon
fiddles his new lead-belcher cannons
in South Yiieh.
tuned better than chainsaws,
at dawn,
he liked mush, with raisins.

Sleeping out all night
in warm rain.

Viet Nam uplands burned-off jungles
wipe out a few rare birds
Fish in the rice paddy ditches
stream a dry foul taste thru their gills
New Asian strains of clap
whip penic ill in.

Making toast, heating coffee,
blue as Shiva—
did I drink some filthy poison

will I ever learn to love?

Did I really have to kill my sick, sick cat.

WHITE DEVILS

Strangling a white girl
disembowelled, the insides hid in a shed
the body crushed in earth-working
under caterpillar tractor treads.

half-done concrete freeway overpass,
digging to bury my own shit
—a chopped up body
mixed with shit and towels

and then,
a disembowelled, half-skinned
horse-sized white wolf bitch
lying on its side in a pool of
half-melted snow,
a snowbank around her,
icy melt water staining red,
the red of blood spreading into the white snow.
she moved, stirred,

And I thought, my God.
still alive.

REGARDING WAVE

II

SONG OF THE CLOUD

Sloped-down shark nose,
 high frilly tail—dorsal fins—
flat sweeping gestures. Ah, puked out.
sweep the sea. broom
 my rear is soft—

Three, and their retinue,
 move up between
slender, with dignity,
 WE
 pile up, pile up, our deep-mounting
 pleasure in our richness
 is not chaos.

scatterings and plains, placings.

Brothers moving elsewhere
visible and tall,
 but far away.

SONG OF THE TANGLE

Two thigh hills hold us at the fork
round mount center

we sit all folded
on the dusty planed planks of a shrine
drinking top class saké that was left
for the god.

calm tree halls
the sun past the summit heat sunk through the vines,
twisted sasa

cicada singing,
swirling in the tangle

the tangle of the thigh

the brush
through which we push

SONG OF THE SLIP

SLEPT
folded in girls
feeling their folds; whorls;
the lips, leafs,
of the curling soft-sliding
serpent-sleep dream.
roaring and faring
to beach high on the dark shoal
seed-prow

moves in and makes home in the whole.

SONG OF THE VIEW

Line of brow, purst mouth
blue straight seamless
 snapless
 dress

O! cunt
that which you suck into
 yourself, that you
 hold
 there,
hover over,
excellent emptiness your
 whole flesh is wrappt around,
 the

hollow you bear
 to
 bear,

shows its power and place
in the grace of your glance

SONG OF THE TASTE

Eating the living germs of grasses
Eating the ova of large birds

the fleshy sweetness packed
around the sperm of swaying trees

The muscles of the flanks and thighs of
soft-voiced cows
the bounce in the lamb's leap
the swish in the ox's tail

Eating roots grown swoll
inside the soil

Drawing on life of living
clustered points of light spun
out of space
hidden in the grape.

Eating each other's seed
eating
ah, each other.

Kissing the lover in the mouth of bread:
lip to lip.

KYOTO BORN IN SPRING SONG

Beautiful little children
 found in melons,
 in bamboo,
in a “strangely glowing warbler egg”
 a perfect baby girl—

baby, baby,
 tiny precious
 mice and worms:

Great majesty of Dharma turning
Great dance of Vajra power

lizard baby by the fern
centipede baby scrambling toward the wall
cat baby left to mew for milk alone
mouse baby too afraid to run

O sing born in spring
the weavers swallows babies in Nishijin
 nests below the eaves
 glinting mothers wings
 swoop to the sound of looms

and three fat babies
with three human mothers
every morning doing laundry
 “good
morning how’s your baby?”
Tomoharu, Itsuko, and Kenji—

Mouse, begin again.
Bushmen are laughing
at the coyote-tricking
that made us think machines

wild babies
in the ferns and plums and weeds.

ARCHAIC ROUND AND KEYHOLE TOMBS

One child rides a bike
Her blue dress flutters
 about her gliding
 white-clad hips

The second runs behind
Black hair pulsing
 to the ease of her lope
 bares her pale nape

They pass by a pond of water-lily
and lotusses, a pond with a legend,

Coast out of sight.

REGARDING WAVE



BURNING ISLAND

O Wave God who broke through me today
Sea Bream
massive pink and silver
cool swimming down with me watching
staying away from the spear

Volcano belly Keeper who lifted this island
for our own beaded bodies adornment
and sprinkles us all with his laugh—
ash in the eye

mist, or smoke,
on the bare high limits—
underwater lava flows easing to coral
holes filled with striped feeding swimmers

O Sky Gods cartwheeling
out of Pacific
turning rainsqualls over like lids on us
then shine on our sodden—
(scanned out a rainbow today at the
cow drinking trough
sluicing off
LAKHS of crystal Buddha Fields
right on the hair of the arm!)

Who wavers right now in the bamboo:
a half-gone waning moon.
drank down a bowlful of shochu
in praise of Antares
gazing far up the lanes of Sagittarius
richest stream of our sky—

a cup to the center of the galaxy!
and let the eyes stray
right-angling the pitch of the Milky Way:
horse-heads rings
clouds too distant to *be*
slide free.
on the crest of the wave.

Each night
O Earth Mother
I have wrappt my hand
over the jut of your cobra-hood
sleeping;
left my ear
All night long by your mouth.

O All
Gods tides capes currents
Flows and spirals of
pool and powers—

As we hoe the field
let sweet potato grow.
And as sit us all down when we may
To consider the Dharma
bring with a flower and a glimmer.
Let us all sleep in peace together.

Bless Masa and me as we marry
at new moon on the crater
This summer.

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ROOTS

Draw over and dig
The loose ash soil
Hoe handles are short.
The sun's course long
Fingers deep in the earth search
Roots, pull them out; feel through;
Roots are strong.

RAINBOW BODY

Cicada fill up the bamboo thickets:
a wall of twanging shadow
dark joints and leaves.
northwest wind
from the China sea.



Salt clouds skim the volcano
mixed with ash and steam
rumbles downwind
from the night gleam
summit, near Algol,
breathing the Milky Way.



The great drone
In the throat of the hill
The waves drum
The wind sigh.

At dawn the mountain canyons
spread and rise
to the falling call of the Akahige
we half-wake
in the east light
fresh



At low tide swim out through a path in the coral

& into the land of the sea-people:
rainbows under the foam of the breakers
 surge and streaming
 from the southern beach,
 the lips, where you float
 clear, wave
 with the subtle currents
 sea-tangle tendrils
outward roil of lava
 —cobalt speckled curling
 mouth of a *shako* clam.



Climb delicately back up the cliff
 without using our hands,
 eat melon and steamed sweet potato
 from this ground.
We hoed and fished—
 grubbing out bamboo runners
 hammering straight blunt
 harpoon heads and spears
 Now,
 sleep on the cliff
 float on the surf
 nap in the bamboo thicket
 eyes closed,
 dazzled ears.

EVERYBODY LYING ON THEIR STOMACHS, HEAD TOWARD THE CANDLE, READING, SLEEPING, DRAWING

The corrugated roof
Booms and fades night-long to

million-darted rain
squalls and
outside

lightning
Photographs in the brain
Wind-bent bamboo.
through
the plank shutter
set

Half-open on eternity

SHARK MEAT

In the night fouled the nets—
Sonoyama's flying-fish fishing
Speared by the giant trident
 that hung in the net shed
 we never thought used

Cut up for meat on the beach.
At seven in the morning
Maeda's grandson
 the shy one
 —a slight harelip
Brought a crescent of pale red flesh
 two feet long, looped on his arm
Up the bamboo lanes to our place.

The island eats shark meat at noon.

Sweet miso sauce on a big boiled cube
 as I lift a flake

 to my lips.

Miles of water. Black current.
Thousands of days
 re-crossing his own paths
 to tangle our net
 to be part of
 this loom.

IT WAS WHEN

We harked up the path in the dark
to the bamboo house
green strokes down my back
arms over your doubled hips
under cow-breath thatch
bent cool
breasts brush my chest
—and Naga walked in with a candle,
“I’m sleepy”

Or jungle ridge by a snag—
banyan canyon—a Temminck’s Robin
whirled down the waterfall gorge
in zazen, a poncho spread out on the stones,
below us the overturning
silvery
brush-bamboo slopes—
rainsqualls came up on us naked
brown nipples in needles of ocean-
cloud
rain.

Or the night in the farmhouse
with Franco on one side, or Pon
Miko’s head against me, I swung you
around and came into you
careless and joyous,
late
when Antares had set
Or out on the boulders
south beach at noon

rockt by surf
bumd under by stone
bumd over by sun
saltwater caked
skin swing
hips on my eyes
burn between;

That we caught: sprout
took grip in your womb and it held,
new power in your breath called its place,
blood of the moon stoppt;
you pickt your steps well.

Waves
and the
prevalent easterly
breeze,
whispering into you,
through us,
the grace.

THE BED IN THE SKY

Motorcycle strums the empty streets
Heading home at one a. m.
 ice slicks shine in the moon
 I weave a safe path through

Naked shivering light flows down
Fills the basin over Kyoto
 and the plain
 a gihost glacier dream

From here a hundred miles are clear
The cemetery behind
 Namu Amida Butsu
 chiselled ten thousand times

Tires crackle the mud-puddles
The northern hills gleam white
I ought to stay outside alone
 and watch the moon all night

But the bed is full and spread and dark
I hug you and sink in the warm
 my stomach against your big belly

 feels our baby turn

KAI, TODAY

A teen-age boy in training pants
stretching by the river
A girl child weeping, climbing
up her elder sister;
The Kawaramachi Beggar's steady look and
searching reach of gritty hand
in plastic sidewalk pail
with lip of grease

these fates.

before Masa and I met
What's your from-the-beginning face?
Kai.
bom again
To the Mother's hoarse bear-down
groan and dark red mask:
spiralling, glistening, blue-white, up

And out from her
(dolphins leaping in threes
through blinding silver interfaces,
Persian
Gulf tanker's wave-slip
opening, boundless *whop*
as they fall back,
arcing
into her—)
sea.

NOT LEAVING THE HOUSE

When Kai is born
I quit going out

Hang around the kitchen—make corabread
Let nobody in.
Mail is flat.

 Masa lies on her side, Kai sighs.
 Non washes and sweeps
We sit and watch
 Masa nurse, and drink green tea.

Navajo turquoise beads over the bed
A peacock tail feather at the head
A badger pelt from Nagano-ken
For a mattress; under the sheet;
A pot of yogurt setting
Under the blankets, at his feet.

Masa, Kai,
And Non, our friend
In the green garden light reflected in
Not leaving the house.
From dawn til late at night
 making a new world of ourselves
 around this life.

REGARDING WAVE

The voice of the Dharma
the voice
now

A shimmering bell
through all.



Every hill, still.
Every tree alive. Every leaf.
All the slopes flow.
old woods, new seedlings,
tall grasses plumes.

Dark hollows; peaks of light,
wind stirs the cool side
Each leaf living.
All the hills.



The Voice
is a wife
to

him still.

him still.

ōm ah hūm

LONG HAIR

REVOLUTION IN THE REVOLUTION IN THE REVOLUTION

The country surrounds the city
The back country surrounds the country

“From the masses to the masses” the most
Revolutionary consciousness is to be found
Among the most ruthlessly exploited classes:
Animals, trees, water, air, grasses

We must pass through the stage of the
“Dictatorship of the Unconscious” before we can
Hope for the withering-away of the states
And finally arrive at true Communism.



If the capitalists and imperialists
are the exploiters, the masses are the workers,
and the party
is the communist.

If civilization
is the exploiter, the masses is nature,
and the party
is the poets.

If the abstract rational intellect
is the exploiter, the masses is the unconscious,
and the party
is the yogins.

& POWER
comes out of the seed-syllables of mantras.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW TO BE A POET

all you can about animals as persons,
the names of trees and flowers and weeds,
names of stars, and the movements of the planets
and the moon.

your own six senses, with a watchful and elegant mind.

at least one kind of traditional magic:
divination, astrology, the *book of changes*, the tarot;

dreams.
the illusory demons and illusory shining gods;

kiss the ass of the devil and eat shit;
fuck his homy barbed cock,
fuck the hag,
and all the celestial angels
and maidens perfum'd and golden—

& then love the human: wives husbands and friends.

childrens' games, comic books, bubble-gum,
the weirdness of television and advertising.

work, long dry hours of dull work swallowed and accepted
and livd with and finally lovd. exhaustion,
hunger, rest.

the wild freedom of the dance, *extasy*
silent solitary illumination, *enstasy*

real danger, gambles, and the edge of death.

AGED TAMBA TEMPLE PLUM TREE SONG

Firewood under the eaves
ends trinned even

Scaly silver lichen
on the plum
bark

Ragged, rough, twisted,
parts half-rotted

A few blossoms open:
rich pink tiny petals
soft and flutter;
Other fat buds.

Fat buds, green twigs,
flaky gray bark;

pigeons must all
Flap up together

IT

*[Reading Blake in a cowshed during a typhoon
on an island in the East China Sea]*

Cloud—cloud—cloud—hurls
 up and on over;
Bison herds stamp-
peding on Shantung

Fists of rain
 flail half down the length of the floor
Bamboo hills
 bend and regain;
 fields follow the laws of waves.

 puppy scuds in wet
 squats on the slat bed
 —on the edge of a spiral
Centered five hundred miles southwest.

Reading in English:
 the way the words join
 the weights, the warps,

I know what it means,
my language is home.

 mind-fronts meeting
 bite back at each other,
 whirl up a Mother Tongue,
one hundred knot gusts dump palms
over somebody's morning cream—
Cowshed skull

Its windows open
 swallows and strains
 gulfs of wild-slung
 quivering ocean air.
 breathe it;
 taste it; how it

Feeds the brain.

RUNNING WATER MUSIC

under the trees
under the clouds
by the river
on the beach,

“sea toads.”
whales great sea-path beasts—
 salt; cold
 water; smoky fire,
steam, cereal,
 stone, wood boards,
bone awl, pelts,
 bamboo pins and spoons,
unglazed bowl,
a band around the hair.

beyond wounds.

sat on a rock in the sun,
watched the old pine
wave
over blinding fine white
 river sand.

SOURS OF THE HILLS

barbed seeds in double ranks
sprung for sending off;

half-moon hairy seeds in the hair of the wrist

majestic fluff
sails ... rayed and spined...up hill at eye level
hardly a breeze;

amber fruit with veins
on a bending stem,
size of an infant pea.

plumes wave,
seeds spill.

blueblack berry on a bush turned leaf-purple

deep sour, dark tart, sharp
in the back of the mouth.

in the hair and from head to foot
stuck with seeds—burrs—
next summer's mountain weeds—

a strolling through vines and grasses:

into the wild sour.

THE WILD EDGE

Curve of the two steel spring-up prongs on
the back of the Hermes
typewriter—paper holders—the same
Curve as the arched wing of a gull:

(sails through the
sides of the eyes by white-stained cliffs
car-park lots and scattered
pop-top beer tabs in the gravel)

Birds saU away and back.
Sudden flurry and buzz of flies in the corner sun.
Heavy beetle drags stiff legs through moss

Caravans of ants bound for the Wall
wandering backward—

Harsh Thrush shrieks in the cherries,
a murmur in the kitchen
Kai wakes and cries—

THE TRADE

I found myself inside a massive concrete shell
lit by glass tubes, with air pumped in, with
levels joined by moving stairs.

It was full of the things that were bought and made
in the twentieth century. Layed out in trays
or shelves

The throngs of people of that century, in their style,
clinging garb made on machines.

Were trading all their precious time
for things.

TO FIRE

(Goma / Homa)

I have raised pure flames
With mystic fists and muttered charms!

All the poems I wrote before nineteen
Heaps of arty cards from Christmas
Straw shoes
Worn clogs
The English Daily-Johnson's, Wilson's Ho Chi Minh
—face crumpling inward licked by yellow locks

The contracting writhing plastics
And orange skins that shrink and squeak
peace! peace! grace!

Using sanctified vajra-tongs of blue
I turn the mass and let in air

Those letters forwarded now to Shiva
the knots of snot in kleenex,
my offering—my body!
And here the drafts of articles and songs
Words of this and that

Bullshit—renounce
the leather briefcase no one wants
the holey socks.

As sun moves up and up;
And motorcycles warm the street;
And people at the bus stop steam—

GREAT BRILLIANT KING

Unshakeable!

—halo of flame—

Eat these sweets of our house and day:

Let me unflinching burn

Such dross within

With joy

I pray!

LOVE

Women who were turned inside-out
Ten times over by childbirth

On the wind-washed lonely islands
Lead the circle of *obon* dancers
Through a full moon night in August

The youngest girl last;

Women who were up since last night
Scaling and cleaning the flying fish

Sing about love.

Over and over.
Sing about love.

Suwa-no-se Island

THE WAY IS NOT A WAY

scattered leaves
 sheets of running
 water.
unbound hair. loose
 planks on shed roofs,
stumbling down wood stairs
 shirts un done,
children pissing in the roadside grass

IN THE NIGHT, FRIEND

Peach blossom
Cling Peaches
Freestone peach.

The Third Engineer meets my wife in the pantry
says "Beards don't make money"
says "I've got two cars"

(At thirty-five my father had a wife,
two children, two acres, and two cows,
he built a barn, fixed the house and added on,
strung barbed-wire fence,
planted fruit-trees,
blasted stumps,
they always had a car.
they thought they were poor— 1935 —)

—"the money culture run by Jews"
—"the Africans got all they know from us"

Etchings of ruins,
"Interno del Colosseo Scavato nel 1813"
—Rossini—Roma—1820—
hung in the passenger lounge.



Fruit tree fields, orchards. Santa Clara, San Jose.
trailer parks in the lemon groves.

Seaman with a few extra bucks:
Talks of stocks, talks of taxes, buy up land,
the whole state of California

laid out like meat on a slab.
Growth and investment; development and returns.
—“I think them poets are all just charlatans.”

says Dogen, “every one of us
has a natural endowment
with provisions for the whole of his life.’



Off the coast of Oregon
The radio is full of hate and anger.
“Teenagers! getting busted for shoplifting is no joke!”
phoney friendly cop voice,
“The Ford Foundation is financing revolution—”
“Teach black people to have more self-respect
and they’ll blame the white people more—”

General
Alarm
When Bell
Rings
Go to Your
Station



After midnight, the “clean time of night”
Rise to see the Morning Star.
Planting the peach tree, mopping the floor.

“we all
worked hard to get ahead”
peach orchard turned roots-up and brush-piled
(the unspeakable U S government

cut down the Navajo peach trees
at Canyon de Chelly-)



On the face of the waters
A wind moves
Making waves

In the dark
Is a face

Of waters.

A wind moves
Like a word

waves

The face
Is a ground
Land
Looks round

ss Washington Bear
West Coast bound

BEATING WINGS

Jerky dance of dune weeds
 looped-over twigs scribble
 wind-and-flower notes
 forever,
 in the sand—

Hadley peeing shakes his cock
 in the desert—

Beating wings of a raven just at dawn.

The same first bird chirps at the first light.

 hair, teeth, spit, breath,
backbone, asshole, hip joints, knees,
 ball of the foot,
 knuckles, back of the hands,
 piss-hard-ons at dawn.
Lazy to get up and scuff the chilly sand
 crap by lantern light.
 —hiss of wings—
 gone.

Comb the sand down from my hair.

“off”
and away, apart, separating, peeling back.
 a-way. a “ways off”
he’s “off” —out of,
 the “oflSng”
 —hot breath
 breathing down my neck.

fuzz—burrs—thorns—tiny hairs stickers,
fluff—down—stickem. fly or be carried
be ate and be shat out.

moving the seed around.

Two Ravens talk a bit.
Then fly off
In opposite directions.

POKE HOLE FISHING AFTER THE MARCH

Those pine shingles—gunpowder dry.
if you want to save money on shingles
go up to Petaluma
a place caUed Wicks”
on anything; handling; pre-finished plywood;
“I gpt a house with those kind of walls.”

Eel-fishing, poke-holing for blinnies
down cliffs through poison oak,
a minus-two low tide.

thirty thousand brothers and sisters
bare-breasted girl on TV
her braids whipping
round about her haid,

“A hawk with a fish or a bird, up in the air,
in his daws.”

An older fatter short-haired man
Down fishing too—all catching nothing—
A roofing contractor.
Says “I’d like to stay down here all week.”
11.30 AM now, tide’8 coming back in
rusty wrecked car (m the rocks

After the Peoples’ Park march.
Monday, low tide.
he sits with us down by the fire
in the truck-high boulders, smoke
stinging of salt
“Yeah I saw you guys on TV.” Laugh, beer.

as the sea moves in
we all talk as friends;
as if America wasn't in a war—

(Gone to the mountains
gathering herbs
I do not know
when he will return—)

High tide.
Where the rocks were
Now there are fish.

N. of Slide Ranch

BROWN

black bread, brown sugar

“all year round”

topsoil,

obsidian.

molasses.

no white places,

breast or thigh.

oryza:genmai (...rices...)

“dark and mysterious grain.”

okra and cod.

eggplant purple; he art-wood red.

bare feet, long hair

sit on the floor,

no meat, no under

wear.

smoky brun bear

BROWN RICE HEADS

MEETING THE MOUNTAINS

He crawls to the edge of the foaming creek
He backs up the slab ledge
He puts a finger in the water
He turns to a trapped pool
Puts both hands in the water
Puts one foot in the pool
Drops pebbles in the pool
He slaps the water surface with both hands
He cries out, rises up and stands
Facing toward the torrent and the mountain
Raises up both hands and shouts three times!

Kai at Sawmill Lake VI69

BEFORE THE STUFF COMES DOWN

Walking out of the “big E”
Dope store of the suburb,
 canned music plugging up your ears
 the mde aisles,
 miles of wares
 from nowheres,

Suddenly it's California:
Live oak, brown grasses

Butterflies over the parking lot and the freeway
A Turkey Buzzard power in the blue air.

A while longer,
Still here.

ALL THE SPIRIT POWERS WENT TO THEIR DANCING PLACE

Floods of men
on foot, fighting and starving, cans rusted
by the roadside.

Clouds swirling and spiralling up the sky,
men fighting with scythes.

Wild beings sweeping on cities-spirits and ghosts—
cougar, eagle, grizzly bear, coyote, hummingbird
intelligences
directing destructing instructing; us all
as through music:
songs filling the sky.

The earth lifting up and flying like millions of birds
into dawn.

Hills rising and falling as music, long plains and deserts
as slow quiet chanting,

Swift beings, green beings, all beings—all persons;
the two-legged beings
shine in smooth skin and their furred spots

Drinking clear water together
together turning and dancing
speaking new words,
the first time, for

Air, fire, water, and
Earth is our dancing place now.

FOR JACK SPICER

Jack, I heard you died, it was
the bark chips in the Skagit
river at Mount Vernon
old Salishan canoes found out
when sandbars opened after heavy thaw and rains—
all the way up to the hills,
and Glacier Peak.
You leave us free to follow:
banks and windings
forward:
and we needn't *want* to die. but on, and
through.

through.

RUNNING WATER MUSIC II

Clear running stream
clear running stream

Your water is light
to my mouth
And a light to my dry body

your flowing
Music,
in my ears, free,

Flowing free!
With you
in me.

LONG HAIR

Hunting season:

Once every year, the Deer catch human beings. They do various things which irresistibly draw men near them; each one selects a certain man. The Deer shoots the man, who is then compelled to skin it and carry its meat home and eat it. Then the Deer is inside the man. He waits and hides in there, but the man doesn't know it. When enough Deer have occupied enough men, they will strike all at once. The men who don't have Deer in them will also be taken by surprise, and everything will change some. This is called "takeover from inside."



Deer trails:

Deer trails run on the side hills
cross county access roads
dirt luts to bone-white
board house ranches,
tumbled down.

Waist high through manzanita.
Through sticky, prickly, crackling
gold dry summer grass.

Deer trails lead to water.
Lead sidewise all ways
Narrowing down to one best path—
And split—
And fade away to nowhere.

Deer trails slide under freeways
slip into cities
swing back and forth in crops and orchards
run up the sides of schools!

Deer spoor and crisscross dusty tracks
Are in the house: and coming out the walls:

And deer bound through my hair.

Target Practice

LOOKING FOR NOTHING

Look in the eye of a hawk
The inmost ring of a log

The edge of the sheath and the
Sheath—where it leads—

River sands.
Tarā “Joy of
Starlight”
 thousand-
 eyed.



 coyote yapping on the ridge
all night sleeping deep
 in the shadow of boulders,
(the saw-whet owl
 calls in the foggy trees)



pack-string of five mules
 winding through the mountain meadow—
watching us: not thirty yards away
a great calm six-point buck
 head up. ears front,
resting deep in flowers.



first the gas engine pops
then the big diesel catches,
roars, and the cat
rumbles off in the
soft green misty light
of the forest at dawn



STOVEWOOD

two thousand years of fog and sucking minerals
from the soil,
Russian river ox-team & small black train
haul to mill;
fresh-sawed rough cut by wagon
and built into a bam;
tear it down and split it up
and stick it in a stove.



FOR WILL PETERSEN THE TIME WE CLIMBED MT. HIEI CROSS-COUNTRY IN THE SNOW

No trail

can't be followed:
wild boar tracks slash
sidehill through bamboo
thicket.

Where are we the hill
Goes up.



khaki breeches,
split-toed rubber workshoes,
singing and whistling to a brisk brown bull
dragging the litde logs down trail
in a foot of slushy snow
behind the Silver Pavilion.



ranges of hazy hills
make the heart ache—
tiny flowers in the underbrush,
winds from Siberia
in the spring.



SHINKYOGOKU, KYOTO

in the dusk
between movie halls
the squeak of the chain
of swings



HIKING IN THE TOTSUGAWA GORGE

pissing

watching

a waterfall



WHY I LAUGH WHEN KAI CRIES

Nothing's to blame:
daily hunger, baby rage—
the Buddha's Lion Roar
and hymns of praise.

Belly and nerves,
floating gathering mind
feel pain and wail
he's getting fat
I have to laugh at that



Masa in the warm dawn
naked
bending over Kai
laughing, dripping
from both breasts



The rim of panties rides
high on the hip
under cotton dresses,
summer, bending down.



AT KITANO SHRINE FOR THE FAIR

In the washroom I looked in a mirror
And saw the roots of a huge tree.



on the night
 of the full moon
mothers with little children
wade home
 in spite of it



THE OLD MAN

His face is the color of the wall
His robe is the same as his cushion
He speaks frog and ox
He laughs up a hill



SOME GOOD THINGS TO BE SAID FOR THE IRON AGE

A ringing tire iron
dropped on the pavement

Whang of a saw
brusht on limbs
the taste
of rust.



CATS THINKING ABOUT WHAT BIRDS EAT

the kitten
sniffs deep
old droppings



FOUR CORNERS HOPSCOTCH

“Arizona
COL orado
Utah
New MEX ico

AriZona
UTAH
Colorado &
New MEXICO.”



PLEASURE BOATS

Dancing in the ofiiing
Grooving in the coves
Balling in the breakers
Lolling in the rollers
Necking in the ebb
Balmy in the calms
Whoring in the storm
Blind in the wind
Coming in the foam.



WILLOW

the pussy
of the pussy-willow

unfolds into fuzz on the leaf.
blonde glow on a cheek;
willow pussy hair.



THE GOOD EARTH

The empty shell of a snail
By a dry log. Warm grass
 seeds in an old cookpot
 playing, we were starving.
Playing "The Good Earth."



CIVILIZATION

Those are the people who do complicated things.

they'll grab us by the thousands
and put us to work.
World's going to hell, with all these
villages and trails.
Wild duck flocks aren't
what they used to be.
Aurochs grow rare.

Fetch me my feathers and amber



A small cricket
on the typescript page of
"Kyoto born in spring song"
grooms himself
in time with *The Well-Tempered Clavier*.
I quit typing and watch him thru a glass.
How well articulated! How neat!

Nobody understands the ANIMAL KINGDOM.



When creeks are full
The poems flow

When creeks are down
We heap stones.

OTHER BOOKS BY GARY SNYDER

The Back Country

Earth House Hold

Myths & Texts

The Real Work: Interviews and Talks. 1964-1979

Turtle Island

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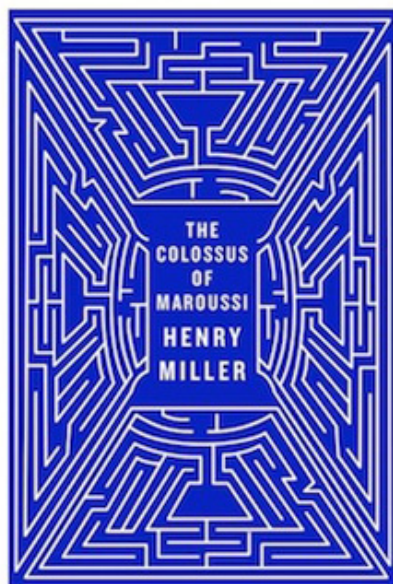
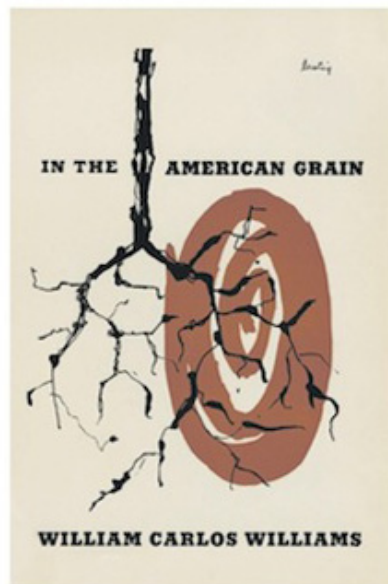
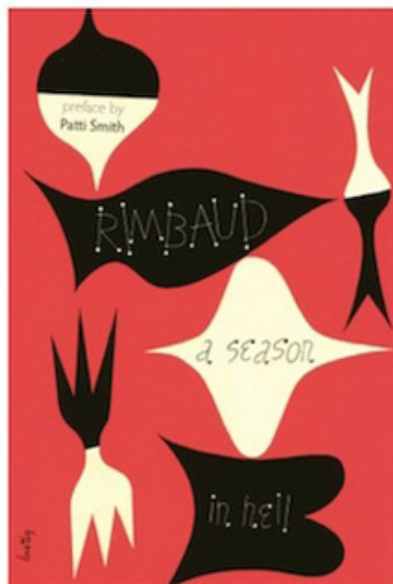
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