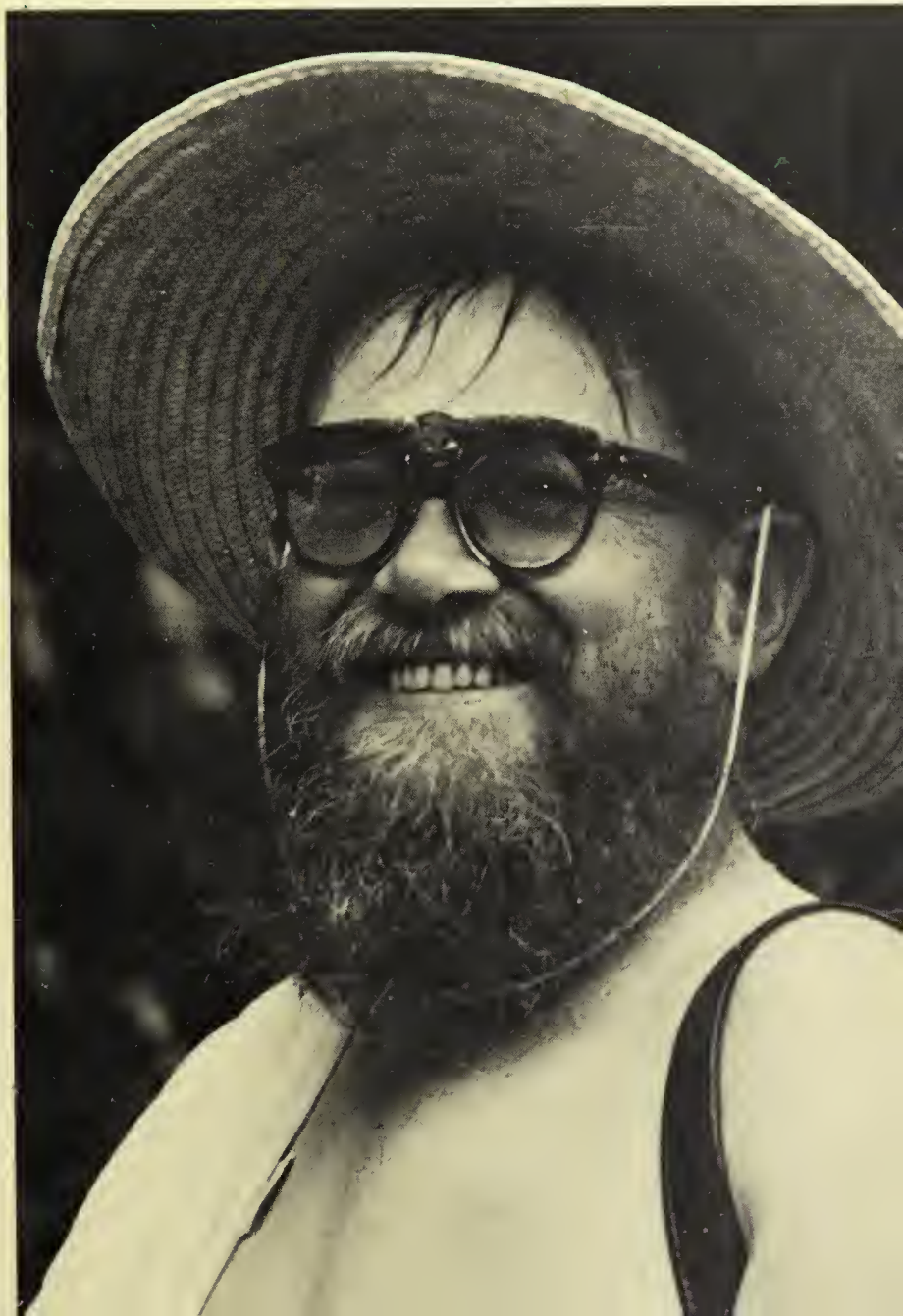


PHILIP WHALEN

Scenes of Life at the Capital




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By Philip Whalen

Every Day

Like I say

On Bear's Head

Scenes of Life at the Capital

Severance Pay

You Didn't Even Try

PHILIP WHALEN

Scenes of Life at the Capital

Grey Fox Press

Bolinas: 1971

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For Allen Ginsberg

222391

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Excerpt from *An Account of My Hut* (Hōjōki) by Kamo no Chōmei, translated from the Japanese by Donald Keene, from *Anthology of Japanese Literature: From the Earliest Era to the Mid-Nineteenth Century*; compiled and edited by Donald Keene. Copyright © 1955 by Grove Press, Inc.; reprinted by permission of the publisher.

Early fragments of this poem were first published in *Origin* 20, Third Series, edited by Cid Corman, Kyoto, January 1971. A version of the first eight pages was published as one of the series of Maya Quartos, edited by Jack Shoemaker and David Meltzer, printed by Clifford Burke at the Cranium Press, San Francisco, 1970. Further pages of the earlier stages of the poem appeared in *Rogue River Gorge* No. 2 (The Columbus Day Storm), edited by Michael Burgwin, Lawson Inada, and Greg Keith, at Southern Oregon College, Ashland, Oregon. *Adventures in Poetry*, edited in New York by Larry Fagin, printed yet another batch of this screed in the eighth issue. Thanks to the editors of all these publications. Seeing what some of this material would look like in print was a great help to me in cutting and revising the ms. for this present version.

P. W.

Scenes of Life at the Capital

Having returned at last and being carefully seated
On the floor — somebody else's floor, as usual —
Far away across that ocean which looked
Through Newport windows years ago — somebody else's
livingroom —
Another messed-up weedy garden
Tall floppy improbably red flowers
All the leaves turned over in the rain
Ridged furry scrotum veins

Hedges glisten tile roof tin roof telephone pole
Decoratively tormented black pine
Slowly repeating its careful program
Endlessly regretting but here is original done once
Not to be reproduced nor electronically remembered

Loosten up. Festoon.

An enormous drop of pure water suddenly there
Right in the center of preceding page

Nothing can be done about that. The line was ruined. OK.
Belt hair. A bend is funnier. Bar Kochba. Do something
About it. Like animal factory mayhem.

The master said, "You shouldn't have put
Yourself into such a position
In the first place." Nevertheless,
It all looks different, right to left.
Another master said, "Well,
You can always take more, you know."

The wind went by just now
South Dakota. Who's responsible for this
Absurd revival of the Byzantine Empire,
Sioux Falls-Mitchell-Yankton area?
Further anomalies of this order will receive
Such punishment as a Court Martial may direct
Or the discretion of the Company Commander
Failure to conform with these regulations
Shall be punished by Court Martial
TAKE ALL YOU WANT BUT EAT ALL YOU TAKE
The following named Enlisted Men are transf
R E S T R I C T E D. SPECIAL ORDER #21 this
HQ dd 8 Feb 1946 contained 6 Pars. C E N S O R E D
3. Fol EM, White, MCO indicated, ASRS indicated,
AF2AF, are reld fr asgmt and dy this HQ and trfd
in gr to 37th AAFBU, Dorje Field, Lhasa, TIBET
and WP at such time as will enable them to arrive thereat
not later than 20 Feb 1946 rptg to CO for dy C E N S O R E D
Or such punishment as a Court Martial may direct

I used to travel that way.

Always take a little more. This is called
“A controlled habit.” (Don’t look at me,
I never said a murmuring word.)
Didn’t you say, “polished water”?
I normally wouldn’t say so.

Wasp in the bookshelf rejects Walt Whitman,
Herman Melville, Emily Dickinson, The Goliard Poets,
A Vedic Reader, Lama Govinda, Medieval French Verses
 & Romances,
Long Discourses of the Buddha, and The Principal Upanishads.
Window glass reads more entertainingly
But soon that too is left for the foxtail grass
Camellia hedge, the dull mid-morning sun

followed by accidental descent into goofball drift
unintentionally
but such is the cost of knowledge
recollections of Jack in Berkeley
Nembies & grass & wine
Geraniums, ripe apricots, & plums
Clio’s green and slanting eyes
Gentle smile of pointed face
How much love I owe to her and to all women

My mother tried to warn me,
“Let your sister ride the bike a while;
Don’t be so damned selfish!”

How can Victorian American lady
Explain to her son that his cock
Doesn't belong exclusively to himself
But also to certain future women?

It's a matter of some reassurance
That we are physically indistinguishable from other men.
When introspection shows us
That we have different degrees of intelligence
Varying capacities for knowing morality
We lose something of our complacency

Rooty-toot
Rooty-toot
We're the boys
From the Institute
I wondered recently what school was being lampooned
In this impudent snatch of gradeschool melody
Recollection of obscene & early childhood.
If Socrates and Plato and Diotima
And all the rest of the folks at that party
Had simply eaten lots of food and wine and dope
And spent the entire weekend in bed together
Perhaps Western Civilization
Wouldn't have been such a failure?

Rooty-toot, Plato's Original Institute

Much of the morning sweeping consists of clearing away
Bodies of several hundred insects who followed my lightglobes

And perished here.

After 49 days each one of them will be reborn

Each in a different shape in a different world

Each according to the quality of his actions

In all his past existences. What a system.

Hi-de-ho.

Rooty-toot-toot. Normally I wouldn't say no.

Rooty-toot is what any bugle, horn or trumpet

Is thought of as "saying," the sound of a fart.

Years later I found the trumpeting devils in the *Inferno*

M U S H

All dropped untidy into the bottom of my skull

A wrapped red plastic phonograph record (the label says
Emperor Concerto) floats on top, inaudible;

Nevertheless, light comes through it in a pleasant way
Precisely the color of raspberry licorice whips.

It got bent in the mail, too near the steampipes . . .

The music is in there someplace, squeezed into plastic
At enormous expense of knowledge,

"FIRE IN THE BORGO"

luke-warm mush, then cold milk poured over it
chills and transforms the entire arrangement gradually
tending towards an ineradicable (nonbiodegradable)
plastic resembling "Bakelite," shiny brown
It shatters if you drop it hard

Changed again! Turned 180 degrees in an
Unexpected direction
Bent Beethoven, *Burnt Njal* I have lived
All these years until this moment
Without understanding there's absolutely nothing
Which I can do well
(RING BELL THREE TIMES)

N O T H I N G

"Har-de-har."

What do you mean, "Har-de-har"?

Nothing, just "Har-de-har."

I might have said, "Hi-de-ho."

"O Mighty Nothing!" (How does the Wicked Earl begin?)

"Then all proceeded from the great united . . ."
(what?)

"And from thy fruitful emptiness's hand
Snatch'd Men, Beasts, Birds, Fire, (Water), Air
and Land"

John Wilmot Earl of Rochester.

The parenthesized water is presented to us

On good authority by the Editor, Vivian De Sola Pinto.

I found my mother's name

Written there three hundred years ago.

"I don't know whether we can or not. Hee-hee! Let's try!"

WALK LIGHT!

I don't know nothing about it
There are two long-bearded apprehensive gremlins
One beside each of my ears. The left-hand one
Very gently whispers, "Hello?" and
Listens for a reply from the other side.
He repeats, "Hello?" very softly. "Are you
Still there?" And the right-hand one listening
And nodding, his own ear turned towards that furry dark
Pink and lavender cave. Presently he replies
(Also very softly) "Hello!"
Across the blank echoing empty dark between.

I think I'll go take a bath.
Well, come on, who is it, if it isn't gremlins —
Some other of those revolting British creations for children
Subject of PhD theses in American universities
Big eyes, charm, lots of fur all over
Stage-set by Arthur Rackham
I'm really going to take a bath now.
I split wood (gift of the landlord) while water
Plooshes into iron pot.
Make fire underneath.
Bless these elements! Their nature and use
Connect me to this place (The Capital) its history
Temple bell rings (No Self. No Permanence.)
Fiery waters all around
The iron bathtub is history, its name, *goemon-buro*
A Goemon bath, he was a highway robber, caught at last

Heavenly Baroque paradise where he sails
Far New Haven's Other Shore
Cherubic winds flap his coronation robes
Dash silver on his golden harp and starry brow
An extravagant Handelian heaven
Lavender wings of peacock feather eyes
All Memling enamel (Mr Yeats a little jealous)
Harps of "omnipotent power"
 ("OHO, OMNIPOTENT POW-ER
 OHO! OH JOY DIVINE!")
Gregory Corso imitating Peter Ustinov Nero-movie)

Too busy to see anybody in New York
A few French paintings, shoeshine
New tweed English pants two pounds real Camembert cheese
Who is there to see in New York anyway
Everybody's moved to Bolinas (I dreamed last night of
 Margot Doss)
And so home again, among roses "Arcades of Philadelphia
The Past" a piece of Idaho scenic agate
A crystal ball "Of Hartford in a Purple Light"
And supper on "An Ordinary Evening in New Haven"
Where you never lived but always heaven
Along with Stéphane Mallarmé and all the marble swans.

I keep thinking about all the really great ones
(To paraphrase Mr Spender) I think
Like anybody living in a foreign country
Of home and money. . . .
There's probably *Some* sensible human way of living in America
Without being rich or drunk or taking dope all the time

FRED, IS THAT MUSIC? DO I SHAKE OR WEEP?

3:X:69 Thomas Wolfe's Birthday "he'd say ok and we'd start in
and every time I'd presently find myself going involuntarily
ulk, ulk, ulk, which seemed to inspire him to even wilder
extravagances,"

FRED IS THAT *MUSIC*? DO I FAKE OR LEAP?

To my horror & chagrin I see that I've suppressed
Lots of goody in the process of copying from ms to typewriter;
Mike warned me years ago, "You should always
Make them reproduce your handwritten pages."

(O V E R L A P)

overleaf clover

I said

rowdy-dow

(picture of leaves)

poo.

beyond the foam

thick purple. Takano River dye-vats

there's not a way in the world I can explain that to you
you just have to get in and start doing it yourself

green shaved patch

right half of the big DAIMONJI

"Every place is the same

Because I felt the same, remembering everything

We boated for hours on the Lake of Constance

Went swimming in the Blue Grotto, ate sheep's eyes

And chicken guts in Crete. The blue tiles of Isfahan

Were better or worse than the blue tiles around the late

Mr ———, his swimming pool at San Simeon.”
And the man from Intourist at Tbilisi who so much
Resembled him:
“Everything being the same everything is naturally different”

Here in the Shinshindo Coffee Shop again
that blonde young lady who just disappeared into —
and so swiftly reappeared out of — the *benjo* was not
that funny girl who used to write for *Newsweek* but may as well
have been —
right this minute
asleep in London, Sydney or Tashkent

three new little trees just beyond
north end of goldfish pond.
I peer among the branches
in search of the blonde who now sits inside
I am in arbor outside
the number of goldfish seven or nine
One is color of polished metal
that girl's hair is a paler shade

(streetcar fills the window 1½ seconds) the hard chairs
and benches here, big tables probably not like the ones
in Reed College library. Fits of psychic imperialism
I attach tags, carve initials, pee on fireplugs
outlining my territory
is that blonde still there
sort of ecru-colored minidress, thin cloth, heavy coat
thick pale hair, untidy braid half undone behind

small pointy nose, chin recedes a little
there's no point in returning until I find out
why did I have to come all the way back here
endless belt of punch-cards travels through the neighbor's loom
repetition of a pattern from a long time back

Here's one who eats a hardboiled egg, rolls, hot milk
and a picture magazine. His friend's weak eyes read
a little book

German metaphysics translated into literary Japanese
vague to vague

two giant galaxies passing through and beyond each
other, a radio receiver on a planet several thousand
light years off might well tune in
on a stupendous music,

 F O O R E E E N G ! &c (Karl-Heinz Stockhausen)
chancere star

 when you get to the end,
 stop

Bill Whosis drunk & yelling in front of Sanjo Station
End of the Tokaido Road

Kamogawa sluicing fast under Sanjo Bridge

The wooden posts and railings shown by Hokusai
guard the asphalt concrete way

 "Why don't you walk?"

a way of living in America

doesn't really invite a narrow pen point plink
under they penthouse lid they eye they milky

forehead, Yaquina Bay, Yachats,
Neptune Park (Tillie the Whale flashes past
just north or south of Yachats?)

I can imagine living there as my grandmother did
gathering wild blackberries
driving out towards Gresham for a mess of green corn
time for melons, grapes & Chinook salmon
at The Dalles, dig mud clams at Netarts Bay
Family all over the place, friends from the old
Kilpatrick Hotel, bring blackberry jam
fresh string beans and salmon

She wanted her hotel in winter
good steam heat, parties and dances
The Lonesome Club, Cotillion Ballroom
Earliest spring flowers and pussywillows
Green slime and moss and mud evergreen and fern
smell of woman, beyond enormous plate-glass windows
The Studebaker black sedan.
All this lost again, galmed up for fair
where's the minute particulars?
what was I thinking of?

I keep thinking of those really great ones like Confucius:
“What am I supposed to do, become rich & famous?”

People keep introducing me to the famous English Poet
We have been introduced to each other once every ten years
For a very long time. He has no reason to remember meeting

Me, since the conversation is limited to “how do you do?”
And he’s considerably taller than I am.

I think all the time I can’t forgive him
For jamming that “nk” sound against the initial “C”
Nor for the blackmail word, “truly”
I can’t stop thinking about . . .
I keep thinking all the time about those
Absolutely splendid

(that isn’t so sharp, either)

Well, somewhere there’s an exact & absolutely wild poetical
equivalent to Mr X’s most often quoted line, & if he
had found it & used it
I should have swooned with awe & pleasure when I was first
introduced to him, & afterwards we might have been able
to talk together?

Fred, is that music?
Do I shake or weep? Did you fall or was you pushed?

Did I run and was I tired

Years gone by, twelve years ago
I must have had about me then some final faded blink of beauty
Fred asked me to marry him, he would be 21 fairly soon
I never had a greater compliment.
It’s too bad we were sexually incompatible
He’s the only one who ever asked me.
No matter how odd the fancy I remember him
Happily at the entrance to old age
I haven’t been a total failure after all.

Paul Gauguin went someplace there was light enough to see
And it made him a painter. (?) N. Hawthorne to Italy
H. Melville to the Southern Sea, beyond the neighborhood of
Christian gentlefolk
Fred, is that music that I fake or leap?

Lion-faced Paul Gauguin fingers and toes
Cock and nose all sloughing gradually away
Leprosy melted him, northern snowman
Disadvantages of a lovely climate
“White men go to pieces in the Tropics”

I can't stop thinking about those who really knew
What they were doing, Paul Gauguin, John Wieners,
LeRoi Jones
I keep thinking of those great ones who never fled the music
Fred and his roommate with bottled hair
All of them yarded off to Viet Nam
Translated into Rugged American Fighting Men
Defending the Free World against Godless Atheistic
Communism

(“I am a U.S. Marine.
I like to fuck and I like to fight:
What's it going to be?”)

Which makes it impossible to like the *Iliad*
Sadist faggotry too much like Parris Island
The Green Berets and the cops back home
Somebody else's castration fantasies acted out

In an ideal climate

but why should the world be different
Why should it continue in its present
nasty way? And it changes every
nanosecond, lovely, dreadful, smashed
dismembered and devoured by *prajna*
Events like the Indo-China War
Final quivers and tremblings
Neural flashes in freshly killed men
(movie of *Bonnie & Clyde*)

The longer I think about it

The more I doubt that there is such a thing as
Western Civilization. A puritan commercial culture
Was transplanted from Europe to U.S.A. in the 17th Century
American Indians were a civilized people.

I can remember when L.A. had an ideal climate

“Everybody wants complete privacy in the Hollywood Hills
for \$35 a month,” the real estate lady told C.L.T.
She wore this big Marianne Moore garden party hat
rocky face petrified lap-dog. “You don’t want to
live over there, Honey, there’s Dark Clouds in that
neighborhood.”

C. & Shirley escaped to Europe and New Mexico

Bottom of my waterglass, pentagonal crystal

The light changes passing through, bent by glass into color
and we are a rainbow, no matter how we love or hate it
We are beautiful red and black and yellow and brown and
white

Maybe a few Swedes or Finns are green in the winter time
If they get cold enough. How can we not be miraculously
Beautiful colors which betray our true nature which is love
And wisdom, compassion and enlightenment,
“Six times three is eighteen”

In Takagamine tiny old lady turns towards a Jizo shrine
Across the street.

A short prayer, umbrella in one hand, the other held up
Before her (*gassho*) and then bowed very slowly
(She really meant it) first head and neck, and then
The waist, very slowly down and back again.
Jizo-samma certainly must have felt obliged
To attend immediately and in person to that lady's
Children and departed relatives. Being Jizo-samma
He has exactly time and energy and compassion enough
To do exactly that, right now.

can this be straight description or observation
without intending to embarrass or attack anybody,
without waving my arms and yelling

does Mr Gauguin's palette go towards a muddiness
even the tropical pictures are faintly greyed
Fluorescent lights in gallery (Kyoto Municipal Museum)
varnish going bad or the pigments themselves
breaking down? look again

fishpond looks clean
fish are newly polished

Frog-child's baby sister has come to ride her tricycle
orange teddy-bear strapped to her back
the same way her mother carries her
The papa comes to pound a large flat shoe on fishpond rim
fish whirl round in fits, then he scatters crumbs on water
goldfish feed

There is a wonderful kind of writing
Which is never written NOW
About this moment. It's always done later
And redone until it is perfect.

Praying mantis moored to top of a flower stalk
Grooms itself like a canary
Preens
Two tailfeathers

I wonder whether Wordsworth was subject to fits
Of feeble-mindedness or simply had a low opinion
Of his readers?

Bigger mantis upside-down on glass door.
Who else has a face like that:
hammerhead shark another cannibal

Strong mothball smell emanates from English poetry & prose
After the death of Wm Blake . . . or a little before
It is detectable in Keats, Shelley, Byron . . . mothballs
And flannel. Smell of Established Church. Industrialism
And Empire building: same Whiggery rules us now

I've got to go sort out my guts.
“What have you been doing these days?”
Just sorting out my guts: disentangling and
Re-coiling them neatly back in place
The same operation must be performed
Upon the telephone cord, every now and again
Je m'en vais à le Toji, in memory of Kobo Daishi
Fleamarket day.

I greet you from the very top of the page

a single branch of stovewood smolders
under the bathtub, the brand of Meleager
still high but able to cook, eat, write, make bath, SWEAT
they ring the bell again I hope all sentient beings
attain complete perfect final enlightenment
which is exactly who I am or not
all my greasy little fingers

coffee-break time down at the Emergency Factory
early in the war, before we all got uniform shot but now
you are trying to confuse me about having my eyes shut
My name in Chauncey M. Depew and it is November 11, 1910
What do you think of that, hey?

STOP IT, I SAY, STOP THIS TRUMPERY MOCKERY
mockery trumpery pink chenille fuzz elephant baby mockery
trumpery trumpery mockery
mongery freeny-monger? fundle

Our main difficulty : fear and distrust of freedom
We think it must be carefully measured
Weighed and doled out in discreet quantities
To responsible persons of good character and high
Social standing: people with lots of money which is evidence
Of their reliability and moral quality

Liberty in other hands is “license”

Difficulties compounded by idea of “consent”
And theory of “delegated powers.”
Hire specialists to run everything.
But the powers they derive from us
Relieve these governors of all responsibility
Somehow become vast personal wealth—
Fortunes which must be protected from “license” and
“the violence of the mob”

We find our freedom diminished (KING LEAR)
Delegation a license for the abuse of power
say, just what are you trying
to prove, anyway?

What do I care about proving anything
Only bust chains & shackles that we may slip anchor
Haul-ass away to the making of Paradise
Where now are only fraudulent states, paint-factories
Lies and stinks and wars

One kid put it clear as may be:
“I want America to be magic electrical Tibet”

Or Konzanji, for example, a little NW of the Capital
Absolutely defenseless, abbot's house on pointed mountain
Top, delicate walls
Multitudes of people drifting through it
Footless ghosts, no fingers, empty parkas
The billows of smoke of burnt and burning leaves
The silence, unbroken purity existing in the world
Cuts down impatience
Leaf jewels rage and brilliant silence
Cold flames: Fudo-Myo-o
Carved fire, sculptured flame world net wall
Momentary bird-heads eyes beaks all swirl crimson ray
Beams yellow streaked. He isn't in the fire he's made of it
The light cool zap-energy sword the gentle hat of lotus flower
Big square feet on solid rock Takao-yama

As I looked at them they must see me, flaming
All absurd, film of mistaken proprieties
Culture of dim Oregon farmhouse to burn to dispose of
Instantly
If what is real can be created or destroyed

Clouds move above maples
Change colors we walk beneath
Colored spaces mean something else —
Where in all this tight and elegant disorder.

Walk on down Kiyotaki River canyon from Jingoji
Missed the trail, found confluence of Kiyotaki and Hozu rivers
Smooth grey-green cliffs of single rock

Heavy green water, no way back to the Capital
Except by boat, voyage in raging maple colors
Over dragon rocks of dream.
Late extravagant lunch, Arashiyama, Hurricane Ridge

I just reread a little of *The Prelude*
To which I could only reply, "You poor fish."

GOD KNOWS THE SPARROW FELL:
GOD SHOVED HIM.

Let's go visit the tomb of Emperor Murakami
Look at autumn leaves but there light rain starts falling
I had hoped to visit big rock on the hillside, also
But came back home I want my umbrella I want my lunch

R A I N

serious, wet rain

discovered the tomb of KOKO TENNO
between the parkway and the trolley track due south of noodle
shop

RAY OF FILIAL DUTY who ordered the Ninnaji to be
And the next emperor was first abbot there: UDA TENNO
His Muroji Palace

here come the maidens dancing
That song they are singing that song which you shall
Be listening is call "The Song of the Panicked Millet"
In the Chinese classical mode

In America we've been fighting each other 100 years
We pretend we're unimaginably rich

But we are poor and afraid of the poor who must become
The Army to defend us against right and wrong
All automatic and impersonal
The Law is The Government
Shall take all your money and kill you
Being completely free and entirely, impartially just

Edgar Allan Poe saw the walls of Plato's Cave
Slowly moving inwards to crush us

Who licks up the juice that runs out at the bottom?

The real shame of America is the lack of an anticlerical
Movement or party. All parties try to compound
With invisible State Protestant Church that theoretically
Doesn't exist. Rubes who think of themselves as
Members in good standing are bilked and robbed.

I got to buy me them eggs.

30 MORE SHOPPING DAYS UNTIL CHRISTMAS!

“again and again the flames of his inordinate Passion
licked my naked flesh again.”

29 MORE SHOPPING DAYS UNTIL CHRISTMAS!

“rolled right over until *I* was over the top of *him* did you ever
hear of such a thing I said Wilbur what on earth are you trying
to do and he was wiggling and shaking and squeezing and

panting and saying all them things over again like he was going crazy until I didn't know whether to send for the doctor or the fire department but he stopped all of a sudden you know how they do and that nasty old stuff all over everything I tell you if I had it to do over again I'd never get married and Wilbur is my third husband"

28 MORE SHOPPING DAYS BEFORE THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY

"then he turns right around and wants to do it again well I said listen you old goat I've got to get some rest I've got to go shopping tomorrow whether you go to work or not"

27 MORE SHOPPING DAYS UNTIL CHRISTMAS

Fred, is that music?

Ah, no, my foolish darling
It is only the roaring of the aged chilling blood
Sluggishly perambulating your brittle veins you forgot
Your bloodpressure pills again, too busy to go out
They brought you three dead sandwiches upon a tray
And coffee, tepid black forbidden coffee
On a tray and you lost your temper on the telephone
And now it echoes in your hollow empty wooden head

I'm not afraid of you.
You're nothing but an incubus.

TWENTY-SIX GREATER AND LARGER SHOPPING DAYS BEFORE CHRISTMAS

So you're a poet, hey?
Well if you're a poet
Tell me a poem.

Come on, tell me one.

Are you a published poet?

Do you know Nick Crome?

One fine day AG was mad at me and said,
"You're going to be a little old man who smells of kerosene
and sits in the public library every day reading Pliny"

Awoke at quarter-past three A.M. strange wooden clack sound
Later find fallen mud-plaster chunk in *tokonoma*
Puddle of pee with one long black hair in a corner of *benjo* floor

Gloomy gold morning ten A.M. ingest giant lump of bhang
With strawberry jam from Bulgaria (friendly socialist country)
Hot coffee. Things will seem better half an hour from now, OK?
Shut up.

What's the use of having a cold if nobody cares.
Why not simply do something else.
An absolute mystery: how to stop and begin differently.
"Don't be a ninny, Dr Culpepper, all surgery is radical

Hand me that there Gigli-saw. Yes, yes, it all
Connects, have no fear, we can take a tuck in the membrane
If necessary. Try to develop a little more dexterity —
Have you tried practising the piano or the guitar?
Us brain surgeons got to show a little culture.
Quit banging my elbow, nurse.”

Fifty years fighting the Bolsheviki
To maintain a 500% profit on every waffle-iron and locomotive
At 499% times are growing difficult, we must try to retrench
At 497½% lay off some of the newer employees the market looks
“Bearish” at 496% SELL OUT while there’s still a chance.
In order to boost profits back to 498%
A “presence” appears in Cambodia

When did the dumb-bunny bomb first hit U.S.A.?
How come everybody appreciated it so much?

THE BAD NEWS INCUBUS SERVICE

“I’m going to get well right away.
I’m going to be just fine,” the old man said;
Then his eyes rolled up and his breath stop
And there he lay dead as a flounder.

Lost again yesterday walking towards Arashiyama
Inconveniently: lunchtime. Several villages,
Tomb of the Emperor Uda, deserted superhighway to
Western Hills
I thought of asking somebody, “This the road to China?”

I really knew where I was, I'd been to those mountains
The empty freeway bored and frightened me
Broken highway to a pretty place where I bought expensive
noodles
Well, it opened up a space, I could see the distance, for a
change
Breathe. Did I miss nine trillion cars, want them to be
On this road with me?

At home, the vegetable supply
A Dutch still-life set on reversed lid of *nabe*
Half a red carrot half a giant radish half a head of hokusai
A completely monumental potato
China will sail across big Zen soup to me

THE BAD NEWS INCUBUS SERVICE

They peer down through my ceiling
“Poor old man he's too fat to live much longer”

Which part of this bothers me most —
Insincerity, indifference or the fraudulent ceiling?
Voices out of the air the bleak and windy white skull attic
Flat white for lots of light
Hollow wooden head son of a bitch, Homer Matson used to say

I keep trying to remember that this is my life now
What I've got, what I actively chose
Pine tree stone lanterns outside the mason's house imperial tomb
Camellia hedge monkey-slide tree
And the responsibility for learning two languages (which

I evade) and dim insistences of two others in the background
Sanskrit and Tibetan. awk!

WHY DID I LAUGH TO-NIGHT?
NO VOICE.

At the foot of the stonewall Fukuoji Jinsha
Somebody took leave of her shoes;
There they are.
Red.

Strangely enough I find that I'm all right
Nothing's really wrong with me, there's food
Payday will be Thursday the pleasure of looking at
A tiny mountain of low-grade amethyst
Almost the color of gas flame cooking buckwheat noodles
(kerosene is on the way)
The cold weather is neither monster nor prodigy
I seem to survive it (Vitamin C) in spite of paranoia
(Vitamin B-complex shortages?).
In winter the air is cold as it is hot in summer
But I never can understand the idea

All too soon I must leave these beauties
And come away to heaven's boring towers of golden flapping
Snowy wings and halo bright star crown
No more to see your sexy frown and freckles
 ("I can't find my mirror!
 I can't find my things!")
So that when you've at last arrived there too
Shall we bleak and holy strangers distant forgiving nod and
 smile?

But soon you'll be asking me, "How do I look?
Is my halo all right? I know my wings are all slaunch-wise
Along the trailing edge." (Preen, preen.) "I wish I had
My mirror, Kids! I wish I had all my things Oh well
I don't care please hold me I want you to hang onto me
a while."

Torn paper fake mountains become three-dimensional
Transparent crystals. Bushes and trees all
Barbered and shaved plaques of tourmaline, emerald
They used to tell me I must apply myself
Work hard and don't be lazy
But what I must learn is to accomplish everything
Which has nothing to do with work.
Work is what an instrument or engine does.
We say a crystal changes white light to green
Breaks light into rainbow, scatters it
Focuses to burning point. The crystal does
Nothing. Its shape and structure make all
The difference. Think of transistors and lasers.
In order to make this day great
Yesterday must be altered

Rain I must wear overcoat muffler and bamboo umbrella
Thinking of monkey tribes on Hieizan and Iwatayama
Wet & freezing I hope they're finding food
Lovely bronze-green fur, defenseless eyes
They run if you stare at them:
Fixed gaze prepares for pounce crunch fangs of death
All monkees everywhere look worried all the time

Eyes and faces, "Oh God, what next. Me?"
Lots of instructions wasted

Go down town and argue with the bank
Fall, as leap
Fred?

Yesterday afternoon they said
They'd pay in the morning.
This morning they say
They'll pay in the afternoon

Raving hot sunshine two days before Christmas
BAFFLEMUTE

& so to Osaka.

Beguile me with all them blandishments again!

Cursus:

The hotel falls. The false hotel.

Enter One in the character of a false hotel. He speaks:

MALEMUTE!

BEZOAR!

TREMENDULATE!

FACTION.

CUCURBITE.

Pantages.

TRASHMULE.

finger

Marred by fits of rage, mental confusion
Lapses of memory. Olson dead in New York
Jack dead in Florida. Today I am going to take more:
Smoked some and ate some

OM. AH. HUM.

in five sacred colors

I woke up a couple of times during the night
High with lights and music behind the eyes
This morning I am cured and know who and where I'm at

Why should I go to Europe to look at
Several million nervous white folks
My very own relatives there they are
Totally uncivilized, fingering and puzzling over
The ruins of Western Civilization
I feel closer to that culture which our ancestors
Destroyed . . . megalithic builders initiated in mushroom
Mysteries at Crete, Eleusis, New Grange

In this capital we also fumble with ruins of high culture
But feelings of antique propriety keep heavy sway
Over family, marriage, feudal obligations to a chief
The life of the Capital goes by in tight pants
Or on horseback brilliant silk *hakama*
Brocade *karaginu* gleaming lacquer hat

Summer's dead leaves philaudering into dusty moss
Like melting Dracula.

(PHILAUDERING. *Mot imaginaire de l'auteur.*)

The soul extractors are here.

Edgar W. Tomczyk of Lima, Ohio, will now attempt
To drive a 35-ton Caterpillar tractor through
Two inches of boiling water from which he will escape
Absolutely unharmed!

(oops.)

Rupert Scanlon of Great Falls, Montana will now . . .

The world (and I)
Barge past the sun
Glass on stove's fuel-gauge reflects
The sun onto north wall twenty feet away
The passage of Time, the zooming of the earth
Can be witnessed as a disc of light
Sliding over dots of mud plaster sand
Other goop embedded in the surface

Daitokuji celebration day still echoes in my head
Sound of manhole-cover falling flat on stone floor
The rainy maples at Koto-In.
Last night wild boar for supper
Shakuhachi music over snowy torrent
BOTAN NABE, Peony Cassoulet
So far north of the Capital the road is only paved
When it becomes (five seconds) mountain village mainstreet
among *sugi* trees ordinary dirt in the canyons
But the people speak *Kyoto-ben*.
BOTAN garden of Daitokuji monastery
Manhole-cover clang and crash
Big pair of cymbals, thin brass with center bowl
Broad-rim soup dishes B L A S H !

Everybody dolled up in brocade bib and tucker
Chinese canal-boat shoes, Nootka shaman hats
To exceed wisdom and ignorance escape skull chain
(Juzu beads I saw today each bead a white head-bone
Apparently impossible although there's enough space
Between bone crystals to drive a truck through)

There's not an owl in the world who thinks or knows
"I am an owl." Not one who knows there's a man called
Slotkin who knows more about owls and the owl trade
Than any owl. I wonder though,
Can Professor-Doktor Slotkin eat micc and fly.

Kyoto 6 P.M. News:

Somebody left a pistol in a raincoat in a taxi on
Higashiyama (Eastern Mountain) Road

New York Buddha Law:

All sentient beings will be brought
To complete final perfect enlightenment
If you will write a letter to *The New York Times*
Condemning Ignorance, Desire and Attachment.

Almost all Americans aged 4 to 100
Have the spiritual natures of Chicago policemen.
Scratch an American and find a cop. There is no
Generation gap.

I sit in the north room
Look out across the floor into the garden

12½ tatami mats the pleasure of contemplating them
They are beautiful and they aren't mine.
Present appearance of quiet neutral emptiness
Books, music, pictures, letters, jewels, machines
Buddha statues and other junk all hidden away
As if inside my head (think of the closets
As memory banks) Wooden ceilings pale orange
Floors the color of wheat straw, light-grey paper
Colored mountains near the bottom cover the fusuma
That divide rooms hide closets. Glass and white paper
Shoji screens two garden ends of the house north and south

Heavy floral designs of Michoacan
(Have you ever considered going THERE to live)

O flowers more lovely than wine

Adonis and/or Dionysus . . .

“... only one note and it a flat one . . .”

"Only a rose

For you." (That was a long time ago.)

(unique abyss)

"I'll go along

With a smile & a song

For anyone . . .” all this was

Copyrighted maybe 1911 "ONLY A ROSE

FOR YOU!"

So long ago I was a prisoner still and other people

Made everything happen good bad & indifferent

“Control yourself!” they said

To survive continuous neural bombardment

Meningeal bubbles twenty years after —

Now I make things happen
These thin brass domes and birds of ice
Cheap fruity cries pop
There's your tricycle (from Jimmy Broughton's movie,
Mother's Day)

tricycle from the Isle of Man

Three legs running
"The Shinto emblem showing three comma-shaped figures
in a whirl symbolizes the triad of the dynamic movements
of *musubi* . . ." — Jean Herbert

Athenian abyss Tarquin Old Stairs off the steep
edge of town Delphi something else
a friend writes from Eleusis: "nothing here
but a vacant lot . . . factories in the distance"

"Those caves of ice"

,

(large comma)

"JA!" Mr C. Olson used to say so the word
Had a big walrus mustache laden with fresh beer foam

Flowers have great medicinal virtue

I decide not to go to town until Wednesday
Buy *Time* to read at Asahi Beer Hall, not have to teach
I just now caught bright future glimpse
Of myself on Wednesday: Long green coat
Orange beard glasses completely distracted

By trauma of trying to talk Japanese to the waitress
Out of patience out of breath wrestling to break
Strong wool British overcoat stranglehold

flowers and vegetables

maybe they will change my mind

The light is different because it's a different season

(Audumb in New York)

usual garden uniform green moss a pleasure.

In spring unexpected crocus and lily and tulip

Crash through it — surprising shapes and colors

Western Civilization rigid and tyrannical

But it also teaches necessity for objective examination

Of the organization and also provides all kinds of suggestions

How to alter the works. Mr Karl Marx wrote a book

All by his lonesome in the British Museum. (Shhh!)

I've read the trial and death of Socrates

Lots of times. When it hits me right I can cry

Other days I wonder why it took the Government so long

To catch up with him. Nothing happened

To Plato, there he sits, writing.

Homer and The Classics burnt at Appomattox

Confucius enjoyed a vogue as originator of jokey sayings, 1939

30:IV, 7:55 A.M. Unknown quantity & quality LSD

7:21 P.M. head full of million-watt light

Hangs from the ceiling, old China dome

Newly uncovered. Dirty but thin, hard and shiny.
Far-away midge on quiet *tatami*.
Many amperes and micro-watts weeded the garden
Picked it up by one end and shook it
Like the dog's dirty blanket, *flooch! flooch!*
And resettled it softly down over the shrubs and bugs
Lots of discoveries underneath
All miraculous and alive

The Capital more than usually full of foreigners —
Expo '70, Osaka. Americans at first imagine
Japan is extension of Cincinnati suburbs
Amazed and outraged to find everything here
In careful and complete control of people who don't
Speak English, occupied (somewhat aggressively) with
Being very Japanese.

That is the funny man's house over there.

That's where the funny man lives.

Keep away.

Hair. Hair. Hair. Hair. Hair.

THE JOURNAL OF JOHN GABRIEL STEDMAN 1744-1797,

“June 9 (1795) . . . the Apollo gardens,

Marylebone, Madagascar bat as big as a duck . . .

June 24 . . . How dreadful London; where a Mr. B — declared
openly his lust for infants, his thirst for regicide,
and believes in no God whatever.

. . . August . . . Met 300 whores in the Strand. . . Saw a mermaid
(. . . September . . .) All knaves and fools and cruel to the
excess. Blake was mobb'd and robb'd.”

A friend wrote from Kent, Ohio, last year

“The Midwest is full of people who want to write poetry
and want to listen to it.”

This year the National Guard, weeping with pity and fright
Kill four students, firing “into the mob”

Nobody cared. Nobody remembers the Korean “Police Action”
Nobody will remember our “Advisory Mission” to Indo-China
why are they doing it

Why are they

oh, never mind am I supposed to judge them

Don’t you remember being high and weeding the garden
And whatever is really beautiful can’t be destroyed

We can’t get our hands on it,

“ . . . The truly great

Have all one age, & from one visible space

Shed influence! They, both in power and act,

Are permanent, and Time is not with them,

Save as it worketh for them, they in it.”

— S. T. Coleridge, “To William Wordsworth”

Endless weedy babble comes away easily

The flowers feel different, having been intentionally

Placed by living fingers which I also feel

Just think of it as a large allegorical painting

Nude figures, red velvet drapery, white marble

“Classical Architecture” (Parthenon Bank of Chemical Pan-
theon Library)

America Devouring Her Own Young

(The soldiers are also our children, we've lied to them, too
Americanism, Baseball, Commerce, Democracy, Education,
Fanaticism
Golf, Home Economics,
ignorance

The complete college curriculum
Then put them into uniform and turn them loose with guns
To kill “hate-filled long-hair dirty dope-fiend Com/Symp”)

Nobody cares because nothing really happened
It was on the TV, everybody will get up
Wash off the catsup, collect union wages & go home
Nobody cares, nobody thinks anything about it
No thoughts at all; a succession of needs and little raunchy
Schemes. "They should have killed a few hundred more —
All a Communist plot to move Blacks into suburbs
Turn over the country to freeloaders, dope-fiend hippy queers"

The American Revolution was a tax-dodge
 Dreamed up by some smart Harvard men
 Who got some good out of it.
 A few of their high-society friends also scored

Russian Revolution a strictly ugly downtown proposition
The Great Unwashed on a rampage. No reference to mystical
Rights to Life & pursuable happiness guaranteed by
Eighteenth Century rationalist Deity in curly wig

Old man potters down the lane singing
Stops to search the roadside flowers and weeds

For some particular leaf that he puts in plastic bag
Of greens. Last night's old man, KONDO Kenzo
(80-some odd years) performed the Nō of *Motomezuka*
Acting a young girl and her ghost frying in hell
We all kept waiting for him to stumble, collapse
Fall off the stage disintegrate
But the longer we watched the clearer it became:
The stage, the entire theater might collapse much sooner
Fall to sand and rust and splintered beams
Mr Kondo would still be there singing and dancing
Every fold of his costume in place five hundred years

It pleases folks in Washington D.C. to imagine
The Russian Revolution is going to flop any minute now
(After fifty years) the insurgent Bolsheviki will be put down
The dear Tsar restored as modern constitutional monarch
(We did it in Tokyo, didn't we?) and the Patriarch of
The Church will crown him in St Basil's while the Don
Cossack Choir (beards and gold brocades) chant Slavonic
Liturgies in full color satellite TV an example
To the benighted everywhere, if only we will pay
Just a little bit more and hire a few more FBI men

A few inches of adhesive tape seals the mouth
But it is hard to get rid of the idea of liberty
After forty years of war Asia still exists,
Not to mention the Viet Cong
And quite different from the plans of Washington
Or Moscow or the Vatican. (Napoleon said, "China . . .
Sleeping giant. I shudder to think what happen
When he wake . . .")

Adhesive tape in Federal Court
Nothing wrong with the System
You'll get a chance to talk later.
Federal Court held together with gum arabic
And Chicago cops

Nara has a great magical feeling
The city no longer exists, the first capital
Restored fragments of temples, carefully excavated
Site of Imperial Palace in the rice fields
Like Olson I've been writing about the wrong town?
 "Worcester! I'm from Worcester!
 All this about Gloucester . . .
 I've been writing about the wrong town
 All this time!" (Vancouver, 1963)

Kent State, Jackson State, There was no reason to kill them
Fusillade into an unarmed crowd
Of children.
I can't forgive us for feeding them
to the Bears currently raiding Wall Street
Painless Extraction time again
Squeezing water out of the stocks
Blood out of the suckers
Everybody hopes to catch a nice gob of the goo
But there's never quite enough

Didn't you hear about the reservations? You were supposed
To phone ahead for reservations. In advance.
Never quite enough, the Official Party had
To be served first.

Never quite enough
Because it was planned that way.

My grandmother used to say, "And so he was left
S.O.L."

I asked her, "What's that mean?"

"Certainly out of luck."

Those that's got, gets. Them that ain't is S.O.L.

"Oh, the coat and the pants
Do all of the work
But the vest gets all the gravy!"

We complain of Tiberius in the White House

But consider: Caligula

Waits fretfully in some provincial capital

CAPITAL REMOVED TO FUKUHARA (Kamo no Chōmei
reporting)

6th month, 1180 —

"To the north the land rose up high along a ridge of hills
and to the south sloped down to the sea. The roar of the waves
made a constant din and the salt winds were of a terrible sever-
ity. The palace was in the mountains, and, suggesting as it did
the log construction of the ancient palaces, was not without its
charms. . . . The manners of the capital had suddenly changed
and were now exactly like those of rustic soldiers."

Oregon City by the papermill falls of Willamette
There's Dr John McLoughlin's big white house

Retired magnificence of Hudson Bay Co.
Benefactor of our Pioneer Ancestors
John Jacob Astor ran him out of business
Washington Irving described all but the money

Where was the capital: Champoege,
Oregon City, Portland, Salem.
The money is in Portland the university in Eugene
The capital in Salem: Life Along The Willamette River?
now a stink-hole
Paper-puke sulphur trioxide and mercury
The lesser towns contribute only garbage and human excrement

The Capitol's great brass dome warping
Melting in the flames
Hand-carved oak and myrtle and walnut panelling
State House in the park, toy stage set, blazing
A lost art, my father used to say. Nobody knows
How to do that any more.
Palaces by Vanbrugh, mansions and watergates of Inigo Jones
Gardens by Capability Brown

blazing
"Sept. 2, a lamentable fire. . . . the wind being eastward blew
clouds of smoke over Oxon the next day . . . the moon was dar-
kened by clouds of smoak and looked reddish. The fire
or flame made a noise like the waves of the sea."
So says Anthony à Wood.

Yet there are still remaining
Shosoin, parts of the Horyuji, Yakushiji, Toshodaiji

The capital disappeared around them. Byodoin and Muroji
Parts of Daigoji too far away from the battlefields
And from carelessness, perhaps. These can still be seen,
In spite of earthquake, ambition, silliness
The thousand Buddhas at Sanjusangendo, the others at
The Toji, survived though the city was flattened
Eight or ten times in a row

Jack used to say,
“Some day you and Gary and Allen and me
Will all be old bums under a bridge,
Down by the railroad tracks. We’ll say,
Remember when we was all out there in Californy,
Years ago?”

Gentle rain from grey-black lump clouds
Fine pale blue sky
Three-color cat sits on weedpile
Near but not under the largest branch of Mt Koya pine

All I can say this morning is a dance
Which can’t be recorded here
A wish to be free from orders, notions, whims
Mine or other people’s
Waiting for the laundry delivery man
Waiting for 95 liters of kerosene
Chrysanthemum yellow starfish tube-
Foot petals

Ancient Orient! Shortest route to the forebrain
Through olfactory lobes. Longest way round is

The shortest way home. A little trip
Through the Anima Mundi, now show
Now currently appearing a persistent vision
When it happens at the eorreet speed
But if you get too elose it is only
Patterns of light
Drop eandy and try to follow it
Creates new place and time. Looking up
I see blank staring faees
Reflecting steady silver glow. Silenee.

Under the bright umbrella, University of British Columbia
Beer on the terrace of the Faeulty Club Allen & Bob
Straightening out something complicated,
Olson sighing the while, "I hear you. One, four, three.
I hear you. One, four, three. Minor's Ledge Light.
One, four, three. I LOVE YOU. One, four, three, Minor's
Ledge Light. You remember, don't you Bob. One, four, three
I LOVE YOU — what better way to remember?"

Do intelligent questions get interesting answers.
All I know is
Every time I get mixed up with rich folks
It costs me all the money I have in my poeket

CURIOUS ELISION
LORD, HAVE MERCY UPON US

Michaelangelo/Cole Porter Variations DAY & NIGHT;
NIGHT & DAY, waking and sleeping

That's what's that's all about
A man with titties like a woman
A woman with muscles like a man

“To Europe?”

.....
“I must have adorned it with a strange
grimace, but my inspiration had been right.
To Europe. . .”

— Henry James.

Pierre who?

“coming & going”

“well if you'd got drunk and
climbed up to the top of the door
and took off all your clothes
and passed out cold
how would Y O U look?”

No matter how far we travel
We find most of the world living as quasi-civilized
Nomads among polished marble ruins of great cultures
The quality of life and the meaning of these remains
Are quite imperfectly known to us, no matter how skillfully
We parse the verbs of lost languages
All ignorantly we project our own savagery & cannibalism
Upon societies and individuals who were
Our civilized ancestors

Christ now returns under the name U.S.A.
Rages wild across the earth to avenge himself

Napalm and nuclear bombs for every insult
Every prick of thorn crown
“Not peace but a sword” (Curious elision.)
Lays about him burning and smashing
Murdering the Sea,

The war continues because it is profitable.
It’s making good money for those who had
Money to invest in it from the beginning

Curious elision for all who did not.

All of a sudden it became as if nothing had happened
And that was the end.

Babies we creep out of water sack
Hid there by young men
Old we slide into firebox
Drift up the flue to heaven

A natural history. A narrow escape.

What happened. Walked to local coffeeshop
Tomato juice. Start home *via* Ninnaji templegrounds
People chanting in front of magic Fudo spring
I went to look at the Mie-do, then realized
I was sick or at least beleaguered by creep vibrations
Clearly time for magical cure.
I poured water over Fudo his rocky image
Chanted his mantra and bowed. I also rubbed

Magic water on my head. Old lady caretaker
Delighted; she said I had done well and wished
For my rapid recovery.

To enforce the cure I visited Fudo spring at
Kiyomizudera, the Kwannon and other Buddhas there
Expensive tempura lunch with view of Chion In
The Eastern Mountains and a glimpse of Momoyama Castle
Glimpse has a marvelous sound like limpkin and Temko

“That Fudo a good old boy he from Texas!”

Shinshindo Coffee house brick fountain,
Stone, tree, new leaves, now a new electrical
Garden lamp on metal pole, as in Mrs Blah’s patio/barbecue
“area”

Chagrin Falls, Ohio. The latest incarnation of
The Frog Child tries to ride minute red tricycle
That groans and squeals. Delicious croissants.
I can still feel happy here. How come.

I’m too fond of eggplant ever to be allowed into Heaven
But imagine celestial *brinjal* — *aubergines du paradis!*
ANACHRONISM:

- a) homesick for one of
the chief cities of Ohio
- b) process for correcting chromatic
aberration in camera and other lenses

One of the most wonderful and magical actions
We can perform: Let something alone. Refuse

To allow yourself the pleasure of messing it up.
The thing appears to want adjusting, improving,
Cleaning up &c. APPEARS so to us
But as a collection of “event particles”
A section of the Universe as a noisy morning &c
Leave it alone. Don’t tamper with it.

Free of that poor-ass Oregon down-home history
As this clear water streaming over head eyes face
I can see hollyhocks ten feet high sideways
To go and to stay illusory
I flee pale music

(I know what I’m doing, NIGHT & DAY)

I flee Death’s pale music

(Well, what?)

Fleeing Death’s proud music,

“Get up out of there,” my father used to say,

“You can’t sleep your life away.

People die in bed.” But I am tired of all the world

With notebook and pen I hurl myself deep among

The dopey sheets to bed, and lock the gates!

Shopping among the sand at the bottom of a birdcage

Every grain a universe designed by Walter Lantz

Nonskid never-fail plastic whose colors fade

All surfaces dim and grubby all of them scraped

Minutely scored cracked and flawed

Material impervious to most chemicals

Resistant to ordinary wear

Allegorical painting: CUPIDITY DECEIV’D BY ADVERTIS-
ING

The canary in residence is terribly
Intelligent and infested with mites.

“Rooty-toot-toot” was the sound of the little .44
Frankie wasted her faithless lover
Whenever I asked people what all that meant
They said “Never mind” —
“Row the boat, Norman, row!”

Hot weather erodes my powers
At the Ishiyamadera, small room with *bo*-leaf window
(For the viewing of the moon, the priest explains.)
She looks at the moon through that window that you see
Over there. She is now a wax dummy with a face
That exhibits what the Japanese think of as “refined”
Features. All dressed up in Heian court robes
Long black hair down her back. In the antechamber
A smaller dummy represents girl-child attendant
Grinding ink at a large inkstone
The figure of Murasaki holds a writing brush
And a long piece of paper. Her head has begun to turn
Away from the writing to observe the moon
And quite likely to remark upon the song of the uguisu
Scholars, Japanese and Western, say she never did,
Never was here a minute. The priest shows
A sutra copied out in Murasaki’s own handwriting
Here’s the very inkstone that she used.
There is the moonlight window.

Dog days, ten years, I try to remember your face
You disappear, all my head can see
Are two paintings and drawing in red ink
Whatever else I've done with my life
Amounts to nothing

But inside the lantern a white speckled black beetle
Not quite as large as a rice-bird gives
Complete performance of *Siegfried* all alone

I am a hunting and gathering culture
The Moselle wine-boat sails over icy Delaware
On gossamer wing through the woods to Skye
(Hurrah for Miss Flora MacDonald)
Under the shadow of those trees
Edge of typhoon sudden rain
Shelter at Basho's Rakushisha hut
Green persimmons next door to Princess Uchiko her tomb
(Famous for her Chinese poems, first priestess of Kamo Shrine)
Under the shadow of those trees, waiting for the boat
Cythere

POÉME IMMENSE ET DRÔLETIQUE

Night morning Greyhound bus NEVADA have a new driver
all on different schedules

*"quel sentiment. quelle
delicatesse"*

Who shall be first to arrive?

Chaos is an ideal state
None of us has ever experienced it

We are familiar with confusion, muddle and disarray
True disorder is inaccessible to us

“ . . . the sense of beauty rests gratified
in the mere contemplation or intuition,
regardless whether it be a fictitious Apollo
or a real Antinous.”

— Coleridge, Notebook, 1814.

“White noise”
Brownian motion
Spinthariscopes
“Cosmic rays”

I look out for a moment from behind the Great Book Mountain
Feeling like Lemuel Gulliver

(this isn't exactly what

大
本
山

) e.g.
)
) BIG
) HEADQUARTERS
) MOUNTAIN
)
) (temple of whatever
) Buddhist sect)
)

means.)

DISTRACTION

assemblage of eggs green onions butter and

amethyst crystals on top of the kitchen cabinet

A mountain of quartz

喝

crystals

水晶

A whole set, (90 yen worth) of red beans

Gone up in smoke while I rummage three dictionaries

Four different texts in three incomprehensible languages

喝

Minestrone

For all sentient beings

金錯

get me out of here! Bail me
out of the WORD OCEAN

苦辛

海



“I wish to God
I never see your face
Nor heard your lion tongue”

And so knocked over my drink

I now have a pantsfull of cold sweet coffee

Hop up out of the way and white shirt all stained

On account of G. M. Hopkins:

“What do then? how meet beauty? Merely meet it; own,
Home at heart, heaven’s sweet gift; then leave, let that alone.
Yea, wish that though, wish all, God’s better beauty, grace.”

Whatever any of that means (TO WHAT SERVES MORTAL
BEAUTY?)

I am suddenly spastic brainless
Flailing arms and feet
Complete total mess. Rush home. Underwear
Hair and wristwatch and all pockets
Full of coffee syrup, take a bath to get rid of it
Before the ants can find me

Poor Hopkins imagined he had it completely under control
Set framed and crystallized
It all explodes iced coffee in ten directions,
Three worlds. He had to be a priest
Poetry was some other trip forced on him
Squirting out every nozzle, pore and orifice

I must have been reaching for my notebook
With both hands and several more
I wanted to copy that message here
Some arm and fingers held the Hopkins book,
Yet other hands reaching for pen — did I yell,
I wonder — which of these hands arms elbows
Knocked the glass *towards* me?

coffee and sugar leaping in
capillaries of my brain

Coffee or sleep thick and sweet
Heavy chocolate hours of morning
Deliberately. And now 10:30 A.M. washed and broken away
From books and music I sit with my feet melting
In bright invisible mountain water that lies above
Brown chocolate mud and fir needles and little sticks
Two inches or twenty feet below — impossible to judge
Because of stillness and clarity of water
Smooth and heavy as cloth of cold
Black transparent stream,
anyway I thought that was the reason

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: “. . . Like an insane person I ran out of our house. He asked me, ‘What do you want?’ I replied, I want to remain immersed in samadhi. He said: ‘What a small mind you have! Go beyond samadhi! Samadhi is a very trifling thing.’”

In the capital the commonest materials —
mud, plain paper, a couple boards and a bush and a rock,
A handfull of straw — stuff we think of as worthless
Throw it away, certainly not to use for building a house
But set here in proportion, in specific spatial relation
An order of decorum and respect for themselves
Out of nothing at all, a house and garden
That can't last more than ten minutes
Very quietly stays forever

Here at the edge of town people visit me
As they used to hike up Sauk Mountain
Or to the Sourdough Lookout. They sidle up
And say, "Ain't you kind of lonely
Up here all alone?" I have to lie and say
"Sometimes," because they look injured & rejected
If I say "No." The truth is that living
In remote and foreign places takes a lot of
Work, every day, no time to feel sad and friendless

The neighborhood barber watches my hair walk by
Jealously. So much for
The Law of Karma.

Where is Los Angeles? Where IS Los Angeles
In among the minnie-bombs & maxi-toons
Cloud, altocumulus, as appears above islands
Far at sea.
O California lardy-dar

What is California, nothing but South Alaska
"See how CANADA comes me cranking in
And cuts me from the best of all my land
A huge half-moon, a monstrous cantle out . . ."
Northern Chile

I didn't know what I was getting into
Until it was too late and now I am a FREAK!
O California!
A GREAT BIG FREAK
(ugh!)

almost white granite with little stars
Juniper trees in high California
Recollected at a great distance
Everyplace else forgot
Thinking "Moon still important at
The capital" and "L'AIDE-MEMOIRE DE LA VRAIE LOI"

An awfully large number of us
Had our heads bent with nowhere theories
Presented in beguiling books
Marx and Lenin, Freud and Jung, Churchill and Lord Keynes
Kafka and Kierkegaard,
In spite of or on account of which
Becoming cannon-fodder for sadist politicians
Patients of expensive quacks. How come.

"In short, he bid me goe to the Fountain head,
and read Aristotle, Cicero, Avicenna, and did call
the Neoteriques shitt-breeches."

— Aubrey's *Life of Wm. Harvey*

I suspect you can be as nutty with a head full
Of Greek and Latin, but maybe less easily imposed upon
And perhaps a little less dangerous?

Anthony à Wood, *Life & Times*: "In this month [*May*] was
to be seen at the Fleur de luce [*inn at Oxford*]
a brasen head that would speak and answer."

Neighbor's new iron gate sound
Bones of my right arm and elbow.

Always. America. Always a line of people
Ten or fifteen of them, all very smart
Waiting at the madhouse door to their parents' bedroom
Walking in their sleep — what time is it.
What does “dromedary” actually mean.
Cancel my subscription to TRAK Service.

Banana trees now at their best
But the most exciting green is rice in the paddy
Just beginning to produce ears of grain
Middle of August, shimmering subliminal green waves
And secret power-vibes
Maybe high quality emeralds can do
A similar job? However, the rice is alive
To be eaten later or brewed into *sake*
And so transports us out of Oregon skull
The sea's defective music as a passing bull
Suborns eleven
I can tell.

“AWAY, THOU FONDLING MOTLEY HUMOURIST!”

An overdose of America
Money and too many decibels

Miss Janice climb up
On a white snow horse
Never climb down any more

O Sunflower, mouldy with grime, &c
Waste and want. Sung flower?

An overdose of pure London
Took Jimi Hendrix away,

“...rueful again the piteous bagpipe went
O bag-pipe thou didst steal my heart away”

(“Fled music is the sweetest

My Fair Lady”)

“Of late two dainties were before me plac’d”

John Keats also lost

“that’s going to be him, see, how
Monkey Face slips down over Great Seal
Eyes and proliferation of curves
From working too fast before the epipyroxylin
Cools”

Yukio MISHIMA, novelist, playwright, actor,
Suicide by elegant Japanese tradition

Produces the effect of an infinite territory
What?

With only one possible neighboring color
What? Monads?

No, there’s, no, no, not nomads, no, no
That idea was discredited, can’t work, David Hume
What about volvox colonies
Universe of spheres containing spheres
All individual, all neighbors with independent spheres

Inside, so beautifully Buchsbaum
Never mourned, no eyes, what

F E R N

the effect of uninterrupted acceleration (how-
ever familiar the track) certain contact-plates
prepare trees light up animals move and sing
laugh in the dark

E M E R A L D S

*

G O N E

*

I drink bad expensive Italian wine
Beside the Kamo River. They say
You've taken a new lover. Passengers
On Sanjo Bridge Hieizan profile
Now all marvelously smudged by pen of hispid friend
Bottled somewhere near Florence, I expect
All the customers in here will rise and applaud
When I leave this place. They have been profoundly
Edified by the spectacle of a certified FOREIGNER
Gobbling up a pizza with his fingers
Drinking a bottle of wine without falling off his chair
A scene of life at the capital

I haven't been drunk for a long time
Reminds me of you, before we all

Became dope-friends. When was your last trip,
I went cuckoo on LSD the 30th of April

There's already been a great deal said about wine
And I'm reading the faggoty part of *The Anthology*
Thinking of you instead of naked boys
Curious elision. I've drunk 0.475 liter of "chianti"
Much too fast. Antinori. (Antenor was a mythological
What did he do?)

Hieizan sadder and smaller than Mt Koya
But still a mountain in several senses
Even though they drive buses to it
The buses go home at night; the trees take over
You can step out of temples into rhododendron flowers
ruins

Path which Mas Kodani followed seven days in rain
Priest robes, shaman hat, straw sandals too small,
Would wild monkeys attack him? Reciting HANNYA
SHINGYO

Wherever stone marker on the trail shows where temple was

What was I saying. Talking to you.
A slow green train leaves for Uji
A slow green train arrives from Osaka
Immediately departs. I just realized that all I've said
For the past ten years was addressed to you
Simple and flat as that.

Kite! not the toy, a living bird
Sails above Kamogawa, that same Goddess

In worldly form dips and swings
Far below a northbound airplane
“KEE-REE!”

“The hawk flies up to heaven”

I have to write this at home with a new pen
I pitched the other into the Kamo
The moment it lifted from writing “-REE!”
To the complete consternation and horror
Of the other guests

Now this Antenor has a curious history.
Brother-in-law to Priam, King of Troy,
he betrayed the Palladium to the Greeks
that they might capture the Capitol. He
escaped with his family to found New Troy
in Italy (Venice or Padua?) the father of
the prophet, Laocoön. Pious Aeneas founded
a second Troy at Rome. Noble Brutus founded
Troynovaunt, *alias* London, capital of the world?

“It is said in the Book of Poetry, ‘The hawk flies up
to heaven; the fishes leap in the deep.’ ”

Horror & chagrin of other patrons
Who carefully preserve their papers, ink and brushes and ink-
Stones in elegant lacquer boxes.
Writing is a serious action presided over by a god,
Tenjin-O-Mi-Kami-Samma, at the Kitano Shrine

All these worlds change faster than I can tell you
I have this reading & writing habit which I cultivate
Excessively, perhaps, little time for anything else
Although it's fun to ride the Osaka zipper
Forty-eight minutes for 65 miles
Fast asleep to Yodoyabashi branch Bank of America

Sound asleep we leave the capital rainy night
(Boats which children might have made from apple boxes)
Passengers remaining awake rattle their beads
Call on Amida Buddha and Kwannon to save them

Under the cushions and the *goza* matting
I feel the planks bulge as they slide
Snail foot over boulders and rocks
Far in the middle of the river
Safe and dry sound asleep left Sōō Temple, Yamazaki Bridge
At sundown. Early morning waken to shouts
Boatswarm harbor of Naniwa
Thanks to Gods of Sumiyoshi!

Vegetable nerves
Cold noodle time in the Capital
I got to kick my coffee habit.
Anybody seen my trunks? Remind me
How is Steve Carey?

Haloed
Which the angels left behind
Empty niches where holy saints once

Hand-hewn bases for noble columns: garden decorations
Wintermin (Chlorpromazine hydrochloride, 12.5 mg tabs)
“Motion sickness, vomiting of pregnancy, potentiating
effects on hypnotics and analgesics, psychoneurosis
such as anxiety neurosis, bed-wetting, Pollakiuria.”

did you say “Bum trip”
or “dumb trip”?

Gardening.
Cleaning the *o-furo*
Spilling the tea I’m going crazy
Sweating and freezing the sky overcast
Hot wooly clouds shove my head under cold water
Dry it off and start over.
The barber’s lady assistant shaved
The rostra of my ears

Before this day is out a great pink peony
Shall have bloomed (note expensive leather hollyhock!)
All pink all
Carved out of the interior
of my eye
(BRANCUSI)

I’ve won every marble
Now I’m running mad
Gardening. Little circular trips.
Dirt produces infinite weed babble
My hands know it; my eyes blunk out, don’t see
Hands read garden

I can catch the sun if I stop grabbing and
Turn my hand over. The sun falls into my open
Palm a sun much larger than we first imagined
We live in its atmosphere

If you want something hold out an empty hand

Newly opened peony delicate camphor perfume box

If you want a poem find a blank page

As if America were the final utterance
Of the human race: A culmination and the end
Land of the greed and the home of the knave?
Most of my compatriots will never learn
That “the human race” is not the same thing as
“White Protestant population of USA”
That “civilization” means neither “Metropolitan Opera Co.”
Nor “modern American hospital”

I'd like to catch up with whoever it was
That placed these weird creatures forever in my cure
Crowned my goofy dome with red hat
Mitre and magic oils
This isn't my job; I mustn't resign

Kite wheels above
Bridge of the Changing Moon
that's the end of that.

My head so packed with contradictory orders and
Theories and “categorical imperatives” and messages
From various power systems and from beyond the tomb
It’s no wonder that my eyes don’t focus and I’m
Plagued by asthma, headaches and a fat habit of body

Did this head-packing job happen by accident or design
Part of it is “cultural” part of it “free public education”
Part hereditary dullness: Ignorance, hankering & attachment

“what did he say?”

Please don’t disturb me. I’m busy packing
The smaller, finer bloodvessels of my brain
With peanut butter.

What did he say. I don’t know,
But it may be useful, he said,
Writing it in his notebook.

Sounds & perfumes twist the evening air,
If I may be allowed to mistranslate the Poet.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA: “ ‘Is it dusk now? If it is, I won’t
smoke. During the twilight hour of the dusk you should
give up all other activities and remember God.’ Saying
this he looked at the hairs on his arm. He wanted to
see whether he could count them. If he could not, it
would be dusk.”

The pink vacuum cleaner died
Now the soul wanders the garden blue/green/black
Butterfly

there. That's for the Abyss. Now
We swing around holding onto the disgusting fur of that
Noxious body "placing our heads where our feet were"

THE SUN THE SUN THE SUN (Blake shows it
Whether setting or rising
We all hang together Benjamin Franklin
Engraved bas-relief on bloody sky
Plain long and short spikes coming away from it
Statue of Liberty crown)

Isn't this extraordinary.
It only happens in the capital when I am there
Three imperial residences within walking distance
Great fat bird light through colored water
Fancy glass urns. Painted water. Break out
Around perforations. Peel coating of protective paper.
For madness, soak in warm water to which
a teaspoon full of ordinary baking-soda
has been added. Twist cap on tight.

THEN SHALL BE SAID OR SUNG

Sang-ridges! Them sang-
ridges!
We got to have a lot
Of them sang-
ridges!

And C H O C O L A T E

“You can
Always
Take more,
You know.”

Several books by Henry James

RING BELL THREE TIMES. OFFER INCENSE. RING
GONG FOR EACH OF THREE *RAIHAI*

THE RAGE OF AQUARIUS. Three kinds of
Chocolate. RUMY which is filled with raisins and
Rum syrup. . . . Chocolate strawberry cream. . . . and BLACK
Which is bittersweet

Across the street from the police-box

THE RAGE ANTINOUS

cut or tear along dotted lines

HIT GONG AGAIN. SECOND INCENSE OFFERING.
EVERYBODY CHANT.

Plum blossoms white and also red ones

Peppermint-stripe camellias, white ones resembling

Gardenia, yellow flowers of rape eaten as *sukimono*

(Rapeseed oil waterproof paper umbrella)

Tiny but F A T green, gold-eye bird

The light all new and different

High-test flowers cure every time

Feeling well is important and relaxes the brain

Beneficent flower vibrations continue a day or so

Now time for high-test chocolate and imaginary colors

Plum trees at Kitano Tenmangu Jinsha

Maybe I revisit tomorrow when nobody is there
I must have a secret book

Above the door to the chancel
Inside Daikakuji Zenden
Two swallow's nests, each with a little flat board
Underneath to catch the drippings
Exactly as if this were out of doors
Where kids are picnicking in the cold
All around Osawa Pond, which place
Like one or two other lakes and wells
Are only authentic remains of the Heian capital
Being fireproof and without military value
And both sides of all the wars were Japanese
Everybody liked the flowers, grass and trees
Planted around the shores. One small mudhen
Labors across the water.

At Arashiyama the flowers are late
Everybody is here anyway, walking
Under the cherry trees. They eat and play
On the river, drink *sake* and sing. The cherries
Will be obliged to bloom
No matter what weather

Man all wrapped in transparent plastic
Sloops along the wet street reciting political speech
Bullhorn slung on his shoulder
I thought first a sound truck had crawled
Onto my doorstep to die

Sun and secret perfume breeze
All greens vibrating
The dogs in the corral roaring and running
We circle them, our horses raving foam
Splash my lavender *hakama*
Green hunting-robe over yellow kimono

Lady West Gate and Lady Plum spent an hour
Quarreling over my hair, setting lacquer cap with
Horse-hair blinkers will it be a sprig of
Cherry bloom or twig of spirea
Lady Plum in tears

(Arashiyama. Korean ladies all in blue silk
Walking circle dance under blossoms
Drum and gong, folksong in shoulder-slung
Bullhorn)

I haul on the reins the horse dances to the left
Blood mixed with his foam as I fire arrows among screaming
Dogs. Lord Akiba thrown! (Heavy brocade *karaginu* and
Green *hakama* his older brother wore last year) Not a
Dog was hit the old men say:

“When we were young
all the dogs ended like sea urchins
Gently waving spikes above the sand” Hieizan
And the Eastern Hills dark blue

(Old ladies with false-nose-mustaches
A slow comic drum dance with beerbottle
Spouting paper plume foam/semen)

Cherryblossom shadow
Embankment of Oi River

Young men in a circle drink and yell and sing
One performs Tanuki prick-dance with big *sake* bottle
Sometimes held out before his crotch sometimes hid
Under his shirt, Unexpected Future lurks in joybelly
He is Tanuki, magical “badger”

Wandering rusty kimono faded fag samisen
Chaunts antique lays to picnickers
Wandering showbiz drum and samisen team
Young man with family and friends & battery-driven
Electrical guitar

Sound of drum and gong prevail
But a whole school of lady *koto* players
Best kimono and Japanese hairdo
Perform on *tatami* platform underneath falling blossoms
Black hair bright silk

Elderly beerglass & bottle grandpa
Pursues green silk Korean lady
Across the pattern of the dance
She escapes and he’s discomfited
Klong of gong hit with sock full of sand
Big spindle-drum hung on grandpa
Subtle GOOM. GOOM. Small gong tinkle-clanks,
Big gong KLONG blue silk ladies of a certain age
The dances of Kudara
The music of Shiragi

Tanuki Badger Supernatural RULES!
Traveler’s reed hat, big *sake* jar,

Grinning mouth and blaring eyes
Grand swag belly over small upstanding prick
Huge balls hang to the ground
Spirit of mischief, wine and lechery
Long bushy tail, thick fur, nocturnal habits
“Badger” is a feeble translation . . . much more like
Big raccoon/bear
Fat breathless popeyed manifestation
Of the Divine Spirit . . . not a bad representation
Of the present writer

Japan is a civilization based upon
An inarticulate response to cherry blossoms.
So much for Western Civilization.
“Mr. Franklin, is it a setting or a rising sun?”
Try to be serious. Try to get to Toji tomorrow.
Try to remember that I accidentally found
Birthplace of Shinran Shonin when I visited Hokaiji
Magnolias and cherries at Daigoji
Unprecedented splendor.

Look into the abyss and enjoy the view.
All we see is light; all we don't see
Is dark. We know lots of other things
With other senses. Various kinds of new green weeds
Pop up through white gravel

Chicago, Federal Court, *USA vs Dellinger et al.* #69 *Crim.* 180:
Mr KUNSTLER: “The whole issue in this case is language,
what is meant by . . .”

Mr Thomas HAYDEN, a Defendant: "We were invented."

Poetry, American. (see under *American Poetry*)

In the U.S.A. "Calliope" is a steam piano.

Nobody ever figured out that Sir Gawain's Green Knight

Was a crocodile (*pace* Yvor Winters)

Revisit Kitano plum blossoms

Pink ones have strong perfume.

Big tree in front of central sanctuary

(*Gongen-Zukuri* architecture, Sugawara Michizane

Was incarnation [*gongen*] of this Deity who presides

Over plum blossoms and calligraphy and scholarship)

So hollow and full of holes it scarcely exists at all

But blossoms immensely before scarlet fence

Intricate wooden gables

Another all propped up with poles and timbers

Part of it fixed with straw rope

Exploding white blossoms not only from twigs

And branches but from shattered trunk itself,

Old and ruined, all rotted and broken up

These plum trees function gorgeously

A few days every year

In a way nobody else does.

At the Capital

44-46 Showa

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