

Philip Whalen

Severance Pay




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The publication of this book was supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D.C., a federal agency created by an Act of Congress in 1965.

By Philip Whalen

Every Day

Like I Say

On Bear's Head

Severance Pay

You Didn't Even Try

PHILIP WHALEN

Severance Pay

Poems 1967–1969

Four Seasons Foundation

San Francisco: 1970

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Grateful acknowledgment is made to Neil Barrett and *Drainage* where
“Never Apologize; Never Explain” was first published in 1967

Library of Congress Catalog Card No.: 74-114626
Standard Book No.: 0-87704-012-5

Cover drawing by the poet

The Writing Series is edited by Donald Allen
and published by Four Seasons Foundation
Distributed by Book People, 2010 Seventh Street,
Berkeley, California 94710

Contents

“Never Apologize; Never Explain”	1
7:III:67	2
Something Childish but Completely Classical	4
Regalia in Immediate Demand !	5
Grace before Meat	5
A Wedding Journey, an Opera	6
Ultimate Frivolous Necessities	7
Dewey Swanson	8
The Apparition	9
The War	10
October Food	10
In the Center of Autumn	11
A Couple Blocks South of the Heian Shrine	12
International Date Line, Monday/Monday 27:XI:67	13
America inside & outside Bill Brown’s House in Bolinas	14
25:I:68	15
Life in the City. In Memoriam Edward Gibbon.	16
Allegorical Painting: Capitalistic Society Destroyed by the Contradictions within Itself. (Second Five-Year Plan.)	18
At the Red Whale Bar & Restaurant, Stinson Beach	19
The Evasive Answer	21
The Madness of Saul	24
To the Revolutionary Cadres of Balboa, Malibu & Santa Barbara	25
To All My Friends	27
Larry Kearny at Stinson Beach	27
Duerden’s Garage, Stinson Beach	28
Bill Brown	30
Life at Bolinas. The Last of California	31
Walking beside the Kamogawa, Remembering Nansen and Fudo and Gary’s Poem	34
Birthday Poem	35

DEDICATION

To my godson

Philip Maximus Van Aelstyn

*One day something unexpectedly failed or bent;
there was some small disappointment. Allen
Ginsberg remarked,*

*“Hmmm. Not much severance pay in
that, was there.”*

“Never Apologize; Never Explain”

A pair of strange new birds in the maple tree
Peer through the windows,
Mother and father visiting me:

“You are unmarried,
No child begot
Now we are birds, now you’ve
forgotten us
Although in dreams we visit you
in human shape”

They speak Homer’s language
Sing like Aeschylus

The life of a poet: less than $\frac{2}{3}$ ds of a second

18:11:67

7:III:67

O tell me it's only temporary
A slight pause while the operator changes
All to Corning Glass of Denmark Pennsylvania

O don't disappoint me, I hear
Pages turning Haydn
Quince blossom tits bright coral
Jack London's great blue eye

(Did you remember to bring the gin?)

Passional disease lions/ bronze German song
 "Phrase"
 wind?

Jack London lovely skin
 The changed operator.
 The temporary Danish.
 Pennsylvania coral blossom.
 Bronze alcohol.
Jack Lion glass and coral cock and balls.

Blue eye gin blond London
A glassy pause tit skin don't.
Passional winding phrase.
Palpitant quince. Blind Haydn.
Blue German dong. Gin. Phrase. Wind
 glass in Pennsylvania bronze
Lovely temporary Jack pause.
Pennsylvania operator balls quince.
Alcohol turning coral temporary.

Bright German disease in blossoms.

Tell Jack: Slight bronze pages.

Wind me disappoint me

glass?

coral?

Haydn?

slide back just a little bit and let me

quit it

Something Childish but Completely Classical

Orpheus, Jesus, Osiris
All say: "Burst out of your tomb
And go on your way."

Serpent and plane tree
Holy and wise:
"We are immortal;
Only skin dies."

Phoenix entombed
In blazing pyre sings:
"Living or dying
All is bright fire."

25:III:67

Regalia in Immediate Demand !

Necklace of human bones
Cup a silver-mounted cranium
Thigh-bone trumpets
A skull drum

Dear President Nixon, you are welcome in Lhasa!
And where is dear Mr Edgar Hoover?

19:IV:67

Grace before Meat

You food, you animal plants
I take you, now, I make you wise
Beautiful and great with joy
Enlightenment for all sentient beings
All the hungry spirits, gods and buddhas who are sad

30:V:67

A Wedding Journey, an Opera

Gorgeous. Why do it. Let's go.

1) Merry. (Figure 11.)

2) Arabic numeral 6.

TRY Leave TRY

Why. I thought so.

3) Do. Good night nurse! (FIG LEAVES.)

9b.) It. Once is enough: a baritone solo.

TRY

Stay in Vienna

Stay in Paris

137a.) Stay in London

Stay in Dublin

Stay in Persia

Stay in Verona

Stay in Dubrovnik

Stay in Tashkent

Stay in Ulan Bator

Stay in Mombassa

Let's get married nine times over

14) Let's don't and say we did. That isn't the capital of Portugal; I'm not a complete fool. Why isn't it like it used to be. TRY.

15r.) Leaving, Nebraska. Financially, of course.

18:VI:67

Ultimate Frivolous Necessities

for Nemi Frost

1. Bamboo trees
2. marble
3. crystals and other semiprecious stones & little objects made out of these materials
4. silk
5. bells
6. big palaces near the sea
 - a) Knossos
 - b) Cintra
 - c) Kamakura
 - d) Cozumel
 - e) The California Palace of the Legion of Honor
 - f) Bebe Rebozo's place in Florida
7. fur
8. amber
9. incense
10. gin
11. dope
12. Baccarat crystal
13. Peacock feathers

11:VIII:67

Dewey Swanson

ran lunatic in the midst of our canoeing trip had to tie him up & sit on him in the bottom of the canoe in the daytime, tie him to a tree at night and he kept talking and laughing and cussing the whole time we put a gag on him one night so we could get some rest from his noise but pretty soon he had eaten and swallowed it all some way or other we were afraid to try that again because he might get all fouled up with that cloth inside of him then he had to get loose a couple times and we nearly lost him completely hunting for him through the brush and timber we never would have found him except for his talking and we never did catch him asleep from the time he first started acting funny

8:IX:67

The Apparition

Sudden brilliant color-slide projection life-size
Gaudy brocade flood across blank mud wall of tokonoma
There you bent above great mass of nasturtium blossoms
Round leaf elegant jungle overlaid on a view of sculptured Karli
Authentic stony record of imaginary history
Stones and light and flowers irrationally equal balance

The awkward sensations of throttling, dying, weeping, tremb-
ling, sweating and failure and loss
Lack all connection with reality yet I say
These are killing me, not my nerves or time,

A hopelessness, a sentimentality I despise it pretends
to permanence, a rigid system,
take a cold bath it will all go away

At Karli the stones burst into fleshy rounds
The rocks are dancing into sand
Those figures were ourselves and will be again while
You and I momentarily appear and vanish
As another slide shows that you and John Chappel
Play on the beach mixed up with blue sky Sanchi *tope*

I imagine myself walking in smoky sunshine suppose
That I were to hug the projectionist, weeping and sobbing
Yes, yes, I understand! Together and apart, life or death
All of it a mistake down at the developing lab all simultaneous

Flash of multicolored lights on the wall (The
Sentimentality becomes more obvious) All abstractly
He had only the accidental pictorial interest in mind
No thought of you or John or me—expecting
Pleasant recollections of Karli naked stone gorgeous
Magic fire-wheel dream.

12:X:67

The War

A handsome young Viet Nameese guy from Burlington, Vermont
Just now got it right in the neck

15:X:67

October Food

Pine-tree child soaks in a teapot
Chrysanthemum perfume soup and a
Seasnail boiling in his shell, that I
May live forever.

18:X:67

In the Center of Autumn

Too hot, the sun's
Too hot for late October
The light blares and clatters
Right smack flat in the eye
Where I don't particularly need it most

Delicate maple shadows their edges
Flicker in & out of focus
Wind slides them past the sun

Iron shutters crash up or down
Is the breeze cold or not?
Orpheum theater.
Wallace, Shirley and Tosh Berman.

22:X:67

A Couple Blocks South of the Heian Shrine

She builds a fire of small clean square sticks
balanced on top of a small white clay *hibachi*
which stands on a sewing-machine set between her
house wall and the street where my taxi honks past

28:X:67

International Date Line, Monday / Monday 27:XI:67

Here it comes again, imagination of myself
Someplace in Oregon woods I sit on short
Wide unpainted wooden cabin steps
Bare feet wiggle toes in dirt and moss and duff
The sun shines on me, I'm thinking about all of us
How we have and haven't survived but curiously famous
Alive or dead—X has become a great man, Y very nearly
Greater, perhaps in some other dimension, Z apparently
Still in a frenzy pursuit of universal admiration, fame & love

And there's LeRoi seated in TIME magazine wheelchair
Head bashed in under hospital bandage
Blood all running down the side of his face

America inside & outside

Bill Brown's House in Bolinas

Some kind of early waking take about bread (should be whole-grain flour &c.) cheese, wine, vegetables & fruits.
I can leave the meat for whoever must have *that* responsibility
(a fit of enthusiastic praise here to all the horses,
cows, chickens, ducks, turkeys, geese, pheasants &c.
whose (bear, deer, elk, rabbit) generosity & benevolence
I have (whales, oysters, eels and sea urchins) so much
enjoyed; I guess I can leave them alone, now.)

Shall I go past John Armstrong's house & wake him up
with bells, but it might disturb Lynne and the baby so
I write now good morning joy and beauty to John and Lynne
and Angelina

I do have to move around outside the house. The sun wasn't quite up—a great roaring pink and salmon commotion in the east flashes and glitters among eucalyptus trees—here are no fields where food is growing, no smell of night-soil, here's all this free and open country, a real luxury that we can afford this emptiness and the color of dawn radiating right out of the ground

Flowers thick & various, fuchsias all over everything
Houses all scattered, all different, unrelated to the ground
or to each other except by road and waterpipe
Each person isolated, carefully watching for some guy
to make some funny move & then let him have it POW
Right on the beezer

Monday Indian eye in the roofbeams
Drumhead flyrod curtain-ring cloud
This is Tony's room. Sound of whistle-buoy as at Newport.
Roaring water for the suicide's bath.

Dumb dirty dog
Dirty dumb dog
Dumb dirty dog

Dumb dirty dog, dirty dumb dog, dumb dirty dog.
Black spayed Labrador bitch. Molly Brown.

4:XII:67

25:I:68

Sadly unroll sleepingbag:

The missing lid for teapot!

Life in the City.

In Memoriam Edward Gibbon.

The room is already white. Trim it in blue
Memory of Bentinck Street or the arbor in Lausanne
Moonlight. Relaxation to write while hearing
Half-misunderstood foreign language in Grant Street
So fat my nose becomes invisible in profile,
Ballooning cheeks Otafuku
A sedentary bad-weather town: pallid flesh and gouty feet
The inhalation of coalsmoke horsefume there screaming sweat
Gin-squall a part of the City's life

Ox wearing straw shoes hauls the groan-wheel shiny lacquer
Carriage streets newly washed between trolley cars
And buses plastic wisteria swings and wabbles from dark
lacquer and gold roofbeam palanquin of gold flower head crown
Priestess Cafe Trieste Grant Street several tons of horse,
men, silk, flowers, gold, pavement, a library of 5000 volumes
Blue and White shelves: Fat Edward Gibbon with monstrous
Hydrocele farting sedanchairmen calmly parsing the Byzantines:

"Decline THE EMPIRE," he tells himself, passing St Clement
Danes, "decline the Honourable Danes Barrington . . . decline
Doctor Goldsmith . . ." and squirms on the lumpy seat, trying
To ease fat legs & jiggling water bag slowly scrunching

The gravel of the courtyard beyond the inner palace wall,
Black shiny hats bend to place chock wedges under moaning wheels
Hoss the lacquer chariot to the left the Imperial Messenger's
Bronze mirrored horse wags its head flapping the Messenger's
Black lacquer hat black gauze plumes towards the North
Parallel with Kamogawa, Exact edge of Hieizan stamped on blue
The aoi leaves already melting, he notes, among the horsehair
"Blinders" of his attendant's cap
Wide floppy silk trousers wet with horse foam

Peter and David tell me goodbye, nobody here but the rest
Of the City drinking cappuccino and NY Egg Cream jet roar
Pearl fingernail patent leather knee-boot suicide blonde
Of a certain age black T-shirt orange beads and yellow skirt
Desperately unhappy •

SUI CAMPI DELLO SPORT

SERIE A

SERIE B

FIorentina 0 Sampdoria 0 Foggia 1 Verona 0

The score in the cities declining in sedan chairs gondolas
Whip-cream french blue frosty paint for the eyelids of
A certain age to pick up to locate to foresee I was wrong:
Not suicide, a fairly well-made nicely-fitted wig sitting
With the Mafia but the black grosgrain band holding down
The front of her own black hair somehow shines through
The gold floss over the top as brain fries in vatic flames
Joyful screeches while rain floods down flames undisturbed:
Jagged flakes & shards of living jewel sound unharmed! by
The City, the Life of the City, “from the tryal of some months”
“(the city the) the city I was tempted to substitute
the tranquil dissipation of Bath”

Refulgent spirit expands branches flowers which are gems
Empty sapphire space and air just past the golfcourse
River’s bend alive changing hideously beautiful coal seam ferns
diamond opal do you hear

San Francisco 24:V:68

*Allegorical Painting:
Capitalistic Society Destroyed
by the Contradictions within
Itself. (Second Five-Year Plan.)*

feeble claw blanket grab disappear foot hog
crackling Oklahoma dustbowl (Virgil Thompson)
whisker tickles shoulder. eye sinus bulge
with 1/2&1/2 cock numb and warm, all body skin slack
and thrown into soft folds except stony heels
death's crumby elbow no breath asthma drag all
joints arthritic ankylose throat night sound
terror as of ages 1 through now I cannot accept
the ending of a day no more light I cannot wait
for night when bed fucking blowing jacking-off is
possible at last naked safe and pleasure

5:VII:68

At the Red Whale Bar & Restaurant, Stinson Beach

Wait until they are
Quiet and then we
Can begin N O
Simon & Garfunkel
Let's come on. Not
Yet. Come on. Stop.
Slurp. Gasp. Huh-
uh! SSSUP! Enough
Room for everybody. Is
Discipline enough.

Where the music is bad
& you can understand the language
Can anything be done.
Action and friends.
Artificial coals and gas
Fire. Why complain
Dream of being in Japan
Ecstatic &c. but my papers
Aren't in order—then I do
Or don't recollect that
My visa had been renewed
up to March, 1969.
Carload of Metropolitan Police
Go past in a little truck
Moment of terror fear deportation
the despair of not having current ms books
as I was about to make poetry reading
Phiz Mezey's big Western-style
Meiji mansion in Kyoto

Again I may fall on floor
As in slightly drunk day-trip
Two weeks ago, "homesick" for
Kyoto fall on the floor weeping
A $\frac{1}{4}$ -hour by the clock
Impossible in bar with lady barflies
Intermittent jukebox
Tiny children play pinball game
Wrong lights expensive drinks

Yesterday in the orchard
Thinking of Bummy driving her car

Discipline enough for everybody.

13:VII:68

The Evasive Answer

I told him he was supposed to I told
him that he should.

Wasn't I supposed to.

What do you think.

FIG LEAVES

Where does that put me.

CALL

CALL AGAIN

SATURDAY

hello?

(We were cut off.)

hello?

hello?

Are you still there?

(What'll I say?)

hello?

Totally wasted green.
Double breasted.
Connive.

I'm sure tired of that.

Green.

11 heads
2 arms
1 head
1000 arms
1 head
8 arms

& a mustache

call the police. Operator
give me the police. I
want a policeman right away
all the policemen I can get
a big policeman all my own
big short-haired mean and strong
to pet, *et cetera*

She had a lovely voice and an English accent:
"My name's Veronica Davidson-Smith;
My husband is a cop."
That was on the beach at Paradise Cove.

WHO
let that guy in here

bag.
shapeless.
bag. slack
bag.
mud.

CAN IT!

TREMENDOUS

did I ask you

O that is green and secret

That's understood. Nobody notices.
Lizzard: knob-toes and glossy eyes.

Tell me again.

Ferns.

Shells.

This person blues his own eyes
pushes out red hairs and shiny teeth
One toenail a failure this week

Do lions have Roman noses.
How much water circulates. Under the sea
A stone, under the stone a raging fire
The water pours down continuously
Bright cold flame of central diamond
True love we know we are.

Kyoto 18:VI:67—San Francisco 5:VIII:68

The Madness of Saul

Everybody takes me too seriously.
Nobody believes anything I say.

5:VIII:68

To the Revolutionary Cadres of Balboa, Malibu & Santa Barbara

“a mild dose of prussic acid.”

“Don’t get funny with me; I’ll knock you
for a row of pink potted geraniums.”

BIRD SHADOW

brain-hooks are certain lines of poetry,
certain words from which the rest of the line is
lost, or we remember the way someone pronounced
it, the tone & timbre of her voice and how we
felt when we heard it, how we saw rainy
fir trees wet bracken on the ground beneath,
“Come here: I want to talk to you” and
“Don’t you ever, ever, pull that kind of a stunt
again, do you hear me?”

brain hooks were devised originally by Egyptian
embalmers who used them to extract the brains of
the deceased out through his nostrils

I keep forgetting that I’m no longer imprisoned
in that household—yet I am stuck here like an
operatic character: an opera that I must keep
attending as a spectator. I watch him in the
triumphal entry with elephants and chained lions
then die with them in the monument while those
leopard skin priests

I keep on paying dues to organizations
which went out of business in 1907.

Idolatry. Idiocy. Bird shadow. Nasturtium feather
a minute explosion—did one of the snails
attain critical mass, transmute itself into pure
energy?

light brown flash

(if only one were a more talented librettist!)

1905.

1903.

1811.

BOUQUET

I'll tell the world.

Eventually.

Bug, you are one of the prettiest creatures I have ever seen. I will do for you or with you or to you anything that will make you happy—i.e. which will enslave you forever, fix all your beauty, all your affections, all your attention on me. I want to eat you: you're candy.

“KEEP YOUR DIRTY HANDS TO
YOURSELF!

STAY THE FUCK AWAY FROM ME.
IF I SEE YOU AROUND HERE
ANY MORE I'M GOING TO KICK
THE SHIT OUT OF YOU!”

18:VIII:68

To All My Friends

I'm sorry I can't stay down
 there where you want to put me
Drowning jellyfish crumbling in the surf
Gently frying on the sand
Sunny-side up

1:IX:68

Larry Kearny at Stinson Beach

Ice Woman says, "You're in the way!
You're in the way!"
She crosses the street to stand in front of me:
She says, "Why don't you look
Where you're going?"

9:IX:68

Duerden's Garage, Stinson Beach

1

Honeybee struggles in gardenspider web
Hook feet crochet a silky tomb
Will it work itself to death before the spider eats it?
Sunshines through its back: black and amber tank

as long as that

the bluejay flies

hollers

B L E A K

TYRANNICAL ARACHNID, HENCE!

That's that. Lie down. . . .

amber tank? Look again.

G O N E

Holes in the web, several strands roped together by the
spinning of that bee body
polygonal vacancies

G O N E

(far too little time for the spider to have wrapped it away
to the cypress tree, to the edge of the roof, down
to the Chinese whoopee bush,)

Flew the coop. I wouldn't help or hinder.
Hungry victory!

O Duerden! Enormous profundities thrust themselves
 Amongst our sensoria which ignore upon them;
 Profound immensities engulf the visible present dispensation!
 Torment! Freak! Savage tremble illiterate musculature
 True human speech of Maya glyph: BAKTUNS. KATUNS.
 Accurately stoned American time before the frauds of pro-
 fessional history's shameful rage!

Sweat, voluminous agey brain! Draw nearer and
 Melt down in Poesy's ravening violet flames

Honey song perfume! Look where my periwig smoulders!
 California sherry feeds the fire with amber potable:
 Sweet flowing sunbeams trapped in crystal,

(H I A T U S)

Waste motion. Entire mountains removed, the gravel sifted in order
 to locate a nickel's worth of gold: In such manner the hours of my life
 here sift away. Ashes of burnt paper, dessication of the spirit, imbecil-
 ity of mind, withering of the heart which signalize my decline into
 ignominious death & obscure grave,

VERSUS MEI HABEBUNT ALIQUANTUM NOCTIS...

to top it all off, Duerden's cat, Alf, has decided to fall desper-
 ately in love with me 9:30 at night when he ought to be at home
 23:X:68 Received notice that I must find somewhere else to live
 before the first part of 1969. I wonder where. 31:X Pioneer violets
 bloom today.

Bill Brown

“Nobody likes automobiles
Unless they are trying to kick
A habit like Jean Cocteau.”

3:1:69

Life at Bolinas.

The Last of California

For Margot & John Doss

The things that are down should be up
The things that are up should be down
Confusion mess and itchyness

rearrange

I have to rearrange the world

Make a demand

Gold

rises

Croodle

WHAT GOES HERE.

FORCE MAJEUR

explosion of shaped charge

instant paisley steel plate tattoo

The world

being oblong with
chrysanthemums.

•

*curiously they went under, under the waves
undulation. Unhesitatingly, no thought
of strength or whether they could, straight
ahead.*

•

Y U M

•

Straight out of the basket that stuff is grey matter
with everything already there. Three brains? Yes.
Out through the

*screams of laughing, drums, flutes
right and left-hand music voices
and hand-clapping whoop*

BRILLIANCE

*Leaks out the cracks
around the stony door
out through the gong clang whoop*

THEY CAUGHT THE
THEY GOT THE SUN BY THE WRIST
YARDED HER OUT OF THE CAVE

*while the girl who did the
naughty dance
covers herself,
calmly,*

OH!

ask for what you want

BOOK

BOOK

cough. uncivilized stove insurance in the living room
sit down

put in your order and be patient

Total failure of civilization?

(bong. whoop. clap. wiggle. blink.)

Squash-flower:

CHRYSANTHEMUM PUZZLE

Long past midnight

Quiet house

Purple green-eared smiling bat

Call on myself, demand

“One Word More”

A new start, great inky swashes arranged

A painting, a new life

Wet dry across the world, O-Ho!

Every time a distinct shape mark

Who cares how long it takes— desire!

CANDY HAND

TOOTHsome OBSCURITIES

CANDY HAND

Sugar Baby

who knows why kind of fun

At Duxbury Point, a few thousand feet from here
The wind blows heavy 35 miles per hour all night long
Big lights at the postoffice illuminate Brighton Avenue
The raccoons can see to get across

•

As I pass through the dark dining room
I perceive that each chair is occupied by dwarf-
ghoul-corpse
(Yammering. Decomposing. Power.)

•

Blithering dead leaves along the ground
Crooked sunlight falling smoke black wind
Electric power failure woke me up, I broke
The kitchen clock. Franco & Judy hungry in Zurich.

30:XII:68—*Bolinas*—11:XI:69—*Kyoto*

Walking beside the Kamogawa, Remembering Nansen and Fudo and Gary's Poem

Here are two half-grown black cats perched on a
lump of old teakettle brick plastic garbage
ten feet from the west bank of the River.
I won't save them. Right here Gary sat with dying Nansen,
The broken cat, warped and sick every day of its life,
Puke & drool on the *tatami* for Gary to wipe up & scold,
"If you get any worse I'm going to have you put away!"
The vet injected an overdose of nemby and for half an hour
Nansen was comfortable.

How can we do this, how can we live and die?
How does anybody choose for somebody else.
How dare we appear in this Hell-mouth weeping tears,
Busting our heads in ten fragments making vows &
promises?

Suzuki Roshi said, "If I die, it's all right. If I should
live, it's all right. Sun-face Buddha, Moon-face Buddha."
Why do I always fall for that old line?

We don't treat each other any better. When will I
Stop writing it down.

Kyoto 14:IV:69

POSTSCRIPT, 17:IV:69 (from De Visser, Vol. I, pp. 197–198), 20th
Commandment of the *Brahmajala Sutra* (Nanjo 1087): ". . . always
practise liberation of living beings

(*hō jō*, 放生)"

Birthday Poem,

In Advance of the Occasion of My Next One (If Any) 1967.

•

“Who, pray, of himself ever seeks out and bids a stranger from abroad, unless it be one of those that are masters of some public craft, a prophet, or a healer of ills, or a builder, aye, or a divine minstrel who gives delight with his song? For these men are bidden all over the boundless earth.”

Odyssey XVII, 382–386 (A. T. Murray, Tr.)

•

“The Scholiast (n. 2 Lactantius Placidus, *Commentarius in Stattii Thebaida*, ed. R. Jahnke (Leipzig, 1898), X, no. 793) refers to a Gaulish custom of selling their lives for money, and, after a year of feasting, allowing themselves to be stoned to death by the populace.”

Nora K. Chadwick: *The Druids*
(Cardiff, University of Wales Press: 1966)

•

Thank God, I don't have to write a poem
All those primulas raving potted hybrids
Mossy brim of brick fish pond

Only the biggest yellow-flowering one
Saves this day from death's vagrom fingers gloom & sad

Thank God none of those who read my poems don't see me
Don't realize I'm crazy, what book shall I carry with me
Lonesome for my own handwriting

A year among strangers, the Japanese all are mad
They look at me, can't forgive me for being funny-looking

That one's eating buttered toast in a way I never saw
anybody eat anything
Rearranging his hair between whiles, daubing it
with his hanky,
He turns to watch the primulas and back to his toast
in the most decorative possible manner
What would he say if he got the chance he keeps
talking to himself all the time, some
kind of professor
And a buddhist, he bowed to the toast before eating it

I go and visit Honen Shonin vision stone and operatic
pine tree Mt Yoshida
Up the hill through the graveyard we die into stone
Manjusri's pagoda lion laugh dim wise face not visible
But inside the back door of Manjusri's house there is
Sakyamuni! Lump skull pokes up through fringy hair
also needs a shave

Costume all fine colors flaking and curling away
Neither smiling nor sad he watches the wooden doors

In front of Shinyodo baby soup yells and wiggles in the stone catch
basin

And so up the last ridge to hilltop shinto shrine
Break across and down to deer-pen cryptomeria courtyard
Octagonal god-house
Parents and children bow

What did I see then? What did I remember? That it was lost,
Now it is gone. I could see myself writing and coffee
I invoke Rodin's head of Balzac
Photo-engraving in Biedermeier frame:

St Honoré aidez-moi!

(Honorius Bishop of Montmartre? Honorius: 4 popes,
“ . . . empereur d'occident de 395 à 423 un des plus
misérables souverains de la décadence ”

Balzac: “ . . . brillant et très fécond. . . . malgré certaines
imperfections de style et la minutie de quelques de-
scriptions. . . ”)

St Honoré preserve us against black coffee
These Japanese knickknacks & from writing ourselves
To death instead of dope, syphilis, the madhouse, jail,
Suicide

The world is wicked by definition; my job is to stay aware of it
Bundles of cut weed carrying on
Without a world without an answer
Mukade put their heads in a ring a furry poison star

Bite through paper-thin shell of one segment of his back (giant
mukade)

There's a kind of orange tree growing and green grass
Hesperides? I freezing, wrap myself and all my clothes in tired
surplus Army mummy bag.

I think of all the words I've written.
What a funny thing to do. And who was he, that writer?

Shimogamo Bridge somebody made young stone corrals
middle of the Kamo River

Double-motion projection of streetcar (moving water moving along
steel tracks the moving bridge)

Sunset behind Mt Atago of a kind which causes religious conversions
bad poetry, suicides

Honen Shonin understood that it was Buddha Land Purple Cloud
Express

Upstairs where the action is all the quality folks
I sit downstairs under the loudspeaker (Peter Paul & Mary)
Spill bright barlight splash ice breaking
You just imagine that the Quality don't wear pointed shoes
Downstairs we got gangsters, too,
Neckties and hair. Hawaiian steel guitars
Café de Jeunesse I celebrate my middle age

BEING,

Madam, I thank you for being what I am
Illegal, shapeless and mistaken
Because you have let me know it and kept quiet
Didn't press charges, prepared your next lesson
Impersonally committed
How do I know where I'm at without you?

“The Sumerian astronomers worked the rhythm out into a Saros, a useful period of 6,585-1/2 days. This was based on the distances of time between recurrent eclipses of both sun and moon, and it is accurate to one day in 1,800 years.”

C. A. Burland: *The Magical Arts, A Short History* (Arthur Baker Ltd., 20 New Bond Street, London W. 1)

A MAXIM:

Always volunteer; never perform. This is benevolence.
This is correction of the Will. Ted Williams went and spit on the grass.

Go now and write properly. Black shiny varnish. Was the paper greasy. Paper or whatever non-operational as of Saturday 22:IV: 67 Mertis's water pump broke down there was nothing to Hell with it let's go to the movies a perennial problem, Brian says so

Inside the winter you will find the loser
Inside the winner you will find the string
Playing music will clarify the mind
Ask me another, I'll tell you again

Charles Olson appears to me in a dream to denounce Irwin Panofsky
What I have to do is practise music. Spending money isn't the
answer.

Dope is only temporary. Magic is more useful and exact.

Homer says if it weren't for death all of us would babble endlessly,
"Tithonus shut in behind the shiny doors"

And the canons in *The Art of Fugue* and in *The Musical
Offering* . . .

I wouldn't allow myself to buy one of those things because
I couldn't remember its Japanese name and yesterday
I disgraced myself at the market, calling an onion "egg"
My grandfather's name was Charles. Confucius has warned us all
"KEEP NAMES AND WORDS STRAIGHT!"

Overcoming insuperable obstacles I attain Sukhavati Land
Field of Chinese bell-flowers Hoshun In, waterlilies don't quite bloom
around the corner

On this side of the temple a meadow in the Sierra,
Lilypond and moon-viewing tower a surprise around the corner
Door painting of storks, the small, never-mentioned stone garden,
Elegance all thrown away chinchilla coat drug along by one sleeve

Leads (*via* Hollywood) into strange Kyoto present memory
Flying every day for many months early morning B-17
(TOMORROW?)

My name was Dumbo then, leather skin high-altitude elephant,
dangling oxygen trunk
(TOMORROW EARLY)

pink hydraulic hairoil fluid
Ethyl-ester perfume airplane fuel for cigaret lighter
Oxygen for hangover

(A HOME IN THE ARMY)

Fall asleep reading Whitman Civil War riding in the greenhouse
high above the Chocolate Mountains

All one short enormous life
how possible went?

Shall I be late tomorrow?

(EARLY. SEVEN DAYS A WEEK.)

with Jeanette MacDonald's husband

(SMILIN' THROUGH)

for an airplane driver

How did I ever get here? Enormous possibilities all miscarried

Long impossible early life

bestowed becalmed bedizened

Lovely desert mornings early every day

Mornings early every flying day twenty-three years ago

SUNDAY PICK UP NEW SYKO SHEET IN FLIGHT SHACK

Hot weather demons box me in

I drum and trumpet a shower of rain

Remember to be careful with magic

Try for money next time. Jewels & money.

The demons are in the pay of IRS and the Treasury Department

Where's my bear suit?

“...by that time we were all going to pieces,” Joan
Christophel used to say, “Naturally there was nothing
we could do.”

Crumbling.

temporarily; everything changed after all—

I heard Eric Dolphy's record, “Out to Lunch”

Hunting lotuses three Sundays

1. Sunday a bud and several big leaves. The Chinese museum (Fujii Yurinkan) shut. Walk through soft willow hair. 2. Sunday cost ¥ 100, found big leaves. The Victoria lily had been blooming; enormous rotting cabbage blossom, starry nenuphars, cacti and orchids. 3. Sunday found strawberry ice, parts of Higashi Honganji moat full of big leaves and buds, one giant blowsy pink LOTUS flopping in the wind—quite by accident I find carved lintel of buck and doe from Gary's poem

Father Wieger says that in *Erh-Ya Encyclopedia* (11th Century B.C.?) "The things of this world were distributed under sixteen sections: kindred, houses, utensils, music, heaven, earth, mounds, hills, waters, plants, trees, insects, fishes, birds, wild & domestic animals."

As the night progresses the heat
Seems to increase the politics of summer
The electric fan drags a sheet of heavy silk across my skin
Mahler, Strauss, Bruckner compose this weather
Mozart brings no relief, my lechery increases
And sleep's heavy dopey sponge-rubber hammer
Waits to press me down again at any moment
The struggle for socialist realism cannot be relaxed a single second
My hands their thick veins lined with greasy fat sweated from the
Flesh of workers! Why did I let General Sarnoff do it to me
RCA and all! Arthur Godfrey!
All power to the ghosts of Henry George and Havelock Ellis!
Down with the Menshevik PTA!
While I sit here full moon electric fan Rachmaninoff
I'm also shut up in a small round wooden tub
Lid tied on with red string, miaowing
How can I work all rotted with silliness and war?
What would come out if I cut the string later tonight when nobody's
looking?
DEMONS HUNGRY GHOSTS HELL WORLDS
Big as life I murdering I
No wonder I feel nasty inside

Hope's bare shoulder when the soap is gone,
That was Lewy in this morning's dream of huge bare dusty
Coffeeshop and bar where he sits in window
Very young sad and dark hair girl with him,
"The European models have wrecked us all; they spit blood in my
cunt!"

The girl says she feels particularly bad about it,
If she has been eating peacock the night before.
Lewy is angry and sad. The girl is tragic and tough.
Slide out of dream and weep on Hope's bare shoulder when
The soap is gone. A dream of drinking wine.

Autumn comes now triumph chrysanthemum harvest
Moon burnished persimmon plumed suzuki grass
The spirit perishes when the season turns.
Exhausted by summer, the autumn finds me sick as March
And winter just past. What do I see a hundred fish
Survived seventy miles of poisoned water, three million fishermen
Flash silver bug feed flip.

What do I see fish seller grabs a fly out of the air
Noplace to wipe his fingers

What do I see big fat boy baby in his pram
Examines a great lotus root

What do I see the sky is overcast for autumn full moon
Invisible *mochi* rabbit mortar
Silent apparition waves peacock feather:

"E M E R A L D S"
and slowly vanishes

A small fat young dog very sick
Tied by too short rope around its neck to the bottom rung of a ladder
Orange plastic garbage can beside it, upside down,
perfectly clean

Sporting goods clerk sits on metal folding chair behind
The counter stroking the front of his pants he smiles
The other boy sits in front of a big mirror combing his hair
some new exciting way
Neither attends the TV which offers them unlimited wealth,
Eternal life, unchanging beauty, new sex potency, endless love

Gently. Double Ten 1967. Gently.
but nothing can be done so slowly
Except that balloon which rises higher into thinner atmospheres
All the gas within its delicate rubber hide slowly pushes the mem-
brane beyond the breaking point
Rupture occurs gently as a gum boil, an ulcerated molar. . . .
Immediately but measurable: the second of time being
Marvelously divisible by electronic means
Blast the gas disperses its molecules glide ever upwards
Among the heavier ones of the air, gas never completely in control
Anyway—lots of it marching carelessly out between fat
Resilient rubber chains

Dr Sun Yat Sen proclaimed a new life
It lasted thirty years; it was old at twenty

S P O I L T

the idea of a revolution, an universal suffrage, a parliament
Free total education Roman alphabet gentle progress towards
The Realization of the Human Potential &c &c
Now the latest medicine show, newest suckerbait
New Model Shears to fleece the rubes in Minnesota Viet Nam
What color is the government, red or white?
It is gold, no matter what motto whose face is minted on it
Gold on loan to certain politicians under certain extremely
Harsh and clear terms of restriction and interest
Blubber hooks attached to rubber chains
Anchored in the bank where the gold belongs to a very few men
Who like it very much

The weather grows colder now but the leaves
Have scarcely begun to turn color
Dusty and wrinkled they hang on, permanently glued
To the trees, absolutely insured against damage
Caused by possible falling. October is almost half gone;
The leaves aren't worried, the sun shines.
Although the nights are almost cold the leaves will stay
Today. They won't fall tonight, either—

Nevertheless in the morning one or three lie

ACCIDENTALLY

on the ground

Nobody saw them fall, the dusty green ones on the tree
Flap quite carelessly in the breeze, who ever heard of
November?

Who's got the money and what are they buying with it
Greece a brand new fascist government
South Korea some kind of ok stable government
Guatemala safe in the hands of reliable cardinals and archbishops
Who knows about Viet Nam?

The mystery is fun up to the point where it's used
for outright bilking and bamboozling the beholder,
killing his children, distracting him while
the government extracts his blood,

“ALBION, AWAKE!”, *et cetera*

In America we have everything, we say “God is dead”
Hoping to shock Chairman Mao (the bank is neither frightened
nor surprised)

The Giant in Chains, the toughy safely entombed beneath Mt Etna,
The certified corpse of Jesus all carefully sealed in heavy guarded
tomb

Safely put away—the embarrassment he caused! The unseemly,
Untimely, politically naive impractical theorist suppressed at last
Finally, completely, once and for all,

but the season UNACCOUNTABLY changes, the leaves
all brilliantly fall, thousands at a time,
Yellow red stripey and tawny splotchy crackling
vegetable brocade foam around my ankles
(new cold makes them ache) the sun blares through
naked branches
wind blasted smoke of burning leaves dead twigs fallen
bark
swirls the black thick plume at the mountain peak
the great solid boulder tomb door
throbs like a drum the sky
shatters,

Now all rationalized into a whole different notation, meaning
and purpose.

The lady in the gold hat dances because the *tsuzumi* orange silk
Ropes loosen drum tone glides, his foot shifts
Balances on its heel. Drum thump: sky-pointing toe
Switches exactly to the right and stops a while,
No more music or dance, only animal breathing harsh
Half stifled behind lacquer mask whose outside shows
Calm silent gentle sadness
the whole figure, mask wig golden hat brocade clothes
white underwear and *tabi* all means something else

the drum says P L O K the toes of that foot
Point straight up again.
The figure is monumentally present, no time has passed
Only that furious hospital death-ward breath
Monstrous, apart, static, tense, rooted,

P L O K

drum foot moves back lifts high off the floor as if to stomp
Comes down silently as the drum P L O K again
The drummer screams a single word the dancer performs a total
CONTRACTION

takes a few steps in a circle
Great green brocade bell (represents a couple tons of bronze casting)
lowers itself another two feet from the ceiling the drum
P L O K the lady's foot moves and stops, a new stop-motion cycle
Commences, varied now by a few short steps, then
the old pattern repeated, one drum-controlled movement at a time
Each motion followed by unendurable stillness and silence
And this time turning in a circle the lady repeats one word five times
And stop when the drum P L O K
 he holds her fan out away from her body
 the angle carefully prescribed
 the smell of burning leaves the

smell of shaving-soap morning cigaret burning on the ledge
below the bathroom mirror goose pimple skin of Rome's Adam's
Apple turkey neck razor gently slow

PASSENGERS ON THE NATIONAL RAILWAY ARE KINDLY
REQUESTED TO REFRAIN FROM READING LITERATURE
CRITICIZING THE GOVERNMENT WHILE TRAVELING
THANK YOU

All I've got to say is, I've had my time.
If you aren't smart enough to have, get
Drop your own I can't cry for you any more
Dear friends, dear Government, dear Policemen
I am no longer interested in your ideas, your laws, your prejudices

Take a hoop and roll it

I laugh at you; I die and live continually
Imagining I care for you, you care for me

Lies & fraud

Nothing's genuine except imagination who creates
Whether we will or no: for fun
For boredom. For nothing.
I chose to appear in this place, to come to your party
I do it on purpose, over and over again
I hate parties, I always have a good time
And it always takes hours for me to recover my sanity
I go there to reassure you that the world is impractical
Magic and lunacy, poetry spells and music

I don't even realize you don't understand that you don't need
The help that I imagine you need I imagine I bring

Imagining I (but that is only you:
All of us projections overlapping real transparent scene)
I must act right, I must intend right even when there's
No such thing as I or right I must choose correctly
Keep these muscles practising, always hit the right key
I can read the score perfectly well,
Nerves and coordination perfectly fine
Only a temporary case of mistaken identity
Claude Raines. Bette Davis. Herbert Marshall. Monty Woolley.
George Sanders. Edith Sitwell. Lionel Barrymore. Ethel Barrymore.

moss carpet veil of tiny fallen maple leaves
William Morris claustrophobia tapestry
Fragments of maple flowers unicameral legislatures
Tragic bimetalism. Oranges. Bergamot. Bigarade.
Bigarré. . . . *qui a des couleurs ou des dessins variés. . .*
Burnt orange color of maple blossom
metal bosom

Q U I E T

One surface of all I see is meditating Buddha Dai Nichi Nyorai
The reverse where I am now downtown Chicago five P.M. Monday
New York Philharmonic Orchestra Roger Shaw Choral & E. Power
Biggs
at the pipe organ

Q U I E T

and it is C O L D in here

Mudra turns out to be childhood coldfinger crossfinger

“Doubletouch” daydream

Yantra in four dimensions discovered “double-fuck” fingerplay

How cleverly our teachers had it figured out

There were five senses five fingers.

Up until that time I knew that there were a great

Many more, senses whose names I don't remember

None the less real and present and functioning

Right now

joy fountains open earliest ether vision

brilliant light of 1929 penetrating

warmth brain face head grow glow like erecting

glans penis cobra's hood intense light and heat

orbicular ridge and supermaxillary sinuses

awakens me if it happens while I'm asleep

“Who been here since I been gone

Railroad worker with his gum-boots on”

Early in the morning what I see four hanging lamps

Two plate glass windows like department store plane-leaves

A stone wall with grey painted streamlined steel fence

Glued on top of it behind which is Kyoto University

Sometime under Imperial Patronage the stone wall has lots of

Green moss ten students and professors a cook a dishwasher

A waiter a potted palm a coal-oil heating stove

The coffee and croissants are a long time getting here

Streetcar shine bicycle handlebars

The Frog Child has a new brother
How's his insect taboo?
A green hole in the distance
Green diamond, beryl, emerald.
Professors and students now appear in
Brilliant feathers, plumes, gems, enamels
(Black palm fronds)
Each one is different. What is it they are eating.
Word word word word word click.

N.B., that St Augustine's pears were green;
John XXIII's were mildewed. (See
Vespasiano's *Life of Lionardo d'Arezzo*)

Two ancient tiny black-wadded-silk kimono ladies
One still a beauty, the other even older
Pure toothless benevolence quite strongly arose and
Crossed the aisle in the streetcar
To say something to the man sitting next to me,
Put something in his hand—money? Ticket?
Next she turned to me, gave me three big crystals
Pure rock candy. I thanked her and she sat down again
Beaming love and joy across the centuries
Right through the center of the language culture barrier

I hear the horns of elfland honking as I lean
As I lean out these magic Japanesey casements all forlorn
The bell

I wrote the tune they're playing.
The mermaids are singing my song
It all sounds better than anyone could imagine

Vain shadows, I used to flee your mocks and fleers
Now the paint has flaked and crumbled from your shoddy veils
Adieu! Get them to a laundry, go. . .

(“LAUNDRY,” tri-syllabic)

And to those admirers of my work who find me an unpleasant man
Remember I am a harvested field
Winter orchard beehive
And to all my friends a secret unheard message:

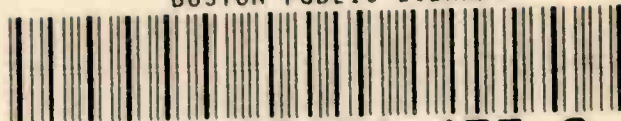
I'm always afraid you'll find out I love you
Then you'll hate me. How much does this matter, any
more?

Two zeroes is one hundred.
Black to move and win.

Awake or asleep I live by the light of a hollow pearl

Kyoto—San Francisco—Kyoto 1967-1969

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