

OUT TO SEA

For Andrea

1974

She hasn't been home lately, her  
Lights seem always out.

There is only the reflection  
Of the moon on her window  
Casting its scornful fire upon me.

O, I am not now without dreams  
of my own,

Designs that hold this squeaky hull  
From within

But,

To remember her  
Naked;  
Revealed in  
The timber of her pleadings,  
Her smooth skin &  
Pretty limbs reaching  
Through such distances----

Such is the pitch & yaw of years

POEM

For Ann

1975

At night she becomes  
A river,  
To sit nearby a while  
And listen & talk incessantly  
About the mountainous day.

And always she falls  
Asleep first,  
Leaving in her wake  
A dream,  
Of moonlight on  
Her skin.

ODE TO WINTER

For Ann

1985

The brackish silver of the sky  
The sunshine  
Bouncing off the sidewalk,  
The air chilled to perfection.  
I rang her bell.  
She was home to my surprise;  
Slightly downbeat,  
Her hair a golden pile of straw,  
In the graceful light of the room.  
Her eyes moist,  
Her jewels lowered,  
“ I’m sad, she said.”

We spoke lucidly of our  
Ten year struggle for balance  
And attempts of good  
Faith and tenderness.

It seemed likely today.  
It seemed in our grasp.  
Like feelings found at the  
Center of a park,  
To walk and walk  
And, look and look  
All day, while  
The perfect air and light  
Lingers...

SPRING IN WASHINGTON SQ. PARK

For T. Dalton 1978

Etude for piccolo, flute, sax, guitar

This one brought out the fake sheet  
And showed his work  
"Try it" said the old man strumming  
His guitar, "go ahead "  
They played:  
First the flute spun its silver  
Coil up, down, forward, backward,  
A lesson in transitions.

That one played piccolo,  
Softly and sweetly, the breeze  
Flowed in and out of it  
Fast then slow, then still,  
And all the while truckers  
Moved along the dusty road  
And poppy sellers hawked  
Noisily  
Still the piccolo was  
Heard tripping along  
Above it all like  
A faintly visible bird.

The other blew wild turns  
On his sax  
Slipping and running all over  
His chords like a bad boy.

But piccolo and flute stayed close  
And the old man  
Riffed a basso until  
It was so magical  
I couldn't help  
But forget...

## MOONTHEORIES

Why

Do I refuse

    Your love?

    The answer is

The moon and

Only the moon,

That half eaten

Rind

Of a glorious past,

That bright lie, amidst

The silence

    Of dark currents.

No use,

    She calls

Around time and

Through the shadows

Playing on my night walls.

DOWN AND OUT IN NEW YORK CITY

For Jonathan

1982

Slowly the whiteness  
He was thinking of began  
To take shape,  
It collected more whiteness like  
The snow storm outside  
And, took the form of an egg,  
A single egg like  
The one in his refrig.  
And too he remembered  
The grape jam,  
“just enough”, he thought.

“not only do I have  
The fundamental ingredients  
For French toast  
But, that’s exactly what  
I want”.

He set forth:  
The frying pan his grandmother  
Gave him,  
The Irish stoneware  
He found in the apt.  
And as he ate,  
Two pieces for him  
And, two pieces for his dog,  
The snow fell,  
Covering the shadowy dark  
Edges of the street.

POEM

(written in prospect park, 1970)

A tree

Fell,

Moaning like a violin tuning itself.

A gray audience rained all day

And, because it is April the sun came out

Blanketing uncut stocks in a

Golden shroud.

The earth by the root is light pure brown,

The air set free after 300 hundred years...

## SERENATA

For Christina

Without love the world  
Is like a dank dungeon  
No mercy can undo.  
A world without  
An ocean, a reddish sun or  
Blue sky, black rock mountains,  
Green trees, yellow flowers,  
Brown earth, white faced rivers,  
Tall creamy hills and dunes.

Without love,  
Life is silent as stone,  
Still as death,  
Sorrowful as a wet wind,  
No white clouds in the  
Midnight sky,  
No silver Moon.

Without love there is only  
Hazy light, no crystal tears to wash  
Away the gloom, no cheers,  
No joyful smiles, no laughter  
To croon in the night;  
No luck or money  
Can make it right.

Without love...  
No touch is soft,  
There is no sweet hope,  
No mischief shared,  
No thunder or lightening  
To make you swoon,  
And all is had and gone  
Too soon,  
Without love!



## QUICK SALE AT THE VILLAGE FLORIST

I rush by her shop  
Like a shadow  
And, there she is  
Watering this strange flower.

I stop and she offers,  
“it’s a Bird of Paradise”.  
And i...  
feeling the moment’s possibilities  
In the light of her glance, speak,

Of its forceful color,  
The urgency of its stem protruding  
Upward thru,  
The unknowns of her solitude,

To her smile...

SPRING SUITE

For Janie

Suddenly a  
Breeze wheels  
This mild day  
Into consciousness

Puddles appear,  
All the cosmic shapes  
Extant, with  
Flowers stuck  
To their silvery skins.

O, spring you are out there  
Among the women,  
Skirts blown high, bare legged  
With bare feet dancing  
On the clouds and sky!

THOUGHTS ON A NOTE OF GOODBYE  
PINNED TO MY BRAIN  
1974 For Janie

This hole in my pocket is  
Like the hole in my life.  
And as I cross  
The seam with needle & thread,

I realize it will take  
Strategy,  
    To seal it with  
A certain durability,  
After all it will hold my keys.

And in the course of this endeavor,  
I think I've become  
My own wife  
    Except,  
That I've sewn  
Only one side of the seam,  
                    And now

I'm back-stitching  
In an argument with  
Myself!

## A REMEMBRANCE

Saturday a.m. 1986

Dear Jonathan

1) There are bagels on the counter,  
There is cream cheese in the frig,  
There is milk and ovaltine  
And a glass there on the ledge.  
There are eggs in the egg box  
And butter in the tray!  
What ain't we got?  
We ain't got hay!

2) we got music, we got moonlight  
We got soul and soup de jour...  
We got outfits for us misfits,  
We got happiness and l'amour,  
We got sunlight in the winter,  
We got balms and blooms in spring...  
What ain't we got?  
We ain't got green!

3) we got spirits in the closet,  
We got ghosts in closets too...  
We got toothpaste in the bathroom  
We got boiling water to-  
We got smiles and frowns for everyone,  
We got glitz and schmaltz for sure,  
What ain't we got-  
We ain't got draw!

## THE YEAR MY CUTENESS FADED

I woke up and my hair was  
On my pillow...and three  
teeth were gone and,  
my face was wrinkled and  
grimaced and I had a  
barrel for a stomach.  
I hadn't shaved in a week  
And, I stunk-  
I was scared and nervous  
And a bit delusional.  
I heard that godlike voice  
In my mind- saying you  
Better go somewhere...  
Anywhere, that you have  
To go to make it... it was  
Then that I realized that  
A writer was just a person!

## GROWING PAINS

For Jonathan

He's looking for the thing  
That makes rocks strong  
With a magnifying glass.  
And I'm wondering if  
Kids played such games  
While Cro-Magnon fathers  
Ran and hunted with the same  
Stones...

A year later he asks  
If the Americans  
Used an atomic bomb  
To kill Hiroshima and  
Are the Japanese gone?

MERGENCE

1969

If you touch me now

As the light fades

I will give myself to you

A bottle of smooth wine

And, all will be shadows around us

We, being near the abyss

Where stars and molecules

& thoughts... leaping

Become

New times and worlds.

## MY OLD MAN

For Hyman

He once told me  
The only suit he had  
Was well over ten years old  
But that wasn't the end of it.  
He had come through  
Most of his life a poor man.  
He used to drive a taxi  
Twelve hours a night for  
A thankless boss  
And, slept most of the day.

In fact I never did see him  
Take a meal or a shower...  
And though I never  
Heard him complain, I also  
Never heard him laugh.  
His second wife would complain...  
First, about not having enough  
Money, until finally

She asked him to leave. And,  
He did. He took his ten year old suit put it in a  
Bag and said to me, "My suit is ten  
Years old and on Saturday night it's what  
I wear dancing. It may not be good enough for some folks  
But it's the best I got..."

He's been dead for a  
Long time now and, it's true  
He never did give me much.  
But he did give me something:  
He gave me the power to keep  
Going when things got rough.  
And, it may not be enough for  
Some people but,  
It's enough for me.



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