

**SINGING IN THE HEART  
OF LUMINOUS PEAK**

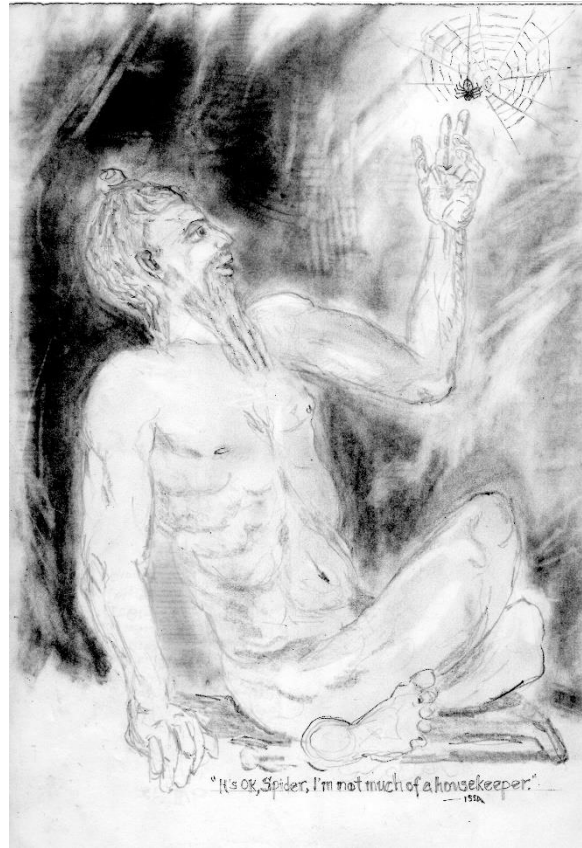


☸ poems from a mountain retreat ☸

**JAMPA DORJE**

SINGING IN THE HEART  
OF LUMINOUS PEAK

JAMPA DORJE



KAPALA PRESS 2023 ELLENSBURG



Kapala Press

[www.dpress.net](http://www.dpress.net)

TO MICHAEL ROTHENBERG

I forgot to phone and say goodbye  
I threw away my cell

My lama said to take one good book  
to remember the dharma  
so, I took *The Collected Poems of Philip Whalen*

No hell, no heaven  
no meditation, no distraction, no hope, no fear

Still, I had to do the hat dance one last time

SINGING IN THE HEART OF LUMINOUS PEAK

*This mind bound to no one thing.*  
—Saigyō

Scrub oak branch freed from snowpack  
flings diamonds in the air

Driveway's gift—mud on my boots  
pine bow's gift—snow on my neck

Give up your desires for fancy teas—  
put on your robes, your robes  
and a pith instruction are all you need

I've been in retreat for three weeks  
and I've eaten all the snacks—  
Milarepa just shakes his head

Patterns of snow rise and drift—  
a dance to dazzle the eye  
on a windy, winter's day

Little snowflake dakinis  
U RU U RU RLLLLLLLLLU U SRU RU  
hold me fast with your compassion

Snow and more snow—the plow guy says  
“If it snows any more, I’ve got no place to put it.”

Laughter of dakinis skiing off Ekajati Peak—  
gravity can be fun, if you don’t break a leg

Moth dancing in the sunlight on the pine wood floor  
stops at the shadow of my robes

Friends to date—a flock of jays, a pack rat  
a spotted skunk, four wild turkeys, two leaf bugs  
an unidentified beetle, the usual suspects

Ravens check me out, a golden eagle gyring overhead—  
not friends, as they don’t eat from my larder

Before I was sealed into retreat, my friend  
Gail warned me, “Be careful. Tibetan practices  
aren’t American.” Good advice—  
these American demons are especially stubborn

Han Shan heard woodchoppers in the valley  
below his hut—here, among the pines, I hear  
a chainsaw in Hidden Valley

Ripped seam in my new chuba reveals  
*Made in Madagascar*, discovered in Colorado  
now, I wear my old robes—I like them better

Passing beauty—  
tire tracks in the snow

Fresh snow covers the snowmobile tracks—  
a return to wintery calm in Hidden Valley

Looking through the window in the lamp light  
was that a ghost or the shadow of a prayer flag?  
Add a coyote to my list of visitors

Sky, my teacher  
Earth, my support  
Sun and moon my companions

Billowing clouds obscure the sun as though impatient  
for the day to end—in the realm of pure reaches  
day time and night time are relative

Passing cloud on a windy day—  
a buffalo becoming an elephant  
becoming a rhinoceros becoming  
a bowl of mashed potatoes

My autobiography—I was born, I wrote, I died  
and I had good friends

The most significant event in my life—the Atom Bomb  
a clever way of destroying us all to prove  
no one has a homeland

Machig dancing on a moon disc with voluptuous breasts  
and blossoming vagina—pinup of the month, circa 1080 CE

Days without numbers—the snow pack melting—  
I've learned Raven talk and a smattering of Chickadee

Moon, you look familiar—you have a lovely face  
I know it's an old line, but haven't we met before?

Jupiter is over the hill, and you're still here with me—  
Moon, do you play cards?

Moon, I saw you with that star—  
now you're swollen with his seed

Moon, you never turn your other cheek  
are you ashamed of some disfigurement?  
Ok, a few pock marks—you're one of a kind  
perfect, non-defiled

In my dream, I am the moon—  
faces smile down on me

Moon, old friend, Dawn is close behind you  
It's a bit early for a visit, but the tea water is hot

Tonight, the moon was full, and I saw the hare—  
usually, I see the old man, but tonight, the hare was there  
ears and all

Sleeping moon, I touch you with my finger—  
are you real?

Crescent moonlight on new snow  
thick fog pouring over Archuleta Ridge—  
a trail of milky quartz

If a sentence is difficult to punctuate  
it's probably the order of words at fault  
so, you're off the hook

I erected my victory banner, my boundary  
extends ten feet beyond my deck—  
I'm overwhelmed by infinity and all I'll never see here

Chop wood, carry water, accumulate mantra  
pick up a few jewels on the path, and my day is done

Quiet in the woodpile—  
has the pack rat become something's dinner?  
Motion discovers us—simple as time  
we are lured to the offering

Profound pith instruction—  
if the going gets tough, do more practice  
a thought to turn the mind

To my right, Chimney Rock, to my left, the sertog  
on the Tara Temple—ahead, a range of vidyadharas  
within, bliss-void is my view

A solitary place full of empty sights and sounds—  
Luminous Peak is a pure land taste of appearances

Complete, ineluctable, consummate, infallible  
formless and without substance—  
“Watch what you're doing and stir the oatmeal.”

In a day where the biggest complication is a prayer flag  
tangled in a tree branch, I consider this is a pure land

If you have wealth, you worry what will become of it  
if you don't have wealth, you worry how you'll get it  
Either way, it's a hassle—Be happy, all beings who are sad

At first light, I lay the foundation for my day  
With *ngöndro* prayers—I get so pure  
I glow like snow in sunlight  
Prayer flags flap, icicles drip, tap tap tap  
I beat my drum—all sounds are mantram

Corn snow shower—  
skiers must be happy on Wolf Creek Pass  
me, snug in Luminous Peak

Few people pass my settlement, a new retreatant  
now and again—it's mostly me and the wild folk  
in the vast expanse

After a sprinkling of snow, there are new faces  
in the landscape—a rock face becomes comedy  
another, tragedy, and yab looks lovingly at yum

I don't have Ikkyu's libido—he was blessed  
Love is blind—still, I enjoy a good blow job  
even if it's only in my dreams

Choose one, I lose them all  
choosing all, I lose the one  
lucky having so many loves  
now, relaxing having none

Awakened by the tiniest sound  
an insect hitting the window pane—

how I wish it was his footstep

Outside the door to class, she kissed him twice  
and, now, she feels his fingers—  
“Wake up, Miss, you’re in Geometry!”

Our bodies wedded—up, now, together up  
and, this one time, I swallow my gum  
Two leaves blown together across the snow—  
one disappears over a precipice  
the other returns the way it’d come

We made love on acid, and it was like a train  
roared through the room—Kay was her name

My first time, we did it on a bed  
under the stars—she guided me in  
and I lasted two fantastic seconds

She had the *Course of Miracles* pinned  
around her room—it was weird  
making love with the angels looking on

She wants to talk afterward—  
what is there to say except  
I have died and been reborn

She climbed on me  
while I was doing 70 mph—  
it was my first experience  
driving with clairvoyance

I’ll find her in a hot hell, and she’ll call out  
and I’ll climb to her through the razor trees

Phony dharma posturing—these robes  
only for show—what am I going to do  
when I'm put to the test?

I fly around, put my hand and butt prints  
on rocks—come back later, nothing there  
still, I'm amazed  
Looking at visages of eternity  
an idea that will finally pass away—  
what will I dream next?

A strange blue at dawn—  
there's a miracle for you  
not sure what to do  
I pray to my guru

Asked the benefit of ngöndro —  
“I feel as though I've been reborn in a lotus.”

Torn parts of a prayer flag  
flutter like lovers kissing—  
I've been up here too long

Rumi says, “Don't be disturbed by a speck of dust.”  
Buddha says, “What speck?”

Frightened yet comforted—a Moon looms over me  
says, “Close your eyes, and it will be tomorrow.”

The muse has me on the ropes—a swift upper cut  
then, *le mot juste*, and a one-two combo

At Adzom's powa retreat, I said  
“My mother doesn't want a fuss at her funeral.”  
Adzom said, “Who are you going to listen to  
your mama or your lama?”

Guru Rinpoche tells Yeshe Tsogyel to go easy  
on the mutilations to improve the feast—  
stick to eating air and mystic heat

Aware that I am capable of murder, malice  
and mayhem, I take refuge with the guru—  
hold me fast with your compassion

I would have fit right in with Do Khentse's crew  
a sangha of reformed marauders—  
“Say the word, and I'll jump off a cliff.”

Oppressed by suffering due to ignorance and karma  
events seem hollow, but life is a hard act to follow

Clouds above, fog below—  
for the buddha mind you seek  
there's no clear path to Luminous Peak

Ideas flap like prayer flags—  
one end tied to the cabin of confusion  
and one end tied to the tree of desire

Do I get lonely in retreat? Actually  
it's crowded living in tight quarters  
with 100 peaceful and wrathful deities

A hole in my water jug from a bear's claw  
as if to say— “Look what I can do.”

Cloud letters—dakini script—hard to read  
Maybe I need a consort—just on this one occasion

Laugh at me with contempt, or let tears  
be your judgement—I follow the middle way

The Great Sea of Abyss—totally open oneness  
be it winds, channels, lights, cells, molecules, or atoms

Faith begins where thinking leaves off  
and sleeping begins where faith leaves off—  
that I awake is the prodigy

To look at my complete being  
requires renunciation—now a crystal  
now a mirror, spontaneously, I just am

Pointless to wonder what if Shrisima  
had followed Chenrezi's advice the first time—  
an undetermined parallel universe of vast expanse

A roofless roof, a windowless window—  
a meditation without meditating

Could, would, should—  
no should—just do it

Stop grasping and you quit being a stupid buddha—  
nescience resolved in *a priori* gnosis

Many times, between dusk and dawn,  
Everness kissed Oblivion to make him stay  
Now, Oblivion has gone his way,  
And Everness, sans Oblivion, cannot exist

Looking at Nothing behind the thing in-itself—  
Wow! What a view

The gods are quiet, but they're still around—  
amazing, I don't believe in them

When my practice lags, I think of Longchenpa  
and the sack he slept in—I look at the luxury  
of my digs and realize, I'm just a cave bug

Prostrations are a centrifuge to separate  
the pure metal from the dross—  
I feel the oneness of Buddha and guru

A day of long contrails—the wind  
feathers a set into a white AH

“The path's a snap, if you're not picky.”  
This insight is attributed to Bodhidharma

What I've learned after a kalpa of meditation—  
Don't say much. Don't do much.

Take yourself off the clock and out of the mix—  
you'll discover a self-evident pure land

Sit like a mountain, open to the sky—  
what's the agenda? Nada, it's accomplished

What was it like hanging out with the dakinis  
in the pure land during my three-year solo retreat?  
It was an orgy with Jampa Dorje

Yeshe Tsogyel, sleeping on a slab of slate  
oozing pus and blood, doing her prostrations—  
me, all I've got going is a bruise and a zit

In a dream, I discovered fast walking is a form of flying—you just need to keep your feet close to the ground

When you eat, eat, and when you walk, walk  
but when you talk, first think twice

I'm glad to gladden my guru's heart with my practice  
OM AH HUM

Clouds of dakini script hard to decipher, like upside  
down Tibetan— “Good, yogi, keeping your samayas.”

At 8:32 am, I achieved supreme release—  
no, not that kind of release—and gone  
in 1/32 of a second

A morning of mantra muddle, mudra mangle  
and fuzzy yidam—then, I put paid to this condition  
of frustration, confusion and pain with more practice

Vajra ground perfected, vidyadhara levels matured  
four kayas fully actualized—who's my lama now?

Once I cut a mean figure galloping on a chestnut mare  
now, I ride a creaky crapper with my leaky bladder

Without wit, wisdom and grace, I'll just be another  
old fart in stinky pajamas—the rose soon withers

The beginning time and the settling down, kaput—  
now, the end game—and the dream that reoccurs

Sitting without moving, just me, myself, and I  
and I think “me” is having a senior moment

I gaze at my reflection in the glass at my black hair  
streaked with white, a reflecting on my years

Winterwinterspringwinterspringwinterspring  
that’s the way it is in the mountains

Dr. Wind makes a house call, operates  
on snowdrifts, removes empty water jugs  
transplants the tarp from the woodpile

Enjoying the tree shade of my mountain home—  
a nest of baby jays rant above my head

The loneliness of Luminous Peak—well,  
jays do stop and pick at my pure offerings

Still wintery stillness  
spring’ll spring soon

Sitting in Luminous Peak, letting my white beard grow  
outside, a young chipmunk digs for scraps in spring snow

Spring come, spring go, now there’s a foot of snow  
goes to show what I know—why did I order a hoe?

Fresh snow on old snow  
No trace of the road to town  
Sitting here among white clouds

Thunder and lightning—the copper fire shield crackles  
with juice—I sit in the middle of the room and pray

New birds from the south having a hard time of it—  
“Go back to Santa Fe—Luminous Peak is not for you.”  
All the same, I throw out some oats to tide them over

Tulips in the snow—frozen kisses

What am I doing on this mountain?  
To view this as the way to an exalted result  
is counter-productive

Something/Nothing  
holding this in mind  
I get on with it

Most truth seekers don't want a guru because they know  
if they accept this yoke, they'll have to work their asses off

As I finished my Vajrasattva mantras  
the moon moved backwards across the heavens

I dawdle over these lines—the sun rises higher  
and I have not finished my prostrations

If it's all one taste, all equal without blemish  
then, you have true abundance

Another trip to the outhouse—  
ah, emptiness and bliss

Why something rather than nothing?  
I can reflect on this, or not

Nyima Ozer, rays of the sun, a palace of golden fire  
all light from one source—inconceivable—  
with nothing to hold onto, my grasping nature is reversed

Venus is up, light the fire  
make tea for Ekajati and me

At sunrise, the jays demand their pure offerings, then  
they're off to the valley, and I continue my morning tun

A glorious mountain—and once there, I can fly—  
the fall not severe, I awake on the floor by my bed

A blue sky day, clear, luminous, consummate—  
I'm sitting here, kicked back, digging all the non-action

First, a chair, then a table, no telling where it ends—  
you only need your ass and your lap and your hands

Two woodpeckers working on a tree  
contrapuntal vibe, Bags Groove—  
and raven notes Monkishly off key  
thrush semitones, those would be Miles

Look, there's a buddha in glorious, resplendent light!  
Oh, it's only a trash can reflecting noonday sun

Itchy asshole—it's awkward to scratch  
when you've important guests present

Rejoice! This is a bright eon  
where the Mantrayana is taught  
to counter consumer confusion

If you know where you are, what you're doing  
and how it's done, without a timeframe—  
the why is suchness

The byways of the path are so labyrinthine that  
without a guide, you'll be sidetracked for lifetimes

Lama G asked if my bronze of Shakespeare was Mao  
“No,” I said, “That's the bard, Guru Rinpoche of poets.”

Prayer flags bright in afternoon light  
as prayers set forth to purify the blight

Hey, leaf bug on the window pane, are you taking a walk  
or wishing you were outside? Believe me, that's snow you see  
door handle, door hinges, door glass, door lock, door frame  
how will you make it through? Open the door, out you fly  
out into the cold, blue-gray sky—Is this a suicide attempt?

Sunset on the ridge, a lake of molten metals  
Amitabha's heaven or one of the hot hells?

I've always liked prison flicks, *The Shawshank Redemption*  
*Cool Hand Luke*, *Escape from Alcatraz*—  
from samsara, I'm bustin' out with bodhicitta

The roar of a jet reminds me Guru Rinpoche prophesized  
Buddhism would come to Colorado when the iron bird flies

The only regret I have is that I'll die before I have a chance  
to finish writing my autobiography

Thanka painters' dialogue on the size of a yum's breasts—  
“The manual says the size of a melon.”  
“A cantaloupe, maybe, not a watermelon.”  
“But I like them that size.”

“Yes, you have attachments.”

Letters like leaves  
Letting leaves lie  
Me, just as I am

I sent my son a *tsa tsa* made  
with some of his sister’s ashes  
without a note. He wondered,  
“Why did he send me this turd?”

My lama gave me a cape of majestic cut  
now, doors open of their own accord  
and candles light at my command

Like Shabkar—with my robes, my boots  
and a couple of pith instructions, I’m all set

I follow the masters of meditation—  
their bony fingers gesture, “Up here!”  
Luckily, I’ve brought my flashlight

Patrul Rinpoche said, “It’s hard to digest dharma  
if you’re as dumb as a cow with only upper teeth.”

A note from Sky—  
“Be Jampa, happy and free!”

Anne is putting makeup on emptiness  
I’m putting a shirt and tie on emptiness  
We’re going out to eat some emptiness  
I’ve got emptiness to tip the waiter

I’m staying put—if I rise, I’ll miss  
the planet turning around the sun

Risk being the Self that is selfless—  
one of these two is you

Get over practice being like punishment and get  
into it, like it's theatre, and you're the star—  
Break a leg! (That's the leg of a curtain, not your leg.)

Stop being a rube by throwing the brass ring  
into the mouth of the clown for a free ride  
on the merry-go-round of karma

A shift towards equanimity, when I discover  
Christmas fruit cake ain't half bad

Muse, I'm glad you're in bed with me—I'm just  
sorry there's only room for one in this old fart bag

Six tuns a day, no time for play—  
I offered it up to my guru, as my beard grew

I know that bear shouldn't be here, Beth  
but I'm not chasing him into the brush  
banging on a pot with a pan

Cherokee-Irish maids from Arkansas  
they'll undo me every time—ecstatic dakini  
of the heart drop, you've got all the moves—  
my blood courses to the beat of your dancing feet

Rock: Buddha, Dharma, Sangha  
Paper: Dharma, Sangha, Buddha  
Scissors: Sangha, Buddha, Dharma

Learn it straight, drunk, and stoned, so when  
you're on stage, you can always perform

Last attachment on my way to retreat—  
Summer Dawn paints a sun in my heart  
as a parting pout adorns the goddess—  
how can I return, if I've never left?

When the bear passed the yurt on his route  
Tulku Sang-ngag said that once a bear gets his feed  
that pretty much fills his need, whereas man  
in his ignorance will destroy the world given half a chance

Musical notes in the rafters, as the wind runs the scales  
creaking floorboards and the pop of a log in the fire—  
in the expanse of equanimity

I've an insensitive ass and enjoy  
the outhouse view on a frigid morning

In a moment of despair, I asked Guru Rinpoche  
“How did you do it?” And he answered in excellent English  
“Don't think so much—press on with your practice.”

Snow on the path, then mud—me snug, even smug  
inside Luminous Peak—inside, I'm happy and free

In Jewel's domain, sniffing her shoes  
and lingerie, reading her detective mags, I felt  
the thrill of oncoming manhood—in no way is this  
to be read in the context of the wish-fulfilling jewel  
(File in the love section)

The morning star, the evening star, secretly dances  
in rainbow light through all the afternoons that pass

The only sound, a whistling in the channel of my nose  
the only light, a candle on my altar

Intellectual copyright! And what of it is original?  
Philosophers worry, but poets scratch and tear, rip and pair  
playing fast and loose with facts

A pack mule fell into a ravine with a load of Longchenpa's  
dialectical writings before they could be copied—  
I thought, bless our lucky stars, fewer commentaries to read

In a small rock is the universe, both insubstantial, both  
empty—the one I hold in my hand, the other holds me

Blue sky day begins with a forlorn bird cry, a spider  
and a white moth in combat, unseeking awareness

I, Jampa Dorje, and Luminous Peak  
a cabin built for long retreat, have come together as one—  
a profitable meeting, an auspicious summit

Warming to my practice, riding the thermals of mantra  
on the waves of faith, I explore this solitary place

Two-pronged assault on my ego—the fabrications  
of Anuyoga and the non-action of Dzogchen—  
nibble at the carrot, focus on the stick

How to get off the grid—  
Let it go, leave it, break free!  
Be sure you have an accountant

Doing mandala offering is like playing in the sandbox—  
an infinity of castles full of jewels

The unidentified beetle is a stink bug, well-camouflaged  
to hide on bark, so well-camouflaged as to be  
nearly invisible in my field guide

Dumpster diving with Longchenpa—all foods are pure  
even if the dogs of Dzogchen Monastery won't eat it

Remembering Philip Whalen writing in his lookout  
“In the mountains, it's pancakes every morning of the world”  
I've taken a liking to a leaf-footed bug—it eats my cooking

Snow during the night, not enough to close the trail  
But enough for long johns and pancakes for breakfast  
Leaf bug smelled that oil—on the spot with proboscis out

With an ear to the ground, I hear many sounds  
sounds of different sizes, that's form  
sounds which portend surprises, that's content

It's crazy sitting on this mountain, chanting in Tibetan  
prostrating in the moonlight—but I'll do what it takes  
to get every mother sentient being liberated

In high winds, Luminous Peak is like a ship tossing at sea—  
with all hatches battened down, this is Flagship Mahayana

Sophia says,  
“A devil sits  
Under the ass  
Of knowledge.”

“Rangwang”  
Wrong wang?

There's only  
Win win

Fog—  
White kata  
Creating  
Blest isles

Afternoon Sargasso Sea—  
wind stops—birds give it up  
in the distance, the tap of a woodpecker  
then, nothing but my breathing

Buddha said, "If there was anything more  
tempting than sex, I couldn't have done it."  
Luckily, he didn't smoke tobacco

4 Ss of camouflage  
Shape, shine, silhouette, shadow  
Look for the gopher snake

Tearingness of paper

So scared  
I jumped out  
of my shit

Afflatus without status

Now  
There  
Then

Lovelorn tom turkey gobbling for the girls—  
such a sad tone of unfulfilled longing in his bold

proclamations, as well as his tender declarations

Tonight, on the sunset channel, the clouds have golden linings  
That's the news, followed by a soap— "Beware of Beauty"

A sudden thaw—food going to rot—an opportunity to feast

While painting Dharmakaya *tigles*, I remember  
where I learned to kiss—from a girl named Nancy French  
and the French really know how to kiss

Ravens waltzing mid-air, doing it every which way  
Look at that—a barrel role—bless their little aviator hearts

Last week she was resistant, this week she's more compliant  
Ravens overhead, *pas de deux*—ah, love on the wing

Tsoknyi said, "The ads are so good we could eat plastic."

"Miso, I don't get it, it's just like bouillon."  
"Oh no, my dear, much more mysterious."

Empty Empty Empty  
Give me something  
To sink my teeth into

I chop a luscious leek for miso soup  
Tofu and seaweed round it out  
I think of Philip's "Food Opera"  
When he was hungry, he was free  
At Luminous Peak, there are no banks  
No government, no wars, I'm free  
To eat delicious soup

When he was known as Flash Dorje  
he poured marijuana on his cornflakes  
Ex-rocker found religion—he had  
Marshmallow Peeps for dessert today

Which came first, the chicken or the egg?  
in Buddhism, as in biology, they are one  
Which came first, the courtship or the copulation?  
with a rooster, the courtship is very brief

Titles—A Monk's Marriage Manual  
Meditation on My Mother's Corpse  
You Can't Cheat on Bodhicitta  
Your Ego Is an Echo

Overheard— “Got drunk and wrecked my motorcycle, but  
I've slowed down, having been whipped by distraction.”

In the uniformity of basic space  
I offer this thought as a buddha realm—  
may all beings find a pure land

A blue-green meteor crosses Archuleta Ridge—  
Arya Tara, what are you up to?

The mating call of a woodpecker, continuous & discordant—  
it's spring, but I wish he'd take his mantra to another tree

The moon is erratic and Venus, inconstant—  
I brew my morning cup with Scorpio over Ekajati

Sticking a girl's pigtail into the inkwell  
did I dream that or see it in a movie?  
No, my school desk had an inkwell  
and Dorothy Darling sat in front of me

While harvesting the last of the ice  
an angry tassel-eared squirrel set up a fuss  
“Hey,” I said, “This road runs two ways, fella—  
in and out.” There is no enlightenment.

Discussing with a hermit thrush my opposition  
to her building in my corbel, her flute-like voice  
may win me over—but, then, neither of us would be hermits

Padampa Sangye’s visage in the woodwork—  
just a knot and a pattern in the grain  
but I can’t shake this magical illusion of pure mind

Where does the first step come from?  
If from nowhere, how was it born? And, if  
from somewhere, it’s already been taken

Basic Buddhist numerology  
I asked for 4 rolls; I got one  
I asked for 2 rolls; I got none  
I asked for 1 roll; again, none  
This is not a poem—  
This is a request for toilet paper  
If I ask for 7 rolls, will I get 3?

I had my nihilist phase, and my response to everyone  
“Go shit in your hat!” But I’ve moved beyond that  
I had my eternalist phase and my response to everyone  
“Repent or be damned to hell!” I’ve evolved here as well  
Hoping I’m not stuck where what goes around comes around  
May all beings find happiness in the middle ground

My ego in an advanced stage of decomposition—  
by thorough examination, I now know something about fish

Beautiful day in the neighborhood, Mr. Ratnasambhava  
sun again, wild folk at work, I write in the morning light

Winter time, quiet time, inward time  
and the outhouse doesn't stink

Gunshots in Hidden Valley—  
maybe not a good place to hide  
Bang, bang, bang, did he hit it?  
Bang—guess not

Do you long for high adventure—  
Ulysses? Moll Flanders? Seven Years in Tibet?  
Then, the *ngöndro* is made for you

Mandala offerings are an opportunity to explore past lives—king and queen, horse thief and  
harlot, even  
the bard Ulysses spared—all beautify the Buddha realms

When my neighboring retreatant walked by  
I stayed hidden and watched her pass  
pulling a sled loaded with her groceries—  
I heard her sigh, and in that sigh was her stress  
along with the multitudinous worries of the world

My Yogi Moroccan spice tea bag tag says  
“You are unlimited.” Yesterday, it said  
“Your destiny is to merge with infinity.”  
This is not exactly comforting

Emptiness, an expression of despair  
and the absurd in the West  
is solace and a release from dis-ease  
to a philosopher of the East

About things arising from causes, Buddha  
revealed their causes and related their cessation—

all the birds in these woods are singing love songs

A maid on the path behind a tree, who could it be?  
She wails, "Get it out of me. I don't want it."  
Could it be a tumor? A baby? Her ego?  
Such anguish!

Hey, bee, I'm not a flower—  
my robe is saffron-colored  
but the only nectar I have to offer  
is the dharma

A ruby-throated hummingbird inspects the flowers  
I painted on the lintel above my cabin door—  
here's a critic who knows his stuff

Sun going down, us going up, revolving  
in space—a spray of prayer flags wag in the wind

Mid-morning, mid-summer, warm blue sky  
mind stream full of song, I add melody to my mantra  
and circumambulate my hut in only hat and sandals

If there ever was a monk buster, it was you!  
I'll join you in the pure land  
after I make a pit stop in a hot hell

Marion Ford, go directly to Akanishta—  
no dwelling in the god realms, Marion Ford, go  
to the pure land, and hold a place near you for me

Books on my shelves, side by side—  
what transpires behind these covers?  
Words and letters, helter-skelter making up their own stories

Precepts of psycho-cosmic real estate—  
happy to be here, happy to go

Eat, sleep, shit  
do a few domestic chores  
hang with my yidam—that's about it

A day much as yesterday, a full measure—  
a flock of jaybirds choir the darkness on  
while at my altar, I chant my evening prayers  
Rishis rise before me, dakas and dakinis—  
a hawk, a squirrel, a bobcat—no one who  
has been to Luminous Peak will fall into lower realms

Fresh green beans, red-skinned potatoes  
pieces of ham with spice simmered a second day—  
I feel like I've eaten the billion-fold universe

Struggling to read in direct sunlight, I move the book  
and the words return—even this shadow is a gift

Waltzing with a grasshopper on my hat brim—  
a one and a two and a three—we're vibrating  
outside the constraints of this world

Luminous Peak rests among the pines—  
set down your burden, here you can skip  
the light fandango with a grasshopper

Dark now—the cicadas make a blanket of sound  
as I gather armloads of darkness from the shadowy foliage

Always worries—if I hadn't done this  
or if I hadn't done that—I'm painting a portrait  
of Guru Rinpoche who sees through the bullshit

I am the sun  
I play with clouds  
I live under a mountain  
not feeling a photon of sadness

We owned land just west  
of where Ishi had lived—  
weird concept, owned land

Venus in conjunction with the moon  
rising in sextile with Orion—  
now, that's XXX-rated

Days in retreat mirror themselves—  
my true nature, a dark blue hue—  
am I being obvious?

Here I am at Luminous Peak  
on Planet Earth, taking a leak, trying  
not to piss on an ant in this vast universe—  
Astonishing!

Thoreau would envy me—  
I live in the Rockies, the west in his future—  
a pretty walk from Walden Pond

An honor to be a member of Ellen's Vajra Dream Team  
her rapping, "Ol' monk Jampa fills the hall with mantra."

Itchy armpit from a chigger bite—everything Ok  
until this bug hatched—but anger doesn't help—  
too much anger flying around

A long-horned cactus beetle hovers above my head  
as a leaf-footed beetle sits on my toe—

love these insects for taking such an interest

Following in the tradition of hermits,  
I told a spider, “I’m not much of a housekeeper”—  
now, there’s a huge web in the window

I hear the conch blow for Chöd practice—  
I’m invited to the feast—not only an honored guest  
I’m the main course

She ditched me and married  
a guy who had won a Nobel Prize—  
not bad being the runner up  
winner of the Ignoble Prize

Slept all morning, while the day swept by  
forward and reverse—Where’s my cup of tea?  
No answer

And what is there to fear?  
Just my natural self—I write this  
revealing a subtle pain

Fire puja at Luminous Peak—  
Black Dampa flies over with a fighter escort  
after the tormas are taken out—  
blessings descend on our plane

If there’s a Day of Reckoning where I  
must breathe on my paintings and make  
the images come to life—I’ll just do that

A young bear charging downhill  
surprised by me and me by him—  
I try to rest in the interval  
between appearance and concept

but my heart beats double time

Of what use is a yogi?

Well, my butt melts snow

When I'm lonely, my meditation dull  
and the walls close in, I climb the hill  
and lean against this hollow pine—

“What's up, Jampa?”

“Cabin fever, but I know what to do about it—  
go for a walk, take the air, talk to a tree.”

And, then, back to practice

Baptized an agnostic and schooled in logical positivism  
now, the only validity I find is in prayer and meditation

This fluttering of thrushes among the prayer flags  
will produce a brood of baby buddha birds

“God does not roll dice,” said Einstein—

He does smoke a big cigar and enjoy a good hand of poker

Four extremes—exist, not exist, both, neither—  
the verdict is still out on the meaning of meaninglessness

I found an arrowhead—

days in retreat can be monotonous

yet every day has its surprises

Old man basking in the sun

old man watching snow fall

old man listening to rain fall

old man masturbating to Brahms

I asked the old pine tree Tm Vrbm Glk

if “Tm” was his given or family name—

it was his location, he replied—trees  
don't need a self (or a masculine pronoun)

Sitting on the temple porch  
processing a classic case of meltdown—  
thinking of the lama, the lama  
appears, looking for her shoes

I am always in awe of the moon—  
there you are, full moon in morning light

You ask, "Is there sex after death?"  
That's all there is—bliss and emptiness coming together

I have eaten supper and washed my dishes  
I have eaten two cookies—I could not stop at one  
I have read a poem by Borges on happiness  
He says everything that happens happens for the first time  
I rip a fart and relive Adam and Eve's surprise

I hear many sounds—sounds of various sizes—  
sounds that portend surprises, and always a sweet voice

I sit and eat my meal respecting the energy it brings  
I sit and drink my tea listening to a thrush sing  
I sit and contemplate the causes of suffering  
I sit and sit and sit, and, then, I just sit

This old monk appreciates your poetry—  
Budbill, you can come by anytime and sit  
and play your luminous flute

Chainsaw noise during morning session—  
nothing to be done—open the window to let  
the pristine sound emptiness in—oh, where  
is yesterday's blissful meditation?

My lawyer who keeps people out of jail for being bad  
wondered why I would do a three-year retreat—  
I told her, “Because my karma is good.”

Below my cabin, a forest with clearings, no streets  
no entanglements—my mind wanders everywhere

Birds chatter before they rest among the leaves—  
I may see them yet in my dreams

Distant thunder, then light rain—prayer flag float  
in a mild, damp breeze—everything peaceful  
Rain stops, prayer flags, damp, droop on branches—  
other happening of birds—it refuses to get dark

In the mud by the spring—a bear’s tracks  
big as my hand—I ring my bell and chant  
hoping he’ll be friendly, in a good way

A broom left by Han Shan or Shih Te  
and a chair by Wang Fan-chih—  
Luminous Peak, none the worse for wear  
I sweep up a bit and have myself a sit

Unsure footing on these high slopes—  
Han Shan’s old sandals, worn out when he wore them  
must get me through another season

Long periods without a reference point—  
a plane leaves a contrail, headed west  
at night, a distant light, a car moving, then  
gone around a bend—I shadow dance  
maybe I’ve gone around a bend

Chinese hermits, a thousand years ago  
heard woodchoppers in the valley  
below their caves on Cold Mountain  
I hear chainsaws buzz in Hidden Valley  
everything else, pretty much the same

Old monks taking joy in a simple toy  
Kalu Rinpoche's favorite was a slinky  
Jampa likes his magic sizzlers  
adult supervision is recommended

I've been shot at, stabbed, beaten, and fucked up the ass—  
no harm done—the suffering of beings is bodhicitta  
I think of these actions as acts of love

My boundary is where the road forks—  
the Four Kings are posted there  
to keep my virtue in and my desire out

All this sagely poetry, what a load of crap—  
still my grocery list is popular for its wild edible words

In the East, sacred wisdom that I can also find  
far to the West, seeing the face of my lama in Tibet

Turning to the sunset channel  
crescent moon, always sexy  
a couple of stars show up  
but they can't catch that lass

Following Borges into the library—  
the labyrinth, the knife fight, the garden, circular time  
and the dream

My meditation includes clouds and the chatter of birds—  
when this grows tedious I make *tormas* and ring my bell

The mountain reduced to scree—  
boulders to rocks, rocks to cobbles  
cobbles to pebbles, pebbles to sand  
sand to silt—no point of reference except gravity

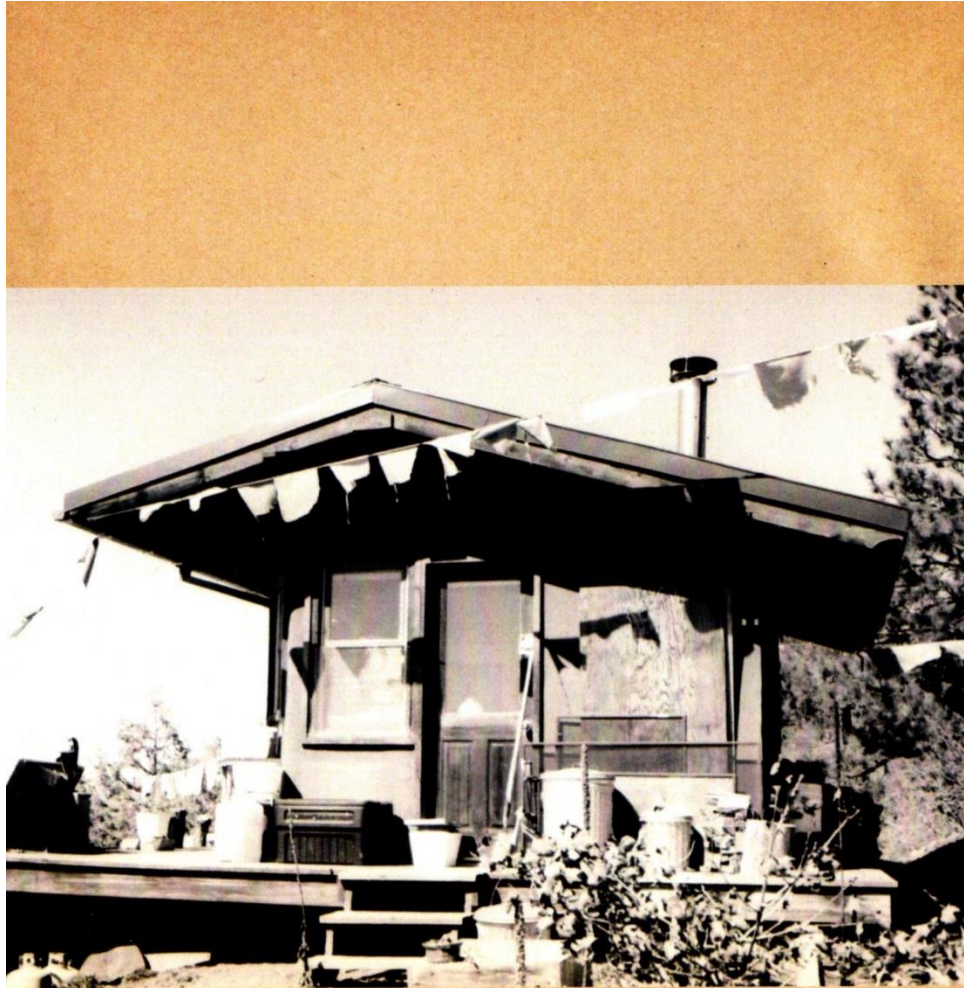
I'm just a stone thrown at me

I have never seen grass this green, each blade  
has its own being—may all the bodhisattvas  
remain until the last blade attains liberation

A housefly crosses the window pane  
I offer to help it find the outside  
but it's having none of this—  
I desist and rest in the here-and-now

Wind whistling under the door  
“You are alone, alone, alone”  
I shift my sight and observe  
the woven splendor of Dharma

These poems have been my companions in Luminous—  
my world graced with light—for you their sound takes shape



KAPALA PRESS