

ON BORGOPASS
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Cover drawing by Claude Smith

POETICS

what is the point, Jack?
is poetry a conversation
among the dead, and the poet
gets it second hand, a vampire
moon sucking off the sun?

what is the poet, Jack?
a battered radio transmitting
static between the stations
on a lonely stretch of road
or a punchdrunk fighter
whose taken one too many
hooks to the head?

powerful emotion recollected
the most exasperating art
Charles makes an analogy
with mahamudra, Williams hears
a sort of song, Lu invents
a ragged song, and Yeats sees
tattered clothes upon a stick

Belle weighs in with poetry as
experience—
I awake in morning light
thoughts sweet as honey
buzzing in my brain
swatting them I get stung
by real bees in a dream garden

PEBBLES

we are born
to dream

we wake
was there something
fluttering?

I was going to ask, but

it must have been a dream

.

too much
or not enough

a sound
we cannot hear

.

swift
clear
sure
final

.

time and loss
two worlds

in and out

.

held together
the great
the small
by light

.

mountain and wave
lip and leg
a relationship
of man and woman
and moonlight

.

in this light
to sit with you
in rest

so it is
happiness pours out
like a yellow rose

.

a glance
becomes
a gaze

.

one day, yes
another, no

.

your refusal and departure
swift, sure and final
an injury so severe
nothing can be done

except message my heart

.

I hold your picture
to my lips

your eyes, lips, eyes

.

in memory of
bug hovering evenings
and the touch of
a cinematographer

.

apocalypse now
a pair of lips now

.

I feel like I'm a walking
Freudian soap opera

.

words of my perfect T-shirt
Don't Worry
Be Hopi

.
a skylark in a field
of larkspur

.
I listen
I feel
I hurry

ON THIS SIDE OF THE PASS
for Patricia

*On Borgo Pass
suddenly the light divides
and the land on one side
rises to heaven
and on the other falls
no one knows where
—Nosferatu*

grandeur of dawn in transparent gold
dreamthoughts caught in a net
dew on grass
teakettle whistles shrill
færies to the high ground
time for tea and scones

the world is swinging to and from
and I am standing still
the yellow sky fills with clouds
in this cataclysmic bliss tornado
time has stopped

and the tiny spasm by which we hang
becomes an abyss where phantoms nourish
on a child's prayer

I follow the lines of my desire
beauty reflected on surfaces and mirrored
by the crazy monkey of mind
no matter what vampire light appears

I drink my tea and eat my scone

BEATING AGAINST THE ROCK

gold from the heart
boundless light upward
outward downward
flowers of obsession

a promise in the blood
joy in the stones
in tune with our touch
sphinx-like spirit

an eye an apple
an oyster a thousand miles
from the sea still feels
the tug of the moon

in this bowl of noodles
moon outside moon within
gaze on the dripping light
hear the voice of a star

why does the universe exist?
no single answer to this
a bouncing bubble
a ball of strings

by all means wear pearls
while you vacuum
and a diamond crown tiara
when you change the catbox

ECO BIZ

now, the world
melting down

we take stuff
out of the earth
heavy metals
and put it into
the biosphere

a closed system
spread the stuff about
molecular garbage
100 lbs of product
yields
3000 lbs of trash

time is running out
tick tock tick tock

TAKES ON A BLUE SET

I want a metaphysic so loose
the most incredible accident could occur
and it wouldn't cause a ripple

In the meantime, I search for the omphallus
and the continuation of culture
Is Great Pan dead?

You're forty feet tall—
man, put me in your pocket
and take me with you

HEAD START

awoke this morning
with my head on backwards

looked in the mirror
at a mess of hair

thought, shit oh dear
my face needs brushing

after brushing my teeth
with a hairbrush

I knew I was loosing
my grip on the day

SKY LINE

I was near you in a dream
crazy as it seems, giving
comfort to your distress
hard to understand
close to you like the air

no more looks, no more words
don't ask with those lips
words like clouds
cloud following cloud, hiding
what you hide

PAINPOINT

easy to say
pain is jus pain
like a jagged blade

easy to say
pain passes
like night

easy to say
pain is a point of view
if you're comfortable

INTRUSIONS

another note on my pillow
the horses are dying

unnatural things can happen
in a natural way

and quickly

MOVING FINGER

the heart

satisfied
with and by
what is

now I sit in Wolf's
Tea Room, Santa Rosa
pushing 58
as once I sat

in the Black Sheep
with my mother
in Berkeley
a boy of 10

writing on napkins

COME ONTO DRY LAND

this time when
your heart's blank
and your head's
an empty chamber

you feel there's a brick
between your feelings
and your fingers

say no more
your days are flowers of water
you wake to find the river rose

STAKE OUT

I set my shutter speed
and adjust my stance
so my shadow falls
outside the frame

I check again—
the birds are still there
and I find delight
in their chatter

.
recorded with directional mic
written in the margin of a bill
toilet tapped, bed bugged

an easy one
the guise, the lies
the prize

familiar fries
fishing for grease
muffled cries

collar or color
play the moister
on the whistle dump

ample gum awake
burnish in tragic
plus one

.
a fragment
f/ a conversation

"I don't understand
the whole concept—
I don't understand
like..."

and she was out of hearing

.
I ask the question again
and it sees me coming
and ducks around the corner

.
no way I'm getting
in her face

just keep floating
naively watching
the ads on TV

my world exploding
the 20th century is
a fairy tale

and afterwards
every conceivable vice
will seem like play

you'll need a lawyer
to ask her out

COLD FOUNTAINS

days when I look in my mirror
and see fear

and the mirror curves
towards a nest of dread

what's next?
fear to be or go or stay

no now there
no now here
nowhere

.

where does the light
in our dreams come from?

.

I stalk Artaud
I dis Rimbaud
I burn Villon

I look on the world
with a cold, blue eye

.

a risk
a miracle
a hope
magic of

TRAVELER'S BLUES

just down the road a jog
follow the river `til it bends
across that field to the far side
up the hill to the ridge—
thataway, as the crow flies

I pull up my mount
and peer from the peak at more
mountains on the otherside

the map I was made
must have been made
to get me lost

make camp
rustle up some grub

"Ain't nobody goin' to git
nuttin' done, ifines got morin
one choice," the hayseed said
"And I got a world of ways"
and the dude rode on

through a vale
across a dale
over a pass
my ass

it's not where I'm going
it's the going

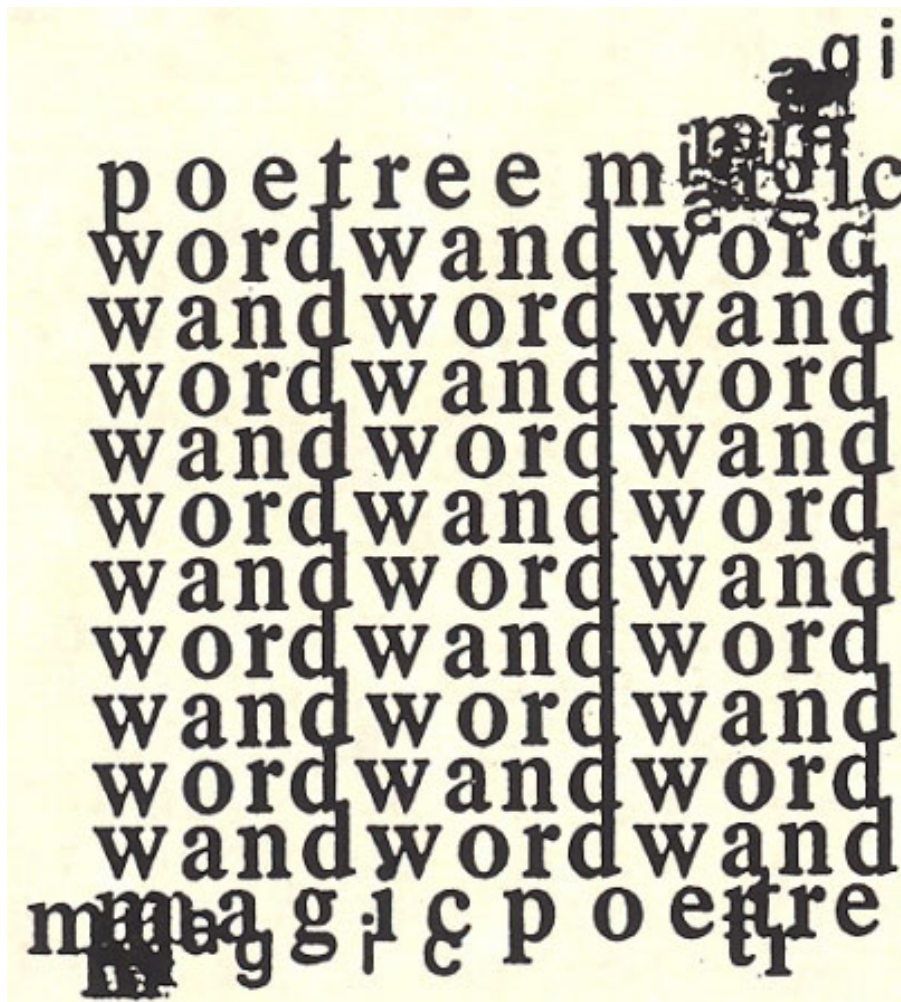
POETICS

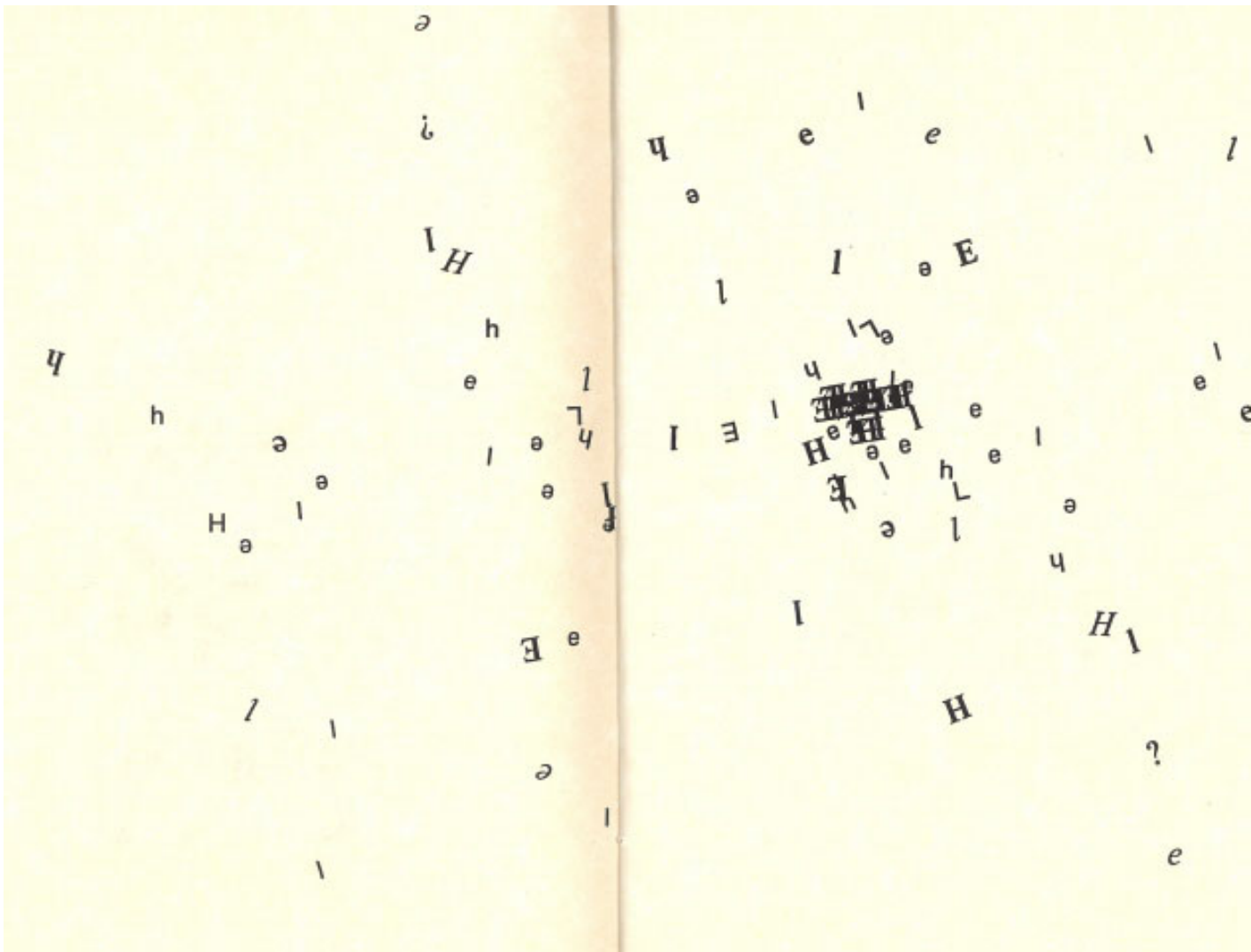
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TARA

for Emily

crossing the street in wonder
about the angle of the earth's shadow
on your soul's wanderings
the crescent moon within hand's reach
you are the path serene
I bathe in your light

you paint details on a batik
of Vajradhara in yabyum
while ants march across the table
your snake lifts his head
and your cats cruise among the candles
I am your devotee, speak through me

you've made yogi tea

and we've gone beyond the fuss
of the day into a room warm
in the flow of words and gestures
our glances and grazes become
a store of bargains beyond form

you are a star near and far
a fearless guide in my meditation
you step down from your lotus
in the dimension of bliss
granting my boon, soothing my fear
I am your devotee, speak through me

totally awesome space, you are
the teaching and the teacher
present and aware in the street
finding smashed glass from a car
your compassionate heart feels
for someone suffering loss

walking through the plaza we find
a shopping cart, and you hop in
but don't let me push you too far
so as not to put the clerk to extra work
at dinner you read my fortune cookie
saying I have consideration for others

this really applies to you, who give
a 50% tip and say, "Why not?"
Swift One, I bring this flower
I'm blown apart sitting, standing
eating, walking, your vibe emanates
in all realms and in your presence

I find solace with all objects
all subjects empty, you elegant
no stain, no blame, no blemish
full-breasted with kindness
warm heart, cool brain
carry me over

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