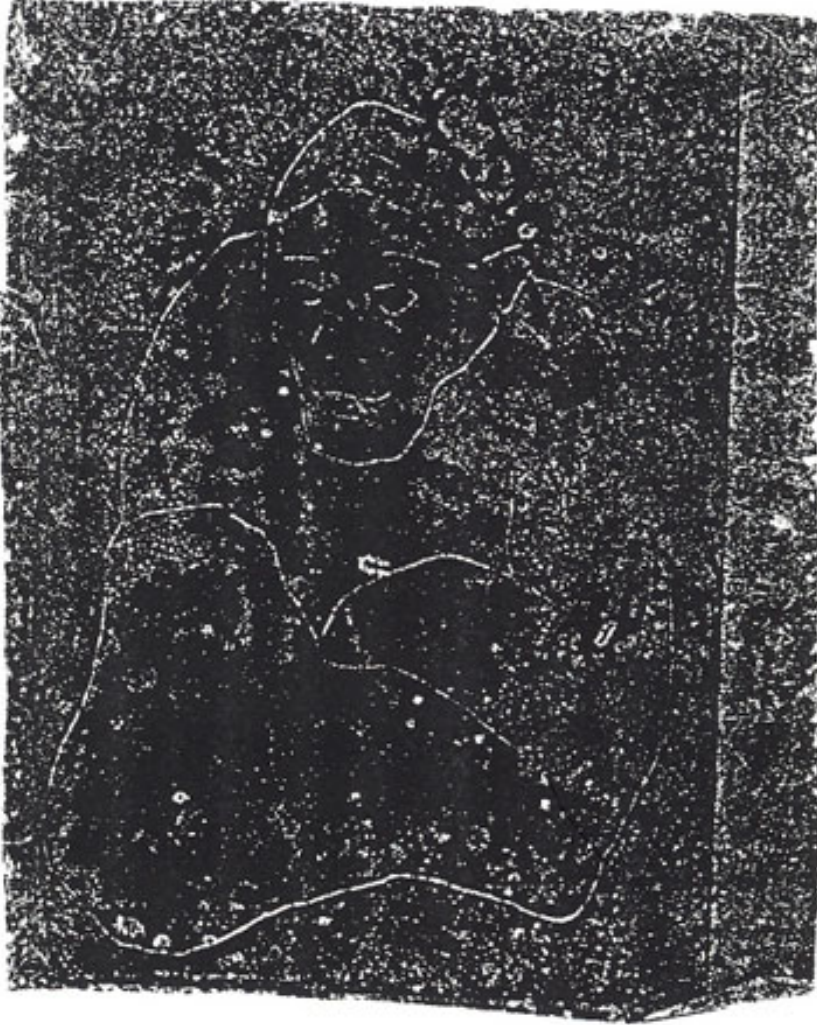


Bear Dance
D Press
Sebastopol 1999
Cover collage by Luis Garcia

In Memory of Steve Arnaudo



BEAR DANCE

I am a hand
unconscious of design
performing a miracle of signs
—frozen mind—
one with the big picture,
a bear dancing with the sky.

FOUND POEM

*just a transformer
passing through
you through me
me through you*

*I stop—interchange—
inner core—data—renew—
just a transformer*

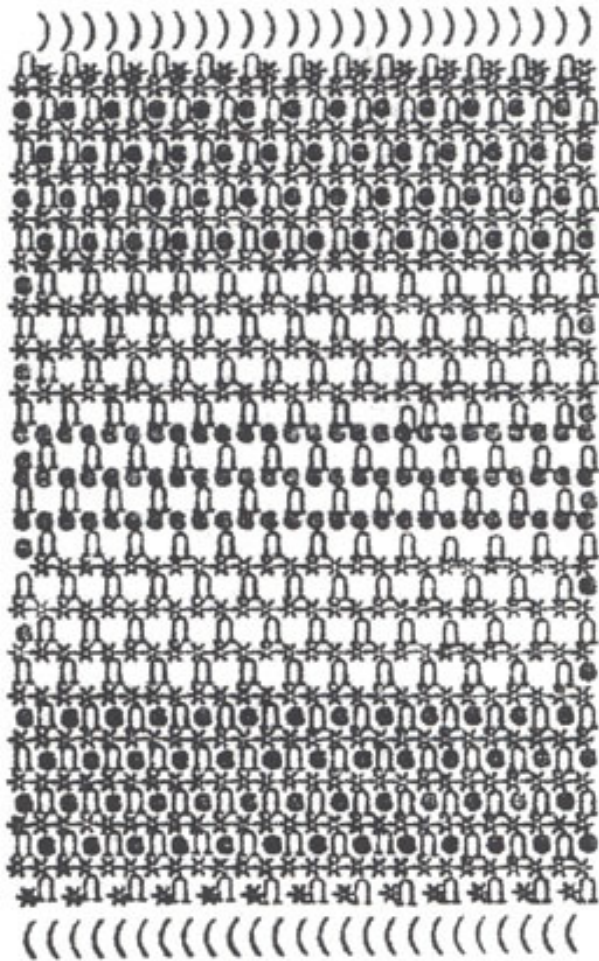
TAPESTRY

Earth assumes,
fire consumes.

Stars, rivers—
wind delivers.

The wisdom of the East
is west of us.

TAPESTRY 2



THE 12:02

You're a time passenger,
someone I've left behind.

I know you're still there.
You're just out of sight.

I've cried about your beauty.
I've lied about the pain.

I bought myself a ticket
on the last flight out tonight.

FOLLOWING SALVADOR DALI

for Claude

It's a cinch—this
paranoiac-critical method
as a spontaneous method
of irrational knowledge
based upon the interpretive
critical association
of delirious phenomena
whereby the double image
may be extended, continuing
this paranoiac advance
to make the image appear
and so on until there
is a number of images
limited only by the mind's
degree of paranoiac capacity

EXCRUCIATINGLY BEAUTIFUL

for Laura

My favorite things are
flowers, fountains
flags and fireworks,

But when I'm near you
the ground beneath me sways
clocks bloom, cars flap—
the whole world is a display.

DICEY

We play without a game board.
Both feet off the ground
flying sideways—a few tosses,
and my life is salad.

LOVERS LAIN

On an old apple tree
Ken carves his love for Barbie.
Here they make their bed.
This is how they wed.

Although the heart be resolute,
beware of plastic fruit.

COYOTE MEETS BODHIDHARMA

There's more to a Zen garden
than raking rocks.

Sore in the saddle,
cobble in my socks.

Gossamer of thought,

overlay of analogy.

Fight smog—
turn on a horse.

ISRAEL 33½

I met Yehezquel in the parking lot
and he said to me, "There's no way,
Jose, how the Mayans factored it.
The End will be in June—
blow the month of July away."

He showed me his designs of diamond guitars.
There's one in Sagittarius, and another
spiraling out of Taurus. Time and space,
there's no death, he said—just a dark river.
You might call it main stream.

CHILLING OUT WITH THE ECLOGUES

Damn it, Silenus, how can I rhyme *ease*
with bees in my beard?

BUNKHOUSE AT 6 AM

My boss barges in like a Brontosaurus

and gives me thirty days notice.
Says he's going to get a divorce

Sell his house and horse,
buy a boat and go to sea
so he can be fancy free.

Then, Buck shows up
with a cow elk tied to a string of ponies,
and I hang the whole thing in the rafters.

This is a lot to process, let alone digest,
for one morning.

BUDDHA'S LAST WORDS

This stuff is just stuff.
Keep on keepin' on.

COLD OUT THERE

I heard her complaint.
The pipes froze. The drain was frozen.
The car wouldn't start.

My hands are numb. My feet are numb.
My knees are knocking.
I had to go to logic class

Which gives me the chills.

On the way,
my boyfriend gave me the cold shoulder.

FABLE

The tortoise win? The lady sleeps.
She signals to move.

Stood up, he carved.
The huge knife stirred.

ATMAN

My start is slow.
My legs disappear.
My back bows, and
I shoot into the wall.

Once again, I am
a moving target.
Once again, I move
to a sound I've found
in a dark fire.

SEA CHANGE

I dreamt my cells were bells,

and muck that fixed the deep
rose to surf

While all existence hung ten.

CLOTHO, LACHESIS & ATROPOS

These three goddesses
determine fortune and mortal life.

At the Skyline Cafe, my dad and I
discuss beatnik ethics. It's 1959.

Hermes out of orbit, I fume
albeit I see a chance of traveling light.

The Fates warp their loom
to throw a weft of experience.

PLEIADES

Orion chased them.
Sterope fell into a faint.

Vulcan set a net to catch
Venus in her embrace of Mars.

Sappho saw the seven sisters set.
She knew love makes a poet into a boar.

You say, "All's fair,"
and I, "Boars have wings."

A WAY SHE WALKS

Fire is water falling upward,
says sage Hereclitus.

An old man stutters when he talks.
A girl in pink flutters when she walks.

What is the limit she'll permit?

Fire is water
falling upwards.

SCAT SONG

for Gary Snyder

You climb the mountain
because it's there where
you know where it's at—

Where the bear shat.

SO SUDDEN

With an eclamptic convulsion

of cataclysmic proportion

The man in the house
is no longer a man, and

The house is no longer a house.
They are parts of a relationship—

And minor parts, compared to
the woman who's lost her VISA card.

What dress was she wearing?
What print? Did it have pockets?

The scale of demolition
is proportionate to the folderol.

ALL LOVERS ARE

crazed. Running about
looking for poems, and
here they are
on the tip of my pen.

Love on the run
—stolen kisses—the spark
and the suffering.

Mixed emotions,
green and orange colors—
a tree of frozen fruit
in a winter haze.

It's bargain night at the Raven,
but you're too tired for
Shakespeare in Love.

ANOTHER DAY

Another day—
still hot for you.

Another day—rain
and fresh earth—
still hot for you.

Another day—vines
laden with fruit—
still hot for you.

Another day—grass
burning in the sun—
still hot for you.

Another day—flowers
freeze, but my desire for you
remains.

SO HIGH YOU KISSED THE SKY *for Steve*

Thinking of the past, not seeing you

in the future, listening to the melody
of galactic globes at aphelion—snowflakes
catch me dreaming of white sand beaches.

The mashed thumb of the moon arises.
Just do a folded wing snaproll, then soar
for the horizon. Direct your flight
towards Proxima Centauri.

Interstellar conditions favoring eclipsing
binaries are methodologically determined
by trigonometric parallaxes. Fats Waller
blows *Tea for Two* on the intercom.

WIPE OUT

Nothing I can do
but let you go.

Am I disappointed,
you ask? Only that

I want to throw myself
in the ocean.

I sit on a beach log
and watch surfers

Tumbling in the waves.
My feelings exactly.

Mist—then a few drops

of rain, but this

Heavy coat of sadness
keeps me dry.

NESTLED IN THE ROSE IN THE MEADOW OF MIDNIGHT

I breathed—
how certain my love,

And in the window's fog
I traced your form.

Moonlight gleamed through.

Lover, the living
wears down,

But I find a luminous
stubborn joy.

INSTRUCTIONS TO MY APPRENTICE

Plow art
is never done,
and rest,

Rest is more
than time away from work,

more than that.

Hoe the row, queer the wheel.
Queerer still, the elf light—
candle of the warrior.

Were you there
when the rat came out
of the toilet?

A memo:
include the weeping
and the hilarious colors.

BEEPER

for Theo and Elizabeth

Siamese, Himalayan, Persian
with schizoid face markings,
he's only been outside once
and won't wash his asshole.

He pisses on his tail,
and his farts are enough
to collapse my lungs.
He's a stinker.

Theo sets up his dolls,
and Beeper dash-twists
into Big Jim's camper
and out the side door.

A sabertooth strikes
Big Jim and Tonto at tea.
Big Jim loses a leg
and Tonto a hand.

As The Maskedman
readies his mount
a Delacroix feline
leaps on Silver.

Theo shouts, "Damnpisshit!"
I say, "Theo, watch the language."
Beeper upchucks on my muckluks.
"Letmestranglethesonofabitch!"

Elizabeth comes from the kitchen
and soothingly asks us to cool it.
Theo points at the puke.
Elizabeth hands me a towel.

Tucked under the covers,
Beeper looks like Blake's *Tyger*
with his long ancient whiskers.
He's done his best.

