



**A DOUBLE
PLAY**

by
**Luis Garcia
and
Richard Denner**

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Cover drawing by Luis Garcia

DOUBLE PLAY

The Dodgers are tied,
tied up with the Giants,
tied up in the cellar.

Bats hang from the ceiling.
Balls
you need them
to play the game right.

Now
write down the pitch.
Write down the middle.

Words
don't strike any out,
don't strike any out.

GREAT

Dirt makes me itch.
Concrete hurts my feet.
Kindness is an official bitch.
Lawn's order, every street.

A WALK

You climb the hill
because it there

where you know
where it's at—

where you're at.

STORIES

He stomped his foot
to come out of himself
through his hand.

His voice was loud
and the ear was frightened.
Now the fire has gone down.

Old stories
told again, again
and again.
moments filled with yellow leaves,
moments filled with fading light,
a gathering of moments

filled with echoes
from a strange
and lovely site.

FABLE

The tortoise win?
The lady sleeps.

She signals
to move.

Stood up, he carved.
The huge knife stirred.

SEA CHANGE

I dreamt my cells were bells were bells,
and muck that fixed the deep
rose to surf

while all existence hung ten.

FOR CHERYL

Your thoughts were men
who danced with blue and yellow girls
south of some border—

girls who reached out and discovered
one tooth inside another.

ON THE BEACH

The beach at Miramar is marked
Right To Pass Revocable At Any Time.

Rotting pears, banana skins,
oil derricks, old derelicts—all

forms of rubber, wood and steel
ripped to elemental particles,
stripped of name and character
and dipped in tar.

EYE AND EAR

for Bob Zurfluh

Here in the air,
here in this air,

eye sees the light,
ear hears the air,

eye and ear
truly here.

SERMON ON THE MOUND

Apparently
I do not understand

when he speaks of the grain
which is the symbol of man.

Looking to the burial

of the seed,

its death
and resurrection,

I want mustard
on my hotdog.

HEM

for Belle Randall

Seeds are sewn
in all his hems.

Hem is always me,
singing quietly

of some dark
eternal sea.

FISHING

Shriek of gulls,
old men talking quietly
on a bridge at sunset
in salmon-colored light.

A cast,
the play of a fish,
water-soaked lines
drifting in deep blue.

EREWHON

Zeroing-in on the many-that-are-one—
a place
where the parts are not knowable
for the hole.

Halve what you have,
enough is more
than enough.
"Good morning, nice day!"

A TRIP

Planning a trip?
First,
go disconnect the phone.

Last time out,
the boat sank.
Boats are fun.

You and I
we know
nothing's all we have.

We've paid our bill.
Duck,
or the ball might hit you.

PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

Serge planted a tree
when he was three
on Berkeley Way.

Luis did too,
two birch,
on Acton.

Peter stared ivy
to cover his hideaway.

William grafted roses,
rows of them.

Patrick sowed oats
up and down on Telly.

Wes confesses
he hates green.

Alice says there's nothing like Oakland
bay laurel for cooking—
or as a fact there.

KEPT

Things kept within myself,
roots of water,
leaves of water,
branches filled with water—

and now—
a voice of water,
a place of wetness
always in my keeping.

MAYBECK ON PANORAMIC

I'm here
to paint pictures.

These bricks should look
like a baker laid them.

If it doesn't look
like a child could build it,
it isn't.

DETAIL IN THE DESIGN

Birds that lay
in Euclid's branches
have a view of May.

Spring blows and sucks,
sucks and blows
the eucal blossom.

It's always ragtime,
suck and blow.

RECORDER

An instrument of water
hidden in the reeds—
a bull rushes towards a bull's eye.

A lash is seen.
A stage is also seen.
Each instrument

is set,
as if it were a trap,

set in space.

Another group of instruments
sings
in another place.

GATHERING

One by one— all,
all of the words fall
into place.

It is a place
filled with the chill air
of fall.

It is a place
filled with yellow leaves—
a place that comes and goes

but always
leaves in its place
a gathering of leaves,

a gathering of leaves
that is a place
filled with light.

FOR BOBO

He had nut cakes for the
fuzzy tailed squirrels.

He had seed puddings for
the pretty, fluttering birds.

He had cabbage salads
for the long-eared rabbits.

He had cheeses
no bigger than cherries,
and these, these
were for the mice.

Bobo, man of the mountains,
elephant tamer and teacher

of snowbound children,
white wings, red wings
lost in Bobo's song—

Bobo, Bobo, Bobo,
man of the mountains.

FRIENDS

A man starts a fire
in a fire place.

Another man starts a fire
in a fire pit.

Two friends
are lit
by a single flame

that
dances to a sound
it hears

in a place
as round
as it can be—

a circle of fire,
a circle of friends.

RADIO

Sound of blues
is interrupted
by the evening news;

one tragic story after another
coming
over the radio—

this radio transmits stories also
from which
black flowers grow.

This radio is also
radio-
active.

This radio
is a hole
howling.

IN ADVANCE OF BEATITUDE

My dad and I, at the Skyline
Cafe counter, discuss
beatnik ethics.

Hermes out of orbit,
I fume, albeit
light-years ago. Today,

and in another place,
my wife warps her loom to throw
a weft of her experience.

What strikes me right off
is the possibility
of traveling light.

STAGES

The sky is overcast,
a gray spell cast over us.

We're the cast,
the characters.

Built by us,
they act according to plan.

We discuss them.
We speak to them.

They to us
speak from the trees.

Bees in the senses hum.

FOUL

Foul air,
foul words,
foul play,
foul ball,

water fowl,
splash of black and blue birds
over water.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN SAFE CRACKERS

Lu and I are cruising around the Berkeley hills, as is our want. We start this conversation at a liquor store on Arlington Avenue in Kensington. Then, we drive up to the Berkeley Rose Garden, stopping to take a leak, then drop down to the northside of Cal campus before climbing back to Lu's house on Summit. Much depends on a red Toyota pickup with a leaky Gem Top. We talk of bikes and gears, tailortots and jazz. We float high above the city.

"Didn't you take toys apart when you were a kid, Lu?"

"No, I always hoped they wouldn't break, so I wouldn't have to put them back together." The closest I came to that was with my bicycle, where I got into components, and I knew about components, but I could never put them on myself. I'd take it in and say, 'Do this for me.' But I got kind of creative dreaming up gear ratios and kinds of tires to do certain things, kinds of frames. So, that way I'm OK, but actually figuring out how to take it apart and put it together, I'm low on the charts there."

"I was never much of an engineer, but I like tinkering."

"I've never...I've hated it."

"Hated it?"

"I've hated it. In fact I have a phobia about it."

"I want to stop and see my house on Colegate where I rolled down the hill in my tailortot."

"That's up here a little further. That's where Bob Hawley lives. He's dying, man. Did I tell you?"

"No."

"I went by his store the other day. I knew he wasn't well. He told me he had cancer of the liver, and they had given him a year to live, and then he went into a seizure, and I thought he was having a fucking stroke. He told me not to tell his old lady. He told me he'd sent my book to Ann Charters. I'd given him four or five for his store. And she sent him a nice letter about it."

"Nice."

"Sam Charters, do you know his work?"

"No, I don't."

"That's Ann's husband. He's a very fine poet. Bob's published a lot of his work. He's very underrated, and he's translated this guy Thomas Transtömer. Both he and Ann are friends with him. He's a Swedish poet, and he's also into recording. He's got a recording studio of some kind in Europe. Jazz."

"I think it's going to rain on us again in a about one minute."

"Man, I used to ride these hills on that bike. That was my most contented period, riding that bike. This is Colegate."

"I think it's on the other side of the hill."

"It's only two or three block long."

"It's on the far end where that other street goes down."

"I like you. You're one of the few people who like to drive around and look at houses, still. Everyone else is in a big hurry."

"I think architecture is one of the unifying things about..."

"...about chaos."

"Makes you feel at home. Here...slow down."

"Which one?"

"The second one."

"You lived in that one, too?"

"Back up a little bit. This one. It had a cement driveway. I was in my teetertot. You know what a teetertotter is?"

"I know, believe me, but I believe you said a tailortot."

"Right, tailortot, I was in it, and it rolled down the hill. Somebody ran out and caught me before it hit the street. But see, I didn't roll that far. In your imagination it's like a steep thing."

"I remember."

"I wasn't even going a mile an hour. Well, that's pretty fast."

"That's very fast."

"We're all going pretty fast."

"Yeah, I grew to love all these people, and I feel real bad about them suddenly dying. Like Ginsberg. I don't want to see Creeley die, although I'd like to walk up and shake him real hard."

"And Levertov."

"I always thought Levertov's health was real good."

"Did she smoke?"

"I don't know. That was my big question."

"Stress."

"Yeah, she was a workaholic. She was a teacher and an activist and a prolific, fucking writer. She was driven."

"75 is a pretty long life."

"Your mother's 87."

"Being eighty is not that uncommon."

"People that live urban, fast-paced lives...like my dad...shit, he was 74 when he got sick, and it took him five years to die. His parents stayed very healthy and died in their 101st year. I've got an aunt that's 97."

"And my dad's going to be 98 this April, and he's...what's the name of this hill with all the churches?"

"Holy Hill. So, you've steeped yourself in a lot of theology in the last few years, right?"

"Not so much intellectually, reading, some of that, but more in terms of an actual practice level."

"But that means talking to experts."

"I came into it without the idea that I want to understand every facet of the Vajrayana. I was interested more in being a practitioner. Doing the rituals. Integrating them with daily life."

"Lifting the weights. Letting them lift you."

"I had years of studying comparative religion and mythology."

"Where did you do that...like at home?"

"At home, but I studied eastern and western philosophies and world literature in half a dozen colleges, but at a certain point it becomes repetitious...a dead end."

"Well, if it doesn't start creating something for you, it gets to be a bag you're carrying around, and you go around and around, and nothing happens."

"Roll up the window a little bit?"

"You got a cold?"

"I don't want to get one."

"This OK?"

"Yes, better. I should get my mom to knit me a scarf like she did for you."

"This is a great one. I wear it everywhere. I mean to thank her again. Tell her how excellent it is. How ecstatic I am. When

someone boosted that last one, just the same color, my favorite, I was really bummed for quite awhile."

"The Rose Garden looks nice. You know, Maybeck designed it like an amphitheater. The drama is the view of the Golden Gate."

"The Maybeck on Euclid, have you ever been to a concert?"

"No, I've peeked in."

"I've been to a couple of concerts."

"Isn't it a private home?"

"It's attached to a private home. The people who live there maintain the theater. They have a regular performance series. They don't use any mikes. It only holds 50 people. It has perfect acoustics."

"Beautiful."

"Elegant. I was going to see Monty Alexander, but they were all sold out. He's a great pianist from the Canary Islands."

"Bird lives."