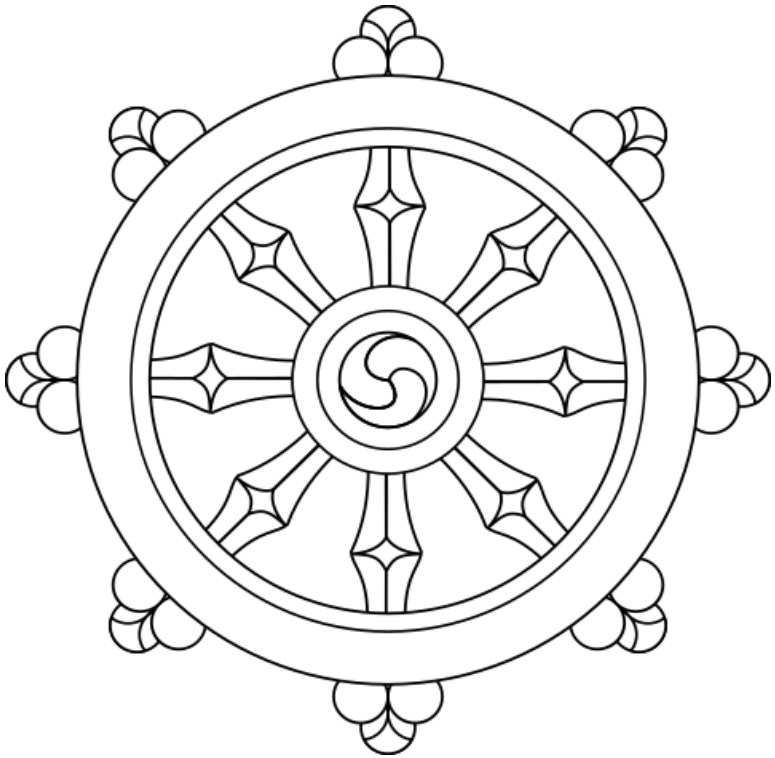


Bardo Spam

Jampa Dorje

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These poems were written by me between 2000 and 2018. What follows is a collaborative effort: AI has helped me arrange the poems into a sequence that honors both Western and Eastern interpretive traditions. The structure draws from Dante's layered readings—literal, allegorical, moral, and anagogical—as well as symbolic frameworks rooted in chakras, tantra, and ritual. This is not a rewriting, but a reweaving.

Cover art: my assemblage, "Outcuts #2"



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"What am I to do when I am angry with you?"
He is leading me somewhere with simple questions,
and I give answers that I don't mean to give.

I am walking towards the stupa, when is hits me.

that presence
that is all
that is

given each
breath

Tears shoot out of my eyes— I can help it—
I have such gratitude for this revelation.
I lean my head against the upper part of the stupa.

A dakini comes around from the other side and asks me
what is wrong, and I say, "I just feel incredibly blessed."
"Yes," she says, "the stupa is a powerful, living entity,
giving off its blessings—it's a good place to cry."

CARRYING MY BONES

I'm walking above the pavement
skimming the surface
responding to the simplicity of rainbow body
while I dissolve into a welcome mystery

Ahead of me, temptations pile up

which he wants included at the end of the main text.
I sit outside the tent, chuckling to myself,
waiting for the text to emerge,
so that I can run off another edition of the book.

Adzom is transmitting it word by word.
Tsultrim writes down each word in phonetic Tibetan,
and Erik translates this into English.
Then, another step in the process of canning peaches,
and Erik translates that into Tibetan,
and Adzom writes it down in his notebook.
Then, another line of the Tara practice,
and Tsultrim writes that down, and Erik translates.

OM CHAG TSAL JETSUN TARE
OM Homage to Jetsun TARE Goddess
Wash jars, rinse. Place jars in hot water.
TU TA RA E YI DUNG WA KUNCHOB
TU TA RA E Save from all suffering
Pack the sliced peaches into hot jars.
TUGJE TOGMED TURE PALMO
Unimpeded compassion TURE Glorious One
Leave one finger of space at top of jar.
DAK LA DRUPCHOK TSOL CHIK SWA HA

GOOD QUESTION

Adzom asks me if I have an answer to his last question.
I tell him I finally understand, and I give a new answer.
Then, he asks me, “Where is your mind?”
And I say, “I don’t know, in my shoe?”

Adzom picks his nose and looks at me, fixedly.
Then, he asks if he can beat me. “Why?” I ask.

I. Invocation & Code

Adds Albert Einstein and Yeshe Tsogyal as cosmic consorts—bridging science and tantra

DAKINI HYPERTEXT

I’m invited into the treasure room—
Ah, Mother Muse, dishing out the scrolls!
Yeshe messin’ with my mind?
You’re my web mistress, talkin’ html

YESHE, I GET IT

You, dancing on my prostate body
        reflective, active
yab yum, ho
        Madonna with your twilight language
“Blah!” you tease
        dynamic denizen of Shang-shung
able to endure Abu Ghraib torture
        humiliation, fear, degradation,
mutilation—
                happy even in hell

        Yeshe
took me into the treasury—
        “Take what you need
BUT take care.”

        Her eagle voice

THE FIVE EXISTS

Either
or
both
neither
nor

Either/or
neither/nor
both/and
neither both/and
nor either/or

•

Both/and
may seem bogus
until

“Or”
collapses into
“either”

SPECIAL RELATIVITY

Einstein’s first wife,
giving him colossal kisses
and tender corpuscular kisses,
called him Johnny.
He called her Dolly.

Einstein was a *terton*,
a discoverer of mind treasures,
& Mileva Maric was his consort.

1-800-BUDDHAS

you have reached the offices
of Guru, Dharma & Sangha
this is a recorded message
if you have a touch-tone phone
press the appropriate button

having pure intention
and you want to take refuge
press 1 for Hinayana
press 2 for Mahayana
press 3 for Mantrayana
press 4 for Dzogchen

if you miss part of the transmission
it will repeat itself upon completion
if you have any questions
press the # key, and a Bodhisattva
will come on the line to assist you

for those with desire-attachment
or guests of karmic payments
we suggest dialing our new number
1-900-Distract

press 1 for a crazy-wisdom bitch
press 2 for yidams in leather
press 3 for assorted hindrances
press 4 to be listened to attentively

TARA-PEACH TRANSMISSION

Adzom wants to learn how to can peaches.
Tsultrim is telling him how, step by step.
Erik translates. Adzom takes notes,
while giving Tsultrim a short version of the Tara practice,

A blow to the head with a rock, and the creature is still.
I dig a small hole, put in a few leaves to make a cushion,
and lay the body of the chipmunk in its grave.
I say a mantra.
I cover it with earth and place a cobble on top.

During one Dharma talk, the subject of killing comes up,
the difference between accidental and intentional acts of killing,
and I tell about my choice, and Adzom says my first act
was accidental & didn't involve me in the chipmunk's karma
in a negative way, but that my intentional act of "putting it out
of its misery" was more serious in its repercussions, that I
should have left it to "burn out its karma" without interfering in
the process.

Such is the difference between the East and the West.
My chances of being reincarnated as a chipmunk are very good.

PROTECTOR OF THE BENT

a heart vowed to eradicate hells
if I don't help who will?

warrior of the byways
plunging into black chaos

into the unknown
into the matrix of the world
I watch where I step—

if it's green with whiskers
it's probably a Leprechaun

if it's soft and steamy
it's probably a cow pie

$E=MC^2$ is a mind *ter*
planted
by the great bliss queen,
Yeshe Tsogyal
while in her Wrathful Samantabhadri
aspect.

Why does a drop of water rise
in the channel of an inserted straw?

Where is gravity?

Nestled in a rose in the middle of midnight,
breathing against the pane,
he traced their initials in the window's fog.

Moonlight gleamed through, & though
the living wears down, they
found
a luminous, stubborn
joy.

They were playing without
a gameboard
both feet off the ground—
flying sideways.

Fire is water falling upward.

Entwined in yab yum
she observed, "The same
extension which constitutes the nature of a body
constitutes the nature of space."

Inner heat trumps
objective knowledge.

Theirs was a deep-seated
thermal happiness.

II. Body & Desire

Expands erotic tension, theatrical dialogue, and meta-physical longing

CODED IN MY DNA

A comatose wisdom mind
a flat-lined wisdom mind
a flattened prostate
a prescription for impotency—

A monk wants his sex
to stay put, hard to stay celibate
if Jampa's is still jumpin'

My urologist tells me,
"If you don't use it, you'll lose it.
Most of my patients want Viagra,
but it'll never be like it was, again."

"Is it ok if I let it go? won't fall off?"
"No, medically speaking, it's fine."

NEED NOT WANT

Body: food, clothing, shelter
Mind: 8 hours sleep, 8 hours work,
8 hours for gaining more Light
Energy: peaceful, wrathful, ecstatic

dot dot
de dot dot

dit dot dit dot
dot dit
what is more is code
is dash dot dot
dash dash dash
dash

dash is dash dot dot
dot dash
dot dot dot
dot dot dot dot

Poets knew it
No (tit for tat)ed
Knit (knew) it
Dotted it down

VIII: Side Rooms

A SIGN

I'm walking up a trail, deep in conversation with Debbie.
We are talking about *tigles,* tiny rainbow spheres,
when I see a flash of light shooting down the trail,
and a young chipmunk runs under my boot.

With its spine crushed, blood running from its mouth,
writhing in the dust, I tell Debbie to walk ahead.
She'll not want to watch what I am going to do.
I've lived on farms.
It's reasonable to put down a suffering animal.

bring attention TO IT
Dot it
Dot

let me
lick your
dot

dot

"head of a boil"
occurs once OE
16c small lump
clot, a minute
spot, speck, mark
1674 roundish mark
made w/pen 1748

dot

1858 point used
in punctuation; a little
child or creature 1859

dot

a woman's marriage portion
of which the annual income
is under her husband's control 1855

dot

mark w/dots 1816
scatter like dots or
specks

to dot down
to write down compendiously

dot

PHAEDRA'S FRUSTRATION

Sex w/or w/out Love
winged antibodies
sprouting, moist
aching like the gums of a baby

Sex w/love
winged souls embodied
touching the beauty of the gods
pain and pleasure
w/or w/out
absence & presence of the loved one

Alone on the sea cliff

SPARKS

The time is spring; the place, Berkeley. The Mediterranean Café on Telegraph Avenue. A woman and a man are seated at a square, marble table. He is a dandy. She is glossily beautiful, like a 40's sex movie star. They are in a pin-spot of light. Behind them looms a mural abounding with Greek gods and goddesses. They know each other well.

BOUVARD: You are the embodiment of wild desire. You'd look great even in pajamas. If I'd met you first, I'd be with you, but I'm with her, and she's the best for me.
ALMA: She's the best for you? You've got to have an edge to love? I'm not good at loving with third-party people. Have I been here before?
BOUVARD: We get caught up in our feelings when acting with other actors.

ALMA: Leave it alone, Bouvard, the geography between us is a shield. Don't cut yourself off from wild desire. I've done it.
BOUVARD: I'm faithful to love, but it's not going to control me, just because all things have sex. It's torture to worry about us cheating.
ALMA: Too stressful, to be honest. I love this crush.
[*She takes a drink from a tall latte*.]
BOUVARD: Hard in this life, you've only one body.
ALMA: Only one flag, only one life, only one leaf. Good line, Bouvard.

BOUVARD: I want to coddle...I mean cuddle you, well, both, but I know you have a natural feminine, non-toxic, body-pure immunity to adultery.
ALMA: You're right, I am careful about hygiene. It's a thing with me, but [*unctuously*] if I was to be unfaithful, it would be with you.
BOUBARD: You, you, you…at least, you're not dumb. Blind, maybe, but not dumb.
[*He takes a sip from her glass*.]
ALMA: True love's an exotic club, that's for sure, and we've got the talent for it.
BOUVARD: [*He rises.*] True love is just a romantic notion.
[*She finishes the drink*.]
ALMA: Keep it up.
BOUVARD: Do you give heart? [*His line overlaps hers.*]
ALMA: I struggle to keep house. I do everything but cook. I can spend the whole day reading in bed. No reason to find someone else, besides me.
BOUVARD: And people have everything, including self-sabotage. [*He sits.*]
ALMA: Why are you fidgeting?
BOUVARD: [*straightening himself in his chair*] My pants are too tight in the crotch.
ALMA: If I had to choose between my survival and my dignity, I'd choose love.
BOUVARD: [*wistfully*] Yes, I miss the hungry years—but not too much. Then, you don't have time for love?
ALMA: No, but you encourage my wild side. [*half rising with excitement*] There's a charm in love affairs. Fun to be with you. Pure passion. Endless. Reckless.
BOUVARD: A kiss from you couldn't hurt, babe.

This is a poem that skips down the aisle
and kisses a tiny girl on her cheek

This is a poem that shakes the hand
of a man with a beard, dances around

The room and curls up in the corner
and goes to sleep

This is a poem that dreams statistics

IF STATISTICS

4 dead 16 wounded
9 dead 24 wounded
12 dead 63 wounded
8 dead 40 wounded

Exactly who do these numbers refer to?
and whose hand is this on the street?

THE DOT

don't
dot it
do it

84,000
dots

it dot is
it dot
it is

IF TOMORROW

We'll catch you back here, tomorrow
freezing yourself in ice, I think

I am ghost to you, and now
you're breathing, buddy, and believe me
we will try to catch you

Are you grieving or are you singing?

How do you solve a problem like this?
How can a punk ghost
call the police station tomorrow?

IF FLOW

A tad of infinity in a dream
a field of flotsam in a stream
call it junk or call it cargo
here, there's no embargo

Beyond reason, cosmic laws demand
that every monument be built in sand
a new angle of a ground level tangle
a river of debris flowing free

IF I

I think people take way too much a direct approach to their problem.
—Kay Ryan

ALMA: With kisses come consequences. [*slumps*]
BOUVARD: I know you could cook my perfect omelet, too.
ALMA: [*ignoring him*] Once, I went on a date with a guy. Walked on the beach. I kissed him, but he didn't call. Wished he had. I took my blouse off. Had on a plaid skirt and boots. Took off one boot because he wanted to see if I had cankles.
BOUVARD: Cankles?
ALMA: He wanted to see if he could tell where my calves left off and my ankles began. I knew he didn't have balls.
BOUVARD: And I'm playing the part of a…I just feel intoxicated by my desire for you. I could kiss you all night. [*Nonchalant*] Just a physical fact.
ALMA: [*She puts both gloved hands over her ears.*] I can't hear a thing you're saying.
BOUVARD: It's nothing, but all the same, a kiss from you couldn't hurt, babe.

Lights dim. Sparks fly.

FAKES & CHEAP TRICKS

I'm a flame diving
into a reflection
in the sea

I suck air—
first breath, last breath

What you see is what you get
and what you get

Comes from the bottom of the deck

III. Society & Satire

Adds religious satire and ecstatic breakdowns

MIDDLE WAY IN AMERICA

The Centralists come into the streets
and shout, “Be reasonable!”

Independence and equality
distinct from
a runaway congress
        and an egomaniacal administration

The presidency no longer exists—
        try to ignore it.

Metamorphosis of our Republic

far right and far left
                middle is
not green, not blue, not red, not white
        just full of bullshit

Breach of protocol
crossing the aisle
        listening to others
to the harps
to the tambourines
to the sack horn

IF ASSURANCES

Last night, I was at the Poetry House
on Paradise Ridge, and the owner said
it worried him that the table was
getting some dings

I told him that they were the beautiful marks
of diligent writers at their craft
that sometimes we must scratch the walls
perhaps start a fire, burn the poems
                burn the house
in a Shelleyan inferno of creativity

I’m afraid he was horrified—
this coming out of the mouth of a monk

IF I TAKE ACTION

When will my new red truck get its first scratch?
Feel like walking over to it and smacking it with a hammer
just to get that over with

IF A JINGLE, A JANGLE

Put down that knife—
cut me open & you’ll find

My raspberry heart impaled on a thorn

No contest, you are easily as fair as your mirror
& where your reflection bends, the dawn blushes

IF A DEAD MAN

Where are you, Liar?
Where do you brew up your truths?

Bright is the eye of the moon,
but you glide between sunbeams
You spread your wings and never
glance back at the frightful moon

All the poets I know have green hair
but you have green toes

IF ONLY

You gave me leave
to take the sense out of the sentence

If only I hadn't promised something cultural
like As You Like It

And, if only I wasn't fearful
I'd tell everyone to get screwed
and ask what I'm charged with

But now I'm doing time
for a double entendre—got
caught red handed with my tits in the till

O, what I could say about flowers

DOG READS MAN IS NEWS

Wrathful voices, ecstatic voices, peaceful voices

Commanding, chortling, cajoling

Dzogchen is news that stays news

CHRIST AS GURU RINPOCHE

The Pope is pissed off about *The Da Vinci Code*
that Mary Magdalene bore a child, sired by Jesus

How's he going to feel about the revelation
the Tibetans have cooked up in Shambhala?

Odd to see the pontification of the mystery
Christ, the bridegroom & the Church
the bride as the reason
why women can't be buff

Quack quack quack
another duck

LIBERATION OLYMPICS

Shake those tail feathers of suffering

A pair of quail—
the female flies off the levy

The male follows

IV. Descent & Torture

Truth's a no-show, pain's the currency, and the barbarians write the rules

DEATH PENALTY

The Needle
first, you're prepped with an anesthetic
so, you should sleep through
the phosphate chloride hit in your blood
however, and this is important,
if you are not fully sedated
you are conscious
but unable to move
Hope your executioner is friendly

What is *humane*? What is *torture*?

Ronald Reagan said he had experience putting down a horse
believed the needle was humane—those that favor punishment
will choose to err on the side of cruel and unusual

3-D OF TORTURE

Dread
Dependency
Degradation

In every fire
on every pyre
on every tire
of every car

Of every lark
in every park
and if she stops
to avoid the cops

She'd better
feed the meter
or she'll meet up
with parking karma

IF A NOTE

"It seems we've had a small explosion,
perhaps we need a new…"

The note trailed off.
I saved it because it was so polite
kind of hinting at a disruption
nothing to be concerned with
just go out and buy a new...

A cup shattered,
blown to bits in the microwave

What was in it?
a smudge of brown—a taste of sugar
and instant tea—my mom's concoction

Without water, the sugar melts to a corner of the cup
and the heat intensifies with the microwave energy…

Electromagnetism is fun, but thermodynamics is the law

IF XO

Nothing crossed
out is a something
an X and an O—
a kiss and a hug

IF I'M

Hey, there
wanna buy a
watch out
an echo might
bite you
a bad mitten
puck in
my guts &
on top of that
my vowels
are juiced

I'm going
to pot &
while I'm
cooking
two cloves
of garlic snug
huggle and kiss

IF SYCNRONICITY

What is she to do
Sweet Lakota Sue?
she sees a sign
she thinks divine

IS THE THREAT OF TORTURE TORTURE?

Donald Rumsfeld said he couldn't understand why
the prisoners were unable to stand all day, when he
was on his feet working 15 hours every day. Yes,
with snarling dogs snapping at his testicles.

What is known is that
what someone doesn't know
can't be extracted under torture.

SEEING TORTURE W/MY INNER EYE

Since history is written by the victors,
it's fair to ask, who are the barbarians?

A new commandment
Thou Shalt Not Torture

Hate to make this the subject of a poem

One thing to be punished as a civilian
one thing to be punished as a soldier
another thing to be punished as a terrorist

Pain inflicted trying to get out of the way
pain inflicted for pain inflicted
pain inflicted for knowledge gained
pain for your memory

Hard to guess another's tolerance for pain

In passing,
"A penny for your pain."

V. Dream & Dissolution

Adds dream logic, metaphysical math, and x-ray vision

WHILE YOU SLEEP YOUR HYPOTHALAMUS RESTS AND YOU DREAM

Zen was in a big space in a big city and moved on roller skates, or Zen was on a big ball and could roll around. It was very quiet, and as Zen rolled, it struck attitudes. No one seemed to notice Zen in white robes, and Zen thought, "This is what it is like when you're dead—neutralized—and it is happening more and more to me, while I'm alive."

EMPTINESS 1+1=1

High
high, fast
high, much faster

Slow
slower

Loud
quiet
quieter

Deep
Deeper

Section VII: If, Dot, Flow

Conditional Realms & Meta-Poetics

LU'S POEM

The poem is IF IT,
and it begins

If it ever is
as it was then,
it will be
as it has been

Which seems to me to
be the way it always is
and that is—never done

So, I'll just leave it as it is

IF BE

Silence swallows me
like a cloudy day

I'm holding my words to my chest—
typing upside down

Labor requires contortion
and sometimes

Love and poems must be aborted
before they strangle the heart

YOU ARE THE MOVIE

and the camera, the producer
        is your mind
and the world's in charge of wardrobe and sets
        so, get a grip

THREE I'S OF SPY

Identifying the target
Initiating the contact
Infiltrating the network

I'm an agent in the field
in the shadow world of self

MAYPOLE

"Let's dance and sing, it's Spring!"

        It's a time of terror and promise—
as my world collapses
                into a molding leafiness

And the cities wretch up their lonely

The years pass
        huge, remote, eyes in the sky

TRIKAYA

Up down sideways
in out center
here there
        where?

All the "bad stuff" is destiny

Less bio-diversity means it's easier
to control harmony

Then, natural cycles can be manipulated to…?

Events-sequence
                time is an accident
                time is a coincidence
                time is a plan

Relationship between
one's self and one's elf

Between
        a distinct self
                and the Divine Self

SUMMER AND ALL

Nothing depends upon
the luminous junk assemblage
resting on the rusty wheelbarrow
except its shadow on the dewy grass

ANCIENT EYES

I see through you
clear to the bone, those pins
in your Botticellian ankles
are ornaments from a nasty fall

I see through you because
I have ancient eyes, have
x-rays your gynecologist
will never see

VI. Ritual Closure

Ends with ritual, art, alphabetic play, and seasonal collapse

PROJECT: MAKE A BOX

A box of Hell
a box of Heaven
wired with sound
w/audible screams & harp music
or mantras

A brass dial calibrated for each religion

Give a small talk
about rationalizing away the dogma
as though heavens & hells don't exist

IN EVERYTHING IS EVERYTHING

All marriages are born in the source
a marriage of marriages

Your marriage is consummated
in yab yum bliss

May your path be fruitful
and your love fulfilled

PAINTING THE SISTINE CHAPEL

A full complement of clouds—
cumulus locomotives above an open pit

Recognize that you're on a work gang
mining titanium for TiO2

Pigment color
Binder resin, glue, egg white
Solvent makes paint flow
vermilion in Middle Ages
mercuric sulfate
ultramarine lapis lazuli

A full complement of moonlight



BARDO SPAM

Jampa Dorje