

Bouvard Pécuchet

BOOK MANDALA

Vajra—space poems—emptiness poems
Buddha—poems involving myth
Ratna—social poems—“getting & spending”
Padma—love poems, poems of seduction,
unrequited love poems
Karma—work poems—poetic process

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Early letterpress books made up of 5 kinds of poems
political/ecological/poem of protest
anagogical/cosmic
abstractionist poetry/meta poetry
psychological/narrative
erotic

How to get to experience of Space
micro/macro cosmos—“as above, so below”
through time, storytelling
through self, explicit sense of Being
through language, concepts, images
through my meditation of nature of mind

How to get to experience of Bliss
powerful emotion experienced directly—“Glory, Glory, Glory” awe of Nature—
“world, still hip ‘n’ happenin’”
meditations on Orbs, Winds & Lights
sexual experiences

Belief systems employed

Christian mysticism, Catholic (St. John of the Cross, St. Francis) & Protestant
(Blake, Bohme, Swedenborg)

Sufism— Zikr, Rumi

Hebrew— Old Testament writings, Cabbala

Theosophy—divination—Tarot, Astrology, I Ching

Greco-Roman—Mother Goddess—Arts, poetry, dance, music, philosophy

Skepticism—sciences, anthropology, medicine, chemistry, physics—logical positivism,

language analysis, deconstructionism

Taoist/Hindu/Buddhist—Zen/Dzogchen

Native American Teachers

Richard Running Deer—Southern Ute Medicine Man

Grandma Bertha Grove—plant spirit medicine

Hunting and working with Clinkats in Ketchikan—trading with Athabascan natives

Western Philosophers (outside classroom)

Price Charleston—Professor of Aesthetics,

University of California—hikes in the Berkeley hills, museums

dinners and drinks in Price's Maybeck

Chester Keller—Professor of Philosophy with a special interest in Mysticism—

Central Washington University—research into esoteric philosophies

Webster Hood— Professor of Ethics Philosophy with interest in money management

Patron of the arts

Other belief systems explored:

Masonic Order— Worshipful Master of Ellensburg Lodge #39—Secretary of Lodge

Professional Astrologer & Tarot Reader—

mentorship by David Pond—editing of *The Metaphysical Handbook*

Study of Gurdjieff & Ouspensky with Chela Wakefield—

Introduction to Evans-Wentz by Jon Springer

Alice Bailey study group in Roslyn, Washington

Works of Rudolf Steiner channeled through Tamara Slayton

Benish at University of Alaska, Fairbanks—study of Zimmer's *Six Philosophies*

study of Bohenski's *Contemporary Methods of Thought*

Shamanism

Bön, Red Path, Beat and Crazy Wisdom traditions

Divination

crystal dousing, palmistry, Tarot, I Ching, Feng Shui, ornithology, Alchemy, germatia & numerology, Cabbala

Healing procedures

Ayurvedic, Sweat Lodges, Massage,

Naturopathy, Nuclear Medicine

Pharmacology—psychedelics

LSD, pot, peyote, mescaline, psilocybin, along with various psychotropic drugs

Book structure

gyre/mandala

episodic— “seek to discover self”

vision experience—inner world meditation

adventure in natural world

creative process from the book, itself—

form/content— see “My Process” essay
tradition/innovation— oral tradition/collage
techniques— “phanopoeia”

Musical Influences:

Classical— 3 B’s + Schubert
 Beethoven’s Last Quartets—
 Bach’s Brandenburg Concertos
 Stravinsky— Sati— Bartok
Jazz— Parker, Monk, Miles, Coltrane, Ellington, Gillespie
Opera— Mozart, Puccini, Wagner, Berg
Rock ‘n’ Roll— Beatles—Stones—Mothers of Invention—Nirvana
Blues— Bessie Smith—Leadbelly—Mance Lipscom
Folk— Pete Seeger, Joan Biaz, Bob Dylan, John Fahey, Robbie Basho

Poetic tutelary deities

Ezra Pound—(body)—”make it new”—
 collage technique applied to poetry
Dylan Thomas—(voice)—oral tradition, Homer, Hesiod, Orpheus
William Carlos Williams—(mind)—invent—“no ideas but in things”

Chaucer—form/content—Shakespeare—imagination—Donne—metaphysics
Shelly—emotion—Byron—exoticism—Keats—clarity
William Blake—printer/visionary

Allen Ginsberg—what’s happening in the world?
Robert Creeley—sense of measure—poems of the hearth
Charles Olson—causal mythology— projective verse
Jack Spicer— serial poetry— collected books concept

Geographies:

Poems of place—urban/bucolic
 poems of workplace—architecture—nature
Poems of space—language poems—emptiness/bliss—singularity/infinity
Poems of the heart
 compassion/skillful means—seduction/longing (Sufi)
Poems of Self-hood & Samsara
 fear of existential nothingness/experience of bliss-emptiness/poems of union
 autobiographical poems—war poems, work poems, poems of liberation
Poems written under other names—Denner & Co., A. Artaud, Jampa Dorje, Bouvard Pécuchet
Faux poetry—“forgeries”

Poems of humor—jokes, puns, language games—black humor (Surrealism)

Poems of Eden—creation myths, Lost Eden—ecological disaster poems

Moving by fits and starts— poems of innocence & experience

Poems of hesitation—see *Second Boiling*

Poems of adventure —“The Beast” in *Tack Shack*
and “Woodnotes” in *Second Boiling*

Poems of seduction— see *Slowly, Curve of Wind*

Poems of unrequited love— see *New Gravity*

Poems of realization— see *Songs of Jampa Dorje*

Poems of despair— see *Ice Moon*

Vajrayana Empowerments & Transmissions by:

H.H. Dali Lama

Sogyal Rinpoche

Chogyal Namkai Norbu Rinpoche

Adzom Paylo Rinpoche

Jetsun Khacho Wangmo Rinpoche

Lama Gyurme Tersing Rinpoche

Tulku Sang-nang Rinpoche

Lama Rinchen

Khetsun Sangpo Rinpoche

Kilung Jigme Rinpoche

Tsoknyi Rinpoche

Gangteng Tulku

Chagdud Tulku

Tulku Orgyen

Lama Wangdor

Lama Karma

The above sources are the background for *The Collected Books of Richard Denner* and suggest some form of organization to the whole arc of his printed books, if no more than his episodic and ongoing search for selfhood. As Sogyal Rinpoche so succinctly put it, “If you don’t have a self” (meaning, I suppose, an integrated self) “how can you get rid of it?”

Extending this a bit further, what’s it means to feel the “meant to be-ness” of one’s existence? to say, “I was meant to be!”—it’s implications and further lack of any answer as to “meant for what?”

At any rate, this is his ongoing quest, and if the reincarnation of poet tulkus occurs in the western tradition, only the process of their manifestation not being understood, and with no system in place to catch the culprits in their early stages of development from the list of teachers, you can see his Buddhist training has been almost exclusively as a Nyingma, many of the teachers presenting him with a strong dose of Dzogchen and Anu yoga tantra, and these practices transmitted through *terma*

teachings, this means that his experience has not been altogether traditional, in the sense, such that, at this stage, he is only doing preliminary practices

But to the books—these are not in a traditional format, being presented in a collected book format, an appropriation of Robin Blazer’s *Collected Books of Jack Spicer*, but in my collections the formatting is closer to each original chapbook with the presence of the covers and artwork and maintaining the original typefaces. The title pages pay homage to Jack in design and with an epigram from one of his works.

The Collected Poems:1961-2000, with an elegant essay by Lee Harris, was organized in chronological and geographical order, whereas *The Collected Books of Richard Denner* are for the most part (he is never entirely consistent) organized in the order they were published.

Volume 1 begins with an exception to the rule, the group consists of 5 sets of poems, each consisting of subsets, that were published in 1998 when Richard moved to Santa Rosa, California, but before he had a computer. These books utilized the stitching technique that he learned from Wesley Tanner at Arīf press which allowed him to create books up to 60 pages. He began with *Letter to Sito in Time of War*, a collection of poems that were at the beginning of the *Collected Poems*, although he had to reorganize the small letterpress books (i.e., *Denner Recipes*) reducing their size and formatting and printing the linocuts in black and white. No matter, the collection was nearly inclusive of that phase of his work. Others will no doubt surface in the future, and since the idea of the war without end seemed pronounced in his oeuvre, a good place to begin—the tendency of the poet to create his own “flower” during all the “fallout” (a form of subversion in its own way).

Volume 1 contains his first books in facsimile, in the order they were collected with two exceptions, *Breastbeaters* was omitted, and *The Scorpion*, forgotten. In their place is *On Borgo Pass* which includes newer poems mixed with older artwork. This combination fits together well and gives the volume an overall sense of development because the poetic output summarizes three decades. Volume 1 contains early poems published in a wide variety of chapbooks before he moved to Santa Rosa, poems he retyped using a large-font typewriter, and it also includes the three offset volumes printed at Record Printing: *New Gravity*, *Flake on Flake*, and *Said Just So*, along with *Islam Bomb*, a book set using an IBM Selectric Composer, a machine used in newspaper back shops to justify lines before the advent of personal computers. In her beautiful introduction, “Having Tea with Blake: Self-publishing and the Art of Richard Denner” Belle Randall claims: “In order to justify self-publication we only need make books that are truly beautiful.” 8 chapbooks. 258 pages.

Volume 2 is a collection of the poems Richard wrote in Ellensburg, Washington. These are the first copy machine poems, for the most part poems of unrequited love. His sex addiction was disruptive and destructive of human relationships. Even with the infusion of Rumi-esque and Rilkean motifs, he reveals he is unable to transcend his manipulative and seductive behavior without the aid of true tantric insights. This volume covers nearly a decade, love, love, love, but perhaps a tad too much negative Padma family energy and not nearly enough wisdom of discernment. Volume 2 also includes *Too Many Horses*, *Not Enough Saddles* and *Blank Flower*, poems written after Richard’s first encounters with native American and tantric teachings. There

are glimmerings of the *tigles* of transcendence. 20 books. 254 pages.

Volume 3 collects the books written in Pagosa Springs, after he sold the Four Winds Bookstore and Café and moved to Colorado to be a part of Tara Mandala Retreat Center. Blessings from Tara's swift undermining of neurotic conditioning and bliss freedom with practical purification of karma yoga, there's nothing like manifesting as a 16-year-old Mandarava daily to give a rough and tumble middle-aged Beat poet inner direction towards equanimity with the feminine. This volume contains *Xitro*, a dirge and homage to his mentor, Allen Ginsberg.

The presence of Simhamukha in *Turn Beauty Turn* and *Sambhogakaya Cowboy* in the same volume, where it resides after *Cow Songs*, contrasts the Ellensburg cowboy and the Colorado cowboy, the books juxtaposed rather than in consecutive published order, reveal an area of risk here, as Richard's teacher, Lama Tsultrim Allione, was not pleased, at this time about his poems containing Tantric deities, saying he shouldn't mess with these practices until he had mastered them, thus overstepping his samaya by publishing poems that have a somewhat sacrilegious tone. The first draft of poems in *Sambhogakaya Cowboy* are later revised in *Constructive Rest*.

At first, Richard bucked under this censorship, but he submitted to his teacher's wish and discovered that the poems were stronger without the esoteric terminology, although in staying honest with his creative process, he later included these earlier versions. Volume 3 covers a lot of territory. Beginning in Pagosa Springs, the books are in the order of creation and publication through *Talking Trash*, after he moved to Santa Rosa, still in order, then dropping back to his experiences in Berkeley in the '60s, in *Hollow Air*, still in order of publication. Then, *Cow Songs* still in publication order, although returning to Ellensburg in subject matter. Poems written in Santa Rosa, *Xitro* and *The Spot*. loop the loop. 12 books. 244 pages.

Volume 4, publication of books in order of creation, show Richard returning to writing into the book that he had initiated in his Deep Bay letterpress poembooks. Now (in 1998), he has a computer, and he puts his work into publisher files and creates books from the computer templates, which enables him to bring abandoned poems from the past together into new serializations. Also, Richard's meeting and collaborating with Claude Smith gave new impetus to his work. With Claude playing his standup base and Richard speaking his words, as well as Richard using Claude's artwork, they can inspire each other. Richard's poetry began to take on a new dynamic with these vibrant print editions. Two seminal books in Volume 4 are *Green Fire* and *Second Boiling* and represent a change in stylistic direction and indicate an increasing preoccupation with metaphysics. 7 books. 252 pages.

Volume 5 contains the two Artaud books, the forgery *Another Artaud* and the "cyberpoem" called *Wavetwisters*, along with the series of poems inspired by Kimberly Clark, beginning with *The Bad Ballerina*, continue in *The Call*, and are fully realized in *The Bad Ballerina Dances Against Violence*. Here it is apparent that the same poems are present in different collections, that they surface in different versions, sometimes whole and sometimes in part, and they play against other poems and take on new meaning. One critic of this series said that they try to be something they aren't. Now, what would that be? 8 books. 262 pages.

The Collected Books of Richard Denner came from an idea he says he had in the middle of the

night, seeing that he could make the collection manifest by taking all the masters of his previous books, running them off and cutting them in half, then stacking them in order, which of course meant creating new page numbers for all the books, as well as creating new masters for many of the books that were published before he had his computer. Since the older copy machine masters used photo-sensitive paper that has darkened into illegibility, he took the few existing copies of these books he had archived and took them apart and copied each page and assembled new masters and pasted page numbers in by hand—a tedious process but rewarding.

Volume 6 is an eclectic collection. Volume 1 began with the already existing set of his five early books, so he began there, but one book, *Breastbeaters*, was suppressed because he was ashamed of its homeliness. This was his first book, printed by Dennis Weir, in Berkeley, in 1963. The offset plates were burned in an orange crate in a closet with a 200-watt bulb, and the result was anything but spectacular. Misspellings did not improve the presentation. At first, he passed them out with joy, but over time he had become embarrassed over the quality of printing and the derivative nature of the *D.T. Poems*, where he shamelessly imitated Dylan Thomas, but beginning with *On Borgo Pass*, a new start in his writing, and with the acquisition of a computer, he began to draw on some of the metaphors from that book, reworking some of the poems, and once he realized that the weird inkings were a part of the intrigue of dPress, he accepted these juvenile poems as a part of the process, alpha meeting omega, and that they found their rightful place in *The Collected Books* Pantheon. The body of work was missing its lost belly button. Richard realized he had also forgotten to include *The Scorpion*, a chapbook printed at Arif Press in Berkeley by Wesley Tanner, in 1975, which is an example of very fine printing. Now included in *The Collected Books* with his funky early dPress letterpress books, Richard realized that all along he been trying to rectify what he thought of as the original “mistakes” in his printing.

Following *Breastbeaters* and *The Scorpion* in Volume 6 is *A Double Play*, a collaborative work with Luis Garcia. Lu being so important to his development as a poet, at times we think they are almost one and the same, soul mates, because they let their poems mingle, poems that imitate each other’s styles. This book is followed by *Pebbles* with a Japanese translation. This is a special edition of the poems published in *On Borgo Pass*. Next, two sets of poems, a war collection (*Road to War*) and a Buddhist collection (*Vajra Songs*), this last set by Jampa Dorje. Jampa Dorje is Richard’s Tibetan name (“Indestructible Lovingkindness”) and connects this book with *Another Artaud*, as the second written under a nom de plume. 9 chapbooks. 268 pages.

Volume 7 collects the short stores, separately printed as *The Episodes* which Richard wrote while he was caretaking his elderly father. These stories developed into an episodic biography of his father’s final days and an autobiography of his time in California. In 2002, Richard broke both his legs and spent the year recouping from the accident and creating the Comrades Press edition of his *Collected Poems: 1961-2000*, utilizing Xlibris, the print-on-demand technology. 7 books. 244 pages.

Volume 8 includes *Denner & Co.*, the collection he created after discovering the Portuguese poet, Fernando Pessoa, who intrigued him because he had created many personas with entire biographies and literary works, and Richard realized he too had been doing something along these lines with Artaud, Jampa Dorje, and myself, the Bouvard Pécuchet character which he had created for the Plagiarist Group, so he took this a step further by creating a series of books under each of the

different names and collecting types of poems as well as writing new poems to meet their specific personality needs. As Pessoa had allowed the writer who used his own name to be a persona, Richard resurrected “Rychard” (an Old French spelling of his name and also the handle he used as the Berkeley Barb poet) who for most of his life was the name he had used to sign artwork, a name that had originated in Berkeley in the 1960s, but now had become the spirit of his artistic process. 9 books. 266 pages.

At this juncture in the *Collected Books* timeline, Richard had Jonathan Penton posit the eight volumes online at his dPress website. This strata of the dPress website (found at the bottom of the menu) contains each volume in both html and pdf formats, and each chapbook is separately listed. (In these days, not all computers could open pdf files.) Richard considered this set of volumes to be a “cyber-stupa” or online reliquary containing his mindstream. Jonathan Penton was Richard’s third webmaster. The first site was designed by Jesse House who lived in Camp Meeker, California. The intention to sell books and displayed snippets of the works offered. The second site by Peter Max Lawrence, who lived in San Francisco, expanded the content, and presented itself in a minimalist design. This design idea was carried over into Penton’s format because the concept of archiving my works became the primary focus of dPress. The eight books of Volume 8 were housed in a cardboard box (shades of *The Ring Trilogy*) and were reproduced a few times for close friends and members of my family. One set is archived at Shields Library at UC Davis and one set at Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley.

Volume 9. At this point, all things went kook. Lee Harris writes an introduction titled “The Polyhedral Polemics of Unbound Denner.” An assortment of poetry and prose works are collected, including *A House Jack Built* which is Richard’s forgery of Jack Spicer’s *The Heads of the Town Up to the Aether*. Richard put on his robes, after the election of “W” in 2004, and in 2005 was ordained by Adzom Paylo Rinpoche as Tibetan Buddhist monk. 8 books. 268 pages.

Volume 10 contains an eclectic collection of writings, ranging from the letterpress “poembooks” from the ‘60s and ‘70s, printed in Deep Bay and Fairbanks (now collected and printed with a copy machine), to tree planting poems from the ‘80s to essays and poems and stories written while at Tara Mandala and Santa Rosa in the ‘00s. 5 books. 278 pages.

Volume 11. Jampa studied flash fiction with Gianna De Persiis Vona at a Sebastopol Community College night class and liberated himself from the restrictions of poetry. Volume 11 contains *Sam* which is Jampa’s telling of his caregiving experience with his dad, sometimes referred to as “The Episodes” and the beginning of an unfinished novel titled *Murder in the Bohemian Grove*. Uncollected in *The Collected Books* is the trilogy *100 Cantos*, written in collaboration with David Bromiage in 2004; Volume 11 contains “The Prologues” that were part of their forgery, *The Canto Beery Tales* (2005). 3 books. 284 pages.

Volume 12 contains the last of Jampa’s writings before he entered his long retreat in the cabin, Luminous Peak, at Tara Mandala in 2009. Tobey’s Jubal is my collection of romantic short stories about Jampa’s in the persona of Jubal Dolan. Also, there are some short works in a smaller format. 11 books. 260 pages.

Volume 13 contains the first three volumes of *A Book from Luminous Peak*, grouped in a series of

chapbooks with the word “moon” in the title. These books are scanned and reduced in format from the notebooks that were hand-written in calligraphy by Jampa while he was in retreat between 2009-2013. 13 books. 262 pages.

Volumes 14, 15, and 16 comprise Richard’s autobiography, written by in the third person about Jampa by me—*Jampa’s Worldly Dharmas*. This trilogy consists of ten notebooks written in calligraphy with watercolors and drawings. It is written in the form of an abecedary of adventures and was written in third-person style to get to the sexual truth, stories Richard couldn’t bring himself to tell and stories with details that did not seem appropriate for a monk to reveal. The original text is in flash fiction style with very little editing. The reprinting of the stories allowed for some stylistic revision and research for accuracy. 3 volumes: v.14, 268 p.; vol.15, 272 p.; vol. 16, 268 pages.

Volume 17 contains two collections of Jampa’s pencil drawings. Again, these have been scanned and reduced in size. Lu Auz, Jampa’s daughter, who is an art historian, sent Jampa a copy of *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain* by Betty Edwards and a copy of *Anatomy Lessons from the Great Masters* by Robert Beverly Hale and Tarence Coyle. Jampa jumped right in, taking Edward’s lead and “drew what he saw” while, at the same time, appropriating figures from the masters to illustrate his whimsical meditations on the nature of mind. Part. 1, 130 p. Part 2, 176 p.

Volume 18. After his long retreat in Luminous Peak undergoing intense yogi training and Dzogchen meditation, Jampa was instructed to return to everyday life. During the five years he had been in semi-retreat and long retreat, the U.S. economy had crashed and begun to recover, and to his surprise, everyone had a smart phone with which they were engrossed. He felt like Rip Van Winkle returning from Shangri la. He had od’d on Eastern Enlightenment and needed to a strong dose of 18th century Western Enlightenment to understand what was transpiring. He lived with Lama Gyurme and his family in Santa Fe for two years. He purchased a new computer and got an android and tried to catch up on American culture by watching all the Oscar-winning movies, much to the chagrin of his Vajra lama, Tulku Sang-ngag Rinpoche. He had lunch with Namkai Norbu Rinpoche and Lama Tsultrim and was given their blessings. In 2015, Jampa moved back to Ellensburg, Washington, to be near his family and to audit philosophy classes at Central Washington University. He completed *The History of a Novel Idea* (2016), his first attempt to synthesize Eastern and Western philosophies with comparative cosmological texts and positing that a foundation for moral behavior might be found in aesthetics. 5 books, 296 pages.

Volumes 19, 20, 21, and 22. The chapbooks change formats. Jampa tries to re-invent the freshman essay as a form of art by mixing genres and delving into an array of subject matter. He tells his personal story—“How did a Berkeley Street Poet become a Tibetan Lama?”—with witty asides and well-researched concepts, following a Deleuzean rhizomatic approach to storytelling. Then, Covid-19 appeared and shut down society for two years. Fortunately, Jampa was prepared for retreat life and took advantage of his situation and began to zoom classes online and rework his tales into the essays he presented to his professors, who began to see what he was about in his research and encouraged him. He compiled forty-two of his essays into one volume: *Aesthetics: the Philosophical Treatises of Richard Denner, Jampa Dorje, and Bouvard Pécuchet* (Kapala Press, 2021, Ellensburg, a tome of 472 pages) and presented a copy to each member of the CWU Philosophy Department as a faux thesis.

The Collected Books of Richard Denner: 186 books spanning 6,916 pages.

The High Mountain Valley Local Authors Collection was created for Special Collections and Rare Books department of the Brooks Library in 2019. Jampa caught “archive fever” and realized he had a secret curator among his persona, a wisdom being searching for shelf space in the Total Library of the Universe. This life-death drive began when Jampa returned to Ellensburg in 2015 and mentioned to his friend, Mark Halperin, his concern about the meaning of his work. Mark said, “Even if it has no meaning, it was still worthwhile to leave something beautiful behind when we die.” Something *beautiful* that is also *good*—an archive!

In researching what Jacques Derrida calls the *notion* of an archive (for Derrida, the archive is a metaphor for the subconscious), Jampa came across *The Big Archive* by Sven Splieker, a book about Archive Art. A blurb on the back of the book reads: “In *The Big Archive*, Sven Spieker investigates the archive—both bureaucratic institution and index of evolving attitudes toward contingent time in science and art—and finds it to be a crucible of twentieth-century modernism.” Jampa knew what he was about to do: create and archive artwork, and now, with the help of his webmaster, Tory Jones of Ellensburg, he has: [dPress](#). Google it and enjoy.