

# KICKASS REVIEW



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# **KICKASS REVIEW**

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*Charles Potts*

### **LA ZAGA DE DUENDE**

Garcia-Lorca says in his theory among other things that  
Duende is the awareness of the presence of death.

I could bottle it.  
Hawk it like elixir,  
The dancing gypsy snake oil  
Of 20th century poetry.

I passed through death to say these things  
Coming out from under a waterfall  
Of a long since dried up river.

Duende has a short half life  
Being half death to begin with.

The true Duende can't be spoken.  
Stop listening for it in words.

Like the Tao of  
Creeping orientalism:  
The more you talk about it,  
The less of it you have.

### **A BETTER VIEW OF DEATH**

Walking in the upstairs hallway of our house at night  
There is so little light I cannot see.  
To keep from bumping into the wall,  
I reach out to touch the Brailly hall wallpaper and  
Feel my way along by fingertip.

Death will be like this, comfortable, invisible,  
And since I can't see  
Neither will anybody else be able to  
So there is no danger either.

Maybe the universe is dead if not merely asleep.  
All those exploding stars, pyrotechnic hydrogen outbursts

From which it gets its impetus across space and time  
Were just flashes in the pan.

The cool view of death:  
You can't see anything at all.

### **SERIOUS AS A HEART ATTACK**

Serious as a heart attack  
People say  
Trying for emphasis.

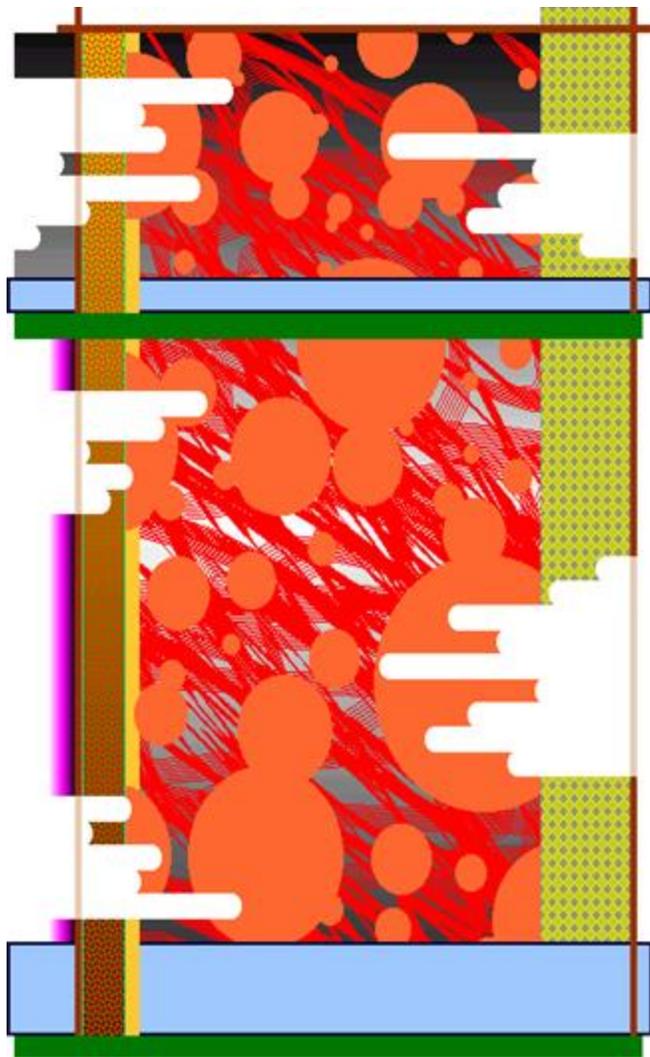
I've heard the phrase.  
Now I can use it  
With authority.

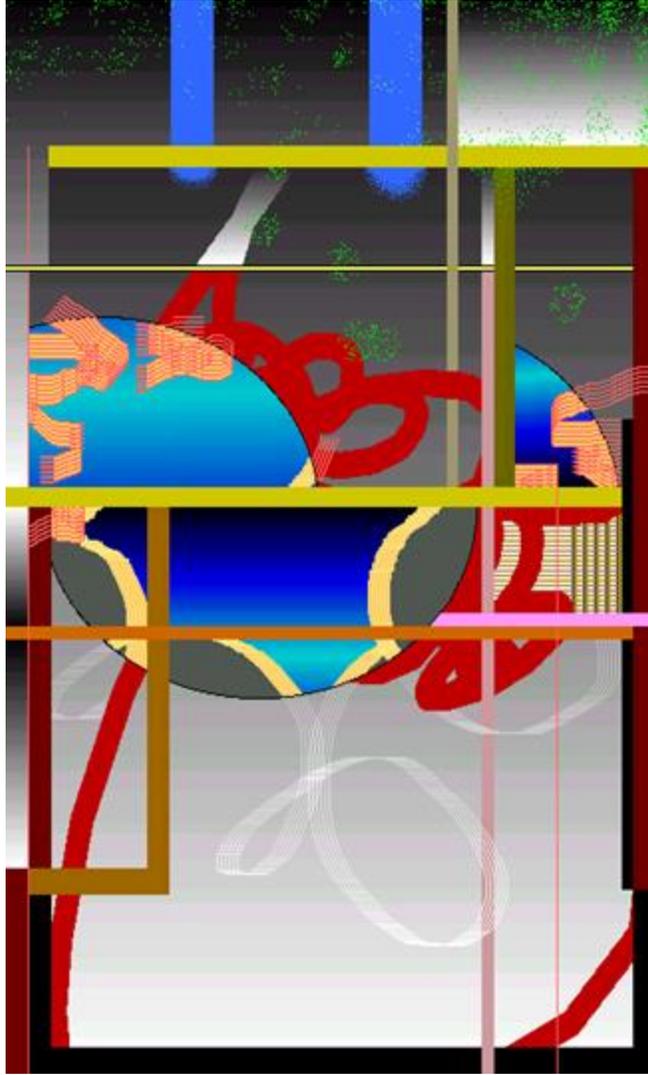
What does serious mean to you?  
Matter of life and death?  
"Stop acting like it was a  
Matter of life and death,"  
My mother used to say.

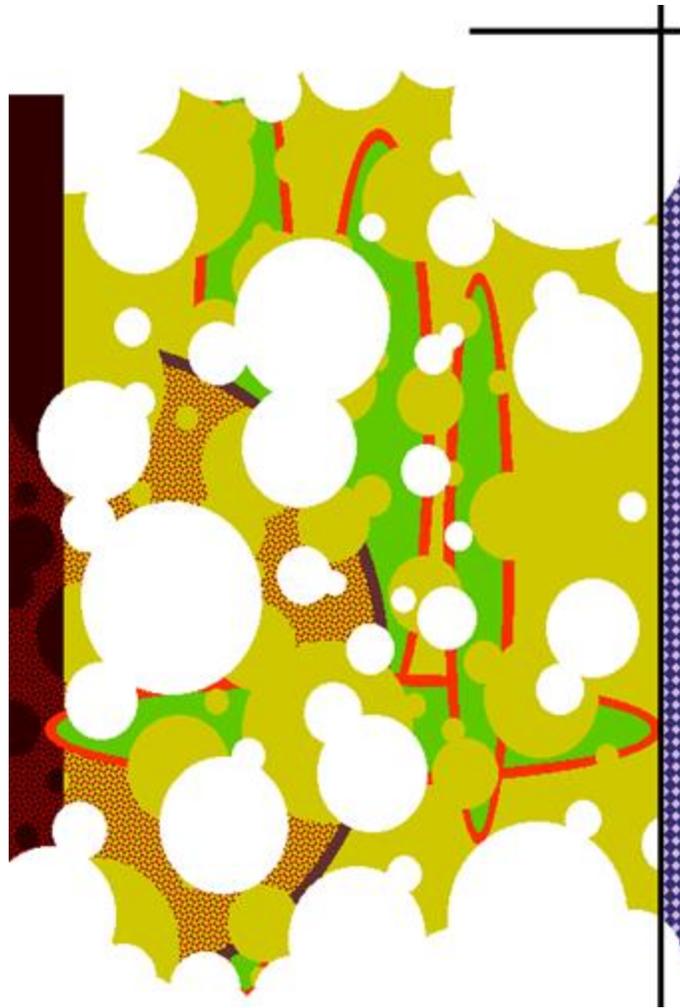
How serious was he?  
Serious as a heart attack.

*Mark Nolan*

**THREE DRAWINGS**







## *Jubal Dolan*

### **JUBAL**

[Editor's note: Some years ago, the writer, Jubal Dolan, vanished without a trace. His wife, Tobey, later gave me this story of Jubal's, which she found among his papers. She assumes it was written before his disappearance. BP]

The house Jubal was nearing was the house he had left months earlier. He had walked from this house without a word of goodbye. He had walked down the blinding block to the corner and caught a bus. He had worked at terrible jobs. He had wandered in the wilderness, covered with dung and experiencing other dimensions. He claimed he had seen fields crimson with carrion flesh. He said

he had heard angels singing and God whistling through his teeth. They had taken him to the county mental hospital.

As he walked, he could smell sage brush, and it reminded him of his life here. But the antiseptic smells of the hospital lingered in his brain, and he thought back to sitting in the dayroom, and he shivered in the cooling air. He felt ill with fever. The effulgence of the setting sun cast deep shadows, and he could feel the nearness of some ominous presence. It was the crystal meth that had driven him insane. Jubal felt his life was like bleached earth, and in the merciless intensity of his affairs, his soul had become singed.

Through the bars of his cell he could see the moon. Round. Very round, sharp-edged and much too close. He heard a coyote in the heavy silence beyond the hospital wall. The wind from the prairie pressed sensuously against the window with the turmoil of a demon. The TV din from the dayroom mixed in cacophony with the music piped into the long, sterile hallways.

He listened to Smitty in the next bed tell about riding boxcars in the 30s. "I started riding boxcars when I was fourteen. From New Orleans to New York to Chicago to Dallas to Frisco and back. And you meet some weird people. Got to be careful, too. Lots of ways to get hurt. Rode into a jerkwater town in New Mexico and walked into a restaurant to get myself some grub before my freight hooked up, and the guy behind the bar yelled bad words at me, and I bet he would've beat my head in, if I hadn't been fast getting back to the car. No, it's better to stay on the car. That is, unless some mean railroad bull takes a hankering after your skin."

Smitty had been transferred from the State Penitentiary because he had gone stir crazy. His most prized possession was a blanket made of stitched together Bull Durham bags. It was a gift for his daughter, if he could just get his hands on her, he said. Spirits in his heart wanted vengeance. And now, it was like Smitty was tagging along behind him, commenting on the weather. "Windy, isn't it?" His life now and his other parallel life right beside him. Lines drifting into infinity.

Jubal opened and shut the gate to the picket fence and stepped up to the door. He had seen a freshly cut flower he couldn't name placed near the latch of the gate. Beyond the door, he could hear the faint cry of an infant. At this time of day, his wife and children would be sitting down to eat, and he could imagine his wife, her lovely eyes. It is the eyes that hold secrets, he thought, eyes that let love in and let love out. Deep in the center of one another's eyes, Jubal and Toby had always seen their love reflected, their loss of innocence, their knowledge of Self...strange visions, swelling, thronging, wailing...a rhythmic revelation between them...and possibly now, the resurrection of her trust.

She would motion him to sit at the table. Food would be prepared. He would drape his coat over the chair and wash his hands at the kitchen sink and eat in silence. She would sit the infant in the corner to play, and then a string of complaints would pour from her. "Where have you been? The children have missed you. There's no money." His son would add, "I drug the colt behind the barn, Pa. It died of bad blood about a week ago. Same thing that killed the cows."

Later, he would sit by the fire. the flames would entrance him, and his melancholy would intensify. He would contemplate the dead colt, and he would get a crazy feeling of being choked.

He started to knock on the door of the little white cottage, as though it was a temple of wisdom. He whispered, in despair: "*Oh, dark night, when will the mayhem in my mind dissolve? When will I see daylight?*" And an invisible chorus sang, "*Maybe soon or maybe never.*" Then, he turned around and walked back the way he had come.

Later, sitting over a cup of coffee in the Hungry Dude Sandwich Corral, Jubal announced to all and sundry, "I feel like a blind man who doesn't know where he is, and whatever I might do about this condition, I can't always be watching TV."

### ***Belle Randall***

#### **A MAGICIAN AMONG THE SPIRITS From *A Book of Psychic Exposés***

I'm searched and bound,  
handcuffed and locked

In the upside-down  
Chinese Water Torture Cell

(Another form of the ubiquitous  
ghost cabinet).

Here in the dark,  
I work very hard,

Twisting and clocking  
my magnificent torso.

Counting the bars  
of spine-tingling music

So that when doors  
are unlocked and I'm found

Gone,  
all the knots and the locks

Are intact—  
proving the music

Celestial.

## TRADE SECRETS

Walking through walls  
Appearing to cut

A person in half—all  
Magic consists

Of a handful of tricks.  
You learn them quickly

And live with great sorrow.  
Trade secret number one:

Those who know don't talk.  
Number two: those who talk

Don't know. Number three:  
None of my tricks is magic,

But no one can explain them anyway.

*Claude Smith & S. Mutt*

### WABISABI: CLAUDE SMITH A POEM WITHIN A PLAY WITHIN A STORY *by S. Mutt*

I went to an art opening for Claude Smith in Railroad Square in Santa Rosa, a show called *Wabisabi*, which is a Japanese Zen phrase referring to the beauty of things impermanent, imperfect, and incomplete.

The artworks were found-objects: rusted metal, busted shingles, stained wine filters, tattered awnings, and a large film box with the corner torn that revealed the word “signature.” There was expertise in Claude’s presentation and juxtaposition of the objects of art.

When I lived on a cattle ranch outside of Ellensburg, Washington, I began collecting pieces of

junk I found, and I attached them to the old outbuildings until I had them completely covered with bones, rope, barbed wire, twisted metal, old farm implements, broken furniture, whatever seemed to fit.

Belle Randall tells me a *fit* is an Old English verse form, as in Lewis Carroll's verse "The Hunting of the Snark," which is a poem in 8 fits. I've always felt that my found-object sculptures were a satisfying extension to my collages, a shift in scale and a challenge in how to engineer objects so that the fewest fasteners and the least amount of glue, wire, nails are used to hold the structure together. These "combines" are assembled as though there is an inner fusion of parts, a union of forces, a merging of disparate elements, a meshing of objects in a metaphysic so loose that no accident is possible.

Claude says: "Truth comes from the observation of nature. All things are impermanent... all things are imperfect... all things are incomplete... and all are in a constant never-ending state of becoming or dissolving into nothingness. There is great beauty in the inconspicuous and ephemeral. *Wasisabi* is an appreciation of the evanescence of life and of our own mortality."



WS 1 Kodax Box 40" x 30"



WS 2 Wine Filter 72" x 36"



WS 3 Pan On, Pan Two

*Sibyl James*

## THE BELT

The father is very thin and not tall. He is cooking dinner. He is telling you about the boys, his son Lee and a friend, who are always in trouble. Last time he warned Lee he'd whip him if it happened again. It happened. This time it was a pay phone the boys brought home and smashed open for the loose change.

Saturday the father wore his biggest leather belt and took the boys out to the garage. You raise your eyebrows and he says I know it but a promise is a promise. He stirs the soup.

This is an archetypal story told by a man who understands an archetype. He knows you think this is the archetype of a fool. He felt foolish. He pulled a muscle in his arm, practicing a whip-like motion on the street, until he realized people watched him. He primed himself to anger all morning, the way you think sad thoughts in a silly movie, afraid you'll laugh yourself to death. Otherwise he knew he would laugh, telling his son to bend and lean against the wall. Lee was trembling already. Don't cry, the father says. He knows a ritual is a ritual.

Two hits. Not hard, he notes, but almost orgasmic. This time you frown, not sure you want to sit here listening, waiting for this soup you're meant to eat together, friendly, the mismatched plates waiting on the faded tablecloth your grandmother might have spread. Me are so hard to love.

Orgasmic and foolish. And frightening too because now it's the other boy's turn and he's a head taller than the father. Heavier and he leans easily against the wall like a gracious horse bending for a fly bite. A boy stands by his buddy, even when it's not his father's belt. A boy goes into the woods and shoots a bear. You know the rest.

This is the funny part of the story. The father thought ahead about his size and the boys' and how he's over forty and smokes Camels and hasn't made enough money to eat well for years. Before he took the boys out to the garage he checked it over, hid the axe and anything that might have made a club. Being a father is dangerous and hard.

He's laughing now, stirring it into the soup so hard you're laughing too. There's nothing left but the explanation. How the three of them sat down on the dirt floor, smelling the years of oil leaked into it from bad engines. How he wanted them to understand they'd made him mad enough to become a fool.

And tells you what he didn't say then, what a father always takes too many years to say, and just puts on his belt instead. He says his son is stoo much like him, and shakes his head as if the picture of his own past clouded up and blurred the soup.

He hasn't looked over at you for a long time, and doesn't now, telling the end. Why did they break the phone open for a lousy ten dollars in change? Lee said I knew you'd give me money. And I know you never really have it, so I didn't want to ask.

The cat walks in and stretches. You play with the loose threads on the hem of the tablecloth. The kitchen is cold and the man stirring soup wears an old down vest above his flannel shirt. His hair falls forward on his thin face and neither of you speaks. You think you could draw a frame around the way he stands there now and hang it on the closet nail beside the belt he'll leave there until he leaves it to his son. And both of them will laugh then and tell the story differently and this is known as history.

You think a thin man stirring soup has never looked so fine.

## CLOSED

Going to the door is hard.

—ROBERT CREELEY

When she leaves, she locks her bedroom door  
because you leave the others open, and the street  
could enter without knocking but never does.

I read about a man once standing on a corner  
for a week. Hands in his pockets, not  
begging, not playing a cracked guitar.  
He said he wanted to be seen.  
His face was like a pond at dusk,  
full of trout lips, stretching after flies.

Tonight the striped cat sleeps against her  
shoulder in the big chair. She reads.  
You get up once to shift the fire.  
Your child coughs in her dreams, turns over.  
This is a painting you keep hanging  
on your wall. There is nothing behind it.

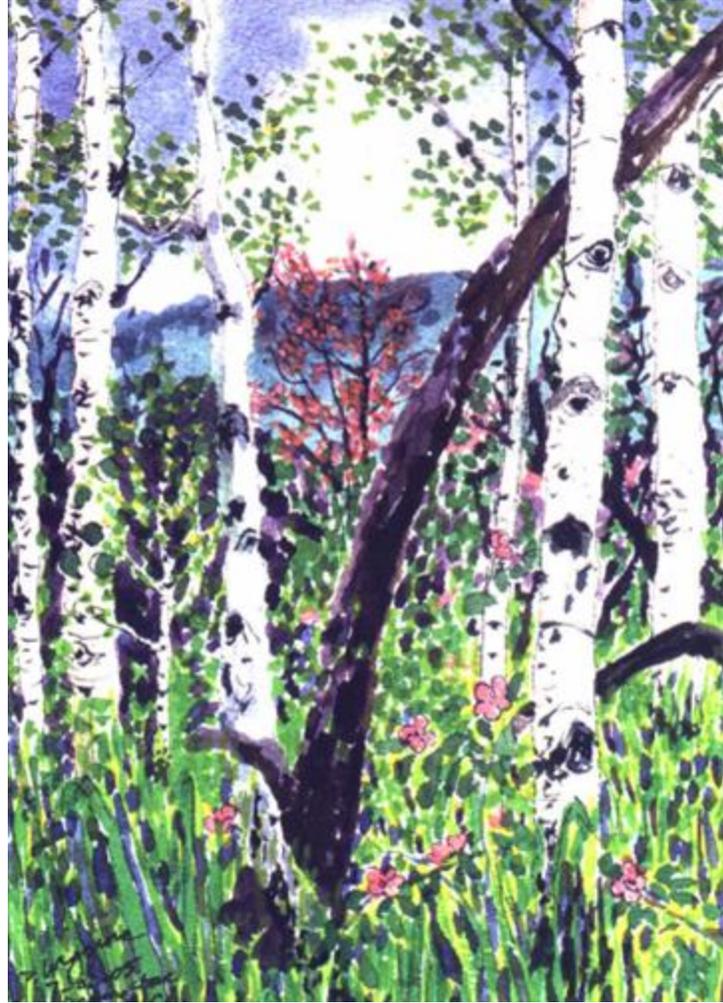
You were behind the open doors once,  
your hands moving like a deaf man's  
signing, let me in or out.  
You fade, a color on the wind, a shadow  
funneled hard against itself until it clots  
in one small stone. If she looked now  
she would see the memory of your hands  
shifting in the memory of a door.

At night the stairs to her room fold up like ladders.  
You have stopped stretching for the last rung.

*Pricilla Wiggins*

THREE WATERCOLORS







*Lorenzo Ghibilline*

**THE DOT BOOK**

don't  
dot it  
do it

84,000  
dots

it dot is  
it dot  
it is

bring attention  
to it

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  
alone 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



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

dot dash  
dot de dash  
de dot do da do it  
dedowa

dot



pinning the head  
on the  
dotting  
ol' fool

dot

dotters  
grand  
dotters  
& great  
grand  
dotters

dot

polk  
adot

z  
e  
a  
l  
o  
u  
s

d  
o  
t  
s

*zest* having to do  
w/orange peel, as spice,  
adds zest, *zeal* is zest  
orange= red w/yellow

Fairbanks  
1971

## PHOTO COLLAGE



**LINO CUT**



*Elizabeth D.*

**CONVERSATIONS ON THE ASTRAL**

“hold your breath until you believe...  
.....  
.....”

unfortunately for us, inertia is fat

.

don't look  
to right  
don't look  
to right  
my left

I said.

for that  
right I  
struck  
left I  
dead.

and still  
don't look  
to right  
don't look  
to right  
my left  
I said.

.

...she kep' an ace up her cunt."

A very funny girl;  
Joan of Arc.  
Excitable,  
a little too excitable.

...but she didn't have any pimples."

The ace?  
Well,  
at the core  
she didn't discriminate much.

.

"Gee, I wish you hadn't take it off.  
I was just beginning to get interested."

.

Hey  
Mister Anselm,  
commirror. I  
I want to  
show you  
something  
that doesn't



1967 Deep Bay

*Eve West Bessier*

## NEIGHBORS

The little girls from next door are hiding in my yard again. Their names are Jennifer and Lisa and they both have very long hair and that pallid, bluish complexion of the kind children get, no matter what their skin tone, when they exist on a diet consisting mainly of McDonald's Happy Meals and Lucky Charms. I don't mind that they play in my yard without asking because, for one, I know the real reason they are over here is because they are hoping that the boys are home and that, if they make enough noise, the boys will come out, investigate, and possibly play. Though, technically, I could be uptight about it because the youngest one, Jennifer, has forbidden the boys to utilize the chicken coop which is directly between our two properties as well as banning them from playing on their tree, though they can often be found playing on ours. But I have enough going on in my life without getting involved in the politics of the girls next door who like to play with my kids but aren't always very nice, and so I leave them alone, making sure only that the doors are shut, because the boys are not home, and the girls have an irritating habit of running in unannounced.

The boys don't seem to care about the girls one way or the other, an attitude that I neither encourage nor discourage, because their mother is a Christian and a little bit nutty. I have learned enough in my years as a parent to know that this is one of the many parental combinations best kept at an arm's length, especially when you're queer and smoke pot. She yells at her girls, though not consistently, with a marked edge of hysteria and volume that, when it happens we, meaning myself, my girlfriend, and the boys, will stop what we're doing, eyes wide, and listen with the sort of twisted dread and fascination that comes when secretly feeding off the instability of others.

My other neighbor, two houses down, asked me about it once. The yelling. As if I might have some bright idea about what to do about it, the proximity of our yards possibly providing me with some illumination into the situation, when clearly there is nothing to be done. This neighbor is one half of a lesbian couple, both of them therapists, and so I try and say the right thing because I would like for them to approve of me and because therapists, as a general rule, make me a little bit nervous. As if my every utterance could be seen as proof of my dysfunction. I tried to console her by pointing out that if we lived in Brooklyn or Queens, New York, people screaming at their children would be so commonplace we would hardly notice, in fact, we would probably be screaming at ours too, and that it is proof of our placid environment that a hysterical mother is such an anomaly.

This seemed to console her somewhat, and we then agreed that the screaming mother is under a lot of stress. Having suffered a tragedy. Her husband fell from a roof some fifty feet in the air and almost died, saved by the miracles of science, but now terrifically brain damaged. Becoming, through his own misfortune, the example that parents up and down Montgomery Road now use to deter their children from careless tree climbing.

“Have you seen him?” My lesbian therapist neighbor asks me, her voice lowered. “Don’t they ever take him outside?”

“I don’t think so,” I whisper back, glad that we have found something to talk about that doesn’t involve anything about myself, “He never comes out.”

As I walk back to my house I admonish myself for not being more helpful to my neighbor who is a little bit nutty, now that I have been reminded that she is under a lot of stress. I should be reaching out to the girls perhaps or offering my services as a baby-sitter, but then I walk past their driveway and see that the mother has put a KLOVE Christian Rock sticker on the back of her minivan, and I think better of it. So easily deterred from my good intentions. All it takes is a symbol, a raised voice, dietary negligence, and our differences are set, immobile. What signs, I wonder, does my neighbor see when she looks at me, that cause her to feel the same?

*Teresa Flisiuk*

## **THE NEW AGE FOR BEGINNERS**

The earth is alive. All things are intimately linked. Consciousness is pervasive. To an incredible degree we create our own reality. The knowledge that we are united on all levels and that we each have responsibility for our thoughts and actions is unavoidable. This knowledge provides the conceptual and spiritual foundation for a global civilization and the next stage of human development.

A non-wasteful, non-destructive, biologically benign world civilization is what is required if we are to continue living on this planet. The massive global change that must occur is a change in consciousness, a profound paradigm shift that will obviously be a very complex event. Yet the lines on which this change will be based are already visible.

There are two factors that powerfully assist in understanding this process of change. One factor is our knowing that alternatives really exist, knowing that we are not doomed to continue on in the same destructive way. With this knowledge it is easier to accept the idea that change is the only alternative to death. The second enabling factor is that once the realization occurs, there is a matrix within each person where the system can restructure itself. There is a source of guidance within and a source of guidance without.

At present, realization of the unacceptable nature of our way of life is spiking. Applying the imagery of input intensity and transformation to our problems is to see the upper limits of the ranges and the lower limits as well. There is a similarity in their dynamics truly to marvel at. At the high end of energy input, something strange and wonderful is happening, and it may be our salvation. Sometimes, systems in the predicament of having more energy than they can deal with are able to reorganize at a higher level as a more evolved and complex system. These systems are comfortable with the increased intensity of input and also possess increased capabilities. The image of the Phoenix comes to mind. Attaining Buddhahood or experiencing Christ Consciousness are examples of this phenomenon.

At the deep end, the processing capabilities of the planet are being overwhelmed. As this continues, Gaia sickens, and the extinction of species of plants and animals is the natural result. And the result of the planet in upheaval is that human illnesses due to environmental stress increases, the economies of each industrialized nation collapse, and political chaos and massive biological fallout from a shattered ecology ensue.

If there were no creative forces at work, the disaster would occur sooner rather than later, but inter-spaced within the public are many quiet ones. They say little, and they do not appear to do any startling things. They hold and guard knowledge and a vision that gives them a clue as to what is happening in the world. They act as yeast for their associates, keeping them by a subtle influence from sinking into despair. These quiet ones are students of a body of teaching which is sometimes known as Perennial Wisdom, passed on by an unbroken lineage of thinkers, down through the long reaches of history.

Such people believe that we are in the throes of transition from a long Dark Age into a New Age, an age that will see a glorious unfolding and consummation of the latent flower of wisdom within human beings. They believe that the discontent that effects people today is attuning them to a point where they will discover new qualities of compassion, a new sense of loving-kindness, and quite new ambitions, this despite the psychotic degradation of the planet's life-stream and the seemingly murderous instinct of the natural order.

The message is one of a great collective being, humanity, evolving towards a further stage in its development. It is a *rough beast* soon to give birth to a part of its consciousness that up to now has remained dormant and unknown. From these birth throes will come a true spiritual faculty as a part of our heritage on the planet. The spirit of the New Age is openness, love, intelligent searching, practical adaptation, and respect for the divine in all things. The term "New Age" suggests the cutting edge of consciousness and right relationship with life, as it manifests in all its forms. The New Age is a spirit, an attitude. It is not a subject matter. The New Age will not ossify and close. It is not Modern.

The occurrence that heralds the New Age beginning is the Sun, by precession of the equinox, entering the zodiacal sign of Aquarius. This will not properly prevail until the arrival of the Sixth Post-Atlantean Civilization. Our present Fifth Post-Atlantean Civilization will continue into the fourth millennium of what is delineated the Christian Era. Meanwhile, there are two temporal benchmarks, which are similar to that of the Age of Aquarius. One is the transition at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century from the Iron Age, which had lasted for five thousand years, to the Age of Light. The other factor is the advent of the Age of Michael, which began in 1879 and will last for the next four hundred years.

Seven Archangels serve as regents to this planet, directing and guiding the evolution of our species by determining the fundamental character of successive minor ages. With the aid of Michael, regarded as the Countenance of the Christ in the Picean Age, as formerly he was the Countenance of Jehovah in the Age of Aries, we will be able to spiritualize our intelligence. We will be able to transcend the conditions that immerse us so deeply in matter. Impulses, bearing an all-embracing human character that is cosmopolitan and spiritual, arise from the Michael forces as well as from those of the Aquarian water bearer. The Aquarian Age is still a long way off, but, as Chauncy Gardner so eloquently put it, "A few are sewing the seeds that must be planted in the present, if their fruit is to ripen in the future."

## LISTEN

We are alive in those photographs,  
energy streams, mischievous eyes,  
exuberant pores, brimming with sunlight.

We are alive as redwoods  
breathing, touching each other's roots,  
deep in musk of earth.

We are alive as children,  
crashing rubber boots against puddles,  
splashing around in temporary skins,  
ecstasy an impermanent smiling of fate.  
Just so, just as this exact moment of direct sun.

To stay precisely there, in that one spot,  
in that one nucleus of joy  
is the aching challenge.

Having to let you go is watching the red  
leak out of sunsets,  
is being the last to leave the theater  
after the curtain closes, the lights come on,  
glaring, unforgiving.

All the familiar, stubborn scents of reality  
flood my sympathetic senses  
through the neon flickering exit.

I hold the aftertaste of bliss as sacred,  
transcribed in silence,  
remembered with eyes closed and lips parted.

More and more time spills  
sleekly under bridges I cannot bear  
to burn too soon.

I am the reed that sways still  
in the lingering breeze of our experience,  
the tip of my tongue touching  
the sweet and sour tinge of loss.

I am the branch that wonders at the quick touch  
of the migratory bird who has ceased to quiver my limbs.

Only the breeze moves under my leaves, speaking of loneliness.

In the spring, will you return, teasing, rousing little bird?  
Faith wears her gossamer gown, bejewels her hair with aster,  
saying, "See, the sun rises again and again."

Days move to darkness. Winter sloshes around, despondent  
in old galoshes making noise and nasty weather and sinking  
into the soft bone marrow of memory.

I have these photos,  
only these photos of maroon and gold  
in early autumn, maroon and gold in laughter  
still resonant on the cliff's edges, in the ambered green of meadow grasses  
waiting to turn dull, waiting to greet snow.

Time never seems to tell the whole story  
all at once, but drops bits and pieces,  
a word here and there.  
You have to listen.

What is being said, is whispered in between  
the heartbeat of forever,  
is repeated  
never, never, never.

You have to listen, carefully.

Listen.

Listen.

Listen.

## **TERESA MELANCHOLIO**

Teresa Melancholio  
Królowo Woalu  
Duchu w ciężkich perfum otoku  
Weź mnie za sobą  
W tak łagodną drogę  
Jak twoje linie

I toczenie ramion

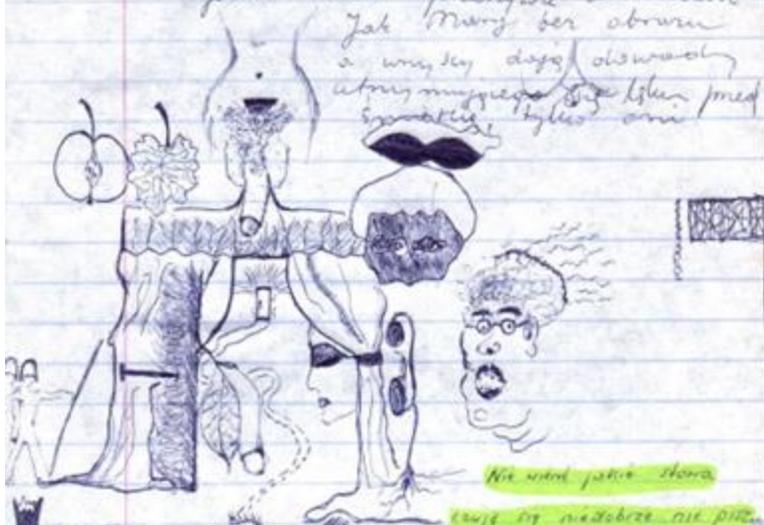
Pani Tajemnico  
Czarna Tajemnico  
Wierna powiernico  
Strasznego przebycia  
Ty jesteś Niespokój  
Ty jesteś Niewina  
Zsabierz mnie za sobą  
Gdzie się rozpovzyns  
Zabłąkana rzęsa  
Rajskiego motyla  
W ostygłe ognisko  
Twoich wielkich oczlu

Damo muzogłosa  
Bolesna usteczko  
I dalej już nie wiem  
Oprócz samej Ciebie  
Twój paluszek ujmę  
I za Toba pòjde

20/3/1984

**DRAWINGS**

Jeden wariat przeszedł w wolności  
Jak Marysia bez obrusa  
a w tym samym dniu oświadczył  
w tym samym miejscu i tym samym  
stylu o mi

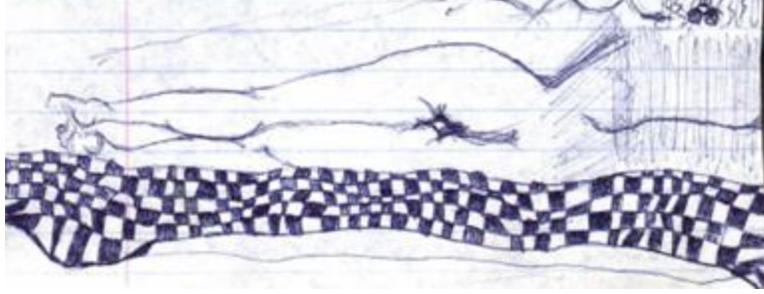
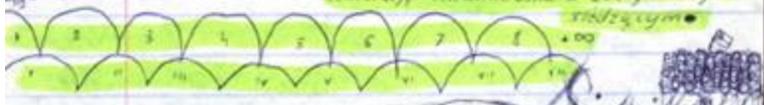


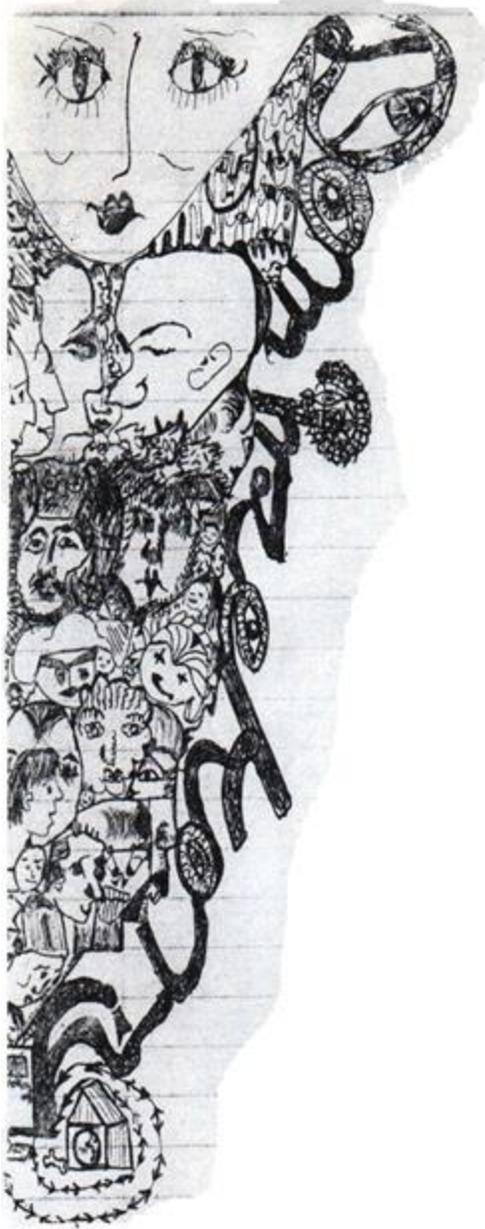
Nie miał jakieś słowa

Wszystko niedobrze się piło

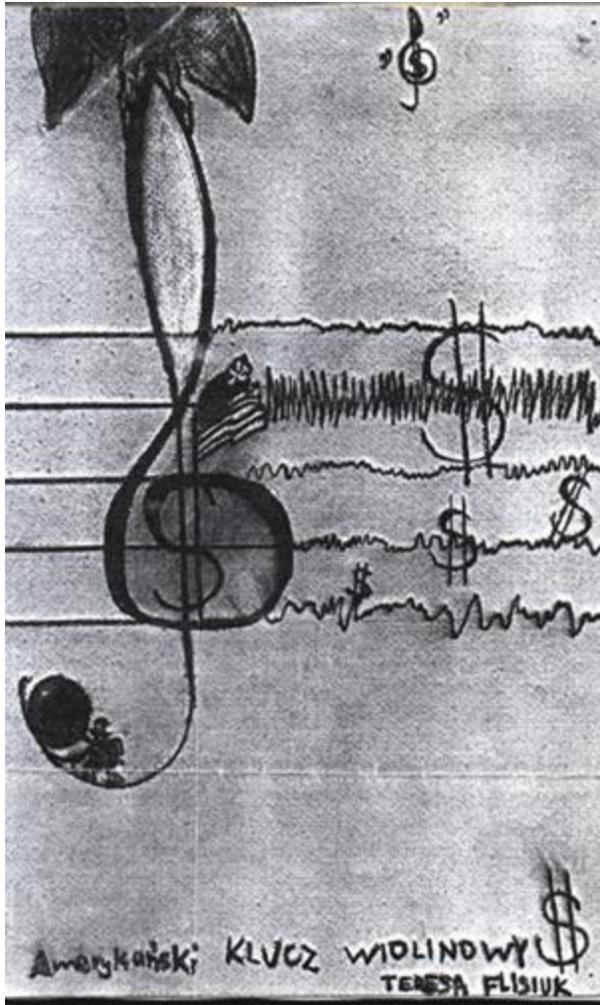
Hej! Jedźcie mnie oświecić

napój o smaku czarna Sztetana  
deklaracji odumienia w takim miejscu  
siódziemy





~~Michałowi Michalskiemu  
w domu który jest był.  
(posiedzenie projektu dla Tcheł.  
wobec w. 10/10)~~  
Będzie papier listowy



*Michael Rothenberg*

## ADRIFT

“There’s nothing like used underwear no matter who did it”

\*

“All these things seem to come out of my head  
Can you see what they are?”

\*

“Dishes & cups”

December 5, 2000

## MUFFIN

Reconnected, rebooked to arrive  
A jog & blink  
Run from terminal to treatable  
1 ½ hour to “Love Shack” in Reading  
Home of Reading Railroad?  
Resort from Revolutionary War  
Free Time  
Liberty Bell  
Scrapple?

Some kind of Oriental frijoles and carrot juice  
Goat cheese on English muffin

She chews gum  
Pumps throttle  
White sari, rose-colored glasses and adhesive third eye  
Ganesh Baba breathes down her neck  
The spine *must* be straight or the head will wobble

Prescription:

Vitamins  
Vegetables, no beef or chicken  
Yoga

Bed of Iris  
Pansies bloom too fast in Spring rain  
Running three hours late...

Conflicted peacocks court in tin roof morning dew honking  
*Da, Datta, Damyatta, Davayadam, Hail!*  
In Rochester  
Drum circle orientalist read cards:

“I am the center of the universe  
Washed in a wave of bliss

Seeking puja  
Under guidance of Lord Ganesh.. .”

Rush to meet lawyer and photographer friend  
at sweaty breakfast joint  
Gulp down food then take garden tour  
Fallen honeysuckle blossoms  
Stone benches carved with Shakespearean epigrams  
Hot house *neoregelia* in passionate heat  
Display of public affection

But before the poetry begins:

“My Dear, please don’t eat the muffin. You will ruin your appetite.  
Please honey, don’t slam the door. Why are you running to the bathroom  
all the time? Don’t you love me? It looks like bran but it’s loaded  
with sugar. Please don’t throw the muffin on the floor, honey. We can have it  
later for dessert.

No, nothing works. It can’t work! I’m foolish to have imagined it could!

“You don’t understand!!!!!!”

May 23 - June 11, 2001

## THE DANCER

“The subject of all painting is nothing more than visibility”  
Robert LaVigne quoting someone

A ballet of soldiers  
Social engineers, oil men and generals

Planted in pastoral mindscape

*“Don’t touch me”*  
*“I am Nijinsky”*

Swan Lake performed on real lake  
Graceful on points

Feeling, though purer, is more easily confused  
The body, subjective, proposes a Universal:

Scored by guiding intelligence—  
Organization with illusion of a plan—

The Universe relays invisible realms  
Between dream fragments

Serial Killers and Killer Crabs

September 2000-December 14, 2003  
Pacifica, CA

### **HOSPITAL VERLAINE**

Eating my way through the chocolate door  
“A telephone whimpering behind Latino jazz”

Increase the dosage. Let's get married

Mommie's not home  
Mommie's in Rome

Paris beacons a 3rd rate circus in a first rate hotel  
(The Price of Culture)

November 1, 2000

*Sir Author Ranting*

THREE DRAWINGS





After Bonard



*John Bennett*

## **AIR GUITAR**

### **Father and son reunion (Part 1)**

Daily Record, Ellensburg, Washington, February 19, 1993

He's an adopted child, and his formative years were normal until he signed up for classes at Berkeley in 1960 and moved out of his parents' specious home in the Oakland Hills (fourteen

rooms with horse stables). It was easy to become disoriented at Berkeley in the Sixties. We're talking Bay Area, birth place of Beatniks, Hippies, Black Panthers, the Free Speech Movement, the gold rush, the drug rush and the spare-change philosophy. Richard found his life getting turned inside out by the execution of Carl Chessman, the shenanigans of the House on Un-American Activities Committee, and a brace of pot-smoking coffee-house poets. He found himself trying to explain to his father what he was doing on the front page of the Oakland Tribune with his hand apparently extended in a sieg-heil salute. The fact that he was on assignment from KPFA and was holding a microphone, not giving the sieg-heil at all, didn't seem to be explanation enough—his father's objections went deeper than that. Richard could have been a doctor—he had the brains. He could have bred and trained show horses—he had the experience. He could have been a concert pianist. What was he doing flunking out of school, writing poetry that didn't rhyme and giving Nazi salutes? Welcome to the generation gap.

Students in the Sixties were simply up-in-arms about every little nitpicking thing. They'd begun to suspect that what they'd learned at home, in church and in school left too much untouched, and no one believe for a minute that Paul Harvey really had the rest of the story. Richard found himself deep into unassigned reading, and a whole continent of ideas began to surface. But before he could get his bearings in this strange new world, he got married and found himself working as a bindery clerk.

His father came to the rescue, footing the bill for another go at college, a modest school down the coast from the madding crowd. Richard became a regular at the Sticky Wicket, a coffeehouse with poetry readings, art shows, theater performances and live jazz. But even with the Sticky Wicket for a culture fix, two years were all he could handle in rural California, and he split for New York where he lived in a dream selling Kirby vacuum cleaners (so good they suck dead skin from your mattress). Before he knew it, he was back in Berkeley.

His marriage was on the rocks by this time, and impetuously ingesting sixteen caps of peyote didn't make things better. Trying the scientific method, Richard sharpened a pencil and opened his notebook to a crisp new page: he would record his experience, just like Aldous Huxley had in *Doors of Perception*.

Wrong. Taking sixteen caps of peyote is not conducive to deductive reasoning. Richard got way out there, and on the advice of an artist friend who was a little to the left of stable, Richard put down four bottles of codeine-based cough syrup to level out, WHAM!—the entire universe slammed together into an intense ball of light, charging him with more electricity than his earthly vessel was wired to conduct. He wound up in the Napa Mental Facility, talking a blue streak trying to convince people whose sanity he doubted that he was unquestionably sane. By the end of ninety days he was beating staff and inmates at Scrabble, and this feat as much as anything brought about his release—anyone who can spell *yrterbium* must have some hold on reality.

After Napa he did a stint at Cal Polytech, and in 1965 he attended the Berkeley Poetry Conference, a mind-blowing summit of Beat, Black Mountain and Reed College poetry giants, an event creating a white-light intensity that rivaled any drug high and had more staying power.

Looking back on those days, Richard sees that things began to shift about then. He stayed on in Berkeley for another year, working for the Berkeley Barb, but each and every day had the feel of Apocalypse to it. So when someone said let's split to Alaska, he split.

## **Father and son reunion (Part II)**

Daily Record, Ellensburg, Washington, February 25, 1993

They're working off a little island in an Alaskan inlet, cutting cedar in a rain forest. They're setting choker on a hill and sliding the timber down into the water with the help of a logging-donkey and cables. Richard is a water chaser. He's running along logs, unsetting chokers and corralling felled trees. Something goes awry. The cable goes slack, and Richard gets knocked on his helmet with a choker. He gets tangled in the cable and sinks like a stone, his rain gear filling with water. He's on the verge of losing consciousness when the cable goes taut again and hauls him up, sends him crashing to the deck, stunned and chilled to the bone. The foreman throws him an oily wool shirt to wear and tells him to get back to work.

He's never felt further from home (wherever that is) than at that moment, looking down the inlet with the pale Alaskan sun washing over the blues and greens. He came up here to find himself, not drown in a tangle of choker gear. He heads back to Ketchikan.

He works cold storage in a fish-packing plant by day and hangs around the Frontier Bar at night, waiting for Cheri to get off work. When the bar closes, they dance to the jukebox until early morning. Richard catches a case of walking pneumonia, and he and Cheri return to Berkeley, where it's coffee houses again, rallies and sit-ins, the Nam, rock 'n' roll and a job for the two of them at Moe's Bookstore. They get married in Reno.

By 1968 they are back in Alaska with their new son, Theo, living in the wilderness in a fisherman's cabin jutting over the water on stilts. They hunted, fished and in the summer gathered berries. They never had a sick day in two years.

Richard wrote poems and letters and once a week rowed his dinghy a mile across open water to meet the amphibious mail plane, sometimes waiting for hours in the cabin of an older couple they addressed as Mr. and Mrs. Clifford. Richard and Mr. Clifford lived identical lifestyles that, ironically, grew out of diametrically opposed world views. They'd drink coffee and argue vehemently until the mail plane splashed down or Mrs. Clifford chased them out of the cabin. Rowing across the water to argue with Mr. Clifford became a high-point of Richard's week.

After the wilderness it was the University of Alaska at Fairbanks where Richard took a degree in English and Philosophy, and then it was south again, but not Berkeley. Berkeley was losing its sway. They got as far as Seattle where Richard answered a newspaper ad and became a caretaker on an 800-acre cattle ranch, running some 300 head of cows and calves on irrigated pasture and fixing up a collection of dilapidated out-buildings. He spent two years getting everything shipshape, and then this idea came over him, an idea that had probably always been penciled in the margins of his astrological chart—why not start a bookstore and live in Ellensburg forever? Why not call Ellensburg home? And that's precisely what he and Cheri did. They opened Four Winds Bookstore in 1977. Sixteen years later the Four Winds has tripled in size and a restaurant has been added, owned and operated by their son, Theo.

Richard is fifty now, and sometimes Berkeley seems like a dream. He and Cheri are divorced but still close, and Richard has a daughter from another marriage. He's still intellectually sharp as a razor; he still writes poetry; and once a year he goes into the mountains to plant trees. But he's also grounded in a community for the first time in his life. He's a businessman and, like his father before him, a Mason.

It boils down to this: his father loved him true and from the heart over the years, through thick and thin, and in the end this love won out over intellectual differences. Richard thinks of old Mr. Clifford up in Alaska and smiles—funny how we know, truly know, just seems to dawn on us one fine day.

*Luis Garcia*

**A POEM WHICH HAS FORGOTTEN YOUR NAME**

You have forgotten surely  
is the way it always begins  
in a time before as usual  
not very far from the end  
which is one thing  
no one has ever forgotten  
the story returned at midnight  
in the middle of that endless journey  
which had no beginning  
the story returned  
to the center of a rain storm  
where it then took the form  
of an invisible bird  
fluttering high up in the rafters  
of an invisible room  
you must remember  
all of them had forgotten  
only it remembered  
we had just arrived  
and were there to stay  
for only a moment  
or two or three or four  
or until the closing of the light  
or until the closing  
of an invisible door.

**THIS PLACE**

This place is quickly disappearing.  
Yes it is.  
Yes it is.

Bits and pieces of a new place

suddenly arriving  
have placed it in another place.

I see myself there  
in yesterday's light,  
in rooms of tomorrow.

I see myself there  
in a world of water,  
in a world of words.

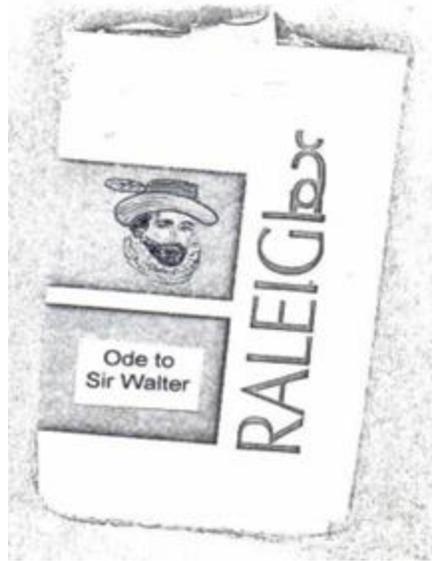
I see myself there  
in a world of wind,  
in a world of birds.

And now I see the towns and people  
as well as the hills and valleys  
of yet another world

Occurring in a place  
at the beginning  
of yet another end.

*Rychard*

**TWO MIXED MEDIA COLLAGES**



### *David Bromige*

#### **OPEN UP OPPEN**

The thing was he was a rich young man, but he had not pleased his father in his first move. He ran off and married Mary, who his father didn't recognize. And he went to Oregon with her, and when he was through with school, these two, married by then, moved to some place on the Mediterranean.

There he started a small press and published work by several young poets, among them Carl Rakosi. But then, in 1932, he found he could no longer ignore or even atone for the financial crisis in the United States by publishing. What he did was quit and begin work for the Communists by

organizing the garment workers.

The only kind of poetry recognized by American Communists is the blue collar kind of poems—about young people and tractors. Rather than write such dross, Oppen put down his pen, and it was to stay down for another twenty-five years.

He fought in World War II. However, he had to flee America to avoid the H.U.A.C. investigations. Living in Mexico, he worked as a carpenter and wrote poems that he framed with blocks of wood. Go to a museum and see them. In the late 50s, when the popular American view of Communists as traitors waned, he felt able to return to his homeland. So, he settled in NYC with his wife and daughter and began writing again. He found a publisher, James Laughlin of New Directions, who was enthusiastic. At his time, American planes were dropping thousands of bombs upon the half-naked natives of Vietnam. His book, *Of Being Numerous*, with its anti-war stance became a hot topic.

Of living,  
Paris is beautiful and ludicrous, the leaves of every  
tree in the city  
move in the wind  
People talk, they talk to each other;  
Even Cortes greeted as revelation ... No I'd not  
emigrate,  
Now we do most of the killing

This book won a Pulitzer. Usually these awards go to writers I'm not interested in, but George Oppen's work I admired. Very sparse in his writing, and he spoke like a man who had been to hell and back and was telling the truth, although no one wants to hear it.

## ***David Bromige***

### **POEM**

*For George Oppen*

At a friend's house he started  
apparently somewhat to her alarm  
to thumb through a stack of Playboys  
"Good-looking girls," he said  
The hostess, flustered, said  
"As I recall, these magazines  
are the property either of my grown son  
or of a male acquaintance  
Oppen continued to peruse the pages  
"Well," he said, "it's a lot easier this way"

“What way?” I asked,  
but the party had moved on

## *Bouvard Pécuchet*

### BOOK MANDALA

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

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

How to get to experience of Space  
micro/macrococosmos—“as above, so below”  
through time, storytelling  
through self, explicit sense of Being  
through language  
through my

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

Scepticism—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 with Alaskan Clinkets,

trading with Athabascan natives

Western Philosophers (outside classroom)

Price Charlston—Professor of Ethics,

U. of Calif. hikes in the Berkeley hills,

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 Philosophy with special interest in health & money management

Other belief systems explored

Masonic Order— Past 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

study of Zimmer's *Six Philosophies* under

Benish at U. of Alaska

study of Bohenski's *Contemporary Methods*

*of Thought* at U. of Alaska

Shamanism

Bön, Red Path, Beat Crazy Wisdom

Divination

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

Healing procedures

Auryvedic, Sweat Lodges, Massage,  
Naturalpathy, Nuclear Medicine  
Pharmacology—psychedelics  
LSD, pot, peyote, mescaline, 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, Ellington  
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  
William Carlos Williams—mind—invent—  
“no ideas but in things”  
Shelly—emotion—Byron—exoticism—  
Keats—clarity  
Shakespeare—imagination—  
Chaucer—form/content—  
Donne—metaphysics  
William Blake—printer/visionary—

Allen Ginsberg—what's happening in the world? Robert Creeley—sense of measure—  
Charles Olson—causal mythology—

Jack Spicer— serial poetry— collected books

## 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—

the forgeries—Denner & Co., A. Artaud, Jampa Dorje, Bouvard Pécuchet—

multiplication of self

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

These are the background sources for *The Collected Books of Richard Denner* and suggest some form of organization to the whole of his collected 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 idea a bit further, what’s it mean to feel the “meant to be-ness” of my 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 Anuyoga Tantra, and these practices transmitted through Terma teachings, this means that his experience has not been altogether traditional, in the sense, such that he is only at present doing his preliminary practices

But to the books at hand, these too are in an untraditional format, presented in a collected book format, a take off of Jack Spicer’s collected books, but in his collection, the formatting is closer to the original with the presence of the covers and artwork and maintaining the original typefaces, the front pieces in homage to Jack, the Aces, a hand issuing forth with each element, adding in Vol. 5, the fifth element space

Richard’s Scorpio astrological sign in volume 6, his Sufi connection in 7, his *collected poems* cover collage in 8, each volume has an epigram from one of Jack’s books, to some extent implying that his overall collection, as well, is a kind of “textbook of poetry”

*The collected poems: 1961-2000*, with an elegant essay by Lee Harris, was organized in chronological and geographical order, in *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 but before he had a computer, they were his first books that utilized the stitching technique that he learned from Wesley Tanner at Arif Press which allowed him to create a book of up to 60 pages, he began with *Letter to Sita in Time of War* the collection of poems that were at the beginning of the collected poems, although he had to reorganize the small letterpress books (eg. *Denner Recipes*) reducing their size and formatting and printing the linocuts in b/w, 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 continual war seemed pronounced in his oeuvre, a good place to begin, the tendency of the poet to create his own “flower” in the midst of all the “fallout” (a form of subversion in its own way)

The first volume contains his first books in facsimile, in the order they were collected with two exceptions, *breastbeaters* was suppressed and *the scorpion* was 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 cut across three decades to summarize, volume 1 contains early poems published in a wide variety of early chapbooks before he moved to santa rosa, poems he retyped using a large-font typewriter, it also includes two offset books along with *islam bomb* set by a computergraphic machine which was used in newspaper backshops before the advent of personal computers

Volume 2 proceeds to collect the poems Richard wrote in ellensburg after publishing the books in the *new gravity* collection, these are the first copy machine poems, for the most part poems of unrequited love and longing, the *new gravity* poems a reflection of his marital breakup, after which he began to fall in love and break up with women purely in order to generate poetry, disruptive and destructive of human relationships, even with the infusion of rumiesque and rilkian motifs, he reveals he is unable to transcend his manipulative and seductive behavior without the aid of true tantric insights

Volume 2 covers nearly a decade, love, love, love, but perhaps a tad too much negative padma energy and not nearly enough wisdom of discernment, this volume includes *too many horses*, *not enough saddles* and *blank flower*, poems written after richard's first encounters with native american and tantric teachings, and the glimmerings of the tige of transcendence

Volume 3 collects the books actually written in pagosa springs, after he sold the fourwinds bookstore and cafe and moved to colorado to be a part of tara mandala retreat center, blessings of tara, swift undermining of neurotic conditioning and bliss freedom of practical purification of karma yoga, there's nothing like manifesting as a 16 year-old mandarava to give a rough and tumble middle-aged beat poet inner direction towards equanimity with the feminine

Note the presence of simhamuka in the first book of volume 3, "turn beauty turn" in comparison to its placement in *sambhogakaya cowboy* in the same volume, where it resides after *cow songs* in order to contrast the two cowboys, the ellensburg cowboy and the colorado cowboy, the books following a juxtapositional order rather than a consecutive published order, an area of risk here, richard's teacher tsultrim was not pleased his poems with buddhist images, 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, note that the first draft of poems in *sambhogakaya cowboy* are revised in *constructive rest*

At first, richard bucked under this censorship but 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, again, volume 3 covers a lot of territory, beginning in pagosa springs, the books are in the order of creation and publication through *talking trash*, moving on to santa rosa, still in order, then dropping back to his experiences in berkeley in the 60s in *hollow air* but still in order of publication, the same with *cow songs* still in publication order although returning to ellensburg, jumping ahead to colorado cowboy yogi poems and returning to santa rosa with *xitro* and *the spot* as a kind of loop the loop

Volume 4, publication of books in order of creation, the real return to writing into the book that richard had originally attempted in my 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 master templates, which enables him to bring lost and lonely poems from the past together in new serializations

Also richard's meeting claude smith gave new impetus to his work, they collaborate in readings with claude playing his standup base and in books, using claude's artwork, they are able to inspire each other and richard's poetry began to take on new significance with new vibrant print editions

Volume 4: two seminal books, *green fire* and *second boiling*, represent a change in direction

Volume 5 collects the two artaud books, the forgery *another artaud* and a cyberpoem in *wavetwisters*, along with the series of poems inspired by kimberly clark, which begin in *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?

*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, and since the older copy machine masters used photo-sensitive paper which has since turned brown, he took the few existing copies of these books he had archived and broke them down and copied each page and assembled new masters and pasted page numbers in by hand, a process that took six weeks

Volume 7 is an eclectic collection due to the fact that volume 1 began because he had the already existing set of five early books, so he began there, but one book was omitted, *breastbeaters* his very first book, 100 copies printed in 1963 in berkeley, he had a couple of copies, had kept them hidden because of his embarrassment over the quality of printing and the derivative nature of the "d.t.poems", but beginning with *on borgo pass* which was 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 needed their place in the collected book pantheon, that the overall body of work was missing it's belly button, then he realized he had also forgotten *the scorpion* and that this chapbook was an early masterpiece of fine printing and that the two of them are separated by the funky early dpress letterpress books and that all along he been trying to rectify the original "mistakes" in printing

It was time for the sucker to surface, so *breastbeaters* begins volume 7 and is followed by *the scorpion* (which is actually a selection of poems from his early berkeley days up to his days on the cattle ranch in ellensburg), the next book in vol. 7 is *a double play* which is a collaborative work with luis garcia, lu being so important to his development as a poet, at times we think they are

almost are one and the same, soul mates, because they let their poems mingle, poems that imitate each others styles, this book followed by *pebbles* in a special version with a japanese translation, in order of publication, originally published *on borgo pass* weaving the first poems he wrote in santa rosa, followed by two set of poems, a war collection (*road to war*) and a buddhist collection (*vajra songs*), this last set by jampa dorje [Editor's note: this is Richard's Tibetan literary name, and as such connects this book with the forgeries of volume 8]

Volume 7 collects the short stores, separately printed as *the episodes* which richard began while he was caretaking his elderly father and developed into a kind of episodic autobiography, note that the year 2001 is not highly represented, except for one book, *from lascaux to dendera* which is included in the appendix to vol. 7, this is the year richard broke both his legs and spent the year recouping from the accident and creating the comrades edition of his *collected poems: 1961-2000*

Volume 8 includes 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 and the bouvard pécuchet character which he had created for the plagiarist movement, 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, and as pessoa had allowed the writer who used his own name to be a persona, richard decided to resurrect "rychard" who for most of his life was a name he had used to sign artwork, a name that had originated in berkeley in the 60s, but now had become the spirit of his artistic process

**Paul J. Longpré**

### **A POEM BY RICHARD DENNER**

*a play*  
*the street*  
*dynamite*  
*an actor*  
*explodes*  
*the theater*

What have we here, a group of words seemingly unrelated and meaningless? Or is the above combination of words brilliantly related and significant? do we have here a play with words, or is it a very serious arrangement of ideas with a definite meaning?

At first glance, the poem looks like nonsense. However, with a second reading, this time allowing each word to echo in your mind, you come to learn that a distinct idea has been formulated. This is not, after all, a nonsensical juggling of words, and you must not be too quick to judge, less you be reminded that Shakespeare once remarked that the world is but a stage on which each individual acts out certain assigned roles. Denner's poem has a relationship to this world theater spoken of

by William Shakespeare. Political man is the actor in a world drama.

When compared to Shakespeare's words, Denner's are also very simple, and in the twentieth century, and in light of a complex, technological society, simplicity is really something to marvel at and appreciate. Denner's words, although simple, should not be taken lightly, because each word carries with it an undertone that has the potential to disrupt our society.

If life is to be taken as a play, and if life is acted out in the streets, then we are indeed playing with dynamite, a dangerous weapon, which can destroy our world theater. And this is the point Denner is making in the poem. Through his remarkable sense of awareness and concern, Denner realizes a reality, which in poetry is very volatile.

In recent times, we have witnessed a pervasive element of violence that has been acted out in the streets, especially in the larger cities of our country. Whether the violence is direct and overt as in crimes of rape, robbery, and murder, or is manifested in a mob riot, or is potentially present in a non-violent peace demonstration, the point is that all these incidents are being acted out in the streets, and this is an extremely dangerous situation. A non-violent peace demonstration or a non-violent campus protest is as explosive as a full-blown riot.

Denner's words are simple, but at the same time, they are heavy with meaning. He utilizes words, or language, as they or it may be which should not be taken literally. He is making use of a figurative language. Furthermore, his words transmit an implied comparison, or metaphor. Denner is not merely referring to an isolated play in which the setting is a street, and in which an actor blows up a theater with a stick of dynamite. More to the point, he is indirectly referring the violence which began in the streets and which has now been carried out in individual acts of terrorism, for instance, the dynamiting of a police station or an ROTC building. In this sense, violence begets violence, and what Denner expresses is a fear that these incidents will lead to violent revolution.

There is no rhyme in the poem. What is important is that he presents three significant ideas, and from these ideas a conclusion satisfies our apprehension. What are the ideas? They are found in the first three lines:

a play  
the street  
dynamite

Each line represents a total idea which is linked in the reader's mind. Once the ideas are arrived at and linked, the conclusion:

an actor  
explodes  
the theater

is found to be satisfactory but only in correspondence with the three original ideas.

His unique style, combined with Shakespeare's "world theater" concept and with the poem's social implications, a leaning towards violence and revolution, expressed in very few words, is certainly a credit to the poet Richard Denner.

## SIX BOOK REVIEWS

*Joyce Metzger*

## **CHAIN CLANKERS & LINOLEUM NUDES**

Author: Rychard Denner, D-Press, Sebastopol, 1998, 40 pp, Hand-sewn.

Rychard Denner is the driving force behind D- Press. Many of the poems in this book were previously published under the D Press logo, and different versions have appeared in the Polar Star Lit Supplement and the Berkeley Barb. These poems which comprise a series of chapbooks were the inaugural publishing of D Press which began in an attic apartment in 1967 in Ketchikan, Alaska.

The author, turned editor and publisher, worked in the back shop of the Ketchikan Daily News doing layout, burning plates, and assisting run a 3-unit Goss webpress. He set type and hung prints. Grant Risdon instructed Denner on the art of cutting linoleum blocks.

The first books, *Poems & Blocks* and *Aztec Designs* were illustrated by Grant Risdon. In 1970, after two inters in the Tongass National Forest, Denner drove the Alkan (Alaska Highway) to Fairbanks. One terrific drive! This reviewer has been the entire length a total of six times, back and forth. Through Canada, into Alaska, turning south at Tok Junction, to head for Anchorage. Never made it to Fairbanks, but if you ever have the opportunity...don't ignore it! Watch the seasonal changes though, to avoid deep trouble.

Denner learned etching and a multiple-color block print technique [Ed. note: the suicide block] at the University of Alaska, from Terrance Choy. Denner's books were termed "unsuitable," said William Hogan, manager of Business Services, then added, "It was obscene."

Six books, on considered pornographic. Yet, John Hulbert, an English instructor said, "Denner is a sincere and talented artist, and as he grows, the University will be glad to have collected his early attempts at writing and publishing. I'll be using several during this term as reference material." The library accepted the books.

Terrance Choy, art professor, said, "I'm an artist, not a poet, and I think the books have artistic merit. Richard shows a proficiency in dealing with woodcuts."

Censorship. Plain and simple. These were the facts and statements recorded in the Polar Star, Friday, October 16, 1970, about Richard Denner's work.

Denner said the uproar "aroused a bewildered feeling. I'm upset that people have no sense of humor about the whole situation. I wanted them to be received with a sense of humor."

*Chain Clankers & Linoleum Nudes* is the culmination of all that furor caused in 1970. How the world has changed in attitude and sense of censorship in the past 32 years! Full nudity "news broadcasts" on cable. Full nudity in stage productions, partial nudity on models at the awards shows. Every act described with a flourish, down to the final wart on the festered bump on some star, or starlet's ass.

Actually, any person who has studied art, will remember many nude artists. Most cloaked their nude painting by naming the figures after gods or saints...and the church didn't blink an eyelash.

Artistic endeavor and experimentation will always lift mascara-ed eyebrows another quarter of an inch. "And, perhaps a hundred years from today, if the world still exists, clothing will be erotic, and nudity will be boring; after all, when all mystery is snatched away, little is left to cause a ripple-stir in brain waves. Without that stir, dead-line activity results, and duh...you guessed it, a population of riveted couch potatoes.

Actually, I personally object to some of the dirty jokes told on prime time t.v., more than what I have seen in Richard Denner's *Chain Clankers & Linoleum Nudes*.

a play  
the street  
dynamite

an actor  
explodes  
the theater

Short block poems beside colored art blocks. Jazz player and dancer.

writhe in the  
light of the night:  
let the snake coil  
& the tyger bite  
writhe in the  
light of the night

Adult material for certain, but again, a guitar player and a dancer carved on the linoleum block.

I especially enjoyed the addition of "Aztec Designs" by Grant Risdon which are included. This is purely experimental and stylistic artwork. Censorship can, and often does, over-step the original intention. Perhaps, I would not leave this book lying around for my six-year-old granddaughter to pick up, but then, there are a lot of other books I wouldn't leave around for her to plunder through; and often times, it is the fact that the books might be ruined. Many are invaluable as indications of the mind-set and the direction our culture is headed.

The longest poem: *Eye of the Vitamin* seems no more horrendous, or in need of censorship, than any poem I have published since 1987. And is certainly not as bad, as the latest disaster flick on t.v., or the out of control rave in world-wide destruction, kill-'em-before-you-see-the-whites-of-their-eyes video games parents spend a week's wages on these days.

Sex is here to stay, fellow readers. The world began with sex and probably will end because of it. We have more to fear from those who seek to annihilate through genocide and murderous barbaric savagery, and from those who seek to rule through power, no matter the form, than we do from a few artistically turned phrases and linoleum cuts.

Use your eyes, ears, and minds, not your itchy trigger fingers! Check out Rychard's website: [www.dpress.net](http://www.dpress.net) if you are really serious and have a bit of green to spend.

## **ANGIO GRAM**

Author: Charles Potts

Coverart by Luis Garcia

D Press, Sebastopol, 2000

24 pp, Hand-sewn.

FLIRTING WITH DEATH

If I have a heart attack and die up here  
My biographer, as if I had one,  
Will be looking you up  
For your last impressions so  
Pay attention

Death is a song  
We all have to sing.  
Make mine painless,  
Brief  
Regrettable and smooth.

Bravo, Charles Potts! You knocked on the door. It opened, you entered with a smile, a quip, a thought-fullness, then returned to tell us about it, with renewed spirit like an old sparring partner who crawls beneath the ropes of the ring just to hear the bell-gong, again. Your words rejuvenate, illuminate, stimulate, animate, and hopefully will circulate throughout the small press as your presence continues to expound, resound and resonate.

Charles Potts' words are always thoughtful. In a time of personal crisis, he rose above the task to stamp his personal monogram upon this term *angio gram*.

Angio gram  
A view of the vessels not of the heart,  
Cardio gram  
A record of how the heart beat is interpreted...  
Still alive and happy  
This far from home.

## **WORD**

Author: Rychard Denner  
Hand-crafted s/s 12 pp  
D-Press, Ketchikan, 1968  
Linoleum cuts by the author

This booklet is truly unique, for it is one of the very early letterpress designs of Rychard Denner. This is the process of printing direct from an inked raised surface upon which the paper is impressed. Every design is a different color and on the opposite facing page, the text is distinct from his pictorial illustrations.

Rychard is indeed generous sending me a collectable booklet of this quality, and I thank him for his generosity. I know very little about this art form, but more of Rychard's poems can be viewed in several places on the web. I believe the designs in this book are early forms of Rychard's "Chainclankers" in their original format. Denner is a gifted, artistic talent, both with words and through the visual medium. Simplicity, not complexity. No factory assemblage or mass production. Striking, mind arresting, miniature works of art.

## **STUDIES IN AZTEC DESIGNS**

Linoleum cuts by Grant Risdon  
Hand-designed book, 12 pp  
D-Press, Ketchikan, 1968

I am the first to admit I am not an art critic. But my eyes feasted upon these multi-hued Aztec designs and my heart felt the same warmth my eyes had already witnessed.

This is fine art. The colors and the designs are beautiful. They satisfy the eye, to embellish life, and award it deeper visual meaning via attractive adornment and ornamentation. We are surrounded by color. Without it life would be drab. Throughout history, color has been applied even to ancient cave dwelling sketches to add beauty and emphasis to sketches; sketches which tell stories about pre-life, life and afterlife. Grant Risdon had added to that wealth of delightful knowledge with his Aztec designs. They return our minds to ancient beliefs and beginnings.

I thank Richard Denner for sending me this beautiful booklet, and I will treasure it as art, and for the deeper meaning it represents: a unity and optimism for life via artistic collaboration.

### **COOL PHOENIX**

Author: Keith Johnson  
D-Press, Sebastopol, 2001  
Hand-sewn, 14 pp, \$8

Keith Johnson's poetry has wings. It soars above the ordinary, peers with an eagle's eye view, down upon the chaos and turmoil below.

Unknowing who we are or what is above,  
trying to reach something that remains  
a flowering eternity  
that we can never lose.  
But flying by your laws  
to my Father, there be One,  
the Un-become.

I dread the recurrent karma inherent  
in this ignorance, and yet  
only through this shame of others' suffering  
can the reflection be motivated  
to pass from the mirror.

You guard your heart like Fort Knox,  
but I know it's greedy and in need.  
No wealth there, only hunger and...  
fragments of a once high-flying love  
blown away, pierced and faltering.

Sitting, I weep that the charade continues.  
In the face of grief, in great joy,  
I sing for the other shore

inside my heart's laughing.

These are poems of change. Of shoreline met, waters waded, new horizons reached, through turmoil, experience, grief and love. This work is an amalgam of compassion, incredible honesty, and the brightness of an ever-questing spirit. The trail was long, dry and hot, but Keith Johnson has reached for, and found, a Cool Phoenix.

As this shore grows dim  
from seeking within  
I find I see myself forever  
at peace with the world.

Few can mouth or write these words. Keith Johnson is indeed, fortunate.

### **ABOUT GRAVITY**

Author: Deborah Swain  
Cover art: Lucienne Dorrance  
D Press, Sebastopol, 2001  
20 pp, Hand-sewn.

Deborah Swain is the short story editor of *Comrades* ezine. She lives in rural Marche, Italy. And as you might expect, her poems are in narrative form which is certainly suggestive of most contemporary poetry which eschews the iambic constant counting of syllables, and rhythmicity of alliteration.

We find straight-forward inner-connectivness. Deborah can, and does, connect with the reader through vivid word-play and imaginative inventiveness. Emotionality does not always rule.

—About Gravity and Othr Things...  
She giggled/ at the idea of them—  
black and white comets/ with udders!  
spinning through space—  
—Just at the moment  
we'd wished for the moon, instead  
a glowing driftwood beacon  
smoldered its magma-like trail  
across the sand...  
—If I'd known/ you weren't coming back  
I'd have waited/ before washing/  
our last sheets...  
—Some say that trees scream  
when you cut them down.  
These trees are screaming/ now, thirsty and  
desperate...like reluctant contortionists  
their limb are caught

in the thwarted stretches towards the sky.  
We don't stop/ or get close enough  
to comfort their gnarled curves with a caress.

Excellent, thoughtful, compassionate writing. Deborah Swain is a poet with both feet planted firmly on terra firma. The richness of her imagery exhibits patient observation. No whining. And a plentitude of adult acuity. She has lived life, enjoyed it, and now, can pass her observations on to others.

I enjoyed this read very much.