

**SINGING IN THE HEART
OF LUMINOUS PEAK**



☸ poems from a mountain retreat ☸

JAMPA DORJE

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TO MICHAEL ROTHENBERG

I forgot to phone and say goodbye
I threw away my cell

My lama said to take one good book
to remember the dharma
so, I took *The Collected Poems of Philip Whalen*

No hell, no heaven
no meditation, no distraction, no hope, no fear

Still, I had to do the hat dance one last time

SINGING IN THE HEART OF LUMINOUS PEAK

This mind bound to no one thing.
—Saigyō

Scrub oak branch freed from snowpack
flings diamonds in the air

Driveway's gift—mud on my boots

pine bow's gift—snow on my neck

Give up your desires for fancy teas—
put on your robes, your robes
and a pith instruction are all you need

I've been in retreat for three weeks
and I've eaten all the snacks—
Milarepa just shakes his head

Patterns of snow rise and drift—
a dance to dazzle the eye
on a windy, winter's day

Little snowflake dakinis
U RU U RU RLLLLLLLLLU U SRU RU
hold me fast with your compassion

Snow and more snow—the plow guy says
“If it snows any more, I've got no place to put it.”

Laughter of dakinis skiing off Ekajati Peak—
gravity can be fun, if you don't break a leg

Moth dancing in the sunlight on the pine wood floor
stops at the shadow of my robes

Friends to date—a flock of jays, a pack rat
a spotted skunk, four wild turkeys, two leaf bugs
an unidentified beetle, the usual suspects

Ravens check me out, a golden eagle gyring overhead—
not friends, as they don't eat from my larder

Before I was sealed into retreat, my friend
Gail warned me, “Be careful. Tibetan practices
aren’t American.” Good advice—
these American demons are especially stubborn

Han Shan heard woodchoppers in the valley
below his hut—here, among the pines, I hear
a chainsaw in Hidden Valley

Ripped seam in my new chuba reveals
Made in Madagascar, discovered in Colorado
now, I wear my old robes—I like them better

Passing beauty—
tire tracks in the snow

Fresh snow covers the snowmobile tracks—
a return to wintery calm in Hidden Valley

Looking through the window in the lamp light
was that a ghost or the shadow of a prayer flag?
Add a coyote to my list of visitors

Sky, my teacher
Earth, my support
Sun and moon my companions

Billowing clouds obscure the sun as though impatient
for the day to end—in the realm of pure reaches
day time and night time are relative

Passing cloud on a windy day—
a buffalo becoming an elephant
becoming a rhinoceros becoming
a bowl of mashed potatoes

My autobiography—I was born, I wrote, I died
and I had good friends

The most significant event in my life—the Atom Bomb
a clever way of destroying us all to prove
no one has a homeland

Machig dancing on a moon disc with voluptuous breasts
and blossoming vagina—pinup of the month, circa 1080 CE

Days without numbers—the snow pack melting—
I've learned Raven talk and a smattering of Chickadee

Moon, you look familiar—you have a lovely face
I know it's an old line, but haven't we met before?

Jupiter is over the hill, and you're still here with me—
Moon, do you play cards?

Moon, I saw you with that star—
now you're swollen with his seed

Moon, you never turn your other cheek
are you ashamed of some disfigurement?
Ok, a few pock marks—you're one of a kind
perfect, non-defiled

In my dream, I am the moon—
faces smile down on me

Moon, old friend, Dawn is close behind you
It's a bit early for a visit, but the tea water is hot

Tonight, the moon was full, and I saw the hare—
usually, I see the old man, but tonight, the hare was there
ears and all

Sleeping moon, I touch you with my finger—
are you real?

Crescent moonlight on new snow
thick fog pouring over Archuleta Ridge—
a trail of milky quartz

If a sentence is difficult to punctuate
it's probably the order of words at fault
so, you're off the hook

I erected my victory banner, my boundary
extends ten feet beyond my deck—
I'm overwhelmed by infinity and all I'll never see here

Chop wood, carry water, accumulate mantra
pick up a few jewels on the path, and my day is done

Quiet in the woodpile—
has the pack rat become something's dinner?
Motion discovers us—simple as time
we are lured to the offering

Profound pith instruction—
if the going gets tough, do more practice
a thought to turn the mind

To my right, Chimney Rock, to my left, the sertog
on the Tara Temple—ahead, a range of vidyadharas
within, bliss-void is my view

A solitary place full of empty sights and sounds—
Luminous Peak is a pure land taste of appearances

Complete, ineluctable, consummate, infallible
formless and without substance—
“Watch what you’re doing and stir the oatmeal.”

In a day where the biggest complication is a prayer flag
tangled in a tree branch, I consider this is a pure land

If you have wealth, you worry what will become of it
if you don’t have wealth, you worry how you’ll get it
Either way, it’s a hassle—Be happy, all beings who are sad

At first light, I lay the foundation for my day
With *ngöndro* prayers—I get so pure
I glow like snow in sunlight
Prayer flags flap, icicles drip, tap tap tap
I beat my drum—all sounds are mantram

Corn snow shower—
skiers must be happy on Wolf Creek Pass
me, snug in Luminous Peak

Few people pass my settlement, a new retreatant
now and again—it’s mostly me and the wild folk
in the vast expanse

After a sprinkling of snow, there are new faces
in the landscape—a rock face becomes comedy
another, tragedy, and yab looks lovingly at yum

I don’t have Ikkyu’s libido—he was blessed
Love is blind—still, I enjoy a good blow job
even if it’s only in my dreams

Choose one, I lose them all
choosing all, I lose the one
lucky having so many loves
now, relaxing having none

Awakened by the tiniest sound
an insect hitting the window pane—
how I wish it was his footstep

Outside the door to class, she kissed him twice
and, now, she feels his fingers—
“Wake up, Miss, you’re in Geometry!”

Our bodies wedded—up, now, together up
and, this one time, I swallow my gum
Two leaves blown together across the snow—
one disappears over a precipice
the other returns the way it’d come

We made love on acid, and it was like a train
roared through the room—Kay was her name

My first time, we did it on a bed
under the stars—she guided me in
and I lasted two fantastic seconds

She had the *Course of Miracles* pinned
around her room—it was weird
making love with the angels looking on

She wants to talk afterward—
what is there to say except
I have died and been reborn

She climbed on me
while I was doing 70 mph—
it was my first experience
driving with clairvoyance

I'll find her in a hot hell, and she'll call out
and I'll climb to her through the razor trees

Phony dharma posturing—these robes
only for show—what am I going to do
when I'm put to the test?

I fly around, put my hand and butt prints
on rocks—come back later, nothing there
still, I'm amazed
Looking at visages of eternity
an idea that will finally pass away—
what will I dream next?

A strange blue at dawn—
there's a miracle for you
not sure what to do
I pray to my guru

Asked the benefit of ngöndro —
“I feel as though I've been reborn in a lotus.”

Torn parts of a prayer flag
flutter like lovers kissing—
I've been up here too long

Rumi says, “Don't be disturbed by a speck of dust.”
Buddha says, “What speck?”

Frightened yet comforted—a Moon looms over me
says, “Close your eyes, and it will be tomorrow.”

The muse has me on the ropes—a swift upper cut
then, *le mot juste*, and a one-two combo

At Adzom's powa retreat, I said
"My mother doesn't want a fuss at her funeral."
Adzom said, "Who are you going to listen to
your mama or your lama?"

Guru Rinpoche tells Yeshe Tsogyel to go easy
on the mutilations to improve the feast—
stick to eating air and mystic heat

Aware that I am capable of murder, malice
and mayhem, I take refuge with the guru—
hold me fast with your compassion

I would have fit right in with Do Khentse's crew
a sangha of reformed marauders—
"Say the word, and I'll jump off a cliff."

Oppressed by suffering due to ignorance and karma
events seem hollow, but life is a hard act to follow

Clouds above, fog below—
for the buddha mind you seek
there's no clear path to Luminous Peak

Ideas flap like prayer flags—
one end tied to the cabin of confusion
and one end tied to the tree of desire

Do I get lonely in retreat? Actually
it's crowded living in tight quarters
with 100 peaceful and wrathful deities

A hole in my water jug from a bear's claw
as if to say— "Look what I can do."

Cloud letters—dakini script—hard to read
Maybe I need a consort—just on this one occasion

Laugh at me with contempt, or let tears
be your judgement—I follow the middle way

The Great Sea of Abyss—totally open oneness
be it winds, channels, lights, cells, molecules, or atoms

Faith begins where thinking leaves off
and sleeping begins where faith leaves off—
that I awake is the prodigy

To look at my complete being
requires renunciation—now a crystal
now a mirror, spontaneously, I just am

Pointless to wonder what if Shrisima
had followed Chenrezi's advice the first time—
an undetermined parallel universe of vast expanse

A roofless roof, a windowless window—
a meditation without meditating

Could, would, should—
no should—just do it

Stop grasping and you quit being a stupid buddha—
nescience resolved in *a priori* gnosis

Many times, between dusk and dawn,
Everness kissed Oblivion to make him stay
Now, Oblivion has gone his way,
And Everness, sans Oblivion, cannot exist

Looking at Nothing behind the thing in-itself—
Wow! What a view

The gods are quiet, but they're still around—
amazing, I don't believe in them

When my practice lags, I think of Longchenpa
and the sack he slept in—I look at the luxury
of my digs and realize, I'm just a cave bug

Prostrations are a centrifuge to separate
the pure metal from the dross—
I feel the oneness of Buddha and guru

A day of long contrails—the wind
feathers a set into a white AH

“The path's a snap, if you're not picky.”
This insight is attributed to Bodhidharma

What I've learned after a kalpa of meditation—
Don't say much. Don't do much.

Take yourself off the clock and out of the mix—
you'll discover a self-evident pure land

Sit like a mountain, open to the sky—
what's the agenda? Nada, it's accomplished

What was it like hanging out with the dakinis
in the pure land during my three-year solo retreat?
It was an orgy with Jampa Dorje

Yeshe Tsogyel, sleeping on a slab of slate
oozing pus and blood, doing her prostrations—
me, all I've got going is a bruise and a zit

In a dream, I discovered fast walking is a form of flying—you just need to keep your feet close
to the ground

When you eat, eat, and when you walk, walk
but when you talk, first think twice

I'm glad to gladden my guru's heart with my practice
OM AH HUM

Clouds of dakini script hard to decipher, like upside
down Tibetan— "Good, yogi, keeping your samayas."

At 8:32 am, I achieved supreme release—
no, not that kind of release—and gone
in 1/32 of a second

A morning of mantra muddle, mudra mangle
and fuzzy yidam—then, I put paid to this condition
of frustration, confusion and pain with more practice

Vajra ground perfected, vidyadhara levels matured
four kayas fully actualized—who's my lama now?

Once I cut a mean figure galloping on a chestnut mare
now, I ride a creaky crapper with my leaky bladder

Without wit, wisdom and grace, I'll just be another
old fart in stinky pajamas—the rose soon withers

The beginning time and the settling down, kaput—
now, the end game—and the dream that reoccurs

Sitting without moving, just me, myself, and I
and I think “me” is having a senior moment

I gaze at my reflection in the glass at my black hair
streaked with white, a reflecting on my years

Winterwinterspringwinterspringwinterspring
that's the way it is in the mountains

Dr. Wind makes a house call, operates
on snowdrifts, removes empty water jugs
transplants the tarp from the woodpile

Enjoying the tree shade of my mountain home—
a nest of baby jays rant above my head

The loneliness of Luminous Peak—well,
jays do stop and pick at my pure offerings

Still wintery stillness
spring'll spring soon

Sitting in Luminous Peak, letting my white beard grow
outside, a young chipmunk digs for scraps in spring snow

Spring come, spring go, now there's a foot of snow
goes to show what I know—why did I order a hoe?

Fresh snow on old snow
No trace of the road to town
Sitting here among white clouds

Thunder and lightning—the copper fire shield crackles
with juice—I sit in the middle of the room and pray

New birds from the south having a hard time of it—
“Go back to Santa Fe—Luminous Peak is not for you.”
All the same, I throw out some oats to tide them over

Tulips in the snow—frozen kisses

What am I doing on this mountain?
To view this as the way to an exalted result
is counter-productive

Something/Nothing
holding this in mind
I get on with it

Most truth seekers don't want a guru because they know
if they accept this yoke, they'll have to work their asses off

As I finished my Vajrasattva mantras
the moon moved backwards across the heavens

I dawdle over these lines—the sun rises higher
and I have not finished my prostrations

If it's all one taste, all equal without blemish
then, you have true abundance

Another trip to the outhouse—
ah, emptiness and bliss

Why something rather than nothing?
I can reflect on this, or not

Nyima Ozer, rays of the sun, a palace of golden fire
all light from one source—inconceivable—
with nothing to hold onto, my grasping nature is reversed

Venus is up, light the fire
make tea for Ekajati and me

At sunrise, the jays demand their pure offerings, then
they're off to the valley, and I continue my morning tun

A glorious mountain—and once there, I can fly—
the fall not severe, I awake on the floor by my bed

A blue sky day, clear, luminous, consummate—
I'm sitting here, kicked back, digging all the non-action

First, a chair, then a table, no telling where it ends—
you only need your ass and your lap and your hands

Two woodpeckers working on a tree
contrapuntal vibe, Bags Groove—
and raven notes Monkishly off key
thrush semitones, those would be Miles

Look, there's a buddha in glorious, resplendent light!
Oh, it's only a trash can reflecting noonday sun

Itchy asshole—it's awkward to scratch
when you've important guests present

Rejoice! This is a bright eon
where the Mantrayana is taught
to counter consumer confusion

If you know where you are, what you're doing
and how it's done, without a timeframe—
the why is suchness

The byways of the path are so labyrinthine that
without a guide, you'll be sidetracked for lifetimes

Lama G asked if my bronze of Shakespeare was Mao
“No,” I said, “That's the bard, Guru Rinpoche of poets.”

Prayer flags bright in afternoon light
as prayers set forth to purify the blight

Hey, leaf bug on the window pane, are you taking a walk
or wishing you were outside? Believe me, that's snow you see
door handle, door hinges, door glass, door lock, door frame
how will you make it through? Open the door, out you fly
out into the cold, blue-gray sky—Is this a suicide attempt?

Sunset on the ridge, a lake of molten metals
Amitabha's heaven or one of the hot hells?

I've always liked prison flicks, *The Shawshank Redemption*
Cool Hand Luke, *Escape from Alcatraz*—
from samsara, I'm bustin' out with bodhicitta

The roar of a jet reminds me Guru Rinpoche prophesized
Buddhism would come to Colorado when the iron bird flies

The only regret I have is that I'll die before I have a chance
to finish writing my autobiography

Thanka painters' dialogue on the size of a yum's breasts—
“The manual says the size of a melon.”
“A cantaloupe, maybe, not a watermelon.”
“But I like them that size.”
“Yes, you have attachments.”

Letters like leaves
Letting leaves lie
Me, just as I am

I sent my son a *tsa tsa* made
with some of his sister's ashes
without a note. He wondered,
“Why did he send me this turd?”

My lama gave me a cape of majestic cut
now, doors open of their own accord
and candles light at my command

Like Shabkar—with my robes, my boots
and a couple of pith instructions, I'm all set

I follow the masters of meditation—
their bony fingers gesture, “Up here!”
Luckily, I've brought my flashlight

Patrul Rinpoche said, “It's hard to digest dharma
if you're as dumb as a cow with only upper teeth.”

A note from Sky—
“Be Jampa, happy and free!”

Anne is putting makeup on emptiness

I'm putting a shirt and tie on emptiness
We're going out to eat some emptiness
I've got emptiness to tip the waiter

I'm staying put—if I rise, I'll miss
the planet turning around the sun

Risk being the Self that is selfless—
one of these two is you

Get over practice being like punishment and get
into it, like it's theatre, and you're the star—
Break a leg! (That's the leg of a curtain, not your leg.)

Stop being a rube by throwing the brass ring
into the mouth of the clown for a free ride
on the merry-go-round of karma

A shift towards equanimity, when I discover
Christmas fruit cake ain't half bad

Muse, I'm glad you're in bed with me—I'm just
sorry there's only room for one in this old fart bag

Six tuns a day, no time for play—
I offered it up to my guru, as my beard grew

I know that bear shouldn't be here, Beth
but I'm not chasing him into the brush
banging on a pot with a pan

Cherokee-Irish maids from Arkansas
they'll undo me every time—ecstatic dakini
of the heart drop, you've got all the moves—

my blood courses to the beat of your dancing feet

Rock: Buddha, Dharma, Sangha
Paper: Dharma, Sangha, Buddha
Scissors: Sangha, Buddha, Dharma

Learn it straight, drunk, and stoned, so when
you're on stage, you can always perform

Last attachment on my way to retreat—
Summer Dawn paints a sun in my heart
as a parting pout adorns the goddess—
how can I return, if I've never left?

When the bear passed the yurt on his route
Tulku Sang-ngag said that once a bear gets his feed
that pretty much fills his need, whereas man
in his ignorance will destroy the world given half a chance

Musical notes in the rafters, as the wind runs the scales
creaking floorboards and the pop of a log in the fire—
in the expanse of equanimity

I've an insensitive ass and enjoy
the outhouse view on a frigid morning

In a moment of despair, I asked Guru Rinpoche
“How did you do it?” And he answered in excellent English
“Don't think so much—press on with your practice.”

Snow on the path, then mud—me snug, even smug
inside Luminous Peak—inside, I'm happy and free

In Jewel's domain, sniffing her shoes
and lingerie, reading her detective mags, I felt

the thrill of oncoming manhood—in no way is this
to be read in the context of the wish-fulfilling jewel
(File in the love section)

The morning star, the evening star, secretly dances
in rainbow light through all the afternoons that pass

The only sound, a whistling in the channel of my nose
the only light, a candle on my altar

Intellectual copyright! And what of it is original?
Philosophers worry, but poets scratch and tear, rip and pair
playing fast and loose with facts

A pack mule fell into a ravine with a load of Longchenpa's
dialectical writings before they could be copied—
I thought, bless our lucky stars, fewer commentaries to read

In a small rock is the universe, both insubstantial, both
empty—the one I hold in my hand, the other holds me

Blue sky day begins with a forlorn bird cry, a spider
and a white moth in combat, unseeking awareness

I, Jampa Dorje, and Luminous Peak
a cabin built for long retreat, have come together as one—
a profitable meeting, an auspicious summit

Warming to my practice, riding the thermals of mantra
on the waves of faith, I explore this solitary place

Two-pronged assault on my ego—the fabrications
of Anuyoga and the non-action of Dzogchen—
nibble at the carrot, focus on the stick

How to get off the grid—
Let it go, leave it, break free!
Be sure you have an accountant

Doing mandala offering is like playing in the sandbox—
an infinity of castles full of jewels

The unidentified beetle is a stink bug, well-camouflaged
to hide on bark, so well-camouflaged as to be
nearly invisible in my field guide

Dumpster diving with Longchenpa—all foods are pure
even if the dogs of Dzogchen Monastery won't eat it

Remembering Philip Whalen writing in his lookout
“In the mountains, it's pancakes every morning of the world”
I've taken a liking to a leaf-footed bug—it eats my cooking

Snow during the night, not enough to close the trail
But enough for long johns and pancakes for breakfast
Leaf bug smelled that oil—on the spot with proboscis out

With an ear to the ground, I hear many sounds
sounds of different sizes, that's form
sounds which portend surprises, that's content

It's crazy sitting on this mountain, chanting in Tibetan
prostrating in the moonlight—but I'll do what it takes
to get every mother sentient being liberated

In high winds, Luminous Peak is like a ship tossing at sea—
with all hatches battened down, this is Flagship Mahayana

Sophia says,

“A devil sits
Under the ass
Of knowledge.”

“Rangwang”
Wrong wang?
There’s only
Win win

Fog—
White kata
Creating
Blest isles

Afternoon Sargasso Sea—
wind stops—birds give it up
in the distance, the tap of a woodpecker
then, nothing but my breathing

Buddha said, “If there was anything more
tempting than sex, I couldn’t have done it.”
Luckily, he didn’t smoke tobacco

4 Ss of camouflage
Shape, shine, silhouette, shadow
Look for the gopher snake

Tearingness of paper

So scared
I jumped out
of my shit

Afflatus without status

Now
There
Then

Lovelorn tom turkey gobbling for the girls—
such a sad tone of unfulfilled longing in his bold
proclamations, as well as his tender declarations

Tonight, on the sunset channel, the clouds have golden linings
That's the news, followed by a soap— "Beware of Beauty"

A sudden thaw—food going to rot—an opportunity to feast

While painting Dharmakaya *tigles*, I remember
where I learned to kiss—from a girl named Nancy French
and the French really know how to kiss

Ravens waltzing mid-air, doing it every which way
Look at that—a barrel role—bless their little aviator hearts

Last week she was resistant, this week she's more compliant
Ravens overhead, *pas de deux*—ah, love on the wing

Tsoknyi said, "The ads are so good we could eat plastic."

"Miso, I don't get it, it's just like bouillon."
"Oh no, my dear, much more mysterious."

Empty Empty Empty
Give me something
To sink my teeth into

I chop a luscious leek for miso soup
Tofu and seaweed round it out

I think of Philip's "Food Opera"
When he was hungry, he was free
At Luminous Peak, there are no banks
No government, no wars, I'm free
To eat delicious soup

When he was known as Flash Dorje
he poured marijuana on his cornflakes
Ex-rocker found religion—he had
Marshmallow Peeps for dessert today

Which came first, the chicken or the egg?
in Buddhism, as in biology, they are one
Which came first, the courtship or the copulation?
with a rooster, the courtship is very brief

Titles—A Monk's Marriage Manual
Meditation on My Mother's Corpse
You Can't Cheat on Bodhicitta
Your Ego Is an Echo

Overheard— "Got drunk and wrecked my motorcycle, but
I've slowed down, having been whipped by distraction."

In the uniformity of basic space
I offer this thought as a buddha realm—
may all beings find a pure land

A blue-green meteor crosses Archuleta Ridge—
Arya Tara, what are you up to?

The mating call of a woodpecker, continuous & discordant—
it's spring, but I wish he'd take his mantra to another tree

The moon is erratic and Venus, inconstant—
I brew my morning cup with Scorpio over Ekajati

Sticking a girl's pigtail into the inkwell
did I dream that or see it in a movie?
No, my school desk had an inkwell
and Dorothy Darling sat in front of me

While harvesting the last of the ice
an angry tassel-eared squirrel set up a fuss
“Hey,” I said, “This road runs two ways, fella—
in and out.” There is no enlightenment.

Discussing with a hermit thrush my opposition
to her building in my corbel, her flute-like voice
may win me over—but, then, neither of us would be hermits

Padampa Sangye's visage in the woodwork—
just a knot and a pattern in the grain
but I can't shake this magical illusion of pure mind

Where does the first step come from?
If from nowhere, how was it born? And, if
from somewhere, it's already been taken

Basic Buddhist numerology
I asked for 4 rolls; I got one
I asked for 2 rolls; I got none
I asked for 1 roll; again, none
This is not a poem—
This is a request for toilet paper
If I ask for 7 rolls, will I get 3?

I had my nihilist phase, and my response to everyone
“Go shit in your hat!” But I've moved beyond that
I had my eternalist phase and my response to everyone
“Repent or be damned to hell!” I've evolved here as well
Hoping I'm not stuck where what goes around comes around
May all beings find happiness in the middle ground

My ego in an advanced stage of decomposition—
by thorough examination, I now know something about fish

Beautiful day in the neighborhood, Mr. Ratnasambhava
sun again, wild folk at work, I write in the morning light

Winter time, quiet time, inward time
and the outhouse doesn't stink

Gunshots in Hidden Valley—
maybe not a good place to hide
Bang, bang, bang, did he hit it?
Bang—guess not

Do you long for high adventure—
Ulysses? Moll Flanders? Seven Years in Tibet?
Then, the *ngöndro* is made for you

Mandala offerings are an opportunity to explore past lives—king and queen, horse thief and
harlot, even
the bard Ulysses spared—all beautify the Buddha realms

When my neighboring retreatant walked by
I stayed hidden and watched her pass
pulling a sled loaded with her groceries—
I heard her sigh, and in that sigh was her stress
along with the multitudinous worries of the world

My Yogi Moroccan spice tea bag tag says
“You are unlimited.” Yesterday, it said
“Your destiny is to merge with infinity.”
This is not exactly comforting

Emptiness, an expression of despair

and the absurd in the West
is solace and a release from dis-ease
to a philosopher of the East

About things arising from causes, Buddha
revealed their causes and related their cessation—
all the birds in these woods are singing love songs

A maid on the path behind a tree, who could it be?
She wails, “Get it out of me. I don’t want it.”
Could it be a tumor? A baby? Her ego?
Such anguish!

Hey, bee, I’m not a flower—
my robe is saffron-colored
but the only nectar I have to offer
is the dharma

A ruby-throated hummingbird inspects the flowers
I painted on the lintel above my cabin door—
here’s a critic who knows his stuff

Sun going down, us going up, revolving
in space—a spray of prayer flags wag in the wind

Mid-morning, mid-summer, warm blue sky
mind stream full of song, I add melody to my mantra
and circumambulate my hut in only hat and sandals

If there ever was a monk buster, it was you!
I’ll join you in the pure land
after I make a pit stop in a hot hell

Marion Ford, go directly to Akanishta—
no dwelling in the god realms, Marion Ford, go

to the pure land, and hold a place near you for me

Books on my shelves, side by side—
what transpires behind these covers?
Words and letters, helter-skelter making up their own stories

Precepts of psycho-cosmic real estate—
happy to be here, happy to go

Eat, sleep, shit
do a few domestic chores
hang with my yidam—that's about it

A day much as yesterday, a full measure—
a flock of jaybirds choir the darkness on
while at my altar, I chant my evening prayers
Rishis rise before me, dakas and dakinis—
a hawk, a squirrel, a bobcat—no one who
has been to Luminous Peak will fall into lower realms

Fresh green beans, red-skinned potatoes
pieces of ham with spice simmered a second day—
I feel like I've eaten the billion-fold universe

Struggling to read in direct sunlight, I move the book
and the words return—even this shadow is a gift

Waltzing with a grasshopper on my hat brim—
a one and a two and a three—we're vibrating
outside the constraints of this world

Luminous Peak rests among the pines—
set down your burden, here you can skip
the light fandango with a grasshopper

Dark now—the cicadas make a blanket of sound
as I gather armloads of darkness from the shadowy foliage

Always worries—if I hadn't done this
or if I hadn't done that—I'm painting a portrait
of Guru Rinpoche who sees through the bullshit

I am the sun
I play with clouds
I live under a mountain
not feeling a photon of sadness

We owned land just west
of where Ishi had lived—
weird concept, owned land

Venus in conjunction with the moon
rising in sextile with Orion—
now, that's XXX-rated

Days in retreat mirror themselves—
my true nature, a dark blue hue—
am I being obvious?

Here I am at Luminous Peak
on Planet Earth, taking a leak, trying
not to piss on an ant in this vast universe—
Astonishing!

Thoreau would envy me—
I live in the Rockies, the west in his future—
a pretty walk from Walden Pond

An honor to be a member of Ellen's Vajra Dream Team
her rapping, "Ol' monk Jampa fills the hall with mantra."

Itchy armpit from a chigger bite—everything Ok
until this bug hatched—but anger doesn't help—
too much anger flying around

A long-horned cactus beetle hovers above my head
as a leaf-footed beetle sits on my toe—
love these insects for taking such an interest

Following in the tradition of hermits,
I told a spider, "I'm not much of a housekeeper"—
now, there's a huge web in the window

I hear the conch blow for Chöd practice—
I'm invited to the feast—not only an honored guest
I'm the main course

She ditched me and married
a guy who had won a Nobel Prize—
not bad being the runner up
winner of the Ignoble Prize

Slept all morning, while the day swept by
forward and reverse—Where's my cup of tea?
No answer

And what is there to fear?
Just my natural self—I write this
revealing a subtle pain

Fire puja at Luminous Peak—
Black Dampa flies over with a fighter escort
after the tormas are taken out—
blessings descend on our plane

If there's a Day of Reckoning where I
must breathe on my paintings and make

the images come to life—I'll just do that

A young bear charging downhill
surprised by me and me by him—
I try to rest in the interval
between appearance and concept
but my heart beats double time

Of what use is a yogi?
Well, my butt melts snow

When I'm lonely, my meditation dull
and the walls close in, I climb the hill
and lean against this hollow pine—
“What's up, Jampa?”
“Cabin fever, but I know what to do about it—
go for a walk, take the air, talk to a tree.”
And, then, back to practice

Baptized an agnostic and schooled in logical positivism
now, the only validity I find is in prayer and meditation

This fluttering of thrushes among the prayer flags
will produce a brood of baby buddha birds

“God does not roll dice,” said Einstein—
He does smoke a big cigar and enjoy a good hand of poker

Four extremes—exist, not exist, both, neither—
the verdict is still out on the meaning of meaninglessness

I found an arrowhead—
days in retreat can be monotonous
yet every day has its surprises

Old man basking in the sun

old man watching snow fall
old man listening to rain fall
old man masturbating to Brahms

I asked the old pine tree Tm Vrbm Glk
if “Tm” was his given or family name—
it was his location, he replied—trees
don’t need a self (or a masculine pronoun)

Sitting on the temple porch
processing a classic case of meltdown—
thinking of the lama, the lama
appears, looking for her shoes

I am always in awe of the moon—
there you are, full moon in morning light

You ask, “Is there sex after death?”
That’s all there is—bliss and emptiness coming together

I have eaten supper and washed my dishes
I have eaten two cookies—I could not stop at one
I have read a poem by Borges on happiness
He says everything that happens happens for the first time
I rip a fart and relive Adam and Eve’s surprise

I hear many sounds—sounds of various sizes—
sounds that portend surprises, and always a sweet voice

I sit and eat my meal respecting the energy it brings
I sit and drink my tea listening to a thrush sing
I sit and contemplate the causes of suffering
I sit and sit and sit, and, then, I just sit

This old monk appreciates your poetry—
Budbill, you can come by anytime and sit

and play your luminous flute

Chainsaw noise during morning session—
nothing to be done—open the window to let
the pristine sound emptiness in—oh, where
is yesterday's blissful meditation?

My lawyer who keeps people out of jail for being bad
wondered why I would do a three-year retreat—
I told her, "Because my karma is good."

Below my cabin, a forest with clearings, no streets
no entanglements—my mind wanders everywhere

Birds chatter before they rest among the leaves—
I may see them yet in my dreams

Distant thunder, then light rain—prayer flag float
in a mild, damp breeze—everything peaceful
Rain stops, prayer flags, damp, droop on branches—
other happening of birds—it refuses to get dark

In the mud by the spring—a bear's tracks
big as my hand—I ring my bell and chant
hoping he'll be friendly, in a good way

A broom left by Han Shan or Shih Te
and a chair by Wang Fan-chih—
Luminous Peak, none the worse for wear
I sweep up a bit and have myself a sit

Unsure footing on these high slopes—
Han Shan's old sandals, worn out when he wore them
must get me through another season

Long periods without a reference point—
a plane leaves a contrail, headed west
at night, a distant light, a car moving, then
gone around a bend—I shadow dance
maybe I've gone around a bend

Chinese hermits, a thousand years ago
heard woodchoppers in the valley
below their caves on Cold Mountain
I hear chainsaws buzz in Hidden Valley
everything else, pretty much the same

Old monks taking joy in a simple toy
Kalu Rinpoche's favorite was a slinky
Jampa likes his magic sizzlers
adult supervision is recommended

I've been shot at, stabbed, beaten, and fucked up the ass—
no harm done—the suffering of beings is bodhicitta
I think of these actions as acts of love

My boundary is where the road forks—
the Four Kings are posted there
to keep my virtue in and my desire out

All this sagely poetry, what a load of crap—
still my grocery list is popular for its wild edible words

In the East, sacred wisdom that I can also find
far to the West, seeing the face of my lama in Tibet

Turning to the sunset channel
crescent moon, always sexy
a couple of stars show up
but they can't catch that lass

Following Borges into the library—
the labyrinth, the knife fight, the garden, circular time
and the dream

My meditation includes clouds and the chatter of birds—
when this grows tedious I make *tormas* and ring my bell

The mountain reduced to scree—
boulders to rocks, rocks to cobbles
cobbles to pebbles, pebbles to sand
sand to silt—no point of reference except gravity

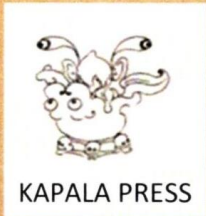
I'm just a stone thrown at me

I have never seen grass this green, each blade
has its own being—may all the bodhisattvas
remain until the last blade attains liberation

A housefly crosses the window pane
I offer to help it find the outside
but it's having none of this—
I desist and rest in the here-and-now

Wind whistling under the door
“You are alone, alone, alone”
I shift my sight and observe
the woven splendor of Dharma

These poems have been my companions in Luminous—
my world graced with light—for you their sound takes shape



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