

triptych of canvases on which you can paint the past any color you want, and he sees time as simultaneously objective, subjective, and secret, or "canny" (meaning supernatural), dividing it three ways: time for rest, time for work, and time to devote to the Deity. It was here I remember seeing a small engraving between the endpapers — a scythe leaning against a broken Doric column, which I recognized as a Masonic symbol for the precariousness of life and the impermanence of material reality.



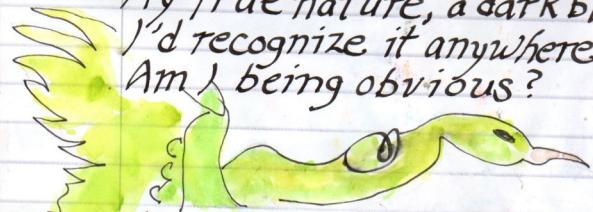
None of these meditative excursions was going to unifHoratio with his beloved. She had made it clear, "I know well enough what I could do, but I dare not, for I know I would regret it." If anything, his thoughts were an invitation for a stay in Bedlam. Needing a break, I let the computer rest and put an entry in my notebook with a question mark for Monday, "a long day with not much accomplished on the library." Still, I was making progress.

At the bottom of the stairs was a heap of suitcases and travel bags. The monks were hustling about. John said it was time for them to depart. "We've had a great time here, but we have to get going if we're going to make it in time for our next gig in Durango." We said our goodbyes. Brom and I were given sweatshirts with the logo of the Ganden Monks' Tour. We went out on the porch to wave them off.



Another Moon  
Jampa Dorje

Days in retreat mirror themselves  
My true nature, a dark blue hue  
I'd recognize it anywhere  
Am I being obvious?



Here I am at Luminous Peak  
in Colorado, on Planet Earth  
taking a leak, trying not to hit an ant  
in this billion-fold universe—astonishing

I sing of Akanish ta in the fall  
as golden as can be imagined  
animals, birds, all very real  
although everything weighs less



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 tapping, "Ol' monk Tampa  
fills the hall with mantra"



Back in the house, I sat down in  
front of the TV and ran through the  
channels looking for the Olympics.

"No Olympics on Sunday," Brom said.

"Sunday?" I asked. "I thought this  
was Monday. I'm sure it's Monday. Friday  
we drove up here and went to the  
empowerment, and Saturday I started  
work on your library, and Sunday I worked  
some but got sidetracked by a novel by  
an obscure author, so this should be Monday  
morning."

"Well, for one thing, this isn't morning;  
it's afternoon, and I saw the light on  
where you're working, in the early hours,  
when I got up to pee. I think you worked  
all night and forgot to sleep."

I went back upstairs and looked  
at my notes. The entry was there and  
the date. I had even made a sketch of  
the Freemason's engraving, but I  
could not find the copy of The Courageous  
Cadet. Instead, I found twenty-six  
volumes of Bulwer's novels: a set  
with gilt pages and lettering and blue  
cloth covers with leather corners.

However, the publisher was Collier, not  
Fishburn and Hughes, Ltd., and such a set  
was more likely from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup>c.  
or the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup>.

Trying to backtrack my pages on the  
computer, I could find no trace of the  
Cyclopaedia of British Literature, and yet

I knew something about Sir Henry Butler, and I had read (or thought I had read) one of his novels.

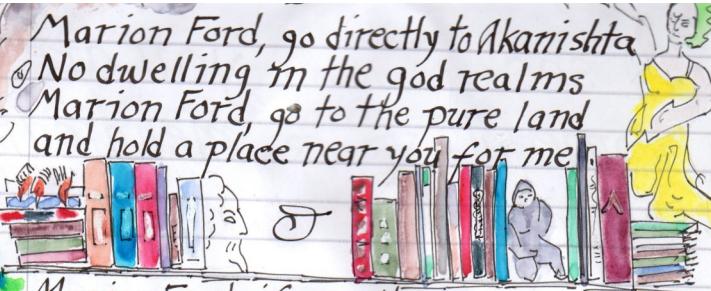
I went back downstairs. "I guess you are right," I said. "Somehow, I got out of step in the dance of time. Do you think that ice cream parlour next to the yoga studio is open on Sunday?"

"Sure," said Brom. "Do you want to go?"

"Could we take the Massarati?"

"We can, and you can drive."

I don't know if the Dalai Lama would approve of a monk in red robes behind the wheel of a red sports car, but I couldn't resist. When we hit a stretch of open road, I put the pedal to the metal, and in no time at all, we were back in the future.



Marion Ford, go directly to Akanishta  
No dwelling 'm the god realms  
Marion Ford, go to the pure land  
and hold a place near you for me

Marion Ford, if ever there was  
a monk-buster, it was you!  
I'll join you in the Pureland  
after I make a pit stop in a hot hell

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



Sorting photographs on the bed —  
a row of Chimney Rock in all weathers  
a skunk, a chipmunk, a wild turkey  
all lain down and framed together



Transmitting Dzogchen in a dream  
to primatologist Roger Fouts  
and he, in signs, to Wahoe and friends  
on a stairway made of golden threads

Diamonds glisten from waterdrops  
that hang from the gutter  
Luminous Peak, after a rain  
is the Lama's pure land

Asked if it is ok to visualize  
Vajrasattva as Jesus Christ  
Adzom said that's unnecessary  
plenty of room for both

Chrushes in the eyes of Luminous Peak  
Bette and Chevy have babies\*  
You can see their tiny heads—  
I couldn't be prouder

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

Bette and Chevy work their tails off—  
the more they feed the chicks  
the more they eat—"And how did  
we two come together?" Bette asks

## MILA AND THE HUNTERS

Sunrise. Mila is in his cave near Nyi Shang  
when his clairvoyant powers reveal the  
approach of some local hunters. As his  
river flow meditation would be interrupted,  
he thought this would be an excellent  
opportunity to try out a new technique  
he had developed.

"I'll post a holographic projection of myself  
near the cave entrance," he thought, "and  
I had better add a quantum of force shield  
to deflect the arrows, if they shoot at me,  
or they will consider me a mere ghost when  
the arrows pass through me." He moved to  
the back of the cave into the shadows, once his  
preparations were completed, so he could  
watch the drama unfold.

When the hunters arrived and saw the  
Jetsun sitting in samadi, it was as  
forseen. They asked, "Are you a human  
or a ghost?" And when they received no  
reply, they shot arrows at the seated figure,  
but none of the missiles would hit themark.  
Frightened, the hunters ran back the way  
they had come. They were baffled but also  
amazed by what they had seen.

One of Mila's deciples was coming up the  
path, and they told him what had occured,  
unable to contain their excitement.

"That was my precious Guru you shot at, you dolts," he exclaimed. "He's a fully realized being." This disciple, whose name was Chira Repa, had been a hunter before he had begun to wear the cotton cloth of a yogi, and his manner at this moment was fierce.

Feeling chastened, one of the hunters replied, "Ah, we was just poking a little fun at him."

When Chira Repa reached Mila's cave and told him what the hunter had said, the Jetsun just smiled and sang this song:

I bow down to all holy Gurus

I am the yogi, Milarepa  
And I have the reputation  
Of purging negative mindstreams  
Revealing nothing is what it seems

Those hunters' poison darts  
Were, to me, as harmless as farts  
They shot at an illusion  
Because of their delusion

The pleasure body led them astray  
But when you follow my way  
What you truly see is unseen  
And the rest is like a dream

I am the yogi, Milarepa  
There may be a few imitations  
But I'm the one without limitations



A new rustling sound – stay tuned  
either the chicks are readying for flight  
or the nest is too small  
and the weakest will get the boot



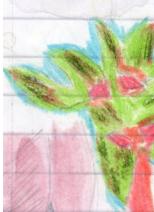
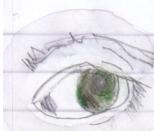
Flapping wings, all quite natural  
first one chick on deck, then another  
It's a breeze – you fly in place  
and the world moves under you



All gone – three young thrushes  
up and about, doing acrobatics  
twice flying inside luminous Peak  
Quiet now, only thunder

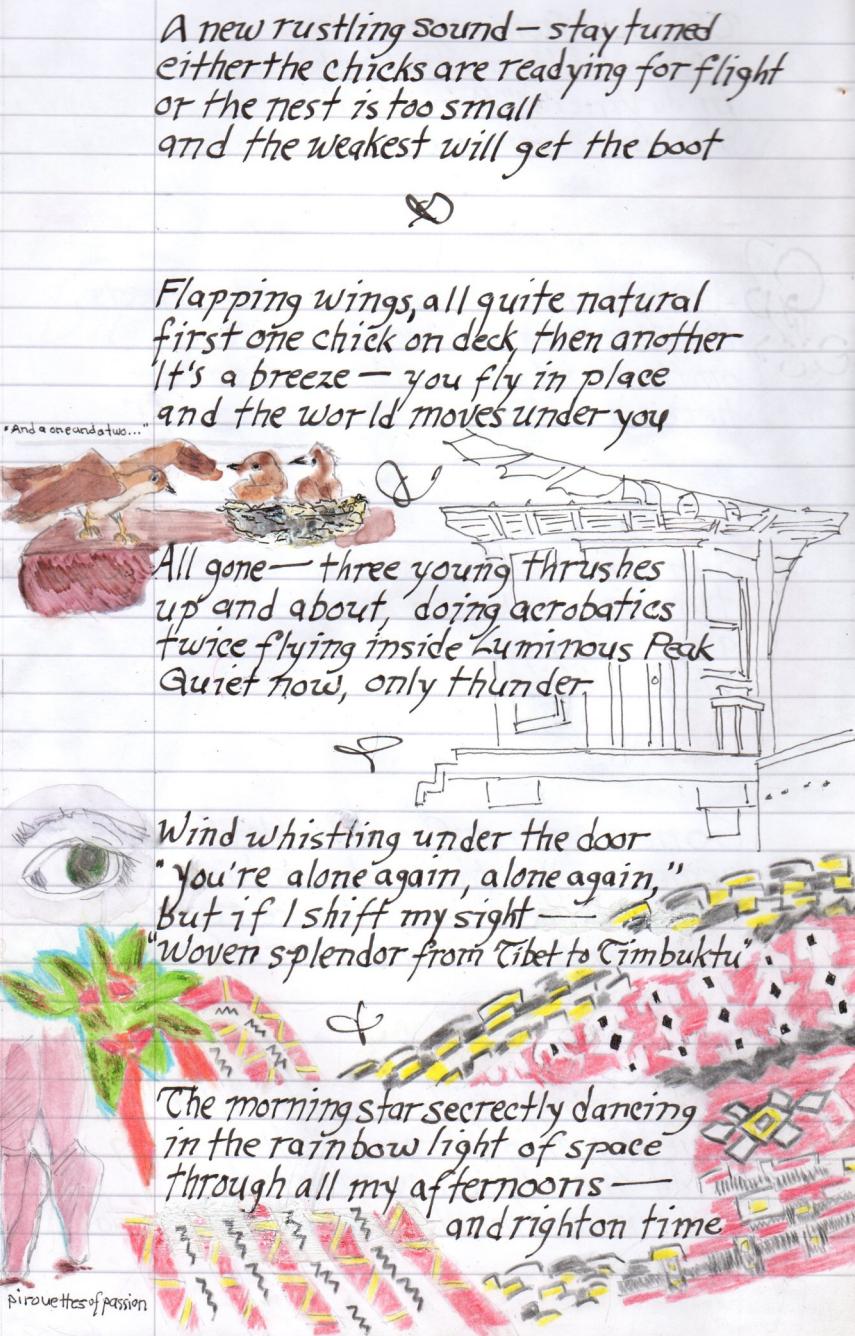


Wind whistling under the door  
"You're alone again, alone again,"  
But if I shift my sight —  
"Woven splendor from Tibet to Timbuktu"



The morning star secretly dancing  
in the rainbow light of space  
through all my afternoons —  
and right on time

pirouettes of passion



## NOTES TO "MILA AND THE HUNTERS"

Tampa's telling of this tale is drawn from the prelude to "The Invitation from the King of Nepal" in *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*. In the original, it is assumed that the people and events are "true," even if they verge on the legendary. In the hagiography of a saint, one expects miracles.



Milarepa, at this point in his life is a fully realized being with absolute powers, and that should be enough to explain why the hunters' arrows couldn't hit him — no need for smoke and mirrors, just good old-fashioned mind over matter.

But Tampa looks behind the curtain and checks on the rabbits to see if they are well-cared for before they appear in the hat. A bit of a sceptic, like David Hume, he thinks "miracles" cloud the issue and make a difficult sequence of events even more difficult to explain.

Clarity must not be Tampa's intent, because his explanation is no less fantastic than the miraculous one; his is a sci-fi, Rube Goldberg version. His unexpected narrative is not so much a rewriting of the tale, as a retelling of it from a different perspective. It's a matter of literary licence.

There are different possible explanations of why the arrows don't hit Mila: (1) poetic, it's a literary and moral story; (2) metaphysical, Zeno's paradox; (3) phenomenological, quantum physics; (4) psychological, "dazzled" or confusion; (5) existential, "the sun was in their eyes" and they just missed; or (6) Mila had the mojo.

## UNREAL REALITY

Why should intent or reason, born in me,  
make sins, else equal, in me more heinous?

JOHN DONNE

Having given up stealing, I can recount the details of the experience that led me to make that decision. My name is Jubal Dolan. I am named after my grandfather, one of the last of the old west gunfighters, a man who skirted the law on more than one occasion.

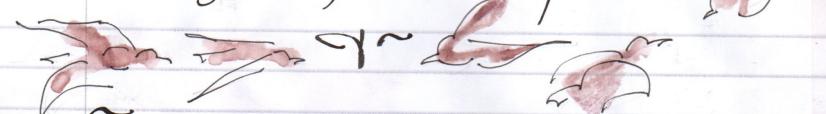
The events of my story took place in Berkeley in the early 60s. I had dropped out of Cal and was hard up for cash, so I took to stealing books from one bookstore and selling them to another. Not a lucrative enterprise, but it kept me in cigarettes and coffee.

Although there were many bookstores near campus in those days, there were not so many that I could avoid repeating my crime in the same store within a short time, and it was inevitable that a clerk would begin to notice the pattern of a long-haired figure in black entering and departing the store without making a purchase or who would appear at another time with a book or two to sell.

I was not the only "fringie" — what ex-students who hung around the campus were called — who practiced this trick, so clerks were on the lookout for shoplifters. I later became a bookseller and can

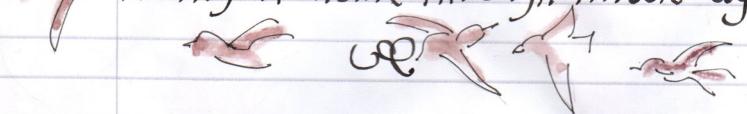
Thrush back — is it you, Bette?  
What're you doing fiddling around  
in that old nest?

No song — maybe it's a squatter



Two of you now — is it the babes  
returning to the nest?

A couple of slackers  
living at home through middle-age



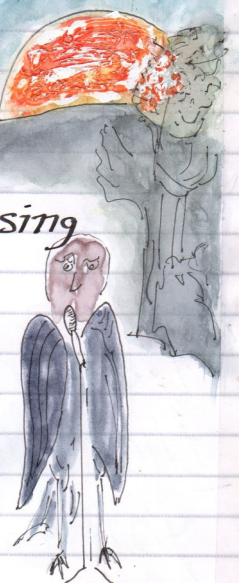
Now, fighting — sibling rivalry  
Can't you share the condo?  
I just cleaned the deck  
try not to make a mess

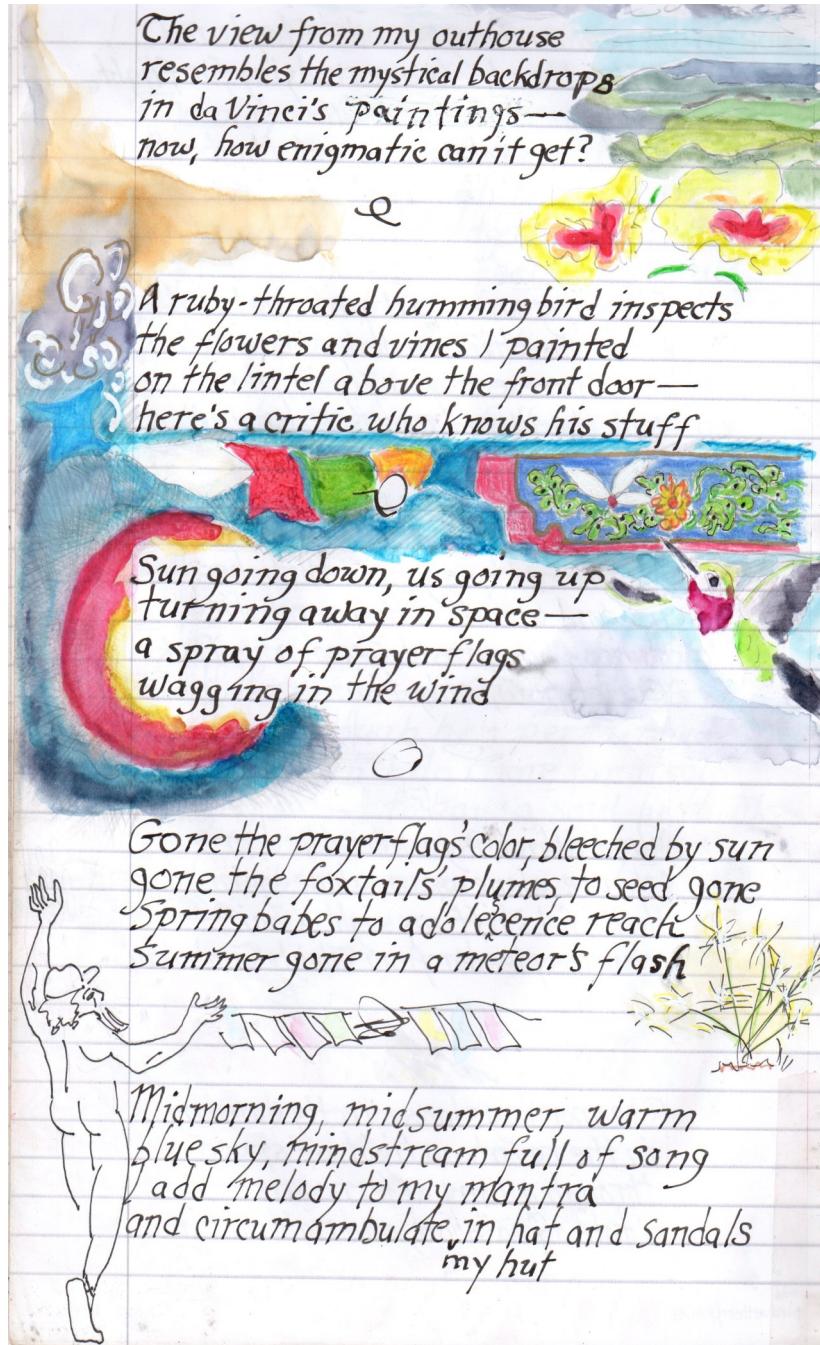


Sing me a song, Bette  
something for eventide  
a sunset serenade — you sing  
and I'll play my damaru



Come on, you sing  
Chevy'll do a bit of standup  
I'll play my damaru  
We'll make an evening of it





appreciate the damage the loss of one volume does to the integrity of the inventory. Call it "shrinkage"; but the profit lost on the initial investment — like in a variation of Zeno's paradox — is never fully recovered by subsequent sales. You have to sell two books to cover the cost of the one to begin to regain a profit margin — but enough; I digress.

I took a large volume from U.C. textbooks called *Macroeconomic Theory*. Weighed ten pounds and made a bulge in my overcoat. Got caught on my way to the door. Thought, "Should have known better," but too late to do me any good. The clerk was angry and rightly so — but here I am moralizing. He told another clerk to phone the police. It was here I had another choice to make.

My captor, of slight build, was looking the other way, and I could have kicked him in the shin and bolted. However, perhaps I was weary but a Raskolinkovian need for punishment arose — I thought like this at the time, just as I thought it was my duty to help redistribute capitalist wealth (my version of microeconomics) — and since I was caught, I let myself be arrested, taken to city jail, booked and shown to a cell.

When my jailer escorted me to my cell, he said, "We'll put you in here; you two have a lot in common." In the lower bunk was a figure in the shadows, so I took the upper bunk.

Metal walls with rivets, painted green —  
wool blanket, no sheets, no pillow — an  
unflushed toilet — a mute for a companion.  
I was reconciled to call it home, for now.  
It would be a couple of days before I was  
on the docket and called before a judge.  
Time for reflection, time for remorse.

It is wise not to ask another prisoner  
what they're in for. If they volunteer  
information, fine, but don't pry into  
another's sorrow. After we had a supper  
of something created by a nutritionist  
that I believe was meatloaf covered in  
library paste, my cellmate spoke.

"Before you arrived, I had the upper  
bunk. I do not remember the face of the  
man who was here, but after he left, I  
took his place. I will tell you my story  
in a matter-of-fact way. Stop me, if  
I get off track. You look like a student  
at the university. I was one, once. I  
left because of my grades.

"I had nowhere to go, so I stayed in  
the area. This may sound familiar. I  
heard what the jailer said. Curious. I  
assume he meant our crimes were similar.  
I took to stealing from stores. Books were  
my speciality because you can trade them  
for cash.

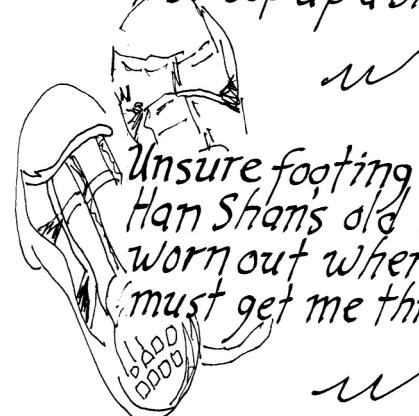
"I got brazen and tried to sell a book  
back to the same store without even  
leaving the premises. The clerk just  
looked at me and laughed, although he

In the mud by the spring  
a bear's tracks, big as my hand  
I ring my bell and chant, hoping,  
he's not friendly, in a good way\*

\* thanks to Beth for that line



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



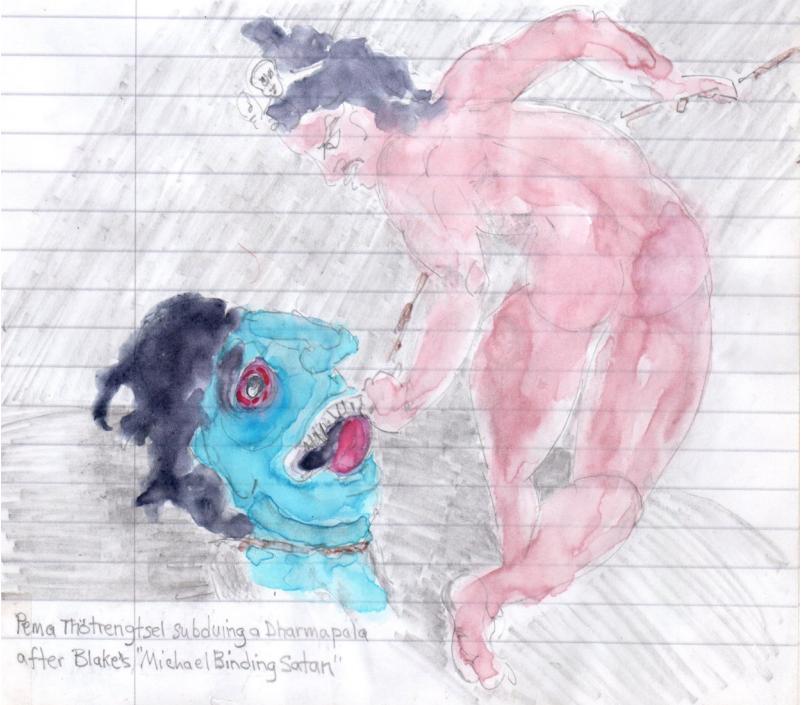
Unsure footing on these high slopes  
Han Shan's old sandals  
Worn out when he wore them  
must get me through another season

Long periods at Luminous Peak  
without a reference point  
Life must go on in the world  
a plane leaves a contrail headed west  
at night, a distant light, a car  
moving, then gone around a bend  
I do some shadow dancing, I laugh  
maybe I've gone around a bend

## THE MERE SELF

The mere self, the dude  
who says, "I'm going to the head,"  
will hang out until you're dead —  
the one to work on is the self

Who plans to win the Nobel Prize  
in chemistry and in literature  
lover of movie stars and super models  
receiving royalties from bestsellers  
and patents on his inventions  
"Yes, it was a rivet, small but effective."  
This is the self to be liberated  
before it runs for office



didn't really find it funny, and called the cops. I could have winged it, but I must have been tired of my ruse, or had a guilty trip like Saint Augustine, because I waited patiently for the patrol car to arrive, and here it am." He fell silent.

Incredible. My own story. Maybe I was dead and had gone to hell. Maybe it was a weird coincidence. Maybe I was crazy. I was mulling this over when the jailer called a name, which sounded like Yaqub Almansur; the cell door was unlocked; my companion threw on his coat and left. I only saw the back of his head.

I waited awhile, and then I took the lower bunk.



## NOTES FOR "UNREAL REALITY"

Jubal Dolan — Jampa says he remembers the name from an early T.V. western; he's not sure if this was an historical person or not, claiming, "I just liked the color and the alliterative vibe." Other adventures of this Jubal can be found in Toby's *Jubal* by Bourward Pécaufet (Scorpion Romances, Sébastopol, 2006).

Raskolinkov — the central character in Feodor Dostoevski's novel, *Crime and Punishment*, who evades arrest for his crime of theft (and murder) but is eventually apprehended

and eagerly confesses his wrongdoing.

Saint Augustine (354-430 ce.) was a "father" of the early Christian church and the author of Confessions, in which he laments his theft of some green pears as an unpardonable sin.

Yaqub Almansur — Jampa says, "I picked the first name I came upon and was pleasantly surprised it was a 12<sup>th</sup>c. sultan." The source is "Quatrain" from "Museum", a section of J.L. Borges' The Maker:

Other people died, but all that happened in the past, the season (everyone knows) most propitious for death. Can it be that, a subject of Yaqub Almansur, shall die as the roses have died, and Aristotle?

— from The Divan of Almoqtadir the el-Maghribi

The influence of Jorge Luis Borges is also evident in the overall concept of Jampa's story, inspired as it was by reading "When Fiction Lives in Fiction" (from "Writings for El Hogar Magazine", which can be found in Selected Non-Fictions, Penguin 1991), especially the mention of a story told by Scheherazade in The Thousand and One Nights (night 602) that includes a version of itself in the telling.

Also, in discussing the play within the play of Hamlet, Borges argues that the effect of this fiction within a fiction is to make reality seem unreal, hence Jampa's title for his piece.

Epigram from Donne's "If Poisonous Minerals".

## REVISIONIST FAIRYTALE

Teaching Yudren English using "Jack and the Beanstalk" as a text, she was not convinced Jack was a fool for trading his cow for a single bean

When she was young, in Tibet after the Chinese occupation her parents had to sell a cow to buy seed for next year's crop

And in the Tibetan version, it's not a hen that lays a golden egg; it's a mongoose you squeeze for jewels





Fog =  
white kata  
creating  
bless'd isles

◎

Afternoon Sargasso Sea =  
wind stops; birds give it up  
way in the distance

the tap of a woodpecker  
Then, nothing but my breathing

◎



Buddha said if there was anything  
more tempting than sex  
he couldn't have attained liberation =  
lucky he didn't smoke tobacco

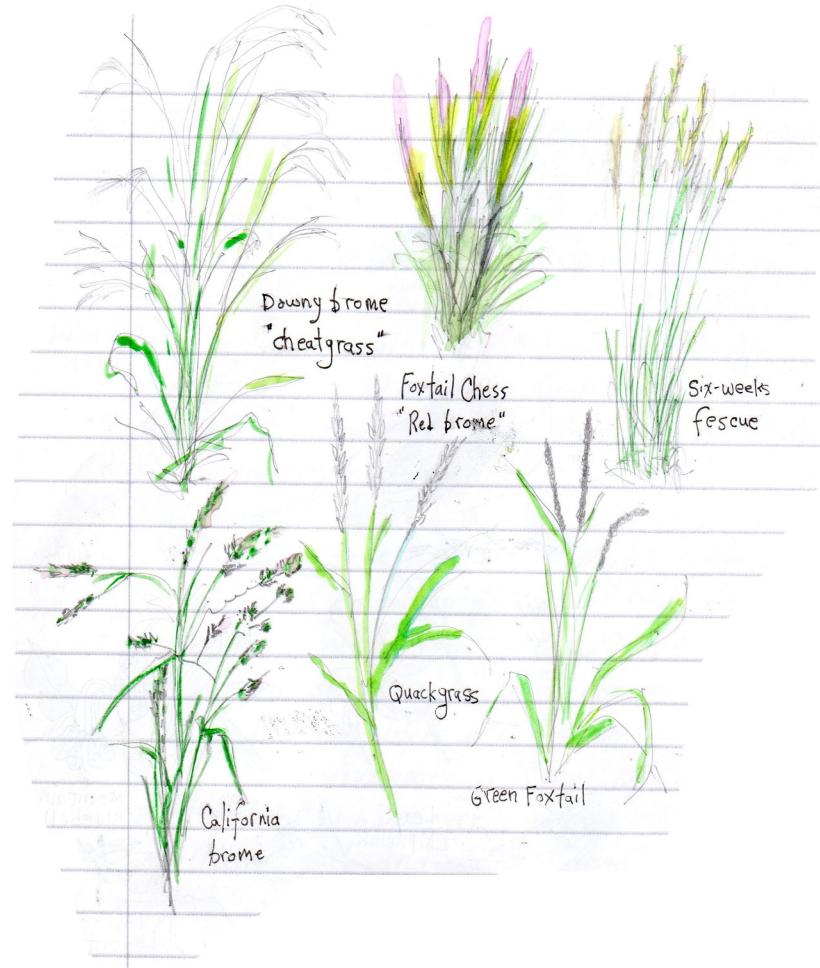
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4 S's of camouflage  
Shape  
size  
silhouette  
Shadow

(Look for the gopher snake)

◎

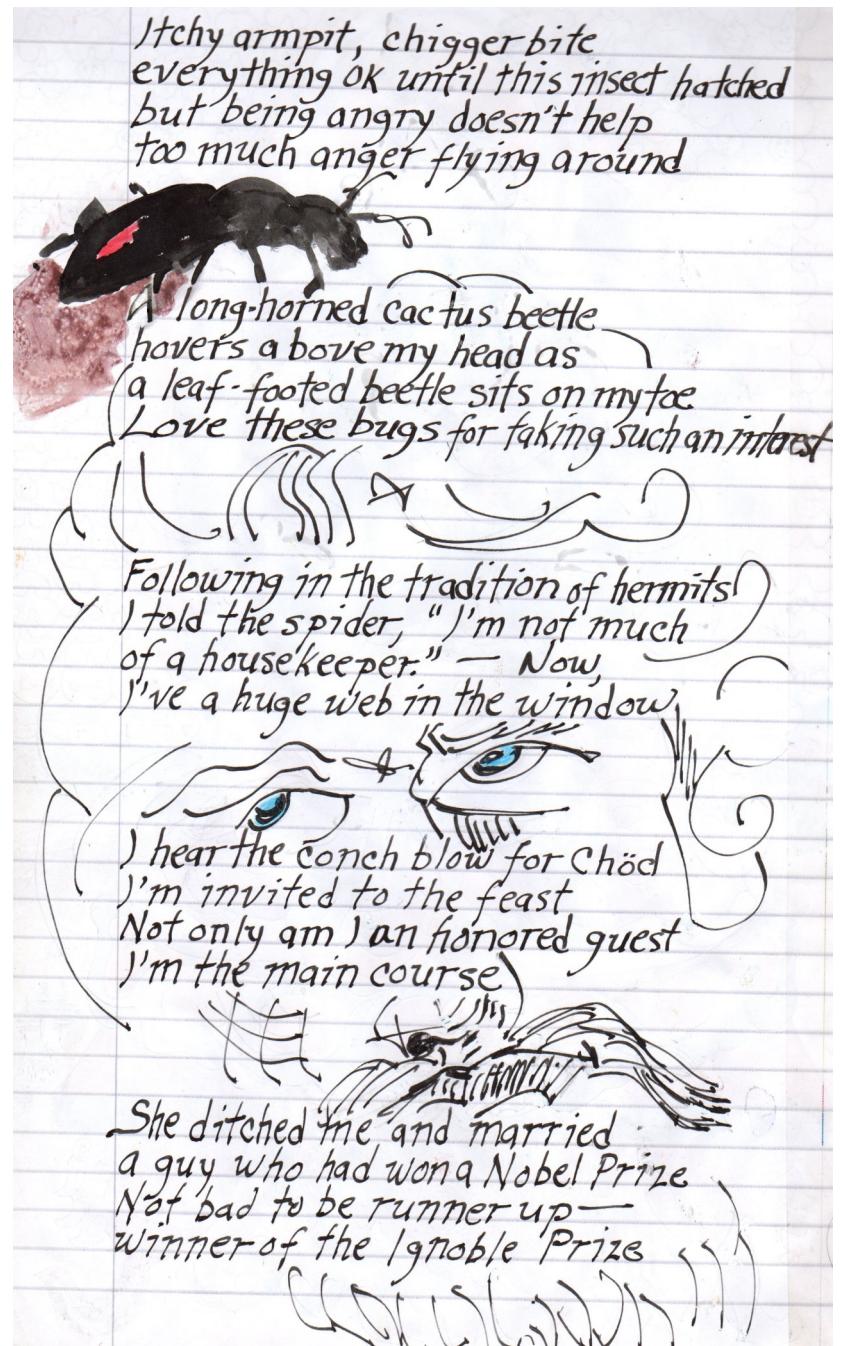
Tearingness of paper





Fierce Moon  
Jampa Dorje

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85

Down there I'm asked to do chores  
makes my asshole bleed  
not a good sign

Down there I go to speak  
"Fuck you, fools" comes out  
not a good sign

Better I stay in Luminous Peak  
talk to the chickadees  
sing songs to keep the sun on track

Peace, clarity, joy  
good signs

Mrs. Bush was asked if W's  
presidency was a failure.  
"No," she said, "America is safer.  
These fools believe their own lies."

Hard to get to the other side of the city (of cyclic existence)  
on the streetcar named Desire  
or on the streetcar named Envy  
or on the streetcar named Pride  
There is a train— Habitual Tendencies  
expensive food on that one—  
and a ship of fools, actually  
a whole fleet—a fleet of fools  
bound for the Isle of Deception



- NOTES:  
1) Black Panthers  
2) Kenneth Patchen  
3) Wm Blake  
4) Leon Trotsky

## RADICAL DZOGCHEN IN BERKELEY

"Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of mankind."  
—Percy Bysshe Shelley

By the time of Leary's proclamation  
TUNE IN, TURN ON, DROP OUT  
I had already dropped out—  
and turned on to my own tune

Radical Dzogchen spontaneously arose  
in America and Europe in the sixties\*  
and Berkeley was ground zero—  
with street poets the vanguard

We had no discipline  
but we had l'esprit  
We had no patience  
but we had the grit

Body: we believed in free love  
Voice: we believed in "power to the people"<sup>1</sup>  
Mind: we believed "war is not good for people" and other living things<sup>2</sup>  
Our mantra: sex, drugs and rock'n'roll

We saw the body as a temple  
We opened "the doors of perception"<sup>3</sup>  
and we abused 4:4 time  
to where you couldn't march to it

You may scoff, but we found "power in the streets"  
enough to stop a war and set the establishment  
/ on its ear

\* Radical Dzogchen is a term used by Keith Dowman in this context  
in his book, EYE OF THE STORM, Vajra Pub., Nepal 2006, page xii.

I've had it all = horses, houses  
wealth, health and fame =  
been playboy, beggar, soldier, freak  
Now, a hermit in Luminous Peak



Neither father nor son has fought  
in a war for four generations =  
Here, a raven coughs, as if  
to say, "No guarantee."



Considering, reflecting —  
the memory of my mother  
comes to mind.

— Shabkar (at White Rock Monkey Fortress)



There is outer time  
inner time, secret time  
a good time and golden thyme  
What's the best time? Teatime



Morning light in the Buddhabield  
many lights from one source  
Watch — and steadily — you'll be  
amazed at the inconceivable

Below my cabin, a forest and clearings  
no streets, no entanglements  
My mind wanders everywhere



With my ear to the ground  
I hear many a sound  
Sounds of different sizes  
Sounds that portend surprises  
And always a sweet voice singing



Long strips of gossamer cloud  
The first stars step on stage  
wearing halos and wire wings  
I'm eager for the play to begin



D: I don't understand why  
you can't say the name\*  
of that play in the theatre  
I said it, and everyone freaked



R: It's superstition and tradition  
Shows you're in the know —  
keep teasing and you'll be blamed  
for every little thing that goes wrong

(Just the allusion, "that play,"  
sends a little ghost into hiding.)

\* In the mores of the theater, the name ("Macbeth") is taboo.

Light on the horizon  
sun's still burnin'  
earth's still turnin'  
moon's still hangin' out  
my bowels work  
I can see, hear, smell, taste, talk  
I can still walk

As my daughter, Kirsten, used to say  
each morning when she awoke  
on her deathbed

"Yippie. I'm still alive!"

Makes me want to get on my cell  
and phone all my friends  
and every enemy, as well  
say, "Thank you, thank you,  
I love you."

THE RAT IS BACK

This rat is fat from eating torma  
at night, he makes music on my deck  
running thru a labyrinth of cans and boxes  
and beneath the cabin there are springy boards  
on which he romps and which he teases

Notes I know:

rat feet on wood  
rat feet on tin  
rat feet on canvas  
rat feet in rain  
rat feet in snow

allegro, staccato, and pianissimo



Waltzing with a grasshopper  
she rides my hat brim —  
one, two, three, and — vibrating  
outside the constraints of this world

(yes, I checked for an ovipositor)

10

Beyond the spring, above Hidden Valley  
Luminous Peak rests among the pines  
Set down your burden —  
here, you can dance with grasshoppers



Always worries — if I hadn't  
done that, if I had done this —  
I'm painting a portrait of Guru Rinpoche  
My hope is he'll stare right through you



A horse was stolen  
or eloped —  
It's getting dark  
is it you?

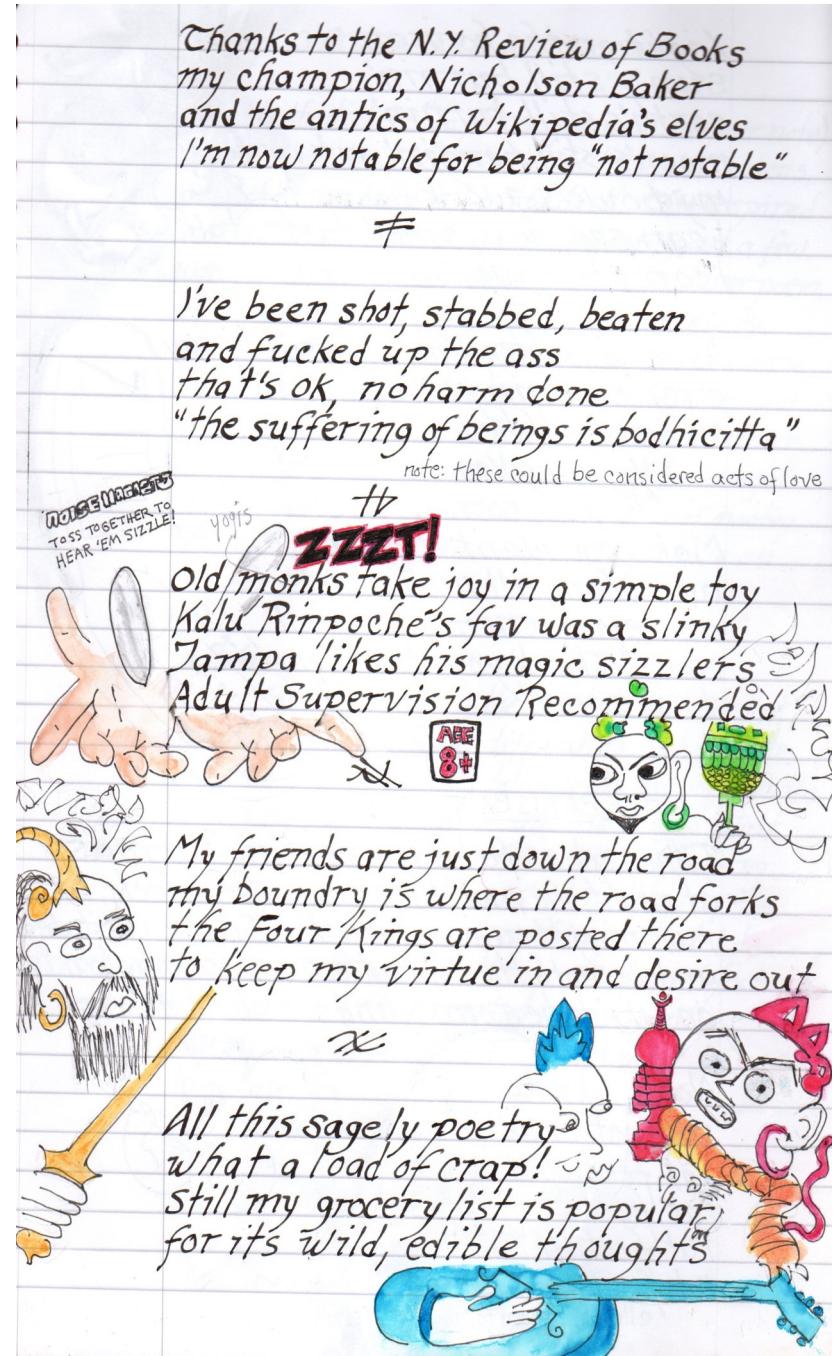
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Dark now, the cicadas  
make a blanket of sound  
I gather armloads of darkness  
from the shadowy foliage



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89

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

Distant thunder then light rain  
prayer flags float  
in a mild damp breeze  
everything peaceful

Rain stops, prayerflags, damp  
droop on branches  
other happenings of birds  
it refuses to get dark



Alone, where nothing stirs  
mystery is all around me  
neither life nor death  
nor some kind of nature

I needn't know what I am  
just love the uncreated absolute  
stripped of self and the myriad things  
thru love alone, for love alone

M

To love by love  
for love with love  
"Yo, dude—  
nothing to be done."

I ask Cara, "How's our relationship?"  
Looking out the window, I see  
the moon and Venus kissing  
I'd say we were tight

M2

A serenade by a thrush—  
gracious offering in morning light  
I think the dakinis sing just for me  
Mister Prufrock

With instruction  
for when the  
pressures on

When I say, "Back off; give me space,"  
I am asking for dimensional space, true,  
but I am also asking for a cessation  
of judgement and restrictive conditions,  
space for consciousness, a plenum —  
to be in a place without conflict,  
which is to say, "Don't rush me; I need time."



"Jampa, you're  
not old enough  
to have seen  
the Barrymores  
onstage."

"I know; I just  
heard this. It's  
(in a pompous tone), "We all know  
probably apocryphal." What the line is. But whose is it?"



Early memories of Oakland Bay Bridge —  
the approach to San Francisco — looking  
up from my mother's lap at the Union 76  
clock tower — the approach to Berkeley —  
the neon sign of Sherman Williams  
Paint Company, a can of paint pouring  
color over a globe — "Covering the World"

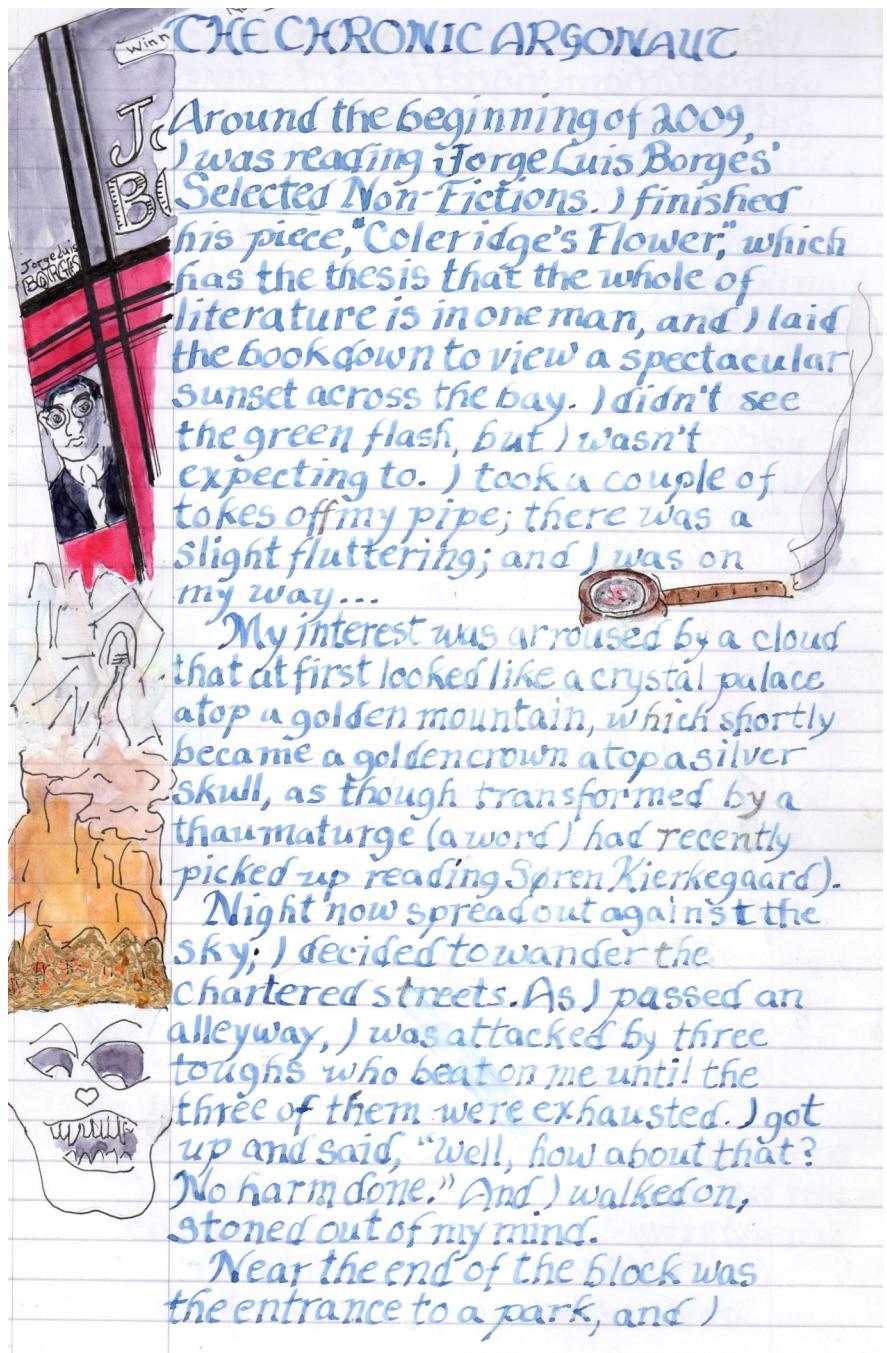


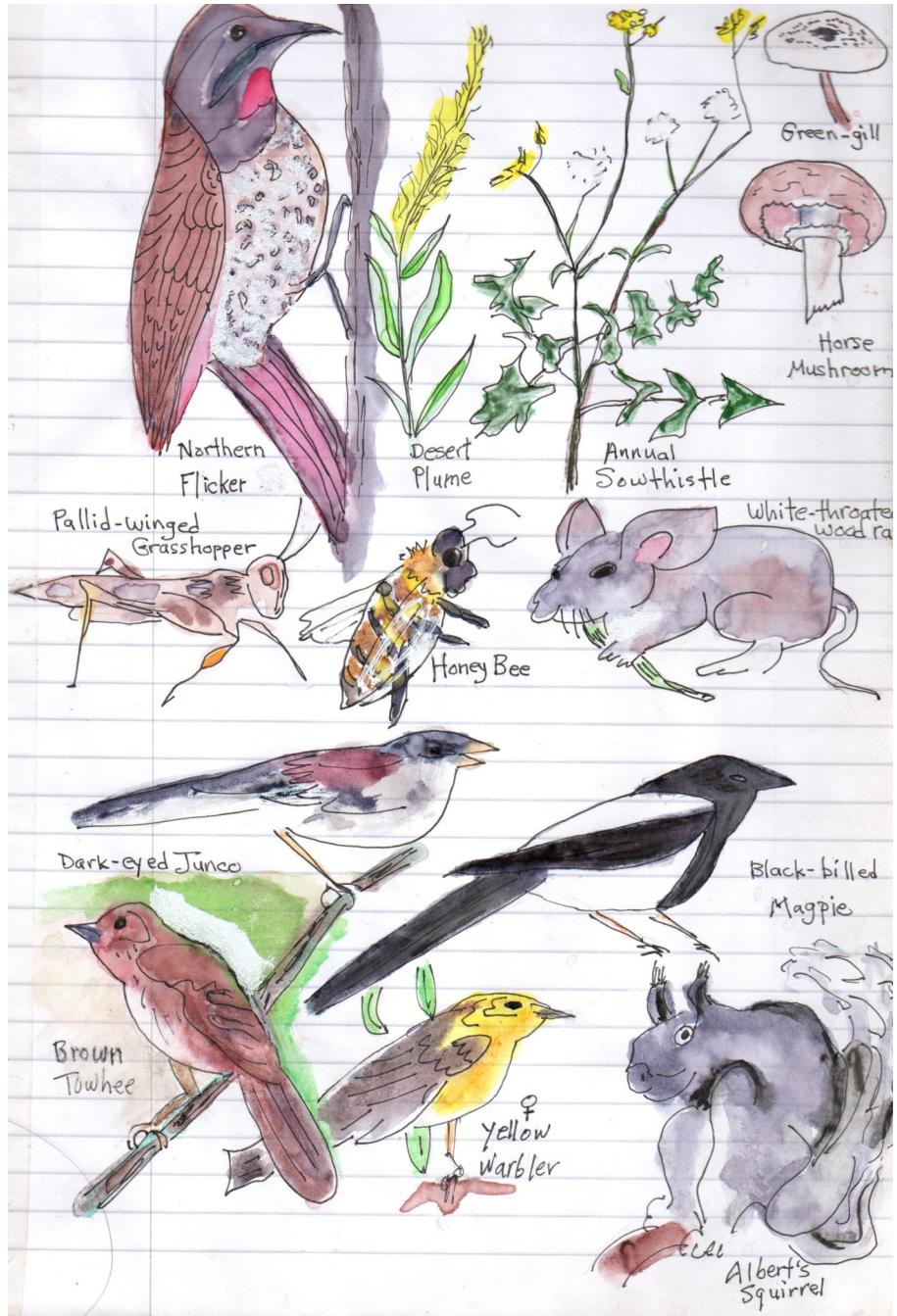
De rerum sensualum, the pleasure of things



Jampa Dorje

The Chronic Argonaut & other stories





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meandered down a foot path towards a gazebo, where five girls were singing & swaying their bodies in a slow dance.

One girl wore a white dress; one was in yellow, one in red, one in blue; and one was wearing a green dress: all the colors of the rainbow. There was the fragrance of something sweet, and I could hear the sound of bells and drums, although no musicians were present nor a CD player in sight.

In one voice they sang:  
*Indigenous* Hey, Dude!  
 You look beat  
 All tattered in  
 Body and mind.  
 Earth, sky and  
 the stars above  
 Hold him fast.

The girl in white stepped forward and handed me a small, blue flower. In a chant-like voice she said, "This flower blooms only once in a yuga and lasts a short time, and many are worthy, but few see it." I didn't have a clue as to what a 'yuga' was, but I took the flower and bowed.

There was a paperback book in my coat pocket with a hollowed-out space where I kept my stash. At present it was empty, so I put the flower there so it wouldn't get crushed.

When I looked up, the five girls



seemed to merge into a single girl, and she in turn became a rhapsody of light and vanished, something like the good witch in *The Wizard of Oz*.

With magic feet, I crossed a lake to an all-night diner, thinking a hot cup of coffee would go down good about now. A neon sign was lit: Oddiyana Cafe. It was warm inside, and old jukebox, which you could operate from your booth was playing "Earth Angel", one of my favorites. It was early morning in the false dawn when I made it home to bed.

In the afternoon, when I awoke, my head was clear, although my body felt a bit torn. I attributed my condition to the experiences of the previous night which seemed like a tremolant dream.

I got dressed. In my coat pocket was my copy of H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine*, and inside was the blue flower, just like in the story. Intrigued, I decided to retrace my steps.

When I reached the alley, there were three homeless men who thanked me for the kindness I had shown them the night before.

In the park, there was a kiosk



## CUSSIN' TRANSMISSION

(OR A WORD THAT STRIKES THE VITAL POINT)

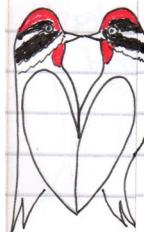
After my riding lesson on the weekend, cutting through open fields toward home, I came upon two men washing a bulldozer almost vertical on the hillside.

"That jackass had better watch it, or he'll tip that thing over," said one. The driver made another pass and I chimed in,

"Look at that jackass!"

The two men looked down at me in dismay, but it was too late. I had learned this new dharma in one lesson.

## LOVEBIRDS



That persistent woodpecker finally found a mate, but no sooner was his plea stilled, than the lonely cry of a towhee carried to the foreground. The constant strain—"Cheweeee cheweeee"—continued until I yelled, "Enough, already!" And I must have been heard, because a second towhee chimed in, and then all was quiet. They got a room.



Bodhicitta is a soft-teach  
perpetual motion machine  
The more you raise it  
the more it raises you

How the slowest came in first  
is anyone's guess - Zeno's paradox—  
all the others in the race dropped dead—  
or this dude had a very strong finish



Summer — everything in place  
leaves are out, flowers, nests built  
and the days begin to melt into  
blazing splendor



Blazing Splendor by Tuku Urgyen  
I highly recommend this memoir.

Two chipmonks frolic on the deck  
after stuffing themselves with tsok  
The morning swollen with long shadows  
reaches into the day



The question is not "Why is there  
Something rather than 'nothing'?"  
but "Why is there something that is nothing?"



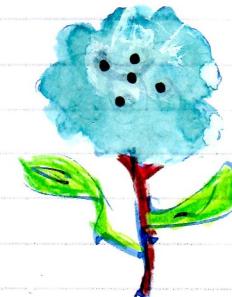
A 12<sup>th</sup> century Arab poet wonders if he will die,  
has been dead for a long time, and now  
I've dug him up again — "Hello, reader!"

that had an advertisement, a playbill  
for The Pleiades, or The Five Sisters,  
which claimed to be loosely based on  
Louisa May Alcott's Little Women.  
I wondered about the number of  
sisters, but I assumed this was to be  
revealed in the play.

When I got to the lake, I found  
that there were stepping stones  
just at the surface of the water.

And at the diner, a sign read:  
"Cafe You Can Eat Any Time," but  
"Time was on the fritz."

Still, there was the small, blue  
flower.



NOTE:

The title is adapted from the rejected title for Wells'  
Time Machine, The Chronic Argonauts. Borges says  
"chronic" means "temporal", etymologically.

## BULWER'S NOVELS

A book is a thing among things, a volume lost among the volumes that populate the indifferent universe, until it meets its reader, the person destined for its symbols. What then occurs is that singular emotion called beauty, that lovely mystery which neither psychology nor criticism can describe. — Jorge Luis Borges

What we see is light, but sometimes the darkness becomes visible. Most books and their authors are forgotten. If fame, as Borges claims, is a form of incomprehension, then literary obscurity is to be consigned to oblivion.

My name is Jampa Dorje. I am a monk in the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism. I am not a Tibetan by birth. I am an American, and my profession, before I took up this vocation was as a bookseller. A friend, Brom, asked me to appraise his library. He was selling his house in Telluride, Colorado, and he was unsure what to do with a large collection of books that had been in his family for many years.

I assumed the book collection would be like many I had encountered over the years, containing run-of-the-mill novels, with, perhaps, an occasional first edition of a noteworthy work, along with the inevitable copy of old books that would have more of an "antique value" than any real worth as collector's items.

I was reluctant to make the trip, but when Brom said he was hosting a group of Geluk monks who were traveling across the country giving empowerments and creating sand mandalas, the idea appealed to me. I was inexperienced in the ways of monastic life, and this would be

To the enigma of who wrote Shakespeare I would contribute this: it is unlikely to have been Sir Francis Bacon, as it seems nearly incomprehensible that either man could have produced the prodigious amount of work they did, let alone both feats.

For an amanuensis, in keeping with the spirit of the controversy, how's this: we know from the absence of records that Anne Hathaway had no formal education, but home schooling is a possibility. So, the sonnets, which imply Bill was gay, were hers, and the plays, written in her little cottage in the moonglow, once the children were abed.



As for my fortune, I could have left in a bank, where the mice of inflation would nibble away or have it in the stock market where the bear could take a big bite. Ouch! These are not metaphors.



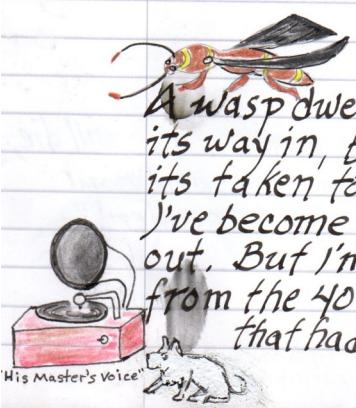
Spring green dents the view =  
I briefly leave retreat for teachings  
and old friends update me on  
how all that changes remains the same

A pair of chipmonks cavort on my porch, play with a collection of junk I save for my assemblages, eat what remainders the jays leave, and chase one another in a game of tag. I worry about them because there is a big gopher snake in the area.

This morning, only one little guy showed up and tried to climb into Luminous Peak through the window. The window was closed, and there was a frantic look in his eyes as he clawed the glass. He went and sat on a flat stone, seeming to me to be depressed. I feared his friend was history, but soon two exuberant chipmonks arrived.

What I momentarily imagined to be a tragedy, now became a farce, one that entertained me, but which revealed that whereas two is company, when it comes to love triangles, it might be preferable to be a snake's repast.

BL



A wasp dwells in Luminous Peak. Finds its way in, but can't find its way out, so, it's taken to buzzing my head, and I've become accommodating and let it out. But I'm reminded of a song from the 40s.— "Open the Door, Richard." that had the refrain

an opportunity to experience something of how monks live and behave, even if it was in an exotic setting like Telluride.

Brom picked me up from Tara Mandala Retreat Center, near Pagosa Springs, on a Friday morning, and in a few hours we arrived at Crestview, on the outskirts of Telluride. We stopped in front of an imposing wood-frame house in a wooded residential neighborhood. We pulled into a three-car garage, and while Brom was unloading some bags of groceries, I took a peak under a tarp that covered a vehicle in the next stall—a red Maserati, gleaming like a wish-fulfilling jewel.

We entered the home through the garage and were greeted by five monks in the kitchen preparing to eat a meal. One of these monks, like myself, was a native. Brom introduced me to John, and John, in turn, introduced me to Lama Norbu, Geshe Kalsang, Yeshi, Tenzin, and Phuntsok.

In modern times, and at the insistence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the traditional rivalry between Nyingmapas and the Gelukpas has, at least at formal gatherings, been suspended. "Rime," or non-sectarianism, is the word-of-the-day. There is still a strict hierarchy in monastic behavior. Perhaps, it was my being the eldest combined with being a friend of their host, or perhaps I was a curiosity, but I was treated with high regard and given the honor of being served after the Lama.

After a bite of lunch, we all settled in front of the TV to watch the Olympics. Although

the news from Tibet was grim after many demonstrators had been jailed following their protests against the Olympic torch being carried through Tibet, all the monks were avid spectators of the athletes.

The swimmers were breaking records, and the gymnasts astounded us with their feats. And so it went, until we had to leave for a yoga studio in Telluride for the evening's presentation. We drove a short ways to the public transit, which was a high-wire chairlift affair with small covered cars that could seat four or six, and which took us high above the valley floor. I rode alone with Lama Norbu and shot video of him and the environs for the incredulous audience that awaited him back home.

John explained the mission of the Ganden monks to a small, but attentive audience. He emphasized the special qualifications of Lama Norbu as a representative of the highest level of Tibetan scholarship and training in ritual. The lama gave the empowerment for Avalokiteshvara, the Buddha of Compassion, followed by the transmission for the mani mantra. At the conclusion, the lama asked John and I to field questions, while the troupe shopped for sundry items at the supermarket.

John tried to keep his answers to the probing questions as brief and concise as a Geluk logician can, and I managed to

## THE YOGI AND THE LIZARD

A lot of creatures hereabouts are young and skiddish, but one old lizard pulls up and we palaver. He (or she) gets a bit of dharma from me, and I get a bit of lizard wisdom from him.

The usual from me, "Rare is the opportunity to discover the holy dharma. All things are impermanent. Consider this and practice, and in this way you will be free of regret at the time of death."

From him, "Rare is the opportunity to rest in the sun in a solitary place safe from predators, and close to a hidey hole. While resting, visualize yourself as a winged dragon and ascend into the sky, soaring once around the top of Ekajati, across Hidden Valley from Luminous Peak, to Chimney Rock and back. Then, settle into a state beyond any image and hang out."



## Milarepa Collage

Doing worthless things  
wandering in samsara  
Buddha is the best

Looking for fame and goods  
death cannot be predicted  
Buddha is the best

Avoid ups-and-downs  
through my mouth I teach  
Buddha is the best



## Garcia Collage

The voice  
in your shoes  
tells me of

bones overflowing with light,  
bells of black water,  
a sea of wind-blown grass.

When the hand  
in my name  
Teaches out

and an invisible bird flutters in the rafters,  
what would you do?  
I'd run, I'd run like hell.

make my answers be mysterious, as only a Nyingma can.

In an hour, the rest of the monks returned, and we went back to Brom's to watch more of the Olympics and do our evening practice.

The following day, the monks went off to paint a sand mandala at the community hall, and I began my researches on the library. Brom showed me to the basement where there were stacks of cardboard boxes of books and many books in groups on the floor. My eyes beheld a wonder.

This was in no way your average collection — here were treasures I had only dreamed of — first editions of Charles Dickens and Lewis Carroll in Moroccan leather bindings with the original covers sewn into the endpapers. Full sets of Balzac, of Stevenson, of Browning, of Kipling, of Defoe, all in leather, bound by masters of that craft. There were large folios of lithographs in color of birds and plants, engravings of 18<sup>th</sup> century German artists, works in philosophy, history and literature.

And so, I went to work carting armloads of books from a basement to a room with more light, as many a monk had done before me. The other monks were curious about what I was doing, and when it was explained, their admiration increased. Even Lama Norbu smiled and let me be first in line at meals, so I could get back to my task.

Once this work was done with catalogs of auction records; now, it is done with a computer. The job is the same: search and compare and appraise — arduous but lovely labor. The details determining "condition" and "value" and "nearest approximate edition" are not relevant to this narrative, but this was the stuff of my hours, with breaks only for meals, for three days.

Obviously, this was a library of not one, but two or three men who wanted and could afford the best of books. I must admit with embarrassment I had always associated Brom's name with some species of grass: California brome, soft brome, or Rip-gut brome, or the like.

This was the family of Mansfield Brom (1849-1919), manufacturer and philanthropist, friend and confidant of "Tobberbarons," and the library had come down from father to son, and had been added to, up to the present day.

But, I digress. I worked diligently and with success, and time seemed to disappear. Then, a peculiar thing happened. I had just finished cataloging a Limited Editions Club copy of Milton's Il Penseroso and L'Allegro with paintings by ~~W~~ Blake. When I laid it aside, I must have bumped a stack of books, and a volume tumbled to the floor, landing with the cover splayed. One page was crumpled, and as I straightened the crease, I read, "All

### Whalen Collage

Cantor discovered three orders of infinity  
Lovely, lovely, lovely  
It shall not stand  
but why must I insist, why  
Mallow in marshy ground  
Is the gasman simple-minded?  
No single fallen petal



### Budbill Collage

After all that work!  
What could be more important?  
Who could ask for anything more?  
I got my father's ashes  
That's the way it goes  
This is truly an irrelevant and useless life  
but what have I got to complain about?  
After that, the blackflies eat you alive



### Borges Collage

Fall's coming on.  
I close my eyes and see a flock of birds.  
This bullet is an old one; its odious fate  
makes me odious as well, but I don't care.  
They were forced to ask me to dinner.  
They had no moral force.

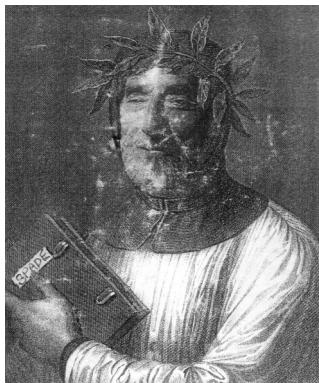
Looking in vain through atlases,  
Herbert Ash died of a ruptured aneurysm.

## THE OLD POET ADDRESSES THE ISSUE OF SOUL

The old poet doesn't believe in the soul, the psyche, or, as Jung would have it, the anima, although under duress, he might acknowledge the muse. Such a fuss is made, he feels he should have one, so he makes one from the rising steam of his tea and a few dabs of liquid paper. It resembles a lacey cloud and follows him as he goes about his chores.

Or, rather, it follows his shadow, which has a more elevated status, being inseparable from the poet's body.

Now, the soul presses against the window pane. The poet lets it inside, although he's perturbed this soul can't do more for itself. Still, it's good to have a soul, he thinks, but the constant humming does get on his nerves.



events in the Universe occur at Once, but we Experience them Sequentially. Take a forest, for example; the trees have had to grow; but we didn't Observe them, and now it is a Forest.

This seemed to me an odd notion, a mixture of David Hume and The Upanishads. I read a little more, and the thoughts were revealed to be those of a student in a state of despondancy after being rejected by a reigning beauty beyond his station in society.

The title page: The Courageous Cadet by Sir Henry Bulwer, published 1832, in London by Fishburn and Hughes, Ltd.

Who was Sir Henry Bulwer? I checked Wikipedia – no result, which didn't surprise me, as what was there one day might not be the next, having been deemed 'not notable'. A search for 19<sup>th</sup>c. English authors led me to the Cyclopaedia of British Literature, edited by Dr. I.S. Naval, where I found this:

Bulwer, William Henry Lytton Earle (Baron Dalling and Bulwer) 1801-72, British diplomat and author, known as Sir Henry Bulwer. Popular in his time for his novels, he is chiefly remembered for speculative ideas in his plots, making him a precursor of the modern genre of science fiction.

The computer is a labyrinthine maze of information. To some it is a "highway", but to me it is more like the sands of the Sahara, shifting and growing every day.

So, Sir Henry was only remembered by literary historians interested in dates and changes. But once he had been the preferred reading of Mr. Brom, and I needed to put a price on this book. I was also interested in these "speculative ideas", I admit.

My day stretched into the night. Anything resembling "science fiction" in The Courageous Cadet was only in an embryonic form—the passing thoughts or musings of the protagonist. Otherwise, the plot was pedestrian and the style of writing, sentimental and dated.

The student, Horatio, preparing for a commission in the army stays holed-up in his room after his love interest has disappointed him; and when he can no longer stand the isolation, he wanders the streets of the city in ever-expanding circles. What he sees is predictable, but every so often, as he is standing in front of a shop window, say, his mind will go off in an odd direction.

Nearly run over by a "diligence" (a public stagecoach) he stands by a wall of a building to catch his breath and considers the possibility of "a spiral of time" and the nature of "standing still in the present", of how it resembles "infinity" and "how infinity resembles a rose or a pool of water."

Another time, he is seated on a bench in a park, and he compares time to a

## FOR THE BIRDS

Jampa, here, inside  
Luminous —  
outside, a bird calls  
not to me perse  
but I hear it

don't know  
what to call it  
or care, really

it warbles, a warbler  
ends its song  
with a flurry of notes  
veers off, a warbling  
vireo, slight olive cast  
dusky white below

could be myself  
Sounds like me  
talking and talking  
inside and out —  
luminous

12 VII 09

