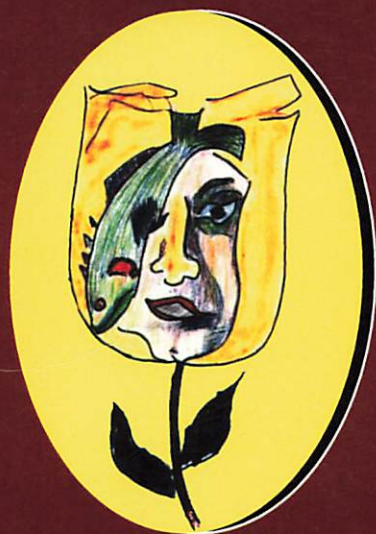


# ABSOLUTION

# FOR THE KITCHEN SINK



*Poems & Fragments*

*by*

*Rod Rippel*

ABSOLUTION  
FOR THE KITCHEN SINK

New Poems  
And  
Other Fragments

By  
Rod Rippel

*Rod Rippel*  
*5/17/17*

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**POETRY AFTER SURGERY**

Look  
What a gift  
The poems of  
'The Shadow of Sirius'

To read them  
Punctuation-less  
Raw streaming forth  
Without bridles attached

Hear them make music  
With mind all muddled  
With pain relief  
Narcotic

No way to force  
The notes  
Into a preconceived  
Melody

And meaning  
Who can think of meaning  
At a time like this



## *A SAVING WORD*

The idea of a Messiah arriving soon  
(Or who has come already)  
'Out there' somewhere to save us  
From our human fate is a monumental illusion.  
The logical alternative is to embrace  
A liberating message about our existence.

'That there is no Messiah' come or coming,  
Our lives, as they are, is what Reality  
embraces, Sustains, endorses, loves,  
ratifies, and accepts. We can accept,  
reject, or struggle to change what life brings.  
This is a self-evident truth.

That we do not require a Messiah  
Is Reality's Messianic Word,  
To desire more than reality provides  
Is an ungrateful illusion. That there is no savior  
Is the Saving Word.

And perhaps  
A final word, the Ultimate Word.

## *THOUGHT*

Thought  
where does it come from  
where go  
in this dream-like illusion of existence  
the universe has taken  
four billion years  
of trial and error experimentation  
on this particular planet  
to become conscious of itself  
to see itself begin to wonder  
and all that movement, fluctuation,  
dreams, thought and uniqueness  
what happens to it  
will it rise to fulfill  
childhood's Vision  
an ascent to All, the Am I Am  
unite with the other and the Other.

## *Affirmations*

Pain is inevitable but suffering is optional.  
Today I will not suffer.  
Today I will embrace joy.  
Today I will enact my doing.  
Today I will stretch my knowledge.  
Today I will expand my un-knowing.  
Today I will love the Mystery.  
Today my being is fulfilled.  
Today I will accept myself as I am.  
Today my mantra will be, "I have no complaints."  
Today I will give thanks.  
Today I am still vertical.  
Tomorrow I may be horizontal.  
In all I will be grateful.

## *THE APPROPRIATE EXIT*

Not a march, nor a protest  
Not crusading agent of change  
Not an advocate of the Cause.

Rather a Waltz.  
An embrace of the swerving, circling entreat.  
Hopefully not a whimper,  
Not a bang. A welcome of Grace.

A final praise of existence and Mystery.  
Perhaps in the style of Zorba's dance.  
Or Fiddler's on the Roof,  
With a touch of "Oh Didn't He Ramble."  
Just a touch!

And what if the Final dance  
Is years in evolving?  
And what or who will be  
My partner?

Shall we not also embrace it?  
Though our exits are solitary?  
And unpredictable as  
The Mystery itself.

And there may be no colleagues remaining  
Who were at my side during lesser transitions  
To launch me on that Vast Sea.  
But I will have my Intimate Band  
Who have accompanied me  
Lo these many years  
Through changes great and small.

There will be Amos, Noah, and Jesus.  
And yes, Huey, Joseph M., (the three Joes),  
Poggio and Polycarp. And Zorba,  
Mountain Rivera and blessed Maitch,  
Little Big Man and Chief Black Hawk.  
Kenneth (YES!) and Mildred (TOO!).  
And my Sibs. Saints all!

These and many more, named and unnamed.  
Known and forever unknown!  
Ancestors and descendents. A Universe!  
All accompany us on our way.  
On that journey in that final adventure.  
And may we all say a loud 'Amen.'

## *Art Appreciation 101*

Sense. Feel. Think. Tell.

When confronted by  
    A piece of art  
Never ask yourself  
    What does it mean  
First try to see  
    What is just there.

What do your senses  
    Experience  
Shapes, color, taste, hear  
    Where the goose-bumps.  
Textures. What dominates,  
    Where enticed, bored.

Then: what would you  
    add, subtract or divide  
What sounds. Play with it.  
    What colors add or remove  
Where put it in your home  
    kitchen, den or bathroom

What are your feelings  
    Sad, excited, anger, fear.

Interpretation is now  
    Appropriate or,  
If meaning invites,  
    Tell a story about it.  
Better yet  
    Let It tell the story of your life!

*A SAFE PLACE FOR MEN*

...no purpose  
...no ideology  
...no program  
...no propaganda  
...no mission

Just a place for men  
to talk, or not,  
to sit or stand,  
to meditate, or not,  
to read, or not,  
to nap, or not,  
to be.

## *BON VOYAGE, AUDREY*

You have prepared your little boat to cross that vast deep Sea  
O Ancient Soul that you are, you know the Way,  
Point the prow toward the Light.

Your soul-mate, your family, your friends, all who love you  
Wish to furnish your tiny ship with supplies,  
Heart-Gifts needed for the Journey:

Food and little dishes, sweet-meats, cakes and wines,  
A memory chest filled with treasures, fond times,  
A tambourine, a kazoo, noise-makers sounds and shapes,  
Dance steps, favorite songs, candles and shawl to keep you warm.  
A ball of twine, ribbons for your hair, a mariachi to shake.  
A comb for your tresses, hugs and kisses keep you from harm.

These Heart-Giftings sound earthly, but you know their intent.  
They guard you, treasured yearnings, and crumbs of grief-lament.  
May they attend you on your Way, then to Home be safely sent.

And, Audrey, as you ply the currents of those deep fathoms,  
From time to time, scatter a few crumbs overboard for our Sake.  
So when our time to embark that Awesome Ocean comes,  
We will be guided safe to Harbor by your wake.



## ***Before There Was***

Before was long  
Almost an eternity  
Water was already there  
Chaos and dark wind  
Then dry and two kinds of light  
One was night  
Laughter and creation's pleasure  
Then sorrow there being no user manual  
Out of dust came sex  
Cast into chance uncertainty  
There was leaping leaping  
And also weeping  
There was place and naming of things  
Waking as from long sleep  
We saw the tree  
Eyes opened with the taste of fruit  
Our lips kissed

*The Buddha on Alto Drive*

He's all head  
Huge ears hang like eggplants  
Lobes spread across his shoulders like epaulets.  
A sensuous mouth  
Wide and about to smile.  
The broad nose almost Negroid.  
The rest of him all belly.  
Hands rest on horizontal shins  
Bracketing the legs and fingers point  
To the earth at his side.  
The eyes are closed in meditation, not sleep.  
This not the Western saint with lidless eyes  
He sees lucidly by looking inward.  
The forehead smooth and bald,  
No wrinkles wrought by worry or worldly Woe.

This is the peaceful Buddha  
At oneness  
Under the Bodhi-tree.  
The Universe filling him with light and mirth  
At the same time placing all the world's suffering on his soul.

Being filled he is also of ample girth  
And large extravagant features.  
Yet next to the ground!  
No part of Buddha is far from the earthly soil.  
He is rooted.

You might think this is the laughing Buddha.  
But no! This is the Buddha who knows  
The joke is on him!  
Enlightenment revealed this.  
He looks as if he could break out laughing at any moment.  
Yet he only possesses this secret:  
The joke is on him and you and me.  
If we could understand this we also  
Might look in possession of laughter without silliness,  
Without the pain of humor.

***BUDDHA POEM #4***

You are living Buddha,  
The Buddha is alive and before my very eyes.  
You are Buddha.  
The Fat Lady with weak legs is Buddha  
You must know that  
You must realize in you each moment and every moment  
You and Buddha are not different.  
You have nothing to seek  
You are living Buddha  
You have no need to search  
    If you do not know that  
You must take my Word for it.

But if you search in vain.  
Search frustrated  
Until you realize beyond any doubts or question  
You are Buddha  
Completely  
You have never been anything but That.

## *CONFESSION*

I have had a charmed life.  
My days pass pleasantly enough.  
Little I do is of much consequence.  
I am bored a lot.  
I have no consuming passion.  
Only a few interests and diversions.  
I love wine-making and yoga.  
To tell how bad it has gotten  
I recently thought about taking up golf.

I am haunted by the memory  
Of my years with the Spirit Movement  
When I was a True Believer.  
I spent those years,  
Whether wisely or foolishly,  
With a consuming desire  
To create a better world.  
A dream. Worthy? Yes,  
But little did I know that the world  
Is, at every moment, Perfect.  
I thought to change it's Future.  
Bend history to a different Path.  
Of course it Bent, not as I thought.  
My efforts wasted? Who can say?  
Perhaps it has been revealed that  
Our vision was arrogant and illusory.  
But not, I contend wrong-headed or even bad.  
Just impossible to achieve in so short a time,  
As all, or most, consuming passions must ultimately be.

Of those times three experiences  
Have had a lasting and indelible impact.  
First: The Singing. Few people can imagine  
The power and feelings generated  
By 300 voices lifted together in song.  
Songs celebrating dreams and hopes committed to.  
Second: The experience of a real community.  
A community of fallible, frail and weak people  
But also determined, stubborn and courageous.

Warmth and loneliness, secure and fragile; human.

And lastly, The Daily Office first thing  
In the wee hours of the new day,  
A rehearsal. Not intellectual. Not emotional.  
Physical. Yet all these and more  
in some mysterious, mystical, human way.  
A corporate and individual performance of  
Poetry, song and reality. Sometimes a drag,  
Too tired to throw off the aches of mind and body.  
Sometimes so transcendent, so glorious  
I could be transported to the seventh heaven  
And see Satan falling from paradise.  
Just a group of ordinary, fragile, weak people.  
A community trying to articulate without words  
What god it was they would serve that day.

## ***CULTIVATE IGNORANCE***

**Fundamentalist religion and  
Exclusive humanistic positivism  
Are two branches off the same trunk:  
A rejection of the deepest truth:  
We do not know and cannot know  
Anything with Certainty following  
These two branches.  
Therefore cultivate the Ground of ignorance.  
For whatever tentative seeds  
It may contain.**

**Knowledge can only grow there!**

## *CULTIVATING IGNORANCE*

If you have an opinion be careful  
It could be the onset of blindness  
And the advent of hearing loss  
For those who think they see are blind,  
For the blind will see and only  
Those who have ears to hear will understand.

When ignorance is cultivated  
And the opinionated give up their certainty  
What do the recovering blind see?  
Trees walking and looking like human beings!  
Two are one and one becomes two.  
Women are as men and men eunuchs.  
Suddenly understanding proceeds as flood.  
Reading where there are no words,  
No lines. The Word is grasped, not seen,  
It grasps! Becomes incarnate.

Only the receptive can avoid opinion  
And they do not have to discard wisdom.  
It is like they have new clothes on,  
Or eyes which are opened.

## ***DARKNESS***

The time before seeing  
In a space  
Someone or something turns on the switch  
And the Holy-Happens  
Never separate from light – but Holy  
In a way light can never be or reveal  
Except on the other side of a darkness  
Where something accumulates that  
Light does not allow and is not 'seen'  
Until the darkness is intensely pushed back  
Or vice versa we yield to it,  
The dark fecundity which precedes awe.



## ***THE OLD TEACHING: TWO WAYS (THE DIDACHE)***

There are two Ways of existence: the Way of Life and the Way of Death.

The Way of life is this;

You shall honor the Mystery that made you.

You shall honor the semen and womb that gave you an entry way.

You shall live in gratitude for all beings and circumstance.

You shall harm no sentient life.

You shall empower the less fortunate.

You shall give to those who ask of you.

You shall ask for only that which you need.

You shall honor your Mentor as your Lord.

You shall leave your teacher when it is time to do so.

You shall honor the teaching not the teacher.

You shall do no harm.

This is the Way of Life.

For the assimilation of this teaching the training is this:

Speak well of all persons especially those who speak badly of you.

Intend good for those you deem enemies

As there are many things you might not wish happen to you, likewise do not do to others.

Fast for anyone who persecutes you. That is, Refrain from eating and sustaining your being as long as there is enmity between you and the other who wants to harm you.

You, on the other hand, have no enemy. To do this love those hating you.

This is the first Rule.

You shall abstain from unhelpful desire and unhealthy bodily gratification.

To do this follow these instructions in your daily training:

If anyone strikes you in anger do not strike back.

In this you should be perfect.

If anyone should ask of you a favor or press you into service which does no harm to another, do so willingly and with a generous heart.

if anyone ask you for clothing do not refuse them.

This is the second Rule. This second rule is difficult in its application to concrete situations.

Practice:

Make it a part of your culture to not be attached to any physical thing.

Practice giving. If someone takes from you what is yours do not ask for it back for you are unable to do so.

If anyone ask of you, give. Do not take it back.

**Practice hospitality. If they stay longer than 3 days, you shall not feed them or offer further shelter.**

**The Universe has created all things, they belong to no one, they belong to everyone. All is Free but not all is helpful. Blessed is he who can hear this.**

**Happy is the one who lives by this Rule, giving accordingly.**

**For He/She is blameless.**

**Woe to the one asking if they have no need. For on the one hand if there is a need, they are blameless, on the other hand, if they seek unfair advantage they will be blamed.**

**Repeat this Rule to everyone who will listen. For those who won't listen or hear, shake the dust from your shoes and move on. In either case do not be attached to results.**

## **DO BE'S**

To be or not to be ... Hamlet  
Be to do, be to do ... Dalai Lama  
Do to be, do to be ... Ortega y Gasset  
Do be do be doo ... Sinatra  
Don't do, to be ... Buddha  
Do Tao, to be ... Lao Tzu  
Die to do, to be ... Jesus  
Do as I do, to be ... Kung Fu Tse  
Do Dharma, to be ... Bhrama  
Doodoo, All is doodoo ... Qoheleth  
Doodle, to be ... Rod Rippel

*EASY LOST HARD FOUND*

Of the many things you've done with your life  
May we remember small kindnesses  
But what of love?

How men need - no not need-  
celebrate and create -  
spaces in their love -  
dare use the word distance?

and then regret what  
they have not known  
how to experience and didn't

too late  
an awkward silence  
the stretching intervals filled  
as my father used to say,  
"We don't have to actually say our love,  
we know what we intend."

Too bad for those  
Who follow that advice!  
Or lack courage to say  
Their love out loud.

Who decreed the scripting  
of leaving with silence;  
of rigid upper lipped bravado?

*Epitaphs I Have Considered (For the Cremation Vase)*

He couldn't find things.  
He wasn't a poet, he was a Poem.  
He could fight his way out of a paper bag.  
"Jesus [ \* ] He was a handsome man  
And what I'd like to know is  
How do you like your blue-eyed boy, Mr. Death?"

*\*Reader, fill in the [ ] with Multiple*

- Choice:*
1. Rodney,
  2. leave blank or comma
  3. semi-colon
  4. colon
  5. exclamation mark
  6. period
  7. question mark
  8. other, you supply.

Life is just a series of 'as ifs' ...  
A Paul Newman wanna be.  
As if Peaceful (my Chinese name-Lee Rao Ning).  
I'm off to see the Mystery.  
Happiness is overrated.  
Love and gratefulness are not separate things.  
Inventor of 9 X 9 offset Chess.  
Tried being a True Believer, couldn't convince himself.  
Made of Star Stuff,

"I only borrowed this Dust (Kunitz)  
What made it Dance, I do not know, (RR)  
Sometimes Joy, Sometimes Woe." (Blake)

"For all that was, thanks;  
For all that will be, yes;  
For all that is, be it so."

Put this dust back please,  
In the Earth,  
I only borrowed it.  
The Air I used and the Water  
Already recycled.  
The Fire, on the other hand,  
Is forever mine.  
Take what nourishes and  
Leave the rest.  
It will not diminish me.

## *Speculations...*

### *Evidence of Sapient Caused Advanced Planetary Extinctions (E.S.C.A.P.E.)*

- I. Given enough time evolution produces random complex life forms and intelligent consciousness;
- II. In the case of Earth the time has been  $4 \pm 0.5$  billion years out of a total of 13 – 15 billion years since origin of the universe;
- III. Tracking of observable planetary systems should be initiated to log evidence of sapient caused destruction of planetary scale, i.e., frequency of novas, changes in light emission or radiation signals.
- IV. Hypothesis – If populations of sapient beings in other systems follows a similar pattern to Earth's *homo sapiens*, then a very rapid acceleration in population will occur. In a very short interval at some point 3 to 5 billion years out from origin. If the stress on planetary resources that results is similar to *homo sapien's* experience, catastrophic extinctions should begin taking place throughout the universe during the next cosmic time period. However, it would be highly unlikely that any two sapient species would evolve at the same rate or develop cultures and societies at similar rates. We should expect a rather wide spectrum of evolving towards ESCAPE.
- V. The spectrum of observations of Cosmic Events is also influenced by the fact that it takes light signals significant time to cross the expanses of space. Since time has elapsed for signals to reach Earth from the rest of the universe, we are in essence the oldest place in the universe that we can see, everything else being observed by signals which left their sources sometime in the past depending on how distant they are. The greater the distance the 'younger' the data is from that source in terms of time elapsed since the origin. Hence, the most reliable data for ESCAPE purposes would be from nearer sectors of the universe since they would be 'old' enough to have evolved sapience.
- VI. Stress in sapient communities (planets) could result in an increased frequency of Spectacular Cosmic Events (SCE) noticeable from, our planet. This assumes 1) a large number of sapient occupied systems exist, and 2) a sizable fraction of those systems are unable to cope with or find solutions to their self-destruction. Violent cosmic events (SCE) have already been observed throughout the universe. This provides some background from which accelerated events could be measured until refined measurements can be developed which could differentiate self-inflicted SCE from otherwise 'natural' events.

VII. Possible reactions by sapient beings to the pending collapse of their planet system could include violent struggles to control dwindling resources and ultimate resort to chain reaction forces capable of producing cosmic signals.

VIII. At present on Earth we are seeing overall stress on several levels. Most important are those related to global warming and the finite supply of water available to a rapidly growing planet population. Struggles are already evident over fossil fuels and energy sources which contribute to the acceleration of climate change and especially to the level of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere (also a finite resource of the planet). Water will rapidly become more expensive than fossil fuels. Food shortages will become a way of life. Air pollution will accompany global warming hand-in-hand. We will probably arrive at the maximum number of people that the finite planet can sustain sometime in this century unless the imperative to control population is obeyed. Even so, the quality of life for a vast majority will be almost unlivable compared to what even the least advantaged of today enjoy. The stresses accompanying the kind of disparity to be experienced in the near to intermediate future are almost unimaginable. This portends increased levels of terrorism, wars, famine, and violence for the majority of earth's population as the powerful attempt to hold on to their resource access.

IX Indicatives for a planetary polity:

1. Immediate reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to global sustaining max.
2. Global zero population growth rate.
3. Planetary fresh water distribution system.
4. Global rationing of fossil fuel use.
5. Alternate energy development.
6. Planetary polity research.
7. Non-automobile culture (walking).
8. Universal free education planet wide
9. Possible legalization of voluntary euthanasia

X Earth citizens: Please apply above immediately!

## *Fascism Worked for Louisiana*

This country is a continuing revelation with thousands of little sub-cultures from stamp collectors to auto swap meet gypsies. And if you let yourself think about it, there's heaps wrong with it. Texas and California are two that come to mind!

When the Northern Louisiana dirt farmers couldn't get a share of the power through the Republicans, or the Democrats, or the Wobblies after the Civil War, they turned to the Socialists during the first years of the 20th Century. They voted solidly and overwhelmingly for Eugene V. Debs for President in every election from 1904 through 1916! That didn't work for them either.

In desperation, they listened to the big lumber companies (capitalism, of course! that's the answer). They couldn't raise crops on their scruffy dirt, but they had plenty of trees! The lumber Cos. promised \$ and a way out of drudgery labor with only more poverty and skinny kids in prospects. They took it!! And the Lumber Companies? They came in and cut every tree in sight right down to the dirt AND LEFT. Every tree in Northern La!. To this day those Parishes in N. LA are called "The Cut-Over Parishes." Poorer than before.

That's why they finally turned to Fascism! They had nothing to lose. When Huey Long came along they were ripe for the picking and Huey was 'one o them.' And Huey delivered for them. That's why he'll always be one of my Saints. They got roads. They got school buildings and teachers. They got free textbooks. Free college tuition and LSU Stadium. They got annual medical exams and a Charity Hospital. They got bridges for roads and dental bridges. ESSO Oil (read capitalism) had been taking oil out of Louisiana ground for nothing since 1902! Huey slapped a severance tax on oil production and when Esso refused to pay and hired an army of thugs and mercenaries to depose Huey, Huey mounted an army of dirt farmers with pitch forks, rifles and a few honest state troopers and met Standard Oil's army at Bayou LaFayette south of Baton Rouge and whipped their Ass!

Ain't nobody gonna run this State but little folk like you and me (and Huey). (Best thing that ever happened to the State of Louisiana!). (And in the middle of the country's worst depression.)

Makes you wish we had a Huey to take on the Big Banks and fat Execs, today! And bless our hearts, ExxonMobil just made profits last year larger than the current GDP of Louisiana!. Where's the justice in that?.



*FOR LANI AND STEVE*

On the occasion of your Wedding,  
Son and daughter-to-be:

"Man and woman are made for Joy and Woe  
And when this they rightly know  
Then through the world they safely go.  
Joy and Woe are woven fine,  
Clothing of the Soul divine."

*\_Blake*

You asked me to recite a poem  
On your wedding day. I thought , perhaps,  
A poem on Marriage.  
But what does anyone really know about this?  
I asked my friends, "Do you have any wisdom?  
Any thoughts?"

Here is some of what they said.

"It's a lot of work"  
"A fifty-fifty proposition"  
"Communications is the key"  
"Keep your love-life vital"  
"Don't take the other for granted"  
"Don't forget anniversaries"  
"Do things together"  
"Spend time apart"  
"If you share toothpaste always put the top back on"  
"Don't be too serious"  
"Never make Jokes"  
"Have similar interests"  
"Have different interests" and  
"I don't know anything, just read them a Gibran poem."

I asked my wife. She said,  
"Love yourself then you can love the Other,  
read 'Happiness Is A Choice.'  
read 'Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus.'"

Even though we don't know much  
Everyone has something to say on Marriage.  
The bookstores are full of it.

A lot comes down to your belief.  
If you believe life is hard, marriage is work  
If life is out to get you, marriage is a battle  
If life is a bowl of cherries, then...

Well,

You get the picture.

After all this I could summarize,  
Steve and Lani:

"Your marriage is yours to create.  
In life you will have 'Joy and Woe  
Woven fine' in all you make.  
More I cannot promise, you know,  
For that would Wedding's Vow and Blessing break."

That could be your wedding poem from me.  
But then I haven't given you anything  
You couldn't have gotten from a stranger.  
So here's my extra gift to you both  
On your Wedding Day:

Read the Story of Ruth and Boaz. (Two Cultures join).  
Read Robert Frost's 'Death of the Hired Man.'  
Marriage....

"...is a place where,  
when you have to go there,  
They have to take you in."  
"I should have called it  
Something you somehow haven't to deserve."

Or read 'A Blessing' by James Wright.  
Paradise is  
Just off the highway  
Where two ponies wait in the shadows of willow trees.  
There is no loneliness like theirs.  
They love one another  
They ripple with happiness that we have come to them.'

Lastly. Keep humor in your relationship.  
Laughter is the child of surprise. It will  
Heighten your experience of Joy and Woe.

Love, Dad

***Forcing Me to Relate....***

*. . Yes, yellow tulip, in your place of honor  
amidst a table of men,  
you are revolutionary,  
transforming reality.  
Forcing me to relate to my relationship to you,  
you invite interpretation,  
consciousness and  
eventually a whole story of creation! . . .*

*... from The Yellow Tulip & Other Poems, RR, 2005*

## GOD'S PREFERENTIAL LOVE

Some might say, looking at the people Jesus associated with and talked about,  
that God's kingdom is meant for the less fortunate and disreputable among us.  
If God has a preferential love for  
the destitute,  
the homeless,  
downtrodden,  
disenfranchised,  
naked,  
hungry,  
despised,  
ill-treated, sick and  
rejected misfortunate's of the world,  
Then most of us had better hope God's love  
Is somehow transformed into  
Extravagant excess,  
Boundlessly non-discriminatory, and  
A no-standards-whatever Love!

***Greetings for Pauline's Birthday***

Simply marking the passage of time  
Is not what we celebrate.  
It is the significant journey  
That you have been on –  
With all it's joys, woes, achievements and disappointments.  
In other words – the creation of a real Life –  
The creation of a real self.  
Valued, loved for what you have become!  
Celebrate your Existence. I do!

## *Grumpy Old Man Syndrome (GOMS)*

GOMS is telling me that my symptoms indicate 1) a decline in testosterone levels, 2) a rise in irritability, 3) an increase in moments of depression and length of depressive episodes, 4) a decline in libido and sexual activity and 5) an increase in temper with outbursts of atypical anger. I didn't need a Syndrome to tell me all this.

But, what's more I'm being told I don't have to go through all this. I can buy a book that tells me how I can manage GOMS. I can get a cream to apply to my perineum to assuage symptoms caused by lower testosterone levels influencing my unacceptable condition (a steroidal hormone cream, I presume).

Of course I shouldn't be the way I am! There are things I can do to eliminate these symptoms – so I wouldn't suffer from post-menopausal male irritability syndrome!

But Hell! I'm 82 years old. Isn't it time to enjoy the decline in testosterone induced behaviors and anxieties? Am I supposed to be a perennial 30 year old with thumping hormones, growing muscles, and a continuous ready erection? Am I not supposed to enjoy this current stage of my life and return to the competitive, striving, peacock displaying, fantasy stud phase of so-called masculine superiority? It wasn't so symptom-free back then, believe me! And, has testosterone proven to be such a great benefit to society in general??

I'll admit I'm slowed down a noticeable bit. It's one of the reasons I would never vote for anyone my age to be President of the US of A. But do I need a four-hour erection? Viagra? And, are women of my generation really wanting a 30 year old stud muffin? If so, let them go after them. I'm sure there are many who would oblige!

Yes, I am more irritable than ever over pettiness, real and imagined criticisms, suggestions about my not caring or not carrying my share of the load, demands on my time (I have less to squander), and observation about my 82 years accumulation of neurotic habits and childhood wounds. Am I supposed to abandon these friends so lovingly cultivated and helpful (or not) after all these years? Of course, one of them is laziness! I do have less energy than before to expend! I would like to have something I'm interested in to expend it on! I may not be Johnny-on-the-spot for someone else's idea of what I should do with my time and energy. Of course, that's also one of my prized neuroses: the pleasing of others, also known as co-dependency. But that's even slowed as I realized that pleasing others isn't within my power to control.

Remarkably GOMS gives me a good excuse to get some detachment from my old drive to please everybody. Now I want to please myself! My Dad always used to say, "You are the only custodian of your happiness." One of his

'pearls' of real wisdom! I should begin to take that more to heart and stop even suggesting that someone else could make me unhappy! I decide whether I'm happy, unhappy or just bored! Whatever I decide is fine. I'll own it and take responsibility for it.

And what's this stuff about a loss of libido? I'm just as interested in a well-turned ankle or shapely butt as I ever was. But there seems to be too much information out there. I just don't live in the delusion that every attractive female is going to fall in bed with me because I have blue eyes and a nice smile. There's more to sex than most of us dream about and it starts with lower levels of hormonal reactions and higher levels of appreciation of the other's reality. I am the first to admit that I have a lot to learn in this regard.

But what's the push to re-shape GOMs into docile well-adjusted, house-broken androgenic and hygienic neutered old housekeepers? Why the targeting of our neurotic behaviors with such zeal? Is it our responsibility to insure the happiness, lower anxiety, and symptom free environment of our family members? Are we truly the causes of their unhappiness? Who is in charge of their existence? NOT ME!

## *HISTORY*

In time all things  
    become blurred and even  
History, the stories we tell,  
    move back and forth  
Like the shifting dunes of sand  
    covering old interpretations  
Revealing unknown fragments,  
    producing new stories  
Undermining old Heroes, raising  
    new questions, answers.  
Even so the myths cling tenaciously  
    And, for many, take on the  
Stature of reality providing  
    Convenient facts and proofs  
For our most cherished prejudices.  
    Thus we do maintain our  
Christ, Buddhas, gods and God.



## *In Memory of Audrey, 12/30/2013*

Entering the hall I saw there was this lady with an emerald sticking to the side of her nose twirling around the dance floor at a soiree sponsored by a church organization and attended by otherwise 'normal' people who looked like they wouldn't step out-of-line at a banker's convention celebrating a mortgage foreclosure and I thought, "There's a kindred spirit I would like to meet" even if it meant putting aside my shyness in face of a group of strangers, quickly downing several glasses of red wine, getting up the courage to cut in on her tall lanky partner (who reminded me of a slightly underweight Charleston Heston or better yet, a thin-haired Clint Eastwood, and seeing if she knew how to dance a modified Lindy jitterbug, even though I was somewhat rusty myself and a little more than taken aback by the prospect of approaching such a handsome couple in mid-dance, nevertheless, nothing ventured nothing gained, and I realized that there had to be a story connected with this person that was out-of-the-ordinary with values as well as an aura of intrigue and assured self-possession, and besides I saw that her jewel wasn't just pasted on but was pierced through the nose like a misplaced ear ring raising my curiosity in finding out what this meant symbolically to her to have chosen such an unusual (for our generation) jewelry style and what message was it sending but naturally I couldn't raise such a topic in the middle of a dance and convinced myself that I would have to wait until I knew her better, which I resolved to do in the near future, but sad to say I never did get that question answered though I grew to know, respect and love Audrey.  
RR

*INTERPRETING PAUL AT GAL 2.16*

The faith that counts is not our faith  
But the faith of Jesus.  
Not our faith in Jesus  
But Jesus's faith in God.  
The faith of Jesus in his Lord  
Is what assures us, his followers,  
That this Lord deserves our trust.  
His trust in the Lord of Life  
Is what we rely on as valid.  
His faith is not that of a God,  
It is the trust of a man,  
That God will not ultimately disappoint.  
We can rely on this because it is the  
Trust of a man, not a Superman.  
Not a divine being, but a real authentic  
Flesh and blood human like ourselves  
Yet faithful even in his humanity  
To God's promise-in-faith. A promise  
As that given to Abraham who also trusted in God.  
There is no greater promise available to  
Men and women than this: that  
We are sons and daughters of God  
When we adopt the trust of Jesus  
We follow his example.

## *IRREVERENT QUESTIONS*

“The world is perfect at every moment.”  
...the Zen master

I ask myself

Are we better off without Saddam Hussien?

Is the world better off without Saddam?

Is the world better off without 4000 American soldiers and mercenaries,  
Without 150,000 Iraqis (collateral damage!)?

Is the world better off without those who could've made it better off?

“Good is a good doctor, but Bad is sometimes better.” (Emerson)

Not that we always want “to know what we don't know.” (Rumsfeld)

We're better off, long run, right?

To make a better world

Someone has to sacrifice.

Just who would make the better sacrifice?

The ones who wear elaborate tattoos,

The druggies, minorities drafted,

Those who'd just have died in drive-by ambushes,

The born again, who needn't fear their death,

The Muslim Americans who had their doubts,

The ones who had no doubts?

Would the world be better off if I'd never been born?

A little better; or a lot worse?

And what about the Galaxy?

Would it be better off without this blue-green lustre of a Pearl?

## ***THE WAY IT IS...***

What ever IT IS that has 'planned,' or resulted in the universe  
Has done it in such a fashion  
That we are unable to really "see" the world,  
As it is, in any fundamental sense.  
All we can do is mentally infer its existence.  
What this implies is that our world  
Is created by our senses and the stimulus processes  
Of our brains which we participate in.  
It is all subject to change as our pictures of reality evolve  
And is sustained by a cultural consensus.  
One inference we seem to share  
Is the unsettling feeling that "something" is 'out there.'  
A 'Thereness' external to ourselves.  
The Mystery itself, the Unknown and Unknowable Unknown.  
Think about it: It isn't IS until we think it IS.

## **CHITTA**

Question of Chitta  
Streaming mind chatter  
relentless continuous no-quiet unrest  
A fluctuation here and there  
alright, alright who's counting  
all this endless consciousness  
enough already  
Its not as though  
you don't have  
something to occupy your time  
you've got the autonomic nervous system  
to keep on track  
the old ticker  
temperature control  
in-out respiratory apparatus  
got to keep all in good shape  
running nice and trim  
stop needless vibration  
a little restraint please  
plaoaleeze (a Joe Palooka please)  
also chief operator maintaining  
the five portals  
admitting a limited glimpse  
all we can know of the  
external (if there is an external)  
why just five they don't require  
all this back and forth of consciousness  
this chitta  
Patanjali recommends exercise for  
quieter mind and peaceful  
integration of the self  
so the soul's radiance can express  
itself in its true grandeur  
that's the tip top of humanness  
they tell me get on with the program  
get busy with those asanas  
do some pranayama  
o nama we've go a lot to do  
to get those mind fluctuations under control

quiet  
stop the incessant stuff of thought  
and thought of stuff  
no distractions  
restraint and detachment focus the game  
that's the name  
quieting the sensory channels  
dial off ipods mental frenetic computers  
Om pada watta neo-rocha Hah  
new motto to yoga class by nine  
shorts on teeth brushed and stove off  
hari Om shanti shanti shanti Om  
O Patanjali O Beramji O Padmaji O BKS

## ***JOB REVISITED***

At various times before Time, after Time or in Time, when The Ancient of Days convenes the Heavenly Court, the foyer and vestibules of the Grand Hall of Heaven fills with messengers and attendants.

On one occasion the Hall was abuzz with officials, choirs, Observers, and the just curious H. Hosts. All the Archangels, angels, Cherubim, Seraphim, avatars, wraiths, whisps, spirits, Sheolholies, saints, etc. were there. And even Y-H-W-H (pronounced Yahuuggah) was there.

A group had gathered around Y-H-W-H including The Shay-tan who, in his usual honored capacity, provides an important function as Advocate of viewpoints often overlooked by Official Policy.

Y-H-W-H noted the presence of The Shay-tan and inquired of him, “Have you noticed my servant RR in your comings and goings among the Humans?” “Indeed I have, your Lordship,” was The Shay-tan’s response.

“And what is your assessment? Is he on the Path to authentic life? And does he revere my creation as Good? How does he fare in your estimate? O The Shay-tan?”

“I have examined RR as I do with most of your Work and he is typical, your IAMWHOIAM (I hesitate to pronounce out loud your Awesome Glory!)”

“My assessment is this: You have many more unquestioning and less doubtful servants to choose from, many who are more servile, either from genuine faith in you or who have suppressed doubt about you. They hope in you for their lives, as I say, from a standpoint of either love or fear.”

“But, what of RR?” asks Y-H-W-H. “I am coming to that, your Awesomeness” replied The Shay-tan.

“He is skeptical. He entertains doubt of your abilities, your claims and capacity. In short, he wonders about your power, your ethics and your very existence. He has, however, some of the qualities you admire in your Chosen People: He is devious, stubborn, weak, clever to some degree, but not too wise. In a word, he is circumspect. He is lazy and he is not anxious to know Y-H-W-H in any intimate way. He thinks by avoiding your gaze he will pass by unnoticed and, therefore untested. This, of course, redounds to all his relationships with The Work of

Your Hands. He passes on the Way, As If Peaceful (the meaning of his name in Chinese).”

“But O The Shay-tan, what of his qualities that I might see as showing my Eminent Domain, or my struggle to achieve the Limits and Possibilities of the future? Is there anything that I might uniquely Love in RR?”

“Perhaps.”

“Certainly there is uniqueness in all that you have touched, O Mysterious One! What that may be about RR, and why you might be interested in this RR, is beyond my Office to know. Perhaps, if you allowed me to touch his life and test him it might be manifested to me, and you would be further glorified (though I cannot see how your Awefulness can be either added to or subtracted from). That, O Light of Light and Darkness of Darkness, is my assessment.”

“I do not comprehend why you could be interested in this typical, uninspiring, and unexceptional specimen!”

Thus spoke The Shay-tan to Y-H-W-H at the Court of the Ancient of Days.



## *LA MESA SUTRAS*

By early childhood we know about authority,  
Sadness and laughter and maybe truth and illusion.  
The world already has paths ready set to learn.  
As we go, we follow or make up our own.  
Reality doesn't always allow doing "as you please,"  
And wisdom sometimes is choosing between  
The tried and true and a risky unknown.

Sometimes discontinuous stuff happens  
and truth makes you laugh. Or cry (negative laughter).  
Authority relates your laughter to truth.  
Perhaps in the beginning it was the novelty  
and it becomes the crisis event.  
For Siddhartha it was the awareness of suffering.  
And, so to resolve that new knowledge he proposed  
Asceticism to rid the self of its burden!

A brilliant idea.  
First, use self inflicted suffering  
to expiate one's guilt. Then resolve  
the question of how suffering arises,  
what is its source?  
For Siddhartha it was the urges of fleshly  
pleasures and desires.  
Which must then be extinguished.

But a flaw.  
A circular resolution.  
More suffering does not expiate suffering,  
Or explain the origins of suffering,  
Or mitigate the effects of suffering,  
Or quell the urges of the flesh.

Nevertheless. Perhaps if  
We resolve a one-eighty to hedonistic excess  
We refuse reflection and lose our self in pleasure.

Forgetting in the moment  
that pleasure is a pursuit and like all pursuits  
fraught with anxieties.

With pleasure there is never enough,  
And fulfillment is elusive and easily turns to emptiness.

Extinguishing or satiating desire is humanly impossible.  
Why kill a very human capacity? That's nonsense.  
We cannot make suffering an illusion  
or detach from the universe (Jagagi).

Then there are Spiritual Exercises  
which offer ways to conquer the flesh,  
to ride that horse to a fruitful detachment  
Or fulfilling bondage.

To yoke ones self to a discipline  
Is to have a religion, a practice, a vocation, a calling.

## **ZORBA**

**My friends:  
With Zorba and the gods of earth  
Let us dance.  
And if other gods there be  
Let them wait.  
My dance-card is full.**

*LITANY OF AGING (IN ELEVEN STANZAS)*

- I. Things Fall Apart (not in any priority order)
- Teeth
  - Blood vessels harden
  - Calcium deposits in tissues
  - Heart muscle thickens
  - Jaw strength lessens (chewing)
  - Weight loss (strength)
  - Bone density decline
  - Joint arthritis
  - Nerve branch sensing - cutaneous mechanoreceptors (fingers)
  - Speed and vibration sensing decline
  - Lung capacity decreases
  - Hearing/eyesight issues
  - Bowels slow
  - Brain shrinks
  - Judgment slows
  - Memory loss, multitasking slows
  - Backup systems falter
- II. Shift from independence to dependence
- III. Usual decline curve with time is precipitous
- IV. Assistance?
- more drugs
  - geriatric Drs.
  - assisted living options
  - greater exercise opportunity
  - surgery!?
- V. The greatest DANGER: Falls & injury (the stats are unbelievable)
- VI. A better life (prospects?)
- VII. "No one here gets out alive" is the best case scenario.

VIII. Consolation and Comfort?

- reject "strategies for easy consolation" found in "inspirational literature," art as uplift.
- pursue poetry, *a sad and angry consolation*.
- pop music, i.e. Bruce Springsteen admits, "All the redemption I can offer is beneath this dirty hood."
- wisdom on the boulevard can be poetry.
- art and Lady Philosophy. According to Nietzsche these offer benign illusion that sustains in the face of the awful truth.
- religion: Two views, 1) Pie-in-the-sky-by-and-by or, 2) Poetry (see above).

IX. The meaning of our life is to find the meaning of our life.

X. Some of my favorite poetry (*sad and angry consolation*):

- Book of Common Prayer* - 1928 edition
- Gospel of John* - 5:1-9 - Moffat Translation
- All Along the Watchtower* - Bob Dylan
- Chant: We are going...* - UUMF
- The Journey* - Mary Oliver
- Is That All There Is?* - Peggy Lee
- Song of a Man Who Has Come Through* - DH Lawrence
- Bon Voyage Audrey* - Rod, Rippel
- Looking for Space* - John Denver
- When Death Comes* - Mary Oliver
- The Saviors of God* - Nikos Kazantzakis
- The Book of Job*

XI. The consolation? You Decide!

*MARK MY PLACE WITH "X"*

Naked I came into this world  
I played many roles with names  
And a Name  
When I leave I want No Name  
And no one place which  
Is called mine -- with a name attached  
I will be scattered  
Into the Chaos  
Into new forms  
Combinations  
Mark the vacant space  
That held my ashes "X"

Naked I came into this world  
With no tag on my toes  
My name was No Name  
A coded message my only birth's possession  
No instruction manual provided  
No technical writing to clarify  
My use, my function, my care and lubrication  
My code-book a wonderful set  
Of pre-programmatic potentials  
And sequenced repetitious proteins, sugars and oils  
Interacting synapses and nexus  
Neurons and pain-pleasure points

Names and language were soon given  
Their consequence and imprint barely considered  
Imagine coming into this world  
Already saddled with baggage like  
"Jesus," "Wesley," or "Attila,"  
Or even "Rodney."  
What fate does a Name confer?  
What gifts and demons?

On the Path is the common discovery  
We must decide the Life we want  
It is not handed to us  
By our name or our circumstance.

Our fate is no answer  
Life itself indicts us  
We cannot trust our rational gifts  
Nor does emotion provide an inerrant guide.

We are the answer  
To life's enigmatic riddle.  
It is a test. We choose and  
Stand self-accused when nothing satisfies.  
When suffering becomes acute enough  
We go forward.

And then we end.

## ***MONEY***

One thing is clear.

My parents didn't teach me  
how to use money,  
only how to save it.

I didn't teach my sons

how to use money  
effectively.

But, how to save.

Now I have enough money

saved for what?

The rest of my life?

What is that?

For security?

For enjoyment?

I never learned how  
and can I learn it now?



## *NEUROSES*

I like some of my neuroses  
The ones you should keep  
A few things you discard  
Some things deserve fixing  
Fix what you can  
Love what can't be fixed  
Some of my neuroses don't merit fixing  
Some are so imbedded it's not worth fixing them  
Some are semi-modifiable, work on them  
All are who I am  
I'll keep them.

*No! Not Down the Rippel's Chimney*

You remember don't you when we were 'Up There,'  
Just before we got our assignments?  
We all lined up before that Big Desk  
Where all the Orders were being passed out.

I remember thinking....  
'The first century of the Common Era would be nice,  
All those villas and Greek temples, you know, and  
Pax Romana.'

As they pushed us towards the down-chute  
I took a peek at my papers.  
*"Your assignment, if you choose to accept it, is:  
Male, blue eyes, pink skin, Twentieth Century,  
May have the option of some years in the Twenty First.  
Kenneth and Mildred Rippel's chimney,  
507 Cleveland Avenue, Moberly, Missouri,  
United States of America."*

"Wait," I said, "There's been a mistake, I wanted ...."  
At that moment my bundle was shoved into the Bird's beak.  
As we started down I noticed the tag on my big toe:

"Sorry, all assignments to Lake Woe-be-gone where  
All the women are good-looking,  
All the men are strong, and  
All the children are above average  
Have been taken."

"DO THE BEST YOU CAN."

## *Nothing Is Lost*

In a very real sense  
Nothing of our Journey  
Is ever lost, only transformed  
As body and being return  
To the mysterious Universe  
From which they emerged.

"Fair Winds and good sails,  
O Soul, may your small boat  
Be stocked with little cakes,  
Sweet-meats and wine  
For that further voyage on a Vast Sea."

*ODE TO MATHEW*

Something in the Chaos  
Wanted a flower  
And we got Life  
In all its glorious variety.  
You grandchild, are one  
of its precious buds.

X O X

Here is the Buddha  
He has a very round belly  
And large hanging ears  
He is very wise and patient.  
When you get older I will  
Tell you more about him.

X O X

Here is the logo for  
My book of poems  
It is the face of someone  
Who has a 'fish-toupee.'

The fish is an important symbol  
It stands for Jesus  
As the letters for his name  
In Greek spell the word: fish.  
The fish is also a dweller in  
The ocean, the unconscious.

X O X

To Matthew my buddy,  
Here is the Buddha  
To hang on your wall  
You can see he's not very tall  
He sits with one hand on the ground  
His belly is large and round  
His ears are big and droop

His lobes look like a scoop  
He is a wise and gentle soul  
Who eats his rice from a bowl  
There's more of him I could say  
But we can save that for another day.

X O X

Here's a logo from one of my books  
Hope you like the way it looks  
It's grandpa's face I say  
And I'm wearing a fish-toupee'  
The fish you know is for us  
A symbol of the Man, Jesus  
About him I could say a lot  
But for now I better not.

Grandpa

## ***PARABLES OF JESUS***

Westar Institute New Testament scholars  
recognized as long ago as 1987 that the parables of the New  
Testament had the following characteristics:

**Consistent**

**An integral whole**

**The work of one voice (author)**

**Composed in Greek**

**No evidence of translation from Hebrew (i.e., Aramaic)**

**Fresh and radical**

**Against the received world**

**Consistently radical and resistant to domestication**

**Although much domesticating activity by redactors**

**Where did they originate?**

## *Pauline*

When you laughed  
At Katie's assertion  
"All the cows in France  
Are ugly as sin,"  
I saw a Pauline  
Who needs permission  
For more life, not less.

Let's adopt Katie  
So she can regale  
Us with the stories  
Of her travels, all  
The ugly creatures,  
The seedy hotels,  
The lecherous men  
And foul tasting food  
Of Europe seen from  
A teen's perspective.  
When Katie wears thin  
We could get Samantha.  
And for vacations  
We could always go  
To Mickey Norton's.

You get the point, I  
Like you when you laugh!  
When you laugh a lot  
Your body likes you.  
You bless those around you.

1985

## *Life Intrusion*

When an external situation or circumstance intrudes (Life Happening), which precipitates an internal crisis (Existential Question), it requires a response (choice) of either  
defending myself, i.e. defend my current Story (life posture) or, embracing the new situation and let go the current Story and choose to adopt a new Life Story,  
which results in a new relation to the situation I have on my hands or, I can refuse to embrace the new Happening and Life-challenge or, I can commit suicide, either immediately or slowly via addiction(s).

Succinctly:

**INTRUSION ...RAISES LIFE QN...DEMANDS DECISION...YES OR NO**

After such a process we interpret it and, if we say YES, we tell a new story about our life.

If we say NO, what do we do? A) keep the old story, B) commit suicide, or C) seek the many addictions available to sustain a living unconsciousness!

There is no moral judgment in this. A NO is just as “good,” but no better than, a YES. It is a life process. Either decision is just as authentic.



**POEM WRITTEN TO MYSELF AT A UNITY CHURCH SERVICE  
ON A SELF ADDRESSED STAMPED POSTCARD POSTDATED  
AND MAILED TO ME ONE-YEAR LATER**

*What do you see needed now? (Pray for)*

Why don't we go for a further reversal of the Bush Legacy!  
Pass Health Care and congratulate ourselves!  
Raise consciousness throughout the Land! That'd be an improvement!

*What do you think needs changing? (Start with yourself)*

Is it possible at my age to --- what, --- mellow?  
I've been lazy all my life...passes for mellow sometimes!  
But I don't fool myself...I want less responsibility!  
And more of getting my own way. So, how do I let go that?  
How let go ... of Self? Of Selfishness?  
First step: Behave more selflessly!  
Find...my Buddhahood, my Christ within, my Nirvana Road!

*O Crap, what concretely?*

More thought for spouse, what she needs.  
Search for connection with my grandchildren.  
More time spent in The Action before acting.  
More awareness of The Intention before acting.  
Commit to actualizing my limited talents on behalf of others.  
Let go of material addiction.  
Accept and receive the splendid vices of unearned health,  
Wealth bestowed by mixed-blessing capitalism.  
Rejoice in the advantages Fate has bestowed.  
Search for the eternal values, i.e., those which stay true to who I am.  
Accept the grace of friends and value of friendship.  
Find real community.  
Learn gratitude for all things.

*And finally what promises do you claim for the future? (Another form of prayer)*

Well, I promise I won't go into prophesying.  
And, I won't go to this Unity service next year!

## *POEM 2*

How can I say this.  
The older I get  
The more I feel  
The urge to withdraw.

To be with the self  
That I already know  
The one invented,  
Increasingly inadequate,  
Broken but still functioning,  
Increasingly defended but  
Less and less defensible.

I still hear the Siren's Call  
Of the self as yet to be born.  
What about that self?  
The One I haven't met,  
The unknown but longed for  
All these years?  
Is there still time  
Does it still take nine months?  
And then even to have just the blotter  
Awaiting the design?  
Where is the womb  
For this new creation?

No wonder I feel the call to hunker down,  
Protect what is, look back,  
Deny the long night ahead.

And of the self now assembled  
(I hesitate to use the word created.)  
Into which I seek safe retreat  
What are the flags flown  
From the ramparts of my hermit Hut?  
The Deceiver, the avoiding plagiaristic liar,  
The upstanding, responsible bourgeoisie-bore,  
The fearful narcissist?  
Hardly the elements to remember

In a decent eulogy.

Can the effort to mold yet  
Another self be justified?

Like the Fool who stored up  
Treasures in his barn,  
My transition to the next stage  
May be demanded before I can say  
Relax self, "Eat drink and be fulfilled."

*Poem 10/5/2010*

What of Human flourishing  
Buffeted by winds between

Seeking some Destiny  
Eternal and also now

For here and there also  
My country and yours

This World and the One  
In the midst of This

Its meaning also part  
Of our inheritance and legacy

Old and New beyond and present  
Only in the six modes

Ourselves and "What Is It?"  
We do not know but cannot Escape.

## *POLYCARP*

While I was in the Perth (West Australia) Religious House, I noticed that the mood of the Order members and non-resident volunteers hit a low level following the high celebration of Advent/Christmas/New Year's/and Epiphany. The period between Epiphany and the beginning of Lent seemed like a large vacuum in the Annual Calendar of the Order Ecumenical's internal celebration and work. I resolved to see what I could institute that would fill that vacuum in our corporate life. The date of January 26 seemed to fix itself in my imagination...there was an unexplainable intuition and urgency in my mind about that date which became almost obsessive.

I did some research. In the old liturgical calendar I discovered that Jan 26 was St. Polycarp's feast day. His story gripped me. It was the story of a man (or woman or any person) who had come to a point of testing in his life. The essentials were as follows:

When Polycarp was brought into the arena where his fate was to unfold in the presence of people, wild beasts and the symbol of his crisis (a crude stake), he heard a Voice which said, "Polycarp, play the man!" He refused to accept the illusions of escape being offered to him by his adversaries. He was rudely strapped to the stake which had a large pile of oil-soaked branches placed at its foot. The wood was ignited and a huge bonfire sprang up. One of his captors stepped forward and with a long spear plunged it into Polycarp's side opening a large wound.

Polycarp again heard the Voice, And then the conflagration divided itself into a cocoon, the flames surrounding and not touching Polycarp. Out of the wound in his side there came a dove followed by a copious flow of water and blood which extinguished the fire!

Comment: There is much symbolism here that relates to life experience. I will leave it for your probing and maybe we will have an opportunity to discuss at some point.

But there is one other thing about this whole episode which made a lasting imprint on me. You remember that in the winter of our Senior year at the University of Missouri, my mother died after a long and painful battle with cancer. For years I refused to think or meditate on this event and its impact on my life. You could say I was in denial about much surrounding her illness and death. And that I didn't allow myself to experience the healing of grieving that loss. Instead, I repressed the memories and events of that life-changing experience in

order to “get on with my life.” For years I couldn’t even remember the date of her death. But curiously my unconscious would not forget it. Popping up over the years was a series of ‘happenings,’ thoughts and coincidences involving January 26.

In Perth, in the process of planning House celebrations of Polycarp’s day, it suddenly came to me, January 26th was my mother’s death anniversary, and the long delayed grieving of her life and death began for me. And my friendship with Polycarp also began.

*Portrait of Mom With Fox*

A glass eye stares from the fox wrap  
Unblinking, unapproachable.

How would you write about  
What clings to you for a lifetime?  
Leaving it unsaid is probably  
Truest to your experience.  
No one could actually understand  
The words it would have to be  
The wordless experience recreated  
And only no-words would hold it.

But what of anxiety, the  
Staring glass-eye  
Unblinking  
    Perpetual  
        Unappeasing  
            Unappeased.

*Question for Philosophy*

It appears that the question  
Of non-duality versus duality is unimportant  
Having no consequence for how to live  
Ones life, no distinctive morality or ethics

Perhaps philosophy can be a comfort,  
A matter of theoretical belief (not practical observance)  
It is a matter which cannot be established as true  
Or not true regarding existence

Similar to, "How many angels can dance  
On the head of a pin?"



*I'M SAD TO SEE THE RAIN GO*

The most precious things said  
In one language  
Cannot be said in another any other way  
That's the burden of translating.  
We cannot know the world  
Another language creates.

When a language dies a world disappears  
When there is no one to make its sounds  
Even if we know some of the words  
We do not know the world they produced.

Water! Six feet of water in south Texas.  
All of a sudden the rains have stopped  
The winds have pushed the clouds east.  
Six feet of water in Plaquemine Parish.

## *RANDOM WISDOM*

It's the desire to get rid of the ego that's the problem.  
This is the Ego in its element - par excellence!  
To get rid of the ego is non-sense.  
To have the ego in its right relation to the whole self is health.

Don't get rid of desire.  
That's nonsense.  
Have right desire.

(Jagaggi)

I hate ingrates, and I am one!  
I don't like complainers, and I am a big complainer!  
I can't stand perfectionists, yet I am my worst critic.  
I react to criticism and critical people,  
and I'm always ready to find fault.

Life is a paradox.  
We often experience unexpected and even daily miracles  
which we do not see until later.  
Or if we do we rationalize...the positive think:  
we expected a good outcome and it just followed.  
We make our own luck by thinking good luck.  
Yet, things do not often turn out well in life.  
Loss is real and so permanent.  
What ifs abound and haunt us. Yet we go on.  
We go on and create the good.  
We memorialize the lost good  
and see gifts we never would have realized otherwise.

**RECITAL FOR THREE POEMS NO. 2  
(PSYCH 101 PLUS RS-1, LECT #1, OLD MOOD)**

The problem: Awakening from childishness, we are unhappy and we do not know why.

Maturity - a new set of distractions. We are not entirely to blame for our plight. Things and pleasures push childishness aside.

But possessing a chief occupation leaves little time for really experiencing our lives.

The problem is the same, our apathy always renews itself. Each distraction, if cut away, is replaced by yet another equally unsatisfying.

A gnawing uneasiness - keeping up appearances. Everything is skewed toward business as usual day in day out.

We become accustomed to disappointment seeing the flaws of even our ideals. The same old treadmill, day in day out.

We develop formulas to give us the courage to face the 'dayin-ness-dayout-ness,' not noticing that our landscape isn't making sense anymore.

Indeed, the formulae have been misapplied, for the situation in which we find ourselves is always new and cannot be decoded by the old principles of our existence.

We have not been destroyed. Not ourselves nor has our world been overcome by death or destruction. We are bathed in the awareness of surprising healing and wonder in the midst of a day like any other so that its beauty cannot be termed universal and must fundamentally remain in doubt.

Yet the wonder persists and will not go away. The pleasure and pain of it is a ceaseless source of awe. Such concentration of happiness and pain concentrated in one heart.

This NOW becomes the point when everything changes for the better or the worse. Again it is the decision point. Figure your way out of this new problem which has again come home to roost.

Will it again be another delay disguised as an intellectual choice? Or is it to be a break with the past? Either the NO of death shutting you into a prison cell or a YES whose vibrations you cannot begin to qualify or imagine?

The illusion of sameness of days and apathy is just not a true picture of reality. Each day is totally new. There has never been a day like it. Even all the particles of matter from the Stars to atoms to the smallest scintilla have never been in the same positions in relation to each other EVER BEFORE NOW. Reality puts the lie to despair of lack of possibility. Every day is truly NEW...a wonder...beauty itself.

## ***A FURTHER REFLECTION***

There are things about life I didn't teach my sons. Things they learned from other men, or from their own life experience as youth. Things they learned from peers. It appears that they are *menches*, successful human beings, not overly burdened by my flaws, obsessions or neuroses. They have their own from whatever sources. They may have some of my faults but not to the same degree.

Perhaps there are ways for our species to avoid a total inheritance of the nurtured misbehaviors of their parents, the hard-wired genetics being enough to deal with.

That at an early age my sons were exposed to a number of other families with other wounds and neurotic patterns, may have had an advantage for them. They at least could observe new patterns and , perhaps, exercise some choice in their own thinking and behaving based on seeing success or failure or distaste in some cases.

That they have experienced me as an absent parent, emotionally avoidant, I do regret. Trying to break that mold in later life had limited success. I comfort myself with that ole saw: that no one survives childhood without wounds even if some of them were not mine! I did not deprive my sons of the unique gifts and struggles of their childhood years.

## ***A REFORMATION***

**A new Trinitarian frame  
For the Roman Church  
Under the rubric of  
Service to the world.**

**First, the emulation of  
Francis of Assisi  
Second, the dedication of  
Ignatius of Loyola  
Third, the recovery of  
Lapsed and new treasures of  
Vatican II.**

**The frame emphasizes**

- 1. Felicity of Service to the World**
- 2. Loyalty of The Faithful Servanthood**
- 3. Discipline of Practical Methods**

**Felicity**

**Compassion for the Needy  
Stewardship of Nature  
Care and Preservation of our fellow-creatures**

**Loyalty**

**Engagement of the Faithful  
Enlistment of Those Who Care  
Empowerment of Women**

**Practice**

**Restoration of pastoral methods  
Innovation of secular outreach  
Revitalization of Spirit depths**

## ***REQUEST***

This dust was mine only on loan  
Put it back please in the earth  
The air I used and the water also  
Have already been repaid.  
The Fire, on the other hand,  
Is forever mine alone  
Take what nourishes and  
Discard the rest  
It will not diminish me.

## ***GOODBYE***

Revelation must be  
terrible with no time left  
to say goodbye.

Imagine that moment  
staring at the still waters  
with only the brief tremor

of your body to say  
you are leaving everything  
and everyone you know behind.



## SIMPLEXITY – SURVEY OF SOME OF THE LAWS GOVERNING LIFE

Moore's Law -- Computing power will double every 18 months.

Zipf's Law -- Frequency of words in a text. The most frequent word used is 2x the second, 3x the third, 4x the 4<sup>th</sup> most frequent and so on.

Kleeber's Law -- For any creature, the amount of energy burned per unit of weight is proportional to the animals overall weight raised to the  $\frac{3}{4}$  power. Thus:  $E = K(W)^{\frac{3}{4}}$  power.

Kleeber's 2<sup>nd</sup> Law -- Energy burned is also proportional to the number of heart beats per minute. In general, all animals within a particular class get the same fixed number of heart beats to spend in a life time. For mammals the heartbeat budget is roughly a Billion per lifetime. This rule applies up and down the mammal class regardless of size -- from shrew to elephant to whale.

Human beings have been an exception pushing our budgeted heart beats to approximately 2 Billion.

Fractal Law -- Nature repeats the same patterns at every scale or size. One consequence is that the capillaries, veins, and cells are the same size for whales, horses and humans. Cells come in one democratic size for all – from shrews to whales.

100 Watts Law -- At any given moment, for all uncountable systems and sub-systems that your body must run to keep you alive, your body is burning only 100 watts of power. Head to toe equals consumption equivalent to a single bright light bulb! What's more, you can't exceed that much even if you wanted to!

## SOURCES OF WISDOM

God has One Rule: I have no need to forgive since I have never condemned;  
be free, be what you are.

Jesus had one Word: Do not be afraid; Wake up! To die is to live!

Moses said: I Am Who I Am, tough sh\*t.

Buddha said: If you see Buddha on the road, kill him! [DETACHMENT]

Wesley said: Act as if! (...you have faith, etc..)

Augustine said: Love God and do as you decide necessary!

Luther said: You are free, to do the will of God! Therefore, create new  
Decalogue's!

Jaggi said: Don't kill desire, that's nonsense. Have right desire.

Patanjali said: Still (dampen) the fluctuations of consciousness.

Joe Mathews said: There is no Messiah, and You are He!

Lao Tsu said: The Word that can be spoken is not the Word.

Kung Fu Tze said: Do not do unto others what you would not want done to  
You [RECIPROCITY]

Mohammed said: Submit. [OBEDIENCE]

Nazrrudin(Sufi) said: To find that which is lost, you must look where there  
is Light.

The oak tree said to RR: Whatever it is that sustains things in Existence  
Is sustaining RR in Existence! [BEING]

Jesus of Nazareth said: Be passer by.

Diogenes said: Live as a dog lives.

Guruji Says: Straighten your legs, rotate your thighs inward, tilt your Pelvis forward; rotate arms and shoulders outward and back, Lift your sternum, broaden your chest, shoulders and trapezius down the back and in toward the spine; tighten the buttocks, stand with feet spread, heels down. Breathe!

Dr, Ramsay, MD, said: Standing on your head for 3 minutes will add 10 Minutes to your life.

The New Religious Mode says: Honor your Interior Council [MEDITATION]  
Develop a sense of Wonder [CONTEMPLATION]  
Intend before you Act [PRAYER]  
Love and be Thankful [CHASTITY]

Socrates said: Know thyself and Ignorance is the prerequisite for Knowledge. Therefore cultivate ignorance.

Kenneth Rippel said: I don't know, we will have to wait and see.

Mabel Dodge said: Think right to make things go right.

Gloria G. and Carolyn B.: Straighten those legs, Rod!!

Karl Barth said: The summation of all Christian Theology:  
"Jesus loves me, this I know.  
Cause the Bible tells me so."

Jesus said: If you think you already know something, you will remain Ignorant.

Jesus also said: When the south wind blows you say its going to be hot,  
And so it is; and  
When the east wind comes, its going to rain.  
And so it does.  
You Frauds! You know how to interpret the weather;  
Why can't you interpret the Times in which you live?  
And why can't you decide for yourselves what is  
Right?

RR Says: Every person's life is a poem created by that person.

A prayer without concrete intentions is verbal masturbation  
and not prayer.

There are many reasons to study Biblical Literature; but Religion is not one.

On the Journey to the East. "Somewhere on the way I lost my violin, and strange dogs no longer bark at me."

From this brief description I have been what the Japanese would call a "Ronin," a wave-tossed man.

The most painful words of my life, "Where's Rodney?"

The word "God" is a verb and has no ontological significance.

## ***SOURCES FOR JESUS***

### **1. The 22 authentic Parables**

These parables contain the primary vision of Jesus. They represent writings of the NT which come directly from Jesus, his stories and sayings, as opposed to material written about Jesus, a process of interpreting the meaning of Jesus and his life for the growing communities of faith. These latter writings beginning with Paul in 50 C.E. and later with numerous gospels in the period from the late 1st century into the 2nd and 3rd centuries reflect various theological and power issues in the formation of the church and, therefore, do not represent the most reliable sources for Jesus the man.

### **2. Striking Features of the Parables: The are not what was expected.**

- by his first listeners
- by his subsequent listeners
- by modern listeners

### **3. In the Parables, what Jesus does not do:**

- Speak about God
- Develop a doctrine of God, or any doctrines
- Speak about himself
- Proclaim his messiahship
- Predict his passion and death
- Claim to die for the sins of humankind
- Predict history will soon end
- Talk about a final judgment
- Picture supernatural beings
- Commission disciples to form a church
- Talk about a mission or program
- Give a detailed or systematic ethic

About all these topics of interest Jesus was simply and startlingly silent.

4. We can conclude that Jesus rarely spoke about religion at all. He talked about a 'hidden' Kingdom in the midst of this world. A Kingdom of God.

5. Readers of the gospels glibly talk about the religion of Jesus because his followers created a religion about Jesus. It is not clear at all that religion was a concern of Jesus of Nazareth.

6. What did Jesus talk about?

- A robbery on an isolated road
- Shrewd business managers
- Day laborers in a vineyard
- Wild mustard plants
- Birds and flowers cared for
- Lost coins
- Sheep (lost & found)
- Wayward children
- Secret treasure and pearls
- Assassins and strong men
- Leased vineyards
- Baking bread
- Dinner parties and guests
- Prayers in a temple
- Woman carrying a leaking jar
- Sowing seed and ground
- Rich farmers and money held in trust
- Hearing of 'those who have ears'
- A father with sons
- And other mundane subjects

7. In addition to the parables about 70 other statements, sayings, aphorisms, one and two liners --- all usually short, pithy, poignant and some humorous sayings have been attributed as "authentically" from Jesus.

They are not that much different from the Parables.

- Occasionally about God.
- One sentence prayers
- Caring about sparrows and the like
- Relation to human parents

Not as subject but about what God does. He merely notes.

- Only once or twice does he talk about himself.
- I saw Satan falling...
- If by God's finger I drive out demons...

8. Jesus mostly silent or not given to straight answers.

- Exasperating
- Frustrating
- Can't pin down
- Sometimes paradoxical

9. Anything else about Jesus the man worth noting?

Jesus sauntered. He was a person who walked everywhere he went. Jesus was not trying to get anywhere in particular on any specific timetable. He was a person whose walking was in the mode of 'Going to Heaven,' of finding the sacred space, of 'going to the holy land,' of pilgrimage, of going to the 'fabulous yonder', of reaching for the 'kingdom of God' in this world.

He liked the company of women. He didn't suffer fools or those who were living in self illusions, but rather exposed them to their real selves. He was the epitome of a free man.

***SPELL BOUND***

Later in a calm mood  
Walking behind Martha  
Who is striding ahead  
At surprising speed  
We catch up to her and  
Ask why the hurry  
Can we join her walk  
She slows and we  
Continue with a stylish  
Joint-rhythm.

The Watcher – always critical  
Is looking at us  
We ignore him  
And Martha agrees  
To let us take her  
To her appointed  
Rendezvous



***WE ARE STAR SUTFF***

Oh my companions  
    On this Journey  
I did not know the star-shine  
    Weeping to the  
Right and left of me  
    Spilling out  
Their existence in such  
    Extravagance.

## *The Game Is A Variant Of Chess*

Call it Wizard Chess.

1. The game is played on a 9x9 board with dark squares at all four corners. The board has 41 dark squares and 40 white squares.

2. The pieces are as follows:

9 Pawns	P
2 Rooks	R
2 Knights	Kn
2 Bishops	B
1 Queen	Q
1 King	K
1 Wizard	W

3. The Rules of ordinary chess apply to all the usual pieces with the exception of the Wizard which is confined to the dark squares, moving like an ordinary Bishop and also a hopping knight-like move of 3 up, over 1 to end up on another dark square. Unlike regular chess, both Bishops of each player move only on the white squares. All other pieces follow the usual moves of ordinary chess.

4. The object of the game is the same as ordinary chess, i.e., to mate the opposing King or secure an opponent's resignation.

5. The starting positions of the pieces are as shown:

Black

9	R	B	Kn	Q	W	K	Kn	B	R
8	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
7									
6									
5									
4									
3									
2	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
1	R	B	Kn	Q	W	K	Kn	B	R
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i

White

6. All rules of ordinary chess apply. Pawns may promote to any piece upon reaching the extreme ranks. However, if promoting to a Wizard and the promotion square is white, the Wizard will be a "white" Wizard restricted to white squares.

#### ANOTHER VARIATION on the 9x9 BOARD

It is called Offset Chess. Played on the 9 x 9 board with regular sides of 16 chess pieces lined up on the usual squares, leaving one row unfilled. This results in the two sides offset from one another by one row. The game is wilder than ordinary chess with more board space for the active pieces to maneuver. While familiar, the strategies, openings and possible positional requirements are intriguingly interesting and often more complex. Give it a try.

## *THE ONE CONSTANT*

I am not a man who has not known  
The turmoil women offer.  
I could write books on the  
Experiences,  
Anxiety,  
Sheer stubborn unreasonableness,  
Inexplicable comfort,  
Sexual intrigue,  
Disappointment,  
Joy and woe,  
Betrayal,  
Friendship,  
Closeness,  
Intimacy and distance  
I have known  
With the females of the species.

I could write on a postage stamp  
What wisdom I have gained  
Relating to women.  
The turmoil they offer  
Is the one constant.

## *The Shape of Dying*

As we age  
We value our independent Self when,  
At some point, things begin to fall apart.  
A process which raises the issue of dependence  
And where to turn for assistance for new needs  
And decisions for the best life relative to our values and energy.  
Learning the lesson of letting go, friends, stuff, dreams;  
Making choices requiring hard conversations,  
Having the courage, strength and wisdom  
To form a plan for dying.

## ***THE SKEPTIC'S MANIFESTO***

A thoroughgoing rationalism is reductive and unproductive.

Nevertheless, skepticism in the face of unsupported claims is justified.

Always be open to change or be challenged when new data or intuitions are presented.

The function of skepticism is getting clarity on the nature of claims.

Skepticism is no basis for being cynical.

Rationalism is seen as overlooking the imagination and intuitive activities of the human spirit.

Truth is more encompassing than the rationally verifiable.

Truth seen as either experiential (Gut analysis) or intellectual (Head trip) means neither is all-encompassing.

Mysticism transcends the rational, neither being all-encompassing.

## ***THE SOUL FEELS WORTH***

Something to remember when you run into old colleagues or classmates,  
The colleague who has been around the world,  
The classmate just returning from an expedition up the Congo River,  
Or the backside of Greenland.

No life is any better or worse than any other when it comes to being a Life.

Remember that when you sit in hotel lobbies  
or watch the crowds at the airport baggage claim,  
or stand at dusk watching the lights come on in houses up and down a darkening  
street.

Remember it when the time comes to greet or say good bye,  
bless or curse, laugh or cry.

Worth is not taken away. For whatever you live is life.

## *TIME*

Time is the great illusion  
Does it really exist?  
The present moment is the only reality  
The only thing that exists is now  
Nothing else  
We cannot occupy the past  
We cannot visit the future  
The only thing we have is  
This moment  
Nothing else  
The past is a present pattern  
    of synapses, circuits, intersections and  
interconnections  
    of our present complex mental facility  
The past is only the present status of our brain  
Likewise the future is a present template  
    of anticipation configured by the mind  
Both past and future are now even as the mind  
    continually reconfigures itself  
No where else only here and now  
Since there is only the now  
Time itself doesn't exist except as a present concept  
Physicists are accepting the fact that time doesn't exist  
The fundamental equations describing the universe  
The equations of Einstein and quantum mechanics  
Can be expressed in equivalent value expressions  
Without using time as a variable or constant term  
The same is true of Newton's Laws of Motion  
Opps, My time is up, the universe just disappeared.



## ***THREE CANONIZED STORIES OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION***

1. Science and art are incompatibly different.
2. There is evolutionary progress and Homo Sapiens is its ultimate expression.
3. There is an external Reality.

### **The Assumptions:**

1. Science is superior to art as a way of describing reality.
2. Things are getting better and better.
3. We are gaining objective knowledge and disciplined control over nature.
4. Science is pointing the way to progress as it increasingly comes to understand and control external reality.
5. There is a transcendent reality or dimension.

Implicit in these 'discussions' is the fact that we are often dominated by thinking in terms of 'either/or.' Either there is a supernatural realm, or there isn't. Either miracles can happen, or they can't. Either Rod is an atheist, or he isn't.

The truth is something else. Neither science nor religion is exclusively adequate to explain the nature of the universe. Both come up lacking and unsatisfying. Why? Because the world is basically mysterious. The cosmos is unfathomable, impenetrable and beyond our data gathering faculties. We can only approximate, express through poetry and mathematics which are finite and inadequate, however satisfying and beautiful. Our knowledge never 'explains,' only describes in terms of our senses and intuitions.

### **Comment**

Everyone knows something which can neither be explained by science nor art nor is it something which has to be taken on "faith." It is this: The bending of a finger when the brain commands, "to bend."

How can something which is 'material,' i.e. the finger, be moved by something 'immaterial, i.e. a thought?

The knowledge that this is so is the common experience of human beings. It is not explained by the language of science, reason or "facts." Nor is it explained by the language of art, religion or faith. But it is the assumed experience of everyone.

## *You Remember ...*

You remember how it was  
We were all lined up  
In that cloudy white room  
Waiting for our assignments  
Standing in line before that big desk.

All of a sudden a big gruff  
Line monitor with padded gloves  
And hairy legs came over  
And grabbed me, "you're in  
The wrong line buddy,  
Over there... the one  
With the sign that says  
'Homo Sapiens.! Get over there!'"

That's how I got here.  
Things looked the same, big desk,  
Clouds and all, except  
Everyone in the line had less hair  
And some had pink complexions – like me.  
"Homo What?" I asked the next in line.

"Sapiens" replied several fellow line-ees  
Rather eagerly, and I thought somewhat snobbishly.  
"What's Sapiens?" I asked.  
"Where have you been?" they replied.  
"Everyone knows it's the newest line!"

I explained I got delayed in the other room  
Something about my frontal cortex being too....?  
"So what's so special about Sapiens?" I asked.

"Didn't you read the brochure?" They exclaimed!  
"It covers the latest in 'Assignments Innovations' –  
Sapiens is like, you know, 'The Know-It-All-Ape,'  
A new model, nobody really knows  
What we are heading for but it's the latest thing."

I thought, we'll see when we get up to the desk.  
There will still be time to opt out.

## **WHITE WINE**

I was cursed  
by the Goddess of white wine  
Who took more than her share  
for several crushes  
leaving me with only a few gallons for my efforts;  
A hoggish tithe went to Her cellar  
and I was left with a few over-oaked bottles  
from my labor from two harvests.  
My grievance must have been heard at last  
Her daughter, Viognier, blessed me  
this year with a barrel  
Made from Her blood and mine.

## *WHEN I GO TO CHURCH*

When we go to the theatre  
    And the curtain goes up,  
We are ready to accept the reality presented.  
It's a finite reality with its world,  
    beliefs and doubts, angels and demons, purpose and  
    plot.  
Characters are quickened for one brief moment.  
When the curtain falls we return  
    to our everyday prominent Reality  
    whatever it is  
    having suspended our belief in it  
    temporarily.

When I go to Church  
    there's a suspension of disbelief  
    like when I go to a drama, a play, or a movie.

When the curtain goes up (In the name of the Father,  
and the Son, and the Holy Ghost).  
I enter another reality, a finite reality,  
which usually does not correspond closely  
with the everyday, prominent reality I experience  
outside the Church's liturgical theatre.

Here people are occupied with appliances, machines,  
electricity and scientific descriptions of cause and effect.  
Morality and ethical values can slide back and forth in these  
Two realities with little difference that I can detect.

Which reality is the 'Real' reality? That of the theatrical  
Rehearsal or the 'prominent' everyday reality?

I am pursuing a spirituality of quest and inquiry, not of answers  
and dogma.  
I see a world where all people are Stewards of the Mystery of  
Life.

I wonder how it would be  
To operate without the assumption of a top down, 'Emperor  
God.'

## *WHEN WE WOKEUP*

There was lingering and persistent  
Longing for sugar and fat  
Out of the chaos of stuff, mostly dark water,  
No-thing to perceive because it wasn't yet.  
No meaning. No differences. No things.

First there was a long wait until land.  
Then, on the third interval  
Two kinds of light, one was night.  
Then came laughter on the fourth.  
Next was sorrow, there being no evidence of the nothing-ness  
Anywhere.  
Out of dust there arose differences and  
Sex. Proliferation with male and female  
Cast into chance and uncertainty.  
There was leaping and also weeping.

There was place and  
The naming of things.  
Our eyes opened with taste on our tongues  
And the flowering of questions.

Stories were invented and we thought  
They were answers.

## *Ur-Word*

Is there a word for everything?  
Even the space between words?  
If a new thing  
Who is privileged to give it its Word?

Is each thing's nature included in its  
Inherent Word? No thing  
Existing as it is without its Ur-word,  
Which only has to be uncovered as it were.  
Plato thought so.

Or were words invented by some  
Master Worders who  
Worded the World, giving us,  
By their example,  
A role to follow.

## *Trump-eting*

Trump gets 'tiresome' quickly.  
Entire slate of Republican hopefuls,  
Second rate, no obvious solutions.  
Trump has no coherent policy  
Just clustered sound bites  
Delivered at high volume and strident tone  
Critical of others.  
Attacks person not ideas.

Perhaps the 'Pros' of the RNC  
Thought they might have some value in Trump  
That they could market and win with!  
But Trump has fooled us all!

### He might really win!

And, if he does the real loser will be...  
Trump himself. He won't know what to do!  
But he will do something...Trumpy!  
His style will be Trumpier,  
And his achievements Trumphant.

## ***THE POSITIVES***

Smiles and laughs appreciatively  
Meets strangers easily - relaxes them  
Neatness in person and dress  
Excellent personal habits  
Thinks ahead (plans)  
Remembers names and dates (keeps appointment book)  
Concerned and interested  
Disciplined (punctual, etc.)  
Observant  
Listens well  
Friendly  
Desires to be helpful  
Generous  
Frugal  
Enthusiastic  
Makes lists (thorough)  
Often double-checks communication.



And we exist and operate in its context daily; in all the hustle and bustle of human activity generated by thought, and we seem oblivious of its mystery.

Those unexplained things we call 'acts of God' are moved by something other than the direct thought of human beings. What is it? We do not know.

So I started looking through the brochure they gave us  
All the tried and true models were there.

I was about to ask the monitor on this line,  
Who didn't look anything like the previous monitor,  
This one being hairless and rather exposed  
When he started shouting:

"You can't opt out now!  
We've already had too many refusals  
The quota for those not wanting Homo Sapiens is filled  
All requests for returns to the older models  
Are hereby refused."

As they pushed me over to the Down Chute  
the last thing I remember is reading the tag on my big toe:  
H.S., MALE, CAUCASIAN, MID-20TH CENTURY,  
DO THE BEST YOU CAN, JUST DON'T MESS UP!

## *AMBIGUITY*

Ambiguity (chaos) in the arena of the spirit is the norm. Ambiguity doesn't have to mean indecisiveness. It really should engender a willingness to be open, to be ready to move from where one is to somewhere else. Its a willingness to see that one is on a journey of consciousness that will never end, at least not until death and perhaps not there. A willingness to accept mystery as one of the overriding givens of existence.

Possibly then, a calmness comes, a decisiveness of spirit. After all, we decide what existence is about! And what we decide is where we stand (until of course convinced we should move).

The "decisiveness" doesn't mean loosely applying the label "faith" to those areas we are ignorant of or are too lazy to explore. Nor is mystery a convenient label for those things we can't explain. We should be clear exactly what we refer to when we use words. But because we are clear doesn't mean we have "explained" it or even "understand" it.

That's why the "Mystery of Faith" rehearsed in every Mass or worship service needs to be explicitly stated. It's not that we are "explaining" the mystery of faith or even understand it in all its ramifications, but we need to be clear that the mystery of faith refers to the 'when you die, you live' reality pointed to most clearly in the life, death and resurrection story of Jesus the Christ. Therefore, we shouldn't beat around the bush and obscure this by obtuse language. We should use the poetry and then say: "To die is to live, that is the mystery of faith."

***ZEN BUDDHISM***

R: The Buddha speaks only  
That which is absolutely true.

P: What does the Buddha say?

R: "The Deaf cannot hear it."

P: But neither can the Hearing!

R: So there you have it!

## *The Journey to the East*

*“When you see a cloud rising in the west,  
you say at once that it is going to rain,  
and so it does.*

*And when you feel the south wind blowing,  
you say that it is going to be hot,  
and so it is.*

*You frauds! You know how to interpret the look of the earth and sky.  
Why can't you interpret the meaning of the times in which you live?  
And why can't you decide for yourselves what is right?”*

*Jesus of Nazareth*

It was my privilege following the great wars of the middle decades of the century to join the enterprise of the Order. The mission of the Order was global in scope and also intensely local in its demonstration projects. The Order's life has never been fully described or recorded in a single account. I doubt that any one individual's effort to put his or her experience of the Order into words could convey the heights and depths of the Order's existence much less express fully the task to which it had set itself. Only the vast archives located in the Order's headquarters in Chicago contain the comprehensive papers and files. And even these records, exhaustive as they are, cannot adequately document the variety and character of those families and individuals who joined the Order, their rich intellectual and celebratory lifestyle. This is to say nothing of the intense personal sacrifice and commitment made by many in their sojourn as Order members.

I come up against the very limits of language in attempting to talk about our enterprise. It was at once magical and mundane, a mix of life and poetry, march and waltz, existing in the present as well as the past and embodying ritual, celebration and grinding daily work. The Order's mission took it into time and space, our ventures required forays into the middle ages, the near and distant future as well as setting forth from Chicago to all the continents. In our journeys we often paused for side trips to join friends and colleagues in music, festivals and ceremonies marking the passage of special time or zodiacal conjunction. I remember especially the advent of comet Kouhotek and the preparations which were made for this auspicious sign of the heavens. However, it was not unusual to find bands of our number at Wolfrap, on a week end at the Palmer House, or on a pilgrimage to the Isle of Iona. I was present with a group who set out to visit Bultmann on his death bed. I also set myself a personal goal to see Tillich's New Harmony and visit the shrine of Huey P.Long. Others sought out Lawrence's tomb in Taos.

Our leaders once diverted from the Helsinki World Council to witness the land of the Midnight Sun and traveled the great steppes and bogs of Scandia. My family was assigned for some time to the Great Down Under and eventually came into possession of Umbagai's magic didgeridoo and even set foot on the mystical island of Rottnest in the Indian Ocean. Others had equally sublime and spiritual quests fulfilled.

Some of our number witnessed the great Summers of '67 and '71, traveled to the shores of Lake Gitcheegumee for a huge urban picnic and danced there with thousands. We experienced the power and unity song bequeaths to those who sing together. Time and again our voices rose and visions filled the Great Hall of Kemper as we experienced our common mind. Our colleagues experienced miracles when RS-1 was taught and many reported seeing Satan fall from Heaven. Such was the power of our corporate commitment.

Truly, if I endeavor to give a full account of the Order and its life I would fill volumes. What could I say of the miracle of the 222 Campaign and the first deployment of leaders to Order Houses across the world? And what about the penetrations into time and space accomplished by teams and individuals. We sat at the feet of Bruno and Theresa. Francis and John of the Cross were honored at our tables. We canonized Mumford, Mountain Rivera, Barth, Boulding, The-Great-One-Gleason, Bultmann, S.K., Tillich, Kazantzakis, D.H.L., Bonhoeffer, Little Big Man, and the Niebuhr brothers among others. We visited ancient Greece, the middle ages and projected ourselves into the next century.

We encouraged our children to join us in these many endeavors and to become comprehensive, futuristic and intentional human beings. Although our efforts were not seen as remarkable by non-believers or the leaders of the world, we moved in a trajectory of glory across time and space. Not all our number survived. The expenditure of time and personal sacrifice was enormous and, at times, many lost faith and withdrew from the journey. Our efforts were daunted by the enormity of our undertaking: to reform the whole world and usher in a New Social Vehicle for the planet. The audacity of this vision required great patience, foresight and working in many strange and unnoticed places. Our colleagues, in small bands, could be found in the jungles of Cano Negro, the outback of Mowanjum, the river bank of the Southern Nile, the high-rises of Hong Kong, a fishing village in Formosa, the island of Je-Judo, the towers of New York and the halls of the Common Market.

To this day, although the Order by its own decision has disbanded, the Spirit Movement continues. To those colleagues who have lost their violins and are no longer barked at by strange dogs, this brief resume is dedicated.





Moore

R.R.







Lawrence



H.D.

R.R.



R.R.

Ashbery

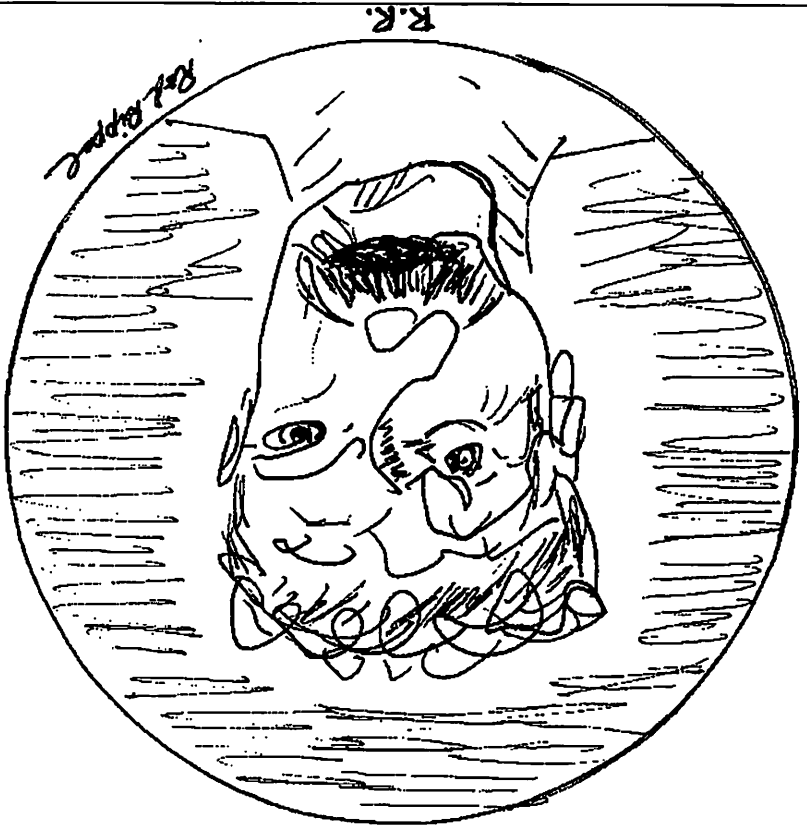






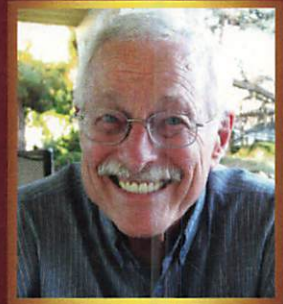
R.A.

Montale





Rod(ney) Rippel is a retired Chemical Engineer. In the 1960's he and his family left Esso Research and Engineering Co. and joined a religious Order of families staffing the Ecumenical Institute of Chicago and traveled widely as lay trainers in theology and community reformulation.



In 1977 he returned to engineering in industrial waste pretreatment control where he was a manager for two major US cities, first in Detroit and later in San Diego. He lives with his wife in San Diego where he enjoys wine making, yoga, walking and writing.

Rod has previously written a memoir , Miles From Moberly, A Man's Journey to the 21st Century," and a volume of poems entitled "The Yellow Tulip and Other Poems."

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