

OF NIETZSCHE GOD AND MERMAIDS

Nietzsche is dead yet God persists
The lonesome town is falling down
The aching heart remains resists
Unsinkable and will not drown
Despite the cold steel efforts of
The cabal of conformity
To suck originality
From what we are and what we love

The shaking of their angry fists
Seems impotent in retrospect
If these damned fools are the elect
Who mark us down in little lists
Then dig up Nietzsche and ask him
What we should do in times like these
Descending with the cherubim
Into triumphant vanities

They do not speak for God to me
I swim with mermaids and caress
Their shining skin and feel God bless
Us in the sea since on the land
The Hitlers of hypocrisy
Who never say thank you nor please
But only hate and make a mess
Would not could never understand

KEPT REALITY

You say reality is true
Yet never bother to explain
What true means and even should you
Stoop to speak of it still disdain
To answer questions if you do

Since you refuse to face again
That true reality which grew
There in the dark you always knew
Would never ever go away

But throbbing closeted all night
Coils cocked to rock your world someday
Once it escapes out into light
When reality brings you to
This closet where you keep your fears

Where you have kept me all these years

THE SILENT SINGING

Echo of a winter night
When creation listened
And the daystar gleaming bright
Like a diamond glistened

From beyond the starlit sky
Comes the silent singing
Soundless echo from on high
Through the ages ringing

Once aloud in silent field
Shepherds heard those voices
Still in silent hearts revealed
Still the night rejoices

From beyond the starlit sky
Comes the silent singing
Soundless song to never die
Endless ages ringing

TWO HEARTS WILL UNDERSTAND

For all the wrong words which wound and lay waste
A poem is an act of redemption
For all the things said heedlessly in haste
A chance to say it right an exemption
An opportunity to speak to light
Cosmos out of the chaos of the night

Wherein we say in our most perfect way
Considered reconsidered thought about
That which we wish we had said yesterday
And though a little late the truth comes out
Clarified rarified into our best
Hoping that others will forget the rest
All the imperfections of life and speech

Since we never know the right thing to say
Till after the moment after the test
A poem is a letter in which each
Word has been chosen with the utmost care
We can only hope someone will be there
To read the words we meant in the first place

So go on and write a poem for me
Say things you could never say to my face
Two hearts will understand ...and destiny

RIDING THE RIDDLE

Rhyme is not a prison but a puzzle
Not to confine but refine and define
Not for the weak but that by which we speak
As by megaphone and not by muzzle
Meaningful pattern turns in the right hands
Water of prose into poetry's wine

Yet rare is the poet who understands
The true gravity of this alchemy
Heard in the silence and seen in the dark
Squaring the circle the taming of time
As practiced by madmen bearing this mark
Riding the riddle and gaming the rhyme

Poetry chooses some few for its will
Never loses nor refuses its thrill
To those who dare to answer it like me
We who claim the call then inherit all
Of poetry returning what it gave
Changed and exchanged saved by that which we save

Enslaved by poetry to be made free
As part of everything even if small

TO ENCOURAGE A FELLOW POET

When words are apropos and apposite
When they aptly speak the voice of your heart
Why do they elicit an opposite
Response in those you thought had eyes to see
And instead of how you thought it would be
They reject those words and rip them apart?

The cause is that old curse of jealousy

The lower nature of man far from dead
Still slithers along to rear up its head
Proudly criticizing loudly when we
Begin to speak truth in our poetry
When we find our voice when we make that choice
To stop pandering start to speak our mind
When poetry leaves the petty behind

They try to hold you down then as you rise

But they will be in for a big surprise
In a while when you through substance and style
To open their tightly-closed minds and eyes
Make all their jealous heads spin with a smile
Do what you are here for! Knock at their door
Then break through it: I know you can do it

ON MY BIRTHDAY

31 December 2005

I am thankful for this life given unto me
All its ups and downs along the way
For the privilege of serving through poetry

As I mark yet another birthday

I realize just how fortunate I have been
Grateful I had the good sense to stay
So as not to miss all the wonders I have seen

Nor would I go back and change it because
It was supposed to be the way it was

TIME TO SCREAM HAPPY NEW YEAR

Alone with the crowd I see
The frozen brittleness of
Our surging society
Spasming through motions of love
Screaming aloud silently
Like painted puppets we dance
Animated by steel strings
Bound and gagged by time and chance

Beautiful bright broken things
Alone with the crowd to be
Alone together at least
Dance this dance of death with me
Starving to death at our feast
Of booming banality
But it doesn't hurt at all
Doesn't matter anyway

Dancing on thin ice looks nice
Icicle fragility
Nobody escapes the ball
Everybody dies someday
Isn't that why we are here?
Now the ball will fall away
Pretty smiles freeze hard in fear
Hold my hand I understand

Welcome to the end my friend
Time to scream Happy New Year

HERE AT THE TURN OF TIME

When things go well my poetry gets smug
And things don't really go well anyway
Only a stupid illusion if snug

To get through another meaningless day

So as I fall into the grave I've dug
I'll say what I mean and mean what I say
Here at the turn of time in honest rhyme

They teach young poets to write what they know

I don't know anything but suffering
But what I know is that it makes me grow
I'll take my suffering any old time

Here at the turn of time my oldest friend

Which hurts me yet which never deserts me
The only friend I have I can depend
On as this carousel spins madly on

Faster and faster until I am gone

THE JOINING OF HANDS

With the future out of sight
But at peace with the past
The present time seems the right
Time to live peace at last

I need nobody
But nobody needs me
I write and study
And live simplicity

Everybody yearns
To have or have not
Yet nobody learns
That it will all rot
Till it gets too late
In a wink of fate

Without saying a word
The heart understands
In its silence is heard
The joining of hands

Where without a word spoken
Love speaks eloquently
There truth endures unbroken
Alive in you and me

WANDERER

Why do I go to the trouble to write
Perfectionistic poetry at night
When people who are paired-off are asleep
To navigate these waters dark and deep
Riding this tide and drifting like these clouds
Which float objectively above the crowds
Of those who are more fortunate than me?

With no one to be with no place to be
I am a solitary wanderer
Going places where no one ever goes
Some of which are some of which never were

And where I might end up nobody knows

I like it this way so I leave the day
To walk in darkness and leave you the light
I find poetry in the dark you see
I travel light in the dark you might say

Those who have nothing are those who are free

SPAM I AM: THE LADY SEEMED NICE ON THE PHONE

As I wait for snail mail
To find out how I fail
In society's way
To measure up today
I am just hoping that Social Security
Takes the answer of a social cancer like me
And will then leave me alone
To just be this little-known
And mentally-disabled poet which I am
Emailing myself to those who think I am spam

People delete what they cannot eat
Having consumed me now they excrete
But the lady seemed nice on the phone
Consumption: excretion
Assumption: deletion
In reality things look bleak for me
I am a homeless man in a house
I have a cat but I am the mouse
Yet what do I know of reality?
And the lady seemed nice on the phone

MENS SANA IN CORPORE SANO

When I do a hundred situps or two
I feel a bright spark of hope burning through
When depressed or distressed I seek that burn
Of exercise so that my mind can learn
The truth a disciplined body can teach
Mens sana in corpore sano: each
Part of the person contributes in kind
A sound body enables a sound mind

Out of all my trials I realize
That my best medicine is exercise

Even though I may never be wealthy
My abdominal muscles are healthy
Hard abs are honest-earned and I have learned
That by exercising and being kind
In a tough-love kind of way every day
To my body I can enrich my mind
It makes me feel like writing poetry
When I do a hundred situps or three

THE WIND THE AVOCADO TREE AND ME

Late avocados in January
Shaken down by desert winds untimely
Shining the sparkling stars to the very
Diamonds of heaven they seem to be

I watch the old tree breathing with the wind
It knows life is a dance and not a race
Obeying the laws no man can rescind
Showing there is more to life than we see
Dancing with grace in the timeless embrace
Of simple natural reality

I join the dance with the wind in my face
Unending unbegun where all is one
We children of the universe we three
The wind the avocado tree and me

LESSON UNLEARNED

It is an observable phenomenon
That those who are down tend to get shat upon

Why do we do this to each other? Just when
We need each other most it is always then
Someone decides to take advantage of our
Incapacity and gain some petty power
At our great expense when we have least defense
A failure of sensitivity and sense

For when the ones who wound find the tables turned
They just might get burned ...by their lesson unlearned

WHAT THE SUNSET TOLD ME

Now as the fools fall from the weight
Of fearful folly to the fate
Of all the arrogant their days
End now as their kind end always
And ever for they can never
Grow at all since they know it all

Or so they think here at the brink
Of final destruction and fall

Sadly we slowly turn away
And wonder if a better day
Could rise with the sun tomorrow
If we too could rise from sorrow

No one left but us to love us
Nothing left to say but hold me
Nothing left but sky above us
This is what the sunset told me

OH BEAUTIFUL TERRIBLE CAROUSEL

I recall a beautiful carousel
Gold leaf on porcelain of white and blue
I rode it to heaven rode it to hell
Never got there never got anywhere
None of my carousel wishes came true
But that was my fault because I lacked faith

I wonder if I were to ride with you
If it would not end as it does in death
Maybe it would take off like a rocket
Aboard which to explore the universe
I still have two tickets in my pocket
And if we die at least we have lived worse

It beckons to me with music and lights
Like nothing you have ever heard nor seen
With enchanted days and magical nights
All of the memories which never were
Of all of the wonders which might have been
All of those dreams which they always defer

Come take me to heaven take me to hell
Oh beautiful terrible carousel

AS THE CALENDAR SPEAKS EPIPHANY

In the midst of life it appears to me
Now as I see through its ice-brittle heart
This culture is consumed with cruelty
Though I celebrate the exceptions I
Fear they only prove the rule as I try
To find the light but find to my despair
Searching for truth as the deceptions fly
That it most often is simply not there
If it ever existed anywhere
As the calendar speaks epiphany

Though we have always felt ourselves so smart
It was our hopeful misfortune to be
Naive to believe those who would deceive
Through a propagandistic history
Which justifies hate in disguise through lies
Of glory and manifest destiny
Though we have always held ourselves apart
We were fools in the best schools we were tools
Of a tyrannical oligarchy
Which ran a scam they called democracy

And all through history little has changed
They have always been greedy and grasping
Only the deckchairs have been rearranged
Deep is the cold sea shallow the glory
As we slide to sink freezing and gasping
Caught in a net caught up in the story
Left by manifest destiny to die
In the midst of life it appears to me
Wondering under a star-spangled sky
As the calendar speaks epiphany

FLYING LESSON

Between piety and dubiety
Betwixt fundamentalism and doubt
Stands the golden mean of satiety
Wherein the soul soars but never flies blind

While those souls on the fringes flail about
Faith and reason in their season heart and mind
In equipoise avoid the noise and strife
Of the unbalanced and unexamined life

When fringes fail extremes have sorely tried
When what has been is gone let go and be
Come find the middle and be satisfied
To be full of now and open to love

Finding unity in variety
With no one beneath you and no one above
Past drunkenness beyond sobriety
From that which might have been to the golden mean

Seek not the overfullness born of greed
Wrapped in the cheap self-printed cloth of sloth
But that balance between excess and need
The satisfaction of satiety

Trust but verify claim yet clarify
For there is really but one society
To be shared by all and by you and me
Keep your wings healthy and strong: fly high fly long

MY FRIEND FRANZISKA

This poem is a present for a friend
Unlike anyone I have ever known
The one I can rely on in the end
When everyone else has left me alone
Here and near no matter how far we are

Her eyes could melt a heart of ice break stone
Or knock down any barrier you please
The boys see her and go weak in the knees
For "hot" is spelled F - R - A - N - Z - I -
S - K - A that is all you need to know

And I who know her need no wings to fly

Her skin like burnished bronze of deepest glow
Her hair the very mantle of the night
Her heart the whole of summer's warmth and light
Five feet of glory fit to make one grow
Like nothing anyone has seen before

And I who know her need know nothing more

PUZZLE OF TEN PIECES

- 1.) I am descended from an aristocracy of crime
And regular aristocracy too but I just rhyme
- 2.) When I was all ready to go fight the Vietnam War
Then the Army decided not to draft me anymore
- 3.) The psychiatrist from the government asked me about
What I saw and I could see he had pig ears and a snout
- 4.) When my mother used to practice smiling in the mirror
She only saw death staring back at her ever clearer
- 5.) My father is a hitman and he would like to kill you
We are proud of each other and I know he would thrill you
- 6.) My son Teddy the poet and my father the poet
Share a birthday and the Lance mojo wouldn't you know it
- 7.) My daughter Maria is a celebrated beauty
And I tell the world with pride as my genetic duty
- 8.) My son Stevie the rock star called me from San Francisco
While walking in Chinatown after a successful show
- 9.) I have known Franziska since early Two Thousand and
Three
She's seen me through hell and been the most faithful friend
to me
- 10.) Some think they understand me yet they don't and never
will
They shouldn't fuck with me but just think twice and then
keep still

TRANSCENDENTAL SONNET #1423
DESIRE

The more we want the less we get
Desire is suffering
Happy are those who can forget
Desiring anything

The less we seek the more we find
That which the heart requires
The body through a quiet mind
Receives the heart's desires

The love you seek will come to you
Ask not and you will know
Forget and let your dreams come true
At last when you let go

For empty must the vessel be
To be filled to satiety

ALONE IS NOT ALONE

Life is not meaningless
Though it may seem that way
About every third day
Not meaningless unless
We let this sun today
Which is ours by birthright
These birds these bugs at play
Which offer their delight
Be squandered slip away
Into a sterile night
Wherein we lie alone
Confronting an unknown
Which we know all too well

While lying in their beds
Right here in our own town
Ache other worried heads
In life lived upside down
The state which some call hell
We isolate ourselves
Like corpses on morgue shelves

If we were together
We could by morning's light
Reconnect our tether
Our lifeline through the night
We are not the only
People who are lonely
Life is not meaningless
Pick up the telephone
Or go out visiting
Not meaningless unless
We live that known unknown
Life is a simple thing
Alone is not alone

IN PLAZA SQUARE

Come see me and step out to take the air
With me and we will see what we can see
Downtown by the fountain in Plaza Square
While parrots squawk in squadrons lustily
In ragged green ranks through the bright blue sky
As sparrows flit close to where you and I
Stick curious noses into sweet roses

Fat ravens will watch us mysteriously
From the branches of that old tulip tree
Which first bloomed on Eleven November
Of Nineteen-Eighteen so I remember
My Grandma telling me when Uncle Lee
Could come back home from the Great War at last
At night the fountain turns romantic blue

The future blooms here from buds of the past
A future I would love to spend with you

Come with me and I will read poetry
At Starbucks to earn us some free coffee
There on the square and I will brush your hair
And kiss your sweet brown skin sweet as toffee
All over everywhere nor will we care
What time or day it is or anything
And then to the shops for that perfect ring

You and me there at home in Plaza Square

SIMPLE PLEASURES SHARED

Violet incense and rose petal tea
New issues of Vanity Fair
Full-color-dust-jacket-bound poetry
Glenn Gould sparkling Bach on the air
Ravens stalk scolding parrots soar squawking
Sparrows just stay out of their way
Those green hummingbirds hushed us from talking
As if we saw fairies today
Cats are sleepy but then they always are

Then I know just what I will say:

"I will polish you my gem from afar"
And we can wash the car today
But first there will be flirting and squirting
With the hose heaven knows and sun
Lots of love scads of suds and fun
Wear your car-washing duds or none at all
If naked stand behind the old Chrysler
No one will see you (you're not very tall)
Then jump out and wave at Pastor Geisler

LIFE WAITS

Before avenging dig two graves
And grieve twice as you do
Love liberates as hate enslaves

"Thou shalt not kill" applies to all: us too

Until we are no more
Hope is not dead
Life waits outside our door
But seeing only death our heart and mind
Lock down instead
"An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind"
As Gandhi said

So what are we here for?

For life! For hope! For seeing through both eyes!
For leaving death for dead to realize
Now is our time and leave war's ways behind

Before avenging dig two graves
And grieve twice as you do
Love liberates as hate enslaves

Life waits outside for you

WHATEVER HAPPENS NOW

The people are frightened
Their actions are strange
Circumstances tightened
Reactions to change

An instability
Of the emotions
In a brittle daily
Dance through the motions
Self-conscious patterns of
Nervous activity
The only hope is love
The only remedy

Whatever happens now
Whatever else we do
Before we go somehow
I would make love to you

METAMORPHOSIS

In an erstwhile disused corner
Of a dusty dining room
Scene of so much childhood trauma
I evolved from damaged mourner
Waiting to join in their tomb
All those others in the drama
Which was once my family

Here in this once barren womb
I have transcended tragedy
Something happened these past years
Through the lawsuits through the tears
Hoped from heartbreak forced from fears
Something happened here to me
I have turned into a poet in this place

Emerging from this chrysalis a butterfly
I am ready for the world to see my face
Out of the dust of death to soar in the sky
I give you me: this poetry my life's embrace

DANCING NAKED IN A HAUNTED HOUSE

I found this couplet scribbled down somewhere
And can readily see why I tossed it
Aside but regret I never lost it
Completely as I snatch it from the air
This Santa Ana windy Sunday night
Perhaps a closer look might shed some light:

"Most loyal lover most fanatic foe
I will follow you wherever you go"

...Unless I suddenly lose interest
And turn inward which would probably be
Among the possibilities the best
Although anyone can telephone me
And many do as you are welcome to

While some walk by my haunted house to see
Some proof of my existence just to know
If there is really such a thing as Lance
I am clearly visible through the lace
Of the curtain and am rather certain
If they are lucky they might see me dance
Naked with a cryptic smile on my face

A lover to none yet courtly to all
And quite completely contradictory
White sheep of a very dark family
A harmless eccentric gentle and small
I only care about my poetry

But yes: I am a most fanatic foe
Having been raised that way what can I say
I tried the lover thing but I got burned
A foe is much more loyal I have learned
But no: any talk of "lover" and "foe"
Is moot now (if you knew me you would know)
I will turn inward and let it all go

Nonetheless... I might still answer if you call
Or dance if you walk by my house... after all

NIGHT

Weary of eating and excreting
Weary of giving
My all as I watch my country fall
Victim to each new stupidity
Draining the meaning from you and me

Fearful of living
Fearful of meeting and of greeting
Myself in the mirror after all
Of this has gone amiss and awry

Weary and fearful to live to die
Or whatever I am supposed to do
At the end of time as they tell me now
All I can do is write these words for you
And hope someone understands them somehow

Alone: and yet... the moon is beautiful the stars are bright!
I will forget the mocking day... and give myself to night

STAGE

Our life seems a stage
Across which the players wander
On then off each age
Leaving us alone to ponder
Play or pilgrimage

It is theater in the round
In which "reality"
Is but accidentally found
We actors (you and me)
Are blocked in circles backstage bound

Our careers are as fragile as our fates
The director sits in the dark ...and waits

SKY RIDDLE

The bright crescent moon hangs heavy in the southeastern sky

Just above one of its hornlike points a star is flashing
As if it were spelling out some coded message which I
Cannot decipher yet wonder about as the dashing
Commuters are beginning to be heard in the distance
On the frantic freeway where some of them will be crashing
This morning without warning as they meet with resistance
From one another and from the laws of the universe
Their flux of frantic fluidity flows from bad to worse

The bright crescent moon hangs heavy and languid as before

But it has moved up and to the south to avoid the noise
That star keeps flashing a signal which is hard to ignore
And neither seems to care much for commuters nor their
toys
Whatever their ends the crescent moon and the star are
friends
To each other and to me and if the star is warning
Someone of something somehow I know I need not worry
It does not seem to be for me since I never hurry
I have nowhere to go and I like it here this morning

My celestial friends and I need no means hence have no ends

GRAVESIDE ON MY MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY

May it all be true what you taught me
Of heaven and of life after death
Sweet kind gentle mother who brought me
To life by your life and gave me breath

May you shine like the stars forever
And know your only child will never
Never never forget about you

May you see me honor you and know
I will ever and always love you
And that because of you I will grow
To be the man you knew I could be

May you see this and be proud of me

TESTAMENT OF SUCCESSION

The one who lifts me from obscurity
Is now the son who once was named for me

The name my mother gave me is rising
Floating to the sun from the ocean floor
As life triumphs at the last surprising
Death and chasing it away from this door
A dusk a dawn and then the noon shall see
The wheel turn for a generation more

My son remember one who loved you so
And break the surface of the sea to soar
Go tell the world that secret we both know
Gift of my mother given once before
With you as with me wherever you go
Witness my hand and understand my will

The one who lifts me from obscurity
Born of the water which powers the mill
Is now the son who once was named for me
The wheel my mother turned is turning still

SILENCE BETWEEN

I learned and remember
Desire comes to nothing
In May or December
Desire is suffering

I wash my clothes out in the sink
And I
Hang them on the apricot tree
To dry

Under the cold clear winter sun
I read and write I pray and think
Cook a bowl of brown rice each day
My heart belongs to everyone
Yet no one and find this my way
To live in solidarity
With all the world when day is done

Alone
With my cat I craft poetry
Unknown
But by a certain chosen few
As I agree and disagree
With everyone and none so you
Can be with me yet still be free

No one belongs to anyone

I fast
And yet I feast upon the universe
My life could be no better and no worse
At last

I learned I remember
Desire comes to nothing
In May or December
Desire is suffering

From silence we rise to silence we fall
Silence between is solace after all

TO LIVE FREE

Above all else it is best to live free
This does not mean that unregulated
State of the worldly ones segregated
From humankind and their humanity
Island-dwellers in denial gated
Behind a powerful state protected
From the rest of us claiming elected
Divine right into which can shine no light
While underneath them it is always night

No: to live free is to have dignity
No one who holds this also holds the whip
I would not a slave nor a master be
Both victims of the same dictatorship
Of cruelty beyond simplicity
For to live free is uncomplicated
Let all your chains fall and then you will know
I cannot tell you how it is to grow
No one can tell you: we can only show

That now is the best and the only time
To hear in your heartbeat your freedom chime

AND WE WILL REMEMBER THIS ALWAYS

Of all past ambition I repent
Especially the pursuit of love
Left with little I am still content
With what I have learned the hard way of
Our life our world and our universe

And now I know what I have to do

I will make things better and not worse
I will always be honest with you
Love everyone as much as I can
In the time given me till I die
To live as a kind and simple man

Let us come together you and I
And all of us as we face these days
Lovers friends and enemies as one
And we will remember this always
Into the dark when our day is done

BURNING IN YOU

How paradoxical love seems to be!
Delightfully so:
I stopped chasing love now it chases me
And at last I know:
Sealed with this sweet kiss love will be my bliss

Love will flirt with me when I am busy
Make me drop my work and make me dizzy
While I bide my time pretend not to see
As if unaware of its presence where
It hides in plain sight as it peeks out there
Love is a wild child absolutely free
We play hide-and-seek but love will find me

Thank you beautiful friend who remind me
Love is always near me and mine to share
In the deep burning coals of your dark eyes
Earth turns around those twin stars where love lies
Timeless true ancient new: burning in you

THE QUESTION ANSWERED

I hear the hair and nails grow on the dead
Between life and final preparation
But then hear it is something else instead
Only a part of the separation

Lying here feeling my hair and nails grow
In mortuarial affinity
Content to wonder I need never know
Nor think about this applying to me

Content to blunder I go with the flow
Of waking dream of imagination
And of simply going on with the show
To write as though my life depended on
It since it does: and then? I will be gone

So it will no longer matter to see
An answer to this or to anything
No hair no nails no desire but the fire
To answer the question of suffering

I CHOOSE "BE"

Most of us here in this world are lonely
You have to be lonely to see it though
We search for love so earnestly only
To find it always just beyond our reach

In the end only we lonely ones know
Among the ruins of us all and each
That what we sing of love is just not so
That those who find it soon lose it again
Having tasted heaven then fall to hell

Only we lonely ones really know pain
This world is hell enough we know too well
But heaven flashes every now and then
Probably just a cruel illusion

And yet we still hope never knowing when
Lightning might strike to end our confusion

All of this teaches me celibacy

No light just pretty lies and weeping skies
Empty arms and "To be or not to be?"

Alone and accepting it I choose "be"

TRANSCENDENTAL SONNET #1424
ESCAPE INTO LIGHT

Sunday morning: I would go to church but for
The fact that I am afraid to go outside
Sooner or later I would go to the store
But for the fact of slow-motion suicide

I wonder if anyone knows what I mean
Or if anyone bothers to read between
These lines all perfected and polished to grace
Or if one can see the skull behind this face
Come clearer and nearer and dearer to me
As it smiles at me and speaks of destiny?

Sunday afternoon: I think about the night
I wonder if anyone knows what I mean?
The meaning is found in the spaces between
The places where trapped souls escape into light

HOPE RISING

Once I loved madly
And so I believed
Someone who badly
Abused and deceived
My absolute trust

When tears rained sadly
My gold turned to rust
All I had received
Was false fairy-dust

I was a mouse for a kitten at play
To whom I never mattered anyway

But: do you know what?

I get the last laugh
She wounded me but
Now comes the next half
They popped her bubble
Shut down her con game

She is in trouble
Now buried in blame
As her woes double
Along with her shame

So: justice is not dead and I can see
Out of these ruins hope rising for me

BRIGHT RED

Three kids a cat a book which is bright red
I hold it in hardcover and I say
"I hope one of my kids will call today"
While a cat purrs his friendship by my head
This book has nothing to do with the one
Who posed as my wife once to steal my life
Nor any of those other horrors done
To me taking advantage of my trust

Three kids a cat a book no boom no bust

The kids have all grown up and gone away
Today the only child left here is me
And I will never grow up but someday
They will come back to scatter on the sea
My elemental essence which will be
Close-followed by a book which is bright red
The cat will be all right with his nine lives
Along with the kids their husbands and wives

The big wheel keeps on turning so they say

BLACK STAR

The hills are on fire now it is raining ash
The cremated remains of the might-have-been
Ashes to ashes as panoramas crash
Like the stock market does every now and then
In the biggest magic circle you have seen
Down here in town the air is brown and the sky
Looks like hell which makes me never want to die

Burn to turn to burn to learn
Purify my heart by fire
Burn away my dross and bring
Out my gold by suffering
Purify my heart's desire
Burn to learn to burn to turn
Purify my heart by fire

It sprang up in Black Star Canyon where I spent
So many magic nights indeed the whole of
My adolescence with amorous intent
And there I learned well the gentle art of love
Black Star Canyon is pleasure and never pain
No houses are burning just nature turning
It all burns black but then it all grows back again

Burn to learn to burn to turn
Purify my heart by fire
Burn away my dross and bring
Out my gold by suffering
Purify my heart's desire
Burn to turn to burn to learn
Purify my heart by fire

Tonight the winds will howl the flames will rise
Burning turning learning turning burning
As Black Star Canyon magic fills the skies

SOUVENIRS IN WINTER

the end

My son brought me a bag of rosebuds of which to make tea
And when the water meets them then they bloom
A Valentine's present profoundly inspiring to me
When they spread rosebud-fragrance through the room

Like the ancient breath of angels preserved
As treasure reverentially reserved
For only the highest and holiest days
I will not make tea of them after all

And yet they will bloom and bear witness always
As souvenirs in winter of my fall

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

+Steven Curtis Lance was born on a Friday, at 6:08 in the evening on 31 December 1954, a very strange evening when there was thunder and lightning out of the blue but only a trace of rain. This was taken to be an omen by his people, but for good or ill they could not say.

He was born to a war hero from the Second World War and Korea who was also a poet, this was his father; Steven's mother was a beautiful young girl who never grew up all the way, but who was the most wonderful mother a boy could have.

Steven's father rejected mother and child shortly thereafter, kicking them into the street, two kids left to fend for themselves in an absurd universe.

They ended up back at "home," the old house where Steven's mother had herself grown up. Grandma's house. Steven is there now, alone, having taken care of his mother and grandmother after they took care of him.

When he was nineteen years old, Steven died from complications of encephalitis, or so it was thought at the time. He was sent home, comatose, to dry away to nothing on the front room couch. It was thought better that way, since nothing could be done for him. His mother and his grandmother watched and prayed and wept for him. Steven woke up one day, very much changed, but with an expanded consciousness and an insatiable curiosity about everything; he had gotten a glimpse of the beyond, and he has never gotten over it. His mother and his

grandmother did their best to nurse him back to life and health. He was never the same, but he had "the gift" now. Before he was a smartass, now he was a savant. It was--and is--a little spooky, but cool.

They are dead now. Just Steven and his big fat cat, Freddie Noodles, and Steven's three children, Maria, Stevie II, and Teddy, who come to visit and who are Steven's best friends. And then there is Franziska...

Alone with the cat and occasional pleasant company, Steven spends his time studying--everything--and meticulously crafting his perfectionistic poems. (I do not mention the ghosts here; it has long been said that Studio Lance is haunted. Visitors discover this immediately, but the Lances are so used to how things are there that this only makes life more interesting. Besides, they are family.)

Steven's grandmother educated him well, and he did well in his life, making a good name for himself in many ways, especially as a composer of a cappella sacred choral motets and partsongs.

When Steven's grandmother died, after he had already lost his mother a few years before, and when his uncle stole Steven's inheritance and tried to kick him into the street just as his father had done years before, Steven had a nervous breakdown and gave up on life. He wanted to die. Nothing made any sense.

But his namesake son, Stevie II, had another idea: why not write a book of poems? Not texts for choral motets. Poems. So, with nothing to lose, and feeling dead already to his past life, Steven was reborn to something new.

He asked everyone to call him Stevie, as his mother and grandmother had done. He became a poet. This was four years ago, after his grandmother died. Good people stepped forward to help Steven. He fought his uncle and won. He had and has a wonderful doctor who helped and helps.

He has now written eight books. Steven--or Stevie, as he is now called--has made a new name for himself in a new life; he is a poet now. He is a good poet, and there are many who believe in him. He has websites, and people are starting to discover him, one by one by one.

When Stevie first became active at AuthorsDen, a cabal of cruel people tried to drive him away; they would not accept him. They failed. Stevie is still there. As he always says:

"Living well is the best revenge, and laughing last is always laughing best."

Stevie is a simple soul, and kind. He is an ordained German Lutheran minister--of all things--among many other things, many of them contradictory. But somewhere deep down inside where even Stevie cannot see, he is terribly tough, like his war hero Marine drill sergeant father. This surprises people, and Stevie always enjoys this surprise ...very, very much.

Read a book of Lance and you will understand. You are holding the very best one right there in your hand, right now.

