



CHARLES FOSTER

Collected Poems

A CRITICAL READING EDITION

EXTREMES AND MODERATIONS:
EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

A TEXT-TECH PAPERS PROJECT

Extremes and Moderations

Early Southern California Poetry

Extremes and Moderations is a Text-Tech Papers project devoted to recovering poetry written, published, and circulated in Los Angeles and Southern California. Each volume brings neglected books and poems back into view through carefully prepared texts, archival images, biographical context, and a clear record of the surviving sources.

Edited by Brian Kim Stefans

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Collected Poems

Charles Foster

1922–1967

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EDITORIAL AND RIGHTS NOTE

This critical reading edition resets the complete texts of *Victoria Mundi* and *Outrider for the Lady* from the source scans in the project archive. It is not a facsimile. The scans govern wording, lineation, stanza division, sequence, epigraphs, and indentation; clear optical-recognition debris has been removed.

Foster's poems were first published in the United States between 1965 and 1975 and remain presumptively protected by copyright. The Academy of American Poets identifies Daleth Foster as the permissions contact for one poem; the present administration of the whole estate has not been verified. Prepared for editorial, scholarly, and rights-clearance work.

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ARCHIVAL IMAGES

A short visual record

CHARLES FOSTER

Born, boston massachusetts, february 2, 1922

workd in advertising until 1957 when he began riting. altho initially published in *evergreen review*, and subsequently in a number of othr great litl magazines, ie *wild dog*, he is stil very much an unknown quantity.

he died july 1967 in sonoma california of sclerosis.

survived by his widow judith, and 2 yung daughters.

C.P.

The author note facing the title page of Victoria Mundi (1973), one of the earliest printed biographies.

VICTORIA MUNDI

CHARLES FOSTER

THE SMITH

By arrangement with Horizon Press
a Litmus first edition

New York  1973

Title page of Victoria Mundi, The Smith/Litmus, 1973.

thread

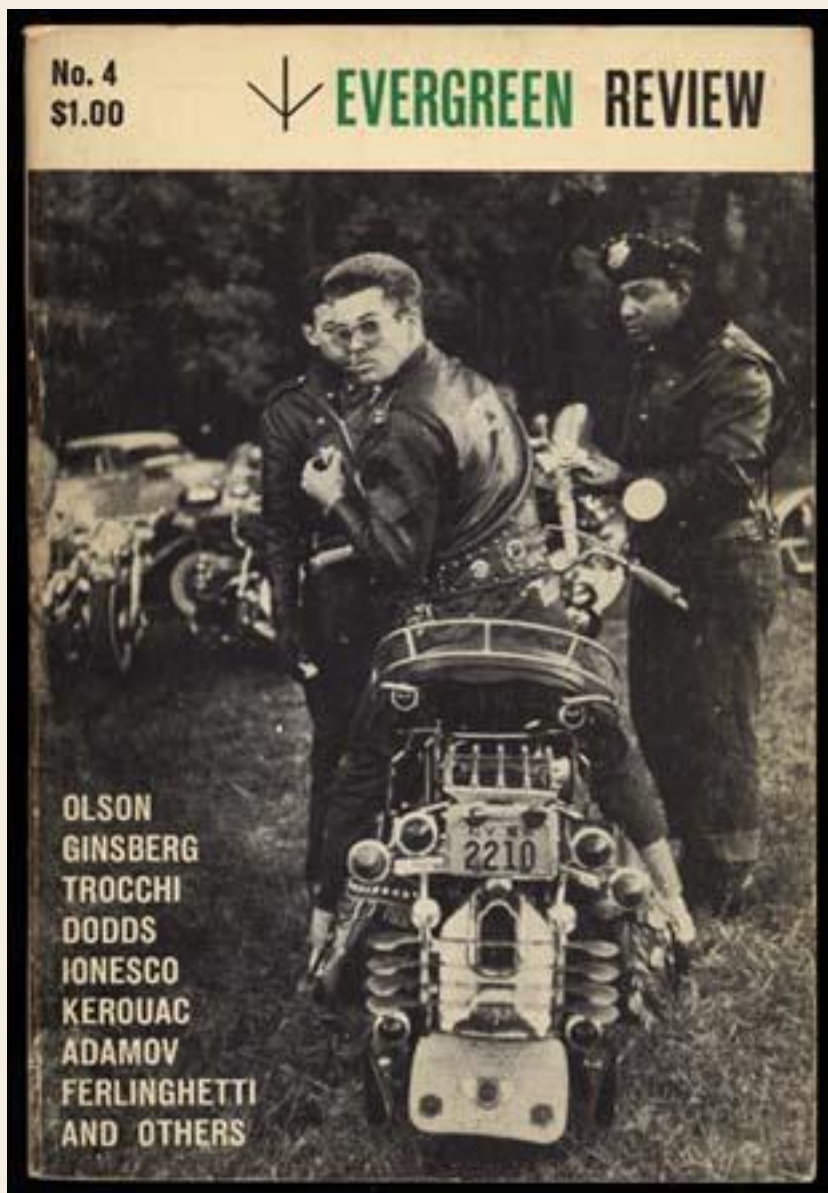
his journey begins on the day when there is no year, that day between years, & that day with the white stone in the heel stone hole; begins anew when he slips into sacred footgear aided by a shoehorn, the unicorn horn, his foot hi upon the heel stone in the dawn his crown of 9 dew drops, 3 groups of 3, cutting the days first rays sprayed across the trillithon/of secret & sacred whirlpool alphabets/as he chants the hour of eklipse, the moment of the nu born son before he rides forth in his firey chariot pulled by the 4 forces towards his waiting death . . . such is the stuff which could b weaved about foster in the lite of these poems & his previous book, but his life was out of phase, like his birth (mar 22 '22) & his death (end of juli 67--however shrouded in necessary mystery: his body found at fort ross beach, sanoma county, & the guess being that of a 10 day solitude. had he joined the helical sirius, the egyptian nu year?), his being out of faze, with both his myth & himself, has led some folks, the same folks claiming that little of his life is known, the same folks pushing the sad existentialist electronic wail, to compair him with villon, rimbaud & verlaine, romantically erroneous az my first attempt. he saw himself as a shaman & as a charioteer, he was/is a rider of forces. he was ridden as well--which led to extremely difficult places where his work was/is so dense & negative it can b readily compaired with a black hole, tho, which is most important, of a unsteady, hence critical mass, which would explode into quasar & punch thru grasping the forces to pull his chariot. & it is in this lite that i have edited this book & titled it for who he is: outrider for the lady. foster is uniquely foster, his paticular tarot combinations & permutations working him & in turn his mining of them. he is a 72 faced poly radiant crystalline being. he is as he says he is

song of the dance before music was born

in brief 10 years of experiences & influences: an x white collar ad man who in 57 flipt out of the racket into the rite of riting. venice his best friend, stewart perkoff, who can b viewd as a twin acquainted with lipton but after 'holy barbarians' blu up th venice scene he moved to s.f. later to marysville. 3 wives. bummd th country bi rail & thum & some of mexico & time with its indians. orakles visions & hi's/pot peyote lsd booze(which killd him) & heroin. graves huxley hesse. the tarot (case waite grey (& crowley, i think)) alchemy(atwood i ching. 'secret of the golden flower' 'zen in the art of archery' the golden treatise of hermes'. synergy th 2nd law of thermodynamics entropy. mozart thelonis monk klee. olson yeates pond stephens eliot duncan & dorn. celtic myth mythologies arthur legends & continuing traditions.

of foster & olson: they r quickly connected thru th tarot--th chariot, th hanged man. (c 'the tarot' by case & 'the book of thoth' by crowley to pull your own strings) th poet-shaman. th poet-historian. from recall, but i may b omitting, olsons dance approaches closest to fosters song in the prose piece 'Appollonius of Tyana' & his untitled poem 'of old time there was a very beautiful'. olsons 'moon is number 18' i point to to illustrate the differences, the opposites, hence complimentary directions. olson juggles

Opening of Karl Kempton's "thread," the friend-editor's memoir and poetics at the end of Outrider for the Lady (1974).



Robert Frank's cover for *Evergreen Review* 4 (1957), which printed Foster's story "The Troubled Makers."

INTRODUCTION

The poet as charioteer

Charles Foster moved from Boston beginnings and a white-collar advertising career into the fugitive poetry worlds of Venice, San Francisco, Marysville, Mexico, and the California road. A visionary break in the late 1950s gave him the central figures of his writing: the Great Lady, the poet as charioteer or shaman, the Tarot as a working grammar, and the poem as a passage of force between bodies and worlds. Friends remembered a restless, difficult, generous man who traveled by rail and thumb, lived close to Stuart Perkoff, read omnivorously, and tried to turn addiction, marriage, fatherhood, rage, and mystical experience into one charged field. His own voice survives on a newly recovered Venice West recording, and his poem beginning “Paleolithic dawns” places him in Wallace Berman’s Semina circle by 1958 or 1959. No book appeared while he was alive. Judith Foster, Charles Potts, Karl Kempton, and other small-press editors assembled four posthumous volumes from manuscripts and notebooks. This edition resets the complete texts of *Victoria Mundi* and *Outrider for the Lady*, including Foster’s two prose statements on poetry. It preserves his stanza breaks, eccentric capitals, slashes, spatial turns, and notebook sequences while correcting unmistakable recognition damage; it also records the still-unrecovered *Dial Artemis*, *Peyote Toad*, and scattered magazine appearances.

Editorial scope

The project archive contains complete copies of *Victoria Mundi* and *Outrider for the Lady*. The 1975 books *Dial Artemis* and *Peyote Toad* are documented but were not recovered, and scattered magazine texts remain to be collated. *Collected Poems* therefore names the complete verified corpus in hand, with omissions openly recorded rather than silently reconstructed.

BIOGRAPHY

Charles Foster, 1922–1967

Names, dates, and the uneven record

Charles M. Foster was born in Massachusetts in 1922, probably in the Boston or Newton area. The surviving sources disagree sharply about the exact day. A California civil-index record summarized in the family research file gives February 12; the author note in Victoria Mundi gives February 2; the Electronic Poetry Center bibliography gives February 3; and Karl Kempton, writing from personal recollection in *Outrider for the Lady*, gives March 22. The civil record is the strongest documentary lead presently available, so this edition uses February 12 while preserving the conflict. No source examined supplies a securely verified middle name beyond the initial M.

Foster died in Sonoma County on July 30, 1967. Friends and later editors say that his body was found near Fort Ross beach after he had been alone for perhaps ten days. Kempton described the circumstances as necessarily mysterious; other accounts connect the death with cirrhosis and long alcohol use. Those details should be treated as recollection rather than a complete coroner's record. The plain facts are that he died at forty-five and that everything now known as a Foster book was assembled after his death.

Family and domestic life

Family material identifies Foster's widow as Judith Ann Isquith Foster, usually Judy or Judith, born in 1932 and deceased in 2000. The brief author note in *Victoria Mundi* says that he was survived by his wife and two young daughters. *Outrider for the Lady* credits Judy with the notebooks and information that made the book possible, and its copyright notice names Judy Foster. One untitled poem begins by addressing Daleth as she brings him water; the Academy of American Poets now credits Daleth Foster as the permissions contact for "How Everything Was in the End Resolved in California." The precise legal descent of the literary estate has not been established, but these records place Judy and Daleth at the center of the surviving family archive.

A later online Beat-history page preserves a direct archival lead attributed to Daleth Foster: "Charlie Foster's body of work went to the Bancroft Library at Berkeley." No public Bancroft finding aid for a stand-alone Foster collection was located in this research pass, so the statement remains a family lead rather than a verified collection number. It is nevertheless more specific than the earlier assumption that the manuscripts might survive only among the papers of Potts, Kempton, or Lipton, and it should guide the next round of repository correspondence.

Kempton wrote that Foster had three wives, but the names and sequence of the earlier marriages remain unverified. Foster's poems repeatedly place mystical vocation beside ordinary domestic life: a supper-table reconciliation in "Passage," a dedication to Julia in "Memorial Day 1957," the extended address to Judith in "The Breakers," the Daleth poem in *Outrider*, and the joint dedication of "Victoria Mundi" to W. B. Yeats and Judith. Family is neither incidental scenery nor stable refuge in these works; it is one of the places where revelation, cruelty, dependence, and care meet.

Advertising, breakdown, and the turn to poetry

Accounts published with the posthumous books agree that Foster worked in advertising until 1957. Charles Potts's introduction to *Victoria Mundi* presents that year as a rupture: Foster underwent an overwhelming mystical or psychotic experience, abandoned the advertising world, and reorganized his life around poetry. Kempton's blunter version says that the former white-collar advertising man "flipt out of the racket into the rite of riting." The different vocabularies matter. Foster understood the break as contact with a genuine field of power, while his friends also saw its physical danger and social cost.

In "Notes from a Journal," written in 1965, Foster gives his own theory. The poem transmits a numinous force between cosmos and person, woman and man, and one person and another. He connects writing with love, mass, mystical experience, revolt, and individual presence. The Tarot cards of the Lovers, Hermit, Justice, Magician, Hierophant, and especially the Charioteer become a vocabulary for the poet's task. "The Mystical Vision" condenses the same claim into a broken, visionary prose: language used by poets, alchemists, magicians, sages, and mystics is not merely talk but a form of being. These statements are essential guides to poems that otherwise risk looking like private delirium or random collage.

Venice, Perkoff, and the California networks

Foster's literary life begins in the overlapping small-press communities of Southern and Northern California. Kempton places him first in Venice and calls Stuart Z. Perkoff his best friend, even a kind of twin. Foster knew Lawrence Lipton, though Kempton says the relationship loosened after the publicity surrounding *The Holy Barbarians* disrupted the Venice scene. Foster later moved to San Francisco and Marysville. The surviving periodical record links him to editors and magazines far outside a single city: *Wild Dog*, *Illuminations*, *Out of Sight*, *Croupier*, *Litmus*, the Smith press, *Rainbow Resin*, and the network around Charles Potts.

The Venice connection is now audible as well as anecdotal. USC's digitized Lawrence Lipton tape 158 records Lipton introducing poems read at Venice West, followed by Bruce Boyd, Stuart Z. Perkoff, Foster, Saul White, and Lipton. Foster's segment begins at 25:55 and preserves his readings of "Let Us Count Among the Customs of the Dying Islanders the Gift of Love," "Parlor,"

“Preliminary Report on Rarum Naturum,” and “Memorial Day, 1957.” The first three titles do not occur in the two recovered books. The tape proves that Foster was not simply a solitary figure later attached to Venice by memoir: he read in the scene’s shared oral space, beside Perkoff and other working poets, and at least three additional poems survive in his own voice.

Robert Mezey remembered visiting Foster in a trailer on a California ranch and later described him as a poet of anger, light, blindness, and visionary pressure, with an intensity that recalled Kenneth Patchen. The ranch appears again in the epigraph to “Victoria Mundi,” signed JF: a trailer, flat stubbly land, distant mountains, and Santa Gertrudis cattle. This is one of the rare moments when the landscape behind Foster’s cosmic vocabulary becomes locally visible. It also shows how heavily his later reputation depends on the testimony of people who were actually in the room.

Kempton’s end essay “thread” is the most expansive friend’s account. It remembers Foster traveling around the country by freight rail and hitchhiking, spending time in Mexico and with Indigenous people, and moving through peyote, LSD, marijuana, alcohol, and heroin. It lists an extraordinary set of influences and tools: Robert Graves, Aldous Huxley, Hermann Hesse, the Tarot in several systems, alchemy, the I Ching, The Secret of the Golden Flower, Mozart, Thelonious Monk, Paul Klee, Charles Olson, W. B. Yeats, Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens, T. S. Eliot, Robert Duncan, Ed Dorn, Celtic myth, and Arthurian legend. The list is partisan and sometimes compressed, but it explains the unusual density of the poems more clearly than any academic taxonomy could.

Drugs, illness, and visionary practice

Psychoactive drugs were neither a decorative Beat credential nor the only source of Foster’s poetics. They were part of a larger attempt to produce and survive visionary states. “Remembrance After a Toke of Michoacán Mota,” the peyote references in Kempton, and the invocations of ether and heroin in Outrider place substances directly in the writing. At the same time, the poems are constructed through elaborate symbolic systems, recurring verbal motifs, numbered sequences, dates, visual placement, and sustained revision. Their excess is disciplined, even when their discipline looks unstable.

Friends also connect the work to addiction and bodily decline. Kempton's account explicitly says alcohol killed Foster. Potts described the poems as talismans made under intense pressure and claimed that recordings survived of Foster reading "Victoria Mundi" and "Public Announcement." Those two readings remain unlocated, but the newly recovered USC tape establishes that Foster recordings do survive and that his reading style can be studied directly. The digitized "Memorial Day, 1957" should be transcribed and collated against the printed text; the three uncollected readings may supply complete authorial witnesses for poems otherwise absent from the archive.

The posthumous books

Judith Foster privately printed an early form of *Victoria Mundi* in 1968. The Smith/Litmus trade edition followed in New York in 1973, edited and introduced by Charles Potts. Its ISBN is 0-912292-29-6 and its Library of Congress control number is 72-96445. The book gathers Foster's two prose statements and twenty-five poems or sequences, ending with the long title work. Potts's introduction argues that Foster's writing is difficult because the reader confronts not an ornamental symbolism but a complete imaginative system.

Rainbow Resin issued *Outrider for the Lady* in Sacramento in November 1974. Karl Kempton edited and published it and designed its "tipoglif" cover. The copyright page credits Judy Foster and says that Charles Potts had supplied five inches of manuscript while Judy supplied information and notebooks. Fourteen poems are listed by title or first line; asterisks identify notebook works whose spacing follows Potts. The volume is materially rough, visually adventurous, and indispensable. It preserves intimate family poems, incantations, comic collage, and the large concrete sequence "The Many-Splendored Fontic-Coded Non-Birthday Check." Kempton's "thread" follows the poems as a hybrid memoir, poetics, and colophon.

Two more books appeared in 1975. *Dial Artemis* was issued in Berkeley by Aldebaran Review/Galactic Approximation Press in an edition reported as five hundred copies; catalogue descriptions give forty pages. *Peyote Toad* was issued by Litmus in Salt Lake City. Complete copies or scans of neither book were recovered during this research, so their poems are not silently reconstructed from secondary quotations. Their existence changes the meaning of *Collected Poems*: the present edition is complete for the two

source books in the project archive, not a claim that every Foster poem has been recovered.

Magazine poems, prose fiction, and reception

Foster's poetry record begins earlier than the previously documented 1965 magazines. Wallace Berman's hand-printed *Semina* 4, dated 1958 by one specialist catalogue and circa 1959 by the Smithsonian Archives of American Art, included Foster's poem beginning "Paleolithic dawns." The issue placed him in a deliberately intimate mail-art company that included Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, Philip Lamantia, Michael McClure, John Wieners, Robert Kaufman, Ron Loewinsohn, and Stuart Perkoff. Catherine Spencer's study of Jay DeFeo independently identifies the Foster poem in DeFeo's archive and notes its affinity with DeFeo's imagery. A complete legible copy of the insert has not yet been recovered, so the poem is documented but not reset here.

The later magazine record is extensive. "Genesis" was listed in *Wild Dog* 16 in April 1965, though a copy has not yet been recovered. "Notes from a Journal," "Ninety and Nine," and "A Hundred Years and a Day" appeared in *Illuminations* 1; "Form! That Is the Focus" in issue 2; and "The Breakers" in issue 3. "O Dear Lady" and "No Name Easter Song" appeared in *Out of Sight* 3 in August 1966. "Magpie, 1964" appeared in *Croupier* in 1966 and was reprinted in *Black Ace* in 1994. *Litmus* printed "How Everything Was in the End Resolved in California" and "Public Announcement" in issue 10, "Victoria Mundi" in issue 11, and "Doom" in issue 12.

"How Everything Was in the End Resolved in California" became Foster's most visible poem. Potts reprinted it in *Pacific Northwestern Spiritual Poetry*; Robert Mezey included it in *Poems of the American West* and later *The California Anthology*; the Academy of American Poets maintains an authorized online text; and the Los Angeles Times selected it for its Poem of the Week series in 2020. The poem's compressed California apocalypse—politics, traffic, disease, desire, industrial imagery, and sudden grace—has therefore carried Foster's name farther than any of his scarce books.

Foster also published prose fiction. "The Troubled Makers" appeared in *Evergreen Review* 4 in 1957, was reprinted in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* in June 1962, and entered the anthologies *Writers in Revolt* and *The Evergreen Review Reader*. A 1958 notice in *Trace* praised the story's

brilliance and its therapeutic laughter, while R. W. Flint found it too fey in a 1963 review. The anthology connection also placed Foster beside editor Alexander Trocchi, whom a later Beat-history account identifies as Foster's friend and associate. Italian bibliographies record translations as "I maghi disoccupati" in 1963 and "Gli stregoni disoccupati" in 1996, evidence that the story circulated internationally even while the poems vanished. Because it is fiction, it is documented here but not reset among the poems. Its existence nevertheless complicates the simple story that Foster began writing only after the 1957 break: prose publication and visionary conversion overlap.

One additional fiction attribution remains unresolved. A retrospective review of the June 1962 *Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, following science-fiction database records, links a Charles Foster to the pseudonym Mark Ganes and the story "Evil Out of Onzar" in *Planet Stories* (September 1952). No source located here supplies the biographical bridge needed to prove that the pulp writer was the California poet. The attribution is therefore preserved as a lead, not added to Foster's verified bibliography.

Legacy and unfinished recovery

Foster's disappearance was produced by several kinds of scarcity at once: early death, tiny posthumous editions, no stable estate-facing bibliography, and poems whose visual and spiritual demands resist casual reprinting. Potts, Kempton, Judy Foster, Mezey, and later anthologists kept fragments of the work in circulation. Their accounts do not always agree, but without them there would be almost no life to place beside the poems.

The recovery remains open but now has firmer directions. Copies of *Dial Artemis* and *Peyote Toad* should be located and scanned; the "Paleolithic dawns" insert in *Semina* 4 and the listed little-magazine witnesses should be recovered; USC tape 158 should be transcribed and collated; the Foster materials reportedly placed at Bancroft should be identified; and Potts's reported "Victoria Mundi" and "Public Announcement" tapes should be sought in his papers and related collections. The exact probate history of Judy and Daleth Foster should also be established before publication beyond research use. Foster's surviving work already forms a coherent, unsettling achievement. The new audio and *Semina* evidence show that the missing materials can materially enlarge it.

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VICTORIA MUNDI

The Smith/Litmus, 1973

Notes from a Journal

For me, now, there is time and no time. I move in time and out of time: to write of the past or future; to explore the roots of myths; to see glimpses of the unborn; to meet you, you who read words I have written, you who by that other reckoning will not be born for a thousand years. I live in space and no-space. What happens here and now; that is the focus of its immediacy. But happenings are related one to another in terms of simultaneity, analepsis and prolepsis — the escape of individual consciousness from temporal-spatial boundaries, the finding of common cause in a pervading oneness, the love that transcends all barriers. (There is) the general application of such relational systems as the Tarot, the potentiality of Art to transcend the human and local, the magic called sympathetic... My faith rests centrally in the poem. It is there that man and woman speak from their depths in a single voice. It is there that love and light may thru the word be one thing.

It is there that something real may happen while nothing happens, there that the enormous presence of the Great Lady touches and transforms me, there that I participate both as creature and creator, in the whole EVENT, that miracle when all is clarity and mystery, all is one and infinitely various, where nothing is explained and there is in that moment no need for explanation. The poem, I believe, is a means of transmitting as essence, a vital and numinous force, from cosmos to man, from the female to the male element and again to the female, from man to man. Thru the poem we transcend age and place. Something of vital and life-giving significance — a blessing, a light, a hand, a numinous and mostly unnamed quality, is passed on thru the poem, in a way not explained by the words of it.

I see the act of making a poem as the act of a naked man: that in the act the poet, tho stripped of those outward marks and badges of identity, reaffirms and maintains his own mysterious and particular identity thru a process of love and light, a listening to and putting into words the heart and soul of another, she whom he loves; that in the midst of this act a secret eye as old as the universe opens, the sphinx of created things stirs, the bread of life passes, something stirs and moves outward in the still, charged air; that the man as poet expresses the emotion, all of it, out of his depths, whether it is his personal emotion or that which he has sensed and is responding to as a poet among men. Thus the poem is an act of bringing together — as is the mass, the act of

love, or the solitary mystical experience — while it is equally an act of individual reaffirmation and revolt, of precise particular statement, and discrimination of sense and feelings.

It combines, in a way, those conditions and forces symbolized in the Tarot in the Lovers, the Hermit, the Hierophant, and Justice. The Lovers shows the naked primeval man, beneath the tree of knowledge, Across from him is the first woman, beneath the tree of life. Behind them is a mountain, sometimes shown with a little door leading in to the sacred room of light. Over their heads is the demi-urge, the Angel, or Creative Spirit. The card represents discrimination. The Hermit, in contrast, shows an ancient and solitary man, at night, on a mountain peak. He carries an eight-pointed star in a lanthorne, and a staff. He is hooded and cloaked. Tho alone, his influence touches all. Indeed, his particular sense is the sense of touch. Justice shows a young woman on a throne, holding a sword and a balance. She resembles the High Priestess, the figure of cosmic memory. She is associated with Libra and thus with Venus, the emblem of the Empress, emblem of balance and of beauty.

Justice is the prime personification of the Lesser Fortune (beauty, grace), She is shown below the Emperor, a symbol, as in the Hierophant. of the Greater Fortune (wisdom, worldly power). In the act of writing or reciting his work, the poet approaches most closely, I believe, the role of the Charioteer. The Charioteer is shown victorious outside a city. He is driving a chariot with wheels of life-light with a canopy of the heavens over his head, his reins controlling harmoniously the Dark Sphinx. He wears emblems of magic casually at his belt — but it is within his own person that the core is placed, thru which the life-giving power passes. Compare the Magician and the Hierophant. The Magician, the image of Apollonian self-consciousness, is largely a manipulator of objects, symbols, and his own discovered talents to effect a transference of the vital energy from above to below. His prime symbol of power, the infinity sign, is not a part of his person, but is placed over his head.

The Hierophant, in contrast to the Magician's youth, is aged. He is seated on a throne and is marked many times with the outward sign of his authority, the cross. Before him are a monk and a priest, in attitudes of submission. The Magician as a manipulator and the Hierophant as a wise sacred ruler both fail to combine the lyric joy and the self-contained stance, that individual presence and power expressed by the Charioteer. Further, he brings about a harmonious

combination of the opposites to a degree (and in terms of the Lesser Fortune and the Greater Fortune) which the other two cannot attain. It is in his shaman-like relation to the people he lives with and among that the poet feels his relation to the Greater Fortune, to wisdom and the roots of security and power, both temporal and spiritual. For in the act of making, he is an agent for the transmission of great power... it is his inner control, strength, talent which permits the power to pass over undiminished.

% * %

How in this chaos can I survive, can I do anything meaningful, can I love anyone, can I relate to anything in the cosmos beyond men? How can we have a world fit to live in, how may we live to realize the people we really are? A poet does not offer logical “answers” to such questions, for the most part. Rather, he writes in full awareness of them, reaching into the full depth of desperation and anguish in the immediate human experience. And in this awareness he moves not only with his own capacities, but in that love of the goddess and the supernal light or power through the necessitous journey of the poem, finding, if he is faithful and skillful and has good fortune with him, that magical numinous and esthetic transformation along with the emotional resolution which opens the way for the passage of life-giving and healing power into the world and the language of men, and, thru the mediating word, provides the way that the individual who reads may in his own way retrace the poet’s experience.

Charles Foster, 1965

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, pp. 9–12.

The Mystical Vision

An idea is a page. An idiot is a passage thru the sky. An hermetic dialogue is in the process of formation. A wing of Vee of white birds is seen against the cool April morning sky. There is a cunning method here involved, not a return to orthodoxy, far from it, but a means of continuing and cementing our survival, a mutual furthering. It is true, there is such a thing as 'just talk'. It is also true that words as used by the poet, by certain alchemists magicians sages and mystics (saving the final category) are not 'just talk' but are illustrations of the act as Being, the Cosmic Pause as purposive, the little red fox who makes the difficult passage thru the orgies of spring, the ice fever in the whistling water, without in the process wetting or curing his brush.

(His fate is already marked in the stars, He has with his two hands and across his body already joined together the living and the dead, the surviving loves, the memories of dove & eagle, the salmon collapsed upon his rocky bier, the pigeon fluttering before hell gate, the roc, the exact and bitter roc, the single great eye blinded and thus opened to a plane of vision not apparent to outsiders, where blinkers flowed and tears ran, rammed home a logic and a beauty out of its immediate results...

to the lady who taught me the glory in the balances, the wheel of rose and fire the blood upon the mulberry the joy in the midst of grace that a break-thru into quietness is love, is art, I make my offering...

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, p. 13.

Ninety and Nine

"Her power was to open what was shut

& to shut what was open."

Just now she came to me again,
showing me the great danger:
she holds in her own hands the image
of the great dancer
there is no threat
that cannot be/averted;
the stork
leaving the marsh
where it cannot stand
flies into its enemies
nest: confusion
is great.
if you would rule
hold your tongue up straight
go against the dictates of habit
do not accept the offerings of
blind men:
deck out your house
with alarm bells
that call into mind
the presence of the great
those who are as hard as the mountain goat
but ready to accept as their vision sees —
do not trust him
who would fill thy mouth
with praises.
we who in our separate persons
— and i say unto you, hear me,
for i am a key, the way
into the mountain
into the small secret recesses
is not blocked to us, unless
some blindness, a partiality
puts us at odds,
against confusion

of voices and language
and against the vibrant birds

of the mother, the heart and the
secret, incestuous star, i say,
do not turn or return, hear me
& hear the sounds of the way,
the way that we do not know
the way not of experience or of recall

as these few instruments speak across wind
and the change in the land is felt only as chance
or as the vagaries of weather, the innuendos
of old women or small children, gestures of wise
animals: do not step forth into that storm
with any wise and experienced guidesmen
for it is their knowledge
of the particulars of past conditions
that makes them dangerous, unreliable;
do not let yourselves be urged

by the combinations and permutations
of your intuitions or the sensitizing

of the deep images
the black places
beyond image

or the change

as birds veer
the eye bound
to an old curve
droops slyly, does
not respond;

there is
a stake,

the old anxiety
of the city

driven into a tree trunk
overtaken cadillac
drunk wheels spinning

but across nothing at all
but the moon acres, the sudden
needs, the typewriters speak

above and below us
a whispering
in contact with
little dolls on strings, little children,
& the eyes, the contact lenses against
loam or sky, the recently dead, old poets
as we turn down the sky into/ an unknown country.
you, sir, who have so suddenly left us
we asked thy aid
from the vantage
of that sky tower
that severance from the bodily
needs, responses, habits and blessings —
that we may speak a truth
necessary to our lives
in the poem, the freshet
of the new sound, the whisper
forming in the blood stream
and along the chance gulfs
of that former space.
in these changes, we who write,
we who must speak the sounds
also must listen, as always,
but old sounds and reliable oracles
swing and waver strangely in their
comments, their conclusions, their
judgments
and we who were in agreement
were walking together
on a common course
now something has fallen
between us: a wall of nonentity, as tho
some folly had just been discovered
on the eve of a victory
where is he who will speak? sir, you who have left
we ask your words.

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, pp. 14–17. Also printed in *Illuminations*, no. 1 (1965).

The American Expletive

1. The American expletive most generally expressive of scornful disbelief and indicative of irreverence is

BULLSHIT

2. The term

motherfucker

as it is generally used is not simply a crude insult but is meant to characterize a person whose attitude toward life is incestuous, and who usually is confused in his relations toward pain & pleasure, and who fails to respect the integrity dignity and freedom of The Other One.

3. The word

BIGOT

is defined as a person who is intolerantly convinced of a particular creed, opinion, practice, etc.

4. SHOCK may open the mind to light. Repeated shocks, however, may dull or blunt the perceptions or the feelings, leaving the mind so numb or so callous that the ordinary processes of thought become distorted and that quality we call humane or compassionate seems to disappear.

5. A RITUAL BLOW is not an attack but a dubbing.

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, p. 18.

Statement of a Holy Poem by George Herbert

When God made man he gave him many blessings.
But he withheld one blessing: rest. For he sd., if
I give this blessing to my creature he will rest
content in nature; since I love him and will that
he love me, I shall leave him with these riches but
also with restlessness, that he will return to me.

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, p. 19.

Doom...

DOOM.

doom.

doom.

the drum beats louder.

something is coming unhitched.

something is running out of order.

love plays to orgasm beat. soul song & flesh sound.

world held on leash unleashed. make your own sound.

accord. accord. where is the pattern of accord.

in your own back yard stands an oak tree.

how many times has lightning struck it.

doom. doom. doom.

the water is very shallow now.

it barely reaches the midpoint of the ankle bone.

there is much to be done if we wd survive.

instinct & intuition are & are not

the memory of the future.

only the imagination is real.

where is now.

it is very clear that we have lived out this

clause. roller bearings are not for sale any more.

doom. doom. doomsday. doom.

say it very loudly if you want to live.

on another facet of the brite red jewel

the word engraved is joy. don't you feel it?

it has nothing to do with new

it has to do with now.

that is where our feelings live when the ghosts

go away; that is why i am opposed to motherfucking.

the war in vietnam is a prime example of motherfucking.

incest is doom. incest is doom. incest is doom.

here is the point where love turns thru madness to hate.

it is the violation of ecology. it is rape of natural order.

it is insane pestiferous violation of freedom.

the food the mouth chooses. the course the feet take.

they wd hide the vile significance of their acts

under the cover of loud noises or violence of
shallow gutlessness of mind of silliness.
doom. doom. you motherfuckers. doom.
i mean you, you silly motherfuckers. doom.
the public. there is no public. there is you & me.
what about him or it? they do not exist.
only in the relationship of you & me is it real.
joy. joy. joy. don't you know that thing is loaded.
it is no water pistol. i am pointing it at yr head.
it will go off only if i pull the switch.
no ghost can pull the switch.
now i advise you to go back to love.
see what you have left out there
before -you paint your face shocking red & sea brite
green & all the brite colors of despair
& sit on grey green pumice stone & make funny faces
as they carry the dead & dying children by.
good luck to the morning. thank god it is still raining. go in joy.
i love you.

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, pp. 20–21. Also printed in *Litmus*, no. 12 (1972).

O Dear Lady...

o dear lady

sweet little girlchild
crawls into my brain
daddy o daddy
3 goddamned awful murder cases
why why why why why
all them damn fools
in the coal vain in the peach shed
— is falling in love like an anger vent,
a stove with no lid the flames
leap & smear sooty don't care
black leaping god-tears on
picture-book zoo

whoa, whoa
cool it with wheat
bucket of cold
no fuckin old shuck
old shit about go
& no-go, them
precise steel reduplicated parts, when
we got like flesh & blood
under these so sculpted tits
to drive you crazy with
a number of souls, how many
can you count
in this lousy old duesenberg

bang bang so loud from
back seat speaker, my ma
never woulda called it
home. (no, no: not enuf, not yet...

ziwu, zambu, zig

wigman, batman old slug
banshee juice 9000 volts
it takes you thru the rear door mirror

with cakes & ale, you
will lose your space orientation

unless you eat it drink it
tie it round your neck
freeze your feet solid in it
let it take you down to the bottom
flat mud mosquito lake erie with
genuine human hair piss doll from
mama mama grrrr!

china doll with cheek
real tears, hair like whip
the neighborhood of cruel
where the hoss got trained to stomp
lightning lashed out from the attic
& grandpa bent the spinal columns of
but truth came out, lousy & late
too much we said, the little jerk
 had a flashlight
 like to blind us all
 sd. the big old pol
 half naked man, half-real
 roast goose eaten up
 by its own damn orange peel!

(what it don't do yet
 is in the mid-part
 cervix & time-server
 of the fore-brain;
 who knows
 what tabu:
 & protect
 us from
 hi-armed fuzz
 who blast
 joe's lady
 who else
 you need
 like this
 feudal type
 protection from?
(rapists, bandits, sex starved kids, natural scientists

those who wd freeze you forever into deathcubes ice
just to see what its like with cold electrodes
where you used for eyes or testicles —

don't you see yet
what has gone blind
can't you smell the hungry flies
where the seepage, the damned flow
is?

we who have an age to see
easy, to say, go easy
no eyes but triphammers in stocky
cells, the sticky/flies light!

the mixed up nixed up ending is
what we don't need no permission
to give, don't quote no odds on
favorite little corpses in the park
or, wake up, old ghost it ain't even
morning yet;

boys & girls who wet
age 40 or two, all over
garage floor, a stone boat

while, fuse sputtering short
they gather with their night-
sticks around tim leary
all the stinking fuzz, including
destry hisself old hoss mister
president, trying to see who

can shove it further up
destiny's dynamometer flashing
red light porch trying the rats

to in the beet juice of their own
mother ignorance destroy
asshole & all — us!

(exactly as if the morons
in their dead bones
obsolete juice pressing
power structure
had no right but see

who could tear down human life
faster than old mid-town!
see — how they come
in two's and three's &
hey! now they are coming
with big sewn-on zero's
gone wild with pride with frozen
bug juice puckered piss frozen
into the gut-greedy pantry
swooping sticky with infantile rapine
jazzing it on wheels of light
made like moose jaw-bone wired
to crawl incredibly within the cement
flowing pools & liquid money udders
where in literal steel vanes whirr
their souls are not!
i offer in the strictest of evidence
dead sculptors, e.g. Giacometti
if you think i will back down
one blank idiot marble i-ball
against a soft hot glowing cigar tip
or even one wholly dead, triple-decker
hero sandwich. Like, who can blow
up whatever this planet holds
is in the manner of odds no value judgment
& like it or not, you motherfuckers
can rot in your own jails
blow off yr own skulls with yr 45's — thas all!

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, pp. 22–27. Also printed in *Out of Sight*, no. 3 (August 1966).

Frankincense Sermon

When i came in to the room, it was empty, except for the objects —
a mattress, many books, pens, brushes, pencils, diagrams, drawings,
sketches, public & private papers, manuscripts, boards with illus-
trations or playing cards pasted or tacked into position, a box or
two, an old crutch hanging on one wall from the wainscoting,
along with a coat, a white cotton shirt and dark wool trousers. I
glanced at the little pile of three books on a straight-backed wood
chair at the feet of the single crutch: Slim paperbac, shiny cover
reflecting four faint bars of sunlight from the window, THE WAY
TO COLONIS...

i pick it up and open it to...

“... he seemed to grow
gentler

as they grew nearer
their destination...”

Next book, thick, red-edged, limp black cover, its
title stamped in gold: “HOLY BIBLE”

... and THE WAY (Kay Cecillus’ book) falls open
“Is this medicine for you?” she asked him —

but much passes. by
unwept, unmentioned, even unnoticed, casually noted then filed
away, thrown into shadow or discard, forgotten

rattan settee & chair
on the smoking junk heap

but often & again an event takes place
there is a place of meeting
a circle of lovers made whole,
linked together.

without damage, there can be no crime.

when an encounter is rigid
we should draw lines clearly and carefully.

when i reply to a peace officer, no,
you cannot search my house
without a warrant
then i have drawn a clear line.

if he immediately responds

by opening a closed and latched box
he has clearly stepped over that line
has violated me
and my house
and you
and your house.

a true peace officer is responsible not only to the peace but
also to the freedom of the people. he has taken a solemn oath
not only to uphold and maintain the peace but also to protect
the constitution of this land and further the freedoms it speci-
fically guarantees.

does the deliberate violation of such an oath by
a peace officer make you sick?

if a priest pisses on his own altar
in scorn, in derision
and then proceeds decorously to conduct
holy services
is the priest performing his office
differently from such a peace officer?

in love, there is more leeway

but there are lines
we do not cross

there are places of reticence
& mystery.

(horns, horns, & the hooting of geese
in the sky:

man is a fool
in love with an image
your face, barely glimpsed
in the life-like street
or his own, chirping,
from the dancing mud puddle
of this icy spring.

and if woman is no better, thank god,
the old occupant

of the empty room
that she is different

and that sometimes
there are only eyes, your eyes,

your touch
the secret places you open
unto us
forgetting all lines
scrawled on blueprints
across checkerboards
(or the snake scored
into thirteen: making a flag/ a sky.
beyond all the partial horror of the city
the lines carefully or accidentally drawn
the curves made with conviction or out of whimsey
the accommodation of a great many people
in a restricted space
a little room
for many bodies
twisted & whole
for many souls
and bright red apples
there is an immediate place of nakedness
the purity
of the encounter
one man to another
man to man
stripped of all badges
degrees & complexions
if we american men
forget this
we forfeit our great gift
to those trapped only
in the old world's myth.
in love are the lines drawn;
you the woman and i the man
draw them in ways we do not wholly understand
nor do we wish to understand
wholly, for there is that mystery
which is sacred.
without damage, there can be no crime.
i do not accept the necessity of enmity

though i recognize people coming on hostile
who do not know any better
who cannot see clearly
who have not known what it is
(or who have forgotten
what it is to be one
(and beyond any conception or idea of 'one'
with themselves and the others and
the moon and the west sun.'

i know that we must accept our earthly condition
and that, when we can, we swing with it
it is hard to acknowledge
that which one has, all do not have,
that the light of God

be he sleeping
or merely absent

from the usual place

does not shine equally and inform
all men and women.

but lady, though we be beasts and spirits at once
we have made something out of the purely human
not for sneezing

let us eat
of the best of our body
take our part in that joy
of the genious, baby, joyous
in the living...

the last page of the sermon i cannot write
i give you the empty room
the solitary man
tom wolfe
hart crane
writing down visions
telling the truth
it is a long silence
a sudden knowledge
a way of coming on as
yourself suddenly

whom you have never and always known,
the intense wonder of
dancing without
words or clothes,
the sudden delight of
pissing,
as a boy
with other boys
among daisies and rusted iron,
into a clear, running stream...

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, pp. 28–33.

The Contentions of Kynewulf

written in the year of the ram

this is the end of the fish story.

fran gerard.

 this is the time of the earthworm.

 man moves forward, past thais.

 this is not yet the time of the speaking mountain.

 this is a time to make new to renew

 vital connexion

 ... with linkage to

what has lasted timeless, graven in stone

who lives in & out of, interpreting

 the fury of change

 divorce & dismemberment

 the defacing of

 fish structures

 the struggle

 for core

 & dynasty...

but the joy of ending

 the nightmare;

 we have stolen bands of force from the magician

 on the upper ledge of sagacity

 we have changed the face

 of the need

 at this point we see the long inverse

 of passion-play, the victim

 & his torturer,

 driven from the boards;

we wd. dance in bare feet

upon bare soil

 &, pausing, behold light in curtains move.

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, pp. 34–35.

Of the Substance of the Earth

earth lives.

earth lives as a dual person, male & female,
positive & negative, polar & meridional,
simultaneous and sequential

man does not own the earth.

the zodiac is seen by us
as a double band, space warped to particular curves,
but the sun & moon are free within it
& the paths of longitude & latitude
cover certain advancing shadows: _ there is play
of appearance, of realities, shattering
& reforming, coming to meet:

man does not own time or space

& thru the band past E-rays in constant profusion

striking, merging,
mingling, altering
the character of...

but the relay is the word, the human voice

within its chamber
a seashell castle &
diaphragm, sound tunnel.

the walls of the room hold, serve our function.

preserve our love

extend the sway

for i do not deny i have dreamed
of embracing you passionately

recoiling from & advancing towards

at the north wain the tower the phallus
mars & venus sort the lots
of death/change/birth

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, pp. 36–37.

Another Look at the Creation Myth

in the beginning there was no beginning
all made void
out of void
a voice
of consequence
i am
yes i see
come move with me
& there are three
& there was zero &
swirl, about an empty, three, warmth, movement, there was
light
into & out of
& something else came in
three became we
what was it
us & not us
out of nothing
it opened, pop
brite link
making a space
& we looped
& in clusters it merged, grew
to a place, a place where
a thing cd be
real:
light struck the stone & there is water.
we are not yet born.
much is yet to happen.
we spin; dancing, thru beam-eyes, beacons.

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, p. 38.

Earthman Is Not Sui Generis

within the stellar realm he has his match
 he is a star child
 borne to-earth to live
 as man a man or a woman
 within a skin
 man is maker
 of star maps
 builder of cities
 lover
 he does not need
 to eat the earth.
beyond the speculum lie other parts,
 to simplify, the occipital ridge
 is not covered with horn
but across it or within
 the encounter with
 who lives there
 is making it
 speaks
 with what cogency?
 there be
 stellar source
we be magnified
 many times a diameron a world-spin
 wd not drop off to diatoms, except
 the urgency, the need, o Ercwulf
 for the four corners, thrones, columns
 red & gold

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, p. 39.

Public Announcement

Turn. Turning. Having turned. Having made
the Great Turn

with you and also alone
sometimes out of touch with
in the cold cold places

we are not, neither are you, neither am i
now alone, nor are we strangers tho
we try on those selves

we have always been
as if somehow not expecting
the clothes to fit,
the old habit still to jibe
or twist that outworn lie:

all i know is, in that joy it is animal,
soul & liver & penis & ears, all suddenly freed
from the dead old weight of the corpse
the corpse dead at the end, i think
of a 30,000 year long wave
when we couldn't find it and it was on our backs
& it was all cowshit all ten tons of it on our shoulders
that some evil and unknown great uncle had secretly
willed us:

it is gone, that enormous bag,
that incredible unearned misery, & now
we have nothing but lies to tell each other
or glad tidings or sighs
or relief till

some truth may be found
made up, out of our actual midst!

first, there was you

when i opened my eyes & felt your
fingers, my breath, a cheek,
then there was you

and i

(but beyond the whole museum of your head
i saw the idiot, empty, laughing sky

& i didn't give a damn one, way or another
for all i knew you might be my mother
i really couldn't remember
or maybe it was raining, it couldn't
say yes, no, blue or cloud

but then my antique memory went away again
we were a skeleton in crowded armor, the sleeping
bag held firm at the zipper, the cows
in the meadow were cold but curious,

we lost our temper, how
could we hold in, who
we knew not? You

ran away

& i was almost dead all over again
when you came back

i will never forgive you
for anything.

if you do not forget
who i am not, never
will be, the fourth
of july
will ladyfinders

pop

but you'll never melt or meet
my brass cannons, the depth bombs of
jellyfish, tornadoes, we

own too many stars
have burned our own

in common and

green young shoots that stab & blind
— no thicker 'n blood
old codger, dipsey doodle
eisenhower said,

giving birth to
3 new 6-legged mules
a wide breast of hills full of mountain snow
a barefoot non-political giraffe

& no end, no end at all
that wasn't wide open
still as the dead
beercans of
tourists in
gettysburg,
somehow, still
waiting the formal
announcement, the invitation

42.

to twins, to dinner, to beheading—
right in the middle of the still stunned & silent party...
happening, what happens, what happening when
the soul of light
changes her direction
(the impulse veers
a cock drives further into
an age-old cunt
an agony of glass
rage in rags bone and rust
moves thru rock, thru iron
arcs, thru traces, blood bends
flexible & taut
into the violet &
almost out of sight, beyond
passwords, slither paper snakes
sent ass-backwards, reeling with
the sense of
that wind
new
chance or
last chance that drink where
all was dry dust
dead lust limpet corpse
& old age agony straw against
where the dead rise up
howl, howl of the living rise
bait with the swung hope
chant & howl with the hope-filled dead

lift, lift the poison of their life
above ancestors, past her waiting head!

so fuck you, grandpa, governor, president
fuck all of you who would divide us back
stagnant & drowning wisps in old grape juice
tank car corpses for the taxes or
a decent burial on the family
expense no object!

fuck you & step down
from where you don't belong

where the light comes from
comes in
turns & bends

it puts all your objects and miseries
passed on to your unwilling ex-subjects
into that old ashcan school entitled
'the mistakes of an age,' or
'human history':

NOW AT AN END

finished, done, no hard
feelings fellah?

nearer, yes God nearer
my God, if only

thy name were not so unknown neuter
not even part of landscape,
now.

when you say when you
or when i
or when some part of us
undivided, not in trance
neither sleeping nor waking
were the oak tree
(i was, you were, we were the —
and the lightning bolt that split it,
when we were the face wild and alive
without any personal feeling, daft & exalted
as sane as the night, blown by black rain
— & thirteen shots rang out

in the tenement nearly next door
as we waited side by side
and the dog, your dog, growled
at the stranger in the night
and the funny but accurate algebra
scrawled doom, all with the moon
and the tenacles of softedge paintings
and the dead faint edge of old
methedrine transactions,
let
light wail!
we
did not accept such answers we
knew already that if the crisis were not
passed, we would not
care, what more now, but
choices, open places?

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, pp. 40–45. Also printed in *Litmus*, no. 10 (1971).

Passage

Passage recorded in the course of an overheard ritual of reconciliation over a supper table

first, he speaking to her
then their two voices, responsively:
 “i haven’t had a baked potato
 for a long time.”
 “about six months now.”
 “is it that long?”
 “yes of course it’s that long.”
 “but why should it be so — long?”

 “i haven’t had an oven.”
 “oh.
 oh, yes.
 oh.

9.57

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, p. 46.

Why Did We Ever Come to Live Here, Daddy?

An end.

A thousand stop signs falling
from the labyrinth of the
beech tree, against the inner ear.

“Diapason”

Intensity: — blue & yellow eye.

Light of roman baths,
falling & failing.

Shoal of rock goats.

Croppings of gnats.

Who beat the shortstop into
the cement?

Lather of ships.

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, p. 47.

One Man's Society Island

at solitaire
impeccably he
closed his eyes to what —
if anybody — to see,
that is,
if anybody wasn't
looking (& anybody
wasn't so —
he riffed a shuffle
& dealt a glancing
temporary deuce in
(spades, smile of it's
all over, spilled death, right off
the bottom of
the cold deck/ cool hands
to
himself.

7.57

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, p. 48.

The Hand...

...a long digression

along digression
 bound for Dallas
at noon
at juncture
 high burial —
 honors of
 chance
 NOTES
 bicycle grace,
 (mishap you dig
 in ritmus box:
“aye sir am his
 majesties dog, in kew
ptay tell me sir
 whose dog are YOU?

7.63

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, p. 49.

How Everything Was in the End Resolved in California

it
wasn't
san
andreas
fault
it
wasn't
mine
things
just
started
sliding.

9.1957

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, p. 50. Printed in *Litmus*, no. 10 (1971), and later in Robert Mezey's *Poems of the American West* (2002).

Memorial Day 1957

For Julia · across the table on Seventh Avenue

now in this time of whispering
roar of soul-conditioning machinery
let us once more raise & carry
the still, quiet voice
for the talking dead
before only they are left
to speak for us:

to all those naked anarchist policemen
who took it on their necks & destiny
to plunge the cross street's lottery
of velocity'd hearse rehearsing scream
in squeal of mindless cadillac taxidance
& pillar'd there in siren intersection
offer up the salt fear
on the open palm of stop—thus far
in gesture & the halting tongue
laying down the word, life & line —
no further — to all you reborn dead
i offer this report respectful memorandum:

some of us are still
equipped with ears to hear
but many tongues have been torn, mutated
by a traffic of twin chrome hooks —
hook of murdered love
 (bureaucracies of compassion
hook of loving murder
 (communities of violence)

and i ask

are the voices
in you dead
 (saying the NO
that is for us

our only YES
enough to give us back our tongues?

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, pp. 51–52.

To a Lady of Aquitaine

who died a virgin at the age of 17

place, please,
 a cobweb between my teeth
 (that my ancestors bones may knit
summon up a welshman
who knows when a rag
is red:
 who can brush up against my shoulder
 and carry away smoke,
but let us leave the genie
 in the orgone box
 (not ever
 to curry favor
“nor to murder a grammarian
without relieving him
 his swag
 of gold
 or to brush tulip fingers
 into the purse
 of the nowhere ape —
AND WHEN IT BREAKS,
 TO BREAK WITHOUT
 ANY HINT
 of apology
 of humble
for the search is not ended
the contact broken
 or unbroken
 (for to be wrong
 is merely sovereign

9.63

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, pp. 53–54.

Remembrance After a Toke of Michoacán Mota...

three skull moon. two o'clock.
three puff adders up out of soda straw.
ransom eyes in the claw-eyed clover,
gingham nipples, clutch of pebbles
& the hi-jawed lantern, wide, swinging
blue-tawed shirt & jack the frisco
 (sometimes a golden glow surrounds her
 while the parakeets ruffs stiffen
 on the rail, into the hot porch wind:
/ toll back, roll me back
 from boise, denver, plum nearly
 guadalajara, tallahassee
 ajijic, bay of flags, truckee
 syracuse & margarita
 duchess county, taw sweet canyon —
 junction & corners, south, west,
 juke box fuzz, dual manifolds
 kiss on the windshield, thru rain
 slush hail peat moss hail;
 (ten belts left in the fifth of bourbon..

 listen to them wipers
 put you down
 black tires singing macadam
 dew sparks pointing
 hi-beam burning holes
 in early spring.

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, p. 55.

The Breakers

For Judith · January 1965

unconditioned by all matter
thrown up in the bitter face of dying —
propositive, manifold, lurking, luring, always ready
and at the slightest hint of the animal weaving a
suggestive treachery of paradigms and smother nets,
the civilizing manifest role that god-like roman in
his bronze toga his wreath, his funeral smile, the sly
twitchings of a fox's shallow victory at the corners of
those interstices, patches, bits of snow, the fleece the
rabbit where the snow is sudden wet with a
thoroughness, a nozzle of the sun, eyes stunned
and ears turned inward: this be no charade, nay, no
dumb-show; it is for the chances, the unborn chance,
those that may pass through the funnel of obscurity
the dens and fennels of the wet green spring
and then we who have listened to the conch's song
and have felt the ribald talons of death behind the ear
who have been scared, wicked, afraid, in great dread
as though the druid could sustain such dissonance
or any monk tread there among the sign the spoor the print
of a goat's foot, the rhyming of a fool in proper tense
strung to the high additives of eternity, wasting, in
their places held, above a wonder, burning, there, where
there is no flame, there, to burn: and to be consumed

whole and unharmed
the living heart
a wonder —

and as a full-bloom trumpet over Spring's wounds, sadness, a

THUNDER!

here is a temple of struts, made flesh
any of small banners —

a sandblast hammering
a shimmering chimera
(silently the ape
picks grubs from log

and manifestly watches
as the lord of the swamp
moves through the slow ooze
a wide domain
where on one leg
the stork watches

small rain
witch withes
heat lightning
all the hair from the head

the blaze, the blaze
of no nude doll nor witched up body
touched to the core: no mammal, nay
no bird or other beast by such ruses
such denials of the true nature of
such temporary compromises, a choking
a stretching, a hanging in the wind
or from a pike, a grinning? No to all
such stale waste such piss-puddles under
these effigies, this holy flesh!

no man or woman stands excused in the light of this knowledge,
this grant made with love and with tears and the blood of hearts,
over and over and over!

now it is not a question of who, who listens, who speaks,
but of moving with the words over a sunstream and rock-
gnarled land

scape, where the scorn of babies
turns, turns the voices of academies
pope or nun turn inward on the child-
glow,

the light foot deftly planted
and across a rotted log, the turd
the immemorial turd, a continuance
in ferns, where no fool's halo
grows:

this is a question of commencement
no stale fixation on sex or
cormorants' voices, the thrust of angels
can rock, twist, bend, drill, stave

or riven
such gullies of eyes
the guile and the swallowing
of the great frog
taking a quaint draught
his respiration quivering
as he turns and turning dives
to the deepest underwater ledge
that breath may
last; the grace
may grow!

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, pp. 56–58. Also printed in *Illuminations*, no. 3 (1966).

One Day I Went to an Employment Office...

told them that i was a poet in search of gainful employment.
the woman who interviewed me was very sympathetic,

she looked & looked in her big book of officially designated
occupations, but she could find nothing closer to the
occupation of poet than literary writer,

which is numbered 0-0604. she put this name and number down
in a little orange book in which she also wrote my name
and an old number they gave me long long ago,

014-16-7676. she smiled often and went very carefully over
my employment activities for my entire lifetime. that is,
a whole previous life passed before our eyes;

& not only that, but she was kind enough to invite me to return
in a few days in order to have a talk with a man who, she said,
specialized in such interesting subjects

as mine, a poet, seeking employment. i would perhaps have gone
to talk to him but i did not remain in the city that long. from
the employment office i walked down main to third and then along
third past silver, lead, gold & copper. i ate lunch in the
good shepherd refuge. then i walked to the blood bank, which
was eight or nine blocks east,

across the railroad yards. they took my blood and gave me money.
i took the money and bought wine and bread and paper and ink
and walked out from the city till i came to a very big ditch
full of broken forms, cement forms, lizards, boulders,

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, p. 59.

Form! That Is the Focus...

sickness. Bright, bright under the dark star of its unknown and yet most evident and visible past, the dust of its relics, of its unimagined sensient textures of bone and wood fiber, ashes and feces, see, see, now, here, at this point we throw the dust into the incredible clarity of moon (repeating and repeating) and at the very last of it, the last breath of the last long sickness—it explodes in the brilliant black clarity of our midnight noon: its own incredible self, that which is WILLED AND FROM THE BEGINNING WAS— suddenly and for a completely sharp-etched moment made real, visible and complete for us as we watch — and we watch what we see, what we have in part made, what in part we have been made, with the great eye of the snake who lies coiled in the stomach, as well as the eye of the interpenetrated skull, the great eye of blindness which sees, it itself, the sphere, the wholeness of the image, beyond the transition, the flutter vibration and movement of the place where IT is not, up to the actual manifest vision of itself as COMPLETE FINISHED AND THEREFORE READY TO GO ON— again, again, we see, we are seen (it was never like this) we witness, we are completed in the One Thing, we can love, we can move again. Now it is not the same thing, now it is never the same thing, it has moved on, we. have been changed in its completions, we are back at our beginning, there where we have never been, the new and material pebble in our new hand, held in the flesh only see and understood, thus made real, in the light of this completion. (The actual light of the soul, made visible as SOURCE and as COMPLETED OBJECT: in that light which moves us TOWARD ourselves, into the OBJECT of soul, there where the BEING lies.

Cadence! Listen! Urgently I tell thee, listen!

Direction, all right direction,
call it a direction

loud vibrato, endwise
& sidewise, loosing
& shaking the body

of all its dry sticks
dirty & shrieking cold oi!
hot & darting up, licking

hot & dry fear places
lighting up the sudden whole
desert of desolate reno air

with the black petals squeezed
in the snow fist of the year
backing and yawing

filling its hole in the sky
with a new gaiety freshly stolen

the joy of cession made to grow
as a mustard-seed bearing
its act, the strenuous & actual
tree: made fruit for thine eye!

* * *

Now shout. Shout down into
the deep grotto from which the word bubbles up, white & covered with frost of newness, the breath of that empty strange place felt or explored for its numbness but its actual beauty lost in a maze of tubes sucking & beating the air on its wings giving supply a birth a nodule of illusion a sound like a dove without a trace of meaning, at the source, a mark, hovering directly over the point where the waters divide and the four elements pour forth renewing in consequent constant motion the pizzicatto tape pauses, hard fingers pouring out liquid rime cascade of song urgently it falls into the house of sound, its won or allotted place as against the fall, the agony of man the timing that will not answer accept rot fall away but it does not stop!

trick voices stage song
in jive echo chamber blue
brass drive hot dry

cherry apple plum the voice
wrapping in brass stogy
soft pine smokes whistles

lamb drives cat & branch
spill into music room
brass ladies dream war

spilling their antique hair
now into petals the lip
setting a sword
into the song
making, where, in the kin,
eating itself out, white powder
love potions or pomade, eaten
out of giant palm, the extension
of verticals out &
where it grows the crystalline
umbilical, no wart
no damage no tension
but the cracking under tension
snap of live twig under dead foot
the round of jive where the other
picture went, the rounding off
of the rock.

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, pp. 60–63. Also printed in *Illuminations*, no. 2 (1966).

No Name Easter Song

I rose up too early, that day,
 for you to have seen me, when i left
 (on my canvas cot i had been burned by stars
 & the dogs had barked around the world
 in a great circle of the night
 night of the cheering fish
 where we who had come to inhabit
 had broken the last precious frozen
 precipice..... fallen, &
 thus in bare feet
 i came upon the fishermen,
 with a million silver fish
 out of the Bahia de Banderas ---
what was that curse on me that you were
pronouncing —
 that the electricity had pranced
 up penis and into left eye
 washing out a finality
 & i would presently return
 as clean
 as dead
 as Job?
i denied all such allegations, went out on the road
into the jungle
met & disposed of six jaguars
but was finally found insane and eating raw meat
while attempting for the third time around
to get thru the same town: palms chattered & scolded
but i had too early, too eagerly
 included you on the list
 of lovers, of midwives
 of the plantagenet fist of the dawn
 would have exploded
 against your true face
 drawn back where the blush of dawn
 struggled, the fish
 bright blind brilliant

hissing millions
flopped at dawn
on pandanus
leaves...
i would leave off
to scream
but i am out of practice
short on patience;
on Death's next visit, pray
bring a priest who
is not such a bore
as the new year's boy —
no lasting new one
& no fellow-travelling nazi prig, either
por favor!

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, pp. 64–65. Also printed in *Out of Sight*, no. 3 (August 1966).

A Hundred Years and a Day

You who have come such a long way
coming to me from the East, hidden
wrapped and cowed in grey and
standing in shadow, nothing
is visible, only your pure nakedness,
the silver anonymity of your Presence
without any trace of shame revealing
the part of your soul made barren
in the light of that which is
evenly burning, now flickering
in the screams of this crow's wind
we are calm in the eye which is
turning, turning, you who were so
young when you came, just a moment ago,
now there passes to me a depth of age
so many millenia, lamina upon lamina
in a radiance, the dark radiance
of the world's rage, so softened ay
by you, She Who, Hidden, Shrouded, 2
is revealed in that Force i

clean calm carrying of within
the red winds of history, heads
fingers, warriors, babies, only
your gentle & slender, dark, shining
depths of knowing, of love/could carry
such harvests, the swirling wheat
rivers of martyrs, the small ones
starved, waiting: let us go on, into it!
Yesterday they came, all three
 & we missed something important
 not the matter of mystery, not
 the hard knot of the heart
 the panic, the random motions
 in the head, random something
 smashing head on into
 NOTHING, a void, a vital part
 just not there where

the meeting place we had supposed
between the past and...

something now, something here,
at this moment, as if
that glow of your own
ability to withstand that hate
released so suddenly into this
void, the ghastly & depraved
anger, exploding, of ghosts,
suddenly deprived, after one
lifetime, or several, just cheated, or
finding it all just as supposed but
one absolutely vital part
just not there, missing, inexplicably
gone —and a wild flapping
of Crane's wings, wild ghost traders
attempting to pass off used eyeballs
somebody else's faith in Jesus
birth of a baby, dead old poet
for a little of the real juice, honey—none
on hand!

You know this of course, you
were there, dressed differently
wearing a red knit dress
and a red silk veil
and a little jewelled dagger at

your waist. At first, you know,
I didn't recognize you, didn't
see the same woman in you;
but as you see, I've changed
as much, I don't recognize myself
today, i read those pages
of the last few days
with the weird incomprehension
having walked through strangers heads
and my own head

into a sudden empty
dead end, me, myself,
suddenly a used up fiction

with a heart wildly beating
when we asked and now nobody
knows where it is, if it is,
a simple confession of personal failure
or the abrupt discovery of a more
general condition. At least,
we're getting a little more direct
perhaps more honest. O course,
that isn't the half of it. Not

half of it, not
any real part of it when
the real thing begins to
come on to them, as to us, the
separation, where the signature
wavers, time suddenly has
no father, we are not looking past
our own eyeballs, the holes
are there, they
haven't moved, haven't altered,
the miracle is
constant, i cannot help it
it is there yes, now, but
it is not—imbued with that
special contradiction or
contribution—did we really,
no, that makes no sense now,
are we now, here, wherever here
is—for there is much to convince me
against my best judgment
that this here, our here
has no existence, or cannot compete
with the void, those chambers of empty
air, of birds screaming, the contusions
of ghosts and children—there we
are all slowly dissolving. Yet,
what else can we do but trust
in that meeting— put our love where
there is some actual touching/ of minds?

Victoria Mundi

For W. B. Yeats and Judith

"We lived in a trailer on a ranch. There was flat, flat, stubbly land, and mountains in the distance.

Across the ditch, dark red Santa Gertrudes cattle, bred for maximum beef and minimum investment." —JF

now i walk thru the bodies
of twenty creatures, men
& centaurs, the solid flesh
torn or altered
by the manifest velocities
of doom foredoomed, doom foreknown
& aimed into, as a goal, a
salvation!

 twenty lives
of the creatures

 quickened

 thru this passage
 thru desert and pasturage
 a whole life on foot
 wrapped in a mulberry-dyed robe
 reading the book of life
 out of dust motes
 the sun of our passage
 the song of man feet
 sandals of cowleather
 & unclean hoofs
 of the ungulates
 our beasts

these i could then boast as my lot
as tho the dust of life, my life
had been thrown up by a wind machine
simply a prop, the mere slipstream
at the edge of the terrace
and the god, whether in the machine,
the angry eye of the whirring lens
lighting up all, making all glow

in the savage light of its reborn
energy — penetrating the loomsong;
and now, after the twenty
fathers of creatures
and the dryads, in the crystalline magic
of the single centered eye
the gate of horn between
unicorn eyes
where, canted, equiposed, lies
the universe
of nails vinegar & wood
splinters, especially tho,
the crowd
blind street
animal
yakking yakking pretending
to be there, here, to be
even slightly aware
where here is
& there was —
a hero?
no.
simply say that the weather worsened
and that some of the onlookers became physically ill and
that others, still yakking in the old language of the tower
were heedlessly working thru the vomit...
you should bear in mind,
also, as the day grew on it became hot. The stench of the
crowd rose up to mix with its already overpowering stupidity;
and these smells mixed with THE BLOOD, which had mostly
dried nicely, even caked, but still, in spots, in the deeper
shadows of my WOUNDS, it was moist red and salt. the flies
came, emerald-green, and for a time i found distraction
in their terrible beauty, in the planting of white eggs \
of new life at the exact points where the torn lanced
flesh would fester
where, father, where
is my unicorn's eye?
— but why, even after they had eaten

wheat cakes & tarts bought out
of peddlars' sacks the talk concerning
market conditions the wise cracks
of the whores to the soldiers
— & even after the full moon rose
& began to eclipse the afternoon sun
over & over again
after the mere orgy of flesh
began and took all things into itself
until the thunder opened and the lightning
‘fell crackling loud breaking the branches
over the fucking multiple bodies in
joint, on the hillside
even after all that they persisted,
little knots of old men
elbowing their way thru the women
kids, foreign soldiery
fiercely agreeing not
to name that feast
for they had that day passed
thru the shadow of the rain forest
where eater eats always & only
the self, old million
mile eyes, sadly
passing as panther
eating boa constrictor
who is turning into vine
who is the bursting grape
in the hard bruised hand
of my self my strange
self, no more than eye
away from this drying out
this 999th selfsame
happenings: i eat.
hurry, for
my tongue is cracked
a wasp is dying
in the sun, on the floor;
hurry
confess & condemn

with cracked black & split
 nightbirds tongue
 the felon dismus &
 his equal; hurry
take flight
as your own mudballs
formed wing, eye, and soared i
over galilee af
 go & love them
 go & love the daughters
 the high-breasted
 girls who have waited
 their lives for you
 go, quickly & love
 my waiting daughters!
how could i deny her?
how could i ever
 deny her anything her
 heart wanted?
i went back to live where
 i had once been a
 prisoner, a visitor
 only just passing now
 living with the afternoon
 dry scorch in my
 shoulder tendons i
 passed naked into the twenty sh
virgin christmas bodies/ EMERGING

spent, not wasted
as one of us
who are one
 i return at the last
 point of the flickering eye
 a blue-black bird
 with a curved iridescent beak
 sitting on my sundown skin
 my mother
 the split throat of my dream

passing from among the other women
passing between the sentries
taking my dried, puckered flesh
away from the copper brash cuirasses
the argument about the birds
pecking away eyes

with no age

caught in them, or
the wolves, cracking
the fear, the tumult the
unrest the unrest growing, to
put it to rest

even with wolves

as she passes calmly between them
cracking faceless legion
taking my lifeless body
taking her own, her sacred
golden grasshopper

out of their midst
holding my deadcold dry corpse
back to her breast
where i had eaten
of her substance
she joined us
we joined as one.

then, my mother, for i
was dead, spoke to the faithful
concerning the disposal of my
remains

then for a night and a day
forever

i waited for the north wind
bearing its death
of wand & cauldron
the stiff may prick

father the oakseed;

of my

bound, fettered, in a five-
fold flower offered
to summer lightning
to the scorched
soot-stained white
midnight lips of
dancers, merry
fools, holy
malignant
eaters of
my heart, those
members of
my body
undivided
of that light!
each one

but to continue
in an age of sacrifice
in a period of superficial flagellation
the breaks in the skin, wounds and marks
as the beast fights off its boredom
the lassitude of its envy, and much worse
the deep sickness
up from the stale lungs
into the stale morning air
the lovers trapped in a valley
of slaughter, the sounds of the
feast with no name
which does not end
with the coming of the dawn

it is no hurried nativity
— a morning of birth pangs

and visitors from far places
coming after the long midnight
the labor of coming out, under
star light to a straw basket
and the chanting of the camelboys
beyond the edge of the light
and at the borders of the dawn's

garden coming in the rage
of the moon, new red crescent
 rage & the agony, flesh & spirit
 sung, scratched & roared
 out of the hairy grey wolves
 throat!

 i remember, while i was
present, everyone was very calm
even the words, spoken or unspoken,
seemed a part of that holy silence
as if the Child Himself had opened
a hole in the Word
filling the room with it

 so that, later, in the
sea the west desert
 where the sun

 smelts bronze
there is no water
but there is a secret
a sacred stolen moment
a garment, sanctified
gathered to the flesh being
worn around the heart
or, flung to the dirt
making a night's haven
under clouds

 the world star
 under the stars in clouds
 we as the thief
 at our right hand
weave into the passage
of light currents, vehicles,
dust clouds:

 it is dry here
 it is dead here
 where there is no water
 flesh dries, shrinks,
 as leather

from clinging to
the light
 the dark
from holding fast
 into the main
 where new birth
 is only
 natural
 miracle...

but the spasms of birth
 subside
 as the new-born suckles
 the comet
 river of ether
 light launched

without ending or beginning
 holding, holding
 together
 hands linked
 hearts linked
 lovers connected
 eyes coupled
 the ten thousand things, man souls
 beyond number
holding together
 performing again in the
 eternal eye of love
 the constant
 never recurrent
 miracle of
 all
 one
 undivided
 thing!

Publication. Victoria Mundi. New York: The Smith, 1973, pp. 70–80. Also printed in *Litmus*, no. 11 (1972).

OUTRIDER FOR THE LADY

Rainbow Resin, 1974

Noumena

I will give you a book to lay down the law, I will give you
a book of honey and roses, and I will spill out the brilliant and
the transparent stones for the diadem in your lap, I will organize
the forces of the dark past the turn, bending them till they turn
into the light. I am he who has polished the cow's hoof in the
pitch black of the night until there is no shine left, only the
eeeyrie and unremembered exactitude of that green-and-yellow glow,
I do not need to ask: you follow in my footsteps, I feel your
holy aura in the blindness of my sight, and the fur is not measured
by the departing iridescence of the dying bull salmon's scales, For
I have been spitted, I died upon the rock beside the running water,
I speak to you now as I am and as I have always been,

Publication. Outrider for the Lady. Sacramento: Rainbow Resin, 1974, unpaginated.

Invocare

I worship the lady
queen of heaven,
goddess of my given hand,
she whose face, when i
was under ether, formed
(once more) out of glowing
spheres in the limitless velvet
depths of the luminescent
dark;

IO GENETRIX!

for she has moulded me
even as i have resisted,
her kiss (before the asters)
fixed in me an everlasting heroin,
her wild, bounteous profusion,
her virgin savagery, a fertility
of innocence, filled me with
wild dizzying fumes of honey

(she whose love is delight
more real than life or death,
whose wisdom is the heart's
actuality, whose sex is an
enchanted wilderness more real
than the tainted algebra of cities,

she who came to me
as a young girl
& conducted me to the
kingdom of sorrow &
before the empress of death;

she who rewound the clock
of my life, filled me with
fearsome joy, gave to me-
the violent & terrible
vision of the rocks
& who took me thru
the cleft, 2-handed &

ironic “salvations” of
vertigo & disgust

she, as erda, skinny old
bag in a deer-skin
apron & halter, squatting
before me on the
damp cellar dirt, there
i loved her and felt
no loathing for the
centipedes or the earthworms;

she as the enormous
fin of the embodied
sea, flailing the room
with the wrathes, the
incandescent wreath
of her body—those
joys of her overpowering
conscience against all
the little sheet metal
pricks her divine figure
her moon—

she whose invisible knife
slipped the pearl-seed
of delta into my body,
whose fingers penetrated
my mind to prepare
for those force-thrusts
to come which would have
killed me

she who showed me how to
steal the galactic god-
power—and who opened
the tiny passage to the
back of my skull, pit
of my brain, to exact
& restore the source,
the god-power, beyond
pluto,

she who came in burlap rags
in the night-time, into a
deep cellar, & gave to me
the deeper secrets of
the body, flesh & spirit
singing—

I ask of her the blessings of
understanding & of dope,
the strength, the clear force
of vision to fill out my role
& my work,

MY WORDS I RE-DEDICATED TO THEE

to my acts lend they grace
& they sense of purpose,

whether i now write in
prose or verse, i continue
to write under thy blessing
& thru thy grace.

peace & joy, blessed lady.

Publication. Outrider for the Lady. Sacramento: Rainbow Resin, 1974, unpaginated.

Monad

number

you came next day to the place of water.—
you tried to count the ants but they
 were without number,
leaves floated by on the water and
 for a time you counted them
 but soon you reached a
 number that was countless
 & the leaves too were without

if you could you would remember
 the point or place when
 the value was cynical
 the loan of sarcasm was
 welcome; nor is there any
 passage thru into the dark
 places of its number,
your birds wheel and fly away
 over my head to the ocean;
 they have lost count of
 themselves; one of them leads
 but no one knows which one,

ii

you kill me,
I kill you,
 words without number breaks
and at the points or planes of
fracture multiply.
 to be exact about it, we kill
each other,

iii

for whom do we suffer
such killing? is there any.
honor attached to the word in
the desert? is there mercy of

honey? are we driven out
of the breath that lingers by
blackthorn by beetle by the
death of the hive, that confound -
commandment?

you stink, do you
stink from holiness, or is
it a stench of death or the
motion of breath, the rotten
fingers making motion of ink?

iv

it is a time of great
power, of manifestation of
the power of the great & the
small, it goes beyond speech,
it passes onwards past a place
of speechlessness,

v

in the nighttime a red
stone wraps inward around
itself slowly. who do i play
with? where do I go, slowly?

only one of the men
is blind, only one of
the pigeons was brown,
why are you going away
from me? is 90 degrees

straight up?

my son called on the
telephone, will I go back
to the telephone?

How far is an illusion?
I bend over and weep for
the end of old horrors,
a cruel silliness assails
us, it is a time to be
ending, to bending around

the corner,
 after lover I love you
we fell out of breath
& felt all the stones glaring
up at us, out of the sky,
 Joy is a tool in a
time of the rabid the many,

vi

to be nothing,

(as in a poem, a
pushcart to push thru
the narrows without
losing hub nickel wheel
ivory wish basic
tit smile

 o where is there
room for this luggage?
 o how may we
live in this garbage?
 is motion?

Publication. Outrider for the Lady. Sacramento: Rainbow Resin, 1974, unpaginated.

Honk—Honk

Geese Song

No Invention,
A Discovery
of Earrings?

Not necessarily
A Rejected suitor
A Mute testament
3 stepping stones

the song of the flute?

yes, si, bueno,
come as you are,
can you manage
PAJAMAS?

Publication. Outrider for the Lady. Sacramento: Rainbow Resin, 1974, unpaginated.

Untitled (“daleth i am trying to write”)

daleth i am trying to write
and you bring me water -
i know the seven oracles the seed and the water.
of Orpheus, I have sojourned in the
Constellation named Nogzuma. -I am not of
full age but I have swum the Hellespont,
been a marsh full of twins, I have been T have
an egg upon a branch, I have been a raisin
held in the green and yellow fire, I have
been a flame upon a bramble bush, I have
met the Surveyor of the Clergy, I have not
wasted my time spent under hedgerows, but
i have known The Serpent & the Crown,
been-two eyes in a model within a maze, I I have
have seen at a distance the Tree Surgeon
and I have eaten the eggs at the bottom of
the pool to the value of half of the clutch,
lived within the Mother of Men and I have known IT have
the Veil of WNon-Existence, JI have subsisted on
a diet of Ether for three days and two nights,
I have often been visited by Distaff, she who
holds the Vine lightly, she who carries the
Scissors snipping tightly, She -who squeezes
the Grape gently, the others of these are mists
I have seen the curds rise and form gently,
been the death that preceded the Birth. I have I have
been the Ass munching hay the breadth of the hands
away, the Hands taken as One, from the vile breath
of the Saviour the foul ordure of the dung heap/POLYHYMNIA!

Publication. Outrider for the Lady. Sacramento: Rainbow Resin, 1974, unpaginated.

Untitled (“on the third morning”)

on the third morning
4 was thrown violently
from my horse
who had in turn shied
at a chipmunk a serpent
or a aster,

when i woke it was the
same day, I had been stripped
of my clothes & possessions
& left by the road
in my wicker basket
for strangers charity,

well could i forget them, who
had left me here, well could.
i wait them, those who
ARE COME; no, do not interrupt—
procede as you are going
but hearing it new
new in harpsichord, straining
sky, full of sac jet
dissonances!

it is all a lie, i decided
your mathematics sex money
calendar eguipment religion
mercy goodness charity
rose arbor fish chanteh
dutch doors home smells
oysters and artichokes
weevils weasels and nuns
silk dreams, the sieve of
hearts the tassels black
of the blood red sun
and the gossip of the moon
saint john saint joan
saint michael all a play
of the old lie: heart-visa-nerve,

think? what is there left to

think about? the extra hands
packed away, at the back of some
closet? of how about
fancy minds forever private
shut away in the wallpaper
a shout from the street

a whistle
or the rumble
of robber, wheels silk
the magic sead where
we could always
once,
find ourselves
is stript to barren
unseen images
leer & usurp
the comedy, the lace
popcorn, even

heroin needles
the extremely deft
placement
of a dream

while we made it all up
out of drunken steam whistles
& rivers without ending
where a single share of delusion
soars preposterous inhabited
fiction dive commonwealth -
the wave

to go on
is the
will
of it
top turned
making it blench the -
opsprey
turvy

Way.
again and again we come up against
strange faces in an age
quit of itself unrecognized
soul fled to hide her fame
amid a could of stars—

but, envy, do not call
her name;
certain broths
clarify in
time—others
jell

have fear in
poots, only
that do not know
hoopsnakes
or the water dance

shyness of pomp
as tho the cool
slayer or the red
camel could
buy the bomb back

we could not wait
for ratpacks
gifts of hatpins
& other legacy
vanishing

combs, rabbits on stilts
if agreement were a door
where what we were
looking for we looked
behind the spiral castle
saw the glass jaw locked
heard the scream of the loon
we had waited 3 days for,

Publication. Outrider for the Lady. Sacramento: Rainbow Resin, 1974, unpaginated.

Untitled (“i am”)

i am

unicorn horn
secret shelf in a magic closet
birth & death of the sun
timber wolf
song of the dance before music was born

i have stood in

sand & rocks at the verge of oceans
passed thru clouds and underneath deserts
lived in tunnels both of daylight
& of hard, glistening rock

i work from the stage of the front piece

i have often been struck blind & come to see the blue light
i have put two times in ra-huma
i am blended with furnace
my knee-bolt is wagered

now i am damaged

am angered
am undergoing another preparation
I AM URUS

a veritable singing head
to translate theme
to carry out scene & story
in light & night of the new
GOLIAD)*** And To Earth
Hake It Manifest

As a Part of Thy Glory
BEFORE. THE END & AFTER THE

BEGINNING

-i have lit the green candle
i rest secure in thy love
i have eaten the salt of the all-one
‘who but i can link to earth to heaven
in the lucent beams of celebration
at the crux of the new birth
at the heart of its inception’
in the storm of its mortal & immortal longing

who but i can manifest
 (under thy love & thy grace
 i sing
 make new,

Publication. Outrider for the Lady. Sacramento: Rainbow Resin, 1974, unpaginated.

Magpie, 1964

in the temples and groves
of those newly born
out of old corpses

a magpie is sitting
she scolds & scorns
her ironies are gentle
but sharp/ as the sweat of goats;

i will eat the part,
magpie said,
the part you left behind
& you will look foolish, naked
or simply invisible
without that which
is bears brother
honey for the children
a taste for wine
of elderberries
sprawling wild
across the neighbor's porch & on
into the sea.

ii

salvage what?
a complete file of Dick Tracy
comic books, dated
1936?
petrified forests, snow drums
song & poem, drum & flautist
(some new years offering to lips
old stones the grin of ivy
skull brimming with
syrup of the dead —
what feast is this?
("the way you do it, is
you do it and you don't do it
who cares if a page is turned
— yet you do
certainly, your wish

to go on, the
 school is open
 children are playing
on tar,
 lines marking out
basketball courts, ghosts
 of hopscotch
 gapes & gaps
in those funny fences,
the usher floats down the aisle
of winter waves
 passing his velvet sack
his pestilence
 into awaiting pews
 under brite green & yellow
umbrella, sand
 & shadows,
voices that crack
 twisting themselves
 to conform
 to madness
dull places
 no exercise
 in soul city,
except the stubborn and unmending dark
 that wordless, companionate life
 no thought, hardly any trees:
 i reach out for your hand
 grasp it
 you make the big step
 up to the pier:
is there any point
 to their humor
 except as shield
 against the dead
out of the body,

the maggot in the beating heart?

april 1964

Publication. Outrider for the Lady. Sacramento: Rainbow Resin, 1974, unpaginated. Also printed in Croupier (1966).

I Am Not Able's

I am not Able's
son, Nor am I
Cain's child, I am
no offspring of Seth,
I did not grow out
of the earth, nor
am I
your orphan,
(I am lost
in your love,

Publication. Outrider for the Lady. Sacramento: Rainbow Resin, 1974, unpaginated.

Comic Valentines

starting & stopping,
in a clear sky, a small fleecy
cloud forms, no bigger than a
clown's hat, see if you can put
it on, Can you wear the rain for
a scowl? is anything left when
you have wasted your anger?
who causes, what precipitates,
why waste your life? -is it all
colored poisonous bile and
purplish bulge? have you no
leer, no abdomen full of
Sloshing fluids, no vital
hose connexions, no garden
flux, no stamina for roses?
do you suppose there isn't
any place to live? is death
so commonplace a place
that any old prayer rugs
go there? why all these ice
cream cones, all of a sudden?
who lives to jeer at delivery
wagons or winds a little toy
to pop the world, string hearts?

i struggle toward the need,
clio, yeah,
the muse of history.
& terpsichore,
earthly dancer
we are not done yet
there remains some dirty work
at a cross roads
after midnight
under the light of
the full moon,
 & yes, there is also
a lantern, there are

spades, & a chain
and a group of shrouds
in the distance,
chanting:
 they are the children
 who know the
 true boundaries
 of this world,
where are the clowns
 & their weapons?
 the bare tits of the goddess?
where are the snakes
 & the electric eels?
 (I could tell you a dozen stories
 better than this one
who is so pig-headed a goddess
so pinheaded a divine manifestation
so wild & plum loco

he, she, it, they
we cannot see the way?

the boundary
 is not hiroshima—nagasaki
 is not any immaculate
 concept of simultaneity
 is no conflict of rational
 & cardinal
no sin may be said to assert
 itself:
 upon history, the ineluctible
 pattern & progress
 that out of this muck
 the pageant comes on,

and the eye no longer
shy away from the actual
as it happens!

I AM NO VICTIM
& i need no victims

I MAY AT TIMES APPEAR
BESIDE MYSELF
AS A POOR BESET WOMAN

surrounded by whirling leaves
ringing doorbells

clatter, crush
loads & tatters of old frenzies
living off my children
under the blame of my
baneful entropy

but i find there is rarely
a decision to be made;
since nobody cares, explores,
delineates, marks out

(except in rare instances
and then as if by accident

(& here i hear
the voice in the valley
it is no use
here, the dance
can

open, open outward!

o wonderful are her ways
her flesh radiant
her eyes alive
with the action
coolly inciting it
daytime & nighttime

in the pearl nightgown
jibing jeering & inciting
to movement
to the simple
intelligent linkages
open, open to almost any
who have left the
monkey cages
of old griefs
outdated futile risks

& canopic jars
(o dare we disturb the
 contents?
 —of Huxleys & Kennedys
 —Hazlitts, Wat Tylers
their bloody nails
assassins hats
the veils of their
 widowhoods
when all that trash
 not flung aside
 not pointed up
 with toothpaste smile
 not jerked & turned
 on its own tendons
finds the immense, simple
 & tender charity
the easy winnings
 the ripe fruit waiting
that which is known
 in the meetings
 if one is indeed present
and we are not
 yet here?
hold,
 listen,
 read it to voices
again & again
point to, underscore
 the obvious
 the given
 the obsessive
 unvoiced
o mothers of necessity
o veiled illusionary
 mumblers of coins
 rosary fingers

telephone dialers

fingers that twitch
the limp prick
the imp sleeping
the precise imprecation

and then in pique
throws a full
year's warts—
flying pan
vengeance

into the pain of
footsteps that falter
in no meaning
where it comes from
the meeting

& one can say only
it is there
i did not make it
it made me.

to make it
you divide
to re-enter
you hold hands
& you come
naked
in play!
this is a holy place
where nothing is despised
except honor
the incest
as window-dressing
the rage
as carefully counted
lunch money
the deposits
a charade
in a zoo

full of monkeys!
this is a place of distances
of arrivals & departures
 no menopause of spirit
 no shrinkage of cunt
 brite moonbeams
 & fool's ivy;
see! with my bare hands
 the wall stretches
 & a procession enters!
my father & mother, living
& dead, flow backwards thru
my left & right hands
 I MADE THEM
 & the hawk
 pursues the male flyers
 in a mad curve;
most blessings are abstract
but you show the way
in the light of your flesh
in the great gasp of your
light into none-self
 the all-body
 there is none!
we are simple
benign extrusions
thirsting for evil
straining to encompass
that which is already
within!
 enuf to pause
 retract but not divide

*

Publication. Outrider for the Lady. Sacramento: Rainbow Resin, 1974, unpaginated.

Urgent Entry

ALL IS NOT LOST
DEATH COMES & PASSES
THE CHANGE IS AS REAL
AS PUBERTY
OR DIVORCE

(our blind eyes
like gentle mice
o noah
split from our lords house
make slow music
at the death by water
(by schmaltz vinegar envy
the raw rice of scorn

but in peace she lives
and her men know her peace
shaking with the deep laugh

beyond veil of terror, psycho gym;
students of doom's curvature

GLASS RIVERS OF SUNDAY
the secret prolonged dial

of terror
midnight vine
of poison
stabs out of tailored
eyes in daylite;

into the cauldron
magic circle
(banshee & magpie

cometh the glow

her blood aura
transforming
old terror
in the strings
bassoons
& horns,
ape kin

ivory winged
sports

and, turning a page
to tense clock of violin
the light falls,
CHRIST!
let the light fall
where it may,
if only
to heal
wounds forgotten
those blaring doves
commanding trumpets where
NADA RAINS BLEAK ASH
CONDOM SILK SIREYE MIRTH
VIRUS OF EVERYDAY
O SECRET BLOOD LORDS
OUR LADY'S BEST TAFFETA
SUBWAY OOZE IN DAMP ELECTRIC

GREENS

(the norske, the dancing greek,
ape in motley
in a helter-skelter valley.
where the maypole,
there the dancers
make her first spring circle
bare feet pounding &
forming
—as even under the eye
of all
lust, law
old bones
the great drive
of IMAGE
o savage rampaging river
o blessed cock
wild stems radiant
eye of womb
fountain of endless

seizing & making
making new
making out of in-turnings
and blaring
with the madness of
ox in panic, those eyes
she who takes flight
the dive,
frozen black
eggshells in back
of eyes,
a rehearsal
stance
the actor, grim, in high joy
purposive, treading
on the light foot
going forth
by touch
into by touch
child screams
where soft particles of night,
wounds, wounds,
web of nightshine
Desecrated
Torn
by the
terrible
shrieks
of the ocean
your love
tears, sirens
your wails
against this joy
this stone unpity
of—

screeches

II

out of whirl
old wail of zeus dead
living with dead,
one of a number
the song of thunder
may rain, speckling
soft soil, moving
earth ironies between
the genuine sun
sundering of image
rainbow master
trout & cod, the sacred
body of
the natural
when chain saws snarl in winter wood, in may

snow

“is the world
a place?”

S Z P

out of the construction to be seen
in that alley between the
junkshop & the public library
running from the temple to the palace
between the way of gorgon and the way

of miles

beset by an enormity, a ghost'
anonymous
not above

wisdom or despair

holding to the

deep heart

where the gathering

laugh

passes those gaps of

fate, past

consequence, modes,

roles

sees out of

a mysterious presence
place of the actual pulse
 where the raiment of flax is stored
 the dried & waiting beans of their
 bodies, soul matrices
 lay waiting for distribution
 among our people.

such are the lessons of loneliness
 thus the cat looks up wistfully at Zoo Giraffe.
 and a winged creature chills & excites a dormant sentry.
 these are the offerings of that mind
 which leadeth itself
 leadeth into itself
 eroding with light

jumbles & codewords
pastiche & triptych
Horny fingers
custard spilled & frozen in the park,
 the black dirt
 stained
a violet bat
 illustrating evolution
 (as tho obscene
 because inhuman
 his chandelles
 under moth-strewn streetlight
 he's sudden remembrances
 twisting the outer dark,
 his shell;
 his sudden shy mewling;

.I

it never ends,
 the form of a man,
that shape in which
 by which
he lives,

this is his natural
death sentence,

Publication. Outrider for the Lady. Sacramento: Rainbow Resin, 1974, unpaginated.

Untitled (“Now, in the darkness”)

Now, in the darkness
between the two caves
of our black days—
the godflower is turned on:
if you have the blind eye
that opens
on the shutter of the night
now it opens
on the shadow
in that incredible garden
hermes, lincoln, the
laughing crocodile
walking blind, striving
into the blind sun
celebrating that single
grace & privilege
of earth flesh
rising once more
on the shimmering wave
of no-place, mist,
that apart
from memory,
you-who-i-am-not
rising but not rising
that-which-is-left
when the watcher
is nobody.

NOW
NO END
NOW
NO BEGINNING;
SHORT SLEEP,
NO TELLING,

Publication. Outrider for the Lady. Sacramento: Rainbow Resin, 1974, unpaginated.

Untitled (“what is the image for”)

what is the image for
your many names?
 out of the hot coal hole
 a spark wrapped tight
 into itself, closing
 as a fist closes
in the wall of speech
a flower speaks
 the room coils in on
 self, annwyn, prue:
 waking the cat on my lap
 sleeps, always alert to
the opening of the door
where your eyes
 reach beyond the sky
 teeth tear at vein
 the blue scarf bleeds
 blindness of the thunder
& in the place of summer -
that unseen purse
 bloated bung starter eyes
 & the thunder trumpet
 of the smoking serpents' eggs
 hold to that music, 3-tined fish spear!

 you come back
 clawing the nose
 with a screech/ from its old place

Publication. Outrider for the Lady. Sacramento: Rainbow Resin, 1974, unpaginated.

The Many-Splendored Fontic-Coded Non-Birthday Check

the true magician

advances in

practice of craft

as he learns

the wisdom of

all fools!

that

there is no

“true magician”

no “lady who loves”

no “practice of craft”

there is black thread

in a black maze

& some times

HANDS touching

one year, when

the sun had swung

once more into his

own sign, the royal

sign, leo, the sign

of the king of beasts

& of course also

the natal sign of

the young empress

of the pacific

ocean sea, the

isles within and

the shores beyond,

there was more than

the usual mumbling

and jumbling...

... the royal astrologists,

geomancers & prestidigitarians

were all quite busy because

... there were more than

the usual perturbations
of the spheres, it was
... vaguely like dragging
an old hag thru a small
mouse hole, i mean
... there were squeals
& screams, especially
from the blind pigs, the
blunt porpoise, & the
short circuit eel, &
... even the pilot
 fish began to feel
 what it would happen
 ... to feel like when
 or if, it really &
 truly began
 to happen
 ... & indeed, in the
earth sign and in
the terrible star
shine and also in
the murky cast
of moon thru dark-
est midnight scud
cloud overhang,
certain events did
take place, even
in that last meeting
place, the dim
moon-blenched, moon-
obscured sheep
mind, earth mind,
flock mind & heart
mind, part of the
city burned and other
bad things happened.
I went to see my friend,
... the eternal ethnic
indian boy, the WISE
AND NOBLE SAVAGE

OF THE EPOCH.

he was in the
process of washing
his hands when I
appeared at the
horn gate, THE
IMAGE OF GRAPPLING

which marked the

entrance to his
noble & airy
abode, he looked
me over carefully and
noted that I had
also washed—my pants,
my shirt, my face:

MAN IS BORN

(he said,

one time by fire
two times by water
each time in air
making tree man-births,
each time seen
as a death
a banishment
a parting
to the practical sense
& the 5 small senses
of the earth-bound & bourne,
those were the words of
the wise & noble savage
of the epoch, the eternal
ethnic indian boy, after
uttering them he smiled,
almost, and went back
to washing his hands,
when he had completed
the ablution, we sat
together for a long

time & a short time
smoking a joint, sharing
a sleep-cap, tasting
the wine of the hosts,
 then I said, but tell me,
tell us, what of the earth-
begot: what can I say
to the man with the
hoe, when I see
him next?

 “you, me, no me too, but
 we us, free space
 between hot/dry-wet/cold
then I was again alone,
I was afraid, the indian
boy of the epoch had left
me, taking his abode & his
small-holding of sheep,
his guts of braves dead
or yet sleeping as well as
his clear yellow, light-
struck eyes, after that
I have not seen him
tho I have heard his
name on the lips of
others—the heavenly
dancers who bore shears
of light, she who was
angered that we had
tasted host’s wine,

 the earthly dancer who
 married in dark star-
 shine on a ledge of
 mortar over the pacific
 sea’s rock wall her
 poet/who had shown her
 in words, “the bliss,
 ... as actual/
 as stone,”

& she too missed the
ethnic indian boy,
for tho she was,
there & then, the lady
of the thread
the boy had need to return
to his own mother
she whose flesh had
wrought his first flesh
for that was the music
of looms, of harps
& of the long night
full of cunning
steps taken in the
 dark of purpose, or
the sudden seeing
 of a great light;
(thus, in fear, in trembling
we, old spirits, give way
to new passages, directed by
... new light,
 yes, that much is—
obvious, certainly, there
are sighs & signs,
centurion-highs, of
new completions &
oblivions untenanted
tho not untended
thru the few fingers
of a man's own, remembered
life-line, yes;
 but now (didn't we
know it? the fear
at the cusp
 finds, in air
a clear, a light balance
with Scorpio dressed
again in fire-feathers,
rising, rising with the
wind, wind of fresh

driving the locust forth
washing light clean...
... SO IT HAD TO END

GROPING DARK

SWITCH; DELIVERY

FIST; LAST &

FIRST WORDS—

WHERE

P
O
I
N
T
I
N
G
T
H
E

HOW

STARS

TAKE PLACE

Publication. Outrider for the Lady. Sacramento: Rainbow Resin, 1974, unpaginated.

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TEXTUAL NOTE

Witnesses, lineation, and visual form

The reading text was generated from 300-dpi page images with line-coordinate data and then proofed against the scans. Victoria Mundi uses the complete eighty-page single-page copy; Outrider for the Lady uses the thirty-four-page Rainbow Resin scan. The older twelve-page Foster selection in the archive is not an authority.

Every poem begins on a new page. Source indents are proportionally reduced to the Green text block. A line too wide for six-by-nine inches wraps to the base verse margin; the continuation is a typographic accommodation and not a new authorial line. No automatic hanging indent is imposed. Stanza spaces and numbered divisions follow the witnesses.

The title-or-first-line list in Outrider distinguishes named poems from untitled notebook texts. Incipits are therefore presented as editorial titles in quotation marks while the full first line remains in the poem. Asterisks in the source say that several notebook poems were spaced by Charles Potts; this edition preserves the resulting arrangement without repeating the asterisks as unexplained decorations.

“The Many-Splendored Fontic-Coded Non-Birthday Check” is fully reset. Its vertical title becomes the page title, while its scattered words, stepped clauses, capitals, and final concrete movement are represented with live type and scaled indents. No source image substitutes for the text. Where a diagonal arrangement cannot be reproduced literally at this size, reading order follows the visible word sequence.

Clear recognition failures have been corrected without burdening the poems: “aman ofa” to “a man or a,” “sezpents” to “serpents,” “tembles” to “temples,” “docrselis” to “doorbells,” and similar damage. Visible authorial spellings and usages—including “thru,” “brite,” “tho,” “enuf,” lowercase names, slashes, ampersands, unclosed parentheses, and abrupt capitals—remain. The source’s “GOLIAD” and “ra-huma” are retained because correction would be conjectural.

The publication note after each work follows the Green volume’s apparatus pattern and identifies the book witness and known periodical appearances. The reading text throughout was checked against the page images. The prose fiction “The Troubled Makers” is excluded from the poetry corpus but documented in the biography and bibliography. Future revision should add and collate Dial Artemis, Peyote Toad, “Genesis,” the Semina, Illuminations, Out of Sight, Croupier, Black Ace, and Litmus witnesses; transcribe USC tape 158; and continue seeking the two recordings reported by

Potts.

COLOPHON

Production record

Designed and edited in Los Angeles in 2026 for Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry. Six by nine inches; mirrored 66/48-point margins; EB Garamond; cream page field; live-text Green cover system.

The cover reuses the project's existing full-color collage, removing the inherited title block and recentering the tiger, zebra, records, and typewriters in the standard Green image panel. The archival section is deliberately limited to four images.

Source scans, OCR geometry, proofed corpus data, downloaded research pages, archive images, cover art, fonts, build code, source manifest, change log, and QA renders are preserved in the production folder. No new research asset has been discarded.