

The Overwhelmed Symphonies

by Francis Raven

The Overwhelmed Symphonies

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OVERWHELMED SYMPHONY #1

Sprout from your belly a hand
And in the palm believe there to be a woman,
As if she came from the immortal lotus petals of your fingers;
Appearing as your palm is open to the sun,
Disappearing as your fist clenches for battle.
The world is formulated by her open eye,
Gone in her slumber.
The advance wave emitting from mind to object,
Invoking its existence,
Such that light may be reflected
Off its surface, back to pupil.

I approach that woman in two ways: from in front of her body,
Where I see the honesty in the jewels on her breast
And from behind, where the world and its creation are hidden.

My approach towards her eyes and mouth
And its directness of speech, is the positive way,
Where I view her all-encompassing vitality;
Enveloping the high and the low like an infinity of love;
Without a sound, like a pillow wrapped around a bell.

My approach from behind,
(My sly feet sneaking towards her,
With the revelation that she may never be known)
Is the negative way;
Where the idea,
Laying slightly behind each thing,
Slumbers.

The spectrum of light envelops red and violet.
Therefore, we cannot characterize the light of day with
Either red or violet. We merely say that it is light, more light!!
So too, with the woman in the hand.
She is comprehensive; we say nothing.

The violets in the field taste peppery.
My intuition is round, I sit at the center of that circle.
The hidden selves of shamans dance around me.
In the shadows, our doppelgangers act out our most reasonable wishes
And our abundant absurd fantasies.
This is my terrible fate as a sound. The silence portrays
Me in a movie, but not very well; I like to choose, at every instant,
The subtlety of sounds which I am capable of.

I choose the violin, fiery wash.
I choose the rain and I am the rain.
We gain the power of that which we invoke in speech.
Metaphors carry one bucket of water to the next; the secret pump.

Speak with me the names of grasses and of architectures.
Let us transform their power in our lungs.
Let the breath of our existence-our aura-be one of praise,
For we have no power or right to negate.

I may only yelp "YES" on the world.
That is my role in this game, proposed like a play on a stage of green and gray.
I argue "YES" to dragons and fairies alike,
I dig deep miles into their rational and ridiculous selves.

For in a turn of events or a mad poetic leap
All of our existences are one
In the eye of that woman who sprouts like spring,
From the gift-giving hand which rises from your belly.

My affirmation is the direct placement of home into each self.
Home is our first world,
Our first attempt to manipulate objects.
The copper bowl full of roses and oriental rugs.

The house is our sanctuary, not for God, but for life.
We say "YES" to God in a church.
We say "YES" to life in our home.

The world is transformed into a home through simple affirmation;
Fighting absurdity in life by giving ourselves to a larger vision
As we feel for our first home in peace and reverie.

The elm tree in back where the squirrels
Chattered in the sacrifice and bliss of building
As you sat on a limb for your first awkward kiss
Which made the beatitude of today.

Home is the eye of the woman in the petals of your fingers,
Where you enter your repetitious static personality.
Sit in this place with me and pray that the butterflies will speak between us.

In this spot between movement and stillness
Let us merge with the friend in the annihilation of joining.
The rain destroys us first before we may be created by her.

In this spot, let us meditate the clocks of our breath
Into the ether of non-ado where the universe is accomplished,

But never strived for against nature.

Well then, I must know my nature. Is it my nature before
Or after the life I have lived? I travel back to the preconscious shapes
So prevalent in a church and the ones perfected in nature.
I travel back to that tingle of flesh in a cathedral,
To the shapes of the arabs; rhythmic geometry of music continuing.
Follow me into the pneuma (wind and spirit) of these shapes.
Red triangle and the tear it brings. Luminous egg.
Universal cross of the body. Circle of seasons.
The four paths towards God-

The path of knowledge in the deep north-

Listen for the fountain within, your spit is a part of that water.
Reflect upon that water with words' distinguishing duties.
Recognize the falsity of these parts; there is only one water.
Personality is the mask that the face has created for the water within to wear.
The mask of youth is ephemeral. The mask of old age,
As we write our final poem, is eternal -
We add and subtract ephemeral masks,
Paring down to the substrate. Do not search for that mask too soon.
It needs the ability to exist in churches and in drunkenness.

The path of love in the Mediterranean south-

Annihilation of self in the action of love;
Sleeplessness and quarrel in awkward steps between stages.
To be the sweetness of sugar and the taster of it.
My head is chopped off like Gnesha,
Not by my lover, but by the love between us.
I was disintegrated in birth.
Now, the shadow of my woolen robe
Is integrated with my friend.
I seek God in the answer we pluck from dancing.

The path of work in the industrial east-

In action, self is lost to act.
The purpose of work is movement.
Too much existence is spent to possess thought.
The purpose of meditation is meditation.
The meaning of these acts is within their action.
Understand the sweaty feeling of being physically debilitated,
Asking for stillness.

The path of psychological experiment in the psychedelic west-

Digging deep in the dirty earth of essence.
Penetrating through the loam,
Through the layered ambivalences of heart
Into the universal imprint of God upon man

And its unique configuration upon each individual.
Digging for a mystical conclusion whose ends logic cannot reach.
Digging to be touched by that hidden spirit within,
Who teaches the path of the outer angel flying into the inner,
As outer light and inner light meet within the eye.

I am the dimensionless point-event
Searching for that woman
Who flourishes from your naval.
I am these callused hands.
Their lucky features caress your body.

The moon skids endlessly in this esteemed life.
Orion watches over us on cold nights:
We search forever to find what we are searching for.
The sentences direct me endlessly.
I am learning to be directed by the ground behind the sentence.
Traveling towards searching.
I am searching for your hand
As it holds the summation of the four male visions of women:
The Crone: not sexual, except in touches and in wisdom.
 The witch-work in quilts.
The Virgin: pure naive princess of an idealist.
 The regenerator of lost passion.
The Whore: seductress, the adventure of dirty wisdom.
 The dangerous unknowable answer.
The Wife: companion in thought and life, partner through the trees.
 The gift of conversations and growth.
They all combine in the hair
Of the woman in the hand which sprouts from your naval.
They all combine in the delirious curve of your back
Which slips down to make the symbol of a sliver moon.

OVERWHELMED SYMPHONY #2

I am learning the lesson in the eye of the cook;
Experimentation leading
To the magnificent ratio of ingredients and
Timing for the bread to rise,
For the cement to dry.
The whole world is ratio and timing.
Everything here is a mixture
And a specified amount of time
To make the ingredients one and acceptable in the world.
A man is a ratio of body and mind.
A tool is a ratio of form and function.
Love is a ratio of kisses and walking-talking.
I am a ratio of my dream of me
And my inadequate attempts towards that dream.
An artwork is a ratio of the possibilities/limitations of the medium
And the artist's intention.

If our meaning in life is art
We may steal the endless passing of days
And place them on a pedestal as art.
Naturally, we all fall into television and masturbation.
We fall whimpering if we do not fight this lassitude
With an intent such as the pretense of character or of art.
My scheme is to love and to write. Ohh, to practice these
Wild events of the soul.
The panting of your dearest mourning dove and pressing pen.

It would be quite romantic to think that I would not be able to live
If I could not write or if my lover left me.
But I would not die, I would need to die, but I would not.
I would continue in these dumb feet
Tumbling onwards towards a new design.
Why not say it? I feel blessed in writing, blessed in my lover.
I do not think that it will ever end. This is what a blessing does
And why we search for it in sturdy columns and
In the ephemeral charm of leaf.
A blessing enchants our eyes with dreams of it forever.
I can picture endless days of writing and loving;
A theme park does not offer that.

I cross myself in front of a cedar,
Full of time and the grace that time brings.
"Spectacles, testicles, wallet, and watch."
I fall into the universal cross of the body,
Skeleton key of my specific cross.

I watch my lover and undulate between patterns of love.
I am searching those patterns which I cannot decode,
But cannot deny.

I travel like an uncarved block of wood,
Waiting to be sketched into a vessel by
The design of my own draft.
I search for my true action in these patterns
Of gray buildings and green growth.
Now, I am the vessel of my own unformed searching.

I do it in love and writing.
 I travel in successive forests,
 In the old growth Douglas Firs and Cedars
 And in the weedy alders and ferns taking over the land.

Exodus. . . Exegesis.
I migrate like birds in winter
Who flock in a pear tree for a conference
Over what they have created.
That is my attitude of movement.
I penetrate the space with my body,
Searching recursively through traces of growth -
Embarrassing ones that I wish I could denounce,
Thievery and the laziness, but also the movement
And enchantment of growth;
Tendrils of seasons saved in tattered notebooks.

The artist is the pack rat,
Denying the urge not to leave traces of his existence.
I send it all off in a letter to my lover,
Like crumbs leading me home.
I am being ushered to the tempting apple
In the same family as the womb of the rose.
The smell of roses followed St. Francis
As he bilocated well with ecstatic stigmata.
I grip the pulse of that choice.
I send a letter to that human voice.

A letter should be a whole world proposed;
A flower arrangement should be the acceptance of ephemeral life.

Arrange the roses,
Warm petals delicately
Spoke in my vessel,
As to say a nest of change;
A vow of envelopment.

Eating the apple

I knew I could choose timeless
In her hair or wind,
Annihilated by both.
Here I am reborn in spring.

I mail the letter and know the river god and his mission;
Mixing the majesty and tragedy of this world together.
Timing the performance well, I always wanted to write a play;
The design of houses moving, of voices conversing.
I am the open concept of art, not closed cold,
But nevertheless defined enough to be communicable.

If an apparatus for communication exists it must not be disregarded.
For if it is ignored, messages will be communicated through it
Which you are unable to understand or contribute to.
Every apparatus is limited. . . Poetry is limited. Novel is limited.
Movie is limited. Photograph is limited. Symphony is limited.
The choice of an apparatus for communication
Begins with its definition.
A definition is an articulation of boundaries and possibilities.

First, you must define your body. Then you must define your intent.
Then you must find an apparatus for communicating
And doing that which your mission implies.
I am a poet and a lover.
I use a pen and a talk and a kiss to do and communicate these.
In my midnight confession I'm gonna tell all the world that I love you.
In my midnight confession I'm gonna make up a language about a language about a
language
So that I can write about writing about how and why I write about what I write about.
I write about being an artist and a lover.
This is how I follow the course of the river and how we have viewed it.

After the agricultural revolution the river
Was seen as a goddess and giver of life.
After the industrial revolution the river
Was seen as a wild thing which needed to be tamed by man.
Its only worth was in its navigability for transmitting materials to ports.
After the information revolution I do not know how we will feel for the river.

I watch the inexhaustible source of ocean's ideas
Through the lens of exhaustible thought.
I do the wild discipline of freedom,
I name my design and attempt acting upon its current.
To float with no purpose
Is to be chained to nothing.
To work with aspiration everyday
Is your freedom in that thing.

So too in love, I live in relation to her,
Our existences are attached.
Yet, I fit freely within her voice.
This is the paradox of being engaged:
To be in the yoke and be divine in the sweat.
I attempt to be captivated within the whole world,
But I may only be enlisted with one thing
And speak one thing.
After I have mastered affairs with one thing
I may move to be engaged with another thing,
But I do not wish to overextend.
May I attempt a photograph now
Or a simple line drawing?

The whole world is a mixture of ingredients and timing
To make those minutiae one and acceptable in the world.
I am also a mixture of these engagements.
These rings and other simple symbols of infinity.
I keep the house in view. The mortar and the result of
Pens meeting in love, plowing through the fields;
Turning over the earth to find an arrowhead-
Tool of direction
Met well with time and my own myth of it.
Who knows if the direction sets?
My perspective is limited. I say my direction and mean it.
I am here to art and love. I expand into new directions.
A patchwork of explorers and scientists
Leading to the braids of her dreamt hair.
I follow a small cloud out there
Where art and life combine
And there becomes here.

My method is a slip of hand,
But I am attempting, like a rude investigator,
To find my bliss. I follow it with a thread,
Perhaps I make a quilt for a wedding night
Or perhaps I let the thread lead me on a long eve
Towards inscription,
Towards the pale action of creating the quilt.
I follow the act of creation into
A mixture of play and knowledge.
 Now, through a turn of events
 I search in coffee houses and bars for a perfect place to scrawl.
I do not escape the urge for it.
Earth has no escape from heaven.
I find no place to write. I find no urge for it.
I sit unmoving beneath the brooding poet's willow.
I am bored here. I hope to fight that boredom,

I hope to turn again. I mix new days out of old lessons.
There is no place to write or love.
I write and love.

OVERWHELMED SYMPHONY #3

At my loneliest hour, eating clam chowder,
Smoke piles in artistic solitude.
I have dislocated myself out of society
To feel the necessity of art.

I am dark matter
With my impossible density.
I suck everything in and render relation impossible.
Relation signifies incompleteness.
If I were whole I would envelope all
And thus, there would be only me and no dependence.

I leave my love for a notebook and an empty coffee cup.
It is here that I write for her and here that I become lonely.
Words pour easily in my bachelor's painting
And almost not at all when I am with her,
Though her good beauties are the cause of my brilliance
If I can be said to have any.
She is the wisdom of poem in being
That I attempt in necessary solitude,
Which as all artists know, becomes loneliness.

At the bar stool, the same way up as down;
The same unreasoned kindness to waitress,
Yet always distant.
Life lingers with my lover
But the writing of that life remains here.

A true literary implosion: A boy writing about a boy writing
about a boy writing. . .
See how I examine the tatters of my life.
See how I examine the teachers of my dance. . . Blake. Kabir. Patti Smith. Rimbaud.
Ecstasy all over them and the nervous twitch of knowing
That our ribs are the same as veins in leaves.
Yet, the leaf knows from which tree it has fallen.

Stem in my tailbone
Fallen in winter
Mysteriously resurrected in spring;
Such is my cycle around the unknowable tree of origin
And the epicycle within that is but the wind of my choice.
It is with great ambivalence that I spiral around that tree:
Acacia of origin, nearer to Christ's brutal contemplation than I.
I know this cycle to be greater than I;
Greater in creation, greater in destruction

And universal as melody of earth.

I cannot pretend, as I would like, that I am not controlled by this cycle.
Though the ambivalence left by this knowledge
Leaves me unable to stand still or move,
Unable to feel anything but competing anger and comfort;
Like a shaman angers, like a father angers.

Still, inside of this cycle is the cycle of my own selected voice,
My own profession, my own choosing of language's lands.
My own wind keeps me searching for the core of that tree.
Blessed song and tingle of flesh; the ecstasy
Which is nearest that wood, however lacking language.
I must find The Word with my many words.
I must proceed in the visible movement of texts to find the invisible still point.

I bring it within, as if I could bring the whole world within:
Oceans regulated in my kidneys.
A Unified Field Theory found every instant in my existence.
Clockwork of mind.
Atmosphere of membrane.
It is all too visible. I must make it unknown,
As a poem does in its best anticomunicative faculties.
Anticommunication protects information from decay.
Communication allows the knowledge transmitted to decay
As in a cookbook or directions for a car
Kept in the sweaty glove box. They are read and forgot.
However, the best art
Is eaten but never fully digested.
In fact, it grows exponentially within
As you mature through the years.
The burp of it all
Making the world smell
Of your digestion of that world.

The bar stool gets cold, the waitress notifies me with eyes
That I have overstayed my welcome. I tip her well. I call my lover,
Attempt to read her a poem but cannot, it is too long, it is unbearable.
I must find the trees, the woods are cold, I kick a pine cone
Though its noise is more like a stone in the frozen hours.
I pass through coniferous crackle
While moving towards graveled beach.
Gray and green always present. Despair and hope. Depression and growth.
Words have ruined me to group the opposites.
Search whole in the impenetrable canopy of hemlock and douglas fir.
Search for the light where it is rare.
Search in the microcosmic jewel, the birth stone.
Search in the red ruby, that rarity.

Search like a saint within wombs' woods. Saunter. Saint Terre. Saint of Earth.
My fingernails hurt in the crispness of cold.

I spot a woodpecker in the limb of a cedar.
I brood for my lover, who spotted a woodpecker
Months ago in these same woods,
Though now she is far.
I do not know of any reasonable reason
For which to leave the perfection of love,
Though I leave.

Leaving the exactness of love is the hardest to bear
For it is not merely the perfection of art
Which is the object of a process,
But also the perfection of life,
Which is the perfection of that process that leads to art.

Love is not only perfection;
Also the perfect imperfection.
Sweet wilted flowers,
Acne and clumsy lovemaking.
Love is the only wound we fight for.
The dirty scab of messing up the equation.
Itchy skin and the comfort
Of reciprocally knowing someone.
The impossibility of intimacy and the existence of it:
A paradoxical revolution of touch
Transforming the faultlessness of a chosen self
Into the sublime dynamic of a life worth playing for.
Messy and wonderful, it is play that is our final cause.

Play is the process of experimenting with known building blocks
Without ever thinking of an outcome. The outcome of love
Is love, could you imagine anything else?
Lovers play in the woods, walking through the wondrous idea
Of dandelions struggling through cement to hold your smile.

I am alone now,
Though this is my attitude in the trees:
That of bliss and of building.
The reason for building a house
Is to create the perfect room for daydreaming.
The entire dwelling serves as a framework for the room of reverie,
As the enzyme provides a framework for its active site.
The sheepskins of the sunroom hold solitude's reflections.

Now, I am in the woods, though I am not lost,
I am wet fingertips hastening the new dawn

As if I were being led by the thread of sutra
Through the conversation of teacher and student.
Through the woods and within the pen;
Through the limbs of destitute suicides;
The red furrows of douglas fir
Pouring a mixture of symbols and blood.

I do not slink away from the question of suicide,
I place it behind the world in which I live,
Always indirectly present
Like the pattern that dictates the rhythm and balance of trees,
For a life moving
Through the hills where a small boy and his bear are always playing;
Through the hills like sleepy charcoal marks.
I have my paper and my pencils
To draw the notes of that question.
Let me scrawl it all out for you on a blackboard.
Let me love the relation of symbols always directing.
Let me act like a map behind the world in which I walk.

I sit alone at a bar, tired.
Greasy fries and dim florescent light
Always flickering though we see their radiance as constant.
Does God flicker in and out of my hours
Like dumb peek-a-boo tricks? My lover is the constant light
Which makes me seen and sees me. I am free in relation to her.
Alone, I am unbearably chained to this necessary solitude.

OVERWHELMED SYMPHONY # 4

The prickly needle of pine on bare foot;
Cherished cushion that I must
Acknowledge life with.
Painful pins equally dispersed,
Though only so deep into skin.
I am bloodless as I am wrapped in a fur of emotion.
All scents of humanity rise around me in steam;
Breaking and forming like the hydrogen bond, rapidly,
As relations are formed and broken in your eyes
While rummaging through the train station for a companion.

Stench of the barnyard and of the dumpster.
The drop of rose-oil in your laundry.
What angels shall speak to me
As these odors are mingled within?
Claiming balance, mortar and pestle.
Will they have wings or
Will they seek the bottom of the poem?

If the poetry must matter
As I hope to hope that it must,
Then the needle must matter
With the thread in its eye,
Sewing the patchwork of clouds into your patchwork pants
That we value for their ease and economy,
And the fact that they show us
That we all may sew
What we wear and tear off
In the touches of beaches
Where the stitch of our origin is finally known.

I am out of deep or shallow water;
I am where the water hunts for a poet who hunts for water.
I wanted to give you a ring. Perhaps a birth stone,
A mood ring, a palace laced around your finger
Or a pendulum at its still point in silver.
But all I could give you was water,
That unsticking voice in a jug,
Ephemeral crystal, scatterer of light.

I'm wooing the leaves with drops like rustling drums.
Perhaps art is the visible trace of this growth-song.
Every paper is crumpled on the floor
Of the freshly arranged room;
Brown blemishes add mystery to words.

Spices need age as does the wine of a hermit.

Shall I be the hermit's hut,
The house of the lone wise eye,
Or shall I be the smog ingesting plant
In our abstract city of apartments?
I will never decide. I will remain in limbo,
As each system possesses a heaven and hell.

I shall walk between the glorious fire and the demonic one,
Not because I did not receive the holy water of baptism,
But because it is the poet's function to walk between
The phenomenon of the raindrops and the noumenal ecstasy of the drip.
The poet is a translator between the all-encompassing unknowable Word
And the lulling words of man as he loves and dies.

I am lucky to have begun this journey in the woods
With my lover who is both my guide along this leafy path
And also the spacious wisdom at its end.
I know it is true, the best of my crumpled papers
Have been done at her side or for her lips to tremble over.

Place a small pebble in your mouth,
It cures the worst of thirst.
The desert and its desiccation claim me.
Alone with God,
Though guided by the tracks in sand
That love leaves,
Leading me towards her brilliance.

With imagination there is more in emptiness
Than in multitudes of form.
My mind does wonders with a white wall
Or the plains of Kansas.
Objects suffocate me
Until they awake a rapture;
Invisible turning of Gods within.
The small, oxidized copper vase
Has an entire history and future
Apart from its object,
For you to wander.

The stone under your tongue is a jewel
Of skipping-stone camping laughter
And carrier of your humanity
As you approach the absurd judgment:
The trial in which you lay prostrate
Unaware of the crime or virtue.

See how the stone is blessed,
Worn and polished,
Washed and stained by irretrievable time.
See how it follows the floor of the stream as bed-load
Traveling from one absurd affair to the next and the next,
Yet traveling with joy nonetheless.
See how that way is sublime
And smooth as the lyre in Orpheus' forest.
But still I wish the unmoving grace of a poem,
Somewhere an equation of Rilke and of Eliot;
Somewhere a murgence of poetic form, its meaning,
And the ecstatic truth behind-
 A framework or skeleton as is The Word
 From which all is based and returns
 Like the osmo-regulating salmon
 From stream to ocean to stream again.
 Throw the bones in the river
 And burn the flesh!
This pattern I begin with, like the length of a step:
Constant, yet moving.

Poetry is the anatomy of life.
We're looking for the bones,
As we look for the golden ball down the well,
Where we search for a story but find none,
Where we steep the tea but cannot bear to wait for it.
 We are constant searching for the poem
 In the small infinity born in leaves of grass
 And in the large infinity of mind.
 I hope to turn. I hope that it matters.
The poem matters, I fulfill my modernist vow.
I do not know if it will be allowed
Or if I can find it
With all of this subjective catharsis being read in bars -
Sawdust on the floor, listing the party in every effect;
Induction without drawing the truth out of it.
But I do not wish to deduce
The particulars of beauty and of terror
From a truth found in abstract clouds.
I will drink those clouds within, the dirty angels
Following in the grace of terror.
 Art is that rope, reaching in tawny fiber
 Towards the salmon gray of my lover's braids -
 The fifth direction which extends through us all;
 From moon to earth,
 Knowledge to news.
The artist is the individual who consciously commits

To responsibly act upon his role within the world.

Expand art in the framework of hours.

We are all artists if we choose to create the sculpture of now:

The mason of dusty churches and their light.

The doctor dedicated to the flow of blood and circulation of the lymph.

The lawyer of loyal opposition litigating linguistic synthesis.

And me with my poem between growth and despair;

There will be no death of air,

It will flow invisibly, but with obvious effect

Between the framework and the hope.

I come of age too early in words

And must follow my recursive calendar,

Dying with the purpose of resurrection.

I build a small temple in the coniferous prickle.

Today poems steal my sensuous life,

But tomorrow I must walk to the beach

Without a single pen to save me from the realization

That even in beauty

I may be bored with the sun.

Perfection is the hardest to bear

When we know that the beauty of the world

Must be brought sublime within.

I strive or cease to strive,

I do not know which is best.

Perhaps I will never know.

Indecision is my answer for now.

I am pleased and walking.

The sun warms my feet,

Knowing the prickle of life

And the necessary pretense of elation in journey.

I cannot bear to spend much time in my temple.

I am an anxious modern mind

Though the dust is alive

And blows an answer in my eye.

OVERWHELMED SYMPHONY #5

I could call you lifting and urging me,
As flame is lifted like steeple or finger
Pointing towards angels at accord in the sun.
Each substance follows into a home of its own.
Give me your best mossy limbs and I will find
The water on the leaf waiting to fall
To its destiny in puddle
Or into the jug that sits beside
Neruda fulfilling the fate of liquids
In the truth of their wetness;
With his sorcerer's tongue, flow of poet's wand,
Invoking the object into poetic clay.
He must be the speech of Prometheus's hand.

Ahh, if fire goes to fire and water goes to water
Then where must I bend,
Carrying my happy stains of youth
And my tarnished idealism?

Still, in between ecstasy and tears
At the end of lonely promises
As I look in your placid pupils
Discovery seems possible
In the diagram of home created
In the gaze between us;
A model like one found while dusting off Euclid
In a midnight bachelor's room
While he dances alone to a scratchy record.

“A line is breathless length.”
I draw my own lines in the sand
Scrawling with caduceus
Borrowed from tempting serpents.
My diagrams are altered by the unknowable speech of sea
Made known by its effect on my will's argument.
Ohh yes, I was tempted to fuse the sand into glass,
My argument into immortality. But with your head
On my chest, I realized that
Immortality is the growth of a plant towards the sun;
The idea of that growth from body-maker to spirit-maker,

Not the map of those tendrils
Under glass in antique shop
Where the ancient woman chain smokes
And bitches about her husband

Unable to find the will to find work.

I find new lines for my proposition every day
And spend my tattered hours positioning these lengths.
The specific act of arrangement is my inevitable procedure,
The assumption I have been given for life;
Imprint on my soul from God,
As my body is imprinted on me from nature.
Unremovable lines and their endless pages of notes;
Substrate of my existence
Remaining constant throughout all causation.

Ohh, do not let me die without learning to play the cello.
The memory of listening to Bach's Suites with you,
While sipping tea and urging our minds into the clouds,
Steeps within me the feeling
That a mason must have
When he has just finished building a church.
Memory filled with stones of reverence
Pointing high in steeple
Made sensuous as lovers' form.
Who must I pray to
So that I might play the cello?
'I' the dreamer must ask
'I' the actor.
A theater proposal in the moonlit limbs.

Go up the dumb boulders with me.
The ideal is here in the choice;
Let us walk amongst the sad-eyed stones
And elude ourselves to believe that each step is new.
Hang tight to the weeds,
The pale growth of necessary external world;
Though love has its own orbit
As I do in the choosing.

I do not blame Eve for eating the apple,
I long for the choice;
Multitudes of possible emotions in such crisp fruit;
Choosing the act of an angel
Between peace and intensity, Buddha and Dionysus.
We sing olives from Neruda's red soil;
Groves and their serene painters, wine lusting.

We choose each instant between meditation and drink,
"Tea or coffee?
Incense or cigarette?"
The choice is not forever,

Though for it,
Future possibilities are bounded.
Potentialities in the mind are limited by
Actualities of the body;
As a spontaneous reaction
Decreases the amount of free energy in a system.
The ability to work is decreased by work,
Unless that which is produced is stored to do later work.
The structure of a house is limited and ends once it is completed,
But the structure of a city should continue
Into a finally unfinished working state.

Thermodynamics of the soul.
Work with me lifting
In the dirty dynamics and frustration
At the center of choice and bliss.
Box of jewelry and urn of hope
Making the shape
Of lifting us higher into ourselves
Gazing. Do we know ourselves there
Or does the gaze annihilate?

OVERWHELMED SYMPHONY #6

I am the note of all undone things in the forest;
Crisp frozen leaves ready for their symmetry and
Limited avalanche from hemlock's bough.
If I could only be rain on your thighs;
The enveloping touch of violins.

No, I cannot, there is just this letter of a lifeboat
To save you from the absence of magic;
There is just this pale tree in front of my eyes.
See, my house has vanished, gone back to wordless wood.
Syllables are swallowed whole by snow
As an engagement ring is enveloped by velvet in a closed drawer.
May I one day wear that silver infinity?

As I write this, another is writing,
Though he is enveloped by love and time behind.
Perhaps he knew that this distance from love would occur,
But at the time he was not letting it surface
Like a plastic bottle on placid pond.

He wrote or sung:

"Swallow me like pine trees and mild verses,
But swallow me whole. I am round
As your eye sees.

Do not take my head, take my poetry,
Eat it with red wine.
Have you fallen down, drunk
In the woods after midnight and
Has it been a friend?

My excuse is wrapped
Around Picasso's form of a guitar,
Play it musically
Like you play
The desire in the library,
Play it like the reflection of a book.

Read it backwards, I come from
All sides humming, my round existence
With prickly pine needles
And mourning love poems."

I suppose that I must accept that it was I, the savage lover,

Who wrote those words.
I suppose I must admit to loving and being loved.
It would be easier to say that it was a faulty proof;
Less string would bind.
Sometimes I wish to destroy my love for you,
I invent ways to anger you. I polish their surfaces
So that they do not appear
Like scissors appear
As they cut the caterpillar's thread of your scarf.
I trick the anger into looking like rubies as they await the light.

Somehow, you always know which words are gems
And which are failed attempts at destruction
Wrapped in artful imitations.
I am not such a good artist
That I can create a ruby as a rose would.
I can however, throw a soda bottle
Into the lake near my home,
And watch the ripples extend from the center.

There is a message in that bottle,
A humble note from a castaway.
See how that message ripples into your soul,
But gets weaker as it nears the shore.
There is a message in being far from your lover
And knowing the brutality of seeing beauty without her.

I am searching for that inscription in the bottle.
My frame carries a note for you - I have filtered it
From the dull rain
Shrouding the traveling bus
Which carries castaways grouped together
So that they do not know that they are castaways.

The movement of my body carries the letter
In coursing blood and rumors of rustling leaves,
But my flesh is far and my message is a weak signal,
As if you were driving alone cross-country
And your favorite radio station
Faded into scratches
Of that song that makes you tingle.
Perhaps you drive back home
Or know that you will return.
Whether you visit or stay forever in that house,
In those limbs of spring breeze,
Is a question which asks if you
Are able to move freely within that house.

Perhaps you drive deeper into the desert
Never to return
And let the signals of radio stations
Fade in and out of your arms.
Your shadow extends the far length to me
And urges me to extend beyond all directions,
As a poet is ravaged by extension.

Poetry has ruined me,
Tantalized me with brilliance
And left me in solitude,
Made me scavenge in the four materials of directions:
Transformation of fire in the south.
Unified spirit in the annihilation of wind in the east.
Ephemeral growth and enchantment of firm earth in the north.
Unconscious desire and self-destruction of water in the west.

I have seen the possibility of their unified root
In the joyous lonely song of creation.
But I have also seen that this root is unknowable.
This is the ruin of the poet:
He sees the possibility of unity within creation,
But knows this uncreated light to be unfathomable.
It would be easier to live without this knowledge,
I would not be left on so many cold doors
Striving for light wisdom poems
Which lie wordless in your skin.
I try to make words fit together to meet there,
As corners for rooms in a house
That keep your movement intact.

The grammar of blood differs from the grammar of bricks.
Blood sends us off in a small boat tingling.
Bricks send us thinking into the clean edges of geometry.
My answer to you is of blood and of brick.
Do not forget my reply,
The hour will come when this grammar will become wordless
And butterflies will appear and tie our fingers together
For our final, eternal meeting
In the hip of Orion.

For now, we meet seldom and passionately as discreet quanta
Emitting from what we have created between
The languages of blood and of brick.
Now, there are just these words for you.
Now, there is hope to escape the repetition of longing.
I search through your letters and
Know the concealed message in the bottle.

Throughout our life of echoing red canyons
I am swallowed by your existence while swallowing it.

OVERWHELMED SYMPHONY #7

The way in which others read the day
And the way I read the day
Are different stories of information.

I choose the stones and leaves.
My father chooses different species of carix.
 "Sedges have edges.
 Rushes are round."
I choose Matisse in an olive grove, in a simple joyous chapel.
My mother chooses the eye that chooses.
I choose the poem, the wings between eyes.

Writing: The unexplainable event of the soul.
A postcard of a painting by Gauguin tacked to the wall

 linguist of color
 shaping Tahitian bodies
 into sensuous directions

Like maps, though not so certain as words.

 antique maps
 in stores
 with men
 who know how
 to use tools.

I am an old nature poet in the mountains,
Though the central peak lays here
In a teepee that looks like an angel.

THE SIMPLE SYMETRY OF ALDER LEAVES LIKE FALLEN BODIES:

 The veins in leaves are the ribs of man.
 Only, the leaves remember the tree.

Rot like warm breath on a fresh flower.
The stink of pond, her humid summer hands
Whistle me to sleep with the crickets and slow summer moan.
Have you caught the animal and examined the poem of flesh?

I am undone woolen robes; the imagined dance of Kabir.
Molly cuts my head off, I thank her, I give it to her freely.
My poem awakes. I feel brilliant in her arms. Her thin, snow-white arms.
She is also seductress and witch; companion of sweaty genitals;
Undulations of thoughts on Dante and Eliot; mind's quiet strings.

Burning beds. She is the teacher
At the end of this dumb whispering walk.
I come back all shout and memory. Does she desire
More thoughts flickering like florescent lights?
Whistle like a sailor on a boat;
Tipped over: OVERWHELMED.
The position of rubbing colors
Pushes me into the wind
Of this longing poem.

The angel. . . prick of light. . .wearing Pollack's splatter.
I feel like the sweat of poetry through a needle in a haystack.
Monet's fields come true right here,
Burning eye; the oil on the old man's canvas.
I would never be his model, no, I become walking too quick.
I become galloping all the time like an eternal
Sublime struggle between overwhelming Dionysus and overwhelmed Apollo.

I want to write like spit. this is my spit. my talk.
Talk to me through a cup

(Chanting skoal.

Cheers!

To the drunken skull of your enemy.

Lightly, I sip holy fruited messages on my last night
Out of flower's shape: Champagne glass.

The cup: A leaking cylinder.

Obsessed with vessels

On long voyages

Bearing messages:

The shape of man.

What message do I bring and where?

Speak to me through a cup

I am all Echo,

Goddess condemned

To repeat the last word.

Tell me that word

Like incessant sand in a glass

Pouring a figure eight on a wave.

I am the echo of worlds in every pore.)

Leonard Cohen singing "So long Maryanne":

"You hung on to me like I was a crucifix."

Archetypal cross of the body;

Shape of everyman.

I kissed Molly like that:
From the temple of stars

To the wet roses of her cunt,
Caressing her clit with my tongue,
Softly, like a sheet flapping in the slow breeze of spring.

The building is near, the Italian villa,
Rebuilding the shape of ancient St. Francis
Through live oaks
As I begin to pour today on her neck.
No hickeys. She hates it when I give her hickeys.

We are the same height,
I look her in the eye: insane space where outer light meets inner.
Beckett's pupils are full of stones, mine are filled
With attempts at scribbles, gestures at reforming the nothing.

The foundation is a metal block.
I lay my body out. My hands are bleeding,
But I smell of roses; I am a thorny suitor of the beautiful petals.
She takes off her clothes, her blooms.
The young son crawls up the dead tree with a coonskin cap.
The wind blows it off, the gale takes his head.

We can stand indoors and watch
Rather endless hours of moldy unleavened bread
Or we can open the door
(Chipping paint, creaking handle, everyone will hear you walking out the door.
The crimson door,
Covered with lamb's blood and menstruation,
Awaits)
Or we may awake outside and let our hats be blown away,
Giving 'I' to dumb wind through red alders.

She holds me. Bloody winter girl,
Death raped Persephone, she holds me tight in the garden without growth.
She spits me back in spring, but the snow has changed me,
I am bitter and give no money to strangers.
I sit in a lighted room. I wear the brittle cloth with delight.
They steal my suit, I give it freely, I consent to give them my power.
I do it for the will to kiss her in the seat of passion, the backseat.
I receive the keys to the lighted room, driver's keys.
It is nothing, no, nothing,
I am a boat on violent seas, controlled by the hands of waves.

But the facts ma'am, I know the facts of law.
I follow, pretend that the keys are meaningful,
Tremble in that postmodern light, the streetlight, suburban nowhere light.
I sympathize with a boat now and then, when I am strong enough to be fragile.
I give to those who note the ineluctable law of soul.

Gauguin formulates the laws of colors as I sit in the lighted room.
Smoke curls;
The picture is new with every glance
And contains the tense bliss of love:
New love becoming forever love
Becoming and holding onto what it first was,
It all holds here.

The spectrum of things
Each one you hold
And each one you perceive
And each one you expect from
Your knowledge of its poetic history.
You meet the object in the middle of its life.

The newborn baby is first a flower,
Is first a temptation, is first shrouded in lotus petals.
The object is first a metaphor,
Naked, attached to poetry.
The recurring path of dumb stones
Has gathered moss of forgotten friends.
The object is cloaked with experiences touching it.
It wears blood-wedding sheets, it wears triumphant boots,
Naive sundresses, immortal peach flavors, enchanted hats.
The cloth that is placed upon the object influences your sight
As you wander through the reeds
To find a different object of the same qualities.

You find a seagull on the beach, flying then,
And teaching flight again. The past year comes back,
In the summer, sitting on the blanket, eating sandwiches - grit of sand.

You laughed with your lover, or were you fighting?
It does not matter now, you are alone.
You mournfully think of Molly.
You are a dumb poet.
You thought she was your muse.
She was the first sound, she was a gazelle, she was your cricket,
But she is also the breast, itchy skin, architectural attempts.
Alive, she is a human being, watch her shout.
Reality before the metaphor.
You forgot in the cafe. You forgot in the distance.
Her photograph on your desk reminds you.
She is not a big hand-holder, but sometimes your hands fold like napkins
In cheap magic tricks and expensive dinners.
Sometimes your bodies fold within each other.
That building voice guides you -
Your shout and whisper together

As it covers the spectrum of voices
Coming from rivers' tongues.
The speech from your eyes uncovers the cloth from your window.

OVERWHELMED SYMPHONY #8

Because my melancholy path of laughter walks
Between accepting the truth of another and
Accepting nothing as true. Because I wish every answer new,
I sit stained in chairs listening at the cement wall
For the next unendurable play. No, I cannot bear
More motion, though I live in its eye.

She gave me a sunflower and danced in my arms
 (in my weavers, my box builders, my pen pushers)
Or was I, in her arms, as our bare feet
Clumsily patterned the cement floor?

I did not know which of us was pushing or which was pulling.
One of us was Apollo, overwhelmed, and
The other was Dionysus, overwhelming.
The roles changed the way they do
When two actors want more
Than a prescription from a dully-lit pharmacy.

Within the turning of guises lay the motion of love,
Regenerating that same motion
Like a pump touched once and kept flowering.
 Ah! Love and knowledge do not follow
 The laws of scarcity as materials do.
 An idea given is returned seven-fold.
My love is not scarce nor do I hope to make it so.

Listen, as I have pinched the incipient flower,
I have found it beautiful once
And been held in that still place of mossy grottos.
But as I made the venture back to that same bud
I have only seen myself.
After our first adventure into the beautiful
The beauty we see in the radiant object
Is only our own,
Imprinted on that delicate matter.

We drown like Narcissus in our own puddle;
The last sound we hear
Is but the echo of our own voice.

Thus, love is not beautiful but sublime.
It moves like a drop between surfaces,
Unable to cling to either side.
Between pulling and pushing

I have seen the answer;
New as immortal laughter of peaches in your belly,
Rounding the bend like a voice.
 Motion like this cannot fit in Pandora's box
 But must stream like viscous oil into her urn.
 Watch the water drip over her curves.

Man seeks a static beauty in a box;
Woman seeks the sublime motion of curve.
Look at Picasso and then look at O'Keefe.

Moreover, look why there are not more female artists in history.
Woman knows she is forever from the first blood of lunar puberty.

Man must have some proof of his immortality
Like a crumpled receipt in a pocket full of tobacco.

A man quixotically creates a beautiful artwork for his lover;
A woman lives with her lover.

Apollo is worthy of a statue and a temple,
But Dionysus must be buried in the wet winter till
And resurrected in the struggle of dandelion spring.

See how I cheer for conversations between these dualities.
Death does not charm me to move onward acting,
It is merely this motion of play, this stage I am set upon.
The mountains volcanically rise,
Through the floorboards; and we climb,
Clinging to weeds that have proven
That the question laid out in The Tower of Babel
Was worthy of our brooding exaltation.

See how a mountain is made to climb.
No, a climb is made to climb.
Love exists to love.
It all fits in my life
As dreaming fits into her looking glass.
Look twice and the river on which we marry is gone.
We need a tool such as love to succeed on the ebb tide.
I am still, though I move through watch's ticks -
Invisible hand pushing like a stern father,
Towards death's incomprehensible names.

Trying to know the wrinkles of Charon's face,
His leaky boat constant on the Acheron.
Ohh, to know the reason for his goatlike trace.

In the dynamic of love we find our dawn,
Though unknown gates remind us of bliss and strife,
Dance moves us and our urge to know death is gone.

The leader of the dance changes as in life,
Constant turns form a well-lit pattern of steps.
My partner in sensing these flights is my wife.

The river is round as time passes on, like an
Orange delirious in throat.
I attempt to refute the clock
By making litigation to the effect that
My dream of eating a Persian peach
Is as real as your olive tones which I memorize today.
But still, time moves me across coasts
Into longing for the gazelle in your laughter.

As I fly towards the pulsing of stars
Or the volcanic belly of Mercury's commerce,
I begin to move through space as well as time.
Brisker and brighter each second until I approach the speed of light
And no longer move with time's hand on my shoulder
But move solely through space which I travel at will;
My own wrinkle in time, escaping clocks' destiny
And the gravity they bring.

See how we lovers ride Pegasus,
Birthed of Medusa's blood,
Into the terror and beauty
Of a life in art,
Like Chagall's painting at the center
Of Russian psychological terror,
But above the lover's fly.

"Movement by another thing may take place
In four ways-pulling, pushing, carrying, rotating."
If I pull you into my arms
With a question of intellect and of body
Then you are two and must twice answer
And if you answer twice
Then I must twice love you and twice move you.
As I pull you with my body,
I delicately place your intellect in a jeweled box
For later dialectic on coffee stained page.
It must be so, your intellect is the hand that guides me into you.
But as I enter, no word may exist.

As I pull you with my mind,

I place the leaf of your body into an urn
For tomorrow's unwrapped kisses.
It is true that I still touch your hand
As we endlessly nibble at a question
Such as: Is the necessity to write that Rilke speaks of
 Merely the necessity to write anything
 Or is it the necessity to write something specific?
But your hand is all I touch,
Passion does not have the words which the intellect needs.
All this pushing away and pulling towards
Is the pump
In the backyard
Watering the tomatoes:
Summer picnics. Sandwiches of avocado and lemon juice and tomatoes!

Sometimes, though, I push you away completely.
As you are two
I must push you away twice.
But as I push you away
You begin to carry a new sort of poetic object
Which you separate from the world
And place delicately in your pocket. . .
A porcelain figurine or a small fragment of driftwood;
Trinket for the journey
Which you carry as a small wet cave to jump into
For the wisdom of laughter
Blowing through the tattered hills
And dispersing the leaves
Into quiet rotations around fruit trees.
You spin around on a blue blanket with a lover
And become so dizzy that
You catch your tail in your teeth
And finally see
That you haven't been very imaginative
With your ability to choose the beginning or end.