

The Instrumentality of Communication

Poems and Other Oddities



Don Bellinger

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For Joy.
And friends, who are always asking, “So where’s the book?”

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Introduction

There is an old saying, “His work needs no introduction!”

So what are we all doing up here? Well, don't look at me! If we stay up here much longer, people will start throwing things. Some of them will be pretty ugly, maybe painful, and definitely stinky. Holy Cow! What was that? It looked like a cow. And she wasn't too happy! Let's run while we can!

Introduction II

Two introductions! What book has two introductions?. Get that man off the stage. Get the hook. The hook! Oh good grief, do I have to do everything. Where is that hook? Oh hell, bring on the hounds! Not basset hounds!

I give up, let him talk.

It is my pleasure to say a few words ... Arrrrhhhhgggg!!!!

Finally, the hook!

Cats Don't Wear Hats on the Boardwalk in June

I asked the man in the street
well, actually it was a woman
but they always say, The Man
in the Street, and I'm not politically
correct, so I asked the man in the
street, who happened to be a woman,
I asked, What is the strangest sight
you ever saw? This woman wore a hat
and carried a cat, a Persian cat,
with whiskers that could ward off
venomous reptiles, snakes primarily,
but occasionally a worrisome lizard. She
said, The strangest sight I ever beheld
was an armadillo juggling avocados. It
was a giant armadillo, and they were puny
avocados, but he kept 5 in the air with great
aplomb. And that, sir, she said, was strange
beyond measure. But I was dubious, and replied,
You're holding out on me, your cat tells me that,
I bellowed, giving her my imperious eye. What
else have you seen, even more amazing than that?
Her cat hissed, she removed her hat, her eyes
barked, her voice blazed from realms beyond
the looking glass. She said, I saw an Ant that could tap
dance to Give My Regards to Broadway, and I'm
afraid, she said, I can't get any stranger than that.
And I, reluctantly, gave her a bouquet of oranges.

All Night Long

You can come over and listen
to my records all night long
the music warm and smooth
smooth as the velvet moon
your hand in mine, and the best
kind of wasting time, holding
on to each other and the night,
the old vinyl groovin on round

The Closing of the Day

With the closing of the day she dreamed of forgetting
memories that had become specters in the night
men grown too young for their girlfriends
girlfriends who married and called only on holidays

with the closing of the day she imagined
kisses sweet beyond intoxication, and tears
gathered up in a wine glass, offering up
a toast, to solitary, reflective nights

with the closing of the day she danced
the lights low, the music cool and smooth, caressing
carrying her through patterns of love-making
flesh that soothed the soul and agitated the spirit

with the closing of the day she wooed distant galaxies
distant heartbreaks, distance like making the bed
early in the morning, smoothing the comforter
discovering that the center is a good place to be

The King

Have you seen him?

The King

Sitting on a park bench, wolfing
a double cheeseburger, large fries, and a king-sized
chocolate shake

We've seen

Phantom after-images,
day-glow sightings,
The Face
in the doughnut shop
window
Signs of visitations,
wanderings

He proselytizes
the back roads and one woman Diners
Gay truck drivers have long
Divine
jumpsuit encounters
over road tar coffee and 3-day-old jelly rolls

He pampers our dreams
and inhabits the spaces beyond
our limitations
Women have his babies
and pronounce themselves
one with Royalty

Love has born thousands
of imitators, and his memory
and his formative years
have evolved
the quality
of myth

I see him now
fat and happy
the years and memories
have left him alone

He has taken up the crown

Corporate Executive Meets the Day

Can you imagine any one morning?
The toast torched, the eggs like shattered
stone
The remainder of a dream
reminiscent
Wasn't there a calculated hardness?

A message to be delivered, deliberately
dribbled in code
on frozen Eggo waffles

Can you imagine?
Drums summon you downstairs to answer
a persistent calling to arms

Battle gear packed on cold stone tiles
Your unit has been called to the Front
and she curtsies, reminding us of your rank as the door booms
shut. Hostile forces await, as memories of hot charged flesh
envelopes your exposed soft underbelly

You march off in force, advancing to beat the sun

Love in the Astrophysics Department

She pegs her future on his shy glances
Unaware that he slow dances with mathematical equations

If only she would divulge her asymmetric inequalities
And show him where to puncture the calculus of a kiss

But the gates of the cosmos do not recognize their retinal scans
Certain galactic entities chastise our couple from the cheap seats

She wipes away potato chip particles
Pretending to probe the mating rituals of anti-protons

He triple checks all of the relevant equations
Believing the delicate fuzz on her arms will align into plus signs

Her soft brown eyes must be shielded from solar indiscretions
Indiscretions which leave her reeling, trapped within mere flesh

He turns down an invitation to the astrophysics lecture and dinner dance
Mistakenly thinking he has disproved the theory of her long legs

She has no place to become excitable and spend the night
And the laws of physics are busy elsewhere

So he rummages through an old pile of Astronomy
And manages to spread out a particularly enticing centerfold

The surface of Mars leaves her theoretically sullied, potentially unfulfilled
She decides to show a certain interest in American Literature

Long Legged Women

Legs that go on and on
past those tasty toes
past the six inch heels
down to the very center
a Jules Verne Earth
center, where prehistoric long
legged women in dinosaur
skin bikinis dance
for pagan gods

A dance that boils
with a voodoo fever
a dance that needs no excuse
a dance that cries out
for loc co motion

A dance that needs no partner
only the earth's molten core
Only the heart and soul of every
19th century adventurer, who knew
how to have fun, while fighting dinosaurs
and dreaming of that one suggestive wink
from that one special Jurassic maiden

The Bar's Closin and the Universe is a Rockin

I was down at the other end of the Universe
waiting out the last eons, I suppose
she caught my eye, though
a lone women wearing a hat, with a feather
drinking Big Dipper ale, with a smile

I drifted a few thousand light years closer
she winked her right eye, and a million suns died
I lifted my glass in salute to her infinite power of destruction
she winked her left eye, and a thousand civilizations collapsed
I blew her a kiss, celebrating her interpretation of societal evolution

She winked her middle eye and, well, all hell broke loose
The Mormon Tabernacle Choir sang Lovelorn in the Milky Way blues
a Galactic poet of some note wrote a multidimensional ode to
Vanilla Wafers, and yes, citizens of the Universe, time itself broke down,
yes, broke down and cried, matter and energy had a spell of the vapors

and my oh my how the joint got to rockin, black holes turned red, and I
left her my number π , we spoke of dark matter and dark energy,
and we laughed, knowing things were darkest just before dawn
We agree to get together just as the Universe fades to black, and we will
drink the best wine, and eat the best food, and as all light fades

create the first kiss

Armadillos Get No Respect

I tell ya armadillos get no respect

Spoiled little girls say, Ick! What's that?
If dinosaurs still roamed the earth
Armadillos might be thought of as 'kinda cute'
By dinosaurs, of course

And what's God's excuse?
No comment, she will say
But just between you and me,
Even God likes to have fun

When threatened, they can jump
three feet straight up
which is quite a feat
and would certainly scare me,
but doesn't impress certain
high octane predators that prowl
our asphalt highways and byways

The three banded kind can
roll themselves into a ball
This is something
I've often wanted to do,
but does tend to leave one
at the mercy of practical jokers

They are related to anteaters and sloths
Imagine being related to a sloth!
Bad for armadillo self esteem I'm sure
And being named for something you eat!
What's that all about?
Doesn't make for a fun family reunion

Some females can delay
implantation of a fertilized egg
for up to two years during times of stress
Oh boy, I'm not going anywhere near that

And what do Armadillos have to say
about their undeserved bad press,
We eat ants too you know!
Well, there's always that

A Bed Time Story

She calls me to bed
pretending to be
asleep, a knowing smile
plays about her lips

she calls me to bed
nude, and all covered
with a fresh white sheet
her hips play games with form

she calls me to bed
with a catty sigh and a
feline stretch, running from
finger tips to arched tantalizing toes

she calls me to bed
always I hesitate the years
sleeping in the middle burrowing
warm between her breasts

she calls me to bed
whispering as if, in some erotic
dream, her voice silky as the lint
bunny, cozy within her bellybutton

she calls me to bed
I crawl down next to
her lips, she pretends some
come hither exultation

she calls me to bed
I can taste her cool
peppermint breath, the tip
of her tongue peeks out, ready

she calls me to bed
I marvel at the earthy
intricate ceremony with which
she calls me to bed

A Bride's Farewell

I'm sorry, she said
I left you for the man in the moon
He wrote me moon poems
and sang me ballads of star-crossed
Androids who dipped their smiles into the waters
of salvation

I'm sorry, she said
I left you for the raven
He dove down upon my soul
and snatched it up upon the wind
to the highest of snowy peaks where time talks
of love

I'm sorry, she said
I left you for the sun setting into the sea
Saltwater pastels sang of unspoken tears
and a briny breeze carried whispers of kingdoms deep
down beneath the crashing waves where mermaids are born
of faith

I'm sorry, she said
I have left you for the stories told by antimatter dragons
that cruise the great starless void out beyond the Milky Way
Stories of vibrant, statuesque strong-willed dark matter miners who
open doors for their lovers, and ride their handsome steeds in the stead
of romance

I'm sorry, she said
I am to wed moonbeams and my bridesmaids are to be asteroids
My flowers girls will be comets, and all of the Universe will come
Einstein's spirit will preside over the ceremony, and our vows will be
the collected works of e e cummings, and the last dance with the father
of creation

I am sorry, sir knight,
I have championed your white stallion, and will ride him up
into the high country, where you may not follow

Rumored Alien Invasion

Space:

massive temporal discharges rain ruin upon a demure Ante-bellum
Galaxy;
the Allegheny mountains are transported into the eye of the Crab
Nebula;
gravitational inconsistencies masquerade as chocolate chip cookie dough
Ice
Cream;
fierce fanatical sun spots align with rogue reprehensible movie star
Asteroids;
wholly uncomprehending black holes mope behind Einstein's theory of
Relativity;

Alien:

It came from the darkest of dark matter, with visions
of conquering the timeless nature of the space-time-continuum,
it ventured billions of light years by over tipping
the speed of light, it spoke fluid Mandarin Chinese,
it collected Star Trek: Deep Space Nine lunch boxes,
it had monumental political ambitions, and ate
one of its self replicating tentacles after intercourse

Earth:

The tabloids shrieked, "Space Monster Nears Earth!"
But the American stock market was up
and it was rumored that the corporate powers
had spirited the leaders of all of the major powers
to a secluded golf resort in the Florida Keys
The President hosted, of course, but he wasn't much of a golfer
The newest Daytime Talk Show sensation thrust out her ample bosom
and asked latest fading sports star, "What do you think about the Alien?"
He said, "My jump shot is coming back. We could make the playoffs"

Cows:

The cows of the Earth said, “Moooo,” and then “Moooo”

The alien understood well such words of wisdom and infinite power

It decided to bypass the earth

The cows chewed their cud, and marveled at the infinite variety of creation

Kissing You

That certain way you stand
one hip thrown out, bare
tanned arms folded, resting
on an ample bosom
Eyes that feed
the Sun's thermonuclear core
Wearing a look that says,
pass by for a price,
a breath of perfume
a hint of quenchable lips, of legs
that give Mother Earth
something to look up to

Kissing you
is something I do
even though I don't
Kissing you
is something I do
have always done
will always do
even as the stars
bid the Universe goodnight

Your kisses live always
but seem forever incorporeal

It is enough for now
to see you doing
that certain something, even
when it's nothing at all

It is enough for now
to chase your spectral kisses,
to carry your perfume, back
with my lover's breath, back
to my single man's bed

The Moon is Hot

So hot tonight I saw time
loving Einstein in my bathtub
you whisper to me at my window
the grass is cool the moon is hot

I can't come in and I can't go out
the world looks too shy
my eyes just can't adjust
my tears don't read Shakespeare

the moon is hot and the grass is cool
my window whispers for me to you
my bathtub dances with Relativity
it's so hot time denies the night

I can't leave and you can't stay
the world tells me to pay it no mind
my heart must adjust just enough
in my tears you read my story

Interlude

“Interlude? Mildred, what the hell is an interlude!”

“Inter what?”

“Lewd, lewd!”

“ I think is has something to do with sex.”

“What?”

“Sex, sex!”

“Well, ” Obviously. “Mildred, don’t start without me!”

When God Speaks to Us

It is at 3 am
when the darkness
plays tickle with our bones
Our sweet self whispers

our sweet self, God
she whispers, plays pantomime
She likes to use puns

God doesn't tell our presidents
to invade wayward countries
God doesn't tell us to judge
those whose lives
we have not lived

God doesn't take sides
She plays scrabble with Einstein
Knows that sides like to hide
where gravity cannot find them

God walks barefoot
lets her hair hang loose
carries an enormous
Old Lady's hand bag
God shops at Goodwill

God kisses
our sweet selves awake
and sticks her tongue out
at the temerity of Eternity

Where Do Tears Go?

I've found my tears
in spite of always
looking in the wrong places
and speaking to the wrong people

If you follow your tears
past their own ending
you come at last to one
single tiny tear drop
a drop so intimately pure
that all the sorrows everywhere
are for an instant overcome

Philosophy Found in a Cookie

I read a fortune from a fortune cookie once that said, Live each day as a new life. Not as if, but as, and I suppose that's good advice for, say the Chinese or Australian aborigines. But for Americans, we are not a philosophical people. Oh, we are church goers, for sure, we say we believe in God, but are we amateur philosophers, do we discuss deep metaphysical concepts behind the minister's back, or do we stick with the same old same old? Whether gays have the right to marry or if liberals have a chance in hell of getting into heaven? We are more Homer Simpson, than Aristotle I fear, not that Homer doesn't have some fascinating philosophical concepts, such as his "Doughnut" Theory: that the singular purpose of Human Evolution is to become perfect doughnut eating beings. Considering our high percentage of obesity, we are doing our evolutionary duty, but I shouldn't bring up evolution, that's a taboo subject. Something you wouldn't find in a fortune cookie, or would you? You never know with the Chinese I'm betting the next fortune I find in a cookie, will say, Another day, another Doughnut. Homer is The Buddha!

Musing on Cows

What are cows thinking?

Are they wondering?

Meditating?

Are they birthing celestial metaphysical reveries?

Could we call them cud-chewing philosopher kings?

If an alien intelligence was to visit Earth

Cows would be the first to know

They would say, “Moo,” and then “Moo,” again

Nothing else need be said, of course

Upon reflection, they would acknowledge to anyone paying attention, that, “We have no need for spaceships because we have no hands, and because ...”

Cows have discovered the secrets of space-time and exist everywhere at once

This would not be surprising to one who muses on cows

The Instrumentality of Communication

Runaway dogs and stray children jump out of
hiding, every time one of my inconsequential girl friends
calls to break another date
“never mind, fellow spectators, and don’t talk to me
anymore about meaningless temptations of the heart”

if only my television set no longer troubled my dreams

Less than appealing next door neighbors turn up
listless and responsive only to
promises of absolution
“please, I cannot be bothered to offer up
mesmerizing religious detail”

if only my television set no longer troubled my dreams

Motorized mechanical millipedes patrol my underwear drawer
seeking out evidence of
unrepentant amorous signatures
“scat, scat, your many legged expeditions are
beginning to steadfastly annoy my psychic demons”

if only my television set no longer troubled my dreams

Colleagues from the institute came by today to discuss
the mandated programming changes,
changes that will, I am told
“bring about my final incorporation
into the promised land of economic globalization”

If only my television set had warned me in time

Sunday Morning Blues

Perhaps
one dull gray morning, I will get up
and just drive no direction, just away

Tears linger just beyond
the sunrise
It is amazing, really
how the most mundane things
tell you all you need to know

Lines
of country and western songs
written on the envelopes of electric bills
All about everlasting love,
and yet
the night keeps right on falling,
and too many mornings
just like the one before
And it's all in how you look at it
people tell me

Sadly this is true

and I've looked at it
for far too long

A tall, red haired women
once
whispered tenderly
in the early morning hours

I promised her a poem

The open road calls out to people
sometimes, even
people with no place to go

perhaps one morning ...

She promised to look beyond the tears
Can a woman drown in tears?

I bought a new Harley, and parked it in my garage

Intimacy

Can you whisper?
Closer, please
Your breath
soothes

Your bed time stories
can samba
A new world
salsa

Your lips
may linger
My lips
cannot recall

Closer

Swallow me
and breath me out

And in

Lullaby my eyes
and coo me home

A Valentine for Alice

Please honey, come in to bed
Little darling, I cannot
The cat is out licking up all the moonlight
and the dog has chased his tail
and gotten himself lost

Honey says she, the key to everything
is the part of the dog's tail that does not wag
She gazes down at her bare feet, feet which seem
so very far away indeed. Pretty bare feet with
toenails painted a glorious garish purple
Little darling says he, what about the part of the cat
that does not meow? Why, says
she, that part of the cat as you very well know
is the moon. The moon, which is always trying
to be somewhere else

Alice, are you still falling?

Try as she might she can no longer
see her feet, and that is disturbing
and somehow oddly stimulating

She is still falling
along with this rousing something
that is much more else
Will some wiser Alice paint her toenails?
It will not be that silly rabbit!

Alice! Alice! I cannot see your head or your feet
You are growing so fast!

She does not hear, she does not see, she is becoming ...

... the end of all things, in the time
it takes starlight to dry a tear. And by then
her newly pink toenails will be completely dry
and she will be Alice again, as Alice was
when rabbits alone lived in rabbit holes

and a little girl will have grown into a woman
And the cat will leave just enough milk
in the Milky Way

I'm Blue Cause My Cat Left Me

They've opened the door
to hell
and let all the strange creatures
run loose
in my dried up soul

I called up my old lady
last
night
and she talked of
something bloated, floating face up, dead
in the toilet of my heart

My cat, Misty, wrote me a long letter
just yesterday
she just said things
have to change, a separation
was unavoidable
and the Purina Cat Chow was
untouched
this morning

It's very strange
if you remember things too well
the things that you don't remember
tend to kick you in the ass

I'm leaving for the Moon
at Mid-night
Misty phoned me from the Sea of Tranquility
she misses her Purina

A Different Way of Looking

I just had to stand on my head
in my last desperate attempt
to discover all the things I had
forgotten I had lost, of course
all the change fell from my pockets
and rolled away, along with something
I could not quite see, coming
to rest under the refrigerator, if
I could see it I might recognize it, if
I recognized it, I might believe it
But I fear what I might find when
looking too closely, what I might
uncover that I never knew of, or
never wanted to know, and then
I see it It has always been there
And I just have to stand on my head
in the final desperate attempt to ...

I Prefer Women

I prefer women,
said a short sad-eyed man
He was a man of few words

Did he mean he was straight, rather
than gay, or did her prefer women to girls?
Did he prefer feminists

to ladies, or mature over childish?
Perhaps his meaning is lost to us

Perhaps he planted those words
very carefully
Land mines for the unwary
Step on one and lose a foot
or a leg or a life

I will use those words myself

Beware fellow adventures
and watch your step

I prefer women, I will say,
and she will say,

I prefer the uncharted territories,
I prefer the tallest of tales,
I prefer mythic quests,
I prefer the beast who prefers good conversation,
I prefer movies without endings,
I prefer kisses to being in-love,
I prefer friendship,
I prefer traveling a twisting and narrow path

She will add,
Are the woods dark and deep?
I will nod and take her hand

Twilight is upon the land, and all travelers should take heed

Walking Home

The road winds, it winds around,
it winds in and through and up and over
I travel it well, walking home

There are signs along the way
advertisements mostly selling diversions
A few are admonitions, road
narrows ahead or commands
stop, yield, the haiku of the road
But I can find my own way, walking home

No time for shortcuts, it's the long way
for me, towns to explore, houses to sleep in
trees to lean against, women to be kissed
along the way home

I cannot take a bus or a car
not a camel or a horse
only my feet know the way
I walk at night if the stars are out
following this one or that
I can not name them
They are calling me home

Usually I walk alone
Sometimes a cat will keep company
Not a handsome cat, but well traveled
a crooked tail or a limp, signs
of fights won and lost
He will stay for some miles
and then be gone
down the way, his own way home

I am not opposed to a women
holding my hand as we walk
but she, too, has her own way home
We can share our journeys
but not our destinations
even if we are destined
to sleep side by side
even as I walk home

For You

I love you
and I have always loved

I kiss you
and I have never been kissed

I breath you in
and I will never die

I breath you out
and I have never been born

I watch you sleep
and I will dream of you always

you open your eyes
and I live

Clouds Across the Moon

Clouds call to you out of the corner of their eye
and you answer measuring your heart with stone
Stone polished smooth by not a river, but
by tears that fall so softly and carry so much

There are certain days that don't follow nights
and certain sighs that don't follow kisses
Because the moon cannot be caught in a glance
no matter how your feet dance in the sparkling dew

Beware coming upon twilight afresh. Approach
as if you have seen it before, and carry iridescent dusk
between your toes. Everywhere you look, looks back
The approaching night carries eyes in it's hip pockets

You look up and say to no one in particular, you say
that cloud looks like something, well, something else
and that other person, that no one in particular, nods
Then you both realize that the cloud is something else

There was a time when you dreamed of traveling to the moon
because men had set foot there, because there was magic there
But we never went back and the magic is not the same. The moon
has become a haunted land where ghosts walk in suits without faces

If you could but call out a warning, saying
the day is dying, the sun is leaving. The sun
has been tagged and now must hide. Would
they believe your warning? They always have

The Mice Are No Longer Playing

the mice have been playing in my closet again
I hesitate to disturb them for they are a rowdy
bunch and a gentleman keeps his own business
and allows others to keep theirs, and besides

there is something else in my closet
It is about to awaken, the mice
will have their little encounter
as they always do, and besides

the festival is fast approaching and am ill
prepared and always leave things to the last
possible moment when the time is almost ripe
and the night is calling out for allegiance

I have something very special planned this year
It will bring forth many worshipful and obedient
followers to one who's name cannot be pronounced
Perhaps it is too early for the secret to be revealed

we are only in the fifth stanza, yet it is already too late
this poem is cursed and you, dear reader, are spellbound
so take my hand and meet a very special some thing
come do not be shy, I'll only open the closet door just a

crack ... and see, the mice are no longer playing

The Truth About Kissing Frogs

The Princess kissed a frog
And changed into a frog
Soon all throughout the kingdom
Princesses and Princes everyone
Explored each and every froggy habitat
Seeking out handsome frogs to kiss
And they all became frogs
And the other frogs didn't mind too much
And the people of the kingdom rejoiced

A Giant Snake Ate My House

That's right, laugh
It's not funny, really

It's rumored
from those Herpetologists
in the know

That the snake
was having problems
coping

That's sad, I suppose
but really

It ate my house!

All sympathy vanished
along with my big screen TV

Insurance, surely, doesn't
cover

A-Bomb mutated giant ants!
50 foot buxom brunettes!
or
Giant house eating snakes!

I suppose that snake
had its reasons
Reptilian though they may be

But I loved my 21st Century
modern conveniences
More importantly,

I'm homeless!

Fallen Woman

She's on the road again
said will send a postcard
she always says that
I think she will this time

She likes the high
cool mountain places
she's a fallen woman
fallen from the sky

She's trying to get back there
Got a postcard today
From Cloud City, Wyoming
Can there be such a place?

Princess of Riddles

I count your dainty toes
each and every time
we speak on things
philosophical, and you
travel barefoot everywhere
even in the winter, and I
know that your feet
carry far more than your
body, they carry
the answer to any and every
nonsensical riddle
that has ever ever been
and ever ever will be

Princess of the Air

The first time I saw you
dressed for bed, your hair
you let fall to the floor
on your side of the bed
because you wore a wig
but not to bed, you went
aerodynamically bald into bed
radiantly charged to dream
to fly about in your kingdom,
your kingdom of the air
where you are much beloved

The Fourth Bear

A bear stands outside my window
he waves and I close my eyes
shake my head and open my eyes
he is still waving, watching me

I didn't know bears could wave
or would have any reason to wave
he does not seem menacing
he seems friendly, good natured

But bears are not good natured
they are bears, wild. They are not friendly
But this one seems to smile at me and wants
He wants me to come outside with him

This is not going to happen, and I shake
my head at him and he shakes his head at me
rather sadly it seems, and drops down
out of sight, disappointment envelops me

I walk to the window and there on the glass
is the condensation from his bear breath, so
he had been there, but is nowhere to be seen
now, maybe he is playing hide and seek

And then I think of Goldie Locks
and think maybe this is the fourth bear
the crazy uncle, who peeks in on humans
Yes, it all seems so logical now

I am no Goldie Locks that's for sure
This is a tale all my own, and even though
something nags at the back of my mind
hinting that this has all happened before

I do not hesitate, I open the door
step outside, and there standing
is the bear that is not quite a bear
a bear that holds close a secret

I expect him to speak, but he does not
he drops down on all fours and yes
I recognize him now, and I a man
who is not quite a man, drop down
and begin to follow him home
the years slip away and the bear in me
comes to life, and I hope that next time
next time ... yes ...

Once upon a time there were four bears ...

Eve's Rune

A young man, having just lost in love, out
walking, far removed from civilized society,
stumbles
upon a young women drawing with a stick
She is etching a pattern into earth that is dry,
on ground that is barren and lifeless
An unlikely canvas

The young man bends close, curious and confused
Exposed in a baking sun, scratched out by this
dessert artist, are gouged symbols, obviously
meaningful and yet to him hieroglyphics
But still these intricate runes have a physical presence,
a surprisingly strong presence that threatens to
suck him down flat where he stands

The women laughs and stabs at her canvas,
butchering whatever chance he had to find meaning there
Dizzy, he falls to his knees, shakes his head, bewildered
She says, "I have been playing with the nature
of man and woman, and I have but one question"
The young man blinks, disconcerted

She says, "Now, Who am I?"

The Meaning of Love

Her lover lost himself in her
silences,
she delved into the unknown mysteries,
pantomimed nos
and mouthed I love yous

They stayed together until
she discovered she didn't know
herself
and he discovered he had to find
himself
even if he had to buy a Corvette

As they split, she asked
Did you ever love me?
He said, love
I'm not sure what that means

She decided to give up sex
for at least five years,
get a dog, and learn how to be
self
absorbed. She wasn't sure what love was either,
but was sure it had nothing to do with Corvettes
or Monday Night football

Or then again, maybe it did
Wouldn't that be ironic

Her dog never did like her lovers

Valentine's Day and the Unified Field Theory

I do not laugh the way I used to
because the universe has stopped believing

I do not cry the way I used to
because time has stopped remembering

I do not think the way I used to
because space has given up the Tango

I do not get mad the way I used to
because cows have grown accustomed to fame

I do not hate the way I used to
because armadillos have reinvented the blues

I do not love the way I used to
because you are you

Halloween

Moon glow will be in our bones tonight
pumpkins will be Cheshire cats, their grins
spreading autumn magic, and time will be a fickle bride
dressed in orange and black, riding the wind

The air will be filled with music
music heard only by true believers
The laughter you hear can only be ghosts whispering
secrets to crinkle-bright leaves that play along the streets

Nothing will be quite as it seems
children will rule, and cats will share the throne
Scarecrows will slow dance with headless horsemen
and stardust ponies will chase broomstick mounted witches
beyond the night and into the sparkle in a child's eye

And, if the Moon comes down close enough, and the air
has just the right taste, and all blown kisses land
just so softly, then, just perhaps
something emblazoned by magic will be born
A first kiss, a true love, friendship found, a newborn
that will dance with the harvest gods, and then eat candy
until the Cheshire cat winks, fades away, and whispers

Happy Halloween!

His Loving Hand

(For My Dad, George Curtis Bellinger)

It is fall and the leaves are in the midst
of their final duty, kissing mother earth for the first
and finale time. And there is a slightly stooped man about his duty too
He sweeps with patience and care the sidewalk clear of those same
dutiful leaves. He wears a flapped winter cap with the chin strap
unbuttoned, a red and black checkered wool coat
over old faded navy bibs, and pair of well worn comfortable shoes
He is intent on his job, and it is a job like all the others
down through eighty plus years, a job that needs doing, his
kind of job, a job that brings to mind the farmer in him, his
Nebraska roots, a farmer that he never truly was or perhaps
never could have been, but always talked about being, often, as he
neared the end of many entertaining tales of his younger days. He
sweeps his boyhood sidewalks, too, or perhaps the farmhouse porch
on the plains of the flat hill country around Comstock Nebraska,
even as he sweeps the cracked uneven sidewalk
in the wheat hill country of Prescott, Washington

He is making steady progress towards me, and I to him
as I sweep my portion, as I do my duty, if only in this poem
We will meet, of that I am sure, and what will we say? But I know,
I know because that is how we are, father and son, I know
because it is the best part of us. He will reach out his hand,
still a strong and steady hand, give my shoulder a gentle
and yet firm squeeze. He will look me straight in the eye, and we
will hold that gaze, not for long and yet long enough, and then
we will nod, our duty done. We might have wished for more, if we
knew how to make wishes come true. Maybe, it was the only way for us
to call our love home. It is a gift that we will always share

More leaves fall, and I see him still, sweeping, clearing them away
as a farmer would a new field for spring planting. And as the seasons
have melted away, I know in my heart that he is at last the farmer
he always wanted to be, and the leaves, they still fall, as they always have
And yet they now have an extra helping hand, a farmer's loving hand,
helping them rise up, the eternal cycle, as they shall be reborn in the spring

The Kiss

Is it a prelude to other
more complex and fevered
couplings, the copulation dance?
Can the kiss be the alpha and the omega?
Does it dance the tango and the waltz?
Does spirit come together at the lips?
Can a kiss reach back into time
and marvel at the big bang?

Cosmologists say that the Universe should have more
stuff, but no one has been able to find it
Men look for this stuff in the cosmic perfection
of the Oreo cookie, women, being more practical,
look within the expected, infinite variation of the kiss

In the end, as matter and energy collapse back
beyond the beginning, and everything is one,
The kiss will entrance the not altogether
reluctant, now virginal laws of physics
and the gods will demand Oreo cookies and milk

Skin Deep

Unrepentant,

She stoically insists
the world
outside, those peering in
on her, those who belittle
her intellect, those who say
she couldn't be more beautiful,

she insists
they are missing
something vital
They search her body for hints
that the universe is not
chaotic

They fail to saturate their cells
with the essential metaphysical
time-released capsules
of worms and decomposition

Those who see only
her beauty, they fear delving
beneath
the surface structure, perhaps
discovering
that everything is coming undone,
that matter is intimately
incoherent

To decompose,
to break apart,
to become dust,
The stuff of creation,

Salvation

Not Alone

1

She championed
the benefits of travel
saying,
travel is broadening
even when done alone

I have my doubts
Not about travel, but
Doing it alone

She is always going on
wild about some movie
saying
You must see it

I have my doubts
Not about the movie, but
Seeing it alone

She is a woman with obvious
passions, saying
I must celebrate mine

But can I celebrate
passion alone?

I write this poem alone

And yes
she would say,
even alone

2

I will be taking a long journey
Traveling alone
Down a road that knows
no destination, down a road
that cannot be turned from
and somewhere
some when
I will meet my traveling
companion

And she will say,
I never travel alone

Ride the Sky Till Morning

A coyote stalks the skyline and renders the past alive
Ponies play among the clouds and call back the years

You drive the wheat hill country and your girlhood rides
the back seat, coloring in a book of playtime moments
that never were, because you were your mother's
practical child, understanding that dreams were for storybooks

But once in a ghostly childhood you read Black Beauty
Spirit horses spoke to you in dreams, and you rode them
up into the sky, and they would never touch the ground
lest they bring you back to your small bed, shivering and alone

A coyote says to the setting sun, The worlds are one
Ponies chase dying sunbeams, and play tag with time

You drive, your mind in a fathomless fog, and turn down
a seldom used dirt road that runs on to meet the clouds
Your mother sits beside you and shakes her head
saying, No, this is not like you, you are My child

Twilight is upon the land and spirits walk. They horde secrets
buried within haunted eyes, and if one can bear to look deep down
beyond the mist of misunderstandings and the lake of tears left behind
then perhaps time will come out to play and yesterday will kiss today

A coyote sits before them on the road, his eyes shine, he says, The world
begins and ends tonight. The ponies touch down near a small stream

You and your mother leave the confines of the car, and walk
hand in hand, one alive, one spirit, both with secrets to share
You point to the ponies and say, Let's catch two fast ones
and ride the sky till morning. She says, I don't believe

I know, You say, and take her face into your hands and look
deep into her spirit eyes where secrets swim, like denizens
of some ancient sea. You would like to dive down and catch those secrets
but the ponies await. You say, Believe, don't be afraid!

A coyote bounds off to meet the ponies, and he speaks to them,
and they are not afraid. All but two leap up into the darkening sky
Your mother says, Remember that day you asked me if I believed
in the Creator, she sighs, and I said that I only believed in things
that put food on the table. You take her hand and say, Yes, I remember,
but the ponies have eaten the past. They'll take us home for the first time

With a leg up your mother is mounted, nervous, but the pony is calm
You have never ridden, but you mount like a Nez Perce warrior
Mother and daughter see their true faces, and two daughters
of creation, ride off up into the never ending sunset

A coyote says to the sun, The daughters have many secrets to chase
The sun says, Hasn't it always been so

Touch Me

Touch me
I will not break
I am broken but will not break

Touch me
Life is touch
I live but am not alive

Touch me
Bring me my first breath
I breathe but I do not taste the world

Touch me
Reveal my first kiss
I believe in your lips
but can only imagine your tenderness

Touch me
Hold my heart beyond the fear
I have seen your brown green eyes
but cannot name the well of your tears

Touch me
Touch me like an avalanche
I long for the warmth of your arms
the fire of your being that burns me alive

Swing Time

I don't do spontaneous things
but I love to swing on swings
almost as much now as then
and so when we sat swing by
swing swinging this Sunday
summer's day it was as if we
stepped back hand in hand
into our childhood days when
summer stretched on forever
and certain looks between a boy
and a girl could foretell the future
in ways to do with swings
and a willingness to jump
at that just right sweet place
where we are just safe
enough and yet exhilarated
by the world rushing by, landing
together, reaching out, knowing
that it would always be this way

After Dinner Speech at Einstein's Bar and Grill

may we call upon the intimate
moments between our breath
and the breath of the universe
when all roads are revealed
and time tickles our toes
and we are called to tarry
only long enough
to wink suggestively
at the starry eyed
space nymphs
who hang around
the Big Dipper
and then we rocket
and may the special
theory of relativity
stand back in awe

Pillow Talk

There she goes off
on another tangent

he mistakenly counters

with some more of his routine
male logic leaving her

quietly contemplating
past lives

he organizes reevaluates
and begins to build

she prepares a small corner within

they journey afar

a fog covers their dreams

she leaves his castle

off on tangent

The Magician's Beautiful Assistant

She becomes just another magician's
beautiful assistant
every Saturday night
She calls during intermission
and regales me with tales
of magical portents and sleight of hand

I often observe her by using cheap
knock-off
crystal balls, and her
performances are always just
beyond mundane

She is more than an assistant,
she tells me this
“If you can truly levitate,”
I ask, “why take the bus to work,
and have sex with second-rate magicians
who sport Bullwinkle tattoos?”

She down plays the material realm,
but is a past chili dog eating champion
of northeastern Tibet
she tells me this
I wonder
should I get a Rocky tattoo?

I observe her through my favorite crystal ball
She is being sawed in half, and for the first time
I notice that the magician blurs and blends and disturbingly
resembles Rocky the Flying Squirrel
and his beautiful assistant shifts and morphs and appears
remarkably similar to an ex chili dog eating
runner up from southwestern Oregon

The audience gasps, the crystal clouds
Is the beautiful assistant doomed?
Is she destined to live forever
Apart?

I have thrown away all of my crystal balls
But I did get a Rocky The Flying Squirrel tattoo

Cats Occupy the Dean's Office

Cats pad in one by one
long-hairs, short-hairs
six-toed cats, fat cats
stub-tailed cats, and
cats with no hair, too

pad pad, a soft-shoe, march dance
The Dean's office now, marked territory

Occupiers, missionaries
a sit in, a purr in

The Dean says,
We cannot educate
everyone
Not enough capital

The cats hold
a press conference
They say,
Down with Capitalism!

The Dean says,
We must maintain
a connection
with the corporate infrastructure

The cats order in
pizza with anchovies
They eat the anchovies

The cats are not
easily bored
Years and years
pass by and by
and finally,
the corporate infrastructure
collapses

The cats read ee cummings
and talk Zen philosophy

The Earth winks her infinite eye

Oh, To Cry a River

The inferno kissed sand yields
shimmering visions of bones bleached
beyond white, and fused ruins of ancient
temples pounded by the death of gods

The sun calls up long suppressed
memories, when the Goddess danced
by moonlight at the shore of an inland
sea, and everyone sang the magic

The skeletal stone of the earth spews
hallucinatory geysers at the steal sky
and a solitary Saguaro cactus
dreams of tears it can never shed

A Conversation at Twilight

She opened her eyes just a tad
too wide for the room
the density of despair, hanging
just out of sight

I said, Can you remember, a kiss
blown my way, a kiss with too much lipstick,
a kiss with brandy splashed breath?

She brushed aside her shadowed regrets
with a flick of work callused tenderness
and shook out her strawberry tinged sense
that the night knows the spirit's end

I said, I have opened my eyes just wide enough,
peeked down, deep within the darkest of despair,
and sometimes, glimpse dimly, your soft brown eyes

Night Journeys

As my journey neared an end
midnight darkened my soul, and
spectral sisters hung Fairy lanterns
to light the path to my doorstep

Having quested far too long
leaving the night forever unfulfilled
Yes, I know that I shall not sleep,
I know that the stars will call down

incomprehensible voices, clandestine meanings,
from disembodied women, women I have never
held near, women beyond time, might-have-been
women, strangely seductive wraiths

At times I can almost understand them
but they speak a language of impossible
rhymes and unsolvable riddles
their voices play hide and seek

but never come out of hiding
They are forever seeking the rhythms
and melodies trapped
within the confines of the lonely heart

I see the Fairy lanterns from my bedroom window
They are burning low, and morning is near
The way is clear and the path is true, but Winter
is close at hand, and my bones, I fear

are too old for questing, and I have been gone
so long. What if the thing for which I search
has been here always, and I might with resolve reveal it
Perchance the meaning lies hidden within the veiled

words of these women that are so close and yet
so far, who seem so intimate and beguiling
and yet so untouchable, so unknowable
women who could possibly hold the key, women

come out come out where ever you are
I am finally home and they way is yours
What's that? What's that you say?
Oh yes, I've always believed it to be true!

Good Wine and Good Chocolate

It is stone quiet

The winter air takes back my breath

something beyond time
walks the twilight mist
I search the gray for her face
but the night has other offerings

She often talked of metaphysics
over wine and chocolates
I talked of cosmology
and how billions of stars have died
yet they shine

Einstein showed us the truth

matter and energy
believe in love at first sight

and stars will forever embrace their beginnings

She believed in the ancient gods
and preached the mythic nature of time

It always comes back to time

I have left her in the past
and the heavens have taken her up
to nurture newborn galaxies

But there will always be the wine
and the chocolate, and the starlit kisses
that measured the very heartbeat of the Universe

The Letter

Some years ago I wrote a letter
Now don't laugh, I really wrote a letter
and mailed it at the post office

You could call it a love letter if you like
If that is your fancy
But I shall not divulge her name
Nor the nature of her heart

A letter, in my hand, for her eyes alone
For her every breath
I needed no letter in reply

And none came
Even though we lived in the same town
Even though we saw each other from time to time
Even though we spoke intimately over the years
There was no mention of a letter

No mention, not in so many words
But in words that somehow I knew
And that is why I never wrote another

Today I received a card with no return address

A Valentine

Inside it read:

Your words have always been so close
I caress them as I dream at night
I breath them alive
With my each and every breath

Signed,
Your Valentine

Change

The sky paints a foreign shade of blue
today
Air hangs eerily dense and moist
today
Birds fly in dark intricate patterns
today
Leaves in the trees dance too close
today

My grass whispers pagan incantations
today
My dog skitters just out of sight
today
My house leans out precariously
today
My front walk wonders drunkenly
today

A neighbor's Sunday paper blinks its inky eye
A close friend scuttles by, too close to the ground
A stray cat crouches low, its tail far too long
A death sweet stench rides a freshening breeze

As I tend my garden,
A single rose weeps for me

Any Closer to You

I can't seem to get any closer to you

We walk on the beach holding
hands, your bare feet loving
the sand with each step
you wearing shorts, lucky
that the day is overcast
because you burn so easily with your
red hair and freckles

I can't seem to get any closer to you

You are exactly the right number of inches
taller than I and I can't get enough
of gazing up into your brown eyes as we
walk along looking for that perfect spot
a place to avoid saying all of the wrong
things that friends that can't be lovers say

I can't seem to get any closer to you

It is getting on into twilight
we stop, turn and face
each other, the waves breaking
hard against the shore, the air
heavy with spray, your hair whipping
about your face, framing it, you
poised like some aquatic goddess
fresh from the depths of the sea

I can't seem to get any closer to you

You are drenched and yet
lit from within, and had I not
held you in my arms, you
might leap up into the sky
to tickle the fancy of the universe
but your eyes are hard on mine
and I cannot see you

I can't seem to get any closer to you

I see only my reflection, you
laugh that wondrous throaty
laugh and wink and lean down
close, your breath warm on my ear
what you whisper astonishes me
again I look into your eyes
what I see there
roils like liquid fire
there is no reflection
only you

And you can't be any closer to me

Walking Together

I used to walk
alone everywhere
only to arrive
and not be there

now I walk with you
and through your eyes
by way of your heart
I rediscover all those
places I have been

may the times
be many, when we
will be together
and together be

It's a New Year

They say it's a new year
they say the stars were created
before God believed in Human Beings

They say it's a new year
they say that loving and being alone
is the cry of starlight upon a frozen lake

They say it's a new year
they say that life begins today and who knows
maybe we have to start all over again

They say it's a new year
they say it means something to whales somewhere
who are always singing our special song

Lingering

I luxuriate in lingering in my bed
can I burrow down deeply enough
under the covers, can I find
the comfort and ease of self
I feel within the sphere of your
courage, the courage to trust
trust that we will find our way
even if we have never been
adventurers before, even if
twilight will soon find us

Next Year Isn't Necessarily a Done Deal

You were having a dream
with certain tangerine overtones
she is statuesque, wearing a veil
but has someone died? A finger
to her lips, behind the veil, not quite
orange, not quite red lips, her finger
a purple lacquered nail, consistent
layered with meaning, she proclaims
Next year isn't necessarily a done deal
And prematurely

you press the down arrow
the elevator lurches, the numbers
blur, time floats, suddenly in slow
motion, whoosh, the door opens
you are expelled

a boudoir, four poster bed
satin bedspread, she clothed only
in a veil, motions to you
and never having felt such silken
against your skin, her pubic
hair the color of, blends into
your eyes tango
encounter the saffron veil
wagging a bejeweled finger
glistening lips that come hither
she prescribes
The next day isn't necessarily a done deal

The bed melts She slinks off
into a scented drop, purified, unreality
drains away, shimmers, leaving

a bathtub on lion's feet, a bubble
bath, she is without a veil, and kisses you
The wisdom of her body untapped, she decrees
The next kiss is not necessarily a done deal

And I say
Is that necessarily a bad thing!

She winks from somewhere beneath gossamer pearl

Cats and Dogs Playing Bridge

You've all seen the paintings of usually dogs playing poker, no one cares how well they are playing even the dogs probably, it's like horses talking, no one cares what poets they are reading, as long as the horse is talking, attention is paid, and money in some circles, dogs will pay
Cats are pretty good bluffers in poker, their whiskers sometimes give them away, and amazingly, dogs are good too, they wag their tails as much for a bad hand as a good and believe it or not, dogs and cats make good bridge partners, as long as horses are not looking on quoting The Raven, then not surprisingly bidding gets a little out of control, and soon a game of Pinochle breaks out, and the avocado dip begins to run low, and please everyone pay attention, this will be your final project in
Animal Card Playing studio technique in oils 101

The Rain

Rain everywhere
a biblical rain, the great
flood, when even dry
is wet, it is All Hallows Eve, trick
or treaters are gone, maybe
liquid zombies now, chocolate malted
shake ghosts, outside my window
watercolors with too much water
Salvador Dali with a case of the
runs, I sit like a stone before
the cataclysm, there is a kind
of pungent order hanging in the air
like some large animal in heat, feline
but not a cat, something softly menacing
crouched just outside my window
it could peer in on me, it's yellow eyes
frighteningly intelligent, a craving
as a cat for a mouse, yet a sensual
almost lecherous yearning, she could
be out there even now, ready to ...
but I am a rock, ensconced on my couch
dry and safe, as rocks tend to be
just before being washed away

Kissing is a Dance

Kissing is a dance she says
placing her hand over my lips

her other hand she keeps
behind her hip, as if hiding

a small measure of magic
cupped in her palm

ready to sprinkle when
everything is just so

Kissing is a dance I say
placing my hand over

her hand that holds the magic
that feels so like sand

from the beaches along
ancient shores, of worlds

beyond the death of the sun
where kisses are only legend

Kissing is a dance we say
cradling with our hands

that which is not magic
or sand from beaches past

but is breath within breath
is story within story, it is

the fire that is music
We dance within a kiss

Creating Christmas Traditions

Maybe we
decided may
be, we would
we decided
separately
but coincidentally
we came to the same
decision, we would open
our presents on Christmas
Eve, and then re-wrap them
trade them, and on Christmas
Morning, both being good
actors, we would act surprised
and we will be surprised, the act
of giving always surprises, and
after all, our memory being
not what it once was, we
will have forgotten
the night before
already
anyway

It's Not Nice to Play Dice with the Universe

You should see things
from my point of view

No, not really

The Universe has certain laws
that if broken
mean
things start to break

Gravity starts to get very
nervous around the High Holidays
the 3rd law of thermodynamics starts
thinking it's the 2nd law, anti-protons
start thinking that protons
are not so bad after all

Imagine it friends
If you saw yourself
through my point of view
and I saw myself
through your point of view

Even writing the notion down
in this poem is provocative enough
if not the beginning of the end

Didn't the Universe just blink out
for a microsecond
There it went again!

Or maybe that was another Bubble
Universe just passing through
I'm not kidding, you can look it up

Two in Too Small a Tub

Watch your elbow, honey!
Oh God I'm getting a cramp!
Your drowning me, darling!
I'm losing my ... where's the
It's behind me I'm behind
Where's your ...
It's not that small!
What's that?
It looks like a dog
I thought you had a cat!
Oh, My God, doggy Tongue!
It could have been worse
No it couldn't!
At least he didn't find ...
It's not that small!
He's gone
Great! Let's go to bed
EEEK! There's the Cat!
The cat thought it was all
Soooo Disgusting!
But cats lick ...
Well, we won't go there!
Or will we?

Declaration of Slowness

I believe we should all just slow down
It should be a part of our constitution
Wasn't it originally in the Declaration
of Independence, but Benjamin Franklin
crossed it out, because he was just too
damned industrious, and look where we
are now, careening out of control, feeding
chaos, speeding the ending of everything

Certain cultures understand the need
to move deliberately, no, slowly, to think
slowly, to talk slowly, make love slowly, so
take your time, don't give in to time, poke
your finger in its eye, shake your fist, give
it the Finger, it's only a mind invention, give
it a Time Out, and take a nap between the tick
and the tock, or get a watch that you wind
and then forget to wind it, no one's watching

Watching the Watched

the plain clothes men were in
plain clothes this time, usually
they are more stylish, more hip

but today

it was dawn of the dead

this time, I managed to slip by
and remarked to a passerby
“They seem to be slipping”
she replied, “I’m in disguise”

I let her pass

Love Letters to Maureen

Maureen O'Hara dances barefoot in my dreams
She carries a knowing inward looking grin
A grin that says, "I have spied out your secret
hidden heart, and have seen you loving me there"
Her hair leads me on, hair the color of the sun
dipped in strawberry Kool-Aid, hair that guides ships
at sea, through the dangerous waters of shallow existence
She stands, hands on hips, feet wide, eyes blazing

I have written her uncountable love letters
even if they have never been delivered, even if
I have never been delivered, delivered of her perfume
daubed, heart drenched, disarming confirmations

I am left with her coming to me in dreams
She is always in her prime, as on the big screen
Fiery, unquenchable, not to be tamed
A woman fearless in love, matchless in spirit
Even as dreams must fade

Why Did the Chicken Cross the Road?

The chickens are building something
Now chickens don't normally build, or
so I thought. It looked rather man made, not
that man made is particularly good. It was impressive
though. They would gather things they found, stones
twigs, bits of metal, they dipped them in chicken
poop, what else, and attached them to chicken
wire, obviously, hanging rather resolutely from
a drooping telephone wire. How it got there I
cannot say, and the chickens are not talking, at
least not as I can determine. But this structure
is growing, rising up to meet the sun, or
something else, something not of this world
Perhaps they are constructing this tower, as a
sign, invitation, saying, yes, please come and
deliver us, we are ready, all is as told long
long ago. When this chicken Tower of Babel
is completed, the sun will bow it's golden head
and Chickens will rule the world ever after

Doorways To, Through, and Beyond

How little one comprehends
the terror/temptation of doorways
whether they be front or back
go from where to where

open one just a crack and the light
that stabs forth will be an alien light
the air beyond populated with atoms
that have too many excitable electrons

and the sounds that will scamper in
are not quite right, a dog but not
the patter of rain drops or perhaps
some weather that is entirely other

I can see by your expression that you
have doubts, think I am overly fanciful
poetic even, God forbid, I have passed
through doors beyond, beyond number

never step through a doorway with innocent
eyes, always examine with utmost care angles
that betray geometry, and remember you can
never return the same person who left

Oh, I know you won't listen, no
one ever does, but if you don't
there will be a tiger at your back
or something worse, be forewarned

I am now safe beyond all doorways
but you out there, feel free, go on
through, it beckons, beyond could be
something just beyond ordinary, or ...

Be sure and close the door behind you!

An Entangled Fairy Tale

The princess married outside of her expected circle, she considered this her only unexpected choice, except that she was exceptionally concerned with the complexity of sex, more so than her husband who thought sex uncomplicated, even though his princess would react in a bewildering fashion, cry out when it was only the moon rising, and she would whisper secrets into his ear that even she did not understand, and she would stretch out her sweat drenched naked body and declare how the French kiss inscribed the heart of particle physics even though she herself knew not the nature of such a kiss

The Key to the Sky

A small man with a key
started climbing up a tall, tall, tall
rickety ladder. A wide eyed moppet said
Oh My, he's going to fall!
But he didn't
He wore a long black coat
and a crooked hat. And he climbed
and he climbed and he climbed
up and up and up
The tip top of the old wobbly ladder
could not be seen. The sky grew dark
but somehow we could still see
the man with the key, he seemed
to almost fall time and time again
A shepherdess with her flock said
He must be an acrobat!
Then, he stopped, and a hush
fell, and a blind beggar said
He's reaching for the key
And indeed he was, deep down
into his pocket it was, and then
out. A mounted policeman said
Why it's as big as a dinosaur
Indeed, a dinosaur
A T Rex!
said a ballerina, No! A Brontosaurus!
Said a Leprechaun
It was a skeleton key, of course
But where was the keyhole
we all whispered? And then
there it was, as big as a crescent
moon in the sky, and fiery red
And it seemed to slither
like a celestial snake
And then somehow, impossibly
the small man brought the monstrous

key to bear, and it thundered into place
and we all stopped breathing
Could he possibly turn such a lock?
Would he turn such a lock?
And then, then, he did just that
And there was not a sound
And the fiery light went out
And we waited
And we waited
And we waited

And ...
And ...
Nothing happened

And that was the most wondrous
and scary thing of all

Cosmological Cats

I'm following a cat in the moonlight
His tail held straight up, like a flag leading
me to answers. Cats are story, mythological
Dogs are real. Cats cross barriers, they
dance with chaos, they skip rope with entropy
They are familiars, but not to witches, to twilight;
to that which falls apart, becomes undone. They
know where the bodies are buried; they
are the bodies. They know it's all an illusion
that they are an illusion. And that's what makes
it fun, what makes the night so illuminated
It's not their eyes that helps them see at night
it's the ultimate paradox that lights their
path. Why, if you follow a cat in the moonlight
You are an illusion following an illusion

Exploring My Universe

It has always been my secret ambition to describe in great detail my universe, not The Universe, not billions of stars, or billions of galaxies, nor billions of whatever, not dark matter or dark energy, nor the next big bang, but my bedroom perhaps, or what makes up my pillow or bedspread, and even what bugs might crawl or fly about. I would note these insects in a journal as a naturalist might, and I would take samples of the air I breath, and the carpet I tread upon, and I would note their chemical makeup in a laptop computer as a chemist might. I would study how the colors of the walls effect my mental acuity and how the walls themselves seem to close in on me at night, even though I can't see them in the darkness, and I would write about these walls in a diary, read it to myself as I lay on my couch and listen half nodding in my chair
But I know that I will never do this, and that no one has ever done it, because if they had, a truth would be uncovered that would shock them to the core, and they would have to extend that truth to Universe out there, and then they would simply have to cease to exist, there would be no other way
So I just sit and watch old reruns of Babylon 5
drink beer, and sometimes fall asleep and dream

I'm Not Here to Talk About That

I'm not here to talk about that
No, really, whether it's global
warming, or universal health
care, it's not for me. I'll talk
about the last best piece of apple
pie I've eaten, or the taste of my
wife's lips on my lips, but I've
decided to be apolitical, areligious
I've decided if I can't see it, hear it
smell it, touch or taste it, I will leave
it alone for a while. If the sea rises
I will marvel at the taste of salt
on my lips, the cold of the water
lapping my ankles as I walk my
streets. The cry of seagulls too far
inland, the grip of water that is a color
that is wrong, and a smell that says
water is here to stay, as it has been always
As for universal health care. Well, the
sick have never been very profitable
and the dead always go back to the sea

Walk On the Wild Side

I've left the gate open and the milk goat
will get out, but I'm distracted, the raccoons
stole my milk pail, they will take anything
that is of no use to them, I'm carrying a carving
of a raven in my pocket, I caress it, almost
as if a lover, there is a storm in the air, the sky
is wild, and the trees are distressed, and I should
get to shelter, but I'm electric, my body at a
precipice, nearing a climax no man could ever
bring, I wonder that the gods of chaos have
left their kingdoms to take me for their own

Naturally

I balance on my right leg
my left out to the side, holding
position for some time, I have
good balance, my girlfriend
doesn't shave her legs, she wants
to remain natural, she shaves nothing
she says, I am not a man, and man she's
not, finally my left leg touches
my girlfriend can do the splits, often
in the nude, all the way, then lower her
torso till the side of her face
lays flat on the floor, her breasts
pillowed under her, a more natural
woman I have never seen, as she raises
I catch her eyes, hold them a moment
then travel down to that now glistening
black, dangerously natural growth of hair
between her legs, I am forced to a decision
I must start shaving my legs, but refuse
doing under my arms, there are some limits
beyond which no man should have to go

The Truth About Vampires

I'm tired of Vampires
they are not cool, not sexy
Bram Stoker would not
approve, Vampires are evil
they are undead, they are
ugly, driven, unquenchable
dead beyond death, they are not
having fun, they don't wink
at the audience, blood is their
only glory, they are predators, but
don't enjoy it, they don't have
any imagination, they are blood
suckers, it's their job, sunset
to sunrise (well almost), the night
to night grind, I'm waiting
for someone to drive the final
stake, Buffy I suppose, Bram
is spinning in his grave or
if the Universe has any sense
of Macabre fun, then he is dreaming
uneasy coffin dreams, awaiting
yet another in an unceasing march
of dreary faux Gothic sunsets

Will You Sign Our Petition?

Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea, Wild Wild West, The Man from Uncle, from the 60s, they date us, but they form our expectations too

Shouldn't we have done more?
We went to the moon, but what have we done lately?

Computers, yes, but they're so Microsoft
Cell Phones, they're so ... Everywhere
How have we progressed?

Do we travel the bottoms of our oceans?
Do we fight off evil villains with futuristic gadgets?
Do we defeat socialist henchmen with capitalist ingenuity?

We left something behind in the 60s
A sense of fun, settled for what should be rather than what could be, what is commercial rather than what makes us want to get up in the morning, unfold our briefcase flying car start our 10 minute 500 mile commute

The Jetsons showed us the good life of 2001 except we were left at the station, and HAL was left in charge and he never did show his paranoia, we all became his sons and daughters

It's time we got off our conformists butts showed some underwater genes, some Western techno machismo, some Illya Kuryakin sexy, enigmatic, futuristic innovation

We are at the crossroads, our bullet train awaits
Are we on board, do we have the right stuff?
Stuff to get us renewed for another season?
Can we count on you, will you sign our petition?
Will Star Trek live again for the sake of us all?

Riding a Heat Wave

Not a cloud in sight
so hot, oxygen has a hard time
crossing the street
God, for some rain
wash away all the tears
the cleansing power

of water, she talks within herself, sitting
at the kitchen table, late in the afternoon
drenched, "God for a gully washer!"
and someone to fix the air-conditioner

and what if
some stranger were to pull off the highway
into this one tavern town, drive down her
street, park next to her trailer, peer into her
kitchen window, some strange women
an identical twin perhaps, driving a brand new
Cadillac, blinking away hot tears
in air-conditioned comfort

does water wash all the scars clean?

the twin never pulls off, drives straight on through

a nice cold shower will have to be good enough, she
strips her drenched T-shirt, and heads down the narrow hall
and is goosed by something just below
the surface of the shimmering sheen of heatmare
Jeez, this is no good, her nipples have a mind
of their own, it's too damned hot, a dam breaking
flood, a release, a drowning, this is, no, she
can't seem to get enough
oxygen

a hard rain has got to come
pounding and cleansing and ... ooh ... so cold!

An Ode to Joy's Legs

Joy has wondrous long legs
right down to the ground
and beyond. The earth
whispers up to the souls
of the feet of those legs
jealous whispers, jealousy
beyond embarrassment. From
the sky rain tears of envy
from the sun whose light
can never shine bright enough
that I wouldn't be in wonder
of those legs even though blinded
The universe itself wouldn't be
quite the same without them, E
equals MC squared wouldn't quite
be so relative. But with Joy's legs
the universe is in balance, and
Einstein rests in peace, just around
her belly button, and Newton, being
more of a gravitational kind of guy
worships at her feet. Now if she
would only show them off a little
more just for me, then every star every
where would shine just a little brighter

the morning after the aliens invaded

who would have thought that alien invaders would be such bores, didn't they watch all the right movies, no, they botched it, they conquered the earth, of course, but they did it with no imagination, and the morning after, the speech about how the earth would be a more peaceful and rational place: no charisma, no drama, the speech writer was having a bad day

but their clothing style brought back bow ties for women. they loved the waltz and polka, which was the only reason they thought we were worth invading. they came without space ships, they just appeared, it was how all the best alien invasions

worked. who could have known! we should have that's who. hadn't we always dreamed of aliens saving our bacon, at least those of us who weren't vegetarians and now how do we get rid of them? we can't throw them out of office, can we? we'll just have to live with them and their strange taste in beer, and that they have no true religion, except a strange aversion to capital letters

A Day in the Life of the Sun

It's a wonder how the Sun takes
for granted it's gravitational influences
If it were a human, it would place
such references at the top of a celestial
resume, but it's only one insignificant star

However, by way of mythology
we know of slain heroes of yore
that were reborn as stars, being
billions of years old their heroic
deeds are long forgotten, even
by the most worshiped gods, or
the least worshiped goddesses, but
our star has an even temperament

The Sun has been worshiped, but not for
deeds done on Earth, born of the flesh
It is not immortal, it will die, even
if it could, it doesn't dwell on death
And if our star be living, self aware, it
leaves it to the Earth's Moon to write epic
poems upon the sands of the Milky Way
about the birth of the solar system
and how Pluto is really a planet

The Sun is getting on in eons
Getting gravitationally forgetful
But we can all rest assured
that it is on the job, giving heat
and light that shines on the measured
cosmic trivialities of our mundane
human travails, countered by the universal
question, "What is dark matter, anyway?"

A Seasonal Tapestry

Spring

wake up
the sun is talking
don't linger in bed
green is happening
and you're liking it

Summer

bubble gum kisses, ice
cream passions, swimming without
seeking the cool, dreaming shade
the sun has delusions
of grandeur

Autumn

Twilight steps out
shines, pumpkins conjure
earth's color pallet, a chill
says life is too
short

Winter

defined by lines, what
is absent, the thermometer
lazy, the sun has doubts
weary of the grind

Just Another Sunday Morning

The moon is lounging just outside
under an old oak. It comes calling
when feeling low. It doesn't knock
knows I am not sleeping, knows
I don't have to look to know, the air
is liquid luminescence, time is tripping
on dime store magic mushrooms, the sun
has lost its god status, and the moon
is no longer a mistress, but a master

I am loosing substance. Luna is
taking the stuff that once belonged
to the sun. It is moonopausal!
Infinitesimally small diamonds waltz
along moonbeams from window to wall
Beautiful, but I am a sun person, and can't
be wooed by such tricks. My left foot
the one without a sock, the one with the nail
on the big toe painted purple, it can not
hold out, yielding to the new order
and like the Cheshire Cat's smile ...

... the Sunday paper hits the front door
As I step outside the sun is back, but brooding
Next to my paper sits an unnaturally large squirrel
I expect it to speak, but it just winks, signaling
the start of a new day, in my fuzzy neighborhood

A Day at the Beach with an Umbrella

the day I discovered a new color
I will never forget
and yet
... there is no name
for this color, and I am not good
with names
it reminds me of blue
but it's so not blue, it's frightening

I'm looking at all the Impressionists painters
trying to find a match
... but all of their names sound
the same, and all the colors run together
gold runs into chartreuse runs into vermilion runs
... off the canvas into my eyes

the eye is a determiner, and ultimately the mind
this is disconcerting, perhaps
... there are colors out there
that the mind ... refuses
to recognize ... shunned colors
entire objects. That color we keep running into
... unexplained bruises, how did that
get there? Because the mind is blind
perhaps there are beings, nimble of foot, who
have learned to stay out of our way, and do all
the most important ... stuff ... that everyone
wonders how it ever gets done

or
perhaps we are all living in a painting by Monet or is it Manet
I can never remember which is which
But there is always an Umbrella

Dancing Fish

My neighbor says it was cats
but my neighbor is staring 60
in the face and wears string
bikini underwear, don't ask!
He doesn't know squat, cats
my behind! It was fish, running
on land, saw them out the corner of
my eye, just as I opened the back
door one morning. No, they were
dancing. They were dancing fish!

Dancing Fish? My wife says
She doesn't believe me. Pretty soon
I'll be seeing herds of dancing fish
Herds? My wife says. Shouldn't
that be schools. I say, no
they weren't swimming. It was so
obvious. They were on land, just
across the street, I answer. A Troop
She says, A Troop of dancing fish
Something is not right here

What is that? A certain slant of light, and I see, what?
Could that be a tentacle? Dancing fish and now ...
Dear, did you know you had a tentacle growing
out of your forehead? I say, and she answers
Of course, I've always had one. She smiles as
if I'd had one too many beers. She adds, You used
to say I'd had the prettiest one you had ever seen!
My God, how could I have forgotten! I reach out
with my tentacle and gently entwined it with hers, as in
a kiss. Maybe it was seeing the dancing fish. Amazing!
Seeing a troop of dancing fish is truly be out of this world

A Tale Told on the Road from Nowhere to Everywhere

The girl had a fan in her hand, some kind
of Japanese Haiku fan, with intricate
butterflies drawn as if about to fly off
and tease the butter ball cat that loved
to pretend to be the mighty huntress
but wouldn't dream of killing anything

The fan girl had eyelashes that absorbed
seismic waves from Alaska and transmitted
them to ageing geologists in Burns, Oregon
who believed the Earth was really, really old
and that God was so damned tired of so much
attention, and longed for cold desert nights

Even sometimes Japanese fans begin to weep
when the air is so still that butterflies take up
knitting, when the butter ball cat discovers
the metaphysical joys of cellular discontent

The girl with the fan begins to tell a story
not a long story, a story she has told
before, has always told, she weaves it like
a spider's web, and something wondrous
opens it's one blazing eye and falls in love

A Meeting to Discuss the Numbers

We should call a meeting
an executive meeting
There is only two of us
and we have no minions
But we make all the decisions
and deciding is hard work

Meetings are always in
and it will expand on our
new tradition of at least five
kisses each and every day
Which seems like an arbitrary
number, but marriages have
hinged on seemingly less
solid mathematical trivialities
Like $1 \text{ over } 2$ or $2 \text{ divided by } 1$
Or, of course, $2 \text{ to the power of } 1$

It will be an evening meeting
Not open to the public, but
open to the creation of some new
equations, discovering when two
bodies become one, and when
one kiss becomes five, five
becomes one, when we wish
for the appropriate chalk board
on which to write all the wonderful
equations that always seem to work out
But where the answer is always a new
born number, a bright-eyed number
that is resurrected with each singular kiss

The Philosophy of Ritual

I awake one minute after the hour
it doesn't matter the hour, it could
be the hour before or the hour after
but always the one minute, and

for breakfast, one bowl of maple
and brown sugar instant oatmeal
with one spoon of peanut butter
one banana, 2/3 glass of milk
not a full glass, not orange juice, or
an egg, no: oatmeal, peanut butter, one
banana, all mixed together in the same
bowl, yes: all mixed together, always
the same, leave the house at 25 after
no matter the hour, no matter work
or play, we are always leaving
always coming back, and just before
bed, always, the good night kiss

freedom is not what we do differently
it's that we do the same thing
for the thousandth time, as if we
demand to do it again for the millionth
if we don't get quite as much from it
we can have a strong cup of coffee

Exploration

Oh to have been the first
to set foot on the moon
that desolate body and discover
that the earth is round

Oh to dive deep into the depths
of the sea and behold creatures
so strange that there are no words
and the world has become worlds

Oh to imagine what has never been
dreamed, never anticipated, and yet
so right, so obvious, so infinitely true
beautiful beyond the power of mind

Oh to uncover, the regions, zones, corridors
unknowable complexities, dangerous environs
safe harbors, jungles of variety, deserts
of seeming simplicity, valleys never before
seen, and heights with views that marvel for
all time, beyond the moon, deeper than
stranger than, the sea; dreamed, imagined
anticipated, and for all that the human
mind is much more than mind, within

Oh for the exploration of one human being
one for another, nothing is quite so difficult
so satisfying, nothing so human, so courageous
beyond revelation, spirit by way of spirit

Meeting Women

I ask a woman
A tall radiant
red headed woman
A woman I could imagine
riding double, behind, on a black stallion

A woman who ponders, intimately
a grocery list, a scroll really
written in intricate calligraphy
All the while fishing the instant
rice section. Wild rice nibbles

She doesn't appear to hear
as I ask,

“Would you consider sharing
a Hungry Man Frozen
Mexican dinner some evening?”

Her concentration
never wavers
Indeed, could the List
be the Key to Existence?

Bowing her head
In Prayer?

At last, nodding, as if deciding
upon the least painful
most merciful mode of execution
She rips the list
creating two equal halves

Wading up stream
sighting some free range
mushrooms
she hands me the bottom
half

It says
1 dozen eggs, garbage bags, and 1 man
with a craving for Mexican frozen dinners

My Kissing Manifesto

The word manifesto has a bad reputation, the connection with communism I suppose, but it's a fine word, meaning, a public declaration of principles, policies or intentions, and I do here declare:

It's not only the quantity of kisses that count, it's the quality, it's not only the quality that counts, it's the quantity, that's because kisses become the souls of butterflies, not enough kisses and some butterflies are flying around without souls, if a kiss is born without the full heart concentration, and intent of the kissing couple, then we have unhappy butterflies butterflies flitting around in a bad mood Couples have a solemn responsibility to the afterlives, and happiness of butterflies

THIS poem is one very, very, long haiku
There are no metaphors or similes here

More kisses,
Only the best kisses:
My Manifesto

Dancing, Acrobats, Controversy, and Sweet Nothings

It must have been that Russian judge she says
'There is no Russian Judge I say, I'm thinking
Well there might be but who cares, it's a cross
between Dancing with the Stars and I'm not sure
They say it's dancing, but if you land
on your head purposefully, repeatedly
Is that dancing? And I move closer
under the covers, she says, he's a former
gymnast, and I'm of two minds, baffled
and determined, she snuggles close, and
says, you know that Russian judge, I
say, it's probably the Chinese judge, since
the fall of the Soviet Union their judges
have all moved to Finland, the Fins lost
in the semi-finals, she says, and takes my
hand, right say I, it all hinged on 1 vote
The Chinese Judge we harmonize. We
kiss, and she seems to be losing interest,
but then the a Russian guy does a finger
stand, and she sits up straight in bed, amazed
and then there is a protest, it is determined
that one of his fingers is artificial, she
laughs, and I wink, and it all becomes
more intriguing, spicy, even for television
and she whispers hotly into my ear
and yes, spice is definitely the right
note to judge any human dance, and yes
the Chinese Judge is a former Tuba player

Worshipping Ingrid

Ingrid Bergman
That face, those eyes
A woman, all women

What is she trying to tell me?

Passionate, cool, fiery, fragile
all in an instant, and for all time
She comes alive in your arms
and you can live only in hers

What is she trying to say?

Casablanca in black and white
black and white and shades of gray
Rick, how could you let her go?
how could the world take her away?

She has something to say to me

She is now lost in the shadow play of memories
Color lives only deep down in those eyes
too far down for mortals to see
down where love toils tirelessly

She is whispering now, I can almost hear

Film fades and dies if it is not cared for
The same is true of love
but Ingrid beguiles time joyously
her radiant expressive face and cosmic soulful eyes call out to me

She whispers close into my ear, and the scene fades to black

Gabby the Gabby Cat

Gabby the gabby cat talks
the walk, revels in the primeval
nature of her tail, makes
allowances for particle
physics, envisions relativity
her eyes proof positive
that time travel is more
than just science fiction

She counts her nines lives
and finds so much more
Chases the moon
cuddles with eternity
purrs persimmon, has
slipped into our hearts
kneaded a soft comfy spot
and curled up for a forever stay

Drawing You

I'm gonna draw a picture of you, a masterpiece
But you know six year olds who draw better than me
I see your Mona Lisa grin. But I vow to capture your wide
brown eyes and pert nose. Your wondering freckles

Someday I'll draw your favorite horse, of course
catching his two year old days, and your cat
too, a calico, with mouse tail breath
And if it is not a sin to brag in the name

of love, you can count the days, and nights too
It will take a pint sized pine and some ugly marks
but I'll have you down in graphite on wood pulp
A declaration, my masterpiece, your Mona Lisa grin

Princess of the United Nations

we held hands and that
was as far as it went
and you thought it went
too far, for your hands
held certain obligations
certain sensitive negotiations
in your hands rested
the fate of the world
your hand in mine
is magic, as long as I stay
within bounds of the Treaty
a kiss might be in our
future as long as your
lips are not needed
to save the world
from global warming

The Deep Darkest Heart of the Night

I'm playing my old records again
the warmth of the music
the old songs, the words that sooth
mostly the voices of women

in the darkest part of the night
often I awake from a dream
where I am washing your feet
the warm sudsy water sloshing
in an old porcelain bowl
and you are singing a song
and the melody is familiar
but the words are not of this world

I play one record after another
after another, after another
and something happens
it always happens

I don't know why I wash your feet
or why you would let me
or if you will tell me your name
or if the song you are singing
is not a song, but a tale
you are telling
that has no ending

it always happens
it's always the deep, darkest
heart of the night
and the music
and the tale
and the washing away
washing away
washing away

and finally ...
Forgiveness

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Author Bio

Don Bellinger was born and currently lives in Walla Walla WA, which is the wine capital of Eastern Washington. Where everyone is always talking about their latest Cab. And we're not talking Cab Calloway! About its heady nose, earthy body, and fetching bottom! Well, we seem getting off on a tangent. Don writes poetry and short stories or perhaps short stories and poetry. He is married to Joy, also an original Walla Wallan. She reads his work for a nominal fee. Is \$5 nominal? Don much prefers beer.

“Mildred? Mildred! This guy has no Author Photo! How can we tell if he smokes a pipe, wears a toupee, or has a cat?”

“Mildred!! Where is that woman?”

“Damn. She started without me!”

Don doesn't smoke. His toupee ran off to join the circus. There is a cat, Gabby. But she is a master website hacker and is not available for interviews. It's all in the tail or tale. Wouldn't you know.

There is a website: donbellinger.com. But it's probably been hacked by Gabby. So beware!

If you like this eBook and have \$7.99 just lounging around on the couch in need of some exercise, send it out to Amazon and buy an old fashioned paperback book copy.

