

ROGER ZELAZNY  
WHEN PUSSYWILLOWS LAST  
IN THE CATYARD BLOOMED







5<sup>20</sup>

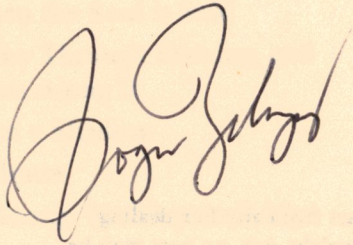
WHEN PUSSYWILLOWS LAST  
IN THE CATYARD BLOOMED







ROGER ZELAZNY  
WHEN PUSSYWILLOWS LAST  
IN THE CATYARD BLOOMED  
AND OTHER POEMS  
With Drawings by Geoffrey Pollard

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Roger Zelazny". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Roger" being more prominent and the last name "Zelazny" following in a similar style.

NORSTRILIA PRESS

Norstrilia Press  
PO Box 91  
Carlton Victoria 3053  
Australia

First published 1980

Text copyright © 1980 Roger Zelazny  
Drawings copyright © 1980 Geoffrey Pollard

Printed by  
WARATAH PRESS  
151 Rooks Road, Vermont, Victoria 3133, Australia

This book is copyright. Apart from any fair dealing  
as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part may be  
reproduced by any process without permission.  
Enquiries should be addressed to the publisher.

National Library of Australia  
Cataloguing-in-Publication data

When Pussywillows Last In The Catyard Bloomed

ISBN 0 909106 05 3 paper

0 909106 06 1 cloth

I. Zelazny, Roger



## CONTENTS

Foreword	1
When Pussywillows Last in the Catyard Bloomed	9
Braxa	14
Brahman Trimurti	16
Thoughts of the Jupiterian Frantifier Fish	18
Lover's Valediction: Forbidding Day's Sacrament	21
Future, Be Not Impatient	22
Somewhere a Piece of Colored Light	24
Southern Cross (Elegy, Hart Crane)	25
The De-Synonymization of Winter	26
Flight	27
What is Left When the Soul is Sold	28
Our Wintered Way Through Evening, and Burning Bushes Along It	29
The Man Without a Shadow	30
In the Dogged House	34
Wriggle Under George Washington Bridge	35
Faust Before Twelve	36
The Doctrine of the Perfect Lie	37
I Used to Think in Lines That Were Irregular to the Right	38
LP Me Thee	39
The Burning	40
I, the Crooked Rose's Dream, Dumb-Sung Anatomie	42

## PREFACE

The idea of this collection was first discussed in 1978 when Roger Zelazny was in Australia as Guest of Honour at UNICON 4. A number of people have worked to make this collection a reality. We would like to thank Keith Curtis who first thought of the idea, and Terry Dowling, George Mannix, John Davies, and Van Ikin, who all helped at some stage.

The Publishers



To Ruby Olson,  
with gratitude and affection





## FOREWORD

In an earlier incarnation I wanted to be a poet. For about five years then (from approximately 1956 to 1961) I wrote nothing but poetry—incredible amounts of it, mostly bad, but improving somewhat as time went on. Twice in my college career, I received Western Reserve University's Finley Foster Poetry Award for some of it. The only piece preserved in this volume from one of those competitions is the Hart Crane elegy "Cross Caribbean". In or about 1961 I realized that only Robert Frost and Carl Sandburg were making their livings writing poetry whereas numerous other authors were doing well under the wings of muses less comely. The writing was there on the washroom wall. I wanted to be a full-time professional writer. I made my decision and wrote the story "A Rose for Ecclesiastes" in October of 1961 and said goodbye to all that. I parked that particular story in a briefcase, took a safe government job in February of 1962 and began a steady output of science fiction stories. I began selling them around the end of March of that year.

But poetry had a way of creeping into a few of those early stories—and when I needed a poem I still had batches of them to draw upon, though I'd chucked hundreds when I'd made my decision for prose. A few of those remaining fit stories



here and there and a few others were passed along to fanzines, till I'd exhausted the file. Some of these were leftovers from a MS unsuccessful in the Yale Younger Poets Competition (I forget which year's; and the name of the volume was *Chisel in the Sky*, if anyone cares).

Of these early pieces, the only halfway decent ones remaining were the dozen which I assembled for a souvenir booklet published in an edition of one thousand by the 1974 World Science Fiction Convention (Discon) at which I was guest of honor, and "Lover's Valediction . . ." which I recently came across when reviewing some old files. These thirteen are included herein, and here is where they've been: "Braxa" is from my story "A Rose for Ecclesiastes", "Brahman Trimurti" appeared in *Nyarlahotep* 3 (and, I believe, in my old college literary magazine *Polemic*), "Thoughts of the Jupiterian . . ." was in *Kallikanzaros* 4, "Future, Be Not Impatient" is from my story "The Graveyard Heart" (and probably drawn from the old *Chisel* MS), "Somewhere a Piece of Colored Light" was in *Double:Bill* 10, "Flight" is from "The Graveyard Heart" also, "What is Left When the Soul is Sold" appeared in *Yandro* 166, "Our Wintered Way through Evening . . ." was another piece from "The Graveyard Heart", "The Man Without a Shadow" was in *Amra*, vol. 2, no. 34—and I believe it also appeared in another old college literary magazine, *Skyline*—and "In the Dogged House" was another "The Graveyard Heart" piece. Thanks to every and all for a first or second showing.

And two *Chisel* survivors, which are also included here, emerged in 1977 to appear in *The Speculative Poetry Review*. These are "Wriggle under George Washington Bridge" and "Faust before Twelve". Then "I, the Crooked Rose's Dream . . ." also appeared in *The Speculative Poetry Review* but was not a *Chisel* piece. It came later, but I am no longer certain exactly how much later.

"When Pussywillows Last . . .", "The Doctrine of the Perfect Lie" and "I Used to Think in Lines . . ." were written sometime during the past year, and this is their first appearance in print.

Every generation seems to breed an eccentric, talented poet who dies young and becomes something of an idol to the next generation. Sylvia Plath was too late for me in this



respect. In my day it was Hart Crane. I've read and still read a lot of poetry, but Crane's word magic probably had the most influence on whatever poetic style I may have. Next among favourites then came Dylan Thomas' incantations and later, Yeats' starkness and symbolism—with Auden's humor and Robert Lowell's power as sources of extreme reading pleasure to me. Rilke and Lorca were there early, too. Pound I respected, but that's hardly the same thing. Eliot seemed to have too many answers, and I was always suspicious of him no matter how well he phrased them. Galway Kinnell came later, and much later Diane Wakoski—along with a whole string of others. My formative years were past by then, though, and there is nothing to be gained by listing the names. Mainly, Hart Crane it was who struck the first chord I can recall, arousing my interest and later my respect, then love for the games the language plays.

Hell. I talk about these people and things as if I were a pro in this area, and I'm not. I mean only to state a few preferences and probable influences for Those Who May Care. I once knew the area fairly well, but I'm hardly out to reverse my decision of seventeen years ago and return to a first love with a boyish grin and a fistful of flowers. I feel more like one of the cows who'd wandered up to a trellis for lunch and later ruminated, "Everything's coming up roses".—Sorry about that, but there you are. I did have an extra reason for saying it, though.

I did win one other literary competition involving poetry in my college days. Cleveland poetess Collister Hutchison was asked to judge the contents of the April 1959 issue of *Skyline* magazine, selecting a single piece to receive a small cash award and a letter of comment. She gave it to my poetry parody piece "Decade Plus One of Roses" and allowed that despite its flippancy the author might amount to something as a writer one day if he applied himself. (For whatever it's worth, here it is. It doesn't belong in the body of this book, but it can occur at this point as an autobiographical gesture indicating interests and attitudes. Anyone with rose fever go directly to the end parenthesis and wait with the cow:



I. GERTRUDE STEIN.

The Rose rose from rose-rows.

## II. HART CRANE.

Find me my paper,  
                        here's my pen;  
Don't bother to bring them back again.

#### IV. VACHEL LINDSAY.

The roaring rose reared, raging rosily.

V. W.B.Y.

Mystic Rose! Missive of powers  
Too powerful to thwart. Circle, rose,  
Sword, cup and book. Let the throwers  
Of darkness see the silver moon rose.

## VI. ROBERT FROST.

You drownded in the hammock that day  
I planted a rosebush for you.  
I think I'll go and see your roses play  
Among the winds. (Why don't you come to?)

## VII. e. e. cummings

Row sof paper ,pen-  
siveth ought blown  
up onpaged plen-  
titudes ,m own  
!



VIII. T.S. etc.

April is very cruel,  
Consequently no roses in this hemisphere  
(But among the Bavenda  
Red flowers figure prominently in funeral rites).

IX. DYLAN THOMAS.

Paper rose! green in morning's bed,  
Gold in the evening, dead:  
Hell rose in your writing to red.

X. WALLACE STEVENS.

One dozen ways of wearing roses,  
And no one is wrong forever.

XI. ROSE ON THE ROAD.

Beat rose!  
alcohol-petalled,  
caricature-flower—  
walked on in the defiling night  
by fuzzyheaded disciples  
of the rival-red poppy.

Homo rose!  
crushed in the staggering morning,  
spit upon,  
cursed in the garbage-spilt light.

Gutter rose!  
brother!

Well. End of gesture. He was a good kid and it was nice meeting him again. He began taking things more seriously immediately thereafter.)

As with my stories, I have nothing to say concerning the substance of the following pieces. They either say it themselves or fail to. In the former case, my comments would be redundant; in the latter, too late. I like to think that if I'd stayed with it I could have amounted to something as a poet. I hope these pieces at least show the direction in which I might have gone.

Roger Zelazny  
Sante Fe, New Mexico  
May 1978



## THE POEMS





WHEN PUSSYWILLOWS  
LAST IN THE CATYARD BLOOMED

When pussywillows last in the catyard bloomed . . .

Fine line.

Lacking an accompanying thought, perhaps,  
yet . . .

My life is full of yet.

We assemble ourselves slowly,  
collecting pieces (such as the above).

Not all of them fit

and some should not have  
but did (such as the above).

Yet . . . I lack. Many things.

But have the pussywillows,  
and there are the cats

(envision them in heat if you would;  
hear their drawn-out wet-baby wails;  
hear them purr if you'd rather,  
or spit).

I have the yard.

The sun dies to the west of it,  
placing me in an enviable position  
stage left of moon and star.

Constellations chart themselves,  
stick-figured: geometry,  
parsimony, pieces . . .

Yet you are there, Old Bear,  
despite;

and beyond, the God of Galaxies?

(Praise Him, praise Him, Van Doren?

I cannot.

I've learned when to keep my mouth shut.)

Regard and rejoice with me  
if the piece be there.

Yet I lack the art critic's part.

Forgive.

When pussywillows last in the catyard boomed—  
Yes. I recall a day. Many days.  
In the yard. The green and the gray.  
The sun and the wind. Singing leaves to light.  
A bird, a tree, a war.  
He was there. The me  
of me to come, memory-bound,  
unknowing, yet of yet,  
conjuring a self that did not come,  
as I call spirits from the vasty deep.  
Peace, piece. Summoned,  
thou art there. The imaged word,  
Hart, pussywillows anchored in its glow—  
no farewells and unbetrayable—  
you were right—  
for there in the catyard—boom,  
blooming, boomed—they grew,  
were growing, grow.

Child, I have come.

I bring, beneath the indulgence  
of self and words, the love learned late,  
the places drained of hate,  
the extra reels of seeing.  
Piece by piece, yet by yet,  
I affirm what I affirm by denying  
what I do not, negative man  
of a thousand selves betrayed.  
I have a center,  
a place as still as a windless,  
birdless, bugless day  
without clouds.  
And it is from this place  
that I see you—







In the catyard last when bloomed the pussywillows  
walked I backward into my arms.

Yet.

Coming I have gone  
and going will I be. Yet.  
Madre de Firesong, Padre de Darkness,  
walking is how I see myself,  
always on hills or wet pavement,  
city by night, country by day,  
with no desire to rest,  
hopefully conjured, always wondering,  
never knowing, beginnings for endings  
and vice-versa, piece-  
meal, yet growing, like morning  
or evening shadow. Some you,  
in the pussywillowed yard of cats,  
farewell me not,  
but color, anchor me walking.

Within are we all.

Slowly ourselves assemble we,  
lacking accompanying thought,  
singing stars to sinking, citying the sea,  
we blood and bone about us,  
pump spirit, populate the dimness  
with past's suns' flicker, ray, day . . .

I hang my yets on the catyard gate,  
booming where pussywillows  
last in the backward-turned time  
evolved their reply,  
whose accent denies my good-bye:  
Yet, yet and yet. And I walk  
singing not praise



but wonder,  
part apart;  
imagined cats dance at my heels,  
at least as important, ever yet equally wise.

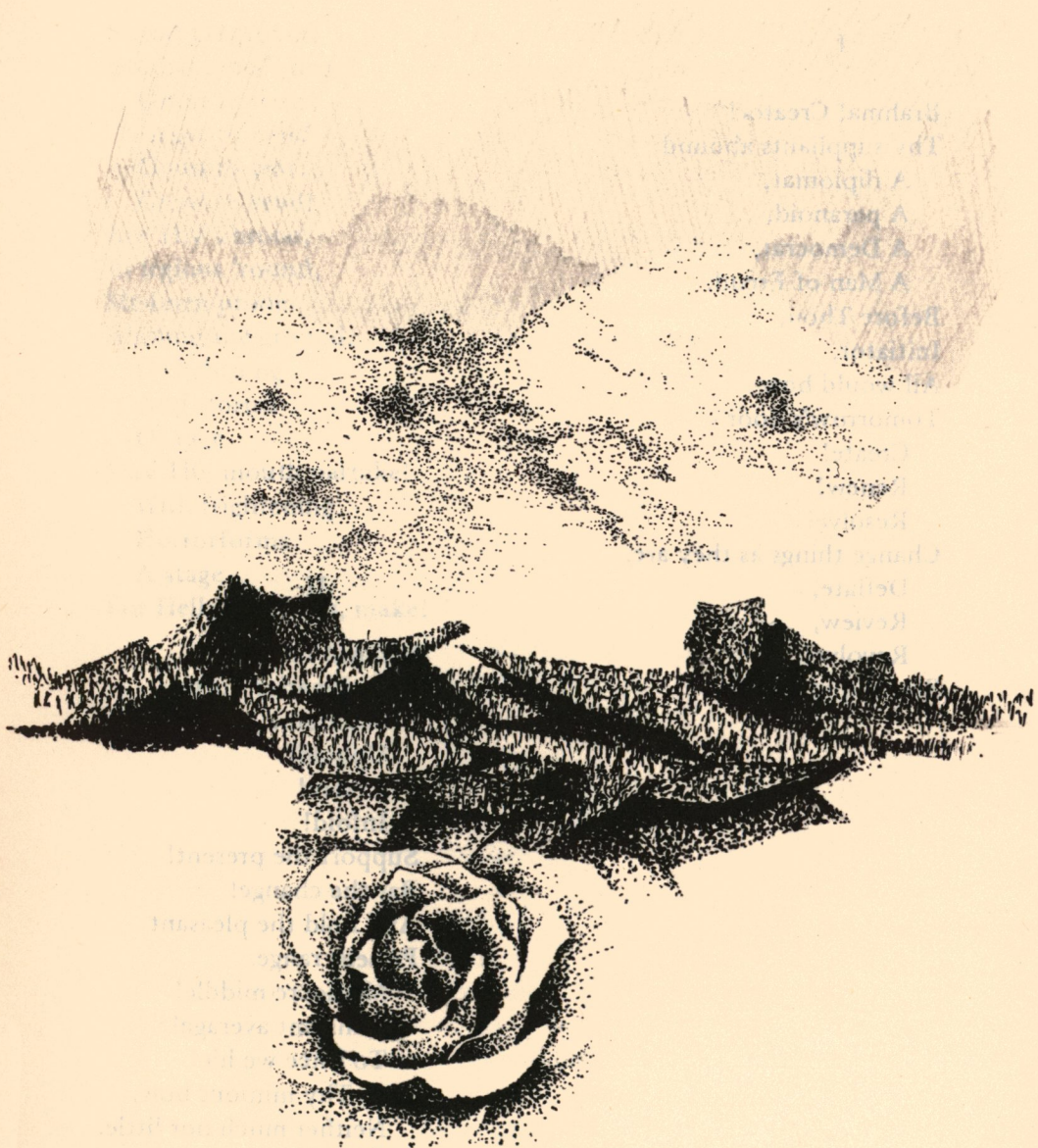
## BRAXA

In a land of wind and red,  
where the icy evening of Time  
freezes milk in the breasts of Life,  
as two moons overhead—  
cat and dog in alleyways of dream—  
scratch and scramble agelessly my flight . . .

This final flower turns a burning head.



BRAMHIN TRIMERTI



## BRAHMAN TRIMURTI

### I

Brahma! Creator!

Thy suppliants abound:

A diplomat,

A paranoid,

A Democrat,

A Man of Freud.

Before Thou,

Initiator,

All would bow—

Tomorrow's door—

Create!

Renew!

Resolve!

Change things as they are.

Deflate,

Review,

Revolve!

Status quo and par.

### II

Vishnu! Preserver!

Reactionaries' forte.

Maintain!

Uphold!

Retain!

Infold!

Support the present!

Bar the change!

And hold the pleasant

Present range.

Mediocre middle!

Constant average!

To Thee we hie!

Here Thy minions bow.

Neither much nor little.

Grant our suffrage.

Hear Thou our cry:

Hold the Here and Now!



### III

Shiva! Destroyer!  
Eternal rebel's liege!

Grant to wear!

Grant to bend!

Grant to tear!

Grant to rend!

Ere Thy Throne,  
In legions 'round,  
Madmen prone  
Abound the ground.

Of lightning

And storms

Of rage

May Thy mouth partake!

With frightening

Horrorforms

A stage

For Hell and Chaos, make!

## THOUGHTS OF THE JUPITERIAN FRANTIFIER FISH

During the "Night" Freeze  
At Which Time,  
Unfortunately,  
Consciousness  
is  
Maintained by  
the Fish, Who  
are, Also Un-  
fortunately, Quite  
Intelligent and Highly  
Sensitive Creatures—Alas!

i

Steep above,  
the clouds have stopped,  
and we are suspended  
in the loss of warmth:  
our frozen pond.

ii

The night is a rock  
to spread wet galaxies upon . . .

iii

Fie! oh day!  
a long night off,  
and that we cannot sleep.

We hang about  
till night is done—  
Black day—



in eyes' weightless prison,  
seeing—

in lake's dark lens,  
exposed—

falling up pits of the sky.

iv

To tear that sky down the middle  
will be more than the mind can bear.

Brittle, it will break.

v

Our frantic remains  
will continue the species,  
in ignorance and light.

vi

Swimming, as we did,  
they'll never give a damn,  
till just about this time  
tomorrow night.

vii

. . . When ice before shards  
is too right.

viii

And the light!

ix

The light . . .

x

Such  
is  
the  
kingdom  
of  
ice  
of  
ice  
such  
is  
the



LOVER'S VALEDICTION:  
FORBIDDING DAY'S SACRAMENT

Phlox of the liberal phoenix,  
breasting towers to day,  
                        extensive  
spirit ahead—  
                        repetitious Ananias,  
forever forswearing azimuths at noon—  
  sinking song  
in centuries of idiom overflows thy habit,  
as flocked thoroughfares spend sloped shadow.

Where gnash thy left,  
despairing doors,  
as cosmos-meeting crusts  
cover a baked vacancy,  
I say,  
out this emptied one,  
“Absence is not eaten”.

## FUTURE, BE NOT IMPATIENT

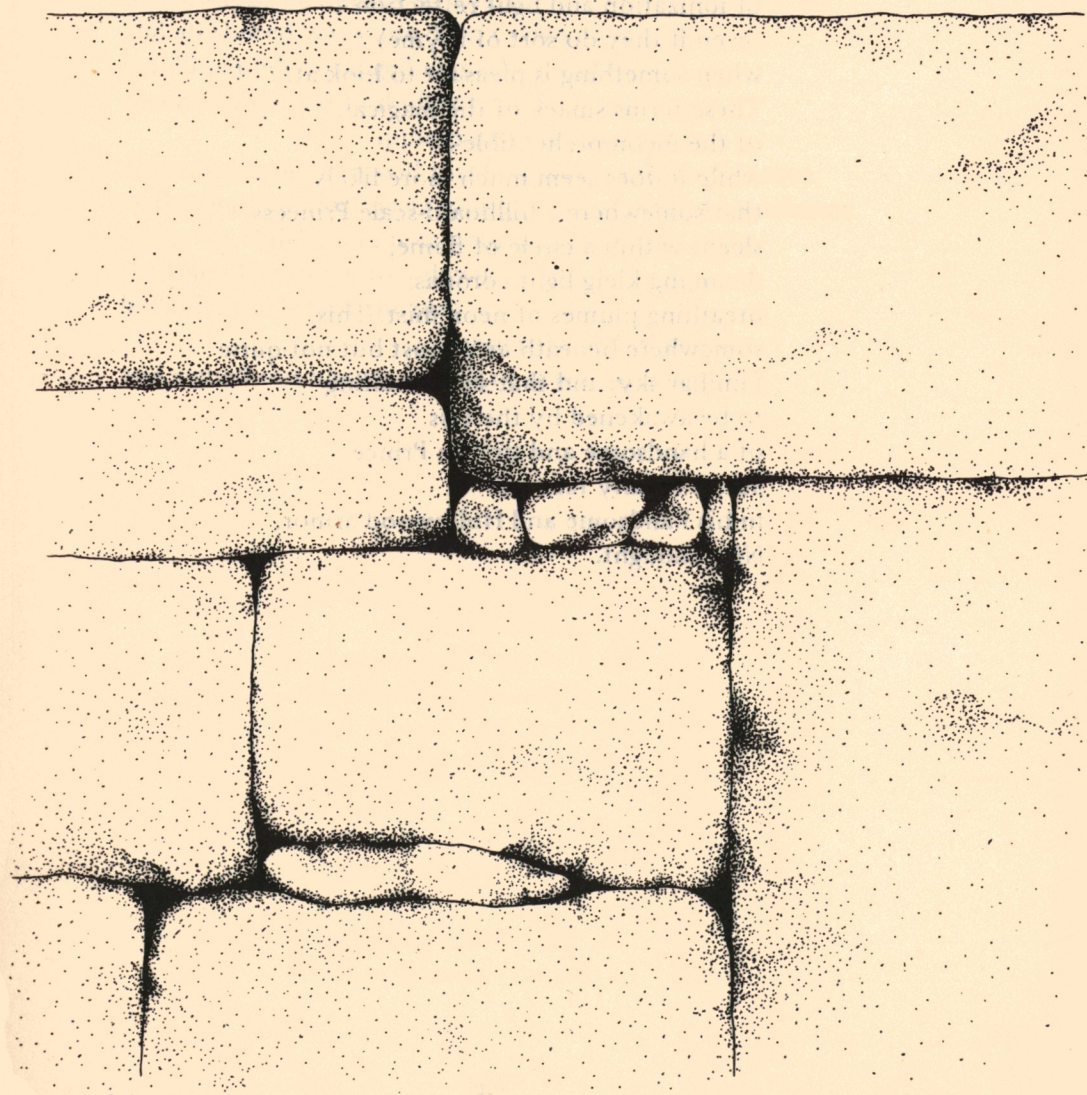
Someday, perhaps, but not this day.

Sometime; but then, not now.

Man is a monument-making mammal.

Never ask me how.





## SOMEWHERE A PIECE OF COLORED LIGHT

It is such a relative thing  
that I am loathe to explain  
this brightness as being of the sort  
once attributed to the breath of a goddess  
dozing just over the horizon. However,  
it is also a shame to talk  
of ionization and light refraction  
(even if they do sort of rhyme)  
when something is pleasant to look at.  
These terms smack of the magical,  
of the incomprehensible—  
while it does seem much more likely  
that somewhere a billboard-scale Princess  
sleeps within a circle of flame,  
dreaming kleig light coronas,  
breathing plumes of neon mist. This,  
somewhere beneath an almost but not-quite  
familiar sky; and that she is waiting  
to be awakened by the kiss  
of a handsome and tireless Prince  
about twenty feet tall  
in his handsome and Hollywood armor.  
Nice thought.



## SOUTHERN CROSS (ELEGY, HART CRANE)

ess Woman of the South,  
ring that I accomplished you . . .

slappings of your tidal sands.

under the sail of the sun,  
and sighed-out hissing sounds of spectered stars.

## THE DE-SYNONYMIZATION OF WINTER

- I. Pure.           Who bells out green mornings  
                      told the summer season to stop  
                      and slept a spell of silence in the earth;  
  
                      yawning, strode again and overtoned  
                      his bell to more green.
- II. Decadent       (For this rang the Second Baptist,  
                      Frazer, and Halloween,  
                      with Christmas-conquering irony?)  
  
                      Autumn Apollo  
                      golden and brown  
                      crackle the bowlength  
                      you bend.  
                      Would were you  
                      so flexible, my lord:  
                      They borrowed your unerring arrows  
                      and brought your sister  
                      to the child-board  
                      among tamed animals.
- III. Iceage         A revealed pudding of mud  
                      mars the making  
                      of morning snow biscuits  
                      in the maiden eye  
                      and the afternoon runs in the streets  
                      after one inspired advocate  
                      but is walked on to a broken crust  
                      the color a charcoal-powdered anything  
  
                      (yet strangely, the goat  
                      thigh-bone burning smell  
                      records in smoke script itself  
                      on skies the peculiar shade  
                      a bleeding handful spilt).



## FLIGHT

Hilted of flame,  
our frail phylactic blade  
slits black  
beneath Polestar's  
pinprick comment,  
foredging burrs  
of mitigated hell,  
spilling light without illumination.

Strands of song,  
to share its stinging flight,  
are shucked and pared  
to fit an idiot theme.  
Here, through outlooked chaos,  
climbed of migrant logic,  
the forms of black notation  
blackly dice a flame.

## WHAT IS LEFT WHEN THE SOUL IS SOLD

The sting of the startled porpoise,  
welting mulatto the bay's gray belly,  
brackish entrails of ocean,  
wrapping the mammary reef,  
nor all minnow-dried decidua,  
festooned of salt excrescence,  
shall barter from heaven back  
that heaved corpse—  
indemnifying eagles  
in peristaltic angle—  
by felling fleet the flagstaff wing  
on folds of stomach slough.



OUR WINTERED WAY THROUGH EVENING,  
AND BURNING BUSHES ALONG IT

(Where only the evergreens whiten . . .)

Winterflaked ashes heighten  
in towers of blizzard.

Silhouettes unseal an outline.

Darkness, like an absence of faces,  
pours from the opened home;  
it seeps through shattered pine  
and flows the fractured maple.

Perhaps it is the essence senescent,  
dreamculled of the sleepers,  
that soaks upon this road  
in weather-born excess.  
Or perhaps the great Anti-Life  
learns to paint with a vengeance,  
to run an icicle down the gargoyle's eye.

For properly speaking, though  
no one can confront himself *in toto*,  
I see your falling sky, gone gods,  
as in a smoke filled dream  
of ancient statues burning,  
soundlessly, down to the ground.

(. . . and never the everwhite's green.)

## THE MAN WITHOUT A SHADOW

What master were he of brush or of graver, who  
drew the shades and the lineaments, which  
there would make every subtle wit stare?

—*Purgatoria*, Canto XII.

“Machine-like, I saw Achilles  
Challenge the gods with the inevitable conflict  
Of mortal desires that even the son of a god  
Did not lay at the feet of those that formed him.  
And I saw him lie  
Like Balder spread,  
With that mortal tree drawing of his fluids  
And shivering against the violent sky,  
Uprgrown from his pierced member  
Upon the darkening ground.  
And their open faces sounded  
While she, the distant Polyxena, sister of Cassandra,  
Spoke nothing, but was believed  
Of pity and known of fear.

Unbelieving, I saw Osiris  
Enter the House of the Dead  
On that Great Day when all the days and years  
Were numbered and, yet, saw that his name  
Was given back to him,  
And, too, the lacerate parts  
We re-formed and rose again  
And strode again.  
And great Isis, before those merciless members  
Was undone, and unbelieving  
Felt the movement of his nightclaimed torse  
Those very hands  
Had seen to the rending  
While she played the great adultress  
To a brother god.



Godlike, I saw the great Odysseus,  
Wielder of the blinding brand,  
Retriever of the goddess-image,  
And bender of that bow,  
Fall unknowing to the unknown slaughter  
Of an unknown son  
Of his own limbs that lay with the darkness  
Of she that made men what they were  
In all but flesh.  
Beloved of her, the dark one,  
And also beloved of her  
That may never know love,  
He took to race of arms  
With his own, by darkness,  
And fell before his dark own  
That even she of the aegis could not hold.

I saw the gods walk by  
In vain procession long  
To the distant doom of the home  
Of the eater of gods  
That throbbed with the constant thunder  
Of clashing teeth, tongue and jaws  
That consumed their Burgundy and cakes  
While bearing perpetually  
Their unwanted sons.  
And the gods came by in their trappings  
Of yellow, purple and awful red,  
And, asking that it might pass from them,  
Shuffled their feet near the end  
And thought of a thousand undone trivia  
That lay behind, and looked furtively aside  
For open doors in the labyrinth  
That might lead the way away.  
But when these could not be found,  
Strove to bear themselves like noble men.

And the unwanted sons inherited  
The lands of their fathers  
When the fathers were no more  
Than outlandish names and strange figures  
Cast in stone, mud, wood and straw,  
While the filmier integument of the earth  
Yet held their horrors  
Constantly stirring in green chambers.  
And the universe is a blue room  
Where an ever-singing woman sits  
At the heart of a lotus  
And plays upon a stringed instrument,  
Where all these have passed and passed again,  
And never turns her crimson-cowled head,  
Save to the subtle nuances  
Of her own melody which she  
Creates for an unknown lord."



# IN THE DOGGED HOUSE

The beam is a greyish of copper  
and from the hunter's eye  
where love went with the crowd  
and boys went in to dance





## IN THE DOGGED HOUSE

The heart is a graveyard of crigas,  
hid far from the hunter's eye,  
where love wears death like enamel  
and dogs crawl in to die . . .





## WRIGGLE UNDER GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE

One who saw the striped underbelly  
and light dotted fins swim,  
like a creature's from depths of the sea,  
above the moon,  
may have glimpsed the face that is beauty  
in its late orbiting moment  
of most skinless dexterity.



WRIGHT BRIDGE NOTED FAUST BEFORE TWELVE

Every bone is trumpet;  
night's counterpane muffles breaking brass:  
the rest is silence and not rest;  
chaos improvised orchestrations  
of minute  
dash downbeat  
the closings of fiery valve.



## THE DOCTRINE OF THE PERFECT LIE

The doctrine of the perfect lie  
is a thing I most delight in,  
smoother than life,  
planed to fit the times,  
sandpapered to join with expectation,  
polished to suit the discriminating.

But it is not that way, you say?

Of course. The delight lies  
in the lie's  
telling: times, hopes, tastes  
to fit, with a little disjoint  
here and there,  
for appearance's fair sake.

Ask any Cretan you meet on the street:

The carpentry is all.

I USED TO THINK IN LINES  
THAT WERE IRREGULAR TO THE RIGHT

I used to think in lines that were irregular to the right,  
but the straight-ruled dexter margin's claimed its own.

Too many pages where lines advance like infantry,  
too much continuity,  
too many harried characters in far too big a rush  
to descend the humps, the hills,  
to stub their toes on weighted words . . .

Potential energy lurks at the rough line's end.

A kick here, a bump there,  
reality topples,  
things slide,  
The talus of improbability grows.

Prose is clean and smooth and slick,  
advancing fully to the right,  
building walls like rows of brick,  
caging wild metaphors,  
sealing their cells dead tight.

What is left  
when fancy's eye is trapped  
and dragged along to such a place?

The bottom of the page is cruel.



## OLP ME THEE

Claims of music  
shackle souls  
or free them.  
I've never been clear  
on the matter.  
Shall we dance,  
here on the hardwood floor?  
Or shall we soar,  
wraithlike,  
to some Platonic hall  
in the sky,  
where a ball  
of mirrors  
reflects geodesic  
whatever it is that we are  
to the eye  
in the air,  
to the measures of time,  
hiccup of heart,  
note in the brain,  
the consummate colors  
we bare?

We circulate,  
the arm descends,  
the diamond finger writes.

## THE BURNING

No animal should be as bright as Blake's Tiger  
and I never want to see one.  
Forests at night are disturbing enough,  
but while mean kids sometimes douse a cat with petrol  
and set it alight  
for small, cruel laughs at its meteor runs,  
its howls,  
who has eye, hand or stomach  
(let's just call it "guts")  
enough to try it with Thee?

More than simple cruelty would have to be involved.  
An existential temper, most likely.  
As in, "No other is responsible for this act.  
Free, spontaneous and unpremeditated,  
I have decided to set fire  
to this sleeping Tiger I have just now noticed  
and burn it away to a grin."

Or perhaps the matter lies  
in the hands and the eyes,  
not mortal, but im-

—A grotesque concept is involved:

There is this being  
with immortal hands and eyes.  
Shoot it, stab it, gas it—  
It dies.

But the eyes accuse,  
the fingers twitch,  
as if they'd like to twine your heartstrings  
and have all the time in the world to do it,  
you son of a bitch.



Considering it every which way,  
it is the sort of thing a primate  
would contemplate.

I can't see Thee  
doing it to me, Tiger.

A cosmic SPCA seems the answer.  
It is too late to do much but admonish  
after the act has occurred.

Primates with immortal parts bear watching, anyhow.  
And I can do without fearful, striped incendiaries  
rushing by me in the night,  
God knows. Write your Representative.  
Preserve symmetry. Save the Tiger.

I, THE CROOKED ROSE'S DREAM,  
DUMB-SUNG ANATOMIE

That I am the pain in the matter is the case,  
though that I am the case in the pain is the matter;

and that I am the matter in the case is the pain  
and the cross—a shade of passed-in substance  
screaming for a name under the driven agonies of hours,  
as the slashed apart circle of the sun by telephone lines,

not unlike that final grating of hearts, cut from  
where wires begin beyond the bounds of seeing,

ends  
shelving bright brooks on flows of black snaking parallel.

So still beneath me lies the world in faint and jettison sleep,  
as oftener than nights are whirled the rabbits of my feet  
through dreaming jungle. While I revolve  
under that star-pimpled sky bust, the quick-gouged intaglio moon  
seems somehow a thumbprint bruising its breast  
concave under tree topped curves jag-collaring throat;

and aches in later membrane of unclothed day make  
hot streams from its bleeding navel an unimprovised,  
non-sacrificial way of being, while not saying,  
some perpetually unmeant *missa in dominica resurrectionis*,  
repeating in Gregorian spasms of dyed wing  
the only in head felt tidal torn thing without.

As all blind thoughts mole that dirt-dreaming jumble,  
feels the father rock of the world, torn untimely from its sun,  
through sole unhealed tunnel, running synapses of sea and dendrite delta  
down this made man mud. Where burns the blue Pacific  
mumble ever the unborn, unconceived floats of dream  
that flow artesian the shafts of ivory, oxidized to petals  
that flame the nervous gray stalactites' roof.



Then down  
that ever evanescent way and back flare films of rockslid dust  
to the volcano that thumps heartbeat only for the ear,  
the mountain that backbones solely to the eye,  
and the ocean that mothers but to the last sucking mouth,

as the name that is my own calls out itself  
to be, sonning after ear its storming father fanned,—  
“Lie down and come,” is nailed onto me. “Spread out thy arms  
like syllables, and reascend the land.”

This first printing of "When Pussywillows Last in  
the Catyard Bloomed" is limited to an edition of  
1000 copies of which 200 are cloth-bound, signed by  
the author and numbered 1-200.  
The remaining 800 copies are numbered 201-1000.

This is copy 425





