I could

strangle

the wind

From a poem by Charles Echols
Manning Correctional Institution

An Anthology of Prison Poetry

Edited by Dale Alan Bailes
Produced by the South Carolina Arts Commission
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EDITOR’S NOTE

It was some of the most interesting time I have spent in my twelve years as a teacher, and sometimes the most painful. At times I left the prison classroom thoroughly depressed; once I stood watching the inmates as they struggled to put their feelings into words, to put form to their experience, and felt the most pure feeling of love that I have ever known.

The up and down feeling persisted during the eighteen weeks I worked. It is best expressed in this note I made for a report during week six:

Whew. I cannot get used to the roller-coaster way this prison workshop works. I get a good class session, 8 to 9 students; they write some strong stuff. Then half of them don’t show up the next time. I don’t know if it is resistance to intimacy, which is natural enough in this place, or if it is just lack of interest. They come and go; I keep a core of 4 at the men’s prison and 3 at WCC who attend every class and write poems both in and out of class. By now classes have ranged from 10 students to 2 students on given nights at the institutions. Given this inconsistency of “student body” I feel I am getting some very good writing from these people.

The writing I got from these people is represented by the selections in this anthology. This writing came from a “school” that was very well described by a teen-aged inmate: “In this place you need eyes in the back of your head. Of course if you had them, someone would poke them out.”

It was a privilege for me to teach these people something about writing, something about putting the pieces of yourself together through using words. It was a time of healing as well as a time of creativity. Perhaps, through the works in this anthology, that creativity and that healing will continue for us as well as for others.

DALE ALAN BAILES, Editor
Columbia, South Carolina
August 1983
FIRESIDE CHATS
Glome-plop! Glome-plop!
The full moon pie faced
on the lake
rim-crick, rim-crick
fall grasses, damp borders
basements rim-click plome plop
ribit.
Sudden flickers, firelight
a hiss in too green wood
Now sand pits
not tree stumps.
Equinox ribit
summer glome-plop

Birds nest large a nip in air
buds Budded

SUM OF INTERIOR ANGLES
My grandfather's craft is just like mine
Grandpa used to tamp his pipe out
on the roof of the jeep
Grandmother's spirit was broken by his death.

Mother's always immaculate
as was her house
seeing her poodles, on their time
prancing; neat white diapers
cut for feminine tails.

When my father's parents
moved from NY city to Florida
they chopped their furniture up
kept from those who were less fortunate
too lazy to work or not members of their
personal church.

My father's anger is just like mine.
If you take him more than forty miles
from a telephone, he falls asleep.

When three I was on a beach in Greece
I walked over the rocky beach and under water.
No one told me I was supposed to
Float.
TOPOGRAPHIC MAP
TO A HANGOVER
We could go together
Party till the streets run yellow
the sky pink.
Our heads just slow enough to catch
dawn’s first feeble rays.

Echoes of night; beer
burps, a breath of fresh air please
you say in honor of the speech
I made after drinking a boot filled
to the ears.
Oh how dark beer makes me belch and
boot leather makes best foam
among friends.

IN TIMES OF NEED
In times of need
days like this
what is peace of mind?

Winds that won’t support
the wings of birds
thunderheads deep
like laden oil tankers,
riding high in the sky.

Beach front forests idly
shuffle and hide their roots quickly
like sea-birds perched atop
beach front hotels flocking together
breaking in the storm.

One wonders if there is not more
somewhere else a place sheltered

RITES OF PASSAGE
Born one day into Capricorn
abandoned by Sagittarius
I never knew who I was until my
Rites of Passage
Listening to thunder planets collide
becoming moons,
children fragments of parenthood.

As hard as I try I fail
to succeed in defeat
like my Planets before me
Rites of Passage not forgiveness
when I am as transparent
as natural lakes there is nothing inside
Hands and feet left behind, laid aside
I think; stupid body how did I ever
allow you to capture me.
Only one day ahead of the hunter
goes the passage of the Hunted.

UNTITLED
Mama good night
the principle called today
Good night mama
He said you cut school
Mama good night
You’ve been in the woods
with those boys, again.
Have you been smoking?
Good night Mama.
Have you been drinking?
Mama good night.
I saw Freddie’s mother at
the mall today
Good night Mama
She said you strangled the cat
Mama good night
Are you listening to me
Huh?
Why don’t you listen
Yes Ma’am
It’s past your bed time
Yes ma’am
Good night Mama
Good night John
Hi there,
That's how most of my letters start
Will you please stop
the pain is unbearable
like a rusty knife being twisted into your gut
You say lots of things
But never do any of them
Sometimes you are soft
like the fur of a kitten curled lazily
on my lap
But those times are few and far between
This is just to inform you that
my pain is over
for I shall catch you unaware
as the kitten was,
curled on my lap,
and strangle you also.

What is this thing called Love?
"The imagination between two fools," my mom once said.
"Something sent from heaven to worry the hell out of you." That's what my dad told me.
I think love is not something you fall into,
but something you grow.
I only have one problem, I can't seem to get my seeds planted.
TO TALK TO YOU

The words
I want to say
fall crashing
to the floor,
scurrying into corners
seeking shadows
hiding from your gaze.

GET OFF MY CLOUD

The cabin nestled neatly
between the ice covered lake,
and the Blue Ridge Mountains.
My hiding place.
Curled cozily on the couch,
I watch, as the Christmas tree
standing sternly in the corner
blinks out some type of secret message.
The snow falling ever so silently
outside, sends a chill up my spine
just thinking about it.
I smile as the fire crackling crazily
in the soot covered fireplace
warms me down to my very soul.
An uncorked bottle of
fine French champagne awaits.
Will you join me?

IT COULD HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT

On the bedside table
A brand-new copy of
National Geographic
With pages of
untold knowledge
is
much like me
unread-
as of yet.

Night falls about us
like the purple silk gown
being slipped from my shoulders.

And you,
you try to act like a grizzly
but really
you’re as tame and gentle
as the small brown teddy bear
sitting slumped on the dresser
With your sky blue eyes
And hands as gentle
as a mother’s touch.

We lie together like spoons
soon sleep comes.

It could have been different
But I’m glad it wasn’t.

IT’S HARD

It’s hard
to say,
“i love you”
on paper.
To paint
the brightest
emotions
with a
piece of
cold lead.
And confine
it
to a piece
of paper
eight-and-a-half
by
eleven inches
Will you
take my
word for
it?
PAINT BY NUMBER
AT SIX PM

Staring clearly into the hazy trees, as green as fur is soft; like the brushing of the silkiest maiden hair. They sway with the wind, performing truth; a pattern assuring me that life's not passing me by.

Olive green lures, and runs through me like a mountain stream. As familiar as the deepest water flowing; as pure and refreshing.

More green filling...like that—
Dark green bushes in contrast with the almost lime green clover; likening to a colorful and illuminated shadow, lighting up my own soul.

The caressing stroke of sky blue is a change as brightening as Easter egg dye to a plain egg.

And the colors of the sun.
Blue-green and red, purple, pink and yellow, as flavorful as a blended lollipop and its swirling colors.

All these fade again to another beckoning blue. Then purple is painted over with black, like a light turning off.

The natural colors of day have left me satisfied as I easily withdraw into night.
POEM UPON A ST. PATRICK’S DAY BALLOON

To capture a moment and watch it sail away, only to become as a speck of dust in the wind to where it reaches unseen.

I give you my life for you to hold onto, the very air that I breathe, and you unclench as to destroy the force that keeps me alive.

You burst the bounds that warmed me and set me free to a cold, lonely wind. Every breath I took was for you, bounded in love for only you, now I’m just one more lonely breath in a million.

UNTITLED POEM

Windows Windows Windows Windows Windows all over the place. Like living in a glass house, looking out my window to overpopulation, where no one really cares. They’re within their own. The pains of windows. Close the curtain. I feel the blind. Close the window so I may be alone. I don’t care either.

You can see right through me. Is there no privacy? Close the window and let me be alone. Quit throwing bricks and busting me. Yes, keep your distance. You got my attention, but leave me alone.

I’m not your peeping tom, you’re none of my business. You’re like a storm beating against my pains. How I long for a gentle rain.
DON'T BE
ONE OF THESE "LADIES"
Child, please, don't you try it.
I'm tellin' ya now, lock-up action
is not where it's at,
and I KNOW das right!
I am too through.

Just ain't no reason
so give it up, baby.
It's
File in....File out....
head 'em up & move 'em out.

Don't go on a field day of crime
and end up here.
You'll be branded.
You'll feel stranded.
So straighten up your act
while you (don't) have the time.

I'M A FISH
I'm a fish.
I can be fooled into getting hooked onto
what I believe to be what I need
to survive. I am taken out of my
boundaries of life in the water to be
with some crafty fisherman, and I
cannot breath.
You turn me upside down and show me
the sky and all around you, but I
cannot live here. My friends are
strung along here with me too, and you're
hurting us.
You could put on your armour to be
with me underwater and still survive
(very intelligent) but I am helpless now.
Why did you have to fake me out with
all your deceit that I didn't understand?
I don't need your guidance for
my nourishment, so don't throw me
all those lines.
I can manage on my own. A glimpse
of your world is enough for me.
Let me be.
Throw me back where I belong, scars and all.
Your world is beautiful, but I do not belong.
THE DARK STREETLIGHT

The little dirt road
to the barn in the woods
is long and dark
when the streetlight is out.

The vampires, werewolves, witches
hunchbacks, ghosts and other
scary spooky unknown creatures
are near the barn
when the streetlight is out.

A giant spider? No only a
large clump of grass.
Something moved over there.
I saw a vampire change into a bat
when the streetlight was out.

Galloping, galloping, galloping
the headless horseman
chases you while your
heart races with fear
when the streetlight is out.

Two large red glowing eyes,
werewolf's eyes? I need my father
he will kill all the monsters
when the streetlight is out!
JAIL JARGON

INSIDE

cracking on you
drop a dime
getting an “A”
being hip
kicking out
shooting bad
slot machine
tunnel
box
stag
cell block
kicking back
buck
house
short
me and you
case quarter
shank
chow
count
rat
coming out of your head
brown shirt
white shirt
sack
“Z”
run a line
drop a line
fire you up
tree top
homeboy
ward
shipped
leather room
rap
aisle bunk
visit
shakedown
busting up

OUTSIDE

asking a question
a phone call
more privileges
understanding
paying money
broke
giving a lot (money, time)
hallway
radio
don’t work
solitary confinement
relaxing
homemade alcohol
where you sleep
last half of cigarette
sharing
a 25¢ piece
a knife or weapon
mealtime
to be counted
to tell on someone
cussing etc.
regular correctional officer
supervising officer
$5 worth of pot
ounce of pot
tell a lie
write a letter
fighting
top bed
someone from home city
living quarters (60 people)
sent to another institution
crafts room
talk
middle bunk
someone comes to see you
search of goods
hurting someone
FIG FEELINGS

Do you remember back in 1966 when you went to grandma’s house and sat in the old creaky rocking chair, that sat on the red Persian rug?

Can you still smell the steam coming from the bottom-blackened pressure cooker, the figs that grandma used to make, those light brown melt-in-your-mouth with hot buttered toast in the early morning figs?

How about on Saturday nights with the late movies and a glass of milk, cold sometimes icy, Big Fig Newtons that bubble as air escapes from being dunked in a glass of wet milk?

Do you still see the bright yellow cannister set on the kitchen cabinet, the big one says COOKIES, filled with figs? Funny though I never was a good cookie thief.

Best of all is sharing a fig cookie with the lady you love without taking it out of your mouth, or tenderly teasing her without giving in, maybe trying to eat-em all?
REMINISCING WITH FIGS
Sitting in the glistening steel swing
Under the magnolia tree that
stood as tall as a sky scraper
Hung heavy with huge aromatic blossoms
that blended sweetly with cherry tobacco
Watching the dog leap in the bird bath after
the last fig newton butt.
Spilling coke in my crotch while the
swing squeaked like a fallen bird.

QUEST FOR MANHOOD
I feel the power of Boa's strength.
My stomach cramping as the emotions stir.
I'm leaving as a boy,
To soon become a man.
By yourself you will survive
Fate of knowledge would soon be shown.
Boa's quickness is my only teacher
Family heritage is all I have.
I must be brave from this day on
Death is a brave man's handicap.
As I leave into the jungle followed only by
the sweet array of Witch Doctor's brew.
UNTITLED POEM
Looking out to see what was looking in.
Backdoor windows always attract me,
possessing my thoughts were little childish ideas.
Is it out back?
Remembering to hurry and look,
before it gets away
Only to find the smell of honeysuckles
lingering in the murky, dusky air.

THE GOAT MAN
The distant ringing of goat bells
In the still crisp night air
Hooves snapping on the red packed clay.
I almost see it,
As I get closer my heart starts quaking.
I smell the goats, just can’t make out the shadows.
Is that a pipe
He’s lighting it,
Then as he blows out the match all disappears.
I could strangle the wind
for flowing gently
through your hair
I could put out the sun
for daring to lay
its hands upon you
I could drown all
Raindrops for beating
so much on your skin
I could harness all
space that envelops
every step that you
take. I could burn
the time that caresses
you as you live.
POEM

Russian Princess in rose clothes.
Bliss comes but always leaves her rapidly wanting.
In Gauguin paintings he says "see no evil."
She sits anyway in raspberry rooms worn-out by Titles.
A command performance approaches like a stalking Tigress.
Her ballet shoes await hungrily in the garden of wings.
Impatient fluttering before the drapery parts in heavy tones of velvetness.
In the audience there are expectant pearls and their swine listening to the strains of the symphony.
They are waiting to catch a glimpse of Their "Giselle."
In the wings she ties the pink ribbons of her destiny.
Between sounds of cello strings that ring of deep night and a deadly dance.
The music a bloodline of scripture and holiness.
There is no sin for ballerinas.
Fallen angels of the stage light.

Kisses and roses
Kisses and roses
The glory and the bows and the lovers
and the grueling hours spent in front of mirrors after the applause.
The ballerina dons her fur.
She leaves in a chauffered limousine and goes to the somber suite with a Central Park view.
Perfumed air, vanity vanity.
Oneness and the loneliness.
The critics voices in morning papers will reveal Truth.
As the princess ballerina sleeps at the Plaza Hotel Her dreams carry her, defecting into the decades.
A plane to Moscow will soon carry her back to never never land where she will be no more or no less and there will be no fame or glory or royalty, or the oneness of a Central Park view from the Plaza Hotel.
IN THE REGATTA

Start
my jib sheet
let out the double-reef in my main.
Come into the wind
so I can be close-hauled
at a good 20 knots.
I love being heeled over from
my bow to my transom
in your dark water
Chesapeake.
Throw up my spinnaker,
so when I round my mark
I'll be running with the wind.
For I feel aerodynamic
as hell today and I want
to take you, golden trophy.

POEM FOR MARION

You came out of the shower
your hair wet
and I didn't recognize you anymore.
It took a few solid moments
before my words came.
A humble prayer was all it
took to replace the golden rod
I placed my hands
in yours. Forgiveness,
it snuck into place somehow.
Flew into the reserved opera box.
Black pants become you
Darlink.
The next time I saw you
your hair was wet again.
(Showers are habitual
like sacraments in church)
You came through the
doors of a cottage.
Being near
Being separated
To meet again
Straight pathways
With lights aguiding
Winged angels follow you
wherever you go
angels like your smile
and they think fine wet hair
is alluring
like a baptism.
THE DREAM THAT PUT ME HERE

I cherish a vision that at one time I was a dream or a good and noble thought that someone wanted to become a reality, the sperm that fertilized the egg in which I slept like the oak in the acorn was conceived in the heat of passion love and desire, in that order to crystalize this dream. And from that, like the bird waits in the egg, I awaited in the belly of my carrier until the darkness therein became an outer light, the iron rust smell became freshly scented air; the taste of salty flesh became the taste of sweet warm breast milk, the liquid stickyness that surrounded me became the touch of firm velvet soft skin and at that very moment in the highest vision of any soul an awakening angel stirred, thus from the dream that was the seedling of reality, put me here on earth to dwell.
ODDS ARE EVEN
AT TIMES
I met a little "Elf Man" once,
down where the lillies blow,
I asked him why he was so small and
why he did not grow.
He slightly frowned and with his eyes
he looked me through and through.
He said: "I am as big for me, my friend,
As you are big for you."

BAD MEMORY
I remember a time when doing time was
hell, when my body was strong and I didn't
lie so well. I was in a place where the
walls were made of stone so cold and gray
and when the boss came around these are the
words you had to say, Boss Man Boss Man
on that big white horse I don't know your
name but I know you're Boss,
I was sick of that and more of them,
But I had to smile because my job
was to please, who? I guess him.
MY FUTURE BEFORE ME

Looking out of my window as a child not knowing what lies ahead for me.

Listening to talk that began moving the mind. I slowly drift away to this life.

A life of running, a life of bars, I took this life to play with like a toy.

I'm sorry now but it's too late and the window I used to look out as a child no longer frames my face.

Instead I see fences, guards and everyone else who looked out their window as a child.
PANTHER
I am a panther, a fearless hunter out looking for a hardy meal.

Running through the night like a reindeer in the forest.

Claws as sharp as the barber razor and jaws as powerful as the human mind.

I rip your flesh, till I've gotten my share leaving behind the leftovers for the scavengers who roam there.

I have no mercy with the instinct to kill.
A walk of a hunter, the King of the land.

HIDDEN EXPRESSING
She was like sunshine that heats the day, mostly alone everytime I saw her.

My mind began to bloom like a flower in the Spring it needed a shower of love to enjoy the world.

The warmth of her body I felt even though we never touched my shyness began to flood me when I wanted to speak.

My eyes held the reflection of my love like a face on the water but the shyness would wrinkle when I wanted to give.

She would never guess the love I have and the flower will wither up in need of a Spring shower.
THE ROOT WORKER
A red rag wrapped around her head,
A toothless mouth, a tongue just as red
A coal black face, dusty and withered
Small snake-eyes recessed in her skull.
Smelling like burnt wood, and mildew,
Something old, something dead.

Living in our midst, yet alien to us
Wielding a power, unknowable to us.
Power - benevolent sometimes, malevolent sometimes.
Try to keep her pleased, our parents said
She'll work a root on you
She can help you, too.

She never died, in the mortal sense
She just wasn't there one day
She was called, I guess
Away.

UPON A FLORAL COOKIE BOX
It's beauty is exquisite, evoking memories of
beautiful women and lofty dreams --
lost dreams, lost women
women I loved and lost
dreams I pursued and balked.

Things with deceptive veneers
but empty inside
old and worn and lifeless inside.

Women who had already been loved too much
dreams already pursued too much.
Futile things, fickle things
things that are no longer there when you need most.
ONCE I WAS A FIREBUG
I lurked quietly at a burning place
–Denying the urge no longer–
Reflected in the flames was a pyrophile's face
Assuaging an inner hunger.

Suddenly there was a blaze within the blaze
–Like the boom in a furnace blast–
Snatching me from a daze into a deeper daze
Making my heart beat fast;

My nostrils flared, my adrenalin surged
I blared, my soul emerged.
Dangling creatures danced
Before my fire-crazed eyes
As I stood tranced
There where beauty lies.
A flickering flame
Naked and fair
Exhaled my name
Into the air.
Wondrous warm arms embraced me tightly
Fiery fingers caressed me,
Torrid tongues licked me lightly
As the hovering heat possessed me.

Fire was the fuel that kindled me
Sustaining me from within,
When the fire roared, my spirit soared
And my best was then.
But when the fire ended
My soul descended.
My spirit lagged and my body sagged
Limp and lifeless, like a wet rag.
Now desperately needing an encore
I was no better off than before.

THE VISITOR
Insanity is a singing bird
That sails upon my windowsill
And chirps suggestively to me.
Sometimes I chirp, too
–Though not as melodiously as she–
Until I tire of her flirting ways
And shoo my delusion away.
DYING CHILD'S PARENTS*

Why do we not let it die then
can we stand by and watch it suffer
like a bird with a broken wing
tell me, is there nothing we can do?

Stop at the bedside and do nothing
we are also helpless
as a rose in a desert
we stand with watery eyes

As that feeble hand reaches toward us
with quiet smooth lines
the pain in our hearts
is like the sting of a sweet smelling honeybee

Like a man who has missed the last train
we are but people in the rain
with minds so blank of medicine and cure
we stand and watch with pain to endure.

*first lines from a four line stanza of "The Little Deaths" by Kathleen Wiegner printed in Hanging Loose
BURIED ALIVE

Thirty years ago
as yesterdays go by
a young and beautiful girl
like a flower under snow
was buried alive

The doctors said "dead"
at two unnoticed, life giving
heart beats a minute
was it a new death
or was it an old one

Were they to know any different
it was unheard of to them
they ship her to the others now
they will try to find a cause
if there is one to find

Her naked body was laid
upon a marble slab
like a hog ready for a butcher
she awaits the touch
of a cold bladed knife
she's left now, for the others

An hour later
a man walks through a door
dead tired on his feet
as he approaches the body
on which he shall perform his job
he says, "Ah, the last one of the day"

He has raised the scalpel
and it glimmers in the light
as a windshield does in a car
on a desert highway
heading for the setting sun

The light lowers now
and the chest cavity open
the cut goes deeper
and time goes by

A hand is placed inside
another hand follows
with a tightly gripped scalpel
to take samples of organs
to help find a cause
if there is one to find

As he goes on placing
tiny pieces of organs
in little glass jars
he finally comes to the heart

He puts his hand
around its lovely shape
his grip is tight
and his scalpel hand
is shaking rapidly

What's this?
But it just can't be!
Was that a heart beat?
or was it just a nerve

He doesn't know
and he will never
because it was the last
of so many unnoticed
life giving beats
now we know how
she was buried alive
SITTING ON A POLE

Sitting on a pole
looking at the people
looking at me
wondering about the people
wondering about me

Thinking, 24 hours gone
34 more to go
Crowds of people here
Crowds of people coming
sitting alone
up on my pole.

Some of those people
think I'm crazy as hell
But I think they're crazy
for going out of their way
to see something odd in life
when odd things happen everyday.

I'm sitting on this pole
to break the world's record
for high pole sitting.
But they are just looking
and that is not important
not even to them

this is important to me
and we know what that is
sitting on a pole.

TRASH CAN ANNIE

The small town of Anderson
had a lady well known
rumor has it that she
knows where every little trash can lies.

I never met her personally
but they say
she has one cat eye that's blue
and one owl's eye that's black
some say
the dirt in her ears
grows baby carrots in the spring.

My brother met her once and
said "She came from the dump."
My father said, "She is just senile."
But for one who lives where she lies
I say she needs help and is helpless
as a kitten on a limb.
I once saw her from a distance
bent inside a can
to come up later
with her dinner in her hand.
LISTEN
In her bed you can hear frogs crickets bats sugar bears and people whisper

ONE LONE CRACK IN THE GROUND
(If you have someone...love them)

Lonely
One single bright red brick sitting in the middle of a shining field of bright green grass.

Lonely
A single roach with one eye missing dragging a small crumb and the man in the next cell just hung himself.

Lonely
Calling the operator on the phone, just to hear a female voice for 14 seconds or should I stall for more time.

Lonely
Clear colored stones from my tiny hole I see one icicle and a lot of water also a man with one lone arm.

Moja (one)
Mosi (one)
Yek (one)
Sato (one)
Mo-isa (one)
One (one)
Solo (alone)

Lonely is one but if I held it, could I touch the lightness of this one winged butterfly and me hanging sadly down amid the coldness of this poem moon in the water, falling now to earth, now dancing while low tide lookers and one black spot of sand, in a bucket of white glass.

Dark and well at dawn, alone and simply not being able to see the happiness of a jump or one lone bell that makes many sounds (not being lonely in the fact that there are many sounds to make a bell ring)

One junkie against the wall (even he is not lonely because he has his habit to keep him company),

Clarence Hines Perry
And lonely in clear quick water, a jot of breeze and at last my
life being spared at the last second by the words of another.

Indiscriminate lonely, when rain obliterated the river and one reed
stood. My love is gone while a near nightingale sings and my heart just
cannot fit through the more than one steel bars. While chanting at the
alter no one to guard my back and me feeling naked and cast into
mist blanketed water.

All the world is cold, me being an orphan eating in the cold winter
twilight, and the moon poor thing crescent. I see and feel no fury even
at these trampers of the clear white snow.

Lonely Even if we met now, you would not want to know me my hair is
grey and my wrinkled face is always covered with lonely.
Perhaps a song out there with the lone red brick me un-
frequented isolated WHY?

NO CASH NO PERSONAL CHECKS
I fell
and
upon traveling across the rivers of forgetfulness
and fire seeing
a flock of black sparrows from the north land
fly away
from the valley of fear past the branch of red May under
which they go
gathering the flowers of death
and in turn
learning the heat greater than the sun,
I came to the door of hell It had a sign that stated
In View Of Recent Robberies
ONLY MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED
IT ALL RETURNS

A body in the wire
bloated and moaning from rot and fermenting cells
mud so red it stained your skin a perfume of death that
stifles the coarse air from your lungs
and
heat that penetrates the very spark of life.

The chatter of a strange tongue
but
if you try you can isolate a sound that was yours from birth.

IT and T, Ford, Nixon feed and grain and
imported
Hondas whose colors vary from blue to green to yellow
in some cases the couriers of high velocity death

A too green to be green jungle, mildew, leeches
and insects that are somehow evolutionary mutations
the smell of cordite and burning human flesh,
Baked beans a Saigon street walker, “Come here darling good
time cheap”
and on reflection, 1500 lbs of orange with black stripes that
snatched my friend a trail of vermilion

Too hot cokes and the clinging grease of C rations
to walk this road of unending rain and desolation
and seeing a color T.V. Ha and opium
war in living color
a journey of never ending to forget a lobotomy
and me
waking
soaked through and through
from the emissions of pores
bitter memories
a 24 hour a day hum of in-coming and out-going
nature perversed

it
all
returns
to
the
land
DREAM

It teaches love tricks all night long
to the stars and planets,
this beauty
while birds sing in the trees
and a clever man builds a city
the crow sits perched upon the oak.

Great winds push the calm night
and still a platinum cloud sleeps
for her pleasure while a hundred white
mares stood in the stone...a storm is
brewing.

A pond in before time stillness
sleeps in the distance
a lonely rose blooms,
Still
Many a summer is dead and buried.

That patient spider
noiseless...by a person caught
although it is not plainly visible to
the eye. Did those feet in ancient
times
travel woodland ways?

Would I be sleeping
dreaming...a flight
of birds
in clear sky
and the mute and
shrouded dead
whose tuneful and well
measured song
bends sweet in mountain
woods or waste.

Me building a hut in
the realm of Human Habitation
a tomb
among
green shades
as I lay dreaming.

AGAIN

Find I
love you somewhere
in
teeth and eyes
chew it
But
do not hurt, I
want you so
much so
little. Words can't
say everything I love
you
again.
FACELESS BEAUTY

An opening window,
a beautiful woman looks out day
and night
wet eyes. The
prettiest women of the world
are dancing while
the others are overcome with drinking.

Us riding through the country
together,
you have beautiful legs
you do not need to drink elegant singer.

The shadow of a leaf falls on your breast,
Dance???
You close your eyes
and dream a young man's hand
is opening your robe.