

*The Fullness of Time<sup>i</sup>*

“Vow to Take Advantage of All Idle Hours”<sup>ii</sup>  
[subtitle: In Praise of Manjushri’s Holy Name ]

An announcement  
from the little box  
airport speakers  
in the honeycomb overhead—

that my flight  
was to be forty minutes delayed,  
the voice practiced though strained,  
made me think of you...

Our time we’d thought  
might be nice  
together  
having been postponed

*three times*  
*running...*  
*Breathless before me*  
*you’d appeared,*

*in one hand*  
*a valise, student paper stuffed,*  
*in the other*  
*a pair of tall-heeled platform shoes...*

Here, looking out through the airport windows,  
I see a  
lone gull flap to the tarmac—  
some mashed morsel  
at which it pecks a long beak

before flying off—  
away  
from the vortex  
of flashing silver blades  
housed in gray aluminum,

*the  
whining engines of my jet...*

Sitting over the massive turbine  
with its incredible thrust, I feel  
the low insistent mumbling of the wheels  
gather the plane to its leap...

*Years ago, I remember gazing through library glass  
at the tall evergreens nearby—  
high atop one, bending with peril,  
was a squirrel, tail swishing*

*in pre-flight...  
Then four limbs out reaching  
for the other top  
so high above...*

*Just days ago, another squirrel  
merely a foot from earth  
claws deeply dug into cedar bark—  
though upside down, perpendicular*

*to the ground—the gap to the next  
tree trunk, though merely two feet or so,  
too far to go...  
Eyes frozen (sometimes, like yours)...*

The weekend before my trip we watched the sun dip  
behind Mount Tamalpais, heard  
the row of tall trees lining your marina pier  
come alive with deep, guttural wok, wok, wok's

as this rookery of the black-crowned night herons  
tucked necks into stocky bodies, and—  
apparently not knowing they're *endangered*—  
flapped off in search of fish...

Earlier we were with your son and friends  
putting in a small skiff, past a gull  
sitting like a sentinel on an easeway pole  
(the birdhouse beneath long abandoned).

Wide-eyed sea lions on the weathered dock—  
sunbathing, astounded at our sudden apparition—  
rolled lethargic bulk into sudden grace, nimbly slipping  
into the safety of the cool deep sea...

Choppy swells in the bay—  
the big yachts nearly swamping us—  
we watched the four *Blue Angels* jets,  
precise in the bright sky above...

Later, alone, our lovemaking  
as tender and delicate  
as those inquisitive whiskers  
on each sweet-faced seal...

As I pulled you closer in embrace,  
some ancient power (*like a bear's?*)  
surged, arcing protectively  
over my strong back...

As the sweetness of our orgasm  
filled us with light,  
grief like lightning  
flashed across my *dandien*...

Or *dandeenie* as you call  
that area so vital  
to my martial arts—center  
of powerful *chi*, between

navel and secret place,  
poles of being (perhaps?),  
umbilical cord  
and penis...

Of itself my breath  
caught—something  
I know  
I'm past hope of ever explaining to you...

*“And manhood is called foolery when it stands  
Against a falling fabric.”<sup>iii</sup>*

*Cleopatra, already famed  
for her enchanting ways,  
met Marc Anthony in a chamber  
redolent with 2,000 red rose petals...*

*Another legend has Aphrodite  
torn by thorns in her haste  
to comfort her lover Adonis—gored  
by a rampaging cutty black boar...*

*her divine blood  
adding the flush of beauty  
to the roses  
formerly just white.*

As a man I share too  
the *fretted fortunes* that made  
Marc Antony, by turn, *valiant*

*and dejected...giving him hope and fear*

*of what he has, and has not...<sup>iv</sup>*

I too have faced  
*the inevitable prosecution*  
*of disgrace and horror,*

the unmaking of oneself  
into mere scuttlebutt  
for the imperial bureaucrats  
like the boy tyrant Augustus,

left by default  
to describe for all history  
*a scene of foolery—*  
though a *painful warrior*

*famoused for fight, though no*  
*fool for fancy, nonetheless*  
*from the books of honour razed quite,*  
*and all the rest forgot for which he toiled .<sup>v</sup>*

*So, did you plant the bomb?*  
I turn to see  
some schmarmy-faced Chinese man—  
little boy giggling, with squinty beads of eyes

pounding the back  
of a pony-tailed, aging hippie  
who, vacant-eyed,  
shit-eats his grin...

We're on break from my conference—  
in the cool tiled lobby,  
my thoughts are with the Dalai Lama's remark,  
earlier—about some dwellers of Hell Bardos

being afflicted with jackass ears. Though he laughed  
when discussing, special diplomatic security

stand all about, looking nervous  
(rumors of a bomb threat).

I find myself scowling,  
admonishing, “You shouldn’t  
joke around  
that way.”

Not ten feet away,  
An irate woman has hunch-shouldered  
a breach through the velvet event robes  
and is arguing with the diplomatic security.

This woman’s mumbling condescension  
making her, too, look more *pig-headed* by the moment...  
*Groovy Baby* and *Schmarmy Face* remark,

“Ooo-ooh, how heavy!”

With a faint smile  
I find myself defending  
the safeguarding,  
“...because of terrorism”

“Hey, it’s all karma, man”  
chimes Groovy Baby—his pal  
Schmarmy Face—little beads of spittle flying—adds,  
“Yeah, just takes time to ripen...”

Seated again I listen to the Dalai  
that afternoon—my mind meditatively  
wanders through deep-seated fatigue.  
When we wrap, I pass the sun-cystalline’d fountain

and board a bus for downtown L.A.  
Copper-hued, chromed windows  
of the cooling canyons about me deepen;  
I’m awaiting the *Big Blue Santa Monica*.

Brooks Brother grey, an  
armor-plated Humvee  
skids squealing around the corner.  
Greasy food wrappers swirl, resettle.

At the Getty Center  
my fascination with the blue and green hues  
of Vincent Van Gogh's "Irises"  
is interrupted by my remembering

the younger Getty's ear, severed,  
sent in a box, by brigands,  
to a seemingly unconcerned  
Getty patriarch...

On another level  
is a painting once commissioned  
by a Renaissance Italian judge  
to hang behind him in court:

Titled "Divine Retribution," the work features  
sweetly-souled large-eyed  
Divine Vengeance, holding a blazing torch,  
and Divine Justice, brandishing sword and scales...

below a man, caught in moonlit surprise,  
eyes choked with the cold pale fires of betrayal,  
frozen muscles unable to flee  
from the lifeless form of a fallen brethern...

The next morning I walk a city park—  
back in Pasadena, before my flight;  
in its center a massive oak,  
beneath are branches—

knotted and encrusted, upwards  
entangling (dark as Buddha's hair)  
into open space—  
leaves having dropped as an autumn blanket...

lambent, still,  
with last night's  
big round  
harvest moon...

Red, gold, aureate, now  
sun-bleached ochre and mocha-tan—  
the leaves dried sweetness  
rustling softly as breeze...

Again the jet turbines power up to speed—  
yet for this, my return, the deep sonorous  
rumbling is like the Dalai,  
chanting sutras...

We nose up  
into a dunnish mass  
of early morning fog,  
water-pregnant and thick...

Later, as we bank  
over a sea scalloped  
and glistening  
like molten lava

I will gaze down  
at the foothills below,  
saffron mountains, basking  
in the immutable sunlight;

jack pines and cypress dotting just  
the weatherly slope (like the mold coming to rest  
on the hollow concrete platforms  
giving rise to your marina's houseboats).

At 33,000 feet, the flight's arc  
a mere dot gliding over  
the low mountains, those  
rugged convolutions of time...

Like ridges I made for you—  
tracing my fingers in your sand tray  
to form a mandala, placing sail boats,  
feathers, crystals, the books you gave me,

one of erotic poetry,  
the other *glockenspiel* in Munich,  
the Dachau concentration camp  
in the sands, too, around a smiling Buddha...

But for now the fog streaks like tears  
down my window; finally  
like that gull, we break free  
into the stillness of flight...

The bright orange globe  
of an awakening sun  
appears—a universal monarch  
ruling over the fog bank—whorled, ridged,

convoluted as a conch shell,  
milky-white, combed as flaxen wool  
so gentle...  
So far below.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>i</sup> after Pope John Paul II's millennium meditation (*Tertio Millennio Adveniente*) on St. Paul's phrase as used in *Galatians* 4:1 *et seq.* and *Ephesians* 1:10, *i.e.*, "to redeem those who were under the law..." and "to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives" the latter *Luke* 4:16-30, 7:22, in which the Christ is reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah)

<sup>ii</sup> As William Shakespeare once did for his patron, the Earl of Southampton...

(*other Shakespeare citations in italics*)

<sup>iii</sup> *Coriolanus*, III.i.247

<sup>iv</sup> Italicized words here and following are from Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act 4, sc. 12 and sc. 14

<sup>v</sup> Sonnet xxv, previous stanza, *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act 4, sc. 3, and *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act 3, sc. 2

## DRAFT CUTS:

love's tenderness the whiskers on those wide-eyed seals  
during their outstretched (on the wooden  
pier) sunbathing—lethargy turning to sudden flapping into the safety of the  
cool deep sea/ astounded at our sudden apparition—

(My thoughts are of the Dalai's remark that morning—  
about some dwellers of Hell Bardos having jackass ears...  
and too how she bears an eerie resemblance  
to that infamous wannabe assassin Sara Jane Moore...)

an honourable man  
to command  
*ourselves to end ourselves...*  
And when one's true friends

refuse—  
why, the Captain's *falling*  
*on his sword...a bridegroom*  
*in my death...run into 't*

*as to a lover's bed...*

Still, like Antony, I have  
*immortal longings in me...*  
*towards unpathed waters,*  
*undreamed shores...*

\*\*\* [Samhain section] "...nothing left remarkable/Beneath the visiting moon"