bpNichol

The madriyiolocy
carrots onions celery potatoes
cheddar cheese
beef for stock
salt pepper garlic
windy day
keep the door open
kitchen cool
core \& steam the cabbages
peel the leaves
rice \& vegetables for the hollopchis
sit around the table
talk of nothing
good feeling for the job that's done
walk the fields the wind blows
blue sky above you always
pray that will be so

This page intentionally left blank

# the martyrology Books 3G4 

Bp nichol

This page intentionally left blank

THE MATYROIOGY
in its entirety is
as i said originally
for Lea
without whom
quite literally
none of it would have been written

'this is the i6th straight day of sunshine hot weather here in divineland be so have found some little spots on the west van side for lots of swimming - ma ybe i should have been a fish. deep breathing floating i learned all those years ago, body totally relaxed back slightly arched \& just letting the ocean hold my face up to the blue sky. sweet heaven, who needs the jesus freaks. spine, which was wrenched again at work (in the valve factory, if yu can dig it, \& i can't thus this is my last week \& then taking a carpentry course) is feeling much better, thanks to hands of mother ocean.
i think it's becoming a good summer all in all. Pat \& i going well. have much to love together. its been hard. lots of work to do. there are images we love in common. that's the most important thing i've ever sd. i don't believe in islands but our house \& garden has an oasis like look abt it. the garden coming in good with the sun \& all the trees around it.

## some paradise

> a slice
well, $i$ tend towards the rural in my soul - never was big on sophisitcated city images. we're moving right along. its our time now.
hope this letter finds yu \& yours feeling finc.
perhaps less time will elapse between. i hope so \& look out there for your poems \& letters.
love
David

This page intentionally left blank
'Grant me a good dream, a beneficent dream. If I shall truly marry the daughter of poetry, if she is to be the companion of my well-being, the companion of my fortune, and if we are to grow old together, make it apparent to me, O Ancestors.'

Batak prayer
to find a bride

This page intentionally left blank


BOOK 3

This page intentionally left blank
'The road which leads through the brush to the mountains is now open, The road which leads to the tatter-heap of memories is now closed.'

Trobriand Island Prayer
a voice in a cloud
a face in a storm
distant drawn
steps down from
having been where
yes
wrong moment
wrong song
urgent long breath
half dreaming in the train i saw you
visible death a scream
saint of no-names
free of lies
as in a like an if
nothing ends except pretending
your own existence blessed
ears filled with echoes
tongues with lies
overlay la lu lu
a w \& a no
another year of knowing you
another life to go
this is not the moment when the writing comes
only the awareness thru another light
a choice of words moving to be said
pray god do let the consonance lead me
broken rhythm as the mind is
needing peace
to sleep in language years or weeks
white tips of mountains
grey clouds
blue sky
oh father
father

there has been that which i've been told faces in crowds i seem to remember
dreams that are foreseen as longings caught as the eye is an error in the sum
often iawake in trembling nothing to be spoke of that can be seen hands around me to lead me gladly friends as family a kind of reckoning
there is a dance within the room
a w ag
walls on which my history's written songs of joy
an $h$ in the sky
an i at sea
as was foretold me

i am not what i appear that straightness or fractioning
nothing like the face that floats above me
crying always crying
this morning in the curtained room the fear or loneliness seemed unreal sensing as $i$ did the higher plane or place you'd gone to

## you have no name now

only a being so alive
i know you're all still with me
linked as one
energy roving into song

i wanted an image or a metaphor
something to contain me
within the flow of language presses in
screamed so loud my father ran to save me
not knowing i needed to fall in
that place where all space holds you
david said of the bottle in his hand
'pouring the liquid you pour the container too gone your skin flows out of you'
someone laughed we were all too drunk
it is disconnected
the drinks the ryme
the too many times not thinking for myself
the flower or the root
plucked from the ocean's floor
eaten by the snake or turtle
who knows his face who knows
what eats what sloughs his skin or shell \& walks away
suppose i had never come here
suppose i had done it that day jumped from the old stone tower on bigwin island pierced my body with ten stakes
i could walk the water
far as the saints would carry me leave that skin behind \& pass away
it is the full moon in the sky the rising sun
watching from the train window $i$ am moved beyond it in a dream walk the fields dumb \& trembling as in a poem i cannot remember writing someone walks beside me whispering
thieves Thieves
you take a man's words to use against him
twist language to such brutal ends
i'm sick with your scheming
too lost in words to ever leave them
too full with love of speech as feeling
G
there must be a beginning made
a starting over a writing down
times when other voices do not distract
there must be an order in all things
to be discovered not imposed
there is an invisible world opens
a heaven or a hell
filled with the men \& women i have killed or disposed of who never made them
but thot the power his
there is a listing or a taking of priorities
these things as i have noted them here
are taking place have taken
are the true \& proper province of poctry \& prayer
II
i wanted a portrait of a man
so perfect it was weak in his weaknesses
catch the leer the arrogant stare
of one who writes poetry as part of a power play
accumulating poems as one accumulates points on a scale
moving up towards the ultimate chair or throne
wearing the fool's cap
a black gown to cloak intention
i need to inscribe a circle in hell
my need to see a wish to find the words for being
held as $i$ am within the limits of my vision
we hold such tension within ourselves
call it duality
we never hear the moment when the words stop or
the silence begins
lay in bed three days dreaming of this poem
wrote it down the first draft it came out wrong
the words stilted awkward
as if there were no song to sing
only the flat statement of what i'd seen
a circle in which saint ranglehold stood
holding the letter H within his hand
taunting the man i described inaccurately a poet
the confusion of parital vision
the agony of half lies
the endless catalogues
the exclamations oh
saint of no-names
king of fools
the days are spent in piecing things together
the night's strewn with pages you do not remember writing
third person to first person
am ithe fool
sick of everything i've written fascinated by my own distaste keep placing one letter in front of another pacing my disillusionment
it is mistaken
silence \& speech
it is one
talking \& listening
there is no duality
'i have nothing to say
\& iam saying it'
listen to what i don't say
what i do say
listen to me

3
drove along the highway nine going west to arthur radio blaring 'don't leave me lonely tonight' is there a road to heaven along here somewhere a cloud-town exit before i go too far
there's a poem i should write
some sort of image of the cosmic hitch-hiker
thumb out it's a troubled life
no one wants to pick him up
he looks unclean
once he might've been saint ranglehold or reat
now there is no name to give him
only the knowledge he outlives us all
we don't stop
'all i've left is a band of gold'
growing old driving nowhere on these crumbling roads


Hello ?!?....


Suzette

different faces different times
places \& people remembered not recalled
'lonely days are gone i'm going home'
the roads run into one another
sometimes i'm sorry i stopped for you
sunny as today is
yesterday it rained
driving north out of toronto
circles in the sky
i saw the face of ranglehold enraged
red clouds against the blue
why?
letters from friends
joy of speech
each moment shared with someone
melting snow
fields emerge as brown
horses in the meadow
occurrences that ryme
it is accidental or

- suddenly the sky opened -
it is all blue
(bluer than blue)
it was all blue
bluer
BLUE

more than meets the eye meets the ear fear of that as the basic proposition mo asked 'what if the bias were reversed' 2000 years the eye has ruled theory that the architecture of greece \& egypt was based on the ear now every architect says there is no exact science of acoustics
the ancient gaelic poets lay with stones on their chests
pressed stale air out fresh breath poetry springing from lungs that were pure
you in the back seat leaning forward
asking where i'm going i've no good answers
the stone on my chest won't let me breathe

the ear the ear it is all there
the mouth fitted to it with such care
there is music in every sound you make
the air here is clearer
wind in my hair
it is a moment the poem has occupied before
the words are shapes the sounds take
it is all there it is all there it is all there
breathing over \& over
history's written in my body
architecture of the too tight muscles will not bend where they should
startled eyes moving in \& out
aware the sound is there
occupying space i am afraid to enter

blue sky \& wind beginning green of trees began a poem about your death ranglehold i had not thot to write about it earlier forgive me
standing with andy in the greenhouse studying the seedlings for the planting leaves so much the same cauliflower \& broccoli i wondered at first if a mistake had been made
it is hard to recall how you died probably you were lost at sea laughing stupidly at the irony undertow dragging you away
sometimes now the hitch-hiker addresses me asks me if i ever care
ifi ever share with someone other than myself this feeling of trembling
is it a selfish act to write saint ranglehold to structure space this way for yourself
i'm trying to learn
it is hard
help me

father i have so much to say i can't throw my pen down in the old way when retreat was easier than continuing
i see visions or images in the sky
perhaps only in the mind's eye faces of saints or lovers now forgotten
may my father's father bless me
may he care for me well
may his father know
my intentions are good
may the father of his father watch over me
as i would
were i he
bless this poem
this road that i have taken
bless my friends
bless me
$B$
love
we know so little of it
disconnected
it's never clear
we play a game of distances
juggle faces \& positions
lost among our own intricacies
you there in the air before me
i know your name
you were saint ranglehold in that old game we played of one to one
how boring that seems
we all need so many friends
this evening the this seems too present
watching mike leave
rainn fall the open doorway
knowing the long drive to london lay ahead
fascinated by the figure moves thru this poem as dave or him
poet
friend
something of the search we share in common
as if words could save the mind
i only know it was bad weather to be driving home in
sense
let us make some of it
too little presence or
suspension of belief
that man i called a thief a poet
the one saint ranglehold tangled with
where is his place in all this
i ask questions
they are not rhetorical
expecting answers or acknowledgement at least
i've never stopped
even when you died
knowing someday you'd really hear me
father if $i$ address you in poems it is to dress you beautifully the body needs such sounds to live in embodies your beauty in its form
as women are in body beautiful
breasts \& belly tender to the touch
it is too much too often
we have our own ways of handling these things
an order is perceived
it is mentioned
the task is once again begun
all of us who occupy this body linked as one
an ear for an $i$ want to talk to you

III
'you have to pay old debts
before you catch the moon'
rumours was what richard called them
states of mind
a whole geography real to me then
i cannot recall

i want to write a history of this present moment brings me here pen in hand late sun of a spring day my own shadow on the dandelion 'magic words of poof poof piffles make me just as small as sniffles' the saints are so much smaller than the real worlds this poem is peopled with
move among you all
as bumbling in my mind as leo was marmaduke always could put one over on him the teams were all the same the duke \& the dope the dodo \& the frog you saw it all on the silver screen stan laurel slapped down by oliver hardy we cover ourselves in fat or longing anything to keep the lean one in scream when we can or laugh
sometimes it is much the same
rob crosses the yard
pauses to talk
not wanting to disturb me in the writing i remember how we first met
me reading KULCHUR was it issue Io
'i was so much older then'
nancy later
looking for liz
julia her skirt swaying
the dandelion is not a weed
its perfect golden flower
i could sleep there always
friends
friends
friends
this is how the false ' i ' ends

3
i do not remember what i could remember the simplest things stick in the mind i know there is a blindness which is hiding do $i$ understand
this music is one of touch utopia as more must have seen
that necessity for a community of feeling the saints never knew kept wandering places by themselves the stupid fucking fools
rob keeps writing me these poems
talks to me as his mother did
spring of 63 so far from language anything $i$ told her of my fear of living
we all need teachers
friends
people we can talk \& read to
as the buddhists saw it
no ' $i$ ' stands alone
its base is 'we'
all the universe embodied in that term
the song the bird sings high in its tree

white clouds
tear down these wires that obstruct my ear
interlude: The Book of OZ
i have imagined a heaven which is another place
a landscape i was born in
fields i walked the saints were at my side
thru the woods a glade animals dwelt within
smiling pool where longlegs fished his breakfast with his beak
bob white rising up to sing his cheery song into the morning cheery as everyone was cheery then
smiles freeze my lips
remembering how you died saint iff
fell from the sky
i saw you fall
thot it was a star
that day as a kid i ventured places i'd never been before
set out to find you
who were you are you anyway
we start there
write it here
the river they called kaministiqua
lay beyond the tall black stack of the incinerator
at the end of the trail lead by the tiny valley we caught the garter snakes in
i remember winter nights in my room
the bed dj \& i shared
$i$ had a friend
torn as he was from the funny papers
crazy jutting jaw stupid yellow hat
i talked with him
it's not easy remembering a lost language
words $i$ have no tongue to use
my life changed when i saw you fall
set out to find you as a son should
took the books
the maps that i could find
followed you into that country the mind recognizes
met the animals
ones i knew by name
peter rabbit reddy fox
those i did not know
faces frightened or insane or
this morning i listened for your voice
somewhere in the howling
heard only the rustle of what could be straw clink of metal
four countries that were different colours
\& the centre green
green as i had never seen before
green

there are many roads to that centre
many ways to go
underground thru the valley of voices overland or
follow polychrome the rainbow's daughter
as the saints did long ago
there are many men in that land of strangers
faces i should recall
you most of all saint iff
i do not know
it's noone's fault
surely the blue that i have talked about was there a sky that ended where this sky begins
these chronicles of kingdoms \& emperors
pass from forest into meadow
from meadow to desert's edge
a vast place full of emptiness or less
i don't know what to say
father i confess ignorance of what the next phrase is
it's not easy living out our history
we want oracles or visions
they come they don't come
that's as may be
in that green place there is too much glare
they give you glasses to wear \& you see
ruled by wizards or princesses
scarecrows or rebels
let our passions rule us father
let our longing free

'How long do you live after you're picked?'
Dorothy's question to the mangaboos
that well you died beside saint iff
fell thru the morning sky
was that the one the braided man fell down
not a well but an 'adjustable post-hole'
he'd hoped to make his fortune on
plummeted thru to the pyramid mountain
even your final moments a dream
thinking you could hear the water you longed for
skin dissolving into meat
meat to bone
it was only the lapping of clouds
flapping of gargoyle's wings
things you had no frame of reference for
at night in the garden i see the mangaboos
full grown ready to be picked
hear the mutter of their vegetable voices
feel their thorns prick
whisper the prayers i said when i was young
'God bless mother \& father
dj bob \& dea
grandma \& grandma
all my cousins aunts \& uncles
all my friends
all the plants \& animals
forever \& ever
amen'

IV
'ah you sing with gods then'
man in a bar in ottawa - may 18/71
four hours monday in the sun to ottawa
nothing but drink \& talk
late tuesday
walk beside the rideau canal the locks
flew out wednesday for tampa
cottage by the sea
present occasion for memory

palm trees are so foreign to me
remember that time in nassau
i could not find the words to fix them here
this act this moment of confession or prayer
pelicans flying low above the waves
crest over our heads
salt in the cyes the nose the tongue
five white petals of the jasmine
five saints names upon our lips
sweet smell in the evening air
spring you are with me again
a dark woman mysterious but fair
place does not dim the focus is there
that time in 63 talking with lea
i remember the sound of her voice
how it held me
this poem a singing back to her
all she has given me
\& told me to share

one woman who was all women to me one woman who grants all women to me the process of transition the choice names seem irrelevant or i name in any case
no place which is all places to me no time which remains the same blurring \& overlapping we exist within a loop or stillness time flows both ways it is always year I day I hour I of our lord praise him write his name in sand water or the wind blurs
one ocean which is all oceans holy remember my father's words
having driven from pacific to atlantic 'my god we're a long way from home' return to that water salt in our gills it fills us
hands together to the sun
breathe in breathe out
alokanorée
aloka norée
breathe in aloka
breathe out norée
aloka norée aloka norée aloka
g
weeks to watch the sand shift
crouching low
watched it blow up from the water's edge waves catch me
smash my face into the beach
each cut reminds me
' $i$ 'd rather be in heaven with my loved ones learnin my a b c's than in hell praying in greek \& latin for water to quench my thirst'
rex humbard
so many things done in your name father
so many curses or blessings
less of one thing more of another
excess works both ways
we have too much happiness or sorrow
we have more than we can handle
one will lead to the other
that's what who say?
bowed south
sun on my right
i am surrounded by the sea
touch my fingers to the earth \& praise you
you have made me
granted me friends
given me reasons for singing their praises
as ido
\& in the praising name them
as i cannot name you
do you think the poem will change
the oracle did not say
spoke of the right time for each thing
the mantle that must be assumed
late night
such a tiny room
the sound of the ocean fills me

supper at sean's
breadfruit mangoes soursop goat's cheese with crackers
green tea
his trip to Ireland
following the family name
reaching back 900 years earlier than i can claim knowledge of talked of poetry sitwell's 'facade'
speech \&
voices voices voices
late at night
writing words that will not wait till morning nothing
no time for anything it seems
we draw nearer $\&$ nearer to that moment when
poetry \& living merge
i need to make my dreams of loving real
ifi could speak to you openly
gather you all in this room
i'd let my fingers talk for me
touch you as i long to
sweet jesus it is clear
oh saints we are one
the father \& the father \& the son the son the son

V
'you must lay down a new language, a new tongue enlightened by the spirits'

- anthony ellis
ellie \& me
another form of we

rob \& i or
connections


## 4 or more

friends
no ends or means
living
move across the prairies
planes
geometry of abstract confession
i am nameless father
we are free to move as we please
in a land where boundaries are a frame of mind
reference
single word
visvaldis told me
'you do not take yourself seriously'
hackneyed image
you can see the way it moves now
shorter lines evolving into longer statements of place or time the history of the poem recapitulated
last night listening to victor read
he was there seated in his garden
watching the gardiner
expressway?
there is no single path or token
rob \& me
we drove out along that highway
west into the mid-day sun
neither of us talking
too tired from too little sleep
relaxing in the place we keeps alive for us
ithot of victor's line
remember how ifirst met him letters
$i$ kept sending him poems he kept rejecting them
helped dave aylward \& i set up that GANGLIA reading he \& margaret read at that night the east coast of america blacked out
short circuit
omen
'someone up there's trying to tell us something' dj was there \& joe
chewing that cigar i've never known him to smoke
i call these poets friends
tho i cannot attend to them daily
there is a we
different the same
links us in the law language comprehends
i have to trust to carry me thru into somewhere
driving east again
metropolitan toronto population 1,916,000
suddenly hit me
watching the concrete walls of the QEW
some sense of history
a we that lacks connections
passing the elevators
the terminal buildings
where i worked that one day burning books
the workmen in the furnace room grabbing the 1908 encyclopedias
'i want these for my kids'
$i$ threw the rest in the incinerator
final dada act
convinced as i was then the uselessness of words of print
the job made its own sense
there is no we encompasses city
only the collective place poverty or pressure brings you to
my people who are not my peoplc
i fear you think me strange
you lacks meaning for me
becoming them
once
once when it all makes sense
the cycle which is history
the sphere
gathers us in
we with we
a kind of litany
i know i need to bring together
my friends \& my friends
make them understand each other
at least that's clear
i am afraid of writing something which does not end
as we does not only the link which is i
to be replaced
other i's to see thru
'in the true time \& space called meaning'
love as many as $i$ can in whatever way
is that not true father?
afraid of the words even now thrcaten to overwhelm me i am carried away thru the slick glass buildings the dirty streets
the we which is not we but slabs of meat
stacked up to feed the mouths of commerce
the smoking chimneys
the burning pages of the burning books
$\omega^{m}$
i wished i has a ship would carry me
over these asphalt streets ive burned my feet on
back when i wanted nothing more than running the marathon i was in training
held the manitoba under I 6 record for 2 miles
fame sure is fleeting
broke it that day i helped carry the torch into the stadium
starting the pan am trials
certain rhythms recurr
themes
i have dreams which end up as poems
poems that shldve been songs
we's a long way away some days
there's so much i
you rise from bed aware of your collectivity no sense of one to move towards we from
carry yourself over water
forgetting it is your own bones you sail upon
settle the shores of lakes
we do forget we
our sails are full
our ship is called SAINT ORM
we set out early
full moon to sea
tide run
the ship the ship
spars against the black sky
i have a dream returns sometimes
i'm running by that water $i$ was born in
screaming waves smash against me sand
walk along the beach when the tide's low
shell gathering sand dollars
holes in christ's palms
that sense of coin
the problem is it is all blood moncy
won by our sweat in some way
the currency takes over as language did
becomes not a symbol used in barter but the end product of bartering relates to nothing real
we never see the gold it's based on
SAINT ORM rides high against the storm
the currency is wood carries us safely into harbour
we sailed from english bay
my hand upon the tiller
first time i'd ever tried to steer a ship
couldn't get the hang of it
main mast swaying from side to side
the captain a german screamed at me
the charts lack accuracy
cloudy skies
broken spires the saints left behind
we cry for you now
not for oracles
for friends
receding shorelines
carry us into each other's bodies

'geography is space
history is time'
city is the place that bore me
those few square feet we call our , uid
measure is accurate
you know your neighbour's wall
wordsworth conceived of going back to nature
we talk of going 'back to the land'
where are we
we is a human community
bounded more by space than time
we push against it as need presses
spread out over the earth
this path
another
could＇ve been the one to Dilmun
lead thru the desert where saint iff lay when he died turned to dust
as each of us must eventually
$\begin{array}{llll}\overline{\text { 二二 }} & \text { K＇an } & \text { a pit danger } \\ \text { 二二 } & \text { Ken } & \text { arresting progress }\end{array}$
the superior man knows where to stand in the pull of things moves with not against the flow
no runners carry the torch here the ships have yet to learn about the horn
i was born in a dark time
it is my legacy
His will？

K＇an water

Ken mountain

三二 Chien arresting movement
＇advantage will be found in the south west＇
＇we have an election next wednesday．
i guess it doesn＇t matter who wins．
we have to work anyway．＇
letters to ellie from saskatchewan
letters to me from home
letters piling up around the brain
the $k$ the $n$ the 1 or s of it
so much shit gocs down in the name of the people
Dilmun existed as a centre of trade first reference to it the Ur tablets
later we know it is where gilgamesh gocs
seeking immortality
ten thousand years erases traces of what might have been the cities built of wood crumble into oblivion we find the idiots who lived in caves the ones, somebody suggested, the city sent away \& theyve become nameless but immortal
the land reclaims its own
Dilmun lying under tons of sand 'lost' for over 20 centuries

Ken third son
K'an second son
三
Meng youthful inexperience (Obscurity)
we carry the city with us
everything 3000 years accumulates
wordsworth wrote about westminster bridge
so what if he lived in the country
he lived on the land which is to say separate from it
earlier today
weeding the cauliflower
pulling out the grass wild potatoes lambs quarter
definition of a weed - something growing where you don't want it the question being

> how do you live in the land
the problem being you can formulate the problem
we forms from some form of giving as the city shldve

> doesn't anymore
more a huddling together
in fear or famine
against a world we dont understand
the second \& the third son
dj \& me
all of our family that moved east
we do not huddle together
seldom talk anymore
that blindness that does not let you see
start our own families
on our own square feet
no we that can encompass each other
attribute symbol family relationship
saint and the first son
saint rike the second
saint iff the only son of saint orm
first son of being Chen

movement perilousness thunder
cities that lie underground so many years they are forgotten
ancestry
realities beyond these

hot night
sleepless in bed
i dreamt of nothing
tossed restlessly
talked with el

rain in the morning
air still heavy
the city is everywhere drawing nearer
i want a different music
complex but clear
carry these words to you
driving into the country
400 north to wards Barrie
blue clouds in a blue sky
heavenly city
ghosts or hosts
their forms are all around us
green men in the summer woods
took the cut-off
aurora road to schomberg
'the sky is falling'
racial memory in a simpler form
the point being there are things in the sky that do fall
as that old egyptian pointed out to solon
'ah you greeks are all children'
we know so little of what could be known
speech is the holy act
linking as it does the whole body
why did isay that?
'geography is space'
west coast is sea \& mountain
prairie sky
blue here east
hills \& fences
some sense of history in the 'new world'
1850 william walker exploring death valley
discovered a ruined city one mile long
its centre a huge rock almost thirty feet high
the remains of a large building on it
melted and vitrified
the indians had no tradition for it
looked on it with awe

> suggesting it was there before them?

Tepe Yahyā there was a man
hitched into the middle east
rode the camel trains thru that timeless space
Susa Kerman Mohenjo-Daro
'the name of the present world is place'
crossed from the Tigris to the Indus basin
back again towards Bahrein
the greek 'springs of Ocean'
Dilmun
oh father
blinded as he was by grief gilgamesh found death for his trouble \& the hitch-hiker watched it all
seated behind the speaker as he always is
i wish he'd speak to me sometime
there is a city grows around us in these woods
a history which is american vespuchi never knew
Tiahuanco
gate of the sun
oldest city on earth
one theory has it culture spread from there
over Atlantis Mu
Oz (as cayce mentioned)
into Egypt \& the east
huge blocks of stone fitted within $I /$ Iooth of an inch
technology we still lack the tools for
the city outlives us all the we
we talk as if it were the enemy
as we use the word american derogatorily
meaning 'that bastard from the united states'
we lack any sense of real community
define ourselves in terms of what we don't want to be
give the symptoms the control
talk about our helplessness
as saint and did
played that game of distances
never wanting to get close
walking towards the woods
saw the groundhog disappearing in the grass
running from me
who brings the smell of city with him
that kind of death its come to mean
carried along
one bird another
song deeper into wood
dark places where the light is hooded by the leaves
stand silent tip the head back blue
imagine a point where the waters meet
ocean to river to lake to stream
overland to here
ithot i heard your sails creak SAINT ORM
$i$ thot the clouds were you

where is my place in this world father which is my time
how i'm to travel on without word from you puzzles me
how can $i$ join such disparate facts as these
a history of the saints
of prehistory
i need a space in this world to call home
a place in these words a centre $i$ can move from some way to say the next years of my life
it seems the more i know the longer this poem becomes
i need a ship to carry me now that ive lost Saint orm a road to run along
some city which is nothing we have seen
friends some way of being which frees me
a we i have sensed the fringes of
a new voice to speak with
a prayer
fill this air with your blessing father
we are together in this holy place you made for us
spinning slowly round our star
how far do we travel
will we find knarn
that was the fourth world exploded
you never did say why
the aboriginees of australia have their 'dreamtime' meaning when it all began
stories that stretch back 60,000 years
that sense of place
tell how there was a time they lived across the sea travelled to australia in canoes
father i need a sense of continuity
i have no family anymore as you would call it
no blood kin i can feel close to
only a brother i do not talk to
why?
we is first of all a blood relation
later a station you pay homage
carry your cross of loss thru life
midwife to your own grief
friends are what save you
it is like that in this new world
we lack a sense of history
a real sense of time
claim our father's father's father as our heritage
\& press no further

sitasana
the easy pose
thumb \& first finger held together
breathing in \& out
sing the song that body sings
heart \& lungs
measure
history is time
myth is space
gilgamesh was human
sth king of the second post-diluvian dynasty
Uruk third millennium B.C.
how do you separate them
the aboriginees never bothered
myth being everything
history becomes unreal
binding in

> a narrowing of focus
the man who has no 'dreamtime' goes insane
we have travelled a long way
'on the road from which there is no way back,
to the house wherein the dwellers are bereft of light,
where dust is their fare \& clay their food.'
you were never fooled by any mask or pose we might have taken
whatever aspect we assumed
traced my own family back to the 1830 's
Ireland (the hypoboreans?)
we are robbed of myth
bereft of trust
just a few hundred years of almost nothing
dust piling on dust
there are bigger things
this afternoon we returned to that spring i had not drunk from in /almost a year
searched for saint reat in the damp woods
he was not there
drove back in longing the dusty road
waiting for some sign father you have yet to show me
3
there is a sign comes
'it rained' julia said
i hadn't thot of it that way
its true
that spring we returned to
thru the back roads beyond mono centre
the signs said private property
listening to the rain
remember a time on comox
andy dave barb \& me
that form of we
place vancouver
time 1963
leave here now
bare feet in the wet earth
rows of carrots \& peas
new foal in the pasture
born this morning
always there is something younger \& helpless needing you
is that the other sign father
that there are things we must do to help we
fulfill our destiny wherever it leads us
standing in the rain in dufferin county
walk over to the town line
mono \& adjala townships
there is no way to encompass everything
we need to encompass as much as we can
the pain is the recognition the work outlives us
we die before we's completion
whatever that is
these memories of vancouver an older time
are memories of a we that never worked
existed in a timelessness which is not memory
only a standing still as years go past
a lack of destiny
earlier today
woke from sleep
a frog in my room
caught it
carried it outside
it pissed in my hand
terror of me
let it free in the rain \& mud
watched it hop away
thru the orchard the field
where my eyes go most every day
a sense of possibility
watch the clouds pile up days the sun shines
thinking of that place the saints left behind
dissolving community
the fall from place into space
an earth they never felt at home on
it is a question of heritage
relaiming the myths that give us history
a geography of time
a chance you have given me father
for which ithank you
snow across the prairies
west into the sun
a child cries in the room below me i cannot comfort
late afternoon grey
edmonton november outside my window
last night another message came
intimation of a time or place to reach to
pick up the pen again blue against the white page
two days of reading talking
bisset \& i chanting in the late evening
hours in that community of sound
later home with doug \& sharon
reread your stories
why do i return to you saint orm
each time that i invoke your name
wake you from that sleep so long desired
do you hate me for it
now the window \& my pen grow blue
blue as the snow's silence beyond the pane
to reach thru

> into your past some present
tense or easy
absence of wind on these frozen plains

morning blue
sky \& the faint tracery of white clouds
shattered remnants of the town you founded
it is the time of the white sun
the stillness at the heart of the storm
the frozen image of your sails saint orm
shook out across the prairies
who is your crew but me
burning in the sun of so much cold
folding crack of frozen sheets
ice on the blue dome of the world we drift thru
helpless as imagery


3
another place a later time
traces of snow upon the mountain peaks
looking over vancouver at sunrise
a face in the mist above the lion's gate
you move towards me from the prairic
your presence invoked you follow where igo
watching as i sleep or try to
\& your eyes are blue orm
blue as the sails on english bay this early november day \& your face is sad is blue

slips off a blouse to reveal her breasts
slips off the skirt \& reveals the rest
is history
hers \& mine
how come i keep thinking of the first time
saint rain made it plain saint orm she loved you
i remember such random details
things that don't make sense
we made love in that tense hurried way you sometimes do \& after she cried

> 'i don't know why' she said
'relief i guess or'
for every poem i write about you
there are two that go unwritten on your name
a loneliness claims the mind
moves me to write these lines to you
saint of storms
i move on troubled seas
clouds mass but do not break
the heart aches even when i hold her
was it like that for you
i want to know
did she love you after all orm did she did she

drove over the malahat to duncan north to nanaimo in the fog \& rain read poems \& drank came home again
details of a life lived out of ryme beginning without hope of ending loving where does it lead you
this morning caught the plane out victoria to toronto at 37000 feet
high over the crumbled roofs of cloud town
the empty streets
statues they raised in your memory orm
two weeks after you went
rain dead
nothing to live for you said
that bastard ranglehold your pupil
you never shldve given him a thing
sun in my eyes so that i barely see the peaks of the cloud range where you hid two years after rain died
talking to noone
nothing to say
rike came to find you
begging your return
i burn with knowledge most days mistrust the arrogance of speech poetry's a kind of prayer daily devotion to your teaching
'trust someone
mistrust names given you as praise'


> a message to myself years hence having returned in a different form hear these words the key clues to unlock the private memory
north from toronto
mono road station sleswick lucille
important when the coaches ran
an inn on this spot we build upon
wine bottles found in excavation
accumulation of such detail
(if i die
if there is truly a death of all thot as i have known it
shock of passing thru into that nether world numbing the mind so that i can never even if returning in time remember this speaking now when horses ring the dusty road
me thinking it was the coach \& you saint orm perhaps the coachman
there is no sense in these clues i leave behind
i speak simply to empty the brain of ryme or reason)
lug the blocks
walls rise
joists \& columns
frame the windows
glass
saint orm sails past
your death's a tragic thing
you can't die can you
i remember the story of the saint who tried vainly slashing his throat discovering what immortality meant
his image grew fainter \& fainter
mark of the unsuccessful suicide
torn as you were between so many feelings
fleeeing to the cloud range
you found a cave \& lived off berries
seeing the folly of your lives
i's lacking continuity
(the morning lengthens
its length measured
not measured
ancient burning circle in the sky
we could move closer \& die
knowing some day its bound to explode
flames escape to burn our bodies
we move away
long after i am dead
me alive inside some other head
not me
a million years hence
useless concept of eternity

now that it's over
now that the long road's gone
your wife dead your tongue stilled saint orm
we are left as we are always left
moving on
after the thinking thru
after the theories run their course
after the instances of forced conclusions
realities thrust upon you you cannot escape
the knowledge that life is that tension between
the public \& the private
the we \& the i remain
the lack of conclusions is the same
the superior man moves as he stands in the flow of it
learns to sing
happy to be more than that single thing
those others around him he attempts to know
endless learning which is living

6:05 a.m.
halifax december morning
roy in the other room writing me in the kitchen getting this down
now i am here
4 hours puts the here there
mind already travelling ahead
down the dark streets
under the trees towards the harbour
waiting for the bus to pick me up
begin the journey back towards toronto
everything comes together
the sound of roy's typewriter
the image of your face
this sense of place which is canada
everything strung out in a line
narrative runs thru
all life a sphere we move within
poets friends lovers saints
caught up in
carried out on
the current of a we which is history
language our currency
banked in time
laying down the base for what's to come

6:30
blue light against the buildings
edges of the blue sails
move out in early morning over the ocean
where they came from
we
interlude: Double Vision

december 7 I<br>the dated poem flounders<br>carols on the car radio

snow falls
all around us
ice \& the crunch of snow
walked up the road past the barn
deatils of a winter day
horses breath in the frozen meadow
dissolving bouquet of speech flowers
now in the last hours of the day the sound rings clear
exhaust from the truck parked in the field
well yield of 2000 gallons per day
two months searching for water
we have sunk five wells
this one 140 feet
'nature hides water' tom says
water's surface nine feet below me
face visible as an obscuring of light
shudder in my jacket when the wind blows

three days ago itook the trek back thru the fields towards the valley looked at the well we'd dug there
colliform count $80+$
valley disturbed by machines \& drilling
sky pale
passing the cemetcry to get there
graves of the typhoid victims
so many aged $2 \& 3$
1903 dufferin county memory
death takes the youngest
in war \& famine
horseman you are not fair
the one well
closer to the house
sunk last year
bad water
too much salt \& iron
below the sweet spring we first struck
the driller ruined in his haste
his greed
walk back thru darkness
what the mind yields as well
as if the sky fell in daily
the bright blue pieces scattered on the ground
found \& forgotten
passes
like glass \&
shattered images of faces
glitter in the night snow
pale lighted windows of the house we live in
did you?
no
but he remembers
remembers well the
at least the memory of snow
inside his frozen face
what his eyes show
${ }^{3}$
felt as stillness in the brain or
vortex or
the whirlpool
as if the mind were a river (it isn't) where the thots flow
filled with creatures you hadn't thot could live there
still water like the heart
reflects grows stagnant
putrifies in time
becomes a stain thinking can't erase
traces back to source
veins it sprang from under the weight of steel or
\& i asked him to be still
for once
to stop think ing
blank
face
you place the feeling behind the eyes
the love or terror
error of the tear or rip in the whole cloth
the hole in holy earth
we name it well

elephants
actual source or origin the old man on the train in 61 or 2 who told me how years ago in winnipeg the circus came to town the main street made of wooden blocks it stormed elephants turning the wood blocks over everything covered in mud the old man was travelling the wrong way they took \& put him on a different train
elephants meant circuses \& peanut brittle because my father always bought some when he took us there because he liked peanut brittle (the actual source or origin) because it is a happy memory (clowns clichéd faces \& despair) this song's gone on to change my tune

```
                                    runes
```

against the old airs
music
\& the new dance
dancer
the new dance air

the elephant caught in the well
one foot or leg plunged into
in the field they'd gone to set the tent up
figuring it was safe
pole in his trunk
ass upended
how many pounds of elephant ass \& hole
leg intact when they hoisted him out
trumpeting his panic
ladies \& gentlemen in our centre ring
the amazing saint and performing feats of sleight of hand
the gambler the damned one who can't tell his ass from a hole in the ground \&
ladies \& gentlemen
it's so nice to have you here
inside these poems
you make the lonely hours far less lonely
if you dance along
out of the side of the buddha's mother having circled her three times
as isaw in the well at world's end everything crumbling
you look within
the vision semblance
seeming of the real
seams on the skin of that lady opening
lifted him out open
as he was as the lady was the elephant trumpeting ta ta ra sun god \& chosen one
saint and
i need to know a lot of things
your city government outline of
the sewage systems carried away
crap that must have flowed from even your saintly bodies
these marks of
the citizen what sets him apart from the non/man who
believes ONLY in his own self interest
sees himself as just in his demands of ownership
couldn't see as we saw
the well has
no bottom
no boundaries you can mark as real estate
spreads out
as large as
that legend of the circus you began with
was it all as this city is
no legend but a lie i walk thru
convenient myth of neighbourhood
even the walls the gathering places interiorized
the idea of privacy grows as the space shrinks
perceptual tricks
false notion of perspective
you demand more because you have less
riding the elephants towards the sea
beneath which is earth

the accounting what each man acknowledges as his own must be done sense of emotions as
this is mine this also
a reckoning in terms of what you have become
not own shown returned to \&
the present realized

beginnings terms of reference
lists of images facts
what can ioffer of the world as real?
words?
motherlodes?
(i.e. mother's load
birth (the obvious symbols)
well as cunt
elephant as prick
the trunk the obvious tipping of the scales
blind as justice is
as the trite phrase trips out easily
catches the unwary tongue)
but he was young then saint and it is an old man's story
he stores these memories up as words excused by phrases
different phases linked by such coherences as give them meaning never clear
how many years of mornings
asked this evening
under the street lamp on admiral road
no one to hear as i did not voice it loudly
except to you in your deafness
in your proud listening

from the lake's edge ontario
the city rises the hill
just north of admiral road
you climb taking the highway up
the roads take you
out of toronto over the flat stretches hills
reaching the top of the old lake bottom
dufferin county
cloud range stretched above you
i so wanted to walk
long as the mind remembers that vision
standing here history is the sea that covered you
the great lakes are memory \& what you can't remember
where the larvae mutate (one reported last year
I 8 times its normal size)
utnapishtim or noah
they are both the same saint orm
built boats
set forth when the flood came
sailed above me
closer to the cloud range
where you slept in your ignorance of what went below
passed on that dark sea
unaware of each other
set down on mountains at the flood's end
it is a tale we all know
utnapishtim tenth pre-diluvian king of babylon
granted immortality dwells in Dilmun where gilgamesh finds him
at 'the mouth of the rivers' where the sky is bluc
that sea you swam in after knarn
when this world first existed
the stories are too familiar
the faces change
we know their stranger origin could be truth
some common source
sumerian or before or
the wall of water rushed across the prairies
as the indians told
in the old days saint orm in the days of old

## $\infty$

starting from vancouver
a line (transpose
windsor \& that southern tip) which is
the straight line trip gives you some sense of canada
it is a question of volumes
how much you displace in the travelling
one edge to the other
boarding the train as i have in toronto
takes you east \& west
divided heart
cunt/tree
perhaps the journey is into darkness
enter the well between your lady's legs
how for ulysses women (the shore) tried to lure him from the world of men yet it was his mother (the sea) he travelled on
'set down roots if she welcomes you in'
it is a matter of permissions
a full partnership lets you take the trip
(here it gets confused)
earth lets you thru if you do it willingly
as orpheus say or saint rand did
or mohammed when he hid in the cave spiders spun a web covered him in saved him from the men who would've killed him
that one went down into hell (the earth)
\& up into heaven (the sky)
the question of why such connections is never answered
that one goes west (to vancouver)
or east (to halifax)
is a matter of facts geography
placing yourself relative to 4500 miles of country
whatever the journeys up or down that might have gone
have yet to come before you

VII
you walk thru the door into the room filling the mind with (quaint phrase $\& i$ said it today somewhere ive forgot the mention of (mentioned to catch dimensions the way things travel truly in the mind) said it with the whole structure fallingfrom my tongue) thots
not
that its that simple he opens the door she steps thru she gains shelter or is first into the unknown the unknown is that image of the closed door \&

> sky
dark cloud
lost in the crowds that do not know your name
how can i address you openly father
feeling the fool in grief or joy
it is the boy behind the man's mask
cannot ask the boon of ignorance
the chance to learn
how the days burn
winter sun in the closed rooms
rythms
so that you turn
around
or is it too simple to put it that way when after all it is the day to day struggle presses on you the ocean of air between you $\&$ the door vast distances you cross every travelling the loss you feel
hearing the doors close windows shut
behind you
the next day
scene: a small room
orm: two days
and: (holds out his hand) not sure
orm: ear
and:
orm: return to
and: form
orm: meaning
and: blue
orm:
there is a silence followed by the door opening the dialogue is meaningless \& is not recorded

> father
> for you
> this song
i am learning to dance
as a man's hands move
what material he chooses
but cannot claim
conversation
preservation of
an old mode of
touching
(here the closed door opens or a wall falls the frame dissolves standing in a field how many years down the time line)
no clouds at all
waiting for snow to fall \& cover it in
there is no scene to encompass this names mentioned are here the length that they appear important as their reappearance makes them clear unclear they are what they are no more than what occurs in the poem that is their shape $\&$ tone their reality

## $\cdots$

pile up the words sixteen past sitting as you are at last there is the transformation not as flowering but as in older times the mind changes the face rearranges itself the very skin how do you follow it thru the swift shift connections i am talking of nothing she hits me in the face out of place the whole conversation there was no song no singing only the bringing forth of facts stacked up against the lack of logic the magic thinking trick of seeing yourself as other than what you are laid bare \& the crumbling as the self is caught unaware gasping strange air we breathe in
east coast morning
salt in the air
you are nowhere near me saints
left to walk where i choose
i place my feet with care
the bruised face of the stewardess
her cheeks purple
\& her eyes
the terror
two days later
ascending air to find you
the madness that is in us
all
oh god we do fall
down
$i$ wanted to say more i wanted to tell you what i'd seen or make you see as i did that moment the vision inside the person's skull the wall falls the talking that is done no longer matters so many friends whose lives have been rumours of what they should've been hours lost on wards 'i knew i'd have to get myself together to get out of there' i wanted to let it be i wanted to let the whole thing go in one last piece of poctry every sweet dream of sanity i longed to share
if you're there saints
if you exist
give it that twist of humour keeps me sane
the listening
that these ones
make it home again
wheels folding down
frozen ground
how is it done how is it said the head sheds the lies its lived by what comes screaming into focus we talk about the real world because the unreal exists inside us beside us the ones we meet the streets are full of us the woman said 'you've got a real father fixation in your poetry always crying after him like a baby' i said nothing the voices those few who speak you take the chance of getting broken
father
i seek that speech cleanses
address you
as is your due
your sons get lost father
the madness takes us
confusion
one of the many names we wear
i rode it thru the other side whatever rips the mind apart survived
younger days as are remembered the thing builds up takes over as the poem ends when the sphere of thot is moved thru all directions similar one word at a time it ends faint words in the evening air send you looking for paper to write them down someone to read them to

## 3

if you wait out the dream the waking comes if you carry it thru the whole thing
cold february day
looking out towards the bay
windows across from me
faces \& doors
what for
voice: do you act out your drama consciously over \& over again this story what that lady said about the father fixation do you play it out before us
\& the sky looms blue
as i have said before
so perfect word to take it in
\& the trees
facing this way
into the landscape

VIII
gazing into the sky
as i would like to or imagined the eye doing
the other eye
interior detail broken up by translation
transfixed in migration
that sense of travel takes you
out of your mind into an imagined other
this pen
put it down then pick it up again
returning into the north
looking out across what we've accomplished
the land worked
the planting
six months taken to construct a place we can call 'home'
i'm coming back again saint orm
out of the wish to be no other place but here
to try to make the process of what's been done as clear as possible

sounds of aircraft distant in the air
bombers carrying their death above us
we's home free
if we goes where we wants to be
as we did
travelling north out of the indus basin
from the palatal $k$ into the ordinary
kentum tongue conversion to the consonant $h$
hundert honderd
one hundred years of solitude
of speech
reaching back 4000 bc
indo-european still a linguistic unity
pre babel
by 2500 the satem \& kentum groups emerge
the sibilant $s$
serpent on the verge of our discovery
white trail of death's birds in the spring sky
higher than i could fly saint orm
who am land bound as my ancestors were
every dream of reaching to the stars beyond the limits of my own mobility
we build extensions
things that fly or sail
carry our differences with us
set them up there
the tribe already drifts apart
third millenium b c
meeting utnapishtim
pre-diluvian pre-babel king
gilgamesh suffers disunities of language of time
he knows he'll die
utnapishtim's immortality
includes linguistic unity
the we's ascendancy into eternity
lie back in grass to watch your shadow pass over me you ride the clouds saint orm dead or alive the tribe of saints goes on its not the town but what you founded the land you claimed carries your memory every bush haunted by what went before
history is with us in viscera \& bone
holy places filled with stones \& trees
we let the landscape write us
as it did then
architecture geomancy
arts the poets were part of knew
scop \& gleoman
integral to a community spoke its tradition
as the gleewood went the round
the tables of the long halls in the country they founded
north of the euphrates
scania
land of clouds \& trees
mysteries
blue or green
the colour of the countryside
of what's seen

## n

an issue of names

Tiwes-daeg yesterday
wednesday may 311972
travelling thru rain to montreal
Deivos Zeus Tiw
the land falls away towards the lake
the train takes me where it will
bring forth a hymn to your memory fader
old when utnapishtim was young
you made saint orm upon the world you formed
out of the void was part of you
your names many
your attributes the same
it is the parallels \& not the differences confuse us
gilgamesh \& beowulf
wrestling for days
enkidu \& grendel
the one ends in friendship
the other in war
it is the difference 2000 years breeds in stories
in points of view

> enkidu
who was one with the animals \& was seduced out of his innocence into the world of men \& grendel who was animal \& killed lost his arm \& left a trail of slime
the mire time makes of remembering
we travelled north
out of fire into cold
no cloaks to warm us we made them on the way
from animals we killed
made shelters from their skins \& bones
the many tribes slowly parting ways
set our singers up to tell the tale
then our scribes
what had been part of memory only
written down
destroyed in the reformation's sickness
sink back in my chair aware you are near me
who inscribes your story as best he can
i understand the necessity of destruction
the fire that purges
the urgency forced you to destroy the four worlds went before
but there is more father
we need our history
the slate is not clean
too much of what should be seen can't be
lost in man's repetitive stupidity
the aztec libraries the spaniards burned
there is no joy there is no joy
Wodnes-daeg
the son to follow the father
as Thunor followed Woden
saint rand saint reat
each of us ekes out our destiny as best he can
utnapishtim the father of gilgamesh's tribe
the irony is he cannot die
gilgamesh cannot supplant him as Woden did Tiw
a time between gods when no one god holds sway
as this century's become
the elders we can respect are few
we suffer the confusion disillusionment brings
raoul duguay \& me chanting late evening
'we are each other's echoes'
keeping the shadow away
we set the axis in motion father
holy sound to bring death's birds down
find our way thru the time you fail to govern
in this season the cycle is renewed
you will return to us under some other name
Thunres-daeg
driving thru rain to fly away
high over the plain stretches into the unknown reaches
where saint ave went that one day
another story to be told another time
i watch it fade
entering a low range of hills i do not recognize
rumoured in the stories of saint reat
sweet madness to say i see this thing
\& yet i ing
the man asked dave
'aren't they just his fantasies'
how can i make my way to you father
your name dead
your son supplanted you
Christ or Woden
as Thor (Thunor) supplanted him
it is a game of shifting allegiances
i seek the one name by which to call you

Jupiter Jehovah
sky father i praise you
out of need i praise you
'from a word to a word
i was led to a word
from a deed to another deed'

a frog drops in the pond rocks the drowned image of your face
Tiwaz Tig Tyr
out of fear you are destroyed out of here your name moves vague words heard over water away

> into the bright air
dufferin county skies are blue roads dusty fields green
as much as hold together we can call we moves into future memory

Tiw you had attributes Woden never knew fickle as he was \& treacherous you gave justice a sense of law sat over the assembly of all the people it is with awe your name's recalled
still calm of the afternoon disturbed something within calls me away
i must right the day to day order of things
if i am to sing your praises
as last night within me i felt it move
seeing the red planet bright in the sky
ellie brian \& i driving north to be here
the journey is always from home to home
Mars who was the god of war
replacing Jupiter in importance
lundi mardi mercredi jeudi
so that in the equivocation which is translation
Tiw who was Jupiter by another name
replaced Mars in the english version
Mars-day becoming Tiwes-daeg
in the long run the father wins it back from the son
st reat there is irony here
not in a literary but a real sense
your son
having brought you back from the dead
it teaches us a lesson
who pursues his father to the end
finds him again restores the we
tribal unity
regains that sense of what his place was
not to praise falsely who should not be praised
but to give him due
the one who was before you \& fathered you
helicopter landing on the farm
asking 'is this the ponderosa'
he'd lost his way
rob laughing at the unreality of the name the naming
it is the stuff of myth or lies
out of this stories of arrogance are born
visitors from the sky who punished men for not answering their questions /properly
that we are always being tested
paranoia on a cosmic scale
you were above that Tiw
the jews knew
that if they never named you they would never lose you

it's the name's destroyed not the word
as you rise from the ashes holy bird dove who flies above me
into the endlessness we named blue

G
driving west thru albion's hills adjala climbing over the top at mono mills
turned right towards the hockley valley
it is an interlude a time between
who holds sway
nothing but the ignorance of arrogance
false superiority lack of knowledge breeds
mills that ground out plenty
mills that ground out salt
mills that stood on the spot $i$ drive across
torn down to make way for this highway
mill stone
covered in crushed rock
it is not forever
what we are or wrought
we fades or will
your name father changes
goes beyond the range of human speech
it is always your home remains the same
the heavens
that geography
where does the arrogance come from destroys us daily
to make my claim as creator having thot it for the first time
pride in that sense as the buddhists saw it
such men hold themselves beyond karma
outlaws

## thieves

because they take away from the one that made us
scene: the landscape moving one tree the next there is a harmony stated by transition the transposition of one image in front of another saint orm speaks but is not listened to we assume it is some older time Knarn perhaps that fourth world moved closer to galactic centre
ascendancy
late night
reading of the deaths left in the hurricane's wake
agnes agony
flooding \& the great tide carries us all
forward into unimagined destiny
(there is so much is not known
why Knarn was destroyed is left obscure the texts we do have tell us little only a single singer's song that their sun turned nova as someone theorized all stars at galactic centre must be older black dwarfs drawing us closer to be crushed into the nothingness from which we came only to form again some other era error that sense what came before was a mistake shaken apart by its lack of harmony inability to keep in tune with the music of the spheres) it is all here father
as it has always been
all language names you
all description as i make it clear
the nine billion names of god
writ out in tongues no longer spoke these billion billion years
$E$
we gather round to talk at night within this house we've built discuss the problems of the day the way things went how we felt about it
so many people loved so long
so many names mentioned before
the course of this poem filled with their presence
final filling of such longing absence
M-5 1 a spiral galaxy the arms whirl out 2000 light years from the core mapped by radio astronomy i 5 million light years away
we will never encompass it
never fix it with that name home
even our own galaxy
how much can you grasp in any real sense
at what point does the mass or density of it all overwhelm you
retreat to details of shoes how you ticd your laces or
what it would mean to you to lose them
sit in my room
sky beyond the window darkens
friends say goodnight to one another
lean in the door to wish one more to me
in this northern place stars are different
chained in the underworld Lupus rules
world under ours
the other side of the earth
the worth of taking the phrase literally
takes you out of that tangle of ambiguity
friends friends friends
we build our lives together with each other's hands
so much of what i love is all around me
looking up where would Knarn be no part of these constellations that was where ave came from went with orm when K narn exploded her whole life folding in
it is here the prayer fits the face
who would praise his friends
turns towards them
words found
no false name or phrases to distract
not to cling to 'position'
a notion sainthood still could be
but for love of something
one or some human gesture
the writing 'is'
as 'we' can come to be
the end
form or token
coin
age
rage against corruption
fallibility to praise
falsely granted
the process shown \& not believed
shown still
who will listen
'himself'
(my own head)
as the voices said
'when?'
as i began
seven long years ago
(so many ways language can be used
ignoring the categories 'poem' or 'prose'
speak as we choose
knowing friends are there ' i ' dies
seek out solutions in whatever skies need be
that much closer to the answer whatever the question is
pass on the quest when this life ends
drawn in
perfect calm of the universe
of chaos
os
death
the infernal fire
i am burned alive daily
the failures
lac des deux montagnes
ice fisher's hut the hitch-hiker sits in
driving thru the blizzard into montreal
sandra melissa ellie \& i imaginary number
factor fact or ring of factories
vision fractures
faces \& names
the beginning
if speech reaches
it is some other place
the nervous system
social or
whatever falls fails
consumed by its weaknesses
sandra talking about our uncle clarence
ten years in the veteran's hospital
bright's disease
gradually losing motor control
they stopped his leaving privileges
took off over fences
his whole body in perpetual motion
asserting that right till he could no longer stand
confined to a wheelchair \& someone else's mercy
the last time i saw mark the contrast
4 days before he died
standing in the ruins the fire had made of 59 admiral
his old home
the resignation
his comment 'what a mess'
i was to remember
hearing of his death late november 72
how he \& i had buried terry
spades to turn the frozen earth
november 1970
december 3 I
travelling west thru rain from montreal
toronto ten minutes ahead
the dead \& the living all around me
midnight
twenty or so
we stood in a circle in a room
talked about the need for honesty
the will to push ahead
help each other face the changing reality
no names pending
dead saints of wisdom
dead friends
new visions for the march winds?

last take
late february 73
dave \& i look out towards the lion's gate
years mass
events
we made it out between the lion's paws
rear shocks gone
swerving to avoid the bumps
spell of spelling cast around us
tiny ripples in the blood stream the brain stem's rooted in
a body place \&
time
the lion's month before us the lamb's born in
the door
you are not permitted to open again
enter thru the lion's mouth the man's root gets planted in not to be consumed
as tho the use of lips weren't speech
a doorway into the woman's soul intelligence comes out of SCREAMING
a complete thot
born from the dialogue between you
or what comes forth from my mouth born from the woman in me
handed down thru my grandma ma \& lea
is what marks me most a man
that $i$ am finally this we
this one \& simple thing
my father Leo
my mother Cancer
she births herself
the twin mouths of women
w's omen
it turns over \& reverses itself
the mirrors cannot trick us
our words are spun within the signs our fathers left
the sibilance of $s$
the cross of $t$
there are finally no words for you father
too many letters multiply the signs
you are the one
the unifying
no signifier when we cannot grasp the signified
saints in between
the world of men
women
the sign complete
the $w$ \& the circle turning
add the E
the three levels
linked by line
or the two fold vision
H to I
the saints returned to this plane

the emblems were there when i began
seven years to understand
the first letter/level of

CODA: Mid-Initial Sequence
faint edge of sleep
a literal fuzzing in the mind
as tho the edge of
what was held clearly
became less defined
the penalty paid \&
your father recognized
for what he is
for $\mathbb{W}$

## HA!

the is
$E$
orange
the vague light
closing the eye
's lid
home plate
the late P
destroyed
leaving only $b$
\& n
beginning again
bna
all history there
t here
opposed against the suffering we have yet to bear


43
last note
not
no e
1 as no
1 body
I where
I w here
no w
for w's sake
no is
e
against the silent sleep

Es
bushes
dawn
the r rises
brushes drawn
the whole scene
the w hole
into which the world
disappears
d is a p
pear shaped
dear H
a p edges
into the sea
sun
the unenviable s

there is no desire for speech
there is no desire to spell
each gesture
against the chaos
must be made well
there is stillness in the heart of the power
as there is stillness in the heart of the storm
between the w \& the d
the in side of
the mind ( 's a quiet place
from which the power unwinds


2n
in vocation
i am
a singer
every letter
invokes a spell
ing is
the power
letters have
over me
word shaping
addition of the 1

within the difference
if exists
tensions a
polarity
who is moved or moves
a distinction a disparity
a.d. a.d.
history's spoken in the first four letters
alle to z
outside the head's
measure of our kind
man's time

(variation on a line by h.D. - in memoriam)
A.D. on
is dead
let the H
supplant the D
in your sweet poetry
adonis head
HE is the A.D.
HE is not dead
The H is gone from your lips H.D. soft consonantal breath
the vowels are locked between the dark doors
dead

$\omega$
whatever dies
the secrets do not die with you the lore we all seek (lor e)
choices are not disinterested
$d$ is in $t$
it is the old story HE lived thru
HIS death \& suffering
33 years into HIS time
22 letters left to pass thru
what birth will herald the change
if the formula remains the same
the era F.G. to follow A.D.
E.H. is the next to bear HIS name
reversed
mother muse
you come before HIS time
incarnate in a name now passed away
H.D. HE follows after you again


I I years since i first conceived myself a writer took up the task to carn that name
$\&$ now i see
i (n) ame
can i speak in the midst of suffering address the cross we wear too carelessly
time
part of the movement out of this dark time are we all trapped in a $D$ we do not recognize
$i$ will never wear the H never see HIS face
it is the apprentice's hips i spring from
her loins
oh ladies i have named my muses
the groin aches to serve you
it is the apprenticeship continues
sail decorated with the single emblem $P$
let $t$ err
as it does in this time
i'm struggling to learn my abc
d of
our/HIS
story

'dogma i am god'
it is all that's said
woke this morning
these words in my head
a palindrome
linked with an image
of friends two poets i knew
disagreed were not speaking with each other

d is a greed
a gluttony of shape
swallowing the era which it ends
discorporates

> casts itself
into its whirling quarrel with itself
bdpq
the first two separated by the c
christ
his birth
ends the era before A.D.
is it the $D$ of devil then
the apocalypse the bible prophesied
ends the age we live in
in dogma the d is on the left
encountered first
has the upper hand in our reading
we are led
into the devil's works
by our very view
god asserts the balance
the cypher for our cyclic ages
the $g$ that will dominate at the end of F.G.
leading on into E.H.
His reign of peace
'dogma i am god'
heresy
hearsay
in the worst sense
false pride
who thinks to bestride the world because he feels crushed by it

This page intentionally left blank


BOOK 4

This page intentionally left blank
'They steal the saint
while you're making the shrine'
'Looking for it all over the place three years
carrying it all the time like a baby'

Korean proverbs
translated by
w.s.merwin

This page intentionally left blank
purpose is a porpoise
a conceit
is there a sea
yes
is there a cloud
yes
everything elemental
everything blue
the precision of openness
is not a vagueness
it is an accumulation
cumulous
yes
oceanic
yes \&
anything elemental
anything blue is
sky
sea
the heart of
the flame
stories
st orie's domain
but the french say
'main'
ti
la
do
hand
the h \&
what else
if the language poses questions
'are there answerers'
what iad
dress
clothe in
thot
not
adjectives for nouns nor
names where things will do
eternally new
a hand shake
speare or sword
the old 's' word
cutting edge of accuracy
if they cannot see
they are blind
hear
deaf
de-
e
f
-fective
'the divine right of '
the hard left cross
nails the boss's son
we are always pleading
asking for
forgiveness
favours
never the old hosannas we used to raise
still worship the wheel in all its i's's
make ourselves capitals
of earthly doubt

the d will out
as the $b$ drops thru its
half note
configuration
$i$ is singing scale
i hails you

Hart works the 'e'
reversing the conjunction
finds the dna
connective
the heart of
writers \& their obsessions
who cares
the oral hang-ups change
a concern for listening
if $i$ let the actual speak
it will revcal itself
admire the form
be seduced by it
as part of
the love of
language
'love me for my mind as well'
elementary statement
elemental state
meant for
completion
combination
we work
the changes
always
to reveal
lest the actual re-veil itself
a shifting of
the humus
cumulous covers
poetry's reviled \&
spat upon
sweet spit \& hhh of breathing
the old so \&
so my dreams are troubled
what matters it the nights are sleepless
i lie awake with poems hymns
these rhythms
insistent as the brain is
with images
a pounding in the chest of
words
the 1 imposition of the earth
the singular
word + one $=$ world
i seek
solutions to equations that are already solved?
no!
only
an understanding
( (i place mysclf as less than
what is obviously greater)
all knowledge
is to know the ledge you stand on
half way between earth \& sky
where the clouds slide
form \& dissolve around you)
a way of moving in the fluid surely
not as a man who walks in water
where swimming would better do
or as Christ did
walking out upon it
to teach them
the stupidity
of rigid category
i want the absolute precision
of fluid definition
the saints learned
long ago
built their towns
'upon the plains of heaven'
blue of sea
(sky)
white clouds
(land)
intermingling
driving north today
fog giving way to rain
rain to snow
\& snow
covering the road finally
there is no definition
where you cannot see the line
of drawing
writing
music
the form a focus for us
i wakens from
the dreamed landscape
out of the words' tumble
should meaning separate
when it is the torrent sweeps me
thru the bound beeches
the switch
hits the mind
blood rushing to
the surface of
the skin

```
sink
    in
```

ink's $\sin$ is
no $\sin$
unless it is the nosin' around
down at the surface where the depth is
we read it in the i's
i centre is a tease
no centre ring at all
Adam knew
the apple was a pull
a way
a separa-
tion-
ning
the whole for
the part
$\sin$ of
partiality
who should have been impartial
(imp art i always wanted to attain
a dance among the little ones)
wanted to be part of
the whole
flows thru
into the universe
absolute \& open
poem of
perfect movement
containment of
the flux

the wind outside rises
air
grey
day
janvier
moment when the movement changes
the line straightens out \& stretches on ahead
there's room to pass
out into the flats of heaven
the cloud land
a night's sleep has seen the last of
for the moment
momentum carries us
on in our arc around the sun
\& the lines become as long as the tongue can
/carry without breathing in
images shift
blue sky turning back to grey
it is the wind moves it
it is a language the celts knew \& spoke of
runes
(the running e's)
pass as vowels thru energy
consonants as nouns
vowels as verbs
what are the sentences that form
words they're made of
syntax of alignment i want to see
apparent in every bush \& tree
placement of the sea \& land
a plan
not in the sense of plot
pre-conceived
but there
readable
if i am able to
see man
writable
purpose
breaks skin's surface
gains control
moves from the know on
into the un
prefix delimiting the road
out of the two year darkness of the mind
no music i could find to lead me
sick of ending things before their time
is marked
b
eaten up
's sung in
the bottom range
down the upper
twists of phrase
sur visage
the mouth opens
writing following the of
sound
noise
products of the human voice
awaking
too little sleep
snow falls
beyond the wind
O
w forms
at the word's end
word's beginning is
the book's end
that conundrum
vision
riddle we are all well rid of
the dull pass of widsom
$w$ is $d$
o ma
i'nh and
the me's restated
at the pen's tip's ink
at the tongue's noise
$w$ in $d$
din
Blake's vision of
Golgonooza
after noon
the clouds give way to sky
blue
e
le me 'n
t
always
why
to rid me of
the ugh in
thought
i spell anew
weave the world
out of the or
binary
the note spun
out of the dinary into the few
letters i am granted
signs to reach who i cannot touch
miles \& years between us
february I 1975 5:48 p.m.
conscious i may be dead when you read this
as two nights ago i lay awake
trying to grasp the concept 'infinite'
a feeling of vertigo
i am so much less than everything
the fact of the all
encompassing me
gunning into high
digger digger
the cat gut \&
the fiddler
questions to answer
answer's an A
B
ginning
of the town
the saints came down from
buildings crumbling
middle ground abandoned
the road takes me
into the centre of that emptiness
the past is made by
the present
at root the blue is bleu
means 'bright'
if you get the $b$ right
everything's ginning
essents \& essentials
so much of the problem is misnaming
last night
walking home
stars above the church at the foot of Huron
the sky a darker blue to purple
range i cannot name
that activity
what should be play
too often's re-creation
the change that Langtek worked
'wreck-creation'
foreign to me now
i want the world
absolute \& present
all its elements
el
em
en
t's
o
pq
$r$
or bd
bidet
confusion of childhood's 'kaka'
the Egyptian 'KA'
soul
rising out of
the body of
the language
the streets are not named standing in the centre square
staring up at windows they no longer gaze from
the whole point of it ended
meanings for existence
gone
the stuttered b
ing
that is living
stammer thru our days
impotent in less obvious ways than
the limp dick or
frozen ocean of
response
the saints come down to
their mortality
or fled
to live among the dead
outside our memories
the city that they built
a memo re
a son
one's debt to one's father
forgotten
farther away than
the next star or
page
surface that the eye lights on
in the press of speech
awkward words are chosen
that decision is
the voice's prelude
skeletal remains
apparent in
the choice of
building blocks
the ' $b$ ' locks into place
a command
in the space left
the weight of air shifts
visible compounds of earth \& water
within a balanced sphere of
forces

Fire (which is sum)
air
earth \& water (clouds)
air
earth \& water (earth)
fire (which is core \& molten)
we can journey outward
into hell
the suns \& darknesses of space
or inwards
into cave-black liquid stone \&
fire
at the earth's core
old questions i had asked
answered
Lucifer fell
from fire onto earth \& could not rise again burrowed into
the ground
the meteor in northern siberia
June 3oth 1908
'a sound was heard
louder than . . . thunder and a column of fire
... shot skyward'
'a farmer living fifty miles away
was hit by a heat wave
which he feared would set fire to his clothing'
i burn on the inside
unnamed purpose
as i had dreamed it years ago
to write my way thru the books of the dead
let the process take me
thru
into
the books of the living
\& i move now
out of 3 into 4
or 1
some new beginning
sensed here
amid the sensory sensation of
speech
these words
the arch
ark
Io
logical
invocation of
the change
flames i saw
among the monotones
the burning beasts cattle
Io of the many eyes
Nura Nal's visions
Io who suckled Zeus
\& invented the five vowels of
the first alphabet
\& the consonants
$B \& T^{\prime}$
Nura Nal who sees thru dreams
what is to transpire
that arch which takes us
over the present
into the future
arks we sail
like Noah or Utnapishtim
till we come to that day
we are no longer young
others come
as Gilgamesh did
caught up in
the immortality game
to question us
there is noone here to question
the wind howls in the empty strects
shutters bang uselessly
i pick my way thru the remnants of their speech
the crumbling outline of their modes of thot
i am no closer to them
only further away from earth
dizzy from the lack of air
i stumble frequently
in the long hours the heart is slowed
the mind drifts between the particles
letters of the law
the $B$ is born
one day before
the celebration of your son Lord
according to the Bethluisnion
\& isit
late in the Nth month
waiting for the $F$ to dawn
seven days from now
ash dropping from
the fire i have lit in my hand
the B gins us
A's the birth
tree
day of
celebration
I
the death
yew
loss of we
which is our perfect B
ginning
false pride of individuality
that i am
yes
but i was of
came from
this soil
W
o men
we all begin in
that embrace our M's contained in
the soil forsakes us
we are lost
Kryptons we all came from
infant crying for our vanished homes
crumble in the face of fragmentary stone
remnants of our origin
shakes us
power's gone
orphaned I's
brought down to their mortality
i hang
suspended in the N which is my name
sequence is the changing of the moon
the month's advancement
BLN
F
amily-
ing?
the shrines change hands
the sacred groves' scarred
battle for our gods across millenia
drift in between
never easy with these mono themes
mono theisms
torn between our parents
mother/father
can't i praise you both
i move from streets
into empty corridors
the saints abandoned
long ago
took their separate ways to earth
or outward
to the stars
other suns \& planets
other gods
useless catalogues of sins \& longings
'are the two equated?'
'sometimes'
'oh'

the is M
the particular
emblem of the end a
beginning a
way
ME/WE
returned to
that vision \&
this time
i write the letters clearly
the w rite of consciousness
a transparency's
too often viewed opaquely
lack of seeing
lack of being
sing
sang
sank
froid
et chaud
caught between the opposites
throats full of praise
masked pleadings with the ones we fear will leave us
kill us
will us dead \& gone
cinq
six
sept
mid-initial drop
Set or Seth
whose opposite Osiris
he murdered
for the sake of Isis
Aphrodite Urania
Aphrodite Erycina
who tore out her lover's balls
in the moment of heat
that cold consumes us
Cain \& Abel
the brothers or the twins
jealously
divides the year
divides the family
mi
fa
so
la ti
etude \&
longitude a
fixing of points on a grid
language
where the grid is
no longer apparent
buried in the history of the race
the alphabet
A to Z of
being
the M
the ME
the $S$ is
a way of starting
your feet move hesitantly in the shuttered rooms
the few things they left scattered on the mantles
artifacts of daily living
rotting garbage that forms their tel
ing
St Orm St Reat
St Agnes \& St And
St Utter
who became the town crier
another story
i never bothered to tell
their histories fill my head
as the dead can do
so many years they tried to block out the living
i became their mouth
their breathing
like some misconception of you God
not to illumine the present
but to haze it over
these clouds of the unknowing
false mysteries i railed against
\& now they're gone
like the voice of Jung on a distant phone
mumbling
uncritical
i see their faces as they were
jealous of your godhood
your parenting
set themselves up as
better than the rest of us
because we acknowledged our suffering
i preferred St And a clown
human \& vulnerable
critical of stupid posturing
absurd hierarchies he'd left behind
aware of the struggle he'd never made
forgetting the common effort raised these spires
built the high-arched windows
placed the cobblestones
lived on
isolate among the many
his face mirrored in the air
he gazed into \& fell
self into self
narcosis of narcissus
wandered then
lost among men
the full pain of his loss haunting him
he is gone now
to 'the land from which there is no return'
where Erishkigall holds sway
to Mag Mell
the plain of joy
Avalon
Isle of Appletrees
finally at peace in
the immortality game
in the gardens the trees have died
freed of their artificiality
'in Dilmun the raven utters no cry'
to do what one does
with honour
is the all
ist heal-
ling
lang
u age
's h
on
our
hour
the days are marked by their divisions
purpose
less divisive in
the long run
lung ran
lang ren
tall
i is here so
short ly
in bed
2 a.m.
ellie sleeps beside me
images form behind her closed cyes
$i$ am following a line of thot
of ink to
its conclusion
to re member
re articulate
eyes
mouth
mobility of limbs
in the dream time
connectives vanish
only that one line or link
you seek each morning
takes you back
e thru k
fghij
arcane but logical
here
'where the sea sleeps'
'where the cold is unendurable'
in these 'barbarous lands at
the end of the world'
we are caught in
a tangled dreaming
an immigrant nation of
uncertain history
we are like you saints
the lands we left destroyed
by nothing more than
the hours' passing
tonight
the moon shines
thru this house of glass
as i as well had said it
'the poem is dead long live the poem'
$i$ know now the saints were wrong demigods at best
we have struggled a millenium
without your name
no power to invoke but our own
noun of your being absent
no other nouns cohere
i speak from 'the land of the summer stars'
'at the back of the north wind'
where the souls flock
each spring
the ponds \& hills of
dufferin county
set out food at the pond's edge
because it is right \& necessary
wander the woods where the old beeches stand
books of your being
light green of new leaves
blue spring sky
that colour range which is the saxon word 'glas'
\& it is death i see
which is the absence of the strength to call you
the power to invoke your name
gone in the shifting game of allegiance
your jealous children played
\& i am left wanting you
left to amuse myself
mother/ father
i am afraid
retreat to theory
talk factually when i feel unsure
hate the noise of such didacticism
hate my hatred of it
journal journey
jour du nalney
move slowly thru the signs of passage
maybe i will ne
ver
speak a
gain
mid this
blue
sky \& deep sea
cerulean
vapour
distant hills
flash of veins
as they show thru
the skin
of constancy
livid as the skin becomes
after a blow
fear or
dismay
the colour of
blood
i dress in
because iam a servant of
words
the colour of
plagues
(indecent
obscene)
'plaid the painter
when hee did so gild the turning globes,
blew'd seas, and
green'd the fields.'
yield it all up from
the person
voice
he hopes is charged with His blessing
the i dies finally merges with the land's scape scope increases
the folded page
writes its way into
the longed for
beginning
story
new
song
round
as the lips form
an O
i used to (age 4)
put the period in
early syntax
early speech
you are dead saints
i am half-alive
or better
some days
calendrical ways
happy in the morning
depressed in the afternoon or
reversals
la tigre
egress
the rest is
written to be written
'it is all so slight'
of hand
the pen's grasped
wrongly but firmly
dreams twist
images erupt
violent
brush the skin off my head
's oblong
aluminum

## oblagatto

one word dwelled on
one month
mispelling: 'obligatto'
thinking: 'obligation'
i am obliged to
play out this path i have chosen
play this tune
write this part as i have just spoken it
because it is necessary
because iam not alone
because to be is cause
(reason versus reasons)
art is to bring together
join
'lost art of art -
we are crazy in our isolation
as i am
torn always
so that the truth appears a melodrama when $i$ state it makes rhetoric of daily speech
'two nations warring in the bosom of a single state'
indispensible
love \& hate
essential to
the completeness of the
compo
sition
moi et me
instrument on which it's played
bound to another

## obligation

two months to play the theme thru
'you are dead saints'
given back into the drift of print
of speech
born anew among the letters
a different tension
different reach
of logic
of the mind's playing out of
reason
a rhyme
till God's re sonned
on the tongue
the groan that must accompany your birth lord
lord
unless the el's read 'one'
one ord er
absolute \& true
which is the two tone order of the pun
'one Samuel
an Irishman
for his forward attempt to pun
was stunted in his stature'
pounded down
(i moved during the course of this writing, interrupting the patterns, jarring at first because i found myself, ten years later, back in the same house i'd lived in during the writing of 1335 Comox (poem that began JoURNEYiNG \& THERETURNS (whose form was perceived after i moved away from there (from here))) the dilemma being ifound myself caught up in a) mirror image
(no way to notate the break
caught up in) another
absolute statement for
my mother
(followed the line to come
'air your grievances \& longings' with
'a transition taken
a return'
\& later
'tonight i kneel
pounded down by the weight of my own resistances
my own fatigue
a kind of false pride'
crossed the whole thing out
uneasy with the tone
began this new movement
sudden intrusion of my mother
coupled with a return of self-loathing
'who does not love his words or works'
i saw as
a deeper level of
the pun
stir)
against the hate of self the love of her
posited
'there is little evidence to support it'
i am
the evidence of
their lovemaking
their spoor
my name is
'little evidence'
little evident in
these proceedings
here in clouds
amid the clash
the roar of c's \& s's
absence of the loud

> separator
the same
$i$ read in in
the form of ain
(which is the pain
(mid-initial sequence) or the stain of
sainthood)
track's a trickle
straight as the jog my memory takes
composed in time the rimes exist beyond the text
contextual
textural
daily bump \&
grind
stripped bare
air your grievances \& longings
in these unfinished rooms
pick up the notebook left behind
after book III
that time i thot
the saints end
finally
end
'f eat her
take her away
in my cap
at dawn
today
the knowledge
to day
the action iact on'
'her' posited again as
$\mathrm{moM} /$ Womom


```
'the change
            (an
        angel
        chang'll
        hang)
```

suspended
over my head
suspen dead
deed
done
one din
motion
or one y
changed by
the revolution
hanged $c$
revolving $r$ the
credit balance ${ }^{1}$
sense out of nonsense
N on sense
(which is me)
i spell out changes
realign essentials
as ithot to
sing a balance sing ${ }^{2}$
to make everything the same you say
'nothing is different'
the arguments get obvious
when one's upset one screams

3 or 1 ?
'it is so unlike me
one like me uses my lungs'
my voice?
gossip's piss o G.
cloud town's gone down
t into d
artness
then the arkness of her belly
is that the sweat of fear
atlas's salt a
blinding of vision in any case
$c$ as e
'it is all the same'
words one used before

2 agèd
fall

naming things that don't exist
twist
back \& forth
existence only in the naming"
to spawn again in that stream
's forbidden
i cannot rebirth myself
cannot become mine own progeny
(glazed window grey day
you've all gone away
five years since i called your names with surety
i am not the same
(sometimes (at night) i doesn't know who he is (why? (that's wrong the sequence should read $w x y-$ the $h$ interpolated into the unknown) $h$ is his) not in that old schizzy sense (i.e. he doesn't know who i is) but a perception re entity in its entirety ('at night' because he is all alone $\&$ 'sometimes' because it's accurate) the lacking of a total
lem is in summing up prematurely (false). he is 3 I (yesterday) but i's what? (joking to a friend he said 'i used to be 18 to myself but i'm catching up') a question of tension in telling a power in print opposed to speech

which is octagonal h sided
or
(an aside
(i's inside
he's an outside face
a pose
a posse or
a nosegay
is it possible
the horses go neigh
posse bull
the whore say
(reintroduction of Blossom Tight, a minor character from an early draft of a later Captain Poetry poem)
'noone is forgotten we're just rewritten. he's letting my voice intrude briefly. it's just a chance for a few laughs at his character's expense (employing the devices of fiction in an autobiographical poem).'
1)))
compulsive unmasking
i.c. as opposed to h.e.
over against the french j.e.
so that the sequence reads
h
i. \}e.(translating) he meaning i
but mot (capital H) He

- no heresy here
a tic
there a tickle
statement
'why would you want to make everything the same?'
consistent voice equated with style
falsely
style's stylus
the fingers an extension of the mind ma 'nd me 'nd personal history
le monde mundane
mynde \& physik
i say 'quoi' mais
je ne sais quoi
it is the $i$ of
$\left.\begin{array}{l}\text { histor } \\ \text { mister }\end{array}\right\} y$
the $y$ 's said $e$
making 'my' 'me'
\& 'why' 'whee'
as in wheat or
whyte
white
night
stars over Inuvik
walking back from the reading to the hotel
the main streets mud
out on the edge of things
the elements still win
stilts support the town
impermanence shows
I20 miles inside the arctic circle you know
we're living out a myth
huddled at the bottom of
most of what is canada
waiting the glaciers return
cities ablaze
fire out of water
burn
coal/oil/gas
ritual pass of light
gestures against the coming night
here the ravens cry
as they did in Dilmun
raise their wings black against the sky
\& fly
the two we saw
walking thru the brush above the river
Mackenzie flowing north into the Beaufort Sea
'big as a dog they are!
had one once fought a dog in the main street!'
snow falls around us
white on whyte
worlds we have railed against
when will we be
content in the present
moment
land
whole
not the part
Ca
Na
Da
C'ND
no space between
the process
switch
which is the flow

(we woke before dawn, throats dry, remembering then we slept in a desert, frozen tho it may be, caught between the i \& he, am image of Dilmun in his mind, caught between first \& third person na(ra)tivity)
rising off the tarmack into the sky
looking back along the body of the plane
straining for a glimpse of the arctic ocean
before the clouds close in
passing thru
into that space between
one layer \& the next
not cloud world but another
spectral \& strange
passing thru
into the greyblue
sky over everything
\& two days later
driving out of Fort Smith
30 miles to little buffalo falls
ruth rees, ellie \& me
watched the water drop
60 feet into the basin
the clouds hung grey
for the seventh straight day
as if cloudtown lay in ruins above me snowbirds flocking up into the sky
trying to make sense of the wreck around me here in the midst of what has never known city trace a civilization or what's left of it
looking out over the rapids on great slave river early the next day
the remnants of Fort Fitz
where the great barges lay to
in their journey north to
Hay River Fort Simpson
whatever outposts sprang up to service those men
lived there
north of the Arctic Circle
\& i am remembering Dilmun
the empty squares \& courtyards
crumbled palisades \& steeples
where Utnapishtim lived out his years
\& i am wishing i could speak to him
discover how long immortality is
was his city like cloud town
the buildings rearranging themselves daily
the city no enemy ever took
because the streets shift even as you walk them
doorways change
familiar only to the saints who lived there
recognized dwelling signs no stranger'd ever see
they went crazy on this earth
only language retaining the multiplicity they were used to
(typing this out 12 days later i kept coming back to that line 'the edge of things' wondering at the vagueness, knowing what i was trying to suggest, that my world was finite, not in imagination but experience, real limits to what i knew, worried once more by the tension between process \& an ideal economy of phrase
reading B.S. Johnson carlier this week, discusses Scott's shift from narrative poem to novel, what he saw as the death of the long poem. puzzling its resurgence, its popularity in recent years, i realized the lines had disappeared between the forms, that the novel \& the poem were merging finally, a clarity, freedom to move as i choose

\& later

talking with steve

> comparing forms
his CARNIVAL

```
'my' MARTYROLOGY?
```

the voiceless voice he saw in Ronald Johnson's poems
i am wary of that impulse within me
would have it out with my i
how can i cast itself out
out of the process i must be true to
is part of the dissolution
the disillusionment
create a third person when the i's can't get along?
(jumped ahead
thot 'song'
son of $g$
h
(comes after him)))
the man at the reading said
'how come your poems sound so down?
unlike you?'
(the desire becomes stronger to stretch out, explain myself, which makes the plain ex, no longer clear, i want a different ear, a he like me, a she where the $s$ is (in correct relation to)
he/i/she
(why is the s the
feminizer?, makes the i is, births it, gives it its being, carries the he in the body of its word, the men inside women, the me in both of them)

EQUATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: HE/IS/HE
such minimal movements to seek truth in (steve said 'you'll be accused of shallowness' (hallowness feminized?)))
these clouds are real
mist mister
it's not the saints sing it's me!
nothing's anything but what it is
too many things aren't what they are
like most of us
we dress in costumes
pose
unhappy with our time
i never could dance like Fred Astaire or Ginger
o music music
there is the mind
a line of thot's its own litany
sung slightly out of tune
i know the imperfections in my voice
know choice is a matter of emotions
commitment to a place \& time
the active present of the writing
1962 Vancouver
25 of us in the rain
protested the Bay of Pigs invasion
1963 Port Coquitlam
teaching a grade 4 class
heard
over the intercom
of Kennedy's assasination \& cried
the contradictions are there in a lifetime literature is no guarantee of a common good i want a firmer ground to stand on
you do the best you can
as isaw that day the foal was born
you start with what's local
stands next to you
\& move out
increase your range as your skill grows
\& what's around you's taken care of

the what's low call
echoes thru these pages
lo cal or (i.e.)
what's immediate is
the word in front of me
the one beyond that that i'm reaching for
no muse at all really
simply this canadian foot
following a tentative line forward
taking the time to tell you everything
the muse is western (greek)
the japanese saw poetry as cveryman's
like thot or breathing
ambiguity was precisely what they wanted
it's social then
a point of view
political
the duty of a citizen
'a man betrays himself in his speech'
((why do they always question content, you speak of form to counterbalance the question, they never ask what you believe in) purpose can become conceit, shift beneath the feet, the line of speech that's called political, the signified slides below the significr, gets lost in what's
expedient, the strength of english, its ambiguity, turned against it, corrupted, the masked language of law \& politics, so distorted we empower experts to interpret it)
in the distance clouds break
i'm sitting on the curb
crossing out words
resisting the urge to apologize
$i$ am thinking it is better left behind this city they no longer had a use for make my way thru the shifting streets along these sheets of paper to an ending it is not over
it is never over
there is 'a third difficulty
with the usual definitions of parts of speech
they neglect form for meaning
although it is precisely through the form of our words and sentences
that we communicate our meanings.'
(James Sledd
A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH GRAMMAR)
\& me
what am i doing
'building up a bracketing of asides'
standing here
outside the limits of this empty city
studying the cloud range
the shapes that shift
because it is the nature
of paper i have scribbled one word on
to shift it
back \& forth in my mind \&
begin again
that way among the tensions
the interplay between the letters
is to start at m
\& then the a
leads thru to $y$
some questions answered
but the rest remain
not in the saints' names
which was beginnings
but in that space between
the s \& t
among the shift of what at first seems arbitrary
'to go beyond the point where it is even neces-
/sary to think in terms of words'
there
which is t \& here
more pain than we can bear
is bearable

| M | Books i to in <br> A $\begin{array}{l}\text { which is begun } \\ \text { \& leads }\end{array}$ |
| :--- | :--- |

This page intentionally left blank


# Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data 

Nichol, B.P., 1944-1988
The martyrology books 3 \& 4

Facsimile ed.
Poems.
ISBN 0-55245-088-0
I. Title.

PS8527.I32M32 2000 C811'.54 C00-930204-2
PR9199.3.N48M32 2000

Parts of Books III \& Iv have appeared previously in White Pelican, Is, Io and Earth \& You. An earlier draft of Book iv was printed to coincide with a reading at the University of Alberta in Edmonton on February 20, 1976.
copyright © 1976 , bpNichol
drawings copyright © 1976 , Jerry Ofo
Published with the assistance of The Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council.

First printed in the autumn of 1976 in Bembo type in an edition of i 500 copies. Another 500 copies were printed and bound in April, 1993 by the printers at the Coach House, 401 Huron Street, Toronto.


