

The Enchantment of

■ Casual Origins

Jack Ricchiuto



the enchantment of casual origins

# The Enchantment of Casual Origins

Published by DesigningLife Books

DesigningLife.com

1020 Kenilworth Avenue

Cleveland OH 44113

Copyright 2010 Jack Ricchiuto

All rights reserved.

ISBN 978-1-4507-2869-0

Ricchiuto, Jack, 1952 -

1. Poetry

I. Title

First printing, August 2010

Printed in the USA

Production: BookMasters

Cover design: Tia Andrako

Cover photo: Jack Ricchiuto

This collection spans the year I returned to writing poems after a 30 year hiatus, an accidental sabbatical of sorts. Actually, if we entertain the premise that, when it comes to poetry, the essence of writing is living, then it was a busy three decades of writing poetry.

Poetry reminds us of the intrinsic relationship between the quality of our language and the quality of our culture, and how shifts in culture begin with shifts in language. When we enter poetry, we enter the familiar with unfamiliar eyes.

I am most grateful to those who generously supported the treacherous journey of reinventing a voice that's authentic to my current aesthetic and view. You know who you are and know your gifts of inspiration and mentorship are profoundly appreciated.

Jack Ricchiuto

August 2010

i was born  
a child of galaxies  
too magnificent for words,  
much less questions,

galaxies where  
love is freedom,  
freedom is wisdom,  
and wisdom is play,

where the greatest  
human achievement  
is the simple act  
of changing one's mind,

where no one  
who makes anything  
knows how it is made,  
i was born from

the sacred geometry  
of the jazz of jazz,  
improvising cool from  
the enchantment of casual origins

lovely the way this evening's  
crimson sun sets ablaze  
urban facades in reflective  
shimmering respite

from the otherwise  
opaque demure of  
gilded corporate monuments

lovely these precious moments  
of prismatic explosions of color  
that will later dazzle the night  
with apollo's twilight riffs

from a lone tenor sax  
swooning a waxing moon into  
one azure alley after another

i want a text massage

i want someone to pour  
warm herbed metaphors  
on my aching verbs,  
knead deep  
into the tissue  
of my tenses,  
be kind to my  
dangling participles,

i want someone  
to release the sinewed  
syntaxes from  
my cramping grammar,

i want someone  
to caress my clauses,  
edit my flabby drafts  
and heal me down  
to the depths of my vowels,

i want a text massage  
that leaves me purring  
with sweet similes

only on rare occasions anymore do their suits  
stretch to barely button aging bellies,

bellies that have, in brotherhood, held steady  
against many a bar, that today march

in procession, carrying their brother to his grave  
in somber remembrance of their years

living life large with laughing buddha bellies,  
union hall compatriots with fire in their bellies,

toasting to their early days courting  
sweethearts with butterflies in their bellies,

today, walking a familiar road with one less shadow,  
suits stretched over bellies soft with grief for a friend

we were going to go to woodstock  
but we heard it was going to rain

rain

eroding fragile faith in our father's wars

rain

steaming forests of love at the edges

rain

beating new rhythms imagined on the roofs of john's dream

rain

swelling oceans that refuse no river

rain

uniting improbable tribes of huddled masses sharing

muddled medicines of a new age

rain

seeding aspen groves and grooves of a new generation

rain

still dancing on the tips of our tongues

we were going to go to woodstock

and we heard it was going to rain

i know a woman  
who tends half her garden  
outside her garden fence,  
her bees leave  
half their blossoms to hummingbirds,  
her squirrels leave half their nuts  
to the unseen trees of grandchildren.  
this morning I return from sleep  
with half my dreams and leave the rest  
to those who sleep and have none.

when the time given  
becomes the time taken,  
I will leave my body to the sciences  
and my heart to the arts.

the only honest thieves are the ones  
who keep their own doors unlocked

come with me  
to the place  
where the seasons meet,  
and mingle,  
and merge  
in unencumbered embraces

let us speak of this place  
the way  
the incense  
of mountain pines  
infuses first breaths  
before dawn

evening sun melts  
into the crucible sea,  
an ancient alchemy  
igniting into a firmament  
of a million prescient stars.  
old men look up from  
unfettered minds tethered to wisened bodies,  
still nimble enough to dance around  
the constellations of life's questions,  
questions that take more than  
one lifetime, questions now  
no longer asked of them,  
impossible to forget,  
the womb of questions  
receiving them back  
into their next birth.

she was a red-headed tale-spittin' trucker  
fire ball pistol bridget tongued diva  
no one would dare lie to twice

she had no use for mirrors or jesus,  
mostly because he danced too slow,  
joan of arc never had it so good

she was fem fatale of kindred convoy tartans  
proof had nothing to do with the test of her tensile,  
everything to do with the company of the jack of daniels

she never took a compliment, never missed a birthday,  
never met an irony she didn't like,  
when she came to the fork in the road, she took it

the nuns used to warn us  
of the theological dangers  
of "touching ourselves"  
which was about as meaningful  
as having given us the keys  
to a brand new mustang, and  
telling us "do not leave the driveway"  
and so we were taught  
to abhor the arbor of paradise  
the celebratory cause of our bodies  
because they too closely  
resemble our mothers  
the cursed progeny of eve  
who was only trying to  
make offering, not imposition  
the way of the garden  
the curse of women to  
the fires of acid in the faces  
of young indian girls who dare  
to embrace the taboo of going to school  
the ostracizing of serbian lesbians  
preserving sacred cultural traditions  
the epic demilitarization  
of african women using micro loans  
to transubstantiate the  
translucent dreams of women  
that since the time of turtles  
have borne ancient songs of incarnation

when i woke, there she was,  
her warm softness nuzzled against my chest  
listening to the hum of my soul the way  
pilots lean into the pulse of signals in a fog  
i never feel her getting into bed,  
i don't keep tabs on her,  
it's an unspoken agreement between us,  
one of many  
i love her independence,  
her casual regard,  
the tides of her indifference  
i surf in rumi ruminations  
on life as juicy paradox  
wrapped in mystery the way  
i would occasionally wrap  
the moist flesh of prosciutto  
around prosecco marinated melon for her  
i think she's fascinated by my suggestions  
even though they go largely unheard,  
it's another unspoken agreement, that gifts  
can be refused without hard feelings  
and that, as long as she  
adorns me with the adoration reserved  
for greek gods, she will be  
the only cat in this house

late summer sun laces  
the carolina sunday longtable,  
diddler fiddlers swarm  
a ballet of bees,  
long skirts a swayin'  
to a gossipin' breeze

proper ladies of every hue  
serve a fine banquet of  
delicious young women  
to swirling spirals of neckties,  
toe tapping to the music  
of their father's dream

old gay couple,  
one blind eye sitting  
next to one deaf ear,

a half-quartet  
riffing the miles  
of dizzy lovers,

two cats clear  
even in the dark  
who their friends are,

two crawdads resting  
in a cool pool, taking in  
whatever flows their way

a bus of boll weevils rolls through baton rouge  
on their way to a panel discussion  
by rail rodeo cowboys and their cowgirl queens,  
talking about the virtues of nomadic romance

scarab weevils are skeptical,  
they'll drink their egyptian hemlock  
before they swallow the kool aid  
of charlatan colonial hitchhikers

boll weevils, unsung liberators of cotton  
from cowboy plantation patrons, so slaves  
no longer strap their hopes to the underbellies  
of underground railroads to the promised land

cranky old man, his white wisps of hair  
thinner than his patience,  
eyebrows bushier than the forget-me-nots  
he tends daily at his bride's grave,  
his crooked legs more fragile than  
the sign he holds every friday  
with a mail carrier's dedication,  
the sign that warns curious patrons  
about the "lie-brary," that corrupt collection of, well,  
"the whole damned thing should be put under 'fiction',"  
he chants, arguing with anyone  
who takes the time, and says,  
"and honest as i'm standing here,  
if they told you the whole thing,  
you'd see that nothing  
is as unpredictable as the past"

he was there, he knows what they left out,  
he knows the millennia of stories missing,  
edited by the tyrannical pens of ideologies  
like the last 35 years stripped from iraqi school books  
as if children would forget how to listen  
to their grandmothers' stories that would  
pour out like a genie from lamps of unpatriotic narratives,  
no he would accept no history book smaller  
than the sum of 6 million personal journals,  
if he could get everyone on the planet  
to spin their truths into a giant web

of how it really was,

and if he were king he'd tolerate  
no official version of anything,  
no authoritative rendering of how it was

and then there's that secret-fan cute librarian  
who tattoos him with a wink  
as he slips another book under his coat  
on his way out the door

one night,  
when your demons  
are fast asleep  
place them carefully  
into a small  
leather box,  
bless this box  
with oil of myrrh,  
walk this box  
down to the lake,  
take this box  
into a small row boat,  
not a motor boat,  
you must not wake them,  
row quietly  
to the middle  
of the lake,  
and there  
count your breaths  
until you hear  
the songs of geese  
rippling to the shore,  
then carefully  
lower this box  
into the water,  
do not let the water  
touch your hands,  
and as this box sinks,

row back to shore,  
keeping your mind  
on your breaths  
and the shore,  
then as you arrive,  
let the shore receive you  
and all you have ever  
considered impossible,  
then at dawn,  
return home  
as never before

cats measure time in trances,  
the grammar of their trajectories  
dangling participles of chance

they would eschew the technology  
of thumbs to grab attention  
if given the choice

what would be otherwise  
flat floors, they reshape  
in escher tessellations

cats would twitter if only  
to liberate tweets from cages,  
zen masters of their own liberation

he stands on his own two feet,  
the ones he gave to the war  
in return for karmic wheels  
cycling birth and death

do our dreams grow  
to the size of our hearts, or  
do our hearts grow  
to the size of our dreams?

he sees for himself  
through his own two eyes,  
the ones he gave to love

in return for a heart  
larger than his dreams,  
and dreams larger than his heart

i lust for the simple life, the luxury laps of the richy rich,  
sporting the drama of minimalism served up  
by brand handlers, fashion consultants,  
aroma therapists and quixotic facial yogis

i lust for the simple life of guiltless elixirs,  
glistening down the runways of charity balls,  
pandering panaceas, well-healed tools of cool,  
zen naked darlings of the simply divine

she weaves her life from threads  
of her mother's worries  
and stretches it wide on the loom  
of her father's flair

she's the heiress apparent  
to caution and caprice,  
every leap leapt, from doubt,  
every leap unleapt, with regret

she is the darling of the friends  
she carries across hot coals of faith,  
inspiration to strangers  
she ferries across eddies of loneliness

on her life's path,  
mountains are nothing more  
than the next twenty feet  
on a trail with a view of the peak

what kind of  
zen teacher  
assaults  
the virtuous  
with ironic  
iconic irreverence,  
the virtuous born  
into this  
incarnation  
to grow  
a sense of humor  
the way fish  
grow gills  
to swim deep  
in the dharma?

n small acts of reluctant generosity,  
we've given the bed over to the dogs,  
the chairs to the cats,  
and the last corners of respite silence  
to your mother

it is no longer a mystery  
why the japanese word for hell  
translates into no space

every day we forage  
for our place in the world,  
two snails crowded into one shell,  
miles apart, but never lost  
in hospitality remembered

they swaddle themselves  
in tight worries,  
tired old birds perched  
in armchairs of well-meaning  
caution, thinly disguised  
as the wisdom of age,  
left far behind by  
the next generation,  
flying naked into the  
future that knows them  
only as possibilities

blessed are old artists,  
old poets and old dancers  
whose fresh eyes  
give wings to the young,  
whose open hearts  
yawn wide in wonder  
of each who dares to pass through

i wonder what our gods talk about  
sitting at the barber shop  
on saturday mornings.  
i imagine they talk politics and religion  
the same way everyone else does,  
my god talking about  
how he takes everyone  
into heaven except for those  
who are offended at the idea,  
your god moving to the head of the line  
those who would be most offended  
at the idea of everyone getting in.  
my god bragging about the brilliance  
of his idea to design evolution into creation  
so he could have the rest of eternity off,  
your god bragging about his delight  
in sneaking in new species  
when no one's looking.  
your god, a tireless listener to the endless  
supplications of the greedy and the good,  
my god wishing everyone would just shut up  
and start listening to each other for a change.  
your god and my god always making secret plans  
to go off one day and play hide and seek  
in full view where no one can see them.  
i heard a rumor that they  
were starting a mariachi band  
on a farm in upstate new york

he makes me laugh,  
his thoughts are mine,  
his name is tattooed on that tender place  
where he will lose himself  
cloud hidden in mountains,  
guided by sure handed sherpas,  
to the caves of smiling monks

there he will find me,  
gathering enlightenment  
in orange peels, peeling illusions

i think of him,  
thinking of me, often,  
my sherpa to the place  
where my ebony  
meets his alabaster

i long to meet him,  
one day

coyote moon  
in epic symmetries  
extract soul fragments  
from tribal slumbers.

geodesic truths  
favor the unprepared,  
shamans breathe into the  
improbability of our arrival

i never liked assigned seats,  
the blind dates and  
arranged marriages  
of social discourse  
give me the magic  
of taking the empty seat  
next to the most  
improbable stories

do not assume to know  
what amazing grace is possible,  
what amazing face might transport me  
to unimagined lands

give me the chance of chance  
the fruition of my intuition,  
the roll of paradise  
in the land of surprise

on his way to the revolution,  
o'anything got lost in  
the hapless tautology of  
a pint of consolation,  
slipping off the edge between  
one man's domestic passion  
and the archetypal operas  
he would otherwise wrestle  
to the ground of his being  
if he was the kind of man  
his woman tempts him to be

there will be no broken glass in this poem,  
no godless needles strewn or blood spewn

no priests sprinkling forgiveness on the unrepentant,  
no crack mothers witnessing their own dying at glacial speed,

none of this will happen in this poem, this poem is about one  
chrysanthemum growing through the crack of a garden wall

she sported herself as the kind of child  
that could cry at camp cheerful  
and refuse consolation from her loyal subjects  
the way ducks refuse rain off their backs

she would grow up to be general in the war  
as miss manners against rights violations,  
castigating decorated heroes for stepping  
on the shadows of her thin fame

her ego flows down from superior towers  
blanketed in brows knit in manes of indignation,  
adorned in honorary doctorate robes of self-absorption  
the way feathers wear peacocks

let's move to limbo,  
let's dance in the garden of the forgotten  
let's make margins the new center,  
a gateless paradise where we wear  
the thousand faces of a single soul

let's go where certainty cannot find us,  
where order comes naturally  
to those who cannot be ruled,  
where turtles dive deep without shells  
and birds fly high just at the thought of it

we will forsake the bondage of isms,  
we will open our houses to those  
who have broken the spell of either/or,  
we will embrace the beauty of both,  
reclaim the magic of circles

let's crack the cosmic egg,  
birthing the twins, courage and curiosity,  
let's do the limbo in limbo,  
dancing below the lines that divide, rising up  
to that place where devils and angels do not go

in random acts of fondness  
i slip my slight of tongue  
along the tongues of secrets shared  
by a tryst of girls, girls no more,  
but still seduced by the intrepid wit of boys,  
boys no more, but still entranced by  
the secret of being her secret,  
i pirouette offstage into her light

depending on where you sit  
the parallax of their nimble truths  
amuse or offend,  
they foment like hot itches  
just below the surface of their cool skin  
truths just petty enough  
to slip past their filters  
just prickly enough to burst the bubbles  
of otherwise polite discourse  
truths erupting and sending  
sardonic spores to the four winds  
unleashing wild prairies of little dogs  
yipping futile objections  
into the howling of the night's deaf moon

when the threads of constitutions  
fray and fail in our unraveling  
flagging interest in the  
glaucoma of myopic governments,  
the seats of legislators  
become pirates' booty,  
the prize of statesmen  
pimping the currencies of terms  
underwritten by junk bonds of citizenship,  
visionless dealers in the service of lips,  
pandering funk, power drunk  
on old wine in emperor's new skins

i bear your likeness,  
the eyes of my eyes  
the hands that still hold me  
in your gift of timeless time

your stories seed  
the field of my dreams,  
migrant fields of progeny  
who labor for the virtues  
you wore without reflection,  
the silk you spun without strain

you were the child of simplicity,  
goodness without intention,  
a banquet served by  
a grace unearned

no one worth their salt  
would tender the pepper  
that poetry is for

folks who can't write prose  
or that mules are for  
fools who can't ride horses.

some truths need  
a good headstand  
every once in a while

for all the blue skies  
breast nesting mountains,  
I'll take mules

who think circles  
around most horses,  
and are better rides at that

some men lack  
a vocabulary  
comprehensible by women,  
they are heard in a language  
they do not speak,

and so they seek  
the delicate balance  
of the spider's precipice  
between extinction and distinction,

the wise man  
neither longs for  
the strong seeking  
the weak nor the weak  
seeking the strong

grandma can't remember  
the last time she drove  
with a license,  
she recalls it was  
somewhere between refusing  
the vanity of dentures  
and sequestering the job  
as chauffeur to the grandkids,  
just to get them acquainted  
to death, so they would  
appreciate life a little more,  
life that's never been the same  
since her retirement  
as a storefront psychic,  
a craft she still plies  
and relishes as she  
reads the palms of  
all the nice officers  
who succumb to her spell,  
she still has it,  
the license conferred to her  
one night by the moon

chickens rhyme in clucking clusters  
squandering otherwise blissful  
and long dusty afternoons  
in unrewarded vigilance of enemies  
instigated by collective delusion,

they were the originators of  
homeland insecurity,  
constitutional guardians of pecking orders  
that our hallowed institutions  
continue to strut around the yard

our institutions whose faithful are  
still seduced by mafia lies of protection,  
the faithful who consider bad news as a food group  
and put all their eggs in the baskets  
of institutional chicanery

even free range chickens,  
fine feathered parodies of  
institutional lip service to freedom  
are cowardly and nested  
in coops of futile fears

his love is a rejection magnet,  
his lifeboat sinks on land,  
his grandparents who raised him  
ran away to the circus,  
his loser friends call him  
just to feel better,  
he is usually the only one  
who shows up for his  
loneliness support group.

when he's not working his three jobs  
he's writing prize winning poetry  
under a name not his own,  
because of him, the next generation  
will understand pain better  
than those who came before,  
he will give eyes to moles  
who live in the ground  
of their own apathy.

leave the horns of your youth at the river,  
instead, adorn yourself with the horns of unicorns,

extracted from the thorns of brambles  
where totems cast spells to your surmise,

fling your soul wide to the edges of the earth  
where rainbows arc into the gold

of blanket-raptured elders whose sacred medicines  
slowly open the eyes of those who hear

we sit and watch  
hearts leaping into flames,  
dreams sleeping through their stop,  
small hands  
grasping a large silence

we sit and watch  
each life's legitimacy,  
each one loved  
if only by one,  
if only for just one thing

if only, worn on heart sleeves,  
regrets for not being more,  
heads nodding in  
the sacrament of commuting  
as we sit and watch

i am the color of night at night,  
the color of the morning in the morning,  
the hues of heat in the afternoon,  
the shimmering cool of evening

our colors mingle together in sublime indivisibility

my politics are a pastiche of mongolian embroideries  
worn by sherpas carrying us home  
to the mountains we weave  
from the colors we sing together

you are the envy of chameleons,  
famous for your propensity for pretense,  
goddess to my narcissism,  
tailor to my imperial wardrobe

we are the convenient marriage  
of the mirage of images,  
ever hopeful for a life poised  
on a deck of a magician's cards

bright smiles distracting  
from tired, empty eyes,  
ours is the fragile bliss of  
saying yes, thinking no

if i pretend to be the one you want  
will you pretend to be the one i have?

there is a sort of silent whiteness,  
a kind of nocturnal radiance, that magnifies  
the unmistakable benign crunching  
of unwitnessed hooves in seamless snow

in the vibrant stillness of cacooned solitude  
i lose track of time and space, the twin illusions of  
near and now, then and far, and for once, forget  
what it means to yearn for yet something other

it's 3 am, the time orpheus likes to lurk  
with siren songs luring  
the rhizomic seeds of a poem  
growing root deep within  
the dark well of fertile, furtive wonder  
that i have somehow fallen into,  
mother earthen wet clay  
giving birth once again to civilizations  
from the mouths of lizards, the wily  
cartographers of ancient true fictions

how does laughter waft  
in the smoke of dubai slums,  
how do children sift the gold of joy  
in the shards of her wealth?

how do they wheel their misfortune  
down her narrow streets,  
how do their smiles galvanize  
the murti prayers of shiva?

how do their reincarnations  
dance with the divas,  
how does their play  
delight in the river of gitas?

think of the proximity of infinite love,  
its searing eyes burning through timid hearts,  
no hell exists beyond our hesitation  
to embrace a love that is infinite,

without the requisite constraints  
of souls sold in compliance,  
no heaven could exist beyond  
our running arms extended into bliss

they sleep  
in fields  
of serendipity,  
spinning yarns  
that web  
prismatic tribes  
they drink in  
the sun, asleep  
in drifting boats  
delivered by  
gulf streams  
to where they  
always  
wanted to be

the righteous will rule the earth,  
but only the joyful will taste it

so i'm like,  
i don't know,  
and he's like,  
i know, and  
i'm like,  
it's going to be ok  
isn't it?  
and he's like,  
it'll be ok,  
you know?  
and i'm like,  
i just wish i knew,  
and he's like,  
he's like ....

drifting out to life's deep sea of unknowables  
with the urgency of a late february fog,  
floating with her in an abyss of similitudes,  
journey mates in tentative approximations,  
swirling with her into the vortex  
of the waning days of their innocence

her knife lips mince words  
into dicey propositions,  
her forked tongue pierces through  
to the meat of the matter,  
the smatter and batter  
of having her cake  
and eating it too,  
her heart funneling out  
social roughage strained  
to curry favors from the stingy  
yeasty egos skewered and sauteed  
for her dining pleasure

deep within the artichoke of what is my life,  
beneath the leaves of best intentions,  
i peel my way to the heart of the matter,  
the small rumors of my luminosity that drown

the loud rantings of any doubts otherwise,  
i dip my will into the creamy dreamy  
of that which would never be approved,  
but by a small few

do you take flesh seriously,  
do you delight in its delectability,  
or is it simply a shell,  
a shell for the sublime?

is it more than what hides you,  
more than a stage for your fashion,  
or excuse to have more than  
the moon at your side in the night?

is your flesh a moat that others must  
treacher to reach the castle of your heart?  
is it the tower they must climb  
to see the horizons of your kingdom?

or is it the rain of the rainforest,  
the dewdrop that holds the light of eons,  
the aperture through which  
the universe delights in itself?

he is a fashionista,  
a trivia barista,  
arm candy to the ladies  
more keen on his shoes  
than his views,  
he is the penultimate  
social sycophant,  
he is every gender's  
night club trophy,  
dog-loyal to a fault,  
his genius is in confections,  
paparazzi in social connections  
if he wasn't so pretty  
people would suspect  
he has something in mind

i collect myself from pieces and parts  
sitting beside the frame of completed puzzles

i collect myself from scraps and shards  
long lost from their original vessels  
now mosaics of tributes to nameless folk artists

i collect myself from fossils and fragments  
of living remnants from ages whose stories  
speak to our humble beginnings.

i collect myself from unspoken confessions,  
from unrepented accusations and unrehearsed scenes,  
unsealed deals and untoasted triumphs

i collect myself to re-member who i am,  
i collect myself and sit in woven wholeness

he plays hide and seek with death,  
death counts to a hundred  
and he finds places to hide  
in the shrines of concubines,  
in the diamonds of clubs,  
in the lies of confessionals  
death looks for him at the end of alleys  
at the tips of knives  
at the edges of bridges  
at the bottom of bottomless glasses  
served by death disguised as angels  
but death doesn't find him  
for now, for now  
he sits on his zen cushion  
and slips unnoticed  
into his next reincarnation

she misses you  
the way butterflies miss cocoons  
the way nests miss their young

content to live in world of  
just one copy of you  
she quests for no surrogates

she misses you  
not the way you think she does  
or hope she does

the next time  
she doesn't get married  
it will be to you

i don't want to see my heroes close up  
i don't want to know their blemishes,  
i want their otherworldliness,  
the invulnerabilities i invent for them

i want them to edify the unvoiced wishes  
from my days of flickering angst  
in the platonic caves of my adolescence,

i want my heroes to save the world  
from the despair of complacency

i want them to enter my aura  
at night and imbue me with the  
improbable kindness of strangers

bring me a poem  
that would bury kings  
with their treasures  
and put aprons on queens,  
that would end wars  
and launch hearts  
on voyages to skies  
that have no horizons,  
to dawns cloud hidden  
in mountains,  
bring me a poem  
with words spoken  
by those with no voices  
to those without ears,  
bring me a poem  
too deep to plumb,  
to sum the illusion  
the delusion of measure,  
too large to hold  
in a single soul  
bring me a poem  
whose question  
erases the certainty  
of certainty, the lines we draw  
around what has no lines,  
what cannot be owned,  
but only given  
In sacred emergence

i will not take  
your keen interest personally

i will not take  
your affection for granted

i will not pretend  
to be less than i am

i will not assume  
you are more than you are

i will not be larger  
than you prefer

i will not be small  
to your largess

i will, if only for today,  
glisten with you  
in the soft rain  
on the unfallen ripeness  
of this evening's dew

take me upon your wings  
lift me high enough to the place  
where mountains merge with sea,  
where desert cicadas sing inside my soul,  
where the songs of whales call me home

take me upon your wings  
where love's release opens wide  
the hands of time  
to receive what is too large  
to be held even by two hearts

let us go where everything is understood,  
where even the truth of our fictions  
become a chrysalis for new eyes,  
where every being illuminates the  
soft dark warmth of earth

how long does it take  
to detox from tv?  
is there some kind of  
guru mountain retreat  
where you sit around and eat  
brown rice and nuts for the mind  
and sip zen cocktails for the soul?  
is it possible to exorcize  
commercial jingles from  
endless loops of monkey mind,  
to break free from the cages of  
the media and its messages?  
what are the early warning signs  
that we are no longer  
thinking our own thoughts,  
feeling our own feelings?  
can we resist the lure of chronic inadequacy  
if we refuse the new, new thing,  
helplessly trapped in  
our patriotic stockpiling  
that feeds our next yard sale  
where we will be gods  
in a pyramid scheme  
of materialistic noise  
that will once again  
drown out the thin small voice  
of reason, begging us  
to be unreasonable?

love carefully metered,  
love burning without trace,  
improv love,  
love on blueprints and spreadsheets,  
love between the sheets,  
love between the lines,  
dogpound love,  
doghouse love,  
purring love,  
hair ball love,  
love on a silver spoon,  
love when all we have is the moon,  
  
now, when you say you love me ...

when you take  
this suitcase  
in your hand,

you hold the suitcases of every exile  
who left their home to the spoils of heroes,

you hold the suitcases of every hero  
who returned home with the spoils of exiles,

you hold the suitcases of their children  
who will never be able to understand, or forget,

you hold the suitcases of fragile wishes  
folded again and again, as if to leave none behind

small gnomes live in your head,  
they whisper your awakening  
to the irresistible incantations of muses  
in the quiet hours before the world stirs

they are the secret gardeners  
busy planting volunteer herbs  
under sleeping stars to remind you of  
how things wish to grow

none of their days ever repeat,  
every day bears its own name,  
they are the architects spoiling  
your plans with relentless serendipities

they are impervious to gravity,  
never serious about their own seriousness,  
they are oblivious to time, never in a hurry  
to be somewhere, or someone else

turn down the noise around you,  
shed the cloak of empty drama,  
let their tiny voices emerge in the spaces  
that call you home

break down

break free

break even

break the mold

break new ground

break bread

break open the wine

break out the good glasses

break into song

break through

expectations spin  
out of control,  
the road rage of  
nanoseconds stand  
between us  
and the next lane,  
we are apologetic for  
digital delays,  
foreplay is reduced  
to 140 characters.  
we lust after time  
the way now disappears  
in ones and zeroes,  
measure has replaced meaning,  
have is the new is  
we have little use for seeds  
little time for drafts,  
we want to begin at the end,  
why and how  
have become the  
enemy of now.  
in a perfect world  
i would prefer the imperfect,  
the hand made,  
the wabi sabi  
of blemishes and flaws,  
the ripples of wrinkles  
on the tides of time

in mobius ironies  
the deeper  
into myself  
I go,  
the more  
I find  
you,  
in  
the space  
that holds  
no resonance  
for words,  
poetry  
lives,  
in full  
embrace  
of despair  
we lose  
faith  
in cynicism,  
and  
circle  
around  
to  
the  
other  
side

crickets dance electric  
to a kokopelli solstice  
northern lights ripple  
in ballets of borealis

let's sparkle  
with the pulse of fireflies  
let's greet the midnight sun  
on the vine of easy grace

solstice fog scarfs our lake's first freeze,  
birds in ruffled autumn reminiscence  
peer through ice thinly at coddles of drowsy koi  
suspended in the joy of buoyant obscurity,

we can never fully know the depths  
of each one's beauty, not even our own, beneath  
the winter of our own translucence, life unfolds  
in the whisperings of emergent enchantments

little is more delightful  
than the smells  
of unfamiliar apples,  
unexpected bouquets  
of cheeks  
blush freckled  
with kisses  
rolling in crescents  
down supple hills,  
laughter unfurled  
to the four winds,  
returning in spirals  
to centers  
beyond before,  
turning without again,  
welcome all  
who enter unplanned

when caterpillars ponder butterflies,  
it's not in lavish lust  
or pretentious prescience,  
but in humble, nibbling,  
lumbering presence,  
content to dream the dreams  
of legs, not wings,  
delighted to inch into delicate,  
delectable emergence,  
divinely tracing the arc of seasons  
along the cosmic,  
karmic improbability of  
transformation without birth