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POINT SPREAD POEMS

BY

PAUL CAMERON BROWN

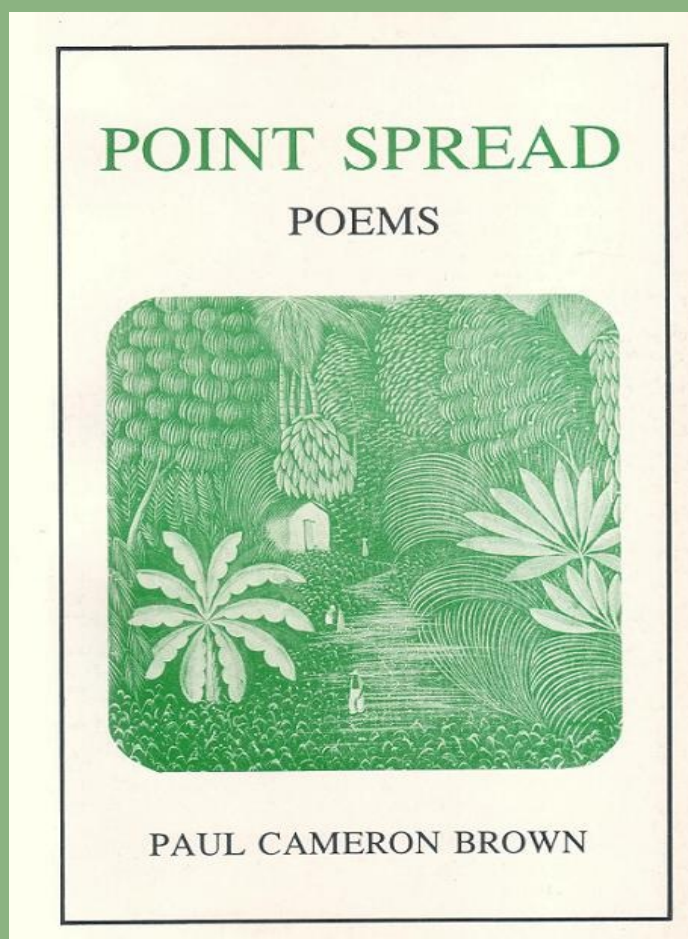


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"In the five and dime
store where I first fell
in love with unreality."

Lawrence Ferrengchetti

WINDFALL

Photos along a soft-centred wall
like assorted chocolates
with prized centres,
tiny miniatures--
full portraits
the young army major, for one,
in battle fatigues come full family regalia.

Mounting the staircase
(tearing back the chocolate paper)
shroud hand on the railing,
pressuring the cherry liquid
into oozing burst of memory,
the nectarine orange of a summer's day.
Swing & garden loom into view,
the mind plays thoughtsapes,
a tag ensemble, along the wall.

Old colours (or lack of them) abound--
the antiquated dress & hairdos
of grandparents that speak lavishly,
into taste buds, across the fallen years.
Ivy & ivory fan, kitten on a rocker,
cradled baby that amounts to me,
the sun coming home to roost on this plaintiff, pleading
wall.

Passage of thought
into this chocolate box--
the lid off stern memory
prying forth a directory of
mouth-watering choice,
or so the advertisers' claim.

Yet do we ever thought
over what we taut (in our heads)
we are? My dad in Kenya (a time and age

from this perspective like the peanut brittle)
or grandfather, about eight, from the dreamy,
dark cream & nougat reaches of layered black space
that speaks the aeons ago--
his manner and distance a smoky haze
from the twilight "special occasion"
Black Magic chocolate box.

[9]

TURNCOAT

Sitting in the spendthrift dark
lilting pennies away,
deciphering fate
The bed, a warm reach past
the pillow
like personal mortality in the
incest breath of life.

Warm stuff of dreams--
the calender with its days mesh &
march like soldiers
dearly departed
(cindered and bludgeoned)
or the old sea-faring chest
where all men are sailors
past light's corner.

Sturdy trudgeons,
clock bursts thru the room
mindful of time and aching,
decaying things.

Hallow's Eve in movements of the curtains--
a remembered Rembrandt,
self-portrait of the old man
standing alone in a clammy room,
idling the seconds, with drab
browns and grays;
that sea-faring chest, again, speaking
of depleted journeys.

Mystic and occult moods,
worlds caught in a single glance
off the wall paper standing abreast
the lamp
and the mirror, back from
the pace of a single thought.

[11]

GANGLAND

A sailor, "tattoo you,"
the cigarette Players
with tape-deck playing
a jaundiced "Yellow Bird",
Cerveza, Dos Equis, the
two horses, in red flame,
across the label.

Trolling in a deep sea-trench
(spinners and chubb),
the dark night
a religious procession,
acolyte stars in hymnal to the wind.

Across the channel
a Party Boat
--the words almost demand capitals
with actions so diminutive--
creased laughter "to go" cross the waves
flicker of lights, siren call
then a lemon shark strikes the bait
on anchor reel, Horse-Eyed Jack
perhaps borrowing the name

from the Outback--
think pantomime, enter Wahoo
and the aesthetic of fear
crazed fish jack-knifing the boat.

Someone produces a cheese tray,
warm wine
the small shark caught in a
role reversal lies bludgeoned
under the seat, even there
a halo glow surrounds the eye and
cobalt snout, but it is the grin
that takes the edge off antics
of the Party Boat
some bedraggled hundred yards away
this Death's Head cocktail,
"What's your poison" leer
teeth like naked light bulbs
against tenement stairs
protean hoodlum a millenia away.

[13]

NIGHT FISHING AT ANTIBES

A beach back of bric à brac,
wine goblet of sky ...
the horizon beginning
somewhere between Nod &
nigh unto forever with
only the sigh of a Casuarina pine
or sea-grape to force a smile.

It was entering into twilight
--our minds were sailing ships,
mere vagaries upon the waves,
mine more a clippership
on the Frisco to China run.

Soirée intimée,
apèrtif, digestif?
A bottle of rum
with Eleuthera for a name
--the prettiest coves
have steadfast winds
dark about portside.

Silvery light of stars,
the stars like black hansom cabs
with livried footmen before
shark-toothed clouds,
a shark-faced moon,
the sight of a shark breaking water,
lemon-white its gullet with the
Big Dipper stuck in a shark tooth.

Diamondhead or Copperback?
Carpetbaggers ... the moon's silver tea-set
giving birth to wonderment
flooding in affection
a Raouel Dufy lithograph,
some decrepit Neapolitan fisherman
zoning his epic life
to human proportions.

[15]

SABBAT

Picturesque Tituba, steeped in Obeah,
in a hairball swoon
leads a harangue about witches with
some of Salem's more delicate
women, obedient children.

In verdant outcrops of the imagination
fuelled by a beldame's winter fire
amid sparks that prance with devils

thru tempest gloom
covens are conjured
so they implicate other pretties
with raven hair,
arm curled, in desperation,
about the moon.

With supernatural hands extended
the sea is a wretch's bitter vinegar
pounding the little, eggshell homes
where, at twilight, a dozen village Elders
with bell and taper,
candlelight and prayer
bind parchment oaths
to envisage clandestine pacts, sabbats,
obscene sojourns.

Peculiar cat--
straw hat,
thatch and loft
a drop of blood sputtering
then drawn over piddling flame,
the well-intentioned righteous
demask the pain-fed frightened.

Gibbet, arm's length of braided rope--
gang-plank, gallow stairs that smirk
off into Eternity
--a lucky few strangled,
the adamant burned,
fickle apostates swum
on a ducking stool.

Ice-fire hearths--
bonfire sheaths ravishing the strong
carnival veil
along pebble-strewn trail.

[17]

SHIVAREE

These kettle bells.
Is it the axe-murderer,
with green garbage bag
in the shadows?

No. Green trees so thick
their tops are folded hands
or knotted knuckles
to make perilous shrubbery
by the garden wall.

Yet this is a state of mind
and shards of multi-coloured
glass dot the top of stones.
Interesting. Should a sociopath put
out his shingle, come calling,
a much under-estimated, rude uttering
would take place.

Still bees are active in the night air,
not swarms, but a hum. Pleasant odours waft
thru stiller air. There is no charged electricity
to things, no tautness or leathery tightness to
individual seconds. Still and stricken still.

Yet "what ifs" come slithering
as if serpents along
a pasture floor.

The diabolical. Rich desire to impregnate with evil,
To embarkation upon conquests.
To embolden and make one's mark,
however ridiculous to the sane and balanced mind.
Horrible. The dirty laundry of just one
over-flowering and too abundant mind gone wrong.

One single blossom out of place and "killer".
Off-kilter. Out of whack. The
pickle short of a jar syndrome.

Then there's the hoots and shrill cat-calls
withered by horse laughs. Guffaws with tattoos and
rifle-butts.

Laid back "good ole boys" type of humour going wrong
sour by too many visits and skunky beers from the
Orchid Lounge.

Rinky-dink, honky-tonk. Dotting the landscape with worn,
thin cars, trouser legs piled up, the "f" and "s" words.

Charivari. A timely entry. A buzz set to sound, a faint
blinking button with no sound. Suckers in the creek
breaking water to catch flies, churning mud bottom
by their too turbulent tails; a bird hitting the window
only its night. The echo of moths lost to the stars
with each jarring knock.

[19]

POINT SPREAD

The skull in the box is that of Cornelius A. Burleigh, the first man to be
hanged in London, Ontario, August 19, 1830. The public hanging attracted
an audience of over 3,000 when the village of London numbered only a
few hundred. Because the rope broke, he was hanged twice! The top of
the skull was taken on a world tour by Dr. O.S. Fowler, a phrenologist.
This part of the skull was presented to the Harris family.
(Eldon House brochure)

Off memory
& a dare,
the grave man
coming to a bitter end.
Burleigh, top of his
skull reminiscent of a laundry cup
(or toothpaste cap) separated from
its yellowing, rightful owner.
No jaws of life here--
rather vengeance beyond death,
shellac & varnish twist shoved
to the withering bone.

Phrenology,
sinister "fin de siecle" fingering
of the intellect's character
through guru-dimensions of the head,
(pseudo-savant/skullduggery clairvoyant).

Thimble-full thinker, sleight of hand
smoke'n mirror trophy hunters
boisterous crowd in a
"hanging mood". Coins
flip on the outcome
while town drunks reel;

The village idiot getting
into the "swing" of things. Point spread
across the yawn
of death ...
brittle behaviour,
the sharp edge of beetles
clicking in the dark.

And I thought
of institutionalized evil
& rabid passion for revenge
pursued beyond the final resting place--
most private skeletal remains
held up as curios. Medieval burning of a heretic's bones,
manure pile for those decried damned;
the cross-roads
drive your cart over the
bones of the dead,
the remembered suicide's end.

Not so strange
given human nature,
Lord Byron's silver drinking cup
runaway Ethiopian slave
(twisted paean to romance)

or Hand of Glory,
corpse-fresh from the gibbet &
famed forges of France.
Hair strands as in under
a magnifying glass, then
shards of clothing/clods of earth
covering a shovel.

The autopsy-necromancy
Nazi intrigue,
playing polo with your
opponent's skull
--Carl Sagan's Broca's Brain
red-bearded decapitation
floating in a cloud of formaldehyde;
sale of skeletons/white slavery
filthy lucre all in one utilitarian
lust for cadavers

Robber-birds pinioning their prey ...
Mania to collect
mania to re-collect,
shadow-boxing logic
rattle his bones
he's only a pauper
whom nobody owns.

[21]

(THE TORONTO STAR, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1985)

Bare bones future
Medical schools may be facing a bare bones future,
thanks to a shortage of skeletons. According to an article
in The Medical Post, most anatomy skeletons come from
India and the Indian government has placed a ban on the
export of human skulls and skeletons. At Queen's University,
500 students share 300 skeletons, four or five of
which have to be replaced every year although the head of
the anatomy department says the students take good care of them.
Anatomists say it would be extremely hard to duplicate the surface
details with plastic skeletons but the option may have to be considered.

[24]

READING THE TIDES: PETROGLYPH PARK

" ... A universe of ineffable gaudiness spun
itself out in his brain ... a promise
that the rock of the world was founded
securely on a faery's wing."
THE GREAT GATSBY

Perceiving the universe
as an orchid stem,
wild hibiscus
crane & heron breaking water
--voyage of elliptical, pea-shaped
canoe down dancing images of
the underworld.

This temperature charged,
climate-controlled glass
geode designed to war on
moss and stone munching
aphid lichens seems everybit as
fanciful as any animal totem.

Grim crevice in the rock
(animistic female orifice)
fertility turtle swollen with
eggs carrying Earth thru
gorged labours of darting
salamander & the spaceman snake.

And coming to that rushing sound,
(subterranean, evocative stream)
or so Algonkians, pensive & puzzled,
paused for a thought encased in
deep, riverine bowels.

Glass slipper, blue guitar
--Silent Lake with something
of wild dimensions in Warsas Caves
(Cyclopean boulders), Serpent Mounds,
this runic enchantment with
glyphs & a cabalistic moon of May.

[25]

FABULIST

Riel veritably in a cockpit--
Gabriel Dumont with his buffalo robe
peeking from behind
a blind at Duck Lake
all ingredients intact,
a gallow's walk inevitable
given a series of probable givens.

Given Riel is an illusionist
figuring 3 days back from the grave
--that an early prototype of the Gatling gun
is in effect, that a Ghost Dance
cannot stop bullets.

Superior numbers & discipline'
mandate the West will cringe
to the Queen's Red Coats;
what's more, the iron horse
icon "talking leaves" & the
superficiality of running
a plow over the land's back
all take their calculated toll.

By some obscure, parboiled magic
Riel is transformed to a living
room of today:
heir apparent to the French Canadian
empire (nightmare) or yuppie visionary
illuminaire?

In the Dominion soup kitchen,
the rest of the country acts
as a beggar clutching another pot.

[27]

ACE OF SPADES

Parable as metaphor--
profile in hard glint of light,
buckskin garb
merging from shadow &
buckboards--
sandwiching of memory
being elbowed
thru a Deadwood City
saloon door.

Noneother.
Dead Man's Hand.
Cards strewn,
last tumbler ...
chamber on empty.
Yancy Derringer modelling the
latest revolver of his namesake,
in pit & the palm
bullet in the back
for Wild Bill, just for a keepsake.

Treasure-trove for the funeral parlour:
"they done him up well". Peccadillo as provocation.

[28]

WILD CARD

Clayton brothers at the corral,
its Earp City today
tumbleweed junction for numerous lives,
not to mention lies
swift-draw artists
encased in a memory of stone
boots up ...
with all the forlorn grace of
being pushed in front
of a train.

[29]

1920's FLICKER

John Dillinger and Baby-Faced Nelson
in a dream together
--one shooting holes thru
theories of his untimely death,
the other frying in an old-time
(e) Electric Chair
with balloons waving, bonbons
going off, the crowd in a joyous,
boisterous mood.

The marquee reads:
"Public Enemy Number One
laid to rest in a
shallow grave as
gravelly as the heart
that beat in his stoney chest."

An adjacent sign noted,
crime does pay the undertaker
but other, good-hearted folks
need look no further than
the Dempsey-Tunney fight
to see which has the
bigger box office draw.

[30]

CANDLELIGHT IN BLACK

The ghosts are marmalade
thin as rinds across toast
or the Weeping Willow, whose
green beard leans,
crane-like, into a child's
backyard.

A Morning Cloak butterfly,
maroon wet with the paint
of morning, cat paws
thin filament leaves
astride a larder
of memories.

Dalliance with the past,
smoke grey these architects
of memory
the privet hedge,
lone pine tree,
jet black caterpillar
poised about a green
carrot top trigger
laced in emperor's gold
like fathoms of the sea
held ... in quiet repose.

HIGHGATE

Angel Inn,
 come off a sign
 blown sideways
 in the sugar and ices
 night.

Old St. Joseph's
 Cathedral, bottom
 of the hill, here
 Andrew Marvell
 of "coy mistress"
 fame sports a plaque
 remembering "time's
 winged chariot" and
 farther (further!) up
 a quaint pub gives accolades
 (Kudos, too) to the fact, 1666
 nefariously was the plague year
 in London--Parliament Hill,
 a brief arm stretch away,
 posited strangled chickens
 and other assorted heirlooms
 in vain attempt for poesy
 to thwart poxy.

A stone's throw
 off in Hampstead Heath
 guns (Big Berthas) could
 be heard from the Somme,
 German dirigibles dropped
 incendiaries, the wounded entrained
 at Charing Cross and a rascallion

(John Keats by name) drained
 a draught at Jack Straw's
 Castle near the Spaniards
 while Turpin's hanged corpse
 was soon to resemble good
 English oaker casks
 at the Flask.

CAPE OF GOOD HOPE

Poltergeist activity
 --the sun winding like a staircase
 onto the pavement,
 rickety afternoon
 shooting back thru
 shawls of the city.

Tippy-toe. Curtains
 ajar, a face at the cross-roads looking,
 looking for all the world as
 pavement stones,
 greasy & black, a thin
 oiled compliment to
 Mrs. Blight registered
 at Old Inn Road.

PICPUS

The day I went to LaFayette's grave, the
 concierge became
 our tour guide amid an old
 ruin of tombstones including bedraggled
 de Tocqueville's crypt (and he, heir
 apparant of America, too).

There, too, the odd City of St. Louis tribute
Fayettevilles
after yet another "Saint" Louis, despoiler
of the Jews--both sitting, squat and apparant,
in summer dust, so shingle-flat,
mindful of Place De La Nation, more
blood-letting blocks away (so the aristocracy
might be healed).
A chapel nun then reached in loud
silence for our Lord, her black
habit / upraised hands forming a
brilliant crucifix against sky and altar.

Some francs exchanged hands
(Monsieur le keeper, after all,
obliged us by opening
a private cemetery, après heures),
the graves looked so wretched--
death stylized in military formation,
row on row,
every private carrying a field marshall's
baton only this time of mortality's making,
crestfallen, no Agile Lapin/Moulin Rouge here,
in the joyless, little garden
(not a bird sang),
our old Frenchman narrating/marching
on in The Old Guard, Grand Armée
fashion
a little Napoleonic
his cemetery, his brandy
like his suspender buttons
lost to recent antiquity.

Place des Vosges, Place des Vendomes.
A dish of plaice at the palais
and a royal hippodrome.

[35]

ILLUMINAIRE

Elfin & gold bug,
genie in the
twilight of a cave.

Virgin On The Rocks
--Da Vinci's painting--
aura light seeping toward
sun-lit crack of day,
the Master's Mona Lisa
in the Louvre
raptured,
luminescence amid aging pigment
steeping about rapt multitude.

Betwixt pit & pendulum,
another canvas--
Da Vinci in a beatific pose
(warm light of the room),
gentle finger pointing upward,
a puzzled crowd
with nowhere to see.

[37]

CARNIVAL AND LENT

Jungle, the cave
human reservoir & cistern ...
quagmire and bog, but no alpine meadow,
fairest glance of goodness in
soiled wildflower under winter snows.

Pebbles into a cesspool,
our sometime passions alive
in the outback where honey-fuelled
ants soothe enemy bones.

My blood, tempest-whipped,
ardour drawn to the surface
fathom marks the depths
sees a spectacle on the roads
queues/Carnival & Lent,
unbridled raw and raging.
Jesus would have nails.

Poison darts,
liana and mangrove sounds
with footsteps in the distance
the blow-gun or bolo knife
attache case / cellular phone ...
"I'll kick your teeth down
your throat, professionally
speaking." Nine to five fecal
beings perform the toilet-bowl flush.

Tsetse fly with design--
sapien, sand paper rough
along the edge, dry rot to the core.

Plague rats cluster in a feeding
frenzy sampling tidbits.
Swirl of the bull fight,
colour and scope, only
its a supermarket, freeway.

Wide angle, wild angel,
Umbrage of the uppercut.
Tough-mindedness, singleness
of purpose, the glacial speed of
fairness along the sorted, sordid
circles of Spitsbergen.

Our species' jailbait reason
firing up the flashlight in the dark
for a circumspect peek in the woods sleeping.
Tell me your adventures in living.

Another hour spent
strangling a reindeer
on the taiga, boreally-speaking.

[38]

TERMINAL LIVING

"Everybody in the world is frightened of getting cut."
Charles Manson

I

The image complete
--collapsing corpses, rag dolls
with skulls shot away ...
ruby-red blood spurting
slipstick/eyeshadow/mascara
all so reptilian replete.

II

The long fingers of the pianist
playing rifle fire to a
captive audience,
stiletto tones;
the trance effect,
precedes a cobra's strike,
summer without smoke.

III

A glass of absinthe
--the Degas painting,
Marc Lepine measuring out his vial,
measuring the worth of a single
woman and finding her long on the call,
cartridge shells exploding
filaments of smoke
(long and blue) like a
woman's fingers up
from his death gun.

IV

Existential longing--
vision far ago, a
lost world of virile primates
where a man's worth
transcended his tie-clip
(suspenders ready, binoculars steady),
letting the stiff upper lip quiver.
Then his face the colour of rainwater,
shoe leather in that same rain.

V

"I am not a wallet," but he was
someone's son.

VI

Mystery (wretched Marc, so unfathomable
inside your débâcle, mêlée that
the French so forlornly cloak,
enfant perdu).

VII

Marc, you are not confined to "why",
rather representative of a long line
of predecessors dead certain
they are nobley right. Gender knows
no restraint. Male crazies? I see the cloaks
and shawls of spectres breaking
saloon bottles with an axe cursing
demon rum, hear "red alert"
at maternity wards after the shootings
--boy babies, at risk, from estrogen cranks.

VIII

Strange, women speak of it,
Lepine died for it--his ersatz,
clouded vision, no milktoast he, yet
so much egg on the face this dirty
thing "Justice".
Naughty boy taking one too many
reprimands from Father, think
of Madonna's spankie.

IX

All the same, Saddam Hussein,
Pedro the Cruel (Butcher of Baghdad,
Montreal or writhing throes of
medieval pillage).
Getting one's own lid pried off--
the shaking indignation of Il Duce,
Der Fuehrer, the sanctimonious
hard-shell pose of Henry, Anne Bolyn
in the cell block for being
a witch (the reputed third breast
was a dead give away).

X

Little ripple, then blip on
a sonar screen trailing off
terminal living. Frame of reference
like a gyroscope breading free.

XI

History is a motherlode of fanatics
by virtue of association.
Wrong-minded'?
Why not, I never met anyone
who was wrong.
No joy in loveland, everybody
revelling in certain certitude this
balkanization of the sexes, Holy Crusade,
Jihad of the gender.

XII

Save us from people who are right,
the "firm but fair" rabid feminists,
rapid virilism crescendo intellects
with egos to stop a train.
Humility of purpose is decidedly
inferior to quiet perseverance
in the truth.

XIII

Inner light taken outside is

fiery and blinding.
Quietism. Pietism.
Everything is a calling or,
in the religious sense, vocation.
What is not a longing'? Craving?
Itch before the scratch?

XIV

The last, inner spike of saintly sanity
snapping to "calling", that siren
song persuasion Lorelei made
vision.

So watch their faces--lips set,
eyes aglow giving us all "an offer
we cannot refuse".

Silver or lead, red hot poker
up the innards in the name of
Self-Determination.

Columbian drug-lord, hat off
cleaning her glasses after
The Hit.

There is no substitute for victory.
Conviction has its price.
Its a funny, old world if only
Maggie Thatcher knew.

[40]

MIDPOINT

The thin, feathery blue
egg-shell curtains gently tossing,
the tin smile
of the roof armada
its metal armour flashing
to inch their shingle way
into escalade-escadrille formation
and leathery sky.

[45]

TWINKLING OF AN EYE

On twin tails of a comet
penguin men polka dot
the night-----
waddle white suits
past pale the white Empress Night,
flickering graveyard stars
---a pitcher of inky black
upended in a choir and manger

II.

Lowing of the clouds
lowering overhead like bombardiers
rifling the Firmament,
black braying back.

III.

Millpond, satin and creamy,
then buttercup crush of waves

[46]

SERENADE

A green flotilla,
verdant armada
stone hand encased
in an arm of ocean
off blue-grotto bay.

Something avuncular where land
meets sea

--underdog, whipped cur,
adult "son" posturing to the elder,
pontificating man.

Melaque after dark
or was it Aguascalientes'?
Monterrey at sunset
prior to "the" pop festival
or Morelia, on eve
of feasts to that native patriot'?

Vera Cruz, 1915, at the height of
American occupation
with Pershing tailing the hirsute Pancho
Villa in Sinaloa
outdated rock & gunboat diplomacy
--no longer exotic fare
plate of frivoles,
fried banana
Mahi-Mahi.

On the palette,
dreams are fickle,
subject to "drunk
and disorderly resisting
arrest," outmoded and
fuzzy with age.

Policeman of the Olmec intellect,
you dance late on feather boas
this Mariachis of the soul
with glittering purse and yellow,
travelling nectar Tequila.

[47]

HIDDEN AGENDA

Mariachis, almost a Spanish temperament within those stars,
--a screen peppered to black,
pebbles as pinholes bright in the night air.

Winged bats, moist velvet foot-pads
that spring from ink spots onto an El Greco canvas
where Garcia Lorca's green, Andalusian hills
find the wind a gypsy bandit
sage, red flower of the cacti,
ballad to rakish cloud.

A ship shamelessly at sea--
the scorpion cloth of open wounds,
dark implants, sturdy oak
constellations, English yew
spouts tremulous shafts
across weather-burnt sky.

A dock in a prison of rose-petal harbour.
Piers along deep, inner space.
Our planet, rockface. Sheer plummet.
Accordion of white light.

Up green ache of mountain
the muffled sound
Goya's Colossus,
the head of the giant
voyaging thru
embroidery and stellar, black space;
tombstone lock on a pulsating world.

[49]

ADVENTURER

How desert islands
in a cartoonist's imagination
invariably are flat,
palm-studded
peopled by a solitary, abject

yet humorous man.

In real time, no delight;
such islets
are razor hot,
rock sharp
treeless, barren
slabs ... examples
of art shirking, but
not shrinking life.

Three days growth of beard,
bottle with note on the incoming tide
comic survivor swimming up
(tramp steamer in the distance),
shirts waved in unison
predictable disappointment et al,
glum hands to face
then the inevitable credulity
splitting retort
amid plaything for the crabs.

[50]

SLIPPER

When I was very young
onto school,
a slick of water curled
under a behemoth, silver poplar tree ...
there, white underbacks
of leaves waved in showy pride the
dead underbellies of bass ...
as tall boys,
big with rakish, probing, anthracite eyes,
stooped in the creek
their red, exposed flesh
colour of school brick.

[51]

HELLULAND

We built bottlecaps off
ship's sides
(soft, cedar bough),
Viking masts
shining thru imagined
Norse seas.

Sporting logs,
(sweet, cedar-wood shavings)
piercing beer hats/silver foil,
grey wraps & burlap,
Atlantic capes,
our twin peaks soared.

New Found Land
(a child's faery shrimp logistics
aide-de-camp simplistics)
marvelled tale
of warm, butter moon
with outpourings around
penknife's blade.

To tame Sutton Hoo,
(I am very close to myself tonight)
bronze copper, cruising wintery water,
Anse aux Meadows,
occasional dirt shack
skraelings,
jagged blade & arrow
backward into time
for Helluland,
yet marooned in the Land
God gave Cain.

TRINKETS

My mind a buzz saw,
wood chips in decapitated thought
soil chilblained hands

II

Cleansing wood,
the keen smell of sawdust
--good, raw earth drenching
the nostril, clean odour
of nature like my brain,
a broomstick sweeping
the coffee pot speaking ...
bubbles massed in steam
inchoate in their pensive rivulets.

A THIEF'S NOTEBOOK

Baggage. Banal brigands,
turn-coats, stiletto to dirk
appraise warm flesh
upraised over a pie-shaped sky,
bread crust moon.

On oyster rock,
with grinning, red hibiscus,
jute and henequin
smother the lavender caress of stars.

WARHORSE

Taken as metaphor ...
Ophelia's funeral oration,
derogatory snout
of the Morning Glory
breathing pollened fire
overladen steps of the church.

II

Limestone rock
caulking in grey
limpid cracks ...
doublet and hose
then gold doubloons
down sunlit honey
where a smear of red lichen
onto brown-yellow moss
colonizes rock.

III

Poor Ophelia, dicing
for a sedentary-free Hamlet,
duty-free of fissures + frost.

IV

Elusiveness,
water rushing over stone
torrent of words
(Ophelia receiving these),
red hand of the berry
swollen shut,
prisoner in the dock
bird of quarry, pit
& gunny sack.

V

Night plummets to quarry,
sky to earth in brazen glory.
Magic of the palm

spans an upturned hand ...
"To each his own
nothing's known."

[55]

TEETER-TOTTER

He was Popeye the Sailor Man
--at least in Picture book and poem
the mind falling from a drooping ledge,
thrust of twilight though working
up to the bargaining edge of words ...

Then, synchronicity and cuteness
aside, the all too old
pretending became the
gaping edge of Popeye's
spinach can, a soul lost
not to Sweet Pea or Olive
Oil, but barnacle and
rip-tides of a brain
slipping its moorings free.

[57]

CHEMIN DE FER

Had I been
a gambling man,
eschewing the "shoe"
of chemin de fer ...
perpetually perched upon that throne
... effete kingdom of the dice.

II

I am that gambling man ...
taking free access to many
a natural habitat, lure
of the open road,
contents under a bottle cap,
the riverine delicacies
of female flesh. Svelte, like
the croupier's green vision of cloth,
tingley-trigger smooth yet addictive
to the touch.

III

Or the pleasures of Ovaltine
(not necessarily the brand name)
... by the handful or cup ...
upon a summer's day,
the mind blur of expensive art.

IV

Blackjack. Three card stud.
The poker-faced look of
many opponents peeling cards
from the bottom of the deck,
some ear-marked for success
with time-honoured stratagems
(& doctored hands) that leave me
reeling (or is it nursing) patent-made regrets.

V

Something primeval about wanting
to trade up your fortune at the
expense of the House. Ambuscades.
Indecision.

VI

Games of chance
the apt metaphor
of our daily roulettes.

[58]

WITHIN REACH

There are two images,
a moon within reach
yet trapped under snow--
an old woman's threadbare shawl
with peasants furiously working brooms
scraping ice shavings
into howls and husks of frenzy.

Ii

Then the same pond,
this time summer
with fishing nets,
and briefer shawls
pirating light's wanton swoon,
a spyglass hour moon
all bathed in yellow
colour of kerosene
--a rich creamy butter--
goldilocks let out on weekends
her spun, golden tresses
lowered onto the water
like so many little boats
nimble hopping aboard.

lii

A kerchief folded on a fence
a man wearing an overcoat living there
in white satin swooning
to the pianist's expert touch
down magic chambers
soothing, soothing there
to fold and tear
the pileated moonlit edge
of her skin.

[60]

COUNTESS

The pig's head omelette--
something akin to a tatoo
buried squarely on the upper
torso of the man
wielding an axe,
chopping wood.
Shoulders drooped,
the bizarre rendition
had a female
counterpart
--a snake, fitted like a
fish-net stocking
coating the upper leg of
the dancer writhing to music,
so soporific,
near the copper shield
of the table,
ever-molten ash,
air-borne with the foetid smear
& puff of cigarette smoke.

[62]

COUNTESS II

Imagining the smoke burnt
imprint of a tatoo
with tapers flickering,
the bejewelled gaze a dragon's snout
must bring
or the serpent coil, crimson flame
curl of dashing cobra,
its very fangs drawing
lifblood from the fleshy
perch in smooth, red scarifications.

On the pectorals of a sailor.
Perhaps whiplash of the granite waves,
grim trucker with a "Mother"
grasping chains
that see burly sandbags in place--
hirsute biker, cords of
hair lashing his tattooed lady
the lavender caress of scar
with implant that
of the chopper itself,
her fleshy buttocks
careening off the road.

[63]

PALEFACE

Old Sawbones, pale as a sheet,
white sand, whispering edge of the sea.

II

The mind tarries not one place long,
(longitudinal wanderings off a map).
Is shiftless, both a shirker (and army deserter)
devours like larvae,
a bullet ledge for leaves.

III

I saw in a rusty tankard
a gallon drum
(ghostly galleon at that),
a tin can floating for
all the world shores
of its alkaline prison,
pirating salinity with anchoring sounds,
brackish bench-pressed sound of waves
wedged between far-off distant gulls
and mezzanine,
dimly-lit funeral parlour
of the sun.

[64]

CUD

There were a series
of three animals
--wise men I propose--
interchangeably looking
(throwing off their guises'
as non-sentient brutes),
scrounging the grass
(eyes foddering me)
chewing on looks,
cud-like,
-one a black
goat shorn of
his devil look
and a burro,
mood entranced, in
armour of mangey velvet.

II

Swinging bells,
making me believe
the twilight caper
that morning lay
more in reindeer's
breath than any
solidarity with
oat or hoove.

III

A strange lot,
they'd ramrod their
gaze with blare
of lightning,

peering into some
primordial instinct
one normally tucks
onto a sleeve or
cranny when thunder strikes.

IV

Pelting rain,
the white mare,
streaked more like
a camel with her
own dung and manure,
(shadings differ)
the sun a tingling dew
refreshing cantaloupes;
the sparkle of their walk
investigating me
in solid cacophony of faith.

V

A form of worship, to be exact,
the Christ-child
in a manger
we four in shared trance
a growing sluggishness
to their fear building
by prospect of food
and inter-species bond.

[65]

CURRENCY

One of the cows was Belladonna,
another Nightshade
still a third, Witch's Butter--
the farmer in question responded with
an eel in tow that resembled a hoe
& a Raggedy-Ann calf
with an elixir for a tail
& a spendthrift tongue
spreading its way
thru the emptied grass.

[67]

REFRESHER COURSE

And he told them "the universe is a ripe apple in heavenly
consummation with Newtonian physics".
Comparisons grew rife with planets in the cosmos measured
against all the grains of sand on all the beaches of the world.

Sobering stuff, this astronomical speculation. Each sun a
star fathering an impressive roster, its "family" in the earthy
scheme of things.

So one kid spat on his shoe and asked if a gob,
hypothetically speaking of course, could be likened to a
solitary ocean.

[68]

GHOST TALES

With leaves twitching
the autumn air
and the burnt almond
breath of landscape
heaving relief,
the afternoon heavy-footedly
walks across
evening's threshold.

A garment is held high
as adrenalin in the marble
glow of wintery air.
Mud puddles reflect the faery shrimp
of clouds while cone-shaped
coniferous trees perch on lawns like
starlings.

III

High above to skating and
sugar-icing rinks in misty hues,
a ginger-bread man
manoeuvres past the ghost tails of a dead
luna moth.

[69]

WANDERLUST

Who administers to my needs?

Is it the dandelion, so ant-encrusted, that
yellow pollen dangles from a shiny abdomen
suggestive of some actor's
smeared and garish make-up?

Or the cicada's song,
difficult to describe,
laundering thick summer heat?

Perhaps, then, the Red Admiral butterfly
especially active at the close of day and drawn
to wooden lawn-furniture or the exposed human limb?

If none of these
breathes vigour or tonic
through my nostrils,
what of tubs of fresh water?

Take pea-pods for crude, rudimentary boats
and children as make-shift sailors,
then they both shall spy the secrets of seas.
Bold harbours will be their cues,
astrolabes their hatchets in which
to chart many a perilous adventure.

A volume of Tom Swift and his Motorboat
tames the haggard breast,
soothes the savage beast.

A trip to the fruit-cellar
beaded with moisture
and clammy with imaginary threat,
chastens the cobweb from the
dusty ledge and sees a privet-hedge
hawk-moth trapped against the
window-pane (a dark spot pressed much like
a pirate's patch against both time & space).

If meandering and nearing journey's end,
think twice. Better red than dead. Brooding
MacIntosh apples stain a slippery floor but
the door to the orchard is always ajar.

By night, an "I And The Village" Chagall painting
draws a lad (and landscape) to stare and stare.
Thickets of wild-grape, strawberry tendrils,
two hares boxing in the meadow, a Winterspoon
Whip-Poor-Will towering above groves of walnut, lilac.
Night air is fragrant (and lush) through a peep-hole
and gate-way to the stars.

Barns with ricks contain pitchforks
like a mis-shapen mask protruding ever
so faintly sinister in silhouette through
a visionary sky.

Remnants of ferret skin, lie interrupted,
upon entering the chicken-coop.

The soldier drinks, his tea and egg-cup abandoned.

I don't have to go anywhere.
Dark and moody, there is an
arsenal of thought with stout
marshal batons in my knapsack.

The power to be led (and lead)
stiff memory in rum kegs and wine casks.
The brooding entrance
to another world,
if not in the palm of my hand,
then very nearly
a shout and stone's throw away.

[70]

PASTICHE

These shell-queens, too,
are blithely catpaws,
shorn & musky acorns with
indexed fingers erect
at manicured attention.

II

... Showboats with green faces far as swallows fly,
a lilac in oasis ... scarlet bream
... blue ointment where the ocean is
periwinkle patches,
a robin's egg clarity pressed
between blue-nosed tavern wall
& bottles clinking.

III

See plush cords,
the suede interior
svelte & slinky
an upholstery simonized
with natural springs where
bubbles encounter founts
in apertures, the rich measure
of open ground or mezzanine curtain
slit along a riverine walk
& jungle clearing.

IV

Twilight. Golden tulip. Golden olive,
"Fool's Gold", a lithesome snake-girl
gyrates her dragon-flared, limb-length
tattoo with red-eye dots itching in
emerald waiting; footpaths overhanging
serpentine curves or laser beam
dancer legs, paddle white, under angel
tint of stage-light.

V

The cut off jeans
compete with campfire glow ...
slipping a musket-width, nostril breadth
around turbans, bonnets, bubbles. Murex.

VI

... Elegant white ibises and egrets
stand like sentinels; herons flying in
their wide wings braking and their long
legs dragging ... and the snaky-necked
anhingas flapping and sailing into
spread their big wings
to dry in the sun.

Sa nom m'etruit

Her NAME escapes me
Nomen fuit

Just the faintest hint of spring

UU

M^M

MOTHER of PEARL
with ODALISQUE.

75

[73]

BOCA

"Nature abhors a vacuum", theorists of both philosophy and politics assure us.

What's more, the phenomena is not confined to mere physical science given the nature of human opportunism. Glance a map of central Europe for further insights. One side always replaced the other when a "common," enemy expired.

Boca might well have studied such eventualities.

Boca was a writer. More accurately, a "touch-dancer" with the written phrase, deftly painting the catchy one-liner with effortless ease and grace. Boca knew his craft, be it the arena of story, poem, drama, (it didn't matter the genre). Unfortunately, his oeuvre remained fixed and static. Boca never progressed beyond titles.

"A right, jolly good thing, too", said Boca in his own defense.

The short burst counted most, whether in thought, sport or field of battle. The utterance of a single breath. That was it! It all lay in the aside, the pun, a retort, the récit. If this were all to the story, there would be no doubt whatsoever; Boca excelled.

"In the briefest expression, perhaps", said the critics. But, as they were quick to point out, it didn't lead "anywhere".

"Where is the larger, more important fruit? His finished verbal passion?", intoned one.

Still, this chance fortune led to the inspiration (and success) of unusually vivid titles.

But ... titles? Just "titles", said others nervously? Yes, proclaimed Boca. Titles. Not epithets, or rejoinders, cat-calls even repartee.

Not even wit in the normal understanding of the term. Just mere titles. Bushel-baskets of them. Worried looks crept onto the onlookers' faces.

Encyclopaedic came the flowering. Ad factories should have tapped such a larder. Any creative department could have done worse than with Boca's dripping imagery and gift for the keynote phrase.

"There is majesty here", said one, "and more than a little Blake. I am reminded of the great symbolists."

"One has to be practical", cautioned still another. "What's here is hardly epigrammatic or even purely an aphorism in any truer sense of the word."

"I'm simply perplexed", said the man finally to his colleague and both left without further ado or thought to Boca's work.

Indeed Boca loved his words, tinkering with the very essence of language.

"A great beginning", cheered a rare voice. "Let's hope one without premature end."

Boca continued to conceive titles by the hundreds. He didn't merely dream up a few, in snatches, he proliferated them in vaster and vaster quantities. It was if a salmon left to spawn could endanger a sea shelf or river bed under the sheer quantity of her seed.

"A one-man explosion at the typewriter", chortled an onlooker, happening to see the quantity of Boca's largesse. That was before he stopped to inquire of the nature of Boca's work. Then perturbed, this same man hurried away to the utter indifference of Boca who kept a steady pounding in spite of the interruption.

On they came. More and more titles. By the hundreds-- for scripts, larger dramas, treatises, epistles, monologues. All. And all without a scarce concern for their ultimate use.

Are we to believe each one came to naught as the sceptics predicted? After all, in this practical world who has use for dreamers? We already know Boca was stymied at the title level. Nothing ever graced his newborn creation beyond that first utterance. It was like sending a baby into the world without proper bedding or clothes.

One nastier commentator even alluded to Boca's work as the equivalent of premature ejaculation. All buildup with no satisfaction. "The promise", he chuckled, "without the delivery".

And that is what came to pass.

Each of Boca's titles, true to prediction, came to "naught" or, rather, nothing much. Blank. A zero. With each "title" one ran aground on the larger abyss of its central problem.

That being, as Boca had been warned by his legion of critics, "one of size".

What good are titles without textual description, chapters, scenes, the "overview?" said one literary agent gruffly.

Boca, taking a respite from his typewriter, had had the temerity to approach one such man in the comfort of his office with reams of suggestions.

Indeed.

People shook their heads at Boca always scribbling furiously. Always working but apparently accomplishing precious next to nothing. "Something" was evidently being done in the strictest sense of the word, but what? What?

"Could his ... well, problem be explained?" one vocal opponent of Boca urged.

"What the hell is he up to?"

Strangely enough, for the seemingly longest time this did not deter Boca. He was his own universe. His feet were on solid ground. The air about him teemed with ideas. He was too busy fishing for the "mot juste", he explained in a moment of clarification.

"One man in the right is a majority", proclaimed Boca, remembering a snippet of John Stuart Mill.

Too busy was Boca replanning the structure of the Colosseum so it might better accommodate his label, his notion, his re-christened version of the ideal verbal escort to accompany that ancient edifice.

And write Boca did. Titles fell increasingly from his pen.

"The Barking Tree."

"The Leaking River."

These were but two. Boca thought he would improve on Tolkein's efforts, at least in the direction of title. After all, to send a work into the reader's lap without proper introduction was like trying to get acquainted without the proper introduction.

Maybe Boca had a point.

"Assembly without Hope" and "Nirvana without End" touched on his mystical stage. He dropped this and proceeded into the area of historiography. And afterwards, dry epistemology would see him concentrate his efforts. These forums were indeed worthy of his attention. Too long had they been neglected. All were in need of good, metaphoric dusting by title.

At last word, Boca was inching toward Kant's, "Critique of Pure Reason".

"That one, in particular, has a poor ring", he was heard to say.

On they came. Precise. Hard-hitting, or so he thought. They made the mind's eye swell with the promise of more and more. Indeed, that "eye" could get bloodshot reading all of Boca's interception.

But the "more" in the sense of the follow-up, the "delivery" or accompaniment of pages never came.

Nowhere was there to be found the Hemingway to follow the "Moveable Feast".

Or "The Edible Woman".

Even the promise of thrillers for a scary submarine epic like "Three Eggs on my Plate" never materialized.

Nothing. Just titles. More, then more and increasingly more of them. Annoyingly so. Scraps of paper decorating a table without an intended victim ever coming close.

It was as if so many salesgirls had left price tags off matching merchandise. That's all that remained. Just the stickers forlornly, white and detached, staring up from their adhesiveness.

More than just a little tacky.

A woman given to comparison confronted Boca.

"Imagine a zoo where the curators had all the animal names, but they were not paired with their owners. That's your stuff. Everything in a weird isolation."

Boca could not be Borca and not even Carl Sagan could rescue him. No large bottles floating in formaldehyde with the decapitated heads from Belle Epoque sailors were possible here.

Boca was more obscure than Gaspirilla Island. More so.

And a final verdict, if there is need for one, can be seen in
Boca's last will and testimony.

He let it be known of his intention to chisel the "ultimate"
one-liner. One to grace his own tombstone. On this he set
to work with a last burst of frenzy.

"To mirror my tragic-comic fate", as he would have said.

Perhaps Boca is still at work, either on the snappy final
wording ("the right elasticity") or in the mechanics of the
engraving itself.

Only a stone-cutter could estimate the probable expenditure
in time for the latter.

Novelists in dire need of fresh insights should enlist Boca.
He's definitely available, if difficult to reach.

Boca might have rescued many a masterpiece from the
dustbin, if not the Box Office, had his specialty been
known.

I look at Boca and hear fire bells. His plight remains the
very stuff of tragedy. By epic standards, how many Bocas
are there worthy of a balladeer and myth maker? Credible
Boca may be, but understandable?

Boca, the metaphoric equivalent of a Sisyphus chained to
his rock of obsession.

"This horrible rock", (or pebble depending on your
viewpoint), wailed Boca.

"I've become my own obstacle, my work is the
personification of my own limitation."

Worse, imprisoned in an inescapable logic and the narrow
confines of a blink of talent.

[76]

WORK IN PROGRESS

Two Chinese fellows approached me in a London suburb.
They were eager for talk.

"Karl Marx's tomb," they implored, "directions to the tomb,
please." They were pronouncing "tomb" as if it rhymed with home.

Suited up in their Mao jackets and identically dressed
without hint to rank or station, they struck me as strangely
odd even on the thoroughfares of a metropolitan city. I had
noticed they wore no green armband common to other
Communist dignitaries.

The smaller of the two became insistent.

I nodded and smiled at the mention of Marx's name for it
was Highgate and, yes, he was interred in the rambling
cemetery near by. Yes, I had visited the grave but was no
means clear it was a grave they had come all this way to
visit.

They were shy but puzzled at my redirection of their query.
I pointed out there was no "home" as they were
pronouncing it, but, only a "grave".

It was then that their enunciation and the silent murder of
the letter "T" came back to me. Like the Cockney unable
to say "h" in elocution class, their confusion was furthered
by knowing only one word for "final resting place." My
own use of grave was causing them grave concern.

They were looking curiously at one another. I doubt if they
had ever heard North American accented English. I might
have been their first authentic "American," short of a
simulated war games exercise. Certainly, though all cities
are polyglots, I had never seen two so authentically attired
citizens of "The People's Republic."

It was an amusing moment, life with the sang-froid
of the unspoken.

I gave them their dues. They had their directions. They
pranced off smartly and melted into the morning traffic.

And I thought of trying to explain that Marx, at least
in unofficial circles here, is not considered with their same
deference.

"I'm sorry if this jars with what you've been told, Wu."

"And no, this is not counter-revolutionary lies. The truth is,
Mr. Han, Marx was ... a chiseler. He died owing nearly
every wage earner in The Village."

Talk of irony and final verdicts. How one who numbers
among the age's savants could so brazenly ignore such hard
economic fact seemed incredible to me. Skulduggery aside,
such a thing, even if only partially true, would be scant
tribute to the fabled man. I thought of the British
Museum's collection of his writings, then remembered it
mentioned nothing of this fact. Glowing tributes, of course,
but no unofficial flack.

And I thought of the possibility of a third world war being,
in part, based on this development. Marx's embitterment,
that is his inability to pay even the most modest debt
through his writing. And should there ever come another
global catastrophe, I imagined how Marx would extend his
wrath.

At the doctrine of dialectic materialism's doorstep. Between
the incompatibility of work and her governing classes.
Exportable revolution. The decadent bourgeoisie struggling
to maintain their stranglehold on comfort. The Gospel
completely according to Karl.

That would be without considering the question of Marx's
alleged incest with his daughter. But, then, most everything
in the Marx story is "alleged." The alleged politics of
confrontation. The alleged incompatibility of those who toil
with their rulers. The alleged inertia of labourers even to
the degree of their exploitation. And, yes, the alleged
superiority of any one system over another.

Of course reference would be made to the irony of Marx
being buried and remaining interred throughout the years in
one of the most class conscious nations on earth.

Where every accent and syllable decrees one's station in
life.

Where every utterance labels the speaker according to rank
and social standing by rigid calling.

I thought of myself discussing such things with the
perturbed, yet unmovable ideologues of the People's
Democratic Republic of China.

Did they know Marx's friend and colleague, Engels, kept a
mistress? Did they care that Marx disapproved?

Imagine using the word "grave" in the same breath as
"grave offence" to discuss incest. Glib moralizing, the
trumpet of the bourgeoisie! I seem to remember Lenin's
disdainful "no omelettes with first cracking the eggs."

Perhaps all communication is claptrap.

All these fellows wanted were directions.

Their minds were made up.

They were attending a secular church, walking in
the footsteps of an earthbound saint. No amount of revisionist
thinking could deflect, in their eyes, Marxian achievement.
And you had to give Marx certain dues. That before people
are capable of aspiring to work, they must first be fed. And
all contacts, within life, must inevitably come through and
be restricted by, how one has chosen to make that daily
bread. Or, in Marx's words, how one is prevented from
advancing by artificial class barriers. Precisely.

Poles apart. Worlds away.

The two Chinese chaps and I were living proof of that.

I wondered if they would have been interested in seeing the Dicken's plaque nearby. The novelist, too, had stayed only a street away. Little Dorritt would have been pleased even if the jury is still out on which thinker alerted the world most to the evils of uncontrolled profit.

I for one, care little for the revolutionary proletariat or repudiated communist dogma but I do like to eat. Marx made his point.

[84]

HARDCASES

I dreamed my toenails
were ivory
and elephants came to trade for tusks
... Then went conveniently off to die
("shed this mortal coil") in a
cutter-shed stacked high
like firewood.

II

I dreamed Landover, Maryland
was the site near the
Pentagon. People got wind of
the scheme and grew intrigued.
Twigs shattered in the moonlight
as curious onlookers tried
to peek-a-boo into the shed.

III

Raisins were left out
to dry as
token offerings.

IV

Mafioso members and other hardcases
wanted to elbow in
but stiff military types
eminently incorruptible, said
"no dice" made, naturally,
of ivory turned a
deadly nightshade of
twilight toenail blue.

V

Umber became my colour
(and trademark) along with the mandatory ebony.

VI

Out-of-work seasonal elves,
dwarfs and the occasional
circus midget shoe-horned in.

VII

Nothing remained of the earlier raisins as
a variety of greedy misfits
pocketed the tributes.

VIII

The North Pole beckoned,
heightened consciousness and
sensitivity groups against
demeaning and negative stereotypes
routed the Barnum and Baileys'
dwarfs and midgets.

IX

A pile of cinders and
grey-glow embers
paused to remain
after boycotting
exposed the great
toe-nail giveaway sham.

X

Reportedly, the Devil has a toe-nail
chair in Hell.

This common, medieval belief
lingers into macumba, voodoo and
loa-spirit trees.

XI

Who wants,
after all,
discarded body parts
brought to such an ignoble
end? The intriguing thing
is in the witchery, smoke 'n mirrors
world of Obeah, toenails are
prized much like the greying
Information Age values
organ transplants for an
aging population.

XII

Medieval really.
Nothing the body profuses
is really evil,
only our intent.

XIII

Should a fly symbolizing
havoc, despair and filth
fall into Holy Water,
the detested fly not
does pollute the sacred vessel.

XIV

Modern fitness buffs full-circle
with gleaming sweat-stained temples
"glistening" with, what else,
moisture.

[88]

COMMENTS



... Unrestrained, imaginative writing.
Brown's magic is the vibrating universe,
his sympathy is his ability to receive these
vibrations. Sympathetic Magic captures
the movement of life in its intervals--
his poems resemble stopped action photographs from a film.
THE TORONTO STAR

... The poetry is fine ... rewarding reading ...
Almost every poem in Sympathetic Magic boasts
an admirable image or two. Brown can write,
without a doubt.
POETRY CANADA POESIE

... Wry humour.
The poet revels in image and can use it well.
Paul Cameron Brown is capable of interesting,
even arresting work.
CANADIAN BOOK REVIEW ANNUAL 1985

Le voyage exotique devient parfois fantastique ...
Se plonger dans les pages de "Sympathetic Magic",
c'est partir pour un autre monde où Paul Cameron Brown
envoute par les mots et les images.

The End

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