

***IT ONLY TAKES  
A SPARK***

***Austin Walker Boyd, Jr.***

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Published in the United States of America  
By Pensacola Graphics, Pensacola, Florida.  
Illustrations by J. Robley Tucker, III

**DEDICATED  
TO  
CAROL LYNN RANSON**

**3**

It only takes a spark  
To get a fire going,  
And soon all those around  
Can warm up to its glowing.  
That's how it is with God's love,  
Once you've experienced it;  
It's fresh like spring,  
You want to sing;  
You want to pass it on.

*Christian Song*

## PREFACE

To each of you who receive this book, I am indebted. For indeed, as I present it, you may know that somewhere, at some time, you have touched my life in a very significant and special way. And, as we are sum totals of all our experiences, so does this book reflect the contribution each of you has made to my life. Some experiences of you are reflected outright, and you will recognize them as you read the book. Others of you are encapsulated in the less obvious subtleties of the styles, themes, and images of my poetry. Yet you are all here, as inspirations to write, to mature, to strive, to love, to learn, to create, and to compile this anthology. Please let this gift be a great hug, and a sign of my love; a thank-you for all you have given me. I can now give to you.

IT ONLY TAKES A SPARK is an anthology of all of my poetry, beginning in September of 1967 with IMAGINATION. At that time, my family encouraged me to retain all of my works. And now, over ten years later, these poems are brought together to reflect my growth through those years; they are a reflection of my experiences in La Marque, Hurricane, and at Rice University. I encourage you to read the poems slowly, and carefully, to extract what each has to offer. I am forever concerned that the reader will miss my real meaning. Perhaps, as you peruse these works carefully, you will not "sight meanings in contract", and you will not miss those poems of which you may individually be a part.

I encourage you, also, to reflect upon the verse which preceded this preface. It is part of a song which I have to identify with through many times of Christian fellowship during my years at Rice University. I have extracted its first line for the title because I feel that those words reflect much of my philosophy and that of my poetry.

To begin with, the title tells us that it only takes a spark... a small effort... to accomplish a feat, and attain your goals; it only takes a little imagination to begin. Yet life does require an effort and imagination. So often, it seems, it is our inclination to shirk the burden of producing a spark of effort, and consequently our lives grow stagnant. Strive then, to show a spark of interest in others; lives, and in your own. Make an effort to help others until it hurts to do so, and then continue helping. This "hurt" will be short lived.

Also, this title is my way to speak out for Christ; a means of witness of my faith. As the title, and the associated song convey, "it only takes a spark, to get a fire going," and that fire is the warming and the growth which accompanies the inflow of God's spirit and love. God has many blessings and a great deal of love He wishes to bestow upon each of us. To accept Him, and His love into our lives takes very little effort, yet it results in blessings that are unbounded. Christ tells us that He waits at the doors of our lives, knocking, but that we must ask Him in. I made that

commitment three years ago, asking God to come into my life and take control. Since that time, mine has been a richly blessed life, full of countless answered prayers, His unerring guidance, and an overwhelming inner peace and happiness which I had not known before. My living is a fresh and happy adventure each day because of Him, and through Him I have a strong sense of directions and purpose. The Lord has a plan for my life, and it is my greatest goal to be available for His use; to glorify God.

In closing, then, I wish to thank you each for all you have given me, in whatever way you may have touched my life. I want this book to be a thank-you for your part in my growth. And, most importantly, I want to share with you, through this preface and our contacts, the love I've known which flows without ceasing from the Lord. I hope you will consider what place God occupies in your life, and if He is not present, that you will go to Him in prayer, asking Him to come in. Indeed, keep Jesus Christ at the center of your life. It only takes a spark, to do so.

And now, with those words of introduction, I want to pass it on...

Austin Walk Boyd, Jr.  
NEXT FARM  
June 16, 1978

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**1967**

## IMAGINATION

The state is set; the battle ready,  
The troops are lined to fight.  
The cannons wait to utter  
Booming fire and light.  
The horses stand so stiff and rigid,  
Awaiting the bugler's call,  
To rush to battle, and fight and fight,  
Until one side should fall.

Our troops are tin soldiers,  
Our cannons, pencils,  
Our horses, plastic toys.  
You ask yourself, how can we fight,  
With troops belonging to pre-school boys?  
The answer is a simple word,  
That all should vividly possess;  
Imagination is the key,  
Like knights and bishops in a game of chess.

Oh, can't you see the tin men marching,  
In neat and orderly rows,  
With guns all raised  
To shoulders strong,  
To destroy the approaching foes?

Can you not see the cannons flashing,  
Throwing forth their metal balls,  
Through dim and smoke-filled battle air,  
To land upon the enemies walls,  
Of paperbacks and old rag dolls?

Is there no room in your thick head,  
To see those horses galloping,  
Across the candy-colored carpet, wide,  
Like rushing foam in a sunset tide?

If you can't see these pictures here  
Of fighting men and horses,  
And flashing, deep voiced cannons,  
Then for you I shed a tear;  
For there's nothing like imagination  
To stir a thinker's mind;  
So I hope that you can see it now,  
Because the enemy has hit our lines!

*September 1967*

**1968**

## KITTY

Oh Kitty, she roamed  
Through our jungle that night,  
Of mop handles,  
Broom sweepings,  
And soapsuds' foam.  
She climbed tow'ring mountains  
Of babies' toys,  
Got caught in the meat grinder,  
And made oh, so much noise!  
She romped in the dishwasher  
And slept wet in the dryer;  
She ate in the frig;  
And got fried in the fryer.  
Kitty rode in Tim's train,  
And flew, oh how she flew,  
In Rob's aeroplane!  
She circled the world  
On my relief map.  
Then she hopped on my bed  
And of all things,  
Took a nap.

*March 1968*

## LIFE'S GREAT MOMENTS

Life's great moments  
Come much too infrequently,  
For the moments of life  
Are full of war and hatred.  
But, too, Mother Earths;  
Seen many great days...  
Abe at the hearth  
And the Wrights at Kitty Hawk.

What a Day!

Washington made the first president  
And Byrd at the Arctic.  
But still, war and hatred  
Have made a dent in our lives.

## HAIKU

As cherry blossom  
As chased by a butterfly  
Flutters to the ground

Petals open wide  
As the sun slowly wakens  
In a mist of dew

A robin flies high  
Over mountains towering  
In the fading light.

*March 1968*

**1969**

## PAESTUM

The waves sleet upon this obsidian beach  
As quietly as the whisper of Athena,  
Eradicating the sole impressions of man  
Hopelessly awash...

Alone a lone, black stretch of beach, I walk,  
Feet crunching on the entrails of Vesuvius;  
And Sol, slipping silently  
To the ocean's depths in the horizon  
Reflecting golds and reds  
On the shimmering Mediterranean.

The waves sleet upon this obsidian beach  
As quietly as the whisper of Athena,  
Expelling the final reminders of Sol  
Hopelessly a wash...

A browned messenger of Poseidon  
Creeps along God's threshold;  
A clump of meager seaweed venturing  
Upon this pure, deserted Roman shore;  
After navigating mean seas  
It has reached its rainbow's end.

The waves sleet upon this obsidian beach  
As quietly as the whisper of Athena,  
Evoking the weary messenger of Poseidon  
Hopefully ashore...

*February 1969*



## BAMBOO SHOOTS

The canes begin  
With meager shoots  
Reaching down  
With tiny roots,  
Into the soft, warm  
Springtime soil  
While other canes  
Grow, die, and spoil.

The days pass on  
With slow, slow tread,  
The other shoots  
Are cold and dead;  
But one survived  
The winter frost,  
To live more years  
At Nature's cost.

Now seven years  
And seven feet,  
The cane has weathered  
Sun and sleet;  
But still it grows,  
Its grandeur great,  
To greater heights  
Where waits its fate.

The times increase  
By ten score years,  
Its height suggests  
It has no fears.  
But one dark day  
The sun blots out;  
The cane stands high,  
Its stature stout.

The wind begins  
To blow and blow  
Against the cane's  
Tall trunk.  
The animals run  
To hide in holes;  
The hare, the mouse  
The skunk.

The rain comes down,  
The cane just grins;  
The hail comes down  
In fives and tens,  
The wind's great force  
Is now so much  
That 'cane' begins  
To fret and such.

The wind increases  
Twenty knots;  
The cane is listing,  
"Fall, I'll not!"  
A stronger gust  
Could finish off  
This cane that lived  
A life, robust.

And then it came,  
That fateful gust;  
It blew 'cane'  
To the ground.  
With thund'rous roar  
Resounding clear,  
It struck upon  
A rotting mound  
Of other canes,  
Like him, so downed

Yet another  
Cane begins;  
Reaching down  
With tiny roots  
Into the soft, warm  
Springtime soil,  
While other canes  
Grow, die, and spoil...

Mirror of civilization.

*March 1969*

## ENDYMION

From apes our race has thus progressed  
To seek the last frontier;  
The galaxies await us,  
Of space we've curbed our fears.

For ages man has seen the moon  
As love and war and myth,  
But mainly as a symbol  
To interpret problems with.

Some races made it deity,  
To scholars 'twas a quiz;  
Some lovers made it passion,  
But man has made it his.

Now that men have reached the moon  
From hither, country free,  
This symbol of men's passions—  
Not what it used to be.

The moon will soon become  
The first true colony of Earth;  
Let's hope it's not polluted  
For an equal volume's worth.

Some people only see the moon  
Now as a conquered land—  
Pray that man will be more gentle  
With new resources at hand.

Perhaps again someone can find  
Another passion's vent,  
In the form of another Moon  
For another Earth so meant.

*March 23, 1969*



## THE NIGHT THAT GHOSTS AND GOBLINS STALK

'Trick or treat;  
The children say,  
Tonight's the night  
The spooks will play!  
From house to house  
The children walk,  
Tonight's the night  
The ghosts will stalk!  
'Trick or treat'  
The usual cry,  
Tonight's the night  
The witches fly!

Coming, going, everywhere,  
The goblins are out  
To give you a scare!  
Squeaks and rustlings,  
Could it be a rat?  
Of course not, silly,  
It's only a bat!  
A shape on the sidewalk,  
It must be a hat . . .  
Approach it, and feel it;  
Good grief! A black cat!

But don't be fooled  
By such foolish talk,  
Even if ghosts can really walk,  
Or even if the goblins stalk;  
For Halloween comes  
But once a year,  
So the rest of the nights  
There is nothing to fear!

*September 1969*

## A DIVER'S DREAMS

All twenty feet  
Of air lies cool  
Between me  
And the lake—  
Of glittering  
Water lapping  
Up against the  
Mud bank baked.

The scene  
Abruptly changes  
To the Conference  
Diving meet—  
The judges  
Sitting straight-faced  
And the students  
Tense in seats.

The title now  
Depends on me;  
I've got to win  
First place—  
My stomach knots  
Its "butterflies";  
My toes,  
The springboard brace.

A mighty thrust  
At springboard's end,  
Into the  
'Heated' air—  
'Winging' upward  
Toward the beams,  
I arch, and  
Swoop 'downstairs'.

The water parted  
Clean and smooth,  
Like dolphins  
In the sea—  
The crowd is up  
And cheering, wild,  
The champion diver,  
Me.

The last rays of  
The setting sun  
Play tricks  
Upon the lake—  
A warm and friendly  
Summer day,  
Of boyish dreams  
It makes. . . .

*November 1969*

## MILD MOODS

A summer night  
Around our house  
Comes on  
Sweet and lazy  
For the whole family  
And me.  
I commence  
A 'knockin'  
June bugs off  
The screen  
Into the dead still  
Dust below.  
I turn around  
To softer lights  
Flowing from our  
Candle lantern,  
And wonder  
How tall  
My corn'll  
Be tomorrow.  
Before long  
It's about time  
To climb into  
The loft  
And get ready  
To rest a bit  
A'fore it's time  
To get up and  
Do the chores.  
I just lie there  
Watchin' moths  
And a few roaches  
Fluttering up near  
The ceiling,  
And wonder  
If everybody else  
Has it so good.

*November 1969*

## OAKEN HOME

Bright against an autumn sky  
Of solid light blue hue,  
A mighty growing oak stands tall,  
As a symbol of strong life, true.

The leaves of flaming gold, and red,  
And yellow, orange, and brown,  
Stand out like burning fires at night,  
Or a brilliant gold kings crown.

Its stature strong, and straight, and stout,  
The bark a metal armor plate,  
With limbs that spread as flocking geese,  
Leaving for their new home late.

A favorite home of lively squirrels,  
And their stored up acorn nuts—  
They scamper up and down the limbs,  
Along each other's time worn "ruts".

Roots all gnarled, cracked, and black,  
They weave as a bamboo mat—  
Reeling, arching, peaking there,  
They're comfy houses for sleek, white rats.

Gigantic burls shape this tree,  
While insects eat them out—  
There in the burls, as one can see,  
You'll find hoot owls about.

Inside one of the oaken limbs  
"Sweet gold" and bees reside—  
Honeycombed, but full of "sting"  
The hive banks food for wintertide.

Sparrows, finches, and robins, red,  
On fingery twigs, all perch.  
They rest, their voices raised in song,  
To swell this autumn "church".

Hoot owls, rats, and gray-coat squirrels,  
Insects, birds, and bees,  
Make this forest oak their home;  
This, their favorite oaken tree.

*December 1969*

## ARTIC MORN

Crusty is the new morn's snow  
To trees and bushes clinging;  
Yonder runs a winter hare,  
And lo!  
Behold, the sun is rising!  
High above the arctic spruce,  
Its rays, like raindrops, flow;  
Through trees' great boughs they sluice.

A tiny musk, or maybe two  
Have left some early traces  
Of which small streams they visited  
With evenly stepped paces.  
A fox, pure white, emerging now  
Is off in search of food;  
A lone blue jay, his few seeds stolen,  
Is in an angry mood.

The hawk, wings spread, is circling now  
In search of morning feast;  
A hare is nibbling roots once more,  
For he also must eat.  
Soon this nature scene must end,  
The noon is drawing near;  
But come again tomorrow morn;,  
We promise to be here.

*December 1969*



## CHRISTMAS FIR

Bells of blue  
And balls of red  
Decorate from foot to  
head,  
The stately fir  
On Christmas Eve  
So eagerly  
Tonight received.

Of rainbow hues  
Gay, strings of beads,  
And beeswax candles,  
It exceeds—  
Of merry, cloth robed  
Angels, white,  
And fine, glass doves,  
Refracting light.

From day to day,  
As present pile,  
The close-knit family  
Glow with smiles;  
All expectant,  
Wondering,  
About what Santa  
Claus shall bring.

Then comes that long  
Awaited Eve—  
Visions form  
Of gifts to receive.  
What shall one get?—  
A mystery yet,  
But mind you now,  
Don't get upset!

Through the night  
The dreams do fly  
From gift to gift,  
That presently lie,  
Under the massive  
Branching fir—  
"I wonder what  
I'll find from her?"

At next sun-up  
The young ones rise—  
The family lines  
Accord to size;  
They march downstairs  
To "Jingle Bells",  
The tune to which  
The whole house swells.

And then the rush  
To living room—  
The young set now,  
All gifts, exhume.  
The oldsters sit  
And wait a while,  
As they pleasantly  
Absorb warm smiles.

While one and all  
Enjoy this day,  
The fir sits pleased,  
Its décor, gay.  
A beautiful tree,  
The people all say—  
This fir is pleased  
In a special way.

*December 1969  
Christmas*

***APPALACHIAN  
TRAIL  
1969***

## A HIKER'S BEST FRIEND

These mounts I find  
Are hard to climb  
With heavy pack on back.  
I wish I had  
A walking stick,  
The one thing that I lack.

The long day ends,  
I stop to camp  
And set my tent and fire.  
I wish I had  
A stick for hire;  
These "hills" are getting higher!

A wintergreen  
My hopes call for,  
I set in search of one . . .  
Both tall and straight  
And worthy size,  
Look here, a worthy prize!

I strike it down  
With swift, sure strokes,  
Just taking what I need . . .  
Now back to camp  
To smooth it down,  
And with it mounts exceed.

I have just what  
I've needed long  
To scale those weary peaks . . .  
All hikers  
Ought to have one,  
To reach the crests they seek.

*A.T. 1969  
Bly Gap*

## MY VINE

The vine  
I like  
To swing upon  
Is long  
And tough  
And strong;  
The vine  
I like  
To swing upon  
Is bare  
But thick  
And long.

I go out  
By the  
Early light  
Of day  
Not long  
To come;  
I go out  
By the  
Early light  
To swing  
My vine  
So strong.

I hold  
My vine  
Too tight  
To fall  
And run  
And swing  
So high;  
I hold  
My vine  
Too tight  
To fall  
And swing,  
Again,  
And fly.

Like birds  
I soar  
Through  
Coolest air,  
The wind  
Against  
My cheeks!  
Like birds  
I soar  
Through  
Coolest air,  
I gaze  
At hills  
And creeks.

The sun  
Is getting  
Up  
From bed,  
It's time  
To go  
Back home;  
The sun  
Is getting  
Up  
From bed,  
Tomorrow  
Here  
I'll roam.

*A. T. 1969  
Tesnatee Gap*

## MISTY FOG

Misty fog,  
In thick'ning rolls,  
Creeps across  
Hills, spurs, and knolls.

The atmosphere  
Becomes serene,  
Now for objects  
Remain unseen.

As night crawls in  
It takes the fog;  
Come watch it once  
At Freeman's bog.

*A. T. 1969*  
*Low Gap*

## SHORT ACQUAINTANCES

I made a short acquaintance  
With a girl named Joanie;  
I felt a strong attraction  
To'rd this special she.

Both freckle faced  
And brown-haired too,  
She was to me  
One of those special few.

I knew her but a short time;  
Less than a whole day's span.  
I wish I'd known her better;  
Someday maybe I can.

You meet the sweetest people  
Trav'ling through the southeast states.  
Hopefully I'll meet her again,  
But for now I'll have to wait.

*A. T. 1969*  
*Coffer's Store*

## FIERY DISCOURAGEMENTS

A nice dry day  
We hike to camp;  
We set our tents,  
The air is damp.  
Our fireplace built,  
We gather wood  
Both big and small,  
Like Boy Scouts should.

I set the tinder,  
Then the sticks;  
Later logs,  
Now it's fixed.  
I'm confident  
Of quick, sure start.  
I take one match  
And strike with heart.

I thrust my flame  
To light this fire;  
My match burns fast  
And starts to tire.  
The flame, now out,  
I try again.  
To Boy Scouts, proud,  
This is a sin.

It too runs out  
And makes me pain;  
Another match,  
But yet, in vain.  
And yet more flame  
To match I light;  
It seems to be  
A hopeless fight.

Both gas and leaves  
And paper tried  
The fire stays dead,  
My hopes untied.  
Could wood be damp,  
Or maybe green?  
The answer still  
Is yet unseen.

I bade you well  
Should you try too;  
I'll try once more  
To start anew.

*A. T. 1969  
Low Gap*

\*

I see a  
Shooting star  
In sky . . . .

But no,  
It's just a  
Shooting firefly.

*A.T. 1969*  
*Low Gap*

## WATER HOLE

It's been a long  
But brisk day's hike.  
It's traveling through  
These woods I like.

As usual,  
My thirst is great;  
I'll find a spring  
Before it's too late.

The woods are sparse,  
I'll search them fast;  
A trickle, thank goodness,  
A spring at last!

I have with me  
A miniature spade.  
I'll build a dam  
Within the glade.

I first dig out  
A foot square pit  
To catch the water  
Bit by bit.

And with some rocks  
I built it up,  
Wait for it to clear  
And dip out a cup.

I fill my bottles  
To take them back;  
Now cut a path  
To the spring and back.

Here, weary hikers,  
Thirsted and worn,  
Can gather their water  
By the path I have shorn.

*A. T. 1969  
Lunch Stop*



**1970**

## WINTRY POET

A rising winter  
From the depths of fall—  
Harsh to man,  
So brisk to all.  
A footprint here  
Has crunched this snow—  
So new, so white,  
On wild winds, blow.  
The ice laden birch  
Creates such scenes,  
Of a weeping beau,  
Or a multi-jeweled queen.  
Spurred by this cold  
Many beasts do sleep,  
But man, most wise,  
Three more months doth reap.  
Wringing with the  
Retreating warmth,  
The geese have left  
This cooling North.  
Frozen ponds  
Host skating leaves;  
One cuts a curve,  
And on a snow ridge, heaves.  
A winter, so,  
As poets see,  
Is for Nature, too,  
Much as you and me.

*February 1970*

Lazy  
Summer river,  
Moving with infinite  
Slowness—like the peaceful passage  
Of time

Bamboo  
Shoots growing to  
Their fateful heights of life—  
Mirror of civilization;  
All time. . . .

*March 1970*

### A POETIC DESPAIR

Writer of poems,  
So subconscious, so real;  
My verse causes commotion;  
Such argument I feel.  
Poems, I have written,  
But no one can see, nor I  
Sometimes, the things I have said.  
Wrong thoughts; permiss can I?  
Meanings in contrast  
Some readers will sight—set free  
From perception—open to light;  
Let the heartborn thought be . . .  
Writing rhymed thought, might I foresee,  
Was by cold fate, ordained for me?

*March 1970*

## CHILDREN'S HAIKU

Flowers in gardens  
Mean the coming of new spring  
And baby chickens.

Electric toy trains  
Speeding along metal tracks  
Are treasured playthings.

Halloween means fun  
For the ghosts and witches, too!  
(Because they come out!)

Toy boats in the tub  
Floating in soapy foam  
Look like ships at sea.

Dropping leaves in fall  
Mean raking, and fun, too.  
(If you count them all!)

*March 1970*

## A BOY AND HIS WAR

A boy went to war with  
A dream in his heart  
Of heroism—

A boy went to war with  
A joy in his heart  
Called "love"—

A boy went to war with  
A picture of fame on  
The high seas—

A boy went to war with  
The excuse he was going  
For me. . . .

A boy came back home  
From a war, maimed unlike  
Other men—

A boy came back home  
With his precious "limbs" lost  
To the bombs—

A boy came back home  
With his soul scarred by his  
Bloody death spree—

A boy came home torn with  
The excuse that he did it  
For me. . . .

*April 1970*

**1971**

## ONE SON

Here lies the snow—  
The Northerner knows it  
Like the back of his hand;  
But me?; I'm a son of the Sun;  
The South, the beach, the palms;  
Galveston, Miami, The Border.

I know a different kind of snow,  
A different kind of cold.  
A different blizzard, another  
Sun . . .  
The snow I know is sand;  
Golden, warm, inviting to the toes.  
The cold I know is Heat;  
Hot heat beating down to burn  
The skin, to light the Sea,  
And to warm the Gulf Stream breeze.  
This is the cold and snow I know;  
The type that never leaves,  
But is as stuck to me as the  
Melted gum on Galveston walks;  
Winters and summers, both  
A never-ending track of surfing,  
Swimming, and  
Living, breathing to  
The slow, rhythmic pulse of  
Palms and sea air . . .  
I know a different blizzard,  
A savage one, the Hurricane,  
On which the rage and tempest  
Of the oceans whip;  
Devastating, flooding, pounding,  
In desperation to kill, and  
Come back to seek an undeserved  
Revenge.  
Man is vulnerable . . .  
He is everywhere . . .  
The palms thrash and  
The waves mount the seawall,  
And put our houses into  
A sad shape,  
But it passes over—



Doesn't it always?  
Everywhere, too, maybe . . .  
Maybe . . .  
The North knows the horrid, bleak  
Cold  
That makes ghosts of the landscape.  
But I do not know this cold.  
I know only the beating rays  
Of the sun  
Which scorch and burn;  
That bring about a thirst for water  
That others take for granted . . .  
The yucca pricks you,  
Cactus pains you,  
And so does the buzzard,  
The snakes, lizards, and the fire ants.  
But it's not all the grief that  
It appears  
In the movie, the television,  
The post cards.  
There is a lighter side, too—  
The one-ness of body and sea you love,  
The beauty of the sands, the stones,  
The naked canyons against a naked sky,  
The warm nights . . .

I suppose, though, that  
I may be biased,  
For there is probably a lighter side  
To the North, too . . .  
I suppose that there is . . .

I suppose that there is  
That lighter side;  
I can learn to know it,  
If I give it time,  
And learn to love it, to respect it,  
And admire it . . .  
I guess a Southerner can change his rank.  
But no longer is it  
An issue of rank—  
The hate between is gone,  
And we are one,  
I suppose . . .

I suppose that  
Weather is the only difference,  
And now, if that's the case,  
It shouldn't be too hard to leave,  
To move . . .  
There are probably delights  
In the cold also . . .'  
Yes, there are.  
There must be.  
So here I am,  
A change of place.  
No more sun or sand,  
But I cannot fret . . .  
The past is behind,  
And my path of Life has already been tread.  
So, lead on;  
And let Life run its course.  
I was a son of the Sun,  
But that was last year;  
I am now, living, surviving,  
Pulsating in the present,  
But what's more,  
I am a son of the Snow.

Here lies my Snow,  
Powdered, clean,  
Cool, fresh.  
I knew the Sun;  
But now?  
I am a son of the Snow!  
The North, the hills, the oaks,  
Hurricane, Detroit, The Border.  
Live now; be now!  
Don't turn your back!  
Because you can't.  
Live on and hard.  
Breathe hard and full!  
Be vivid, and  
Take all Life has to offer!  
Experience new things;  
Don't just be one Son;  
Be as many as you can!

*January 1971*

**SANDY, TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF . . .**

Oh Lord! Where is my brethren?  
He is lost and gone to us—  
Oh Lord! Is he alive now?  
En route to Cal by bus?  
Oh Lord! Where is my cousin?  
Was he rolled for greenish bills?  
Oh Lord! Please protect my cousin,  
That he may come to see our hills  
Again,  
And again . . .

Oh Lord! Where is my brother?  
Does he feel a loss of goal?  
Oh Lord! Is he a' searchin'  
For the gaining of his soul?  
Oh Lord! Where is my cousin?  
Is he out there searching now?  
Oh Lord! Don't knock his reasoning—  
It's what he wants—not how,  
He gets it  
Rightly . . .

*January 5, 1971*

## DON'T

Our life is, or could be . . .  
Fantastic fields of freely flapping fractured frail flowers  
Blown blue by the black blue blasts of not obliging.  
Wind, waning in wet with wild whispers  
On which wisps of the Welch wilderness whirl, while  
Hirelings huddle, hotly, hiding in  
Hard houses, hollow to the honing  
Cuts, chastising as a chock contorting comfort  
Comes as the conqueror.  
Down this darksome damper, a degrading detriment;  
But don't discourage, drive at  
Sensitive times, soothing experiences, some times of serenity;  
Don't be driven down by the demands  
Of a non-thinking, non-caring nest of non-involved nematodes.  
Fight back! And lend a helping hand!

*January 1971*

## TWO BROTHERS

It came not of an eve,  
Or of a day, or of a year,  
Of time—  
It came not of a man  
Or of an act, or an idea,  
Of people—  
It came not in a bow,  
Or in a box, or of a present,  
Or for a gift—  
But it came,  
The war,  
Despite the tries,  
Despite the ties, of family, brothers,  
States and homes;  
It came, despite;  
To tear a gap  
Atwixt two brothers, home and state;  
They rushed to join—and all because  
The war was here;  
They could not wait...

Lordy! Lordy! King Cotton is here!  
We're the southern states, the cotton, the rice and cane;  
We're the planters, the farmers, slaves.  
We are South! Oh Lordy! Lordy!  
White supreme!...  
You take our slaves? Oh, no!  
The right is ours; we do them good!  
Without them we will die, our  
Cotton kind...  
Codfish! Mackerel! Do you hear?  
We're the North, the industry,  
The sailors, fishermen.  
South, the slaves, must free;  
This country is; so they must be!  
Protest the tariff, the government,  
Then protest your freedom, too!  
Slaves are people—you'll not die—  
America is free!

Come! Come! The chorus chants—  
This conflict must resolve!  
Lordy! Lordy! Slaves persist!  
Codfish! Mackerel! All together abolitionists!  
It seems no way can exist  
To arbitrate the North and South;  
Groping at the others throat,  
But neither giving way,  
In deeds or say.  
And such carries on, the battle  
Of the mouths; of North and South,  
But their hands at side, poised, readied,  
To strike...

Many years, oral fighting persists,  
Neither prepared to move,  
The same Lordy! Lordy!  
And the same Codfish! talk.  
And bitterness has the only life—  
The only thing that grows...  
But come the eve of Lincoln,  
The tide of action turns,  
Douglas fights for slavery,  
And Abraham takes his stand...  
The Northerners side with a leader,  
The Southerners still disbanded,  
Except that if Lincoln "makes it"  
The North will have trouble at hand;  
And he does, the North his carryall.  
The South acts too, and leaves the union;  
Confederate states, in lieu;  
Now a battle of brothers, two...

All rush to join, and all because,  
War is here,  
They cannot wait,  
To kill their brother...

For Lincoln is the hardest task,  
To mend a broken bond,  
But with the actions taken, he must  
Carry it on through—to the end—  
Not to destroy slavery, but  
For the freedom cause...

A war, now, that tests the American dream;  
Democratic principles;  
Are they present now?  
But no! They are at a test,  
And now it is left to see,  
Who wins?  
It's a bloody brother battle,  
With broken family ties;  
A long time to renew them,  
In the future, but for now?  
A war must be decided,  
And many lives will lose;  
But man is at a test—  
A test of freedom for mankind...

They did not rush, when slavery lost;  
Lee, at Appomattox—  
But the war is finished, and all can wait...  
Two brothers are home again...

Lordy! Lordy! King Cotton is da'ed!  
Codfish! Mackerel! Do not fret so,  
Southern brother!  
Your institution's dead,  
But there are other ways to earn your keep;  
The Cotton is not all you have,  
So for lost bolls, don't weep!  
You too, can fish, and grow  
Potatoes, corn, and sail the seas.  
Factories have no preference.  
They'll grow "South" just as well!  
Money makers will come, it's true,  
And take your bottom cent;  
The ills of Reconstruction  
Are surely evident.  
But white supreme was wrong, and is;  
Negroes, now, are free!

Black or white, both are men,  
And free men can't be bought...  
The black man is an equal man;  
White men are no better—  
Slavery was a sin!  
Man has learned the lesson  
That Freedom works both ways.  
You can't be free and own a man;  
Freedom knows no slaves!

And so, the brothers conflict has reached  
The end of all its gore;  
Lincoln died a'fighting, too,  
For the cause of all mankind;  
And he left a plant to build by  
That would leave the past behind.  
Writers of the history books  
Will call it Reconstruction, but,  
With Lincoln's meaning,  
The title is out of place.  
There is no reconstructing, rather,  
A building up anew—  
There shall be no replacing,  
But instead, a "new South", in lieu...

*March 1971*



**GOD SAVE THE GRAPH?!**  
(Composed at a charting desk)

One hundred thousand squares  
Staring at me, black on white.  
One hundred thousand squares,  
With no rosiness in sight.  
Blank and plain;  
Bleak is pain;  
No color here or there  
That keeps all mankind sane.  
One hundred thousand squares;  
I've counted them, you see;  
One hundred thousand squares;  
Ring bell, and from this nightmare, free!

My nightmare is my desk top;  
The dream of learned man.  
My nightmare is a desk top  
Like so many in the land.  
Just big enough,  
Of plastic, tough,  
In rows of fours or fives,  
With room, the aisles to buff.  
My nightmare is a desk top;  
I'm part of one now, see?  
My nightmare is a desk top;  
From whit and rote do free!

My desk top is for graphing,  
For charting ups and downs.  
My desk top is for graphing,  
In centimeter bounds.  
Of greatness, shows it;  
Man can know it.  
Charting his progressions, red,  
And trying to predict it.  
My desk top is for graphing,  
For plotting (?) future needs.  
My desk top is for graphing;  
A plan of life it feeds.

My graphing plans mans' living;  
It tells him when to sup.  
My graphing plans mans' living;  
Statistics say "Throw up!"  
The 'fall' is plain;  
"Need greater gains!"  
"The rise will go this far by then";  
"One hundred more will ride in planes..."  
My graphing plans mans' living,  
Supreme guidelines it be;  
My graphing plans mans' living  
Till the stats say "Die at sea!"...

My dying is my freedom;  
The graph pertains no more.  
My dying is my freedom;  
To chartless heavens, I now soar!  
From godless rise and falls I break.  
My thirst for color, I now slake!  
A second life of beauty, mine!  
A graphless heaven, thank God for make!  
My dying is my freedom;  
"Religion rises in this land!"  
My dying is my freedom...  
"We predict a rise in Heavens' band"...

*March 1971*  
*Algebra*

### **A SPACE OF RIVETS**

Spacing's neat and plain  
My eyes, it does not strain,  
And the philosophy is sane;  
But what I'd like to see  
For once, is spacing, free,  
Where all the blackboard rivets  
Are crammed up by the dozens  
Instead of sets of three.

*November 1971*

**CLR**

Doves—  
Flighty between  
Personalities that decay and revive.  
Is terrible that rot can set in.  
I like permanence  
Or truth—  
Sweet doves.

*Fall 1971*

**MARY**

My thoughts of you—  
Fall off the trees—Below,  
But don't rot or die.

All my thoughts are leaves.  
Fall—all but one dies and drops—  
One thought, of you, stays green.

*April 1972*

**1972**

**53**

## I WISH I COULD ANCHOR A SILKEN GRAPNEL

Lonely...  
A gulf; a distance;  
A blank between two worlds,  
Of two people,  
Or more.  
No substance atwixt,  
Or rather, not substantial.  
I'm running around, making  
Progressions into personalities,  
But they are searches with  
A grapnel anchored in jello—  
A rope of bubble gum  
That gives no palatable yield.  
Speak, and speak back,  
And the bubble gum rope goes slack  
To throw me into my void of black;  
A lonely, unyielding gunny-sack.  
And I sit, hands upon my knees,  
Reflecting on what went wrong.  
... I decide, and leave my sack again  
To search and dive  
Into another personality,  
And suffer a throwback  
To my little hole,  
Where abides a single soul,  
And partial others...  
Got to get out!  
And anchor my hook  
Of uncoarse silk correctly;  
Open my valentine,  
And let the light shine...  
Lonely,  
For right now...

*January 1972*

### PSUEDO-GULL FROM A COOL BENCH

Sun finding holes in my covering  
To cause unreal heat for a winter day,  
And cool cement lamenting the  
Sore muscles of my seat...

What's that?

I hear a sea gull,  
Stirring me up from my own little world  
Of Dylan Thomas.  
A seagull  
That lonely cry so absent in  
These West Virginia hills—  
But it's not possible, that cry of ocean  
Freedom, resounding in these hills.  
And yet, it's there,  
Evoking fond memories of a warm sun,  
And cool cement, on Galveston morns,  
With a smell of fish, lingering on the air.

I've got to support my convictions,  
On hearing the cry of tide-life,  
Awaking me from the depths...  
And Thomas shields my eye,  
As I look up, peering for the sound,  
And its origin in soul.  
There, aloft, soaring over browned hills,  
Floating as if lost to the world,  
And buried in its cries...  
Lost of Poseidon and stranded,  
Interminable miles within a landlocked state;  
Straining to regain its waters and fish.  
There, above a hollow still holding breaths  
Of morning mists,  
That dissolves slowly in Sol's mouth;

The bird soars, now doubtless, not a gull,  
But brown as the trees, reflecting gray  
In the sun on banking swerves,  
And just as lonely,  
Crying out, seemingly in vain,  
For some presence lying beneath the plants of ages.

Fluttering, floating, soaring, diving,  
Disappearing in the mist and popping up again,  
As from a morning born sea fog.  
Still forlorn, despairing cry...

And the sun begins to cool—  
The winged one goes on, and disappears at last  
At the hollow's mouth,  
And the sun again doth shine...

Oh well,  
Back to Dylan Thomas, and  
My crying stomach.

*January 1972*



## IN TRUTH, YOU'RE ONLY A CAT

Feline acrobat,  
Moving all over the house;  
Ascending,  
    Descending,  
        Progressing,  
            Transgressing,

Always wailing;  
Warming your body by fire,  
And wishing the warmth of my companionship...  
Just the two of us here;  
My mind works and wishes;  
That you were cursed  
I might kiss you,  
And company make...  
Oh, Lord! Such foolish dreams  
Do nothing for my mind,  
In reality;  
They only set it in a pool of falsehoods,  
With no disagreeable truths...

... So back to reality;

Damned cat!  
Always bugging me with your cries,  
And never, ever giving up the least bit  
Of relief,  
From raucous wails  
To let you in the attic...  
Cursed cat!  
You're a lucky one, you know;  
No cares... Good food... Always warm,  
While all those other animals  
Suffer in that unearthly chill...  
You don't deserve such luxury!  
Darned cat!  
Why am I so vehement?  
Maybe I ought to throw you out,  
Who knows?...

I envy you...

*January 1972*

### SUNLIGHT CASTS THE BRILLIANCE...

Sunlight casts the brilliance;  
Many casts the shadow—  
A shadow of what he is—  
Sun cannot penetrate;  
Nothing shows but an outline.  
You know the rough sketch  
But the sun can't probe inside,  
With a cast of back the only return.

The Sol does not shine through,  
Perhaps he shows indirectly.  
Man squints—  
He knows the rooms well,  
Not the outdoors—his first home.  
Then, too, he may be  
Confined against his will.

And he squints as he escapes,  
Momentarily...

*Spring 1972*

### ONE HUNDRED FLOORS OF MARSHMALLOW

Breechclout in the fall;  
Voyage to the top of white-eyes'  
Cresting lodges in a rock forest;  
Climbing in a clumsy metal bird,  
So close to my mother, the moon.  
But many, many lodges do not bring me  
To my mother; no closer to the womb;  
Only farther from my roots.  
Silly white-eyes—  
Their great heights gain nothing;  
No closer to the sky;  
Only farther from Life.

*November 1972*

## ASHLAND, KENTUCKY

So many things  
Written while you wait;  
The plane hasn't left,  
For bus I still wait.  
It's so much of  
"HOLD!"  
This is no poem, bold;  
I'm just a'settin',  
Waiting to move;  
All kinds in the station,  
Trying to groove.  
A juke with the beat,  
A burned, bench-type seat.  
People of all sorts,  
Scattered around;  
The ring-a-ling pin-ball machines  
Do so abound.  
Fifteen move minutes  
Left on the clock;  
I'm in no hurry,  
Like those on the dock.  
The people will move,  
In plenty good time;  
Too many coronaries  
From racing through grime.  
We're all going our ways,  
And varied we are;  
Black and white,  
Traveling far.  
How many escaping,  
Or traveling to go?  
Me, I'm a journeying,  
With jam in my toes.  
No one can say,  
What things will become  
By night-time up north.  
I'm not predestined!  
On my own, I go forth.  
Curling fag smoke  
Up through the air.

I envision fronts  
Around those of the "fair".  
Confrontations of random,  
Of "far-outs" and widows,  
Army men and beatniks—  
No humdrum.  
Maybe I imagine  
The ice that I feel.  
Perhaps it's not as bad—  
As electric eels.  
We all are one brother;  
A fat mass, at that;  
But we're moving together,  
(And lots of them scat).  
I'll move real easy,  
Won't beat myself out;  
It's time to be moving,  
On my chosen life route.

*December 12, 1972*

### UNORTHODOX CHRISTMAS WISHES

There are no fancy frills here  
To wish that same old way;  
'Tis unnecessary to repeat that  
Expression, a cliché.  
Just keep it in your heart to think  
How lucky you must be  
To never have to drink  
What is not pure and clean.  
Bless, dear God, your fortunes now  
And that you are alive;  
Do not for lavish presents seek,  
But for mankind do strive.

*Christmas 1972*

### **A MEANINGFUL MOUSE-AN MATERNITY**

...And below the deck of oaken timbers  
Stands the mouse, with deathly shivers,  
Awaiting not the 'Christmas life'  
But praying for his mouse-an wife,  
Who lies a'nest to give now birth  
To lowly mouse, bethought no worth.  
Now giving life, as was at first  
In Bethlehem, where Christ was nursed.  
The mouse, as He, is born in straw,  
As mice do gather near and far  
To see the newest mouse-child born  
To the wandering ship that carries corn...

The birth of both, is here, the same;  
All births are one in Christmas fame...

*Christmas 1972*

**1973**

**64**



### IS THERE VICTORY IN DEFEAT?

Is there victory in defeat?  
A defeated purpose judges biasly  
When its vision is clouded by the fears of loss.  
Is there victory in defeat?  
We think not, tangibly, when  
We will not be back to see its fruits.  
Is there defeat in victory?  
Surely not, when there  
Is no joy in Mudville—  
Truly, there is no joy in  
Mudville, tonight.  
Does it truly matter,  
Win or lose in life?  
We cannot judge, I think,  
Fresh from the battles strife.  
The 'Sayers' say it matters—  
That it patterns life to come.  
But athletes cannot judge  
When their goals are trodden un'.  
Other days will come, they say,  
And the sorrows will be gone.  
Perhaps I'll think back of this time,  
This game,  
And say "we really won".  
But I know not what the future holds;  
... So far; and yet, so close...  
Those goals...

*Mary 9, 1973*

## THE HARVARD PROJECT

Cinder blocks  
Laid half on half  
From floor to ceiling rise.  
Beyond asbestos  
False overhead—  
How far keep going?  
I now surmise.

Here we sit with tests  
Teacher tells the answer; oh  
We do fuss in vain.

Poor us—students here  
Missing answers—cannot change;  
Accept them as are.

What's the use to try?  
To change the answer—worthless;  
It's bound to stand pat.

Tis' humorous, quite;  
All of us make our comments  
What we all did wrong.

Sitting behind me—  
Wonder what goes on in mind?  
Could live if knew thoughts?

Almost time to count  
Score of test so great and grand—  
Here comes—down by nine!

*March 1973*

## HASSLE

HORRIBLE  
AGITATING  
STICKY  
SCALY  
LONGWINDED  
EXCURSION  
Into  
Everyday  
Things  
That  
Bug  
Me,  
When  
Repeated  
Over  
And  
Over  
Are  
Bad  
Enough  
To  
Hurt  
Just  
Once.

*April 1973*

**1974**

**68**

### IT'S A GOOD LIFE AT THE INSTITUTE

Life is truly wundebar—  
Even with the mounts that  
Strain ourselves.  
Behind in analyzing, extrapolating,  
Integrating, explicating,  
Running and sometimes  
Jumping for life to stay in the game.  
But I still love it.  
The profs, the people,  
The perplexity.  
Perhaps even happier with  
More dedication.  
Is that the answer?  
Get to work on it, and  
Enjoy.

*January 1974*

## RICE

Born in the sea flats,  
Mothered by the grass  
He grew.  
Weaned upon the salt air  
And taught the waves' sweet song,  
He knew,  
That Life would not be roses,  
But neither pessimist  
His gist,  
Of philosophy.  
He reared amid the camphors,  
While through the first ten steps  
He marched;  
His life was all, but nothing;  
Was full, and yet it lacked  
The flavor; parched.  
But then a hill came looming  
And he landed there upon,  
And soon to don,  
His revised person.  
Initiated by the hardness  
That was fertile food for soul,  
He grew.  
Nourished by the Mother earth,  
The growth, the land, all men,  
He new,  
That life here would be roses;  
Its grandeur would be great,  
And not too late  
It came to learn.  
The hollers were the mountain womb  
That mothered the peoples' ways  
He learned.  
They rounded out his learning  
Cultivating purpose, love,  
Harmony.  
His mind, his limbs expanded;  
Of people he partook,  
But it was Heaven, and lasting, spoiling.  
Hourglasses came down crashing,  
That could not belittle bonds  
With the spirit.  
Uncertainty hung damp above,  
Futilely over dauntless man-child,  
Summed experience.  
He parted, torn, but knowing

There lay ahead a goal,  
Amid dark,  
Yet unrevealed.  
Poplar child mucked back in flats,  
With a calling near at hand,  
He knew;  
His hands, like Keesters',  
Flew by love and love  
To glorious ends,  
And shone in blanch purity  
Stark against the blue  
Of reward,  
And new beginning.  
Spanish themes of hoping,  
Fathered in grand age,  
He began.  
Challenged in a setting  
High in sky, degree,  
He fights.  
A head above the water,  
A stride across the line,  
Pressed by doubts,  
Fed by glad,  
It continues without trade;  
Hard to get down; too good.  
It is the dream  
That presses harder yet,  
Above the clamor and the din  
Of doubting others,  
He loves life.  
Born in the sea flats,  
Mothered by the salt air, the creeks,  
He grew.  
Weaned upon the salt air, and  
Taught the waves; and hills' sweet song,  
He knew,  
That life would not be roses,  
Unless he made it so,  
His gist,  
Of philosophy.

*February 14, 1974*

## WHAT THREE BOOKS WOULD YOU TAKE?

### I

Journey through mental dimensions—  
By warps of cellulite—  
Wells of time,  
Comprehension brimmed—  
“The ultimate speed is being there”,  
And its truth is portrayed  
Upon walls engrossing  
The limitless limitationing  
Of the lehreren.

### II

Across space,  
In dimensions  
Straight.  
Left then right,  
And up and down,  
To dimensions  
Of particles, and waves  
And Nemerovian images  
That stirred yet more within.  
Through limits of dimension,  
Geometry; Plato's perfect concept,  
Into bounded unbounds.  
Or rather, bounded, bounding unbounded.  
Or, rather again, unbounded  
That frees the unboundable.

By limits of exchange,  
Concepts of worth,  
Expressions of charge  
And of feeling,  
And back to unboundness, in boundness  
Roam.  
Mindful of concepts that  
Limit, yet are limitless—  
Of dislike, of like, of lust,  
Of pleasure, of love,  
Of being—  
Enjoying the unboundable concept  
Within the unboundable Platonic  
Purity,

I sat.



III

Tick, tock, tock, tick,  
Bzzz, Bzzz, click, click—  
Hammer, Whang, Ring, Rage,  
Bell, dial, hand, gauge.

Across the unfathomable  
Einsteinian progression,  
On a stamp—

IV

Upon the bounds  
The cellulite flicks;  
Relaying the concept,  
Slowly; The concept  
Wells.  
Time flying by, for me,  
Of years past; viewing  
The same,  
In near the same  
Boundment, and experiencing anew  
What is the womb  
Of my being, my straining;  
My perceptible imperceptible  
Struggle against the unbeatable  
Yet mouse-like barrier.

Bound.

My paradox, explained.

Being in space,  
But traversing time—  
No velocity because  
No bounds at gates that,  
Run past, whiz the speed  
Via perceptivity.

I see.

That the run is  
Elementary, not as  
The limiting particle,  
But the basic beginning.  
I am such a child... a babe...  
I am yet unborn!  
I and all others are  
Encased... bounded... yet  
Striving within our box.

Falling headlong  
Against walls that  
Poe-like expand before me  
And beyond—  
My fingers find no  
Fathomable bounds.  
And yet I am running  
Away from myself.  
I am truly races and  
Agonies back there—  
Limitless limiting miles back  
At my starting point.  
I am a snail—  
I weave a silver trail  
Across the world... along  
My equipotential field  
Against which I can do no  
Work.

A path minds long,  
With the mind left at  
My start,  
Where fell my home's  
Afterbirth.  
There I left me.  
I filled then with perceptions  
Of my bounds, and  
Forever influenced,  
Was taught to say  
"Leave you behind",  
"Accept you... he is  
Not you... you are  
Not you. You are a  
Bound within abound—  
Strive"...  
But I still wait back at  
My starting 'first dimension'.

Back there I would start.

Virgin, in its concept be,  
I would begin...  
Move not a biochemical,  
See not an auge;  
Smell nor taste,  
Nor decibel hear...  
But only mind.  
Immediately cry out  
In the silence

(Silent?  
Only because other  
Minds do not hear.)

How rawly beautiful  
My newness is.  
I go now to discover  
My infinity—  
Mind crossing ever  
Tender ground that  
Resounds painfully but  
Wonderful with knowledge.  
I am new... in my game  
And my concept.  
No! My dimension.  
That too is boxed,  
But limitless.  
I would trek across  
Stingingly new thresholds  
Forever going and with me.  
I still am there, though;  
It of me is here.  
I must retrace, or call  
Me home;  
One.

Find me again... (a long road);  
But yet find me again,  
Where I have no reference points...  
Where I  
Am.

Find myself... I...  
And begin as the child,  
Anew—  
For I am yet unborn;  
I have regressed forward  
A didecade.  
Over so much I must remake!  
Then start over and  
Move not a biochemical,  
Erect not a vein,  
Ere not a thought off  
Of being where I am,  
But somewhere else.

I nat I would be  
At my concept of being—  
Across the 'folds',  
The chains of time  
That are chains for those  
Who never feel they have  
Lost me, somewhere back there.  
How lucky to know  
I have so little gone,  
And yet am able to stop  
Before my<sup>2</sup>  
Should prevent it.  
So I am here, still carrying  
Forward, but casting out  
Line 2.

VI

Oh, mind!  
Send the Engine Order Telegraph  
A flank reverse!

Across my inner dimensions  
Would I fly—  
It is the television  
Rambling around within the  
Home, when its true world  
Exists within the tube.  
All world is within me!  
"I am a perfect expression of being".  
JLS, thou art now so clear;  
(A concept yet... that clear!)  
Even my own idea of myself  
Is limited and on-flying.  
I am my repertoire of perceptions  
And formulations, reapplied in  
So many different ways.

But across the infinite,  
I just am...  
No motion (no reference)  
No need (no concept);  
Just being there.

OH! How can I visit them all?  
"Beyond my wildest imagination"  
Is so true.

Damn those didecadent years!  
They have left me so rudimentary.  
That I might have tread  
So pitifully, but  
Uncontaminated at first;  
I would not be held back now.

VII

So, Clemintis, hear me now.  
I am reformed (an idea).  
You are so right,  
That I would change,  
But so wrong.  
You are in a Box of Jesus—  
He, too, restricts.

I see a pinhole where  
I was (I am!).  
I am heading for the  
Light that is perception,  
That is all;  
That is crap!  
But by so romantic a metaphor  
I limit my go to your perception.  
I will find me.  
Then twitch not...  
I will get me back, and  
Go into into me.  
There will I be blinded by me,  
And perhaps be forever abandoned  
And lost within me, as those without  
Will believe.  
I will have found the light  
That blindeth within me,  
For didn't I say God was inside?

... And perhaps I will wander  
Pseudo blind, and stumble,  
That I may acquaint me with my in-me.  
Nonetheless,  
I will find where we really are.

VIII

As I brake, back down to zero bells  
And go to reverse, I will ponder.  
But in my running box must I still  
Be held by limits.  
The imposed bureaucracy of time.

Time to go.

IX

Watch out world!  
Perceive that impression of light of me,  
But make not light!  
I am going back to me.

Me is to be relocated in the  
Bounded unbounded cranium;  
(Is it there?)  
Pull hard!  
Limits of physical strain!  
All back full to find me  
Amid the ocean of me;  
Being, place;  
All a potpourri!

Come with me!  
Let us all find us  
Within us, for  
Ignorance, I see,  
Is not bliss, but  
Infinite struggle.

JLS, you said  
It so beautifully...  
"Keep working on Love."—  
Is that the ultimate fuel,  
The propelling force?—  
Or only the media of transmittance  
Back to me?

LIFE... you concept, you...  
You are fantastic.  
I love you...  
I am going to keep working on you...

Runners set...

GO!

*April 1974*

**POSTAGE DUE 2¢**

Time, like the world,  
Is truly very short and small...  
Voyageurs are all too aware.  
One "end" of the world,  
And back again,  
And spanning—  
Thousands of nauticals over,  
I am returned.  
Amid this sea, so large,  
I am relocated;  
Come again to a volcanic jut  
Where crunch the blue-fire sands,  
And shooshing breakers.  
I, like a pigeon homing,  
From the "lower" bowels of the glove,  
Am returning.  
No trail sown,  
A threadlike bond  
Called family  
Guides me home... to Coletto.

*July 12, 1974*

## TO CAROL

An awakening, of sorts,  
Has overtaken me;  
I am aware, just now,  
Not like before;  
Such times are rare.  
Understanding, now,  
Overtakes me.  
I, engulfed in time,  
In distance, and most,  
In thought, am  
At that point  
Where all enfurled,  
Flows out...  
Please bear with me  
As I free myself  
Of unsung sights.

An acquaintance spoke  
Of how this world  
Was but of three parts.  
Here on the seas,  
There is only starboard,  
Port, and us.  
The world, as it knows us,  
Lies in two halves;  
One to our left, and  
One to our right.  
But, truly, the only world  
We know is the ship itself  
In which we are enfurled.  
I'm thoughtfully provoked,  
Watching the world cleft, and  
Run by as wake.  
Bioluminescent sea, like  
Green, spilling, fiery  
Blood from a sliced ocean  
Pours out from us.  
Churned, chopped,  
Burning, and frothed,  
It boils behind our passage;  
Lies unhealed,  
Till out of sight—still, and  
Unchoppy like its distant  
Halves.  
God flung stars dust



The sky, shadowed as  
Clouds whisper their Nature,  
Talk between us.  
Feathery, downy, translucent;  
All clichés.

I have restricted beauty  
When I define it.  
Something will always be missed.  
And do you know why?  
Because it is all the same...  
It is all so magnificent.  
One need not leave  
To go someplace beautiful;  
Only to see different manifestations  
Of beauty—emotion embodied  
Into a physical state.  
Appalachia is where I found  
The emotion,  
But the Rockies have it too,  
And the mountain of Samoa,  
Or the Makai Range of Hawaii,  
Or the mountains of Australia,  
Or Fiji—  
All land—  
It's a small world  
I've decided,  
Because it's only of a single clay—  
All molded from an Emotion—  
And the differences in different places  
Which we think we perceive,  
Is just Emotion spoken to us  
In different languages...

So Carol,  
Now it has all sunk into me—  
I have felt no great number  
Of tinglings in my spine  
This cruise, of seeing and  
Being so far from home,  
Because it has been shown  
To me that the Earth,  
Though varied it may be,  
Is all one in beauty—  
In love—  
In being.  
My travel, after all,

Was in circles,  
N'est ce pas?  
Around the round globe.  
And I have seen different  
Forms and languages of the  
Love I'm feeling for life,  
And this Earth, and its sea.  
I'm seeing that travel is  
All well and good, and offers variety,  
But you'll find the same outside  
Your own back door...  
Go look—  
The "Yellow Rose of Texas"  
By Melrose Street?  
It is your own yellow Samoan orchid.  
The pine tree by the back fence—  
Like the Hawaiian evergreen.  
The dandelion-peppered grass—  
Like the Australian turf.  
To us, the South Sea counterparts  
Are beauty, and ours, commonplace.  
Familiarization, it seems, can  
Artificially  
Dampen beauty, emotion, love.  
Finding something different,  
Something novel,  
Makes it beautiful and endearing.  
I have just been shown, I see now,  
That familiarization doesn't  
Kill the novelty of one's surroundings.  
It only closes you, (me), up  
To the ever present beauty that surrounds,  
Eager for us to open up to it.  
It, as I said, is emotion—love.  
What did the elder gull say?  
"Keeping working on love, Jonathan..."

Awakened, I try to understand,  
But it's impossible.  
Only can one enjoy and rejoice at it.  
The sea, Carol, is like love.  
It, and tears, are  
Liquid emotion.  
It is violent, and passionate;  
But unbounded, in body,  
As in definition.  
I want it to seep into me,

To flood into me,  
But I still stand apart,  
Thwarted, as if corked  
Into my world.

That is why I'm writing.  
An attempt to send out  
A missive, an explanation—  
A word—  
Something to embody  
What I feel and get it  
Free, to the other side  
Of the cork.  
Perhaps the Feeling won't  
Be caught by the Cork  
In the mail.  
And writing to you, Carol,  
I am also writing to myself.  
I am giving myself an idea,  
And simultaneously a limitation.  
Perhaps you think I'm  
Rambling...  
Or that I'm over emotional  
Or silly about it all.  
Granted, I've just seen  
A movie—a celluloid  
Emotion that "inspired" me.  
But it just unlocked me,  
To help me remember  
And understand.

I am understanding now,  
That I have seen the  
World's bottom.  
I have crossed the midriff  
And returned,  
And all that is gone is time.  
And it seems as nothing,  
For how does one consider  
That which can't be grasped.  
So many places and oceans—  
Seen—  
And in a way they are  
All alike.  
That is,  
They are all real,

And not just map spots,  
And they are all  
Attainable;  
They exist, and in great beauty.  
Here they are  
Not dissimilar.  
I have seen the  
Islands, the continents,  
The paradises, the seas.  
And they are all beautiful.  
(Beautiful says so much  
That it says nothing.)  
Recall your best feeling ever?  
That is what they are.  
And I can see clearly now  
That all of earth is  
The very same.  
I have heard that  
"People must invent  
Differences because  
Everything is so similar".  
It is enrapturing, Carol,  
And I am told, too,  
That this is a small world...  
So... it is beautiful...  
Or, it just is.  
Like visual feelings,  
That I understand as  
They enter me  
Through sight—  
And smell and taste and hearing.  
And these are limiting again.

But an awakening, of sorts,  
Has overtaken me,  
And somehow I feel, and  
I understand, but  
To think or write on it all  
Makes it vanish like the wave.

The wave...  
Split off from itself at the bow,  
It travels abeam, and by a  
Falling hull shooshes outward  
Tumbling over itself and burning,  
Green.  
Whispering and screaming

Of quiet water,  
It abruptly disappears.  
It is dissolved in itself.  
And something so vivacious  
Has suddenly swallowed itself up,  
And like the feeling, is gone.  
That must be the key.  
Perhaps I've just seen  
That the existence and  
Embodying of love into  
Physical states  
Is what beauty is.  
The fact that it is there,  
Perpetually.  
I will never see  
The sea, which travels  
Forever on past the eye,  
As drab.  
It is another  
Embodiment of love,  
And in that is forever fantastic!  
The sea is like the  
Forests of West Virginia,  
The plains of Texas,  
The sky, the hills, the people!  
They are all the same,  
And wonderful...  
Just different manifestations...

And perhaps energy?  
I have worn myself thin—  
Too many words?  
Trying to express where only  
Feelings can explain?  
Pardon me, Carol, if  
This  
Has sounded like an admonishment  
Of those who read it.  
I am speaking to me through  
You...  
I am telling me something too,  
And admonishing myself only.  
But also trying to share, somehow,  
The elation which I feel so  
Forcefully...  
I am longwinded,

(You know!)  
But I felt to pour it out,  
I could see it...  
Am I too analytical?  
Nevertheless, it is a missive—  
A communiqué to us both  
Through that intangible  
Stopper-cork boundary.  
Was it successfully delivered?  
I hope so—  
For the most important message  
Of it all,  
Is that  
You are my sea.

*July 14, 1974*  
*Bastille Day*

**1977**

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**TO ALL HIGH EMPRISE CONSECRATED...**

Exhaustion.  
Cruel, cold, eyelid shuddering  
Tiredness,  
Crawling relentlessly throughout  
My body.  
Precipitously balanced  
Upon the edge of hinter-conscience;  
A losing battle  
To maintain coherence.  
The warrior fights cannons  
Booming his eyelids shut;  
A falling cranium crashes  
Softly to the desk.  
Read no more Psyc tonight;  
Rest.

*September 1977*



## PHEIDIPPIDES

Fleet of foot,  
He races  
Drinking in the air.  
He glows, he burns,  
He paces;  
Those miles are trod  
On long, hot days, with  
Burning road and sky—  
Fountains of body juice  
Flow out;  
The salt skin cries.  
On mournful, humid  
Mornings, that dread the  
Coming noon, he flees,  
From bedtime drowse,  
And sandy eyes;  
The distance trod in threes.  
On sighing nights,  
Into the glare  
Of fuming motor-cars;  
Cursing all the yawning roots,  
And praising God, for darks, and prayers;  
For quickness in the gloom;  
Tumultuous efforts satiate  
The escape from sessile rooms.  
On morns and nights,  
And burning noons,  
On roads, and wilder trails;  
In watery skies and toasted air;  
Iced paths, with freezing, wetted hair.  
Praising all that is above  
For taxing body stores.  
I give my Lord this temples all,  
Exalting it and pushing more.  
Thankful for the Runners life,  
Its joys and peace,  
Its one-with-Him,  
Matching strides with spirits beat;  
Forever in the Race,  
And drinking in the pain;  
Thanks, to Him, for fleet of feet.

*September 1977*

## PAIN IS SWEET

Pain is sweet.  
Aftertaste upon my tongue  
Invoking thoughts of  
Hurts once young,  
And now grown old.

Pain to cleanse;  
Sweating flesh, my legs dull groan;  
Purify my soul  
And sharpen, as a razor hone.  
Pricking to peak.

Pain of heart.  
Wrenching soul for others love;  
To hold and share...  
Yet, flighty doves,  
That never rest.

Pain will choke;  
Cruel "no"; suffer much longed "yes".  
Torment, this road;  
Lord lead me, show me best,  
The road less traveled by.

Pain so sour;  
Sweet, now old, partook by mouth;  
Bad taste, decaying,  
Leave me withered, rot of drought.  
Parched soul.

Sweet is pain.  
Perfume of body; God's toll.  
Gives growth and makes anew;  
Ambrosia of the soul.  
I am fresh of it.

Taste the sweet pain.

*October 1977*

## SUNSET

Dark grey fluffy rocks  
Are giants that hang in the sky.  
Suspended by the cottony threads  
And wafting airs of  
Clean fall clouds slipping by.

Sol is a centipede  
Digging from beneath those rocks;  
His legs as rays are peeking out,  
And then a little of his head,  
But most of his mighty mass seems caught.

Lithe bugs hover and speed about,  
Taunting the marshmallow mounts;  
Slipping from the centipedes stare through rocks,  
And dripping insect dew across the lot,  
They taunt the big bugs pounce.

With a salubrious heave, Sol shrugs the rock,  
And pours out all his self.  
Those flitting bugs glint gold and white,  
The rocks dull grey grows warm,  
And darkness quickly melts.

But no...

The lazy grey is laying down again,  
And stifling poor centipede.  
His legs pulled in, he suffocates,  
Drowned and squashed beneath the pall;  
Out a tiny baseline crack  
His gold-orange blood is freed.

*November 1977*

## SHELLBACK DAWN

Sailing down to the Southern Straits  
Where ships have ne'er gone.  
We valiantly strode cross the line  
A few hours 'fore the dawn.

A Pollywog full crew were we,  
New seasoned with the salt;  
These sailor boys would soon be men;  
As whips would crack, we cross the fault.

Awash amid the doldrums, lone,  
The San Berdoo new south;  
And sweating down in grimy decks  
Slept Pollywogs as in a drought.

Tossed and turned, they fretted  
Now the coming of the day,  
When cross't the line the Shellbacks wake  
To gather Pollywogs for play.

No dawn yet awoken, but we for sure,  
Aroused about the deck;  
All backward in our clothing,  
And ropes about our necks.

Led to musty, stinking holds  
That reeked of diesel oils,  
Those Shellbacks fed us ketchup toast,  
Green eggs and sour kitchen spoils.

Above, on oaken, rough hewn decks  
They waited, greedy faced,  
While shivering in our timbers, cool,  
We dreaded dawn; hearts, untested, raced.

Then rose the call; The Shellbacks moaned  
Ecstatically for blood;  
All, prodding lazy albatross,  
They pulled us up like mud.

BLASTED! As the hatchways top,  
We're hit with gushing sea;  
Pounded, seared, by heavy salt  
They hosed poor Pollywogs, as we.

Then crushed to knees by cruel kicks,  
They gashed our open skin.  
Drawing blood on roughened decks,  
We strove to bleed as men.

A gauntlet formed. The beating came,  
With sectioned wetted strap.  
Merciless, the Shellback strafed poor  
Pollywog; no pity in their slap.

Hundred feet of wailing hose, and broken backs  
We belly, penitent;  
Neptune and his sexless wife  
Will see us now; our bloods are rent.

Serviced, judged, and sentenced each,  
His Majesty brushes off  
Each Pollywog, poor Pollywog,  
To trails and tests; at horrors, scoff.

Against the fatted belly  
And the packing grease slimed crotch,  
We kiss and grovel for His grace;  
He anoints our every notch.

Jagged, oiled and salty wounds,  
They gather up our lot,  
And bleeding out the fatted calf,  
Immerse us in a bloody pot.

Floating in the milieu,  
Drowning 'neath the froth,  
The foaming ox's blood above me,  
I wallow, frail and crushed moth.

They drag me from this hell-hole,  
And thrust us into hair,  
That floats on toilet contents,  
Then explodes into our faces, fair.

This test, we pray, is finished;  
"Allow us, please, to go!"  
But no, so close to shellback honor,  
Through wretched garbage must we flow.

The canvas tube of slop-stuff,  
So rancid, sour-foul,  
Brings vomit to the forefront;  
Immersed inside, we howl.

"Oh free us, mighty Shellbacks!"  
We cry as I push through  
This plug of vomit, rotting sludge;  
A putrid, oozing stew.

The Southern dawn is shining now,  
Through the porthold of this coffin.  
A free man, Shellback, I emerge;  
Burst from old placenta, rotten.

I, the grown up Pollywog,  
Am sliced, and bruised, and bleeding;  
I reek of garbage, blood and grease,  
But Shellback, I, not beaten.

I am cleansed of Pollywog,  
Free of the Northbound taint.  
Now crosst the line, discard those clothes  
Whose reek will make the fishes faint.

Those backward garments, left adrift,  
Are staining virgin wake,  
But they take away all Pollywog,  
And my taste for South, now slaked.

Doused with baptismal gush,  
And clean of all catarrh,  
I am ventured equatorial;  
Set sail for lands yet far.

Naked with my fellows,  
Aboard the San Berdoo;  
Now high and mighty Shellbacks  
That crossed, and lived it through.

Oh, I am good Neptunes Shellback,  
And a salty sailor, drawn...  
Whose wisened eyes know Southern skies,  
And seas, and  
Shellback dawn.

*November 1977*

## WACO

I grieve.  
I try so hard  
To do  
That which I know  
I shouldn't;  
And I try not  
To do,  
That which I know  
I should.

I live inside a  
Paradox,  
I follow flighty  
Wiles;  
Oh, to follow reason and  
Not lust;  
If I thought, I doubt,  
I would.

*November 7, 1977*

### ARROW HOUND UPON YOUR LAWN

Where is my target?

I have loosed an end,  
And the shafts are fallen.  
Starkly straight upon the lawn,  
They lay;  
Pointing off in one direction,  
They fell short of mark, or went  
Astray.

I sent an extra arrow flying,  
And waited for its falling thrust;  
The wand sailed, truly, for the mark  
So distant,  
But faltered, short; pierced only  
Dust.

*November 1977*



## I CAN WAIT FOREVER

Winds are blowing,  
    Flowing,  
        Growing;  
Feathering about me  
From the sprouting wisps.  
Rocking gently,  
Bowling saintly,  
I relax encapsuled  
From their wetting hiss.  
Longing, pensive,  
Inking missives,  
Until I feel the truth,  
Or know her calling kiss.

*December 1977*

### ASK THE FLOWER PETALS

Parry, parry,  
Ponder;  
Carry all the burden  
Of this love.  
Think of where I stand today;  
In her heart,  
Her thoughts,  
Or in her way?

Parry, parry,  
In no hurry,  
She won't say.

*December 1977*