

IT ONLY TAKES A SPARK

Austin Walker Boyd, Jr.

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**DEDICATED
TO
CAROL LYNN RANSON**

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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HASSLE

1974

IT'S A GOOD LIFE AT THE INSTITUTE

RICE

WHAT THREE BOOKS WOULD YOU TAKE?

POSTAGE DUE 2¢

TO CAROL

1977

TO ALL HIGH EMPRISE CONSECRATED

PHEIDIPPIDES

PAIN IS SWEET

SUNSET

SHELLBACK DAWN

WACO

ARROWHOUND UPON YOUR LAWN

I CAN WAIT FOREVER

ASK THE FLOWER PETALS

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

HERBIE THE GNAT

Most of your friends
Have dogs or cats,
Or birds or bats,
Or fish or rats;
But my pet is . . .
 . . . a GNAT!

My Herbie,
The gnat,
(Quite a gnat
At that!),
Sits and sleeps
Wherever I've sat.
Herbie's eyes
Are a deep
Shade of grue
Like those of
A gnu,
And he's proud
Of it too!

We walk
In the park
Every morning
At eight,
After cleaning
Our plates
And jumping the gate,
Eating Joe's dates,
And playing
With grates.

At noon
We have lunch,
After finishing brunch,
When we had

Crackers
To munch,
And a ban-ana
Bunch.
Just after
Our lunch
We visit Joe's shmoe

That walks
Very slow
And eats
Only snow.
(On which Joe is low!),
And has
Fourteen green toes.

One day
Herbie and I
Plan to visit
The zoo,
With birds
Colored green, yellow,
Red, orange,
And blue.
However,
My Herbie,
With eyes
Colored grue,
Knows no
Other gnats
In the zoo . . .
 . . . do you?

September 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
Teshatee 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'd 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'id!
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

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

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

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 my²
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 Austrailia,
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

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,
Bowing 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