

# Allen Ginsberg

## Poetics Practicum

June 3, 1992  
Revised  
March 29, 1995

### Table of Contents

- 1 Kerouac, "Belief & Technique for Modern Prose"
- 2 Kerouac, "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose"
- 3 Ginsberg, "Some Different Considerations in Mindful  
Arrangement of Open Verse Forms on the Page"
- 4 Ginsberg, "Fourteen Steps for Revising Poetry"
- 5 "A Synopsis of Metrical Systems"
- 6 "Versification in English Poetry"
- 10 Suggestions for readings in Ezra Pound's Literary  
Essays
- 11 Selections from Ezra Pound's Literary Essays
- 15 Suggestions for readings in W.C. Williams' Selected  
Essays
- 16 Suggestions for readings in W.C. Williams' poems
- 19 Suggestions for readings in Charles Reznikoff's poems
- 20 Trungpa & Ginsberg, "Meditation & Poetics"
- 23 Blake, Outline of System in *Jerusalem* (S. Foster  
Damon)
- 24 Blake: Auguries of Innocence
- 26 Shelly: Ode to West Wind
- 27 Hart Crane: Atlantis, from The Bridge
- 28 Great Prajna Paramita Sutra -- Sunryu Suzuki, Roshi
- 29 "Survey of Historical Poetics"
- 33 A Scheme of Lyric. Theme: Rhythm & Cadence
- 37 Tom o'Bedlam's Song
- 38 Lady Greensleeves
- 39 What Is Beauty But A Breath
- 40 Suggested Reading List: Moderns

### Addenda 1993:

- 42 Ginsberg, "Cosmopolitan Greetings"
- 44 Ginsberg, "Mind Writing Slogans"
- 48 Ginsberg, "Meditation & Poetics"
- 53 Ginsberg, "Mind Writing: Exercises in Poetic Candor"

"First thoughts are best in Art, second thoughts in other matters."

-- William Blake

\*\*\*\*\*BELIEF & TECHNIQUE FOR MODERN PROSE\*\*\*\*\*

List of Essentials

1. Scribbled secret notebooks, and wild typewritten pages, for yr own joy
2. Submissive to everything, open, listening
3. Try never get drunk outside yr own house
4. Be in love with yr life
5. Something that you feel will find its own form
6. Be crazy dumbsaint of the mind
7. Blow as deep as you want to blow
8. Write what you want bottomless from bottom of the mind
9. The unspeakable visions of the individual
10. No time for poetry but exactly what is
11. Visionary tics shivering in the chest
12. In-tranced fixation dreaming upon object before you
13. Remove literary, grammatical and syntactical inhibition
14. Like Proust be an old teahed of time
15. Telling the true story of the world in interior monolog
16. The jewel center of interest is the eye within the eye
17. Write in recollection and amazement for yourself
18. Work from pithy middle eye out, swimming in language sea
19. Accept loss forever
20. Believe in the holy contour of life
21. Struggle to sketch the flow that already exists intact in mind
22. Dont think of words when you stop but to see picture better
23. Keep track of every day the date emblazoned in yr morning
24. No fear or shame in the dignity of yr experience, language & knowledge
25. Write for the world to read and see yr exact pictures of it
26. Bookmovie is the movie in words, the visual American form
27. In Praise of Character in the Bleak inhuman Loneliness
28. Composing wild, undisciplined, pure, coming in from under, crazier the better
29. You're a Genius all the time
30. Writer-Director of Earthly movies Sponsored & Angeled in Heaven

As ever,

Jack

JACK KEROUAC

ESSENTIALS OF SPONTANEOUS PROSE

**SET-UP** The object is set before the mind, either in reality, as in sketching (before a landscape or teacup or old face) or is set in the memory wherein it becomes the sketching from memory of a definite image-object.

**PROCEDURE** Time being of the essence in the purity of speech, sketching language is undisturbed flow from the mind of personal secret idea-words, *blowing* (as per jazz musician) on subject of image.

**METHOD** No periods separating sentence-structures already arbitrarily riddled by false colons and timid usually needless commas—but the vigorous space dash separating rhetorical breathing (as jazz musician drawing breath between outblown phrases)—“measured pauses which are the essentials of our speech”—“divisions of the *sounds* we hear”—“time and how to note it down.” (William Carlos Williams)

**SCOPING** Not “selectivity” of expression but following free deviation (association) of mind into limitless blow-on-subject seas of thought, swimming in sea of English with no discipline other than rhythms of rhetorical exhalation and expostulated statement, like a fist coming down on a table with each complete utterance, bang! (the space dash)—Blow as deep as you want—write as deeply, fish as far down as you want, satisfy yourself first, then reader cannot fail to receive telepathic shock and meaning-excitement by same laws operating in his own human mind.

**LAG IN PROCEDURE** No pause to think of proper word but the infantile pileup of scatological buildup words till satisfaction is gained, which will turn out to be a great appending rhythm to a thought and be in accordance with Great Law of timing.

**TIMING** Nothing is muddy that *runs in time* and to laws of time—Shakespearian stress of dramatic need to speak now in own unalterable way or forever hold tongue—*no revisions* (except obvious rational mistakes, such as names or *calculated* insertions in act of not writing but *inserting*).

**CENTER OF INTEREST** Begin not from preconceived idea of what to say about image but from jewel center of interest in subject of image at *moment* of writing, and write outwards swimming in sea of language to peripheral release and exhaustion—Do not afterthink except for poetic or P. S. reasons. Never afterthink to “improve” or defray impressions, as, the best writing is always the most painful personal wrung-out tossed from cradle warm protective mind—tap from yourself the song of yourself, *blow!*—*now!*—*your way* is your only way—“good”—or “bad”—always honest, (“ludicrous”), spontaneous, “confessional” interesting, because not “crafted.” Craft is craft.

**STRUCTURE OF WORK** Modern bizarre structures (science fiction, etc.) arise from language being dead, “different” themes give illusion of “new” life. Follow roughly outlines in outflanning movement over subject, as river rock, so mindflow over jewel-center need (run your mind over it, *once*) arriving at pivot, where what was dim-formed “beginning” becomes sharp-necessitating “ending” and language shortens in race to wire of time-race of work, following laws of Deep Form, to conclusion, last words, last trickle—Night is The End.

**MENTAL STATE** If possible write “without consciousness” in semi-trance (as Yeats’ later “trance writing”) allowing subconscious to admit in own uninhibited interesting necessary and so “modern” language what conscious art would censor, and write excitedly, swiftly, with writing-or-typing-cramps, in accordance (as from center to periphery) with laws of orgasm, Reich’s “beclouding of consciousness.” Come from within, out—to relaxed and said.

SOME DIFFERENT CONSIDERATIONS  
IN MINDFUL ARRANGEMENT OF  
OPEN VERSE FORMS ON THE PAGE

1. Count of syllables (Marianne Moore, Kenneth Rexroth)  
(Creeley's mono syllabics)
2. Count of accents (Traditional iambic etc. foot)
3. Measurement of vowel length or quantity (Classical Greek  
& Latin, Swinburne experiments, Pound, Campion)
4. Recurrent variations of pitch, or "tone leading of vowels"
5. Breath stop (Creeley, Olson, Williams) (new breath, new  
line) (pause)
6. Units of mouth phrasing (pause within the same breath)  
(Ginsberg, Olson)
7. Divisions of mental ideas (Corso, Williams)
8. Typographical topography (aesthetic balances on page,  
symmetry, asymmetry)
9. Heartbeat (Duncan)
10. Conditions of original notation (line-length, verse length,  
bloc-shape) & writing materials (pocket notebook, booksize  
journal page, napkin, tape, typewriter, matchbook etc.)  
(Olson, Ginsberg, etc. Kerouac especially)
11. Chance (arbitrary choice, impulse, fatigue, accident, inter-  
ruption, sudden impatience or energy)

"Form" is what happens. All considerations are elements of a single "discipline" which is MINDFULNESS or conscious appreciation and awareness of the humours of line arrangements on the page, intelligence in relation to the mental conception of the poem and its vocalization.

Allen Ginsberg, Prepared for  
Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics  
Naropa Institute, 1975-1977  
April 2, 1977

Fourteen Steps For Revising Poetry

Ginsberg

1. Conception
2. Composition
3. Review it through several people's eyes
4. Review it with eye to idiomatic speech
5. Review it with eye to the condensation of syntax  
(blue pencil & transpose)
6. Check out all articles & prepositions: are they  
necessary and functional?
7. Review it for abstraction and substitute particular  
facts for reference (for example: "walking down the  
avenue " to "walking down 2nd Avenue")
8. Date the composition
9. Take a phrase from it and make up a title that's unique  
or curious or interesting sounding but realistic
10. Put quotations around speeches or referential slang "so  
to speak" phrases
11. Review it for weak spots you really don't like, but just  
left there for inertial reasons
12. Check for active versus inactive verbs (for example:  
"after the subway ride" instead of "after we rode the  
subway")
13. Chop it up in lines according to breath phrasing/ideas  
or units of thought within one breath, if any
14. Retype

April 1, 1982

A SYNOPSIS

of

METRICAL SYSTEMS.

table of feet. OF:

TWO SYLLABLES

Pyrrich.....	U	U	in the
Spondee.....	I	I	God Damn!
Iambus.....	U	I	Believe!
Trochee.....	I	U	Summer

THREE SYLLABLES

Tribrach or Chorius.....	U	U	U	into the
Molossus.....	I	I	I	Oh Good God
Dactyle.....	I	U	U	Desperate
Anapest.....	U	U	I	Understand
Bacchius.....	U	I	I	Is God Love? Believe me.
Antibacchius or Palimbacchius.....	U	I	I	big bagel
Amphibrachys.....	U	I	I	Tomato
Amphimacer or Cretic.....	I	U	I	loyal wife

FOUR SYLLABLES

Proceleusmaticus.....	U	U	U	U	underneath the[Falls]
Dispondeus.....	I	I	I	I	four square foot falls
Dilambus.....	U	I	I	I	eccentric joke
Ditrocheus.....	I	I	I	I	parasitic
Choriambus.....	U	I	I	U	Abacadabab sit in the stree
Antispastus.....	U	I	I	I	insistently
Ionic a majore.....	U	I	I	U	High hat into
Ionic a minore.....	U	I	I	I	in the twilight
1st Paeon.....	U	U	I	I	definitely
2d Paeon.....	U	U	I	U	delightfully
3d Paeon.....	U	U	I	I	in the evening
4th Paeon.....	U	U	I	U	into the bank
Epitritus primus.....	U	I	I	I	your sweet blue eyes
Epitritus secundus.....	I	I	I	I	'bite the big nut
Epitritus tertius.....	I	I	I	U	give her a dime
Epitritus quartus.....	I	I	I	U	I've got rhythm

FIVE SYLLABLES

Dochmius or "Slanted".....	U	I	U	I	I	I bit off his nose
Anaclastic or Hypodochmius.....	I	U	I	U	U	open the boxes
.....	U	U	I	U	I	under Aspen trees
.....	I	I	U	I	U	"Lo, Lord, Thou ridest!"

If a verse is complete, it is called ACATALECTIC; if a syllable is wanting, CATALECTIC; if a foot, BRACHYCATALECTIC; if a foot or a syllable is redundant, HYPERCATALECTIC.

A METRE generally signifies a combination of TWO feet; except in dactylic verse, and in the metres composed of double feet.

Where a verse of a given species consists of two feet and a half, it is called a PENTHEMIMER, as consisting of five half feet; of three and a half, a HEPHthemimer, as consisting of seven half feet.

VERSIFICATION IN ENGLISH POETRY

The following are less common forms:

The spondee (spondaic foot), which consists of two equally stressed syllables, seen usually in compound words or when important monosyllables come together, as blood-red, heart-break, childhood.

My fā thēr poor | lī lēd? | World, world, | O world!
-Shakespeare, King Lear

The pyrrhic (pyrrhic-foot), which consists of two unaccented syllables.

This su | per nat | u ral | so li | ci | ting
Can not | be ill | can not | be good:
-Shakespeare, Macbeth

The amphibrach (amphibrachic foot), which consists of three syllables, an unaccented, an accented, and another unaccented, as severely, memento.

I sprang to | the stirrup | and for is | and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped | all three.
-Browning, How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix

The amphibrach line, however, may easily be divided into anapestic feet by a slight rearrangement of the stressed and unstressed syllables as follows:

I sprang | to the stirrup | and for is | and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped | all three.

In order to emphasize the effect of different arrangements of stressed and unstressed syllables, the iambic and the anapestic feet are sometimes classified as rising meters because the accented syllable follows one or two unaccented syllables, as return, effervesce. Similarly, the trochaic and the dactylic feet are classified as falling meters because the accented syllable comes first, as laughter, syllable.

A little observation will show that each kind of foot has its own characteristics; hence, in every poem the foot chosen should bear close relationship to the purpose of the poem—its thought, its mood, its movement. The trochee has a tripping or sprightly quality; the iambus is more dignified and moves with drum beats as if on a march; the anapest gallops along with speed and freedom; the dactyl saunters slowly with liquid rhythm but with great strength and persistence. In the following jingle Coleridge aptly illustrates these qualities; he employs the Classical terminology:

Trochee trips from long to short.
From long to long in solemn sort
Slow Spondee stalks; strong foot yet ill able
Ever to come up with Dactyl trisyllabic.
Iambics march from short to long;—
With a leap and a bound the swift Anapests throng.
One syllable long, with one short at each side.
Amphibrachys haste with a stately stride.
—Metrical Feet: Lesson for a Boy

Quite naturally the length of a line of poetry has bearing upon the rhythmical effect. A short line suggests rapidity; a long line, slowness. Between the two are numerous gradations. A line of verse is named according to the number and the kind of feet it contains. The process of determining those factors is called scansion; it involves the division of the line into syllables—stressed and unstressed—and the grouping of those syllables into feet. A line of poetry containing one foot is called monometer; two feet, dimeter; three feet, trimeter; four feet, tetrameter; five feet, pentameter; six feet, hexameter; seven feet, heptameter; eight feet, octometer. The iambic foot is the most common in English poetry; it is found chiefly in tetrameter and pentameter lines.

In scanning poetry, one must pay attention to the meaning as well as to the rhythm, and one must be careful not to mispronounce words or to distort the emphasis of the sentence.

VERSIFICATION IN ENGLISH POETRY.

Some words allow more than one pronunciation, and words like *heaven* and *even* may be pronounced in one syllable or in two syllables, as the meter demands. Final non-syllabic *ed* is sometimes pronounced as a separate syllable, and syllabic vowels coming together are very frequently telescoped into one syllable. Note the scansion of the following lines:

Monometer iambic—

Thú's I /  
Páss by /  
Ánd die /  
Ás one /  
Ún known /  
Ánd gone.

—Herrick, *Upon His Departure Hence*

Dimeter iambic and anapestic—

The wínd's / on the wóld /  
Ánd the níght / is a còld,  
Ánd Thámes / runs chíl /  
Twíxt meá / and híl /  
Bútt kínd / and deár /  
Ís the óld / hóuse hére,  
Ánd my héá / rd is wá /  
Midst wí / ter's há /

—Morris, *For the Bed at Kelmscott*

Dimeter dactylic—

Tóuch hée / nó / sco / rn fú / ll / y /  
Thí / nk of hée / mó / urn fú / ll / y /  
Gé / nt l / y and / hú / má / n l / y /  
Nó / t of the / stá / ins of hée /  
Áll thá / t r / emá / ins of hée /  
Nó / w is / pú / re / w / o / má / n l / y /

—Hood, *The Bridge of Sighs*

Trimeter iambic—

Óh, lét / the / só / lid / ground /  
Nó / t / fú / ll / b / e / neá / th / my / fé /  
B / e / fó / re / my / lí / fe / há / s / f /  
Whá / t / só / me / há / ve / f /  
—Tennyson, *Maud*

Tetrameter anapestic—

The Á / sy / rí / an / cá / me / d /  
Ánd h / is / c /  
Ánd the / she /  
Whén the / bl /  
—Byron, *The Destruction of Sennacherib*

Pentameter iambic—

It g /  
T /  
Í /  
Má /  
—Shakespeare, *Othello*

Pentameter anapestic—

I /  
I /  
Ánd /  
H /  
—Browning, *Saul*

Trimeter trochaic—

Cá /  
Ín /  
Whá /  
Lét /  
Thése /  
B /  
Y /  
S /  
—Mrs. Browning, *A Drama of Exile*

Trimeter anapestic, with iambic variation—

Ó /  
Thá /  
Ó /  
Thá /  
—Tennyson, *Break, Break, Break*

Tetrameter iambic—

I /  
Thá /  
Whén /  
Á /  
—Wordsworth, *The Daffodils*

Tetrameter trochaic—

W /  
Ó /  
Thó /  
Ó /  
—Hunt, *Song of Fairies Robbing Orchard*



VERSIFICATION IN ENGLISH POETRY

Hexameter iambic—(see Alexandrine, below)—

Yet morn'ing prom'ised much; for pitched and slung and reared  
On ter'race 'neath the tower, 'twixt tree and tree ap'peared  
An air y' struc'ture; how! the pen'non from its do'ne,  
Frè net'ic to b'è free, makes one red stretch for h'ome.

—Browning, *Fine at the Fair*

Hexameter anapestic, with iambic variation—

In the night where thine eyes are as moons are in heav'en, the night where thou art,  
Where the silence is more than all tunes, where sleep's ver' flows from the heart,  
Where the pop'pies are sweet as the rose in our world, and the red rose is white,  
And the wind falls faint as it blows with the fumes of the flowers of the night.

—Swinburne, *Hymn to Proserpine*

Hexameter dactylic—

Maid en most beau ti ful, moth er most bou ti ful, la dy of lands,  
Queen and re'pub li can, crowned of the cen'turies whose years are thy sands,  
See for thy sake what we bring to thee, it a ly, here in our hands.

—Swinburne, *The Song of the Standard*

Heptameter iambic, with anapestic variation—

There's not a joy the world can give like that it takes a way,  
When the glow of ear'ly thought de'clines in feel'ing's dull de'cay;  
'Tis not on youth's smooth cheek the blush a lone which fades so fast,  
But the ten' der bloom of heart is gone, ere youth it self be past.

—Byron, *Stanzas for Music*

Heptameter anapestic, with iambic variation—

She is fair'er than earth, and the sun is not fair'er, the wind is not blith'er than she;  
From my youth hath she shown me the joy of her bays that I crossed, of her cliffs that I clomb,  
Till now that the twain of us here, in de'sire of the dawn and in trust of the sea,  
Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids and be seech'ers, a thirst for the foam.

—Swinburne, *In the Water*

Octometer trochaic—

Cóm rades leave me here a lit tle while as yet us ear ly morn;  
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound up on the bú gle horn.

—Tennyson, *Locksley Hall*

Telescoping or elision of syllables—

A waits a like the in ev'ry ta'ble hour;  
The paths of glo'ry lead but to the grave.

—Gray, *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*

On diff'rent sen'ses diff'rent ob'jects strike.

—Pope, *Essay on Man*

Her 'háv'ior hád the morn'ing's fresh clear gráce.

—Arnold, *Tristram and Iseult*

Non-syllabic ed pronounced—

Lift ed his curv'ed lids, and kept them wide.

—Keats, *Hyperion*

The Alexandrine

The Alexandrine is a line composed of six iambic feet; it is so called because it was used in Old French poems on Alexander the Great. Although widely used in France, it has never become popular in England. It was used in the *Chronicle* of Robert of Gloucester (c. 1300), along with a seven-accent line; occasionally in the miracle and the morality plays; and in

Drayton's *Polyolbion* (c. 1613). When the Alexandrine was alternated with the seven-accent line, the combination was called "poulter's measure," because in the words of George Gascoigne (1575) the poulterer "giveth twelve for one dozen, and thirteen for another." Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, thus illustrates poulter's measure:

Layd in | my quiet bed, | in study as | I were,  
I saw | with in | my troubléd head | a heape | of thoughtes | ap pear.

Pope characterized the Alexandrine as "languishingly slow"—

A needless Alexandrine ends the song  
That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.

Used at the end of shorter-line stanzas, however, the Alexandrine adds the effect of dignity and serves to join the stanzas in harmonious progression. See the Spenserian Stanza (p. 988), and *The Faerie Queene* (Vol. I, p. 394).

### Variations in Feet

As can be seen in some of the foregoing examples, it is not necessary that all feet in a line of verse be of the same kind. Indeed, if they were, the result in a poem of any length would be not only an obvious monotony but also a degree of unnaturalness in phrasing. Thus variety in metrical rhythms is both essential and pleasing.

The simplest variation in metrical feet is found in the free interchange between an iambus and an anapest, or between a trochee and a dactyl, as seen in the first four examples below. These changes involve merely the addition or the elimination of unaccented syllables, and do not affect accented syllables. Variations involving accented syllables, such as an interchange between iambus and trochee, or between anapest and dactyl, are rare, except at the beginning of the line or after a distinct natural pause in the line known as the caesura. A spondee or a pyrrhic may be substituted for the prevailing metrical foot of any kind.

Sometimes a line contains more or fewer syllables than the prevailing number. The variation concerns only unaccented syllables, but it may appear at the beginning or at the end of the line. The addition of one or two syllables at the beginning of a line is known as *anacrusis*; the addition of extra syllables at the end of the line makes a *weak* or *feminine* ending. The omission of syllables at the beginning of a line is called *truncation*; at the end of a line, *catalexis*. A line terminating in an imperfect foot is thus called *catalectic*. If the line ends with a complete metrical foot, it is *acatalectic*. In the scansion of a line of verse a caret ( $\wedge$ ) may be used to indicate the omission of a syllable.

#### Iambus for anapest—

And the state | ly ships | go on  
To their há | ven ún | der the bill;  
But O | for the touch | of the van | ished hand,  
And the sound | of a voice | that is still  
—Tennyson, *Break, Break, Break*

#### Anapest for iambus—

It raised | my hair, | it fanned | my cheek  
Like a mead | ow gale | of spring—  
It min | gled strange | ly with | my fears,  
Yet it felt | like a wel | com ing.  
—Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

#### Trochee for dactyl—

What will you | say when the | world is | dy ing?  
What, when the | last wild | mid night | falls  
Dark, too | dark for the | bat to | fly ing  
Round the | ruins of | old St. | Paul's?  
—Noyes, *Seven Wise Men*

#### Dactyl for trochee—

For a | charm of | pow er | full | trou ble  
Like a | hell broth | boil and | bub ble  
—Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

Selections From Ezra Pound's Literary Essays (New Directions, N.Y., 1968)

Read around these sentences or paragraphs, but note specifically:

Pages 1-40 - Gists as Below:

Page 3 - Points 1,2,3

Page 4 - "Criticism"...Paragraph 1, especially sentence 4 - "That little of which.

A Few Don'ts- Paragraphs 5,7,8

Page 5 - Paragraph 1 - complete

Paragraph 2 - First two sentences, "Go in fear..."

(Also paragraph 7 and paragraph 8 & 9)

Page 6 - Paragraph 2 - complete

Paragraph 3 - First sentence - "Don't be viewy.."

Paragraph 7 and Paragraph 9 first sentence, "Naturally, your rhythmic..."

Page 7 - Paragraph 3

Paragraph 7 - Symmetrical Form

Page 9 - CREDO - Paragraph 2 & 3

Page 11- Paragraph 2 - from the sentence beginning, "...Each age has..."  
to end of paragraph.

(Also note Paragraph 3 & 4)

Page 12- RE VERS LIBRE First paragraph, "I think the desire..."

(also note paragraph 2 at top of page, "As to Twentieth Century..."

Page 13- Top of page, "I think progress lies..."

Page 25- Paragraphs 3,4,5,6 - Melopoeia to end of page.

Page 31- Paragraphs 1,2,3

Page 38- Pound's Reading List

Page 39- Paragraphs 1 & 2, Paragraph 3, first sentence, "For practical..."

Page 43- Paragraph 5 - On bad art

Ezra Pound  
Literary Essays  
(New Directions, 1968)

A RETROSPECT

Criticism is not a circumscription or a set of prohibitions. It provides fixed points of departure. It may startle a dull reader into alertness. That little of it which is good is mostly in *gray* phrases; or if it be an older artist helping a younger it is in great measure but rules of thumb, cautions gained by experience.

I set together a few phrases on practical working about the time the first remarks on imagisme were published. The first use of the word 'Imagiste' was in my note to T. E. Hulme's five poems, printed at the end of my 'Ripostes' in the autumn of 1912. I reprint my cautions from *Poetry* for March, 1913.

A FEW DON'TS

An 'Image' is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time. I use the term 'complex' rather in the technical sense employed by the newer psychologists, such as Hart, though we might not agree absolutely in our application.

It is the presentation of such a 'complex' instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art.

It is better to present one Image in a lifetime than to produce voluminous works.

All this, however, some may consider open to debate. The immediate necessity is to tabulate A LIST OF DON'TS for those beginning to write verses. I can not put all of them into Mosaic negative.

To begin with, consider the three propositions (demanding direct treatment, economy of words, and the sequence of the musical phrase), not as dogma—never consider anything as dogma—but as the result of long contemplation, which, even if it is some one else's contemplation, may be worth consideration.

Pay no attention to the criticism of men who have never themselves written a notable work. Consider the discrepancies between the actual writing of the Greek poets and dramatists, and the theories of the Graeco-Roman grammarians, concocted to explain their metres.

LANGUAGE

Use no superfluous word, no adjective which does not reveal something.

A RETROSPECT<sup>1</sup>

There has been so much scribbling about a new fashion in poetry, that I may perhaps be pardoned this brief recapitulation and retrospect.

In the spring or early summer of 1912, 'H. D.', Richard Aldington and myself decided that we were agreed upon the three principles following:

1. Direct treatment of the 'thing' whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.

3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome.

Upon many points of taste and of predilection we differed, but agreeing upon these three positions we thought we had as much right to a group name, at least as much right, as a number of French 'schools' proclaimed by Mr Flint in the August number of Harold Monro's magazine for 1911.

This school has since been 'joined' or 'followed' by numerous people who, whatever their merits, do not show any signs of agreeing with the second specification. Indeed *vers libre* has become as prolix and as verbose as any of the flaccid varieties that preceded it. It has brought faults of its own. The actual language and phrasing is often as bad as that of our elders without even the excuse that the words are shovelled in to fill a metric pattern or to complete the noise of a rhyme-sound. Whether or no the phrases followed by the followers are musical must be left to the reader's decision. At times I can find a marked metre in 'vers libres', as stale and hackneyed as any pseudo-Swinburnian, at times the writers seem to follow no musical structure whatever. But it is, on the whole, good that the field should be ploughed. Perhaps a few good poems have come from the new method, and if so it is justified.

<sup>1</sup> A group of early essays and notes which appeared under this title in *Paradoxes and Divisions* (1918). 'A Few Don'ts' was first printed in *Poetry*, I, 6 (March, 1913).

A RETROSPECT

Don't use such an expression as 'dim lands of peace'. It dulls the image. It mixes an abstraction with the concrete. It comes from the writer's not realizing that the natural object is always the *adequate* symbol.

Go in fear of abstractions. Do not retell in mediocre verse what has already been done in good prose. Don't think any intelligent person is going to be deceived when you try to shirk all the difficulties of the unspeakably difficult art of good prose by chopping your composition into line lengths.

What the expert is tired of today the public will be tired of tomorrow.

Don't imagine that the art of poetry is any simpler than the art of music, or that you can please the expert before you have spent at least as much effort on the art of verse as the average piano teacher spends on the art of music.

Be influenced by as many great artists as you can, but have the decency either to acknowledge the debt outright, or to try to conceal it.

Don't allow 'influence' to mean merely that you mop up the particular decorative vocabulary of some one or two poets whom you happen to admire. A Turkish war correspondent was recently caught red-handed babbling in his despatches of 'dove-grey' hills, or else it was 'pearl-pale', I can not remember.

Use either no ornament or good ornament.

RHYTHM AND RHYME

Let the candidate fill his mind with the finest cadences he can discover, preferably in a foreign language,<sup>1</sup> so that the meaning of the words may be less likely to divert his attention from the movement; e.g. Saxon charms, Hebridean Folk Songs, the verse of Dante, and the lyrics of Shakespeare—if he can dissociate the vocabulary from the cadence. Let him dissect the lyrics of Goethe coldly into their component sound values, syllables long and short, stressed and unstressed, into vowels and consonants.

It is not necessary that a poem should rely on its music, but if it does rely on its music that music must be such as will delight the expert.

<sup>1</sup> This is for rhythm, his vocabulary must of course be found in his native tongue.

Let the neophyte know assonance and alliteration, rhyme immediate and delayed, simple and polyphonic, as a musician would expect to know harmony and counterpoint and all the minutiae of his craft. No time is too great to give to these matters or to any one of them, even if the artist seldom have need of them.

Don't imagine that a thing will 'go' in verse just because it's too dull to go in prose.

Don't be 'viewy'—leave that to the writers of pretty little philosophic essays. Don't be descriptive; remember that the painter can describe a landscape much better than you can, and that he has to know a deal more about it.

When Shakespeare talks of the 'Dawn in russet mantle clad' he presents something which the painter does not present. There is in this line of his nothing that one can call description; he presents.

Consider the way of the scientists rather than the way of an advertising agent for a new soap.

The scientist does not expect to be acclaimed as a great scientist until he has *discovered* something. He begins by learning what has been discovered already. He goes from that point onward. He does not bank on being a charming fellow personally. He does not expect his friends to applaud the results of his freshman class work. Freshmen in poetry are unfortunately not confined to a definite and recognizable class room. They are 'all over the shop'. Is it any wonder 'the public is indifferent to poetry?'

Don't chop your stuff into separate *iambis*. Don't make each line stop dead at the end, and then begin every next line with a heave. Let the beginning of the next line catch the rise of the rhythm wave, unless you want a definite longish pause.

In short, behave as a musician, a good musician, when dealing with that phase of your art which has exact parallels in music. The same laws govern, and you are bound by no others.

Naturally, your rhythmic structure should not destroy the shape of your words, or their natural sound, or their meaning. It is improbable that, at the start, you will be able to get a rhythmic-structure strong enough to affect them very much, though you may fall a victim to all sorts of false stopping due to line ends and *cæsurae*.

The Musician can rely on pitch and the volume of the orchestra. You can not. The term harmony is misapplied in poetry; it refers to simultaneous sounds of different pitch. There is, however, in the best

I begin on the chord thus querulous, for I would much rather lie on what is left of Catullus' parlour floor and speculate the azure beneath it and the hills off to Salo and Riva with their forgotten gods moving unhindered amongst them, than discuss any processes and theories of art whatsoever. I would rather play tennis. I shall not argue.

### CREDO

*Rhythm*.—I believe in an 'absolute rhythm', a rhythm, that is, in poetry which corresponds exactly to the emotion or shade of emotion to be expressed. A man's rhythm must be interpretative, it will be, therefore, in the end, his own, uncounterfeiting, uncounterfeitable.

*Symbols*.—I believe that the proper and perfect symbol is the natural object, that if a man use 'symbols' he must so use them that their symbolic function does not obtrude; so that a sense, and the poetic quality of the passage, is not lost to those who do not understand the symbol as such, to whom, for instance, a hawk is a hawk.

*Technique*.—I believe in technique as the test of a man's sincerity; in law when it is ascertainable; in the trampling down of every convention that impedes or obscures the determination of the law, or the precise rendering of the impulse.

*Form*.—I think there is a 'fluid' as well as a 'solid' content, that some poems may have form as a tree has form, some as water poured into a vase. That most symmetrical forms have certain uses. That a vast number of subjects cannot be precisely, and therefore not properly rendered in symmetrical forms.

'Thinking that alone worthy wherein the whole art is employed'.<sup>1</sup> I think the artist should master all known forms and systems of metric, and I have with some persistence set about doing this, searching particularly into those periods wherein the systems came to birth or attained their maturity. It has been complained, with some justice, that I dump my note-books on the public. I think that only after a long struggle will poetry attain such a degree of development, or, if you will, modernity, that it will vitally concern people who are accustomed, in prose, to Henry James and Anatole France, in music to Debussy. I am constantly contending that it took two centuries of Provence and one of Tuscany to develop the media of Dante's masterwork, that it took the latinists of the Renaissance, and the

<sup>1</sup> Dante, *De Vulgari Eloquentia*.

verse a sort of residue of sound which remains in the ear of the hearer and acts more or less as an organ-base.

A rhyme must have in it some slight element of surprise if it is to give pleasure; it need not be bizarre or curious, but it must be well used if used at all.

*Vide* further Vildrac and Duhamel's notes on rhyme in '*Technique Poétique*'.

That part of your poetry which strikes upon the imaginative eye of the reader will lose nothing by translation into a foreign tongue; that which appeals to the ear can reach only those who take it in the original.

Consider the definiteness of Dante's presentation, as compared with Milton's rhetoric. Read as much of Wordsworth as does not seem too unutterably dull.<sup>1</sup>

If you want the gist of the matter go to Sappho, Catullus, Villon, Heine when he is in the vein, Gautier when he is not too frigid; or, if you have not the tongues, seek out the leisurely Chaucer. Good prose will do you no harm, and there is good discipline to be had by trying to write it.

Translation is likewise good training, if you find that your original matter 'wobbles' when you try to rewrite it. The meaning of the poem to be translated can not 'wobble'.

If you are using a symmetrical form, don't put in what you want to say and then fill up the remaining vacuums with slush.

Don't mess up the perception of one sense by trying to define it in terms of another. This is usually only the result of being too lazy to find the exact word. To this clause there are possibly exceptions.

The first three simple prescriptions will throw out nine-tenths of all the bad poetry now accepted as standard and classic; and will prevent you from many a crime of production.

'... *Mais d'abord il faut être un poète*', as MM. Duhamel and Vildrac have said at the end of their little book, '*Notes sur la Technique Poétique*'.

Since March 1913, Ford Madox Hueffer has pointed out that Wordsworth was so intent on the ordinary or plain word that he never thought of hunting for *le mot juste*.

John Butler Yeats has handled or man-handled Wordsworth and

<sup>1</sup> *Vide infra*.

Pleiade, and his own age of painted speech to prepare Shakespeare his tools. It is tremendously important that great poetry be written, it makes no jot of difference who writes it. The experimental demonstrations of one man may save the time of many—hence my furore over Arnaut Daniel—if a man's experiments try out one new time, or dispense conclusively with one iota of currently accepted nonsense, he is merely playing fair with his colleagues when he chalks up his result.

No man ever writes very much poetry that 'matters'. In bulk, that is, no one produces much that is final, and when a man is not doing this highest thing, this saying the thing once for all and perfectly; when he is not matching Ποικιλώθρον, ἄθανατος! Ἀφρόδιτα, or 'Hist—said Kate the Queen', he had much better be making the sorts of experiment which may be of use to him in his later work, or to his successors.

'The lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne.' It is a foolish thing for a man to begin his work on a too narrow foundation, it is a disgraceful thing for a man's work not to show steady growth and increasing fineness from first to last.

As for 'adaptations'; one finds that all the old masters of painting recommend to their pupils that they begin by copying masterwork, and proceed to their own composition.

As for 'Every man his own poet', the more every man knows about poetry the better. I believe in every one writing poetry who wants to; most do. I believe in every man knowing enough of music to play 'God bless our home' on the harmonium, but I do not believe in every man giving concerts and printing his sin.

The mastery of any art is the work of a lifetime. I should not discriminate between the 'amateur' and the 'professional'. Or rather I should discriminate quite often in favour of the amateur, but I should discriminate between the amateur and the expert. It is certain that the present chaos will endure until the Art of poetry has been preached down the amateur gullet, until there is such a general understanding of the fact that poetry is an art and not a pastime; such a knowledge of technique; of technique of surface and technique of content, that the amateurs will cease to try to drown out the masters.

If a certain thing was said once for all in Atlantis or Arcadia, in 450 Before Christ or in 1250 after, it is not for us moderns to go

saying it over, or to go obscuring the memory of the dead by saying the same thing with less skill and less conviction.

My pawing over the ancients and semi-ancients has been one struggle to find out what has been done, once for all, better than it can ever be done again, and to find out what remains for us to do, and plenty does remain, for if we still feel the same emotions as those which launched the thousand ships, it is quite certain that we come on these feelings differently, through different nuances, by different intellectual gradations. Each age has its own abounding gifts yet only some ages transmute them into matter of duration. No good poetry is ever written in a manner twenty years old, for to write in such a manner shows conclusively that the writer thinks from books, convention and cliché, and not from life, yet a man feeling the divorce of life and his art may naturally try to resurrect a forgotten mode if he finds in that mode some leaven, or if he think he sees in it some element lacking in contemporary art which might unite that art again to its sustenance, life.

In the art of Daniel and Cavalcanti, I have seen that precision which I miss in the Victorians, that explicit rendering, be it of external nature, or of emotion. Their testimony is of the eyewitness, their symptoms are first hand.

As for the nineteenth century, with all respect to its achievements, I think we shall look back upon it as a rather blurry, messy sort of a period, a rather sentimentalistic, mannerish sort of a period. I say this without any self-righteousness, with no self-satisfaction.

As for there being a 'movement' or my being of it, the conception of poetry as a 'pure art' in the sense in which I use the term, revived with Swinburne. From the puritanical revolt to Swinburne, poetry had been merely the vehicle—yes, definitely, Arthur Symon's scruples and feelings about the word not withholding—the ox-cart and post-chaise for transmitting thoughts poetic or otherwise. And perhaps the 'great Victorians', though it is doubtful, and assuredly the 'nineties' continued the development of the art, confining their improvements, however, chiefly to sound and to refinements of manner.

Mr Years has once and for all stripped English poetry of its perdamnable rhetoric. He has boiled away all that is not poetic—and a good deal that is. He has become a classic in his own lifetime and

ceptible than some I have used. I think progress lies rather in an attempt to approximate classical quantitative metres (NOT to copy them) than in a carelessness regarding such things.<sup>1</sup>

I agree with John Yeats on the relation of beauty to certitude. I prefer satire, which is due to emotion, to any sham of emotion.

I have had to write, or at least I have written a good deal about art, sculpture, painting and poetry. I have seen what seemed to me the best of contemporary work reviled and obstructed. Can any one write prose of permanent or durable interest when he is merely saying for one year what nearly every one will say at the end of three or four years? I have been battistrada for a sculptor, a painter, a novelist, several poets. I wrote also of certain French writers in *The New Age* in nineteen twelve or eleven.

I would much rather that people would look at Brzeska's sculpture and Lewis's drawings, and that they would read Joyce, Jules Romains, Eliot, than that they should read what I have said of these men, or that I should be asked to republish argumentative essays and reviews.

All that the critic can do for the reader or audience or spectator is to focus his gaze or audition. Rightly or wrongly I think my blasts and essays have done their work, and that more people are now likely to go to the sources than are likely to read this book.

Jammes's 'Existences' in *'La Triomphe de la Vie'* is available. So are his early poems. I think we need a convenient anthology rather than descriptive criticism. Carl Sanburg wrote me from Chicago, 'It's hell when poets can't afford to buy each other's books.' Half the people who care, only borrow. In America so few people know each other that the difficulty lies more than half in distribution. Perhaps one should make an anthology: Romains's 'Un Etre en Marche' and 'Prières', Vildrac's 'Visite'. Retrospectively the fine wrought work of Laforgue, the flashes of Rimbaud, the hard-bit lines of Tristan Corbière, Tailhade's sketches in 'Poèmes Aristophanesques', the 'Litanies' of De Gourmont.

It is difficult at all times to write of the fine arts, it is almost impossible unless one can accompany one's prose with many reproductions. Still I would seize this chance or any chance to reaffirm my belief in Wyndham Lewis's genius, both in his drawings

*nel mezzo del cammin*. He has made our poetic idiom a thing pliable, a speech without inversions.

Robert Bridges, Maurice Hewlett and Frederic Manning are<sup>1</sup> in their different ways seriously concerned with overhauling the metric, in testing the language and its adaptability to certain modes. Ford Hueffer is making some sort of experiments in modernity. The Provost of Oriel continues his translation of the *Divina Commedia*.

As to Twentieth century poetry, and the poetry which I expect to see written during the next decade or so, it will, I think, move against poppy-cock, it will be harder and sancer, it will be what Mr Hewlett calls 'nearer the bone'. It will be as much like granite as it can be, its force will lie in its truth, its interpretative power (of course, poetic force does always rest there); I mean it will not try to seem forcible by rhetorical din, and luxurious riot. We will have fewer painted adjectives impeding the shock and stroke of it. At least for myself, I want it so, austere, direct, free from emotional slither.

What is there now, in 1917, to be added?

RE VERS LIBRE

I think the desire for vers libre is due to the sense of quantity reasserting itself after years of starvation. But I doubt if we can take over, for English, the rules of quantity laid down for Greek and Latin, mostly by Latin grammarians.

I think one should write vers libre only when one 'must', that is to say, only when the 'thing' builds up a rhythm more beautiful than that of set metres, or more real, more a part of the emotion of the 'thing', more germane, intimate, interpretative than the measure of regular accentual verse; a rhythm which discontents one with set iambic or set anapaestic.

Eliot has said the thing very well when he said, 'No vers is libre for the man who wants to do a good job.'

As a matter of detail, there is vers libre with accent heavily marked as a drum-beat (as par example my 'Dance Figure'), and on the other hand I think I have gone as far as can profitably be gone in the other direction (and perhaps too far). I mean I do not think one can use to any advantage rhythms much more tenuous and imper-

<sup>1</sup> (Dec. 1911)

least, and with very little delay, be told what the discoveries were. If he wish to be a good critic he will have to look for himself.

Bad critics have prolonged the use of demoded terminology, usually a terminology originally invented to describe what had been done before 300 B.C., and to describe it in a rather exterior fashion. Writers of second order have often tried to produce works to fit some category or term not yet occupied in their own local literature. If we chuck out the classifications which apply to the outer shape of the work, or to its occasion, and if we look at what actually happens, in, let us say, poetry, we will find that the language is charged or energized in various manners.

That is to say, there are three 'kinds of poetry': MELOPŌIA, wherein the words are charged, over and above their plain meaning, with some musical property, which directs the bearing or trend of that meaning.

PHANOPŌIA, which is a casting of images upon the visual imagination.

LOGOPŌIA, 'the dance of the intellect among words', that is to say, it employs words not only for their direct meaning, but it takes count in a special way of habits of usage, of the context we expect to find with the word, its usual concomitants, of its known acceptances, and of ironical play. It holds the aesthetic content which is peculiarly the domain of verbal manifestation, and cannot possibly be contained in plastic or in music. It is the latest come, and perhaps most tricky and undependable mode.

The *melopœia* can be appreciated by a foreigner with a sensitive ear, even though he be ignorant of the language in which the poem is written. It is practically impossible to transfer or translate it from one language to another, save perhaps by divine accident, and for half a line at a time.

*Phanopœia* can, on the other hand, be translated almost, or wholly, intact. When it is good enough, it is practically impossible for the translator to destroy it save by very crass bungling, and the neglect of perfectly well-known and formulative rules.

*Logopœia* does not translate; though the attitude of mind it expresses may pass through a paraphrase. Or one might say, you can not translate it 'locally', but having determined the original author's state of mind, you may or may not be able to find a derivative or an equivalent.

I mean to say that from the beginning of literature up to A.D. 1750 poetry was the superior art, and was so considered to be, and if we read books written before that date we find the number of interesting books in verse at least equal to the number of prose books still readable; and the poetry contains the quintessence. When we want to know what people were like before 1750, when we want to know that they had blood and bones like ourselves, we go to the poetry of the period.

But, as I have said, the 'fortunata business' set in. And one morning Monsieur Stendhal, not thinking of Homer, or Villon, or Catullus, but having a very keen sense of actuality, noticed that 'poetry', *la poésie*, as the term was then understood, the stuff written by his French contemporaries, or sonorously rolled at him from the French stage, was a damn nuisance. And he remarked that poetry, with its bagwigs and its bobwigs, and its padded calves and its periwigs, its 'fusian à la Louis XIV', was greatly inferior to prose for conveying a clear idea of the diverse states of our consciousness ('les mouvements du cœur').

And at that moment the serious art of writing 'went over to prose', and for some time the important developments of language as means of expression were the developments of prose. And a man cannot clearly understand or justly judge the value of verse, modern verse, any verse, unless he has grasped this.

### PART III: CONCLUSIONS, EXCEPTIONS, CURRICULA

Before Stendhal there is probably nothing in prose that does not also exist in verse or that can't be done by verse just as well as by prose. Even the method of annihilating imbecility employed by Voltaire, Bayle, and Lorenzo Valla can be managed quite as well in rhymed couplets.

Beginning with the Renaissance, or perhaps with Boccaccio, we have prose that is quite necessary to the clear comprehension of things in general: with Rabelais, Brantôme, Montaigne, Fielding, Sterne, we begin to find prose recording states of consciousness that their verse-writing contemporaries scamp. And this fuller consciousness, in more delicate modes, appears in l'Abbé Prévost, Benjamin Constant, Jane Austen. So that Stendhal had already

who has ever written a good poem or a good octave or sestet. It is the result of twenty-seven years' thought on the subject and a résumé of conclusions. That may be a reason for giving it some consideration. It is not a reason for accepting it as a finality. Swallowed whole it is useless. For practical class work the instructor should try, and incite his students to try, to pry out some element that I have included and to substitute for it something more valid. The intelligent lay reader will instinctively try to do this for himself.

I merely insist that *without* this minimum the critic has almost no chance of sound judgment. Judgment will gain one more chance of soundness if he can be persuaded to consider Fenollosa's essay or some other, and to me unknown but equally effective, elucidation of the Chinese written character.

Before I die I hope to see at least a few of the best Chinese works printed bilingually, in the form that Mori and Ariga prepared certain texts for Fenollosa, a 'crib', the picture of each letter accompanied by a full explanation.

For practical contact with all past poetry that was actually *sung* in its own day I suggest that each dozen universities combine in employing a couple of singers who understand the meaning of words. Men like Yves Tinayre and Robert Maitland are available. A half-dozen hours spent in listening to the lyrics actually performed would give the student more knowledge of that sort of *melopœia* than a year's work in philology. The Kennedy-Frasers have dug up music that fits the *Beowulf*. It was being used for heroic song in the Hebrides. There is other available music, plenty of it, from at least the time of Faidit (A.D. 1190).

I cannot repeat too often or too forcibly my caution against so-called critics who talk 'all around the matter', and who do not define their terms, and who won't say frankly that certain authors are demitison bores. Make a man tell you *first* and specially what writers he thinks are good writers, after that you can listen to his explanation.

Naturally, certain professors who have invested all their intellectual capital, i.e., spent a lot of time on some perfectly dead period, don't like to admit they've been sold, and they haven't often the courage to cut a loss. There is no use in following them into the shadows.

In the above list I take full responsibility for my omissions. I

subject up into crumbs quickly dryable: A curriculum for instructors, for obstreperous students who wish to annoy dull instructors, for men who haven't had time for systematized college courses. Call it the minimum basis for a sound and liberal education in letters (with French and English 'aids' in parenthesis).

CONFUCIUS—In full (there being no complete and intelligent English version, one would have either to learn Chinese or make use of the French version by Pauthier).

HOMER—in full (Latin cribs, Hugues Salel in French, no satisfactory English, though Chapman can be used as reference).

OVID—And the Latin 'personal' poets, Catullus and Propertius. (Golding's *Metamorphoses*, Mariwé's *Amores*. There is no useful English version of Catullus.)

A PROVENÇAL SONG BOOK—With cross reference to Minnesingers, and to Bion, perhaps thirty poems in all.

DANTE—'And his circle'; that is to say Dante, and thirty poems by his contemporaries, mostly by Guido Cavalcanti.

VILLON—

PARENTHERICALLY—Some other mediæval matter might be added, and some general outline of history of thought through the Renaissance.

VOLTAIRE—That is to say, some incursion into his critical writings, not into his attempts at fiction and drama, and some dip into his contemporaries (prose).

STENDHAL—(At least a book and half).

FLAUBERT (omitting *Salambô* and the *Tentation*)—And the Goncourts.

GAUTIER, CORBIÈRE, RIMBAUD.

This would not overburden the three- or four-year student. After this inoculation he could be 'with safety exposed' to modernity or anything else in literature. I mean he wouldn't lose his head or ascribe ridiculous values to works of secondary intensity. He would have axes of reference and, would I think, find them dependable.

For the purposes of general education we could omit all study of monistic totemism and voodoo for at least fifty years and study of Shakespeare for thirty on the ground that acquaintance with these subjects is already very widely diffused, and that one absorbs quite enough knowledge of them from boring circumjacent conversation.

This list does not, obviously, contain the names of every author

in its (the code's) relation to a different state of society. It is as if, in physics or engineering, we refused to consider 1 force designed to affect one mass, in its relation (i.e. the force's) to another mass wholly differing, or in some notable way differing, from the first mass.

As inequities can exist because of refusals to consider the actualities of a law in relation to a social condition, so can inequities exist through refusal to consider the actualities of the composition of the masses, or of the individuals to which they are applied.

If all men desired above everything else two acres and a cow, obviously the perfect state would be that state which gave to each man two acres and a cow.

If any science save the arts were able more precisely to determine what the individual does not actually desire, then that science would be of more use in providing the data for ethics.

In the like manner, if any sciences save medicine and chemistry were more able to determine what things were compatible with physical wellbeing, then those sciences would be of more value for providing the data of hygiene.

This brings us to the immorality of bad art. Bad art is inaccurate art. It is art that makes false reports. If a scientist falsifies a report either deliberately or through negligence we consider him as either a criminal or a bad scientist according to the enormity of his offence, and he is punished or despised accordingly.

If he falsifies the reports of a maternity hospital in order to retain his position and get profit and advancement from the city board, he may escape detection. If he declines to make such falsification he may lose financial rewards, and in either case his baseness or his pluck may pass unknown and unnoticed save by a very few people. Nevertheless one does not have to argue his case. The layman knows soon enough on hearing it whether the physician is to be blamed or praised.

If an artist falsifies his report as to the nature of man, as to his own nature, as to the nature of his ideal of the perfect, as to the nature of his ideal of this, that or the other, of god, if god exist, of the life force, of the nature of good and evil, if good and evil exist, of the force with which he believes or disbelieves this, that or the other, of the degree in which he suffers or is made glad; if the artist falsifies his reports on these matters or on any other matter in order that he

## Highlights of William Carlos Williams Selected Essays (New Directions)

Page 11 - Paragraph 3 - "The true Value..." (first three sentences)

Paragraph 4 - From, "It is easy to fall under the spell..."

to"... close to the nose...a necessity."

Page 108- Last paragraph "The (the lines) have a character..."

Page 109- Paragraphs 1,2,3,4,5

Page 157- Last paragraph - "But you can't quite kill..."

Page 158- Continuation from previous page, Just this sentence.

Page 160- Paragraph 3 - Photographic camera and what it can do.

Page 161- "...The local effort..."

Page 162- Last paragraph, first sentence, "It's the disinfecting..."

Page 233- Paragraphs 4,5,6,7,8 (Please notice paragraph 6-"It is the eye...")

Page 234- Top of the page, second sentence, "Only where the eye hits..."

(Note: "The local is universal")

Page 237- See the sentence that begins, "My idea is that poetry..."

Page 238- Last paragraph - "Some exposure..."

Page 239- Paragraph 4 "...write of that which is nearest to the skin..."

Page 257- Paragraph 2 - "...he takes words as he finds them..."

Last paragraph - "It may be that my interests..."

Page 261- See notes on Hart Crane's rhymes (pages 261 & 262 - paragraphs 1 & 6)

Page 281- Paragraph 1 - "Perhaps all that I can do here is to call attention..."

Page 282- Paragraph 1 - "There was then a subject matter that was..."

Page 283- End of paragraph, last four sentences - "Reluctant, we waken..."

Page 291- Paragraph 2 - "It is there in the mouths of the living..."

Page 337- On Measure- The whole essay



Suggestions for Readings in William Carlos Williams by Allen Ginsberg  
according to hardness, objectivity, vividness (or suggestive  
formulation of theory)

Collected Earlier Poems

Vol. I 1909-1936, New Directions, NY., 1986

Page #	
115	Hic Jacet- sample of creakier early style
124	To Mark Anthony in Heaven
122	Le Medecin Malgre Lui- arch echo of literary self-consciousness mixed with present perception:
124	A Coronal- Spring
39	The Revelation- see Whitman
337	The Trees- total "inquisitiveness" & openness
341	The Sea-Elephant
343	Rain- awareness or Love, Mind, the discoveries of equanimity mind. "Palms w/lethargic feeling shifting in the direction of the balmy wind, Monstrous animals sprayed up out of the ground/ settling and unsettling as in water"-Xbalba
377	An Early Martyr
352,	Flowers by the Sea
378	
92	A Portrait of the Times
383	To a Poor Old Woman
384	Proletarian Portrait- world without attributes
387	Invocation and Conclusion
353,	Sunday- sounds of Sunday
376	
268	The Dead Baby- Corso's favorite
401	A Poem for Norman MacLeod
	Pastoral- take a walk, non-judgemental
	Pastoral
57	The Young Housewife
	Love Song
76	El Hombre
78	Canthara
85	Good Night
86	Danse Russe- complete self incorporation
92	Smell- inquisitiveness
96	The Old Men
97	Spring Strains
100	January Morning: I, V, VI, VII, VIII, X, XI, XIII, XV
105	Dedication for a Plot of Ground
	Love Song
137	The Late Singer
153	Complaint
157	Thursday
154	The Cold Night
157	Time the Hangman
158	To a Friend
158	Spring
159	The Poor- Upaya

- 159 Memory of April  
 162 Queen Anne's Lace  
 162 Great Mullen  
 163 Waiting  
 166 Youth and Beauty  
 167 The Thinker  
 171 The Widow's Lament in Springtime  
 169 The Nightingales - a certain abstraction in the field of  
     vision, examining optical mind, reducing phenomena to dhatu  
 172 Portrait of the Author- constantly returning from daydream  
     to shamatha clarity or precision  
 174 The Great Figure  
 263 Paterson- no ideas  
 322 The Flower  
 183 Spring and All  
 189 The Black Winds  
 200, Young Love  
   289  
 215 To an Old Jaundiced Woman  
 216 Shoot it Jimmy  
 217 To Elsie  
 221 Horned Purple  
 224 The Red Wheelbarrow  
 228 The Avenue of Poplars  
 231 Rapid Transit  
 233 At the Ball Game  
 289 (from The Descent of Winter) 10/22, 10/28, 11/1, 11/2, 11/7,  
     11/8, 11/10, 11/20, 11/28, 12/15  
 266 The Young Sycamore  
 357 The Cod Head  
 249 New England  
 240 The Bull  
 362 In the 'Sconset Bus  
 3 1, Poem  
   352  
 453 Between Walls  
 285 On Gay Wallpaper  
 372 Nantucket  
 325 The Attic Which is Desire  
 372 This Is Just To Say  
 326 Birds and Flowers  
 405 Fine Work With Pitch and Copper  
 373 Young Woman at a Window  
 430 Perpetuum Mobile: The City  
 459 Morning  
 444 Classic Scene  
 451 The Term  
 454 A Bastard Peace  
 452 The Poor  
 455 The Defective Record  
     Detail (4 separate poems)  
 457 At the Bar  
 457 Breakfast  
 458 To Greet a Letter-Carrier  
 458 These  
 464 The Last Words of My English Grandmother  
     Fragment  
 371 The Sun Bathers  
 278 The Men  
 401 You Have Pissed Your Life Away

William Carlos Williams Collected Later Poems--

New Directions, NY, 1963.

- 45 Intro to The Wedge (1944)  
 7 A Sort of Song- "Saxefrage!"  
 12-13 Prologue-"ordinary speech"  
 23 The Cure (philosophy)  
 32 St. Valentine- rhyme, appeal to experience  
     dismissing the General, even History- Dropout  
 33 Young Cat  
 40 Perfection Vipassana "O Lovely Apple!" "Nd one!"  
 41 These Purists- Brain/flash  
 44 The Last Town- red lite 53 & 8th Carcrash? - "Concept"  
 45 Thoughtful Lover- "The particulars of poetry" his art  
 46 The Forgotten City  
 52 A Thot re Ecology Raleigh was right  
 56 Sentence- Chinese Haiku  
 57 Cold Front Human reaction "0 fact"  
 59 The Gentle Rejoinder - talk  
 61 F.M.F. in Heaven  
 80 Education a Failure  
 81 The Banner Bearer- quadribeat, Prosody Comment  
 86 His Deception- photo  
 88 The Manoever  
 89 The Horse- fumes twin exhausts  
 96 The Act- Creeley Touchstone Roses in rain  
 97 Savage Beast  
 99 Raindrops on a Briar- Writer hipped on painting  
 102 Graph (photo)  
 104 The Flower (small photo)  
 124 The Clouds  
 136 The Centenarian  
 147 Every Day  
 152 April is the Saddest Month  
 153 To Be Hungry is to Be Great  
 173 Mists Over The River  
 177 Approach to a City  
 196 Apres Le Bain  
 197 Spring Here Again- Goffle Brook  
 208 2 Songs re Russia  
 230 To Close  
 242 Soft Coal  
 The Injury

Suggestions for Readings in Charles Reznikoff by Allen Ginsberg  
according to hardness, objectivity, vividness: selected epiphanies

Poems 1918 - 1936  
Volume I of the Complete Poems

Black Sparrow Press,  
 Santa Barbara  
 1975

p.15 #9	p.l1 #2,3	p.58 #38	p.116 #48,49
p.16 #14	l2 #5	59 #40	117 #50
17 #19	l4 #12,17	60 #42,43	120 #66
22 #7,9	l5 #19,20	62 #45,46	121 #69,71
24 #21	l6 #21	63 #48	122 #73,74
29 #2,3,4,6	l7 #24	108 #8	128 #IV Karl Marx
30 #8,9,10	l9 #27	110 #15,16	168 #3 I
32 #11	51 #29	111 #17,18,20	169 #4 IV
33 #12	52 #30,31	112 #21	171 #6
34 #18	54 #32	113 #28	172 #8
35 #19,22	55 #33,34	114 #34	
36 #29	57 #36	115 #39,41	

Poems 1937 - 1975  
Volume II of the Complete Poems

1978

P.26 #2 I, II	P.49 II from Testimony	P.82 #44 II
27 # V	53 #5 Kaddish (all)	85 #51 I, II
28 # VII	54 II, III, IV, V	86 #52
30 XVII	55 VI, VII (see his wife,	93 #8,9,12
31 XVIII, XIX	Marie Syrkin's,	94 #13,14,15,16,17
32 XXI, XXII, XXIII	description of his	95 #20
33 XXIV, XXV, XXVI	death), VIII	96 #21,22,25
34 XXVIII, XXIX	56 IX, X, XI	97 #28
35 XXXI	75 #20,22	98 #30
36 XXXV	76 #24,25	99 #34
38 #3 Autobiography:	77 #27	100 #37
Hollywood (all)	78 #30	
	79 #34	
	81 #41,42,43	

p.101 #38  
 104 #50  
 pp.106-136 (All of Part II of  
By the Well of Living and  
Seeing)  
 pp.137-178 (All of Part III of  
By the Well of Living and  
Seeing)  
 p.207 #7  
 208 #8 I, II  
 211 #11

A one volume edition is now available. A.G. 6/6/92



conception of a flash, as "sun?" In other words, do you constantly examine your thought-forms as three-fold process? Or is it only when you have a "striking" thought that you try to analyze it?

Rinpoche: Thought patterns are three-fold thought patterns, which usually involve a three-fold process. It's just another after-thought on that natural process.

You could compose haikus consciously as a training process. Then slowly the person begins to get more confidence in themselves and they actually begin to flow... Buddhist students also connect with the study of madyamika\*, the study of three-fold logic. You have a case, and the reference coming out of the case and final conclusion all same three-fold process... You could say "mind is empty; free from conceptions, it is enlightenment."

Allen Ginsberg: In any case, the three-fold pattern would be the basic structure of almost all noticings?

Rinpoche: And there could be some discipline that goes with that. Training people.

David Rome: Well, that kind of three-fold process is not a gimmick, it's a very basic pattern by which perception occurs and also by which creation occurs. So, your finished poem might actually show those three levels. Or it might not all that specifically. But nevertheless, the process which you went through to create a poem must, it does anyhow, follow that kind of process, but the extent to which you're somewhat clear in following it will affect the elegance or accuracy of the poem. So, you have some kinds of first impulse to express something, and that impulse carries with it some sense of the texture of what you want to express, in some cases, particularly for poets, it's one detail, that has struck you. You feel that there's something further that could be made of that

\*Madyamika - a system of Buddhist thought founded by Nagarjuna, which very logically proved that absolutely nothing exists as an independent, solid, objective situation, therefore, nothing exists.

\*David Rome - Chogyam Trungpa's personal secretary who often read his poems and acted as scribe when Rinpoche was making a poem.

or presented from that, or even just trying to present that one detail involves some further process. So, then, you begin "fleshing it out," so to speak, which is finding a further reference to that detail, or that basic texture: That process contains openness as well as narrowing, which I think is what becomes very important about these three steps. They are how to do something without having it all figured out to begin with. But, on the other hand, not going off in every direction so that you end up purely with chaos or jumble. So, your middle stage is feeling that texture further, or drawing that detail out further; making new discoveries, but also being able to focus it down towards some kind of single statement, single message. That becomes the third level, which could be contained in a great last line, or it might even be contained in that kind of space that's left after the poem is over. There's some unified event which is actually taking place.

Allen Ginsberg: How would that apply to the last haiku?

"A wild sea  
and stretching across to the Isle of Sado  
the Milky Way."

Rinpoche: I think that hangs together as three-fold process. You have a sense of "waterness..." you have a sense of nostalgia - the island, dwelling place... And then sort of "so what"--the Milky Way.

Student: Could you explain the connection between poetry and right speech--since right speech is one of the paths.

Rinpoche: There are a lot of connections. We hear stories of Buddha that when he gave sermons to people--even though they had psychological blockages--they couldn't help but listen to him--and once they listened, it began to make sense--and when it made sense to them--that's helping liberate them. I think this is our goal--in some sense--is to develop a kind of logic version. There has to be some kind of motivation, at least to create order in the universe--by means of speech, poetry--this is our objective, actually, all together.

From: A Blake Dictionary, S.Foster Damon, Brown U. Press, Providence, 1965

Blake's Fourfold Correspondences in *Jerusalem*

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST	
Urthona (Los) Blacksmith Imagination Poetry Friendship Nadir Breadth Iron	Luvah Weaver Emotions Music Love Center Inward Silver	Urizen Plowman Reason Architecture Hunger Zenith Height & Depth Gold	Tharmas Shepherd Senses (Body) Painting Lust Circumference Outward Brass	The Four Zoas Their callings Their meanings Their Arts Their Desires Their places Directions Their Metals
Enitharmon Spiritual Beauty (In- spiration)	Vala Natural Beauty (Nature)	Ahania Pleasure (Sin)	Enion Generative In- stinct (the Earth Mother)	Their Emanations Their meanings
Rintrah Wrath Ocalythron Jealousy	Theotormon Desire Oothoon Free Love (The Magdalen)	Bromion Reason Leutha Condemnation	Palamabron Pity Elynittria Toleration	The Four Sons of Los Their meanings Their Emanations Their meanings
Eternity (or Eden) Sun Gods Earth Gnomes	Beulah Moon Men Fire Genii	Ulro Stars Matter Air Fairies	Generation Earth Vegetation Water Nymphs	The Four Worlds Their symbols States Elements Elementals
Humanity Head Ears	Emanation Heart Nostrils	Spectre Stomach (Bowels) Eyes	Shadow Loins Tongue	Divided Man The Body The Senses
Europe Scotland Edinburgh Euphrates	Asia England London Hiddekel	Africa Wales Verulam Gihon	America Ireland York Pison	Continents British Isles Cities Rivers of Eden



21 The wild deer wandering here & there  
 22 Keeps the Human Soul from Care  
 43 The Beggars Dog & Widows Cat  
 44 Feed them & thou wilt grow fat  
 29 He who shall hurt the little Wren  
 30 Shall never be beloved by Men  
 31 He who the Ox to wrath has movd  
 32 Shall never be by Woman lov'd  
 35 He who torments the Chafers sprite  
 36 Weaves a Bower in endless Night  
 33 The wanton Boy that kills the Fly  
 34 Shall feel the Spiders enmity  
 37 The Catterpillar on the Leaf  
 38 Repeats to thee thy Mothers grief  
 39 Kill not the Moth nor Butterfly  
 40 For the Last Judgment draweth nigh  
 25 The Bat that flits at close of Eve  
 26 Has left the Brain that wont Believe  
 27 The Owl that calls upon the Night  
 28 Speaks the Unbelievers fright  
 45 The Gnat that sings his Summers song  
 Poison gets from Slanders tongue  
 The poison of the Snake & Newt  
 Is the sweat of Envy's Foot  
 The Poison of the Honey Bee  
 Is the Artists jealousy  
 A Riddle or the Crickets Cry  
 Is to Doubt a fit Reply  
 The Emmets Inch & Eagles Mile  
 Make Lame Philosophy to smile  
 He who Doubts from what he sees  
 Will neer Believe do what you Please  
 If the Sun & Moon should doubt  
 Theyd immediately Go out  
 He who mocks the Infants Faith  
 Shall be mock'd in Age & Death  
 He who shall teach the Child to Doubt  
 The rotting Grave shall neer get out  
 He who respects the Infants faith  
 Triumphs over Hell & Death  
 The Childs Toys & the Old Mans Reasons  
 Are the Fruits of the Two seasons  
 The Questioner who sits so sly  
 Shall never know how to Reply  
 He who replies to words of Doubt  
 Doth put the Light of Knowledge out  
 A truth thats told with bad intent

50  
103  
104  
105  
  
110  
85  
  
90  
  
95  
96  
53

Auguries of Innocence

[An Editorial Arrangement]

To see a World in a Grain of Sand  
 And a Heaven in a Wild Flower  
 Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand  
 And Eternity in an hour  
 A Robin Red breast in a Cage  
 Puts all Heaven in a Rage  
 A dove house filld with doves & Pigeons  
 Shudders Heil thro all its regions  
 A dog starvd at his Masters Gate  
 Predicts the ruin of the State  
 A Horse misusd upon the Road  
 Calls to Heaven for Human blood  
 Each outcry of the hunted Hare  
 A fibre from the Brain does tear  
 A Skylark wounded in the wing  
 A Cherubim does cease to sing  
 The Game Cock clipd & armd for fight  
 Does the Rising Sun affright  
 The Lamb misusd breeds Public strife  
 And yet forgives the Butchers Knife  
 He who shall train the Horse to War  
 Shall never pass the Polar Bar  
 Every Wolfs & Lions howl  
 Raises from Hell a Human Soul  
 The Bleat the Bark Bellow & Roar  
 Are Waves that Beat on Heavens Shore

10  
5  
15  
16  
17  
18  
23  
24  
41  
42  
19  
20  
71  
72

120

Some to Miserie are Born  
 Every Morn & every Night  
 Some are Born to sweet delight  
 Some are Born to sweet delight  
 Some are Born to Endless Night  
 We are led to Believe a Lie  
 When we see not Thro the Eye  
 Which was Born in a Night to perish in a Night  
 When the Soul Slept in Beams of Light  
 God Appears & God is Light  
 To those poor Souls who dwell in Night  
 But does a Human Form Display  
 To those who Dwell in Realms of day

125

When we see not Thro the Eye  
 Which was Born in a Night to perish in a Night  
 When the Soul Slept in Beams of Light  
 God Appears & God is Light  
 To those poor Souls who dwell in Night  
 But does a Human Form Display  
 To those who Dwell in Realms of day

130

54  
 59  
 60  
 61  
 62  
 65  
 56  
 57  
 58  
 63  
 64  
 65

Beats all the Lies you can invent  
 Joy & Woe are woven fine  
 A Clothing for the Soul divine  
 Under every grief & pine  
 Runs a joy with silken twine  
 It is right it should be so  
 Man was made for Joy & Woe  
 And when this we rightly know  
 Thro the World we safely go  
 The Babe is more than swaddling Bands  
 Throughout all these Human Lands  
 Tools were made & Born were hands  
 Every Farmer Understands  
 Every Tear from Every Eye  
 Becomes a Babe in Eternity  
 This is caught by Females bright  
 And returned to its own delight  
 The Babe that weeps the Rod beneath  
 Writes Revenge in realms of death  
 The Princes Robes & Beggars Rags  
 Are Toadstools on the Misers Bags  
 The Beggars Rags fluttering in Air  
 Does to Rags the Heavens tear  
 The poor Mians Farthing is worth more  
 Than all the Gold on Africs Shore  
 One Mite wrung from the Labrers hands  
 Shall buy & sell the Misers Lands  
 Or if protected from on high  
 Does that whole Nation sell & buy  
 The Strongest Poison ever known  
 Came from Caesars Laurel Crown  
 Nought can deform the Human Race  
 Like to the Amours iron brace  
 The Soldier armd with Sword & Gun  
 Palstied strikes the Summers Sun  
 When Gold & Gems adorn the Plow  
 To peaceful Arts shall Envy Bow  
 To be in a Passion you Good may do  
 But no Good if a Passion is in you  
 The Whorc & Gambler by the State  
 Licenced build that Nations Fate  
 The Harlots cry from Street to Street  
 Shall weave Old Englands winding Sheet  
 The Winners Shout the Losers Curse  
 Dance before dead Englands Hearse  
 Every Night & every Morn

70  
 73  
 74  
 51  
 52  
 75  
 76  
 79  
 80  
 81  
 82  
 83  
 84  
 97  
 98  
 99  
 100  
 77  
 78  
 101  
 101  
 111  
 112  
 113  
 114  
 115

Beats all the Lies you can invent  
 Joy & Woe are woven fine  
 A Clothing for the Soul divine  
 Under every grief & pine  
 Runs a joy with silken twine  
 It is right it should be so  
 Man was made for Joy & Woe  
 And when this we rightly know  
 Thro the World we safely go  
 The Babe is more than swaddling Bands  
 Throughout all these Human Lands  
 Tools were made & Born were hands  
 Every Farmer Understands  
 Every Tear from Every Eye  
 Becomes a Babe in Eternity  
 This is caught by Females bright  
 And returned to its own delight  
 The Babe that weeps the Rod beneath  
 Writes Revenge in realms of death  
 The Princes Robes & Beggars Rags  
 Are Toadstools on the Misers Bags  
 The Beggars Rags fluttering in Air  
 Does to Rags the Heavens tear  
 The poor Mians Farthing is worth more  
 Than all the Gold on Africs Shore  
 One Mite wrung from the Labrers hands  
 Shall buy & sell the Misers Lands  
 Or if protected from on high  
 Does that whole Nation sell & buy  
 The Strongest Poison ever known  
 Came from Caesars Laurel Crown  
 Nought can deform the Human Race  
 Like to the Amours iron brace  
 The Soldier armd with Sword & Gun  
 Palstied strikes the Summers Sun  
 When Gold & Gems adorn the Plow  
 To peaceful Arts shall Envy Bow  
 To be in a Passion you Good may do  
 But no Good if a Passion is in you  
 The Whorc & Gambler by the State  
 Licenced build that Nations Fate  
 The Harlots cry from Street to Street  
 Shall weave Old Englands winding Sheet  
 The Winners Shout the Losers Curse  
 Dance before dead Englands Hearse  
 Every Night & every Morn

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)

Percy Bysshe Shelley: *Ode to the West Wind*

I

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,  
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead  
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,  
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,  
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,  
Each like a corpse within its grave, until  
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill  
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)  
With living hues and odors plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;  
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,  
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,  
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread  
On the blue surface of thine aery surge,  
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge  
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,  
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night  
Will be the dome of a vast sepulcher,  
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapors, from whose solid atmosphere  
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh, hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams  
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,  
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,  
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers  
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers  
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou  
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below  
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear  
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,  
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;  
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;  
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free  
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even  
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,  
As then, when to outstrip thy sickly speed  
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.  
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!  
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed  
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:  
What if my leaves are falling like its own!  
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,  
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,  
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe  
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!  
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth  
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!  
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O, Wind,  
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

Hart Crane (b. 1899): *Atlantis*

Through the bound cable strands, the arching path  
Upward, veering with light, the flight of strings,—  
Taut miles of shuttling moonlight syncopate  
The whispered rush, telepathy of wires.  
Up the index of night, granite and steel—  
Transparent meshes—fleckless the gleaming staves—  
Sibylline voices flicker, waveringly stream  
As though a god were issue of the strings. . . .

And through that cordage, threading with its call  
One arc synoptic of all tides below—  
Their labyrinthine mouths of history  
Pouring reply as though all ships at sea  
Complighted in one vibrant breath made cry,—  
"Make thy love sure—to weave whose song we ply!"  
—From black embankments, moveless soundings hailed,  
So seven oceans answer from their dream.

And on, obliquely up bright carrier bars  
New octaves trestle the twin monoliths  
Beyond whose frosted capes the moon bequeaths  
Two worlds of sleep (O arching strands of song!)—  
Onward and up the crystal-flooded aisle  
White tempest nets file upward, upward ring  
With silver terraces the humming spars,  
The loft of vision, palladium helm of stars.

Sheerly the eyes, like seagulls stung with rime—  
Slit and propelled by glistening fins of light—  
Pick biting way up towering looms that press  
Sidelong with flight of blade on tendon blade  
—Tomorrows into yesteryear—and link  
What cipher-script of time no traveller reads  
But who, through smoking pyres of love and death,  
Searches the timeless laugh of mythic spears.

Like hails, farewells—up planet-sequined heights  
Some trillion whispering hammers glimmer Tyre:  
Serenely, sharply up the long anvil cry  
Of inchling æons silence rivets Troy.  
And you, aloft there—Jason! hesting Shout!  
Still wrapping harness to the swarming air!  
Silvery the rushing wake, surpassing call,  
Beams yelling Æolus! splintered in the straits!

*The Bridge* (New York: Liveright, 1933).

From gulfs unfolding, terrible of drums,  
Tall Vision-of-the-Voyage, tensely spare—  
Bridge, lifting night to cycloramic crest  
Of deepest day—O Choir, translating time  
Into what multitudinous Verb the suns  
And synergy of waters ever fuse, recast  
In myriad syllables—Psalm of Cathay!  
O Love, thy white, pervasive Paradigm . . . !

We left the haven hanging in the night—  
Sheened harbor lanterns backward fled the keel.  
Pacific here at time's end, bearing corn.—  
Eyes stammer through the pangs of dust and steel.  
And still the circular, indubitable frieze  
Of heaven's meditation, yoking wave  
To kneeling wave, one song devoutly binds—  
The vernal strophe chimes from deathless strings!

O Thou steeled Cognizance whose leap commits  
The agile precincts of the lark's return;  
Within whose lariat sweep encinctured sing  
In single chrysalis the many twain,—  
Of stars Thou art the stitch and stallion glow  
And like an organ, Thou, with sound of doom—  
Sight, sound and flesh Thou ledest from time's realm  
As love strikes clear direction for the helm.

Swift peal of secular light, intrinsic Myth  
Whose fell unshadow is death's utter wound,—  
O River-throated—iridescently upborne  
Through the bright drench and fabric of our veins;  
With white escarpments swinging into light,  
Sustained in tears the cities are endowed  
And justified conclamant with ripe fields  
Revolving through their harvests in sweet torment.

Forever Deity's glittering Pledge, O Thou  
Whose canticle fresh chemistry assigns  
To wrapt inception and beatitude,—  
Always through blinding cables, to our joy,  
Of thy white seizure springs the prophecy:  
Always through spiring cordage, pyramids  
Of silver sequel, Deity's young name  
Kinetic of white choiring wings . . . ascends.

Migrations that must needs void memory,  
Inventions that cobblestone the heart,—  
Unspeakable Thou Bridge to Thee, O Love.  
Thy pardon for this history, whitest Flower,  
O Answerer of all—Anemone,—  
Now while thy petals spend the suns about us, hold—  
(O Thou whose radiance doth inherit me)  
Atlantis,—hold thy floating singer late!

So to thine Everpresence, beyond time,  
Like spears ensanguined of one tolling star  
That bleeds infinity—the orphic strings,  
Sideral phalanxes, leap and converge:  
—One Song, one Bridge of Fire! Is it Cathay,  
Now pity steeps the grass and rainbows ring  
The serpent with the eagle in the leaves . . . ?  
Whispers antiphonal in azure swing.

### GREAT PRAJNA PARAMITA SUTRA

Thus I have heard: Avolokitesvara Bodhisattva practiced deep Highest Perfect Wisdom when perceived the five fields of consciousness all empty, relieved every suffering.

Sariputra, form is not different from emptiness. Emptiness not different from form. Form is the emptiness. Emptiness is the form. Sensation, recognition, conceptualization, consciousness, also like this.

Sariputra, this is the original character of everything: not born, not annihilated, not tainted, not pure, does not increase, does not decrease. Therefore in emptiness no form, no sensation, no recognition, no conceptualization, no consciousness. No eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind; no color, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch, no object of touch; no eye, no world of eyes until we come to also no world of consciousness; no ignorance, also no ending of ignorance, all the way through to old age and death, also no ending of old age and death. No suffering, no cause of suffering, no nirvana, no path; no wisdom, also no attainment because no non-attainment. Every Bodhisattva depends on Highest Perfect Wisdom because mind meets no obstacle. Because of no obstacle no fear's born. Gone beyond all topsy-turvey absolutes attain Nirvana. Past, present and future every Buddha depends on Highest Perfect Wisdom therefore attain supreme, perfect enlightenment.

Therefore I know Highest Perfect Wisdom is the great holy mantra, the great untainted mantra, the supreme mantra, the incomparable mantra. Is capable of assuaging all suffering. True because not false. Therefore he proclaimed Highest Perfect Wisdom mantra and proclaimed mantra says: Tayatha Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate Bodhi Svaha. O Sariputra this is how a Bodhisattva-Mahasattva comes to know the Highest Perfect Wisdom.

Then Buddha praised the Noble Avalokitesvara, "Excellent, excellent! Highest Perfect Wisdom is accomplished exactly like that!"

Sunryu Suzuki, Roshi  
Adapted by A.Ginsberg & Gelek Rinpoche

# SURVEY OF HISTORICAL POETICS

## SYLLABUS

### Week 1

- 1) Pre-literate Oral Traditions: Australian Aborigine, African Griot, Shamanic poetics, boasts, Contest of Bards, Kalevala.
- 2) Minstrelry: Wanderwogel, Minnesingers, Troubador men and women. Ezra Pound and Paul Blackburn, Translators.
- 3) Early Ballad and Anonymous Lyrics: Lyric meters, Sir Patrick Spens to Dylan songs, "Sinking of the Titanic" and XX Century Ballads. Early Skeltonics and Rap short verse multiple rhyme.

### Week 2

- 4) Various Classic Meters and Quantitative Verse: Greek Sappho and Latin Catullus. Pindar and Horace for variety of stanza. Pound's Cantos for a modern application of quantity.
- 5) Alliterative Verse: Piers Ploughman, Pound's "Seafarer," Auden's "Age of Anxiety," Kalevala.

### Week 3

- 6) Sonnets: Various sonnet forms: Petrarch, Shakespeare to Merrill Moore, Gwendolyn Brooks, Ted Berrigan.
- 7) Elizabethan Song: Campion and Dowland to Beatles.
- 8) Elizabethan Quantity: Campion, Sidney, Fulke-Greville, Pound's update and Basil Bunting's vowels.

### Week 4

- 9) Blank Verse: Chaucer to Elizabethan Shakespeare to T.S. Eliot & Wallace Stevens.
- 10) Miltonic Ten Syllable Line and Latinate Syntax
- 11) Heroic Couplet: Dryden and Pope.

**Week 5**

- 12) Metaphysical Verse: Stanza complexities. Earlier Wyatt, Donne, Marvell, and Vaughn etc.
- 13) Silver Age Lyrics: Herrick, Herbert etc.

**Week 6**

- 14) Romantic Gnosticism, Mystics: Smart, Blake, Clare, and 'minute particulars'.
- 15) Romantic 'Ordinary Mind': 'Spots of Time,' updated diction. Wordsworth and "Lyrical Ballads" preface.
- 16) Romantic meditation and Ecstasy: Wordsworth, Keats and Shelley (16a) degenerating to Tennyson and Swinburne metrics.

**Week 7**

- 17) 19th Century Idiom: Browning, vernacular monologues.
- 18) 19th Century Modernist Aesthetics: Poe, Baudelaire, Rimbaud.

**Week 8**

- 19) Far Eastern Aesthetics: India : Veda, Sutra, shastra, mantra, sloka, doha; China: Dao De Qing; Li Po, Bai Juyi, Tu Fu, Tsu-Tung-po; "Chinese written character as medium for poetry;" Japan: Manyoshu, women poets; Tanka, Waku, linked verse, Haiku.

**Week 9**

- 20) Whitman Breakthru: Expansive verse, expansive personal breath.
- 21) First Modern Poems 1912: Appolinaire's "Zone," Blaise Cendars' "Easter in N.Y.," followed by Eliot's "Wasteland," 1914; Elimination of punctuation; montage.

**Week 10**

- 22) 1st Half XX Century International Expansive Style: Futurism, Stream of Consciousness. Prose Poetry: Rimbaud, St. Perse, Artaud. Dadaism: Tzara's Manifesto of M. Antipyrene. Surrealism: Andre Breton, Philip Lamantia; chain poem, exquisite corpse, list & catalogue poems, pop poems.

**Week 11**

23) 20th Century British Idiom: Yeats, Lawrence, Bunting.

**Week 12**

24) Post-literate Oral Tradition: Preacher, Spirituals, Hymns, Blues, Calypso, improvisation; Signifying Monkey, Rap, African-American and Caribbean poetics, Bop.

**Week 13**

25) USA Last Half XX Century: Stein, Dada influences etc. Open form, Spontaneous, Projective Verse; W.C.W.'s "relative measure" Considerations & techniques for 'rules of free verse': Olson, Kerouac, Creeley; Burroughs' cut-ups. "Personism:" chit-chat, gossip, associative improvisation & abstraction: O'Hara, Kenneth Koch, Ashbery. Language School Poetics.

**Week 14**

26) Multiculti Poetics: Liberation movements: Gay, Lesbian, Black, Women, Nuyorican, Native American, Chicano/a, Asian American, PacificRim, Indigines; Ecologic, Mammal/Vegetable (Situationist poetics), Fundamentalism, Chaos poetics. Situationist and Language Poetics. (More TBA)

**ASSIGNMENTS:** 14 Poetic Exercises, one per week.  
Portfolio of poems to pass.  
10 page paper on some mode or problem.

**REFERENCE BIBLIOGRAPHY:** Aristotle, Poetics; Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetics; Norton Anthology; G.E. Saintsbury, History of English Prosody; Lewis Turco, Book of Forms; Ron Padgett, Teachers and Writers Handbook of Poetic Forms. Don Allen, New American Poetics; John Thompson, The Founding of English Meter; John Hollander, Rhymes' Reason; Paul Fussell; Ezra Pound, Confucius to Cummings; Louis Zukofsky, A Test of Poetry.

**CONTEMPORARY ANTHOLOGIES**

Don Allen: The Postmoderns. Grove Press. New York, 1982.  
The Poetics of the New American Poetry. Grove Press. New York, 1973.



## HOME-MADE EXEMPLARY ANTHOLOGIES

A. Ginsberg: 20th Century Expansive Verse & Heroic Precursors.

(Anthology Xerox in Library)

A Mini Anthology of XX Century Heroic Expansive

International Poetry- Oct. 1986. (Xerox in Library)

Photographic Poetics: An Anthology 1988. (Xerox in Library).

Living Poetry: An Anthology 1988 Olson to Katz. (Xerox in Library).

A History of the Sapphic Stanza. 1980. (Xerox in Library).

A Short Sapphic Anthology. 1989. (Xerox in Library).

Beat Poetry Anthology Olson to Cope (Literary History of the Beat Generation Vol. I). 1987. (Xerox in Library).

Incunabular Beat Texts (Literary History of the Beat Generation Vol. II). 1987. (Xerox in Library).

A SCHEME OF LYRIC  
THEME: RHYTHM & CADENCE

Specimens from Norton Anthology of Poetry, 3rd Edition

GEOFFREY CHAUCER (ca. 1343-1400)

51 Merciless Beauty

ANONYMOUS LYRICS OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

53 Adam Lay I-bounden

54 I Sing of a Maiden

61 Western Wind

61 A Lyke-Wake Dirge

61 Jolly Good Ale and Old

WILLIAM DUNBAR (ca. 1460-1529)

62 Lament for the Makaris

JOHN SKELTON (1460-1529)

67 To Mistress Margaret Hussey  
(see elsewhere : The Tunning of Elanor Running)

POPULAR BALLADS

71 Lord Randal

72 Edward

73 The Three Ravens

74 The Twa Corbies

74 Sir Patrick Spens

ANONYMOUS ELIZABETHAN AND JACOBEOAN POEMS

85 As You Came from the Holy Land of Walsingham

88 Weep You No More, Sad Fountains

THOMAS WYATT (1503-1542)

90 Whoso List to Hunt

91 They Flee from Me

92 My Lute, Awake

93 Forget Not Yet

GEORGE GASCOIGNE (ca. 1535-1577)

101 Gascoigne's Lullabye

CHIDIOCK TICHBORNE (d. 1586)

105 Tichborne's Elegy

SIR WALTER RALEIGH (ca. 1552-1618)  
105 The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd  
107 The Lie

EDMUND SPENSER (ca. 1552-1599)  
138 Epithalmion (*end stanzas*)  
146 Prothalmion (*first stanzas*)

FULKE GREVILLE, LORD BROOKE (1554-1628)  
151 Sion Lies Waste

SIR PHILIP SYDNEY (1554-1586)  
156 Astrophel and Stella (*#s 1 & 31*)

GEORGE PEELE (1557-1596)  
162 When As the Rye Reach to the Chin  
162 Hot Sun, Cool Fire

ROBERT SOUTHWELL (ca. 1561-1619)  
163 The Burning Babe

SAMUEL DANIEL (ca. 1562-1619)  
166 *from Delia #45*

MICHAEL DRAYTON (1563-1631)  
170 *from Idea #61*

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE (1564-1616)  
The Passionate Shepherd to His Love 185

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616)  
185 et seq. Sonnets: #s 18, 29, 30, 55, 65, 71, 73, 107, 116, 129, 146  
193 When Daisies Pied (Spring & Winter)  
194 Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind  
194 It Was a Lover and His Lass  
195 Oh Mistress Mine  
196 Hark! Hark! The Lark  
196 Fear No More the Heat o' the Sun  
197 When the Daffodils Begin to Peer  
197 Full Fathom Five  
197 Where the Bee Sucks, There Suck I

## THOMAS CAMPION (1567-1620)

- 198 My Sweet Lesbia
- 198 I Care Not for These Ladies
- 199 Follow Thy Fair Sun
- 199 When Thou Must Home
- 200 Rose-cheeked Laura

## THOMAS NASHE (1567-1601)

- 202 A Litany in Time of Plague

## JOHN DONNE (1572-1631)

- 205 Song ("Go and catch a falling star")
- 207 The Canonization
- 208 Song ("Sweetest love, I do not go")
- 210 A Valediction: Of Weeping
- 213 The Ecstasy
- 216 Elegy XIX. To His Mistress Going to Bed
- 220 et seq. *from Holy Sonnets #s 1, 10, 14*

## BEN JOHNSON (1573-1637)

- 224 On My First Son
- 228 Epitaph on Salomon Pavy
- 230 Song: To Celia
- 237 Slow, Slow, Fresh Fount
- 237 Queen and Huntress
- 238 To the Memory of My Beloved, the Author Mr. Wm Shakespeare

## JOHN WEBSTER (1580-1625)

- 241 Call for the Robin Redbreast and the Wren

## ROBERT HERRICK (1591-1633)

- 242 The Argument of His Book
- 243 The Scare-fire
- 243 Delight in Disorder
- 246 To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time
- 247 To Daffodils
- 248 His Prayer to Ben Johnson
- 249 An ode for Him

## GEORGE HERBERT (1593-1633)

- 254 Easter Wings
- 262 The Collar
- 267 Death
- 268 Love (III)

JAMES SHIRLEY (1596-1666)

268 The Glories of Our Blood and State

THOMAS CAREW (1598?-1639?)

269 A Song ("Ask me no more where Jove bestows")

EDMUND WALLER (1607-1687)

274 Song ("Go, lovely rose!")

JOHN MILTON (1608-1674)

284 L'Allegro

287 Il Penseroso

293 Sonnets: When I Consider How My Light Is Spent  
On the Late Massacre in Piedmont

294 Methought I Saw

295 *from* Paradise Lost: The Invocation

SIR JOHN SUCKLING (1609-1642)

317 Song ("Why so pale and wan, fond lover")

319 A Ballad upon a Wedding

322 Out upon It!

RICHARD LOVELACE (1618-1658)

332 To Althea, from Prison

333 To Lucasta, Going to the Wars

ANDREW MARVELL (1621-1678)

336 Bermudas

337 To His Coy Mistress

340 The Definition of Love

343 The Mower to the Glowworms

343 The Garden

HENRY VAUGHAN (1622-1695)

350 They Are Gone into the World of Light!

JOHN DRYDEN (1631-1700)

374 To the Memory of Mr. Oldham

375 A Song for St. Cecilia's Day

Tom o' Bedlam's Song

From the hagg and hungrie goblin  
That into raggs would rend ye,  
And the spirit that stands by the naked man  
In the Book of Moones defend yee!  
That of your five sounde sences  
You never be forsaken,  
Nor wander from your selves with Tom  
Abroad to begg your bacon.

*While I doe sing "any foode, any feeding,  
Feedinge, drinke or clothing,"  
Come dame or maid, be not afraid,  
Poor Tom will injure nothing.*

Of thirty bare years have I  
Twice twenty bin enraged,  
And of forty bin three tymes fiftene  
In durance soundlie caged.  
On the lordlie loftes of Bedlam,  
With stubble softe and dainty,  
Brave braceletts strong, sweet whips ding-dong,  
With wholsome hunger plenty.

*And nowe I sing, etc.*

With a thought I tooke for Maudlin,  
And a cruse of cockle pottage,  
With a thing thus tall, skie blesse you all,  
I befell into this dotage.  
I slept not since the Conquest,  
Till then I never wakèd,  
Till the rogysh boy of love where I lay  
Mee found and strip't mee naked.

*And nowe I sing, etc.*

When I short have shorne my sowre face  
And swigg'd my horny barrel,  
In an oaken inne I pound my skin  
As a suite of guilt apparell,  
The moon's my constant Mistrisse,  
And the lowlie owle my morrowe,  
The flaming Drake and the Nightcrowe make  
Mee musicke to my sorrowe.

*While I doe sing, etc.*

The palsie plagues my pulses  
When I prigg your pigs or pullen,  
Your culvers take, or matchles make  
Your Chanticleare, or sullen.  
When I want provant, with Humfrie  
I sup, and when benighted,  
I repose in Powles with waking soules  
Yet nevere am affrighted.

*But I doe sing, etc.*

I knowe more then Apollo,  
For oft, when hee ly's sleeping,  
I see the starres att bloudie warres  
In the wounded welkin weeping;  
The moone embrace her shepheard,  
And the quene of Love her warryor,  
While the first doth borne the star of morne,  
And the next the heavenly Farrier.

*While I doe sing, etc.*

The Gipsie Snap and Pedro  
Are none of Tom's comradoes.  
The punk I skorne and the cut purse sworn  
And the roaring boyes bravadoe.  
The meeke, the white, the gentle,  
Me handle touch and spare not  
But those that crosse Tom Rynosseros  
Doe what the panther dare not.

*Although I sing, etc.*

With an host of furious fancies,  
Whereof I am commander,  
With a burning speare, and a horse of aire,  
To the wilderness I wander.  
By a knight of ghostes and shadowes  
I summon'd am to tourney  
Ten leagues beyond the wide world's end.  
Me thinke it is noe journey.

*Yet will I sing, etc.*

37.

From: Poets of the English Language Vol. II:  
Marlowe to Marvell  
Ed. W. H. Auden and Norman Holmes Pearson;  
NY Viking 1950

## WHAT IS BEAUTY BUT A BREATH

THOMAS GREAVES

SONGS OF SUNDRIE KINDES 1604

1

What is beauty but a breath?  
Fancies twin at birth & death,  
The colour of a damaske rose,  
That fadeth when the northwind blowes:  
Tis such that though all sorts do crave it,  
They know not what it is to have it:  
A thing that som time stoops not to a king  
And yet most open to the commonst thing:  
For she that is most fair,  
Is open to the aire.

ANONYMOUS

From: An Anthology of Elizabethan Lute Songs, Madrigals  
and Rounds

Text ed. W.H. Auden and Chester Kallman, NY, Norton 1955

## Lady Greensleeves

Alas, my love, ye do me wrong,  
To cast me off discourteously:  
And I have loved you so long,  
Delighting in your companie.

*Greensleeves was all my joy,  
Greensleeves was my delight:  
Greensleeves was my hart of gold,  
And who but Ladie Greensleeves.*

I have been readie at your hand,  
To grant what ever you would crave.  
I have both waged life and land,  
Your love and good will for to have.

*Greensleeves was all my joy, etc.*

I bought thee kerchers to thy head,  
That were wrought fine and gallantly:  
I kept thee both at board and bed,  
Which cost my purse wel favouredly,

I bought thee peticotes of the best,  
The cloth so fine as fine might be:  
I gave thee jewels for thy chest,  
And all this cost I spent on thee.

Thy smock of silk, both faire and white,  
With gold embrodered gorgeously:  
Thy peticote of Sendall right:  
And thus I bought thee gladly.

Thy girdle of gold so red,  
With pearles bedecked sumptuously:  
The like no other lasses had,  
And yet thou wouldst not love me,

Thy purse and eke thy gay guilt knives,  
Thy pincase gallant to the eie:  
No better wore the Burgesse wives,  
And yet thou wouldst not love me.

Thy crimson stockings all of silk,  
With golde all wrought above the knee,  
Thy pumps as white as was the milk,  
And yet thou wouldst not love me.

Thy gown was of the grossie green,  
Thy sleeves of Satten hanging by:

Which made thee be our harvest Queen,  
And yet thou wouldst not love me.

Thy garters fringed with the golde,  
And silver aglets hanging by,  
Which made thee blithe for to beholde,  
And yet thou wouldst not love me.

My gayest gelding I thee gave,  
To ride where ever liked thee,  
No Ladie ever was so brave,  
And yet thou wouldst not love me.

My men were clothed all in green,  
And they did ever wait on thee:  
Al this was gallant to be seen,  
And yet thou wouldst not love me.

They set thee up, they took thee downe,  
They served thee with humilitie,  
Thy foote might not once touch the ground,  
And yet thou wouldst not love me.

For everie morning when thou rose,  
I sent thee dainties orderly:  
To cheare thy stomach from all woes,  
And yet thou wouldst not love me.

Thou couldst desire no earthly thing.  
But stil thou hadst it readily:  
Thy musicke still to play and sing,  
And yet thou wouldst not love me.

And who did pay for all this geare,  
That thou didst spend when pleased thee?  
Even I that am rejected here,  
And thou disdainst to love me.

Wel, I wil pray to God on hie,  
That thou my constancie maist see:  
And that yet once before I die,  
Thou wilt vouchsafe to love me.

Greensleeves now farewell adue,  
God I pray to prosper thee:  
For I am stil thy lover true,  
Come once againe and love me.

From: Poets of the English Language Vol II: Marlowe to Marvell  
Ed. W.H. Auden and Norman Holmes Pearson; NY Viking 1950



## SUGGESTED READING LIST: MODERNS

Allen Ginsberg

- R. Blyth  
Haiku. Hokuseido. Tokyo, Japan, 1973. (op.?)  
 Vol. 1 Eastern Culture  
 Vol. 2 Spring  
 Vol. 3 Summer-Autumn  
 Vol. 4 Autumn-Winter
- William S. Burroughs  
Nova Express. Grove Press, Inc. NY, 1964.  
The Soft Machine. Ibid.  
The Wild Boys. Ibid.  
The Western Lands. Viking, NY 1987
- David Cope  
Quiet Lives. Humana Press. Clifton, NJ, 1983.  
On the Bridge. Humana Press. Clifton, NJ, 1986.
- Gregory Corso  
Gasoline & Vestal Lady. City Lights. SF, 1955, 1958.  
The Happy Birthday of Death. New Directions. NY, 1960.  
Herald of the Autochthonic Spirit. Ibid. 1982.
- Robert Creeley  
Mirrors. New Directions. NY, 1981.  
Selected Poems University of California Press. Berkeley  
 1991
- Allen Ginsberg  
Collected Poems 1947-1980. Harper & Row. NY, 1984.  
White Shroud: Poems 1980-1985. Harper Perennial NY  
 1986.  
Howl Annotated. Ibid., 1995.
- Jack Kerouac  
Mexico City Blues. Grove Press, Inc. NY, 1959.  
Scattered Poems. City Lights. San Francisco, 1971.  
Visions of Cody. McGraw Hill paperback. NY, 1973.  
Heaven & Other Poems. Grey Fox Press. S.F., 1977.
- Philip Lamantia  
Selected Poems:1943-1966. City Lights. SF, 1967.
- Richmond Lattimore  
Greek Lyrics. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago,  
 1955.
- Ezra Pound  
The Cantos. New Directions. NY, 1948.  
Literary Essays of Ezra Pound. Ibid. 1968.
- Carl Rakosi  
Collected Poems. National Poetry Foundation, University  
 of Maine. Orono, 1985.
- Charles Reznikoff  
Poems 1918-1975 ed. Seamus Cooney. Black Sparrow  
 Press, Santa Barbara, 1976.

- Nanao Sakaki Break the Mirror. North Point Press. Berkeley, 1987.
- Gary Snyder Axe Handles. North Point Press. Berkeley, 1984.  
Left Out in the Rain. Ibid. 1986
- John Wieners Collected Poems. Black Sparrow Press. Santa Barbara, 1986.
- Philip Whalen Heavy Breathing Poems 1967-1980 Grey Fox Press. SF, 1983.  
On Bears Head (1950-1966) Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc. NY, 1969.
- William Carlos Williams Selected Essays. New Directions. New York, 1963.  
Collected Poems Vol. I 1909-1936. ed. Litz & MacGowan, Ibid. 1986  
Collected Poems Vol. II 1939-1962. ed. MacGowan, Ibid. 1988.

COSMOPOLITAN GREETINGS-  
To Struga Festival Golden Wreath Laureates  
& International Bards 1986

Stand up against governments, against God.

Stay irresponsible.

Say only what we know & imagine.

Absolutes are Coercion.

Change is absolute.

Ordinary mind includes eternal perceptions.

Observe what's vivid.

Notice what you notice.

Catch yourself thinking.

Vividness is self-selecting.

If we don't show anyone, we're free to write anything.

Remember the future.

Advise only myself.

Don't drink yourself to death.

Two molecules clanking against each other require an observer to  
become scientific data.

The measuring instrument determines the appearance of the  
phenomenal world after Einstein.

The universe is subjective.

Walt Whitman celebrated Person.

We are observer, measuring instrument, eye, subject, Person.

Universe is Person.

Inside skull vast as outside skull.

Mind is outer space.

"Each on his bed spoke to himself alone, making no sound."

"First thought, best thought."

Mind is shapely, Art is shapely.

Maximum information, minimum number of syllables.

Syntax condensed, sound is solid.

Intense fragments of spoken idiom, best.

Move with rhythm, roll with vowels.

Consonants around vowels make sense.

Savor vowels, appreciate consonants.

Subject is known by what she sees.

Others can measure their vision by what we see.

Candor ends paranoia.

Allen Ginsberg  
Kral Majales  
June 25, 1986  
Boulder, Colorado

Revised 1/29/90  
5/18/92

*See Cosmopolitan Greetings Poems 1986-1992 Harper Perennial, N.Y. 1995*

MIND WRITING SLOGANS

"First thought is best in Art, second in other matters."

--William Blake

I. GROUND (Situation, or Primary Perception)

- 1. "First Thought, Best Thought"  
--Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche
- 2. "Take a friendly attitude toward your thoughts."  
--Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche
- 3. "The Mind must be loose." --John Adams
- 4. "One perception must immediatly and directly lead to a further perception."  
--Charles Olson, "Projective Verse"
- 5. "My writing is a picture of the mind moving."  
--Philip Whalen
- 6. Surprise Mind --Allen Ginsberg
- 7. "The old pond, a frog jumps in, Kerplunk!" --Basho
- 8. "Magic is the total delight (appreciation) of chance"  
--Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche
- 9. "Do I contradict myself?  
Very well, then I contradict myself,  
(I am large. I contain multitudes.)"  
--Walt Whitman
- 10. "...What quality went to form a man of achievement, especially in literature? ...Negative capability, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason."  
--John Keats
- 11. "Form is never more than an extension of content."  
--Robert Creeley to Charles Olson
- 12. "Form follows function." --Frank Lloyd Wright
- 13. Ordinary Mind includes eternal perceptions. --A.G.
- 14. "Nothing is better for being Eternal  
Nor so white as the white that dies of a day."  
--Louis Zukofsky
- 15. Notice what you notice. --A.G.
- 16. Catch yourself thinking --A.G.
- 17. Observe what's vivid. --A.G.
- 18. Vividness is self-selecting. --A.G.
- 19. "Spots of Time" --William Wordsworth
- 20. If we don't show anyone we're free to write anything --A.G.
- 21. "My mind is open to itself." --Gelek Rinpoche
- 22. "Each on his bed spoke to himself alone, making no sound."  
--Charles Reznikoff

II. PATH (Method or Recognition)

- 23. "No ideas but in things." "...No ideas but in the Facts."  
--William Carlos Williams
- 24. "Close to the nose." --W.C. Williams
- 25. "Sight is where the eye hits." --Louis Zukofsky
- 26. "Clamp the mind down on objects." --W.C. Williams

- 27. "Direct treatment of the thing..." (or object.)"  
--E.Pound,1912
- 28. "Presentation, not reference..." --Ezra Pound
- 29. "Give me a for instance." --Vernacular
- 30. "Show not tell." --Vernacular
- 31. "The natural object is always the adequate symbol."  
--Ezra Pound
- 32. "Things are symbols of themselves."  
--Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche
- 33. "Labor well the minute particulars, take care of the little ones  
He who would do good for another must do it in minute particulars  
General Good is the plea of the Scoundrel Hypocrite and Flatterer  
For Art & Science cannot exist but in minutely organized particulars"  
--William Blake
- 34. "And being old she put a skin/On everything she said."  
--W.B.Yeats
- 35. "Don't think of words when you stop but to see the picture better."  
--Jack Kerouac
- 36. "Details are the Life of Prose." --Jack Kerouac
- 37. Intense fragments of spoken idiom, best.--A.G.
- 38. "Economy of Words" --Ezra Pound
- 39. "Tailoring" --Gregory Corso
- 40. Maximum information, minimum number of syllables. --A.G.
- 41. Syntax condensed, sound is solid. --A.G.
- 42. Savor vowels, appreciate consonants. --A.G.
- 43. "Compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome."--Ezra Pound
- 44. "...awareness...of the tone leading of the vowels."  
--Ezra Pound
- 45. "...an attempt to approximate classical quantitative meters..." --Ezra Pound
- 46. "Lower limit speech, upper limit song" --Louis Zukofsky
- 47. "Phanopoeia,Melopoeia, Logopoeia." --Ezra Pound
- 48. "Sight, Sound & Intellect." --Louis Zukofsky
- 49. "Only emotion objectified endures." --Louis Zukofsky

III. **FRUITION** (Result or Appreciation)

- 50. Spiritus = Breathing = Inspiration = Unobstructed Breath
- 51. "Alone with the Alone" --Plotinus
- 52. Sunyata (Skt.) = Ku (Japanese) = Emptiness
- 53. "What's the sound of one hand clapping?" --Zen Koan
- 54. "What's the face you had before you were born?" --Zen Koan
- 55. Vipassana (Skt.) = Clear Seeing
- 56. "Stop the world" --Carlos Casteneda
- 57. "The purpose of art is to stop time." --Bob Dylan
- 58. "The unspeakable visions of the individual." --J.K.
- 59. "I'm going to try speaking some reckless words, and I want you to try to listen recklessly."  
--Chuang Tzu,  
(Tr. Burton Watson)

- 60. "Candor" --Whitman
- 61. "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin."  
--Shakespeare
- 62. "Contact" --A Magazine, Nathaniel West & W.C. Williams, Eds.
  
- 63. "God Appears & God is Light  
To thosepoor Souls who dwell in Night  
But does a Human Form Display  
To those who Dwell in Realms of day." --W. Blake
- 64. Subject is known by what she sees.--A.G.
- 65. Others can measure their visions by what we see. --A.G.
- 66. Candor ends paranoia. --A.G.
- 67. "Willingness to be Fool."--Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche
- 68. "day & night/you're all right"--Corso
- 69. Tyger: "Humility is Beatness." --Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche  
& A.G.
- 70. Lion: "Surprise Mind" --Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche & A.G.
- 71. Garuda: "Crazy Wisdom Outrageousness" --Chögyam Trungpa,  
Rinpoche
- 72. Dragon: "Unborn Inscrutability" --Chögyam Trungpa,  
Rinpoche
- 73. "To be men not destroyers" --Ezra Pound
- 74. "Speech synchronizes mind & body."  
--Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche
- 75. "The Emperor unites Heaven & Earth." --Chögyam Trungpa,  
Rinpoche
- 76. "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world."  
--Shelley
- 77. "Make it new" --Ezra Pound
- 78. "When the mode of music changes, the walls of the city  
shake" --Plato
- 79. "Every third thought shall be my grave" --W. Shakespeare,  
*The Tempest*
- 80. "That in black ink my love may still shine bright"  
--W. Shakespeare, Sonnets
- 81. "Only emotion endures" --Ezra Pound
- 82. "Well while I'm here I'll  
do the work--  
and what's the Work?  
To ease the pain of living.  
Everything else, drunken  
dumbshow." --A.G.
- 83. "...Kindness, sweetest  
of the small notes  
  
in the world's ache,  
most modest & gentle  
of the elements  
  
entered man before history  
and became his daily  
connection, let no man

84. tell you otherwise." --Carl Rakosi  
"To diminish the mass of human and sentient sufferings."  
--Gelek Rinpoche

Naropa Institute, July 1992  
New York, March 5, 1993  
New York, June 27, 1993



Meditation and Poetics

Allen Ginsberg(USA)

It's an old tradition in the West among great poets that poetry is rarely thought of as "just poetry." Real poetry practitioners are practitioners of mind awareness, or practitioners of reality, expressing their fascination with a phenomenal universe and trying to penetrate to the heart of it. Poetics isn't mere picturesque dilettantism or egotistical expressionism for craven motives grasping for sensation and flattery. Classical poetry is a "process," or experiment—a probe into the nature of reality and the nature of the mind.

That motif comes to a climax in both subject matter and method in our own century. Recent artifacts in many fields of art are examples of "process," or "work in progress," as with the preliminary title of Joyce's last work, *Finnegans Wake*. Real poetry isn't consciously composed as "poetry," as if one only sat down to compose a poem or a novel for publication. Some people do work that way: artists whose motivations are less interesting than those of Shakespeare, Dante, Rimbaud, and Gertrude Stein, or of certain surrealist verbal alchemists—Tristan Tzara, Andre Breton, Antonin Artaud—or of the elders Pound and William Carlos Williams, or, specifically in our own time, of William Burroughs and Jack Kerouac. For most of "The Moderns," as with the Imagists of the twenties and thirties in our century, the motive has been purification of mind and speech. Thus we have the great verses of T. S. Eliot:

*Since our concern was speech, and speech impelled us  
To purify the dialect of the tribe  
And urge the mind to aftersight and foresight,  
Let me disclose the gifts reserved for age  
To set a crown upon your lifetime's effort.  
First, the cold friction of expiring sense  
Without enchantment, offering no promise  
But bitter tastelessness of shadow fruit  
As body and soul begin to fall asunder.*

There's a common misconception among puritanical meditators and puritanical businessmen, who think they've got "reality" in their hands, that high poetics and art as practiced in the twentieth century are practiced as silly Bohemian indulgence, rather than for the reason that one practices mindfulness in meditation or accuracy in commerce. Western fine art and other

meditation practices are brother-and-sister-related activities. (Which is quite different from the notion that East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet—an idiot slogan denying the fact East and West the brain's the same.) It's an important insight to have, so that as meditation practitioners and businessmen we don't become inhibited in expressing and probing ourselves through various art means that we've inherited—from poetry to music to tea ceremony to archery to horsemanship to cinema to jazz blues to painting; even New Wave electric music.

Major works of twentieth-century art are probes of consciousness—particular experiments with recollection or mindfulness, experiments with language and speech, experiments with forms. Modern art is an attempt to define or recognize or experience perception—pure perception. I'm taking the word "probe" for poetry—poetry as a probe into one subject or another—from the poet Gregory Corso. He speaks of poetry as a probe into Marriage, Hair, Mind, Death, Army, Police, which are the titles of some of his earlier poems. He uses poetry to take an individual word and probe all its possible variants. He'll take a concept like death, for instance, and pour every archetypal thought he's ever thought or could recollect having thought about death and lay them out in poetic form—making a whole mandala of thoughts about it.

Kerouac and I, following Arthur Rimbaud and Baudelaire, our great-grandfathers among hermetic poets and philosophers, were experimenting naively with what we thought of as "new reality," or "Supreme Reality." Actually that was a phrase in use in 1945; we were thinking in terms of a new vision or a new consciousness, after the little passage in Rimbaud's *A Season in Hell*: "Noël sur la terre!" "When shall we go beyond the shores and the mountains, to salute the birth of new work, new wisdom, the flight of tyrants and demons, end of superstition, to adore—the first!—Christmas on earth!" In fact, the phrase "new consciousness" circulated among Beat Generation writers as our poetic motif in the early fifties. The specific intention of that decade's poetry was the exploration of consciousness, which is why we were interested in psychedelic or mind-manifesting substances—not necessarily synthetic; they might also be herbs or cacti.

Kerouac's motive for his probe was disillusionment: the heavy experience of the lives, old age, sickness and death of his father and his older brother, whose dying he experienced as he took care of them and watched them in their beds, close to their deaths. As he wrote in *Visions of Cody*, in 1951:

I'm writing this book because we're all going to die—in the loneliness of my life, my father dead, my brother dead, my mother far away, my sister and wife far away, nothing here

but my own tragic hands . . . that are now left to guide and disappear their own way into the common dark of all our death, sleeping in me raw bed, alone and stupid: with just this one pride and consolation: my heart broke in the general despair and opened up inwards to the Lord, I made a supplication in this dream.

As a motive for writing a giant novel, this passage from *Visions of Cady* is a terrific stroke of awareness and *bodhisattva* heart, or outgoingness of heart. So I'm speaking about the ground of poetry and purification of motive. A few Buddhist dharma phrases correlate charmingly with the process of Bohemian art of the twentieth century—notions like "Take a non-totalitarian attitude," "Express yourself courageously," "Be outrageous to yourself," "Don't conform to your idea of what is expected but conform to your present spontaneous mind, your raw awareness." That's how Dharma poets "make it new"—which was Pound's adjuration.

You need a certain deconditioning of attitude—a deconditioning of rigidity and unyieldingness—so that you can get to the heart of your own thought. That's parallel with traditional Buddhist ideas of renunciation—renunciation of hand-me-down conditioned conceptions of mind. It's the meditative practice of "letting go of thoughts"—neither pushing them away nor inviting them in, but, as you sit meditating, watching the procession of thought forms pass by, rising, flowering and dissolving, and disowning them, so to speak: you're not responsible any more than you're responsible for the weather, because you can't tell in advance what you're going to think next. Otherwise you'd be able to predict every thought, and that would be sad for you. There are some people whose thoughts are all predictable.

So it requires cultivation of tolerance towards one's own thoughts and impulses and ideas—the tolerance necessary for the perception of one's own mind, the kindness to the self necessary for acceptance of that process of consciousness and for acceptance of the mind's raw contents, as in Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself," so that you can look from the outside into the skull and see what's there in your head.

The specific parallel to be drawn is to Keats's notion of "negative capability," written out in a letter to his brother. He was considering Shakespeare's character and asking what kind of quality went to form a man of achievement, especially in literature. "Negative capability," he wrote, "is when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching out after fact and reason." This means the ability to hold contrary or even polar opposite ideas or conceptions in the mind without freaking out—to experience contradiction or conflict or chaos in the mind without any irritable grasping after facts.

The really interesting word here is "irritable," which in Buddhism we take to be the aggressive insistence on eliminating one concept as against another, so that you have to take a meat-ax to your opponent or yourself to resolve the contradictions—sexual contradictions or political contradictions—as the Marxists took a meat-ax to their own skulls at one point, and as the neo-conservatives at this point may take a meat-ax to their own inefficient skulls. A current example might be the maniacal insistence that the Sandinistas are the force of evil and that our C.I.A. terrorists are patriots like George Washington. That's a completely polarized notion of the universe—the notion that everything is black and white.

A basic Buddhist idea from 150 A.D. is that "Form is no different from Emptiness, Emptiness no different from Form." That formulation is one that Keats and all subtle poets might appreciate. The American poets Philip Whalen, Gary Snyder, Kerouac and Burroughs in their *wark* do appreciate this "highest perfect wisdom," both in their own intuition and from their study of *Prajnaparamita* texts.

As part of "purification" or "de-conditioning" we have the need for clear seeing or direct perception—perception of a young tree without an intervening veil of preconceived ideas; the surprise glimpse, let us say, or insight or sudden Gestalt, or I suppose you could say satori, occasionally glimpsed as esthetic experience.

In our century Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams constantly insist on direct perception of the materials of poetry, of the language itself that you're working with. The slogan here—and henceforth I'll use a series of slogans derived from various poets and yogis—is one out of Pound: "Direct treatment of the thing." How do you interpret that phrase? Don't treat the object indirectly or symbolically, but look directly at it and choose spontaneously that aspect of it which is most immediately striking—the striking flash in consciousness or awareness, the most vivid, what sticks out in your mind—and notate that.

"Direct treatment of the 'thing' whether subjective or objective," is a famous axiom or principle that Pound pronounced around 1912. He derived that American application of twentieth-century insight from his study of Chinese Confucian, Taoist and Japanese Buddhist poetry. There was a Buddhist infusion into Western culture at the end of the nineteenth century, both in painting and in poetry. Pound, as many of you know, put in order the papers of "the late professor Ernest Fenellosa," the celebrated essay on "The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry." Fenellosa/Pound pointed out that in Chinese you were able to have a "direct treatment" of the object because the object was pictorially there via hieroglyph. Pound recommended the adaptation of the same idea: the Chi-

nese poetic method as a corrective to the conceptual vagueness and sentimental abstraction of Western poetry. In a way he was asking for the intercession of the *bodhisattvas* of Buddhist poetry into Western poetics because he was calling for direct perception, direct contact without intervening conceptualization, a clear seeing attentiveness, which, as you may remember, echoing in your brain, is supposed to be one of the marks of Zen masters, as in their practice of gardening, tea ceremony, flower arranging or archery.

That idea was relatively rare in late-nineteenth-century academic Western poetry, though Pound also drew from advanced Western models—old Dante to the French modernist poets Jules Laforgue, Tristan Corbière and Rimbaud. The tradition was initiated by Baudelaire, who had updated the poetic consciousness of the nineteenth century to include the city, real estate, houses, carriages, traffic, machinery. As Walt Whitman said, Bring the muse into the kitchen. Drag the muse into the kitchen? "She's there, installed amidst the kitchenware."

Another slogan that evolved around the same time as Pound's and with the same motif was William Carlos Williams' famous "No ideas but in things." He repeats it in his epic *Paterson*, a little more clearly for those who haven't understood: "No ideas but in facts." Just the facts, ma'am. Don't give us your editorial; no general ideas. Just "give me a for instance"—correlate the conception with a real process or a particular action or a concrete thing, localized, immediate, palpable, practicable, involving direct sense contact.

In one of the immortal bard's lyrics, divine Shakespeare gives you nothing but things:

*When icicles hang by the wall  
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail  
And Tom bears logs into the hall,  
And milk comes frozen home in pail . . .  
And Marian's nose looks red and raw. . .*

That was Shakespeare's vivid presentation of unmistakable winter. You don't need to make the generalization if you give the particular instances. A poet is like a Sherlock Holmes, assembling the phalanx of data from which to draw his editorial conclusion. William James' notion was of "the solidity of specificity." Kerouac's phrase for it was, "Details are the life of prose." To have it you've got to have "direct treatment of the thing." And that requires direct perception—mind capable of awareness, uncluttered by abstraction, the veil of conceptions parted to reveal significant details of the world's stage.

Williams has another way of saying it—homely advice to young poets and American art practitioners: "Write about things that are close to the nose." There's a poem of his, much quoted by Buddhist poets, called

"Thursday." Does anybody know that little eight-or-nine-line "Thursday"? It goes like this:

*I have had my dream—like others—  
and it has come to nothing, so that  
I remain now carelessly  
with feet planted on the ground  
and look up at the sky—  
feeling my clothes about me,  
the weight of my body in my shoes,  
the rim of my hat, air passing in and out  
at my nose—and decide to dream no more.*

Just try! Actually that one single poem is the intersection between the mind of meditation—the discipline of meditation, letting go of thoughts—and the Yankee practice of poetry after William James, where the poet is standing there, feeling the weight of his body in his shoes, aware of the air passing in and out of his nose. And since the title of this series of talks is "Spiritual Quests" we might make a little footnote here that "spirit" comes from the Latin *spiritus*, which means "breathing," and that the spiritual practices of the East are primarily involved with meditation, and that meditation practices usually begin with trying to increase one's awareness of the space around you, beginning with the fact that you're breathing. So generally you follow your breath, in Zen or in Tibetan style. It's a question of following the breath out from the tip of the nose to the end of the breath and then following it back into the stomach, perhaps, or the lower abdomen. So it's sort of charming that Williams arrived at this concept on his own: "air passing in and out at my nose—and decide to dream no more."

Another Pound phrase that leads the mind toward direct treatment of the thing, or clear seeing, is: "The natural object is always the adequate symbol." You don't have to go chasing after far-fetched symbols because direct perception will propose efficient language to you. And that relates to another very interesting statement, by the Tibetan lama poet Chögyam Trungpa: "Things are symbols of themselves." Pound means that the natural object is identical with what it is you're trying to symbolize in any case. Trungpa is saying that if you directly perceive a thing it's completely there, completely itself, completely revelatory of the eternal universe that it's in, or of your mind as it is.

In Kerouac's set of thirty slogans called "Belief & Technique for Modern Prose" there are a few mind-arrows, or mind-pointers, which are instructions on how to focus in, how to direct your mind to see things, whether it's "an old teacup in memory," or whether you're looking out a window, sketching verbally. Ke-

rouac advised writers: "Don't think of words when you stop but to see picture better." William Blake's similar slogan is: "Labor well the Minute Particulars, attend to the Little-ones." It's very pretty actually; take care of the little baby facts. Blake continues:

*He who would do good to another, must do it in Minute  
Particulars  
General good is the plea of the scoundrel hypocrite &  
flatterer:  
For Art and Science cannot exist but in minutely organized  
Particulars*

A classic example of William Carlos Williams in America seeing minute particulars clearly, precisely, thoroughly, is in the most famous and most obvious of Imagist poems, "The Red Wheelbarrow." Because the thing was seen so completely the poem seems to have penetrated throughout the culture, so that people who are not interested in poetry—high school kids or thick-headed businessmen—know this as the totem modern poem. Is there anybody here who doesn't know "The Red Wheelbarrow"? How many know it? I was just trying to figure out whether I was overstating the case when I said it was penetrating through modern culture. O.K. Apparently, one-third of the room knows it, and after I read it, most will have heard it:

*so much depends  
upon  
  
a red wheel  
barrow  
  
glazed with rain  
water  
  
beside the white  
chickens.*

That's considered the acme Imagist poem of direct perception. I think it was written in the twenties. It's not much, actually. Williams didn't think it was so much; he said, "An inconsequential poem—written in 2 minutes—as was (for instance) The Red Wheelbarrow and most other short poems." But it became a sort of sacred object.

Why did he focus on that one image in his garden? Well, he probably didn't focus on it—it was just there and he saw it. And he remembered it. Vividness is self-selecting. In other words, he didn't prepare to see it, except that he had had a life's preparation in practicing awareness "close to the nose," trying to stay in his body and observe the space around him. That kind of spontaneous awareness has a Buddhist term for it: "the Unborn." For where does a thought come from? You

can't trace it back to a womb, a thought is "unborn." Perception is unborn, in the sense that it spontaneously arises. Because even if you tried to trace your perceptions back to the source, you couldn't.

To catch the red wheelbarrow, however, you have to be practiced in poetics as well as practiced in ordinary mind. Flaubert was the prose initiator of that narrowing down of perception and the concretization of it with his phrase "The ordinary is the extraordinary."

—One perception must move instanter on another—as similar to the dharmic practice of letting go of thoughts and allowing fresh thoughts to arise and be registered, rather than hanging onto one exclusive image and forcing Reason to branch it out and extend it into a hung-up metaphor. That was the difference between the metaphysically inspired poetry of the thirties to the fifties in America after T. S. Eliot and the Open Form, practiced simultaneously by Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams and later by Charles Olson and Robert Creeley. They let the mind loose. Actually, that's a phrase by one of the founders of our country: "The mind must be loose." That's John Adams, as reported by Robert Duncan in relation to poetics. Try that on the religious right. Leave the mind loose. One perception leads to another. So don't cling to perceptions, or fixate on impressions, or on visions of William Blake. As the young surrealist poet Philip Lamantia said when he was asked in 1958 to define "hip" as distinguishable from "square": Hip is "Don't get hung up."

Robert Duncan once got up and walked across the room and then said, "I can't revise my steps once I've taken them." He was using that as an example to explain why he was interested in Gertrude Stein's writing, which was writing in the present moment, present time, present consciousness: what was going on in the grammar of her head during the time of composition without recourse to past memory or future planning.

Meditators have formulated a slogan that says, "Renunciation is a way to avoid conditioned mind." That means that meditation is practiced by constantly renouncing your mind, or "renouncing" your thoughts, or "letting go" of your thoughts. It doesn't mean letting go of your whole awareness—only that small part of your mind that's dependent on linear, logical thinking. It doesn't mean renouncing intellect, which has its proper place in Buddhism, as it does in Blake. It doesn't mean idiot wildness. It means expanding the area of awareness, so that your awareness surrounds your thoughts, rather than that you enter into thoughts like

a dream. Thus the life of meditation and the life of art are both based on a similar conception of spontaneous mind. They both share renunciation as a way of avoiding a conditioned art work, or trite art, or repetition of other people's ideas.

Poets can avoid repetition of their obsessions. What it requires is confidence in the magic of chance. Chögyam Trungpa phrased this notion, "Magic is the total delight in chance." That also brings magic to poetry: chance thought, or the unborn thought, or the spontaneous thought, or the "first thought," or the thought spoken spontaneously with its conception—thought and word identical on the spot. It requires a certain amount of unselfconsciousness, like singing in the bathtub. It means not embarrassed, not jealous, not involved in one-upmanship, not mimicking, not imitating, above all not self-conscious. And that requires a certain amount of jumping out of yourself—courage and humor and openness and perspective and carelessness, in the sense of burning your mental bridges behind you, outreaching yourself; purification, so to speak, giving yourself permission to utter what you think, either simultaneously, or immediately thereafter, or ten years later.

That brings a kind of freshness and cleanness to both thought and utterance. William Carlos Williams has an interesting phrase about what's wrong when you don't allow that to happen: "There cannot be any kind of facile deception about it . . . prose with a dirty wash of a stale poem over it." Dirty wash of a stale poem over your own natural thought?

When I met Chögyam Trungpa in San Francisco in 1972 we were comparing our travels and our poetry. He had a heavy schedule and a long itinerary, and I said I was getting fatigued with mine. He said, "That's probably because you don't like your poetry."

So I said, "What do you know about poetry? How do you know I don't like my poetry?"

He said, "Why do you need a piece of paper? Don't you trust your own mind? Why don't you do like the classic poets? Milarepa made up his poems on the spot and other people copied them down."

That's actually the classical Buddhist practice among Zen masters and Tibetan lamas, like the author of "The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa." These songs are the most exquisite and hermetic as well as vulgar and folk-art-like works in all of Tibetan culture—classic folk poetry, known by every Tibetan. But Milarepa never could write. The method, again, was spontaneous mind, on-the-spot improvisation on the basis of meditative discipline.

What Trungpa said reminded me of a similar exchange that I had with Kerouac, who also urged me to be more spontaneous, less worried about my poetic practice. I was always worried about my poetry. Was it any good? Were the household dishes right, was the

bed made? I remember Kerouac falling down drunk on the kitchen floor of 170 East Second Street in 1960, laughing up at me and saying, "Ginsberg, you're a hairy loss." That's something that he made up on the spot, a phrase that just came out of his mouth, and I was offended. A hairy loss! If you allow the active phrase to come to your mind, allow that out, you speak from a ground that can relate your inner perception to external phenomena, and thus join Heaven and Earth.

Mind Writing: Exercises in Poetic Candor

1) After 5 minute meditation

List thoughts chronologically (Recollection of thoughts during meditation) : Write down in sequence the main external perceptions and internal ruminations or chains of thought that passed thru your head.

See: Mind Writing Slogans:

- 1. "First Thought, Best Thought"
- 2. "Take a Friendly Attitude toward your thoughts."
- 15. "Notice What You Notice."

Specimens: Ashberry "Instruction Manual"  
 Snyder "Bubb's Creek Haircut"  
 Allen Ginsberg "Mind Breaths"

2) Heaven Earth Man Haiku

Look At

- 1 Minute Meditation Outside Class: Heaven or Sky
  - 1 Minute Meditation Outside Class: Earth or Ground
  - 1 Minute Meditation On Seat: Human, In your Head
- Then write 3 part poem, 3 short verses

3 Part Short Poem

Waking from thoughts (Ground) (Sensation) (Heaven)

See: Mind Writing Slogans:

- 16. "Catch yourself Thinking"

What's the situation (Path) (Recognition) (Earth forms)

See: Mind Writing Slogans:

- 60. "Candor"

What's your reaction, comment (Fruition) (Reaction) (Man)

See: Mind Writing Slogans:

- 29. "Give me a for instance"

See also: Mind Writing Slogans:

- 12. "Form follows function"
- 11. "Form is never more than an extension of content"

3) Extended Heaven Earth & Man, 3 line poem

- One Ground — Heaven
- Two Paths — Earth Forms
- Three Fruitions — Man

## 4) Three Line Poem

- 1) What's your neurotic confusion?
- 2) What do you really want, desire?
- 3) What do you notice right where you are now?

## 5) Haiku

Take one vivid moment, one spot of time.  
Express the details in one sentence.  
Reduce it to about 17 syllables.

Example: "Put on my tie in a taxi, short of breath, rushing to meditate."

## 6) Visualization Poem

- 3 Verses, each one sketching panoramic landscape visualized; each verse one breath long.  
4th verse, ending the quatrain — an afterthought, zigzag from nowhere, a switcheroo or capping verse.

## 7) Mind Clearing Exercise: Confusion &amp; Complexity to Simplicity in

- 5 verses of 21 syllables each --  
Beginning with Samsaric neurotic confusion  
Proceeding to simplicity & resolution of the anxiety & confusion in last verse.

Examples:

Big Eats

Big deal bargains TV meat stock market news paper headlines  
love life Metropolis  
Float thru air like thought forms float thru the skull, check the  
headlines catch the boyish ass that walks  
Before you fall in bed blood sugar high blood pressure lower,  
lower, your lips grow cold.  
Sooner or later let go what you loved hated or shrugged off,  
you walk in the park  
You look at the sky, sit on a pillow, count up the stars in your  
head, get up and eat.

*August 20, 1991*

Not Dead Yet

Huffing puffing upstairs downstairs telephone  
 office mail checks secretary revolt—  
 The Soviet Legislative Communist bloc  
 inspired Gorbachev's wife and Yeltsin  
 to shut up in terror or stand on a tank  
 in front of White House denouncing Putschists—  
 September breezes sway branches & leaves in  
 a calm schoolyard under humid grey sky,  
 Drink your decaf Ginsberg old communist New  
 York Times addict, be glad you're not Trotsky.

*September 16, 1991*

## 8) Word Oxymoron juxtapositions: Re "Surprise Mind"

Take a 2-3 syllable word, write it down the center of the page 20 times, then conjoin it on either side with an opposite, an oxymoronic pairing, like "Nazi Milk", "Hydrogen Jukebox", "Fried Shoes", "Animal Shoes", "Elephant Jello", "Electric Meat", "Microphone Saliva", i.e. word associations with a key word.

Of the list of 20 put :

3 stars for 3 best

1 star more for two best

1 star more for best best— i.e. 3 stars for the top banana

Take class vote among choice of the 3 best, compare with subjective choice of the poet.

## 9) From above, form 17 syllable American Sentence (regular subject verb object) from favorite oxymoronic phrase. As:

"Bearded robots drink from Uranium coffee cups on Saturn's ring"

"The next speaker got nauseous swallowing Hitler's microphone saliva."

"The midget albino entered the hairy limousine to peepee."

"German farmers produced many tons of Nazi milk for the Führer.

## 10) Top ten epiphanous moments of lifetime: "Spots of Time", most vivid recollections since childhood.

See: Mind Writing Slogans:

13. Ordinary Mind includes eternal perceptions.

15. Notice what you notice.

17. Observe what's vivid.

18. Vividness is self-selecting.

16. Catch yourself thinking



See Wordsworth Prelude Book XII, V. 208-225

"There are in our existence spots of time that with distinct preeminence retain a renovating virtue, whence . . . our minds are nourished and invisibly repaired . . . such moments are scattered everywhere, taking their date from our first childhood. I remember well that once . . ."

Also: Wordsworth Prelude Book XIV, V. 11-62

"It was a close, warm, breezeless summer night, 11  
 Wan, dull, and glaring, with a dripping fog,  
 Low-hung and thick that covered all the sky;  
 But, undiscouraged, we began to climb  
 The mountain-side. The mist soon girt us around  
 And, after ordinary travelers' talk  
 With our conductor, pensively we sank  
 Each into commerce with his private thoughts:  
 Thus did we breast the ascent, and by myself  
 Was nothing either seen or heard that checked  
 Those musings or diverted, save that once  
 The shepherd's lurcher, who, among the crags  
 Had to his joy unearthed a hedgehog, teased  
 His coiled-up prey with barkings turbulent  
 This small adventure, for even such it seemed  
 In that wild place and at the dead of night,  
 Being over and forgotten, on we wound  
 In silence as before. With forehead bent  
 Earthward, as if in opposition set  
 Against an enemy, I panted up  
 With eager pace, and no less eager thoughts.  
 Thus might we wear a midnight hour away,  
 Ascending at loose distance each from each,  
 And I, as chanced, the foremost of the band;  
 When at my feet the ground appeared to brighten,  
 And with a step or two seemed to brighten still;  
 Nor was time given to ask or learn the cause,  
 For instantly a light upon the turf  
 Fell like a flash, and lo! as I looked up,  
 The moon hung naked in a firmament  
 of azure without cloud, and at my feet  
 Rested a silent sea of hoary mist.  
 A hundred hills their dusky backs up-heaved  
 All over this still ocean; and beyond,  
 Far, far, beyond, the solid vapours stretched, 45

In headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes,  
 Into the main Atlantic, that appeared  
 To dwindle, and give up his majesty,  
 Usurped upon far as the sight could reach.  
 Not so the ethereal vault; encroachment none  
 Was there, nor loss; only the inferior stars  
 Had disappeared, or shed a fainter light  
 In the clear presence of the full-orbed Moon,  
 Who, from her sovereign elevation, gazed  
 Upon the billowy ocean, as it lay  
 All meek and silent, save that through a rift--  
 Not distant from the shore whereon we stood,  
 A fixed, abysmal, gloomy, breathing-place--  
 Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams  
 Innumerable, roaring with one voice!  
 Heard over earth and sea, and in that hour,  
 For so it seemed, felt by the starry heavens.

60

So list top ten lifetime hot moments, epiphanies, moments of experience.  
 Can do it newspaper style: Headline, sub-head, lead paragraph, body  
 of story, who, what, when, where, why.

11) Of these top ten: Take one and write one extended anecdotal narrative  
 poem.

Examples: Reznikoff's family anecdotes

Marie Syrkin's "Finality"

Wordsworth's Prelude, Book XIV l.11-16, ". . . a light  
 upon the turf"

12) List top ten secrets you never told anybody. It may be embarrassing  
 moments, crises, what makes you shudder to remember to yourself,  
 top ten shames, or secret pleasures, minor discoveries, etc.

See: Mind Writing Slogans:

20. "If we don't show anyone we're free to write anything."

2. "Take a friendly attitude towards your thoughts."

18. Vividness is self-selecting.

21. "My mind is open to itself."

22. "Each on his bed spoke to himself alone, making no  
 sound."

also see: Atisa: "Abandon any hope of fruition"

A.G.: "Immortality comes later."

- 13) Of these top ten, take one, write an extended anecdotal narrative poem.
- 14) List top 10 fears, recurrent bad images of suffering, that haven't yet happened.

Re: Atisa: "Always meditate on whatever provokes resentment" in "Mind Training Slogans"

See: Mind Writing Slogans:

- 2. "Take a friendly attitude toward your thoughts"

Example : A U.S.-Tibetan Guru's fear of being caught in a Dharmic financial scandal like the Xtian Jim & Tammy Bakers' personal misuse of funds.

- 15) List top ten pleasurable experiences of lifetime.
- 16) Of the above, take one & write an extended anecdotal narrative poem.

- 17) Describe a:
    - Mystical experience
    - Aesthetic experience
    - Illuminative experience
    - Religious experience
    - Peak Experience
    - Memorable, happy, joy, moment
- } Different Names  
Same substance

by means of describing external phenomena observed at the time:

- a) where you were - place
- b) what date, season, hour of day - time
- c) what you saw outside of you - external coordinates
- d) what thought - words went thru yr head (short & factual) at the time
- e) what thoughts went thru yr head afterwards (short & factual)

- 18) Top ten wishes
- Top ten lies
- Top ten dreams
- See Kenneth Koch's Wishes Lies Dreams Handbook

19) Rhymed Blues

Take one sentence more or less ten syllables, rhyme the end word 2 times more (original rhyme echoing in your head automatically suggesting rhymes) — Then fill in the blanks between end rhymes, keeping to a regular syntax: 12 Bar Blues Form.

"Sometimes I think that you're too sweet to die  
Sometimes I think that you're too sweet to die  
Other times I think you oughta be buried alive"

—Richard "Rabbit" Brown,  
New Orleans, 1929

Homework Exercises:

9) Stop in tracks once a day, take account of sky, ground & self, write 3 verses haiku.

10) Sit 5 minutes a day, & after, re-collect your thoughts.

11) Stop in middle of street or country, turn in 360° circle, write what you remember.

3/30/95      Allen Ginsberg