

...and Poetry

*Cremation burnt child dreads the fire and mushroom-cloud,
Silent-majority have the courage of one's convictions,
Silence gives consent actions speak louder than words,
Counting the risks play for high stakes peace at any price,
Silent-majority in the best of taste reduced to silence.*

Jeffery Michael Weiss

*The big dipper
scoops up all the star soup
changes it into diamond earrings
for all the pine trees to wear
at midnight.*

*It's a great celebration tonight,
everything in its finery.
River music plays
and rocks leap about
doing a jig.*

*Tree stumps in green velvet mossy gowns,
Who will brush their cheek against them?*

*Sky is the dance floor
where no feet touch anything
and ruby planets
somersault around the moon.*

*What a party! What a party!
Do you want to go?
Open your eyes, sleepyhead
and take a deep breath
of midnight winter air.*

By Jane McLaughlin



Myung Sook Chun doing a traditional Korean dance for Soen Sa Nim's birthday

Old Yellow Face's Flesh and Bones

*The world of our hopes and despair,
forever with us, forever haunting.*

*"Everything is burning, O, Bhikkus."
Eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, mind;
Burning, burning, burning;
Fires of passion and longing,
forever with us, forever haunting.*

*"Wander alone like a rhinoceros."
But we have not the resolve
to cut the cords that bind,
detox the entanglements that are
forever with us, forever haunting.*

*"Be ye lamp unto yourself, Ananda."
Children of Kafka's nightmares,
locked into our karmic phantasmagoria,
we cannot dephase the samsaric pull that is
forever with us, forever haunting.*

*"Work out your salvation with diligence,"
said the Enlightened One.
Must a Christ be crucified in every age?
for us to be delivered from the illusions that are
forever with us, forever haunting.*

*"Let go, let go," said all the healers of history.
This attachment, this investment,
this claim to our bodies and our universe,
which is our catastrophe, and which is
forever with us, forever haunting.*

*"The Great Way is not difficult,
only throw away your likes and dislikes."
Throw away this ego, this body, this mind,
this choosing, this self-mythologizing that is
forever with us, forever haunting.*

*Blue sky and green sea are the Buddha's original face;
Sound of the waterfall and bird's song are the great sutras;
Wake up! Moment to moment,
Eternity is spread all around in Suchness,
forever with us, forever liberating.*

Mu Soeng
Diamond Hill Zen Monastery

THE MAD MONK

*"God, I've carried you on my back long enough,"
the mad monk sighed, "old and sick as you've been.
Whenever I gazed at something beautiful—
a tree, a flower, a lock of hair—
you'd wheeze and say, 'That reminds me of a time...'"*

*Whatever something came along to make my sap rise,
you'd mutter, 'A word to the wise...'*

*Whenever I despaired, you'd inform me solemnly,
'Face it, boy, that's the way life is...'
Well, now I say, the hell with you!"*

*With that, God leaped off the monk's back,
and turned into the sun!*

*Sunlight streamed through the trees,
and the mad monk bowed his head.
Just this.*

2.

*"Turned water into wine?"
the mad monk cried. "That's nothing!
Watch me turn wine into water!"
And with wink
he eclipsed the sun,
and pissed till Kingdom come.*

Anthony Manousos

Sauntering

*Where the woodland trail ends
sumac, red as pin cushions,
pause before the heathers*

Brendan Robb

a Dharma dialog:

Martyrdom

*For all
the prajna of
one live monk burnt, the wind
still knows the dichotomy; man
and ash.*

Don Smith

The Grateful Dead

*The mind
not the wind knows
man plus ash yields prajna.
Whose phoenix flames while still monks burn
sitting?*

Paul La Chance

(Don Smith is Dean of the English Department at Frostburg State College, Frostburg, MD. Paul La Chance is a professor in the English Department.)

The One Sleeping On The Mat Next To Me

*In the house of birth and death
on the third day another traveler
was awakened in the night, the one sleeping
on the mat next to me.
It was raining
(where was I)*

*she told me the next morning (I hadn't heard).
And in the middle of that sound
(where as I)
there was another,*

*of the teacher,
in the room above,
bowing,*

*for a long time in the middle of the night
the quiet rhythmical whoosh of his robed body
as it fell over and over to its knees,
his forehead to the floor, his arms outstretched, palms up,
the brush stroke almost out of ink where the circle closes -*

James Baker Hall