

DIRECTION

Bowing every morning
one hundred and eight times
to nam pung bosal
bodhisattva of the south wind

Every morning
nam pung bosal bowing
one hundred and eight
thousand times to me

Kneeling every morning
back turned to the sun
ringing a bell, shattering
the hell of dark swords

Demons fleeing into the west
across the high plains
into the Rockies, into the arms
of the vast heavy planet

Sitting every morning, facing
the white wall of the north
which resembles so much
the white wall of the self

Breathing in, thinning to
transparency like space
Breathing out, entering
bird song and traffic

Christina Hauck

Too long apart from gloom
and parting
on this snow washed sun smashed day
I pass by near where
last year the dear died.

Where less snow has fallen
under the lee of a fallen tree
already it's melted off —
for example
beside the tracks.

Alan Davies

ENLIGHTENMENT DAY POEM

Before Buddha was Buddha
everyone called him Siddhartha, and everyone loved him:
father, mother, sister, brother, wife, child, servants, concubines.
When he looked in the mirror, he liked what he saw:
smooth skin and clear eyes, white teeth and long, black, glossy hair.

When Siddhartha left his father's house, he cut his long black hair,
gave away the silks and fine brocade
wrapped a rag around his loins.
He had no use for mirrors.

Six years of searching!
Six years of hunger and fear, boredom and pain!
Six years before he gave up and finally began.
He took his seat under the bodhi tree.
He took a vow not to move until his mind opened
Or his bones turned to dust.

In the moment before Buddha became Buddha, he moved
a little, easing a thread of pain in his neck, glancing up
at the morning star—which isn't a star but a planet
casting back full-faced the burning of a sun.

In that moment Buddha became Buddha.
He heard the stone girl's tears give way to laughter.
He felt the butterfly rousing the dragon to flight.

Right now, when sunlight fills the Kansas sky,
How do you see Buddha's star?

KATZ!

Candles burn bright on the altar,
smiling faces light up the dharma room.

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The pictures in this issues are courtesy of Matthew Smolinsky.

