

The Collected Poems

Thomas E. Albury



*These are the colors that lie flat on the page.
These are the thoughts unwound,
The scatterings swept in piles.
The first thought spoken at the last awakening of inspiration,
Raw verbiage compost of light.
This is the real book of me.
Written in drunkenness, experienced as a mirrored soul
From the first point of.....*

*Anyone could do the same
All could be one
But for the slight turn of diffraction
A single soul decides to take.
A twitch of the psyche?
A slight exhale of stardust,
The natural progression set in motion
By what we all seek.*

It wasn't possible to put any chronological order to these poems. A few had dates, but I decided to group them more by subject. The first few indeed, are probably the earliest; dating from around 1990. It then goes into love poems, deep into the poet's heart, and then off into the cosmos. Thank you Gale for giving me an excuse to do this. Happy 43!

Love, Tommy
August 29, 2020



A row of trees
Mark a simple line
Between the world
And what I call mine.

There are trains of thought
That can be bought
Of how the planet's divided;
By money, land, or kinds of power.
As yet, they're undecided.

But it's the pomp of circumstance
Men use to mark their range.
It is the element of chance
Will always make it change.

Is there a slighter shaft of day
Than one that winds its winter's way
To rest its weary fingers light
Upon the wall before the night?

The fire that man has brought to play
Against the one from nature's way
Has itself come round about
To split an acorn from the sprout.

I brought my saw below the south stone wall
To see what damage the wind had done,
Where everything grows and tries to fall
Down the hill toward the sun.

Some ash and oak had reached too far
And left themselves defenseless
Against a hard, late summer storm
That crossed the land relentless.
But it left a better view of the stars,
So I don't mind too much the clearing.

It left the trees a little wiser, too;
Somehow in better form,
By finally learning a simple truth
They'd ignored for fear of fearing.

It wasn't just old and dried-out branches
That fell to nature's breath,
But green and thick as limbs could be
Who should have had better chances
To keep themselves from early death
And help to keep the tree a tree.

So I sawed and thought and tossed
Amongst this tangle the wind had crossed,
Thankful it happened on the meadow side
And not up where the cars ride by;
Where I'd almost as well have a fence of steel
Than be grateful for a star revealed.

When magic from my tongue does rise
And you imagine things beyond the covering of earthly skies
Where breath and blood by all are known
More precious than the hardest stone
Beauty walks the sacred ground
No more to hide her face
No longer to be used by men
To elevate the commonplace.

The drums of war are not in the distance,
I hear them at my door.
I smell the fear and feel the resistance
That peace is crying for.

The pain that settled deep in our hearts
Will not become unbound
With simple untying.

We cannot breath
Until Promise is believed
And Trust is a soothing embrace
Upon a fragile soul.

The wheel of Dharma is turning fast
The Word King lights the sacred path
My breath is steady,
My feet unsure,
Vertigo in each step to keep it pure.
There is a calling in each movement
Falling from the moment the moon steals light from the sun.

I heard my vision in the voice of the river.
Memory songs of a language far removed,
To barely reach my understanding
With refractions of light, yet
Knowing these are songs such as the birds carry
For dropping in the wind.
I carry some too, but they seem to fall from my pockets.

What are we most afraid of?
If not pain, is it losing ourselves?
We are lost a thousand times,
Then we may think to look down at our feet.

The enemy may come and take us away,
Or Christ may come and take us away.
China is building the greatest dam
To provide the most power for the greatest nation.
What are we afraid of?
That we will sew clothes to sell in the Walmarts of China?

The road to enlightenment is littered with discarded beliefs.

They took her name and placed it
In a golden locket
In a velvet box
In an iron cage
In a tower tall
In a city strong
Against the sea.



But the sea rose
Above the rocks
The city drowned
The tower fell
The iron broke
And the box floated quietly to me.

I opened it and sold the gold
And took the name
Upon my lips
Into my heart
And vowed to set it free.

So I built a boat
Of love and wood
And sailed the icy wind
Upon the depths
Churned by the moon
To find where she may be.

My love lingers by heaven's door
Well hid behind a cloak of life
To catch a glimpse of eternity's shore
Or hear a note from an angel's life.

As one in dreams who lies awake
Traversing a lifetime 'tween dusk and daybreak
She sits upon this earthen rock
And sounds across Nirvana's lake.

Watching the goings to and fro
As a faerie on earth she is to heaven
Looking into what only God knows
Making the most of this gift she's been given.

Wondering why there is such a strangeness cast
Upon this life we wander through-
Is the familiar lost into the past
As the sun draws up the morning dew?

Does it wait within the clouds
For thunder to sound the final day,
Rending apart this unnatural shroud
And letting the rain come down to stay?

Although this space is so vast
We both believe in love
Like fools at sunrise.

Every time we meet
Light falls from the shadows.
The darkness seems so deep,
The idiot's asleep.

Light falls from the shadows.

We have been looking at this
“Separation of One”
Through eyes of love.

Knowing when light was spoken into being
That we were there in that sound.
And when light was divided from darkness
We were made separate unto ourselves,
Not to redundantly return to source,

But for each of us to fully become:
One by One
And then
Two by Two
Learning of love outside ourselves.

One could not experience unconditional love
Without separation.
So it is the separation which allows us to discover
How something is created from nothing.
How One can love or be loved
Simply for the sake of love.

Where is that color not yet seen
That we would know as clear as red sky
And the green of earth's home?
Behind frosted glass or upon the lost chord
I wait upon the open air to see and know it's name.

I watch the angel's fingers touch the unfeeling hand.
In walks the man with the colors of a winter afternoon
Unfolding lives like a deck of loose cards.
He asks about the angel's hands, the color's name
And the fire's path.

I would try until my last days
To describe to you the color unseen, unnamed -
We would think unknown
But for it's breath upon our shoulders.
Like a trick of the memory it hides between thoughts
As we walk about our touching paths.

In the time you took to capture the very future's breath
I rolled your soft questions in the unstopped rain
Until the night spoke its reply.
We listened to its wet whisper upon the glass
And let the rain melt itself back to earth.

Between the heart and stomach forms the lightning in the sky.
I feel their fear, but forced to laugh like the wizard unbound,
I strike again and again.
Rage and laughter and power
With each thunderous cry lets loose every hidden dream
Until it rains with mercy.

Speak to me like a touch;
Not something I've known
Like a mirror in the hall,
Following my gaze within a frame.

Come to me with a warm breath
That draws from my own,
The pulse from a hand
That lingers enough to know.

Where the rain melts into soil
Wake the seeds of my heart,
Wash away bitter emptiness
And the tired longing.

Leave imagination
As a scene in the distance
That's not proven real.
Only sight has noticed,
No memory swept its ways,

But walk through my thought
With the soles of your feet
And breaking branches, open sky.

I listened to your heartbeat yesterday
And was sure it said something about me.
Our breaths have mixed for twenty one years;
Our bodies must hold more than just memories of each other.
We still experiment with trust - but it's probably my fault.
I keep misplacing things and
Trying to put new things where they don't really fit.
But listen to my heartbeat tomorrow.
I'm sure it will say something about you.

Come with me and stir this brew
Of spices, fruit and wine.
See what tasting it may bring
Of feelings, truth and rhyme.

No other one has yet to touch the point
Between your heart and mine
To draw the bow, begin the strain
Thru motion, space and time.

A hand that rests upon the snow
Asks a question of the soul.
Not why or how, but only what
(And perhaps which way to go).

The fruit is floating, the spices settle,
Why do you look at me that way?
You had a bad dream, it's raining, and I'm lazy.
Fetch me a spoon while I turn down the flame.

Lean your head a little this way.
You smell the wine, I'll smell your hair,
We'll smile with the memory of a sweet day.
Fiddles and bees at Litchfield fair,
And reasons to know we'll never stray.

If the earth is a cliff, yours are the fingers I grasp.
Maybe we should burn the house down
And separate for a year, then see what happens.

My soul would be ash
And yours water.

If love's seed grew and burst
Through reality husk
The pineal cone would be ignited by fire.

You tell me I am merely foolish
When I am drunk and serious.
My subtleties are blown like dust
And your obviousness ignored like the wall of China.
What sifter could combine them?

A stone from the heavens could bring understanding
If it fell in the sea and washed over the land.

She painted her sacred ornaments in tepid colors,
Out of modesty, I suppose,
Contrasted by her astounding shades of opinion.

I've seen the way the moon looks at you
And the way the night wind follows you
Just a ways off, through the trees
Just a ways off, pretending to be
Nothing more than another whisper in the dark
When I know it is the very breath of the night
Come down to catch your scent
And I've seen the field in the evening mist
Reaching up with its fingertips
The way every blade is bent
Inviting you to sit.
I've seen a cloud pass behind the moon
So it wouldn't block the view,
And the stars closer too,
'Till the rings of Saturn and Jupiter's moons
Caught with bare eyes
Sing like struck bells and drag the feet of dawn
To keep this lunar courtship
From ever passing on.

Angels we have heard while high
21st century Superfly
Living in privatization land.

Hanging with the flying wounded
Dropped my cross along the way
In the cities of open graves.

Will you be mine? Could I be yours?
Maybe we could both give ourselves away
Like the girl with the bonsai heart
Who memorized the legalities of friendship.

His education bound his hands in silver wire
And meshed his tongue and lips into gears.

What are they singing about?
Not a singular love,
Not an all-encompassing love,
But love, still;
Because love comes out of the cracks.
I've said it before.

Even though they sing
From the side of their mouths
And wave their arms
In a ridiculous fashion,
And spell things wrong,
And love is like a marble
That rolls past them on the floor,
Still, they follow it.

Out of the corners of their eyes
It sits beside them
On an empty stool,
With beauty on the other side
Winking at them.

It takes all their strength
Not to wink back.



*Over the fields and waters I need to go
Carry my soul in a beaded sack
And wander till I can't go back.*

Somewhere between broken dreams
Where all thought is art;
Or at least, it seems so, when
The last few bits of melody
Drift away as only forgotten songs can.
Somewhere between,
If you steer clear of pirate spirits
And hold to the soft voice within,
You can move silent and swift
As a thief in your own mind
Where a stolen crust of bread
Becomes a king's banquet.
But do not tarry long,
Search out the deep treasures;
Search out something
You know you will remember
Before thought caves in
And waking rescues you.
Then hold your treasure
Up to the light
Hold it bravely before waking eyes
And try not to laugh.

I feel different than I used to feel.
Something wandered in and caught my eye,
Like a cat upon a windowsill waiting
For a bird too weak to fly.
Now I'm waiting for the wounds to heal
As the sunset bids a pale goodbye.

I've been preying on death's door
While looking the other way.
I've avoided birth's forceps in the
Kingdom of eternal wonder,
Knocked out on heaven's floor.

In my dreams I always walk with angels.
And you know how in dreams sometimes
You can do anything you want?

You can talk, you can kill
You can ride, you can steal

But I end up holding their hands and walking
Along the streets, or the sand.

There are memories that only come at certain times.
Places and situations,
Feelings and visions
That don't need a clock to interrupt.
Moods and conversations in a constant flux.
There is always something ahead or behind.

You can walk, you can fly
You can ride a freeway on your bike up to the sky.

The wind came across and down
Talking through the trees
Like a sad, lost, nervous army.
I stood on the cracked beach
Where the waves were afraid to cross
Watching the rivulets draw lines of
Pebbles in the gray sand.
The wind twisted and skated,
Grabbed up a handful of ocean,
And threw it at a fleeing cloud.
What was left to wonder,
I wondered?
Where was this time?
Who could ever be here
And not see what I am seeing now?
Between what was left of November
And the Crystallmass of winter
I plucked a brown, dry, maple leaf
And touched the end of the stem to my tongue
To see if I could taste the life
That kept it hanging to the tree.
The wind stood a ways off
And whistled
To remind me of the chill.
I walked back into the house
To forget about the wind
And to remember the ocean within.
Do not let the tentacles reach too far
To touch its fibrous roots
To all your ends
Before the first chill of fever
Shakes you like a leaf.
Do not surrender half a breath
Without meaning...

It's a very private day.
The darker clouds slip under solid gray.

The sun is a moon when you know where it is.
The trees hold their colors in pale greens and yellows.

I want to go, again and again, to feel the private wind,
You can't be anywhere but alone.
I want to be, I don't need to know.

The flame gently passes from earth
Into an exploding star.
Your feet do not walk alone.
Witness with me the depth of the sky.
Time is measured in the passing
Of one hand to the other.
Spirit is breath not going in or out.

Soon you'll be left turning behind the hounds and red trees
Wet pages thick in the grass from poets' abandoned memories
Tasting only the passed on blackened berries
And the seed's wish to be buried and forgotten.
The mystic hands of force compress one,
Release another; something breaks, something loosens,
Something caught life from the sun and swallowed.
Now when the coyotes and crows talk to me
I follow their voices alone
And touch the leaves with my own hand
In my foolishness thinking the blue sky is in my breath
And my own rotting soil holds the heaven's song.

Slowly waking up
I hear the dream-time voices linger
I feel the moonlight touch my fingers
I know there's something I should remember.
I don't know what it was.

In my personal utopian capsule
I can do anything I want to
I can drive like a fool and not feel a thing.
I can turn on the bells and make them ring.
No matter what the world is doing outside
I know that there is always a space in my ride
For me and whoever else should choose to abide.
I can breath any kind of air that I want to
I can plug in a bucket of moonbeams
I can answer my watch when the phone rings

There is another hunger that burns within
I held my breath and prayed
Tho my heart be corrupted
And my mind be full of doubt
There shines uninterrupted
A light that calls me out.

Touching the hem of healing light
Drawing the source to my core.
Knowing I've opened my secrets to sight
Throwing myself through the door.
Blind me, burn me,
Tear through the fragile webs I wove.
The muse is a puppet on strings of words
Held by myself from above.

Walk me to the end of the wall
Where the voice of death can be heard.
What does it matter?
The seed is already inside me.
Only my fear would allow me to think
That a word could reach in and touch me
And freeze me with its emptiness.

First my father and mother where
My life began, became,
Then my sister, who standing beside me,
Held my hand, and also passed.

I spoke into the void.
My voice did not fall flat.
My words did not repeat.
The echo from my mouth shot like an arrow and ended.
Nonexistence is nonexistent.

The temperature dropped
From a moist whisper
To a cold stare.

Now there are ice dams on the eaves
The ceiling drips icy rain
And draws lines upon the wall.

The darkness is empty
Like a silent shout.
A white crystal touched the sky
And turned the moon into a stranger.

So I bounce balls of humor
Off my wall of sorrow,
When I should be tearing at it with a pick axe.
It is what it is.

If you are constantly begging god for an answer or a sign,
A whisper or direction,
You will never hear god.
It is what it is.
Your whining will chase god away.

Look closely at the wind, listen to the trees
To get your mind in the right direction.
It is what it is.

I like feeling a little numb
And able to watch my own ghost-shadow
Dance beyond the walls.
What am I looking away from?
It can't be alone-ness
Because it makes me more alone.
Could it be close-liness
The fear of someone shining a light
And dispelling my dancing dreams?

When the weary sky of wonder
Turned from Crimson Red to Clear
And the empty voice of strangers
Said “nothing” in my ear
I walked across the graveyard
Where souls no longer cry,
Set my eyes on the horizon,
And bid them all “goodbye”.

There is no supplication.
The mind of higher reason
Hardly gives a glance.

“What is your condition?” he asked without a smile.
“I got Jesus stuck inside me, and he’s carried me for miles.
It seems that we’re both hungry and in need of something more
Than a promise from the future of a brighter, distant shore.”

Maybe I do remember something.
My earth-mind is full of holes and walls
But my other mind knows something;
I can’t really call it memory.
In this world it seems like recordings of dreams
I may or may not have had -
But then sometimes it *all* seems that way
And the only real thing is the one thing I can’t describe.

I read that it all begins with Zero
And all possibility is held in the silence.
This may be true.
The only difference between nothing and all is light.
At least I have learned this one thing.

Spirit upon the beach,
I know why you have set the waves so deep
And crushed shell into sand
With no thought of sleep,
And misted the sky to make it part ocean.
Being of spirit, I understand your devotion.

Salted blood follows my life road.
Bird upon rock, tree upon sand.
Each way the wind goes
Is held for the sun to follow,
The shadowy moon to fold in its hands
And hold upon the lap of waves.

Once touched by thunder,
Released in unhalting breath,
I know why you have set
My heart so deep beneath
The roots of wonder -
To know the fullness of your depth.

The seed that scattered from the hand
Wakes from sleep with nature's pull
You have set it so
Because it is beautiful.
Being of spirit, I understand.

Is it such a ragged balance
Between the torch and cave,
Where the shadow raves
On walls behind
And the fires turn
Corners in a circle dance?

The muse hides in hollows and cracks,
In whispers and scents
To bring us back
With sweet poison of flower and song,
Deep in reflection
Of no right or wrong.

We could walk
Without sound or sight
With our champion above
And within for light.
Yet choosing to hide
In shadows between,
We bear a strange load
Both seen and unseen.

To hope without ending,
While among baser dreams
Our candles may flicker
In shadowy bendings;
We'll move even quicker
Through the dimness we see.

You follow the rhythm of your soul
Because that is the obvious thing to do.
If you are tortured, if you are in love,
If you are searching, if you are happy, at rest,
It is easiest to not move
Against the patterns that are falling.

The questions are sometimes possibilities,
Sometimes aberrance,
Always a way to learn.
Every Tree is a million dream catchers.
The sky that we see is the limit of our reality.

When we dream, that sky is split
Like the Jello of Moses' Red Sea.
We walk across the driest soil
That ever was drowned
To the land which was made verse
By the power of spiritual almighty.

Dripping off the trees of God's fingers,
(Not golden spires)
Each organic lip
Drinks more than sweetness,
Speaks more out of darkness than obvious rhythm,
Because that is.

You opened God's ear
And sang our hearts from sleep into glory.
Fire sparked from tone shot rhythm winds
Round to every candle we held
Amazed at what this light revealed.
It was our love singing.
It was your tears in our eyes.
Hallelujah
God smiled
Do good
Do good.

The crescent moon resting on the sky
Grew larger and larger
Floating down
As we followed it home
Singing Hallelujah
Do good
Do good
God is One
Our sins are washed away.

For the Soweto Gospel Choir

The only Darkness
Is what has settled like dust on our hearts,
Weary from your absence.
Every leaf I see falling,
Every night sky too far away for knowing
Sends your voices like birds around my ears.
The rocks are starved for snow this year,
And the ground is only half asleep,
Too anxious for another early spring.
But Orion still turns
Slowly across the sky
And whispers hope in my ear.
“Just because the light can’t be seen from earth
Doesn’t mean the star isn’t there.”

To Anne and Daniel

In the halls of the angel’s arc
Throwing whispers at the dark
Looking for a pair of sparks to start a fire
Or you could go on
Choosing to ignore death
And live each day as
You would imagine a mayfly lives.
One day,
That’s all. No at a time stuff.
I wonder which is more precious
Eternal life
Or one moment of life.
Be here now - no time thought
Or no thought - only time.
I wonder which is more real?

Where does the soul's wind blow,
And how does the night sky wander?
The earth turns, but that's not all.
It all turns.
And the universe, but for being mostly empty,
Is on fire.

Dark giants also roam,
Their heaviness floating and falling
With invisible steps.
Our lives beat against the vacuum
Like the wings of a moth
In the cold night air -
Drawn to light, suspended in darkness.

Some of us watch and wait;
Some try to cut with the
Dull knife of Science,
Or turn us to fear
With the Dark Night of the Soul.

But we should know better.
We've been riding the edge of reality,
Both hands waving free,
Just as fast as our fears can
Become laughter.

Tears and toil like teeth on a gear
Turn the wheels we hope will be freedom.

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