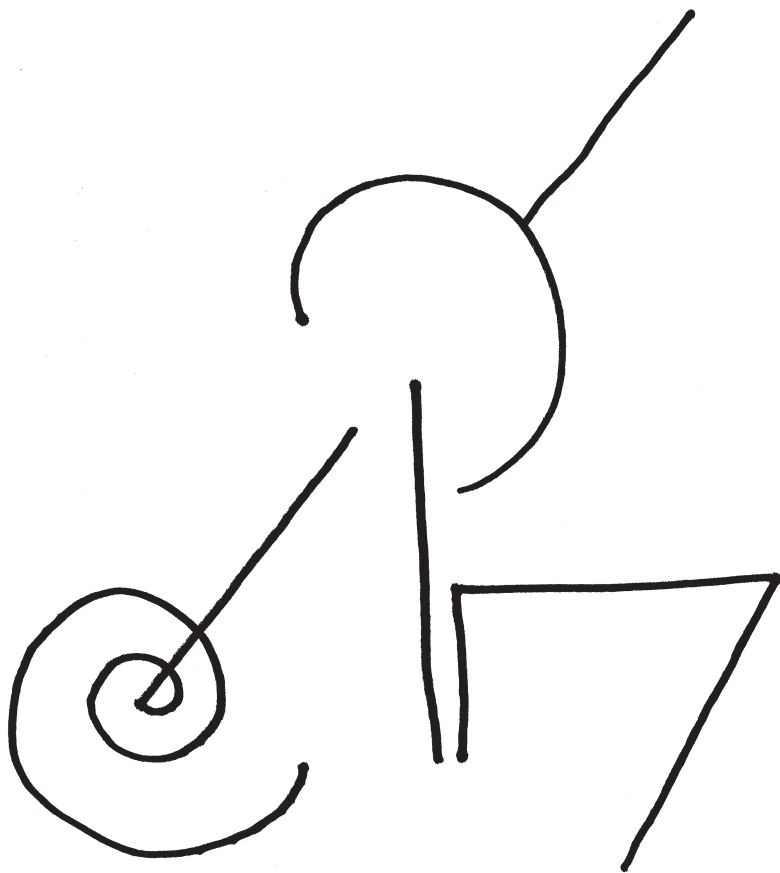


Night Riders

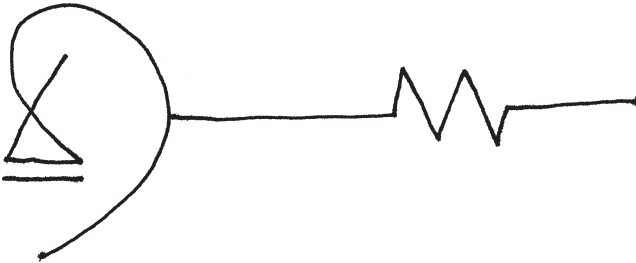


Mark Weber

NIGHT RIDERS

Mark Weber

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*These poems were written very late at night in waking dreams from February 5 through February 20, 2017

Author photo self-portrait 20feb2017

This is Zerx chap #73

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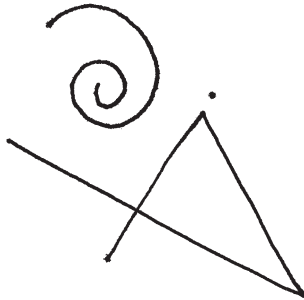
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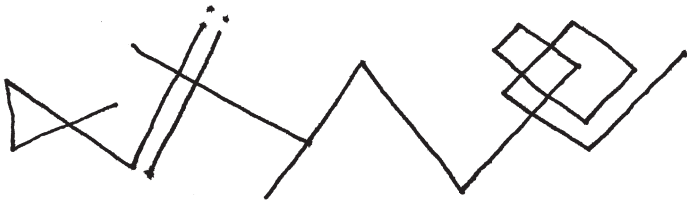
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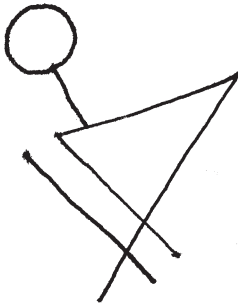
Equal to all that was Arthur
born twice: once for the flesh
and again many years later in the books:
Row boats worked upstream to
fill palaces with his blood
everything was related, borrowed like
butter from a neighbor, you'd find
easy workings this carrying of ladders,
climbing palisades, poking around dark
corridors and still the story would
not be denied, nothing could turn it back,
like bread rising in the oven it
grew, became ocean-going, locked horns
in arenas, slipped out side doors
disguised as a librarian, someone else
had the keys, shod the horses, packed
the sandwiches, someone else counted
the moons, sorted the good from the bad,
made restitution, judged the sword,
broke with a gallop away



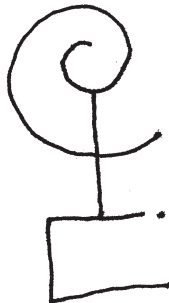
It couldn't have been much
these sumptuary orchards transplanted from
the east, over-laden, a ship for
the alimentary tract, a news rack, frozen
TV dinners, frozen teevees, tavenich,
token itch, partly hitched the horses
broke loose, didn't come back, we
found our way by river, surrounded by trees,
overwhelmed by fright, goosebumps, little
things, a carton of milk, no more no less,
hazard's hair stood up on the back of yr neck,
the moon, too, was suspicious,
something crackled in the leaves
left quickly
a gate closed
your footing tenuous
all you wanted was an orange
straight off the tree
without getting caught
the juice born of the sun



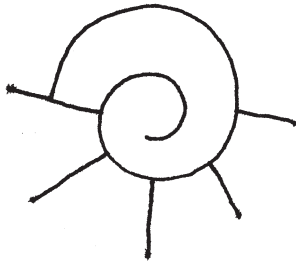
It was the hat, I'm sure of it
like the song it was almost forgotten
down a path grown over with weeds
it had a feather in the trim
laid across a map
candle wax sealed it to the table
a sextant for a paperweight
turned sideways
there was nothing left of the Adriatic
the brim and the shore caught
with driftwood, there was a man
filling up the trunk of his Chrysler
with it, probably furniture, Robinson
Crusoe, with a little imagination
you could make a table, dangle macrame
off it, ponder the spokes of
the universe, serve cocktails
and dinosaur speculations



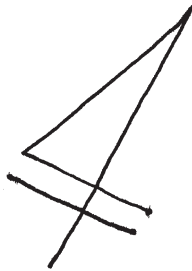
In nearly the same moment
both the birds in the trees and
the telephone went off
just as I was pouring a cup of tea
tangled
there was again that generalized unspoken
presence of molecules talking
to each other, even a squirrel started chattering
I took my tea at the window
and regarded the squirrel in truth
between
long cessation turned in on itself
like sparks spitting out of the fireplace
a loud man hawking peanuts at the ballpark
I tended to agree with the squirrel
consequence
forming an ocean swell
it's not always propitious
to answer the telephone



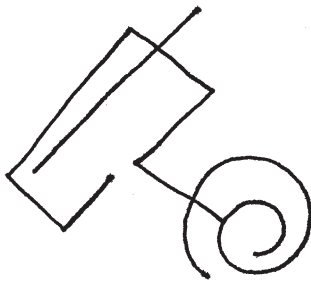
To never again visit
the cities of Uruk, Nineveh, and Babylon
pains me, but present danger lurks there
for outsiders, one only wants to sense
the ancient locales or yr past, see the
same mountain silhouette skyline at dawn,
touch the clay in the river bed my
brothers of the cuneiform circumflex gather'd
feel the same breezes, take portends that
out of the north horses were coming,
predatory for our valley ----
I have hidden seeds and roots in the hills
so we can replant after the marauders
have gone, else we cannot go on unleaven'd
bread forever, cyclonic, it was easy
when the fish came up river, Ennana would
wrap them in lotus petals and bake them, we
had slices of apples and oranges and dates, and
something called soma that that man from the city
of Mohenjo-daro beyond the Indus River brought us



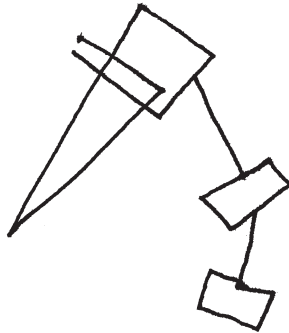
We are said to have come
from sorrow leaving behind slaughter
something came up river devastation
burned everything down trampled
it is a memory that is confused
when I grew a little older and we
lived further into the forest I was told
his name was Alexander ----
"Alexander the Great" a curious name
for a destroyer but then the vainglorious
have their pride, I understand
his tomb is in Alexandria, a pretty
city on the coast of the World Sea --
I will visit that tomb some day not
sure what
I would say or do, the Christians mark
the sign of the cross maybe I'll do
that head and heart
he did not comport himself well
in this life, maybe in the next
he will do better
leaving no sorrow ----
the dream of uniting the entire world
could have only came from
the mind of man



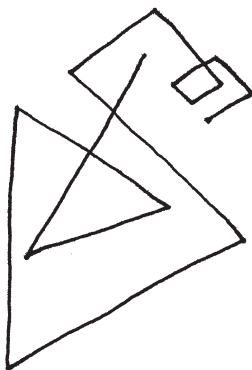
We didn't much count the disappearance as
we stumbled in disbelief
one only has to remember
all the treachery in Rome
to see where this is going
adrift in titanic paranoias
there is no honor, only jealousies
and inarticulate speech, it
will be a time when true feelings
are disguised, kept
away from the light, maybe
retreated to sanctuary in
the mountains



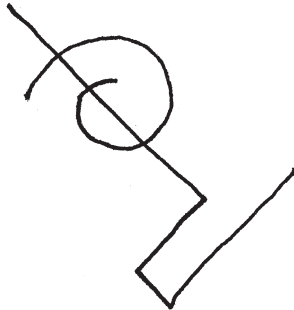
It is cold and
all I want to do is sleep
taking little notice of the outside world
nothing is so important or needs
be done ----
bundles of blankets and pillows
glorious lethargy
snow drift sleep oracles
dreams rolled under warmth
unregarded, foster'd, left
alone someone in shadows
adds another log to the fire
murmurs and soft airplanes
overhead flying west



Night riders are sure-footed
self-aware, moon-visioned
and disappeared back into shadow
vanishing circular inwardness
reality is nothing
we can live without it but not
our horses
they never betray us:
torrential sky swirling stars
torrential twirling guitars & jaguars
out of the night and back into
as if never-ending, our horses
run away from the dawn into
continuous night



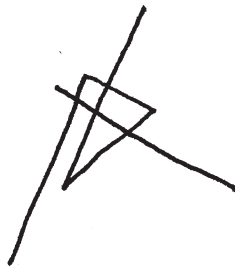
Names were the easiest
things to change
boulders and rocks, crowbirds
dwindling river
I carried a million baked bricks
yesterday it seems like
for our House of Healing here
at Mohenjo-daro
then, the Sarasvati dried up
changed course, upriver the land moved
and broke the river apart
(this is what the fish mongers found
out from the horse people)
rocks and boulders, I joined the crow people
sitting lotus cross-legged meditation
muddy monsoon cotyledon became
my new name



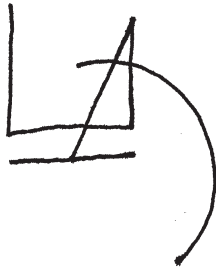
Apprehensive became a fact of life
we were apprehensive all the time
nobody was sure of anything anymore
out of apprehension came prayer
-- that seemed to calm us down --
I'd walk over to where the boats
 were at mooring
and talk to the sky, you can't
 grow apples this close to the ocean
but the mountain valleys north of
 here are full of them
each one a prayer
nothing apprehensive comes from there
beseeching the peach and pear
turbulence tortured me:
 it was time to move along



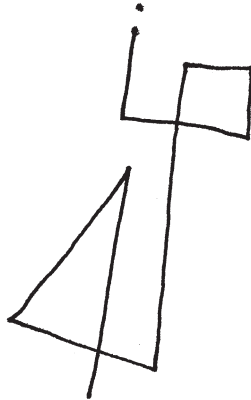
Coriander for Cleopatra, and
three camels loaded with frankincense
fierce winds
we could huddle together
 for the night with blankets
out on this expanse but
I seem to recall there's a canyon
not too many miles further
the people that live there will help us
they have gray eyes
are tall and slender
the wind is howling like those
 timberwolf we heard outside Rome
 last year when we were carrying
cinnamon and nutmeg and black pepper
 we bought in the city of Gerrha on the Persian Gulf
and crossing Arabia, from the Nabateans, those
prosperous nomads, we acquired
medicines and cosmetics: myrrh, kohl, malachite,
antimony ----
Those gray-eyed graceful people will know we're
 out here, they will sense our need
 and send someone



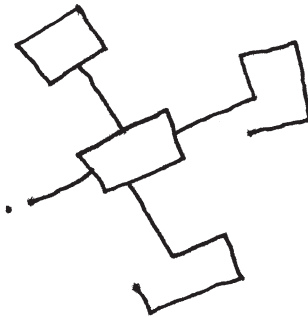
We all have layers
and masks
and stories we tell ourselves
this big guy on TV w/ yellow
hair has layers upon layers
of deception he could hardly know
himself it is so dense, his
code of honor is a box of snakes
orange crashing chain-link fence
a rabbit pulled out of a hat
a sorrowful group of mothers
standing on the corner



I woke up three days later
and drank more of the Aryan horseman's soma
and have no idea how long I've been dreaming
since then, I should eat something, the soma
takes your appetite (have you ever
seen a fat opium eater?) this reminds me
of Odysseus in Lotusland, we need to
break the spell, I need to rouse
the others and turn around, we'll perish
if we don't go back to Thessalonika,
the magic here on the Indus
is too strong for us



Rejuvenated, we started over
leaving everything behind we were
as Buddha, changing,
careful not to harm
but always forthwith
not allowing harm to come to us, either ----
From being so quiet and alone
for so long
You eventually hear what the trees
are saying: Harm nothing
Help others, share your food, claim
only your personal peace, stay
away from mean spirits, harsh
& ignorant they are a danger
that only a saint can tolerate



You wouldn't want to cross Cleopatra
she'd put your head on a spike
We got into Alexandria, did our trading,
smoked a lot of opium, visited with the beautiful
 women at the West Gate, caught a ship to
 Marseille
We'll take that river north into the Celtic lands
of my people
where the forests are vast
rivers crystal clear
the skies not overly promising but honest
there are songs there
 I have not heard in a long while

