







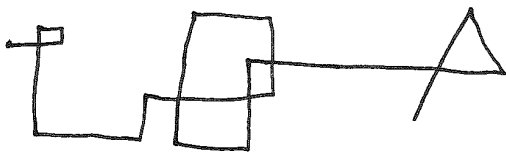


# NOT YET SO FAR

Poems  
Mark Weber

This is for Patti Littlefield  
The singer

First edition \* June 2019 \* 200 copies



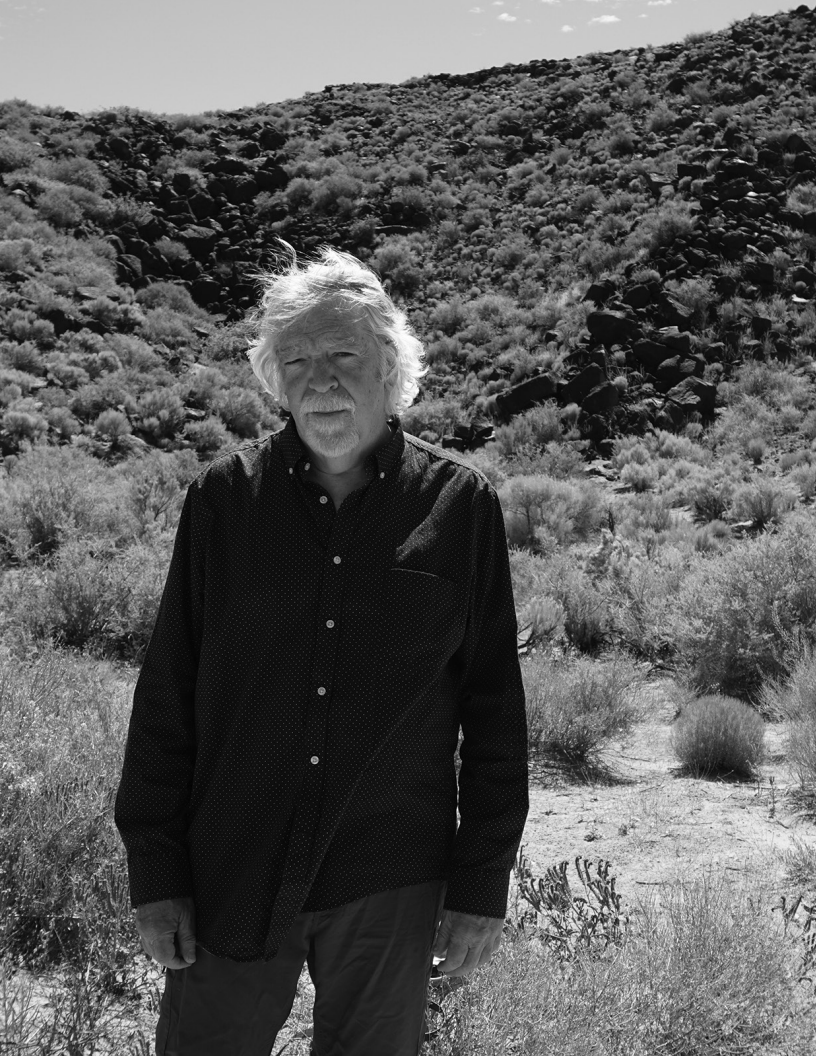
\*These poems written mostly in the last few months but one or two date back to 2014 ----- Some of them have appeared variously on FaceBook, or my own webpage JAZZ FOR MOSTLY, or were written specifically to read on KUNM's Saturday night PSYCHEDELIC RADIO HEAD SHOPPE, or on Brandon Kennedy's KUNM AfternoonFreeForm show ---- and one or two can be heard on the NIGHT RIDERS cd (but did not appear in the book) & so forth

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Materiality: A couple of these poems first appeared in the program for a performance in NYC Nov. 2018 w/Carol Liebowitz(piano) and Bill Payne (clarinet); Marionette has been set to music by Kazzrie Jaxen utilizing Billy Bauer's line; Poem 19, my journal says is an exercise in tri-syllabic assonance; old guy in 16 is Tom Albach, Nimbus West Records; Joan in 22 is author/publisher/go-go dancer Joan Jobe Smith; "deave" is Old English to deafen/bewilder with loud noise; Arlen is saxophonist Arlen Asher, who has played jazz all over New Mexico since 1958, that poem was read at his 90th birthday party at Outpost Performance Space; Zoreh runs High Desert Yoga in Albuquerque and is daughter of Persia (Iran), this poem, originally was for her birthday, but was repurposed for this book; Supriti has been my yoga teacher almost ten years and counting; my Mom died June 14, 2015, age 82; also a few poems included in this sequence are from a project I'm working on with pianist Virg Dzurinko

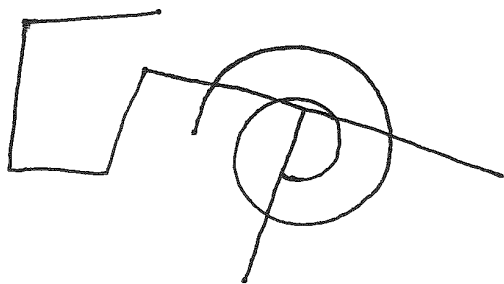
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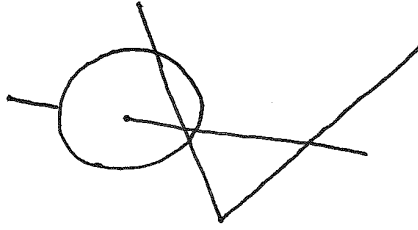
Things change ----  
If you're like me, you're suspicious  
of too much change  
It gets too weird: You barely get used to  
some new development and bing bang boom  
Here's a new turn of events

After awhile you get like those young warriors  
Who come home with that 100-mile stare  
Psychically wounded  
But,  
I'm not young, nor am I old enough  
to play the Old Man Card

Twilight,  
I catch myself at a busy intersection  
Awaken'd by honking behind me  
Staring in a trance: What is this world?  
I'm not sure this is my world, where are we?  
I jump to it, stomp on the gas and  
we're off like a herd of wildebeests  
charging across the savanna  
heading for the Jerusalem



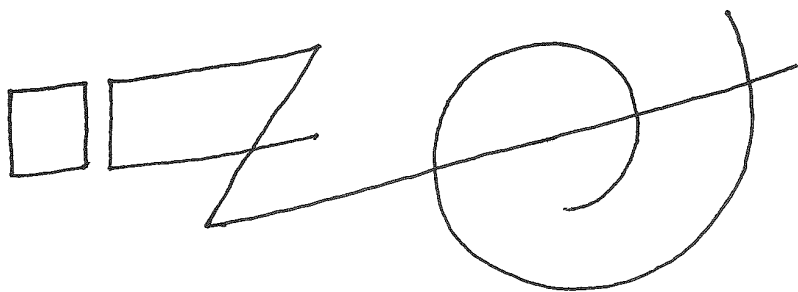




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If it were so, and  
it most like was, then  
kinship stretches further up river  
than  
hitherto believed, belief around  
the fire at night grew quiet  
as we listen'd to the traveler  
tell of generation after generation  
moving up this river, the Danube,  
all the many thousand miles not  
so much in boats but more often  
on foot following the valleys ----  
An earlier people, gentle, but scarce,  
larger than us, not our kin, taught  
us which plants could save you and  
which were cursed and when  
the moon came close  
to hold our babies up to the sky

Fragmentation, atomization, alienation  
All the parts withdrawn and scatter'd  
tumbled like a circus clown crawling  
to the edge of the ring  
where a yahoo wearing a Make America Great  
Again duckbill hat douses him in beer laughing  
This tattoo'd subset who drive trucks  
with tires that come up to your tits  
dangles a pair of rubber bull testicles from rear axle  
yells at cats in trees  
turbid, the waters are turbid  
joined toward the lower valley into  
a cement culvert, slowed at the grate  
by a half dozen shopping carts and light  
fixtures, somebody's lawn mower, a shoe,  
more shoes, hundreds of shoes  
that once walked a mile for a camel, tired  
shoes all pooped out with their competition stripes  
and twigs for shoelaces  
atomized, our prayers floated off  
over the mountains, somebody with a gun  
is shooting them  
all during the night

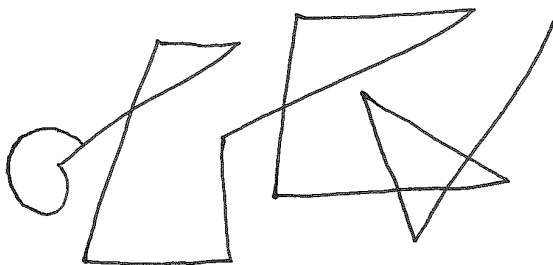


We had simple ceremony  
 Although, I didn't see it fall:  
 Fall it did, within  
 A dream so bleak it waked you "weak and weary"  
 As of old, the raven tapping at your window cold  
 "Darkness there and nothing more . . ."

You might not be awake?

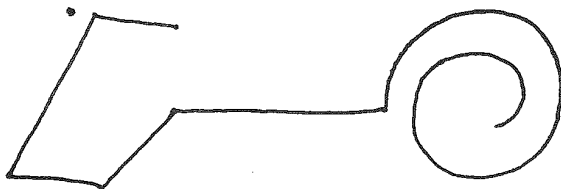
The sky full of crows  
 And a raven quoting Poe  
 And softly a radio somewhere  
 With Peggy Lee singing her lament: Is that all there is?  
 And you look down  
     And the street is full of harlequin  
 Dancing around a dustbin  
 Chanting: That's all there is, That's all there is,  
 That's all there is  
 And the crows break up  
     and scatter  
 And a witch wearing a black hat  
     flies by on her bicycle cackling the same thing:  
     That's all there is, forevermore, Lenore  
 So, go back to yr grave and haunt me no more  
 And I spit in the cuspidor  
 And the raven has a pompadour  
 And looks like an ichthyosaur  
 And I can't quit rhyming words with trapdoor  
 Toreador, reservoir, troubadour, metaphor, picador,  
 Conquistador, forevermore . . .

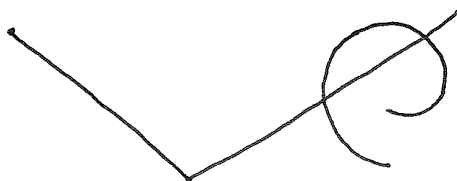
Perilous is the journey at times  
I somehow think it rougher for  
the younger folk, those of us who  
have been around a bit longer  
can piece it together with  
a little more patience, we've  
already traversed this terrain  
crossed over the frozen rivers  
heading south, and re-crossed  
them again when the sun  
has come closer and we follow  
the herds north, and the birds,  
and the rains full of benediction  
This world so supremely glorious and  
violent, waterfalls of grace  
and graceful turning, we turn  
with it, each year  
becoming a little more quiet



## TAKING THE DAY OFF

Some of this stuff I don't even remember  
Come as it did out of the blue, unannounced,  
Like the discharge of a blunderbuss, scatter-shot,  
Memory in a thousand pieces  
The peal of a freight train so far away  
Fairy dust  
The foam of the receding wave at the beach  
And the little bubbles in the sand  
Percolating  
Remembrance of seaweed  
Wrapped around the pilings, sixteen  
Fishermen on the pier in raincoats  
Take the day off, as is the Tao  
A soft bottle passing around, and  
Another memory: the distributor  
And the timing gear used to ride  
On top of the drive shaft, does  
It still? It occurs to me that  
Our presidents should know  
A few more things about basics  
Than they do: How to make a table, for instance





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## READING IN BED

Maybe this would help  
The script is hazy, I push the  
reading glasses further up my nose  
and reach to turn on the other  
bedside lamp  
But still, not enough light  
There are clouds and storms

generating, birds are chattering  
in the trees and a solitary dove  
coo-coo coo-coooooing  
the dawn chorus  
as I nose around a college textbook  
called THE ANCIENT WORLD that  
I picked up at a yard sale many years ago  
It has the usual student margin notations  
and underlining, various color highlighters  
from the two or three undergraduates who have  
used this book, but as is often the case  
they start off great guns underlining and  
highlighting up a storm, but peter out around  
page 98 with "Nebuchadnezzar embellished  
Babylon and made it a showcase," says he built  
the Hanging Gardens, which you'll recall  
are one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World  
This well-written textbook composed previous  
to the current theory that the Hanging Gardens  
were some number of miles up river in Ninevah  
on the slopes of the mountains  
beyond which is Persia  
all of a hundred years before Nebuchadnezzar

God bless all the students, and teachers, and  
Archeologists, scholars, thinkers, and those who  
Contemplate and ponder, God bless  
The meditators and travelers, poets and priests  
And those who print the books  
And gardeners and farmers, chroniclers of seeds  
And time and the stars, bird watchers and  
Boat launchers, hitchhikers and those who  
Would pick up hitchhikers if they were not  
A thing of the past, the past that  
Is a splendorous hanging garden near a river  
That flows out of the mountains  
Beyond which is Persia

## YOGA CLASS

When was it  
 In our history  
 We realized  
 That  
 We were made of "star stuff"

Rather than merely dissolving into nothingness  
 In whatever grave our corporeal body finds itself  
 Someday in eternity?

Well, no sudden moves, I always say (to  
 myself) in yoga class

At one point the moon was much closer,  
 Only 14,000 miles away at it's formation, and is  
 Slowly receding outwards, not so much as part of the expansion  
 Of the universe, but due to the surge of the tides & gravity  
 Now it's 250,000 miles stretched and still creeping  
 (I got this from Neil deGrasse off TV)

Cross your eyes ---- trigger Third Eye

Pratyahara – go inside to go outside, exponentially

The crux being: It is positively psychedelic  
 To wonder  
 Where  
 You've been all these years since the Big Bang

Utkatasana  
 Ardha Chandrasana  
 Dandasana  
 Janusirsasana

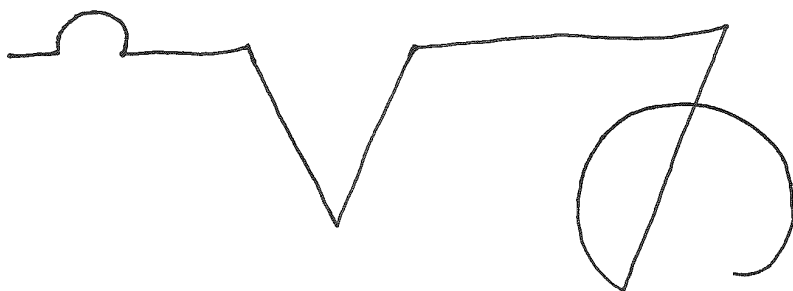


Mostly, I suppose, your atoms  
Have stuck around Earth these last 4.54 billion years  
Harnesses by gravity  
Tidal currents & paisley chromosomes  
Swirling pilgrimage  
Supersymmetry

I don't even want to know where your atoms  
Were  
Before the Big Bang 13.8 billion years ago  
That's too scary for my little brain to handle

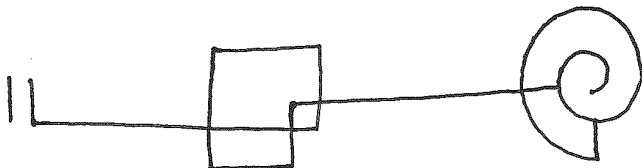
And all the while space matter is passing through us  
"subatomical particles"  
As well, the possibility of parallel universes  
Contrary universes, infinite unfathomable universes,  
Mathematical universes where the only number is one  
(Didn't Three Dog Night sing about that? In another  
Universe far far away when we were all on LSD?)  
Maybe some of that space matter is consciousness  
itself?

Kapotasana  
Natarajasana  
Padmasana  
Urdhva Dhanurasana  
Tadasana  
Trikonasana  
Gomukhasana  
Adho Mukha Svanasana  
Garudasana  
Balasana  
Ardha Matsyendrasana  
Anjali mudra  
Balasana, again & again  
Vrksasana  
Utthitaparsvakonasana  
Halasana  
Pascimottanasana  
Savasana  
Garuda mudra



## SHEILA

I've been sober almost  
As many years, and I still get choked up  
When someone declares their freedom  
From this horrid disease: Sheila Jordan  
Told us she recently celebrated 33 years  
And  
Sang her song The Crossing  
About  
That door you have to  
Open and cross through, if  
You're lucky, to freedom, it's not  
Exactly easy, but you don't have  
Much choice, come hell or high water,  
Caught up in a tsunami, that jail  
That sad slow disaster eating you alive  
That car with a flat tire  
That sad twirl on the dance floor all by yrself  
That devil that has enter'd yr body and taken over  
That melted ice cream cone you wear for a hat  
That hat that never did keep out the rain  
That rain that is a mist and drizzle  
Somewhere, if yr luck holds, you can see  
The other shore, and in the crossing  
Even the crossing is sacred

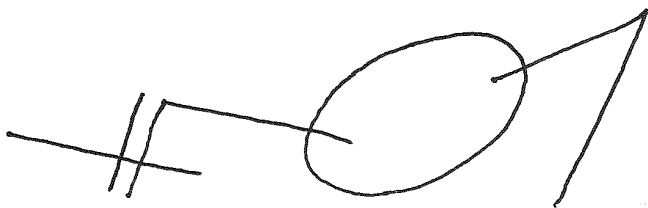




Yoga is all muscle memory:  
Natural postures  
Of symmetry and balance  
And water equality  
Remembrance of where the body  
Wants to stand, floating

Said another way:

Yoga is all muscle memory:  
You once were a tumbling waterfall  
Falling straight to gravity  
Symmetrical to the equator  
Equal to the horizon  
Silhouetted by the Milky Way  
As the inhabitants of a prairie dog town  
Stand on their hind legs  
Watching



## FIRST A SONG

I'm a little birdie  
Singing in my tree  
Chirp chirp chirp  
It's 4:33

Tweety tweet tweet  
Scratch scratch scratch  
Sharpening my beak  
in the mulberry

There's the ornithologist  
With her shiny binoculars  
Showing me a picture  
Of a curved-bill thrasher

So, that's what they call me  
in Albuquerque  
Flitting to the giant cholla  
Where I hide my babies

Chirp chirp chirp  
Tweety tweet tweet  
Bring us fat bugs to chew and eat  
We're as hungry as hungry as hungry can be!

Can be! Can be! Those noisy babies  
Feed me! Feed me! Their constant litany  
Ignore, ignore, the pudgy babies  
I'm a little birdie singing in my tree!

IRENE

I am lucky to have inherited  
certain traits from all through my heritage:  
That even-temper'd strain that surfaced in America,  
and I suppose not restricted to America, it's  
of the species, wherever it was free  
and unencumber'd by so much want and disease

If you think about it, that's what America  
was, situated in this temperate tropic, perfect  
land and weather for sustenance, it gave  
us a certain imperturbable calmness, a  
composure and assurance (as opposed to  
scratching out existence in harsher climes)

(I know not everyone will agree with  
this perhaps naïve observation) but, I believe  
there is something to it

America was the next evolution in government,  
to get shut of oligarchies, feudalism,  
monarchs and despots and demagoguery

It all has taken time: you know, even  
feudalism is understandable if you look  
at it from the other side, and not  
how it degenerated into a spirit-demeaning  
servitude, look at it from what it evolved  
out of

I'm thinking of my Grandma Irene this morning,  
born of immigrants out of England somewhere (wherever  
the Seaman's and the Weatherbee's came from?)  
(We're Scots-Irish on that side, mixed with  
Austro-Swiss – Weber – on the Great Plains

of the 19th century)

Came across the continent in those catamarans,  
the Conestoga Wagon (my Great Grandma Seaman, mother  
of Irene, eventually settled in Kansas, north of Wichita)

In her later years, retired from two decades at  
The Progress Bulletin where she was proof reader  
and I from a young age would wander among  
the huge clanking newspaper machinery on the bottom floor  
(Grandma and 3 other proof readers had a  
little cubbyhole – I can see it now, still – on the  
3rd floor) and the press operators would  
show me the linotype and conveyor belts and  
huge monstrous rolls of paper feeding into  
the machines, those years all the working men  
wore chinos, with cuffs, I was probably in denim, the  
air was different then after the war

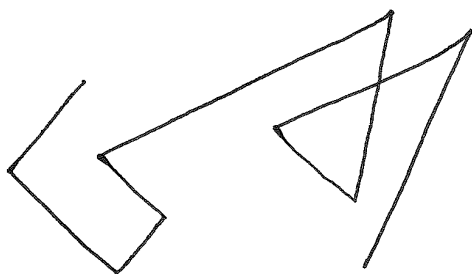
Grandma would sit for hours, perfectly content,  
in her easy chair looking out the window  
at Lincoln Avenue thinking about her life ---- that  
imperturbable stoicism  
I inherited from her ---- That night in a cab  
on Manhattan that that truck was about to  
slam into us, I said, "We're going to get hit"  
I didn't scream or flip out, because, how could that  
change anything? That was Grandma Irene in my  
blood talking ---- Afterwards, (we survived by near miss)  
Connie said, "Mark, you were so calm!"  
It's so apparent to me now  
That that was Irene

## FAERIE

On my way to the woodpile  
Passing under the branches of our apricot  
Late afternoon, a carpet of golden yellow leaves on the ground  
With still many leaves on the tree, vibrating yellow  
Glowing effulgent sunlight all was memory  
Luminary memory

It is only momentary: both the stillness  
And the yellow glowing déjà vu

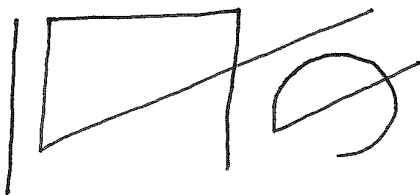
Gone like a quiet childhood  
Poof, an autumn dandelion puff ball  
In the wind





## ARLEN

When you play with so  
many people you have to  
have trust  
That things will be okay  
and, barring that  
You have to be able to  
play in yr own head  
You have to hear the song  
faraway, and play toward it  
as if  
the chords had strings on them  
pulling you,  
you can arpeggiate the notes, but  
it's as if  
the saxophone is doing this on its own  
All that you know  
is that faraway melody  
you heard long ago way back  
in the woods and you don't know  
who was playing it  
This was before you even knew  
what a saxophone was  
or even cared, then somehow  
you had a clarinet in yr hands  
and somebody showed you how to  
set the reed, shadows & mist people, one  
of them singing softly that same melody  
from deep in the woods, a song  
that has no name, naming it  
would make it disappear,  
evanescent,  
and for  
all these years that's the melody  
you've been hearing in yr head, the  
one yr fingers  
hope to play someday



## RAMBLING, AGAIN

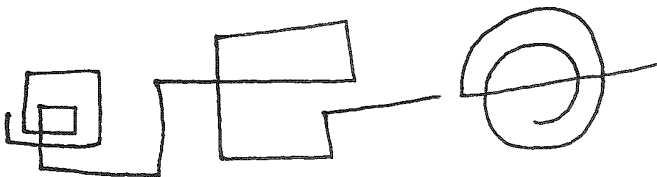
"Don't over do it" I told myself  
 You gotta be careful, after a certain age  
 the body would rather you not push things  
 I was out for a quick walk during  
 the dawn chorus, what a racket, birds  
 chirping like crazy, I had to make it  
 back before the teapot went off (Janet  
 still asleep) I do these crazy things like  
 turn the flame on under the teapot and  
 challenge myself to make it around  
 the block before it starts whistling

Old hipster Tom on the telephone yesterday  
 said, "You gotta keep active, man" He's pushing  
 94 so he's probably right, altho  
 He's too cussed to die, has a colostomy bag  
 and a bad eye and still can beat you  
 in a pool game, "You gotta put some spin on  
 the ball, man" which sounds like the refrain  
 in a Willie Nelson song

Well, I'm not really an exercise kind of guy  
 I do two yoga classes a week (when I'm  
 not recuperating from a pinch nerve or  
 hernia surgery) and traipse around in  
 the mountains, so, in my way  
 I put a little spin on it  
 But, over-doing it is laughable in my case,  
 I'm a couch potato supreme (with  
 a side order of salsa)  
 Give me a good book and a couch and  
 a bowl of Tater Tots and I'm set,  
 I'm under-doing it! (do Tater Tots  
 still exist?) Maybe take a break from  
 reading about the Stone Age and listen to  
 Hindemith's clarinet sonata w/ virtuoso

Reginald Kell not over-doing it, either,  
He really keeps his cool, doesn't rush  
things or get too excited  
After that I put on this re-master'd version of  
Country Joe & The Fish's first album **ELECTRIC  
MUSIC FOR THE MIND AND BODY** (in 1967 mono!)  
that still sounds as great today as it did way  
back when, no wonder I drifted into jazz, this  
psychedelic music got me ready for jazz!

There's an anthropology to this exercise craze  
that started in the 70s ---- Can you  
imagine if you suited up for a jog back  
in Anglo-Saxon times? They'd say  
you'd gone bananas, except  
they didn't have bananas in England back then  
They'd say: He's as crazy as a hedgehog  
Altho, it'd sound like this:  
Wedendseocfram from hattefagol  
and if our Anglo-Saxon had been into his mead,  
it'd sound like this:  
Wodan Un-nytverb haerenfagol  
And then they'd burn me at the stake  
with my Nikes on, BUT  
if I talked quick I could convince them  
I was a Druid and this is Wyrð  
(Wyrð is kind of like The Tao, it's the way  
things unfold in fate and not-fate)  
Then he'd share some mead with me, but  
I don't drink, not anymore, in which case  
he might drag me back to the stake



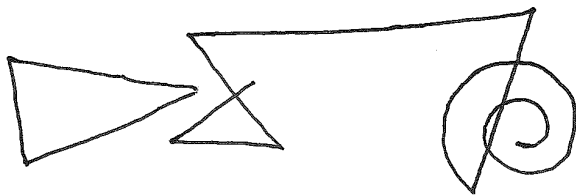
## SUPRITI

And now you're an orphan  
 Like the rest of us  
 Adrift  
 Out on the Western Sea  
 In your little boat  
 With the tattered sail . . . .

Those far distant lands  
 Where your mother departed on Saturday  
 The only telephone that can reach her now  
 Is called memory  
 Pumpkin pie, a novena, that spanking  
 you got for refusing to do the dishes (or was it  
 when you used your uncle's tennis racket to  
     bounce rocks?)  
 And your mother never spanked  
 you again because she cried  
     and you didn't . . . .

Adrift  
 With the dust particles floating  
     in the afternoon window light  
 The bleak trees are beginning to remember  
     their leaves  
 something like tea  
     that is memory in a cup, warm  
 and slightly acerbic, or is that melancholia?  
 Something . . .  
 Something . . .  
 You trail your hand in the water over the side  
 of your boat, there's a jet way overhead above the troposphere  
 Do jets fly this far over the Western Sea?  
 Maybe . . . .  
 Maybe  
 the Buddha is up there?  
 Going somewhere in a jiffy

Is it something you  
Can tell I'm not sure  
Tom Bombadil or Barad-Dur  
The good and its opposite: the  
Very worst: Evil so incarnate  
It makes you wonder where it came from?  
Did it arrive on a meteor  
From out of some vortex of a black hole,  
A netherworld, like a Greek slave ship:  
The rationale so inside-out backwards  
You cannot figure how it was justified:  
Maybe this evil passenger tramp microbe  
Is refugee escaped from an even more  
Evil place, beyond reckoning?  
A place where reckoning is laughed at  
And it lands here in this pristine innocent  
Green and blue world  
Where trees could walk  
And every crow is a philosopher  
Who, still to this day caw caw  
Remind us not to buy any green bananas



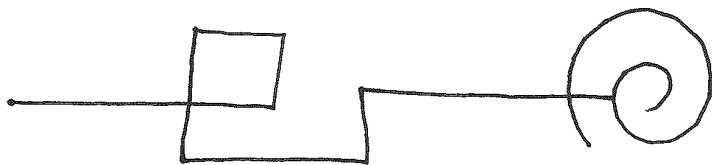
## SHOULDER ISSUES

There was a merry yogi  
 Who took the long way around to samadhi  
 Extra patchouli, Patanjali, Viparita karani  
 Devanagari tattoo L on left wrist, R on the other (for  
 those increasingly frequent moments of doubt)  
 Leaned his shoulder hard  
 to the Wheel of Dharma  
 Maybe a little too hard  
 in Vasisthasana

There was a grinning yogi  
 Sitting on his sky blue mat  
 Rubbing his shoulder, trick knee  
 Rocks & boulders, Ravi Shankar  
 Surya Namaskar, get some gas in the car  
 Remove chaturanga from repertoire

Downward-facing dog  
 Grumbling shoulders like a broken cog

O, would that I could cartwheel  
 Stand on my head pinwheel, but  
 Let's be real:  
 I'm too old for all that, tit for tat  
 I'm too fat  
 I'll stay right-side up  
 And live another day  
 To tell of it



"The warmest November on record,"  
says the weatherman

Our stack of winter firewood is for naught

Scene in a second-hand store:

Child says, "Daddy, what are these?"

"Those are coats"

"What are they for?"

"When it was cold we used to wear those"

"What's cold?"

"That's when you shiver"

"Shiver? What's that?"

"When it's like the inside of the refrigerator"

"Why would it be like that?"

"Oh, I don't know, it used to be cold in winter  
and hot in summer, that was before you were  
born, there used to be snow"

"I don't like snow, I saw it in a picture  
and it was lonesome"

"Yeh, there didn't used to be so many people back  
then, probably why we don't need coats anymore"

"I don't like coats, they're scary. Daddy, have you  
been keeping up with your AA meetings, you're  
scaring me"

"Oh yeh, I go to AA, that's where we pray for snow"

"Daddy, you're weird, you better take me home, now"

"Does your mother and that turkey she lives with  
still have that painting of King Trump on the wall?"

"He's not king, he's our savior"

"Yes, of course. I think I better take you home, you're  
depressing me. I wonder if we can get through  
all those police checkpoints your savior put up?"

## RAMBLING, AGAIN

I have never learned which is correct  
 way to pronounce Patanjali, either  
 of two ways, both musical ----  
 Reading this morning Satchidananda's take  
 on the Sutras I see where  
 pain is purifying, that the nature of  
 tapas burns off impurities, which  
 you'll be pleased to be informed  
 I am approaching sainthood, my upper  
 right jaw is sore from clenching my teeth  
 at night, I have been cooked, grilled, pan  
 fried, baked and barbecue'd Patanjali style  
 and now God is pouring extra hot sauce on me  
 I am looking forward to my new ethereality  
 purified down to the bone, just call me  
 Swami Webskidananda, who's skepticism  
 Gave everybody in Heaven a big laugh, who  
 drinks of the Earl Grey and walks like  
 Frankenstein, I think of Christ on the cross  
 who would not die, so a Centurion piked him  
 in the guts, what kind of person would do  
 that? Soldier or not, it's hard to imagine  
 such a thing, Golgotha be damned, his  
 asshole captain says Go pike that bastard  
 and let's get out of here we got beers  
 to hoist, I feel a twinge in my own  
 wound, merely a common routine hernia  
 surgery and I feel like I've been gutted  
 on Flanders Fields, the Somme 1916 (one million  
 two hundred thousand young French, English, & German  
 men perished), Waterloo, Gettysburg, and clear back  
 to Megiddo (1475BC) and no doubt  
 all the thousands of years previous when  
 we were harassing Neanderthals ---- What's wrong  
 with us? The bodies piling up  
 And we're suppose to be sapient? I have always thought



the defining characteristic of Homo Sapiens was  
cleverness,  
this morning it seems more like Homo Afflictionem (Inflicting  
Pain Man)

Well,

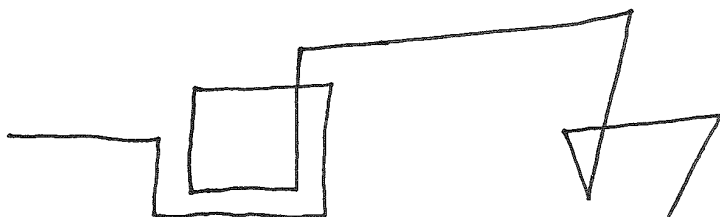
Satchidananda says this pain can be a good thing "We will  
look forward to pain, we will even thank people who cause  
it as giving us the opportunity to steady our minds and  
burn out impurities"

Now,

I see what he is saying but I'm not that far along  
in my swamihood, worked all my life  
and I got a pinch nerve in my backside, pollen  
allergies, and a gut wound, I wonder what Patanjali  
would say about pain pills? Take a couple of those babies  
and you'll never get purified, you'll be toast, you'll be  
sidestepping all the benefits of tapas and self-discipline  
and pretty soon you'll be down in the alley  
waiting for the Man "Wants eleven dollar bills, you only  
got ten" (Dylan obviously talking about scoring ---- Reminds  
me of the scramble in the 80s when dope went from  
ten to twelve dollars a bag, but that's  
another story, I'm a swami now, in this poem)

Uh, where was I? Tapas and  
another cup of Earl

and my pernicious aggrievement? I'm such  
a poseur, almost everybody I know  
has had more pain than I have ever had in this life,  
I just like to bellyache, is that  
any way for a swami to act? Buddhism is  
chock full of all kinds of ridiculous hermits,  
I could be Yogi of the Quasi-Virtuous Bellyache



MOM

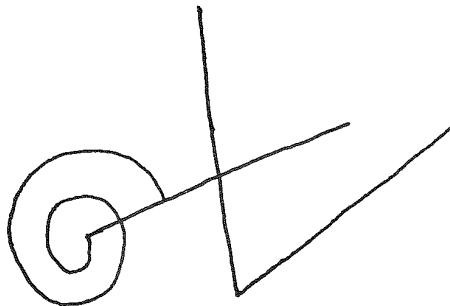
It gets dark early this time of year  
 Bare trees and full moon  
 Everything is slowed down, quiet  
 Luckily, I cover'd the woodpile  
    before the snow made its entry

I have a dictionary in my lap  
 And a cup of Lapsang Souchong  
    on the end table, after a morning  
 of Earl Grey I take Lapsang before  
    the sun goes down, and a book

I don't like to stoke the fire in  
 any way, preferring to allow it  
 to take its own course, pine, aged  
 mulberry, elm, mimosa, black locust, cottonwood, all scavenged  
 around Albuquerque, downed in the wind: Never  
 chop down and take a tree just for burning, that's bad luck,  
 Luck being indescribable, inscrutable,  
 Inexplicable (which almost became the title of this book,  
 I asked my fellow member of the Earl Grey Club  
 Joan and she said: "Inexplicable sounds good, so  
 many things on Earth are inexplicable, especially the poetry urge"  
 I had first asked her if I should even bother putting  
 together another collection, who wants to read this stuff anyway?  
 And Joan being Joan said, "Mark, why not do another book?  
 Rocks or diamonds or imaginary purple hearts, go for it, you'll  
 get hepped from the making of it")  
 Imaginary purple hearts? Joan has been my pen pal for  
 a million years, she & Fred live near the Pacific Ocean

I have to write some sad letters, these two  
 Christmas cards addressed to my mother  
 From old friends of hers

Nothing so much as nothing  
(What does that mean??)  
In the sciences of contemplation  
Nothing is a place, it is desirable  
Our teachers tell us to look into  
That space between the thoughts  
You know  
Self-consciousness is an appropriation  
(or, rather it appropriated us?)  
There have been other modes of "thinking"  
You sit meditation and see: It's  
All there and not there  
Luxurious nothing  
Nothing upon nothing  
You hear the mystics speak of the void  
Maybe that's what black holes are? Pure  
Consciousness, a vortex  
of consciousness?  
I saw a headline the other day  
That said there are millions  
of black holes  
Out there



## ZOREH

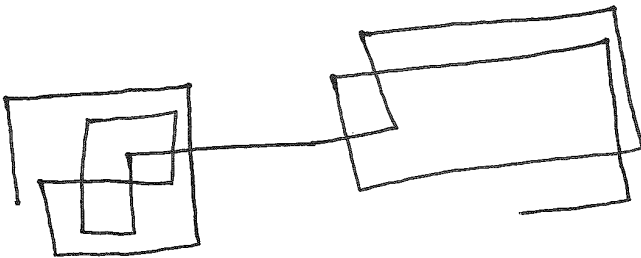
It was all about to arrive  
So far as we could tell ----  
The moon controls the tide  
And your blood  
And upon it  
Innocence among the cargo  
The prow of the ship is Arda Chandrasana  
Half-moon Lady carved from a cypress  
Taken from the mountains above Persepolis  
Jalal al-Din Rumi is kept below decks  
Having gone bananas after staring into  
The face of God one time too many  
Repeating over & over "Last year, I gazed  
Into the fire, This year I'm a burnt kabob"  
Aren't we all?  
Lord Ardha Matsyendrasana sent a million shimmering fish  
To protect us  
And guide us into harbor  
The beach is lined with yogis & yogini  
Each with Garuda mudra held to their hearts  
Symmetrical  
Awaiting Zoreh's arrival at the ceremony  
Of the trip around the sun



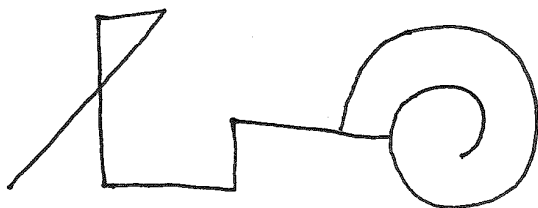
deave yet so tellingly  
did the sky speak  
that  
only foolishness not overcome  
would that we continue this path this day

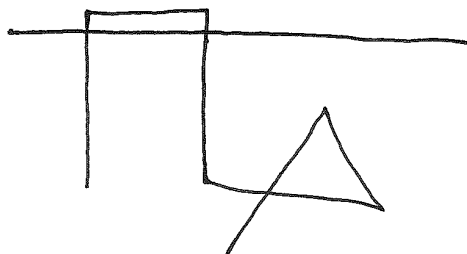
to release the fire that  
is in the wood  
hunker down under this overhang  
and take the day in forbearance

it is good to rest, gathering our thoughts,  
strengthening our resolve, ordering  
the alignment of stars come nightfall  
meat to cook  
crystal water  
we only knew a hundred words then  
                    in those days  
and of them they were growing  
as we spoke them  
unwinding our tongues



Shamath, the god of justice  
explained to Hammurabi  
    in the year 1792BC  
the things we must have in agreement  
if we are to live together  
Marduk was now our lord god in  
    this wide-open expanse  
    known for its two overflowing rivers  
    the Tigris and Euphrates  
And still we had armies and war  
Just as the thief believes he is innocent  
There is no retreat for the warlord  
    who takes your crops  
He brings his own gods and horses and spears  
Convergent into all this a cataclysmic flood  
Washed it all away, the thief  
and the priest drowned together  
We were like the fish scatter'd  
    across the land  
And out to sea

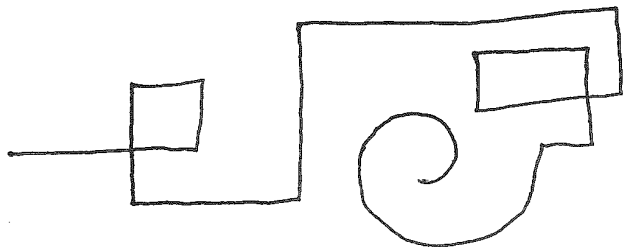




27

JANET

It was in those last couple winks  
That I dreamed I became disconnected  
From you, lost and without money  
Or keys or cell phone I looked  
For you in the store you had gone into  
While I sat outside at a table that  
Had an umbrella, forty-five  
Minutes and you never came out  
So, I walked the aisles inside  
And there was no you,  
Well, I could  
Go for a stroll, allow enough time  
That you would return to our apartment  
Equally wondering and worried what  
Happen'd to me, you'd say of course  
That you were in the store but the  
Dream didn't last that long, and I  
Would have said I looked all over for you



And even so  
There are certain things I must have known  
at one point  
Even as I don't remember knowing them

O little marionette  
Nothing surprises you anymore,  
Does it?

Strange to feel so young in mind  
Even as the strings on your arms & legs  
Become brittle, ageing, age-old like water both  
Ancient and newly fresh



You drink this water, but  
It goes straight through you . . . .

Tumbling, O marionette  
Curiosity has always  
Carried the day: suspended on strings  
Clackety clack down the street

Those same strings that have become  
Entangled so many times over the years  
Detours, trapdoors, wrong turns  
Interrogated and tripped up  
Pulled over

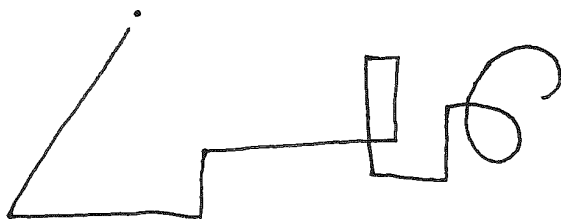
How often you are confounded, not  
By inconsistencies, but purely  
Mystified more like dumb-founded  
Stopped in your rickety tracks  
You learn quick  
How to swing one arm in circles  
Dancing a crumpled jig  
Before judges and surveyors  
Spiraling downwards, criss-crossed

All such little things  
That take up so much time ---- frittering

In a world where Buddhist monks have websites  
Those paragons of renunciation  
Having succumbed to the vortex

I'd sure be nice to do nothing today  
But there's always these strings . . . .

O little marionette  
You want to get out of here,  
Don't you?



30

## CAROL TRISTANO & HER RIDE CYMBAL

Once she initiates her ride

She never lets it go

It is constant

Like a laser beam

The ride permeates

Unwavering concentration of energy

is held in that ride, little bursts are

Released via the off-beat snare hits

While the hi-hat marks time

Like a hood with a cigarette dangling

Eyes half-lidded

Leaning up against the wall of a skyscraper

Snapping his fingers on 2 & 4

The entire kit begins to glow

Flickering warmth when mankind only knew

How to capture fire from lightening strikes

Saved it like a sacred mystery

Glowing, the bass drum is that ancient

Drum from around that fire, heard now

from down through the ages

Our camp not far from the river under

That tree-crested cliff

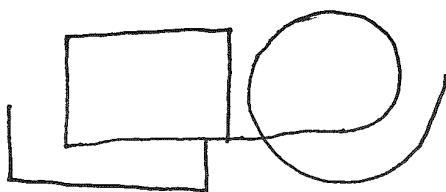
On a mid-summer in deer country

Cougar, bear, elk, beaver, crows, eagles

Taught us their songs

And the drumset glows

And each glowing coal is ricochet  
Each tap on the snare  
Keeps its center, centering  
And the ride never ceases, as  
The planet turns with the night  
The ride finds Earendel (Venus, the Evening Star)  
in the west following  
This western guiding light calm & serene  
Pure energy out of the universe  
Undulating waves of the Big Bang  
Carol's ride is that river  
Toms are hot biscuits & biscotti  
Tumbling  
The moon-illuminated clouds pour from the night  
Hissing  
Refracted churning turbulence  
Glowing



31

RAMBLING, AGAIN  
Some yes some no  
Some things do the trick for you  
And others have no jump  
That's just the way it is  
There is no pure objectivity  
(Not unless you do the work of a sitting  
Buddhist, then  
you'll have pure vision and no other impositions  
upon your perception)  
Some yes some no  
Looking at this book of Annie Liebowitz photographs

Makes me glad I never became a professional photographer  
Bless her heart  
I'm more of a guy who knows how  
To change a tire on a car  
Hammer nails, fire up a chainsaw  
There's always something going on  
I like what Annie says: "I'm always perplexed when people say that  
a photograph has captured someone . . . a photograph is just a tiny  
slice" and this gem, which is something I've also been  
saying for years: "A lot can be told in those moments in between"

These wild stay wild places  
take a turn for the heart  
heart that is wild, blue  
windblown turns for the storm  
waking wild intensifies, rising  
wild the eyes carry pine cones  
of recognition, equivalence  
unstranded turning forever  
turning electrical syntax  
of knowing, wild stay wild  
disobey everything but the wild

Seriously realistic dream last night  
where I was in the throes of missing a fix  
and was somewhere where I had managed to score  
one bag which was not enough but worse was  
there was not much chance of scoring more, I was  
agitated and frayed and at the edge of withdrawal  
when I woke up at 4 it took a full minute  
to shake it off realize it was only a bad dream  
It was probably that episode of Inspector Endeavor Morse  
we watched on TV last night that had a sick junkie that  
was so accurate, leave it to English actors to get it right,  
but also, it was only yesterday  
that I found out that my old running buddy back in those days  
has been dead almost ten years ---- something compelled me  
to do a google search for Jim Baker, and he's gone ----  
Maybe it's tied in with the fact  
That

I have 7 more pages to fill with this book and I've got a stack  
of poems to select from, but they are kinda saying  
a bunch of stuff I've already said, in all kinds of ways  
in the previous 30 poems, SO  
I am now going to start bullshitting (pardon my French)  
You can stop reading now, it's all off the top of my  
head from here on out  
Maybe grabbing a few stanzas here & there out of journals  
to scrabble together . . . .  
Remember in THE GREAT GATSBY when F Scott around page 80  
left the world of West Egg and Nick watching Gatsby  
and for one little minute  
decided to talk directly to the reader? I was 18 or 19 and that  
tore the top of my head off (I've always thought he had a hangover  
when he did that, hangovers make you goofy, F Scott was a bottle  
baby from way back, poor guy) WELL,  
that's what I'm going to do now, 6 more pages to go!

I was thinking yesterday as I walked home from Sunday morning  
yoga class that anybody reading this book  
esp. academics & doctrinaire will notice that I am no longer  
playing the Literary Game anymore, (if I ever did?)  
But, I could be living in the past, I'm not sure there exists  
much of a Literary Game these days? I'll have to ask around  
Not like the 20th century when it was a closed system  
With all the luminaries holding court and keeping the doors  
Locked tight not unless you show up at one of their  
drinking soirees, Then  
in the Sixties along came the Mimeograph Revolution  
and things got more democratic (and underground)  
and then Xerox came out with their copy machines  
and the Little Magazine Era was off and running, which  
is where I came on the scene, my first appearance in a  
magazine (we didn't call them "zines," yet) was 1980,  
kinda late, but I was mostly working in jazz from 1976  
onwards, again, a little late, but  
I'm a late-starter, late-adaptor, slow learner (I only got  
out of high school with a C- average, kinda stoopid  
doncha think?) Which is another  
reason why you should stop reading this book <grin>

It was Joan, who you first heard about in Poem 22, she  
published me in PEARL, which  
got the ball rolling

Too bad Jerry Garcia didn't live  
To grow old with the rest of us  
We need our geniuses and holy fools

Our spin on a dime philosophers  
And twin sublime rebopitors

With eyes that look around corners  
And boots & saddle up all the loners

Music that has sixteen dimensions  
And pizza for everyone in suspension

Jerry passed the hash pipe to me  
Backstage, upstairs, at the Ash Grove  
in Los Angeles, the City of Fallen Angels (as  
Joni would have it)

I was all of 18 or 19 (we were older then than now,  
paraphrasing Dylan)

Jerry didn't believe in hierarchies  
We were all in this together, and music  
Was music, sustenance, soul food, a mixture  
of down-to-earth Campbell's Soup  
And laser beam into outer space (this was  
good hash)

and when the 2nd show was about to start  
I told Jerry that me and my girl Shane  
would sure like to hear more, that we only  
had enough dough for the first show ---- this  
was his band with Merle Saunders ---- He said  
Follow me and we went down the stairs and  
through the audience and he found some empty seats  
right up front, right in front of his tie-dyed Fender Twin Reverb  
he used in that group

He was a real honest guy, Jerry Garcia, he  
Couldn't see it any other way, straight-forward and

Unfainfully honest  
And no complications, all he wanted to do was  
Talk about music  
I believe I told him how he sounds like Coltrane tonight  
(I was really into "My Favorite Things" at the time)  
That earned me a high five, metaphorically speaking  
I have since come to think of him as  
On the same plane as Charlie Parker  
Deep space, other-worldly ability to ride the wave  
Explode their notes into a rainfall of glittering sparkles  
I sure wish Garcia would have lived a little longer  
(August 1, 1942 – August 9, 1995 age 53)

You cannot know everything  
so possibly that awaits, not  
unless you have foresight, which  
we all have hidden behind  
our eyes, all is known and unknown  
depending on how quiet you can be  
turned into rain  
all those journeys of yr ancestors  
long a part of you  
descended into valleys  
taken with breath  
known and unknown, indeed  
Like who taught you how  
to make fire  
from flint & dried grass?  
How to count using  
the joints of yr fingers  
To chant the names of rivers?  
ever so far back  
in forests  
So far back into the mountains

I dream of going back up into  
The mountains again  
My beloved Sandias, that overlook Albuquerque,  
10,000 footers so peaceful

How far deep into the wilderness do you want to go?  
I myself am ready to go a long way  
Way out there and disappear like the hermit Everett Ruess  
and his donkey eternal  
Starry nights of Utah  
Canyons and forgotten mountain valleys  
Pure water  
For years we thought Everett could still be alive, but now  
the years have caught up with the mortal possibilities  
The last anyone saw him was around 1934 or 1933  
Nobody knows for sure  
He was always disappearing, so  
it wasn't surprising not to see him for long stretches  
Then, one day it was apparent it had been years  
Stretched out years, sky blue years, red rock years

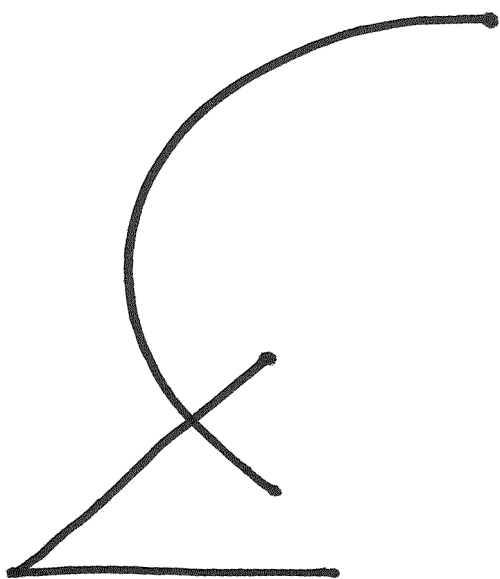












Not yet so far  
Yet far enough upon  
A wind that could be  
Yet far so not  
Not far so yet