SONGS FROM THE VAGABOND

from the hand and mind of Phil Gooding.
Completed Feb. 22, 1
Songs from the Vagabond

A CREATIVE PROJECT
SUBMITTED TO THE HONORS COLLEGE
IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR

ID 499

by

Philip Edward Gooding
Advisor: Dr. Thomas Koontz

Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana
May, 1990
**Songs from the Vagabond** is a compilation of songs and writings most of which were composed in 1987 and 1988. It is a time in which I was often traveling and never quite unpacked and moved completely into any one place. This compilation was originally intended to be an audio cassette, but recordings of the quality desired have yet to be achieved. So here is what has ended up being compiled after taking some time to cull through notebooks, notecards, and song lyrics quickly scribbled down while sitting in front of a tape deck. As far as I am concerned it is not as important WHAT I have written. What is more important is HOW. Some of my favorites were "composed" while sitting on a rock or walking down a street. Many of these songs are the words and melodies I sing to myself as I walk along. It feels good to get them in a media I can share with others.

This compilation is officially completely compiled

Wednesday, February 22, 1989, 10:08 PM.

Phillip Edward Gooding
Home is where the heart is
And the Vagabond doesn't know where his home is
So he set out alone
To find his heart
And a voice he could call his own...
ALONE
He came to the Island expecting to find a primitive gospel choir.
Instead he found a tourist trap. A trap with teeth, teeth trying to bite under his skin.
Teeth that are people trying to get part of him. And he's not taking the bait. He's not
stepping fully in. Yet he's not walking away, nor trying to escape.

"I'm a survivor!," he screams.

"I'm a failure," he thinks, "Don't touch me."

Even though he came to the Island to be touched.

"Maybe someplace else." Always, "maybe someplace else."

And always also it is, "No place will do if this place does not do.
All places are within me, and if this place does not satisfy me, then I do not satisfy me.
This is what I think, this is what I do."

So here the story begins. He is on the Island, not feeling all together well with
himself. He is on the Island and he hopes to learn. No, he doesn't care about learning.
"Learning" is intangible.

"Here the story begins." "The story," not, "the learning."
so a story will come from this. A story about all the world,
and a story about the man who went to the Island. For his life
is all the world he knows.
CHAPTER 1:

On the back of this envelope
on this dark rainy night
I am writing by candle light.
The rain comes down hard
And the sea is angry.
All the world is reduced to the
light of three candles. In this world
I find the beetle, whom the children
have dripprd wax on most interesting.

The children are interesting
by themselves. They own the world,
they will not inherit it,
they own it every moment.
They command the animals to
talk and the sun to come out
from the clouds. We shape them.
We call them to obey. We
ty to mold them. But they
are as free as the kitten
who climbs on the table to chase
the beetle. And they show their
freedom when they chase the
kitten. They show their
freedom when they cry.

I stand up to walk out of
this world with the wax splattered
beetle still on the table behind me,
on the table in candle light.
Streetlights

Shadows move across the walls
as I lie in bed,
but I choose the fading streetlights instead.
The city is full of bright lights tonight,
but I prefer to follow
the light of the fading streetlights.

Streetlights are fading,
fading street lights tonight.
Streetlights are fading.
    I follow the fading streetlights...

Shadows move across the back of my hand
and I know that someplace
    the ocean is reaching for the sand.

Streetlights are fading,
fading street lights tonight...
Floatin' in the Middle of the Sea

Well there's water all around me
'Cause I'm floatin' in the middle of the sea
And I haven't had a bite to eat for days.
I see no relief in sight, haven't even seen an island,
And no ships, no ships have passed my way.
But somehow I do believe
That there's someone watching over me,
Some invisible hand that I can not see.
But as far as I can see there's no end to this sea,
And as far as I can tell there's no way out ov this hell.

'Cause I've been floatin' in the middle of the sea
With water all around me
And I've even seen the belly of a whale.
Well I met Jonah there, and sittin' 'round the fire we made
We told each other a few old wives' tales,
But I didn't like the company
So I got back into the sea,
I came upon an island
I met a man, and I said to him

That I've been floatin' in the middle of the sea
With water all around me
And I haven't slept a wink in days (or nights).
"You've got a nice island and, Mister, I was sorta wonderin'
If maybe, just maybe I could stay." (And he said,)
"I am real sorry sir, but you just can not stay.
You see, we are all blind here
    and we'd sorta like to stay that way."

Then I dried myself off before I got back into the sea,
And ever since about that time
I've been trying to let that hand guide me,

'Cause I've been floatin', in the middle of the sea
With water all around me
And I haven't stepped on dry land in years.
When I let that hand guide me
I hope that you can see
I've got fewer troubles,
    fewer worries,
    and even fewer tears.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
...In the mountains
and in the sea
he flies away to be...
Bloomington

I'm walking in a city
That I do not know
Though I really know no one
I'm not afraid I don't know where to go

Walk into a restaurant
Where I've seen some people go
It's a nice little hideaway
Has its own appealing sort of way

It's the kind of place
I might start some day
I'd rather own a restaurant
than a record store anyway

There are hanging plants
And pictures of green
And the music that's playing
Is so serene

I'm walking in a city
That I have never seen
No, I have no burdens
Yes, It's almost like a dream

I can go where I like
I have no place to go
And I have to think
Because there's so little that I do know

When I walk out that door
Only God knows where my feet will fall
And I'll just follow them
And find myself content,
   Content...
night
When night skies are free of city lights
stars become clearer,
and in the clearness
bright eyes can see satellites
moving slowly by.
THE REALIZATION OF ALONE HITS
THE REALIZATION OF MEALS WITH NO COMPANY
AND LACK OF SHARING COMPANIONSHIP COMES TO SURFACE
THE STEPS HAS LITTLE RECURSE
BUT TO STEP ALONE

THE WORD "ALONE" BECOMES A ECHO
A FURTHER RIPPLE FROM REALITY
YET AS THAT RIPPLE REFLECTS AND RETURNS TO ITS SOURCE
IT CREATES FURTHER ECHOS IN MIND BODY & ACTION

THE BOLD MAN SETS OUT UPON HIS JOURNEY.

THE CHINESE MAN SEES HIS FAMILY
AFTER YEARS OF SEPARATION
Beanstalks and Spaces

A small wooden room with a wooden floor
and space to let dreams grow.
An open mind and an open heart
and space to let the light in.

A clear blue sky
and all the space to believe.
A road going no place
and coming from no where.

A tree that grows until it touches the sky.
Beanstalks are what dreams are made of
and giants cannot hide what we seek to find.

We climb higher and higher
until we touch the clouds.
They look hard, but are soft to the touch.
it is like walking on water

HE HAS NO TABLE OF HIS OWN
TO EAT UPON, NO TABLE
TO WRITE UPON, NO ROOM
TO PLACE A WOODEN TABLE NEAR
A WINDOW WHERE HE COULD
SIT IN A WOODEN CHAIR
AND WATCH THE MOON
GLOW ALL NIGHT LONG
SPACE
SPACE IS SOMETHING
    VERY SPECIAL
PERSONAL SPACE
    IS VERY VALUABLE
SHARED SPACE
    IS HELD HIGHER
    THAN ANY OTHER SPHERE

SHARED SPACE
    IS MUCH SEPARATED
    FROM COMMON SPACE
SHARED SPACE IS VERY RARE
SPACE
    IS NOT LIMITED
    TO A BOX
SPACE
    IS NEVER SEEN
    THE SAME
SPACE

............................
I have no mirror,  
Neither a glass,  
Nor a person with whom to confer,  
To point out how I appear to the world.  
Because of this  
I am sure my appearance lessens  
And my world becomes more and more  
limited to the thoughts moving rag tag  
across the hills and plains of my mind.

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

A familiar song  
Is part of home  
It calms my nerves most times  
And helps me breathe.  
It soothes me  
Even more than a blue sky  
Or a calm sea.
Memories
I hold them close to me
Maybe too close
Thoughts,
Pictures of events past
Of Pleasant experiences
Of Love, and Lovely moments
  of touches and kisses
Of past actions and past words
I Love what has happened
And often let it carry me
Yet I always say I must start swimming
Adrift in the salty sea
Everything reminds me of something else
Face value is difficult for me to see
The way I cry now and thoughts I think
Remind me of when I was in third grade
   when I used to cry and hit my head on the wall
   And scream "I am stupid"
My mother comforted me then
My mother is not here now,
   Not tangible,
Neither is any Love I’d like to comfort me
I see no sense in these tears
I see no sense in little emotion
God, Bless me!!
   I Feel damned! I Feel as if I have been cursed.
God please help me! Self help me!
My face is contorted and I am among strangers.
And I stop my crying for fear of showing weakness
Would that I had secure comfort
So I could cry and talk
Until I no longer had the urge to cry
Anymore
It is beginning to seem to me
That one cannot go any place
With only one purpose in mind

One purpose tends to narrow and create expectations
One purpose seems to shut out any other plans
One purpose is not all that we will see
And one purpose is much less than what we will be
   Or what we are.
Walking on the sand

In these days of Darkest despair, the man on the Island wandered from place to place, from person to person, alone. He carried little with him, and in these days there was little he could call his own. It was during this time that it came to his mind how important his small home and cluttered room had been. He realized how important it was to him. Here he had the world, the entire world within his reach, yet he had no place he could call his own. No room with a familiar texture, with a familiar energy, with a familiar, yet not quite so noticeable, scent. No room which he might traverse in darkness. No room, even, where he might curse himself for having a room. He had no room at all.

Akin to the lack of a familiar texture of a room, was the lack of a familiar touch of a friend. Solitude can make one bitter, and the stiff shoulder and tightened back of another human are no comfort. Some comfort is found in conversations yet . . . no hand to hold, no shoulder to wrap an arm around, no openness to run and not think, no kiss either of friendship or of love. No familiar comments, no familiar phrases of personality. But the touch, the touch not met by tightness, the touch met by soft yielding of flesh, met by trust. That he missed.

(If he were a child, he would cry now. Now he, as a man, is on the verge of tears, yet tears alone have little reason.)

The man on the Island stepped off of the sand. He found himself walking on the dry land. One step he must take and then another. Too insecure to smile at another. He holds his face then moves silently on.

He holds his face and moves silently on. He does not allow himself to be free. He does not look to see too clearly. He only moves within his searching mind. Searching, he says, for his true self to find.
Port Antonio (JAMAICA), 3 AM

ROACHES AND RATS ENTER THE STREET
CHASED AWAY BY MAN OR DOG
(Actually I am the only one who stomped the rat to his sewer)

MELODRAMATICS MIGHT BE ADDED HERE
BUT I SHALL REFRAIN
I'M WAITING FOR THE EARLY MORNING BUS
AND WONDERING WHAT THIS TOWN LOOKS LIKE IN THE DAYTIME.
SEVERAL WHITES ARE WANDERING AROUND THIS NIGHTTOWN,
MOSTLY EUROPEANS, I BELIEVE,
(THEY PROBABLY ALL ARE. EXCEPT ME. I DO MORE WONDERING THAN WANDERING.)

THE "ROOF CLUB" DOWN THE STREET IS PLAYING MUSIC.
ON ONE CERTAIN BASS NOTE THE WINDOW BEHIND ME VIBRATES
I LOOKED THROUGH THE WINDOW OF THE BANK,
I SAW A ROACH ON THE FLOOR.
(I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK ABOUT ROACHES INHERITING THE EARTH.)

THERE IS ONE BUILDING I'D LIKE TO TAKE A PHOTO OF,
MAYBE IN THE DAY TIME, BUT IT WON'T LOOK THE SAME AS AT NIGHT.
I NEED A TRIPOD FOR LONG EXPOSURES,
AND CONFIDENCE THAT I WON'T GET MY CAMERA RIPPED OFF (OF MY NECK)

EUROPEAN WOMEN LOOK SO SEXY
THE BOLD WAY THEY CARRY THEIR BODIES
(WHILE I PRACTICALLY STUMBLE AND PISS ON THE STREET SIDE)
Everyone Calls Me Whitey.

Everyone calls me Whitey,
And I'm beginning to think that's my name.
Everyone calls me Whitey,
Everybody knows me by that name.

I've dreamt of my face
more often than I've seen it in a mirror,
      Lately.
I'm not as alone,
I've started to make friends here,
      Lately.

But they all call me Whitey,
And I'm beginning to think that's my name.
They all call me Whitey,
So I ask you
     is that
my name?
America does not exist
it is an illusion called "concept"
not to be known except
as a long lost idea of home.

Brady J. Mick
April 8th, 1988
Paris
The West End of the Isle

I've got to leave this town.
I only know people by the things they try to sell me.
Their goods, their goods become their name
The Bicyclist, Mr. Peanut and the Clothes Lady
are the only names that I will ever know.
And the prostitute, she is the same way
Though when she offered to make love I said, 'No'
I must admit that I still fantasized about that love
as I walked farther down the road.

Oh, the sun never rises
on the west end of the island,
though I've seen it set
with fire into the sea,
In the morning it creeps through the vegetation
There is no eastern horizon to be seen

So today I'm going to the east end of the island
to see if I can see the sun rise over the sea.
Today I'm going to the east end of the island.
Today...
I am
free...
There are particular places that, perhaps, all people should see. There are some art galleries that, perhaps, all people should walk through. The Jamaican National Gallery in Kingston is one of these places. As I walked through every room some work always caught my eyes and caused me to linger and relax. Quite often the work was made by the hands and eyes of Edna Manley. "Ghetto Mother" is a sculpture she made which reaches out from one of those rooms.

**Getto Mother**  
(inspired by the sculpture of the same name)

Such a pulling down
Such weight
Such weight
Such a frightened face
No escape
No escape

February 2, 1988  
Jamaican National Gallery, Kingston Jamaica
THE CONCERT
(the Phil Woods Quintet
tuesday, 11 October, 1988)

ALL OLD JAZZ PLAYERS WEAR GLASSES
(When they sightread sheet music today)

Though they have grey hair,
In their movements I see youth.

He touches the keys
only lightly
all is fluid

The man is powered by music
Inanimate on stage
except when playing

He seems a quiet man
But the way he plays
Makes me want to know what's inside of him

They move
Like choreography
listening
Perhaps I like art
not because it gives me insight directly,
but because it soothes my mind
and draws me to the present
so I might see
what is here
A forgotten note to myself

I'm always making up love that is a thousand miles away
You know it's easier that way
It gives me a bit of hope
When I find myself all alone
I think of someone someplace
Who I'd like to share this moment with
Skies of blue
And blue songs too
Rambling thoughts
And late night talks

I sit here in a field
There's a patch of dandelions over there
That I would like to share
the open door
I walked past them
As I heard them singing through an open door
I knew the songs they sang
But I could not join them
There is something tender about singing lovers
Singing without instruments
Singing, searching for words
A tender sound
  somehow sacred and pure,
  somehow sanctified,
A sound that should not be broken
  by any other
no matter how dear,
no matter how lonely
  that other sound may be
a lifetime of one kiss romances
and never buying a flower for a lover
Isolation

One night I stood watching the rain pass a light
Hoping Love would walk up and wrap her arms around me
It was a warm hope
I don't feel that hope now
If the rain came down tonight
I don't believe I would have any relief
I believe I would only feel more tension

I pray for relief
I pray to let myself go
I pray I haven't lost my childhood
I pray I haven't gained doubting forever
I pray I can freely smile
I pray I stop thinking of myself in past and future tense
I pray for life
I pray for sharing warm star light
I pray for an open heart
and a flowing, happy mind
I pray for release
New Year's Eve

If someone might have moved
   in a certain way
or if certain words had been spoken,
   certain questions asked,
I might be in someone's home now
lying in someone's warm bed.
She was not a person that I know
But I wouldn't be sitting here
   in a broken chair
   waiting outside in the cold
   only slightly sheltered from the rain
   hoping my friend will come home...

Perhaps if I had tasted the drink she hid under her coat
Or asked her where she was going,
Surely if she would have put her hand softly on my leg
Or asked where I was going
   or asked if I would like to go to her place,
Perhaps if I would have completely relaxed my shoulder and leg,
Or even if I had only said more than "excuse me"
   as I passed her when I left the bus...

Perhaps if only one thing had happened differently
   I wouldn't have walked here in the rain,
Perhaps I would have gone to her apartment
   And lain with her on her bed
   And come, with my eyes closed, between her thighs,
   kissed her lips
then lain down beside her to look at her,
   touching her belly, and wondering if I should ask her name.
I kiss her cheek then turn my head
   to look out the window and listen to the falling rain...
The bull elk sings of his dream

Lie down in tall grass and look at the stars
While what was living flesh turns into scars.
While winding streams like veins break the surface
When rabbits run like blood to a red face
She steps from the dreamlight to bathe under stars
And slips in the stream silt, turning with a start
to the wing'd whisper song sung by pines to
wading virgins whose warm lips have turned blue.
I cannot lie down to sleep in my wound,
Nor can I lie down to rest in her womb.
Sailor's Song

alone
I've sailed these seas for years
alone
alone, I sail alone
I've seen many a port
but I've never taken anyone
on board
with me
no, not with me
'cause I sail alone

I sing this sailor song
To whomever might listen (to me)
Most often I sing this song
Only to myself
Only to myself
"I turn minutes into years,
   minutes into years,
   minutes into years..."

I've seen the setting sun
boil when it hits the sea...
I've seen the coral reef
reduced to nothing
by the pounding waves

I sing this sailor song
To whomever might listen
Most often I sing this song
Only to myself
Only to myself
And with this song
I turn minutes into years
   minutes into years
   minutes into years...

I sing this sailor song...
Hotel Room in Spain

In a hotel room in Spain
She turns off her colour television

In a hotel room in Spain
She turns to her pealing paint reflection

She drinks of her wine
Then she stares into the mysteries of the glass

In a hotel room in Spain
She longs to be with him...

To be held by him,
To close the curtain,
And to make loving silouettes
to the night.

She is caught by a flicker
And she looks out side.
She is drawn to her window
To look out into the night.
She sees lovers holding hands.
As the walk beneath the streetlights,
She sees them kissing under the corner lamp post.

She dreams or him,
She closes the curtain.
She dances...
She dances with him.
She dances...
She dances with him.
(they dance)
...Freely, Freely, Freely...

She cried herself to sleep
(alone)

In a hotel room in Spain...
(alone)

In a hotel room in Spain.
(alone)
(alone)
alone
The Homeless Blues

I've got the homeless blues,
And sometimes I feel heartless too...
...A spider stuck in his own web
Struggles until he dies,
A bird is hatched from her egg,
And if she lives she learns how to fly...

...These words I offer to you,
And I'm not sure what words can do,
But I bring them none the less
Because words are all I have...
Words
One lesson I have learned on this journey
Is the value of words to me
The correct flow of words
    can create a desired flow of feeling
Words can capture moments
Words create pictures

Words I make
To you I take
To give you
A picture of what I see or feel
All the words that I use in my thought,
Words of any language,
I think
    so I might save them
    so I might give them
    eventually to you
Every person's life could make a book, or a movie.
   It is all in the words of dialog,
   The angle of the camera,
   And the projection of the thoughts.
   Every life could be a story
   If only it is written down at the right angle.
language
So much of what I see
I try to think how to write it down.
I try to think of categories
So I might tell my experiences to another.
I look upon the pigs
And think.
I look upon their features
And try to decide how I will describe them to others.
Pictures of how pigs have been described to me
flash through my mind:
"The three little pigs," Animal Farm, Old McDonald,
Lord of the Flies,
And any other childhood picture of a pig I have been given.
I weigh the words I have been told
With the living animal in front of me
And in my mind
I weigh words to tell others.

It is true,
It must be true,
That we think more of words for others
than for ourselves
If one grew up without another who spoke words
One would not learn words
And this is not only because no one taught him words
It is more because
He has no need for words

Words are used to express to others
The only reason we use words in our thoughts
Is to prepare the words to give to others
And when we save words to speak to ourselves
in the future
We are saving words for another.
symbols
Nothing has meaning
until it becomes a symbol.

I am a hero to some
A fool to others
And even sometimes
the fool is a symbol
or the lover
or the love that is left behind
or the mole on the back of a hand
or hair growing thick on a back
or a broken arm
or the ring falling off your finger,
your first kiss,
the back of the head of the boy who sat in front of you in class,
the person who, years ago, you thought about marrying,
or your mother,
or your father,
or the place where you grew up,
or the place where you first kissed,
or the time you walked out a door,
or the time you walked in one,
or the time in first grade
when you said something that made everybody laugh,
or a ballet or opera or play you went to,
or a conversation,
or a book you read.
They all can become symbols
and they often do.
Others are forgotten,
(or at least some don't surface so easily in the mind)
Symbolic Self
The downfall comes
When you see yourself as a symbol
And you believe that you are something
Beyond what you are

(8 January, '89)
it is easy to forget ourselves
it is easy to fall into the trap
it is easy to copy ourselves
and try to recapture the moment
of discovery which is part of our past
When we try to be something we are not,  
    or something we think we are  
When we . . .

When I fight with myself  
I feel like I'm in hell  
There are no shadows, no light, no dark

I am screaming out now, but I am silent  
And I want to let go  
I am holding onto myself too tightly  
I am rolled up into a little ball  
I am watching myself too closely  
I am guarded, I am afraid to fall  
I am even writing in a familiar style to try to soothe my soul
Doldrums
I don't amaze myself any more
Has it all become habit,
Simple reflexive habit?

No word I find
to say what I feel
Words become trivial and habits in themselves

(I look out
at a world I am timid to leave)
Remember Beauty

Maybe it takes an artist to know
That it's all shit
screaming shit
crying shit
sobbing shit
smiling shit
laughing shit
look at me shit
fuck me shit
Dance with me Beauty
  Dancing with Beauty
    is much more Lovely
    and so much Stronger...

Remember Beauty
Scream
Sing
Screams
   Bring out what we
      will not whisper,
And whispers bring out the tenderness
   that a scream cannot touch

I believe,
Yes, I believe, that we all must scream
   and we all must whisper
      and we all must feel the touch
         of another living thing
     Especially the touch of another human being.

I believe,
Yes, I believe, that sometimes we must close it all off.
   I don't know if we should,
      but sometimes we must do that...

And I don't know
   if anything is ever complete.
I don't know
   but I must try
      to find out
         where we go
     and what I must do
       what I must do...
Silent Screaming
A child on the floor
traces his fingers
through the colours
on the carpet

fire is on his mind
and with a prayer
it does come
to his hands

he does burn
he does burn
he does burn
burn it all

the sky is filled
with the smoke,
filled like ash
when a volcano explodes

he would not cry
so he did explode
and fire was the only,
only way out ...
"Parting is Such Sweet Sorrow"

I walked through the town this morning
What can I say that hasn't been said before
Sleepy towns, Sunday mornings
Words scribbled on a page.

I screamed this morning,
Set the town on fire...
Stared into the flames
Like a good Boy Scout should...

"Good-Bye Childhood"
Burning
The floor boards are warped and weathered wooden floors
   A cabin
       with a front porch view of the lake

The smell of wood
   perhaps an old abandoned fishing pole
       or a tin bucket of some sort

It's the dry pine season
So we strike a wooden match,
light the string of kerosene,
   and step out side
       to watch it burn
           ash down to the ground
Waking
Morning comes
And her dreams are hard to fade
She reaches out with her eyes closed
To feel her familiar room

A stretch, to feel the body move
As she starts day breathing again
She stretches her ear to hear
   As far as sound will go
All sounds well
So she looks at the ceiling
Then she sits up and looks at the wall
All feels well
She is breathing well
   once again
A fit body is a beautiful thing
Trim, supple, every muscle a ripple
Smooth, sinewy
Every muscle
Moving in concert
<><><>>

HE STOOD UP
IN A DARK AND CROWDED ROOM
THOUGH EVERYONE WAS FRIGHTENED
HE WAS THE FIRST ONE TO MAKE A MOVE
FEELING HIS WAY
HE WALKED TO THE DOOR
HE REACHED OUT AND TURNED THE KNOB
THE DOOR OPENED AND LIGHT FELL ON THE FLOOR

HE STEPPED INTO THE HALL
AND LEFT THE ROOM BEHIND
HIS FINGERS TOUCHED THE WALL
NEW LIGHT HAD LEFT HIM TEMPORARILY BLIND
BUT HE WAS SURE OF HIS FOOTING
AND SURELY HE KEPT WALKING,
BUT HE WAS NOT SURE OF HIS VOICE,
SEEMS YEARS SINCE HE REMEMBERS TALKING

SO HE WALKS OUT
INTO A NEW LIFE
WITH THE SAME BODY
THAT HE HAD IN HIS OLD LIFE
AND WITH LOOKING AT HIS BODY
HE KNOWS
THAT THIS MUST TRULY BE
PART OF THE SAME LIFE THAT HE KNEW
BEFORE
cleansing
Cleansing my body of this disease is like cleansing my clothes of dirt. I know little of washing clothes by hand, (If I had to hand wash all the time all my clothes would be black) but I do know that, somehow, with every drop of water which is squeezed out of my clothes some dirt comes too.

Every excretion of my body is likewise a purging action which removes unhealthy filth from under my skin.
Singing in the Morning

And she lifted her voice unto God and spoke thanks to God for giving her life and breath, for the cool water which washes her skin, for all her anger and for all her laughter. She gave thanks to the Sun and to the true yet unseen spirits. She gave thanks for the times she spoke to her lover in words unsure. She gave thanks for the sweat which has cleaned her skin and soiled her clothes. She gave thanks for every moment she has longed to scream at the silent tension that would not allow her shoulders and back to fully relax. She gave thanks for her eyes and all the sounds she has ever heard. She gave thanks for life.

unsure steps
unknown words
trust, knowing
Dancing by candle light

I dream of canning strawberries. Tonight
I want to be sure. Tonight I want to
untangle the dream from the fantasy and the
vision from the illusion. Tonight I want to hope,
I want to act stronger than belief
I don't want to hold back the dream or
blur the vision, but I do not want to be deceived.
I don't want to see things that are not true
I don't want to speak words that should not be spoken
And I don't want to correct myself either
I want to trust what comes out and know that I am
not alone. (But lord, and every person alive, o, sometimes
I feel so alone. I want to shake off the shadow
but it follows me where e'er I go. Shake! Shake!
Shake...) I want to believe in the celebration
I want to celebrate. I want to sing...

Unknown words
Unsure steps
Trust
Knowing
I want to sing
(tonight)
sand in hand

Walking on the sand
Silent footsteps of a man
Watching the birds
Watching them fly

Slight splash of the wave
Footsteps walking on the wave
Feeling the water
Come to rest on the sand

Heartbeat in chest
Wind blowing
Foaming wave crest
Without knowing

Walking on the sand
Silent footsteps of a woman
Feeling the sand
Slip through her hands

Sand in hand
Wind in hair
Wind on clothes
And steps on sand

Sand in hand
Wind in hair
Wind on clothes
Steps on sand
Breathing
Take a time each day
To just sit down and be.
Take a time to do something
When you are no one's brother or sister
or son or daughter
or friend or lover.
Take a time to just be
yourself.
somedays (I am)

I can believe
and I can follow.

I can trust
and I can scream
and I can lie down to sleep.
I can tire of this life,
I can tire of breathing
    and feelling
    (anything)

I can shake it all apart
I can bring it all together
I can kick it out of the system
I can let the blood flow
    openly, smoothly,
    like a summer stream

I can kill
I can kiss

I can like
I can enjoy

I can hate

I can cut
I can bleed
I can die
I can live
(and some days I do)

Some days I do actually live, and breath, and scream, and give birth, and kill,
and die, and scream and touch and kiss and love and hate and beat and destroy
and create,

some days I do live.
Benevolence

If I were God today
I would smile upon the earth
I'd ask every person to help me
For I carry a heavy load.
I would ask every person
To be God for themselves,
Find me inside of them
And even more of themselves...
the well tuned sky
I am finally content
With the transience of music
Music lifts my soul
then I do not long for her wings again
Today I am confident
should she want to lift me again
I will offer my hand
AFTERWORDS

AND THERE IS A TIME
WHEN THERE IS NO NEED FOR MUSIC
AND THERE IS NO NEED FOR WORDS
AND THERE IS NO NEED TO MENTION ANYTHING
TO ANY PERSON
INCLUDING YOURSELF
at this age our dreams blossom,
flowing water from the sky,
someday we will look back to see what bore fruit
and what left the soil dry...
flightless birds
humbleness,
deny the validity of what we feel,
being careful not to spontaniate.
    When we precurse our words with conservative preambles
    of our own insecurity,
    then we cannot step out on the clouds.

As long as you hold onto hesitation
you cannot fly.
Harvest Sunday '88

I am a man who dreams of using his hands
Beautiful dreams of beautiful creations
But something doesn't always flow through with me life

My hands are soft
And my mind oft' over worked

Stones are not carved with eyes
Sand is made from stone by wind and sea and time
Time is all we have
And we haven't a clue how much time
Perhaps when my hands are hard
My mind will have time to take a rest

Dreams
Beautiful Dreams
   in full colour
Spreading across the silver screen
   in my mind's eye
Eye hand coordination
Time to shrink the time between
To make the space of conception
   The place of birth
      with labour

I am a man who dreams of using his hands
Beautiful dreams of beautiful creations
   from my hands
the garden seed

I HOLD THE SEED IN MY HAND
GIVEN THE RIGHT SOIL AND WATER IT CAN GROW
WHEN THE LEAVES ARE TOUCHED WITH LIGHT
THE GREEN BREATHES OUT OXYGEN

I HOLD LIFE IN MY HAND
AND THE VINE THAT MIGHT GROW
TO BEAR FRUIT
AND THE TREE MIGHT ADORN
A DESOLATE FIELD
THE FRUIT MIGHT FEED THE HUNGRY
AND THE TREE MIGHT HOUSE THE HOMELESS
I HOLD SALVATION IN MY HAND

I MIGHT BE THE FARMER
I MIGHT BE THE BRINGER OF GOOD FORTUNE
BUT THE WAY FLOWERS GROW
AND THE WAY THE WIND BLOWS
IS OUT OF MY HAND
Spring
I walk into the park when I see him.
His form interests me. It draws me near. Dark form, bent on the bench. Intriguing. Before I draw nearer, the form begins moving, almost stumbling, away. The unstable black mass straightens. He steps out of his way to smell blossoms on a tree.
A lingering pause.
We cannot speak of our salvation because we fear the indignation of human reproach, and the possible loss of what glory we have found.
ANXIETY
My hand is shaking
And I feel so hungry,
Though I need nothing to eat.
I have the glowing core
That can both feel so full
Yet so empty at the same time
Counting rings on a wooden table

I sit at the table counting rings from each cup of coffee I lift it up. I stare out the window to see the city, but the glass catches my reflection and throws it back at me. Tired eyes. Tired eyes and a tired heart that the light cannot see. I set the cup down, coffee has stained the bottom brown. Forty-seven coffee rings, a ring for every cup full of coffee I've lifted up from this hand carved wooden table made with care. This wooden table is now scared by a man who cannot see the city's lights through the glass that reflects the peeling, pained and sagging heart of this place he sometimes calls home. I pour myself another cup from the pot, I lift the brown stained clay to my lips and see the number of rings grow from forty-seven to forty-eight.

I close my eyes again and pray...
trying to breathe

I don't enjoy being tense
I'm not sure I know how to deal with it.
I've just noticed
What a timid life I lead.
I've also realized all that I've done,
All that I'm capable of,
So much.
I can right something damaged
I can touch people
I can begin, create inspiration.
But I still have problems with completion.
Completion
It is a big word:
A thousand feet tall,
Three thousand feet wide.
Inspiration comes relatively easy
Like a forest in the spring,
But it's not always reliable,
Like a desert stream.

I don't enjoy tension,
Tension blocks inspiration,
It blocks all of my being
Misdirects me
Sets my compass ajar.
I am, for the greater extent,
Based on floating. Not climbing.
Based on floating in the middle of the sea
And subject to the currents within me.
Self Expression
I could write
And fill up this sheet solid with words
But what would it mean?
I could scream
And have empty halls reverberate with the sound
But what would that prove?
What would it show
Who would it touch

I know I can do almost anything
But right now I feel most helpless
I know I can feel anything
But it's so easy to confuse with nothing

Somebody listen,
Somebody please.
I know I've got to speak first
But will you be there to listen
Please listen

Pouring out a heart,
Like a stream with cold ice sting,
May just seem like water passing through the woods,
But I stick my hands in the water
Until they've turned red.
And I watch the water fall
Which rolls and changes like you said

Somebody listen,
Please listen.
I have everything
And nothing to offer

Everything and nothing
All at the same time

My hand is shaking again,
I'm getting ready to speak again
And I pray that you listen
I pray I have the courage to make a sound

Show my face in the night
In the forest trees
As the sky turns twilight
And I go to rest by the stream.
**Empathy**

Do you have the same questions as me?
Do you hear the call but often don't follow?
do you fight the same walls sometimes?
Do you wonder why?
Do you wonder what love is?
I can't seem to give it words.
Do you wonder what other people think?
how do they see the world?
Do you feel lonely sometimes
then a moment later feel so together with humanity?
Do you wonder, sometimes, if your questions make any difference?
Do you feel inspired sometimes?
Have you ever felt a warm glow in the centre of your chest?

Do you have the same questions as me?
Do you ever hear a call and choose not to follow?
Do you ever find yourself moving unsure
But feel, somehow, you must know?
I have always dreamed
of being a magic man
But I am not
I don't have sight either
But I do know that there is magic
And maybe knowing is some type of sight

I am not a dream gazer
Or a fortune seer
And I haven't spoken in tongues
But I do know that the stream is true
And maybe someday
I can be sure of myself,
Sure enough to let go,
And let the stream take me
to where need to be.
questioning
What is a poet and what is an artist and what is the difference between a writing and a poem and poetry and a poem and silence and being alone and kissing and loving and hating and fucking and loving and hating and trusting and believing and disrespect and a lie and disbelief and a futile cry of self expression and crying and beating your fist against the wall and screaming or breaking something valuable and raging like the sea or seeing the rain fall down on a cloudless night, praying for either a rainbow or a faceless love to kiss you from the shadows and fill you with light...
living

If a dream and reality are both the same then who can believe that one is more valuable than the other. And if a life is spent dreaming rather than touching the ground who can doubt that the dream is more real than the living. And if one disbelieves life and also workers to have a dream, what is the point in living. Kiss the sky, touch the tree. Feel the concrete under your feet and occasionally step on the grass. Believe in something, please Believe, Believe in something. Something must pass, And time will come, And leaves will fall, and rabbits will run, And mountains will crumble, And the sea will boil, and dogs will die, so will miners trapped and buried alive in coal mines, and wives will cry, And vows will be broken, And babies will scream, and preachers will cry alone in the night when they pause for a moment and realize they don't fully believe, And mothers will scream when they give birth, And the babies will cry when they have breath slapped into them, and they won't believe, And they won't know, and until they think they will just be what there is And what they are
I Close My Eyes ...  

She tried to abort the child, but she heard the baby screaming inside of her and could go no further. No further into the dream, No further into defilement, torn with tears she felt bereavement, she felt she could go no further. Warm slick red fruit, bleeding like nectar from a tree I can't hold on to it any longer Warm sticky life, like a kitchen faucet with sugar on it I can't let go I breath and rub my face, push my hair up out of my eyes sticky and slick, like cold water turn to ice sticking to flesh, warm and wet slipping under feet seeking stability on solid cement And her high heeled shoes should not be worn in this weather Her skirt looks much too cold to be worn in this wind She wraps her coat up tighter and walks on, her made up face catching the wind I don't know her. I don't see her. I close my eyes to her her in the wind, closed to her scent Until I sit silent at the table, Take my coat off, shiver in the silence Until I sit silent at the table and hold my hands to be sure, just to be sure That I did not let go of all that I must leave behind.
I closed my eyes and saw
that she tried to abort the child. Teeth
clenched in pain, cheeks set in determination. The cutting
stabbing, retching, vomituous of youth
still clinging to what thread of life must grow
"I must let go," she said, "I must let go.
If am still to survive, I must let go.
No more climbing high in trees for me. I must let go."
So she closed down her eyes and saw
The teeth cutting through
She saw the limbs growing only to scream cutting through
She felt the teeth biting through her own skin
And she felt the claws sink deep as she swallowed them
Cutting, breathe, breathing, sharp
beating, coming, sticky fruit sweet heart
"My love," said I, "let's run over there
And hold each other by the river, kissing under trees, no care."
Breathing hard, breathing sweet sucking air beneath the skin
I must hold on, I must let go, I must burn away the sin
So I stack the wood under the corner and set the house on fire
My eyes turn red, my eyes run dry bending over in laughter
"My love," said I, "let's run," said I, "over the fields and to the sky."
"My love," said I," my love," said I, "let's set fire to the sky."
I closed my eyes and saw,
As she tried to abort the child, sweet pine trees
and sparkling streets growing warm in the sun rise
kissing skies and cirrus clouds, and Venus just faded down
The bright sunlight turns off street lights and bends to kiss the ground.
I closed my eyes and saw
her, as she tried to kiss her child
but he turned his cheek and he stood his ground
until she turned away.
I saw her eyes as she closed
them, and locked herself inside.
A heart beats loud
on a cloudless night
As she stands by the meadow stream.
On a cloudless night in a treeless field
under a moonless sky.
"We have no need to kiss," I said, "I do not love you."
But we took the stars, and we swallowed the guilt
under that moonless sky.