Echoing Voices

An Honors Thesis (ID 499)

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Muncie, Indiana

April 16, 1990

May, 1990
to the Spirit of the Living God,

my mentor
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Introduction

Parts of this thesis are thousands of years old. They have been experienced by shepherds wandering through vast pastures, young Indians dodging through the thick underbrush of sun-dappled forests, and wealthy professionals briskly walking along sidewalks in clattering cities. They have been faced whenever and wherever humans have interacted with themselves, their neighbors or their environment. They are issues that are intrinsic to humanity itself, that have been and will be addressed or ignored, remembered or forgotten by all who live on this planet.

*Echoing Voices* attempts to present these issues through the eyes of many who may have lived them. It tries to provide a variety of "voices" and experiences to which the reader may or may not relate. My hope is that readers can empathize with the views being presented, in the process learning more about themselves and others. Some of the meanings are made clear, while some are purposely left more subtle and ambiguous. The latter are for the readers to interpret based on their own unique experiences and philosophies.

The title, *Echoing Voices*, alludes to the reoccurrence throughout history of the attitudes and moods expressed by the subjects of the poems and photographs. The project is divided into six sections, each dealing with an issue faced by individuals. Obviously, not all of the issues are represented. Each section begins with a picture and a couplet that relate to its particular theme. The couplets, together with the final couplet, complete a sonnet. Sections contain from four to nine poems, one of which is overlaid onto a photograph. All of the pictures were taken, by me, in the summer or fall of 1989. Poetry is a visual as well as an oral art, and it is hoped that the juxtaposition of the poems with the photographs will enhance the aesthetic and conceptual impact of each.

A variety of techniques was used in the creation of the poems for this project. I have used traditional forms such as the sonnet, villanelle, pantoum, ballad, rondeau and satire; and have written free verse with varied stanza patterns, rhyme schemes, and meter. Length of line, stanza, and poem has been manipulated. Some of the devices used include internal rhyme,
end rhyme (strong and weak), double rhyme, identical rhyme, alliteration, assonance, metaphors, similes, and personification. I have tried to experiment with poetic form, point of view, and content. Some poems stress ideas, some language, and some rhythm. Some are imagistic in nature; while others find expression through attitude, emotion, or logic.

Most of the sections are self-explanatory. The "Mortality" section deals with the individual's recognition of the fragility of his or her life on earth. Included are poems expressing fear or mourning. "Transcendence" deals with life as being more than outward appearances: spirituality adds another dimension to all of our actions as well as our contemplations. The couplet introducing this section is not intended to imply reincarnation; rather, it alludes to the continuity of natural elements. When we die, our body's chemicals will be broken down and returned to the natural cycle. There are various ideas of what happens to the person's spirit. The allusion to the recycling tendencies of nature is intended to imply that it is logical to assume that the spirit also continues its existence.

A lot of thought, planning and creative energy have been put into this project. I think it is normal for creators to have mixed reactions to their inventions. Like parents looking at their child, creators look with one part of themselves and notice all of the tiny flaws that they have had the rather dubious privilege of watching develop. They see in their projects the places where their work has refused to capture the essence of what they intended and aspired to capture. The other part of the creators, though, looks at the creation and sees so much of itself in another form that it is amazed. Creators see their work and wonder that it has grown out of them. They admire it. That is how I feel--like I have created something that is and is not me, that does and does not express what I intended it to. In some ways I feel it has surpassed my original expectations. In others, it has not approached them. I look at it with a mixture of admiration and embarrassment.

Enough of my opinions. My part is done now. The rest is up to you. Have fun.
The energetic wave approaching shore

is confident of far horizon's reach.
I Like...

...Vegetables and attitudes and warm bread smeared with butter.
...outdoor sports and inward thoughts and living an adventure.

...Saturdays and rainy days and full days by the river.
...Misty nights and muted lights and writing poems -- whenever.

...Nighttime sounds and unknown towns and books and, sometimes, people.
...Ocean waves, exploring caves, and striving for my ideals.

...Loving God and being loved, enjoying His creation.
...Midnight prayers and casting cares and freedom from tradition.

...Sunset skies and railroad ties and running with my puppy.
...Good old friends, avoiding trends, and bike rides in the country.

...Living life and full-moon nights -- the heart's imagination.
...Taking pictures, hanging out, and late-night conversations.
To W.S. Merwin

I have read through your poems now and think that they are very good. I hold them in my lap and stroke them with my eyes and they respond by vibrating in soft low sounds like the trains that rumble in the distance carrying the bulk of your ideas on tracks that run parallel to your words whose images capture so much of the often-overlooked and not-always-understood that many people still do and do not for they even in your works are veiled by mist and magic often your ambiguities your unexpectable and rather sudden endings come round and dry upon your mind flowering quite a gentle, a low land so sending the trees
Jottings In a Barroom Watching Crazy People Dance

Live band in the bare bulb light.
Curious eyes contemplate the nature
of my communication with my napkin.

Your music invites me to ride the waves of imagination.
Windows of the mind open to reveal images of reality --
morning meditations, solitary soul sounds,
triumph of the spirit and driving force of life.
All appear with the red velvet sway
of the cymbals in the dancing stage lights.
Dancers look and they dash away,
to the deep darkness between the stars.
Get away, that's my side of the moon.

Your music sounds like what I think about --
an inward journey on the edge of night.
I don't like you playing it for them.
The dancers are blinded by insecurity, they can't see.
Through the smoky shadows, I glimpse a liquid movement,
an attitude, flowing like water, inward directed.
Meditations and soul sounds are back;
they, too, must see the blindfolds.
They are joined by the moments before sleep.

Your music answers questions never asked.
My mind asks questions never answered.
Forward we go, teacher and student.
First one, then the other.
The clipped bird wonders why he can't fly.
The dancers, too. Can't they feel the shears around them?
Oh, they are the shears. They're too busy cutting to fly.
Weightless, timeless, we drift upon a sea:
undulating waves of reflected thought.

You stop playing and time descends.
Silence arises to greet the dusty day.
Your music sounds like what I think about.
"Whispers in the Dark"

"Sh, here come the guards!"

"Them? They come and go. The only thing that stays is the light in your eyes warning me not to approach."

"I must leave now."

"Leave me to the darkness made darker by your light's departure?"

"Darkness enhances senses."

"And covers angry acts."

"My light shall show me the way, and yours shall guide you."

"I gave mine to see your's intensified, when I thought we'd share."

"I shall take it to the deep darkness beyond the moon, where few choose to go."

"I cannot follow you there."

"I know."
But reality proves its efforts poor:

Its strength is shattered when it hits the beach.
Lament

I hear the nation cry
I see the nation die
And it's dying from
an enemy it can't see
and it's dying from
an enemy it can't hear
and it says that it is dying
to protect me.
A Satire Against Potatoes

Day and night you find them there:
Upon the couch, upon the chair
With beer or Coke an arm away:
nothing to think, nothing to say.
The evening paper lies unread,
Addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Potato Head.
Change his glasses, change her nose
Their opinions come straight from the shows.
Change the channel and you'll notice
They rarely care just what the show is
As long as it amuses them
And makes their lives seem half as grim.
The government sits by and stares
Pretending to be unaware
Of wasted minds and wasted lives
Of all of these potato guys.
But really, why should they object --
Potatoes make such easy subjects.
So grab a chair and sit right back
"A t.v. set for every sack!"
Information

Broken lanterns intersecting,
Rowboats for a glassy sea;

Crooked pathways straight and narrow,
People see what they can see;

Fairy tales with happy endings,
Emotion-shod reality;

Broken mirrors now reflecting,
Silence holds the book for me;

Tinted glasses show the sunset,
Jesus died at Calvary.
Names:

NAMES.

EMBRYO in the womb.
CALF by Mother's side.
COW in the pasture.
CATTLE in a herd.
MEAT in a slaughter-house.
GROUND BEEF on the table.
NOURISHMENT for the body.

NAMES.
Society

I looked at you and screamed.
I could not bear to see
your hideous face.
The blood of men and animals
was mingled with your tears.
Your white fangs trembled
as your eyes sought
tender victims.
You noted my reaction briefly,
glancing, puzzled, in the mirror.
But you only smiled,
and patted your wig.
Confused, I looked into the glass,
and saw a haunting beauty
painted there.
Late Night Vigil

Shadows shift in the breeze as he stands his post, eyes alert and darting. Blonde strands peek from beneath the helmet, damp with sweat of fear and concentration. Well-cut nose, mouth and chin, accustomed to praise, hide beneath the dirt. Fingers occasionally tighten on the cold steel held within their grasp. His mind is busy forgetting; it has come to know too many things it shouldn’t. Each day he wakes an older man; his age falling farther behind. He was never to see this side of man that he has glimpsed, and will not forget. Teachers and parents strove to hide this knowledge, hoping without recognition it would cease to exist. Unable to trust his own conclusions, he decides the officers are right: the enemy must be hated. And killed. It’s easier that way -- when one doesn’t question... Tonight he wipes all thoughts away and stares into the darkness, at the shadows shifting in the breeze.
Stray drops of water, forced into the air,
May feel their isolation from the rest.
The Window Seat

Silence creeps into the Western sky as the warmth of my blood turns cold. All around me people sleep, clothes tossed upon their unlit lamps.

The wind sweeps pieces of trash across the field outside, like tumbleweeds blown across the desert sand.

A solitary soul weeps gently in a corner like the ocean of teardrops I cannot hide with dry eyes.

A clock ticks on in the silver light.
subway sunday

on a corner seat
facing sideways
resides the lonely
shadow of a boy
who looks intently
at the floor with its
stains and mildews
avoiding the window
opposite showing
buildings people
cars that tell
him do not touch
keep riding keep
looking for a home
you'll never find
because
you do not know
what one is
Inside Out

One night I was sitting in a quiet apartment with only the contented sounds of the cat on my lap and the I found an itch sounds of my dog on the floor contending with the rain coldly blowing against the window nearby. Suddenly with suspended content the cat leapt from my lap and flew almost literally onto the sill of the window with body tight and spilling growls and hisses at something hiding nearby in the rain. My dog and I ran to see what was causing this reaction she with her paws on the sill and me with eyes squinting into the night straining to see only darkness. Then there was a slight movement outside and I faintly made out the image of the past midnight intruder who was a dark cat sitting on the window ledge. It regally watched its indoor counterpart jumping warnings at the window and insolently turned its yellow eyes on my dog and I staring. My mind turned and I saw the scene inside out I all wet and cold fur sitting on ledges staring with dignity and slight scorn into warm cubicles of nurturing light that housed others huddled together not me.
Saturday Morning

The lady creaks into the kitchen
to move the pot of water
from the stove.
She talks to herself
as she leans against the counter
remembering times
that were never as
she thinks of them.
Outside, the dusty maples sway.
that girl

she looks so cocky
all punk hair and smiles
she looks so cocky
avoiding latest styles
she looks so cocky
first sight would never know
she wears chain metal armor
underneath her clothes
Still is the Cold

Still is the cold on the distant ground, 
Objects with darkness again entwined. 
Tears greet the silence without a sound.

What is this new place in life I've found? 
Hoping for landmarks, I search my mind. 
Still is the cold on the distant ground.

Echoes of laughter no more abound, 
How can I hear what I've left behind? 
Tears greet the silence without a sound.

Beckons the calm as I cast eyes down, 
Calmness with coldness and night combined. 
Still is the cold on the distant ground.

Threats in my ears like a hammer pound, 
Just how much longer can I decline? 
Tears greet the silence without a sound.

Whispers of joy in the sorrow drowned, 
When will I hear your warm voice so kind? 
Still is the cold on the distant ground, 
Tears greet the silence without a sound.
The old man, busy forgetting broken dreams and gusty winds, stares in liquid silence at the bottom of an empty bottle.

It slips from his hand and crashes to the ground, scattering hopes and promises to blend with the dust.

He staggers, with the remnants of a sudden anger, away from the bridge supporting him.

No longer serving as a backrest, the letters on the girder whisper their silent plea.

The small boy runs, his too-old eyes and clothes forced unwillingly ahead.

Nobody knows if he is running to or away from anything.

Forced over on the walkway by passing adults his shoulder lightly brushes the side of the bridge.

Lately touched by a lonely shoulder, the painted symbols scream their cryptic meaning.

An anxious man looks again at his watch, annoyed at being kept waiting alone with his thoughts and his sudden loneliness.

He abruptly tosses a half-burnt cigarette without noticing the paint on the steel near which it falls, seeing only his fear and trying to hide.

A wisp of smoke curls past the black letters, trying to call attention to their unheeded message.

The now vacant spot, with its tattered sneaker and half-smoked cigarette lying forgotten in a maze of broken glass, boasts, unseen, the provoking letters, meaningless to many, sprawled on the surface of the bridge:

"R E A C T"
But sometimes this high, lonely perch is where
They mix with those that understand them best.
Just thought I'd mention

I really have noticed

how pleasant

silence can be

when you're around.
Ballad of the Boy From Tyranese

Deep in old rolling Tyranese 'twixt a forest and a stream there lived a very valient boy who served a mighty dream.

The youngster's name was Addleby and he knew oh so well that when one has a mighty dream, one really mustn't tell.

Therefore young Addleby set off one moon-forsaken night and crossed the bound'ry river before the morning light.

Addleby was sure that he was never going home until he found a maid that he could rescue all alone;

so he could claim his maiden fair and take her as a prize, and show all of his schoolmates he was very strong and wise.

Across the stream was so different from noble Tyranese that soon the boy grew homesick and fell upon his knees.

His heart was weary in his shoes his hopes were sunk so low they dressed themselves in garments that only worms can sew.

Then suddenly Addleby heard a muffled sound and rushing forward caught a glimpse of a maiden on the ground.

He ran to help his maiden out to save her from a spider He jumped and landed where he aimed: upon the thing beside her.

He landed on the insect foe and squashed it with his shoe then walked up to the maiden fair to claim her as his due.

But she, poor girl, must be scared her face was not so pretty, and when he told her she was safe, she whispered "what a pity".

He said, "Well it was hard, I know, but now I've come to save. I'll not let any spiders near, so please don't be afraid."

"Afraid of what?" she cried at once, "that spider was my friend! You came so fast from over there that I could not defend."

"I thought you faced a certain death, and I was quick to save you So now you're mine, oh don't you see, and I am here to claim you."
"Well if you'd like me as a friend, I suppose that I could manage -- in that department I have now, it seems to me, a shortage.

But don't you ever think that you can win me as a prize to any type of silly game you happen to devise."

Well Addleby had never had a girl as a companion so he decided he would try and see if he could have fun.

They played all day and both of them had much more fun than ever because they made up lots of games that they could play together.

Young Addleby was taught to play in harmony with nature. In turn he taught his friend the game of "run away and capture."

Before the evening grew too late, Addleby declared that he should leave for Tyranese to calm his parent's fears.

Before he left, he asked his friend -- If she were so inclined -- to visit Tyranese 'cause he um, well, he wouldn't mind.

"Sure," she said, "I'd love to come -- I've had much fun in play. So don't you worry, Addleby, for I'll be there someday."

So Addleby drifted back thinking it was better to have a friend and share with her than to try to own her.
When He Kissed Me

When he kissed me by the river
with the birds above us flying
and the water softly sighing,
he asked me to be his forever;
but I gently whispered "Never."
I believe my heart was crying
when he kissed me.

Don't be mad at me forever--
He didn't know that you'd be spying,
near the water softly sighing,
just to scare us and be clever--
when he kissed me.
Magic Moonlight

Silver pools of liquid moonlight
Spilling slowly through your hair,
Sending searching fingers wandering
Through the silken tangles there.
Seeing only what they outline,
I awake and hear their prayer,
That you would be there always for them--
Be forever in their care.

Silver pools of liquid moonlight,
All reflect a silent tear
That settles slowly deep inside me
As I awake to find you near.
I always knew you'd come back for me,
Though it seemed I didn't care.
I was waiting, wanting always
To awake and find you here
Beneath the pools of liquid moonlight--
Painting silent all my fears.

Silver pools of liquid moonlight
Passing softly to the air,
Taking with them silken tresses
Of your tangled silver hair.
Silently I close my eyes,
Avoiding the unwanted glare
Of the sunlight, awful sunlight
That insists on shining here,
Showing all my magic moonlight
To be pools of lonely tears.
Contemplations

Your voice, vibrating in the autumn night, finds refuge in my soul. Many hours have we sat thus, your arms around my body tucked close to yours. I cannot see your face and yet I feel your love in the tenderness of your touch, your voice. I answer for a while the questions you propose, then fade to silence and enjoy the night.

Your voice, too, stills, leaving only the waterfall's soft harmony blending with the voices of unseen wings. Soft moonlight falls as gentle rain sheltering us with its magic.

And so we stay 'til daylight touches our hands, folded one inside the other's.
The Bath (a pantoum)

As I fill my lover's bath,
I can't ignore her charms;
I quite forget my wrath
as she settles in my arms.

I can't ignore her charms
though my memory smarts still:
As she settles in my arms,
I don't control my will.

Though my memory smarts still,
my mind reviews the past.
I don't control my will --
How long will these scars last?

My mind reviews the past:
my lover was untrue.
How long will these scars last --
She killed me because I knew.

My lover was untrue,
I asked her to depart.
She killed me because I knew --
plunged a knife into my heart.

I asked her to depart,
she made me leave instead --
plunged a knife into my heart
to be sure that I was dead.

She made me leave instead --
she tossed me in a stream
to be sure that I was dead.
I thought it was a dream.

She tossed me in a stream:
my body was eaten by fish.
I thought it was a dream.
My lover got her wish.

My body was eaten by fish:
my elements were spread.
My lover got her wish:
to the water I was wed.

My elements were spread:
I drift now through a tube
(to the water I was wed)
I splash into her tub.

I drift now through a tube,
my lover's cut herself --
I splash into her tub --
Her boyfriend stole her wealth.

My lover's cut herself:
I taste my lover's blood.
Her boyfriend stole her wealth:
Her new lover was a dud.

I taste my lover's blood
as I fill my lover's bath,
her new lover was a dud:
I quite forget my wrath.

As I fill my lover's bath,
I can't ignore her charms;
I quite forget my wrath
as she settles in my arms.
Upon Visiting Your Deserted Home

A broken swing
sweeps back and forth
a silent metronome
counting the echoes
of our days.
Once I sat there
with thoughts of you
so tender
and filled with hope.
The full moon above
lighted the limits
of my dreams
that lie tattered now
in silver shadows
at my feet.
Reflections

The gray mist blackens inside and out
as my still face is suddenly
thrown back at me.
I stand at my window in solitary silence,
awaiting the approach of the stars,
and moon, and release from this pain.
Your words, voice, eyes glare at me
through my maniacal memory.
The death of an illusion,
and I, the sole survivor,
stand trembling
in this aftermath of grief.
Four years' memories play mind games
as I attempt to sort the fragments
of our shattered dreams.
When did they break and why?
And must this glass be replaced
with something less fragile than love?

These questions drift hopelessly
through the plane of my dejection
as I glimpse the stars
appearing outside.
Have you severed me from these, too?
My frantic thoughts despair
as my view is obstructed by the
traveling prison of your fear
reflected on my face.
The objects of the room behind me
crowd in one dimension on the glass.
They help me to realize it is not you
who sprayed your dark, lonely mist
upon this glass as in my heart,
but I, who hold my
focus so unwavering on this filmy scene,
where all is reflected but
essence of life.
I must lift the shroud
and catch the substance
of all that is ahead --
for these reflections of what is now behind
can otherwise stain the view.
So I realize as I shift my
gaze beyond and dance upon
the clouds with the stars
that are my eyes encircling the moon.
All drops that ride the waves find cause to fear
Evaporation seems to be the end,
Paranoia

Silken shadows from my window, silken shadows through the night: moving always to confuse me -- moving just to cause me fright.

Underneath my fluffy pillow, underneath my sheets at night: I can hear them laughing at me -- laughing just to cause me fright.

Intermingled with their breathing, intermingled through the night: screams of pain and screams of torture -- screaming just to cause me fright.

People say I'm mad, I'm crazy, say I'm terrified of night. I know something that they don't know -- night exists to cause me fright.
Fear Puts the Sha'p Edge in Mah Voice

Ah knows you troubled, darlin',
'cause Ah yelled at you so ha'd.
Ah didn't mean to scare ya'
as you ran so close to that road.
But, baby, how can Ah explain
a feelin' you ain't never
had cause to feel?
That deep-down-sick-inside fear
that puts the sha'p edge in mah voice?
Convicted Without Trial

scared
running
testing waters
making
escape

keep running

tried
convicted
before arrest

keep running

from fear
pain

uncertainty
maybe better
maybe
worse
different

keep running

my crime
i'm
Black
At this moment

the dust hangs suspended in the silence of the coming night...

...above the dead leaves that lie upon the ground like soldiers cradled by the battlefield.

...below the newly appearing moon whose orange tint winks a silent warning to those who notice.

...intermingled with the soft caress of the mother's dark hand on her infant's lifeless grave.
Shayna

I had to go inside
for a minute.
You were forbidden
entrance:
landlord's orders.
Your black body
pleaded with
your dark eyes
of love.
White cross necklace
pressed against
the door as
I looked back --
grey socks uneven
on your feet.
I don't know
what enticed you
onto the road that day.
I heard your yelps
of pain,
and fear,
and saw the bus strike you,
pressing your
fragile body into
fine diamond dust
sprinkled on the road.
I ran to scoop it up,
and shape it into
you again.
But as I held you,
the wind blew,
scattering the shimmering sand.
You slipped through
my fingers
and were gone.
But nature's not as cruel as it appears:

These elements, as rain, return again.
I Kicked Something Buried in the Leaves Yesterday

while walking with my feet bared
to the autumn sun,
the leaves flying around my ankles
from the movement of my limbs,
I kicked something.

It was not one of the acorns falling
sporadically upon intruders;
not a green leaf, unexpected and
heavy amid the crunch of the dead.
I believe it was a memory

of the happy eagerness I'd felt
while walking, years ago,
in fall with shoes in hand.
March Drips into April

I walked today as the mist fell gently
softly embracing and muting the lights
that still stared quietly into the distance
where distinction of source and sidewalk reflection
had gradually melted away

I ambled while feeling the lick of the air
on my cheeks and underdressed arms
and I thought oh how peaceful as
Heaven's tears sprinkled and sparkled and
speckled the bay

I wandered and wondered why
at the houses with windows but curtains
unaware of the night with only the
blue flickering light of the t.v. sets wishing
the squishing outside away
Daybreak

As darkness melts into the morning,

misty drops of dew,
lingering on the lawn,
smile, the warmthness greeting;
then surrender and are gone.

I, the sole observer,
curse the light the day brings near.
I exist in nighttime's cover,
in the shadows of the moon.

Soon they, too, will disappear,
leaving me with dawn contending --
crowded streets and crowded lives.
How I'll miss these gentle hours
the world becomes my very own.

And I, with all surrounding,
softly speak in muffled tone.
The tinted sky breaks the quiet
as I press my face into my hands
and weep with that around me,

as darkness melts into the mourning.
Cloaked in Silence

I see you in the light still dim
walking silently among straight shadows
unaware of my presence
for I have waited motionless
so as not to disturb you
on the way to your drink.

With the sound of a leaf
stirring softly the dry autumn
leaves you appear in the dim light,
walking silently among straight shadows,
unaware of my presence.
I have waited motionless
while the last rays of light
departed the sky's edge.

As you bend your graceful neck
with your ears flung back to the water
your smooth ears Past you upon your shoulders
graceful, and the sound
I remain motionless
hoping to catch a glimpse
of your beauty in the mist.

Without making a sound
you tense your ears flung back
your nose upturned to the
crisp morning air searching for the
start to turn away --- to leave
but a sudden crash of sound
folds your legs beneath you.

I stare helpless as your royal blood
seeps into the damp moist earth
past the tips of your smooth ears
lying motionless so near the water
it seems I was not alone cloaked in silence
hoping to catch sight of you
as you sipped the morning light.
The Human Condition

I ran today
from the cabin
where I'm staying
past the trees that
line the road

I descended to the lake
and stopped before
the geese left
I walked onto the pier
and watched the water
ripple past

I felt the sun upon
my bare skin and hair
and saw it touch
the water interrupting
passing waves

I heard the wind
blow through the poles
like children with old
pop bottles

and I wished I could just
melt into the water
and forget
Venetian Blinds

Red fingers grasp hopefully, trying to pull its slats apart. Some slip through the cracks and edge into the room, mixing with dust and odor. Exploring, they find bottles containing last-drops, and turn the liquids mellow within their reflecting prisons. Tiny digits creep across the floor and lightly touch the skin of a pallid hand draped across a pillow. They clamber over the leaden body, trying to catch its attention. But it's too busy with an evaporation of its own. Daunted, the fingers slip again to the floor, as their comrades at the window, gently beckoning, fall away once more.

Dawn has passed unnoticed.
Midnight Passage

Brave candlelight flickers
against the nighttime clouds
and dances on my moistened skin
as I sit beside my window
and watch the essence of the night.
How dare it travel the length
of my natural body
as if I deserved to feel
its tender touch.
I whose race stands accused
by the depths of the earth
it has destroyed.

Sadness lurks within my heart
at the separation I feel
from its beauty-laden flames.
Into the darkness I peer
as the moon moves silver
shadows across the land.
How I long to caress the
silky shafts which shoot
from its mystic surface.
But, I fear my human hand
would leave traces of cancer,
in the guise of fingerprints,
to stretch across its surface
and smother the tender life within.
I cannot bear to glimpse
its gentle smile
when I know I daily
peel away its protection,
eventually leaving it exposed
to cripple slowly
before it dies.
I whose race stands accused
by the depths of the earth
it has destroyed.
I'd like to drive my nails into my flesh, ripping, until its ugliness falls away, and I stand as a single soul. Then I would drift on the wings of the wind -- on the edge of a dream. I would sail past the towns and villages until I spied a solitary place, where I would fall upon my knees and beg forgiveness. Then I would rise, restored, a wisp of fresh air, and travel with the night. And I would sing with the life surrounding me, joining its song of freedom. But I, despicable creature that I am, sit here, instead, and stare, once again, at the fingers of light exploring my skin in maneuvers of dance. I whose race stands accused by the depths of the earth it has destroyed.

My lips tremble above the fragile body, about to blow away the fragments of its tender life. They stop. Maybe, if I can appreciate beauty, I hold it within; and if I long to commune with nature, maybe, somehow, I can.
Perhaps I need not tear
this vile flesh apart,
but look instead into my
very heart; then glimpse,
and hold, the smile
reflected within.
the exchange

i heard that You would love me
   would take my life
   and make it Your own
   i wanted that
   i was tired and confused
   and so i came
   afraid of rejection
   (i had been taught by the world)
      trembling
   i set before You my life
   a black Raven of fear
      as my sacrifice
   i watched as You took it
   and my fear turned to despair
   as i saw its dark awkward shape
      in Your light perfect hands
      incredulous i saw a Blood Red Tear fall
      upon the Raven
   and it became a pure white Dove
      You smiled as You
   gave it to me and laughed
   as i held it unsure as my own
   then I laughed as I felt the bird
      now inside
      flutter and stir
   and become my life.
The Nature of the Toy

Careless,  
it whips around  
and comes right back.  
It dives and twists and plunges.

Always,  
or almost always,  
it returns, fully wound,  
ready to spin again.

Sometimes,  
the line gets  
twisted and the yo-yo  
stops, lifelessly  
suspended.

A hand,  
sometimes chubby,  
always caring,  
straightens out the tangles.

It winds  
the deadened string  
and sets upon its course  
the restored object;

For the string,  
the very thing that  
allows its antics,  
quite often injures.

But the person,  
patiently guiding,  
understands. That's  
the nature of the toy.
And so the tide of man sweeps from its source,
Unable, from the midst, to see its course.