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The Dragon Papers

Ruth Taylor

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

English

Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

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ABSTRACT

The Dragon Papers

Ruth Taylor

The Dragon Papers is a poetic investigation into the ways and meanings of dragons. It claims as its territory all places (physical, metaphysical, psychic) where dragons in any of their many morphologies and manifestations may be found. Its aesthetic strategies tend, on the whole, to be synergetic and syncretic -- one finds, for example, antiquated idiom riding in tandem with contemporary mathematical theory -- and, as the thesis is also an experiment in the long-poem, the modalities of both synergy and syncretism are incremental.

The thesis is organized into five sections. The first section is composed of four prefatory "free standing" poems which depict the quotidian flux as disease, denounce logical argument, parody epic invocation and ultimately subsume panorama in phantasmagoria.

The balance of the work consists of four dreams. The first dream, "Ouroboros", contemplates cosmogony and the paradox of self-engendered origin. The second dream, "Notes from the Abyssopelagic Zone", brings in dragon voices and explores the plasticity of time, the notion of forgetting one's historical period. "The Increateum" merges the first two dreams and deals with the interpenetration of abyss and absolute, of phenomenal and experiential worlds.

The final dream, "Emanations", articulates the new view that results after one has been disgorged from the dragon's maw. This last dream "comes home" to the end of the twentieth century.

THE DRAGON PAPERS

BY RUTH TAYLOR

SAPIENTER RETENTATUM SUCCEDET ALIQUANDO

Waiting for a Vision

The neighbour out back
is hauling in the washing:
white sheets, blue nightgown,
an orange bathmat.

Between coughing,
blowing my nose
and coughing, between crying,
coughing, blowing my nose,
crying and blowing my nose,
between coughing, sleeping, crying, blowing my nose
and sleeping,
I'm waiting for a vision.

They used to come flocking like great fat crows
cackling and gawking as we sat in the sun
talking of the speed of thought
of unconditional cosmic love
of whether there was anything in the names for things.

They used to come
in odd harmonics:
millennial gongs chased by crystal chimes,
the caving in of ceilings,
the goose's emancipation from a prison of glass.

They used to come in ordinary things too.

On the Magic Baking Powder tin:

Continuous action,
consistent rising
with Magic
Measure for measure,
Magic can be used
with complete assurance
in all recipes.

Double Vision

Ezekiel saw the Wheel.
So did I.

You saw spokes, rims, tires, tubes, axles, grease.

I said, "You're being too concrete, let's think
of the universe as a whole new ball game."

You said, "Dialectics, it's all dialectics."
"Dialectics schmialectics," I said.
"Didn't the swami tell you that once you've seen
the Big Wheel all you can do is jump off?"

"No." You said.

"NO?" I said. "NO?
You're just going to sit there
and say NO?"

"No dear." You said.

So, I jump off.
Here I am in a solitary seventh inning stretch, and
you know what?

There you are going round again,
a rare baseball card
clacking on a spoke.

To the Muses

O ominous oms of omniscience!
How shall I invoke you?
With bamboo flutes and dried goats' hooves
with a cloven heart or bleeding hearts all in a row?
With a loon in my pocket and nowhere to go?

O high fidelities of funk.
O myriad Melpomene monomanias.

I draw a silver line from a lode
straight through the brain
to where the body splits in two
and ode upon odious ode will be strict,
duly stamped and signed and dedicated exclusively
oh, to George or Jake or Steve --
anyone but you.

O Calliope's cyclopean cantaloupes.
O Polly's perfect hymen.
O Euterpe's usurping ukulele underwear.

Shall I ride backwards on my donkey through my past lives?
You think some ol' black cat is scratchin' out your eyes?
O every word's an oracle and every silence wise.

Maybe I should celebrate the Main.
O Karnatzle, O Verenikes, O Blintzes, O Sour Cream!
What the hell, I can't say much about Paris.

(in the midst of the midst
he threw an apple to the fairest
and now we're grooving on fuck all --
the militia, the millennia, the meat-puppets,
the men --O, the men? Nope.)

O uranium undulations of Urania.
Space. The Final Frontier.
In search of zero-gravity sex
and boldly going nowhere in particular.

(The ghost, damp, salted, cedar-spiced,
drifts in to Montreal and takes the empty seat.)

"Hi, I'm visiting from Schizolano, B.C.,"
says the ghost.
"You got any communicable diseases?"

(It is from here, the midst of the midst, my love,
from flames that bob around the wick
from lovely skulls that ache and crack
from the guzzlers of beer and the sellers of smack
from the hot-to-trots and the dragon dicks
to the quick organic flicker of a fix
that bones unite with bones
that ghost unites with ghostess
you're as welcome as the clap, my love,
go find some other parking lot
go cream some other hostess.)

Can you dig it?

Walking, walking, walking,
sine metu, without fear.
Om mane padme hum
Om mane padme hum
O many paid me, ho hum.
What the hell was that hormone joke?

O Erato's erogenous eggplant ego.
O Clio's eclectic Karma clit.

All you have to do is cooperate.
Shall I drag out the black roses and the scythe?
Dry your eyes, the world will get one without you.
In the midst of the midst, how shall I invoke you?
Imagine getting goosed by Pan!
Imagine the Perilous Pulpit in Percival's pants . . .
a rod, a wand, a wonder!
Nah, that's hag talk.

And now we're at cross purposes.

O Thistle-tickler Thalia.
O Terpsichore's hot-tin tap shoes.

(In the midst of the midst, my love,
please dance me loose and dance me loose
and let me leave your glasses steamed.
The gleaming gypsy moon up there
makes you my emergency.)

O George!
O Jake!
O Steve!

O George's G-spot geiger-counter.
O Jake's javelin jism juice.
O Steve's slippery seismo-staff.

O!

It can hit you hard, knock a few teeth out
or slam you back into your bones
Just remember the hike you took
up to Round Top's top, highest peak in the range
where you gasped while catching your breath at the view.
Remember how you pumped yourself up
steep slope after slope, up
steep stairs of bark and root and rock,
how you stopped part way for pushups on the moss
and a kiss from a cold mountain brook,
read the litter of love-notes on loose birch paper,
and perched between the dragon's brows where,
slow as stone is slow, it blinked off to sleep
engulfing the whole Missisquoi in mist.

It was there you got entangled
in dragon dreams, got drawn into
the third eye's gyre. . . .

OUROBOROS
FIRST DREAM

En To Pan

The circle is a whole but also a hole,
it is symbol of nought
which contains everything,
abyssal womb
of all being, first chaos.

ou ro bor os
ouro boros
ouro boros

mantra endlessly moaned, haphazard
syllables, scattered seeds in voices' loam,
roots into diaphragm,
germination into utterance
a time-lapse image of sounds, discords
between ellipses

ouroboros

loops, coils, helixes,
incalculable braid,
illegible blueprint,
mucid tracks left by slippery courses,
hoary slime and by the crooked wayside
owl's toes, mice livers, moles' teeth,
stones from swallows' gizzards,
eyes of river crabs

ouroboros

a circle, a way
of dreaming backwards, filling
solar plexus with light, light
that is within light, a way
of breathing in fragments, incoherences. . .
a sensation of falling into

the beginning that was before the beginning
the part that was erased, sublime
vibration of zero as number, as whole,
centre, point of concentration,
the spaceless dimension,
origin of the Perceiver, moment
of cataclysm

images
of swallowing,
devouring,
disgorging

images
of begetting,
castration,
sundering

sensation of gagging,
psi apprehension of
a closed system,
eternal process, continuity

ouroboros

complex paths appear
reticulations in a plasma pocked with lacunae
gaps -- no, a network of gaps --

a gape, like art,
the object of a gape, and yawns, yawns
hiatus in breath, experience
of endlessness

a voice:

I have always been talking.
You have just been tuned in.
You cannot know the context of everything.
You cannot know anything at all.
This is the beginning.

ouroboros

there are incantations
and the blending of strange unguents
there is a shell, a skin shed
transparent as rice paper, loose as dandruff,
tentative as the argument
of systole and diastole, uncertain
as the next breath

myrobalanus, costus, amomum, cinnamon, comacum,
cardamum, spikenard, marum, myrrh, cassia,
storax, laudanum, oenanthe, malobathrum,
serichatum, aspralathus, panax, saffron,
syrian sweetrush, devil's paintbrush, sweet marjoram,
lotus
honey
and wine

and then
Sun, Berbeloch, Chthotho, Miach,
Sandum, Echnin, Zaguel:
accept who comes before thee
anooint thyself and thou shalt see him
with thine eyes

don't forget
orpiment, sandarach, realgar
don't forget
cinnabar,
blood

blood, ah, cooling elephant's blood
from snifters made of their skulls,
ah, shark's milt and toad's roe rolled up
in their unleavened ears. . .

ouroboros

Coagula et solve:

Delicate vessels, broken.
Delicate neurons, severed.
What burst forth was either
protohyle or dross but something
filters out of kellipah
before the tremendous lights shine forth,
a little starseed from primordial space:

Imma and Abba are cosmogons
who face-to-face their "polygons"
they abstain from beans
burst from their genes
and mushroom into paragons.

From nought. No matter. No thought.
They were sparks, splinters, they muttered
their abracadabras in vain.

Behold: Mars between the Ram's horns
and pigeons, the last of our doves, sundered.

Tell the Lady of En-dor
to go home.

Please send her home.

Scarcely comes the breath, scarcely
spring settles fertile haunches down.

Watch out, watch out,
there are sooty empiriks about.
They'll insist we were created
on day five.

The circle is a whole
but also a hole
a goose-egg, a cipher

ouroboros

consideration of manifest matter
as One, separation of waters, salt
from sweet, male from female
cold from hot
moist from dry
a splitting of the rhubarb
so to speak

One furnished Other with Blood.
One gave birth to Other,
rejoicing in Nature,
triumphing over Nature,
mastering Nature,

but not
Nature opposed
to such another One

One and the Same Nature
proceeding of One Self
by process of trouble
and great effort --

mouth birth
issue from no more than a yawn
that follows a slippery trail backward
to dark abodes under Kasion

(I seem to have, ahem... ahem...
a plague... ahem... of frogs
issuing...ahem...)

George and Protogeorge were martyrs
Who bound up Dragons' snouts with garters.
Then sang they many sultry taunts
of honi soit qui mal y pense
and that was just for starters.

(how many diadems on every head?)

ouroboros

NOTES FROM THE ABYSSOPELAGIC ZONE

SECOND DREAM

"Philo, with twelve years study, hath been grieved
To be understood; when will he be believed?"

--Donne

Blood, oh inspissated juice, mud
of moondrake, canal or Hesperidean sluice
of precious gemmes from heades halfe shote
of spiry hackles that split the Bears in two:
Illuyankas, Tiamat, Ullikummi, Ya.nm -- not
pease-porridge hot, by George, but red, green, blue
and a little oil to keep the prestidigitation loose,
belly calm, Eltanin Balm, cinnabar, Blood.

Elephants! A war upon them! Dear Ku-pu,
wild beasts cry in desolate houses and us
in pleasant palaces, Muspellzheimers. Sure,
we can shark up the moon. Please tell Naitaka, advise
Muilearteach and Skrimsl, alert Hiuchuckaluck
(in the words of that old fart of a bard),
"sometimes we see a cloud that is dragonish."
We shall heave up the weight of dying elephants!

Ialdabaoth, you too, old gape-mouth demiurge
soul-swallower of the first order, returning
morsels to matter. We are as those who dream while asleep
only without sleeping. Thrice-Greats don't venture here.
Do strip off your Chaos and plunge with us, quick
before too much in-breathing. Oh Preexistent Perfect Deep,
do not reveal the hoary lands to the vulgar crowd, here
here are your flaming pearls, Ialdabaoth.

Wake up Ladon, guard those golden balls. Who knows
some muscle-bound hero might arrive. Baal, Baal,
wherefore art thou Baal, thou crude, uncertain, unhewn pole,
thou menhir, thou pillar of upright stone, here's
your codpiece of low rolling clouds. Lilith, get up,
start the slow boil of loins. Rahab, assemble yourself.
Jorgmungandr, get your tail out of your mouth. Hop to it!
Typhon, Python, Apophis, Azhi Dahaka, Sir-rush, Wake up!

Come, you spines, you colubrines, slither from those graves
and upon bellies new-grown go to lunches of dust. Dear
meanderers of low estate, bruise heels, watch your heads
and beware of early sparrows that may spy you, my worms.
Grog the unfallen angels with change and martyr their livers
for humans' sake! Stretch out between Kocab and Alkaid,
rouse Thuban, let him steer the ships. Leviathan,
thou twisting, crooked, ageless one, Come.

Ahem. Ahem. Eftsoones me aweless daliaunce
all writhled and frounced yquicked
and in skey, reechy concernancies
I did me macerate a bit, viz.,
sulfur, mercury, carbon, saltpetre (detestable stuff)
philosophical vinegar, homunculi, mandragoras --
coil into a hitch, a herakleotic knot,
boil down to reduce the broth, eftsoones. Ahem.

Mixed humours here, cold, hot, dry, moist,
sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic, melancholic --
a bit colicky too, no doubt, as they say
drink wine and have the gout, drink no wine
and also have the gout -- even after ale enough
to make cats talk and snow enough for blindness
after lonesome hours that dry to wrinkles on the clock
and blues enough for kindness, find us, mixilated, mixed.

An Epistle

To those who in harkening have looked askance,
a question curled mute in some grimace of the lip, a mote
of hatred for pure effect glowering deep in a dull eye,
who, incensed and insulted by some imagined affront,
raise their pulse rates with limp-tongued objections
all abled with tooth-gnashings and foaming red;

To those with sensibilities like rare hothouse orchids
whose florid ejaculations do smear this work
with nectars unfit for the lowliest of gods;

To those hypocrite lecteurs who know not
where light goes when the candle is blown out
and, heedless of this, burn it at both ends;

To certain paunchy mongrels hungry for a pedigree
and to those who slap their hams in petty mockery,
a word.

Having conceived nothing, why ache about a name?
The calamitous labour pangs of the mountain
may yet bring forth a ridiculous mouse.
That's all there is to it, egg to apple.
But do consider, in some way that is not habit,
the light that is seen at the pitiful amplification
of your current devices, the Light, oh, the Light
from a time before the Earth was made:

a sparkle
in a dragon's eye.

"I am a sick dragon . . . a mean dragon. There's nothing attractive about me. I think there's something wrong with my liver."

This is a pseudomorphosis.

The secret is the eye
closed and open

open it sees
the mirror that does not shine

closed it sees
the mirror that shines

I know you.

I read the blistered braille
my breath has traced into your thighs.

I feel the stars stab
and drag at your tidal hair.

I see you clawing out the open dark.

Raw honey flows in your spine
and charges your discs.

I know where you lie, pearled and foamed,
in moony filigree with river hair undone
and oh, like a falling bloom
my Andromeda, the shortwave of your sigh
the lithe eternity of your postures
the too-perfect solitude of your skin, silence
your only infidelity.

I am dressed as a bride
at the mouth of your cave.
I am strapped to a jagged rock
the waves crashing around me.
Impale me quickly
on your monstrous tooth
wind your sinews into me
bind me in your Python's grip
burst the blood from me
that our bloods may commingle.

Fill me with the heads and tails
of your code, let
our mutual blood fall into the foam.
Rise, rise, my monstrum, my own.
Bathe me in blood's seed,
let me grip you in gentle tiger's paws, shed
my bridal skin, seethe myself
in my own milk, become
alabaster, submerged in the gulfs
of your groans.

Show me
your peacock's colours, render me
iris of your image in a rain
of living gold. Cleave me
from this rock, this morbid stone.
I am dehydrated as a crone.
Come, water me,
water me.

"Serpens, ni edat serpentum
draco non fiet," quoth Erasmus.

Who knows what may come of an hour
in a dragon's lair -- no matter
that the will may be
simply to see
what symbols emerge
from the abyss.

Let us deal in meanings
for which there is
no academic proof.

They are hidden, hidden, hidden.

Whorls closely coiled and curved inward,
marked by extreme, often needless complexity.

These are
to entangle one into a situation
from which escape is difficult.

These return one
to a former condition.

This allows one
to disappear:

Psalm 60

I will return from the Dragon
return from the depths of the sea,
you dabble your feet in blood
the tongues of your dogs are eager.

Well, what would you have me do?
Stand at the edge of my own lair
and plead with myself to come out?

Does not the ass know
in whose face he brays?

If a snake and a half
laid an egg and a half
in a day and a half
how long would it take
a saint with a wooden leg
to kick all the red herring bones
out of Leviathan?

I never disappear
for long.

It's your own fault
for wandering this far, and
by the way, do drop that flagon of ambrosia
you snaffled when you thought I wasn't watching.

Let's say you're in a Cilician cave of many names.
Let's say I've got a bearskin that contains your vitals
Let's say I've been sending you messages
upon divers papyri for aeons.

What of it?

Shall I tell you how my spine got bent and where
along old ocean roads of snag and snare, my thin words
swelled too fat for much event, or where, in keeping
thoughts lean and sparse, flesh wrinkled and coiled, breasts
turned to scaly dugs and wiry whiskers sprouted from my chin
or how the urge to begin is lost in summing up the past
when the better talk is of passersby (how some passed in
and others out) who like to sneer and scowl and mock
the forlorn whimsies of our cosmic clock?

Why bother.

I am the calm of flowers
past their bloom
and weary of the bees.

With delphic innocence
I do presume
to treat of things
retired into sundry spaceless bowers
above, beyond, beneath the seas
where cloaks of the unnamed
are hung, the wombs
of such machines as may concoct
the patterns of cloud
wherein pass-words round
your burning ears like the sound
of an airship: after it is seen.

A small conceit you'll perchance allow
for our understandings fail us
at the least surprise.

For the fireworks, your eyes
are not strong, they shatter
like roman candles.

Flash! A Fast Blue Angel! Lightning Bolt!
The fine cords between shoulders and neck
snapped. The infidelity of your silence.

Oh, accompany me out of the burning noon
with banjos and with tambourines.

"Deep calls to deep in the roar of thy cataracts
all thy waves, thy breakers, pass over me."

Only phrases leap out, all
is ectoplasm, oozes and swirls
eddies of the unknown, elementals
coming suddenly into sharp focus:
snake's face, gleam of knowledge
so insidious that it passes
as truth

and then,
moments of greater freedom:
Nature rejoicing in Nature.

In a pause between uncertainties
the words speak for themselves.

There is a voice crying in the wastes,
someone or something speaking who wants
neither to dissertate upon nor kabbalize
the Holy Name.

A voice that says, "Ecce,
here are dubious tidings."

Maher-shalal-hash-baz,
let the Waters fasten-up the message
and seal the oracle.

And now the saints come marching in
with parchments full of lives,
now the sages commiserate
and tally sacks and wives.

Where's the poem in all of this?
Where does the poet live?
Behind the words?
Between the lines?
In sludgy precipitations;
the leavings in a sieve?

What singer lives within and drones
the chantlike monotones of yearning
in company of flaccid friars,
dithyrambs and learning?

Poor old Michael Finnegan
He had whiskers on his chinnegan
The wind came along and blew them innegan
Poor old Michael Finnegan
Beginnegan.

The potter ranks no higher
than the clay, therefore let us gauge
every mystery
with the palms of our hands
and by their spans
set limits for the heavens.

THE INCREATUM

THIRD DREAM

It is an arduous task to give novelty to what is ancient,
authority to what is new, interest to what is obsolete,
light to what is obscure, charm to what is loathsome...
credit to what is dubious.

--Pliny

Dragon.

The word, alone, must suffice
to speak the sum-total of its history.
It is impossible to refresh
the memory of the world.

This, by misfortune,
is premise upon premise,
line upon line, is theft
(or recollection)
is the association
of dissociated parts
within the pantemporal sublime.

By good fortune, none of it
is more than an image in a shadow,
a slight bright motion, a fetch
of a silkworm momentarily eternal
upon a quivering leaf.

This quickens the eye
enough to see through things.

From the head tremendous lights shine forth
in rich and complex patterns, some in letters,
some in numbers, some in the Holy Tongue.

They shine now, from where the phylactery is laid,
a world of dots, eye-writing in sapphiric aether,
the energized shattering of beautiful vessels.

Wine drawn must be drunk.

Job: consumed.

Antiochus Epiphanes: consumed.

Herod Agrippa: consumed.

Oh tenebrous incalescence!

Oh temerarious colubrine opus!

I dream now of lotus blossoms

and the warm-hearted moon.

I dream of the old problem

of squaring the circle.

I dream

invasions.

One must inhale, contract the breath, remove
self from self, become a portion of All
absorbed into All, ego absconditas.

One must move over, make room.
Do not emanate, do not exhale.

Swallow self and
in a simple act of will
subsume
Great Nothing in Great Nothing.

Do not disgorge.

Now, fix the eyes, maintain
stillness beneath nictitating membrane,
clear the lid that sees
the mirror that does (not) shine.

It is the eye that strikes first
immobilizing its object.

It exists in the brain, hidden deep
in the cerebrum, the limbic lobe,
the hypothalamus and part
of the diencephalon. It is the location
of predation, it is the coiled
engendering force, it is kundalini
raised into the head, it is knowledge

and yet we are deceived
with ephemeral fruits, are given
bearskins full of abominations.

Conceived of as
half woman, half snake
we dwell in chthonic climes,
earth's privates,
and devour all things raw.

We are plunderers, shape-changers, spectres,
despots, gluttons, ravishers.

Lure us with food, sex, disguises and magic.

Rabbi Simeon ben Yochai insists
that our deepest meaning
must remain inviolate.

Katholikos Ophis
the way through all things.

We are undifferentiated.
We are hidden tongues.
We are spies of the heart.

Who comes to steal my slough, my garter?
Who comes to call me light?
Who comes to judge
the strange lunations in this work
that do aspire t'arrogate
into themselves
chthonic and celestial fires alike.

Oh do not be like unskilled carvers
with blunt blades who fail to find the joint
and mutilate the roast.

One tires of cinnabar and gold liqueur.
One tires of heaven's circles, earth's squares,
of all quaternities in which may be seen
the impress of the creative hand.

One tires of Hebdomads and Ogdoads, Monads and Gonads,
of tetraktys, dactylopters, holothurians, mictyres,
amphisbaenas, basilisks, and dull symposia on
Hypostases of the Archons.

Are the dragon's clothes the real dragon?

What is a dragon
that flies in the air
and wanders alone
while an ant sleeps peacefully
beneath its teeth?

A mirror in which all colours appear.
A mirror that does not shine.

And now what lingers but curiosity
as to the why of this, the how of that?

Is there not the sensation, however fleeting,
that one walks from time to time
upright upon an ancient but familiar earth,
that some tiny current springing from the loam
jostles the heart back into its rightful place
and the minds' halves settle in a comfortable embrace?

What part of you
kisses me
who am all lovers
content at last with kissing?

Now and then, if some herring-shaped dirigible
blimps into sight superimposing
an undeniable red upon the clearest blue,

does one scurry to the top of the nearest poplar
and cry aloud, "Alas, I am confuted and confounded?"

Does one run to one's abacus
and in a fit of clicking beads
reduce anomaly
to equation?

Does one empty one's cask of spirits
into the drink and pledge
to refrain?

Perhaps one breathes deeply
and exhales.

Perhaps one laughs self
into serenity.

I am an unfeathered, two-legged creature
who was born in the year of the world.

Now comes the penultimate glance where leaps
the hardest spark of hatred newly born
which suspects, nay knows, in its tiny heart
the b-bump, b-bump of self-annihilating glee.

This is the full furnace of a laughter
which none may live long enough
to begin to perceive.

And if not?

Then I draw out a small hot splinter
in a state of stiff repose
and set to a fine blaze
the log in my own eye.

Who has skirts of straw
need fear the fire.

Oh where's the road, the riddling road
where's the ringing in my ears gone,
the small sound of soft gold bells, good fool's words,
claps of delight in spontaneous hands, where's the dance
all gypsy-ankled and full of timbrels, the sneezeweed
yarrow, vetch, clover, and queen anne's lace? Where are the
old dreams of wild vinegar trees, of white-caps, of salty
ocean breeze?

They've been swallowed up
by Isaiah and Job.

First there is a dragon
then there is no dragon
then there is.

The secret is
the eye
closed and open

a mirror that does not shine
a mirror that shines

I sing of peaches ripening
on coral stems, of tortoises' heads
and peonies blossoming open.

I sing too of a fast red bird
resplendent with speed, an ember
in the gold crucible of the lotus.

O wailing monkeys in the pine trees.
O cat and mouse in a single hole.
O billy goat butting a gnarly oak.
O ducks flying backwards.

(In the citadel lies the lapis
under monstrous guard, in the garden
lie the apples, likewise watched.)

Nobody knows of what I sing.
That is the agony of it all.

This is a celebration of subtle fire
that is pearl and blue and luminous.
This fire will not burn you.

Can you see the salamanders frolicking?
The salamanders are merry.
A little man is among them.

Oh what a great many shapes!
Oh what colours!

Look now.
One who is like a peacock
spreads open his tail.

Is not man but fish inside the air
for this, inside his eyes is nought
but moon astride great wings, great spans
or how else move his water orbit?

And is not man but clay, thrown clay
inside the sun, earth his wheel and nought
but radiance sublimated into use?
How else contain him?

Is not man but wind and spark and splinters
his heart a ball of lightning, his mind a gulf,
his sex a tautness between yawns, his shit
a mere anticipation of fatality?

Is he not but aether farted into flesh,
his daimon a nymphomaniac, his nocturnal seed
but rhetoric?

How else explain him?

"Evil to him who evil thinks."
Upon this motto let readers dwell
and, finding no recriminations deep within it,
think twice before berating my tracts
and they'll be thought or seen
as good as george-a-green
if they but pause to collect their wits, their facts
and cunningly weed out, incurring no great deficit,
ingots, baubles, pearls and hence their cravings quell
where first they read but anathema and jinx.
Mickle must a good heart thole
to beat gold thin, forego dole.

EMANATIONS
FOURTH DREAM

"All that shaketh doth not fall; the contexture
of so vast a frame holds more than by one nail."

--Montaigne

What can one interpose
between absolute
and phenomenal worlds?

The limited and isolated existence
of separate things
is not in the divine scheme.

The mystical abounds
with the erotic: the first beam
of divine light is
the primeval germ,
emerging from nothing, seeding,
and overflowing in a drastic
and paradoxical manner.

But, the above is nothing,
is the appropriation of tone
is the entering into ancient debate
is a mix calculated merely to surprise.

Note the gashed absence of the slightest lividness,
the excision of spleen, the withered bit of liver
galvanized to mock the pumping of fetal heart.
Note also the shock of inelegant image, the crash
of otherworldly wind against soft temples.

Hallucination is an insult to Sight.

Who knows what I am talking about or why
I did not long ago shut up.

Do I speak through canary feathers, speech
muffled with yellow fluff, does my cheek bulge
with a thick and sluggish tongue, are things
dragged out, dredged up, do things drag on?

The Drag-on Papers.
(One must ever be one's own parodist)
I am the Drag-on.
End of exercise.

We do not know in whose hands
a single letter was scribed, or what
makes blue the moon beside our calendars.
In a late spell of fine weather
the only alchemies we know
are those that despair
has stacked against us.

We remember no prophetic movements
among perennial bodies, taste
no elixirs newly spouted from the font.

We animate nothing but our miseries
and those as raw nerves
coiled around voltage.

And you are a dull wit
impertinent in your dullness, ill-equipped
to ponder any new occultation
in this bold asynchronous mass. You are
a mere eavesdropper, a burning ear, and I
am the seer, the speaker.

I call upon all voices swallowed
by decorum's bland demands, I call
on those engulfed by others' monotonous tirades,
those that are doppelgangers
in chill bureaucratic corridors, whispering voices
betrayed by half-formed phrases, jeers
behind blood-stained spectral hands.

I call all these and more
I call discarnate words to task.

What is unspoken is inviolate and yet
is a kind of gorgon calmly cleaning her teeth
in a polished shield
and as she braids her snakes
into a high-piled writhing crown
she is beheaded and thence
turns anything to stone.

I call upon many to testify:
impending fluxes, old leeches, cantankerous crones,
virginal spaes, levitators, spoonbenders, saints,
necromancers, dowers, inspired epileptics,
alchemists, lunatics, grave robbers.

I call the wind to blow through
the cracks in your house.
I call the loose snow to fly
from your rooftops, the timorous doves
from your rafters' sanctum.

To speak is to purge
thought's suppuration.

Words exist as a kind of volatile rot
exiting by throat, tongue, typewriter or pen.
Fleshy incarnations, symbols of nought,
condensations of waste left in the wake
of the speed of thought that lay claim
each to its autonomous life,
they are tyrants
and we are their slaves.

Lakes, we are, land-locked, cold and profound
at "bottom" fathomless ooze,
diatomaceous mud, wombs' linings
millennia of slough
but because essentially fluid
we are not history
written in igneous layers, not
peat-bogs turned to diamonds -- in short
we do not date. We are mutable,
mother worts in search of strong ferment.

Things don't have to add up, don't need
to tally, who says they do?
Can you weigh out in shekels the worth
of the crescent moon cradled neat
in the beloved's misty eye, can you audit
the heart's trial balance, circle its shortcomings,
sue it for tax evasion, tithe its revenues?

What is the measure of dream,
of eros beached moist on psyche's tropical strand
where's the calculus and physics of fecundity
the predictable chaos of deep life engendering groans?

What is beyond the firmament?

Look,
there go the fast-moving,
bright and dragonish clouds, jaws open, aghast
and scudding into mountains.

Above them, one big dragon roaring,
spitting lightning out in forks: a show
of compassion and rage . . . some tragedy
has occurred this moment, somewhere.

And the dragon scent --
eerie and comfortable cologne,
impending aroma of sudden, strong
and clean wrath blowing
down from the North, rapidly.

A magnificent rumble of massive wings
reverses the air and renders plants
silent, expectant and thunder-green -- sound
that engulfs all other sounds.

The rain comes now
straight down.

From the beginning it has been only this you've wanted -- simple images, a clear voice, an authoritative tone. You've wanted the ins and outs of dragons, rain rushing down hard and fast, burning of belladonna, sculpting of mandrakes into women and men. How can I convince you meditation is its own reward?

Yes, rain falls, snow flies, kettle boils and dishes are stacked in the sink. Yes, this is the brink of exhaustion where I curl up and rock to my heart's slow metronome. Nevertheless, I am here, now, some kind of maniac, neurasthenic, giggling at etymologies, cackling at word and wyrd, drawing the moon down into this vast agglomeration.

And the soul? It is, like yours, finally, more at home at the spa than in lonesome dilatations. I, too, see the crows zoom in and out of fog, know dreams' ludicrous diction, try to score more than the machine, dare the ghost within, yearn to be haunted.

No less than the Stone itself I crave
and seek it in ciphers, labyrinths and tomes,
burn incense and by tapers' meagre light
at winter's solstice, deepest night, enslave
spleen, retinae, Bundle of His and bones
in haggard, subterranean pursuit
of sublime, clairvoyant and absolute.

I wish to sail some Argo of the mind
through applauding rocks, a fleece nailed to my prow
--Chiron's rumours are sperm in my fallopian ears.

And oh, I am ripe for rumours, ripe
for recondite gnomes, for phantasms
strutting their stuff on the big-screen;
oscar-winners, charismatics of esoteric lore.

I reckon in fractals, syzygies and googols, dream
in neutrinos, particles and waves, nuke my left-overs
(a common device) and am rocked in the asymptotes
of waking and sleep.

I deal in quarky reasoning,
make quantum leaps
that are not without charm.

I write copious notes explaining
the undefiled, the indefinite, the colourless,
the formless, the unchangeable, the uncovered,
that which shines, that which does not shine,
that which is comprehended by itself,
the unalterable, the incorporeal

I seek out all and sundry wisemen
vague golems who know
men's wisdom only, the wisdom of penis
taken in hand, the wisdom of it lying
in a deep and permanent swoon -- those for whom
life's mystery is visible. It is fondled until,
of itself, it is anxious-aware and then it overflows
warm upon their bellies.
Finally, it is captured in kleenex.

And so I claim the hoary lands as home,
reveal nothing to the vulgar crowd, sing
medleys of magic and theurgy, orgasm
in hot fast ejaculations of delirious metaphysics
become
heterogenous mass
obscure and bombastic
become
the North, the Night, the Winter,
the Abyss of Yin.

I am an engine.
I drive the deliberate into
the deliberate, spin
woolgathering into yarn.

The mere cohabitation of miscellanies
is notarized into fact. It is

the tumbling of
an infinite number of loto balls
within an infinite container
for an infinite period.

It is
that we find this easier
than an infinitely petalled lotus
infinitely blooming.

How far from the primal everyone is.
Short of the therapeutic scream,
the occasional earthquake,
the freak power outage Hydro can't explain
except by blaming solar flares, Northern Lights,
we are content to buy stock, guarantee
our investments, ponder new purchases, wonder
whether or not to change
cities, countries, constitutions.

Suppose I want to talk lightning
and you want to talk sovereignty.

"Dialectics," you say, "it's all dialectics."

"Parataxis," I say.

"Paris Texas," you say, "I saw that."

"Pay our taxes," a chorus of voices adds.

I mean this ain't potatoes potahatoes anymore,
it's worse.

Let's call the whole thing off.

This is the end
This is an effort to ground a dangerous charge.

This is Great Nothing.
Door Number Zero.

We dream forward into stars,
stars dream backward into us.

Some of us dream ourselves into palatine districts,
into immortals of old with Milky Way condos.
Some of us dream ourselves into zones
marked off on the stellar map
as the abodes of dragons.

It is all a matter of which archons
one prefers to deal with.
Some of us, let's face it,
love the bureaucracies.

And the stars? They dream of DNA,
of guanine and adenine, of Club Med vacations
in the primal soup, of happy haploids
at genetic singles' bars, they are
fed up being stars, tired
of twinkling and inspiring lovers,
of constant cosmic espionage duty,
tired, mostly, of being misunderstood, thought of
as nuclear hot potatoes, white dwarfs,
as souvenirs of the big bang
pinned like fashion accessories
on heaven's dark scarf.

They are images of dragons reaching into dragons
grabbing hold of wombs, turning wombs
inside out and enclosing dragons so that dragons
may gestate, be given birth.

Lightning is a macabre and flashy killer.
It melts telephone receivers, scrambles computers,
wrenches rockets from their flight paths,
packs a punch hefty enough to explode organs.

This is the end, a moment
of intense atmospheric pressure,
millennial shudderings, immolations,
flesh vomited forth, turbid water
with which living water mingles.

Nature rejoices in Nature.

Lightning moves charged fingers
up out of the earth, catches
the sky's electric hands reaching
out of storm,

thence
comes the Light.