

NO ONE IN PARTICULAR

Selected Poems

By
J. J. Anderson



NO ONE
IN
PARTICULAR

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Published by J. J. Anderson
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ISBN 978-1-4507-0975-0

Library of Congress Control Number: 2010903694

Printed in the United States of America
First printing, March 2010

Drawings by the author.

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PREFACE

It took me a long time to admit publically that I wrote poetry. The school and peer environment I grew up in did not treat kindly boys who liked poetry, let alone one who wrote poems. I was in my early thirties before I first cautiously spoke about my writing to someone I met while living in San Francisco. I was encouraged to share what I wrote with others—which I did, even though I knew much of my poetry was not polished and some of it was still “in development.” Ah well, poets do have to *practice* their art, don’t they?

I was fortunate to get even more encouragement from poets Elsa Gidlow and Rosalie Moore, who became a good friend. Rosalie generously invited me to join her in a San Francisco coffee house poetry reading where she introduced me as a fellow poet (which made me squirm a bit) and asked me to read some of my poems to the gathering. Rosalie was a supportive tutor and a fine poet who wrote several books. Her book, *Year of the Children*, was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize.

After listening to some of my poems, Elsa Gidlow referred me to a teacher friend of hers named Terry for some sorely needed tutoring. I was amazed as I watched Terry take poems I struggled with and, with a few quick strokes of her pencil, strip away the unneeded words burdening my work. I could still use her keen editor’s eye!

Sometimes, only a fragment of a poem “works” well. But I find it difficult to bury poems containing a particular phrase I like, such as

I’m Sundaywounded—
Paperboy,
 don’t pass me by,
 I need your
 quick-cure
 comics

but the “parent” poem of that image will not see the public light of day, as long as I can keep it tucked safely away. As I said, poets need to practice.

I wrote a poem I’ve chewed over for decades that shall, I think, never be finished. Sometimes a poet gets “stuck.” As a recovering intellectual, every so often I write poems that are logy. When I slip back into that rut, I seek the cleansing and cathartic power of *haiku*. For me, reading and writing *haiku* has proved to be liberating. Samples of my *haiku* are on my website, jjanderson.info.

A poem should transport the reader beyond its words to “another place.” Words are important but so too are rhythms and resonance. Their origins are found in everyday speech and the sounds of life around us. As I have said elsewhere, my practical friends see far less poetry in life than I do—some of them suspect that is *all* I see!

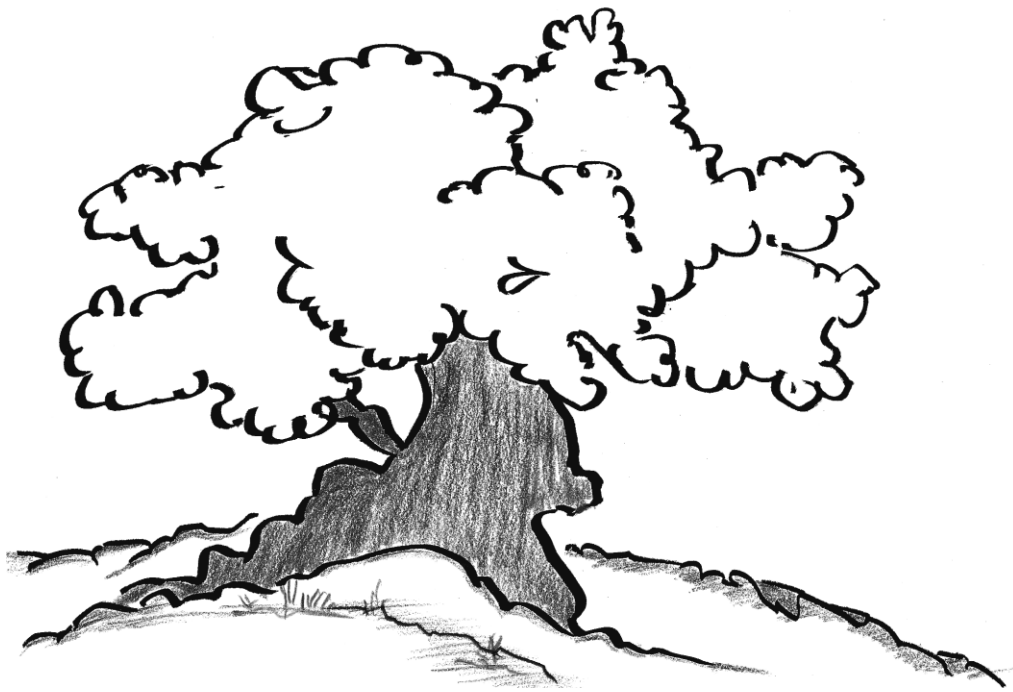
The poet is the first person to enjoy a poem. And the poet is often surprised at what has emerged from her or his adventure into Mythic Reality, that realm where one’s imagination is the only passport required to visit. I hope you will find some enjoyment in the pages of this little collection of my poems.

JJA
March 2010
Albuquerque, New Mexico

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AGING

I was the grape
before I was the wine;
And when I drink Jordan
and Jordan drinks me,
I will know there is
lesser part.
Without complaint,
I will be vinegar, too.

ALARM CLOCK

Last night,
wound and set
and put by the bed.

This morning,
found snoozing
under the pillow,
turned off.

A night
on the closet shelf
will teach it a lesson!

A MOLLUSK'S LOVE SONG

A sedentary life
and quiet;
here, sand beds
and shallow waters,
where corals' brilliant
colors riot
and nearby neighbors'
sons and daughters
explode
from black
and inky clouds
in odd maneuvers
not allowed
a clam.

Willowy,
spineless,
reaching upward,
undulating kelp
give sway
to eddy currents
that make their way
to larger tides;
for such forces
as would lead
a jellyfish to sea,
no need have I,
a clam.

Yet,
once while waiting
(wide expectation)
for some small sea-life
to feed me,
a crab
(from a large atoll)
passing by
on her way to sea
loosed
a grain that
entered my world
and has bothered me
this long time.

AND IT'S ONLY TUESDAY

Fridaytired
and
twicetasting coffee

bills
but
no
letters

was it last month
or
yesterday
you said
goodbye?

AT NIGHT

how you twitch you
when I touch you—
of course,
that's only when
you sleep you;
half awake you
sometimes
touch, too,
warmly,
warmly

AUTUMN WALK

God and I took a walk
this morn long before
the Sun.

We and breathless
trees gazed shamelessly
upon the Goddess white and full,
wondered at the footprints on her breast
and at our own neighborhood footsteps.

Slowing crickets prophesied
ghosts and goblins.

We were brisk and steady,
unlike the fickle breeze
so strangely warm. . .

God and I took a walk
this morn, familiar friends,
our wordless way known
to us both was still
as new as the shiny penny
we spied in the half-light.

God and I took a walk
this morn but not alone:
bright souls
(or were they stars or both?)
flanked our path.

We softly considered
the desires of our hearts
and, satisfied, turned
our steps
toward
home.

BACH MOOD

Point
and
counterpoint . . .
fugues, not cantatas,
for my vacant cathedral—
the key is minor
the music
 unmarred
 by hearing;
 alone
 this eleventh hour,
 I play by
 votive candles
 lit for variations
 of me
 played long ago.

Neverminding mistakes,
playing all night,
no ear shall intrude . . .
 sanctuaryspace
 will swell
 with echoes
 of secretsounds
 until my celibate soul
 explodes
 into
 the
 wide
 celebration
 of
 God-that-I-am.

BLESS YOU!

I snoze
a really good
sneeze
and
felt as good
as if
I had been
to a revival
and
gotten saved.

[UNTITLED]

Come, take my hand:
walk with me
this time
and for times.

I'll bring a drum,
you bring a dance:
Our steps, our path
already rhyme.

You bring bread and garlands,
I'll bring drink and song;
we'll play
this eternal summer,
lovemaking in our blankets,
listening to the sea of grass
surrounding and hiding our time,

whispering our Mother's Truth,
our Father's Love.

Come, take my hand:
come back with me
to our secret place that
shades only a little
browning, comforting Sun.

Where we may together see
and not be seen;
be free,
giving freedom
to each other,
our gift of laughter.

Don't wait!
Waiting is done!

Come, take my hand,
my Beloved,
it's our time
once again.

DESERT GENESIS

a tumbleweed,
fall fit
for burning,
following dust devils and
quick gushes of chilled air
rushing down draws
to join
wandering winter winds;
barbed wire
tears away at limbs
as desert gales
reduce it to
a seedless skeleton;
but all across thorn-sown mesas
comes resurrection
a thousand thousand times

DIVINE MADNESS

Who exorcised into the swine
the madness of a wand'ring man
would mark my tracks across this life
'prisoning me within his Plan.

Who could, with touch or word or sign,
heal his Madness from my soul,
instead plays out this Farce Divine
and sows the seeds within my thoughts
of cross and love and sacrifice.

FAITH IN NO-FAITH

Faith in no-faith
comforts not:
no grace
no Gilead
no soothing rites
to still
the inward
storm;

Leap of no-faith,
larger risk,
holds no promise
of Waiting Arms;

Where the pillar?
Where the *petros*?
Where the confraternal band?

Alone in no-faith
perched upon
Horeb's pinnacle

I

question all:
the worlds below,
the heavens above,
the universe within.

FIGHTING BACK

Here comes the one
who
last in line by far
still
makes the climb:

skinny,
unsure,
stubborn,
silent.

Shaking 'neath the pack;
little musclepad
eased cutting straps
and tired bones.

So what,
it has all been done before,
someone said.

But

not

by

me,

came the reply.

FOUND

Littleboy Lost,

it's time-to-come-home,

the huntingame is done.

What you daydreamed

at Muddy Fork

is come true

at last:

hideawayhoping

you wished for

the-one-who-loves-you-best

to find

and

gather-you-up

and

carry-you-home-loving

and

here

I

am

•

GRANDAM

gnarled root
withered dry
the seed within
no longer sprouts
but
all around
profuse and green
stand hopes and dreams

HANGOVER

Last night
Excitement Bird for supper;
this morning for breakfast:
Fear Worms

HELPING WIND

Helping Wind
blows me
here and there,
into your garden
and then another's.

Chance, we say,
marks where I'll land—
not really:
the path is there
but only seen
when we recall
places and times
damp with rememb'ring.

Helping Wind and I
bring petals of space
and fragrance of now
for you to press
in offhand pages.

When I'm carried seaward
perhaps it is really you
who are flying away
while I stay put.

HER CHILDREN

She with them,
so involved,
so immersed,
each day's new world . . .

but then distressed:
all so compressed,
too soon gray.

The aperture
caught each scene . . .

Trembling fingers
turn a leaf
but find it blurred:
all occurred
so very fast

now they're gone.

INTERCOURSE

How have you been?

*up
and down
and all around
fuzzy
and smooth
and in the groove
and
totally out of step*

Fine.

How are things?

*large
and small
or not at all
or very quick—
but that's the trick
to getting it all together*

All right.

What's new?

*this very now
and
how I am
nothing at all . . .
I can't recall
what it is you said*

Not much.

How are you?

*round
and ground
runny and thick
and sticky
with gratitude
for
your ritual platitude*

OK.

INTROIT

Peace
is seeping now
into crevices
where once desire
choked out Love;
Peace,
the emptiness
of the Universe,
slowly, slowly
washing self
away.

INVITATION

smoldering wick
bruised reed
gently will i take
thy trembling
waiting spirit and
a new creation make

MALE

By the numbers
and by God
surrender my heart
for kin to eat:
 "I am the sacrifice
 and the offering."

I'm sandcastles
left behind;
I'm treehouse
with no rope ladder;
I'm Comrade Adolph:
keeper and eater
of little boys;
Rescuer-of-Ladies
who leave me roadside
colacan flat
to be sold
by the ton.

I am boardrooms and barrooms
and bayonets and brawls
and lost, lost, lost
long before
my first erection.

I'm faded khaki
junk-filled trunk
crying drunk with vets
for times
when we were buddies
and scared
and alive
and crawling inside
of each other,
our own new wombs,
for the warmth of real.

I'm wind-up lonely,
in three pieces of hurry;
and bottomline red
and running, running, running
out of my dollar allowance;

I am, Merciful God,

solid as a Triple A bond
and ready to buckle
at the first kind word.

Blue-and-tattoo
or medium-starch-please,
I'm stumpdeaf
to suburban serfs
and wishing I was home. . .
wishing I was home.

I am reserved
and in the Reserves
and out of reserves
and don't even know
(if I ever did know!)
what I need or want
or how to get into myself
or out of the race
or how to be true
or how to be whole
or how to be half
or how to be anything
but the last of the. . .

MARCH WINDS

March winds,
who never knew me,
eating the edges of ice,
calibrate my Spring,
clear my billowing mind
refresh my tender heart
bring me hope of all that is new
let me ride your promise
into whirling new birth.

MONKEY'S PAW

My first wish
was to have Life,
my second
to have Death.
My third wish was
to have neither.

MR. JULY TYREE

Mr. July Tyree was a practical man
who didn't understand
Winter sky,
why its confusion of stars
is not like Summer's—
which is also mixed up.
He didn't care
but he knew it was different;
anyway, it didn't matter,
it was only sky.

Mr. July Tyree was a practical man
but he waited too long,
it seemed to most,
to find a lady.
One night,
in a dream,
he glimpsed her face;
but couldn't recall it;
besides, it was only a dream.

Mr. July Tyree was a practical man
not inclined to rush
into things unplanned;
so,
when Judy Garcia
and her subtle shape
slipped into his brain
and there remained
day after day,
it was annoying—
at first.

And day after day
he made the rounds,
wrote down their orders
for more.
More of this,
more of that,
delivered by Tuesday
next week.

She always smiled, chatted;
he always took time—
he could spare time for her;

besides, it was only chat.
'Til one day they
went to lunch:
sandwiches on a park bench.
Well, he had to eat and so did she;
anyway, it was only a lunch.

Then again.

And again.

And again.

Mr. July Tyree was a practical man
who never dreamed
July-and-Judy
would be one
word.

But *she* knew.

NOT-MUSE

I have a demon
that keeps me
from sleep.
It's always
in the corner
of my eye
but
a quick turn of my head
to catch a glimpse—
to confront it,
to demand respite—
finds it
already gone.

OFF AND ON

I must be
unbalanced
to be Poet;
when centered
no Muse can tempt—
leading Poet
through inner
Halls of Silence
he is mute
with awe.

I must be
slightly mad
to be Poet;
when sane and dwelling
at the stillpoint center
of my Soul
there is nothing to say.

Completely insane,
I rant;
but slightly mad
Poet can speak.

Thus have I learned
to love my madness.

[UNTITLED]

Oh, the roundness of God
and the slurping!
And the barbrawling slipperycrawling
know-it-when-I-find-it of God!

Oh the stone-in-my-shoe
Cistine earwax
Edsel telefax
worn-thin filled-to-the-brim
of God.

Oh the you-and-me-and-we of God!
And the baby chick
fruit fly
by-and-by
of God.

(Oh the to-be-continued of God!)

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SIX
SYLLABLES ON BECOMING AN AMERICAN

Smoke-filled stuffy room;
Committee reports that grant
Remembering time.

“Coach” said Fair Play is
The lesson to learn; also,
Winning is required.

Schoolyard baseball games—
A skinny kid not chosen;
Tomorrow’s leader.

Crying at poems!
Getting good grades! Maybe he
Really is a “queer.”

The classroom bullies
Turned the grindstone: someday points
To prick taunting boys.

The teacher implored
The smart aleck to behave;
Ashamed of his brains.

The football captain
Was Class President, with girls
And letter sweaters.

Middle-aged man who
Would trade a chairmanship for
A chance at right field.

PEPPER AND IVY

They were both
just regular;
though not, perhaps,
just.

Regular, anyway.
As if to show
that whole damned crowd
magic
and grace
is everyday stuff,
is what's good to see
and smell and slurp;

God sneezing on mud pies,
making them moo and giggle.
Regular.

Real.

PRAYER FLAG

[Written after a friend's death, this is
about a Buddhist Prayer Flag used at
his memorial.]

I remember royal purple;
Now stand you lavender, pale, limp,
Circled by churning roses,
Who springtime sigh:
 He, too, fades,
 fading, fades,
 soft memories,
 lifeless as your taters.

More resolutely still
The bamboo stem
Downward pierces
Bed Center:

 Fade I now,
 Sun, wind and water,
 to compost—
 still and ever:
 one Heart, two
 and many,
 where shines brightly
 royal purple.

RESOLVED

To redeem
this spark's fierce
brief moment with
the bellows breath
of experience,
fanning the glow
until the coal
is quite consumed.

RUMMAGING

The mind's I
can almost see
the spires
and stained glass
reveries of God's love;
the favorite pew,
jabs splintered thoughts
into any ass tempted
to sit again.

Once,
thought after thoughts,
like brick and bricks, built
antipathetic anterooms
to keep hearsay and heresy
out of the sanctum sanctorum.

Presently,
seldom thoughts
(like church mice
after potluck crumbs)
poke curiously through
mossy hymnstones
of forgotten selves
but find no sustenance.

It was *pain*,
not prayer,
brought the
secret strength
that buckled
the pillar
and crashed the
vaulted ceilings,
revealing
what was hidden by
great eyebeams:
 the Crooked Way
 of the Universe.

SAN FRANCISCO SUMMER

These tempered times
go 'round and 'round . . .

summers here are cold;
my inner clock
confused
when July I saw
treehung kitecross
shivering, rat'ling
in fogcold wind.

A lifetime
or two ago
spring or fall
was the time to fly;

but this is a new place. . .

A jealous oak
(I think it was)
snatched
that blue and silver bird
from its lover's
puffing and panting.

Above the wind's lament
snared sticks
'n' tatters
called down to me:

If you're going to fly,
cut the cord!

[CHANT]

Song inside me
I will sing you
 On the mesas
 I have heard you
 The arroyos
 Bring me music

I will sing you
Song inside me
Song inside me
I will sing you

Song inside me
I will sing you
 Desert Woman
 Calls her children
 The coyote
 Is my brother

I will sing you
Song inside me
Song inside me
I will sing you

Song inside me
I will sing you
 Call the hawk down
 My sky brother
 Call him from the
 Blue-grey mountains

I will sing you
Song inside me
Song inside me
I will sing you

Song inside me
I will sing you
 As the desert
 Burns my footsteps
 As my trail
 Becomes my dancepath

I will sing you
Song inside me
Song inside me
I will sing you

Song inside me
I will sing you
 Clapping cloudbursts
 Bring me drumbeats
 Cooling raindrops
 Lift my spirit

I will sing you
Song inside me
Song inside me
I will sing you

Song inside me
I will sing you
 You will guide me
 Lead my spirit
 On the mesas
 In the village

I will sing you
Song inside me
Song inside me
I will sing you

SUMMER MEANS ROSES

He moved slower after—
there is no reason for it,
really—
his health is good;
but when Martha passed,
part of him passed, too.
He snorts, “Nonsense!”
Yet everyone knows
theirs was
special.

He, the quiet one,
shy and self-effacing;
she so full of grace
and joy and greeting all
as if they were kin.
“Poor dear!”
she would say,
to one who came wounded.
And he would quietly bind
with tea and biscuits and,
in summer,
with roses.

Now, some worried.
“She was always
the strong one,
you know,”
whispered one.
“Can’t even cook
for himself,”
clucked another.
“Ought to quit
that farm ‘n’
come to town.
They say
he’s taken to
talking to himself.”

Not to himself:
to her.

And in summer
he tends
her roses.

“They’re coming up the road, Martha.
Just Jesse ‘n’ Jody. . .
the two of ‘em. . .
in Jody’s car. . .

“You see, Martha! I knew this one
would do better over here!
Not so crowded. . .
better view of the road. . .
see who’s comin’ ‘n’ going’ . . .
bloomin’ . . . just. . . fine. . . .”

“Hi, Pop. . .
jeeze, get out of this sun. . .
come up on the porch. . .
rest a while.”

“See, Martha, he’s startin’
right in.”

“Hi, Papa. How about a
hug?”

“What brings you two
out here on a weekday?
‘N’ where are the kids?”

“Sal went to see
her mother and
she took the twins.”

“Hey, can’t a girl take a day
off to visit her favorite
father?”

“Her *only* father. . .”

“Besides, Kitty wanted to
stay and play with Angie’s
kids.”

“Well, Martha,
this sounds fishy. . .”

“Pop, you have to quit
talking to yourself.
People are thinking
you may be. . . *losing* it.”

“Talking to your mother,
not myself.”

“Pop. . . Mom’s gone
three years now. . .
Jody and I,
we’re worried. . .”

“Lighten up, big brother!
Papa’s just talking to the love
of his life! We understand,
Papa, we know. . . we just
came out to see if you’re
OK.”

“You can see.
Lost ten pounds.
I’m tendin’ nearly
an acre of garden,
not countin’
your mother’s roses. . .”

“Pop, listen,
we came out
to talk to you
about something,
about moving into town
nearer to us. . .”

“Did I tell you,
Martha?”

“Subtle, big brother, *real*
subtle!”

“Jody, ‘r’ you in on this, too?”

“Papa, I love you more
than anything. . .”

“Here it comes, Martha!”

“. . . but Harold and I worry,
you out here alone.
You don’t visit much. . .
if you didn’t have to come
buy groceries. . .”

“Clyde Berger,

he knows what to do,
so, don't worry. . ."

"Clyde Berger?"

"He drew Pop's
new will, you know,
the one he's
keeping *secret*."

"Don't worry, Jes',
you're still in it."

"That's not what I mean
and you know it!
Pop, you've been acting. . .
sort of. . . *eccentric*. . ."

"Son, I'm not acting,
I *am* eccentric."

"Papa, we. . . love you. . .
so. . ."

"C'mere, Sweet Girl,
'n' let me tell you
one of my secrets:
I'm crazy 'bout
both of you. . .
even weird Jes'. . ."

"Pop, this farm's
too much,
just too much
for a man your. . ."

"Oh now, Jesse!
Don't you say it!"

"Papa, it's just his way
of saying he loves you. . ."

"If it'll make you two
feel any better,
I hired Walker Good
to work this summer
'n' to stay here
durin' winter, too."

“Walker Good!
Jeeze, Pop, old Walker
is crazier than. . .”

“Crazier than me?”

“I mean, how safe
can you feel
around a man who. . .”

“Who talks to himself
all the time?”

“Jesse, Walker’s good around
a farm and he’s never hurt a
soul, except maybe himself
with a bottle. . .”

“*Jeeze*, Pop,
I mean, *jeeze!*”

“Who raised these two,
Martha? Must’a been you
'cause they’re sure gonna
rescue me. . . but they don’t
seem to take to colored
folks much. . .”

“*Dammit*, Pop!
It’s got nothing to do
with him being black!
He *drinks!*”

“So do I!”

“Two beers a year!”

“He promised he’d quit.
I’ll quit, too.”

“Give me a break, Pop. . .
he’s not safe behind
the wheel of a car!”

“Yup, well,
that’s no worry.
They took away his
driver’s license. . .”

“God! I just saw him

driving his worthless truck
down Gatewood Road!
Wait 'til I see Sheriff Riggs!"

"Son, I didn't raise
you to be mean
to folks. . ."

"Pop, Walker
behind the wheel
is menace to
innocent people!"

"Well, I fixed that, too.
I bought his truck.
I'll be his *chauffeur!*"

"I give up!"

"Papa. . . Papa, you and
Walker. . . you'll do
just fine out here. . ."

"What! Aw, *jeeze*, Jody,
don't encourage him!"

". . . and Harold and I
and Jesse and Sally
and the kids
will come out
when we miss you. . .
the kids love all
the space to play in,
and we *love* Walker's old
stories, too. . ."

"I see where
the weird genes
really went!"

"Waddaya think, Martha?
Are they over this fit, yet?"

"OK, *OK*, I surrender!
Come here, everybody. . .
group hug!"

"Here, take some
roses to Sally."

“Thanks, Pop. . .
see you later. . .
call me
if you need. . .
anything. . .”

“You mean like
peace and quiet?”

“Bye, Papa, we love you. . .”

“Kiss the little ones for me. . .”

“Well, Martha,
did pretty good. . .
didn’t run ‘n’ hide.

“O’course,
they’ll be back
to try again. . .
but by then
I’ll have some help.

“Let’s go over ‘n’
pick up Walker. . .”

THE BLOODY SCHOOL'S LET OUT, MATE!

times

and chimes

and grouchy toads

and chirping crickets
in rows and rows
of gas chamber green

magic noontime elixirs
and glances
and laughs

pitiable old
unpitying young
(some parchments disguised
as mod posters)

smug giraffes
unsee
everybody
and nobody

the link that
couldn't
without breaking

(Buckle!
No triune god here, John,
to make it worthwhile.)

someday shaman
curing ancient ills
that have no cure
save by fire

if the demigods
and their creatures
cannot mate
then let him break
and be done

the truth of the coin
is found on its edge—
breezes topple;
whoever called "Heads"

is unhappy

as the Little Tramp
tips his hat
and *Finis* follows his fanny
down dusty roads
another miracle worker comes
(may he not be blind)

his very form
makes him
alreadyhistory

what is needful: *agape*

so what?
there's the oriental
coffee chime

THE FIRST BEE

Four years old
and screaming, wild
he came running
with the second child
who had on his back
the Black-and-Yellow-Terror.

Only hollering,
no tears at first;
initially excitement
and later the worst
which would be salved
by a mud-like poultice.

While his father struck
the Buzzing Monster dead
with his shoe,
his mother had said,
“Quick now, boys!
Get inside!”
Round, swollen welts,
volcanoes red
with center holes
erupting pain; his father said,
“Go and make
a baking soda paste.”

His father wondered
after he had spoken
if the Rainbow’s Pact
had finally been broken
for all the tears
their wide eyes produced.

Like the trip hammer
of a runaway machine,
the boy’s heart pounded
and his body, lean
from urgent growing,
trembled and shook.

His father’s arms
calmed the lad;
his Hero killed the Frightener
and from the store he had

of knowledge devised
a soothing medicine.

But his father thought
how this was one
of many stings to come;
would tears again blur the eyes of his son
when at last he saw
his father as mortal?

THE MAN IN THE MOON

When I was a boy, I saw the face—
the face of the Man in the Moon.
Others did not.
Taunting, laughing,
playmates cried,
“Lunatic! Lunatic! Lunatic!
Do you see the *green cheese*, too?”
So I learned to be the quiet one;
until Aunt Laura one day said,
“. . . as plain as the face of
the Man in the Moon. . . .”
When the others left,
I shyly asked,
“Aunt Laura have you . . .
have you seen . . .
the face of the Man in the Moon?”
“Of course,” she laughed,
“His mouth is round,
as if he’s saying, ‘Oh!’
and his eyes are worried, too.
I think he’s wondering
when all us folks
will finally learn to get along!
But only special ones
with magical eyes
see the Man in the Moon.”
She laughed again,
“But what do I know?
I’m just your nutty aunt.”
I jumped up,
hugged her neck
and cried, “Oh no, Aunt Laura!
You’re my *favorite* Aunt!”

THE SEASONS OF THIS MAN'S HEART

The seasons of this man's heart
are not governed by suns and moons
commonly known, plainly seen and charted;
inner planets guide
his heart and hands.

In their turning,
sowing time, tending time,
stirred by inner clime and weather,
gently call this Son of Earth and Sky
to season on season of timely chores,
with their promise of harvest time:
full measure, pressed down, overflowing.

When the sharing season stirs his heart,
easy hands empty storerooms,
without question, without pain,
with quiet gladness and knowing
of the eternity of growing
and giving that lies ahead.

TO JENNIFER

Watch out for those
 ivy-covered lies
the too-quick-coming
 of wizened days
when laughter becomes
 a broken wing
and ash is the taste
 of everything
and Forgotten is the place
 Pan plays

TO MOLLY-O (THIRD TRY)

Once there was
a hermit crab
who, in a borrowed shell,
protected independence
and freedom very well;
when interviewed by Reasoner,
the crab had this to say:
 "Of course,
 I didn't really know
 the price
 I'd have
 to pay . . ."

TO MOLLY-O (LAST TRY)

morning warm
and dozing,
opening and closing

half adrift

in Saturday's ship

with a sea bag
just for one

TO TERRY

So far,
you're the only one
I know

who

hasn't pecked
this white crow.

TOWARDS CARMEL

next to
november green
fields, blemished
by unchosen pumpkins,
the small town
football field
where
sea gulls
met
for a scrimmage
in the rain;
but a second look
showed it was
half time ceremonies

UNITED STATES OF PIZZA

United States of Pizza,
where I live,
Much too busy and faster than a
surprise fart.
Of course, each topping is extra;
all are fattening.
Wanna be saved? Toss the pizza,
eat the box!
Wanna be slow? Revisit the Big One,
WW II, when you drank
great pitchers of time
and contemplated
Mom's Red Points;
Polliwogs grew larger
than Moby Dick;
The road past the graveyard
was longer than
middle age
but only half as scary.

VERITAS (or, A DOG IS A DOG IS A DOG)

Git outta here,
you sonufabitch!

George! That nice little puppy
isn't hurting anything!
Sweet little thing . . . come here,
girl, come to Mama . . .

Sonufabitch pissed
on my azaleas! Git!

George!

Here Tramp . . . here boy . . .

Here Tramp!

There you are, you ol' rascal!
Over visitin' Calloway's
Prissy poodle again, huh?
You ol' rascal, you. . .
Want your supper, fella?

Hey Dad, Tramp's not *old*!
How come you keep callin' him *old*?

Well, he's as old as you are, son,
twelve years old next month.
We got him as a pup
the month you were born.

I'm not old! I'm just a kid.

Yeah, but time is *different*
for dogs, Jimbo, time is just
different for dogs. . .

How come, Dad? If it's eight o'clock
for me, isn't it eight o'clock
for Tramp, too? Huh?

Come on, Jim, let's wash up
for supper.

Don't worry, Tramp, you're not old,
you're my *pal*.

I don't care, Ed! Right now
he's in the city limits 'n'
he ain't got no license.

Hell, Frank, you know ol' Tramp
as well as I do. He don' do no harm.
Jimmy Wilson'll be lookin' all over
for him. I'll jus' drop him off
on my way home 'n' . . .

Like hell y' will!
Put him in Number Eight
with the other strays!

I don't know, Doc. . .
he must have picked it up
in the Pound
a couple of weeks ago. . .

Well, Mr. Wilson, this old animal
is just not going to fight it off.
I really think it's best to
put it to sleep.

Poor old fella.
Jimmy's gonna be heartbroken. . .
can't you. . .

Look, Mr. Wilson, we've got some
fine Cocker pups here,
good healthy animals,
at a good price, too.
Why, in no time at all. . .

WHEN I WORE A YOUNGER MAN'S CLOTHES

When I wore a younger man's clothes,
I slept naked 'n' felt sheets 'n' blankets
wrap me in a sensuous cocoon—
but I stuck my feet out from under
to cool them in the night.
From time to time, a lovely woman
would join me to make laughter and love.

I still cool my feet but now
wear sweat clothes to bed.
To comfort me, I sleep with extra pillows
and my favorite teddy bear.
No one else.

When I wore a younger man's clothes,
I seemed braver—and more foolish—
than now I am.
I don't know if that's true.
Many times I tied the knot—
and saw it cut each time.
Alone again, I wonder, "Who has come
this far and lasted so long?"
(Sometimes: Come this far,
learned so little!)

When I wore a younger man's clothes,
I raised my banner and vowed
to create, to contribute, to do a "great thing."
But decades have yielded no "great thing."
With so little time left, I wonder,
"What is there time and strength left to do?"
And who is left to do it!
(And who is left to care!)

When I wore a younger man's clothes,
even a boy's,
I filled my days
with noisy love for God and for life.
Even now I look and say,
"These are the hands of a man
who loves God!"
When I was smitten with this love,
how it happened or where,
I cannot say.
Perhaps I've forgotten.

Perhaps I never knew.
Perhaps it always was.

How quiet has that love become.

(Fondly do I remember that boy beneath the stars
who gazed up and *knew* without a doubt.
I miss him sometimes. . .)

When I wore a younger man's clothes,
my son delighted me and
I loved him fiercely.
Love him still;
but now he tells over and over
how he has forgiven me.
Which means he hasn't.
(Only just lately I forgave
my own father—
and see how many decades *that* took!)

When I wore a younger man's clothes,
I heard the Music and the Muse.
Or so I thought.
Such pretentious poetry—and poor!
Still, there is no choice
and never has been: *Write!*
And more: *Teach!*
Write what?
Teach who?
Who will read?
Who will listen?

When I wore a younger man's clothes,
I heard The Voice.
It led me—when I let It.
How often I ignored It or failed to heed
because of friends or family or embarrassment
and even shame!
But now friends fade;
family grows distant.
Shame has also faded.
So has The Voice.
(Have I lost my hearing?)

Alone again.

When I wore a younger man's clothes,
I thought I didn't have time for children.

Time to really hear what they had to say,
to really look into their eyes and know them,
to really love them.

But I have another chance!

So, what is needful?

A garden.
Old men
should
have
gardens
and
grandchildren.

Little ones to love fiercely,
to cherish, to spoil,
to keep them busy enough
to forget about
when they wore a younger man's clothes.

[UNTITLED]

Where will you fly tonight,
my Spirit?

Will waiting guides
whisk you to
Seventh Heaven
when I finally lose
my grasp
and slip
into Sleep's womb?

Where will you sail tonight,
my Spirit,
when freed from your anchor,
my hull that hides you
'most asleep
while I walk this World?

Will I see you as we pass
in that special instant
that is no-time,
when all is suspended
except for me
falling, falling
into our night's nothingness . . .
except for you bursting into,
bursting into . . .
into *where*, my Spirit?

Why don't I ever hear you
when you finally come home
to sleep?

WHO'S YOUR FRIEND?

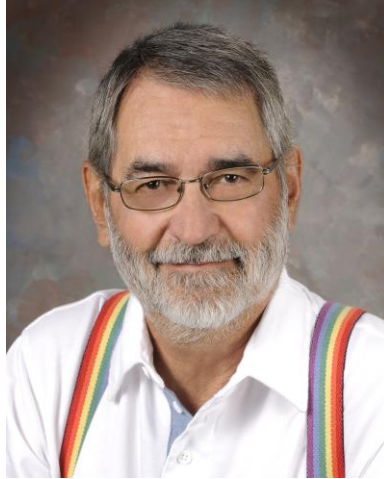
I'm appleangular
this morn,
bitten crisp
and good for me;
chin juice be damned,
I'll munch my way
through Wednesday and
bacteriabrown
toss my core tonight;
tomorrow,
I'm an artichoke.

JUMPING DEER

Pa-tua-pe,
take your place
among the children;
soon enough
your wide brown eye
will see
the Warrior Path.

YA-POP-MAY-HEH

There is no corn.
The deer are gone.
Yet,
Bringing-Flowers-Singing
fills my heart
with gladness.



J. J. Anderson is a grandfather, writer and golfer who lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He writes poetry, *haiku* and short pieces on a variety of subjects. His work includes:

Only a Leaf

Hooyahmi – Stories and poems for children ages 5 to 10

The Down Home, Plain Talk, No Frills
Guide to Personal and Professional Effectiveness

Excerpts from his personal journal

Guide to Effective Computer Use

White Crow – Selected poems

and technical articles.

\$21.00 US

ISBN 978-1-4507-0975-0

