a collection of clouds

Volume 2: Addenda

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This second volume begins in the year 2000. Although the æsthetic moment is present, as with the previous series, poetic craft has matured along with spiritual practice and perception . . . and the human condition of retirement and old age.

March Meteoron 2000

Beyond the mountain
a setting sun greets the dawn.
Pumpkin moon.

Touching Base
Mill Creek, 23–25 May 2000

A sunlit twinkling
amid shadowed forest pines,
yellow butterfly.

Sunset sunbeam motes,
a billion insects dance in
the last warmth.

As the freeze arrives,
the firewood only smokes.
Moonlight on tree tips.

A crashing through trees,
a soft thud upon the ground,
another pine cone.

What Truly Matters/October 2000

In a crowd
two friends
alone.

Point Reyes Christmas 2000

In forest of leaves
the song of but one
dropping, tumbling.

Dawn meadow.
Two sunlit deer turn to
the intruding shadow.

February Chill

After the rain
two hawks surf the contours
of the rising sky.

Berkeley Spring

Along misty streets
iris . . . poppies . . . and daisies
dance these dormant bones.

Relativity

Across twilight sky
paired egrets descend to meet
themselves on the lake.

Validations

That suspect shrill call –
eyes lift to the high roof and
its finial crow.

In leaf-shedding trees
Monday morning birds sing out,
I am here, I am here.

Camping during the First Terrors,
October 2001

The campsite retreat –
no war, no terror here, yet . . .
bullets and casings.

Thwack, swoosh, flutter, flap –
A crow, in air so becalmed.
A struggle to just fly.

The motorcyclist:
these woods vanish in his blare,
their silence shattered.

Night winds howl,
icy flows tap the tent,
need to pee . . . *again!*

Pulse of the forest:
it is not tree, bird or bee;
the ear hears itself.

Nimble climber,
a squirrel cracks cones to nibble
ripe pine nuts.

From hushed pines
birds call softly, amply.
But those flies, those bees!

Tannenbaum [2002]

O discarded tree,
you once warmed the heart but not
the wintry room.

Overnight Sensation

The walking routine
halted under graycast skies.
Cherry blossoms!

Heat: Mt. Tamalpais, 7 June 2002

Two white-winged egrets
Skim across the mountain lake.
A shaded cove.

At water's edge
a red-faced fish hawk
dips its head to sip.

Not so well hidden,
a lurking wild turkey –
gobble, gobble!

A plunge from the sky.
A splash upon the lake.
The hawk's empty claws.

January

In skeletal trees,
tumorous nests deserted,
the shadowless dawn.

Dharma Lessons of the Tent

[Fort Hunter-Ligget/Lost Padres Forest Campground
18–22 May 2003]

Morning sun.
Pollen sacs plunge,
pellet the tent.

Cloudless thunder.
Artillery or bomb blasts?
The jay pecks for food.

So many birds.
Why then so many
mosquitoes and flies?

Against the tent
shadow puppet insects prowl
a plotless epic.

Patrolled by black flies,
this tent becomes a prison
or a hermitage.

Noisy neighbors gone:
sudden clarity and peace.
O you hermit monk!

Jays, squirrels, woodpeckers
in forest conversation:
mine-me mine-me mine.

Chipmunk neophyte,
fearlessly curious still,
eyes the tent beast's lair.

Nightfall.
Syncopated frogs sing
a ragged rag.

Meshed tent and DEET
plus Sun Tzu's insects equal
five hard itchy bites.

Stinky and sticky.
But the narrow shallow brook
is not a shower.

The 60th-year Manifesto

[2005]

The lone mote
afloat in the universe
of my tiny room.

New shoes for ambling:
one hour of comforting,
two of suffering.

Wide open poppy
welcomes the midday sun,
its soft cooling wind.

The little girl's joy,
her bicycle, destroying
my moment of gloom.

On the Seventh Green,
devoid of players, the doe
ponders her odd lie.

lie ***n***. 1. The manner or position in which something is situated. 2. A haunt or hiding place of an animal.
3. *Sports*. The position of a golf ball that has come to a stop.

The Last Great Road Trip
[August 2006]

The solace of noon; its
sweet hopefulness missed in
the throes of midnight.

Cattle herd ashore,
bird communes on the water.
The lone observer.

Dusk — utter calm.
Sudden scores of bird squadrons
rush to the lake!

The fowl convention
argue through the evening:
geese overule the ducks.

Morning mosquito flits
give way to the buzzing flies.
No business here.

Bleating dawn cattle
now sound asleep on the grass.
Soaring mercury.

Lake bird flotillas
scooping up breakfast leave
the surface empty.

No overhead jets
but the occasional whoosh
of highway semi's.

A whispy white cloud
arises from emptiness
then melds back to blue.

Parching summer wind
provides hot tea for dinner.
Unsatisfying.

Job in ruin awaits.
An ancient, doubtful auto.
Night of heat and wind.

The needed journey,
ill-afforded in prospects.
Grasping the dharma.

Still far from mid way.
Menacing red night lights flash –
antenna array.

Campground flood lights glow
through the tent walls, reassuring
the child within us.

Train horn, airport jets,
crickets and frogs of midnight.
Why did I awake?

Days with friends bring cheer.
New sights, foods, and bonds renewed.
Yet nightmares haunt sleep.

Great mountain stupa
but the distant plain tori!
Light rain and quick steps.

Into the Rockies.
Nearly at the top . . . snowing!
We retreat through fog.

Green River rabbit
hops past my shredded tire,
ignores this new plight.

From the Editing Floor, 1991–1993: Reconsiderations

Dishes put away
yet breakfast lingers.
Odor of oil.

Dishwashing bubble
escapes
into the teacup.

Rising over the ridge
Venus, the edge of dawn,
a match for tea.

A forest of days:
one moment great freedom,
next moment, prison.

Forest hermitage:
each leaf rustle, each bird chirp
a Buddhist sutra.

Voices walk the woods,
pine trees pine, birds bird, and I
cannot be found.

Zafu sitting,
only East Ridge as witness,
lentil farts.

Rite
[October 2006]

Father's open grave.
Flowers, then shovel's earth
crash upon the casket.

Back to Pt. Reyes
[August 2007]

At the trail head.
Scent of moist earth, plant decay
entice and cajole.

At the creek, two deer
tagged with scarlet ribbons
bring Christmas early.

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In the Meantime
[2008–2009]

Sudden commotion:
Thirty-six thermal gulls
soar back to the bay.

One-half cup of rice
pellets over the pot
sent forth skyward.

A chill in warm air,
I return for my sweater
and welcome autumn.

Cracked open and chipped,
my mug is chucked with a
momentary sigh.

Three pair of crow come.
They ponder the odd movement.
My dance of Tai Chi.

The Year 2010

Painting by Gestalt

The first, brave brush-stroke,
one color against the void,
orders all the rest.

After April Showers

Streets lined with orange suns –
Poppies everywhere bringing cheer
at least to me.

A Bay August

Sliding the window:
a crusty scrub jay cries out –
my summer smile.

In Old Age

This lit autumn leaf,
this bird chirp, this crumbly cake,
even this distress.

In Berkeley

Parched autumn leaves
scratch along the asphalt
with each passing auto.

Feeling Like Shrödinger's Cat

At the splitting path:
peeking ahead, I am there
already walking.

Art Prose to Poetry

Situation I

Now I feel the ease
of the knife slicing circles
from a banana, the curve
of computer keys, the thinness
of a fine brush, both the slick
and rough textures of my morning
paper; I admire
the fleeting scent
of a lit incense stick; the reflection
of gray sky on a right angle
triangle tool resting on my incomplete
canvas, the rattle
of pills in the bottle,
musical.

Situation II

Applying paint
amid the gray overcast
sky light on canvas.

2011 Climate Conumdrum

In warm autumn sun
gum tree leaves linger in green.
Evening air goosebumps.

Nature as Metaphor

Flashes of something
yellow among the branches
playing hide and seek.

Along the Waterfront

Cramped somber city
patch of orange poppies, one
to my hat.

With the passing train's
horn, honking goose, gander, and
six peeping chicks.

Glimpses of Brazil

[2012]

A maze of alleys,
the gallery door at last
. . . closed.

Ant hill of people
rush to lunch, missing the
musician trio.

In Rio, my cane,
gray hair bring polite respect
in compensation.

Smooth subway below,
chaotic traffic above,
Christo above all.

Grand duck dinner
guitarist and songs, joy
but for the loud lush.

The shaded hammock
swaying in afternoon heat,
the poet's dropped pen.

Walking and stumbling
Paraty's rocky roads – still
worthy of right gifts.

No ground in sight
flying through night clouds, she
gestures a prayer.

Ah, a waterfall.
Two, three, four, five more falls . . .ten,
twenty. . . Terrific!

Abiding
[2013]

Pine tree needle skirts
dancing in the morning breeze
swinging, and singing.

The expected bird
jostling the lemon leaves
has rounded mouse ears.

The storm softens
sufficiently to hear
a forest twig snapping.

2015 & 70 Years

Each stroke and hue from
my brush of painting style and form
is my life story.

Passing Darkness
[September 2017]

Rushing here and there
in dusk sky gray electric
100 clumped crows.

Air nitrous sweet,
Distant rumbles and flashes,
the rain hesitates.

High above the trees
Olympian fireworks
shadow the street sign.

A touch of blue.
Behind a retreating cloud
the moon persisting.

The Scientist

I dwell alone.
All the germs you find
are me.

January 2018

First winter rains —
Rushing to the window —
its chorus of drops.

The Pandemic 2020

Senior Hour for food —
waiting long in line apart,
gloved and masked.

No concerts, no art,
empty streets lead to closed parks.
I yearn for a touch.

Frayed website tethers,
society by proxy,
lack magic presence.

75
[April 2020]

Ghost kin haunt my dreams,
follies and realities.
My death is next.

Unintended cloister
devoid of any visitor
yet filled with music.

The ignored elder
wisdom unheard and unsought
by unripened minds.

Years training for life,
training for oblivion,
for deeds persisting.

Wafting incense joins
the scents of shoreline and pines —
birthday present.

* present *n.* 1. now. 2. here. 3. gift.

Pandemic Holidays

Sunset ritual —
A thousand crows stream west
To greet and to roost

Family Archives

Old age reflection
in the morning mirror —
my grandfather's face.

The Age of Invisibility

Walking with wood cane,
the T-shirted skeleton.
Halloween coffee.

Sky Scene

Riding the thermals,
three squadrons of pelicans
Now swoop to the lake.

December 2025

Lake Merritt morning,
smooth, serene, so silent.
Distant mallard splash.

Terracotta roof,
russet foliage beyond —
window to autumn.

Worth the jazz concert:
the frigid walk to transit,
the colder return.

Brisket, and latkes,
menorah candles alit,
my gift — family.

Bonding in drizzle —
crow pairs preen their mate's moist head;
we have umbrellas.

Silent city stroll
through colorful Christmas leaves.
The lone hawk above.

Exhaling the year,
yet toxicity persists.
Time to flip the page.

Opening The Window

Multiplex of sound —
rain falling in trees, on roofs,
into fluid self.

Gentle gusts tink the
hanging chime of bamboo tubes,
chilling the hushed room.

Trucks and jet airplanes
whoosh and rumble, breaking trance.
This breach of the peace.

On Piedmont Avenue

Affixed on the roof,
unseen by street folk below,
weathered wooden owl.

Against winter sky,
last leaves on skeletal trees
swinging in the wind.

Church bell declares noon.
First grade, wearing down and wool,
picnic on the grass.

Food scents on the breeze
awaken breakfast hunger,
quicken the pace.

Warm café coffee
breaks the chill, wakens the brain,
enlivens the walk.

Death & Decay of Democracy

Sky lord Jupiter
shines bright in early evening
these troubled times.

Sun before the storm,
warm rays upon the cold cheek,
yet sadness of heart.

Flying at sunset
vast murder of crows care not
murder by police.

Invisibility

People see the cane,
not the slow gray-haired woman
within the crosswalk.

Light & Dark

Morning light casting
dragon shadows on the wall.
Carved Asian brush rack.

Veterans Day 2026

Green turning to red,
tree leaves casting cool shade —
the old soldier sighs.

Echoes of past wars,
one victory against hate:
voter rebellion.

A cane at her side,
a weapon at the ready —
a warrior still.

Ignored yet again:
Veterans Day in Oakland
and the veteran.