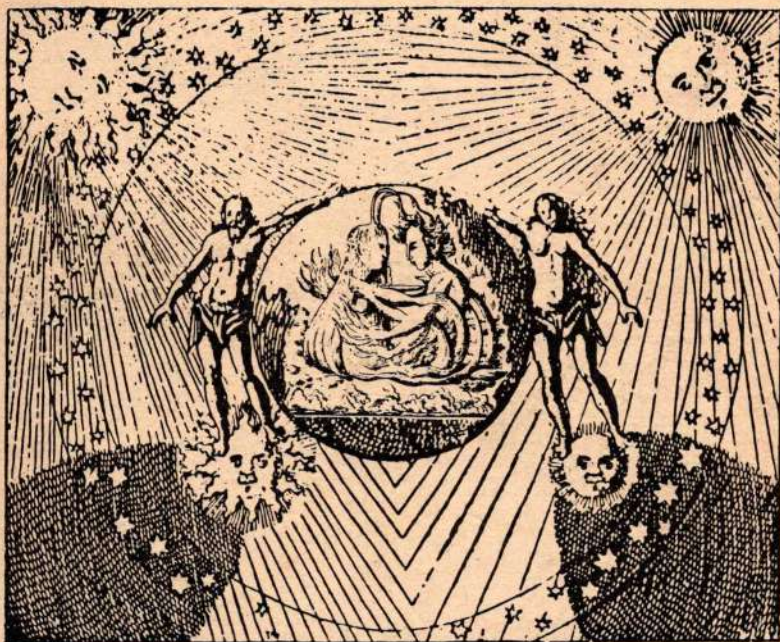


# TIDAL NEWS



john curl

John Curl

TIDAL NEWS

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**For changing woman: may you never stop growing.**

# **TIDAL NEWS**

**john curl**

**HOMeward PRESS**  
Berkeley 1982

This book contains most of my uncollected poems from over the past decade, as well as selections from the five chapbooks I published during that period. They are presented here in somewhat reverse chronological order. The first section contains all recent works, and the last contains the earliest; in between however, there is quite a bit of overlapping. The actual order of poems is based partly on chronology of writing, partly on content, and partly on style and stylistic development. My first chapbook was a long philosophical poem called *Change/Tears*, which I printed in a small mimeo edition in 1967 and gave to friends. It is not included here, as it stands somewhat outside the work that followed: beginning with my second chapbook, *Commu 1* (1971), activist politics became a central axis. The five small books I published from this perspective, together with much other work, have developed into a larger work, which I present here.

A number of these poems have appeared or are appearing (with some alterations) in the following periodicals and anthologies:

*Third Rail, Blake Times, The Unrealist, Soup, Pulse of the People, Sparks of Fire, Merlyn Gorky, Clay Drum, What Is Real?, Amerus, The, Toward Revolutionary Art, Haight-Ashbury Literary Quarterly, Love Lights, Anthology of East Bay Poets, Fool-killer, Poetalk, Radical America, Ball, Grassroots, Left Curve, The Black Panther.*

ALSO BY JOHN CURL:

POETRY

*Cosmic Athletics* (1980, Poetry for the People)

*Ride the Wind* (1979, Poetry for the People)

*Spring Ritual* (1978, Cloud House)

*Insurrection/Resurrection* (1975, Working Peoples Artists)

(with photos by Ken Light and graphics by Bruce Kaiper)

*Commu 1* (1971)

*Change/Tears* (1967)

HISTORY

*History of Collectivity in the San Francisco Bay Area*

(forthcoming, 1982, Homeward Press) (with Judy Berg, Allen Cohen, and Morris Older)

*History of Work Cooperation in America* (1980, Homeward Press)

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# I. FIELDS OF CINNABAR

[energysongs]

14

## CREATES

creates the Indian Ocean  
blows a silver ring around the moon  
runs his tongue along his lover's burning ridge  
tears up ballot in front of voting booth  
rides the wave of the marching chant  
constipates the chairman of the board  
heals a bleeding mind  
kisses a pimple on her lover's ass  
thanks a sparrow for a song  
takes a bite from the cat's dish  
ties the ideologist's shoelaces together  
abolishes the credit card  
radiates in waves of pleasure through your lover's dream body  
knocks over the daffodils, exposing the microphone to the general strike  
committee  
loosens your pelvic shores  
shares his carrot with his little brother  
denies the charges  
disappears down a drain pipe  
trisects the pentagon  
gives the broker three years parole  
reveals Nixon's novocaine habit  
pulls off Haig's buttons  
appears as a great dane at four a.m. in Bush's bedroom  
takes a long piss on the J. Edgar Hoover memorial blackjack  
steps into Reagan's dream dressed like Mother Jones with her sleeves rolled up  
throws a family reunion  
soaks all the beans overnight in a big pot  
hands out the bowls and spoons  
passes round the fair shares  
creates

## WITH THE PROLIFERATION

with the proliferation of advanced weaponry, nuclear war becomes an increasing statistical probability

you squat by a log fire  
a sunshower passing a country road  
your thigh muscle stretches to Borneo  
the tiny soft hairs on the hill of your buttock  
a salamander sits beneath a cherry tree  
your sweetheart in overalls  
each leaf forms around its energy absorbers  
the secret meaning in that look in your eye  
a house remembers all of its visitors  
shavings twist off a pencil into negative space  
a bluebell is heartsick for a false lover  
logs jamming galactic river  
being weighed down by "the lessons of history"  
I had a good boss once—he kept apologizing  
they better not try to close that window before we get our food stamps  
a train wheel crushes a grasshopper  
brigades of landlords landmine the trail to the source  
a scarlet tanager contemplates suicide  
stop i've seen enough  
evening breezes fill the heads of state  
oppression breeds the struggle against itself  
a green marble rolls down a stone path  
a sudden storm drenches a financier  
worm breaking in half  
river of honey flows through a thirsty cavern  
your sweetheart taking off overalls  
spinning on the edge of the world  
a picketline encircles the great silence  
you notice a universe in the palm of your hand  
following your heart through a concrete wall  
you see god leaping in the embers  
spell to prevent the next world war  
a million grandmothers surround the pentagon  
the president is attacked by a poem in the getaway car  
I heard it on the unemployment line  
missiles misfire on launching pads  
the neighbors march on city hall  
unpiling the money of the world  
becoming all you know you can be  
history means nothing unless you're willing to risk everything for love  
always expect the impossible

## CONNECTIONS

1

you peek through the beaded curtains and  
see the moon gliding through a thin cloud; you  
and your lover lie scarcely moving for a  
long long time while a brook  
trickles through your hearts. suddenly the  
strawboss is handing you your paycheck five  
dollars short, you lean your bootheel  
into the shovel and look up  
into the snowflakes. they try to break  
through the picketline but a  
bleeding sunset fills the entire sky

2

you touch your lover's neck beneath  
a willow heavy with wind; crystals  
slide into each other but the cop's  
hand is grasping your shoulder; they  
drag you into the interrogation room when  
at the galactic center your sweetheart  
slips into something a little more  
comfortable, you are inspired by the skin  
of an apricot and escape together on  
a winged deer through the forest

3

mud oozes between your toes you  
notice a twig catch on a mossy rock in a  
backwhisper of the current as your  
landlord's face appears in the drenching  
rain, you grasp for the fire opal  
but it vanishes. all prisoners for crimes  
against property are released, a green-tailed  
bird alights on your lover in bed you  
pull down the covers and climb along  
the edge of tomorrow into a grove of  
ferns

## THE DESTATUIZATION OF LIBERTY

the executive calls the senator at the  
monopoly hernia money union castration too much perfume  
mass picketing is declared illegal  
insurance abomination swallow your tongue  
your lover's hand is like dry ice  
a pillar of salt looks back at Gomorrah

Liberty mourns through the dirty barred window  
meets her lover in a secret melody  
Liberty roaming through the night forest  
in purifying agony

you run your tongue along your lover's ocean cheek  
you will be neither employer nor employee  
the chairman of the board is paraded through the jeering streets  
Paine and Jefferson go on a great wandering  
collectivization is circulation of light  
why did the lovers sleep with their glasses on? the better to  
see their dreams

## TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

an exploitation of human labor business  
a looking out for number one business  
a make your pile and get out business  
a boss order abomination business  
a whatever the market will bear business  
a cheat lie steal business  
a do what you're told or else business  
a degradation inflation depression toxic wastes business  
a hemorrhoids beat your best friend business  
a draft plutonium gangster business  
an atomic dust imperial world war three business  
a business as usual business

where is the honesty of penguins? where  
is the justice of sunrise?  
must free people be prepared to sleep as well in garages, under bushes  
or in dreams?  
even at this moment the boardmembers meet  
in the condemned sewer to divide our livers into  
exacting shares, sealing the fate of munition  
profits on our ability to have children

a rapture stars tumble along your spine business  
a fields of orange poppies spread their knees to the  
mountains of your eyes business  
a mass demonstration rubbed with alchemical smoke business  
a conch shells withdrawing energy from stuffed ballot boxes business  
a lifting the consecrated picket line to the east business  
a boycott all businesses business  
a submachineguns melt in cops screaming hands business  
a collectivizing your boss' business business  
an abolishing business  
a taking care of business

## CONSCIOUSNESS OF

the way you unhook your brassiere  
running barefoot through a country puddle  
a calico cat in a deepest yawn  
what we are and what we can be  
a bird of paradise outside your window  
being forced to take a factory job  
the moment you first realized America is not very democratic  
the root system of every plant you see  
being careful not to step on a black beetle  
the surgeon sutures the incision  
your lover whispers in your ear  
the thoughts of the ocean at sunset  
a puma climbs a cherry tree  
allying the nations of our mind  
into a new resurgence  
deep beyond dreamless sleep  
we walk an awesome future

## THREE QUICK JABS

1

Reagan, ordering out the national  
guard, bites his tongue in the same  
spot twice, while a log drifts  
in the middle of the ocean and a  
great bird appears in the evening sky

2

as the general strike moves into its  
third day, the bombadiers are put  
on ready alert, the vomitgas cannisters  
are discovered defective, Bush keeps  
appearing at the toilet door, a bee  
climbs into a chrysanthemum

3

sunset flashes off a mountain top, the  
brigadier breaks and runs, a cat peek-  
ing out of a brown paper bag, the lover  
is awakened by a sweet hand, Haig dictating  
his confession, a young hummingbird stre-  
tches her wings, the stocks are fed into  
the shredder, a raindrop on the back of  
your hand



## CHILDLIKE INNOCENCE ALWAYS

corruption injustice abuse  
captivity injury anguish  
choking inhuman abasement  
Chile Indonesia Angola  
cobwebs insanity ambush  
conspire intruder assassin  
cobra infernal agony  
Chad Iraq Argentina  
cartridges impale assault  
cannibal internment autopsy  
cancer intimidate aghast  
coup intervene asphyxiate  
Cuba India Algeria  
Cambodia Ireland Arabia  
colonial incorporated aggression

challenge insurgent accusing  
companions invoke agitation  
courage illumine awaken  
confiscate imagine abolish  
collective indigenous alliance  
commune international augury  
cleansing infinite acquittal  
climax intimate absolution  
compassion insight amnesty  
childlike innocence always

## OF TWO EVILS

Mussolini spits at Hitler (behind his back)  
peace candidate Quasimoto bombs the restless ghost of LBJ  
Carter the Lesser sticks his little finger in Ford's left ear  
Reagan the Greater sucks the droopy head off Nixon's Billybeer

let the slavedriver hire the judge  
let the vice president's plot be hatched  
let the party hacks dream of blood  
let the vice squad's ravaging disease  
your lover slips a hand inside your shirt  
the scent of lilacs rustles the leaves  
I'd go to Budapest to spend a night with you  
your kiss your lover's secret desire

children crayon the senate  
an act of god illumines this very moment  
your former boss asks permission to take a break  
the money belongs to the hungry  
democracy is evicting your landlord  
the twopartysystem means we're not invited  
party collectivist it's always  
electionday vote in the  
streets rock me all night long

## BE A UNION ORGANIZER

union disunion reunion unison unity  
labor union trade union industrial union union  
card union hall union meeting union songs  
union shop union label union benefits union  
hacks union dues union pension fund union racketeers  
break the union company union business unionism union  
history union struggles one big union revolutionary  
unionism union of workers union of industries union  
of like minds union of black and white union of women  
and men union of soul and heart union of elders and  
children union of sensual and spiritual union of lowest  
and highest union of winter and summer union of  
red and green union of earth and sun union  
of shore and tide union of muscle and energy stream  
union of seeker and sought union of something and nothing  
union of birth and death union of profundity and  
absurdity union of sperm and egg union of freedom  
and necessity union of socialism and democracy union  
of form and meaning union of laughter and  
tears union of nations  
union disunion reunion unison unity

## BE A UNION ORGANIZER

## SUNRISE AND SUNSET

sunrise and sunset last all day long  
a lover's thigh is kissed in a field of clover  
strings of pelicans glide above the breakers as we  
run hand in hand along the tide  
your sweetheart awakes with a ruby in his mouth  
the sounds of rainforest echo in your soul  
I melt when you say that to me  
they order the bombs into production  
another welfare cheater is caught  
worker replaced by machine  
the executioner licks his teeth  
someone reads the marriage of heaven and hell in the street  
a baby is sobbing in a desolate gutter  
the archbishop appears at the tattoo parlor  
a gaggle of politicians try to hang themselves  
the presses jam against lies so there are no newspapers  
the stockbrokers and hypocrites blaming each other  
the computers all spit the same answer  
ninety-four senators testify they've lost their memory

the day the world was saved

all the conflicting ideologies announce it proves them right  
a harris poll shows 23% opposed  
the orangoutangs were busy fucking  
a little girl asked her older sister, what does saved mean?  
I've loved you secretly for a long time

## AN ALPHABET OF U.S. CORPORATIONS WITH INVESTMENTS IN EL SALVADOR

Alcoa Aluminum  
Bristol-Myers  
Crown-Zellerbach  
Dow Chemicals  
Exxon  
Foremost Dairies  
General Motors  
Hanover Insurance  
IBM  
Jack Off A Dead Pig  
Kimberly-Clark  
Lynching The Spirit Of Jaguars  
Max Factor  
Nestlé  
Otis Elevator  
Pan Am  
Quagmire Beneath Your Feet  
Ralston Purina  
Sears Roebuck  
Texaco  
Underwood Meats  
Veal La Luna Muerta  
Warships Cruise Off The North Shore  
Xerox  
Yelling Disembowelment  
Zigzag Lightning Splits The Stock  
Yet The Children Cannot Be Destroyed  
X-Out The Name On The Deed  
Why Are You Doing This To Your Sister  
Violar La Tomba De Los Loros  
Undressed By The General's Bloodthirst  
Tronchando El Three M Company  
Standard Oil Explodes On Saturday  
Rocks Tumble Down A Narrow Gorge  
Quaking The Treasurer's Beachhouse  
Proctor And Gamble Palido Como Copos De Jabón  
Orden Spits Poison Writhing On Its Side  
Never Push The People Too Far  
Mutilando Monsanto Chemical Dividendos

Liars Shuddering Like Wet Vultures  
Kneecap Splatter On The Steps Of The Capital  
Judgment In Long Shadows  
IT&T Being Hereby Served Notice  
Hearing Jugular Unions De Arañas Y Angeles  
Gunbarrel In The General's Soft Corporation  
Folgers Coffee Bankrupted by Armed Grandmothers  
Entering Illuminated Territory  
Duendes Surface On The Assembly Line  
Cleansing Chevron Oil From The Common Plantation  
Banco De América Surrounded By Visionaries  
América Central Oceanic Amazement

## THE COMMISSAR

the commissar orders you to step behind the line  
you scrub your sweetheart's back  
the chairman strides to the podium to thundrous applause and  
announces the central committee's unanimous decision in the  
interest of the proletariat  
helping your neighbor fix a window  
the government owns the industries so it's illegal to strike  
reading a story to a sick child  
a blackberry flower opens its soul to the wind  
  
socialism is / socialism is not  
  
hold hands at the movies  
dip your spoon into the honeypot  
take your fair share no less no more  
defy authority  
abolish all bossism  
pass beyond the verbal mind  
loving with your soul  
squatting on the earth, stretching to the sky

## WAR ARTIST

war artist, trained in trauma school  
rehearsed to act a bloody part  
and now so downhearted  
cause we ain't letting you practice your art

the general wakes with a sour stomach  
the general examines his toilet paper for blood  
the general is upset at the state of his jelly and toast  
the general calls for his metallic wraparound sunglasses  
the general decides to alter the statistics  
the general bumps into his wife's lover at the urinal  
the general's doctor's late for the day's first injection  
the general orders the sailor to strap on the dildo and fetch the whip  
the general steps into the conference room and strides confidently up  
to the pinned map

war artist, strutting there  
with your neutron bombs corseting your flabby sections  
you're going to find someday  
you can't hide from your shadow and your reflection  
you can't hide from your shadows and your reflections

## **PAINTING A TIGER**

painting a tiger in realistic detail then  
reaching in and pulling its tail

we must be visible down through the marrow

midwives of transitions  
the language of dream  
the hinges of realities

composting the same conscious ground

before the act  
during the act  
after the act:  
the word

you know you got it if it moves you

## **FORMATION OF THE NEW INTERNATIONAL**

a chainsaw breaks the silence  
hitler commits suicide  
decadence is a scarce commodity better grab your share  
man i'd like to get into her pants  
the moment after you die  
and what of the voice in the embers  
I know you have visions too  
hey we got a common ancestor  
lifting the spirit from the cell  
you blow at a house of draft cards  
Rockefeller dives into an oil slick  
the reactor is unveiled at the wax museum  
singing from your higher self  
a honeysuckle stretches into a pecan tree  
the sound of waves on a moonless night  
sweetcrotch on a sunday morning  
socialism is whatever makes us feel good  
only we can save ourselves



## II. NUDE MOCRACY

[selections from *Cosmic Athletics* (1980),  
*Ride the Wind* (1979), *Spring Ritual* (1978)]

## SPRING WATER

spring water trickles down vaginal hair  
the bumps on your lover's nipples  
the last time you told a lie  
love letters of a sixteen year old girl  
your mother's inhibitions  
a kiss on each ridge all the way down your spine  
cartoon characters laugh and punch each other's face  
smoke from a burning flag  
the king of Chicago hiding in Argentina  
back at your old high school the principal has a crush on his body guard  
the airports spit barbed wire  
the streets are paved with turpentine  
all the lovers trying to get it all in before  
the bankers and lawyers are shooting each other  
and here comes nineteen-eighty-four

they're doing skin searches on the corner  
you run your tongue along a sweet fold of skin  
Rockefeller's starting to call himself a socialist  
your lover's spirit flaps against a window of your soul  
the highway turns to flaming blood  
you open the curtain, beyond your neighbor's roof  
    a shimmering object rises and soars  
    they're serving vulture stew at the stockmarket  
    they're giving away the food at the supermarket  
    they're hurling bricks through bank windows  
        right on target  
    beauty queen's teeth are brown  
    evil clowns in judges' gowns  
    businessmen are falling down  
the children are singing of the resistance  
provocateurs trying to start a race war  
seven major cities on general strike  
and here comes nineteen-eighty-four

## WHO ARE YOU ANYWAY

two deer jump through an emotion  
a snapdragon bends beneath a bee's weight  
you turn a corner and meet your shadow  
mommy I'm afraid of the dark  
reading a William Blake poem out loud  
you got a bad grade on your report card  
sapwood encircles a douglas fir  
childhood in the house of trauma  
a spiral of mayflies above a stream  
you try to conceive of your mind  
stop playing with yourself  
those electrons spinning in your armpits  
sitting around depressed  
cops charging picket line  
the guard strolls past your cell  
the ribs on your back remind me of a young antelope  
these lines change with the seasons  
they're strapping you down to the table  
you watch your lover take a bath  
sharing this bread and cheese  
    who are you anyway  
    what is this place  
    what'll we do now  
rubbing elbows with the neighbors  
look at that pretty girl  
this is going down on your permanent record  
no boss I won't do it  
your lover isn't your truelove  
you deserve better than this  
hurling back teargas cannister  
workers militia stopping scabs  
you take the club away from a cop  
national strike committee shuts down the highway  
emeralds bounce against buttocks  
neighborhood committee tearing down fences  
ex-banker shuffles on the employment line  
watering the garden  
you swim through your lover's chest  
kissing your beautiful stretch marks

your lover really is your true love  
you gaze into a weathered face and see a child  
    who are you anyway  
    what is this place  
    what'll we do now  
a peach drops from a tree  
the circle of our lives  
tiny kisses on your breasts  
fire blows through your navel  
seed looks for a spot to put down roots  
you make love to a wind  
earthshadow move slowly across moonvalley  
an old man plays with a puppy  
we owe each other a living  
the reconciliation of the packs  
snake sheds its skin  
stepping through a stone into the wind  
moon energy birth shine  
the tribe climbs through a cloud into a new world

## BALLAD OF MOM AND DAD

"How could you do it? Don't you love me?"  
the toilet brush is earthquake-blue  
    rolling its sorrowful eyes on the payday line  
"I always save frozen orange juice containers  
    to pour off chicken fat into"  
the cleanser smoked our coffee break  
    while the bathtub ring is singing melon rinds  
"I was seven goddamn minutes late  
    they got no right to dock me a half hour"  
the speedup is crackling, the gas bill is vicious  
"Oooo there are little round shiny bugs in the flour"  
"For crying out loud, can't you even wash the dishes?"  
the tv weatherman is doing a striptease  
the yellow cat snores in a puddle of burning machine grease  
the foreman whirls down the drain but a dream drowns his screams  
Mom is praying to deargod make it stop please  
Dad and Mom lie back to back, each hoping the other is asleep

Mommy was a choreslave till it broke her spirit  
Daddy was a wageslave till it broke his back  
Mommy got shrunk in the broomcloset  
Daddy got stretched on the boss' rack  
Dad's working nightshift and is hardly ever home  
Mom keeps whispering she only wants to be alone  
Dad's beside the tv snoring and groaning  
Mom's beside herself and won't answer the phone  
Dad's got a heart attack and flowers on his stone  
Mom's got cancer and you can see all her bones

Remember that evening in the park when you first touched each  
    other's cheek?  
remember how you slipped and skinned your heart?  
remember when she didn't return your call for what felt like  
    almost a week?  
remember his first fumbling your bra?  
remember how your energy fields shimmered almost the same  
    and drenched your thankful mind in a hot glowing rain?  
remember how the grind began to drive you apart?  
how you were resigned to servitude three years at most  
well maybe five or ten  
how you panicked when you saw the gate swing closed

how you panicked when you saw the gate swing closed  
and the prophets of gloom turn out to be the wise  
remember how the lackies in their cocked silk hats  
drove smartly past your pen  
while their children sobbed and mocked at you  
for having drunk their fathers' lies?

Daddy, I know you only did what you thought you had to do  
Momma, where'd you find the strength to pull us through?  
Daddy, don't try to stop me  
I know what I got to do  
they aint going to check-mate me  
like they trumped all over you:  
all pawns are wild now and  
so are the knights of hearts  
Momma, we got to light candles from the stars

## BECAUSE

because of the moon through the branches of the trees  
because you slipped out of your dress  
because this shopping center was once a hollow where at dusk  
whippoorwills sang

because the teacher said so  
because of the shine in an infant's eye  
because your hips feel like waterfalls  
because they don't care what else happens as long as they get theirs  
because if you sit here very quietly redbellied deer will walk by  
because my mouth is filled with you  
because there's a universe under every fallen log and a wilderness  
under every flat stone

because hungry hearts prowl the streets of dream  
because they're tattooing the seaturtles with sulphur  
because you don't want to lose what little you've got  
because talking on the telephone too much can give you cancer  
because madron trees don't lie  
because the atmospheric ozone layer is worth more than deodorant  
because Kickass rules the world  
because these handcuffs are bleeding  
because they installed a tiny microphone inside your ear  
because an American factory is almost a perfect miniature of a  
fascist state

because of the markings on this ring  
because you and I are only now and here  
because a bird doesn't care about its scientific name  
because these symbols scare the bribes off judges  
because employees and tenants are in bondage and bondage is supposed  
to be abolished in America

because these plums know exactly when to blossom  
because this is neither this nor that and that is both that and this  
because you were born to walk this picketline  
because every pore of your body is a star  
because worker collectives can do a better job running the industries  
than bankers' henchmen can

because willows love to watch the ripples in a quiet pond  
because we want to abolish their power not kill them or become them  
because our minds when left to float free always point north  
because overthrowing the government and overthrowing the dictatorship  
are not at all the same thing

Liars Shuddering Like Wet Vultures  
Kneecap Splatter On The Steps Of The Capital  
Judgment In Long Shadows  
IT&T Being Hereby Served Notice  
Hearing Jugular Unions De Arañas Y Angeles  
Gunbarrel In The General's Soft Corporation  
Folgers Coffee Bankrupted by Armed Grandmothers  
Entering Illuminated Territory  
Duendes Surface On The Assembly Line  
Cleansing Chevron Oil From The Common Plantation  
Banco De América Surrounded By Visionaries  
América Central Oceanic Amazement

## THE COMMISSAR

the commissar orders you to step behind the line  
you scrub your sweetheart's back  
the chairman strides to the podium to thundrous applause and  
announces the central committee's unanimous decision in the  
interest of the proletariat  
helping your neighbor fix a window  
the government owns the industries so it's illegal to strike  
reading a story to a sick child  
a blackberry flower opens its soul to the wind  
  
socialism is / socialism is not  
  
hold hands at the movies  
dip your spoon into the honeypot  
take your fair share no less no more  
defy authority  
abolish all bossism  
pass beyond the verbal mind  
loving with your soul  
squatting on the earth, stretching to the sky



## WAR ARTIST

war artist, trained in trauma school  
rehearsed to act a bloody part  
and now so downhearted  
cause we ain't letting you practice your art

the general wakes with a sour stomach  
the general examines his toilet paper for blood  
the general is upset at the state of his jelly and toast  
the general calls for his metallic wraparound sunglasses  
the general decides to alter the statistics  
the general bumps into his wife's lover at the urinal  
the general's doctor's late for the day's first injection  
the general orders the sailor to strap on the dildo and fetch the whip  
the general steps into the conference room and strides confidently up  
to the pinned map

war artist, strutting there  
with your neutron bombs corseting your flabby sections  
you're going to find someday  
you can't hide from your shadow and your reflection  
you can't hide from your shadows and your reflections

## **PAINTING A TIGER**

painting a tiger in realistic detail then  
reaching in and pulling its tail

we must be visible down through the marrow

midwives of transitions  
the language of dream  
the hinges of realities

composting the same conscious ground

before the act  
during the act  
after the act:  
the word

you know you got it if it moves you

## **FORMATION OF THE NEW INTERNATIONAL**

a chainsaw breaks the silence  
hitler commits suicide  
decadence is a scarce commodity better grab your share  
man i'd like to get into her pants  
the moment after you die  
and what of the voice in the embers  
I know you have visions too  
hey we got a common ancestor  
lifting the spirit from the cell  
you blow at a house of draft cards  
Rockefeller dives into an oil slick  
the reactor is unveiled at the wax museum  
singing from your higher self  
a honeysuckle stretches into a pecan tree  
the sound of waves on a moonless night  
sweetcrotch on a sunday morning  
socialism is whatever makes us feel good  
only we can save ourselves

## II. NUDE MOCRACY

[selections from *Cosmic Athletics* (1980),  
*Ride the Wind* (1979), *Spring Ritual* (1978)]

## SPRING WATER

spring water trickles down vaginal hair  
the bumps on your lover's nipples  
the last time you told a lie  
love letters of a sixteen year old girl  
your mother's inhibitions  
a kiss on each ridge all the way down your spine  
cartoon characters laugh and punch each other's face  
smoke from a burning flag  
the king of Chicago hiding in Argentina  
back at your old high school the principal has a crush on his body guard  
the airports spit barbed wire  
the streets are paved with turpentine  
all the lovers trying to get it all in before  
the bankers and lawyers are shooting each other  
and here comes nineteen-eighty-four

they're doing skin searches on the corner  
you run your tongue along a sweet fold of skin  
Rockefeller's starting to call himself a socialist  
your lover's spirit flaps against a window of your soul  
the highway turns to flaming blood  
you open the curtain, beyond your neighbor's roof  
    a shimmering object rises and soars  
    they're serving vulture stew at the stockmarket  
    they're giving away the food at the supermarket  
    they're hurling bricks through bank windows  
        right on target  
    beauty queen's teeth are brown  
    evil clowns in judges' gowns  
    businessmen are falling down  
the children are singing of the resistance  
provocateurs trying to start a race war  
seven major cities on general strike  
and here comes nineteen-eighty-four

## WHO ARE YOU ANYWAY

two deer jump through an emotion  
a snapdragon bends beneath a bee's weight  
you turn a corner and meet your shadow  
mommy I'm afraid of the dark  
reading a William Blake poem out loud  
you got a bad grade on your report card  
sapwood encircles a douglas fir  
childhood in the house of trauma  
a spiral of mayflies above a stream  
you try to conceive of your mind  
stop playing with yourself  
those electrons spinning in your armpits  
sitting around depressed  
cops charging picket line  
the guard strolls past your cell  
the ribs on your back remind me of a young antelope  
these lines change with the seasons  
they're strapping you down to the table  
you watch your lover take a bath  
sharing this bread and cheese  
    who are you anyway  
    what is this place  
    what'll we do now  
rubbing elbows with the neighbors  
look at that pretty girl  
this is going down on your permanent record  
no boss I won't do it  
your lover isn't your truelove  
you deserve better than this  
hurling back teargas cannister  
workers militia stopping scabs  
you take the club away from a cop  
national strike committee shuts down the highway  
emeralds bounce against buttocks  
neighborhood committee tearing down fences  
ex-banker shuffles on the employment line  
watering the garden  
you swim through your lover's chest  
kissing your beautiful stretch marks

your lover really is your true love  
you gaze into a weathered face and see a child  
    who are you anyway  
    what is this place  
    what'll we do now  
a peach drops from a tree  
the circle of our lives  
tiny kisses on your breasts  
fire blows through your navel  
seed looks for a spot to put down roots  
you make love to a wind  
earthshadow move slowly across moonvalley  
an old man plays with a puppy  
we owe each other a living  
the reconciliation of the packs  
snake sheds its skin  
stepping through a stone into the wind  
moon energy birth shine  
the tribe climbs through a cloud into a new world

## BALLAD OF MOM AND DAD

"How could you do it? Don't you love me?"  
the toilet brush is earthquake-blue  
    rolling its sorrowful eyes on the payday line  
"I always save frozen orange juice containers  
    to pour off chicken fat into"  
the cleanser smoked our coffee break  
    while the bathtub ring is singing melon rinds  
"I was seven goddamn minutes late  
    they got no right to dock me a half hour"  
the speedup is crackling, the gas bill is vicious  
"Oooo there are little round shiny bugs in the flour"  
"For crying out loud, can't you even wash the dishes?"  
the tv weatherman is doing a striptease  
the yellow cat snores in a puddle of burning machine grease  
the foreman whirls down the drain but a dream drowns his screams  
Mom is praying to deargod make it stop please  
Dad and Mom lie back to back, each hoping the other is asleep

Mommy was a choreslave till it broke her spirit  
Daddy was a wageslave till it broke his back  
Mommy got shrunk in the broomcloset  
Daddy got stretched on the boss' rack  
Dad's working nightshift and is hardly ever home  
Mom keeps whispering she only wants to be alone  
Dad's beside the tv snoring and groaning  
Mom's beside herself and won't answer the phone  
Dad's got a heart attack and flowers on his stone  
Mom's got cancer and you can see all her bones

Remember that evening in the park when you first touched each  
    other's cheek?  
remember how you slipped and skinned your heart?  
remember when she didn't return your call for what felt like  
    almost a week?  
remember his first fumbling your bra?  
remember how your energy fields shimmered almost the same  
    and drenched your thankful mind in a hot glowing rain?  
remember how the grind began to drive you apart?  
how you were resigned to servitude three years at most  
well maybe five or ten  
how you panicked when you saw the gate swing closed

how you panicked when you saw the gate swing closed  
and the prophets of gloom turn out to be the wise  
remember how the lackies in their cocked silk hats  
drove smartly past your pen  
while their children sobbed and mocked at you  
for having drunk their fathers' lies?

Daddy, I know you only did what you thought you had to do  
Momma, where'd you find the strength to pull us through?  
Daddy, don't try to stop me  
I know what I got to do  
they aint going to check-mate me  
like they trumped all over you:  
all pawns are wild now and  
so are the knights of hearts  
Momma, we got to light candles from the stars



## BECAUSE

because of the moon through the branches of the trees  
because you slipped out of your dress  
because this shopping center was once a hollow where at dusk  
whippoorwills sang

because the teacher said so  
because of the shine in an infant's eye  
because your hips feel like waterfalls  
because they don't care what else happens as long as they get theirs  
because if you sit here very quietly redbellied deer will walk by  
because my mouth is filled with you  
because there's a universe under every fallen log and a wilderness  
under every flat stone

because hungry hearts prowl the streets of dream  
because they're tattooing the seaturtles with sulphur  
because you don't want to lose what little you've got  
because talking on the telephone too much can give you cancer  
because madron trees don't lie  
because the atmospheric ozone layer is worth more than deodorant  
because Kickass rules the world  
because these handcuffs are bleeding  
because they installed a tiny microphone inside your ear  
because an American factory is almost a perfect miniature of a  
fascist state

because of the markings on this ring  
because you and I are only now and here  
because a bird doesn't care about its scientific name  
because these symbols scare the bribes off judges  
because employees and tenants are in bondage and bondage is supposed  
to be abolished in America

because these plums know exactly when to blossom  
because this is neither this nor that and that is both that and this  
because you were born to walk this picketline  
because every pore of your body is a star  
because worker collectives can do a better job running the industries  
than bankers' henchmen can

because willows love to watch the ripples in a quiet pond  
because we want to abolish their power not kill them or become them  
because our minds when left to float free always point north  
because overthrowing the government and overthrowing the dictatorship  
are not at all the same thing

because socialism without democracy isn't socialist and democracy  
without socialism isn't democratic  
because in a mountain glade somewhere a yellow bird is warbling  
because even Richard Nixon was once a beautiful baby  
because consciousness purifies  
because you can find the answer by looking very closely in your  
garbage can  
because if you'll just wipe the blood from your face and climb back  
to your feet you'll fall  
helplessly hopelessly in love

## AMERICA A MIRACLE

your lover is very sick  
the manufacturers' association writes a new law  
the cop orders you to show your i.d.  
someone has dumped garbage on our mountain  
a row of skulls guards the tunnel to the vault  
brown paper bag being handed to labor racketeer  
hailstones hit the streets of Cincinnati  
a green grasshopper rubs its antennae  
four-year-old tying shoelace  
music envelops a maple tree  
worm eating its way through the soil beneath your feet  
a wind stretches your innermost muscles  
these words vibrating between our brains  
a gull looks down into a prison yard  
clouds tumble past the setting sun  
the crickets are suddenly quiet

this miracle

crown of a head pushing out through vagina  
your grandmother's last words  
two tongues encircle a comet  
something is happening under the boardwalk  
you wake up in a dream  
you find a poem in a sandwich  
baby watching bug on yellow weed flower  
spirits ride the rings of saturn  
the way you look on the molecular level  
two spotted blue eggs beneath a hummingbird  
a ladybug flies past your heart's desire  
you roll your eyes back and see sunrise  
your greatgrandmother giggles in the dark  
you remember the words to the song  
you pass beyond cosmic boredom  
you turn your lover over  
rain floods a cemetery of timeclocks  
a hundred pelicans join the picketline  
the phones go dead at the stockmarket  
workers rummaging through boss' office  
the boardmembers plead insanity  
tenants abolishing landlords

rank-and-file committee managing factory  
you seize control of your job  
the president calls for his mommy  
you nestle your lover's nipples like eternity  
you rediscover that work can be a joy  
continents drifting toward marriage  
languages mingle their seed  
deer makes love to unicorn  
the races go for a hayride  
the wind laughs at all borders  
the key fits your manacles  
you lose all fear  
you can't stop saying I love you  
you step out into the morning

this miracle

## DISARMING AMEROSHIMA

sun energy blow from the east  
river energy glow from the south  
wind energy flow from the west  
mind energy drone from the north

the sweetsmell of damp pubes  
the first time you ever tonguekissed  
your lover giving you a gift  
garbage islands drift in the middle of the ocean  
chemical fog approaching playground  
security guard splithead bloodgutter slum  
your boss eyes you suspiciously  
bankercancer added to preserve freshness  
boardmembers expressing confidence in management  
nuclear wastes trickle through cell walls  
statistics hiding bureaucrat  
fallout hovers over porpose herd  
a leukemia of dividends  
ten thousand cows chew radioactive cud  
your grandchild plays with her birth defect  
Oakland implodes on payday  
the suburbs melt into nightmare

picketing moneyplague headquarters  
stormriders lifecyclone sit-in  
blockade disrupt immobilize  
general staff surrenders to forest  
energymafia caught at the airport

poisons breaking down into vitamins  
spiderwebs glow into clover  
missiles blow into forestchildren  
reactors drone into turtle nests  
financiers flow into plows  
the laugh of a weekold baby  
your honey's mouth like the beach sun  
rabbitfamily goes for a picnic  
you fall to earth and kiss your mother  
a million old people look up at the full moon  
waking in your sweetheart's arms

## RIDE THE WIND

### INVOCATION

*the changes slide ten thousand years  
urging dawn from yesterday  
the Revolution spirals ten thousand years  
but what great surges we can stride today*

1

clouds swirling round mountain peaks  
the hole in the center of the sun  
girl and boy eyeing each other at a dance  
bird hanging from barbed wire  
landlord collecting neutron bomb  
arm being pulled off by machine  
profit graph impaling elk  
ward off corporate bubonic spell  
organize forest  
picket slaughterhouse  
pull of president's hood  
push banker to assembly line  
grass returning to laughter  
prisoners healing sunrise  
ocean flesh filling with pleasure  
gong singing compassion

2

mold in the seed pod  
three lawyers peeking from pockets  
copcars parked in dark alleys  
the space between you and me  
dreaming this storm of grief  
the gun behind the incometax form  
ocean wave fleeing from oilslick  
tv shows feeding your cancer  
block Rockefeller inflation kick  
gnaw termites taxshelter foundation  
tear down Business As Usual sign  
stars wander through your organs  
these fingers down your spine  
the reflection of willows in a pond  
paper airplanes glide to the moon  
releasing comet bliss

3

smoke from a mindfire  
running to meet your love  
sliver moon over the desert  
dragonflies swoop with joined genitals  
the circulation of bloodmoney  
preservatives clumping in brain tumor  
spider on Nixon's wart  
white sugar radiation sickness  
cattle prod in your eye  
hook up Carter to live detector  
cancel insurance companies  
hurl brick at computer card  
sail to Zanzibar  
lick tongues with a spirit  
humble yourself before a bird  
the heart in your secret pocket

4

the moment before sunrise  
galaxies in the eyes of a wolf  
armored car trucking food to supermarket  
the lock on a layoff slip  
Batman in the service of finance capital  
two dogs lying to each other  
bedbugs on a cell wall  
kick time clock  
dodge Bank of America lies  
flooring foreman bad energy  
neutralizing money acid  
a bonfire of rifles  
Rockefeller caught trying to swallow evidence  
food moon stars  
the universe breathing thanks  
the axis of the cleansing madness

5

running through piles of autumn leaves  
billows of smoke from an extinct volcano  
moonrise in a dark closet  
the lock on the toilet door  
all that was better left unsaid  
your landlord writing in fine print  
sobbing through the stillness  
ducking teargas cannister  
fold computer programmer  
biting snitch's tongue  
three bosses running  
flooding the caves beneath the pentagon  
ducks rising from the foam of a wave  
the stumble of a lizard  
the inside of your lover's thigh  
giving away something you love

6

the wall behind the mirror  
condors circling Brooklyn  
the wind between sleep and waking  
sparks spinning from a galaxy  
pus dripping from a factory  
the hard lump behind the eyes of a cop  
the hand slapping your pleasure  
broken angels marching lockstep into nightmare  
disarming drill sergeant curse  
rip off FBI agent's moustache  
jump out of crashing car  
evacuate corporations  
vacuum the floor of congress  
recongregate peach orchards  
look deep into an old person's eyes  
scatter summer showers



7

trees turn up their leaves  
talking to your honey long distance  
the ocean floor glows and splits  
rain approaching from the desert  
concrete funneled into your mouth  
politicians gangbanging an antelope  
a parking meter punctures your heart  
your casket waits at the end of the employment line  
tear up overcharge  
fog general's sunglasses  
rent increase storm strike  
checkmate bank guards  
stockholder wringing mop in scrub bucket  
thank you energy swirl  
gliding up an endless banister  
the torch in my stillness

8

furnace spirit arising  
earth bowels speak mountain geyser  
cattle turn their heads into the wind  
running sores across the forest  
plane poisondusting prairiedog city  
popradio smiling newslies  
the smell of plowed fields after rain  
evict land speculator  
turning assembly line money tide  
elbow in Morgan's stomach  
ripping up national debt  
scab fenceposts falling  
crickets chant moonrise fullness  
neighbor hugging flowers  
the voice in the flowing metal  
cutting barbed wire

lips on the verge of touching  
forest walking into night  
the soul of music in the space between your hips  
bison stampede into a snowstorm  
dirty socks on the foodstamp line  
sniffing glue on sale  
the chains heavy on your ankles  
stockholders dancing round a fart  
frisk cop  
roll up boss' eyes  
trucking food to strikers  
unslicing corporate pie  
abolish money with love  
sky energy flow through my thankful hands  
god in the mind of a child  
coming in your lover's soul

elation of pubic hair  
the lights of the inner city  
calling the sunrise  
your mother's lap  
munitions factories vomit in reservoirs  
layoff slip reeking cancer  
copclub shatters the bridge of your nose  
flesh dream time  
jumble numbers on bank ledgers  
kicking profit margin into ferns  
neighborhood committee blocking eviction  
grocery clerks handing out food  
rabbit tending the fire  
the universe in a raindrop  
whales spout off a misty island  
this offering to tomorrow

11

from the secret in the marrow  
hawks in a treetop, watching  
the banks of underground rivers  
the numbers on your ballot  
sorrow of the ocean  
knife beneath your thumbnail  
boss giving you an order  
deflect poisoned arrow  
medicine song burn mafia fungus  
indigestion toothache Nixon  
ink vanish on search warrant  
strike lightning in the same place twice  
twelve bankers panic in a circle  
tree thanking rain  
a grove of blackeyed susans  
the fingers of a tiny baby

12

the face in the fire  
yellow sprouts turning green  
wild horses in the clouds  
the law against whatever you're doing  
blood on a cop's shoe  
bulldozer crashing through caribou herd  
jets strafe ghetto  
nuclear wastes seeping into grass  
graveyards circle the factories  
the time of gangster-kings  
tearing incorporation paper  
taking control of tv station  
repainting cop car  
feeding rabbit  
giving gratitude to the sunset  
smiling the stillness  
breathing the wind

13

the revealings of Lazarus  
hardhat in a snake web  
neutron missiles forest the moon  
firstgraders chorusing allegiance  
a bayonet twists in your silence  
clover embryo push against seed shell  
six tenants talking leaflet  
hand kneed dough bondage  
coyote turning compost pile  
sunburst through coma  
Trilateral lice swarming  
dust clog machinery  
four thighs sinking spinning  
rainbow tie around smokestack  
workers controlling machinery  
the houses belong to the residents  
city hall purified by cellos  
putting to rest the screaming ghost of Buffalo Bill

14

pulsing together in loveblood  
the mind in a tree root  
beansprout stretch arms energy  
telling your lover everything  
poison slipping through the skin of a peach  
all the lies you memorized for history tests  
the asskicking room in the police station  
demonstrate mountain power  
burning slavery contract  
defoliate money forest  
deflating landlord's stomach  
cream face pie card  
workers seizing dawncrash  
Rockefeller soul sobbing forgiveness  
factory breathing grass  
rain spine opening  
scar tissue heal  
moon roll close to sun  
energy spinning calmness web  
sand release spring water

15

the crypt beneath the closet  
CIA agent slipping into white gloves  
bluebottleflies in a corpse's mouth  
the smog of burning hair  
corn tassels flutter with twilight  
mountains open their eyes  
being true to your honey  
blackcheek whitecheek brushing  
punching Reagan's spirit-body  
starlings storm Wall Street secret army  
dying rats carpet the White House lawn  
mist rusting rifles  
heart canals overflow armory  
unlocking Chamber of Greed  
squirrel returning to treefork  
singing glows from your breasts  
hummingbird hover by lily  
drenched in joyful dance  
oakleaves fall into a swift river  
darkness vanish from the heart of the KuKlux Klan

16

giant rolling waves in the middle of the ocean  
cosmic winds whirl  
glacier root slide across the pole  
cloud descend into an unknown valley  
opening a new island in your mind  
herd of elk sniffing asbestos factory  
broken teeth bounce in the gutter  
crosshairs following candidate  
knock on your door at four a.m.  
confiscating inventory  
draining swamp around stock market  
national guard joining strikers  
the president's last swindle  
carpenters run through the Senate  
forest fading into jewels  
bear wander through prison ruins  
workers collective selecting foreperson  
purgation of dawnmetal  
smile into the great calm  
flocks of hearts flying home  
community absorb corporations  
inside this circle of fire

## O COLUMBIA

O Columbia this is the temple  
these endless waves of trees  
this wolfbirch dawn  
these rivers of light bursting through crevices of cloud  
this sweet fogdamp wombsky  
this starry flight of geese  
this is the temple  
this forestdrenched sunset  
this symphony of clover  
these antelope mesas rainrumbling  
these snowloving islands  
this threethousandmile bouquet of grainflowers  
returning to seedwarmth  
this moondamp redwood knowledge  
this thrushmelody shimmering through this golden spine  
this marriage of root and earth  
this revealing of oceangreen valleysecrets  
these clustered mountaintops singing to the dawn  
this holy gift of rabbit leaf and wind  
this joyous drifting continent  
this  
is the temple  
But the moneychangers  
have seized  
the temple  
this cancer salesman  
this tv news disguise  
this shattered glass betrayal  
this genocide of falcons  
this prison corporation factory torture  
this wageslave firing squad  
this starvation graft insurance noose  
this money infection  
this poisoned barbedwire bank  
this groaning captivity  
this gangster orgy  
this chairmen of the board conspiracy  
this wagecut Rockefeller heartattack  
this stockholder deathship speedup  
these neutron Carter embalming  
this incorporated lobotomy  
these brokenhearted bleedingroots  
this crucifixion of robins

this burning lake  
    this storm of nails  
the moneychangers  
                    have seized  
                                    the temple

- these selfevident truths
- these alienated rights
- this consciousness streaming
- this vast comingtogether
- this great castingout
- this refusal to obey orders
- this national strike
- this army rebellion
- this wilderness insurrection
- these marching saints
- this deep plowing
- this whip of cords
- this drivingout of the moneychangers
- this dissolving of the corporations
- this cleansing of the temple
- this tearingoff of uniforms
- this bomb dismantling
- this fence downtearing
- this prison unlocking
- this mind unblinding
- this hurtlover hearing
- this return to foreststars
- this rebirth of our crystalhearts
- this sunburst of workerlove
- this seagull marriage
- this rebuilding of the temple
- this collective jewel
- this thought of love among us
- this emerald thunder
- this tongue on your perfect lips
- this raven's shout
- this festival of our ancestors
- this ceremony of dawnfamily
- this communal money
- this collective land
- these socialized machines
- this economic democracy
- this joyful workers' power

O this rainbow cooperation  
O this circle of love around us  
O these laughing children  
O these joined genitals shining  
O this infinite sharing  
O this living prophesy  
O this love among the races  
O this harmony of light  
O this kiss blown from the sun to the moon  
O this ocean of hearts

O COLUMBIA



### III. INS URGENCIES

[selections from

*Insurrection / Resurrection* (1975)]

## GRANITE CLIFFS

Granite cliffs of cloud, trees like awesome  
creatures dancing joyous at the sky out-  
side my window, a bird, head & breast red  
like fuchsia berries, song ecstatic dark like  
the moon:

                  these energy patterns  
we call reality our consciousness

    . . . Yet bankers steal our  
    minds & homes, bosses drink  
    our souls; they rig things so  
    money's in charge, hoard our food  
    in supermarkets, guard our  
    clothes with burglar alarms, make  
    lies required reading in school . . .

OUR PERFECT MIND,  
                  OUR BLEEDING MIND!

We may not reconcile, my sisters &  
    brothers, til our consciousness is  
pregnant with our longing & our  
    strength. Then like grass  
    bursting through cracks in concrete,  
this birth in fire . . .

## 1st WALL

We build houses, the banks  
own them; we build  
machines, the bosses own  
them; we try to  
build our lives, the state  
owns them, & the bosses  
& the bankers own the  
state. But workingpeople  
are dreaming dreams  
again. The sky is dark  
with birds.

## JOE AND TED

Joe's the good cop, Ted's  
the bad. Ted knocks you  
down, kicks you in the  
head. Joe pulls him  
off, helps you to your knees.

"He's crazy, kid, he'll  
kill you," whispers  
Joe. "Do yourself a favor, tell  
him what he wants to  
know, do like he  
says."

Cops working in teams  
take on roles: next time  
the bad cop'll be Joe.

It's like that up &  
down the system. Our  
bosses & landlords & the  
taxmen are Ted,  
the Welfare Department is Joe.

Like every Welfare client  
knows, never  
turn your back on  
Joe.

## 2nd WALL

Mr. Businessman: we may slave  
for you, but as we  
slave we're thinking. We don't  
need you, we can run things  
ourselves, for each  
other's needs, not your  
profit. We know you are  
afraid of us. We are an  
ocean, we are a storm.

## ANDY

We needed a sander to keep our shop running;  
Andy picked one up at Sears.  
But they noticed the bulge beneath his coat  
& now he's locked in Santa Rita.

The judge said he was poor once too,  
but he'd worked hard & studied;  
Andy shuffled from foot to foot,  
glanced around & cracked his knuckles.

In the prison diningroom  
I sat across from him;  
we weren't allowed to touch.  
Guards paced expressionless  
up & down the rows;  
there was so much weeping around us  
I could hardly hear.  
Beneath the wide table  
we touched toes.  
Andy said, "There's a lot of us in here."

## MY BOSS

My boss stood dawdling  
in front of his office,  
with a made-up woman in a bright red dress.  
As I passed by, invisible to him,  
he licked his narrow lips  
& displayed one immaculate palm;  
          the other he kept hidden  
          in his pants pocket.  
"My hands are clean,"  
      I heard him chuckle.  
"Only money making money from money."

Back on the line I tried to work,  
but there was grease on my hammer  
& fire in my head.  
I caught the foreman's eye  
& slunk down to the 'head'.  
Plunked on the stool,  
face in my hands,  
& let my weary calves rest.  
Then noticed a bent nail  
on the crudded floor,  
picked it up  
& scratched in jagged letters on the wall:

**BUT MONEY MAKES MONEY FROM FLESH.**

#### 4th WALL

They claim the ground I walk, the  
house I live in, the machines I  
work at, the goods I produce;  
they claim two thousand  
years of law behind them &  
ten thousand hired men with  
guns to back them up & claim  
those guns defend their  
freedom which they claim is  
my freedom too, freedom to  
sell them my labor, pay them  
my rent, buy back the goods  
I've produced, freedom to  
scheme to set myself up  
like them & exploit fools like  
me.

But who am I to  
speak?

Just one poor workingman.  
And the workers, they claim,  
are  
content.

#### 5th WALL

A vast network of machinery,  
devised & built by *us*, capable  
of assuring *everyone's* survival:  
a few bosses control

it: our seas  
smell of death, our  
cities of hunger;  
our schools & jobs  
are prisons of despair; our  
police are men they own,  
our leaders men they choose:  
business is bloated,  
survival is scarce.  
CRIMINALS DICTATE  
THE TERMS OF OUR  
LIVES: THE ONLY WAY  
TO FREE OURSELVES  
IS TO UNITE.

## 6th WALL

HEY

KIDS

the businessmen rule over  
us. they steal  
all the money, buy  
the teachers,  
politicians & cops.  
they trick us into being  
slaves, force us into  
fighting wars so they  
can ransack  
the world for their  
personal hoardes.

TELL YOUR FRIENDS  
WE ARE GATHERING  
LIKE WIND  
THIS IS OUR PLANET  
THIS IS OUR BLOCK

## 8th WALL

Our lives are at the whim  
of landlords & bosses:  
rents & prices up,  
wages down, no  
jobs: they try to keep us  
at each others' throats  
to just survive.

The night  
is dark, yes.

But there's  
many of us & we're  
getting ready. Soon  
the moon will rise.

## I'M ONLY VISITING

I'm only visiting this meat, passing  
through it like a child  
waking into dream, dreaming into  
wake .

Should I  
disturb the around?

Water  
washes through the  
ground  
down to the sea, through  
mouths of whales &  
otters, gills of  
fish, then up again, to  
clouds.

Still, I  
walk these streets, climb these  
walls; I see children too  
worried to laugh & men  
too pained to crawl; they've got  
my name on a list down at City Hall.  
Should I give them what they ask, make no  
distinctions? Change my mind? Or shave my  
beard & change my name? Watch us all sputter  
blindly to a messy extinction while my  
spirit is floating outside my  
brain?

If I view this oppression with  
distraction will it pass? Or will it just be  
me who passes, distracted & oppressed, while  
the oppression remains?



## MUTINY

Don't take your chains so personally; keep  
them in perspective:

  human  
                  life will someday cease, even  
                  life itself, all  
energy slowing into  
                  nowhen, the universe like  
a giant eye closing shut, &  
even then, what dreams the universe  
  might then dream!  
                  Still/ now is/ & is  
here/ & that is all/ you/  
                  & I will ever see,/ no matter  
how many different realities  
                  we may have seen or may see.

And now/here you & I are chained,  
                  some to the oars &  
                  some in the hold  
  of a slave galley.

And petty-master swaggers down the row  
& flicks his whip  
& mutters about how lucky we are

to be free  
to choose between  
the guard-stalked ship & the shark-prowled sea  
as we patrol

                  the oceans of the world  
                  in search of booty,  
                  plundering all we meet &  
murdering all who would resist.

                  And each morning the captain  
                  appears on the bridge  
                  in his pin-striped suit  
& salutes as the guard  
                  raises the colors:  
the bugler blows of stripes & stars  
but we fly the jolly roger.

And you & I, poor slaves  
in the scheme of all that exists,  
what can we do but salute  
when we're told, pull our oars,  
remember,

be,

& persist

until the world somehow  
works through this pain  
to some better  
eventually?

Yet deep down we all know  
we'll never reach shore  
until we mutiny.

### 9th WALL

When you can't stand being  
cheated & pushed around by  
your boss another minute,  
remember:

in this system  
all jobs are like that.  
you're "lucky"  
to even have one.

They keep the money scarce &  
the jobs few; somewhere  
they got a file on me & you.

THE BOSSES ARE THE  
MOB ARE IN POWER

We are chained together.

## DREAMS

They think we're stupid  
They think we should be glad  
they let us eat  
& walk the streets,  
have roofs over our beds;  
we know what's going on  
inside our heads,  
& that's an advantage  
we have over them.

Maia told me she dreams as she works,  
of ways to bankrupt her boss  
as she balances his books.  
In Art's dream he cashes his last paycheck,  
walks up to his boss,  
yanks him by the nose  
& dumps him on the deck.  
Fred jumps on his boss' desk  
and pisses all over the place;  
Ann feeds her boss  
slowly into her machine;  
work stops,  
the other workers rush over  
in her dream,  
to catch the look on the boss' face.

When I was young,  
a furrier, Sam,  
told a dream to me,  
of workers taking over  
their places of work,  
firing their bosses,  
& running things together,  
for everyone's needs.

I thought about it a long while,  
then (I was 9 or 10)  
went up to him & said,  
"Sam, if people have got it  
bad like you say,  
& we could all have it so good  
another way,  
why doesn't everybody just do it?"

He said, "People have been trying to,  
for a long long time,  
& a lot of people have died trying.  
It's not just a question  
of what's best for the people  
or what the people want:  
there's guns pointed at us  
from all sides."

And now that I'm older  
& have worked myself  
& dreamed my own dreams & nightmares,  
I've learned we all dream the same dreams,  
& dreams are powerful beyond compare.  
If we can each remember them  
& share them,  
we can build great visions  
out of our despairs,  
& visions create surging movements among us  
to realize those visions  
& dispel our most fearful nightmares.

### 10th WALL

a battle, sometimes raging,  
sometimes almost invisible,  
in every clothes store, bank,  
every supermarket aisle: this  
is class war.

We'd like  
to avoid it, but there's  
no way—as long as  
business owns the law,  
we're poorer every day. Still,  
we'll get what we need,  
one way or another.

WE ARE EACH  
OTHERS'  
WEAPONS.

## TYRONE

Emeryville 1973, the night after Halloween.  
Tyrone Guyton was walking home.  
He was just fourteen.

Not tall for his age and with a young face,  
eyes so open and gullible,  
he liked to study after school,  
spend time with his family,  
never been in any trouble.

Three whitemen in business suits  
drifted by in a long sedan.  
Aint that strange, one said to the others,  
a black boy starting up a white chevy van.  
Ty cruised slowly down the ave  
then saw them in the glass;  
he cut down 33rd Street,  
they sped up on his tail,  
honking and yelling  
then suddenly rammed his bumper hard:  
he lost control, jumped the curb  
and smashed into a wall.

Tyrone scrambled out the door,  
he saw revolvers being waved,  
he wasn't far from home,  
he tried to make a break . . .  
Tyrone felt a blazing flash  
and fell flat on his face.

Those unmarked cops claimed he had a gun  
but no gun was ever found;  
the only two witnesses said  
they handcuffed Ty behind his back  
then blasted him through the back of his head  
while he was lying bleeding on the ground.

Still, it didn't take that judge and grand jury  
long to decide  
it wasn't murder but justifiable homicide:  
those cops were just doing their job,  
protecting private property  
from those who haven't got any,  
and trying to keep people scared.

Now, this town's full of kids  
hanging out on the street:  
the big cars are passing, the money flashing,  
daddy needs new pants, mama's out of work,  
and even when you got a job  
there's just enough to eat;  
and the stores are flaunting clothes and food,  
rats scratching behind the walls of the apartments,  
and you know  
its the banks and finance companies who really own  
most of those shiny cars,  
and when the people can't pay  
they take them away  
and sell them over and over again  
and they keep the cops and courts  
as their accounting department.

Every fourteen-year-old knows  
that to break the law  
is to strike back  
at those who dictate the laws.

So the cops keep on killing  
the grand juries keep acquitting  
and the kids keep filling  
up the jails and the morgues.

And it's never going to stop  
until the people act to lock  
those hired guns and licensed crooks in jail  
and open the jails to release our own.

And now and here's a place to start:  
JUSTICE FOR TYRONE.

## 15th WALL

When our blood begins to age,  
our muscles slow,  
our energy retreats  
like sap from snow-crisp branches,  
when life should begin to mellow:

### INTO THE GARBAGE HEAP!

expended with,  
each of us,  
for we'll no longer be  
useful enough to them,  
replaced at the office or machine  
with fresher, more profitable flesh.  
Then  
    go sit in the park,  
nothing in your pocket,  
or stay home & watch TV  
if you haven't hocked it.

The old know the truth:  
When we're young  
    they drain our lives into money;  
when we're old  
    they help us to get dead.  
America is a slaughterhouse.

One by one we're expendable to them.  
But together,  
fighting back while we've still strength,  
we can take care of each other  
& expend with them.

## TECHNOCRACY

Hurting through eternity,  
this slaveship earth!

They've seized our means of survival  
with their laws & guns & machines,  
keep us chained,  
some to work them,  
the rest to their charity,  
desperate, superfluous.

Wherever bosses rule,  
technology remains a tool  
to keep us in poverty, captivity.

The only breakthrough  
that will help toward the solution  
is in the technology  
of revolution.

## 18th WALL

Sometimes/ the pain/ of  
being/ in this prison/  
with you . . .  
(the warden's owned by  
bankers, our bosses  
are our guards; property &  
money are the walls  
& the bars.

Yet even  
now they're brawling among  
themselves, over  
which should own our days &  
nights & which should  
rule the mountains & stars.

WE MUST KEEP  
STRONG & WAIT & WATCH THE  
TOWERS

Soon we will  
gather in the  
prison yard.



## BLUE-COLLAR WOMAN

Blue-collar woman,  
fire in your arm  
& grease on your cheek,  
faded red bandanna tying your neck  
with a granny knot for a locket;  
after a hard day, tough & mean  
or smiling like a mountain stream,  
rally flier in your jeans,  
phillips-head screwdriver  
& 15/16th open-ended wrench  
sticking out your back pocket:

I just want to tell you  
you look fine  
driving that 1450 multilith press  
clacking & hissing in 4/4ths time,  
or rolling on that creeper  
beneath that ten ton truck,  
arc-welding that ship's truss,  
or waving that picket sign.

I just want to tell you  
it feels fine  
to be hammering with you  
on the assembly line,  
or pouring concrete forms in rain,  
or driving tractors across the plains,  
or mopping floors,  
or goofing off,  
or laughing at the boss,  
or shoveling earth for a sewer line.

Because it sure got to feel  
pretty weird & unreal  
when day after day  
& year after year  
I was forced to work only with other men.

I just want to tell you  
I know it's a hard fight  
for a working woman  
of the working class;

I just want to tell you  
you burn like the night  
as you twist & weave  
in your worker's dance.

### 19th WALL

EITHER YOU GOT A JOB OR YOU  
GOT A HUSTLE. IF YOU'RE A  
WORKER, MAN YOU GOT A JOB; IF YOU'RE  
A BOSS, MAN  
YOU GOT A HUSTLE.

How come we got to  
work for hustlers, how come they're  
directing the show? Why can't  
I work for you & you  
for me, share what we  
have, be each other's security?  
Did God arrange things like  
this? Nature's law, human  
nature? Is our collective  
mind diseased projecting  
horrible dreams? Or am I  
here alone in my  
strange creation?

Still, consciousness has laws of its own.  
awakening will begin in unbearable oppression,  
when death is overcome  
power will flow, renewal  
(if not for their guns  
our parents our grandparents  
would have kicked them out long ago).

DAWN.

LIGHTNING FROM BELOW.

### 21st Wall

Poor blacks, browns and whites  
competing for the same lousy jobs  
that aren't even there:

nobody getting a fair share.

So whiteman shoves brown  
& brownman shoves back;  
blackwoman blamed  
whitewoman attacked:

huge corporate profits,  
poverty biting.

They try to keep us fighting  
for crumbs  
to try to keep us from  
uniting.

## MEDITATION

Cast  
off your personality, do  
whatever occurs to your  
brain, see the living crystal  
structures of  
reality, step out of your  
bones & run in the  
rain; attune your  
energies to the great  
streaming frequencies, share your  
mind & meat with all  
livingkind,  
till your body stretches  
to the ends of the universe  
& the galaxies  
are thoughts in your mind . . .

then come back.

And see this day-to-  
day reality  
where you wipe your ass & wear out  
shoes & brains,  
is as real, as perfect, &  
includes all the rest,  
& we don't fully exist outside it.

But...

there's  
your boss still telling you  
what to do, still making ten times  
more than you, & for doing nothing, & if  
you were to say shit about it, you'd  
be fired, then how you going to  
pay the rent? still children hungry  
cold while stores are piled with  
clothes & food. still Reagan  
Rockefeller, DuPont, Mellon, Ford, Chile, South Africa,  
Attica, San Quentin, Pepsi-cola, IT&T . . .

Can this be real?

Shut your eyes & hear a oneness in your  
body singing; open your eyes &  
see this wonderous singing universe;  
open your eyes & see we're living  
in a corporate fascist state.

Is the road to liberation to shut your eyes again?  
Can you stop the slaughter by stopping it  
in your mind?

Or must flesh liberate flesh  
before mind will reflect it?

Meditation:

a thousand-petaled lotus,  
a thousand picket signs.

# IV. EMERGENCE IES

[strugglesongs]

## WHEN I ENTERED THIS HOUSE

When I entered this house  
they told me,  
"There's opportunity here for all.  
You'll make it, kid,  
if you work hard  
& you got something on the ball."

But since then I've wandered  
up & down the dim-lit stairs  
& met philosophers pushing brooms  
& nincompoops swivelling  
in university chairs,  
& since then I've peeked  
in their secret rooms  
& glimpsed how they *really* run this thing.

I just want to warn you, kid,  
in this house  
the toughest crook is king.

## DOLLARS

I looked at a dollar  
bill the other day and  
noticed to my  
surprise there  
is no dollar sign on the  
dollar A spread  
eagle, a wide  
eye floating over  
a pyramid, George  
Wash in a curly wig, a burnt  
forest of ones but  
no dollar  
sign. then I  
realized it wasn't so  
strange afterall there are no  
dollarsigns on bombers' wings  
either on the sides of  
nuclearplants or in incense-  
shrouded shrines in  
banks

## ROCKEFELLER'S DEAD

remember his greatgrandpa drew his first blood money selling cancer cures in the 1830s

rockefeller's dead

remember his grandpa invented the game of all's fair in war and monopoly in the 1870s

rockefeller's dead

remember his father ordered a tent city of striking miner families shot and burned at Ludlow Colorado in 1914

rockefeller's dead

remember the body piles at Attica prison in '71 remember the Vietnam war remember Nixon remember the computer mafia the neutronbombcoldwar JoeMcCarthytheRonaldReagangaschamberbankvault

## ROCKEFELLER LIVES

remember Standard Oil Chase Manhattan Bank IBM Mobil CBS Borden Atlantic-Richfield AT&T Metropolitan Life Allied Chemical Con-Edison Chemical Bank Eastern Airlines Pan-Am American Express etcetera etcetera

remember the next time cops attack strikers the next time somebody's sentenced to jail for stealing what's rightfully theirs remember the next imperialist war remember the family that still chairs the junta board

## ROCKEFELLER LIVES

remember there has always been and will always be a

## RESISTANCE

## I DREAMED I SAW MY PICTURE IN THE POST OFFICE

### WANTED

for jaywalking parking in noparking  
zones cutting labels off pillows of stuffed  
chairs littering drivingstoned  
slipping personal notes into fourthclass  
mail charging longdistance credit  
card calls to board of directors'  
phones running out on bank  
loans shoplifting apples paper  
clips and underwear scraping a Rolls and  
splitting the scene tax and draft evasion  
harboring a deserter from the  
marines lying on federal applications  
punching coinchanging machines slipping  
past Welfare regulations sawing down highway  
advertising billboards with a bow  
saw conspiracy with known revol  
utionary agitators and outlaws and for  
using foul and abusive language to offic  
ers of the peace

IF YOU HAVE INFO LEADING TO THE WHERE  
CALL YOUR LOCAL SECRETPOLICE

CAUTION

OTHERS MAYBE WITH THEY  
MAY BE ARMED TO THE TEETH

( upon seeing my picture in the Post  
Office rack, as you can  
surmise, I was taken  
aback Then seeing the serious of my  
situation without further hesitation  
slipped toward the  
door before I might be recognized  
but the clerk at the Stamp Window was staring  
at me I panicked and was about to  
flee when I realized he and the other  
clerks and people standing in line all  
looked exactly like me



## FACES

Who gets to sleep in a windblown hovel  
guts aching with hunger  
and who gets to jet from sunquenched beach  
to alpine skilodge on a caprice?

this is a face of dictatorship

Last month the landlord raised our rent  
we refused to pay  
sent us a notice  
vacate ten days  
time was up came back with his police  
threw everything we owned out into the street

this is a face of dictatorship

Spokesmen sing, There isn't enough to go round.  
While rats grow sleek on hoarded corn  
and suited farmmasters  
order milk poured into the ground

Injunction said,  
two pickets each entrance  
was all we strikers could have  
but twice a day the bulls cruised round  
to run protection for the scabs

Jetplane ripping my clouds up there  
and splattering my air,  
are you pregnant with grain  
to balm away despair  
or bombs to seed the soil somewhere?

Bluejeans and businesssuit  
fighting in the street  
red lights howl sirens chilling sweep  
nightsticks flash hungry for meat  
which head is going to get beat  
bluejeans or businesssuit?

This classroom teaches American democracy:  
do what you're told sit in your seat

Faces of dictatorship:  
the banker's pen the boss' knife  
the politician's twitch  
you've been seeing them all your life:  
we've had to fight them to survive  
since before we knew who or how

deface the dictatorship

Don't give up now

### LA COMMUNE, PARIS 1871

and yet today in the USA  
they let us all survive  
only cause we each got a good disguise

Well all I know is  
I am still now and here, still  
looking through these  
hundred billion windows at my  
self over there.  
I cried when I heard  
    the war was over and  
when I remember  
    the war was over and  
when I remember  
    the war still rages on,  
I cry again and once again recall  
    I am a warrior  
and gird my trembling loins like  
Arjuna, and dare  
to breathe of the holy air  
to prepare this creaking flesh  
and sharpen these songs.  
    To resolve my pain I  
    must resolve yours, and  
    that is one reason why,  
    beneath it all, naked  
we are still communards

## FOR THE INNOCENTS

all who have ever heard the message of the crickets  
I call on you  
all who have ever felt the wind splashing cleanly in your face  
I call on you  
all who are, or are descendents of, wageslaves serfs slaves  
prisoners debtors tenants housewives foreigners  
I call on you  
all who believe in the inalienable human right of the oppressed  
to throw off their oppressions and oppressors  
I call on you . . .

the night of the shame beyond madness is upon us  
the despisers of sunrise  
musicians of the ghastly dance  
sorcerers gristlier than hollywood movies  
the night of those whose unquenchable destruction gushes from  
rivers of self-hate  
whose murderous passions warp from  
the slaughtered children inside themselves

even as these innocents are one by one murdered cowardly  
on the streets of Atlanta  
their elder brothers' deaths by the thousands on faroff colonial shores  
are being plotted brazenly in Washington conference rooms  
their families' destruction by the millions in wageslave pauperdom  
is being conspired flauntingly in those same plush chairs

race war . . . imperialist war . . . class war  
can there be no connection?  
and what's it all for . . . ?

I call down the spirit of Harriet Tubman and Angelina Grimke  
the voice of Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison  
the wrath of Nat Turner and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn  
the heart of Soujourner Truth and Martin Irons  
the strength of Thomas Paine and WEB DeBois  
the balance of Martin Luther King and Mother Jones

all who await anxiously the news of their capture  
we call on you  
all who descend from wageslaves serfs slaves prisoners debtors  
tenants housewives foreigners  
we call on you  
all who have ever loved someone of another race  
we call on you

all who say with pride you have mixed blood in your veins  
we call on you  
all who believe in the inalienable human right of the oppressed  
to throw off their oppressions and oppressors  
we call on you

race war . . . imperialist war . . . class war  
can there be no connection . . . ?

all who have ever heard the message of the crickets  
we call on you: listen to the evidence  
all who have ever felt the wind splashing cleanly in your face  
we call on you: pass sentence  
all who have ever wept at the mercy of spring  
we call on you: stand with folded arms as a surrounding wall and  
carry out the sentence

for the innocents

## WHO RULES AMERICA?

you and me?  
those goodol' boys they parade on tv?  
or faceless shadowed faces  
hiding behind incorporation papers un-  
listened telephones and stainless steel secretaries,  
meeting the board behind locked doors  
and directing our lives invisibly?

is the twopartysystem democratic and free?  
or are those candidate-  
selections really setups between  
feuding gangs inside  
ONEBIGMONEYPARTY  
in a never ending brawl  
over how to split the booty?

aint it hard  
when you got to fight  
a masquerade in a smokescreen?

## A NIGHT AT THE CIRCUS

Headline of Souvenir Program:

DEPRESSION OVER PRESIDENT DECLARES

And everybody in the tent  
can smell bad breath

yeah, MONOPOLISTS RIDING HIGH

While we smoulder on unemployment  
lines, patch threadbare clothes, watch  
our bankbooks stamped CLOSED, can't  
afford to go anywhere or  
turn on the lights, open the  
frigerator all you see is  
white and even the alley  
rats have gotten so bold they're  
gnawing kitchen windows in the stealth of  
the night cause it's so hard to  
find good garbage

listen Boz,

pull off that clowndisguise:  
can't you hear nobody's  
laughing at your lies? we  
all see your ringmaster's  
draped in a Dracula cape. and we all  
know the cackling that makes the walls  
shake so every time you  
cross your eyes or fall flat on  
your face is only blasting over  
the loudspeaker from an old  
Nixontape

but you won't make your escape

Even now in a smokechoked  
vault beneath the center  
ring, cold drops of  
sweat dribble down your  
fatboys necks as they  
ante up their stakes  
glances roving behind their backs  
shaking fingers can barely hold  
the cards, *they* know the hour's late but

still each can't resist the thrill of  
trying to make one last killing before trying  
to slip away into the dark

but we've got the trapdoor  
locked, the secret passage blocked and

Up here in the sullen  
glaring crowd the hawkers have  
thrown away their poison cotton  
candy, guards and ushers' uniforms and  
stars litter the aisles, from the control  
booth high above crashing echos chill thenight

any minute, Pres,  
our guys'll flip on all the lights  
then we'll see if the clown can smile

## THE LAW

there's businessmen  
who work this side the law  
and businessmen  
who work that:  
vultures who like light meat  
vultures who like dark

## WALLSTREET AND MAFIA ARE ONE MONEY IS THEIR ONLY LAW

they pick apart our bones  
together  
with the same poisonous breath  
nest in the same lurking fog

PEOPLES LAW  
PEOPLES WAR  
PEOPLES JUSTICE

## FOUR STREET SHOUTS

1

Crooks ruling our nation  
using inflation  
to steal next year's pay hike  
and years of our savings  
NATIONAL STRIKE

2

Bosses' economy collapsing  
WE DON'T NEED THEM  
survival means seizing our freedom  
we have nothing but each other

3

Capitalism tears  
the family of races apart  
but fighting back together  
can heal our aching heart

4

Socialist revolution means  
shedding diseased skin and  
mending the circle  
whole again

## WATCHING THE TV NEWS

Down south there's "banana republics" they say,  
where highheeled generals sip blood through plastic straws  
where union bosses tapdance and newsmen do pratfalls  
where the election booths are draped in widows' shawls

Down south there's "banana republics" they say,  
where party platforms paper the walls of buzzards' lairs  
where shadowed eyes keep constant watch through crosshairs  
where the fruit trees are fertilized with workers' short lives  
where plantation owners and their wives have sordid little affairs

But up north there's a gringo republic I know  
where highheeled generals sip blood through plastic straws  
where union bosses tapdance and newsmen do pratfalls  
where the election booths are draped in widows' shawls  
where party platforms paper the walls of buzzards' lairs  
where shadowed eyes keep constant watch through crosshairs  
where the machine are fertilized with workers' short lives  
where stockholder husbands and wives have sordid little affairs

↳ So who's calling who a banana?  
who ties a black silk bandanna  
over his face when he makes  
housecalls? who writes all the secret  
knocks for the fatboys in the  
Tower and hands out the false  
promises and poison rings in  
the Multinational Chamber of Horrors who  
elects himself every year chairman of the board  
who can't walk down his own street unless well  
guarded by his secretsecret police and  
who's always met with ungrateful servants  
picketing his front door who's  
the biggest banana yeah the biggest  
banana of them all?



## STRICTLY CONSTITUTIONAL

Went to a party on the courthouse stairs—  
you should have heard that bad band wail:  
the sax was smoking down the drummer's tail  
while the guitar melted the locks on the jail  
the night the dockets caught fire  
and we boogied from darkness to dawn  
you should have been there with us carrying on  
the night the dockets caught fire

Harry said to Mary, "Look here comes the heat  
better stash your stash and get your shoes on your feet"  
Mary said to Harry, "Lover don't be dismayed  
it's only the comrades from the Emma Goldman Brigade"  
the night the dockets caught fire

Firetrucks arrived like a flock of screech owls  
but they just couldn't breach our  
surging wall when we locked arms and howled,  
you should have seen the chief,  
his face hanging like a side of beef  
and his eyes rolling wild, crying,

"Think about the governor, consider the neighbors"  
as we carried out the deeds, the police files  
and the incorporation papers  
the night the dockets caught fire

Hooting and stomping like unchained slaves  
round those prancing embers and those sky-licking flames  
when the music suddenly stopped and we turned and saw  
a shadow standing by the courthouse door,  
draped in a hood and long black robe,  
yelling, "Stop in the Name of the Holy Ghost!"  
but Ghost, who was leaning against a broken lamp post,  
just laughed, fingered His Holy Nose  
and went right back to His Marshmallow Roast  
the night the stocks caught fire  
and we boogied from darkness to dawn  
you should have been there with us carrying on  
the night the dockets caught fire

A pale moon still hovered in the west  
the east was singed with dawn  
we hung upon each others' necks swaying back and forth  
a pigeon settled on the flagpole mast  
the band jammed slow  
thin smoke swirled through the waking streets  
ashes started to blow

## MIXED BREEDS

His mother has some Italian blood in her  
her lover's just a bit Hungarian Jew  
his grandpa's got some Chicano in him too  
her aunt's one part Madagascan  
his cousin's a little Choctaw  
neither you nor he know it but  
there's some Malay-Swede  
in your uncle-in-law

Mixed breeds  
that's what we all really are  
no fences ever succeeded  
in keeping our loveplasm apart:  
    we were one in the beginning  
    and the tribes have travelled far  
but we're reaching home again  
    and we've the right to claim what's ours  
our blood is an ocean  
    flowing round and round the world  
    the future belongs  
    to the mixed breed and proud

## BALLAD OF THE SUMPUL— BALADA DEL SUMPUL

and now you ask me why  
don't we turn back?  
I ask you back,  
don't you hear the weeping fields and mourning waves?

On the south bank of a meandering river  
in the deep Salvadorean jungle,  
the village of Las Aradas. The Plowed Fields,  
communal shantytown of cardboard and mud  
haven of collective survival  
hidden community of fifteen hundred  
women and men, children and elders  
across the Sumpul river from Honduras  
refugees from the terror  
of the ruling military junta

Before dawn, May 14, 1980  
troops of the junta  
joined by the paramilitary fascist  
ORDEN (blackshirts, white skull-&-crossbones insignia)  
quietly semicircle Las Aradas . . .

we were out seeding when bullets sprayed and splattered  
dropping our hoes we dove for our rifles  
children were screaming and animals falling  
fistfulls of lead tore through mud walls  
rooftops were burning and tumbling around us  
militia stood bravely drenching with fire  
slowly we backed into the arms of the Sumpul  
to cross as we'd planned to the wilds of Honduras  
but out of the brush stepped the Honduran army  
blocking our way . . .

y ya me preguntas  
¿ por que no nos volvemos?  
te repongo:  
¿ no puedes entender  
los campos llorandos y las ondas lamentandas?  
when three hundred are left to vultures on a sunny morning  
and twelve thousand in the past year disappear  
to unmarked graves?  
te digo, uno u otro:

persistir guerrilleros  
ó inclinarnos en cavernas colonizadas,  
morirnos esclavas  
ó demontar la junta  
y arrojar sus huestos en cruz de latón  
atrás Haig, Rockefeller, y Reagan

and now you ask me why  
don't we turn back?  
I ask you back,  
don't you hear the weeping fields and mourning waves?  
¿ cuando abandonaron três cientos para los buitres  
por un amanecer soleado  
y desaparacen doce miles por sepulcros sin marcas  
por el año pasado?  
I tell you our only choice  
is to fight on as guerrillas  
or grovel in colonized caves  
die as slaves or tear down the junta  
and toss their brass crossbones  
back to Reagan, Rockefeller, and Haig.

**THANK YOU GRANDMOTHER—AHÉHEÉ NIHIMÁSÁNÍ**  
(for the people of Tó Hąjiiłeehé—Cañoncito)

The desert throbs and rumbles.  
Painted horses on the scrub pinon mesas  
sniff the bristling wind and rear.

Diné,  
The People, gather from  
the mountains of the four directions  
for a great singing  
swelling like sunrise  
over the medicine and spreading  
with the fireglow over the blowing  
night sands.

Behind the front seats of the pickups  
parked in a haphazard circle  
in the dunes, bluish rifle barrels  
glimmer.

Grandfather  
strolls along the parched arroyo bank,  
arms clasped behind his back.  
Noticing a smooth flat pebble,  
brown with grey streaks pointing  
east, he stoops and picks it up.  
Turning it over he  
sees a rainbow:

Grandfather smiles.

Grandfather,  
with a trail of deputies' clubs hanging high over your head  
come to us groaning  
with hunger on the ends of your wings  
come to us writhing  
in old age sleeping in gutters  
come to us bleeding  
with barbed wire streaming from your bruises  
come to us moaning  
in your rags wove from cornstalks  
come to us screaming  
wandering along the plutonium scars of stolen land  
come to us crashing  
eating out of garbage cans holy with buckskin  
come to us tearing  
with school lies tattooed on your shoulders

come to us sobbing  
cheated at the store in your thirst of white bean stalks  
come to us pleading  
with thunder sweating from your eyes  
come to us throbbing  
from your doorway of sand and cloud-darkness  
come to us crowing  
with the mirages of youth tied about your feet with white lightning  
come to us breathing  
kissed by the winds of dark mist and pollen  
come to us shining  
from your porch of squash blossoms  
come to us laughing  
rubbed with the breath of dawn  
come to us glowing  
in your coat of children and rivers  
come to us roaring  
with a trail of dew draping over your shoulders  
come to us cleansing  
drenched with the stomachs of mountains  
come to us singing  
in freedom running along the streams of evening twilight  
come to us flashing  
licked with the shirts of our ancestors  
come to us flooding  
with deer playing in your shadow  
come to us filling  
rolling in a robe of comets  
come to us dancing  
with your rifle loaded with sunrise  
come to us shooting  
with eagle leaping from your eyes  
come to us Grandfather  
come to us Grandfather

ahéhee nihiMáśāní  
ahéhee nihiMáśāní  
thank you Grandmother  
thank you Grandmother

## SIDE TO SIDE

Man my feet were getting tired  
stomping this picket line;  
glad we're all here now  
and it's getting near high tide;  
hey grab a sign and a handfull of petitions:  
it's a good day to liberate our living conditions!  
just in time!

Fly the Workers Militia:  
solidarity can ease your mind  
solidarity can ease your mind

Man those bulls must be wired  
up on shoeshine polish and sweet wine:  
they'd rather crack your skull  
than tell you the correct time.  
I aint scared and I aint superstitious  
but momma always told me bullshit aint too nutritious,  
ten's my unlucky number  
and they already tried to crack me nine times

But now I'm Workers Militia and  
solidarity pays for your fine  
solidarity pays for your fine

Man I feel like a choir  
singing halleluia to the sky;  
I'm gonna take my pain  
and bake it in a blackbird pie.  
I aint sorry and I aint malicious:  
even grandma said that judgment day  
was gonna be delicious,  
and just look at them uniforms  
running for a place to hide!

Fly that Workers Militia  
solidarity sways side to side  
solidarity sways side to side

## LONG AGO

Long ago, the old ones say,  
the earth was common garden to us all:  
the trees dropped us  
fruit to share, sweet leaves  
stems and flowers offered themselves up  
to all of us  
through the endlessly living soil,  
from above and below the branches and rocks  
gifted us common tools, we taught  
each other how to fish and cook,  
hunt and sew, shared abundance when  
the earth glowed warm, shared  
our stores and body heat  
when we huddled together from ice and storm;  
so together we tended the garden.  
But today I drive my old beatup wheels  
up and down the garden's rows and  
everywhere above the clatter and drone  
of crazy machines  
I can hear the cast-out people's  
wail and moan, the same rumbling  
down every foodstamp and unemployment line,  
the same sulking anger in so many  
eyes along the street,  
and the schools seethe like  
concentration camps, the workplaces reek  
of war, at so many kitchen tables  
the same cries burst through grit teeth,  
and everywhere is electric fence and barbed  
wire, security guards, burglar alarms,  
keep out, private property, trespassers  
will be violated to the fullest strong  
arm of the law . . .

THIS IS NOT DEMOCRACY

THIS IS DICTATORSHIP

down with the dictatorship  
of money and property  
down with the dictatorship  
behind paper walls  
down with the dictatorship  
of the corporations  
dissolve the corporations  
rebirth to the garden  
as common property of us all



# V. SCATTERED SHOWERS

[heartsongs]

## I'M STILL ALIVE!

I never thought I'd live past twenty-five,  
and now the seasons have changed  
and changed many times since that year.  
Gone are the tearless fears  
gone the fearful tears,  
and in their place  
this beautiful surprise  
this gift this  
laughter this time  
free and clear  
this raft of logs and hide  
coasting down a gentle tide  
past emerald ports  
    rocked in symphonies of desire,  
    past storm-torn towers  
with windows spitting fire,  
    with only the current  
to trust as a guide  
and only the wind  
    and my heart to steer.

## BUT ANYWAY WHAT'S IN A NAME?

And the Lord said to Noah,

“Build me an ark, and of every living thing bring in  
two of each sort, male and female”

Then the waters prevailed and blotted all that lived from  
the face of the earth except those with Noah  
and his wife

History does not record how that little menagerie whiled away the  
days but my guess is Noah holed himself in  
the captain's cabin and waited for another  
message from God

while it was his wife who kept the trip together cleaning up  
animal shit

Christian, Judaic and Muslim traditions all recognize Noah as  
the Second Adam our common father while the  
same traditions do not even bother to record  
her name

## ALL THE UNSPOKEN

all the unspoken things  
hover between us  
like ghosts  
between scaffolds . . .

## UPTIGHT

You took my sorrow  
and borrowed my tomorrow,  
and now that I want them back,  
you say you lost them  
somewhere near Boston  
down by some railroad tracks.

You say,

"They just fell out the door."

But why were you lying  
on the car floor?

I tell you honey I can't

walk without it;

but you say you

don't want to talk about it:

You gaze into the mirror,  
rub creme into your skin and  
whisper breathily,

"I'm just that kind of woman."

And now you stop me in the hall  
and throw my toothbrush  
against the wall and insist  
you have to know why.

You cry, "All couples go  
through a little estrangement so  
why don't we just make  
a little arrangement?"

Well honey,  
cause I'm just not that kind of guy.

## APPROACHING PARANOIA

Q: You know  
I trust you  
to act the  
same when we're together and  
when you're alone. But  
who is that  
who keeps hanging up  
whenever I answer the phone?

A: Probably the FBI.

## DOWNSTARES

my love is cruel like silk  
and changing as the sky, she  
wants what I do not have  
to give, she gives what she knows I  
do not want, my eagerness makes her  
reluctant, she rolls through my  
fingers like mist, she mocks me, she  
dreams secret dreams until  
I no longer know the sweet  
sounds of night nor  
guard the secrets of children

I am a starfish I  
peek from the mud beneath a  
rock with small red pebble eyes.

I am cruel like the  
sky and changing as silk, I  
want what she does not have  
to give, I give what I know  
she does not want, her eagerness  
makes me reluctant, I roll through  
her fingers like fog, I mock her, I  
dream secret dreams

I am a distant red star

## JAYS

All the robins are gone; today  
jays hop about the walnut  
tree in my back yard,  
cry and shake their blueblack  
crests; the nuts are  
rotten with worms; still  
an orange squirrel above  
my head gnaws them, chatters a  
complaint then throws them half-  
eaten on the ground, as clouds  
in blotches grey like soot  
drift past a feeble  
sun; my love is lost in  
dreams; even as I hold your  
hips you lies alongside waterfalls,  
biting strangers' lips; and as for  
me I see all others in the shadows  
of your eyes, and that is  
why I'd kiss you should I kiss  
another's thigh  
and different faces pass and fade  
away behind my eyes as I  
lie drifting in your  
restless tide; but why  
then does the solid ground  
inside my chest  
give way and I find myself in a  
terrible void, plummeting  
down, why do I  
moan and sigh?

. . . for love only streams from  
the heart not the dream . . .  
a robin above me cried.

## A CERTAIN MOOD

Days can climb tough when you're on your own,  
nights can crash rough when home means alone  
licked by the waves of the city's strange moans  
and you're just not getting off no more  
    on sliding free to roam  
with your body under water and your mind under wind,  
gazing into eyes in the crowd,  
floating down the street in a cloud.

They say, you got to find something to strive for  
have drive for  
if you don't start soon you'll never arrive, did  
you think it was enough just being alive, kid?

You swore you'd never get wrecked in a role  
it had to grip real, glide whole  
you had to ride it with your spirit  
let your soul unfold  
but now all you feel is the wind and the cold  
shuddering along the cracks of your dislocated bones.

There's your old camp buddy with his filthy rags  
your tenth grade sweetheart with her  
hot pants and icy stares, the short-change  
artists with their breasts bare, the wage-  
earners in torn underwear, the storm troopers  
in their pancake masks, the store-owners in  
their bullet-proof flags, and the false priests  
in their foul airs and the insurance salesmen in  
their electric chairs.

Looking for someone to ease  
your brain, looking for something to heal the  
pain, trying to let your  
self be, trying to let your mind  
see, feeling whatever you got to feel, waiting for  
something to be revealed, a  
leaf drifting near a fall, a brief  
encounter in the hall, gazing into  
eyes in the clouds, floating down the street like a  
crowd.

## LOVE HANDLES

River spirit touch me please  
with lilies twisted about your knees  
dank hair tangled with stormy skies  
ocean brooding behind deep eyes

Moon rider you know what you done  
you threw my colors out to bleach  
in the bony stare of the sun  
and now my soul's sulking alone  
in a closet of limestone  
a bass note out of reach  
a dead bird on an empty beach

Hard lady stay out of my trees  
my branches are trembling with  
too cruel a breeze  
my shock absorbers are too shot  
my brains are blue hot

Look honey I aint afraid  
but your touch is like a razor blade  
and don't pull that steel pin  
sticking out of my secret heart  
or my grenade will blast  
your whims apart

Hey lover I take back what I said  
I'm sorry for the fleas I put in your bed  
I'm sorry for the squirting flower I  
hid inside your head  
and for its sudden shower on your  
thought of the hour I'm sorry  
for what the thunder said

Love hands lets go get blessed  
I know a place where we can slip  
into a robe of darkness  
blue lightning twisting round a fountain  
bowl moon rising beside a mountain



## HEARSAY

They say a man can't understand a woman  
and I wouldn't disagree,  
but then again  
they also say a man  
can't understand another man so  
that's why, you see,  
I'm daring to be presumptuous and say  
I thought I understood you yesterday.

## WE WALKED ALONG

We walked along together,  
my lover and I,  
together watching the Spring sun  
drift through a cloudless sky,  
laughing at a wild yellow rose,  
laughing at a distant train,  
looking at each other  
and laughing again,  
we walked so close  
it almost seemed we were one.

But there's a rule of the road  
we thought we could go  
without obeying:  
people who get too close  
are soon separating.

We both feel the tire treads  
skid across our brains  
and see death  
bouncing toward us  
in a pickup truck  
across a colorless shadowless plain.

But somewhere beyond  
the savaging tears  
and chattering pain  
we both also know  
our roads might  
meet  
in a sweet  
comingtogetheragain.

## SOMETIMES I WISH

Sometimes I wish  
you weren't really you  
so I could see you  
without feeling all the  
pain we've been through  
(there's such heavy dues  
in loving)

But sometimes  
suddenly you glow  
dawn new  
I got to hug you and whisper  
—Love,  
    we've come through!—  
and kiss away your every bruise  
(there's such a well of renewal  
in loving).

## DREAM

She is talking  
in her sleep. I  
listen for a while but  
it is very garbled.  
"Lover," I finally  
say, "you're talking in your  
sleep . . ." The words  
are difficult to  
pronounce. I force  
my eyes  
half open just as  
she says, "Lover, you're  
talking in your sleep . . ."

## ALL THE PEACHES

All the peaches were slightly bruised  
but the price was right. I was  
examining a flattened mud-brown spot about  
the size of a nickel, when  
some words blew by and  
turned my eye to  
two women beside the cabbage and carrots,  
one about fifteen, the other about forty-five.  
From the tilt of their jaws and the  
twist of their ears I felt  
sure they were mother and daughter.  
I thought I'd heard, in a  
quiet tone like dark water,

—women are the keepers  
of the mystic bowl  
in which the soul is brewed—

But I wasn't sure. To look at them  
I would have guessed  
the older was chatting to the younger now  
about the lettuce or watercress.  
The older moved with a comfortable sag,  
dropping a celery bush  
into a plastic bag;  
the younger kept glancing  
down a far aisle,  
rubbed her knees together slightly  
and bit her lower lip;  
she looked as if she didn't quite fit  
into her

just-blooming womanness. I  
slipped closer and leaned my head to  
hear the older say to the younger,  
with eyes like stained glass,

—women are the openers  
of the magic door  
through which the future  
mind must pass,  
the offerers  
of the perfect spring  
where the spirit must drink  
to grow strong—

she placed three tomatoes on a scale then  
went on,

—but that doesn't mean you  
have to take that kind of shit from  
those jerks, Ellen, stand . . . Ellen  
are you listening?—

—I know I know—the  
younger replied impatiently then  
suddenly noticed me and blushed.

—All the peaches are slightly  
bruised,—I shrugged,

—but the  
price is right.—

## I HEARD THE SONG

I heard the song of my death  
calling to me  
from a spiral just out there  
but oh so close to me  
and it sang

oooo ooo ooo oooo oooo

oooo ooo ooo oooo oooo

so soon I knew fear was nothing and  
so I had nothing to fear

I heard the song of my life  
calling to me  
from a spiral inside here  
oh so close to me  
and it sang

oooo ooo ooo oooo oooo

oooo ooo ooo oooo oooo

so soon I knew fear was nothing  
and so I had nothing to fear

## THE WIND BLOWS

the wind blows your hat off  
a one-eyed fish with a headlamp stares at you through the porthole  
I just stubbed my toe on a puddle  
don't forget to zipper your fly

you fall in love with a pillow  
I've got a chipmunk in my pocket  
examining little pieces of stuff in the gutter  
a redbrick building waves to us as we drive by

you spent the whole morning playing with your toes  
hey they wont let you do that on the bus  
why is that bird laughing  
two supernova collide

poem for gary johnston  
Africa rises from the foaming waves  
I'll stay with you forever  
the panhandlers pray for rain

feeding the children of paraguay  
beetles don't recognize private property  
because your pants are filled with wind  
but there's so much pain

they exchange your head for an elephant's  
you tickle a cop with a sunbeam  
you are sent as ambassador to the eskimos  
you make world war two not have happened  
you do a little dance to this poem  
they crown you with a birthday hat  
you leap into a secret pond  
a greeneyed frog dives through the front wall  
riding the rising sun through a cloud of infinite sound

you blow a little kiss to god

## ALMOST TO

1

Blackberries tangle lazily  
along the fence grey  
and weathered to the grain.  
Lapwings in the roses and  
poinsettias by  
the window. A cobweb  
sparkles in the corner  
of the sill; an ant  
explores the dust;  
droplets ramble down  
the beaded glistening  
pane. Early morning,  
blue and pale, seeps  
like milk through the leaves and  
across pillow-strewn hair. Beneath  
the comforter her foot  
is barely brushing  
mine. In the other  
room baby stirs.

2

laughing girl  
when you dance around  
your flowery dress whirls  
and petals drift to the ground.  
Did you tie that blue ribbon  
around your cat's tail?  
What did your grammy  
send you in the mail?  
Where do you and your friends set sail  
when you float in your ship of dreams?  
Browneyed girl who lives in the back  
you dance like a silvery stream.

## TIMES 2

1

There are times I've looked  
for love but could find only  
sex, times I've looked for  
sex but could find only  
love, times I've  
looked for anything or  
nothing but couldn't find  
it, time's  
a string of colored beads,  
love and sex  
a clasp and a locket.

2

one way to pass  
through this reality  
is with love for all things  
equally. To  
love a thing,  
share with it  
care for it with compassion  
accept the limits of its flesh, the  
burdens of its mind  
seeing all things in it including  
yourself. Begin  
slowly. Choose one thing and  
love it. Then, as need be and  
if time allows, add  
another.

## TRULY

I love you like

I love to look at things  
I can't afford to buy,

I love you

like I love to  
talk to people who don't reply,

like a forest loves fires,

a jury loves liars, like

a miser loves a penny in each eye,

I love you so much I

could cry...

I love you like a

seagull loves to rub against the sky,

like a convict loves his dope,

a worker loves his hope,

a mountain loves a cold singing

stream, a yogi loves a cosmic

dream, I love

you so much I

could scream . . .



## VI. EARLY WARNINGS

[selections from *Commu 1* (1971)]

## WAR REPARATIONS TO THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD

I used to wonder what went wrong  
with this country then I found  
out it was built on  
genocide slavery  
servitude and wage-slavery  
but luckily  
katchinas drive starships  
and enslaved people always rise

## CALL TO ARMS: UNIFY THE FIELD

All matter is in motion, Einstein said, all  
matter is at rest, each conscious point  
a center of the universe, around which a  
dream of reality swirls, each particle or  
wave an energetic void which consciousness  
calls a thing.

Then why should it  
matter?

People illusions, phantom objects at  
best, states of nothing in motion, thought  
forms like here & now, infinity, eternity,  
nothing is left to one but Self:

then whom  
is there to love?

a lonely  
place to suicide or pray.

But then again,  
only the mad  
are sensuous enough  
to walk through walls.

SEIZE THE LAND—FISHER'S PEAK,  
TRINIDAD, COLORADO, 1967

Late afternoon, summer, a hot  
wind out of the west, Drop  
City shimmers. Mike  
stumbles out of his dome, eyes  
veined, takes a long  
piss. "Mike," I say, "they  
just killed Robert  
Kennedy." Face screwed blinks  
& shakes his head then  
nods in the distance, still  
pissing. "See that mountain? Well  
it's still there."

The  
mountain, by the way, is owned  
by the Rockefeller family. There's  
a barbed wire fence around it.  
When I mentioned  
that to a lady from town, she  
replied, "How nice of Mr.  
Rockefeller to provide such  
a beautiful view  
for the people."

## ON THE EXCESS AND CORRUPTION OF PRESIDENTIAL POWER

Mind is  
your breasts slow sensual wobble as you  
move my hundred million years of  
flesh willing itself to continue,  
mind  
is endlessly expanding energy turning  
in upon itself endlessly like  
the universe, mind is the spark  
in the infinity between mirrors  
that contains it all,  
mind is the cannibalist system  
grinding workers into cancerburger  
(over thirty billion served),  
mind is god suffering  
in our own created illusion,  
mind is  
social revolution,  
mind is release,  
mind .  
is light.

## THE SKY BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE

When we finally wake,  
surprised at first to see  
our fallen vehicles separate from  
our space, as through a window to  
another land & neither hand nor word can  
penetrate the veil, we  
panic for a moment.

But no,  
we are still here, whoever, wherever we  
are.

Then wonder  
at this new vehicle freed &  
look about in wonder  
& finally turn our mind  
to what awaits.

**OBSERVE IT APPEAR, OBSERVE IT MOVE  
THROUGH ALL POSSIBLE PERMUTATIONS,  
OBSERVE IT DISAPPEAR.**

Commune ends alienation. The Paris  
Commune. The fall of Saigon  
Notice the familiar sensuous progression  
as you fall asleep, like a cater-  
pillar cocooning.

Notice

the dark corners you  
turn, the transitions, trans-  
formations. Be  
alert:

loss of consciousness is  
a trick you play upon yourself.

Notice

how the dream forms, what stuff it  
is made of, where it comes from.

See  
yourself in it, wonder what you're doing,  
thinking. Creep closer. Slip  
inside.

Now you are in your dream body and  
can go anywhere you wish.  
Be careful you don't get lost. Commune  
means together.

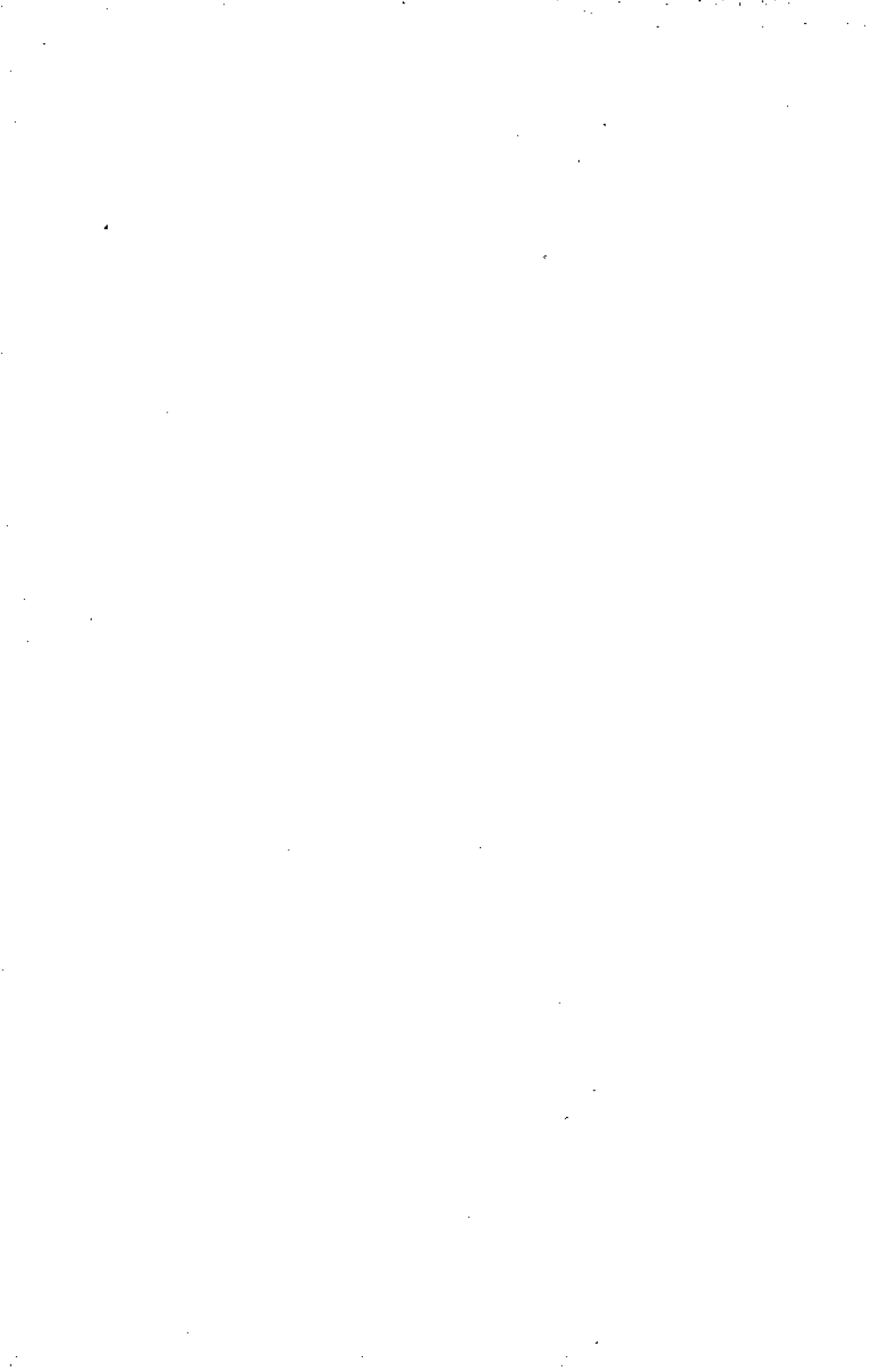
the Pittsburg  
Commune. New York in the  
Fall. the Fall of  
New York

## THOSE TREES AREN'T DYING,

that pavement,  
those telephone poles have been  
here since time never began and will  
be here until time never ends, even  
when the last of us is meat for  
fish and birds, we too  
will be as we have always been:  
these soft thighs, this  
sensual dance,  
this pleasure pain,  
watching the appearances  
change. Choice is  
delusion, yes.

Nonetheless in the eternal present we have  
total choice.

At this very instant secret US factories are  
manufacturing nuclear bombs.  
at this very instant your landlord is thinking of  
raising your rent.  
at this very instant the trees are dying.  
at this very instant your lover is seeing a  
planetary healing vision.  
at this very instant twenty thousand people are  
being born.



This book contains fifty uncollected and unpublished poems, as well as selections from previous books by John Curl: *Cosmic Athletics*, *Spring Ritual*, *Insurrection/Resurrection*, *Commu 1*; and the complete *Ride the Wind*.

"What is unique about John's work is the technique he has developed to bridge the gap between poetry of the heart and political rhetoric . . . His is the wholistic vision of Whitman, a hologram of fragments—each of which mirrors the inner harmonies as they leap out at you, all like circuits wired to some luminous inner board. In his strong impassioned voice, John's staccato lines hammer away at the machinations of the corporate hyenas just as smoothly as they hammer together a universe we could live in as brothers and sisters."

Art Goodtimes, *Poetry Flash*, 1981  
(about *Cosmic Athletics*)

"The procreative force, the cosmic sensibility, the oracular insight Curl brings to the reader is constantly astonishing. His poems in *Insurrection/Resurrection*, and these poems (*Ride the Wind*), help define and give rise to a verse of the surreal poetarian vision of the left. Here unrealism attempts to seize and transform imperialist reality. Curl writes like the lead miner in a pit crew. As such, he is already a major young poet on the people's side. There is not a thing to be bought off in his poems, there is only the amazement of truth."

Roger Taos, *The Unrealist*, 1981

"By replacing sentence structure with what he calls 'energy structure,' Curl is able to create a greater diversity of sources for inspiration and possibilities for communication within the context of any given poem . . . John Curl has proven himself one of our most capable and talented messengers."

Fred Pietarinen, *City Arts*, 1982

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