

Invocation for a Miniature Epic

The night Diane di Prima came to town and Lenny Bruce was killed
and we found the Mexican prophet and took him home to Orange County
and you wore a white summer dress at the top of the stairs
and nothing at all in the orange groves and my brother went to jail
and the moon felt everything before it went down and nobody saw
and the fire went out and nobody saw and the music stopped
and we were blind and saw and white water and you cried
and nothing I would say could help and Allen on his way to Cambria
and Mel's dog Frodo with him picked us up on the beach and left us there
and I told you I loved you again and I kissed you under your wet hair
and you huddled into the wind and poncho in the healey's back seat
and the snow began and the deer started down and the cougar screamed
and screamed and napalm swam among the peasants in Vietnam

and stay with me I asked no matter what I do or what I say
and the cancer began inside you and my father finally left
and you went to ceylon and then to hong kong and then to dark japan
and Mike slept with us and we killed Aaron Mitchell and Stevenson
and Jeff slept with us and we killed Malcolm X and Hart Crane
and Basil slept with us and we killed Archimedes and Lorca and Nietzsche
and Socrates and Christ and my grandfather and my two lonely tomcats
and we moved into the missionaries' barracks in potter's mills
and the snow came down in the blackness and Kish disappeared
and Dylan was born and we killed Kennedy and Jamie was born
and we burned los angeles the cancer and we burned detroit
and berlin and syracuse and the prophet drank gallo and spoke of love
and we burned nagasaki and hiroshima st petersburg and rome newark
and alexandria and the prophet spoke of peace and how he killed his baby

and they busted Mal and Sue cut her hair and Fred went to europe
and Jim to his third shrink and you to phoenix and fountain valley
and Sue cut her hair and Mal went to jail in resistance
and for maybe the first time we made love that last time on the beach
and the sky pavilion was set with silken carlomagnian vaulting
and feathered air a fluting music on the sand where the jade king
and ivory goddess did not just do things at the surface of the skin
and I walked into the cold water where the fireworks were melting
and felt in the pebbles for fish or tadpoles and found a thin line
and followed it out into the darkness of nightbirds' cries
and smells of cuban pine and dogwood and yellow lotus buds
and island mud getting set for the next storm and red dawn
and I knew then, as I let go, the night: it will never be over

from *Hunger Weather 1959-1975*