

Arts District

1. IN A JADE GREEN SHADE

Come in out of the sun, love
am'rous as this lovely green,
relax in the clouds and rain,
enjoy the cloudbursts one after one.

2. DRAWING LESSON

When asked to draw the world they saw
they drew the lines in different places
as people often do. But no one knew,
except maybe those two, if they truly
drew what they saw or if what each saw
from their joint and several spaces
was anything like what the other saw,
for all that's known for certain true
were the lines of conclusion they drew.

3. ETUDE

Ripe fruit falling through tropical air
sweet to the tongue. Taken from a dead
Indian, friends and neighbors, old wives
in the moonlight, geese overhead. Frogs.
These were found broken as an animal
in the street, blown abstractly as paper
onto the grate. Slumped by the door at breakfast,
under the cabbage leaf by noon, inside
the morning-glory at sunset, glistening from
the tips of pine needles in mountain fog.
These were carved in a black walnut shell,
acid-etched on glass, scratched on the cavewall.
These embroidered, these left plain. These
bought for a nickel and dime to have a good time with
down across the line: French whores and Chinese
madams, Harlem pimps and princely johns,
these were dropped by pigeons losing the race,
trying their best just to keep up.

4. SIMILITUDES

As I said, J's are like minimalist painting,

the canvas covered with little squares of color or,
even more, like some minimalist music,
Reich or Glass or some other hearts of space sounds,
the minor variations through long repetitions
taking on meanings as the frequencies of notes,
the modulated pitch of phrased intonations,
amplify and interfere with each other
rhyming in a different sense than we think of
usually when we think of rhyming sounds,
and often focused on emotional nuances.
Mine seem to me more like surreal canvases
Bosch and Brueghel and some of Dürer's engravings,
images from multiple walks of life arranged
among flights into heights and depths of dream states,
conscious thoughts alongside archetypes
drawn from real life as we know it:
psychological, socio-economic,
things pregnant with meaning, scenes and unseen
sounds juxtaposed and punned together
taking on significance and symbolic
resonance, hopefully of use.

5. MUSE

*her goddess ass and thighs
wrap all around your brain*

Graves was right of course as usual:
call her Muse or Nymph or Goddess
or Lilith decked out for the Beaux Arts Ball,
cast in bronze or flesh or words or less,
her peculiar strength lies in her need
to give love freely and absolute with no
corresponding obligation on her
part of constancy, honor or sympathy.
The man she rides gets more from her than his kenning,
more than his tongue understands doing her bidding:
bearing her weight, for instance, his whole life,
her thighs firmly astride his neck and brain
her long silky leg across his hairy chest
her gracefully arched foot pressing down
hard on the cock and bull story of his pain.

6. ANALOG TIME

Above the river, fog
above the fog, mountains

Black Mountain
Cold Mountain
Mount Analogue

All these mountains
stacked up behind each other

Mt Ararat
Mt Pisgah
Ossa on Pelion

The clouds like a mountain range
the moon like a cloud

Mont Blanc
Mont Saint Michel
Mons Veneris

The mountains walking
blue-green rose-gold

Salvat
Meru
Taishan

The mountains on fire
through our rear window

Parnassos
Olympos
Golgotha

7. THE FIGURES OF WOMEN

A famous poem by a famous poet
asks if the mind of the lover dwells most'
on the woman won or the woman lost.
He never answered the question directly.

In the poems the figures of women
are usually those who got away,

mourned in their absence but informed,
in a manner of speaking, utterly
by the won who won him.