

OFF
stage

ROOM

June 1

The Dissenting American Poets Present:
The People's Poetry
Josh M. Beach
Lisa Taylor
Chris R. Gray
Candace Polson
Mike Spring
Eric W. Dickey

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"The Way Of Poetry: An Ancient Wisdom"

J.M. Beach

The African Novelist and self taught Cultural Anthropologist Bessie Head once wrote of the native African, "His whole world is his religion and he is a religious man." She was paraphrasing John S. Mbiti and went on in her essay to quote from his book, African Religion and

Philosophy:

*Wherever the African is, there is his religion: he carries it to the fields where he is sowing seeds or harvesting a new crop; he takes it with him to the beer party or to attend a funeral ceremony... In traditional religions there are no creeds to be recited; instead, the creeds are written in the heart of the individual, and each one is himself a living creed of his own religion. Where the individual is, there is his religion, for he is a religious being. It is this that makes Africans so religious: religion is in their whole system of being.*¹

Bessie Head was trying to emphasize the "spirituality" latent in everyday life, which is everywhere accessible to those peoples who are in accord with it. And what is spiritually accessed by indigenous peoples around the world seems lost to the civilized except through storyteller-poets who have somehow retained a mystical understanding of the world:

'Who are you?' people asked.

'I am the dreamer and storyteller,' they replied. 'I have seen life. I am drunk with the magical enchantment of human relationships. I laughed often. The big, wide free world is full of innocence...'

¹ Mbiti, John S. *African Religions and Philosophy*. qtd. in: Head, Bessie. "African Religions," *A Woman Alone*. Oxford: Heinemann Educational Publishers, 1950. 51, 53.

*But what happens to the dreamer and storyteller when he is born into a dead world of such extreme cruelties that no comment or statement of love can alter them?... Where is that wedge of innocence and laughter that resolves so many human ills?... For largeness of heart is what we need for a civilization and big, big, eyes, wide enough to drink in all the knowledge of the heavens and earth?*²

Bessie Head re-lives the words of William Blake, "As man is so he sees." The poet sees the beauty and innocence of the world around and lives within that sacred center. This allows the poet to access the sacred within life and thereby become and live the sacred—"drunk with the magical enchantment." Such is the potential reality of life. Such is the poet's Vision.

But there are those indigenous and native peoples around the world who can still see poetically and experientially the sacred as an everyday reality. The indigenous "heart" bespeaks a ceremonial belief built of strong emotional bonds to the material world, which unites the application of a methodological system with the practical concerns of everyday life, and produces a purposeful sense of personal/communal survival working within the larger "Way" of life. Tribal rituals and stories have preserved this ancient Vision, which expresses in the Nuu-chah-nulth language Hishuk "Tsawalk", "everything is one; everything is connected."³ But this Vision, to the eyes of those who do not see spiritually, seems but a fancy or a meta-physical illusion. William Blake once wrote, "The tree which moves some to tears of joy is in the Eyes of others only a Green thing that stands in the way."⁴

² Head, Bessie. "Epiologue: An African Story," & "God and teh Underdog," *Ibid.* 101, 50.

³ Happyhook, Tom. "Securing Food, Health and Traditional Values through the Sustainable Use of Marine Resources." Speech given at Oregon State University on April 11, 2001

⁴ Blake, William. "Letter to Rev. Dr. Trusler: Aug. 23 1799." *The Complete Poems and Prose of William Blake.*

The Western world, and Western Science in particular (as it has become the dominant ideology driving Western society), has become that type who sees the natural universe as just a "thing," and in its technological "progress" has lost sight of that Visionary essence, which moves unseen behind all life: "Any damn fool can treat a living thing as if it were a machine."⁵ And thus there is a "difference,"

Tom Happynook believes, "between knowledge and information."⁶ Western science has always gone after piece-meal "information" instead of a more holistic "knowledge." Vine Deloria, Jr., in concurrence with the proposition of this dichotomy writes, "the white man has ideas, the Indian has visions."⁷ Vision being a holistic approach to life. Vision being a holistic "knowledge." Vision being what is necessary to apprehend the complex reality, which is the phenomenon and event called Life.

Oregon State Philosophy Professor Kathleen Dean Moore learned early in her career from a "misguided professor" that Western philosophy, heavily influenced by Aristotelian analytics and "scientific" rationalism, "is not about life. Philosophy is about ideas. Life and ideas are not the same."

I went looking for a discipline where the essential value was clarity. I found it in western philosophy... Everything I wrote was clear to the point of vanishing. Objective, abstract, precise, and never, ever about life... the range of possible subjects narrowed: the easiest things to write clearly about are the simplest, and nothing in real life is simple... Many of the ideas that remained were reduced by isolation—unrecognizable, fractured from the lives of real people. In the end, they didn't matter.⁸

⁵ Deloria Jr., Vine. *Spirit and Reason*. Golden Fulcrum Publishing. 1999. 13.

⁶ "Securing Food, Health and Traditional Values..." Ibid.

⁷ *Spirit and Reason*. Ibid. 15.

⁸ Moore, Kathleen Dean. *Riverwalking*. Lyons & Burford, 1995. 141, 142, 144.

The "white man's ideas"—Western Science and Philosophy—seems starkly inadequate set against the complex reality which is called Life. "Indians believed," as Deloria, Jr. wrote, "that everything that humans experience has value and instructs us in some aspect of life...we cannot 'misexperience' anything; we can only misinterpret what we experience...so we must be alert and try not to classify things too quickly."⁹ This "knowledge" of experience exists as the Native American "science of wholeness"¹⁰ or "science of relations."¹¹ It is a Visionary way of seeing and understanding the world, which Western Science has heretofore rejected. But it is a Vision the Western world "badly needs"¹² if this earth is to sustain its balance.

The Native American "science of wholeness" or "science of relations" is a "world view shaped by reciprocity and spatiality."¹³ It is a world view, which sees the environment as "not a place of divisions but a place of relations, a place where cultural diversity and bio-diversity are not separate, but are in fact interdependent... the natural world is a complex web."¹⁴ The Native American world view arranges its knowledge in a "circular format, which is to say, there [are] no ultimate terms

or constituents of their universe, only sets of relationships."¹⁵ And every relationship was "established" upon "personal relationships between and among other forms of life."¹⁶ The human being was no more important than the wolf or the fish or the tree or the mountain: all had their place, their meaning and role to fulfill, and as a unity where considered "family."

⁹ *Spirit and Reason*. Ibid. 46.

¹⁰ Ibid. 40

¹¹ Happynook, Tom. "Securing Food, Health and Traditional..." Ibid.

¹² Deloria, Jr. *Spirit and Reason*. 16.

¹³ Tinker, George E. "An American Indian Response to Ecojustice." *Defending Mother Earth: Native American Perspectives on Justice*. Ed. Jace Weaver. Orbis Books, 1996. 163.

¹⁴ Happynook, Tom. "Securing food, Health, and Traditional..." Ibid.

¹⁵ Deloria Jr., *Spirit and Reason*. 48.

¹⁶ Ibid. 54

Western science, however, works within a "severely restricted" and impersonal "arena" and therefore does not ask "complete questions of nature"—"may not even be asking relevant questions."¹⁷ And Western science seems to often jump to conclusions about what it finds within its narrow searches of irrelevant questions:

*Western science prematurely derives its scientific "laws" and assumes that the products of its own mind are inherent in the structure of the universe. But American Indians allow the process to continue, recognizing that premature analysis will produce anomalies and give incomplete understanding.*¹⁸

A root concept of "dominion" and "control" is inherent within these localized questions asked of nature manifested in the very heart of Western science, which is founded upon the "acts of naming:"¹⁹

*Naming nature is the special business of science. Theories, models, and descriptions are elaborated names. In these acts of naming, the scientist simultaneously constructs and contains nature—"according to the relation and perspective he chooses."*²⁰

Western science derived an inherited process found in the Book of Genesis whereby dominion over the natural world comes through the naming of its multifaceted parts:

*When dealing with the ordering of complex natures (representations in general, as they are given in experience), one has to constitute a taxinomia, and to do that one has to establish a system of signs... taxinomia... treats of identities and differences; it is the science of articulations and classifications; it is the knowledge of beings.*²¹

¹⁷ Deloria Jr., *Spirit and Reason*, 45, 12.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁹ Tinker, George E. "An American Indian Theological Response to Ecojustice." *Ibid.*, 159.

²⁰ Keller, Evelyn Fox. *Reflections on Gender and Science*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995. 17. Keller is critiquing the Western Science on the grounds of gender and within the complex of Western Science itself, yet she parallels the Native American Critiques on some key issues. Keller writes that "knowability and objectifiability need to be relinquished" and that the "concept of order" needs to replace the older, "coercive, hierarchical and centralizing" concept of "law." (149, 132)

²¹ Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things*. New York: Vintage Books, 1970. 72, 74.

But as Spinoza pointed out in the 17th century, the "system of signs" (language) that Western minds created was incapable of truly apprehending reality because what could be represented through a "system of signs" (language) would be a 'negative' representation conveyed in terms of 'what it is not.' A positive definition ('what it is') could never be known or represented through language. A being could only be. Thus was "God" for Spinoza: the Ultimate, Un-definable Unity, which was 'Being' and 'Life.'

And such is what the indigenous and Native peoples around the globe—and what poets for centuries— have tried to make Western minds understand: you cannot "know" Life, you can only live Life. Thus "the old Indians," as Vine Deloria, Jr. wrote, "were interested in finding the proper moral and ethical road upon which human beings should walk. All knowledge, if it is to be useful, was directed toward that goal:"

The real interest of the old Indians was not to discover the abstract structure of physical reality but rather to find the proper road along which, for the duration of a person's life, individuals were supposed to walk. This colorful image of the road suggests that the universe is a moral universe. That is to say, there is a proper way to live in the universe: There is a content to every action, behavior, and belief. The sum total of our life experiences has a reality. There is a direction to the universe, empirically exemplified in the physical growth cycles of childhood, youth, and old age, with the corresponding responsibility of every entity to enjoy life, fulfill itself, and increase in wisdom and the spiritual development of personality. Nothing has incidental meaning and there are no coincidences.

The wise person will realize his or her own limitations and act with some degree of humility until he or she has sufficient knowledge to act with confidence. Every bit of information must be related to the general framework of moral interpretation as it is personal to them and their community. No body of knowledge exists for its own sake outside the moral framework of understanding. We are, in the truest sense possible, creators or co-creators with the highest powers, and what we do has immediate importance for the rest of the universe... In the moral universe all activities, events, and entities are related, and consequently it does not matter what kind of existence an entity enjoys, for the responsibility is always there for it to participate in the continuing creation of reality.²²

This is basis for the Native American "science of wholeness" or "science of relations:" reciprocity of identity and actions within a relative universe of equally autonomous, but inter-related parts. This idea, however, also has roots within the Western tradition, expressed most fully perhaps in the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Martin Buber. Buber said, writing of "True community,"

All of them [the people] have to stand in a living, reciprocal relationship to a single living center, and they have to stand in a living, reciprocal relationships to one another... A community is built upon a living, reciprocal relationship, but the builder is the living, active center.²³

The "active center" for Native Americans is that 'sacred space' whereby the mystery of the world and the unity of Life is revealed and made manifest. The "active center" and the "sacred" are Life itself apprehended in its total unity.

²² *Spirit and Reason*. 43-44, 46-47.

²³ Buber, Martin. *I and Thou*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Touchstone, 1970. 94.

And if the indigenous and Native universe is "moral or has a moral purpose" then it must be maintained that this moral universe "is alive." The universe itself is here seen as a living 'being,' and thus composes the heart of the "active center" of a people or of an individual. In this organic concept "all things are related" and so "responsibility for maintaining the harmony of life falls equally on all creatures:"²⁵

Life is better understood as a tapestry or symphony in which each player has a specific part or role to play. We must be in our proper place and we must play our role at the appropriate moment. Mutual respect in many ways is a function of a strong sense of personal and communal identity.²⁶

The essence of the underlying unity and reciprocity of Life is carried through the art and song of the people, danced through the various rituals, and lived as the sacred words (Logos - the Word) ever composing the unending poem, which is Life. Or as Walt Whitman characterized this essence, using a metaphor of a "powerful play:" "That you are here—that life exists and identity, that the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse."²⁷ Such is "knowledge" or indeed, "wisdom." And thus, such is "truth" (that which should not be forgotten). To the indigenous or Native mind—to the Visionary—to the poet—this is all one ever really "knows" of Life, and really needs to know.

²⁵ *Spirit and Reason*. 49.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 52.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 51.

To Flee Within the Mighty Tides

J.M.Beach

*Strive to see supernal light, for I have
brought you into a vast ocean. Be careful!
Strive to see, yet escape drowning.*

-Isaac of Akko; Otsar Hayyim

To flee within the mighty tides
we creep like criminals in the night,

Pulling our better reason wrong
Or half way towards the right,

To these questions buried under
Identified over our better sense,

Our answers must remit our failing
Semblance of the chance we missed,

Where burning fire within our hearts
The truth slipped past our ears,

And the absolute of ages gone
Disappeared before the years,

Yet what by chance we make is sound
Replace the sight that fails,

But where misleading guides our light
We trip, and drive upon the nails,

Deep, Deep into the coffin shut,
Within our dreams we failed,

We could not keep the faith afloat

A hold upon the sails,

We lost and crossed each way our heart
To saviors carved in wood,

And were we wished to swim we drowned
In visions lost the water stood

Locked, within the waves that crashed,
We blocked away the fear, we dashed

Upon the rocks, fell bruised
As blood and water mixed,

But where we fixed our eyes for help
No longer was in sight,

And we with anger turned our hurt
Two hands to dive within and fight -

To fight,
to save ourselves we must,

And if in failing drown we do
To you our words ride on to float,

Where faith is not upon the water
Find at hand what can be made to serve,

To save, to ride, upon to safety
Take your life into in your hands.

Live, live to swim,
that you might understand.

If Only We Reach the Bay

J.M. Beach

Cross out and go on!—All right then, let's go on!
—August Strindberg; "The Dance of Death"

I know these complications come,
 But I've yet to see them form.
 Simply the situations start
 As seas are calm before the storm.

But some angels sing a broken song:
 Fallen out from high a shriek,
 A cry, proud paradise reels,
 As Towers once strong in heaps.

Our winds of Fate do always blow.
 And Bells of warning soft do ring.
 Alarms not heard in early dawn
 Break evening out from peaceful dreams.

All Vessels tossed within a storm -
 Tumult rains upon the weak.
 Wet and weary, the vision pinched,
 Frail hopes oft tend to sink.

We as one do float on water,
 Human as our bonds do bind.
 Separate yet we cling together
 Waiting the weather to see, to find.

Alone one thinks the other safe
 If one would leave the boat to swim.
 Each prepares alone the pain
 As limbs begin the diving in.

Thus alone we miss the winds
 Blowing us together;
 Clinging hope where drowning looms,
 Our fingers hold the weather

Tearing at our flesh and vessel,
 Anchored in each other's arms.
 We sink or swim as fate decrees,
 But love alone the storm disarms.

So I to you, and you to me,
 Hold fast these winds away.
 And truly will our scars reveal
 Bonds not broken... (if only we reach the bay!)

Hard As Nails

J.M.Beach

*Don't you see that unless I can be hard—
as hard as nails—I shall go mad.*

—G. B. Shaw; Heartbreak House

How am I to feel, to find the words to say,
America, what you've done to me inside
My head, my heart, I beat upon the nails left

Piercing my inner walls, to build a defense strong
Against the cruelty I see reflected about
Me, in the middle, alone, staring into

Vacant eyes of those who die outside the dream,
Cold, paper-bag-wrapped boos to strike away what
Within the dream they could not find, poor darkness

Gives without a word, the numbness to embrace,
Disappeared in front of eyes who will not see,
Who cannot see beyond their own fear to find

The meaning left behind the feelings lost, now
How do we hope
to build,
to cry,
alone to die

We live without touching, placeless we stand numb
Upon our history, wiping blood and bones

Into flags waved in tatters to keep the cold
Freezing outside the dream, and we will weep
Without seeing their eyes cut our future out,

Thrown away upon the streets as trash we walk
Their skins, our path to glory blown in swift winds
To sail our sins away from our naked failure,

We've fallen, without grace, inside of you

America,

You whore
Without luxury of feelings,
Fucking for your diamonds.

Scars

J.M.Beach

*It is bitter—bitter...
 But I like it
 Because it is bitter,
 And because it is my heart.
 —Stephen Crane; The Black Riders*

Life's bear blade pointed in to you,
 To bleed your humors dry, to drive
 A mark into your flesh to find
 Where blood breaks forth a deep feeling;
 Scared where memory won't forget.

Hard lines drawn down us, cut clear through
 The many machinations upon us
 Placed: Life's inflicted wounds we bear
 Our standard hewn where we survive
 To tell bitter tales tattooed.

Our lives etched from pain and sorrow
 Sketched into an outline, birthed forth
 Our sacred Identity, known
 Because we bore the knowing forth.
 More than words, speaking flesh reveals.

What heals leaves behind a trace
 To touch back the experience,
 To find where we have come - so far -
 To find the distance spanned here marked
 A scar, a wound that bled its truth.

I AM what I have lived to tell.
 I AM what I will live to bear.
 Strength in pain our lot to take in
 Stride, onward through the perilous
 Points to dare death in Life survived.

Who Will Save Our World?

J.M.Beach

*No, we should go forward, groping our way through
 the darkness, stumbling perhaps at times, and try to
 do what good lay in our power.
 —Camus; The Plague*

If our world was burning
 Would you smell the smoke,
 Or choke small denials
 As you smile in ignorance;
 Sure of deliverance,
 if admittance never leaves your lips?

If our world was burning
 Would you cry for help;
 A yelp or a yawp coursing alarm
 Through the streets, and everyone
 You meet would know
 we are all in danger?

If our world was burning
 Would you care for the scorched—
 The soft skin torched by flames;
 Pricked by the nameless horror
 Dancing toward your little plot of Earth,
 less secure if you choose to save?

If our world was burning
 Would you fight back to save;
 React to pave the way to water,
 Or would you totter between disbelief,
 Or relief that the end has finally come?
 (the water will not throw itself...)

If our world was burning
 Would you dance amidst the flames;
 Or point fingers in blame;
 Or cry out in shame;
 Or curse you deity's name,
 accepting the pain and certainty of death?

If our world was burning
 What would or could you do?

We'd like to say we'd pave the way
 Toward the flames, to put them out
 Or to shout and shout and shout,
 "our world is burning"—
 "the sky is black;"

But to such words would you listen;
 By such warnings would you react?

I say now our world is burning,
 Slowly at our back.
 What will you do
 In the face of this fact?
 (The water will not throw itself...)

The Messiah

J.M.Beach

*Good and evil and joy and pain and I and you—
 colored smoke this seemed to me before creative
 eyes. The creator wanted to look away from him-
 self; so he created the world... This world, eternally
 imperfect, the image of an eternal contradiction,
 an imperfect image—a drunken joy for its imperfect
 creator: thus the world once appeared to me...
 I overcame myself, the sufferer; I carried my own
 ashes to the mountains; I invented a brighter
 flame for myself.*

—Nietzsche; *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

In the beginning was the Word
 in the written words found in books,
 waiting upon the shelves beckoning
 forward, Us, to touch the sacred
 Bindings holding Our discovery
 In pages full; recovery in words
 to write whom We are destined to be.
 secret voices singing subtle tones,
 An undiscovered language in
 the whispering of the dead,
 waiting patiently for paradise
 recovered; again to speak to mortal ears
 To share with those who would hear
 a feeling old, and largely untold
 and often misunderstood, here,
 left to mold away under cover
 Of centuries in silence,
 through eternities of ignorance and confusion
 waiting for the resurrection:
 a sacred union of Breath and Word

Illuminating the Vision unseen—unheard
 tongues of fire will inspire
 the entire Vision come—
 The Word again to create
 The world as it was meant to be,
 using Us as vessels to usher in
 that which has never been;
 to finally find what was hidden within
 Our worn, dusty skin.
 God has been within
 Our worn, dusty skin,
 and We, in our manufactured sin,
 Could not see Him;
 Leaving His message to rot within
 as We died without
 knowing what We could have been.

We are the Resurrection
 and the Life!

We have the Peace
 that passes understanding!

We hold the gold of heaven
 within Our veins,
 buried by the rock of ignorance and shame,
 and in the name of truth

And wisdom rediscovered,
 We will uncover this hidden treasure;
 coming to measure inch by inch
 the hidden core revealed

In words that will heal,
 and restore the doors of perception
 to their rightful place,
 in conception of the holy Vision waiting

For its inception into firmer faiths,
 found in the faces
 of those around Us who carry the keys
 unlocking the mysteries we've instilled;
 For we could not willingly love
 without fear of falling lost
 among the scattered deities,
 in Our broken world of shared misery.

We are the Resurrection
 and the Life!

We have the Peace
 that passes understanding!

To breathe the Vision into time,
 and in breathing find Our dreams
 that seemed impossible to grasp,
 slip from their heights

So that We might touch
 the intangible face of Our God
 fallen free from blind worship and idolatry.
 We are God—You and Me—

And in Our unity comes
 a new community of saints and sinners,
 where We once stood in flames
 amid the fire of denial and blame.

We are the same You and Me,
 and in our difference We see
 Ourselves understood,
 outlined in perspectives

We could never find before
 when We hated Ourselves,
 and the binding ties of relation.
 and Our cohabitation in the hells

We fearfully raised,
 has fueled the rage of angels locked
 within Our restricting angles of sin,
 and what We have been,
 I've come to say,
 is now forgiven
 And all is cleansed,
 and all is washed away.

We are the Resurrection
 and the Life!

We have the Peace
 that passes understanding!

Rise and go forth
 proclaiming in the name of God and Man
 that We understand
 that God and Man
 can and will be united within the sins
 that We forgive.

Rise and come to crucify Your self
 upon the cross of time
 to find the future—built from the years
 Our tears destroyed—

Raised in the glory
 of the coming of Our Lord.

We are the Resurrection
 and the Life!

We have the Peace
 that passes understanding!

You, a Galaxy

J.M.Beach

*Whoever says You does not have something; he has nothing.
 But he stands in relation.*

—Martin Buber; I and Thou

Open the depths of your oblivion to me,
 I would see your soul of matter formed spirit.
 Being naked, your expanse of stars and vacuums
 Spaced a universe, ordered by unseen principles
 Dancing from pole to pole in silent gravitational truth.
 Let me peer into your vast galaxy and feel time pass,
 The distance spanned an unutterable touch:
 Your wonder observed without knowing a thing.

Amadu Diallo

Lisa Taylor

1,2,3,4,5,6,7,
 8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,
 16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,
 27,28,29,30,31,32,33,34,35,36, 37,38,39,40,41.
 Injustice, Injustice, Injustice.

Through the tears I hold myself,
 I try to tell myself its just one of those things.
 Part of the cycle of life.
 An accident,
 like falling down the stairs
 or sudden infant death syndrome.
 A flaw in Gods master design.

I try to hear your point of view,
 to listen with patience.
 When you say that history has nothing to do with it,
 that it's happening was a random act.
 It's a rare act, a lonely act.
 That lynching is a thing of the past.

There's no reason to get my panties in a bunch.
 Its happening has nothing to do with race,
 I have to be joking right?
 There's no way that this could have been an act of hate

You told me I had some nerve to think that
 his death was a transgression against me.
 You told me I was crazy, the only reason this
 made the news was because he was black.
 If it had been one of yours it wouldn't of been
 on the news, no one would of gave a damn.

I went home that night
 I re-thought my place on this earth,
 I re-thought who I was.
 I cried.

My Man called me the week before, when it
 first happened. He said nothing. We sat there
 we didn't speak. Eventually he said,
 'Damn my mom is crying.'
 He told me that as they watched
 the news she sat beside him,
 tears streaming down her cheeks,
 she looked her
 son in the eyes and said
 'Baby that could have been you.'

41 shots 41 shots 41 shots
 America, this is the message
 you are sending to black people.
 It is 19 fuckin' 99...
 And we still can't find justice.

Dreamer

Lisa Taylor

Dedicated to the memory of Dr Martin Luther King Jr.
*"He had a dream and we had a chance, I have been
 blessed by that chance. I have learned how important
 dreams are, we all must dream in order to give that
 chance to the next generation."*

Let freedom ring, out over the hills
 Let us throw down our bails and hold the lash
 Let us be free
 Someone had a dream, we are not slaves

Let freedom ring, out over the crowd
 Let us sit at your counters and study at your schools
 Let us be equal
 Someone had a dream, we shall overcome

Let freedom ring from coast to coast
 Let us stop killing our brothers and ignoring our children
 Let us heal
 I have a dream, we shall learn to love.

The Session

Lisa Taylor

Out of night they come,
 From years ago
 They come.
 Haunting, like shadows from no light.
 Their icy cold claws choking me,
 Crushing out my spirit.
 Memories of the past.

He sits there in his leather easy chair,
 Scribbling random notes on a yellow legal pad,
 Sipping his green tea
 He says, "I want you to look beyond those days,
 see your potential, your goals."
 "Visualize your future."

As if he could ever understand
 my need to exist before this moment in time,
 Before this very instant in my life.
 He with his big white house
 and large extended, loving family.
 As if he could really understand,
 Understand,
 That I was no ones child.
 A cast away.
 A scrap.

Out of night,
 Out of aloneness,
 Out of years ago they come.
 Haunting me like shadows from no light.
 No light at all.
 Their icy cold claws choke my life,
 Stomp out my breath, and crush my spirit.
 Visions of them, all of them.
 Those that stole from me, those that took from me
 what a girl has to give.
 As I lay there on that couch,
 Words forcing themselves up with bitter contemplation.

He sits there in his leather easy chair,
 Scribbling random notes on a yellow legal pad,
 Sipping his green tea
 He looks at me.
 With a glint of hope in his voice he says
 "You were so young then, look at you now."
 "I want you to visualize your future."

As if he could ever understand,
 Those of us that have been mis-positioned.
 Those of us that know fear, like one knows his own tongue.
 Those of us who had to choose between NO!! and a home.

Silence or freedom.
 As if he could understand,
 Understand that I was no ones child,
 A commodity on the so-called black market.

Silence has been my best testimony,
 The words have never come, does anyone understand?

He sits there in his leather easy chair
 Scribbling random notes on a yellow legal pad
 Sipping his green tea.
 He says, "I'm sorry our time here is up."
 As though he hadn't heard a word I was saying.

Deviance

Lisa Taylor

Is it deviance to deny I am american
because of my racial ethnicity?
My government spits on my name,
While swearing I'm welcome.
How can america live inside me,
As I live in america?

She can ignore the bigotry without notice.
She is you and you are her.
You belong.

My body fills an open space.
My mind contributes to your thoughts.
My money to your economy.
But, you see, as I am a part of you,
you are not a willing part of me.
You fight your own existence within me.
My people our rituals and songs have been taken.
I live here and still I deny that I am american.

Do not sing to me the national anthem.
....For the land of the free and the home of the brave
Does not belong to me.
My people are not free.
My people are all people you shun.

Do not teach my children the pledge of allegiance.
One nation under god....
Japanese internment.
Indivisible....
Trail of tears
With liberty and justice for all.
Slavery

I would love to be apart of her
But first you need to see that I am hurt
Apologize for Bigotry, racism and hate.
Apologize for genocide.
Not for you.
Not for me, your other half
But, For the human race.

The artist told me I was his medium.
 With me he wanted to kiss away my hardness,
 to smooth away my fears.
 He wanted to mould me and feel my shape,
 wet beneath his sculptures hands.
 He wanted to build in me a fire hotter than a kelm,
 so that when he was done,
 I would be his greatest masterpiece.
 He wanted to wake up my senses with his art form
 and express himself with passion,
 He was a master at work, an inspiration.

The Funeral

C.R.Gray

I can see the funeral now
 Church. Bell. Steeple. Cross.
 My brother's face serious and discontent.
 A thousand eyes looking with disbelief
 and a sense of betrayal by fate or the gods.
 A Priest with usual sermon. The scent
 of frank and mire insence between
 aisles of wood and marble.
 Women with strange hats. Restless
 bats and birds. Sad clouds. Rivers
 without sound. Trees still as steel.
 A white hearse. Flowers. His coffin on shoulders
 of compatriots. Mourners in a yard of stones,
 dressed in black, confused as I was confused
 by the chronicle of a death unfortold.

And at the end when he was buried
 with a basket ball and a bouquet of roses
 and the roll of drums and hymns
 from a thousand unharmonious voices, we
 walked away with an eerie feeling of lost.

Ode to a Mexican

C.R.Gray

Mexican I see your face.
 You have the face of history
 written all over your forehead
 and chin. Mexican when I look
 at you I see the face of a thousand
 nations. I see the hidden
 pyramids of the Aztec. I see the brown
 Mississippi rolling down your eyes
 heading for tomorrow, heading for tomorrow.
 Mexican I see the Grand Canyons
 in your face. I see the ancient Red Woods.
 The Rockys and the Sierras in your
 cheek bone. Mexican I see the deserts
 of Texas and Arizona in your smile.

Mexican I see your face in the
 acrid landscape from my plane.
 I see your eyes everywhere eagles
 and hawks fly. I see your tears of
 joy feeding the Colorado and Columbia
 rivers. Mexican I see you in the
 morning hitchhiking north for work
 when winter finishes its satire
 for bare bottom trees. I see you
 following the path of the geese homeward journey each spring.

Mexican I see your face
 in the corridors you have
 built in the west. I see your
 face in the crushed grapes
 and wine of valleys great.
 I see your face in a hundred
 canals where the moon paces at night.

Mexican I see you. I see your
 face everywhere I go about
 and I wonder about your wanderings
 with the Hopi and Apache and
 Mohawk and Sioux for ten centuries.
 Mexican I see the Columbia Gorge
 in your face. I see a hundred waterfalls
 in your teeth and laughter.

Mexican I see your face in the
 burning candles for the dead.
 I see your nose in a million corn,
 potato and strawberry fields
 I see your face in the hat, shirt,
 pants and belt of ranchers and cowboys.

Mexican I see your face round
 as the moon. It is the face of both
 the sun and the moon in one.
 Mexican I see your face where
 journeys end and journeys begin
 for border crossers. I see your face
 where wagon wheels no longer
 tarry with gold and prisoners of war.
 I see your face on walls, street comers
 and subways. Mexican I see your
 face. It is the face of the rocky cliffs of the Americas.

Run Jose Run

C.R.Gray

*For the Border Runners between
 Mexico and the United States*

Run Jose Run.
 Run across the border
 Between here and forever.
 Run Jose Run Run
 across the border
 of indifference and resistance.

Run, Run Jose Run.
 Run, don't look back.
 Run, don't look back.
 Run, the snake behind
 you will slow you down,
 make you fall to the ground

Run, Run Jose Run.
 Run, Run through the dark.
 For thousands of years you
 have been running without
 shoes across the Rio Grande.
 Run, you have been running before
 borders, before walls.
 Run for your freedom, run for your sucess.
 near barns and chicken cobs.

Run Jose Run.
 Run from the border patrols.
 Run from their dogs.
 Run from their torchlights.
 Run through the deserts,
 run through the rivers.
 Run across the winding roads,
 soon you will find a new home
 near barns and chicken cobs.

Run Jose Run.
 Run past your fears.
 Run to meet your dreams.
 Run, you will reach your destiny
 not too far away where ranchers
 and cowboys pack horses and cows.

Run Jose Run.
 Run to California,
 Run to Texas,
 Run to Arizona,
 Run to New Mexico.
 Run, run because if you
 stop the border patrol will
 capture you near a dry river

across the border, send you
 back to a life of poverty.

Run Jose Run.
 Run across the vast expanse of land.
 Don't forget to bring water.
 Run, don't look back for strangers.
 Run, look out for danger hiding
 on ranches with rifles and machine guns.
 Look out for rattlers hiding near bushes,
 among flowers with shotguns.

Run Jose Run Run.
 past the train tracks.
 Run before dark meets you.
 Run before the night trips you.
 Run you will make it before dawn.
 Past the cactus trees.
 Follow the yellow ribbons
 to your earthly heaven.
 Remember don't look at the strangers
 dressed in diamonds and pearls.
 Don't forget never make the snake
 see your eyes. Beware of his wales.
 If you don't look at him
 you would be invisible to his eyes.

Run Jose Run.
 Run, don't forget the snake
 is behind you.
 Don't forget the snake has a hundred
 legs and he can run faster than you.

Trick him with your foot steps.
 Trick him with your legs.
 Trick him with your laughter.
 Trick him with your prayers.
 Trick him with your beads.
 Trick him with your sun seeds.
 Trick him with your feet
 Trick him. Trick him. Trick him.

Run Jose Run.
 Run for your life.
 Run for your children and your wife.
 Run for your new life in paradise.
 Run, anything is better than a dollar
 for a day and a nickle for an hour.

Run Jose Run.
 This is no time to slow down.
 This is no time to have second thoughts.
 Run, many have died from thirst.
 Run many have died from gunshot wounds.

Run, many have died from broken dreams.
 Run, many have died behind prison cells.
 Run, many have died, many have died.

Run Jose Run.
 Run, don't look back,
 Remember don't let the snake see your eyes.
 Run, don't even think about saying goodbye.
 RUN JOSE RUN.

Song to the Body Electric

C.R.Gray

Walt Witman was that you
 sitting near a river, near
 the morning hue. Someone
 swore they saw you singing
 as the snake hissed to Diana.

I heard you were dancing
 to the song of birds, listening
 to the polite river's dull sounding words
 to statuesque maple trees.

Was it you? Was it you?
 Walt have you returned
 from the dust and stone
 to banks painted gay in spring's
 beau. Have you returned from New York's
 gentle dew to make your
 presence felt in present tense.

Walt Witman was that you
 observing boats row far and
 near, judging an impolite
 faculty of men? If it was
 you, I sing a song in tribute
 to your body electric. Fabulous
 piece of machinery that was you
 now me. Grown froth flesh to walk
 through forests and upon seas.

I sing the body electric.
 Fanciful and free among

haystacks sitting like tombstones
on fields of harvest where you
lay when summer prepares
to take her journey south.

I sing the body electric,
I celebrate your manner, your
mind. You who have walked
with great men and angels
perhaps even the devils of war
on battlefields near Gettysburg.

Walt. Walt Witman was it
you walking among the silent
monuments of the civil war dead,
men you have nursed from a former death.
Walt was it you looking for your
captain, fallen by a coward's bullet.
You are not on time to change a fate
written on battlefields of churches late.

Walt was it you running naked
near the Oregonian shore
through darkness with the dead
I sing to the body electric
that once housed you on sojourns past.
Walt was that you riding a nimbus
Like some god of the skies.
Was it you spitting words
from the clouds with Ginsberg, Coros and Burroughs.

I sing to the greatness of the body electric.

Blue Moon
Candace Polson

that first day she came to sing, Chick said
she was too ugly to be on stage. her hips
screamed from her girdle, her nose spread butterfat-
across her face and shapeless trunks held her body.
she's no Billy Holiday he said, but when Teddy
threatened to quit, pack up his bright trumpet and all
his swing into his black case, Chick gave her a shot.
she stood fidgeting in front of the orchestra, asked
for a B-flat and sang deep, dark notes from her lively
gut. slick as silver the moon rose from her scat
and Chick wept, hunched over his drums from his
tubercular spine. a tisket, a tasket, she's lost her yellow
basket and the band tried to keep up as she belted
through the room searching for that wicer bowl.
they marveled at the ocean range rolling from her
throat, shook at the command she held over her waves
as they crashed off her tongue and recoiled against
the far wall of the ballroom. *get this girl an audience*
Chick cried and the Savoy never stomped the same
again. she was the first lady of jazz at nineteen
receiving bows from Billy and Louis, a coronation
of rhythm crowning her head, as she swayed to the swing
that was her only joy. on Chick's death bed he
whispered, take care of my Ella, but she needed
no help, only a glistening, smooth sax, and the dashing
ingers of Fats Waller. she'd found her place
n this world, her voice transforming her face,
her body into grace notes and indecipherable
tones that tripped through the music and returned
to the melody.

Pornography of Nostalgia

Candace Polson

I had wanted to write
about my past

the long days at grandmother's house
where rain mixed with the scent
of mildewed window screens
or, the first sight of her white
porcelain animals set along
the window that faced the road

I had wanted to collect
it all again

on paper—line upon line
stacked neatly next
to the other like her fragile
animals on that window sill

but these words are mere prostitutes
that live in my mind. they sweat skimpy
syntax as they walk my streets whispering
fevered memories that I can never

relive, only translate from the full
round bodies of my childhood into
flat imitations—a glossy collection
of centerfolds stimulating my desire

I am nothing but a pimp
of the past parroting truth
back on the page in airbrushed
perfection--silicone statements
where truth once resided

these metaphors strut from the tip
of my pen calling for a quick buck—
a payment of longing for the history
that created me

these voices seduce me-pull me
out night after night to drive
down their streets searching for
a flash of manipulated past—
a porno of images that I can create
in my lonely bed with fingers
that madly rub these thick
snap shots into smooth pleasing
prose.

He sits

Candace Polson

three tables over, hiding
 the lack of a thumb. I am
 mystified at the absence he
 shyly shades with four fingers
 and a shirt sleeve. I catch
 glimpses of a scar, thick
 and sanguine, curved like his
 bottom lip. he seizes my stare
 unprepared for the attraction
 in my gaze and I look away,
 a timid smile on my lips.

he reaches up to touch
 his chin. four fingers
 brushing the curve
 of his jaw and I want
 the soft whisper
 of his story
 written with stitches
 along his flesh. I want
 his fear and anger stroked
 across my belly.

I want to feel
 his missing thumb caress
 my thigh leaving the ache
 of his phantom limb.

he watches me lift
 tea with my perfect
 hand, small and white
 one tiny scar branding
 the left index finger
 and I am ashamed
 at the shape cupping
 the mug. the five fleshy
 pads placed awkwardly
 around the handle
 barely able to hold
 what I am missing

as I notice him take his
 lover's hand in his, her thumb
 resting where his should be.

The Price of Milk

Candace Polson

*beauty is a lie told by my mother
to two young girls eating cereal
in front of saturday morning cartoons*

last week I had to buy 2% milk instead of skim because all the stores I went to were out of the slimmer milks. that whole week I would get up in the middle of the night, drink straight from the carton and remember what it was like to be back in kindergarten when *fat* was only a word thrown around the playground like the big red dimpled balls used to slam a corner in four-square or slap a thigh in dodge ball. back when milk had legs like fine wine that walked up the side of the bowl, past the cereal to the very rim—my spoon thick with it, my chin clinging to the last drop that hung from my skin as my sister and I sat with the carton between us, watching cartoons at 5 am. back when this ritual seemed harmless and innocence didn't need a definition until one morning mother, swearing we were beautiful replaced the creamy milk and frothy mustaches with skim white water so our bodies would echo the face.

after that, she never mentioned the shape of our hips or the width of our arms, yet we were always on a diet—trying to lose the weight we desperately wished didn't exist, like the boogie man under the bed. even though our mouths never spoke the words, our hands never forgot the ounce of chocolate hidden in the second bowl, on the second shelf of the first cabinet in the kitchen. *sabotage* mother called it when we'd arrive home after splurging at the grocery store. *I'm ruining you girls* she'd confess after the cheetos were gone and dinner was buttery popcorn. *you're just too pretty for all of this. it's all my fault* and we'd make a pack, the three of us, to start again on monday counting every calorie, every fat gram—an apple for lunch and skim milk over puffed rice.

tonight I stand half-naked in front of the fridge nipples on edge and reach for the last swallow of this milk, my lips surrounding the mouth, my small fingers chilled from holding the handle of the plastic jug. I know I will hate myself the next morning, as I did every morning growing up, waking to an empty bed, my stomach holding the only possibility of fullness. *sabotage* I think as the last sip has been licked from the jug.

Hardware

Candace Polson

The language of woodworking is built in the body. It's a hard vocabulary to wear-clamped to the joint of the butt-chisel resting against steel nippers, tools balancing on a knot of pine compressed hard like the afterthought of a woman's breast that peeks from a blouse revealing the areola's secret stain. This craft is not for soft feminine hands they must be sanded and worked into tough lacquered calluses. The body must be bold, able to screw into tight grains of hard oak. Shy biceps shutter from friction saws and grinding wheels. Without stamina the slipstone slides from timid fingers and crashes to the ground of the carpenter's solitary work station. Thighs must have width and strength to maneuver snakes and reamers, lift studs and circular arm saws into preordained grooves like the tongue fits the cheek the groove fits the tongue. The body knows the delicate angle of the breast auger, invites it into the chest, revels in the boring mechanics of tools and flesh, wood and skin. A body born of sawdust and deep mahogany reeks of earth and bark, but it's not a dirty chore to cling to a nut driver, the ball catch, the men know this, refuse to cringe at the names and women cannot spurn the attraction. It is a time for building like the slow foreplay of lovers moving their teeth across a calf. They know it starts in the word, the rough syllables expelled past lips wet with anticipation for measurements and levels. The project once started in the mind, moves perhaps to paper and lead, but always returns to the tactile touch of metal ripping into the flesh of lumber, carving out the symbol of

Table, Chair, Cabinet, Bed

Terminal Gravity

Mike Spring

for Dean Metcalf

Vietnam unfolds from a map in the fine swirls
on the pub counter's polished wood

you lick your finger and draw the coastline

and there you are, in 1964—68 days in an attack transport
with amphibious crafts ready to move toward the "unclassified" shores

the hulk of the ship swaying to the sea and tidal pull—the slap
and lick of water is the only voice you want to hear

in moments of solitude, like this, when you're on your watch,
looking out towards land, you can see that Beauty is still with you

—the way light slips in and around the tropical jungle—all the colors
in the universe are here!—how in each breath new things are created—
you lift your binoculars to see more closely the trees tangled
in fine nets of green fog—how the silver and red ribbons of light uncoil
like newly hatched snakes—and yes, here, Beauty is with you—
it moves inside you—a whirlwind of birds spiraling down into the center
of a black pool—your body takes in air as heavy as sleep

above blue rocks pouring into the yellow soup of land
 are monkeys suddenly scrambling
 through the mid-section of jungle foliage—
 they move in such a way you think of dance—and you think
 how you want to become such a creature—to lift out of your body
 and become something entirely different

but it is with these monkeys that stop your mind
 from wanting to see further—even stop your mind
 from following the whirlwind of birds as they are turned away—
 the black pool freezing over with ice—
 because these shapes are too close to the shape of men

and because these shapes are too close to the shape of men
 you will not enter the beauty of these trees fully—you know that these
 colors
 and textures you are witnessing could be holding that particular father
 or son that will pull the valves out of your body to protect those children
 that live underground—those wide-eyed children playing with broken
 parts of machinery—betting coins and marbles and carved bones
 on whose toy soldiers will fall first to the rumble of American bombs

—sometimes the path that changes your life isn't necessarily the path you
 choose—
 the orders to land on the beach were pulled out
 your boat turns and drifts
 back home

the guitarist

Mike Spring

takes hold of a note
 the length of his arm

and pulls it out
 from his wrist—

both ends severed—
 a fleshy straw—

he puts one end
 into his mouth to see

how long he can
 breathe like this—

he'd like to think
 that every note

in every song he plays
 comes this easy—

this close
 to who he is

coltrane's landscape

Mike Spring

like this ocean
cliff eucalyptus

wind swept
and boughs leaning
leaves over
like water
falling

we've called similar
shapes weeping

but it's more
like Isadora Duncan caught
in the moment

of flying
: a spinning note
lifts
and shatters
to rain

the affair

Mike Spring

I counted
back the change
from your five. Your fingers
flowered open then closed
over my finger
tips and pennies
when they touched the center
of your palm. Thank you
I said. Thank you
you said walking away
with a new book
cradled in one arm. The receipt
left behind on the counter.

This Body Burning

Eric Wayne Dickey

for Hak-Hoe Do, sculptor

Misplaced among the two cycles of death and life,
 forced to reside among the turning and churning.
 All the while the way this body, burning,
 yearns to be with those that died.

There is no need for words on stone.
 This body, like fire for the sun, crying
 at the moon, stars and a burning
 evening, sees meaning without words.

This body is heavy—the dusty world holds
 its heart on an anvil like night and day leaving,
 cleaving the tongue full of blood weaving
 through veins, rhythmic, full then empty.

Becoming Joseph and Mary

Eric Wayne Dickey

Outside our Oregon cabin wind whispers
 a slow howl of low notes. A fire warms the inside
 A great metronome swings and ticks.
 Your areolas caress my torso: our poles—
 connect and crackle with energy.
 Hearts synchronous, our skin slaps against each other.
 I press my chest between your breasts.
 Our deltas join at the mouths of our rivers;
 our bodies afire on the their own.
 With each beat we feel
 like Joseph and Mary.

Water Quenches Our Thirst
Eric Wayne Dickey

The river fills in for conversation.
I stop to listen to the whirls and purls
and rushes of identical water droplets
perfectly packaged
rising and falling with the whispers
of this afternoon's rainstorm
lapping at its banks like a grooming cat.

Tears stream down
tearing at the flesh of the river
just like at anyone's face,
yet we submit each other to punishments
of desire again and again.
Will we ever learn to rise and fall
like the water in riverbeds, accepting?

The river does the thinking for me.
Sounds of water occupy my thoughts.
It silences me, the river, as does the ocean
—when confronted with that sublime
persistence of waves swaying back and forth
from shore to shore, a dance.
A lake, too, whispers its wisdom
in our ears: slowly, quietly.
And rain, squeezed from clouds like sponges,
Hushes us with its white noise.

This Thing That I Carry

Eric Wayne Dickey

This thing that I carry.
 It's like a ripe melon.
 I can tell before cutting it open.
 That it is Juicy Red.
 If I drop this bomb now.
 It would explode on the pavement.
 Under red chunks.
 And green rinds.
 Broken.
 Not cut.
 Like on a plate.
 In brisk even wedges.
 Wanting to bleed their life juices.
 Into the place where.
 A giant machine comes together.
 Masticating the meat of the melon.
 Into chunks and smaller chunks still.
 Into juice.
 The tongue working around.
 The mouth organizes seeds.
 And with a momentous energy.
 Spits them towards the lawn .
 Some seeds never clear the sidewalk.
 Staying there afterwards.
 From the afternoon sun through dusk.
 Into a night of the raining meteors in mid-August.
 The watermelon seeds.
 Glistening with the stars and the moon.
 This thing that I carry.

Jenny's Grandmother

Eric Wayne Dickey

Her grandmother—
 flight of the owl
 over the windshield,
 the star shining on that day—
 left her a violin.

The weight of the bow,
 the pulling of the fibers
 is the same as it was in December of 1843,
 or at a Spring Dance somewhere
 in Choctaw County:

a dancing girl
 in a barn full of people
 deeply cleft in the
 Alabama wilderness,
 wanting to run and hide
 to meet a boy and kiss
 under stars,
 to hear owls between
 distant laughter
 while through the trees
 crickets accompany
 a violin.

Walking Trees

Eric Wayne Dickey

Somewhere in the New World
 I've heard tales of Walking Trees.
 They propel themselves
 by sprouting new roots while
 leaving old ones behind.
 Propped up like a teepee,
 the trunk begins somewhere around six feet up.
 Limbs and branches antennae
 into the canopy,
 feel for sunlight.

I imagine these trees
 slowly moving across distances
 from sunnier place to sunnier place.
 As days creep over
 one after the other,
 a tree could suddenly appear
 at the back door of my house
 of which I thought I knew everything.
 One of them could cross the fence
 and move to the neighbor's yard
 where the grass is greener, so to speak.

I'd like to read in the headlines
 that a group of errant trees
 attacked the logging mill
 just outside Emmett, Idaho—
 the camp, having ceased production,
 was unoccupied by people
 but the trees were victorious anyway—
 and that there was an ongoing stand-off
 between the trees and the ATF
 and local Police that lasted weeks
 and months and seasons.
 The trees held out long enough
 to machinate complex strategies
 into an impregnable fortress
 equipped with abatis, catapults
 snares and snags.

I can see an army of them
 sweep across the country side,
 charge over hillcrests
 wielding big sticks and
 through ruffled voices
 cry out their battle names—
 their green hair waving in the wind.

1, abatis: felled trees with sharpened points for defense

Afterword

J.M.Beach

This publication and the poetry reading for P.E.O.P.L.E. Day 2001 were brought to you by The Dissenting American Poets. This organization is a student club on the Oregon State University campus as well as a community outreach program, and is coordinated by J. M. Beach. The purpose of this organization is as follows:

- 1) The affirmation of poetic expression and the fostering and development of poetic sensibility.
- 2) The celebration of Life in an unrestrained fashion with the preservation of difference and diversity united under the common purpose of poetic expression.
- 3) The protest of U. S. Cultural Imperialism through our dissent of the hegemonic cultural mores of our present political and economic system ruled by corporate exploitation and fed by rampant consumerism.
- 4) The organization of P.E.O.P.L.E. Days (People for Everyday, Organized, Personal Life Experiences) and Non-Market Driven Activities on the OSU campus and in Corvallis public spaces for the expressed purpose of creating a community of individuals to celebrate alternative visions of 'American' culture, and thereby protesting the failures of our current cultural/political system of oppression and domination.
- 5) Furthering the study and knowledge of the history of Poetry and Artistic Expression, and its relevance to our time and age.

Anyone can join the activities of The Dissenting American Poets and all are welcome. An e-mail newsletter is sent out over the course of the year discussing poetry and various cultural events in the Corvallis area. If you are interested in receiving the newsletter or getting involved in future events, please e-mail beachj@ucs.orst.edu.

*O' I see flashing that this America is only you and me,
its power, weapons, testimony, are you and me,
its crimes, lies, thefts, deflections, are you and me...
Past, present, future, are you and me.*

*I dare not shirk any part of myself,
Not any part of America good or bad...*

These States, what are they except myself?

*-Walt Whitman; "By Blue Ontario's Shore"
(1891-92)*

What does not exist
We must create,
America:
A poem in our eyes.