FOR WHOM I SING

(TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF FRANZ-JOSEF DEGENHARDT)

I DON'T SING FOR YOU
YOU, WHO HITCH UP YOUR BELT
WHEN IT COMES TO SOMETHING IMPORTANT.
YOU, FULL TO THE BRIM OF SENTIMENTAL SLUSH
YOU, WHO HATE NOTHING SO MUCH
AS YOUR ENCRUSTED BODIES
WHICH YOU STILL WRAP IN STANDARDS
SING ANTHEMS
WHEN THE VAN ALLEN BELT CONSTRICTS.
AND NOT FOR YOU,
YOU BON-VIVANT BOURGEOIS PHILISTINES WITH
ARCHITECTURAL IDEALS
YOU FRANCOPHILIC CHEESE GOURMETS
YOU, WHO LOVE NOTHING SO MUCH
AS YOUR PERFUMED ESSENCES
YOU, WHO AREN'T ASHAMED
TO SILENCE BIERMANN
BECAUSE HE'S SO WONDERFULLY REVOLUTIONARY.
NO, NOT FOR YOU

I DON'T SING FOR YOU,
YOU BURSTING GLUTTONS WITH THE
TABLE-LIGHTER CULTURE.
YOU, WHO HANDLE YOUR WOMEN LIKE
STEAKS AND FOR
SYMPATHY SOB WHEN YOUR FAT MONGRELS
DIE. YOU, WHO GRIN WHEN YOU
THINK OF THOSE TIMES
AS IF OF A DIRTY JOKE.
AND NOT FOR YOU,
WHO ONLY LIVE BECAUSE HERE TOO MUCH
AND SOMEWHERE ELSE TOO LITTLE BREAD
IS LYING AROUND. TEMPLE-STEP SQUATTERS
YOU, WHO LOVE NOTHING SO MUCH
AS YOUR OWN UNWASHED STOMACHS.
YOU, WHO WITH STUPID
HASHISH-SMILES STAMMER
OUT YOUR LAWLESS LAWS.
No, not for you.

I sing for you,
who throw the crumbling wisdom of your heroic-fathers
culled from the so-called
Way of the World into the wind
and simply try out new ways. You, who burn away
the lacquer with which
the architects cover
the fissured framework.
For you,
who hunt the fatted mongrels
in the swamp, can’t sleep
when you think of those times and hear
all the gluttons snoring
and don’t want to squat on the temple steps
as long as the rod still reigns over freedom
napalm is still the food for the poor
I sing for you.

Translated by AL WILKE
AT THE KALAMAZOO RIVER, IN EARLY SPRING

Half-numb, I have been fishing
this cold river all day,
and the fog that was here since dawn is
collapsing now, into darkness.

On the other shore
I see a doe moving
stiffly, to drink. Her hide hangs
loose across a furrow of ribs.
Winter has made her old and
empty, like a widow
she is unafraid.

The ground is still
hard beneath a layer of mud.
I can't feel my hands
as I watch her
turn back, into the trees
not even lonely.
I have come too soon and
cannot ask for anything, have
nothing to contribute.
Except these words.

I wish
they were the sound of birds,
any birds,
coming toward me.
Coming back.

STEFEN ECKERSTROM
A SEASHELL AND A GIRL

Besides the glossy beauty of the thing,
The sheer symmetric shimmer
I loved the old legend when someone would urge
Me to hold it quietly next to my ear
To hear the sea within.

I taste your salt sweat skin,
Hear your breath as breakers succumb to the shore
And feel how your tide's irresistible surge
could chide an only swimmer
To chance the mystic ocean whence he sprang.

JOHN WEBB
SIGN

I obey the Lord of Autumn's sign
So I love fruits hate flowers
I regret each kiss I give
Like the shaken nut tree tells the wind its sorrows

Eternal Autumn Oh my soul's season
The hands of last year's lovers strew your soil
Some woman is chasing me it's my fatal shadow
Tonight the doves fly for the last time

Guillaume Apollinaire
Translated by Rodger Friedman
YOU GOTTA GO TO THE RIVER IF YOU WANNA DRINK THE WATER

HOW CAN ANYONE CARE ANYMORE, HOW LONG HIS HAIR IS,
WHAT THE HIPPEST SLANG FOR THAT COLOR PILL IS,
HAVE WE ALL FORGOTTEN WHAT WE WERE LOOKING FOR?
I AM NOT BLACK,
OR BEAUTIFUL, BECAUSE I KNOW WORDS LIKE JUMP STREET, GIT-GO,
BECAUSE I GREW UP DIGGING CORNBREAD AND TURNIP GREENS "SOUL FOOD"
BECAME EVEN MORE POPULAR THAN AUNT JEMIMA
BECAUSE I CAN LOVE ANY MAN OR WOMAN
FOR THE WINGS THAT LEAVE THEIR EYES AND LIGHT ON MY SHOULDERS-
THIS ALONE DOES NOT FREE ME;
I AM ANGRY AT THE GROOVY INTELLECTUALS WHO RATTLE OFF NAMES
OF EVERYTHING THEM SOULBEAT SAXISTS, DRUMMERS,
LOVERS EVER PLAYED
WHILE WHEN THE MUSIC SAILS INTO MY VEINS,
THEY CAN'T EVEN MOVE!
I WANT THE SELF-LABELLED FREE MEN
WHO FUCK LIKE WATER PISTOLS
TO TRY TOUCHING MY SKIN
WHAT JIVE WE LAY ON EACH OTHER!
WE DIG MOATS AROUND OUR CASTLES, SAY, LOOK, MY IMAGE
AND IN THE DARK, LOCK THE GATE, PISS IN THE WATER
NO LIMITS ARE ENOUGH!
THERE ARE NO PARTICULAR APPTITUDES OR REQUIREMENTS FOR TRUTH
ONLY ITSELF
WHEN YOU ARE THIRSTY,
YOU WILL NEVER NEED FORKED STICK, ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY,
OR MODERN CHEMISTRY TO FIND WATER
COLORLESS, ODORLESS, NO NEED OF TASTE
SATISFYING BEYOND CONCEPTION
THE WATER IS LOOKING FOR YOU

LISA ROSENBERG
FLIES

I take a dry satisfaction in my corner
of this huge room: rain-stained ceiling,
table, teapot, chair,
the enormous window where flies
come to die. On the sill,
a wasp strains to his knees,
his abdomen dragging, wings
sticking out like ears. Flies
witch on my paper, buzz an inch
into the air, spin over
the edge, carrying their demons
to the sea. December and they
still die; the floor is crisp
with bodies. I believe they die
of boredom. The glass of this window
offers nothing but light,
their hairy feet hungering
for the steam of manure, swill,
wart, flanks, udders.

Flies, if Easter ever comes,
we will rise together and buzz off,
a man in a black cloud
hunting fresh sweat and honey.

CONRAD HILBERRY

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NOON TIME

THE SHEPHERD STRETCHES ON THE GRASS.
THE DUST SLEEPS ON THE ROAD
THE WAGONER ON THE STRETCHER
THE BLACKSMITH IN HIS SHOP,
THE BRICKLAYER LIES AT FULL LENGTH.
THE BUTCHER SNORES ON THE TABLE
HIS HANDS STILL RED.

GEORGE LISIK (MAURITIUS)
THE TIBETAN STORY OF THE DEAD NGO-RUB-CAN

In a great land lived seven brothers who were magicians and performed wonders. There was nothing that these people could not have done. They could make a man die and live again; and they could perform many other extraordinary things. The king of that land had two sons. When the king and queen were dead, the two children had nothing to eat and were unhappy. Then they consulted each other and the younger said: "Brother, go to the magicians and learn a magic art. If you learn a magic art we will be able to eat again." The older said: "Fine!", and both went to the house of the magicians and implored them: "Oh magicians, please teach our elder brother a magic art!" The magicians answered: "Alright, we will teach him."

Then they were both very glad. The elder brother remained there, and the younger went away again.

The magicians taught the elder brother to change magic earth to stone and stone to earth, further to imitate the cries of the rock-partridge, the snow-pheasant, the goat and the sheep, but otherwise nothing. They made him tend the sheep or sent him for wood all day long.

When one and a half months were past, the younger brother came to the house of the magicians to see what kind of magic art the elder brother had learned. He hid
Himself by the window and watched what sorts of unusual feats the magicians practiced. He watched for a long time, for they practiced the whole day. Suddenly, he learned everything.

As the sun was about to set, he saw his elder brother descend from the mountain with the goats. He went into the house with his brother and greeted the magicians. The magicians cried: "Ho, king's son, why have you come?" He answered: "I have come to see what sort of arts my brother is learning!" Then the magicians said: "Your brother has finished learning all the magic arts. Take him with you again!" Then the two went happily home.

When they had arrived at home, the younger brother said to the elder: "Ho, brother, show me what magic arts you have learned!" And the elder brother showed the younger his arts. He fetched earth and transformed it to stone; he fetched stone and transformed it to earth. Then he imitated the cries of the rock-partridge, the snow-pheasant, the goat and the sheep. After that the younger brother asked: "What more have you learned?" And the elder brother answered: "Other than this I have learned nothing, no, I have learned nothing more!"

The younger brother thought: "He hasn't learned a single good trick!" Then he said to the elder: "Ho, brother, I will transform myself into a fine horse of the most beautiful color which can trot well! Take it along for sale and demand 200 rupees for it. But if you receive 100 rupees, well then give it away! If you should meet the magicians, they will say, 'We want to buy
THAT HORSE! If you sell it and they ask for the bridle too, you must not give it to them." He told him this emphatically.

The younger brother transformed himself into a beautiful horse and the elder led it away for sale. He met an eminent merchant who said that he would give 100 rupees for the horse. But the brother did not surrender it and led it further. Then he met the magicians who said that they would give 200 rupees for the horse, and so he sold it to them. But when he said that he would not surrender the bridle, the magicians replied that they would pay for it, and gave 50 rupees for it. So he was very pleased and went home. When he looked at his money there however, it had turned to stone.

The magicians knew that the horse was the prince. One grasped it by the tail, one by the bridle, and they put it in a dark hole without giving it hay. After seven days they seized it again and led it to water. As it would not drink the water of the brook, they led it to the river. There the horse recognized a good chance to escape, while it drank the water slowly it saw a fish swimming by, and transformed itself into a fish and fled away in the water. The magicians transformed themselves into seven otters and chased the fish. As it swam, glancing up at the sky it saw a dove flying there, so it immediately slipped out of the fish, transformed itself into the dove and flew away. But the magicians transformed themselves into seven falcons and chased it.

By flying, he arrived at the innermost nook of a valley in which there was a hermit: "Grandfather, do hide me, someone is coming who wishes to kill me." The
GRANDFATHER SPOKE: "WHERE AM I SUPPOSED TO HIDE YOU? I HAVE NO OTHER ROOM!" TO THIS THE PRINCE REPLIED: "I WILL TRANSFORM MYSELF INTO THE MAIN BEAD OF YOUR ROSARY AND STAY THERE. THEN SEVEN PEOPLE WILL COME HERE WHO WILL SAY TO ANYTHING THAT YOU OFFER THEM: "WE DON'T WANT THIS!" THEN THEY WILL SAY: "GIVE US THE ROSARY!" BUT YOU MUST SCATTER THE ROSARY AND RETAIN THE MAIN BEAD."

THE GRANDFATHER SAID, "ALRIGHT!" THEREUPON THE PRINCE TRANSFORMED HIMSELF INTO THE MAIN BEAD AND STAYED THERE.

THE SEVEN MEN NOW CAME INTO THE GRANDFATHER'S ROOM AND DISPLAYED MANY MAGIC ARTS. ALTHOUGH THE GRANDFATHER OFFERED THEM MUCH GOLD AND SILVER, THEY SAID: "WE DON'T NEED THIS, GIVE US THE ROSARY FOR OUR BLESSING!"

AFTER THE GRANDFATHER HAD TAKEN THE MAIN BEAD IN HIS HAND, HE SCATTERED THE ROSARY ALL OVER THE FLOOR. THOSE PEOPLE, HOWEVER, TRANSFORMED THEMSELVES INTO BIRDS WHICH PICKED UP THE BEADS. THEN THE PRINCE CAME OUT OF THE MAIN BEAD, STRUCK EACH BIRD WITH A STICK, AND ALL SEVEN BIRDS DIED.

THEN THE GRANDFATHER SAID: "NO, KING'S SON! HERE I SIT FOR SO MANY YEARS IN THIS CELL PERFORMING RELIGIOUS EXERCISES, AND NOW THESE SEVEN PEOPLE HAVE DIED HERE! THEIR SINS WILL REST ON MY HEAD!" THE PRINCE REPLIED TO THE GRANDFATHER: "I CAN DO NOTHING; YOU, OH GRANDFATHER, DO WHATEVER YOU CAN!" THEN THE GRANDFATHER SAID: "IF YOU GO TO THE LAND OF DRY CORPSES AND FETCH THE CORPSE OF NGO-RUB-CAN, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE ALL OF THEM ALIVE." THE PRINCE ASKED: "WHERE IS THE LAND OF DRY CORPSES? I WILL GO THERE!" THE GRANDFATHER SHOWED HIM THE DIRECTION OF THAT LAND AND SAID: "IF YOU GO THERE, YOU WILL SEE MANY DRY CORPSES, OF WHICH ONE OR ANOTHER WILL SAY: 'I WANT TO GO WITH YOU', BUT ONE WILL SAY:
'I do not want to go with you!' and he will climb up a dry tree. When he has gotten to the top of the tree, you must take the hatchet and begin to chop down the dry tree above the roots. Then say to him: 'Dry corpse, do you want to come down?' Then he will be afraid and come down. After that, put him into the sack dhar-moi-ston-shon, tie it up with the cord rgya-stag-khra-bo, and bring him here. No matter what the corpse says, you may answer nothing!' Then the old one gave him the hatchet, the sack dhar-moi-ston-shon, and the cord rgya-stag-khra-bo and the king's son went to the land of dry corpses. For food the old one had given him a small stone pot and a spoon and said: "You will have whatever you wish to eat as soon as you stir in the pot with the spoon."

He arrived in the land of dry corpses. There were many corpses there, of which some said: "I want to go!" There, in accordance with the instructions of the grandfather, he looked around. Then one said: "I don't want to go!" and clambered up a withered tree. Now he took the hatchet, went before the withered tree and said: 'Dry corpse, do you want to come down?' Then the corpse was afraid and came down before the prince instantly. The prince stuffed him into the sack, tied it up with the cord and hoisted it up on his back. When they had travelled a few days, the corpse said: "No, king's son!

A long night passes away with telling of tales;
A long road is shortened by speech!
Either you or I should tell a story!"

To this the prince nodded his head. The corpse Ngo-rub-can told a story, and the prince went along nodding his head.

Translated from the German by Cindy Ning
WHERE THE RIVER ENDS

COME THIS FAR WITH YOUR OWN NAME
AND YOU WILL FIND YOU HAVE NO OTHER

HERE THE RIVER DREAMS ITS LAST STONE
WHERE WINDS PRESSED TO NO SHORE OF THEIR OWN
SEEK THEIR SHAPE IN THE DRY COUNTRY OF THEIR TOUCHING

TO TELL US: THIS IS WHERE IT ENDED

OLD HEART
NUMBED BLOOD OF ORIGINS

YOU COULD NOT BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IT MEANS
TO STAY ALIVE IN THIS PLACE

THOUGH YOU WOULD GIVE BLOOD FOR STONE
LISTENING HARD FOR WATER AS IF YOU KNEW

RICHARD BOWDY
FIVE ROOMS

Each one has the same chill.
In each one the same mouth opens
Showing me the mapped walls
Of abandon, the nails
Where I hang the cracked
Language of my days and nights.
As if the years had at last
Returned to stitch their
Failings to a common tongue:
My boots and my breath.

As if I had let it come to that;
To find myself alone, wandering
The rooms like an old mistake,
Letting each one gather along
Its dust and have its say,
And say nothing. To be nothing
But the cracked voice hung
From the nails of their ignorance,
The numb flesh knocking off
The dull nightmare of each step;
Letting them lie down among
The old clothes and take back
From the smells what is mine:
The shoes, the torn sheet,
The dirty thumb-print of regret.

Wondering if this is what I am:
This chill, this numbed flesh,
Standing out among its rooms
Like a fistful of nails, waiting
For the knock, for the last word
To fall. Wondering, will it ever
Be mine again to hear the chipped
Wisdom dropping from my voice,
To feel my face grow cold and
Know why. To know that in each
Room the smell comes back the same:
That I am here, and that I am no one's answer. And that where I step nothing begins nor ends. First reading home home from the Braille of each breath: to know the word and know it's not enough.

Richard Bowdy
BABA: THE WANING

When legs were trees
I clutched her blue wrinkled hand.
Her black skirt folded round me
like a cone.

She showed me how
she pressed herself onto paper
and lived there;
a photograph of yellow eyes
where her lover waits
and her son comes back.

Twisting into a handful of twigs
her body lightens
and her eyes sink further into
a face that turns to rubber.

The rice boils over.
She goes out of the house in the snow
and forgets her shoes.

Melissa Runge
UNTITLED

AT FIRST EVERYTHING WAS BREATHTLESS CONQUEST
CONQUISTADORS WEARING RED AND BRASS
PLUMED HATS
MOTION MOVING FORWARD LIKE DANCERS IN FLOUNCING
SKIRTS
EMOTION CLIMBING TO HYSTERICS
AND BREAKDOWN

EVERY MOVEMENT MADE AND ONCE MADE
CUT OPEN FOR EXAMINATION
DISSECTED FOR ANALYSIS
AND STORED FOR LATER PONDERINGS

O.K., SO NOW WE'VE GOT THE MEANING
HELD IN PALMS LIKE FRAGILE ANCIENT SCULPTURE
ONE FALSE MOVE
AND IT COULD TURN TO DUST
NOW I FEEL THE WHEEL SLOWLY SLOWING DOWN
AND THE SPINNING'S SETTLED
UNTIL I'M BACK WITH MY FEET ON THE GROUND

THE DIZZINESS SETTLES INTO FINE
PATTERNS
THE DUST STORM CLEARS ITSELF
BEHIND MY EYES

I STAND OUT WITH MY HEAD COCKED,
LISTENING FOR SOUNDS AROUND ME:
TRIGGERED AND READY TO GO OFF
I ONLY NEED A SIGNAL.

MARTHA DUERSTEN
IN THE GARDEN

"THE SONS OF GOD SAW THAT THE DAUGHTERS OF MEN WERE FAIR."  
(GENESIS 6:1)

THOSE LOVERS WERE SLICK,  
THE FLASH GORDONS OF EDEN.  
EVERYTHING HAPPENED OFF SCREEN.  
SLIDING IN ON SILVER BOOTS,  
suits like skin,  
THE LORD HAS GOTTEN US,  
LEAVING SONS IN THE DARK,  
SNAKES WITH FINE BODIES,  
INSTRUMENTS.  
HOW THEY COULD DRIP SILVER LIKE A DENTIST.

STRAPPED IN,  
AND I WOULD GO WILLING,  
INTO THE SEPULCHRE,  
INTO THE CAPSULE.  
PULLING CHROME LEVERS TO MY BREAST.  
HUSBANDS WATCH, MUTE AS ABRAHAM  
WHILE WE WORSHIP.

CHRISTY WALLACE
WHERE IS OUR MONEY GOING?

AT NIGHT ON THE MOON
APOLLO SPACEMEN
ARE THE DANDIES OF DECEPTION
WINTER-PLOUGHING
OR COLLECTING DUST A REALIST SWEEPS AWAY,
LEAPING LEFT AND RIGHT LIKE HUNTING DOGS
AFTER A FOX IN THE LUNAR WIND.

THE SKIPPER IN ORBIT FLIPS THE SWITCHES
INSIDE THE MECHANICAL MODULE,
HE ACHEs WITH INSOMNIA
UNTIL THE BOYS ARE BACK
AND CRUISING LIKE A FLASH FOR HOME.

SPASHDOWN, NEAR HAWAII, TEEMS OF FROGMEN
SCRAMBLE IN THE WATER TO OUR NEW-BORN HEROES;
ON DECK THE RUMPLED PRESIDENT
DEFLECTS A MILLION EYES, DIVERTS HIS OWN,
WHEN FROM THE SMOKING SILVER CAPSULE
(WHAT A BLOW TO OUR NATIONAL DIGNITY!)
STEP NOT THE CONTINENTAL GENTLEMEN WE EXPECTED
BUT THREE OF OUR OWN POOR APPALACHIAN STOCK.

BARRY BROWN
RESIDENCIA EN LA TIERRA

MICRO COSM. MACRO COSM.
STAR. QUASAR.
STEADY STATE
THE IGUANA EXPANDING THROUGH TIME.
WALKING OUT OF THE SEA
ONTO THE CONTINENT OF SOUTH AMERICA
IN THE THIRD YEAR. INHALING THE AIR
THE HUMID SEEPING OF TIME IN THE TROPICS.

STEADY STATE
THROUGH THE YEARS. THE UNRAVELING BALL.
THE CONSTANT INHALING OF AIR,
ALL THE STORED UP KNOWLEDGE IN THE LUNG CELLS
OF THE FIRST REPTILE
LOW FLAME
THE SUN'S INTOXICATING
TIME IS A DELICATE DRUG IN ECUADOR.

LAZY. LACK OF MOVEMENT. SUNSPOTS.
EVERY OTHER CENTURY A VESSEL BURSTING
DEBRIS. CRACKS. FAULTS IN THE LAND.
PERU IS WRACKED WITH EARTHQUAKES
RESTLESS SHIFTING
THE GREAT BANG EXPLOSION OF THE ANDES OVER-
NIGHT
CATASTROPHIC

A MERE SPLIT ON THE SIDE OF IGUANA
A JOLT TO HIS GRIP, HIS GEARS.
HIS PRECEDENCE OVER THE CONTINENT
PULLING HIS BELLY ALONG THE GROUND
HE WANTS TO MAKE LOVE.
THEY EAT HIM LIKE CHICKEN. SPLIT HIM IN TWO.
MATTER REDUCES TO MATTER.
THE RAINS ARE STRANGE IN THE AMAZON. RIVER OF
REPTILES

JUAN HAMILL
INTERVIEW WITH PATTI SMITH

INTERVIEWER: You've been called a rock poet. Do you see that term as representative of your work?

SMITH: First of all you have to think of the reason I'm called a rock poet. I don't even know what a rock poet is. People just call me that because I'm somewhat of a black sheep in poetry and the people that have accepted me most of all have been the people in the rock press, young kids, rock and roll people, even though I'm secretly academic. It's just a coinage. It doesn't mean anything. I used to write a lot of stuff that was real street oriented and had a lot of street rhythms, but it doesn't bother me to be called that...Perhaps, I should be called more of a jazz poet. It's just easy or convenient, people like to label stuff. Labels don't really mean much, I mean what's a beatnik? What's a rock poet? I don't know. If I have to be given a name... I think of myself more as a surrealist poet. I've been studying surrealism a lot and its relationship to language and it seems to me that my poems draw from those images.

INTERVIEWER: What images for instance?

SMITH: The first surrealist image I had was... I saw space and then floating in this clear space was a jewel, you know a gem with no setting, just a many faceted jewel. It was so beautiful, like an emerald, just floating in space, and I was watching it and then it occurred to me, I mean it was so there, so concrete, it was so something. But it was completely abstract. What is a jewel floating in space? It has no meaning it's just there... It just is. That's how a poem should be. A poem should float on it's own, like cut loose from the world, severed from muscle, root, or anything to which it's joined. It should float freely like that jewel. It should be its own little universe. So everytime I work with a poem, I work with a whole new universe. Rock stuff comes in 'cause I'm really interested in
IS RHYTHM. I MEAN IF TO GET TO A BIG UNIVERSAL RHYTHM OR TO THE GREAT RHYTHM I CAN GET THROUGH TO PEOPLE AND TRY TO GIVE THEM A PIECE OF THAT RHYTHM THROUGH STREET RHYTHMS THAT'S FINE. IT'S LIKE A LOWLY RHYTHM TO GET TO A HIGH RHYTHM.

INTERVIEWER: YOU'RE INTERESTED IN SURREALISM. WHO WOULD YOU CONSIDER YOU'RE MAJOR INFLUENCE? IS IT A SURREALIST POET?

SMITH: NO. I THINK SURREALISM IS A GREAT CONCEPT YOU KNOW THEY DEVELOPED NEW CONCEPTS OF SPACE THROUGH LANGUAGE, REALITY BEYOND APPEARANCE, SALVATION BY MEANS OF DREAMS, BUT THE ART THAT CAME OUT OF SURREALISM REALLY SUCKED DOGS. IT WAS REALLY LOUSY ART. THE POETS STUNK, MOST OF THE PAINTERS WERE SHIT. THE ART THAT CAME OUT OF SURREALISM REALLY ISN'T THAT IMPORTANT. IT'S THE CONCEPTS OF SURREALISM. IF I CAN APPLY SURREALISTIC CONCEPTS WITH REALLY STRONG LANGUAGE THEN THAT'S SOMETHING NEW. MY BIGGEST INFLUENCE IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST INFLUENCES OF THE SURREALISTS AND THAT'S RIMBAUD. I THINK IT'S IN SEASON IN HELL HE HAS THIS PHRASE, IT'S IN A FAMOUS LETTER HE WROTE ABOUT HOW HE WANTED A POETRY, A NEW POETRY. HE WANTED TO BE A SEER, A POET AS A THEFT OF FIRE. AND HE SAID TO BE A SEER YOU HAD TO DISARRANGE ALL YOUR SENSES AND GET COMPLETELY FUCKED UP. THAT YOU STILL HAD TO HAVE ABSOLUTE CONTROL OVER YOUR OWN MADNESS, WHICH HE HAD. THAT YOU HAD TO DEVELOP A NEW VOCABULARY, A NEW LANGUAGE WHICH HE CALLED, I DON'T KNOW HOW TO SAY IT IN FRENCH BUT IT MEANS OF THE SOUL FOR THE SOUL, AND THAT'S WHAT THE SURREALISTS GRABBED HOLD OF. THEY NEVER GOT AS GREAT AS RIMBEAU BUT THEY WERE SMART ENOUGH TO REALIZE HOW BEAUTIFUL HE WAS. THEY TRIED THROUGH THEIR SOUL TO HIT OTHER PEOPLES SOULS THROUGH DREAM LANGUAGE, THROUGH DREAM SPACE BUT THEY JUST WEREN'T AESTHETICALLY AT THE PEAK THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN AT. I BELIEVE THERE IS SOMETHING THAT CAN HIT ONE
PERSON’S SOUL FROM ANOTHER. IT’S WHY ROCK’N ROLL WAS SO GREAT WHEN WE WERE ADOLESCENTS ‘CAUSE IT LIKE HIT OUR SOUL BELOW THE BELT.

NOW I’M MORE INTERESTED IN SEX IN THE BRAIN.

I BELIEVE WHEN YOU HIT, START HAVING COMMUNICATION WITH BRAIN SOUL, IT’S LIKE YOUR BRAIN CAN COME! IT’S LIKE READIN’ RIMBAUD, I HAVE EXPERIENCES, I READ HIS LANGUAGE AND I’M SO SEDUCED AND I’M SO ON THE RHYTHM AND I FEEL THERE WITH HIM LIKE OUR BRAINS ARE FUCKIN’. IT’S THE GREATEST FEELING.

INTERVIEWER: WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE POETS FUNCTION IN THIS KIND OF COMMUNICATION? WHAT’S YOUR MAIN INSPIRATION FOR THIS KIND OF COMMUNICATION IN TERMS OF YOUR OWN PERSONAL SOURCE?

SMITH: WELL WHEN I WAS YOUNGER MY MIND WAS REALLY CAUGHT BY ARCHITECTS I THOUGHT ARCHITECTURE WAS REALLY SO FANTASTIC BECAUSE YOU ACTUALLY BUILT THESE STRUCTURES THAT YOU COULD SEE. AND THEN I STARTED REALLY THINKING ABOUT LANGUAGE AND GOT MORE AND MORE SEDUCED BY LANGUAGE THAT A TRUE POET IS LIKE AN ARCHITECT. THAT YOU BUILD THESE HOUSES, OR THESE POEMS, THEY’RE LIKE SOUL HOUSES THE EGYPTIANS CALLED THEM. IF THEY’RE SUCCESSFUL A PERSON CAN ENTER THEM AND GET LOST IN THE MAZE OF WHAT YOU’VE JUST CREATED AND THEN I LEARNED THROUGH RIMBEAU NOT ONLY BY HOW MUCH YOU COULD GIVE BY LETTING SOMEONE ENTER YOU BUT HOW MUCH YOU COULD REVEAL OF YOURSELF. THROUGH LANGUAGE I STARTED REVEALING MY MOST MONSTROUS OR MIRACULOUS NATURE. YOU FEEL CERTAIN RHYTHMS IN YOURSELF AND YOU WANT NOT ONLY TO COMMUNICATE THEM TO OTHER PEOPLE BUT SEE THEM FOR YOURSELF. LIKE SOMETIMES I CAN SEE A PHOTOGRAPH OF MYSELF THROUGH MY WRITING. IT COAGULATES LIKE BLOOD, THE BLOOD OF THE POET.

INTERVIEWER: IS IT A UNIVERSAL SELF YOU REVEAL OR YOUR OWN INTERNAL SELF?

SMITH: WELL I HAVE TWO DIFFERENT WAYS OF WRITING. ONE IS LIKE A COMPLETELY OUTSIDE SOURCE. THEY SAY THERE ARE TWO MUSES OR TWO GODS. ONE IS
THE GOD OF LIGHT OR THE GREAT RHYTHM AND ONE IS THE GOD OF THE INTELLECT. THE FIRST ONE SEEMS TO COME FROM THE OUTSIDE. SOMETIMES I’LL BE TRYING TO SLEEP OR RESTING, I’LL NOT EVEN BE IN CONTACT WITH MY MIND AND A POEM COMES TO ME LIKE MUSIC. IT’S LIKE THIS POEM

Dog Dream happened when I was sleeping with my friend Sam Shepherd and we were both just sleeping quietly and we both woke up and he told me about this dream he had and he told it so quiet and so beautiful. He said he was in a sunshine country and he was nervous and he looked up at the sky and he saw a dog in the sky and it filled him with great peace and it had wings, and it had a red ring around it at the neck and it disappeared and it came back and disappeared and then it came back and landed, and he ran into this little cabin and he said Oh! I’ve just seen the most wonderful thing, a wonderful dog, and then someone said Now don’t tell anyone about that dog. And he said Why? Whose dog is it? And someone said That’s Dylan’s dog. And he was telling me this and my mouth was like frozen, I couldn’t move because I had dreamed almost the same exact dream in my own terms. It was the same dream and I told him and he went back to sleep. I was just lying there thinking of what a nice thing it was and I felt a presence in the room and there was this apparition. I mean it was the most concrete apparition I’ve ever seen. I mean everyone has apparitions but this was an apparition that was as there as a wedding cake. It was so frothy and it was this little girl that was like a Fellini communion child with her little lace gloves and a little white veil and sort of a sinister face, very precocious looking and she came up to me and she had a real red mouth and she started singing a little song the way little children sing, kind of off the melody and it went; Have you seen Dylan’s Dog it got wings, it can fly. When
You speak to him of it, it's the only time
Dylan can't look you in the eye... And I got
real shocked and I said I see you! I hear you!
You know, vanish cause the acknowledgement
I thought she would split like all apparitions
but she didn't, she was really persistent.
So I ran into the bathroom and I shut the door.
And she was there at my knees, I mean she was
kneeling in front of me and she was singing
the next stanza about the snake and then the
following about the bird, and I fly out of the
bathroom and I said Sam! Sam! Look! There's
this fairy child, this apparition and she's
singing this song to me and I want her to go
away! And he just looked at me and he said if
she's singing to you she wants you to write
it down or remember it. Write it down and she'll
go away. He was like so casual that there was
this ghost following me all around the room.
I did it and I still have it, I wrote the whole
thing down and it's such a complete, perfectly
structured little song I just wrote it and
she vanished and so I had the paper in my hand
and when I woke up it was just there on the
bed. That's just one occurrence. This has
happened to me maybe a thousand times. I mean
it happens to anyone who creates. Legends of
scientists suddenly seeing formulas appear to
them. It's just part of the collective
consciousness. I feel like the great rhythm
speaker, and it gives me great pleasure. But
the real pleasure is from working with the god
of the intellect. I mean that's the one I really
like to work with. I worked with the other one
when I was younger, even two years ago and
they were mostly songs. That's how Rock Poet
came about. But lately since I've been getting
more into concrete philosophy and studying
surrealism and really studying Rimbaud and
trying to communicate with him and feeling him,
I've been more in contact with my brain. It's
like sometimes I wake up and I feel like my
SPIRIT GOES up into my head and I walk around and it's like a white loft filled with spotless light and I feel the walls and as I press they get bigger and bigger and I just work things out with language. It's like lyric mathematics and it's hard work for me, 'cause I had a real punky upbringing and didn't speak that well and didn't think I had to learn grammar or talk well and all of a sudden I've completely fallen in love with all the aspects of language and all the intricacies and all the puns and jokes and cruelty. I just have to walk around with my brain. You know sometimes I'm up there and it feels all slimy like intestines, you know how the brain coils, and I feel that and it makes me shudder. But at least I'm still feeling contact, some kind of abstract experience and then this incredible flow of language or little phrases that are so perfect like sapphire seurot dot. Something like that is so beautiful to me and to know that I wrote it, that I made it up. It's when I do things like that I feel like I'm throwing rhythm into the great rhythm. Usually the great rhythm gives to me and I'm the recorder. But sometimes I'm the pitcher. You know and I throw that ball right into the great rhythm and I say how do you like that one baby?

INTERVIEWER: Could you explain some more about this great rhythm? What do you see it as or where does it come from?

SMITH: I guess it's a way of talking about the hierarchy of energy. When I was a kid I always wanted to believe in something like God or the cross or wanted to believe in the holy ghost. I loved objects. When I was a kid I loved Catholic objects. I was always hiding them. I was always getting holy cards and hiding them under my bed and looking at them at night because it was some kind of crystallization of a belief. Then I started doing art I started to feel a oneness with my art and that my art was
GOOD. I STARTED TO GET ON THE RHYTHM OF IT. IT WAS LIKE A NEW CRYSTALIZATION OF SOMETHING GOOD, A HIGHER ORDER AND LIKE I DON'T SPEAK WELL ABOUT RELIGION. IT'S LIKE A FEELING. I HAD THIS VISION. IT WAS THE NEATEST THING. I WAS HOME ALONE ALL NIGHT AND I GUESS I WAS KIND OF DRUNK. I GUESS I WAS REAL DRUNK AND I WAS JUST SINGING. I LOVE TO SING, JUST ANYTHING... I JUST MAKE UP LITTLE SONGS OR JUST MAKE UP THE WORDS. I HAVE THIS LITTLE PHRASE I LIKE IT'S THERE ARE REALLY FLYING SAUCERS. I DO IT OVER AND OVER 'TIL MY VOICE GETS ALL CRACKED AND DRY AND IT'S SUCH A NEAT FEELING. I'M JUST ROOTED TO THE CHAIR, TO THE FLOOR, TO CHINA AND I WAS JUST SITTING THERE AND I LOOKED AT THIS PAGE IN A BOOK AND IT WAS A BOOK OF LOUSY WRITING, LIKE THERE WAS NO SOUL IN THE LANGUAGE AND I WAS JUST STRUCK THAT I SAW ALL THE WORDS AS AMPUTEES, THE WHOLE ALPHABET WITH NOTHING, NO ARMS, NO LEGS, NOTHING AND I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND IT. I THOUGHT THEY WERE JUST AMPUTEES WITH NO ARMS OR INVISIBLE ARMS OR ARMS FLAILING. AND I KEPT LOOKING AND WAITING FOR IT TO GO TO ANOTHER STAGE AND THEN THE NEATEST THING HAPPENED. I JUST WATCHED THE LETTERS AND THEN THEY SORT OF TUMBLED AND TUMBLED AND TUMBLED OUT INTO THE HORIZON AND THEN I LOOKED AND LOOKED AND MY SIGHT LINE STRETCHED AND IT WAS LIKE ENDLESS, ENDLESS DESERT AND THEN I SAW THIRTY ARABS WITH THEIR BACK TOWARD ME AND THEIR MOUTHS BEGAN TO OPEN. THEY WERE ALL IN LONG WHITE DRESSES AND IT WAS REALLY NEAT IT WAS LIKE I SENSED THEIR MOUTH OPENING EVEN THOUGH THEIR BACK WAS TOWARD ME. AND THEIR MOUTHS WERE LIKE O'S AND THEY STARTED SINGING AND I WROTE IT DOWN AND CALLED IT ALGEBRAIC MUSAC. I DIDN'T KNOW HOW ELSE TO SAY IT. IT WAS LIKE THESE NEON SQUARES AND CIRCLES TUMBLING OUT OF THEIR MOUTHS REAL JUTTINGLY BUT ALL MADE OF NEON. SO I WROTE IT DOWN AND THIS IS HOW IT GOES; HOW SIGHT LINES STRETCH, ENDLESS DESERT, THERE SAT THIRTY ARABS, ALL IN WHITE
DRESSES, THEY OPENED THEIR MOUTH AND STARTED SINGING ALGEBRAIC MUSAC, FIRST NEON SQUARES TUMBLED OUT, ANIMATED DESERT DISNEY, GRADUALLY UNRAVELLING CHANT CHANT, VERTICLE NEON SNAKING ACROSS THE SANDS, FORMING HILLS, HUMPS, FOUNTAINS, DUNES ACCORDING TO PITCH, A TONE ETC. SOON THE ARABS FELL BACK, BUT THE VOICE THE VOICE REMAINED AND TRAVELED ON LIKE LOVING ARMS EMBRACED THE EARTH, SATURN ARM BANDS, WANDERING STAR, PERFECT HARMONY, HA HA HEE HEE.
BALANCE

Born to be, born to be me. Just the right dark glasses.
The power of the image. Treat the cornea like a jewel.
Sapphire seurot dot. Pull vision in. Inverted flashlight.

And out, zero out before its too late. Parachute, like the Berber Nomad. Never stick around for more then.
Not a sign of. Instamatic travelogue. The hungry eye.


Skull cap. Perhaps the sky. Bird target. If it be the true canopy. Build the great trampoline. I'll attempt the big bounce.


Patti Smith
1

WHERE THERE WERE ANGELS I SAW NOONE. NOTHING, NOT EVEN
SPACE, THE AIR AN ICE MILK, BANNA POPSCILE, WHITE PAPER.
TIME STRETCHING LIKE A HAND THAT COVERS. Gotta
BEAT TIME.
GOT A LONGING FOR THE GREAT DEPARTURE. TRAVEL
SEARCH PARTY, SAFARI, DISTANT PLACES. DIALECTS. JUNGLES.
PAGODAS.
DESERT LOVE NEST.

2

LOOK AT THIS LAND WHERE WE AM. LOST SOULS.
FAILED MOON OVER
THE CARNIVAL. DESERTED. THERE IS NO TWILIGHT
ON THIS ISLAND.
NIGHT FALLS LIKE A FINAL CURTAIN. HOW SHAKE-
SPERIAN.

CARNIVAL OF FOOLS, OF THE SEDUCED AND THE
DISCARDED, THE
TRICKED ONES. THE SKINNED ETHIOPIAN. SLEEPING
THRU THE WHOLE
THING. THE LEOPARD ROLLING OVER. ALL BUT
BLUSHING WITH THE
DISCOVERY OF HIS SLEEK COAT SANS SPOT.

3

PASS OUT THE MUSTARD SEED. SLIDE ONE UNDER THE
TONGUE.
ENCASE IN CRYSTAL, WRAP IN THE LEAVES OF A
BIBLE. I'M DEAD
TIRED, SLIT MINE IN HALF. SLIP ONE NEATH MY
FINGERNAIL.
OWWWWW YELL WHAT TORTURE. AT LEAST I'LL
REMEMBER. WALKING IN
THE SAND. STRANGER. CHLORAFORM...
I am experiencing courtship with the angels,
instead of careses they beat their pure feathers, rapid wing move,
Vain-o-bleach peacock, more incredible than the prized
Chinese fans, fans that plucked the white heron dry and
yet satisfied, completely wiped out.
Still I wonder...

Is it possible there is yet a more natural light, one
that rips and zings, highly polished fat chrome arrow.

See me walk thru the jungle, naked how noble
the only surviving savage, civilized yet without a stitch.

Overhead is the white eagle, huge mythic, be he albino or mystic its the same to me, he's big as a hut
now. His cock comes down, like a ladder from the belly of the helicopter rescue, immence perfect ladder, monkey bridge,
an arc, a runway, so inview that I can see the animals run
up by twos, to shelter safety
HE’S UPON ME. WE KNOW WHAT TO DO. TO MOVE THE NIGHT WITH LOVE. SYNCHRONIZATION OF BREATH. SEX, UNLIKE THE STRANGER, CAN MOVE MOUNTAINS.

AND ME I’M ONE GAPING HOLE. A COCK PIT. AND HIS (THE EAGLES) IS SO FITTING, BOTH ME PROTEST. FOR A SECOND. NO-AHHH.

VIRTUE EXPENDABLE. ANGELS BLOTTED WHERE THERE WERE NO SPIDERS I SAW SPIDERS PENETRATION TIL IT COMES LIKE THE FLOOD.

PATTI SMITH
HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

There is a continuum of virginities, an endless array of occasions which scatter themselves intermittently along the way to be violated; I have a multitude of maidenheads which the world does not cease to burst; no matter what is lost, there will always be one thing more.

TOM BRAHAM
IT IS ALL OVER

...IT IS ALL OVER FOR US. WE SEE IT,
WE STARE AT IT,
WE LOOK AT OUR MOURNFUL FATE IN ANGUISH.
BROKEN SPEARS LIE IN THE STREETS.
OUR HAIR IS TORN.
HOUSES ARE WITHOUT ROOVES,
THEIR WALLS REDDENED.
WORMS PILE UP IN THE STREETS AND SQUARES,
AND WALLS ARE SPATTERED WITH BRAINS.
WATERS ARE RED, AS IF DYED,
AND WHEN WE DRINK THEM, IT IS LIKE DRINKING
SALT WATER.
MEANWHILE, WE KNOCK DOWN ADOBE WALLS.
OUR PAST IS A NET OF HOLES.
OUR DEFENSE WAS IN SHIELDS,
BUT SOLITUDE CANNOT BE PROTECTED BY SHIELDS!
WE EAT ROOTS,
WE CHEW DOG-GRASS,
ADOBE STONES, RATS, DUST, WORMS,
IT IS ALL OVER FOR US.

AZTEC (NAHUATL)
TRANSLATED BY SALLY HYER