

No-Design

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Contents

Cool Dawn Light	5
The End Of History	6
Under Clumps Of Pine	7
What To Be?	8
White Cloud Drifts	9
Beyond the City	10
The Real Makers.....	11
Into Quiet Air.....	12
Sleeping, Waking.....	14
Listening In The Clearing.....	15
Empty Mirror.....	16
Form Is Void Just As It Is.....	17
Dawn World	18
Nothing There.....	19
Washing	20
All Grass	21
Mountain Zen	22
Trust In The Heart	23
In The Space Inside	24
Direct Pointing.....	26
Night Magic.....	27
Not Our Place	28
Backwater	29
Old-Time Sages	30
Logic, Compassion	31
Power Failure.....	32
Among Dark Leaves.....	33
Seen/Unseen	34
No Transmission.....	35
The Guarantee.....	36
Gazing At The Pattern	37
Still Clinging.....	38
Go With The Fixity.....	39
No Fuss	40
The Empty Stream	41
Phantom Grass	42
Voice.....	43
Let Go	44
Not Natural	45

Always In The Realm Of The Spirit.....	46
At That Moment	47
Empty Shores.....	48
A Deeper Mood	49
Credo.....	50
Black City Echoes	52
It Doesn't Come From Nowhere	53
Tiny Spaces Are Gigantic.....	54
The Trackless Track	55
Values In The Grass	56
Dawn, Bamboo, Freedom.....	57
Dolphin	58
Simple Firelight	59
Forces Inside.....	60
Plenty Of Time	61
Little Knots	62
Nature Keeps Writing On The Rock-Face	63
Don't Believe.....	64
No Ought In Nature	65
Lost Empires.....	66
Beautiful Freedom, Shining Hills.....	67
World Of Forces	68
A Concert.....	69
We Were There, Wherever There Was	70
Leaf-Fall	71
Earth In Her Elements	72
Don't Believe.....	73
All The Tall Trees.....	74
Nameless.....	75
On High Hills.....	76
Something Rises	77
Lake of Cloud, Tiny Peaks	78
Triplet	79
Being Shadow, Watching Shadow	80
'They Shall Be One'	81
Prayer Has Nothing To Do With Religion	82
Frost At Midnight.....	83
Index Of First Lines.....	85

Cool Dawn Light

Cold green pool under green trees.
Grey sky.
Edge of autumn. This world
Is here without design.

The Chinese said *tzu-jan*,
Of-itself.
Deep down in the silence,
You can feel it,

All that process,
All that order,
Smooth as silk
And all without us.

Mist on the green pool
In the morning.
Chill leaves stir. This world
Moves without intent.

The Chinese said *wu-wei*
Without making.
No hidden mind here,
Cool dawn light.

The End Of History

The end of History
Is filled with intricate detail,
Plenty of action,
Not a silent end,
On a silent beach.

The end of History
Is not the end of war,
Technology, interest, event.
It's simply that
We end in repetition.

To endure you must
Get used to the repeats,
Always entertaining,
And the sameness
Of the thought.

The end of History
Is not the end of mind,
Science is delightful;
It's simply that there
Are no further values

Than those we know.
Love, truth and beauty
Not enough for you?
The end of History
Is not the end of those.

Respect, at last, arrives
For the creatures, the planet,
And the individual life.
True, sensitive, and kind:
The final refuge.

The end of History
Is full of subtle detail
Replete with action,
And not a silent end,
On a silent beach.

Under Clumps Of Pine

No point planning the spontaneous move.
In a flash, the brushstroke in the air,
The dancer in the dance,
The exercise of thoughtless skill is *Te*.

Here the fallen trees, the broken rocks,
Roots, rot, down to the heartwood,
Floor of the forest,
Mist on the mountain-top, alight.

This too a lightning-flash in eternity,
Unfolded from itself, self-organised,
Temporary the order
Out of chaos, we call beauty.

Under clumps of pine in the rain,
Watching the peak float in the fog,
A murmur somewhere
Of the running stream; all this life.

What To Be?

Our relationship with Nature,
Slowly changing, swiftly changing.
Imagining the meld of mind and machine
Savouring the cool air of the forest.

Our relationship with space and time,
Swiftly changing, slowly changing.
Imagining the meld of mind and machine
Touching distant galaxies in silence.

Our relationship with each other,
Slowly changing, swiftly changing.
Imagining the meld of minds, machines,
Joining thoughts over aeons.

Freeing the mind of technology,
Its implications; thinking
Of values, thinking of purpose.
What to do then; aim for; what to be?

White Cloud Drifts

White cloud drifts. Leaves turn
In the breeze. On mountain slope
The white streams scour the rock.
Pale grasses in the shadows.

The sky is clear, nothing hidden.
Our ignorance we call mystery.
Measuring the darkness, no need:
Everything settles by itself.

Deep midnight hum of universe,
Shadows flicker, leaves sigh,
Fall of water, in the darkness.
Floating there, the bright moon.

No mind, and no reflection.
No will, and no intent,
Following the mountain trail,
Silently, seasons pass.

Beyond the City

The track disappears in bushes,
Thorn and scrub, the air close
I sit on a log,
Watch the tree-creeper
Spiral upwards

Far hush of the city,
Still roads.
Here a mind,
There the silence
Which is which?

Look down at the floor
Of the wood, its detritus,
Intricacy of twigs,
Bark, leaves, dust, fibre,
Nature's leavings,

Which are Nature,
And not left. Look up,
Tendrils, shapes of cloud,
The thousand forms,
Swirling in the eye.

Here is a space. To be.
No sound, distant houses.
Deep in your original
Mind, is the gleam
Of valley haze, cool air.

The Real Makers

Power is empty, though it makes
The world of phantoms work.
Ghosts, we pass, and pay
Lip-service to the powers.
A thousand stratagems
To rationalize the weird.

Buildings, clothes and cars:
But still a world of spirits.
Minds in the window-glass
Stop and reflect.
Cities standing, *maya*,
In the silent universe.

Easy to tell yourself it's real,
Vanish in the maze of names
And forms; drink the tea,
Speak the ritual, be careful.
The world is solid in the dark,
Less so in the light.

No I've no anger for those
In power. They are
Human beings just like me,
And fallible, just Egos.
Phantoms without masks
Are simply phantoms.

Most are powerless. History
Is empty. This unreal world
Is made of hidden thoughts,
Of ghosts of ghosts,
The spirits of the phantoms,
Shining in the dark of the world.

Into Quiet Air

It's sudden awakening,
And nothing changed!
The sky is clear,
World is how it is.

Smoke haze on granite ridges,
Deep light in the trees.
Everything wavers,
Then is still.

Everyday life
Is perfect awakening.
Nothing special,
Undefined by thought.

Not by meditation
Or intention,
The leaves move
The moon wanders.

Sunyata is emptiness,
Wu is non-being,
Neither are other
Than the silent mountain.

What you think is flowing,
That is still.
What you think is still,
That is flowing:

Caught on the snow-peak
The clouds stop moving.
Trees and granite slide
To the creek.

Tun wu, flash of insight
Offers nothing.
The void is not void,
The real not real.

Nothing to find here,
Standing in the snow.
No Wheel of Being,
This Moment is the Wheel.

Set down your mind
Steadily before you,
Watch it vanish
Into quiet air.

Sleeping, Waking

Do all those memories
Help or hinder?
Mind makes obstacles.
Mind stirs up thoughts.

In the great Void
Move sun, moon and stars,
Wandering mind,
Regretful heart.

Bright blue sky,
Birds fly through it.
Mountain shimmers,
Ancient places.

Nothing else.
No mind in the Void.
Stone without purpose.
Grass without intent.

Sleeping without dreams
Under far heavens.
Waking to green meadow,
Green thought, green stream.

Listening In The Clearing

Sudden barking: an adder slides away in the sun.
Brown-yellow bracken, that oily scent.
The slow-curving ridged backs of hills,
The layers of trees,
Birch, oak, down to the alder in the valley,
Blood-red cut trunks, black sinuous stream.

Sudden crashing: deer gone through the trees.
Salt-licks in hollows, moss-green roots,
The high dark crests of ridges,
Stone shelves of forest,
Birch saplings shading the leaf-filled ditch,
Thin white streams threading the mountain.

Empty Mirror

Why an intent among the stars?
What purpose?
We can drift
Through eternity
If we choose.

Why the frustration, *dukkha*,
And the pain?
Where are we
Off to travelling
In the night?

The mirror is empty,
And the lake is dry,
Where is freedom?
Don't strive, don't grasp,
Don't crave, don't cling.

Leaf drops from the tree.
Cloud slides
From the mountain.
Stream from the ledge,
Moon from the sky.

Form Is Void Just As It Is

Squirming life in the darkness,
Eels in the tide,
Still this is void,
And nothing to be grasped.

Flailing pine on the hill,
Black in the milky light,
Still this is simply void,
And nothing has risen.

Thoughts in the cool night,
World silent, sighing, calm.
Still life is merely void,
No constant Self exists.

Dawn World

Down the valley: trees and no people.
The world is *that*, the world is *such*,
Tathata.

The awakening an awakening,
Nothing new:
Sun breaking from behind the one peak.

In cold morning air the world turns stone,
Then cloud, then stream,
No beginning and no end.

Frost on the cliff-face, smoke from the fire,
The world, so, far beyond the mind,
Slowly alters temperature.

The perfect feeling? Clear, calm affection.
Oh so difficult.
Dawn world: chilled trees and no people.

Nothing There

Long narrow trail along the hillside.
High to look down, fearful mind,
Feet slipping on the peat track.
This is form, and this is void.

There is what is, and nothing else.
Mind descends into the bracken,
Chases each frond to its base,
Awake, there's nothing new to see,

No addition. World is free, world is free.
Scrambling along the hill-track,
I saw that *nirvana* is *samsara*.
All these forms and nothing there.

Washing

Nothing to do to make it so.
Washing in the mountain stream,
You can even wash the mind.
By seeing, not by trying, we see.

In too much concentration on the thing,
We miss the thing itself, in the mind.
By too much meditation on its nature,
Nature just passes us by.

Who thinks to find the self, loses it.
Who thinks to lose the self, finds it.
Losing or finding the self:
Neither leads to the mindless trail.

Freezing water, wind in the pines.
Trees all sway, the heart flickers.
The world is always like this.
Nothing to do to make it so.

All Grass

Like a network of crystals
The diamond *sutras*,
Shining quartz in the rock.
I trace the glittering veins.

Like a web white with dew,
The jewelled meanings,
Brightly strung in the silence.
I trace the gleaming jewels.

West and East: a weight of being.
All the objects of existence,
The emotions and the actions.
I trace the silent trail.

No one means to come so far.
Once here, no way back.
All naked flowing light,
All grass under the stars.

Mountain Zen

Mountain Zen is hard to understand.
Try it without the understanding.
There is the cataloguing of nature,
There is the mindless letting-go.

Wandering through trees and grasses,
Hairy seeds blowing in the wind,
Following the moonlight on the stream,
Chasing the radiance in the clouds.

Mountain Zen won't get you anywhere.
It means leaving everything alone.
There is trying to dictate the process,
There is watching everything go by.

Sitting on the un-carved rock, in the sun,
Drifting silently among the pines,
Pollen spills across your quiet heart,
Pale birch leaves whisper in the light.

Trust In The Heart

Big weathered rocks,
This place is ancient.
Stone-axe factory
On the slopes,
Bone arrow-heads
Amongst the scree.
Empty caves, old hearths,
The silent people.

Beautiful arcs of slender trees,
Brushing their leaves
Through the torrent,
Green meadow at the foot,
All the signs
Of our past below
The mountain.

Something carves
Into the body.
Where we came from
Is almost a memory,
Latent in the bones
In the skin,
Aeons pulsing.

No paintings here,
No rock-carved art,
No ochre daubs,
No statuettes of bone,
Just a feeling
Deep in the mind,
And a voice saying
Trust in the heart.

In The Space Inside

Mind is the sky.
Birds are the thoughts
Coming and going.

You can shoot them
With your feathered
Arrows, then they die.

You can fly with them
Imitating form,
Admiring process.

Through the blue
Void of your
Past they swirl.

Sometimes they
Are clouds,
Wisps of future.

In the morning
They fly East,
West at night.

They leave no
Trace, you can
Watch them go.

No one knows
What kind of
Birds they are.

They fly too
High, they fly
Too swiftly.

Their call falls
Through the
Space of mind.

The cry of all
The birds
In the world.

Direct Pointing

The Tao is like the empty sky.
Open your eyes and you see it.
It needs no discipline, no intent.
The wind at dawn blows through.

The Tao is like the moonlit lake.
See it and your mind grows quiet.
It's nothing to try for or to gain.
The light goes deep in the water.

The Tao is like the running stream.
Look there, your heart grows still.
Altering, it's one and the same.
Motionless, flows through the eye.

Night Magic

Mind empty, night-wind empty.
What you look for
Was never lost: it's here.

No point talking, no use chasing.
No place for those machines
On empty streets.

Nothing outside, nothing inside.
There's really nothing
To be grasped.

Nothing to be practised, known.
Nothing to be done,
Nowhere to go.

Mind empty, night-wind empty.
Just a perfect
Movement of the trees.

Not Our Place

All gone where? Years
Of power and violence,
All gone under. Nature
Survives, lovely Earth.

Calm mountains stretch
Through the sky, mind
Settles. Mad nations,
Elsewhere, mortal cries.

You need to hover at
The edge of conscience,
You need to float in
The un-carved space.

No one can carry
The weight of human
Suffering. No one
Can impose a purpose.

One species scrabbling
To dominate the planet,
Subjugating creatures,
Withholding life-rights,

Will achieve nothing.
Silent mountains rise
Through the sky. Deep
Woods, leaves flowing.

Backwater

Old fruit trees in the abandoned meadows.
No one round here working. Fields silent,
Old clapboard houses glow in mellow light.

All the way round, the soft mountain slopes.
Still space. Quiet people. Little competition,
The sense of settlement, rooted tribes, trees.

Always there have been the peaceful places.
We have it in us to be free of every violence,
Of the body and the mind. We have it in us.

Though this place, and this metaphor, will fail,
Though there is no sanctuary from depredation,
Calm is not hatred, benevolence no destruction.

The endless agony of confrontation, of desire,
The eternal round of guilt, regret and craving,
Evaporates in this silence. Inanimate Nature

Reclaims, free of us, the rough deserted orchards:
Vanishing peoples, old tongues, peculiar ways,
Old clapboard houses fading through the twilight.

Old-Time Sages

Old-time sages abandoning study
At a single word, in a single moment,
Rested in silence, spontaneity.

Neither selfless nor selfish,
Neither this nor that, free
Of temples, scriptures, practice,

Old-time sages sitting far off in the hills,
Living, peaceful in the mountains,
Inside, outside, life-events, the *dharma*,

Spoke not a word. Nothing gained.
Journeying back to primal being,
Entering the realm of the creatures,

Old sages voiceless under pine trees
Left no teaching, spoke no wisdom,
Rested in non-action, spontaneity.

Logic, Compassion

Suffering is inherent in the creature,
Pain, regret, transience.
The animate would return
To the inanimate,
Cease clinging. All return to Nature.

Sun softly shining over Earth,
Autumn light on the leaf-mould,
The wind blowing on the mountain,
From the blue:
Ours, this logic, this compassion.

Suffering is inherent in the creature,
Not inherent in the world outside.
Silent light cascades,
Beyond the mind,
There is no suffering in the universe.

Power Failure

Pre-dawn light on the creek,
Pallid water.
Glistening clusters
Of pine-needles stir,
Over the fallen trunks
That block the way.

Without tools and furs
No one lived here.
Cunning and co-operation
Led us outwards,
Our dispersal
From the African savannahs,

Until we competed for the planet
With every life-form,
Exploited every kind of matter,
Black oil pumping,
Shale fracturing,
Machines above the asphalt,

While salvation lies in not-doing,
All in intentionless action,
Compassion devoid of interference,
Free giving
Without competition,
The sharing where we began.

Broad light flowing in the creek,
Over the shining, singing land,
Where is our power?
While the universe,
Without purpose,
Goes on doing what it does.

Among Dark Leaves

Silent illumination, *mo-chao*,
The moon glows in the water.
Calm, at night, among dark leaves,
I look to catch the stars moving.

In sitting, just sit: in being, just be,
Like the boulder in the stream.
Un-carved, at rest, in black flow,
Here, without knowledge or intent.

Don't name the lights in the sky.
Motiveless action is the secret.
Mountain peaks in the storm,
Poke through the jagged cloud.

You need to wake from morality,
Free the mind from convention.
The inanimate adheres to no virtue
The mindless feels no empathy.

Stars are far off, in the deep sky,
Leaves are stirring in the chill air.
What point is there in the universe?
Freedom is the absence of desire.

Seen/Unseen

New planets orbiting their stars
Make no difference.
Though we are likely not alone,
Mind is mind.
It can't invent purpose
For what is without intent.

Hail to the invisible companions,
Slowly circling.
Though we may likely never meet,
Mind is mind,
And thoughtless process rests
In deepest values.

Some blue smudge in the blurred image,
Might be us,
Silent in the distant mirror.
But mind is mind,
With nothing to grasp in the void,
Nothing to gain.

No Transmission

One foot in front of another,
We go.
Through the thousand centuries,
We go.

Tools and skills,
Are what we learn,
And deep process
Of the universe.

Learn: the Void has
No possessions,
Nothing to be gained
From emptiness.

Perfect silence
Still the best.
Look, I pass
Nothing on.

After this
I'll relax in stillness.
It's your mind
That goes on working.

The Guarantee

When we ask: 'Why
Something and not Nothing?'
The 'why' conducts a complex meaning:
Nothing, it implies, was a real alternative,
The Something a pure anomaly.
There's a yearning for design of the un-designed,
A direct communication of the strangeness,
How Being feels so very odd.

Mountains loom, the water chills,
The trees feel solid, alien.
Objects we imbue with personalities,
And endlessly anthropomorphise nature.
Or we grant intent to the intentionless,
Desiring to be part, to be needed,
Would be liked, even loved by the inanimate,
Though we barely manage love with people.

But was Nothing ever a real alternative,
Or that void a physical possibility?
Why should this strange world not be what always is,
The only meaning its peculiar existence?
No purpose can inhere in the purposeless,
Other than the purposes of creatures,
And the purposes we design into machines,
Where in time we'll meld with the inorganic.

You must understand the beauty
In the absence of design,
It's that absence that guarantees our freedom.

Gazing At The Pattern

Even the 'selection' in natural selection,
Is too anthropomorphic for me.
Nothing 'selects', there is no active verb,
There are pressures, populations, there are outcomes.

What we see as the sieving of life-forms,
What we capture in equations,
Is a sequence of events, devoid of greater plan,
Resulting in a pattern of survival.

Science too is plagued by language,
The inappropriate embedding of intention,
Through verbs that go implying a subject,
When all we really have is the object.

Even the 'selection' in natural selection,
Is too anthropomorphic for me.
The real issue being whether we're unique
Or whether mind emerges everywhere.

Still Clinging

In the gorges, in the hills, autumn light
Slanting softly through the pines.
The mountain peaks have no awareness,
The wind has no identity.

In the woods, in ravines, dark streams
Show white against half-buried stones.
What's the use of all this craving?
There's no purpose in the cliffs, in the snow.

Boulders bedded in the grass, white clouds
Moving slowly in the sky.
Shadows deepen, leaves fall,
Mind still clings: to pathless silence.

In the mountains, in the darkness, who knows
The trail, and where is home?
Misted thought in tangled valleys,
Endless flowing endlessly consumed.

Go With The Fixity

The wave lifts and falls every movement.
The Self dies and rises every moment.
The world is a process of energies in flight,
The mind the endless process of awareness.

This thing you call your identity,
Its name and its form, how fragile!
There is no time so nothing lasts in time.
You exist by this continuous creation.

Is the stream the stream, the tree the tree?
Where nothing changes everything is changed.
The mind is enlightened on the mountain,
This still cold moon, the seething flow.

No Fuss

Wu-shi, no fuss and nothing special.
We wash in the stream.
Birds fly noisily from the clump of pines.

Mist hangs in the gorges. I roam round
With nothing to do.
Mountains and trees never get bored.

No intent. Vague thoughts.
Pile wood for a fire.
If you look for the mind it's not there.

The world is bright. Heart is clear.
If you think there are no
Values without purpose, you'd be wrong.

Wu-shi, no busyness, nothing special.
Stones and spoons,
Cold water, flames. We eat.

The Empty Stream

The intimate essence of the Tao
Is this: there's nothing to believe.
What is called faith is pointless.

Mind-values flourish of themselves.
There's no use following the Way.
Seeking the Buddha-self, you lose it.

And when you wake there's nothing special:
Quiet knowing, an everyday lightness,
This empty stream flowing in the void.

Phantom Grass

The size that belittles.
Vast buildings in the sky.
Giant doors, plate glass,
Space over-engineered.

Here and there a token tree,
Phantom grass.
Ghosts of power
Pass to and fro.

The human is here
On sufferance
You understand.
This is power's place.

And here the powerful
Bound by endless forces
Go to and fro
Conceiving of control.

This is the essence
Of the civilised.
You must understand
What we have done.

Exchanged a world
For the dream,
Conceded the mind
In ritual,

To conquer the material
Live in peace,
And overcome
Indifferent Nature.

How did we get here?
As ever, gradually.
What we create exists
Beyond our acts of creation.

Voice

Eventually you'll hear your own voice.
Mind goes working of itself.
The rhythms are your native tongue,
Encapsulating a whole culture.

What speaks is from behind the mind.
Like that heavy-blossomed thorn
Now losing itself in a fan of fruit
Spread all round it on the ground.

You can be casual about it, creation,
But it's the inner complex moving,
And best if you just open the gate
Let leaves blow across the path.

The hills need no help to be hills.
Clouds needs no assistance to be clouds
Mind needs no effort to be mind.
World needs no purpose to be world.

Let Go

Restless mind driving endless purpose.
Greed, fear, dissatisfaction, curiosity.

Let all that go.
Watch the fog
And cloud
Swirling over summits,
Clumps of pine
In the deep.

In the silence, there's no need of values.
Morality's the result of too much action.

Sun-glare after rain.
Wu-wei.
Sit and contemplate
The brightness.
Jagged ridges,
Black wet stone.

The universe is neither kind nor harsh,
Beneficent nor hostile, simply mindless.

Scrambling up the trail,
Alone.
Confusion over, see
Beyond the trees
One whole mountain,
Floating weightless.

Not Natural

In us sincerity, kindness, affection,
Nothing in the rocks and trees.

Empty mind, sees so clearly:
Awareness outside design or meaning.

No one can discover it by searching.
No one can hold to it by clinging.

Wishing I were deeper in Nature,
Twice-born to another kind of being,

All the four-thousand year old phantoms,
Gone with the mist in the breeze.

Always In The Realm Of The Spirit

Pale bark, green insect, watching eye,
A kind of natural integrity,
Truth you can touch, our affection for it all,
The living empathy that makes us human.
Yes it's about spiritual values,
But no, it's nothing to do with religion.
Mind is always in the realm of the spirit,
The integrative process of awareness.
If you don't think values arise
Out of the deep core of the creature,
Nothing, I can do or say, will ever
Convince you otherwise.

But look. Pale grass, antelope, clear eye,
The signs of natural perception,
The closest to reality we have, our delight
In it all, the flowing light that is our being.
And all of it about spiritual values,
Freedom from design, devoid of the divine.
Values out of genes and culture: we live
In the unreal realm of spiritual awareness.
That's what mind is at the highest pitch,
The process out of which values arise,
Caught between the self and the world,
Nothing of value otherwise.

At That Moment

Everything known gone at a stroke,
All the books, all the thinking,
Everything gone sliding away,
Down a snow-slope, in the breeze.

No knowledge to chase after.
No *karma* to escape,
Every single cloud and stone
Every breath is the way.

Boundless as the empty sky,
It's around you and inside.
What you can never see or hold,
Always with you, deep and clear.

Silence and it's there;
Speak it and it's gone.
Don't look, and you'll find it.
The open trail, that's the way.

Cities far off in quiet air,
Deep gorges, icy lakes.
This empty body is the phantom.
This silence is the *dharma*.

Empty Shores

Absolutely nothing to aim for,
On the white beach in the rain.
Atlantic stretching far West,
Cloud weighting the horizon.

The world is aimless, mindless air,
Vapour and breeze, a salt-light
Making its delight in the mind,
One pure play of mad fractals.

Green barrels of waves, the roar
Of brine shattering on the shale,
Far out gulls crying out in flight,
Climbing upwards from the spray.

Forms mind would like to enter,
Vanish into their complexity,
Become what the eyes reveal,
Meld with those granite shores.

If we could leave mind behind,
Let self, outside self, be Ocean,
Just as the old-time sages did;
Thought, the white birds passing by.

A Deeper Mood

Late October warmth, and quiet haze,
The leaf-fall, the many fallen leaves.
Bring your values, show what we are:
Do you know love of truth, of beauty?

Which may not be love of humans,
This dark species. Though we try
Not to weary of it all, and this life,
Not to be destroyed by the system.

From the top of these hills, dry fields,
A pair of lakes, and we wonder how
All the stone walls got built, far now
From the perceptions of those lives.

Aimless, empty: the contours of place.
Wandering the wood, soft laughter,
Mind falls with everything that falls,
Delighted by the world un-designed.

Credo

No this is not about me, it's about us.
It's about the hollow paths of power,
A craving for control, the foolishness;
A way through to what we came from.

If you don't believe, explain the meaning
Of this universe that never points beyond.
Always complete in movement, aimless
A void that's full: fullness ever empty.

Not a way back, there's no way back,
Into those first grounds of our being,
Into those grasslands, the savannahs,
Below the shadows of the silent trees,

And no path forward on this track,
The endless erosion of nature on our
Planet; illusions of industry, courage;
Crushing weight of the Anthropocene.

Curiosity, cunning, co-operation
Can only take a species so far,
Into the dumb competitive deadness,
Into the knowledge ending discussion:

Beyond them love is needed, and a joy
Of depth beyond a cursory enjoyment,
The creative force that brought us here,
That needs now to illuminate this Earth.

And not the toils of religion, but human
Love. And not the joys of unawareness,
But delight in throwing off the centuries,
To return to the locus where we started.

Bring your values here: truth, sensitivity,
And kindness. Learn new sharing, a new
Giving. Only what is shared increases
Of itself. The rest is a bitter dynamic.

It's not about me, I would fail, you will
Succeed. It's about the next generations,
Who must first learn to wander aimless
Through this world, in the spirit at least,

And be patient. Since nothing is designed
Unless natural minds design it, first learn
The intentionless, Earth devoid of purpose;
Then question how we got here, and why.

There's a path forward that is a path back,
To the grasslands and the trees where we
Began. And in every single moment a Way
That can't be looked-for, but is always there

Inside You.

Black City Echoes

Black city echoing with light.
But side-streets empty still sing
Of other spaces: under-seas,
Moonlit forests,
Silent grasslands.

Night city seems innocuous.
Walking the concrete,
Beside sheets of plate glass,
Phantom buildings
In the sky,

But diminishes the spirit.
The water, wood and grass
Is retrieved by mind
From more
Ancient places.

Western hills gleam bright,
The land quivers,
Under the creeping weight
Of our domination,
Are we done for?

Strip out the poetry,
Are we done for?
Another simple eye-blink
Of the stars,
A passing tremor?

Light is beauty, beauty light.
Leaves shine in the moon.
Clouds collecting,
Breeze stirring,
Black city echoes.

It Doesn't Come From Nowhere

Most imagery from Nature
From the 'suchness'.
From the richness
Of intentionless world.

Little from the made,
Most from the given,
Aimless structure,
Meaningless process.

Being clear that function
Is not purpose, a misnomer,
The seed has no intent
To form the plant:

And that form is no
Direction, the wave
Is bounded water
Moving to no plan.

At least that is true
Of the inanimate:
Minds create purpose
From the self-aware,

And bestow meaning,
Imbue time and space
With significance,
Create their worlds.

Still, deep in them,
Deep in the 'body',
Is all the imagery,
And force of nature.

Your body's in your mind.
Your mind is body.
Your eye's that shadow
Crossing the beach.

Tiny Spaces Are Gigantic

The weight of all the mass of all the cities: swiftly gone.
The mountains, the forests, grasslands, seas: all so frail.

A thousand generations lost and vanished in a dream;
All the billion leaves of autumn: all the empty trails.

The children and the adults, the creatures, and the plants,
All flowing, like a marvellous cascade, into the void.

Like gusts of rain slowly washing down from the clouds.
Like the calls of migrating birds heading through the sky.

Loose, like the liberty of wild wandering streams.
Mindless like the trembling of breaking ocean surf.

Dislocated from the chain of purposed cause and effect.
Unconnected to the reasoning powers, logically bereft.

Standing wordless, seeing mindless, lost in this eternity.
Tiny spaces are gigantic, Nature threads the momentary.

The Trackless Track

Wandering the aimless way: go, following the trackless track,
Sitting under dark pines: gazing as the light shines on the pass.

What is this *Tao*, this *Dharma*, to be known?
Passing by the names, not stopping by the forms.

The ridge above is basalt: granite baking in the sun.
Bright wordless minutes, and slow waves of stone.

Climbing over scree-slopes, scrambling blocked gullies,
Penetrate the green gorge, stop to visit with the deer.

Drifting the cloud trail, straying through the gate of grass:
All that worthless hopeless nightmare, Being, left below.

Values In The Grass

My values in the grass, where are your values?
In the shadows, in the subtle play of form,
The swaying blades, the arching threads
Of green: this insect home.

My values in the grass, bowed sincerity,
The slow empathetic movement, all
Together, the kindness of the coolness,
The shifting of the light.

My values in the grass, where are your values?
Beyond the human, far side of being,
Surrounded by a sensitivity, released
From every kind of slavery.

My values in the grass, intentionless.
What harm in stems and shoots, the pastoral?
The best of what we found on the way,
Almost intact, still: a beauty.

Dawn, Bamboo, Freedom

Dawn. Water-drops on the bamboo leaves.
What is it in the mind that goes on
Counting time, feels the dismissal,
Like heavy atoms ticking in the dark,
The soft cool centuries of rain subsiding,
The mind of no age,
Mind floating like a bird in the light?

All the changes buried under dark oak,
Juniper and mountain-pine,
All the green gorges East, West,
Haunts of the creatures, the first peoples,
And no one ever owns the land,
On this passing world without intent,
This lost planet.

Dark-light, water-drops on the thin leaves,
Those marvellous globes, deep mirrors,
Snow bows their platforms, wind stirs
Every sphere of the shining mind,
Like surfaces of far gleaming sky,
Where over the mountain's edge
Freedom slides on silent wings.

Dolphin

The clinging is the longing,
The desire goes on forever
And for the whole mind
Not simply the body.

Ache. It's the pain
Of its transience,
It's the beauty
Of the un-ownable.

The grasping is the failure
To let go. The wish
Goes on forever, moving
In the mind which is body.

Then gone! The sudden flare,
In the blind moment,
A dolphin arced
From impossible seas.

Sudden horizon opened,
The gasp of relief, release,
Freeing of the body
And the mind,

Before the swift fall back
Into deep water,
The grey-silver arch,
The glittering spray.

Simple Firelight

It's not the heaviness of thought that impresses,
It's the lightness,
Not the density.

It's not the scope of reference that compels us,
It's the feeling,
The human feeling.

The slightest architecture is the most welcoming,
The quietest mind,
Moving on the darkness.

Though we love the drama and the interplay,
The rain and thunder,
It's silent flames,

And peaceful trees, barely stirring in a landscape,
That sink deepest,
Longest-leaved.

Forces Inside

Night-time city, a white glitter of bars,
Excitement on the edge of darkness.
Each light the invite to the threshold:
Music, perfume, beauty are the goddess.

Everything that came from the desert
Has confused the simple human mind,
The veils of the galaxies that glisten,
The dangerous, shifting sands of time,

While a clear heart lives in the grass,
In that first free season of the spirit,
Moves with the fast-running stream,
Bathing mind and body in the flow.

Night-time city, the seductions of power:
Where souls are sold, we become unequal,
Things shining in each other's perception,
Objects greed manipulates, deep longings.

Night-time webs of light cross continents,
Thread the globe down there, other nets
Are cast about our meanings of the real,
Unseen, the dark divisors, such beauty,

That alien beauty of the made not given.
All things detached from value may entice,
Leave us staring at each other, wondering,
What future for this night-time, sighing land?

Plenty Of Time

This: a world now that blocks the heart.
Impermanent selves live phantom lives,
In the dance that no one proclaimed.

No emotions in tranquility are enough
For this deep dark: pure jets and gasps
Of love like dying fires.

Almost the granite peaks inadequate,
Floating over scented grassy hills,
Rivers, rock and birdcalls.

Dukkha has a name, and *anyita*,
Maya and *trishna* have names,
That's frustration, pain, transience.

The nameless is the silence of trees,
Almost, the watery glade gone still,
Almost, the old unspoken nature.

Too much clinging, and less sharing,
Will undo us, the ice age
And the truth will undo us.

Harder now to take it easy, to deny
The failings on the planet,
The actions gone beyond control.

Lovely, how the squirrel still stirs
Through the litter on the wood's floor,
The kestrel diligently hovers:

All this darkness fades, will melt,
Beyond us; Earth not waiting,
But enduring, blue till dawn.

Little Knots

From vibrations underneath the universe,
From all the collapsing quantum wave-forms,
Little knots of energy,
We appear.

I dream about my life, your life, what we were:
Skeins of strange weirdness in deep space,
The irrationalities of emotion,
Human fate.

Rebirth is the fall from moment to moment,
The self-reincarnation of our life in time.
And not fresh lives
We'll not know.

Purposed action is the *karma*, pointless
Except to evoke the being of the mind,
Preserve and propagate the body,
Such our world.

So much futile grasping of each other,
So much clinging to what justifies the self,
Careless of each,
We call it love.

From the tremors underneath the universe,
From the deep-entangled dance of almost-being,
Little knots of space-time,
We appear.

Nature Keeps Writing On The Rock-Face

Now we're puzzled what to say,
Everyone writes poetry,
Or a novel. Everyone publishes
Everything, everywhere, wildly.

No one here carves or paints
On the rock-face, in scarlet ink,
Or black on silk banners waving
Like cloud-kites in the wind,

But above the domes and spires
Of former ages, planes in the sky
Write their message in the air:
Every waste to everyone, slowly.

Now it's a mystery what's
Left to say, everyone talks
And no one listens. Everyone hears
Their own voice, is it weeping?

But sometimes silently we stop,
And Nature is there in the eye,
Ceaselessly writing energies
Over the un-purposed quiet.

Non-meanings from which
We try to gather meanings,
Not Correlatives, just cries
Of being, unintended cries.

Don't Believe

Simply don't believe. Start there.
Not the fancy rites and rituals,
Nor the primitive confusion,
Despite the warming glow.

No art meant to reassure,
Tragedy, an easy purgation,
Romance, a kind of promise,
Fairy stories everywhere.

Here the snowy stream is life,
The trail a dust of whiteness,
Needles and green bamboo
Powdered over, all still.

Mountains smoking cloud,
Farms in remote valleys,
Rocks soaring, hawk high,
Banks of stone and shale.

Inside you the delicate heart,
Calm at last. Your role is here,
Being nothing, no more turnings,
A long, a slow space of bliss.

No Ought In Nature

No ought in Nature, so no values.
We assert them, inextricably
Linked to purpose, action,
To non-intervention, attitude.

We make them, we are them:
Love, the desire for, delight
In, the Other; all the complex
Intimacy of deep relationship;

Truth, the desire for control,
Understanding, knowledge
Of the how, the way to make
Things work, clear assurance;

Beauty, the delight in form,
That echoes realities of being,
The lines of creation, the light
Falling there into inner spaces.

We balance them, and that's the art
Of living, tempering the stresses,
Moving towards whatever builds,
Turning from whatever destroys.

Buddha is the problem, but not
The solution. Zen the bolt
Of awakening from the dream,
But not our future. It's Being;

All things inanimate alive for
Us. Every glittering leaf,
Ancient forests, dark cities,
Strange textures of the universe;

All things animate alive in
Us. Every movement, tremor
Of the creature, every cry,
All that's living, and that dies.

Lost Empires

No explaining what comes to mind,
Not random, but stray;
Working of the unconscious
Outside power;
Space where we create,
Like the artisans of what lasts,
With their kilns, wheels, hands.

We subdue all that with reason,
Settle for order, its displays;
Playing to the conscious
Sense of power;
Space where we abdicate
Our humanity, and bury
Their pots and bowls underground.

Beautiful Freedom, Shining Hills

Beautiful freedom,
Shining hills,
Torrents of rock,
Bowing trees.

Affection is the silent
Heart, that's
Mind and body –
In love, with this world.

Deeply we touch
Each other,
Face to face
Species to species,

Our desire
Sweet longing
To be one
With all this Earth.

Sincerity is the silent
Mind: that's inner process,
Resonating
To the truth of things.

Honestly we face
Each other,
Spirit to spirit
Skin to skin.

Beautiful freedom,
Shining hills,
Ramparts of rock,
Blowing trees.

World Of Forces

Venus in the dawn.
Despite attachment
We detach,
Driven, by those unconscious forces.

Under the paved-over bridge
The old river,
Not choosing its path
Trickles downwards.

Groves of trees
And stone walls
In the sky: it all breaks,
Melts, scatters.

What we think we purpose
Is not solid,
All these deep emotions
Breaking free.

And we think Reason
Controls this world
Of our unreason!
World of forces. Morning light.

A Concert

Examining the form of your face in the silence,
As one examines a painting
Or a landscape,
In the uncertainty of detail,
In the confusion of the light,

Is aura and music of the spirit,
As we hear through the paint
Where the musicians
Blow and pluck there silently,
Inside the layers of pure colour.

Or as we realise in the landscape,
A breeze moving in the distance,
Across the bluish void,
Expressing what, who knows,
But scraping every nerve.

We Were There, Wherever There Was

Bleached profusion of may-thorn and dog-rose
Flowered all along the high green hedge
On our footpath to the sea.

There the white chalk cliffs stood unreal,
Eroded flanks
Of sheep-like flocks enduring.

We were in the Tao, peripheral vision
Was where the mind resided walking,
The waves beyond the edge.

Blurred, dim, indistinct our bodies,
Memory fails them,
But the white-thorn, the may; the dog-roses

Sweeter than time, echo in that space,
Like snow of stars, snow of cloud,
All along our footpath to the sea.

Leaf-Fall

Like random rags the brown leaves fall,
And block the path.
Should I sweep them?

Delight is there in incoherent beauty,
Foam of form,
Discarded news-sheets of another year.

Curious how each little pile, each leaf,
Rising from
The seascape of the light evokes emotion.

Shelley was right, the hectic multitudes
Are too like us
For comfort, too perishable to be left.

Earth In Her Elements

Today an iceberg the size of New York
Forms in Antarctica,
A deep crack working away
At the base of the world.

Lines of fire flow from a volcano
In Chile, sighs
Of the belching globe, ash
Settles on the roads.

In Thailand the people live
In water, pole around in water,
Learn the fear of flood,
And not its peacefulness.

From the satellite a hurricane coils,
Its snowy Catherine wheel
In spinning speeded motion
Over the silent screen.

Earth in her elements.

Don't Believe

The confusions all confusions of action. Greed and fear,
In the cunning mind will not be overcome by power,
Demonstrations, politics, polemics, action, war.

We practised all this in the grasslands and the forests,
By the blue lakes in the rifts, in the deep caves in the ice,
All that led to these systems of the brain, imagined error.

Yet mind is free. The nightmare is unreal, and no control,
Never a hope of controlling all this intricacy of events:
Still we've escaped religion, the Victorian age of reason.

The Twentieth Century surely taught us the blind unreason,
Only the individual can ever channel clear, affirming values:
Only the single self can be sincere, true, empathetic, kind.

No hopelessness and no despair, though suffering is endemic
In the mind, regardless of all riches, poverty, abuse of flesh,
Despite the tricks of rapacious nations, world organisation,

Might of trade, carving of the Earth, gone hells and heavens.
The individual life intrinsic is still free. Meditate, love, walk
The pathways of the planet: make your way across the void.

Don't act; don't follow; don't believe.

All The Tall Trees

All the tall trees dying in Alaska, whitebark in Montana;
Mountain pine beetle taking down ten billion conifers
Over the watersheds, the ecosystems, Russia, Canada;
Its life-cycle speeding with the world's slow warming.

Old lodgepole pines prime targets, jack pines, spruce,
The high alpine forests: no useful way to counter that,
No good interference. Better the wildfires we prevent
Sitting in lookouts, better the deep burn and the renewal,

Wild Nature, than explosive, chemical, electrical attack,
Than the clear-cuts, deep erosion, life-damage. Logging
Won't do. Down chainsaws, leave the whole space alone,
Watch it go: non-action better and another thousand years.

The grass succeeds. The juniper survives. But no way back.
Small insect lever, leveraging the planet, buzz of all forces
Slight, half-visible, outside our control, our power to see
The outcome of a stone tossed in the pool, its outer wave.

Nameless

Looking at all those small unknown flowers
Fragments of piercing colour
Scattered over two acres of fragrant grass

Gazing at indistinct stars in the sky
White splinters of light
Signals out of meaningless fires long gone

Singing deep in the spirit with the branches
Of a blown mass of woodland
Twisted by high winds below the pass,

All of it better nameless.
All the forms.

On High Hills

Seven thousand feet beyond humanity,
Only a thin layer of transparent gas
Between the phantom and the galaxy.

Moon on bare rock. Black breeze in the pine.
A solitary cloud swirls through the blue.
All the heart and mind filled with stars.

Who will know that we have come and gone,
On the unseen planet in voiceless space,
Tracing its dark ellipse, free of our presence?

Something Rises

Enough if we survive the great disaster,
Singing in the light on the other side,
Live through the wreckage of the heart,
As I survive, and you, and every spirit,

Though damaged by the loss of freshness,
Of carolling blackbird silhouetted high,
Calling to the twilight age of the Earth,
With that primal melody that cuts the sky.

Enough if we survive.

Lake of Cloud, Tiny Peaks

Do what you like you manifest the Way.
Through the gate of grass on the old trail,
See the endless summits jut from cloud.
Millions of lifetimes black rock buried.

All illusion in this empty body, all real,
Here's nothing solid: our intrinsic nature.
But your affections never less than true.
And beauty is a construct of the mind.

Everything is in Nirvana from the start,
The everyday mind, just being, is the Tao.
Do as you wish you manifest the Way.
Yet still the end of all your decisions,

Flowing air, deer on the mountain slope,
And fawn among the trees, is Nature!
Our simply leaving everything alone
Proves not as simple as it might appear.

Triplet

A star, a moon opposite, a planet, in the blue.
Half-moon, half cylinder-top; a star, our sun;
A planet, this Earth clothed in oak and pine.

Behind the blue the universe hides. Behind,
The blue. Behind the blue is black and light,
If there had been no night we'd never know?

A star, bright as one thousand, in the blue.
A moon, pale, Shelley's gazer in weariness,
The planet, icy, brown, hard as dumb iron.

Winter's triad in the mind: our shining star,
Eye-scorching fire; the pale sister opposite;
This ground under our feet: this triple void.

Being Shadow, Watching Shadow

The people too are ghosts, and some we knew,
Phantoms in thought, of thought, dream bodies,
Our flesh is real, but the inhabiting mind unreal,
Abstractions sliding silently through pure form,
In a world that has never been and never shall be;
No use our claiming that process of flesh is mind,
We know mind still floats far out beyond the flesh,
As a strange phenomenon of the networked tissue,
In which are conjured the distant scenes, not quite,
Transformed and incorrect as memory makes them,
But beautiful if we can free them of ancient terrors,
Shame, remorse, pain, the rehearsed awkwardness,
Free them to billow out, forms, in another daylight,
Where the weight of the earth becomes its lightness,
And its language is ours because it speaks us rawly,
In the fierce fire we are, in our watery inner spaces,
In our airy flights of falsehood, our earthen hearing,
In everything we are not, but so conceive ourselves,
Phantoms in the light, shadows across the darkness,
There on the fern, there on the silent wall, once more,
There, as the afternoon slides, white evening glistens.

'They Shall Be One'

In our disorder we learnt there is a world of order,
Which is chaos, sea of unintended consequences,
Obeying rules which are born out of form itself,
As placing stick by stick makes two sticks whether
You wish it differently or not, as shapes connect.

Beyond ourselves we feel the darkness of an order
Without reference to anything within our feeling,
Not the divine, but the absence of design, the cool
Unintentional nature of the universe glowing there,
In a thousand colours of which colour knows nothing.

It is an unimagined order, perhaps beyond imagination,
Which is only a model of meaning traversing the mind,
And this perhaps beyond model, beyond our metaphor.
Like the mysterious sound of the bird outside, behind
The curtain, no bird we knew but the liquid sound itself,

Which is forced to be its own metaphor: what is there
To offer for a singing bird but the song itself: the fire
Of the galaxies down to the deepest vibration of space,
The obscure presence of what is, dissolving round us,
Until we are one with the man, the woman, in the wind.

Prayer Has Nothing To Do With Religion

Dissolve us in light, and light is Tao,
The universal single many flow,
No time, all space, the change
Of this whole into whole
That nothing less can grasp.

Weigh us with light, weigh us,
There is nothing into which
We look, there is no word:
A language without words
That can never be spoken.

Bury us in light, inter us
Among galaxies, in fires
Of non-earthly presence,
Clasp us, silently,
In our non-being.

Frost At Midnight

Reading Frost, at midnight. There's a dark presence
Underneath an interaction with the world, a private
Withdrawal into being, into his escape, communing
With a sweet inwardness and isolation. Harsh verse
Amongst the gentleness the desire for true response.
There is an ice and cold, the creaking branches yaw
In the night-winds, time is slowly creeping over all,
And the man himself, where is the man himself, far
From, behind, the surface of the poem, infinities deep.
There the tree tosses the wrong side of the glass, there
Is the fate of insect worlds, the maze of our vanishings
Into self, into wood and fern, into sky and stars, marsh
And memory, and what we look for, grail in the stream,
Meaning in what is gone, what is done, what the strong
Know of this world they penetrate with their dreaming.

Reading 'Frost at Midnight'. A second solitude, second
Calmness, silentness. And matter flickering in the light
Quivers till it almost attains the boundary, is there one,
Between the living and the lacking life, where stone is
Tree, and the tiny pebble in the fountain jet trembles in
Eternal motion, whirled in the vortices above pale sand,
And the solitary leaf on the branch dances to wind-dark
Rhythm. 'Everywhere', cries Coleridge, 'echo or mirror.'
We interpret. We force the sympathies, companionship
Of natural forms in natural space, the other than human
That shares our time and space, strange in its otherness.
Those are our voices in the darkness calling, hiss, sigh,
And not its meaning, ours. Here is the poet of the subtler
State, moving beyond his age, not understood, belittled,
As if to provide a mind to the future is not truth enough.

Reading. Frost at midnight glazes the moon-white fields,
And the body quietens to the intellect's grave music, ice
In this atmosphere, blue mist on the near slope, a tremor
Of the universe passing through the individual life, wild
In its summons: mind's civilisation seems a sham, time
Pours through it as if it were some fragile fluttering form
Rage-filled in its nakedness, soft as the air, bitter as cold,
One of those naked spirits on the heights, out on the moor,
Battering themselves against being, fate, each other, lost
And found again in the intensity of what this living makes
Of the creature and the cry. This what it gives, momentary
Calm, an abstruse meditative deep full of glittering snakes
And visionary dreams, a flickering of the dumb inanimate,
Tick of the twig in its mindless restlessness, its non-intent.
This is our world, of no design: we have given it our love.

Index Of First Lines

Cold green pool under green trees.....	5
The end of History.....	6
No point planning the spontaneous move.....	7
Our relationship with Nature,.....	8
White cloud drifts. Leaves turn.....	9
The track disappears in bushes,.....	10
Power is empty, though it makes.....	11
It's sudden awakening,.....	12
Do all those memories.....	14
Sudden barking: an adder slides away in the sun.....	15
Why an intent among the stars?.....	16
Squirming life in the darkness,.....	17
Down the valley: trees and no people.....	18
Long narrow trail along the hillside.....	19
Nothing to do to make it so.....	20
Like a network of crystals.....	21
Mountain Zen is hard to understand.....	22
Big weathered rocks,.....	23
Mind is the sky.....	24
The Tao is like the empty sky.....	26
Mind empty, night-wind empty.....	27
All gone where? Years.....	28
Old fruit trees in the abandoned meadows.....	29
Old-time sages abandoning study.....	30
Suffering is inherent in the creature,.....	31
Pre-dawn light on the creek,.....	32
Silent illumination, <i>mo-chao</i> ,.....	33
New planets orbiting their stars.....	34
One foot in front of another,.....	35
When we ask: 'Why.....	36
Even the 'selection' in natural selection,.....	37
In the gorges, in the hills, autumn light.....	38
The wave lifts and falls every movement.....	39
<i>Wu-shi</i> , no fuss and nothing special.....	40
The intimate essence of the Tao.....	41
The size that belittles.....	42
Eventually you'll hear your own voice.....	43
Restless mind driving endless purpose.....	44
In us sincerity, kindness, affection,.....	45
Pale bark, green insect, watching eye,.....	46

Everything known gone at a stroke,	47
Absolutely nothing to aim for,.....	48
Late October warmth, and quiet haze,.....	49
No this is not about me, it's about us.	50
Black city echoing with light.....	52
Most imagery from Nature	53
The weight of all the mass of all the cities: swiftly gone.....	54
Wandering the aimless way: go, following the trackless track,.....	55
My values in the grass, where are your values?.....	56
Dawn. Water-drops on the bamboo leaves.....	57
The clinging is the longing,	58
It's not the heaviness of thought that impresses,.....	59
Night-time city, a white glitter of bars,	60
This: a world now that blocks the heart.	61
From vibrations underneath the universe,	62
Now we're puzzled what to say,.....	63
Simply don't believe. Start there.....	64
No ought in Nature, so no values.	65
No explaining what comes to mind,.....	66
Beautiful freedom,	67
Venus in the dawn.	68
Examining the form of your face in the silence,	69
Bleached profusion of may-thorn and dog-rose.....	70
Like random rags the brown leaves fall,	71
Today an iceberg the size of New York.....	72
The confusions all confusions of action. Greed and fear,	73
All the tall trees dying in Alaska, whitebark in Montana;	74
Looking at all those small unknown flowers.....	75
Seven thousand feet beyond humanity,	76
Enough if we survive the great disaster,.....	77
Do what you like you manifest the Way.	78
A star, a moon opposite, a planet, in the blue.	79
The people too are ghosts, and some we knew,	80
In our disorder we learnt there is a world of order,.....	81
Dissolve us in light, and light is Tao,	82
Reading Frost, at midnight. There's a dark presence.....	83