

*Experiments in Poetic Form*

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### III

In the beginning was bliss:  
happiness in right relationships,  
a world of light and meaning,  
the perfection of paradise.  
But then it fell into suffering  
as spiritual conscience lost control  
and a just God revised creation.

Mankind is a steward,  
humanity a viceroy  
conceived by love,  
created with wisdom,  
a manifestation of purpose,  
the child of noble destiny  
starting from dust and breath,  
transcending even angels.

There is an elective heaven,  
a way of personal rebirth,  
following the true religion  
which looks to eternity  
and realizes brotherhood  
through sonship.

## II

In the beginning was a bomb:  
energy in explosive dimensions,  
a world of gas and plasma,  
the perfection of chaos.  
But then it swirled into galaxies  
as natural process kept control  
and godless law supervised forces.

Mankind is a mutant,  
humanity an accident  
conceived at random,  
evolved by time and chance,  
a phenomenon of fortune,  
the result of fierce struggle  
starting from common chemicals,  
ascending beyond animals.

There is a universal goal,  
a way of collective development,  
following the true science  
which looks to the future  
and reaches the ideal  
through the possible.

This collection began in the 1980s as a series of experiments in writing poetry. The question, "What is poetry?" is explored through minimal poems, in search of an essential core. The question, "What is the difference between prose and poetry?" is explored through contraries, contradictions, and completeness.

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### *The Poetics of Parallelism*

The distinction between prose and poetry is based on whether serial or parallel communications predominate.

Prosaic writing is expository and narrational. Prose presents a subject by representing an object. Its validity is that of the true and self-consistent. A serial structure is used because it preserves consistency. We may say in accord with Gödel's incompleteness theorem that a consistent representation is incomplete. Something essential will always be missing in a prosaic account.

Poetic writing is lyrical and metaphorical. Poetry presents an object by representing a subject. Its validity is that of the good and the complete. A parallel structure is used because it preserves completeness.

The archetype of verbal parallelism is the metaphor. A metaphor is a congruence relation. Two entities that are different in some way are equated via some perspective. The entities equated are parallels. The perspective is the voice that articulates the relationship.

In accord with the contrapositive of Gödel's incompleteness theorem, we may say that a complete representation requires an inconsistency. The logic (or illogic) of that inconsistency is explored here. A shift in perspective, a metaphor,

### TRIPTYCH

I  
In the beginning was being:  
ideas in exact proportions,  
a world of mind and archetype,  
the perfection of harmony.  
But then it turned irrational  
as celestial conflicts took control  
and a lawless demigod devised matter.

Mankind is a mistake,  
humanity an error  
conceived in weakness,  
devolved by foolishness,  
an emanation of misfortune,  
the product of tragic fate  
starting from lofty spirits,  
descending into dark bodies.

There is a heroic escape,  
a way of mystic reversion,  
following the true philosophy  
which looks to the past  
and recovers the good  
through the one.

## EDGAR POE IN NEW YORK

The Tombs opened at moontide  
to reveal a gentleman with studied pose  
speaking of the ideal as though it were possible  
and beauty as though it were objective.  
Only a stranger saw the end.  
The theater let out a whisper.

unites different viewpoints. The shift may be jarring or subtle but without it there's an image without depth.

A poem itself is an image  $\hat{=}$  the image of itself, which informs everything in and about the poem. Hence the significance of poetic form.

## APPOINTMENT

Time's end is round the bend.  
Go straight and skip the date.

## DUALS

Mind bind starts hearts.  
Heart find parts minds.

## LOVE STROKE

Love stroke is no joke.  
Laughter comes after.

## NO LEDGE

Knowledge is fine as far as it goes,  
But how far that is nobody knows.

## ABOUT TIME

Waiting for her to show or not to show  
with ribbons flying fearlessly leading  
troops into battle or boredom  
as quarter past passes  
solitarily,  
I wait.

But wait,  
what is this saint of liberty clutching in  
her hand and breast if not a volume  
by Cassiopeia and a torch for  
the moonless night?

## THE LAST DAY

No, the sun hasn't set; it only seems so.  
Work ends abruptly, noise turns off,  
Doors open everywhere.  
A train is coming to take this world away;  
Tomorrow is the last day.

Only children play while we wait and stare.  
We're too amazed to think. Our lives are  
swallowed up,  
Problems and all.  
A train is coming to take this world away;  
Tomorrow is the last day.

Yesterday we had no time but now we're early.  
There's nothing more to say. Moonlight dims  
As blue turns into black.  
A train is coming to take this world away;  
Tomorrow is the last day.

It dawns at last when the day is done.  
We rise to sleep forgetting there are dreams to  
dream,  
And this is one.  
A train is coming to take this world away;  
Today is the last day.

## ABOUT FACE

Hypocrites never change their mind,  
the self-assured don't question their thoughts:  
ever pushing, never turning,  
ever peering, never seeking,  
as adamant as arguments,  
as relentless as religion.

But the meek are always wondering,  
the lowly can't help but change:  
ever learning, always growing,  
ever bearing, always hoping,  
as humble as hands,  
as teachable as tongues.

Only self-doubters believe;  
only sinners become saints.

## ORDERS

Turn your clock to midnight,  
Set your watch for noon,  
Hear the screaming sunlight,  
Listen to the crying moon.

Decode the wordless message,  
Unlock the doorless room.  
Start your constant pilgrimage,  
Leave your earthly tomb.

Follow the unseen light,  
Look for your unknown home.  
Take your maiden flight  
Never again to roam.

This is the last command  
From the primal sphere.  
The end is now at hand,  
The timeless age is here.

## APRÈS NOUS

Expect to be interrogated  
By earthlings who understand nothing  
But blood and money and sex. Tell them  
Your age is 600 and you're building an ark.  
They'll call you a cult and try to put you in a camp  
Until you confess that wine is god and towers are  
holy.  
Pay no mind to the giants or their generations.  
Keep your hand on the ax, the pitch, and the rule.  
Let the landlubbers find a branch of their own.



## REQUIEM

There is a sorrow that comes softly  
waiting to be embraced,  
the white stare of a lifeless face  
yearning for the lost moonlight.

But do not touch that one-time friend,  
do not revive that corpse again,  
release the arms that grasp for more:  
let the requiem begin.

There comes a song of Sirens' call,  
a taste of tears long dry,  
the gentle cry of lonely eyes  
leading back into the night.

But do not be deceived by sighs,  
by tender lips that never smile,  
do not avoid the parting strife:  
let the lament end.

## THE GOSPEL OF CUPID

I give you the story as I received it:  
That Cupid died for Love, that  
He was buried in a heart-shaped tomb  
On the fourteenth day of February  
As foretold in the Romances, and that  
He can be seen by lovers everywhere.

The very night Cupid departed  
He gave out flowers and candy saying,  
"Take these tokens of heartfelt Love."  
And with the same sweet look  
He gave out wine and roses, saying,  
"Let red remind you always of Love."

Lovers, let us love as Cupid loved  
For Love is God as God is Love.

THE TALKER  
*Ecclesiastes 1*

Irony of ironies: all is irony.  
Our labor takes all day and our wages disappear  
To pay for the wife, the kids, and taxes.

Look at the sun working hard all day. How far  
does it get?  
The wind works hard, too, going in circles.

Rivers go places into a sea already full.  
The water returns and rains on our weekends.

Everything takes work. We know it and forget it.  
We want more so there's always more to do.

Yesterday repeats and today happens over again.  
What's really new? Old reruns pass for news.

No one cares about the old days.  
In days to come they won't remember today.  
But I'm just talking to the wind, isn't that what  
you think?

FREE FALL  
*October 18, 1987*

There is a moment before the winds of winter  
deflate enchanting dreams of endless levity  
when the mirage of summer lingers in the trees  
and the rainbow of autumn fills the languid  
landscape with a breathless firestorm.  
In this instant liquidity evaporates.  
Everything turns to memory.

## CALYPSO

Tourists fly overhead crying, crying,  
Where is our moon? Where is our moon?  
Who snatched away our silver coin moon?

Seamen stagger on the deck calling, calling,  
Where is our moon? Where is our moon?  
Who scuttled our sailor cap moon?

Natives comb the beach singing, singing,  
Where is our moon? Where is our moon?  
Who made off with our tambourine moon?

Frogmen folic in the waves laughing, laughing,  
We stole your moon! We stole your moon!  
We found the disk that fell in the water!  
Follow us, follow our laughter!  
We will dance with your moon!

## OVERHEAD

Jet airplanes in thundering torrents  
stream to cities of cement  
carrying businessmen with their ties  
to distant engagements  
overseeing the lives below.

Associations as rushing rapids  
flow to memories of moment  
carrying the busyness of our lives  
to diverse entertainments  
overlooking the cries within.

## AMERICA

There is no country called America.  
People are born Americans and die Americans  
But America is not a country.

There is no American nation.  
People fight for America and against America  
But America is not among the nations.

There is no capital of America.  
People come to America and live in America  
But a capital has not been found.

America is a dream.  
There is land, government, population, and poetry  
But America is still a dream.

If you don't understand,  
Ask Abraham.

## BELTWAY

Spin around town one more time,  
Circle the monument to the last war  
Until you see the text beneath the text.  
Whatever the caption says today,  
Remember tomorrow yesterday shouted,  
Now! Turn around and join the line,  
Read the leaflet, unfurl the banner,  
Before the moment comes too late.