

Twelve Dream Meditations & One Silver Star
Poems 1971 - 1981 & 1986

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JULY 2007

Before the Sleep

(Late Summer 1971 / 2007 for Dennis Smith, Rick Puckett, and Gary Magness)

Morning River

(Late Fall 1971 / 2007 for Dennis Smith, Rick Puckett, Gary Magness, and Mark Beelek)

April 29, 1972

You

(Spring 1972 for Marilyn Schell)

Reflections II

(Summer 1973 / 2007 for Jerri Hof)

Climbing Higher

(Spring 1974)

Nightingales II

(Fall 1974 / 2007)

Another October

(October 1974 / 2007)

October 11, 1976

(for Jerri Hof)

October 8, 1977

(for Jerri Hof)

Circling In Your World

(1979 / 2004 / 2007 for Jerri Hof)

Plenum Assembly Distributor Valve

(1981 / 2004 / 2007 for the nightshift)

Under a Silver Star

(1986 / 1993 / 2000 / 2003 - 2006 / 2007 for Linda Ross)

BEFORE THE SLEEP

1.
Music floats slowly through

white air to weave
in our ears its

smooth secrets like
soft secrets that
never speak
except to leave

a certain quietness
a sifting through
of the dust in you

2.
and firebrand stars
burn tiny
holes into the roof
of the cabin through

the smoke of night

3.
Gary strikes a match
lights a cigarette
as if one star
already rises
in the room

(he lifts a
quiet glass

of water to water
ashes of stars inside)

4.

Our eyes meet now
& then reflections of
gentle weariness
unworded
person to person

5.

Outside the summer
moon has moved
beyond the last dark
horizon of earth...
Rick descends
lying down beneath
it, for sleep
has entered the cabin

and Dennis falls off
the edge of
starlight without
a sound in our
consciousness

it shall be night

MORNING RIVER

6.
it shall be winter

flow in with sleep
my friends, everyone
slow silence performing
breathing dreaming

7.
except me
too many thoughts
in front of the fire
the Moody Blues
moving their many
manifestations of time
still air.... a very quiet

8.
low fire in the fireplace
I see within my mind
a picture of myself sitting
in the old rocking-chair
shadows standing old & soft
they fit together with
firelight into perfectly natural
snores rising from mouths

9.
I get up
from my rocking-chair.

I light a candle.
I sit down again.

Mellow light
warms the ceiling....

10.
& sunlight & its
long forgotten hours.
I'll go outside now
to see for myself
exactly how the moods
will be new & fresh &

11.
voices in the sky

12.
snowflakes whisper
as I stand on the porch

outside their sleep
half-rain

13.
in my hair a cool light

I see the Osage River
never far away

moods wander down
a shiny gray sidewalk

made out of

14.
the sunless side of day

where night disappears
beyond darkness

another cold morning
rises from the river

APRIL 29, 1972

The sun is setting
a soft finger
in the earth...
the clouds are leaving
their footprints at home
in the rain

I'm burrowing down
into feathers
of luminous blue
light, and farther
on; and
I'm making my way
through thoughts of
thick dark earth-smell
underneath a slow crawl
of blue thunder

You

yellow rays, on us
/you/

there we were
/you/

I reached over:

REFLECTIONS II

& so

I hear the wind of her shadow
bringing many names
to moon-castle, shimmering night
murmuring trees, starry meadows

& so

I listen inside the spaces of stillness
as lengths of dim reflections hasten
through all the moving mirrors of water

CLIMBING HIGHER

Smoking
green mountain and the city
below I can see
almost touch
shadows where we sleep
card and discard
laughter, rivers, streets – up here
clefted and hollowing
I hear voices in the rocks
the half-toy haze of the city
exhaling among roots, branches, dreaming

you do not sleep here

voices crash along the pathways

slow figures rise together from stone
pass away among the gliding trees
can you hear them
they laugh together in french
maybe spanish
don't reply

they will not hear
I see them turn slowly – as if dreaming, fading
motionless as they all must fade
turning away into stone
the riddle and color of stone – tonight
we will sleep rubbing the female voice

NIGHTINGALES II

When we must prepare
for sleep among the nightingales
you do not smile at the dust
in their throats but
say nothing pretend we hear
and if you listen
and if you float
as though over highways, sleeping

if the darkness seems
more bitter than singing –

you can see their wings open
and how blindly they respond
to the rustling tilt of feathers
and voices, can
we still want sleep or pretend

they sleep that way

slightly toward our faint dreams
are we turning or should we forget
anything flimsier than a joke

nightingales do not remember
do not respond
to the shapes near the ends of our dreams

ANOTHER OCTOBER

Building legends in the sea; blowing conch shells
of bearded mariners. weren't ships soon offshore
their wooden inner shapes – woven hidden sails.
the Captain writes that ocean:

“this ocean, this distance”

These waves. to permeate. frothy juices
of fish. a silver sound on sand as the sun
carries away. searching seagulls.

Here. this lost last place in my flesh
gathered under closed eyes, the darkest burst
of smiles. By touch. by heart. fingernails invent
the digging inside. the gazing into darkness
the mind to mind.

I ran here. without bending the blades. I ran.
mariners understood, they anchored their swaying
ships. & fish swam. & sunset made the most of it.

Always. that wistful walking back. not leaving:
never leaving. the Captain stands very still here
beneath shadows of light. writes in his book:

“the circle, they sway” a pause:

“this ocean. this
vast moment.”

In his book he lies down. sleeps. its pages
comfort us. its words. dreaming the sand is
drowsy in collapsing sunlight. he is warm.

New horizons he grips with his hands
the woman there she
is long & brown in her hair. her hands fast
asleep. folded under the sun
she is a dream he dreams.

What beach is this? the buccaneers are never
never going to be lost. for the games they play
they play in almost every
foam of this particular ocean.

He passes. under our footprints. the surface is
his dream of her. a shining island nearby

Shining in his hands full of wind. a globe of glass
pictures of the sea, held within
that temporary fragrance. his closed eyes.

A dream of ships parading from water to water
don't those fish remember
thinking "...and these
are buccaneers... and this ocean..."

This ocean. the same as swimming into light
is their place, as if from place
to place they must spiraling go.

In more ways than one I have filled
my time / wave after wave falling in
my skin. a luminous unfolding

The Captain awakens from sleep
his shadow and his body climb
adrift on the wind. adrift
in the water. that same sand. adrift.

why shouldn't we all hear voices of buccaneers

The Captain momentarily
sways. his hand traces the symbol
the outline of sleep in his logbook. he writes:
"for one motion; one dream"

That last song was his.

OCTOBER 11, 1976

Blue fish emerge from slow streams at my feet
to disappear through your stillness underwater
excited by dreams that stay radiant inside of us
swept up in blue currents from your body to mine

October 8, 1977

Now
when it is over:
morning is over, afternoon is over; outside
I hear the traffic moving slower
and in my ears the songs I have always heard
spreading at the beginning of October
throughout the brown house
where I am young, and will always be young.

Jerri is glazing the teapot tonight.
And I would like to say she is younger than me
and we live together happily in a brown house
forever. While we are young; and so
suddenly October
November, December
and then years
years after the brown house
will make us old enough to think of these times

will I remember the mornings growing on the lawn
and in my ears the songs I have always heard
flowing together slowly at all the edges
of all the days of the brown house
where I was young, and will always be young.

CIRCLING IN YOUR WORLD

and maybe every so often
a flock of birds descends
through some of your dreams
as if to forget the darkness
in your swirling hair, swirling
against the curve of your world
entangled in your dreaming

and I wonder what goes on
in your dreams in the dark
of your night somewhere
over there in your next life

surrounded inside your next
moment of singing birds
descending in your hair
circling between your arms

somewhere in your curving
world every morning

Plenum Assembly Distributor Valve

I move the torch before me from city to city
aimlessly beneath my shadowy hood
thinking of what to say next
in the next city.

I set off in the morning somewhere in the west.
It's not enough to sustain the flame that murmurs
in my hand, like the memory of forgotten places
as I lean into the invisible depths of aluminum.

My whispering fades ominously as night falls.
I have come to expect certain details to fade, of
course, not long after I have finished making
this next plenum assembly distributor valve.
I gather the parts and polish them first.

I can't say exactly what it means.
The flow of memory moves along a shifting path
across the world as I strike the torch.

Then I go out to my car to drive off the edge
to another world. I guess
I used to live in some other world
I learned to take off my gloves. I learned
to sweep up the floor.
I learned to whisper like this

on my way home.
Everything sounds like a whisper

of voices in a distant city
as I drive into the unfinished dark

on to the next detail. There are always more
details to consider, to finish

always something more to foretell
hidden just beyond my fingertips
somewhere deep in the metal

whatever life I lived once
whatever life I will live

life after life

as I move the torch before me
into the next city

Under a SILVER Star

Following bent
circles of successive evenings

invisible lavender waves curving
into indigo, a vast
fountain of light everywhere above

certain forever diminishing rivers
we gather to watch in wonder

the ancient rumors of recent stars
wafting up against
dark aquatic planets
all those finely woven wrecked sails
disappearing into evening

it is as if the whole world floats
away upon the surface of earth
beneath our feet, the somewhat
vague remnants of almost sunken
continents carrying us promptly
into slippery blue ruins underwater

I stand in these particular doorways
every afternoon I light a lantern

filled with the mystery of ebbing
far from the shores of falling stars

a muttering line in ever-deepening sand
that yearns to cease, the unfinished
debris of completely vanished cities

I push aside the swaying fabrics
of previous lives in the fog

I still listen to the always
eloquent prophets of
the flowers at the fountain

repeating in my mind everything I said

all the overwhelming murmuring
that destroys itself against dusk

among disintegrating ships I stand
at the end of each fading song I stand

I fold up everything I know about the past

here is the memory of a nameless shore
that once gathered & released the vapor
of all our yearning in crowded mirrors

now I lie down in the uncertain history
of reeling light ceaselessly
casting me into future after future

to foretell what must come next
in the circle that must be bent

whatever the music meant to us
whatever it might portend

there is nothing left to relinquish
& no one to hear the singing

& no one here to listen &
no one there is no one in the end

no one else but you