

the end of is



Speculative and Petitionary Poems

J. Kevin Mactavish

Preface

This collection grows out of a ten-plus year pursuit of trying to pin down and understand "what is". The pursuit has been conducted according to, and sometimes loosely so, noematics, a kind of human science of describing what one's experience-of is reflexively till it comes to a stopping point, a point that might be called "a satisfactory understanding".

I have reached a stopping point now with the pursuit, and thus can externalize some of my studies, the ones that found their expression in poetry, sometimes difficult and obscure.

It does not matter that all will not reveal itself. The point has been the journey--the expanding richness of ideas, images, and insights which make up the incredible beauty and diversity of every thing material and immaterial.

May you find some peace and pleasure as I have when you consider some of these things.

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Dedicated to my children and theirs.

I accept

A rope dropped from the sky
Inviting us up for a better view.
But doubters doubted, including why.

It undulated gently in the breeze,
Innocent it was and said just is.
Some said portend! comes dis-ease.

Leave well alone enough already.
So the crowd prevailed,
And convinced us steady.

Such a shame to leave that way--
Could have been a giant up there.
And I have never seen one. What say?

Past New 1993

1.

Pray, sweet pensive ladies.
Dost thou pray?
Or, are these but dreams
that do occupy you?
If dreams, mayst I join two?
(Just a third
in unholy threesome
strikes not my fancy.)
I'd even the wheel,
if but to help carry thy burden.
Wheels are useful
and oft-times needed.

2.

If prayer is thy treat,
I'd join with you,
a loving warrior,
not soft retreat:

To god's will in co-creating thine.
Where two are gathered
begets the third
and in god-like oneness
embraces all.

3.

Do you pray?
Or are you dreaming.
Together as one?
Or together as two.
Beget the third.
What do you think?

4.

(Oh, pensive ladies,
I'd the fourth!
And gladly be . . .)

Prelude to Hello

I am a verb.
You thought I was a noun.
Perhaps I was in your eyes.
That makes it so.
I know.
You are a verb.
I thought you a noun.
You said no.
I saw the wall.
Nouns are the stuff of subjects and
objects.
The things acted upon and acting.
Like walls.
I am not subject,
not object.
Nor are you.
I know.

And in the knowing,
the -ing -ing of being,
I am.
You are.
You are a verb.
I am one too.
The is-ness of being
in a moment of light
incredible light
the lightness in being
an elusive illusive
it
makes it so.
Then, only then,
we can come to
and know.

Poem 4-11

It's impossible
to walk softly
in these woods.
They aren't soft.
They are.
And as she is,
we who walk
can or can't
what we want
with inflated tires--
to ride
the snowy hill
or traverse
through mud.
Although we try,
dressed
in warm clothes

to conquer her--
silly all-terrain,
some capsules
to protect us
from what?
Ourselves.
To walk softly
in these woods,
impossible.
They are.
And She is.
It's I am
that prevents
it so.
To conclude.
We walk.
She is.

Know Words

Listen in silence
to the deepest heart
of your heart
where the essence of you
is joined in oneness
with the divine
--soul and spirit--
and tell me
how the grass grows,
how the flowers bloom,
how the sun shines.

If you find no words
but you find
that you know
without them,
tell me that then
for in the unspeakable:
that's where I sometimes am.
The bonds that bind me--

they are the words.
I can go beyond the words,
but they call me back.
I cannot help it;
nor can we
who know either way.

How does the grass grow?
How do the flowers bloom?
When will we bathe
in the light
in the sun
I cannot tell you
how hard it is to wait.
I listen in silence
in the deepest heart
of my heart

to join in oneness
with the divine.

Silent, Memory 2008

Into awareness like a dog called to the fore,
but for this admonition:

Dare not recall childhood still. That would
admit its hold, and the beauty that was.

Dare not surface memories. If not, you are
the old age you are.

Deny them now their voice. Hang to youth
made of repression, as long as illusion can
last.



The game needs rules. Break them and you'll be down the slide to inevitable's end.

Dare recall to deny this terminus, Master, the story by telling, mastering fate. Once
memories're out, they no longer hold.

Show the story its telling's not over. Till the pen rests upon the desk, and the ashes on the
mantle . . .

Sepulchral inscription

(In memory of Miguel, Cozumel, 2009.)

Let me go peacefully.
Next time I'll not disappoint.
Smile and know I love you:
Each the most!
Each differently.
Alone because of this.
And still now, in this infinite love.
Would we had realized in time.



Lest hope

Little bird, little bird,
whisper me truth.
I've stormed the world
my self and seen none.

Little bird, little bird,
show me the trust.
Been stormed world o'er
in spite of self, none.

Little bird, little bird,
have me believe.
Storms and storming
I'm just not enough.

Hey, screech my deaf ear.
life feats and repeats,
we know, lest hope.
And call this help,
all will be well all,
as we take flight

in the fear that pervades
the now and pending storms.



Levels of description

A gnat's whatever I see,
And that is as it is.
I am king, I am rex.
And whatever--it should be.

Strolls a science sorta guy,
And sees it as it is.
He states whatever. X.
With his micro marvel eye!

He reported this to us,
And this was no thing/rat?
So we called X just IT.
And lingo seemed such a fuss!

X the Xs, -evers, whats,
And depend on the gnat.
Say, "That is where I sit.
And what I feels in my guts."



Critical poetry

Critical poetry . . .
in the glass
shined on me
sure 's no other
too much thought
will it smother
No one caught
the middle way
best advice
conserve the fray
less suffice
the essence read



hoist the mast
as has been said
more, no less,
to make it last
And we're lost
said the words
in the dust
till up in curds
Poetry is
and no more
though if I shout
this I swore.

Village bench

Unanticipated leisure just so
Forces me to wander
Up and down the village slow
Till that silent restless
Comes to rest on a bench.

The clatter of the kitchen
Reminds me I am relieved
Of daily chores surrendered
to the agenda of what may come,
or not, this better way.



Consciousness rising

Intro

The life long nude
beckoned ageless males
till she thought it rude.
Their interest only--
prospective sales.

Body

She wearied of her object maid,
she was not her self in their eyes.
So love not lust the bed she laid.
She wanted more to realize.

In short.

She sang that song,
lit countless rockets,
beckons lifeless long,
till they--some--got it.

Thought experiment

re gur git
am end eh
a man duh
this ill
o sire is

she graced us
with her way
till the end
of is

and she somewhere in Egypt
they say
still bejeweled that men
like me dumbfounded, eh?



Old love poem 1992

I appear as one,
although I'm two.
And as I reach
before and back
I find you,
where:
Already Four?
(As if so early simple.)

So lie with me
This bed of life,
and nestle my neck's nap
'til we must part,
alone,
as two or one.

You appear as one,
but I see two.
And three and four
as we go forth
to a horizon bright

that on we smiled.

"Please me dance."
"I ne'er learned how."

But tripped about
so sweet and tears.
My life and love
kept me still
and moving too.

A music heard
but ne'er before,
had we but danced.

Come with me.
The music calls.
I'll the one.
You the two.
We the three.
Us the four.

In life's ways--
Sow's the promise.

My partner gone . . .
Are you there?

I sing as one.
I sing as two.
And hope to meet,
where.

To nestle 'gain
as spoons would do
in the bed of bliss
to unknown reach.

Upsides us
If I were one
and you were two
and we the three
and the four.
Just for now!
If not four more.

Logical conclusion November 2005

"You don't understand.

"You were not there."

So?

"You can't know."

You've made your point.
So why are you telling me?
(why are you distancing me?
why are you asking me
to listen to all these things
I will not and cannot?)

(I need to say them for myself,

to pinch myself alive)

"You just happened to be here."
(your mistake was listening)

What is it about what you experience
that I can understand?
(or is it all about untouched lives
wandering about muttering,
and grumbling?)

"You can't . . . (understand this,
you don't understand that)"

(let's agree on this,)
I give up (being here, I'm gone).

Some such art

The music of the words
and the gaze into worlds
have brought me to this:
Let what is be what I see.
Have what should be what we do.
And the marriage of these, splendor.

Isn't poetry, or some such art,
the way we would of it--
it concrete,
and not more,
and no less,
perfect in perfection,
to enjoy and inspire?

Tis so. Tis so.

untitled

Smoky pubs don't turn me on.
Talk and cheap philosophy be gone.
No one's that clever in those places.
If so, we'd've won our human races.

As it is day-in-day-out the same,
To keep the hoi polli insane.
And aspirant ones have their druthers,
But can't solve the quest of the others.

As I could

Yellow with green, a centered vase
On the worn warm table before me.
Here in flesh but without a face,
I seek not seen nor do I see.

Round them circle and curl the cat
Flowers flair and timely fade,
I come not from this land or that.
As we watch and wait among the made.

Bloom away, you defiant one.
But give to me the face I would--
Not to curl and circle, stray but run
Till I can see as I could.

n-of-one

it is blue,
anyone said
I saw green
but this one was!

I then saw blue
(and everyone like that)

I saw green again
and then red
and black
and a color I had no n for

curious science or math
or whatever it is

n of one--
with better things to do . . .

untitled, November 05

Tourists too have a stable life,
as their placeholder brothers and sisters.
With stress and strife
and bills to pay, occasional blisters.
It has just been chance or choice
that appear to make us different.
So judge or wish deliberately,
before you our places take.
We'll both return home
to that self-same place.
And we'll give no matter
to distances, landscapes
and the spaces left inbetween.



That would be December 31, 2005

New Year, come.
We can yet rejoice.
But for the old,
some dusting some.

Truth transient and goodness gone, of this world will not suffice, not again complicit,
seduced or seducing. Now--beauty in mine eyes, this horizon; a definitive step, a worthy
journey. Not this one's pimp, or that one's whore.

While others are left to theirs and uses, I will immerse in the colors and textures of what I
see and can describe, in some lost corner, or in concert with truth and goodness that
would be, and more.

New Year's, rejoice.
We're not yet old.
I will find my love,
and embrace her voice.

Goddesses not gods beauty is. And trinities but for the holy and the gifted. Choosing above
the rest is worthy much (and yet not yet all outlawed). We can have abundant if limited and
partial joy.

Before our silent fall, before the majesty that we can conceive. And conceive we must, if not realize, or we will surely die. So, New Year, come and let us rejoice--no need but want, no longer coy.

Hats I, An Invitation

(written on the occasion
of the First ZUSAS Staff
Research Colloquium,
January 15, 1998)

There's something quite like wearing a hat.
It can be compared with where you have sat.
Remember when you were at school,
And changing your seat was really cool?
From that new but ordinary place,
You actually changed your mental space.
To see the teacher and all goings on . . .
Well, at least for a while it staved off a yawn!

Hats come in all shapes and all sizes.
Some are even invisible, one realizes:
Have you ever seen a thinking cap?
Your teacher said, "Put it on!" after a loud clap.
Yes, in sizes and colors galore.
Some hats make you look from days of yore.
But some hats are mere functional,

Can make non-Germans downright punctual.
Others let you be whoever you would.
Some we call not hat but a hood.
Some sinister ones help you to hide,
And make you good though you have lied.
While some of these help you be hid.
Others make you look as if with a lid.
With some you can play sports and run.
Some to be seen in is just plain fun.

All in all hats do a trick.
They are as magicians,
And in a flick,
From candles come flowers,
Which turn into,
You guessed it, bowers.

It is abundant ideas here we are after,
Sparked by altered states, like laughter.
Your hat this occasion, silly or serious,
Will take you, scholar, beyond the mere curious.
Putting one on will change your view,
From who you were to someone new.
Realities beyond what is normal and is.



You can even change from a her to a his.
Consider for a moment if but brief,
How becoming another might be a relief!

So come with your head, and your hat.
Even if an invisible thinking cap.
(It's a small thing to ask.
And represents a wee task.)
And let yourself go.
To other worlds you would know.
There's nothing quite like wearing a hat
To alter the ordinary thises and that.

The last poem

Years and years and years past
I would write a gift,
and thought it shared
the love at Christmas.

Now and now and now at last
through the years I sift,
and think to share
our love at Christ's mass.

Then and then and then repast
I would mine eyes uplift,
And pray forgive--
self love this boat's mast.

But again, again, again it's no.
Not my love nor ours this journey takes.
But of the One that gives without the for,
And all the pretty words forsakes.