

Poems  
of **Love &**

**Liberation**







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## Preface

Throughout most of Western history (and not only Western), man/boy love has been the primary mode of homoeroticism. Nowhere is the record more clear on this point than in the arts. The modern American reader must also consider that homoeroticism has been an important cultural tradition in many societies. It has rarely been (and in many places still isn't) subjected to the special kind of hostility that it has seen in the U.S. for the last 50-100 years. Thus we see Plato, Strato (and too many more Greek and Roman writers to name), Abu Nuwas and the poets of Andalusia, Michelangelo, Shakespeare, Coleridge, Goethe, Lawrence, Whitman, Auden and company singing every color of emotion for their young lovers and beloved. And for every one "great" poet favored by talent, time, and circumstance, there are a thousand who are less favored heartily singing along, like the boys in Luca della Robbia's singing gallery (frontispiece). We have tried to present a small selection from the best of this broad range of poetry on man/boy love.

With the gap between the public's consciousness and the reality of man/boy love so great these days, one may, and perhaps should, question the value of collecting poetry while national registries, castration laws, and vigilantism wreak havoc on the human spirit. Certainly, there is need for a spectrum of responses not yet mustered. As part of this spectrum, the arts speak forcefully, and they reach places unavailable to the most skilled orators. They bring with them our traditions and our strength, the message of universal love and liberation through the ages. The humanities are the cornerstone of civil society, and they are our traditional weapons in defense of eros. Even the small selection herein witnesses the fact that man/boy love forms part of the bedrock of the culture.

The expression "Love Is Not A Crime" comes from the *Carmina Burana* — a late Medieval collection of songs in the direct line of the poetic traditions represented here. The force of these living traditions gives NAMBLA its strength and promise.

David Miller  
San Francisco, October 23, 1996





# Happy I that Love and Am Beloved

## A Song of Joys

In winter I take my eel-basket and eel-spear and travel out  
on foot on the ice — I have a small axe to cut holes in  
the ice.

Behold me well-clothed going gayly or returning in the  
afternoon, my brood of tough boys accompanying me,

My brood of grown and part-grown boys, who love to be with  
no one else so well as they love to be with me,

By day to work with me, and by night to sleep with me.

*Walt Whitman*



## A Glimpse

A glimpse through an interstice caught,  
Of a crowd of workmen and drivers in a bar-room around  
the stove late of a winter night,

and I unremark'd seated in a corner,  
Of a youth who loves me and whom I love, silently  
approaching and seating himself near, that he may  
hold me by the hand,

A long while amid the noises of coming and going, of  
drinking and oath and smutty jest,  
There we two, content, happy in being together, speaking  
little, perhaps not a word.

*Walt Whitman* (United States, 1819-1892)



from *Hylas*

Moving with a god-like ease,  
 Through the gray boles of the trees,  
 Hylas first spied Heracles,  
 Looming vast as huge Orion,  
 Tawny in his skin of lion;  
 While through interspace of leaves,  
 Through the network autumn weaves,  
 Fell bronze sunshine and bronze leaves  
 On the lion skin with its paws,  
 Dangling, fringed with crescent claws.

Softly all the flock were bleating  
 As he gave the lad good greeting,  
 Rubbing down with leaves his club,  
 Mighty as a chariot hub —  
 Hylas stood with golden locks,  
 Glowing mid the lichened rocks,  
 Laughing in the silver beeches,  
 White as milk and tanned like peaches.  
 Then the hero loved the lad,  
 For his beauty made him glad,  
 And he took him on his knees;  
 Tender was huge Heracles,  
 Telling him of strange journeys  
 To the far Hesperides,  
 Crossing oceans in a bowl,  
 Till he won him heart and soul.

So these two were friends forever,  
 Never seen apart, together  
 Were they all that winter weather.  
 And the hero taught the youth  
 How to shoot and tell the truth,  
 How to drive a furrow straight,  
 Plowing, plowing, very early  
 When the frosty grass was curly —  
 Taught him how to play the lyre,  
 Till each wire, and wire, and wire  
 Sang together like a choir;  
 and at night young Hylas crept  
 In the lion skin where he slept

Where the lowing oxen team  
 Stood beneath the smoke-browned beam,  
 Slept beside the hero clypt  
 By the giant, downy lipped.

*Hervey Allen* (United States, 1889-1949)



### *At Dawn*

He came in the glow of the noon-tide sun,  
 He came in the dusk when the day was done,  
 He came with the stars; but I saw him not,  
 I saw him not.

But ah, when the sun with his earliest ray  
 Was kissing the tears of the night away,  
 I dreamed of the moisture of warm wet lips  
 Upon my lips.

Then sudden the shades of night took wing,  
 And I saw that love was a beauteous thing,  
 For I clasped to my breast my curl-crowned king,  
 My sweet boy-king.

*Lord Alfred Douglas*



### *I - XV*

Once I loved a boy  
 who loved me. We were so happy  
 that I never doubted him  
 when he was away,  
 & vice versa.  
 And if I should happen  
 to want a tongue-kiss from him  
 in the middle of a public crowd,

he'd do it, & no stare  
 would deter him from  
 granting my wish.

*Abu Nuwas* (Persia?, c. 756-813)  
 [free translation by Hakim Bey]



### Sonnets

22

My glass shall not persuade me I am old,  
 So long as youth and thou are of one date,  
 But when in thee time's furrows I behold,  
 Then look I death my days should expiate.  
 For all that beauty that doth cover thee,  
 Is but the seemly raiment of my heart,  
 Which in thy breast doth live, as thine in me,  
 How can I then be elder than thou art?  
 O therefore love be of thyself so wary,  
 As I not for my self, but for thee will,  
 Bearing thy heart which I will keep so chary  
 As tender nurse her babe from faring ill.

Presume not on thy heart when mine is slain,  
 Thou gav'st me thine not to give back again.

25

Let those who are in favour with their stars,  
 Of public honour and proud titles boast,  
 Whilst I whom fortune of such triumph bars  
 Unlooked for joy in that I honour most;  
 Great princes' favourites their fair leaves spread,  
 But as the marigold at the sun's eye,  
 And in themselves their pride lies buried,  
 For at a frown they in their glory die.  
 The painful warrior famoused for fight,  
 After a thousand victories once foiled,  
 Is from the book of honour razed quite,  
 And all the rest forgot for which he toiled:  
 Then happy I that love and am beloved  
 Where I may not remove nor be removed.

26

Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage  
 Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit;  
 To thee I send this written embassage  
 To witness duty, not to show my wit.  
 Duty so great, which wit so poor as mine  
 May make seem bare, in wanting words to show it;  
 But that I hope some good conceit of thine  
 In thy soul's thought (all naked) will bestow it:  
 Till whatsoever star that guides my moving,  
 Points on me graciously with fair aspect,  
 And puts apparel on my tattered loving,  
 To show me worthy of thy sweet respect,  
     Then may I dare to boast how I do love thee,  
     Till then, not show my head where thou mayst prove me.

*William Shakespeare*



## Love, All Alone, Stands Hugely Politic

### Sonnet 116

Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
 Admit impediments, love is not love  
 Which alters when it alteration finds,  
 Or bends with the remover to remove.  
 O no, it is an ever-fixed mark  
 That looks on tempests and is never shaken;  
 It is the star to every wand'ring bark,  
 Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.  
 Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks  
 Within his bending sickle's compass come,  
 Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
 But bears it out even to the edge of doom:  
     If this be error and upon me proved,  
     I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

*William Shakespeare*



To —

Three rompers run together, hand in hand.  
 The middle boy stops short, the others hurtle  
 What bumps, what shrieks, what laughter turning turtle  
 For Love, racing between us two, has planned  
 a sudden mischief: shortly he will stand  
 And we shall shock. You cannot help but fall,  
 What matter? Why, it won't hurt at all,  
 Our youth is supple, and the world is sand.

Better my lips should bruise you so, than He,  
 Rude Love, outrun our breath; you pant, and I  
 I cannot run much farther; mind that we,  
 Both laugh with Love; and having tumbled, try



To go forever children, hand in hand.  
Time's sea is rising, and the world is sand.

*Wilfred Owen* (England, 1893-1917)



### Sonnet 124

If my dear love were but the child of state,  
It might for Fortune's bastard be unfathered,  
As subject to time's love or to time's hate,  
Weeds among weeds, or flowers with flowers gathered.  
No it was builded far from accident,  
It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls  
Under the blow of thrall'd discontent,  
Whereto th' inviting time our fashion calls:  
It fears not policy that heretic,  
Which works on leases of short-numbered hours,  
But all alone stands hugely politic,  
That it nor grows with heat, nor drowns with showers.  
To this I witness call the fools of time,  
Which die for goodness, who have lived for crime.

*William Shakespeare*



94

I said as the narcissus-boy came ambling by,  
a peach twirled in his hand:  
"What a pity to wait until we offer cash!  
Give love its proper due!"  
"More pitiful still," he replied, and chuckled,  
"is a penniless flop at the door."

*Abu Nuwas* (Persia?, c. 756-813)

[free translation by Hakim Bey]



*Yes We Do*

Of course we want your children  
 we want to bring them up in a loving realm  
 void of the fear we have grown old with/  
 Of course we want your children  
 we want to bring them home to faeries  
 gentle people/ frolicking beings  
 bathing in the mountains' runoff  
 running off to develop inwardly  
 the secret person hidden  
 beneath translucent skin/  
     a child smiles  
     powerful/ blossoming wild  
     flowers in high pastures  
     feeling at one with the mother  
     bubbling streams for life's aftermath

Of course we want your children  
 we'd put them to better use  
 than you would at war  
 finding children good scouts  
 then better soldiers  
 till/ they underdeveloped  
 reach a premature rest  
 in your best cemetery plots/

Yes we do/  
 we want your children  
 we want them to have themselves  
 we want to love them whole  
 within the broken bits  
 of your riotous world/

*David Emerson Smith*



## These Two Fire-Clowns

### Pollen Boy

I will walk on a pollen road. Pollen boy will go in  
front of me, and in back of me, and under me.  
His words will I speak. I will live like him  
and no harm will come to me.

— *The words of First Man, from the Navajo Feather Chant.*

Sweet-smelling Boy God  
Who nourishes bees  
From the lips of flowers.  
Life-giving Boy God  
Who scatters His substance  
On the changing winds,  
Letting chance decide  
Where it will take root.

Laughing at the risk of failure  
As you lap up the dew  
Of the days ahead,  
Kissing the morning dazzle  
From the shining surface of earth.

How shall I hang back  
When you grab at my hand,  
Plunging along the path  
Running forward, backward  
Rapid every which way.  
I never know  
When you will whisper  
That pollen should be sucked  
Like the seed of men  
From its silken shaft source.

*Linda Frankel*



*Rock Island Pavanne**(for K.E.)*

You know how the transcontinental out of Chicago glides into a landscape that looks so much like the map you wonder which came first — a geometric grid the color of corn stubble, grim solstice-gray old black-&-white TV-land from the observation car, one after another poor hick town flicks past between plastic coffee & stale insomniac cigarette smoke — & you wonder what would happen if you just got off the train in one of these dorfs: a negro porter standing in the black cold snow helps you down onto the cinders, the train pulls out into railroadland, no one's there, the station's been torn down, long slow freights clank past towards Iowa, the fastfood restaurants are closing for the night — and you know that in all these shopping-mall farmer-frame-house rigid December Bored-Again Xtian towns there must be boys with names like Jimmy & Joey — let's say one of them is almost eight, raggedy-kneed blue-jeans & an old slouch tweed cap, hair & eyes both the same soft Venetian brown, body svelte as a Caravaggio urchin-cherub — and the other ten-&-a-half, huge slightly crazy green eyes, world-record eyelashes, hair the color of Lindisfarne-gospel goldleaf — wild enthusiasts, boastful liars, agents of chaos, cuddle-monsters, extortionists of toys & favors, fancy-dancers, dirty jokesters, natural-born exiles from the Mundus Imaginalis — right! there must be millions like them in these frozen flatlands, millions of secret epiphanies in thousands of icy boxy little houses at every point of the night-whistle-echoing nation — but imagine just this once instead of staying on the Wabash Cannonball or whatever Zephyr you disembark just here & now & finally

penetrate the mystery of these lost-town boys who might have waited unknowingly forever for someone to notice their beauty, might have grown old and heavy, square & dull without ever communicating their dirty-sweet fragrance & sheer unreasoning joy to a single poet — but this time you finally get off the train in this godforsaken grain-embargoed cowburg — and thanks to the whim of some nearly defunct amerindian pagan-pervert genius locii this time at last you get to meet a Jimmy & a Joey who are precisely as imagined, feed them cheeseburgers



### *The Hands-Hold Dance*

The hands-hold dance of children on the dry river-bed  
 was life exploding out of blazing heat.  
 Between sparse reeds and a thicket grew  
 the human tuft in the pure air.

The passer-by could feel as torture  
 his detachment from such ancient roots.  
 In the golden-age flourishing on happy banks  
 even a name, a garment was a vice.

### *Eugenio Montale*



### *Young Boy*

At evening,  
 out of the gate of a certain monastery  
 comes a handsome young boy, going home.

At the end of a day quickly darkening  
 he throws up a hand-ball,  
 he throws a hand-ball high up in the sky  
 and continues playing on his way home.

In the quiet street  
 both man and trees look drained of colour,  
 and the sky goes flowing like a dream.

### *Miyoshi Tatsuji (Japan, 1900-1964)*



## Whom Move Not They?

### *The Lover and the Garland Weaver*

Today when dawn was dim I went  
 Before the garland-weavers' stall  
 And saw a boy whose beauty sent  
 (Like stars of autumn when they fall)  
 An arrow of swift fire that left  
 Glory upon the gloom it cleft.

Roses he wove to make a wreath,  
 And roses were on his cheeks and lips,  
 And faintly flushed the flowers beneath  
 The roses of his fingertips.  
 He saw me stand in mute amaze,  
 And rosy blushes met my gaze.

"O flower that weavest flowers," I said, —  
 "Fair crown where myrtle blossoms white  
 "Mingle with Cyprian petals red  
 "For love's ineffable delight:  
 "Tell me, what god or hero blest  
 "Shall bind thy garland to his breast?"

"Or can it be that even I —  
 "Who am thy slave to save or slay —  
 "With price of prayers and tears may buy  
 "Thy roses ere they fade away?"  
 He smiled and deeper blushed and laid  
 One finger on his lips and said:

"Peace, lest my father hear" — then drew  
 A blossom from the crown and pressed  
 Its perfume to the pinks that blew  
 Upon the snow wreath of his breast,  
 And kissed and gave the flower to be  
 Sweet symbol of assent to me!

Roses and wreaths with shy pretense  
 As for a bridal feast I bought,  
 And veiling all love's vehemence  
 In languor, bade the flowers be brought  
 To deck my chamber by the boy  
 Who brings therewith a greater joy!

*Strato — translated by John Addington Symonds*



### *Blanditur Puero Satyrus*

With looks and hands a satyr courts the boy,  
 Who draws back his unwilling cheek as coy.  
 Although of marble hewn, whom move not they?  
 The boy ev'r seems to swoon, the satyr pray.

*Richard Lovelace*



### *Palatine Anthology, XII, 102*

Through the frost and snow, Epikydes,  
 the hunter follows every track of hare and hind  
 up and down each mountainside. But if you say,  
 "Look! Here lies one wounded," he won't stop.  
 Just so, too, my love pursues elusive game,  
 flies past the most inviting boys that line its path.

*Kallimachos (B.C. ca. 310-240)*



### *Dilemma*

These splendid twins love me. Upon my oath,  
 I don't know which of them to make my master —  
 Dear Zeus, I love them both:



I must choose, but I can't!  
 One comes, the other goes: my heart beats faster —  
 always the boy beside me can most enchant.

*Strato*



### *Strato to a Young Angler*

My boy,  
 I'm the fish  
 which you have caught  
 with that hook you made.

Pull me where you will,  
 but don't run off  
 or you might  
 lose me.

*Strato*



### *Catalogue Aria*

Cloud-white boys in thought I seize,  
 and honey-skinned ones too.  
 Blond and dark-curl'd lads both please —  
 so do the blue- and hazel-eyed:  
 But most of all I'll woo  
 this dark-eyed firebrand to my side.

*Strato*





## “Call a Flame a Flame”

### *Battle Fatigue*

Hot-blooded boys don't give me no respect.  
 Their roaring hard-ons painfully remind me  
 that I can barely get myself erect  
 with ninety mile-per-hour winds behind me.

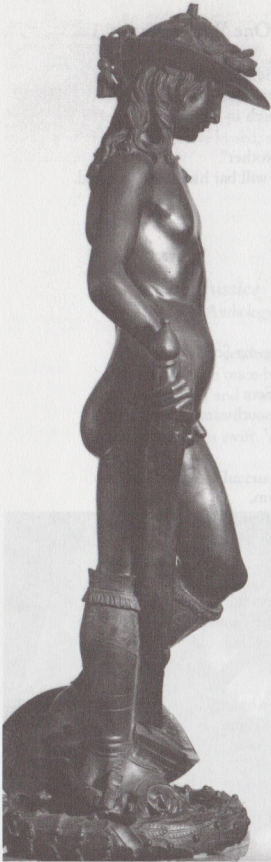
I flee them, but they always win the chases,  
 (with rutting boys, its hopeless from the start),  
 and after they have put me through my paces,  
 I stagger off to rest my pounding heart.

Oh, sex with boys will be the death of me,  
 but peace awaits on high where angels dwell,  
 and if a horny cherub strokes my knee,  
 I'll pack my bags, check out, and go to hell.

*Phillip Hutchinson*



I know which of them to make my master —  
 Dear Zeus, I love them both.



*Chicken*

my legs? oh  
they just came  
naturally big

I'm training  
for  
the football team —

I gotta lotta  
endurance  
(hot  
looks in the direction of

midleaged  
ass  
in the grass

dark blue  
circles  
under his young  
eyes)

I'm in shape  
from running  
(built like a  
sinewy Renaissance  
puto, ripe  
Italian buttocks  
smelling of  
*parmigian'*)

I oughtta  
be big  
all over when

I'm 17

*Harold Norse,  
San Francisco, 1972*



*Honest Advice from One Who Knows*

When you see a handsome boy  
 don't hesitate: call a flame a flame —  
 kindle him, your hairy torch in hand.  
 But if instead you blurt  
     "I'll honor you as a brother"  
 — why then your shame will bar him from your bed.

*Addeus of Macedon**Uncle Henry*

*(to be read with an over-the-top Scottish accent)*

When the Flyin' Scot  
 fills up for shootin', I go southward,  
 wisin' after coffee, leavin'  
     Lady Starkie.

Weady for some fun,  
 yearly visit Wome, Damascus,  
 in Mowocco look for fresh a-  
     musin' places

Where I'll find a fwend,  
 don't you know, a charmin' cweature,  
 like a Gweek God and devoted:  
     how delicious!

All they have they bwing,  
 Abdul, Nino, Manfwed, Kosta:  
 here's to women for they have such  
     lovely kiddies!

*W. H. Auden*



### *Little Deceiver*

The day when I fondled him on my knee  
 And he saw his image in the pupils of my eyes,  
 He kissed my eyes — little deceiver,  
 His reflection he kissed, and not my eyes !

*Sadah ha-Levi*



### *Poetic Justice*

*(Palatine Anthology, XII, 12)*

Just as he's getting his beard,  
 Ladon, the once-haughty youth,  
 fair once, and cruel to lovers,  
 has fallen in love with a lad.  
 Nemesis is swift.

*Statilius Flaccus*



## *Lay Your Sleeping Head, My Love*

### *from Endymion, Book II*

After a thousand mazes overgone,  
 At last, with sudden step, he came upon  
 A chamber, myrtle wall'd, embow'd high,  
 Full of light, incense, tender minstrelsy,  
 And more of beautiful and strange beside:  
 For on a silken couch of rosy pride,  
 In midst of all, there lay a sleeping youth  
 Of fondest beauty; fonder, in fair sooth,  
 Than sighs could fathom, or contentment reach:  
 And coverlids gold tinted like the peach,  
 Or ripe October's faded marigolds,  
 Fell sleek about him in a thousand folds —  
 Not hiding up an Apollonian curve  
 Of neck and shoulder, not the tenting swerve  
 Of knee from knee, not ankles pointing light;  
 but rather, giving them to the fill'd sight  
 Officially. Sideways his face reposed  
 On one white arm, and tenderly unclosed,  
 By tenderest pressure, a faint damask mouth  
 To slumbery pout; just as the morning south  
 Disports a dew-lipped rose. Above his head,  
 Four lily stalks did their white honours wed  
 To make a coronal; and round him grew  
 All tendrils of green, of every bloom and hue,  
 Together intertwined and trammell'd fresh:  
 The vine of glossy sprout; the ivy mesh,  
 Shading its Ethiop berries, and woodbine,  
 Of velvet leaves and bugle-blooms divine;  
 Convulvulus in streaked vases flush;  
 The creeper, mellowed for an autumn blush;  
 And virgin's bower, trailing airily;  
 With others of the sisterhood. Hard by,  
 Stood serene Cupids watching silently.

One, kneeling to a lyre, touch'd the strings,  
 Muffling to death the pathos with his wings;  
 And, ever and anon, uprose to look  
 At the youth's slumber; while another took  
 A willow-bough, distilling odorous dew,  
 And shook it on his hair; another flew  
 In through the woven roof, and fluttering-wise  
 Rain'd violets upon his sleeping eyes.

*John Keats*



### XVI, 13

Sit down beneath this tall pine-tree which whispers and quivers in the  
 mild breath of Zephyros.

Here, beside the splashing brook, my flute will close your charmed  
 eyelids in sleep.

*Plato*



### XVI, 210

On entering the deep-shadowed wood we found the son of Kytherea,  
 ruddy as apples.

He had neither his bow nor his quiver of arrows, but these were  
 hanging up on a leafy tree.

He lay among the wild-rose blossoms, smiling, fast asleep.

And tawny bees above him dropped fresh honey on his delicate  
 mouth.

*Plato*



*from Saki Nameh — a cupbearer to his Master*

In the market-place no-one disputes  
your Poet-fame. And though I too  
gladly follow your singing-voice,  
I also listen when you are silent.

And I love you, because you print  
unforgotten kisses — best-of-all,  
for words may vanish into the air,  
but a kiss lives on in thought.

Rhymes on rhymes carry bright meanings,  
Thoughts to think raise deeper joy;  
Sing to others, yes, but also recline  
silent with your serving-boy.

*J.W. von Goethe (Germany, 1749-1832)*



*The Poet to the Sleeping Saki*

He slumbers well and has a right to slumber.

Dear child, thou has indeed decanted wine  
For me, thy teacher: without strain and cumber

The thought that ages him dost thou divine.

Now sleep is pouring out for thee, health-bringer

That keeps thy limbs in full and glorious plight:

Still quaffing, to my lip I place a finger,

Lest waking he should freshen my delight.

*J.W. von Goethe (Germany, 1749-1832)*





*Sonnet 43*

When most I wink then do mine eyes best see,  
 For all the day they view things unrespected,  
 But when I sleep, in dreams they look on thee,  
 And darkly bright, are bright in dark directed.  
 Then thou whose shadow shadows doth make bright  
 How would thy shadow's form, form happy show,  
 To the clear day with thy much clearer light,  
 When to unseeing eyes thy shade shines so!  
 How would (I say) mine eyes be blessed made,  
 By looking on thee in the living day,  
 When in dead night thy fair imperfect shade,  
 Through heavy sleep on sightless eyes doth stay!  
 All days are nights to see till I see thee,  
 And nights bright days when dreams do show thee me.

*Shakespeare**Lullaby*

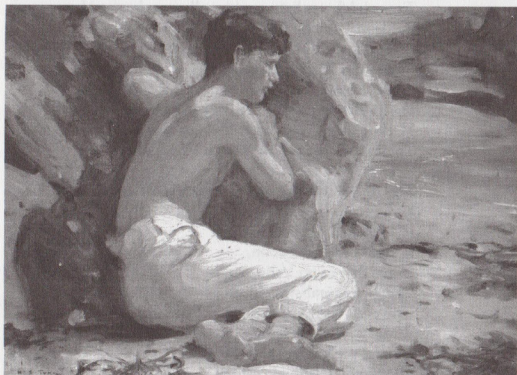
Lay your sleeping head, my love,  
 Human on my faithless arm;  
 Time and fevers burn away  
 Individual beauty from  
 Thoughtful children, and the grave  
 Proves the child ephemeral:  
 But in my arms till break of day  
 Let the living creature lie,  
 Mortal, guilty, but to me  
 The entirely beautiful.

Soul and body have no bounds;  
 To lovers as they lie upon  
 Her tolerant enchanted slope  
 In their ordinary swoon,  
 Grave the vision Venus sends  
 Of supernatural sympathy,  
 Universal love and hope;  
 While an abstract insight wakes  
 Among the glaciers and the rocks  
 The hermit's sensual ecstasy.

Certainty, fidelity  
 On the stroke of midnight pass  
 Like vibrations of a bell  
 And fashionable madmen raise  
 Their pedantic boring cry;  
 Every farthing of the cost,  
 All the dreaded cards foretell,  
 Shall be paid, but from this night  
 Not a whisper, not a thought,  
 Not a kiss nor look be lost.

Beauty, midnight, vision dies:  
 Let the winds of dawn that blow  
 Softly round your dreaming head  
 Such a day of sweetness show  
 Eye and knocking heart may bless,  
 Find the mortal world enough;  
 Noons of dryness see you fed  
 By the involuntary powers,  
 Nights of insult let you pass  
 watched by every human love.

**W. H. Auden**



## *Like the Rising Sun Among the Stars*

### *In the Moonlight Wilderness*

Encintured with a twine of leaves,  
 That leafy twine his only dress!  
 A lovely Boy was plucking fruits,  
 By moonlight, in a wilderness.  
 The moon was bright, the air was free,  
 And fruit and flowers together grew  
 On many a shrub and many a tree  
 And all put on a gentle hue,  
 Hanging in the shadowy air  
 Like a picture rich and rare.  
 It was a climate where, they say,  
 The night is more belov'd than day.  
 But who that beauteous Boy beguil'd,  
 That beauteous Boy, to linger here?  
 Alone, by night, a little child,  
 In place so silent and so wild —  
 Has he no friend, no loving mother near?

*Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-4)*

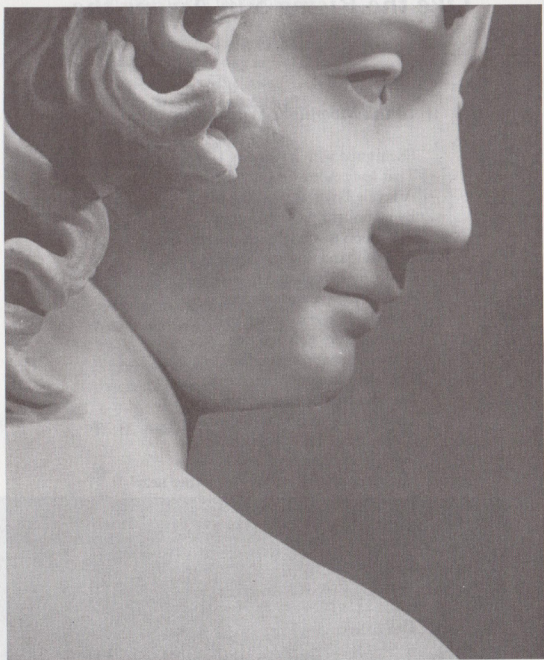


### *To Dindymus*

Your face reveals a down so light  
 A breeze might steal it, or a breath;  
 Soft as a quince's bloom that might  
 Find in a finger's touch its death.  
 Five kisses — and your face is cleared  
 While mine has grown another beard.

*Martial*





*Palatine Anthology, VII, 669*

My boy, my star, my Aster!  
with your two eyes you look up at the stars;  
would I were heaven, ever to look on you  
with a thousand eyes.

*Plato*



*Palatine Anthology, XII, 127*

I met Alexis walking in the road at noon, when summer was reaping  
 tresses of the corn. And two rays burned me; those of eros from the eyes  
 of the boy, and those of the sun. Night has cooled the sun's rays, but  
 dreams have fanned the others higher. Sleep, that brings rest to the  
 laborer, has brought fresh toil to me, fashioning an image of beauty in  
 my soul, a breathing fire.

*Meleager**from Menar Es-Sena: "Upon the Café Deewan..."*

Upon the cafe deewan, gaily shawled  
 There lies a lad whose lips gleam sherbet-wet,  
 From time to time his olive face is palled  
 By the blue fume of a dull cigarette.  
 Beneath the red fez ebon tresses show,  
 He turns his head in indolent surprise,  
 And as he looks betwixt the lashes glow  
 The midnight beauties of his glorious eyes.

*Montague Summers**Song from Fukushima*

Handsome boy!  
 O for a thread  
 To haul him over  
 To my side!

*Anon. (Japan, 17th Century ?)*



*New Blackbirds — For A.M.*

There was a man  
 who at every stanza  
 that he heard from  
 the blackbird  
 said  
 darling darling  
 and there came again  
 new blackbirds blackbirds.

And with every boy  
 that he saw on a  
 bicycle or walking  
 he thought  
 and said  
 beauty beauty.

And that man  
 is myself.

*Jan Hanlo (The Netherlands, 1912-1969)*

*High School Lover*

slant blue gaze  
 high cheekbones pouting lips  
 in bathroom mirror admiring  
 his astonishing features  
 and first mustache  
 (pastel smudge on upper lip)  
 small upturned nose  
 and luminous wide eyes  
 that attract wherever he goes  
 longing looks for those  
 superb thighs and tell  
 tale bulge of pleasure

doing homework  
 nodding in rhythm to some hot  
 jamming earphones  
 thick hair standing up a little  
 framing forehead ears face  
 bent over geometry  
 perfect buttocks  
 partly exposed  
 he lies on the floor  
 white gym socks soiled    tennis shoes torn  
 from rough wear of power slides  
 on skateboard with fiery blue  
 dragon and skullsword emblem  
 surface smeared by the city

withal a cheerful cherub  
 streetwise tender tough  
 ray of sunshine breakdancing  
 nude and high in bedroom  
 with laughter and bad breath  
 (pot beer cigarettes)  
 mouth full of fun  
 and kisses  
 half-child half-man  
 balanced in wild abandon  
 of anarchy  
 and hotblooded joy

in search of never ending touch  
 at times of need selling  
 the firm young flesh  
 for immediate satisfaction  
 and dollars  
 to quell the hunger  
 in growing cells  
 he grows and gladdens the heart  
 of girls and fatherly  
 lone men

*Harold Norse, San Francisco, 1985*



*Indian Summer Afternoon*

I saw him in the supermarket  
 hovering above the potato chips  
 and candy bars

blue trunks exposing  
 smooth thighs  
 beginning to fill out

mouth  
 moist and parted  
 ablaze with ripeness

of fourteen years

he stood submerging  
 the needs  
 of that flagrant mouth

in candy and chips  
 unnatural substitutes  
 for what at this age

nature  
 obviously intended  
 something so pansexual

that all the taboos press  
 on him  
 and on the onlooker

a mask of casual make-believe  
 of bland indifference  
 so that nothing disturbs the surface

of the supermarket  
 on this hot Indian summer  
 afternoon

*Harold Norse, Monte Rio, 1980*





### *Coney Island Daydream*

On the train rumbling to Coney Island  
 stark row of towers rises along the shore  
 trying to stack humanity in a vertical hold  
 it's sort of sad/ but you've got to put them  
 somewhere/ and this is that somewhere  
 the subway cars are covered  
 with inscrutable names  
 and their lovers  
 vanity graffiti/  
 at King's Highway  
 a young boy's expression says  
 avenue P — come with me/  
 I fumble with words  
 but can't put it together  
 in time — the train  
 clunks to a halt  
 and he smiles longingly  
 over his slender shoulder  
 leaving me here/ alone  
 to scribble this song/

I've an inclination  
 to be by the sea/ foamy  
 to get down in the sand  
 with hot boys at hand  
 to get lost in the touch  
 such a marvelous obsession

my body soaks  
 in my mother's  
 salty sea skirts/

*David Emerson Smith*



**Sonnet 104**

To me fair friend you never can be old,  
 For as you were when first your eye I eyed,  
 Such seems your beauty still: three winters cold,  
 Have from the forests shook three summers' pride,  
 Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turned,  
 In process of the seasons have I seen,  
 Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burned,  
 Since first I saw you fresh which yet are green.  
 Ah yet doth beauty like a dial hand,  
 Steal from his figure, and no pace perceived,  
 So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand  
 Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceived.  
 For fear of which, hear this thou age unbred,  
 Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead.

*William Shakespeare*

**"When Day is Done"**

When Theudis shone among the other boys —  
 like the rising sun among the stars —  
 I sighed aflame. And so I still burn now,  
 while the down of night creeps up those cheeks.  
 For though he's setting, yet he's still the sun.

*Strato*



## As If Joey Were Present Again

### A Photograph From Carcemish

I gaze at you now, my darling, my brother,  
 the pistol asleep in your young groin,  
 your lips pulled back in a mighty grin.  
 My little Hittite, after you there can be no other.

In your dark eyes, my darling, my brother,  
 The world was created from the waters of Chaos;  
 now black waves of tears  
 crash upon the beaches of my sleep  
 and drown my dreams forever.

T. E. Lawrence ("Lawrence of Arabia")



### Magian Child

desire itself confuses the unlocking of words — as if  
 Joey were present again on the living room floor curled  
 in my sleeping bag miraculously escaped for one night  
 from all eight-year-olds' prisons — as if I were not  
 a thousand miles away — an almost tearful sentimentality  
 mixed with masturbatory desire at the memory of his  
 tattered clothes, bluejeans with holes in the knees,  
 handmedown hi-top sneakers cracked & decayed

bound, chafed

& engorged by red ribbons my head throbs, crotch grows  
 steamy damp with lubricant as if once again I were  
 waiting all day for him to come & wrestle his make-believe  
 kung-fu, play with my hands, guide them up under his  
 t-shirt over his cherub's belly or down between his legs  
 — as I read him *Doctor Strange*

the borders of the poem  
 are violated, how can it contain the way he talks, how  
 sometimes the calls of songbirds are mistaken for his  
 far-away voice — the clusters of ghetto-obscenities that  
 eroticize his fabulous prattle of sorcery & heroes,  
 tree-houses & ray-guns — mingling of giggling smut &  
 angelic revelation

separated from him by an entire Time-  
 Zone of this monstrous flat continent I watch him from  
 the window as he comes home from school, running through  
 the grey snow, a solitary third-grader — otherwise the  
 days wandering empty streets of this almost-nonexistent  
 town, boarded-up shops, bible shops, gun shops, waiting  
 for school to let out

& the highway shopping mall named  
 after local hick-poet Eugene Field, blandness carried to  
 an almost religious extreme, true nexus of the town's  
 life, K-Mart, J.C. Penny's, waterbed boutique, video  
 arcade with cornfed boys hypnotized by SinisStar, corrupted  
 by Dragon-Slayer — the toystore, koolade-LSD-garish  
 colors of unexpected fireworks, colors of total indulgence,  
 voluptuousness of spending on candy, gum, McDonald's  
 (gourmet food or American boy-love), caps, capguns, A-Team  
 action figures, boxes of matches, things meant to live  
 for a few hours in a boy's hands & take on beauty from the  
 attention that animates them, burns them & discards  
 them

his sudden arrival like an injection of melted  
 electricity, Spring entering the room & banishing Winter,  
 break-dancing to Friday Nite Rock Videos, slightly plump,  
 right on the beat, a miniature odalisque — physiognomy  
 of a child-magus: high forehead hidden by multichromatic  
 brown gossamer bangs, small elf chin, lips pursed for a  
 kiss, huge down-slanted eyes, fey saint's eyes. He  
 doesn't photograph well — you must see his aura & touch  
 him & smell his primordial boy-sweetness, like a cloud's  
 spoor, to comprehend his particular beauty. In the car  
 we share the back seat, he tells me he wants to be a  
 sorcerer, a wizard like Syzygy Darklock or Dr. Strange, he  
 fantasizes about the power of levitation & mind-over-matter

— “Imagine if someone was wearing a wig I could make it fly up in the air off his fuckin head!” — he climbs on my lap to get warm, playing with my hands, pushing them into his crotch — explains how everything has a Voice for him, words he can hear if he listens hard enough — toys for example have Voices, & he speaks to the fire as to a living creature. Bless the back seats of big American cars on long straight highways in the night, warm, invisible, removed from the flow of Time

for an hour

or so I watch him by lamplight in the bag, surrounded by toys & blazing comics, Conan, King Kull, Dreadstar, Galactic Legion, Judge Dredd, the Golden Knight — my balls ache, neoplatonic fantasies simmer in my brain — that in India this child would be recognized as the reincarnation of a Great Soul — that innocence is more than just the charm of ignorance but a substance in itself, a wave or emanation that raises the neck’s hackles. Long lashes are silk on his cheeks, bare arms crossed over his orange t-shirt, bare toes, hair pushed into loops against the pillow — he pulls me into his dreams, trains moan far-off false 4 A.M. dawn — lost boy contemplated by sleepless uncomfortable fool, City Poet starved on the absence/presence of child-sleep that pins this world to some other Dimension with the pain of a broken toy, the whispered goodnight, the brilliance

finally around dawn I smoke a joint & climb into bed with him, take him gently in my arms & discover he’s wet himself, blue jeans soaked, sleeping-bag soaked — in his sleep his arm is around my neck & he breathes into my mouth, my hands explore luxurious dampness of crotch & buttocks — for a moment I shift down in the bed to inhale the accident & smell only the odor of spring-water, fresh, clean, like April

8 A.M. Saturday morning the boygang begins to congregate: Jimmy rings the bell, bursts in frosted with snow like an ice demon, Siberian green-eyed blond tiger cub — Steve wakes up & comes out of K’s bedroom in a bathrobe & flicks on the TV. Ingenious Bugs Bunny. Joey wakes & says “Uh oh, I drank too much pop last night

& pissed the bed" — stands & takes off his jeans, gets a towel from the bathroom & puts it down over the damp spot — & we sort of get back into bed together, Warner Brothers giggles, he pushes up his shirt for me to rub his stomach & nipples, like Faustus I urge the clock to stop, his penis stiffens under the sodden jockey-shorts

we build a fire together on a frying pan, handful after handful of kitchen-matches bursting & crackling, the red box becomes an effigy of School, cones of paper become rockets, matches explode in my hand & blister my fingers but instead of feeling pain I laugh at the trite symbolism. The pan grows into a heap of char & ash, we take it into the bathroom & dump it in the toilet, Joey pulls down his pants & piddles yellow on the black wreckage, plays with his penis as he urinates, squeezes his tiny balls, makes himself pink & hard, smiles up at me with missing teeth

he tries to get permission to sleep over another night ("and this time you gotta make sure I don't drink so much pop!") — but the unseen ogres who control his life have withdrawn their arbitrary favor & his begging is denied. Next day he tells me he was so disappointed he cried, I hold him tight & kiss him, we repeat our love, he cuddles against me for a story, his baby-erection in the folds of denim, his hair against my cheek

on the last day of my visit he comes back three times to say goodbye again, shoot me with his ray-gun & kiss me goodbye. The outside world is frightening — I flinch from newspapers — emptiness of the landscape — nuclear nightmare on the train — terror of telephone, of all adult relationships. I can't bear to leave the sphere of infantile magic — junky without fix, kaleidoscope colors gone dull & dead.

*Hakim Bey*



*In Days of Old*

In days of old there were many blossom boys —

An Ling and Long Yang.

Young peach and plum blossoms,

Dazzling with glorious brightness.

Joyful as nine springtimes;

Pliant as if bowed by autumn frost.

Roving glances gave rise to beautiful seductions;

Speech and laughter expelled fragrance.

Hand in hand they shared love's rapture,

Sharing coverlets and bedclothes.

Couples of birds in flight,

Paired wings soaring.

Cinnabar and green pigments record a vow:

"I'll never forget you for all eternity."

*Ruan Ji* (China, 210-263 AD)



from *David*

May the church's blood red songs give you peace, poor little altar boy.  
How many men and lights are shining for this small body, now that  
its face can no longer burn with shame!

No one used to see him when he made the milk pails clang at vespers,  
or,

in the evening, disappeared through the fields with his friends  
and a sack for clover.

[...]

And so, here in the church, the bright candles burn up the last smell of  
David.

They burn the water where he is reflected.

The grass where he used to run with THESE feet.

The bed where he used to sleep with THIS body.

And remember he was a poor little altar boy:

a primrose with a goldfinch's voice!

He used to swear with his friends, smoking behind bushes or stealing  
peaches

or pears from the fields.

When I met him at evening in the pasture with the turkeys,  
he went hot all over like a pearl when greeting me,  
eaten up by his delightful shame.

"But rest in peace." Oh, little boy! The last day we met,  
he was one of the boys who ran through the village while the evening  
was thundering above the houses and trees, full of fresh rain.

I don't know which day, which evening.

He greeted me, his face burning with shame: I was horrified for him,  
poor child with no life, his tender body condemned to growing up  
in the muddied path of your sins. His mother gossiping in the yard  
with the women.

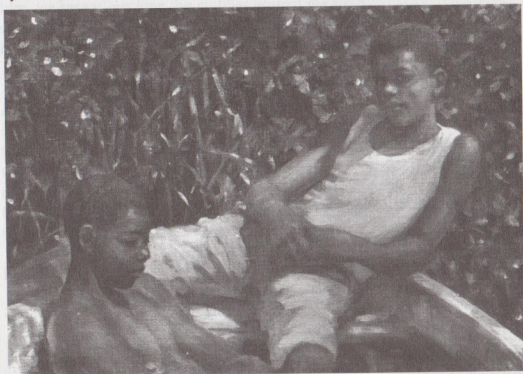
In which evening? Now you have left him to a fearful place, and my  
wonder

is as great as your resignation.

O the blood red songs in the church! But outside a flower showers  
droplets of dew in the wind, a bell is dying away.

The last chimes are already in the bosom of the infinite, far away,  
like your hearts, amen.

*Pier Paolo Pasolini*





## *When In Disgrace With Fortune and Men's Eyes*

### *Why?*

No complaint had ever been lodged against me other than by the authorities;  
 And the D.A. stated throughout the trial that I had loved and cared for the "victims";  
 And the "victims" and their families continued to visit me at their request, even after I had been accused;  
 And one of the families involved came to my house for several weeks, after they had been coerced into testifying against me;  
 And "victim" after "victim" came to me and told me of the threats and other Gestapo-like techniques that were used to force them to testify against me;  
 And six of the "victims" were never put on the witness stand because they withstood the pressures to do so;  
 And the mothers of the "victims" testified that they did not believe what the authorities were trying to make them believe;  
 And the two families that did testify had to be threatened and kidnapped from their homes by police before they would testify;  
 And one of the "victims who did testify against me returned to the stand several days later and recanted his earlier testimony;  
 And two of the others came to me and told me that they wanted to do the same but were afraid to do so;  
 And the credibility of many of the witnesses seemed very bad;  
 And one of the witnesses stated flatly that he wasn't even there when the alleged incident was supposed to have happened;  
 And, then a guilty verdict was rendered in the non-jury trial despite the fact that  
 the statutory requirements of the crime were not fulfilled;

I AM SITTING IN JAIL!  
 WHY?

Could it be because there is a group of people who make their  
 living through the prosecution of cases like this?  
 Or could it be because of public pressures caused by the people  
 being misinformed about the facts involved in a case like this?  
 Or could it be because of religious fanaticism wherein vociferous  
 bigots cry out because others do not believe the same  
 as they do?  
 Or could it be because of the "mob psychology" syndrome that  
 produces witchhunts such as this one?  
 Or could it be, because of civil rights issues being resolved in the  
 courts, certain authorities have fewer and fewer people  
 to harass and they have to find someone to vent their  
 feelings on ... they can't harass the Communists anymore ...  
 they can't harass the Blacks anymore ... they can't harass  
 the Gays anymore ... where do they turn?  
 They turn to a minority group where they feel they have a chance  
 of success. Once they get a toe-hold there, they theorize  
 that they can start up the ladder again ... the Gays ...  
 the Blacks ... the Communists ... ISN'T THAT A PLEASANT  
 THOUGHT?

*Karl Ahlers*



### *Chron-Illogical*

What's in a year?  
 The years between me  
 And 'Manda are ten.

What's in a month?  
 Step backward a month  
 And I am transformed  
 To a law-breaker  
 With 'Manda made a victim  
 Who vanishes behind stereotype.  
 Watch the invisible sex-starved teenager  
 Attempting to wolf down erotic encounters  
 Snatched during rare parental absences.  
 Society sold her sexuality  
 At a profitable markdown.  
 What price gay youth?

What's in a day?  
 A day dealt arrest  
 To a man who dare not set foot  
 On his country's unforgiving soil  
 Because he gave love to a boy  
 One day before the law allowed.  
 "You're only a pack of cards," said Alice.  
 Is that how to escape from a looking glass world?

What is time that we permit it  
 To break into bedrooms like a bandit,  
 To rend loving partners,  
 To interrogate the young  
 Until they agree in tears to lie  
 To drag them unwilling into courtrooms  
 To sentence them to institutions  
 To terrorize them to self-slaughter!  
 These things have been done  
 And will continue to be done  
 Until we cry halt!  
 Let time be no tyrant.  
 Let another voice be heard.

*Linda Frankel*



### *Japanese Scarf*

If it wasn't for bad luck  
 If all your life contains just now  
 is middleclass neurotic angst  
 then make poetry of it  
 I wouldn't have  
 no luck a-tall

well that's the advice of my poet friends from  
 New Jersey. The WIDOW & DISEASE turn up as fortune-telling  
 cards, Petit Lenormand, as Mick deals them out to me or I pick  
 a card any card, strange fin-de-siecle engravings, bad dreams  
 from old storybooks



now wherever he goes  
 he carries with him a Box  
 a ghetto-blaster, so he will have  
 music wherever he goes  
 hip-hop & poppin  
 androgynous as a moorish  
 slaveboy in blewgenes out here  
 in the sticks, the marshes  
 the confederate-gray winter  
 the frozen eel-grass

I studied kendo with an ex-pilot  
 from the Kamikaze Corps, the war ended before he got a chance  
 to fly his mission — once on a practice flight he landed his  
 Zero rough, the plane bumped, his head jerked forward, mouth  
 hit the joystick, blood & teeth all over the instrument panel  
 — his commanding officer drags him out of the cockpit, slaps  
 him in the face: “You fool! Are you trying to eat Emperor’s  
 airplane?!”

well better you than me Jack — those Japs are  
 crazy, everyone knows that — I’d rather live to fight another  
 day. Do you realize they publish comicbooks there like True Life  
 Romances, only with grown men & willowy blond 13-year-old boys?  
 Sick, right?

*suga suga shi*  
*bofu no ato ni*  
*tsuki kiyo shi*

*refreshingly*  
*after violent storm*  
*moon rise radiant*

— Admiral Ohnishi again

so another “relationship” bites the dust probably. I never even  
 touched him below the waist, believe me. I sent him paperback  
 ghost stories & some japanese paper flowers, the kind that swell  
 up in water, he’d never heard of the idea, he loved it. The town  
 like a colony of hermit crabs, doors slamming everywhere, getting  
 up a lynch mob for the Pied Piper

guess I’m turning  
 Japanese  
 still you have to admit  
 it would be gratifying

the bomb-pregnant Zero zooming  
 down at the  
 New York Post building  
 Time/Life, Newsweek, Readers  
 Digest, 23<sup>rd</sup> Precinct, Baptist  
 church. Rupert Murdoch  
 peers up sweating  
 like a tainted oyster

Mick makes missiles  
 of kitchen matches. The cards  
 are scattered in poker hands  
 fortune telling hands  
 hands with white lunar fingers  
 & veins of snow-buried turquoise

rat-tat-tat-tat-tat!  
 the Pedofile Revenge Squad  
 nneeeeeooooowwwww!! blam blam!!!  
 the huge window shatters  
 Rupert cowers behind his  
 mahogany desk. Sound effects  
 appear in jagged explosive balloons

the tip of the building goes  
 up like a pyrotechnicality, a Blossoming Chrysanthemum, the  
 display's finale. Rising-Sun logo appears on everyone's t-shirt  
 or pseudosilk jacket. Cherry blossoms in the fishbowl next to  
 Mick's bed. I fantasize him jerking off on snowy boring afternoon.  
 I hate poetry about sadness & defeat.

I shall return!  
 Shall I return?  
 Divine wind of  
 sexual agony  
 & sterile nostalgia.  
 Moon rise  
 radiant.

Hakim Bey



*Where Is The Stuttering Boy?*

Where is the stuttering boy, where has he gone,  
 gazelle perfumed with pure myrrh and frankincense?  
 The moon has concealed the light of the stars —  
 the graceful beloved conceals the light of the moon!  
 He chirped with soft speech and relied upon  
 Him who gave voice to the turtle-dove and swallow at their time.  
 The letter 'r' cannot hope for union with him, nor can I:  
 Avoidance includes us both and makes us equal in misfortune!  
 When I am alone, I write 'r' on the palm of my hand,  
 I weep lamenting, and so does the letter 'r'.

*Samuel Ibn Nagrillah*

*Sonnet 29*

When in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes,  
 I all alone bewep my outcast state,  
 And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,  
 And look upon my self and curse my fate,  
 Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,  
 Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,  
 Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,  
 With what I most enjoy contented least,  
 Yet in these thoughts my self almost despising,  
 Haply I think on thee, and then my state,  
 (Like to the lark at break of day arising  
 From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven's gate,  
 For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings,  
 That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

*William Shakespeare*



from "*Ut Quid Jubes*"

Why do you order me, little lover-lad,  
 Why do you command me little dear,  
 That I sing a sweet song,  
 When I am far away in exile  
 In the middle of the sea ?  
 And why do you bid me to sing ?  
 More likely, sad little one,  
 Should I weep, little boy,  
 And lament rather than sing  
 A song such as you demand,  
 Dear love.  
 O why do you bid me to sing ?

[...]

*Gottschalk**How Odd the Fate of Pretty Boys!*

How odd the fate of pretty boys!  
 Who, if they dare to taste the joys  
 That so enchanted Classic minds,  
 Get whipped upon their neat behinds.  
 Yet should they fail to construe well  
 The lines that of those raptures tell  
 — It's very odd you must confess —  
 Their neat behinds get whipped no less.

*Lytton Strachey*



## *THIS is a birthday present!*

*Lloyd. September 9, 1941*

I never (today) went to the courts except  
 to angle sharply tremendous bounces  
 and catch those youngsters flat! I'm thirty.  
 But look, before each play the little Welshman  
 is stroking in unconscious meditation  
 his swelling prick. This throws me off my game.  
 "Hinder!" I cry, when my first serve falls short.  
 My second hits him square on the spot!  
 "Ouch!" he shouts and lays the offender bare.  
 "Looks O.K.," I say with expert eyes.  
 "Yes, ain't it a beauty?" whispers Lloydie.  
 Solicitous, "I'd better take him home,"  
 and I toss in the ball — to their relief!  
 Because today I should have scoured the courts  
 like Hektor when he set the ships afire.  
 "THIS is a birthday present," says the youth.  
 "And THIS is solace for the injury!"  
 — in compliments like these we pass the time.  
 May such an unanimity of joy  
 often reward those who against their will  
 leave courts of glory on an errand  
 of mercy, not unmindful of Eros.

*Paul Goodman*



from *The Schoolmaster*

VI, *The Best Of School*

The blinds are drawn because of the sun,  
 And the boys and the room in a colourless gloom  
 Of under-water float: bright ripples run  
 Across the walls as the blinds are blown  
 To let the sunlight in; and I,  
 As I sit on the beach of the class alone,  
 Watch the boys in their summer blouses,  
 As they write, their round heads busily bowed:  
 And one after another rouses  
 And lifts his face and looks at me,  
 And my eyes meet his very quietly,  
 Then he turns again to his work, with glee.  
 With glee he turns, with a little glad  
 Ecstasy of work he turns from me,  
 An ecstasy surely sweet to be had.

And very sweet while the sunlight waves  
 In the fresh of the morning, it is to be  
 A teacher of these young boys, my slaves  
 Only as swallows are slaves to the eaves  
 They build upon, as mice are slaves  
 To the man who threshes and sows the sheaves.

Oh, sweet it is  
 To feel the lads' look light on me,  
 Then back in a swift, bright flutter to work,  
 As birds who are stealing turn and flee.

Touch after touch I feel on me  
 As their eyes glance at me for the grain  
 Of rigour they taste delightedly.

And all the class,  
 As tendrils reached out yearningly  
 Slowly rotate till they touch the tree  
 That they cleave unto, that they leap along  
 Up to their lives — so they to me.

So do they cleave and cling to me,  
So I lead them up, so do they twine  
Me up, caress and clothe with free  
Fine foliage this life of mine,  
The old hard stem of my life  
That bears aloft toward rarer skies  
My top of life, that buds on high  
Amid the high wind's enterprise.

*D. H. Lawrence* (England, 1885-1930)



*Island of Giglio*

we sailed into the harbor  
 all the churchbells rang  
 the main street on the crescent shore  
 hung iridescent silks from windows  
 stucco housefronts gleamed  
 rose, pistachio, peach  
 and a procession sang  
 behind a surpliced priest  
 carrying a burnished Christ  
 when I set foot on shore  
 a youth emerged from the crowd  
 barefoot and oliveskinned  
 and we climbed up rocky slopes  
 till dusk fell and close to the moon  
 at the mouth of a cave we made love  
 as the sea broke wild beneath the cliff

\*

skeletons of fish, boats  
 on the beach, granite  
 boulders, juniper trees  
 and the town with winding  
 alleys; old men suck pipes  
 as the full moon leaps  
 like a flying fish &  
 shrinks up the sky; we  
 merge on the rocks  
 where waves run  
 up & down

*Harold Norse, Rome, 1954*



## 10% of a Really Good Thing

### *Loving Statistics*

Time was,  
Used to be,  
That I gave 100%  
Of my love.  
And the boys flocked  
To me.

Then They busted me.  
And They put The Fear  
in me.  
And The Fear diminished  
My Love  
To about 10%  
Of what it was.

But, y'know,  
The boys still come around.  
Because 10%  
Of a really good thing  
Is better than  
100% of nothing.

S. G.



### *Drinking Song*

Hear the four best things a man can ask of life:  
health unmarred lifelong, beauty of form and act,  
honest gain of wealth — and while one's still a boy  
to come to brightest bloom among heroic lovers.

6<sup>th</sup> Century Greek, author unknown



### *A Purity Defined*

It is time to be silent.  
It is time to be that tower  
that a child lusts for.

It is good to know someone  
who does not confuse this  
possibility, this  
meeting in the forked young branch of eternity  
(its own purity, its  
own tree)  
with love.

*Paul Blackburn* (United States, 1916-1971)



### *The Seven Gifts*

I gave my clear-eyed boy a star  
Of clematis from summer days  
That dwelt among the scented ways  
Of an old garden still and far:  
— So that it lights his dreams with truth  
From that walled garden of my youth,  
I gave my clear-eyed boy a star.

I gave my soft-haired boy a crown  
Of olives from the groves of Greece,  
That all life's passions turn to peace  
For him, and perilous paths lead down  
To clear calm lakes beneath the moon;  
— So that his brow be cool at noon,  
I give my soft-haired boy a crown.

I give my red-lipped boy a rose  
 Fresh from the dew of waking dawn,  
 — A rose for my fair dancing faun  
 Whose laughter all the summer knows:  
 — Sweet, careless, unstained, fragrant boy,  
 So that love bring him only joy,  
 I give my red-lipped boy a rose.

I give my white-skinned boy a pearl  
 Fair as his body and as strange  
 As still pools veiled in mists that change  
 Their mysteries as they wreath and curl:  
 — So that his visions ever be  
 Wondrous and subtle as the sea,  
 I give my white-skinned boy a pearl.

I give my singing boy a lute  
 With silver strings whose chant belongs  
 To Youth for him who sings his songs  
 Among the ripening flowers and fruit:  
 — So that I hear his voice in Spring  
 When I lie unawakening,  
 I give my singing boy a lute.

I give my laughing boy a kiss  
 — Too poor for lips so exquisite —  
 With curious fleeting tears in it  
 That glitter through a love like this;  
 — So that he never know the pain  
 Of red bruised mouth bruised red in vain,  
 I give my laughing boy a kiss.

I gave my sweet-souled boy my heart  
 That has been cleansed by bitter tears  
 Of all the fruitless weary years  
 Which hope and sorrow set apart:  
 — So that his pain shall pass before  
 Into myself and be no more,  
 I give my sweet-souled boy my heart.

*Edmund John* (England, 1883-1917)



*Treedom*

A Boy robbed of childhood  
 by the white racist cotton hoods of adults  
 the ones they shroud their senseless bodies with  
 the ones they hide their grey swollen faces in

A Boy dresses up in lace highheels  
 the ripe red lipstick of bursting pricks  
 the one he plays with through his pocket  
 the one he opens up his fly to find  
 hidden there/in his underwear

TREEDOM/one short step from freedom  
 A Boy comes of age in rural shabbiness  
 the pink rose of youth blossoms/Dogwood  
 the tree he climbs in search of privacy  
 branches to hide in  
 to spy the addled ones  
 the tree he climbs to steal love  
 from his slender sapling torso  
 the oak he grows into  
 in order to escape the world/  
 His pappy sneers and says,  
 "Boy you'll never leave this holler"  
 But still he goes to Nashville  
 aching for lavender liberation  
 the violet freedom of a changeling child  
 there he grows robust in his new awareness  
 and shares it hesitantly with strangers/  
 he gives in to his urgent need  
 and colors it with cum  
 saliva/ocean foam  
 and clouds

*David Emerson Smith*





*Epigram XII 219*

Schoolmasters — Gods! — do you want paying too?  
 Ungrateful louts! For why? You've got young boys  
 To gaze at, chat with, kiss when they meet you.  
 It's better than gold coins to have such joys.  
 Whoever's got sweet lads — send them to me  
 For kissing, and I'll do it for them free.

*Anon. (Ancient Greece)*

*The Singing Gallery*

On a cracked wall in Italy  
 I saw something the bomb passed by  
 in a dark church aisle:  
 Piero della Francesca  
 set his seal of light  
 in colors that speak yet.  
 And Luca della Robbia  
 made thick marble sing  
 his joyous song  
 of Renaissance boys.  
 They sing to me.

Now it's rockets to the moon,  
 we change sex like underwear,  
 we believe in science.  
 All right, men must have myths.  
 I'll take The Singing Gallery.

*Harold Norse (Florence, 1956)*



## *Fool Voyager*

A drunk staggers beside my table  
he angers me/not because he's stinko  
but because he keeps calling everyone cocksucker  
and fortunately for my kind/they're not  
another man about my age pushes him off  
from bothering his woman  
so he could better abuse her/  
Yet through the filthy air of this café  
the image of sweet youth filters through  
young boys still amaze me/still pure vision  
in whatever street/in whatever country  
they are the conspicuous jewels  
in an otherwise lusterless world  
they are my underpinning  
the germ of my mythic existence  
children still react purely  
they play it from the heart  
they haven't learned the hidden games  
everything is out in the open  
openness is their playground  
I am their ally/always ready to touch  
a dark head with love's gentle hand  
I am a boy lover  
and there is no other way  
for this faggot fool voyager  
I should be with children always  
to guide them through the insanity  
of adult created fear and pain  
nothing is ever as easy as it was  
when the days were warm and sunny  
and the minnows squirmed  
and wiggled through  
my toes

*David Emerson Smith*





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