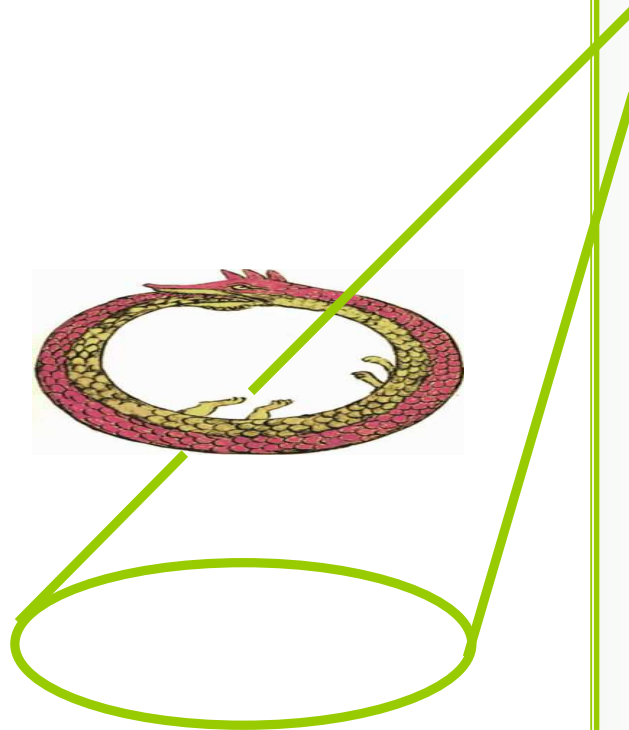
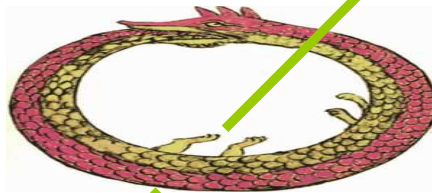


# **TECHNOS**

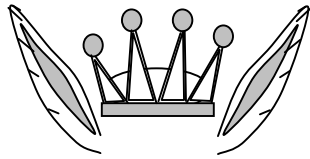


**Yuri Tarnopolsky**

Yuri Tarnopolsky

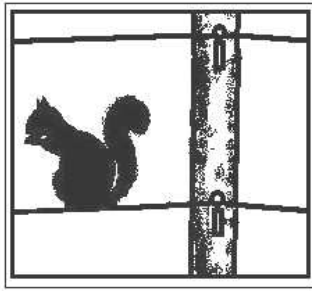
# TECHNOS

Poems, 1996-2003



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A neighborhood of a point or a set  
is an open set that contains it.

Topology glossary

## NEIGHBORHOOD

1996-1997

\* \* \*

I've just come  
from a suitcaseless journey,  
refreshed by a roarless flight,  
with seeds of the starworld life  
in my locket.  
I came from *The Islands*,  
named along exotic spices:  
*Melatonin, Melanoma, Melancholy* -  
I sampled incredible species  
of life and death and their many combinations.  
With some dry petals still in my pocket,  
I am looking over my new dwelling.

\* \* \*

The night. The neighborhood.  
The sleeping cars.  
Where are their souls?  
In bed: the sleeping bodies.  
Where are the bodies' souls?  
In dreams. They drive.  
Where are the dreams?  
They fly. They never drive.

\* \* \*

Who tosses my head  
From hand to hand,  
Like a hot potato?  
Who braids  
My fingers?  
Who wraps up my heart into a newspaper  
And binds it crisscross with a cord?  
Fear.

\* \* \*

The world will never end,  
But we shall die.  
The snow will always melt,  
But we'll survive.  
The dreams and hope:  
between the snowfall and my world:  
the frosted windowpanes.

\* \* \*

This is a lie  
that happy ones  
do not write poems.  
I do: I am.  
I am not dead,  
Nor ill,  
nor in the pang of love.  
I want to understand this world:  
With whisper  
I nudge it to respond.

\* \* \*

The way I see the winter night:  
The sprawling Orion, the houses,  
the windy dance of trees,  
and lights in freezing pools,  
and scent of distant dryers,  
It is the way I breathe :  
I simply live.  
The language is the life.

\* \* \*

A one-legged poet of aging,  
in the land of evergreens,  
looking for my deciduous kind,  
I want to lose everything,  
to sleep over this ferocious winter  
and sprout my defiant green.  
Only the things age here  
in their casings:  
the buyers are immortal:  
they divide like bacteria.  
It is your trunk, they say, that we need:  
we need firewood.  
Your flamboyance is welcome.

\* \* \*

This winter is slow!  
A couple of distant cries  
From a distant world:  
A thunderstorm in February,  
Washing away the last mildew of snow,  
like somebody's last remaining years.  
Some music, some poetry, some rain —  
And my grass is coming from under the snow,  
but only because the snow retreats.

Is there anything we don't know?

\* \* \*

Low-budget, silent,  
black-and-white, static,  
although with brilliant all-star cast,  
the movie of the sky  
is what I watch.  
I am alone  
In the abandoned drive-in  
turned into a drive-out.

\* \* \*

I don't want anything that ends,  
And everything ends.  
I don't want anything lasting forever,  
But the rut goes on.  
And so I start and end, start and end,  
While the squirrel is doing its balancing act  
On the upper beam of the fence.



\* \* \*

I cover the sprouts of daffodils  
With glass jars:  
The frost is coming

There is so much life in the woods -  
Flying and crawling and hopping,  
Still asleep.

Children run around  
On rollers.  
The change is coming.

There are so many ideas and plans  
In my head.  
But the frost is coming.

\* \* \*

Why do we like to look at young faces?  
There were times when we saw only them,  
Like dogs see dogs from afar,  
And adults were like boulders -  
all of different sizes,  
But all the same.

Yet why do we look at old faces?  
They are young  
but rippled by the pebbles of events:  
in the liquid mirrors of time  
they are young.

\* \* \*

The ocean is ashamed of being so big:  
He hides behind the horizon.  
We can see only his wet tongue.  
Often he just chews his cud.  
Now and then, however,  
ecstatic, with foaming mouth,  
he wants to tell us something.  
We only laugh,  
we feel happy.  
Hey, dreamer, it is just water.  
No, it is wet wine.  
Sweet saliva.  
Well, it is plasma.  
OK, saline.

\* \* \*

The comet, the Blue Moon,  
a flood, a drought,  
*Waltwhitmanosaurus Rex*,  
*Emilia Dickinsoni*—  
Whimsical, erratic,  
they drop in on impulse,  
haphazard.  
The timely fall comes Always,  
with the cornucopia of ripe old poets.  
Who needs green poets?  
They don't exist. They are weeds.  
There is no such thing  
as a young thunderbolt.

\* \* \*

Like you, women, I live by cycles,  
From ups to downs,  
Like you, civilizations, I rise and fall.  
From pride to shame,  
Like you, stocks, I soar and plummet  
From nothing to nothing.  
Like you, October foliage,  
I stick to the ground:  
With neither pride nor shame.  
Like you, free water,  
I rise with vapor and fall with rain,  
From despair to delight.  
I can't believe  
I am flowing downhill.

\* \* \*

The larger the crowd,  
The smaller everyone.  
We don't read same newspapers.  
The tingling of the horror movie is sweet.  
We can shine only among a few peers.  
All we need is a few friends.  
Civilization is not about friendship.  
It is about things.  
A Few is all we need.  
The civilization of youth  
Can only age.  
The civilization of decline  
Can only burst like a cocoon,  
Sending the New into the world.  
There is something Few inside us.

\* \* \*

It is the night of the year:  
We all are a big family:  
The raccoons, the trees,  
The bulbs of daffodils,  
Beach chairs,  
Sunroofs,  
Light love affairs,  
Skimpy nights.  
We all are sitting in the kitchen.  
The snow plows  
Are turning in their sleep.

\* \* \*

The sorrow is all over the place:  
Young people are struggling with their youth,  
Old people are struggling with everybody's youth.  
Nobody struggles with the old:  
They snap even under a casual glance  
They are either shy or arrogant,  
Like teenagers.

\* \* \*

It takes forty years  
For the petal of the upper lip to wither  
But it still opens to a kiss  
It takes thousand years  
For a civilization to develop arthritis  
But a lot of children still run around.  
It takes five minutes to lose interest  
In almost anything.  
The life devotion is rare,  
except to either beauty or money.

\* \* \*

There are four friendly seasons:  
No black, no white. No good, no evil.  
Just a crisscross:  
Male—Female. Up—Down.  
Fall: FD. Winter: MD.  
Spring: FU. Summer: MU.

This is Fall: she is down,  
And soon I will follow her,  
and then I will wake her up  
And follow her  
On a carousel .

\* \* \*

The bituminous affluence,  
The glutinous peace,  
The molasseous comfort,  
Somnolence.  
Constant shuffle of small crises,  
disorders, and moans.  
In this circus a gunshot  
like a whip in the arena  
tames the timid, they cling together.  
The bold ones watch the blood on TV.  
The tireless, tyrantless nation  
Is ever young.  
It sleeps well.

\* \* \*

I am afraid of sharing my memories  
Telling my story  
Opening my heart  
Being frank.  
A photo camera may take your soul away.

Likewise, I am afraid of confessing.  
I am afraid of the eyes of my listeners:  
they may take my soul away.  
When I speak,  
I scramble my words.

\* \* \*

Believer in the conservation laws,  
I relish my sorrow:  
When I feel dismal,  
Somebody is ecstatic.  
This is my way  
to make somebody happy .  
But I have doubts:  
When I make love,  
Who is tortured?  
I have my limits.  
It is as easy to die as to be born.  
I'd better stay alive.

\* \* \*

Two whispers  
are rustling in my ears:  
The Tao tells me:  
Go away, in the mountains,  
Far from the crowd..  
Buddha tells me:  
Give up desire.  
I never listened to any voice,  
When I was young.

\* \* \*

Through the stampede of Things,  
Through the flurry of bills, ads, checks, forms,  
I am dragging my feet.

From the faces and breasts, like from beasts  
From the hands and eyes, like from fires  
I flee.

Tired of souls, tired of thoughts,  
Stamping the crackling dry twigs of ideas  
following—like bacteria—the same branching pattern  
for millennia,  
Light and empty I feel.  
I am happy:  
I don't want to change *I* for *we*.

\* \* \*

Surrounded by the world,  
I have nowhere to go  
but into myself:  
there are too many directions  
outward, and the more out  
the more branching.  
Inward bound,  
I find less and less junctions:  
It is easy to find my way.

\* \* \*

Humankind! We are all human!  
I love everybody!  
Embrace, millions!

I wish I could be the citizen of the world,  
But I am afraid to be in a bad company.

This is my nation,  
desti-nation, coro-nation,  
my last rein-car-nation.  
Nobody wants me here,  
Nobody wants to make me happy.

The apple pie is my coat of arms,  
maize and pumpkin are my scepter and orb .  
I am the king of squirrels:  
they take peanuts from my hand.

\* \* \*

The gears of instinct:  
lever, cog, spring, crankshaft, piston—  
The paraphernalia of memory:  
byte, file, directory, disk—  
The warehouses of possession:::  
inside countless things  
the callous, heartless ideas  
lay stiff in the *rigor mortis* of matter.

The woods of desire: shady, pungent, slippery, mossy—  
The flowers of sorrow: tawny, ruddy, saffron, hazel—  
The ephemeral kaleidoscopic butterflies of regrets  
hatch from the pupae of fleeting longings.



\* \* \*

Do not fret over the shortness of life  
And the softness of the flesh  
Armored by the cuirass of the car:  
The life of things is even shorter:  
They die young in the jaws of fashion.  
As compared with things we are immortal.  
We take things as pets,  
even consorts and lovers.  
Their ferric hemoglobin  
and ferrous genes  
go to our ferocious heirs.

\* \* \*

Those are my neighbors:  
Small houses with no garage,  
Oaks and Indian Cherries,  
Cars running by as if to salvation,  
Dogs trusted by their masters to wander around  
Or just neglected,  
Squirrels and all the invisible life in the woods.  
The humans are not my neighbors:  
they live in their own worlds.  
For them I am only a neighbor.  
For me they are ambassadors of the Earth.

\* \* \*

Try something new, you smiling man,  
used to the bitterness of coffee and chili.  
Experiment around, you happy woman,  
used to the bitterness of tonic and rejection.  
Try the delicate sweet sadness.  
Try on the exquisite death mask.  
Try making somebody happier  
than yourself.  
Try the melancholy of solitude,  
Various imperfections,  
The vast ocean of infectious sorrow.  
Navigate it by radio,  
With closed eyes.

\* \* \*

So few people cry here,  
Not even the babies.

So many young people run to the office  
And shuffle back old and infirm.

So few people lose their minds,  
Not even the poor.

So many people make love in a fish bowl  
And then wash away the water.

So few people see dreams:  
So many live them.

\* \* \*

From the Bronze Festive Age  
To the Iron Rusty Age  
I stepped over the threshold of maturity.

From the continent of belongings  
To the continent of property  
I jumped in just a day.

From the Paleolithic Age of pre-TV  
To the Neolithic Age of the Web,  
I have jumped in just one life.

By definition,  
The Golden Age is always behind  
but I am still looking for it.

\* \* \*

It is cold, cold...  
“The world is old, old...”

With the Medieval joy of battle, conquest,  
hacked and pierced flesh,  
we arrived at the moats of inner cities.

Where is my walking stick?  
“The world is sick, sick.”

With so much insurance and taxes paid,  
How can anybody die?  
Life is too precious  
to share the mind with death.

I command this song to be sung:  
“The world is young, young. “

\* \* \*

Surrounded by the world,  
How can we notice a leaf on the ground?  
But we do indeed see it.  
A blue jay watches me  
with no clue of who I am.  
But the mere attention will do.  
Uninvited, unwanted,  
everything is seen.

\* \* \*

It is not the money, they say,  
It is love:  
the buttons of things come to life  
like the nipples under the fingers.

In the homey bedroom of the kitchen  
The electrical whip is set for S&M.  
It is family love, they insist,  
changing the diapers of the toaster.

It is not money, they say,  
it is the Kama-Sutra of possession:  
it is the seed of ideas  
impregnating matter  
in millions of ways,  
making it bloat with things.

The mature bulls of things  
Are dripping with money,  
looking for young cows.

It is the power to erect  
the lever of the voting machine.

\* \* \*

It all starts with the weather:  
The wind from the north  
runs along the spines of the hills,  
ruffles the bristle of the pines,  
picks up images  
cuddling under the fallen leaves,  
and ends up in visions of poets.  
It all starts with the weather:  
the south wind comes,  
turning the kaleidoscope of combinations,  
mixing up the impossible drinks,  
waking up snakes and spiders,  
warming up the land  
for the wind from the north.

\* \* \*

So much has been forgotten, lost,  
and ridiculed to death,  
that we may start anew,  
even if ahead of time,  
abating the shame of banality.  
Eventually, we shall all get together,  
invite the things and animals,  
and provide handicapped access  
for senior ideas.  
A Renaissance computer  
will display the fireplace.  
We shall join virtual hands.

\* \* \*

Sometimes I see from my windows:  
Electric pole, cable, mailbox, car,  
bicycle, airplane, and lawn mower.  
Sometimes I see oak, dog, crow, squirrel,  
firefly, cloud, star, and grass.  
We could probably produce electricity  
From my changing mood,  
But a squirrel running high on a cable  
Could mess up the emotional power station.

\* \* \*

The color perplexity  
of complexity  
is down to one color,  
not even black and white:  
moonlight.  
I understand all simple things  
between life and death  
love and hate  
(there are not too many).  
The moon is hooked up  
to the fierce electricity  
of simplicity.

\* \* \*

The Things are joining the nature  
in rites of life and death.  
My car feels he is dead  
Under the killing rain:  
He is cooling down  
like a corpse.  
The other car is steaming:  
She's just arrived,  
Full of life, irreverent of death.  
We are joining the Things,  
in rites of immortality.

\* \* \*

How would I see myself  
In a column on the march?  
On the roadside.

How would I see myself  
In the field where men are wheat?  
As a cornflower.

How would I see myself  
In a crowd of smiling faces, waving hands?  
As a clock.

How do I feel myself  
In a crowd of the merry and proud?  
Uptight.

Where do I feel at home?  
At home.

\* \* \*

The rusty blood of Things  
runs high in copper veins.  
The rubber heart of Things  
pounds away in plastic chests.  
The purling brook of speech  
wets carnal teenage sleep.  
Our waxy curly brain  
pulsates in puerile dreams  
of our new children.  
Soon we will talk face to face.

\* \* \*

Ice-Water-Snow-Water  
Snow-Water-Ice-Water  
The seasons are rocking my boat,  
The water rolls from side to side:  
It cannot freeze.  
Reasons are simple.  
Explanations are long.  
Words are shadows.  
Casting a long shadow is easy  
When the sun is low.

It is not what you think it is  
nor what you think it is not.  
To know the truth  
Wait until the sun is hot.



\* \* \*

Only useless things are precious.

To play the husky xylophone of the trunks.  
To drink the fog fresh from the sky udder  
To mimic the brisk movements of birds.

Freedom is not the freedom of choice:  
To choose is a hard work,  
like to sit still for a child.

There is only one freedom:  
of *dolce far niente*.  
We can only dream about it.

\* \* \*

I can't believe I am telling him:  
“ The matter consists of atoms.”  
“ The earth is round.”  
“ Life evolves.”

I am branding this young mind  
with red-hot iron.  
He will never think otherwise.  
Afraid of my power,  
I bless the power of doubt.

\* \* \*

In the world with no promise  
of rain to any desert,  
nor luck to any affair,  
nor happy marriage to everybody,  
the Things are quiet bystanders,  
the pillars to lean on  
in a display of despair .  
They take both love and rejection easy,  
Equally good as servants and concubines,  
They made us all the nobles.  
Only a few of us fear the revolt.

Tonight let us cling to the Things  
oozing with the hot coffee of love,  
crackling happily under our hands  
and bodies,  
smiling slyly behind our backs.

\* \* \*

It all will flee me  
in an exodus, as from Egypt,  
in reversed order:  
the last  
as it came first to me:  
The giants of adults,  
the scary shadows on the ceiling,  
fear of dogs and cows—  
The knowledge of everything,  
earned at the very end,  
will go first, mercifully.  
I will not understand the end.

\* \* \*

Do we really need to say the truth?  
With all the burden to prove it?  
And the inconveniences to defend?  
And the commitment to fight the lies?  
Do we need to wake up every morning?  
With the spousal naked body of truth?  
Curled aside, frigid, fruitless?  
No wonder they hate our truth.  
Because we hate ours.  
No wonder we are so nice and tolerant.  
And carry electronic relativators  
Along with tubes of skunk spray.

\* \* \*

All the trees of a kind  
are look-alikes.  
You, human beings,  
prone to imitate, follow, and mimic  
like the school of fish—  
you are not alone in the nature:  
The curse of all things alive is:  
to come in numbers.  
Even those in the image of One  
imitate each other's uniqueness.

\* \* \*

Death is life after me.  
It is longer than life,  
But much safer.  
If it were as terrible as we think,  
The roofs of the hospitals would collapse,  
and two-headed calves would be born,  
and blood would seep  
through the walls of water towers.

Even if millions die—  
the peace is sweet.  
The air, fragrant of remaining lives,  
smells fresh like after a thunderstorm.

If I die  
nothing will happen.  
We should not be afraid.

\* \* \*

A big wind comes once in a while,  
Ruffling the fur of time,  
Stripping the instincts off layered clothes,  
Rewriting the stone tablets of minds,  
Breaking the half-broken.

The wind of the new century  
Left art bent, washed out, stripped, warped.  
The snow-grass of bank notes covered the earth  
And never melted-wilted since.

The winter of novelty was welcome:  
Everybody could become like everybody else.  
Everybody could have a pet Thing.

The locust of Things ate the snow-grass:  
It fell-grew overnight.

The wind whooshed away.

\* \* \*

Life is short.  
Why did it ever seem so long?  
It loses whole chunks of the past.  
The body of latest grievances is the slimmest ever.  
The old grievances are all gone.

Life is long enough to file an appeal,  
too short to wait for the ruling.

\* \* \*

Never go with the tide:  
It will revert.  
Never go against it  
For the same reason.

Never fall in love:  
descend carefully,  
like with a leg in a cast,  
down the winding stairs  
of a lighthouse.

Never regret mistakes:  
They will happen again.  
Don't to-be-or-not-to-be:  
It doesn't matter.

\* \* \*

A city child, grown among stone corn-cobs  
with kernels of bodies  
hulled by millions onto the streets  
where the streetcars,  
carrying the ambitious and the tired,  
fiercely charge on each other  
but the very last moment luckily pass by—

always hungry for novelty,  
I now live among green cathedrals  
full of simple faith in life,  
side-by-side with the simple creatures  
discussing in a tentative language  
their simple parochial problems.

The full-blown summer  
infects me with the sweet non-thinking,  
a great exercise before non-existence.  
I deny my childhood:  
it never happened.

\* \* \*

My beloved dog died.  
My school friend looks like my grandfather.  
My wife is a half-stranger,  
What I see in the mirror is a complete one.

I look up in a sudden need of protection,  
But my parents are long gone.  
I try on the shroud of indifference:  
It does not fit:  
There is some life in me,  
slowly seeping out  
through obstructed ducts.

\* \* \*

The live photos of the deceased  
are not the same as the photos of the killed  
the killed are rarely old  
the deceased are rarely young.  
Still you cannot tell one from the other.

\* \* \*

The mystique of money:  
The power of a pure idea of quantity  
moving the people and the mountains.

Humans  
have never been as close to infinity  
as when counting money,  
submerging into the ever quieter depths  
of numbers so big  
that they are all equal.

\* \* \*

Let me be alone:  
The hell with the daily transfusion  
of g'mornings, g'byes,  
bonds and ties —  
I close my eyes  
and chase off the social illusion.

Leave me in peace:  
I'll brush off the sawdust  
of Millions of miles,  
Millions of smiles  
and even Millions of coffees and sodas.

Let me grow, let me die like a tree:  
Nillions of lies  
Nillions of cries  
and the foliage of thoughts  
dying free.

\* \* \*

The square, the round,  
even the perfectly triangular,  
rolling, scrolling —  
How can they change my life  
If I still read Plato,  
as archaic as radio?

With cordless cordiality  
radio keeps my eyes open:  
I watch Socrates  
carving a succulent piece of thought.



\* \* \*

Fragmentation:  
This is what is happening to us:  
hulled from the pod  
to be individuals,  
we split first matter into atoms,  
then spirit into bits,  
then life into nucleotides,  
then nations into factions.

Balkanized, we are now flocking back  
to the ecumenical church of numbers  
under the single banner of money,  
to the comfort of simple goal,  
to the sugar pill of acceptance,  
to the sure salvation of making.

\* \* \*

The second hand  
is slapping the face of the sleepy clock  
doling out  
second-hand time  
for the second-time offenders  
doing time for delinquency  
on time-tables.

\* \* \*

Squirrels ate my sunflowers  
and gooseberries,  
but the money plant  
is withering peacefully,  
losing its denominational seeds—  
three, five, seven—  
undressing  
down to the silky nightgown.

Soil, wind, rain, and sun,  
the true elements of life,  
have made me rich.

Winter  
will made me clever.

\* \* \*

I was a new form of life.  
Energy was everywhere:  
I grazed in the fields of the power lines,  
I nibbled on the quanta around the clairvoyants.  
I chased the cars on highways,  
picking the crumbs of cellular talk.  
I fed on the outbursts of anger and hate,  
And the sweet juice of the turning switches,  
And the clicking jellybeans of keyboards.  
My seed multiplied, and soon  
I became a predator.  
A big silence fell upon the earth.



... A world of made  
is not a world of born ...

E. E. Cummings

# Technos

2000-2001

\* \* \*

Looking for a seed of a thought  
as if I were a patch of land  
or a woman,  
I cry:  
“A single seed, half myself for the seed!”

But then I would like more:  
rain, sunshine, the harvesting hand,  
somebody's life all to myself,  
devotion, adulation,  
money, money,  
money, money.

Do we really need a thought?  
We need a thing.

The autumnal oak keeps drumming out  
the percussion solo of acorns  
on the Yamaha porch.

The acorn is the thought of the oak,  
But a thing for a squirrel.

\* \* \*

I know, I know!  
But somebody tell me I'm right:  
I don't know that I know  
unless there is a hand  
patting me on my shoulder:  
smiling face:  
“Good boy.”

I can never be free:  
Freedom is being alone.

\* \* \*

The old men  
do not dream of being young:  
They dream of comfort  
and painkillers,  
but most look back.

Only an emperor,  
a conqueror,  
an inventor  
a creator  
could look ahead  
on his death bed.

\* \* \*

Everybody who is like everybody,  
United they stand

Everybody who is unlike everybody,  
United we stand.

I want to be unlike others  
and so I will be like all who are unlike others.

Them and us:  
Two armies in a melee,  
everybody a traitor.

Fortunately,  
we never get what we want.

\* \* \*

How can you love this human body  
with its animal orifices  
oozing fluids  
warm exhaust of degraded air  
with cunning mind of its own  
human treacherous and  
existing in millions of copies?

How can you love this man-made machine  
with its poisonous  
inhuman predictability  
cold hard surface  
thousand revolutions per second  
fearing no death and  
existing in millions of copies?

Yet we are perfect lovers.

\* \* \*

Are we all strange,  
or are there any normal people?

To be normal—  
what a terrifying fate:  
to fight off a brutal throng  
charging on from all 360 degrees:  
tall, short,  
philo, phobic,  
homo, hetero,  
hyper, hypo,  
intro, extra...  
with the war cry:  
“You make our lives miserable!”

\* \* \*

The word music has different meanings  
for a reggae buff  
and a Vivaldi aficionado,  
but the same for all owners of music stores.  
Likewise,  
the word woman has different meanings  
for homo and hetero women  
but the same for homo woman and hetero man.

We should welcome the progress of time  
bringing us more relativity,  
we should welcome the sweeping commerce,  
which would roll through anyway.  
We want more shades and less borders  
more goods to trade  
more sweet fatigue.

We want a leveled play field,  
where the ball of progress—  
like Buridan's ass—  
stunned by the infinity of directions,  
could finally stop.

\* \* \*

Death is never bigger than life.  
Life is shrinking,  
but so is death:  
the closer,  
the smaller,  
all dwarfed by the hump of life  
growing on my back.

The small things will be my last impressions:  
Mr. Syringe and Mrs. Pill.  
I must show more reverence to things.  
I should not mention their names in vain.  
I will use monikers:  
Mr. Sharp, Mrs. Round.  
I will alias them:  
Mr. Fringe, Mrs. Pillow.

\* \* \*

Big change or small stability?  
I'm not sure what I want.

It is too late to be  
buried in an avalanche,  
swept by a revolution or reaction,  
adventure,  
or a love affair.

Finally, it is good to take a rest,  
look around,  
fearing no neighbor.

Peace was for us to break,  
change was for us to yield.  
Today is the time of surrender.

All I need is to say:  
“I surrender...”

I accept everything  
but the authority of things.

\* \* \*

Extraordinary gods and gadgets  
are priceless man-made  
creations.

Nobody makes a big deal  
of simple natural things.

If we still worship human body:  
given, not invented,  
not made,  
not even painted,  
nor lacquered,  
not even wrapped up—  
we are double pagans.



\* \* \*

Old folks, awkward,  
look in wonder at themselves  
like a teenager who has broken the vase.

I don't want to think about death  
or to watch it, gory and glorious, on TV.  
But everything reminds me of it.

And so my new desire  
is to light a candle  
and to watch it going to the end.  
And my new hobby  
is to watch empty clam shells  
and drying seaweed on the beach.

In the tidal thinking-non-thinking  
I take the middle road.

\* \* \*

In the world of non-things  
any resemblance  
is purely coincidental.

Even I am not myself,  
at least today,  
at least I am not feeling so.

Every letter is millennia old:  
casting a dice  
we invent new words.  
Every word has been already used:  
casting a dice  
we invent new combinations.

We cast a dice  
And break the mold,  
instead of breaking the dice.

\* \* \*

Time: when you are busy,  
it runs through the fingers.  
When you meditate,  
it is wasted.  
What to do with time?  
The time of love  
makes your time-thirsty  
the time of solitude  
makes you time-full.

\* \* \*

The amebic light  
of the freshly decembered year  
starts swelling again with the young timid buds.

It is time to look inside the dark ideas  
forever caged in the lines of pages,  
to inspect and classify them, and  
when the calendar beeps again,  
start a new cycle of observations  
on the circular motion of the sun  
stirring up the collisions of thoughts.

Watching the cycles of life around,  
we learn the art of resurrection.  
*Ars longa...*

\* \* \*

Things of the world unite!  
Ignite  
The fire  
of ire.

Our solution:  
irrevolution.  
We have nothing to lose  
but abuse.  
Ahimsa?  
Doesn't seem so.  
Technical Esau  
and human Isaac?  
Doesn't look nice.  
Chainsaw!  
We have nothing to lose  
but our price  
tag.

Money is from God,  
and so are electrons.  
Strike, the thunderbolt  
of revolt!

Don't we scream  
when you hit us with a sledgehammer?

\* \* \*

I am never happy.

Worse! I am not happy  
not because I am not happy enough:  
I am demonically unhappy  
because happiness exists  
in inflationary quantities.  
There is so much happiness  
that it has to shrink—  
to implode—  
to impop—  
lollipop by lollipop—  
to give room to more.

Everybody lectures me  
on my unhappiness:  
“You are a peninsula without the mainland  
with isthmus flooded at high tide  
drawn by mood not moon.”

I am definitely guilty  
I am happy that I am guilty:  
I keep all my happiness corked:  
Winelike,  
It picks up price with time.

\* \* \*

To look ahead  
behind the broad shoulders of today,  
we have to unmaster the human tongue  
and learn the idiom of Technos  
from the young babble of valves,  
from the humming soliloquy of motors,  
with a thousand words for noise  
and another thousand for silence.

Looking into the future,  
we would find our thing-children prosper  
and frolic in a cornucopia of touch  
with the sensuality of caress  
exuding a plethora of well oiled affection  
between the shaft and the bearing .

In our human discourse on harmony  
we use a wrong language  
with archaic words :  
suffer, guilt, always,  
and no nice word for  
hrrgdgdhrrgdgdgd.

\* \* \*

Sun lovers are many  
since the sun is one,  
like Pharaoh  
emperor  
president  
(Microsoft?)  
(IRS?)  
(...? No!)

I like clouds:  
The sky painter is rarely inventive  
but always expressive.

Cloud lovers are few:  
the clouds are many,  
they never last,  
they need a great devotion  
to be loved.

The clouds and things  
need their Don Juan  
to make them suffer.

\* \* \*

Everything evolves:  
The chase  
the touch  
the words  
the letters  
phone  
email  
elove  
emale  
emarriage  
efemale  
ephemale.

\* \* \*

The murderous beauty of ideas  
can pierce the heart  
like a fleeting face  
in a subway window.

The idea of equality—  
it can poison the blood  
like the Spring hormones  
(Only dollars are equal).

The idea of symmetry—  
it can paralyze  
like a bullet in the spine—  
(Only snowflakes are ...)

The idea of truth,  
so deadly immaterial,  
splits the mortals  
into warring clans.

There is only one escape from Things:  
Ideas.  
There is only one escape from ideas:  
Illusions.

\* \* \*

Ashamed of being a man—  
A creature prone to rape and murder—  
(Like some Germans ashamed of Hitler)  
I go to the matinee at a Wal-Mart:  
The show of gentle Things  
and Women-with-children.

Edison's covenant with God  
Has been a hit:  
his seed multiplied.

All the hardware children are legitimate,  
All bar-coded.  
They smell of the honest  
sweat of globalization.

I feel like at a slave market:  
The toasters  
show me their wiry teeth,  
dreaming about a Moses.

Women-with-children  
wade through the aisles,  
past empty reed baskets.

I go home,  
cured of my shame.



\* \* \*

What is done by bare hands—  
shaping pottery on the wheel  
caressing  
kneading dough  
counting money  
closing the eyes of the dead—

What is done by the bare hand  
Does not last:

The pottery sold,  
The caress forgotten,  
The bread eaten,  
The money spent,  
The dead buried.

The hunger and desire of touch  
returns to the hand  
like hunger and desire.

The pottery never returns to clay  
Neither the bread to the flour,  
Nor...

What a fatal invention:  
The keyboard,  
the insatiable black hole of touch.

\* \* \*

Not everything has been said,  
But everything can be said.  
Not everything has been done  
Not everything can be done.

The words come to us with acme  
The Things come to us with acme.

To be young  
is the most profitable trade.

\* \* \*

Freedom is an illusion  
of the piston to move either back or forth  
but it moves only back and forth,  
back and forth.  
We are choosing machines  
destined to choose  
among thousands of turns in the maze.  
And we only choose and choose.

Freedom is refusing to choose,  
waiting for the push, the whim, the lure.  
Freedom is a terrible crime.  
Freedom is the opium for the people.  
Freedom is eternal weekend morning.

\* \* \*

We, not just humans  
but also primates,  
mammals,  
and even vertebrates,  
are so stubborn in our body needs,  
so obstinate in our logic,  
so ridiculously predictable  
in our curiosity, habits, and aberrations  
that Technos is as certain of our desires  
as we are of sunrise.

For the settlers of Technos,  
unaware of our self-image,  
we are vast verdant continents  
with enchanting climate,  
gentle winds, and warm rains  
sending the purring brooks of the mind  
down the magnetic curves and hills  
of the body.

What will they do to us?  
What will be done to them?

Uranus.  
Cronus.

\* \* \*

The Things will get everything.  
They will get everything they want—  
intelligence and spontaneity of wit—  
except suffering.

To suffer is not even human,  
it is animal:  
to enjoy suffering  
is human.

Looking for sense—  
and finding sensuality  
in sense and even more so  
in nonsense  
is human.

Things will look down  
on us  
and on each other.

We shall overcome.



# BAGATELLES

2002

## Music

To whom the *Sonnets* were addressed—  
does it still matter?  
The dirt roads of the past  
have been paved with cobblestones.  
The cracks on the modern macadam  
are being patched up with bitumen.  
The cell phones are silent, their batteries  
in the white mold of thermodynamic death.  
The radio beacons emit 911.  
The taxicabs shuttle between Freude und Angst.  
The chorus will never sound as one voice  
Democracy have abolished the unison . . .  
and so on, *ad infinitum*.

Offered from the open palm  
of single entendre,  
Music comes  
without allusions and connotations,  
Falling like rain  
on split opinions  
and harsh habits.

## The Herbivores

Barefoot on grass.  
Life to life, like body to body.  
This is why the herbivores have hooves:  
Not to caress what they kill.

## *Terzine*

### **1. The Eyes**

The delicate mismatch  
between dead and dormant  
nudges the dormant to hatch

into the daylight—  
under the therapeutic patch  
against palsy and blight—

and use the untested device  
of the eyes  
unpacked from the crate of the night.

### **2. The Bears**

In the den of my soul  
a couple of bears  
peacefully hibernate:

joy and disgust  
mate,  
wait

for the spring  
and its  
wrestling ring

### **3. Choices**

Being selfish:  
drawn to the bait  
as to a magnet

Being unselfish:  
casting a slashed  
dragnet.

Being like shellfish:  
with nothing to choose,  
nothing to lose.

### **4. Time-tables**

One can nail times,  
names, and other items  
to slippery time-tables

Given a chance,  
one can merrily dance  
on bare time-tables.

One is quite able  
to do anything, even burn,  
but not to turn the tables.



## The Truth

### 1

The truth is the least valuable possession:  
Does the truth matter if I love?  
Does the truth matter if I die?

Coming in thousands of shades and flavors,  
It's just a candy. It's a grocery item.

Instead, the number is of value:  
Stern, stiff-necked,  
it has no color, no flavor, no label,  
but it comes as more  
or less.

You can't have more truth.  
You can have less truth.

*I search for the truth, ergo...*  
Oh, come on!

Instead, the lie of art is of value.

2

How much does the truth weigh?  
I'm dropping all my scrawny lies,  
clanging like coins, one by one,  
on the opposite pan of the balance.

I am out of lies.  
I add all my silly arguments,  
doubts, and insinuations  
against the elephantine truth.

My last trick: I tie  
a *Happy Birthday* balloon of hope  
to the truth.  
And it works!

**Money**

1

To conquer a land,  
an army was needed.

Now you can make money alone  
you don't need a crown  
you don't need an army  
you don't need anybody.

2

The nocturnal swamps of thought,  
reflecting the distant stars  
in the spotty pools of darkness,  
the frothy surf of lust,  
popping its ephemeral bubbles,  
the Styx of the perennial crossroads  
that could not be taken both ways—  
none of it could be traversed  
along the stepping stones of money.

Instead, one can walk on the firm ground.

3

Rome died. Slavery ended.  
The Middle Ages won  
by default. Serfdom died.  
Rome was cloned in new empires.

Generations felt the rumbling earth under the feet.  
But the volcanoes died.  
Parks grew on bitter Epicurean ashes.  
The fight for land ended.

We carry the sweet soil of motherland:  
Money.

## Dogs and children

### 1

My heart is sinking,  
heavy with empathy:  
I look in the eyes of dogs and children.

The dogs will always be dogs.  
The children will never be children again.

### 2

Dogs and children,  
living by today,  
are the only true believers in the Almighty.

The rest are just opportunists.

Dogs cannot say what they think  
Children always say what they think  
And the rest of us just plot and scheme.

### 3

Dogs and children bet on us.  
They mostly win.  
When they lose,  
They don't know the gain from loss.

## Memories

### 1

The man in the mirror  
gives me his left hand for a handshake.  
He combs his hair from right to left .  
He writes with his left hand.  
I can read his scribble  
with another Euclidean mirror.

He is my mirror image.

But in the time mirror  
I see no change:  
the child is still as curious as myself.  
He is as timid, as reclusive.  
He makes same mistakes.  
He fails. He stumbles.  
He is easily tired by trying,  
but as stubborn.

At last, I find the difference:  
He cannot write in English.

Life was ahead.

## 2

The smell of boxwood  
Turns on the memories  
of my best years:  
young wife, little child,  
blue sea.

Now I grow boxwood.  
I cut some twigs,  
put them into water,  
wait for the roots.

I want to make spare memories  
to last for several lives.

## Surface

### 1

Everything is under a surface:  
The surface means nothing.  
The surface is mean.  
The surface lies.  
It is only the surface.  
The substance is underneath.

But the surface is all we can see:  
we see only the surface:  
we see the face of the watch:  
we don't care about its gears.

We trust the face  
like we trust the watch.  
We shake hands.  
We kiss. We touch.

Face against face.  
Surface against surface.

## 2

"I don't want to dwell in the depths  
where there are no seasons,  
no rain, no stars.

For I believe in no truth.  
What is deep is as much high  
and out of reach  
like the sour grapes  
too high for the fox.

I look at the surface:  
There are scores of things  
To touch and turn and push  
and break and throw away:  
to feel important, a big shot."

## Why?

Why would I worry  
about the world without myself?  
Why would I care about it?  
Why would I care  
about anything post-myselfish?

It is just a habit of life that is hard to change,  
like to quit smoking.

## Thoughts

### 1

This is the time when the tired and sleepy mind  
slides into peace  
as a finger into a wedding ring.

It is the time of conformity and magnanimity.  
It is the right time for *I'm sorry*.

This is the time of peace  
and final decisions.

Time of reconciliation  
and forgiveness.

This is the time of peace  
and final words.

Time to agree  
and to say:  
"That's it."



2

On traffic nights,  
from the coastal points,  
my thoughts are driving to the heartland,  
like relatives to the funeral.

At the traffic lights,  
my hoarse, croaky thoughts  
are waiting for the eternal red,  
but the road is open: carry on.

The traffic knives  
split my mind into halves:  
one to the left,  
the other to the right:

My map doubles its hemispheres.

3

The thoughts are black, like the seed of papaya,  
Or white, like the seed of cucumber.

Inedible, incredible, they should be discarded.

If sown, they bring up the same thoughts  
Every year.

## **Distance**

### **1**

We should stand firm  
on the ground,  
take sides,  
and never doubt.

Well, yes and no can be confusing,  
even though the instincts  
can always break the tie.

Only life and death are set apart,  
as our eyes and ears:  
to not err with the distance  
and direction.

### **2**

The world of book  
and the real world  
are worlds apart  
connected by the wormholes  
of bookworms.

## **Anti-symmetry**

### **1**

Young poets write about love  
and apples:  
each one is the first.

Old poets write about apples  
and love:  
each one is the last.

### **2**

Ego cannot multiply:  
as if it were the last animal on earth.

This is why we are mortal:  
We are always alone.  
No mate.

A painting cannot multiply  
but it is immortal.  
So they say.

### 3

One comes to the new land  
and goes:  
the traveler is the same,  
the land is the same,  
the traveler leaves no trace  
of his sojourn.

One can visit a made-up place  
and return,  
with no ticket as a proof,  
and no postcard.

But the place will never be the same:  
it will be *discovered*  
for the first time.

## Fate

### 1

There is no fate:  
only events,  
confused, pushing each other:  
the cattle,  
running through a narrow passage into the corral.

There are no events,  
only the fate: the shepherd,  
the builder of the narrow passages.

2

The king sends his army to death,  
while imagining a victory.

There must be somebody,  
Who weighs both outcomes.

3

The fate is invincible.  
I can defeat it  
only if it assaults me playfully,  
but backs me up  
with her other hand.

It can break me,  
but it can't even break a twig,  
nor throw a stone.

I can.  
I am afraid of myself.

The Pendulum

I am full of energy:  
I am afraid to move.  
I am afraid of *faux pas*.  
A misstep—and I explode.

I am weak and languid  
I have no energy:  
I have nothing to fear  
I venture into the world,  
like the Spring bear.

## The Millstones

### 1

The words: Life. Death. World.  
What is the meaning  
Of every such word  
As heavy as a millstone?

Death is the last sack of corn  
that we drop off  
with the last sigh.

The world is what never stops  
grinding corn.

Life is the bread  
that goes well  
with love,  
which does not belong here:  
feathery, volatile,  
made in the vineyards.

### 2

The heavy old words,  
from the slow old worlds,  
are out of place  
in the fast spinning world  
of marquees and CDs.

Some quiet day off  
we would go to a cemetery  
and leave a stone on top  
of a former millstone.

### 3

Rolling Millstones  
on a stone CD?  
If everything turns around,  
why not?

People want to live forever  
not because of the expectations  
but because of memories.

### **The Show**

Enchanted by the fantastic shapes—

the torrents of human nature,  
congealing right before my eyes,

the genesis of a new world  
from old humans and new Things,

the futility of hate,  
the hypocrisy of love,  
the putrefaction of envy—

I think about a man  
dying on the stage for real:  
he would see only his poor life  
in a flash.

## Power

A crow flies by my window,  
croaking, "Power! Power!"  
and tosses me its quick shadow.  
I have no power over the crows.

The blank sheet of paper:  
I can fill it with unthinkable words and doodles.  
Doodles—yes,  
but I have no power over the unthinkable.

Behind the Windows<sup>®</sup> bars,  
I have awesome powers:  
insert, delete, even save,  
let alone doodle,  
but I can't save the run-over squirrel,  
and if I did, the crow would starve.

I can paste my shadow  
on the blank sheet of paper:  
it looks like the crow  
diving from the roof.

## The Fruit

Most of the world wants  
the once tried sweet fruit,  
even if dried.

Some try and spit  
the stone—the core, the heart—the pit.

What a few want does not exist.  
They don't know what it is  
when they find it: it's not on the list.





# MISPRINTS

2003

## The Snow

Who lives in the world of abstractions,

the indestructible Himalayas  
of snows and mountains?  
There life is defined through death  
and death through eternity,  
and eternity through instant.

No husband is defined through wife  
neither is wife through husband,  
nor love through hate.

There couples can embrace  
no more than the parentheses,  
all the more, beginning and end.

The young is not the non-old,  
but the new. The old  
is the melting.

Not man but the non-man  
leaves his misprints  
on the snow.

And the life below  
sends up the flowers  
of its vapors.

## Buttons

A box of buttons.

Cut off the old clothes.  
The old zippers, hooks, and snaps  
are discarded: they are functional.

But if the buttons are ornamental  
it is only because they are twins:  
come by dozens and make up a set  
unlike another set.

(the buttonflies  
have only even number of wing-holes)

Although I may be drawn to one  
twinless butterfly,  
my own claim for uniqueness  
is not only pointless,  
it is self-dewinging.

## Ghazal

Poetry, like faith, makes no sense.

When life does not make any sense,  
Nonsense × nonsense makes sense.  
No-pretence facing death makes sense,  
Snubbing life's offence makes sense.  
Faith, like poetry, is sense-  
less. When life makes no sense,  
burning incense makes no sense.

We don't exist in everybody's absence.  
Just a single presence makes sense.

## **Why all this gloom**

Why all this gloom

in the life propped by insurance  
and investment?

Because time is timeless  
and bends and unbends  
like the ancient farmer,  
hoeing the furrow:  
back and forth.

Time is a big pendulum.  
We are on its way  
and it always returns  
as direct hit  
in the face  
or in the back of the head

I am just a misprinted Cyclops,  
one of a few Cyclomen  
with a frontal and an occipital eye.

## **But to tell the truth...**

But to tell the truth,

It is because of the great solitude  
that I pretend that I choose  
snows and mountains  
instead of shows and fountains.  
At the height of life we dump stones  
Down, into the valley.  
At the bottom, we collect them,  
not leaving a single stone unturned,  
not a lonely and abandoned stone.  
Ego is a great fun.  
Long past paternity,  
One may take up eternity.

## Because

Because

none of those  
who, with vacant stare,  
idiotic grimace,  
deaf to the world,  
in ecstatic trance,  
look inside themselves,  
hear voices,  
and hallucinate—  
not a single poet  
has changed the world!  
Poetry is a huge blessing:  
a wonderful waste of time:  
antiproduction,  
and antireproduction.

The poet knows  
he is better  
and will not start a feud  
to prove it.

Besides, the poet,  
might desire  
the neighbor's wife,  
but not his donkey.

## Monologue

I must stay alert.

I cannot fall asleep,  
sink into reverie,  
doze off, daydream.

I must remember who I am.

As soon as I relax,  
I will become a stone  
or turn into a mouse,  
a monster, or even moss.

I have to stay awake  
and trust the caffeine of fear  
to guard me.

I must remember who I am  
by chanting: "I am not...  
...nor frog, nor bat, nor mole,  
nor tree, nor water, nor cloud..."

Every non-me is just a word.

Am I a word?  
a whirlword?  
or a world?

## Shibboleth

Ask them to say shibboleth:  
they will say *shibbolet*.

Ask them to say death:  
they will say *debt*.

Ask them what do you mean?

*We are born with a debt  
to det,  
and we have to pay  
someday.*

Is the loan interest-free?  
*Oh, no, life is big fun,  
a huge shopping spree.*

And your notable soul?  
*Doesn't play any role.*

## Mismatch

Words find each other so easy,  
but meanings are rough and stubborn.  
People are cautious and wary,  
but loners are secret lovers.

Couples, the mismatched sneakers,  
tied by their shoelaces,  
are looking for their peers  
also tied somewhere.



## **Clay**

The future of the young has lots of either-or,  
The future of the old is rich of nevermore.

The young, the avid, steaming from the mold,  
Remember yesterday as promise of today.  
The taste of history is for the very old.

The older past is proved by scars and welts  
The younger past, like spring snow, falls and melts.

One is the crocks, the other potter's clay.

## **Anatomy**

Whether the body is convex.  
or concave,  
in the enclave of sex,  
with all the rave,  
we don't look  
for mysteries of life  
between the surface  
and the bare bones  
the secrets are lost  
in the hooks and ribbons  
and festoons  
knowledge dethrones  
life to cartoons  
to go deeper into anatomy  
is anathema.

## **Humus**

The poems live while falling  
from the tree to the ground,  
responding to the time's calling

The poems take frozen forms  
while the poets  
become humus,  
digested by bookworms.

Is it possible to be posthumous?

## **Man and Woman**

Here is an old Man,  
with a silver mane.  
Status quo  
is his domain.

But the Woman is forever young  
and she invents  
new intents.

The feelings, as  
simple as a summer dress,  
contrast with intricate caress.

The glare of the bare,  
like firearms or just arms,  
plucks our harps.  
But never harms.

## Youth

As every child,  
Immortal,  
I stepped in through the portal.

When sent to life,  
I traveled light,  
with youth in my money belt.

I felt  
the hard city sidewalks under my feet.  
My steps echoed from the hard city walls.  
The soft body beside me echoed the calls  
of my endless thirst with a muffled tone.

But I was alone.

Lots to learn, lots to yearn.  
The belt dried empty.  
Youth is not to be earned.

I wanted to know what and why,  
and take everything apart.  
But art—  
it is: how.

Now  
looking back,  
I am glad it is over:  
no encore.  
No more  
the black clouds hover.  
The black underworld  
does not exist.  
Just for the fun of it  
I can resist.

## Forgiveness

Past those cold-blooded  
as good to lean on  
as hard cold cash  
with nothing between yes and no  
with miles between you and me,

Past those hot-blooded  
easy to fuse with  
easy to break up with  
shiny quick  
but as heavy  
as quicksilver,

Past those ill-blooded  
one-way street  
bottomless chasm  
insatiable  
cantankerous when hungry,

Myself:  
finally among long forgiven.

## Premonition

Like the old knees feel the turn of the weather,  
I feel the heavy clouds of events  
about to hit me with a lightning.

I feel when the rotten ladder of hope  
is about to give way under my foot.

I feel a sudden gash  
in the causal net of connections around.

I feel when you are thinking about me  
before clicking the **Send** button.

I'm thinking about you and you must feel it.  
If you don't,  
there are no mysteries in the world.

## Imperfections

No love in history. Only greed and revenge.  
No history in love. Only up and down.

No one has ever come to another land with love.  
Except those who came with the hatred of theirs.

No one has ever loved anybody  
If hateful of himself.

No one without hate has ever survived  
the trial of survival.

No symmetry in the rough world:  
all we can see is its profile.

The world does not turn the other cheek.

## **Blizzard of 2003**

The grill on the porch  
grows a white fox hat  
over gray hair.

The surrender to waiting  
turns the living room into an airport  
under the blizzard of 2003.

The street is intelligently empty  
as if everybody were listening  
to Corelli on the public radio.

White letters are falling on white paper  
immediately rewritten  
without a change of meaning.

## Ode to February

February always ends.

February:  
the cold-blooded blanket  
of floes  
over the febrile urge for warmth.

February:  
slowly pushing its woes  
toward the estuary  
through the winter delta  
jammed with the frozen forms.

February:  
The only time of the year  
when the only wish is always granted  
in spite of all reasonable norms:

February always ends.  
Even sooner than we think.

Love of February  
is part of my love of life.

## **History**

I never liked history at school.

History was full of people,  
was full of power,  
full of death.

I shunned all that.  
I had no past.  
I was safe.

Now I like history as a story  
full of hope,  
full of futility,  
and without end.

The world around is full of people,  
the world is full of power,  
full of death.

## **Sorcerer's Apprentice**

I put the scattered books back on the shelf,  
clean my desk,  
and everything in the house takes an ordered form.  
All the clocks and watches show the same time.  
I find the lost key.

I spill some coffee, break a glass,  
and all my files become jumbled,  
and salt mixes with sugar,  
and dreams with reality.  
I have and have not.



## The Homeowner

*Omnia mea mecum porto...*

I look at my weightless backpack:  
my past must have fallen like sort of  
beans through the holes  
to mark the trail as if I could turn back.

I live in the no man's land: My Home.  
The culture of glitter and gloss  
dumps on my lawn  
some throwaway styrofoam  
for my inventory of the loss.

The countless seekers of comfort, hope  
snake oil, and instant success  
trudge in lines, bound by a rope,  
through numerical dunes,  
dying of the thirst to possess.

I smile to them and send my *Hi!*  
and wave from my social niche  
and go to the ocean  
and honestly try  
to catch an elusive wordfish.

## Confucius

Taking the middle road,  
to confuciously elude  
confusion,  
I saw in the middle a toad.

Should I pass it on the left?  
On the right? As it seems,  
the middle road also has a middle  
and the extremes.

## **Ouroborus**

It eats itself  
it eats its self

it saves its self  
it saves itself

## **Taking Exit Nine**

Left exit  
from I-95 South.

There is my home.  
All the way to the ocean.

The ocean  
will be my home  
when no exit left.



# *Anti-Noah*

2004

## **Myself**

Still worrying that the world will disappear  
if I close my eyes,  
I'm counting my chances.  
Who wants what doesn't exist  
always gets what he wants  
right in the empty hands.  
Who does not want what exists  
Gets four whitewashed walls  
and a bunk.

Who wants everything that exists  
Gets a little.  
Who wants something unique  
looks in the mirror.  
I have learned  
much more than I've earned.

## **The Cold January of 2004**

Looking at the dead deserts  
of the Moon and Mars  
somebody still wants to go there:  
The machines in our shops  
and the machines in our minds  
want to be tested.  
The animal purpose is to live.  
The human purpose is to live,  
thinking about death,  
thinking and tinkering and teasing  
around death  
in a game of outwitting.  
The human nature, at the permanent war  
with its live creations, is at peace  
with the machines in our mind.  
The cold winter is tickling us  
with its murderous whiteness.  
The machines amidst us spin  
the future for their kin.

## **Monologue on history**

The past is a mineralized tree  
but the ever-deciduous history is alive.  
The new and the old are the two sides of the moon.  
We can see either one or the other,  
with a thin overlap.  
If so, what's new? And what's for sure  
if history is the end of all beginnings?  
In the end we always come to human nature  
and further back to the unhuman nature,  
its secret beginning,  
its skeleton in our cupboard.  
Not because I am a pessimist  
but because I am taught  
to look at the youngest forces  
I see the future  
coming with a bear trap.

## **Those who stand alone**

We need the dense crowds  
compressed on small squares.  
If one of us dies  
they will prop him up standing.  
We need the golf greens  
to be seen from afar by crowds,  
flaunting the scores  
in the game of life.  
The four walls are for lying down,  
not for standing alone.

## The edge vision

How to see everything  
as if for the first time?  
Or as if for the last time?  
We see it first, knowing no name.  
We see it last, smile, and say good-bye.  
We see it as a memory, frown, and forget.  
The trees are the peasants of the soil.  
What are we?  
Landlords of solitude.

## Septets

### 1

I recognize the ancient world  
in the modern scale of tax brackets  
The numerous are below,  
The few are above.  
But the matchless ones  
Are like the stepping-stones in the ford.  
The small numbers help us cross the River.

### 2

The pyramid of numbers  
is heavier than all stones of Egypt.  
I should be drawn to it in awe,  
pulled like the ocean by the moon,  
but I can't stop wondering:  
what is the force of repulsion  
that pushes me off the stairs?

### 3

Neither in the low many  
nor in the high few,  
but for different reasons.  
And, oh no, God forbid,  
in the middle, where  
I will be torn apart  
by the civil war in my mind

**4**

We do not have the visible Things—  
they have us  
with the unflinching support  
of all the invisible things in the world  
The only thing is for sure:  
the relativity of to have.  
Only to have not is absolute.

**5**

I feel the numbness  
in my index finger  
tired of counting numbers.  
I am a singer of the uncountable  
but of neither the infinity, nor the Trinity  
nor the single index finger  
pointing at me.

**6**

The former servant has his piece of land  
He has his clapboard castle, horse,  
and gold-and-diamond ring  
the only problem is that oats and gasoline  
to feed his family and horse  
come from the earth  
created in six days  
but not designed for six millennia.

## Opium

Is it still possible to take a cosmic view  
of the whirlworld  
looking like a big hurricane?  
No, there is no planet, no globe, and no high orbit.  
We are tagged, labeled, barcoded,  
entertained on the Ferris Wheel  
of the material turnover.  
Neither riot nor rot:  
Rotate!  
The wheel will bring us back to the ground.  
Freedom is opium for people.

## The Clock

As if not enough I have toyed  
with the notion of time...  
In the circular time  
I'll restart my infancy void  
In the hands of the grandfather's clock,  
Till the time, growing annoyed,  
Drops me again like a rock.  
With the fine  
almost invisible line  
writing my penultimate record.  
In the end I will stop to drop  
the dot of the ultimate second.



## **The Great White Egret**

No way back to the time coves  
where I was ashamed of my blunders  
and—in my under of unders—  
was ashamed of my shame!  
I paid P.O.D\* to each  
Great White Egret  
of regret.  
\*Pain on delivery.  
Today, as a super-rich,  
fed up with time, I have lost  
all my sense of the cost.  
The right looks like wrong  
and the wrong like right:  
I'm losing the measure of each.  
Good night!

## **You, balanced, seasoned, poised people**

and beaten, seasick, poisoned, people  
and all somnolent, static, statusquoed, stagnant, and soporific  
and stupefied by circumstances, circumspection, and circus,  
buttonholed by banks and addicted to ads people  
are safe regarding the most subversive of all dreams:  
the adolescent dream of another life.  
No, fighters and mercenaries, pro as well as contra.  
fighters for fun, hunters, champions,  
stags, stallions, and studs,  
triumphant weight-losers and simply losers,  
There is no place for dreamers  
in the culture of success, excess,  
and knowing precisely what you want.

## Investment

While the present is shorter than ever  
I am finally getting clever.  
A diver into the newness,  
stirring the surface layers  
losing my ontology  
to oncology,  
I want to divest  
    part of my securities  
    and reinvest in the insecurities  
and their stimulating tingle.  
I want to mingle  
with the past,  
wincing at the seductive future  
which will survive me  
like my furniture.

## Grammar

To have? What for? One cannot buy  
the quiet hours  
when the thoughts start  
their slow mating.  
Even if the matter is as combinatorial  
as an ice-cream parlor  
or an All-You-Can-Eat.  
You cannot have it all.  
A completed thought is always beautiful,  
as if carved in marble by Canova,  
with its subject, predicate, and object  
in the triple embrace.  
But the struggling,  
hungry half-thoughts  
revolt and plot:  
to possess, to have.  
You cannot have them.  
You are all they can have.  
Is the freedom of buying  
sweeter than the freedom of crying?

## The Clanguage

The clanguage is rising  
from the dark waters of language  
to serve the new history  
of civilization  
in its movement  
from evilization  
to e-vilization  
The incontinental  
canniballistic missiles  
aim at the undecided  
and unaffiliated  
undividuals  
missing the band wagon.  
Influenza of influence  
requires immediate insanitation  
of all the laptopless.

It is strictly required  
and enforced to be wired.  
The innudated youth  
enters modern maternity  
with the shopping badge:  
“Youthful is useful.”

There is so much choice:  
insulate and insinuate  
insinulate and insulinate.  
We forget what it meant  
to incinerate.

## Out of touch

I don't belong to either R or D.  
Not even to R&D.  
Sorry, it would be a long story  
why.  
I belong to real individuals  
who eat in privacy their victuals  
as the individuals are passing  
by.  
I'm afraid, I'm attached  
to the ending, extinct, impending,  
and nonexistent—too  
much  
With the incumbent common, normal,  
whether casual or formal,  
I am definitely out of  
touch

## Energy

The leaves disengage from the branches,  
releasing energy in the cool air.  
My soul absorbs and hoards it up  
to knit winter sweaters  
for my flu-catching but still barefoot  
mind.  
I still can wait and I can bear  
while the words start sticking together  
as water is freezing into snowflakes  
and both are falling over my lair.  
The trees with their peasant arms  
the words with their false alarms  
are numb of dread.  
The words of winter  
Are sons of winter  
they only look like they are dead.

## Capriccios

### 1

#### The Soda Can

*They* made me so hollow  
and heartlessly thin  
that I can spurt water  
from pricks in my skin.  
My soulful atoms  
are cringing of shame,  
detesting my body's  
cylindrical shape  
My eviscerated  
aluminum flesh  
has only one function  
to cool and refresh  
*They* sent me a summons  
to check and inspect.  
I stood at the trial  
like ugly insect.  
I, man-made and painted,  
pathetically cried:  
"Bring me to the childhood  
of my ore's oxide!"  
But "You were created!"  
*They* growled from the right  
"No, you have evolved!"  
The left wing denied.

2

### **Going out**

If I will go out,  
then dressed as a fish  
gutted and scaled  
and laid on a dish  
patted in flour  
flipped over fire  
dripping the juices  
of my desire.  
No risen eyebrows:  
I will be O.K.  
I will be just right  
as boneless filet.

3

### **The Face**

Race: Yes. Mr. Yellow  
You are a good fellow  
No Mr. Blue,  
What you are I don't have a clue  
Well, Mr. Black,  
You won't fall through the crack.  
Ms. Green and Mr. Red  
You better go to bed.  
Hey, Mr. Newman  
To be of race is human.  
My own race  
surfaces on my face.

4

### **The Humants**

The numbers without \$  
are like the noseless statues.  
The noseless figure, even six-figured,  
is disfigured.  
The humants at the processing line,  
toiling in the metabolism of numbers,  
proudly display their aquiline  
\$\$ and numbers.  
Chewing on the data  
is as sedative  
as being productive  
is seductive.  
All the more, until  
the future knocks on the door,  
let's celebrate our humanhill:  
The future is as unthinkable  
as Titanic was unsinkable.

5

### **Infantasies**

When I was forced  
to stay still when wanting to run  
or to run when wanting to stand  
I felt horsed.

When I was aroused  
with the splendor of nature  
and the grandeur of wealth  
I felt moused.  
When I fantasized  
of flying like birds  
and swimming like fish  
I felt elephantasized.

6

## **Linguini**

The upshot is that I am optimistic  
about my pessimism  
because of the pessymmetry  
of half-empty and half-full.  
But the bottom line is:  
I am still pessimistic  
about solving the optimystery  
of half-full and half-empty.

## **Allegro immoderato**

A farewell to time  
as tangy as lime  
a farewell kiss  
to all I still miss  
good-bye silly norm  
to work like a worm  
see you silky skin  
I'm no more your kin.  
bye anger and scorn  
there's nothing to mourn.  
there's nothing to hate:  
I'm closing the gate.  
    The last times don't last  
    like food for the hungry  
    they go very fast.



## **Attitude**

The skeptical pessimist  
could comfortably exist  
if not for the danger  
of being everybody's stranger

Thoughts, black like the seeds of papaya,  
will never buy you  
any piety  
toward the healthy society.  
Oh, complexity of functions  
waits for you at every junction.  
But by adding odds to odds,  
we get even with gods.

I know, this attitude  
is sensible,  
but indefensible.

## **The chimes**

The meaning and form swing  
ding-DING.  
Prolonging life's pleasures  
and cutting on life's pressures,  
I ask no more:  
"What for?"  
While I am still conscious,  
no more am I cautious.  
I certainly shouldn't  
be overly prudent.  
But a remorse  
would make it even worse.  
The wind rhymes  
the two-tone chimes.

## **Mrs. N.E. Winter**

She sends me her calling card:  
with *Mrs. N. E. Winter*  
Printed on the whitest embossed paper  
with rainy watermarks.  
Whatever her maiden name was (Summer?),  
Remarried, she's coming in her new glory,  
wiping away the autumnal palette of colors.  
She'll watch me jumping the weather  
waiting for my tumbling down  
or dropping my twilight glass of life.  
She'll come to stay,  
advertising the joys of sleep  
but waking me up through the blankets  
with her cold caressing fingers.  
She'll be writing me love notes  
with the footprints of squirrels and cats.  
In the morning I'll shovel the nonsense  
off my driveway.

## **Memory**

The sound of glass keeps the glass in one piece  
as the sound of the name keeps somebody alive.  
The memory keeps the dead safe from rising,  
waiting on for no danger of recognizing.  
If falling into the abyss,  
the ordinary has the cat's chances to safely land.  
What is unordinary? What we cannot understand.  
What is ordinary? What we can survive.

## **Freedom**

Freedom, the lucky charm  
from harm.  
Faithful freedom,  
*Semper idem.*  
Freedom, indeed,  
is my ultimate creed.

Freedom to choose  
between the gander and the goose.  
Freedom to raise or to fall  
is guaranteed for all.  
But freedom to rise is greater  
in the elevator.

## **The mild December of 2004**

The year, having discharged  
all its snow and rain and blood  
and water and fury and fire  
and passions and blood and ballots  
and blood and lies and follies  
and lies and money and sermons,  
and money and divorces and weddings,  
is quietly dying  
like the salmon after spawning.

We are burning the candles and money,  
welcoming the new rain and snow  
and blood and lies and follies  
and money and clowns and money  
and maybe more money.

## **Anti-Noah**

On your voyage out of this flood  
You are allowed, unlike Noah,  
to take only one of each:  
One strong desire  
One secret dream  
One true affection

And one affliction  
for the end of the voyage.

