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Editors: Jerome Rothenberg & Dennis Tedlock  
Assistant Editors: Ed Friedman, Diane Rothenberg & Barbara Tedlock  
Contributing Editors: David Antin, Kofi Awoonor, Ulli Beier, Stanley Diamond, Harris Lenowitz, Dell Hymes, David McAllester, Simon Ortiz, Gary Snyder, Nathaniel Tarn  

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Schwerner’s ongoing work, The Tablets, derives form and (often) image and impulse from ancient near eastern survivals. “The modern, accidental form of Sumero-Akkadian tablets provided me with a usable poetic structure. They offered, among other things, ways out of closures — which I find increasingly onerous — as well as the expansion of the constricting girdle of English syntax. They also invited spontaneous phonetic improvisations ... made me feel comfortable in re-creating the animistic ... and (enabled me) to put in holes wherever I wanted, or wherever they needed....” The Tablets I-XV were published by Grossman in 1971. The attached recording (copyright 1973 by Armand Schwerner) shows the oral dimension of the work and its relation to the written score.

Armand Schwerner

TABLET XVII

'Ahanarshi's trip': this tablet seems to belong to the familiar anecdotal homiletic genre, though the personal presence, in combination with an almost surreal texture, makes me suspect the intrusion of a relatively recent hand. An archetype of spiritual friendship does pervade the text, some of whose quality arrives at later refinement in Judeo-Christianity.

Ahanarshi......................in the Teacher's room.......Ahanarshi
+++++++for the Teacher..........................interview
Ahanarshi+........................................... interview
and the vibrations of Ahanarshi's water body were tempest
Ahanarshi did a headstand to [homogenize] his fluids, he used
the [meditation-pillow] to prop himself up on, he sat
in the lotus flower,* Ahanarshi, at the feet of the Teacher

*etymology unclear: may signify a growth, perhaps a position

for the space of a meal,* the straggles of his hair [set ablaze],

*commonly taken as 1/2 hour

Ahanarshi, by the Teacher, gently by the Teacher.
Buzz of a fly buzz of a fly, random visits to the wine cask
Ahanarshi wanted to talk, wanted.........................
wanted but settled; he slid into [himself], turquoise vase, dust pieces strike him, Ahanarshi, his crystal body gong.................sea-wind of the double flutes Ahanarshi sees his heart is a frost-cake, he sees his heart, the smell of low-tide decay invades his rust nostrils, he inhales aroma of singed hair he shudders with pleasure in his throat ..........he stiff as a penis, prone on the river belly sees inside to the shoal of sea-robins and flounder and porgies which never bump, Ahanarshi sees them never touch, cold under the chocolate river; his head turns warm, he tells well among the [species] he tells well a while and telling bewilders...........rage.......blows of phlegm into his fat throat ............resthe arced right foot cramps, drive of ice-pins in the cave behind the left knee. He says 'pain, pain!' Ahanarshi says 'pain, pain' he reenters his activity he is present Ahanarshi no longer concentrating now he hears air circulating in and out of the Teacher he splinters into a mine of blue-green flints it is clear thousands of painful wisps ride him, tiny throats, the Teacher says: 'we will work together'

the Teacher says 'we will work together'

the single mind..................to discover* the Teacher

*invent?

---

Read the Edda of Iceland, the songs of Fingal, the accounts of North American Savages (as they are call'd). Likewise read Homer's Iliad. He was certainly a Savage in the Bishop's sense. He knew nothing of God in the Bishop's sense of the word & yet he was no fool.

—William Blake
Louis Zukofsky

THE IYYOB TRANSLATION FROM "A-15"

An
hinny
by
stallion
out of
she-ass

He neigh ha lie low h'who y'he gall mood
So roar cruel hire
Lo to achieve an eye leer rot off
Mass th'lo low o loam echo
How deal me many coeval yammer
Naked on face of white rock—sea.
Then I said: Liveforever my nest
Is arable hymn
Shore she root to water
Dew anew to branch.

Wind: Yahweh at Iyyob
Mien His roar 'Why yammer
Measly make short hates oh
By milling bleat doubt?
Eye sore gnaw key heaver haul its core
Weigh as I lug where hide any?
If you—had you towed beside the roots?
How goad Him—you'd do it by now—
My sum My made day a key to daw?
O Me not there allheal—a cave.

From Zukofsky’s contemporary masterpiece, "A" — the opening of the 15th section a translation-by-sound from the Hebrew "Book of Job", principally the whirlwind sections of Chapter 38. Z’s principal working in this manner is his translation of complete Catullus (Cape Goliard-Grossman): a counterpointing and close imitation of the source language, or post-Joycean attempt to deliver meaning by pun and rhythm. (Reprinted by permission of the poet.)
We cannot review the past without understanding that symbols and the tactics used to communicate them depend upon a new vision of the nature of man. This can only be possible by creating a new mythology of creation itself. The current fascination with ecology is one key to the new mythology because it attempts to understand the real natural world as a part of us and we as a part of it. The key to the communications gap is thus really quite simple. We must return to and understand the land we occupy. Communications have made the continent a part of the global village. The process must be reversed. The land must now define the role communications can play to make the country fruitful again.

—Vine Deloria, Jr., We Talk, You Listen
Charles Olson

"TRANSPOSITIONS"

A SUMER FABLE

FABLE OF CREATION

And there was first the sea

And the sea gave birth to the mountain

And the mountain was heaven and earth

Heaven was the male and the earth the female

And they gave birth to a son, the air

And the air's lust for the earth was

That it wrenched the mountain apart,

And the sea took his mother for himself,

And the father, in his anger, separated heaven

He carried heaven off to himself

And the son had also a wife.

And of her he begot the moon, a son

A male, who, by his travels, brightens lighted

The dark sky

The small stars are grain he scatters,

The big stars are wild oxen which walk with him)

And the moon, in his sun, is the father of the sun,

Who, like his grandfather, child

Who, at the end of day, lies down, as does,

The sun, up in his mother's breast,

To sleep on the breast of his mother.

At the end of the day, he rises
FROM "THE SONG OF ULLIKUMMI"

(translated from Hurrian and Hittite, and read at Spoleto 1965 to honor the presence of Mr. Ezra Pound)

fucked the Mountain
fucked her but good his mind
sprang forward
and with the rock he slept
and into her let his manhood
go five times he let it go
ten times he let it go

in ikunta luli she is three
dalugasti long
she is one and a half
valhasti wide. What below she has
up on this his mind sprang upon

When Kumarbi his wisdom
he took upon
his mind
he took his istanzani
to his piran hattatar
istantzani piran daskizzi

Kumarbis -za  istanzani piran hattatar
daskizzi
sticks wisdom
unto his mind like his cock

into her
iskariskizzi

the fucking
of the Mountain
fucked the mountain went right through it and came out
the other side

the father of all the gods
from his town Urkis
he set out
and to ikunta luli
he came
and in ikunta luli a great rock lies
sallis perunas
kittari he came upon
What below she has
he sprang upon
with his mind
he slept
with the rock kattan sesta
with the peruni

and into her misikan X-natur
andan his manhood flowed
into her

And five times he took her
nanzankan 5-anki das
and again ten times he took her
namma man zankan 10-anki das

Arunas
the Sea

LA CHUTE (II)

If you would go down to the dead
to retrieve my drum and lute
a word for you, take my word
I offer you directions

Do not wear a clean garment
they below will dirty you
they will mark you
as if you were a stranger

Nor rub yourself with oil
the finest oil from the cruse.
The smell of it will provoke them
they will walk round and round
alongside you

Carry no stick. At least
do not raise it,
or the shades of men will tremble,
will hover before you

Pick up nothing to throw, no matter the urging.
They against whom you hurl it will crowd you,
will fly thick on you.

Go barefoot. Make no sound.
And when you meet the wife you loved
do not kiss her
nor strike the wife you hated.
Likewise your sons. Give the beloved one no kiss,
do not spit on his brother

Behave, lest the outcry shall seize you
seize you for what you have done
for her who, there, lies naked
the mother
whose body in that place is uncovered
whose breasts lie open to you and the judges

in that place
where my drum and lute are

THE SHE-BEAR

o goddess excellently bright
look kindly
on this effort

1
Time, of itself, brings no significant changes

Does time stop me on the street and say,
"Pardon me, mister, which way
is life?"
To shred, pound, wash, decant
in order to begin....

Look, it is at root
a question....

Take fertility, for example, founding it
on quite other associations than you're used to:

what each carried
they threw down into springs,
or on to the carefully colored sand,
the men

their cylinders,
the women
annulets

There is a way
to breathe again, the process
not at all so complicated, a matter
of a turn (you asked me:
two blocks left, then
straight ahead)
of an act (disposing,
such as the above)
or this aversion:

one night a year the priestess,
not abandoning herself,
on the contrary
by presentation takes on lovers
collects
a thumb's length of value (coins,
or turquoise pieces), leaves them
to the honor of Mimosa
And goes about the business of her day

(o goddess, receive these, our tokens,
for your light)

2
Agree we call the place
Pelican Rapids
Agree we have a fish hook
and an axe

Agree
a root can be a poison
or a plant, a house
a suffocation
or a frame

On this plateau, agree
we've left marauders
on the plain below

Let us raise a praise for woman,
let us give her brightness back

"o Black, o dirtied, o
covered  
o Naked, o wild, o
thighed  
o Loose, o corrupted, o
lain on  
o Bearer,
who has suffered
chagrin  
  
o Hair, o Silk
o Pleaserer  
o Cedar-Box, o
Wronged  
o Round, o flesh, o
Answerer  
o Theorist, who would charm
to save  
o Seeker, o Imaginer
of passion
Caught
in your own snare

Descender, so rankly
imprisoned, turn aside
the Judges' stare

Prostitute, Equal, Light, o
Dunged in this same Cave, o Lady
throw off all Crawlers!

Breast-Brilliant, blind
them!

The Cow
and the Patriarch
are gone, the Stable
and the Son

The Presumers, the Forgivers
are done, you have finished them
with the fire
from your eyes

Lady Below, o Hatcher
o Reminder, we sing of
your pride

END-NOTES FOR OLSON'S TRANSPOSITIONS”:
(1) “The Song of Ullikummi” first appeared in
Causal Mythology (Four Seasons Foundation) and
Archaeologist of Morning (Cape Goliard Gross-
man). The other texts, in various degrees spin-offs
from Mesopotamian sources, have never been
published, though a first section of “La Chute”
appears in Archaeologist. Other major trans-
positions and lifts from Amerindian sources, etc.
turn up throughout the Maximus Poems.

(2) Circa 1951/2 Olson was applying for a
lectureship in American Civilization at Teheran
University, Iran. He wrote of his Mesopotamian
(and ongoing Mayan) interests:

“I have found it increasingly important to push
my studies of American civilization back to origin-
points on this continent and this, in turn, has
involved me increasingly in questions and in the
development of methods to investigate the origins of
civilization generally ... Just as surely as the
backward of America led me to the Maya, and to the
study of a 'hieroglyphic' language as a valuable
core to investigating morphology of culture, so the
backward of Western civilization led me to the
Caucasus Mountains and to the civilization which
first flourished in the Mesopotamian Valley ... My
method has always been to put around any such
core the full picture of culture, both where it came
from and where it dispersed. And I am particularly
interested in the whole region and the plateaus of the old East, the old routes of people's movements... 

"My desire is to go to IRAQ to steep myself, on the ground, in all aspects of SUMERIAN civilization (its apparent origins in the surrounding plateaus of the central valley, the valley-city sites themselves, and the works of them, especially the architecture and the people's cuneiform texts.)

"The point of a year of such work at the sites and in collections is a double one: (1), to lock up translations from the clay tablets, conspicuously the poems and myths (these translations and transpositions have been in progress for four years); and (2), to fasten — by the live sense that only the actual ground gives — the text of a book, one half of which is SUMER.

(The other half is the MAYA, and the intent, in putting these two civilizations and especially their arts together, is to try to make clear, by such juxtaposition, the nature of the force of ORIGINS, in the one case at the root of Western Civilization and in the other at the root of American Indian Civilization.

The further intent is that such a study throw a usable light on the present, the premise of such a study of origins being, that the present is such a time, that just now any light which can lead to a redefinition of man is a crucial necessity, that it is necessary if we are to arrive at a fresh ground for a concept of 'humanism.'

It may make my purpose clearer if I mention how Dr. Henri Frankfort found it necessary, in his 'Birth of Civilization in the Near East' (1951), to examine both Toynbee and Spengler's conceptions of how civilizations come into being. My difference, however, is marked. For such a method of juxtaposition as described above cuts across 'classified history' and demands, as these other methods do not, both the substance and the forms of art, and their examination by a man who is a practicing artist himself, a 'professional' in the arts as signs of the culture."

(3) From Causal Mythology (lecture delivered to the University of California Poetry Conference, July 20, 1965, at Berkeley) — the following came soon after Olson's reading of "Song of Ullikummi":

QUESTION: Well, why do you go to another culture to get your myth?

CHARLES OLSON: Well, you knock me out if you say that. I just thought I bridged the cultures. [He laughs.] I don't believe in cultures myself. I think that's a lot of hung up stuff like organized anything. I believe there is simply ourselves, and where we are has a particularity which we'd better use because that's about all we got. Otherwise we're running around looking for somebody else's stuff. But that particularity is as great as numbers are in arithmetic. The literal is the same as the numeral to me. I mean the literal is an invention of language and power the same as numbers. And so there is no other culture. There is simply the literal essence and exactitude of your own. I mean, the streets you live on, or the clothes you wear, or the color of your hair is no different from the ability of, say, Giovanni di Paolo to cut the legs off Santa Clara or something. Truth lies solely in what you do with it. And that means you. I don't think there's any such thing as a creature of culture.

I think we live so totally in an acculturated time that the reason why we're all here that care and write is to put an end to that whole thing. Put an end to nation, put an end to culture, put an end to divisions of all sorts. And to do this you have to put establishment out of business. It's just a structure of establishment. And my own reason for being, like I said, on the left side and being so hung up on form is that I feel that today, as much as action, the invention ... not the invention, but the discovery of formal structural means is as legitimate as, is for me the form of action. The radical of action lies in finding out how organized things are genuine, are intial, to come back to that statement I hope I succeeded in making about the Imago mundi. That that's initial in any of us. We have our picture of the world and that's the creation.
Part of a major attempt (by translation, etc.) to lay out the common roots of Greek and Semite poesis and to glimpse in back of it the universally human poetry of the old tribes. Charles Doria is with the Department of Classical Languages, University of Texas; Harris Lenowitz, of the Middle East Center, University of Utah, is a contributing editor to Alcher-inga, and currently working on translations of the Babylonian Enuma Elish (creation poem), etc., for appearance in later issues. In the present selection Genesis I and Genesis II are Lenowitz's translations from Hebrew; the others, from Greek sources, are by Doria.

Charles Doria & Harris Lenowitz

From WHEN: Some Greek & Near Eastern Tellings of Creation

"When" An Introduction

How do we begin this?

There is very little here, except for Olson and the standard scholarship. Hardly anything you can point to, few commentaries, fewer translations, a real absence of hard information.

There are the journals and the archaeological reports, but that material never gets gathered together, there is no one around trying to make sense out of it all. That's number one. And number two:

Even if people did start making a lengthy study of creation stories, they probably wouldn't be too happy with the results of what they're doing. Who really wants to face these problems?

So it might be just as well if we got going and made our contribution, placed our information on the table; start talking about it, even if it does get modified as we go along, even if it is a little crazy, at least it will be there, to be talked about and not pushed away.

No one has ever tried to set up creation as a coherent system, simply because it is on the face of it irrational, and because it is irrational it was hard to get interested in it. This is still a country that will go down passionately believing in its assumptions. What is not included, is left for the cultists, the lunatic fringe. Which maybe is where creation belongs anyway.

But now that we are becoming aware of irrationality as a general condition of existence, it is time to look at specifics. Which brings us to this. Let's look at some of the unexamined stories and see just how crazy they were, let's not clean it up and make it philosophical or mythical or anthropological or anything. Maybe what we'll be left will be what it is. And not so crazy after all.

Three things then called for:
1. New translations of the creation texts
2. Gathering it all together and comparing it
3. Setting up some guides, some markers

One guide might be chronology. Not post hoc propter hoc. But a setting in some kind of time and
place. It might be a sentence or two like this: “this is something like what you see here. Where do you suppose it came from? here? there?” In other words creation doesn’t have to exist so discretely, abstracted from experience in unknowable ways, but you can see that it moves.

Does creation move from the Near East into Greece? Is it still part of the quest of the sons of Cadmus? Tucked in with the laws, the calendar, the numbers, did it slip into Europe this way? This people will accept in theory but are unwilling to feel, to embrace as a part of history.

I don’t know. I still haven’t decided for myself whether it does move East West or from some other point into both the Near East and Greece. I don’t know the purview. I don’t know where it is all coming from. I have an idea. If you’ve read any proto-Indo-European textbooks or reconstructions of proto I.E.—that’s my idea. To try to formulate a proto-mediterranean theogony and a set of observed rules or descriptions which will produce or generate the differences that show up everywhere. Not saying, not trying to work etiologically—first causes back to phenomena. To reconstruct without trying to reconstruct geographically, because I don’t know if I’m going to be able to do that. That other—the geography—that seems to me like it’s going to be some kind of an archaeological story.

It should be enough, at this point in our study, to indicate harmonies and synchronicities among the texts and their communities. I don’t think it’s necessary to bring out causal relationships, even where they exist. A creation story is responsible to its community, not to standards of criticism that come from a time when the only easy and natural communication is pen to paper (a dead metaphor, that) instead of with words to fellow speakers.

Take Orphic materials for an example. What we’re dealing with here is a long series of recollections, in the form of citations and paraphrases from other writers, later hymns and poems, but never the Orphic texts themselves. Maybe they never existed in the way we want them to. But the Greeks had ideas about what they meant. And they persisted. These Orphic recollections lasted a thousand years, from, say, about 500 B. C. to about 500 A. D. These recollections are cast in that form—remembering again—remembering back—anamimnesis exactly as in Hesiod or Homer. There’s even a formula for this: “The Muses told me.” Or Euripides’ character in the Melanippe fragment: “This is not my story, it’s my mother’s.” Very little sense that anybody is doing it fresh—for the first time. That’s why causality won’t hold up here. Because even when you know where you got it from, and why, you can’t admit that you know. It has to be cast back into the tribal memory. It is word of mouth (“mythic”) not a translation.

We know that the Enuma Elish is a copy of Sumerian stuff. We don’t have any Sumerian stuff to tell if it too is a copy—but everybody suspects there will be. Hittite stuff is certainly a copy. Empedocles, Hesiod, the Orphic writers—they all say they are getting it from somewhere else. Nobody can stand up and say, “this is mine.” The rules of the game forbid it.

It is like the story of the Golden Age. A pseudonymous production. It doesn’t have any value if the story is purely temporal or contemporary. Value—belief—is acquired when it is somehow out of time and place.

There is also the matter of originality. When you talk about the cosmologists, the tellers of creation, you are thinking of people who describe or make a world. But if you say cosmogonists, world-begetters, then you are talking about those who witness in their work the birth of the world.

At least for the Greeks: Creation was never discrete. They never said it had happened once and for all and that it cannot necessarily unhappen. The
Secret of Prometheus: if Zeus marries Thetis, their son will upset the order of the universe, for the son of Thetis will always be greater than his father. Creation was something that had to be maintained. And it was in the rites to the creating gods. The birth of tragedy is also then the true genealogy of morals (bad Nietzsche). Because if you did not propitiate the gods—feed them—creation for the tribe, the polis, will not take place, would not be renewed. The sun would not come up. The seed refuse to sprout. The animals never birth. The women, sterile, useless.

We call this procreation. Creation instead of, acting in place of, for and in behalf of others, the “gods” presumably. The moment of creation when the Holy Spirit slips the immortal soul, the catalyst, into the union of sperm and ovum. Or so that myth runs. Or as we say, in our rational moments: Monkey see, monkey do: Mimesis—people betray their simian origin when they imitate by magic the life-giving operations of the universe in their own persons, families, and communities. But what if it were all true and literal? That we “god-make” in union with other god-makers. That we possess the same power and propensity for immortal making as the plants and animals? And that the stories of creation preserve this awareness?

We lose this through literary and mythic analysis as the reductions—procreation and mimesis—show. We simplify and put it all on one level. We don’t see it as a whole, but as disjunctions. Now this, now that. The retreat from the powers of life is an advance into the arms of death.

In the Near East things start off with some notion of “when.” (I thought if this book ever gets finished it ought to be called When because that’s the way it begins)

For example the J. Account of Creation in Genesis [Gen. II] begins “when”, and the Enuma Elish starts, I mean that’s literally the start of Enuma Elish “When on high.” The scholars have supposed that’s maybe how Genesis I begins. So the first characteristic then of this proto-cosmogony is this word “when”—it deals with a beginning but not with an ending.

But we are not trying to make an assemblage, an Idea; you know, if you take all these cosmogonies and impose them one on top of the other then the ideal cosmogony will appear. What we’re going to see is a development of the creation story like spokes radiating out of the center of a wheel. I don’t think we’re going to see any platonic form of it, but making one up makes us witness, (apprentice) cosmogonists and should help.

How do we begin? What is the center?

We start off by saying, there is no progenitor, no father figure. No evidence for that.

Hesiod says Chaos, neuter. But chaos is not first. The egg is first. Chaos is two, the split between halves of the egg. Upper half Sky; lower half, Earth. Ge and Ouranos, Apsu and Tiamat.

In Appollodoros and Ovid the egg shows up as the mass, tohu-bohu in Genesis. An undifferentiated mass, but it’s an egg, The One. The split, Chaos; the Dyad. Then the Myriad, the Many of Empedocles. Philosophy beginning with Socrates and Plato has taken over this creative problem of the One and the Many and turned it into a mental conundrum—the multiplicity of experience vs. the oneness of true reality. But this is just an example of how creation has become confused and disjunct. I don’t think the Greeks are primarily responsible for this, it is a result of cultural alienation.

You start out with an undifferentiated mass, the egg, then chaos or a split, which allows the first discriminations, the first orders (order = cosmos,
everything one by one (in a line) to arise.

[Why the split?] The split is the result of Strife, of Neikos, as Empedocles says, which continues on through the separations in the first orders, or the Three Generations, if we want to trace out that pattern as well.

The One cannot be at home with One’s-self—the One cannot be at home anymore than we, the particles of that one, can. There is the counterpoint of ourselves here which we also use, reasoning from little to large, from now to then.

The split shows up in ourselves as instruments of creation. We are not the observers in this, but organic energizers of the process.

It also shows up by reason of the fact that the halves are always at war with each other: the ceaseless war of Earth and sky: Gea and Ouranos, Kronos and Rhea; Baal and El against Mot and Yam in Ugaritic; Apsu and the adviser Mummu against Tiamat in Akkad.

These (ourselves included) are the inheritors and energizers of the split. The first moment—if one can speak of the first point in a circle—of time doubling back on itself like Ouroboros—is the One who is not at home with itself. The One is trying to get out. It is an egg struggling to hatch. Phanes, Love, according to the Orphics, wants out of his shell—he has to break the egg. As do the struggling children in Enuma Elish. Everything is locked up inside the One—it is the cornucopia, Pandora’s box. In Empedocles hate and love are locked up together inside the egg: Aphrodite and Neikos. In Hesiod, when the split occurs out come the dyads, the first differentiations, but also love, Aphrodite, “loveliest of gods.” And then the halves, Earth and Sky, Ouranos and Gea, who fight. Sky comes down upon Earth to make her more herself, Earth-mother (Ge-
De-meter later on), producing and producing; Blake’s “prolific” and “devouring.”

The instability of the egg is caused by the fact there are too many things in there. They agree that they are one; they disagree as to how to continue. Whether it’s one or two, the point is that they’re trying to get out. To do that they push the walls of their world apart and so make a place for themselves. The space, again, is chaos. But it’s not inside or outside the egg so much as it’s a change.

I take a crumpled up ball of paper, I set fire to it, it falls apart. The splitting up, the differentiation, and the return, entropy. Eggs hatch, by analogy, when the conditions are ripe, in the fullness of time.

As Heidigger says in his lectures on metaphysics: the first metaphysical question is—what is all this? what are the sein? here are all the things of the world, what are they? are they real? do they exist? That’s a very late, a sophisticated question. The initial observer, if there is one, looks around, he sees himself, he sees things, he sees the contrapuntal differentiation, then he tries to reconstruct or construct a cosmogony which will explain his existence as differentiated.

The tribe, the community, celebrates creation because if it didn’t, creation would stop. Everything would fall apart. If it did, it would all collapse upon itself—nowhere else to go—we’re dealing with a plenum, after all. It all goes back together again into an undifferentiated mass. It becomes the egg.

That’s what happens if creation goes unrecognized publicly—if there is no ritual for its celebration. The importance of the public act of witnessing and honoring is that the patterns of creation are affirmed—established in the community of men. This is the first cause—if one can speak of the effect as the cause—in a world where time sails in a circle, where it is difficult to speak of beginning and end. The will to exist is the evidence of creation; it also sets it in motion.
But this is our language, not that of the original cosmogonists. We mustn’t diffuse something that should not only be apprehended as a luminous whole, but also participated in and strengthened.

Because for the ancients the world was alive and now. The dead return their life to the living. In turn they call them back to the grave so that they can once again pass out through the gates of life and death. Then the world was alive—but it had to be maintained. Maintained in what you might call regular sequence (order=cosmos). If it weren’t in regular sequence, it would revert, become chaotic. Egg-like.

In Virgil you get a very beautiful instance of the story. In the other world, the place of the dead, Avernus, is chaos. It’s only the dead and the world of the dead that stand between chaos and this world. That keeps our world from reverting.

If the interchange, life/death, stopped, chaos would come back and “be loosed upon the world.” Everything would pass through chaos back into the egg.

But contained within this egg there is an initial pair. They are not going to be love or hate—but life or death. Who are really one and the same. As Empedocles has it:

love equals life (“the divided meadows of Aphrodite give life”)
hate equals death (dissolution—but this is only temporary)

In Orphic terms Love or Phanes is swallowed up by Zeus but he returns to us in Dionysos, the son of Zeus. So the interchange, the energy level, remain constant. In absolute terms there is no birth or death, no beginnings or ends. But we interrupt this circle only to recover it and trace its operations.

there is no birth
there is no death
only mingling and exchanging
the already mingled and exchanged.

So we can’t really look for reasons, for first causes. It is technically insane. There is no reason the egg splits except that it did. It is epiphanic. By having occurred it also reveals it is something that had to happen in order for things to be the way they are. The story is the recollection of that epiphany. The stories are the testament of the metamorphosis of human memory, of its splendid variety that confuses and beguiles, and tempts the weary mind into false order—the Platonic synthesis.

If we are here, the egg did split and continues to do so. We maintain that split because it’s only in those inches on a cosmic scale (infinity for us) that we also maintain our lives.

Without that regular sequence, whether it’s the fish in the sea, the trees, or the circle of the seasons, even the connection: hand-nerve-brain—all of these things that are so necessary for everything else—the interdependence would be impossible. The cosmos is not simply a sum of all that exists, it is also the operations and orders that uphold and sway existence. We can discuss it as a force or a balance, even a combination—a balanced force—but we have to see it as well as dipolar, as having two faces or phases. We are in one phase, the condition of the split, but it could also revert, if adequate provision is not made. But we also say existence is all there is, it only creates living forms out of itself.

What we are doing is apprehending and witnessing it.

The will here is human. There is nothing in the nature of things to make this apprehension. It’s something in the nature of man that forces him to make explanations. Without making these explanations things cease to operate.

To say it chancily: the general cause is also the specific cause of the first step, the splitting of the egg.
EURIPIDES: FRAGMENT FROM MELANIPPE

this is not my story
but one my mother tells

once Sky and Earth were one
then they split into two

father and mother of all

brought into light
trees
birds
beasts
fish in the sea
race of living men

HESIOD: THEOGONY

children of Zeus
grant me song
of the gods who are forever
who were born out of Earth and star-lit Sky
dark Night and Salt Sea

speak tell me
how we were born the beginning
of the ground we walk on
rivers ponds lakes
sea without end swelling rushing
stars sending light
sky cupped overhead
gods born of them
the gods givers of good things
dividing wealth among themselves
honors titles a palace in the mountains
Olympus

Muses living in the houses of Olympus
who was first
"Gap was first
then Earth the great chair with her immense teats
then Pit hard to see
depth in the wombs of Earth

next Love
loveliest of gods
who unstrings the body
tames the heart
breaks the mind
whether god or man
within his heart

the children of Gap were Gloom and Night
whom Love joined
their children were bright Air and Day

Earth's first-born was star-lit Sky
a lover to cover her
equal in every particular

he made her his chair
the seat forever for the happy gods

the children of Earth
the long hills where nymphs roam
who sleep in thickets
sterile Sea 'without sweet union of love'
because his salt will not make her fruitful
in his swelling rushing
Earth sheltered Sky
their children were the Earth-born the Geagants
tidal Ocean
sons Koios and Krois and Hyperion and Iapetos
daughters Theis fixer Rhea flow-er Themis setter Mnemosyne recaller
Phoebe with a golden crown Thetys lady of the deeps

her youngest Kronos 'air large birds ride'
thinks in crooked ways
most feared of all her family
for in his energy he hated his father

the children of Earth
Wheel Eyes hearts of force
   Thunder Lightning Thunderflash
they gave Zeus thunder they made him the thunder bolt
   like all the gods in everything
except for the one eye turning in their forehead
wheeling in place between their two eyes

the three sons of Earth and Sky
never named proud Kottos Briareos Gyes
   from their shoulders
       hundred hands leap forth
   upon each of their shoulders
       fifty heads wag
   upon their muscled bodies
       out of their shoulders
not according to nature
unapproachable ungraspable in their strength
hated and feared most of all
as soon as they were born

as soon as his children were born
Sky hid them away
he deprived them of light
shoving them back deep into the wombs of Earth
he went away and laughed

Earth crowded groaned
she thought of something clever and ugly
she made grey adamant
made a sickle of it
made her children understand what she wanted done with it
sorrowing in her heart
she encouraged them
'pay him back for what he has done
he was first to hurt'
this is what she said
they were afraid
none of them answered
but great Kronos who thinks around corners was not afraid
he spoke to his wise mother
'I shall do it
I shall finish it
I do not love my father
he was first to hurt'
he spoke huge Earth shook with joy in her heart
she hid him in a place of ambush
she put the sickle with jagged teeth in his hand
she showed him her plan
great Sky came
bringing night
lying heavy on Earth in love and desire
she opened receiving him
their son stretched out his left hand from ambush
in his right he held the great sickle with jagged teeth
he chopped off his father's balls
he threw them to the wind behind him
they flew away a bloody track in the air
which Earth enfolded
in full time she gave birth to the strong Curses
and the great Titans
full-armed bursting with light shaking long spears
and the Meliads nymphs of the ash tree
all over boundless Earth

when his balls cut down by adamant
fell from boundless Earth
onto high Sea
battered they swam open currents
from that deathless flesh foam blossomed
inside the pink flower a girl was born and grew
she passed by holy Cythera
she came to Cypris surrounded by water's flood
she stepped onto land
august lovely goddess
grass sprung up under her tapered feet
Aphrodite born of foam Cytheria the well-garlanded
because she grew inside the bloody foam
because she passed near Cythera
Cyprogene because there she was born
on Cypris wave washed
Philomedes because she loves Love's bone
because she was born inside her father's balls
Love walks with her
Desire follows

as soon as she was born
she went right to the race of gods
this is the honor she holds this is what they allotted her
her share among men and deathless gods
young girls' talk
their laughter and sweet deceit
delight pleasure lovemaking softness

the sons great Sky fathered he cursed
calling them Titans the Strainers
because he said they tightened and strained
to do proud deeds
and they would be paid back for it soon afterwards

GENESIS I: "AT THE FIRST"
(being a translation at root of Genesis I.1-II.4a)

At the first of the gods' making skies and earth, the earth was
a mixedup-darkness on top of deepness: so wind-of-the-gods swept
down on the waters.
The gods said LIGHT so there was light, and the gods liked the
light so they made it different from the darkness:

they called the light Day
called the darkness Night:
so that was Evening
and that was Morning
the first Day.

Then the gods said, LET A SPACE BE BEATEN OUT, and
it was TO SPLIT THE WATERS UNDERNEATH IT FROM THE
WATERS ON TOP OF THE SPACE.

the gods called the space Skies

so that was Evening
and that was Morning
the second Day.

Then the gods said, LET THE WATERS-BENEATH-THE-
SKIES BE GATHERED TOGETHER INTO ONE GROUP SO THE
DRYNESS CAN BE SEEN. And they were.

the gods called the dryness Land
called the gathering-together-of-the-waters Seas.

The gods liked what they saw

they said

SPROUT THE EARTH SPROUTS:
GRASS SEEDING SEEDS
TREES MAKING FRUIT,
FRUIT ITS SEED IN IT,
EVERY KIND ON EARTH.

So it was like that: the earth brought out sprouts: kinds of seed
seeding grass, kinds of seed-in-fruit making trees
and the gods liked it

so that was Evening
and that was Morning
the third Day.

Then the gods said, LET THERE BE LIGHTS IN THE SPACE
OF THE SKIES TO SET THE DAY OFF FROM THE NIGHT. THEY
WILL BE MARKING TIMES, DAYS AND YEARS, AND WILL BE
LIGHTS IN THE SKIESSPACE LIGHTING THE EARTH.

So that's how it was: the gods made the two big lights: the bigger
light for running the day, the littler light to run the night and stars.

the gods presented them
in the skiesspace
to light the earth
to run the day and night
to make a difference
between the light and darkness

and the gods liked it

so that was Evening
and that was Morning
the fourth Day.

Then the gods said
SWARM WATERS SWARMS
BREATHING LIFE
AND FLYERS FLYING
OVER THE EARTH
OVER THE SKIINESSPACE

so the gods made big seabeasts and all breathing crawling life on
Earth: the waters swarmed and all the birdwings

and the gods liked it
and blessed them

BREED A LOT, AND FILL
THE WATERS OF THE SEAS
AND THE FLYER MAKE MANY
ON THE EARTH.

So that was Evening
and that was Morning
the fifth Day.

Then the gods said, LET THE EARTH BRING OUT BREATHING LIFE OF ALL SORTS: CATTLE AND CRAWLER, EVERY EARTH LIFE

and that's how it was:
gods made all earth life
cattle and red-dirt crawler too
all of all kinds
and liked it

so the gods said
LET'S MAKE SOME RED DIRT TO LOOK LIKE US
LOOKING JUST LIKE US
TO BOSS:
THE FISH IN THE SEA
THE BIRD IN THE SKY
AND CATTLE
AND EARTH
AND ALL CRAWLERS CRAWLING THE EARTH

so the gods

made man as he looks
looking like the gods
they made them
prick and hole
they made them

and the gods blessed them
and the gods said to them

BREED A LOT AND FILL THE EARTH
AND TAKE IT OVER
RULE:
THE FISH OF THE SEA
THE BIRD OF THE SKIES
ALL LIFE THAT CRAWLS ON THE EARTH.

Then the gods said

HERE WE'VE GIVEN YOU:
EVERY SEED SEEDING SPROUT
OVER CROSS THE WHOLE EARTH
EVERY TREE BEARING FRUIT
SEEDING SEED
FOR FOOD
FOR YOU

AND FOR EVERY:
LIFE ON THE EARTH
FLYER OF THE SKIES
CRAWLER ON THE EARTH
BREATHING LIFE:
EVERY GREEN SPROUT
FOR FOOD

and that's how it was

and the gods liked everything they saw
very much

so that was Evening
and that was Morning
the sixth Day.
Now the skies, the earth and all their troop were complete. The gods finished off all the work they'd done on the sixth day, and rested on the seventh day from all the work they'd done.

the gods blessed the Seventh Day
set it apart
because they'd rested on it
after all the works
the gods had made to work.

That's the story of the gods' making skies and earth.

SANCHUNIATHON: From THE PHOENICIAN HISTORY: "Creation"

The all father was Air, dark blowing and clouding
more rather a sharp blast of wind and cloud: but gap
swirling in gloom throughout that first long aeon,
boundless and endless
but then Air, love struck of his own beginnings
mated with them,
their marriage: Pothos, Desire
the beginning of things
though he did not know it yet,
and the child of that union Mot
whom some call mud
though others mould, and from her
the spores of creation the genetices of the world,
then there were others:
the zoas not possessed of sense,
from them the zophasememin who were,
and their shape egg like:
and Mot burst forth into light
and the sun the moon the stars and the other huge constellations
and when she had burst forth into light
's splendour
strength
of
her
heat
struck
land
and
sea
and it clouded
it blew
it rained down
great rain
and they stood apart
each moved from their place
from the strength of that heat
and flew up once again in Air

meeting headlong

and at that noise

the zophasemin awake
and were frightened
and began to move out on the land and sea male and female

GENESIS II: "WHEN"

when Yahweh of the gods was making earth and skies

not even a wild bush yet on earth
not even a wild grass had come up

since Yahweh of the gods hadn't made rain on earth
since Dirtman wasn't there to work the dirt

water 'd just gush from earth
and water cross the whole land

Yahweh of the gods shaped Dirtman from lumps of dirt and blew the soft-blowing wind of life into his nostrils so Dirtman was then breathing life then Yahweh of the gods planted a garden on a pleasant plain in the east and put the dirtman he had shaped there then Yahweh of the gods raised every tree worth looking at and eating from and in the middle of the garden is the tree of immortality and the tree of knowing-what's-good-and-bad river comes up in the plain to water the garden then splits into four branches one of them is the Hopper winding through all of the Havila country where the gold is (and good gold at that) and bdellium and lapis lazuli the second river's name is Gusher that's the one that winds all through the Kassite country name of the third is Tigris which runs east of
Ashur and the fourth is Euphrates

so Yahweh of the gods said to himself "it isn't good that
Dirtman being all alone I'll make him the right helper"

So
from the dirt
Yahweh of the gods shaped
all the wild animals
all birds of all the skies
then brought them to
Dirtman to see what he would call them whatever Dirtman
called them is their name

So
Dirtman gave names
to every bird of all the skies
to every wild life

but he didn't find a right
helper yet for Dirtman then Yahweh of the gods put Dirtman
into a deep sleep while he was sleeping took one of his ribs
then closed the flesh back up then Yahweh of the gods built
the rib he'd taken from the dirtman into woman brought her
to the dirtman so the dirtman sang

"That's the one
"a bone from my bones
"a flesh from my flesh

"this one'll be called woman
"'cause she's taken from a man

that's why a man will leave his father and mother to hang
around his woman because they are one flesh
ORPHEUS: POEM FOR LYRE GOD APOLLO

Lyre god Apollo
I will sing for you
a new song
I will reveal your terrible arrows
to all men everywhere
but especially to those
my rites have kept pure

When Time and wailing Need
split the ancient egg
outstepped Love the first born
fire in his eyes
wearing both sexes
glorious Eros
father of immortal Night
Phanes, god of Brightness
whom Zeus swallowed and brought back
Zagreus
Osiris
Dionysos
offer myrrh
Bull Shouter
laden with gold
Seed of gods and men
Priapos
Erikapeios
horned
clandestine
unnamed
Sounding Rusher
All Shining Slayer of Night in the eyes of men
everywhere on the pure oars of his wings
my lord
quick-glancing Reflector
Sparkler
Blessed Clever Ubiquitous
Go rejoicing in the completed acts of his name

In the countless wombs of Earth
Time brought forth Air
and the grim goddess Death
and the Strainers the Tighteners
who stay beneath boundless earth forever
because of what they did

Then Healer
and Mountain Mother
who fashioned Huntress Moon Queen
from relentless Sky father son of Time

Have you heard of the mangling of Zagreus?
of the gods who lived on Mt Ida?
of Mother Earth who wandered in the great gulf
in search of her child to give us law?

the meaning of dreams

the reading of the signs

the star roads

the cleansings needed

atonement

satisfaction

the mountains of gifts the dead require

what I learned
when singing and playing
I followed the shadowy paths of hell
in search of love

when in Egypt
I gave birth to the stag
as I neared holy Memphis
and the round cities of Apis
the eddying Nile surrounds
where I taught my secrets

you have learned all things unerringly from my heart
I have done it by sixes and sevens

now the gadfly leaves me
stinging and burning
my body learns from the unremitting sky
you will learn from my voice
all the things I concealed
from stubborn men
how the heroes and half gods
passed over into Peiria
and the steep sheer head of the Wet country
praying that I would be their messenger
that I would guide the stroking of their oars
I the precursor of their return
in White Boat against the inhospitable nations
of rich and reckless people
against the claiming of their gold

I sail on the ship of the world

PHEREKYDES OF SYROS: THE SEVEN NOOKS or GOD-MINGLING or THEOGONY

1.
Z - Day Time She-earth
the always living

She-earth became our earth
Z - day gave her earth for her honorable share

2.
The Story of the Flying Tree of the Earth
(on which She-earth hung the web of cloth)

they are building houses for Z - Day
many houses huge houses
they put everything he'll need into them
they give men and women to serve him
and anything else he might use

when everything is ready
they have the wedding

on the third day of the wedding
Z - Day makes a web of cloth
a large and lovely mantle
he embroiders Earth and Ocean on it
and the houses of Ocean

(he gives it to She-earth the bride
he says to her)
"because you wish to marry
I give you this for honorable share
take pleasure in me
join me in love"

people say
this was the first rite of the unveiling
this is how the custom arose
among gods and men

after she receives the web of cloth
she says to him

3.
when he was about to make the world
Z - Day changed into Eros

he made the world out of contradictions
he drove agreement and love through it
he extended it into one throughout

4.
Kronos and Snake went to war
they raised up armies
they challenged each other and fought
then they made an agreement
whoever fell into Ocean first lost
the winner would be Sky-master

this is the beginning
of the mysteries of the Titans and the Geagants
whom people say fought the gods

and the stories the Egyptians tell
of Typhoon and Horus and Osiris
5.
below our part of the world
is the share of Tartaros the Terrible
Snatchers and Hurricane
Northwind's daughters
stand guard there

whoever injures him
Zeus throws to Tartaros

6.
hollows, ditches, caves, gates
riddles through which
souls pass and repass
this men call birth and death

the ordered world is a cave

7.
seed pours out

12.
the gods call a table thyoros
because that's where people
put out food for them

13.
Zeus and Hera are not the parents of the gods

13a.
gods eat immortality
HYGINUS: THE BIRTH OF VENUS

a giant egg fell into the Euphrates
fish pushed it shorewards
doves sat down and warmed it up
it hatched
out came Venus
later called the Syrian Goddess (Ashtaroth)

EMPEDOCLES: NATURE

Origins

I speak in twos

sometimes it grows to be one from many
sometimes it separates to be many from one

two the birth of deathly life
two the leaving off

birth the union of all things makes and kills
leaving off strips and is stripped

when deathly life divides itself
it never ceases exchanging

sometimes everything comes together in one through Love
sometimes each thing is separated in two by Strife of Hate

when one separates once again
many is born but it does not live forever

since this exchanging never ceases
they are always motionless in a circle

say it once
say it twice

I speak in twos
sometimes it grows to be one from many
sometimes it separates to be one from many

Fire and Water and Earth and high unfilled measure of Air

Hate hated twice by the roots is their equal
Love which is in them friend in length and width

let your mind look at her
don't sit there eyes astounded

born in their bodies
men worship her

through her men think of desire
they do what unites them in peace and friendship

because of this they call her Joyous and Joiner
Gethosyne Aphrodite

no living man has ever seen her
because she swirls in their eyes

all the roots are equal
they are the same in birth and age

they rule with different honor
each according to their nature

time sails in a circle
so they each have a turn

to them nothing is added
nothing taken away

they are always the same
equal in birth and age

if they should leave off without limit
everything would die

all this what makes it grow?
where did it come from?

how should the roots leave off
since nothing is empty of them
they are always the same
equal in birth and age

running across each other
they make all things

so on and so forth forever

I will tell you something else
everything that is born and dies
is not really born
does not really die
they only mingle and exchange
what has already been
mingled and exchanged

people call this 'birth'
I will use the same words
'birth' and 'death'
because that is the custom

when Light and Air
mingle

in the form of a man
or animal tree bird

people say 'it has been born'

when men animals trees birds leave off
people say 'it has died'

there is no birth
there is no death

only mingling exchanging
the already mingled and exchanged

birth and death
are names people use

I use the same words
because they do

but there is no birth no death
you are a fool
if you think there is

this in the marvelous bending of the human body

sometimes through love
all the limbs come together in one
all the limbs that have a right to a body
at the acme of flowering life

sometimes through Hate
all the limbs are dismembered
they are broken into pieces by the Strifes breakers of life

this also happens to trees
to the fish who live under Water's roof
to the animals in the hills
even the tumbler pigeon who walks on his wings

so on and so forth forever

Love

clinging Love kisses

see the hot bright Sun everywhere

see the immortals bathed in heat in intense light
the rain everywhere icy and black

from Earth flows forth the gracious and solid

in anger everything is distinct divides itself

they come together in Love
they desire each other

from all that was
all that is or ever shall be

trees blossom

men and women and animals and birds and fish Water feeds
and the long-lived gods who are honored above everything else
there is no death
their life is not forever

they are always the same
equal in birth and age

they run through each other
they make everything

the exchange the roots
mixing mingling bring

The Four Roots

the goddess says
'think of painters
who use the drugs of many colors
to make figures that resemble real things
giving form to trees men women
to animals and birds
to the fish Water feeds
to the long-lived gods honored above everything else

this is the origin of everything
that flourishes without number by day'

the names of the four roots of everything

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zeus</th>
<th>bright Air</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hera</td>
<td>mother Earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aidoneus</td>
<td>homeless Fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nestis</td>
<td>Water</td>
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<td></td>
<td>with her tears</td>
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<td></td>
<td>she waters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the well-head of life</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

time sails in a circle
so they each have a turn

they lose themselves in each other
they grow according to their share

they are always the same
running into each other
they are born men and animals
trees birds fishes

so on and so forth forever

the roots are born hair leaf
thick feathers of bird
horny scales on strong bodies
tall tree and perch in the sea

so on and so forth forever

parts looking for bodies
heads without necks suddenly sprouted in Earth like cabbages
naked arms without shoulders
eyes searching for sockets
roamed Earth
monsters
rolling feet shambling hands

many were born two faces two bodies
cattle man-prowed
or men beeve-headed
half male half female
their bodies in shadow

sometimes through Love the roots come together to make one
sometimes through Hate the roots separate to make many

grown into one
they are completely swallowed up

they know how to grow into one from many
how to be many after one separates into two

in this way they give birth
but their life is not forever

since they never cease mingling and exchanging
they are always motionless in a circle

Love Harmony Aphrodite
Hate Strife Neikos

when Strife reaches the bottom of the dine
Love is born in the midst of the swirl
everything assembles there to be one and only
not quickly
one from one
one from another
deliberately
coming together
they mingle and exchange
there then flow forth
the countless tribes of living things

Strife holds up above
all who refuse mixing and mingling
alternating with those who do
for Strife has not yet retired perfectly
from the furthest rim of the circle
part of him remains
the rest escapes from the body of Sphere

he retreats
soft Love's immortal attack pursues

suddenly living things are born to die
although they had learned to be immortal

when they mingle and exchange
there then flow forth
the countless tribes of living things
shaped to fit every form
wonderful to see

Air with his long roots enters Earth
Fire burns underground

A kiss unites everything in every part
radiant Sun  Earth  Sky  Sea

in part they live in living things
but their life is not forever

everything that is ripe for mixing and exchanging
is matched by Aphrodite
submits to each other
becomes one

everything that is in two
separate
in birth
in mixing and exchanging
in image set upon it
is enemy to itself
to everything else that is in two
ey do not know how to join in Love
ey are lonely sad
because Hate and Strife are twin fathers of their race

Sphere Cosmeg

Sphere rounded in Harmony's compact gloom
smooths himself
circling gloriously
in lonely joy
Sphere is equal everywhere
is entirely without limit
he smooths himself
circling gloriously
in lonely joy
two branches do not spring from his back
he has no feet no quick knees
no part of sex
he is Sphere
equal to himself
entirely without limit
there is no Strife
or Quarrel in his body
when huge Strife leapt up
inside Sphere's body
reaching out to rule
now that his time
had sailed around
he marked out his own path
to replace Sphere's fat circle
one after another
all the limbs of Sphere shook

Earth

Earth is the center of Sphere

Earth meets the other roots
Fire Rain bright Air

she is their equal
in age and birth

she anchors herself in Love
in tight harbors of accomplishment

sometimes she is stronger in one thing
sometimes weaker in another

from the roots blood sprang
and the forms of all flesh

Baubo the wombs (of Earth)

in her smooth cunts pleasant Earth received
two of the eight parts of Water gleaming Nestis
four from fire Hephaistos

they were born bones
the skeleton Harmony put together

you will see
in the crusty backs of shell-fish
in the trumpet mollusk
the tortoise with his skin of stone
how Earth lives on top of flesh

hedgehog bristles are sharp
they point up
men sprouted from Earth
like heads of lettuce

gentle Fire has a short-lived share of Earth
Air brings clouds
Sea sweat of the Earth
Sun and Moon

you hardly ever see the rapid arms of the Sun

untroubled Sun
sends his light flashing back
towards Olympus

Sun gathers his Fire
he sails a circle in the sky

Sun turns around Earth
spinning in a smooth circle
his borrowed light
like the track of a wheel
around the furthest

Sun sends out his arms
like darts

sweet Moon
empty-eyed blind Night

gentle Moon looks with Love
on the luminous circle
of her king the Sun

Sun's arm punches
her smooth face

he hammers against it

Sun sends out his arms like darts
you hardly ever see them

owl-eyed Moon scatters
sunlight on Earth
darkens as much Earth
as her face covers

ambushing the light
Earth makes night

the Sun's shining body is veiled
you cannot see the hairy tribes of Earth or Sea
Men and Women

Fire
when it separated into two
fashioned in the night
angular men
wailing women

the whole born sketches of men
sprang up from Earth
like head lettuce
half Heat half Water

Fire
eager to reach himself in them
brought them forth in light

they did not yet show
the lovely body of their limbs
they had no voice
which is man's mark

wrapped in sheepskin cauls

in the hotter wombs of Earth
the men were born
therefore they are darker than women
hairier and have a cock

the birth of the human body is divided
half in the father's body
half in the mother's

when a man's pure sperm leaves his body
and enters his wife
when she is cold
a female is born

Love

the divided meadows of Aphrodite
give life

Love  Friendship  Harmony
a kiss
her eyes serious

a knot binds two
two eyes see one

just as the juice of a fig
bolts white milk and rivets it

Aphrodite joins with bolts of Love
as wheat bound by Water makes bread

Water marries wine
but she does not love oil

rays of yellow crocus
mix and exchange in the linen's thread

desire steals over me
softening and mingling
in the organs of my body

everything that is thick on the inside
porous on the outside
received a surplus of Water
from the hands of Love

when Love had watered Earth with Rain
breathless she gave the shapes of living things
to homeless Fire to harden

everything was in her hands
when it grew for the first time

the love-light in your soft eyes
threaded mine
two eyes see one

when you are getting ready to go on the road
you take a lamp
a Fire against the tempests of the night
while the wind blows
you adjust the windscreen of the lantern
to keep out the cold
but the light leaps over the rim of your lamp
piercing night as far as it can go
with unworn lance

this is how Love preserves her mythic Fire
locked up in the body's membranes
she places him in the glancing eyes of a girl
spinning a network of fine linen of flesh
to protect the flame from depths of Water
who surrounds her pupil

but the light leaps over the rims of your eyes
piercing night as far as it can go
with unworn lance

from the four roots
from the mixing and exchanging of Air Fire Earth Water
grew the shapes and colors of all living things
Love joined in Harmony

from them she made
indestructible eyes

'everything feels and has a share of thought'

from the roots
Love joined in Harmony
everything was made

through them
each thing
thinks suffers rejoices

Earth sees Earth
Water Water
Air Air
Fire Fire
Love Love
Hate Hate

so on and so forth forever
sweet fucks sweet
bitter plunges in and out of bitter
sharp cuts sharp
salt is coupled with salt

so on and so forth forever

turned towards what is before them
men's thought grows

come listen to me
understanding increases thought

thoughts spin on tides of blood
that ebb and flow
for that is where what men call 'thought' is
blood around the heart
man's thought

everything breathes in and out
everything has bloodless pipes of flesh
stretched through its body
delicate furrows pierce the mouth
the surface of the skin
there blood pools
and Air cuts for himself
easy passage in and out

gentle blood sings in the veins
while it retraces its path
leaping back into the body's crevasses
and the straight flow of Air enters
but when blood returns
Air breathes out

there are exhalations
from everything that has been born

dog's nose tracks
the slices of themselves
animals' bodies leave behind
the breath from their paws
that lingers in fresh grass
shadows make the river bottom black
your two eyes see the same color in caves

everything partakes of breath and smell and sight

everything longs to return to itself in others
time sails in a circle
everything that is born
feels and has a share of thought

**Natural Demonstration**

because of Air
evergreens produce fruit
all year long
tall olive trees lay eggs

pomegranates ripen late
their fruit running over with juice

**Water from bark**
steeped in wood
is wine

salt is hardened
pushed back on itself
by the gleaming blows of the Sun

there are drugs
that overcome sickness and age

I have shown you all this
so that you can put it to the test
so that you will master the strength of the unwearying winds
that spring up waste fields combing the Earth

that when you wish you can call them back
that you bring for men after black rain bright weather

that after summer drought you make rain to feed the trees
when it falls down from the sky
that you bring back from hell
the life of the dead

"WHEN": NOTES & COMMENTARIES. "I read the stories of creation because they open an unsuspected past. They are also a line into the real future, they redeem the endless present of the fact, the limitless extension of a clarified moment.

"The first accounting arouses the instinct of knowing. It provides the stories memory needs to make the transition from present to present.

"Once a sparrow's fall was memorable. What sound does a tree make when it falls now?

"The world as experience: a heightening and in-gathering of what is accounted-for, explained. How it got to be the way it is is told you by the created world.....

"We are still discovering a language for this, a way to return the reporting of experience to the mythic. The person on tiptoes stares out through the prison bars of Man towards a world built of the same stuff as he."

(Charles Doria, "Creation: The Myth of Accountability")

On translating Genesis (Harris Lenowitz): "Since I called the translation 'at root' I better explain some things. First, the division reflecting the sources in form: the Bible is of course not the creation of a single author or even a single school (of thought); it is as we have it the redaction of at least four documents, traditions. These sources are called J (for Jahweh or Yahweh, the name used for god in writings of this source), E (for Elohim, same reason J), P (for Priestly document) and D (for Deuteronomistic recension). Since the two stories here are identified as from P and J, respectively, just a word about them: P uses Jahweh throughout for the Name, but can't use it in Genesis I because of Exodus VI.3—'by my name Jahweh I was not known to (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob)—so it (they) uses the older, proper to this story, 'elohim,' avoiding anachronism. If we assume that P is a late document, trying, among other things, to use as many terms as are known in order to bring all variant strains of the religion together, the choice of 'elohim' is explained. After all, the story is mostly Babylonian (Sumerian), and the actors there are 'ilim. Of course the form is plural and P is selling monotheism, but as the most traditional term, 'elohim' has to be used. (Even J has to use it, though linking it with 'Yahweh,' so we get there either 'god Yahweh' (a determinative) or 'Yahweh of the gods' (a construct). I have used the latter (the 'determinative' ploy is weakened considerably by the fact that even as a determinative marker 'elohim' is still a plural). An impossible choice then for the P editors and the translator, but the plurality lies at the bottom, pace commentators who have tried various sneak plays: the 'plural maiestas' (equally applicable to the plural verb in Gen. I.26), explanation of the 'im suffix in part (the 'm' an enclitic, a prosody); but the whole suffix, length-plus-'m,' is just plural. So P uses 'elohim' throughout Genesis with singular form verbs!—a champion compromise. J had made a compromise earlier, which P chose not to accept, the 'Lord God' of King James, etc., which he only uses here in Genesis. The story is so old and traditional nobody could avoid that plural completely....

"So, 'at root' means 'meaning.' It means cutting out the 'literal' meaning for the whole meaning—an hendiadys for example ('be fruitful and multiply') doesn't mean two things in Hebrew, only one ('fruitfully multiply,' 'breed a lot'); it means getting it right; plurals where they exist, infinitives where vocalization insists on perfects (like I.1 'created' really 'creating;' also 'beginning' really 'beginning of'); and it means getting to the bottom of things like root meanings: for everybody's petty 'male and female created he them,' 'prick and hole' because that's where zkr and mkv start, and indefinite 'adm as 'red-dirt' because that's the whole story. All of this by knowing who it is that's telling the story, and why, and listening closely."

Sanchuniathon's Phoenician History (full version originally printed in Richard Grossinger's Io). "The one clear example we have of a Semitic poet, Sanchuniathon, leaving behind an epic on the beginning of the world and its march toward civilization, which was translated into Greek, then re-edited during the great controversies between the Christian Church and the Neo-Platonists. The fragments of it in Eusebius' Praeparatio Evangelica form a complete whole and show clearly how the Greeks and Romans are all the common possessors of a tradition that goes back at least 2000 years before the beginning of Greek history, 2500 years before the beginning of the
Orpheus: Hymn. Drawn from late 4th and 5th century A.D. sources—principally the Orphic Argonautica, & other simplified hymns and narratives "introduced in hopes of attracting and explaining their faith to those who had already given up the traditional Graeco-Roman pantheon.... But I believe it will be possible, by going back to the 5th and 6th century B.C. fragments, to reconstruct an Orphic cosmology faithful to Orphism itself when it was still something holy, and not a de-mythologized church on the order of some protestant sects today." (C. D.)

Pherecydes: The Seven Nooks (Greek text in Diels and Kranz, Die Fragmenten der Vorsokratiker, (Zurich, 1966). "Pherecydes of Syros lived about 650 B.C. and is supposed to have composed his creation story 'under Orphic influence.' His dating either makes him contemporary with Hesiod or a generation or so older. I think he is at least as important as Empedocles and not as well known." (C. D.) Z - Day=Zas, alternate form of Zeus (Bright etc.), but distinguished from it in the fragments.

Hyginus. "A freedman and librarian in the service of Augustus, he wrote up in abbreviated form 277 mythological stories, taken for the most part from Greek sources. This story is no. 197 and almost certainly not Greek in origin. It is a noteworthy example of the tendency of the creation story to repeat itself over and over again in miniature in the separate mythologies of the gods. But Venus is somewhat more important than the others. She is pre-Olympian and pre-Homeric. More important one can see her as a differentiation of the masculine-feminine Phanes (but one direction only—the female). So this is an important Orphic recollection as well as example of the ongoing mythic process—generating and subdividing." (C. D.)

Empedocles. "The surviving work is all fragments, which accounts for the somewhat choppy nature of the sections I've divided it into. In making the divisions (mostly my own) I tried to follow Jean Bollack (Empedocle: Les Origines), a modern French commentator and translator. But it's in the nature of fragments that they begin nowhere, go nowhere, and are preserved most often for the craziest of reasons. So I've respected the integrity of each fragment, while sometimes changing their order or making new sections to accommodate a number that seemed more or less dealing with the same thing: Origins or whatever. Most of the repetitions are Empedocles'.

"Some Observations
Empedocles accepts the literalness of myth, therefore he concerns himself with providing explanation for it
He believes that gods and men are one—and that they are made of the same elementals
that Earth is mother of all
that the universe is animate and sentient—'everything feels...'
He believes in Orphic duality—eternal warfare between Hate and Love, Light and Dark, Sky and Earth, Devourer Zeus against Abounding Eros
He believes in the great elementals of the Near East as found in the Enuma Elish:
Tiamat/Apsu—Water salt and fresh
Anu—Sky Wind Air
Bel Marduk—Fire Sun Heat
Ea—Earth
(his sees them as substantive forces rather than gods: numina not dei)
Sphere is the Cosmic Egg of the Orphics. The Splitting of the Egg: the Two, the Many (‘Between one and infinity there are no numbers’)
When he approaches the Four Roots and the Two Modals, Hate and Love, he uses the indeterminacy of Divine Names in Greek, e.g.:
Ares—war or the War God
Helios—the sun or the Sun God
A Curious Fact: in his lifetime Empedocles was known as a magician, a weatherman and raiser of the dead" (C. D.)
What is a god?
A god is an eternal state of mind.
What is a faun?
A faun is an elemental creature.
What is a nymph?
A nymph is an elemental creature.
When is a god manifest?
When the states of mind take form.
When does a man become a god?
When he enters one of these states of mind.
What is the nature of the forms whereby a god is manifest?
They are variable but retain certain distinguishing characteristics.
Are all eternal states of mind gods?
We consider them to be so.
Are all durable states of mind gods?
They are not.
By what characteristic may we know the divine forms?
By beauty.
And if the presented forms are unbeautiful?
They are demons.
If they are grotesque?
They may be well-minded genii.
What are the kinds of knowledge?
There are immediate knowledge and hearsay.
Is hearsay of any value?
Of some.
What is the greatest hearsay?
The greatest hearsay is the tradition of the gods.
Of what use is this tradition?
It tells us to be ready to look.
In what manner do gods appear?
Formed and formlessly.
To what do they appear when formed?
To the sense of vision.
And when formless?
To the sense of knowledge.
May they when formed appear to anything save the sense of vision?
We may gain a sense of their presence as if they were standing behind us.
And in this case they may possess form?
We may feel that they do possess form.
Are there names for the gods?
The gods have many names. It is by names that they are handled in the tradition.
Is there harm in using these names?
There is no harm in thinking of the gods by their names.
How should one perceive a god, by his name?
It is better to perceive a god by form, or by the sense of knowledge, and, after perceiving him thus, to consider his name or to "think what god it may be."
Do we know the number of the gods?
It would be rash to say that we do. A man should be content with a reasonable number.
What are the gods of this rite?
Apollo, and in some sense Helios, Diana in some of her phases, also the Cytherean goddess.
To what other gods is it fitting, in harmony or in adjunction with these rites, to give incense?
To Kore and to Demeter, also to lares and to oreiads and to certain elemental creatures.
How is it fitting to please these lares and other creatures?
It is fitting to please and to nourish them with flowers.
Do they have need of such nutriment?
It would be foolish to believe that they have, nevertheless it bodes well for us that they should be pleased to appear.
Are these things so in the East?
This rite is made for the West.
Milton Kessler & Gerald E. Kadish

LOVE SONGS & TOMB SONGS OF ANCIENT EGYPT

The In-itef Song

Here is the tomb-song of King In-itef, true-of-voice, inscribed before the singer with the harp:

Pale is this good prince,
for good fortune is finished.

Generations have died, others have risen,
since the age of the ancestors.
Those Gods who strove in their time drowse in their tombs.
So, too, the Noble-become-spirit is buried by his pyramid.

They who built tombs, their tombs are gone; what has been done to them?
I know the words of Ii-em-hetep and Her-dedef whose sayings are legend.
Where are their monuments? Their walls have crumbled, vanished, as if they never stood.

And none returns from there to speak of their nature, portray their state, calm our hearts until we too sail for that kingdom where the dead walk.

Now let your heart be high and loft above this destiny.
Magnify pleasures, never grow weary.
Bathe in the living wonders of the God's bounty.
Place myrrh upon your hair, wear garments of fine linen.

Until the dawn of that day of wailing
follow your heart and your own good.
Osiris does not hear their mourning.
Their wailing does not save us from the afterlife.

The Garden

I'm your favorite, yours,
like the garden is mine which I planted
with flowers and all kinds of blossoming fruit.

This pond is so pleasant which your hands
have made to cool us with the northern breeze.
It's a lovely place to stroll about.

Your hand in my hand, my body content,
my heart rejoices as we walk together.
O your sweet voice makes me dizzy!
Seeing you here, now, each glance
is more delicious than any feast.

Nothing Else

When I leave you, my Brother, and feel your love,
my heart stalls within me.
When I see sweet cakes, they turn to salt.
Pomegranate-wine, once so delicious, is like bird's gall.
The breath of your nostrils, nothing else frees my body.
What I have found, may Amen grant me forever.
The Portal

The portal of my Beloved,
its inner door in the middle of her house,
its two gates open, the bolt undone,
the Sister angry.

O were I named gatekeeper,
I'd make her furious with me.
Then, like a child in fear,
I could feel all over me
her indignant voice.

My Malady

If I were to lie down pretending to be ill,
all my neighbors would come to see me,
the Sister among them.
She would make the physicians quite unnecessary: she
knows well my malady.

Each Time

My heart flees when I sense within this
love of him.
It won't let me simply walk,
but leaps startled in its place.
It won't let me wear my garments with grace
nor lift my fan.
I bring no luster to my eye, nor can I
prepare my body with oil.

When I dream of him, it calls:
"Move! Move! Go home!"

Don't frighten me, my heart.
Why must you act the fool?
Sit down. Be calm. The Brother
will come to you.
And you too be calm, these eyes.
Let no one say of me
"A woman dazzled by love."

O my heart, endure.
Be still each time you ache for him.

The Blessing

I worship Hathor. I honor her majesty.
I praise the Cow of Heaven.
I make adorations for the Golden One,
offering thanks
to my Divine Mistress.
I speak to her and she hears my words,
for she has ordained for me my woman,
who comes of her own desire.

How happy I was.
I was joyous! I was flying!
since it was said: "Look, look, it is she!"

Behold, she came, and the lusty young men
 bowed down with love.
I sang prayers to my Goddess, that she would give
this Sister as a blessing.
In three days she was mine,
but now she has been gone for five.

Do Not Leave Me

My heart inclines toward you.
I shall do whatever it desires
when I am in your embrace.

I paint my eyes: so, when I behold you
my two eyes shall be bright.
I bring my body close to you, that I may see
your love, O great one of my life.

How beautiful is this hour.
May it last like an hour of eternity.
Since I woke beside you, you have lifted up my heart. Whether sad or joyful, do not leave me.

The Second Song of the Harpist in the Tomb of Nefer-hetep

I've heard the songs inscribed in the ancient tombs, how they exalt the temporal life and deprecate the kingdom of the dead.

Why say this of the land of eternity, that righteous place, devoid of terror? It abhors strife; none there attacks the life of another. It is a land without enemies.

All our forbears since primal antiquity rest there. Millions, millions yet unborn shall sail there, for none can fail to reach it, none may stay behind in the kingdom of Egypt.

These years we change upon earth are mere illusion. When you disembark in the West they say: "Welcome! Safe and Sound!"
TO DIONYSUS

i

Come Dionysus you hero

to the pure Elean shrine

come with the Graces

charging it with oxfoot

you lordly bull

you lordly bull

ii

In his "On Paeans," Semos of Delos says the so-called Improvisors were wreathed with ivy and recited at a slow rate. Later on they and their poems were called Iambi. The Hard-on Dancers wear the masks of drunk men and wreaths and flowered sleeves; their tunics are a whitish color and they're girdled with a Tarentine robe down to their ankles. They enter silently via the main-gate, and when they come to the center of the dancing place, they turn to the audience saying:

Stand back for the God

he wants to walk through the middle

with all his power.

But the Cock-carriers do not wear masks, they wear instead a vizor of ladslove and thyme and over that a dense crown of ivy and violets; they come in dressed in plaids, some through the wings, others through the middle doors, moving in measure and saying:

Bacchus, for you we grace this music

spilling a simple rhythm of varied melody,

new and virginal, never used before in songs;

for the hymn we begin is pure.

Then running around they'd choose someone, and standing still, they'd make fun of him. The one who carried the pole simply walked in covered with soot.
SONG OF THE ARVAL BROTHERS

? 6-7 century B.C.

then the Dancing Priests of Mars go into a room which is locked behind them. They tie up their robes and pick up the texts. They divide into (? three) groups to dance and sing

field gods help
field gods help
field gods help

please Marmar
for most of us
no death
no disease

please Marmar
for most of us
no death
no disease

war Mars
enough no more
dance through our doorway
stop here
whip earth

war Mars
enough no more
dance through our doorway
stop here
whip earth
war Mars
enough no more
dance through our doorway
stop here
whip earth

talk
to all the Seeders of the field
one by one

talk
to all the Seeders of the field
one by one

talk
to all the Seeders of the field
one by one

Marmor help
Marmor help
Marmor help

one two THREE
one two THREE
one two THREE

again
three times
again

after the Dance of the Three Steps, a signal is given. Public slaves come
in and put away the texts
"Acts of Saint John"

THE ROUND DANCE OF JESUS

"A praise poem

"we sing now
"will go to meet what is to come
& had us form a circle
we stood in with folded hands
himself was in the middle
(said) You answer
Amen
then started singing
praises saying
"Praises Father
circling & we answered him
Amen (said)
Praises Word (said)
Praises Grace
Amen (said)
Praises Spirit (said)
Praises Holy Holy (said)
O thee transfiguration (said)
Amen (said)
Praises Father
Thank you Sunshine Light
no darkness (said)
"I will inform you now
"the reason for this thanks
(then said)
I save
& will be saved
Amen
I free
& will be freed
Amen
I hurt
& will be hurt
Amen

Jerome Rothenberg's redaction &/or working, based on versions by Edgar Hennecke, Max Pulver, & G.R.S. Mead from the 3rd Century gnostic source. "After a while the Christ rose & said he was very glad to see his children....'My children, I want you to listen to all I have to say to you. I will teach you, too, how to dance a dance, & I want you to dance it.'...Then he commenced our dance, everybody joining in, the Christ singing while we dance." (Description—by Porcupine, circa 1890—of Wovoka, the Christ of the American Indian "ghost dance" religion.)
Am born
& will give birth
Amen
I feed
& will be food
Amen
I hear
& will be heard
Amen
I will be known
all knowing mind
Amen
I will be washed
& I will wash
Amen
all Grace Sweet Mind the Dance is round
I blow the pipe for
all are in the Round Dance
I will pipe
all dance along
Amen
I will moan low
all beat your breasts
Amen
the One & Only Eight
plays up for us
Amen
Old Number Twelve
stomps up above
Amen
the Universe controls
the dancer
Amen
whoever isn't dancing
's in the dark
Amen
I will go
& I will stay
Amen
I will dress thee
& I will dress
Amen
I will be Ored
& I will One
Amen
I have no house & I have houses
Amen
I have no place & I have places
Amen
I have no temple & I have temples
Amen
I am a lamp to thee who see me
Amen
I am a mirror to thee who view me
Amen
I am a door to thee who come thru me
Amen
I am a way to thee wayfarer
Amen (said)
"Follow "my Round Dance
"& see yourself in me "the Speaker
"& seeing what I speak "keep silent on "my mysteries
"or dancing think of what "I do
"make yours the suffering of a man "that I will suffer
"yet powerless to understand your suffering "without a word
"the Father sent language thru me "the sufferer you saw
"& saw me suffering "you grew restless 
"shaken 
"you were moved toward wisdom "lean on me
"I am a pillow "who am I? "you only will know me "when I'm gone —
"but am not he for whom
"I am now taken—
"will know it when you reach it
"& knowing suffering will know
"how not to suffer
"myself will teach you what
"you do not know
"I am your god
"not the betrayer's
"will harmonize the Sweet Soul with my own
"the Word of Wisdom speaks in me
"says
"Praises Father
& we answered him
Amen (said)
Praises Word (said)
Praises Grace
Amen (said)
Praises Spirit (said)
Praises Holy Holy (said)
"& if thou wouldst understand that which is me
"know this all that I have said I have uttered
"playfully & I was by no means ashamed of it
"I danced
"& when you dance in understanding
"understand & say
"Amen
For Wisdom

Write these Wittenberg letters with rooster blood

\[ \text{\(O \rightarrow GP \times Y \): } CPD D \quad \text{Anna} \quad \text{\(\{\text{\(ama}\)}} \]

and put them under your left side when you go to bed. Whatever is about to happen during the next month will then be revealed to you.

Against the Mare

Mare Mare Memory
You may not remain with me until you count
the birds in the woods the fish in the river
all the trees and the words of God.

Against the Shivers

Kulumaris
Kulumari
Kulumar
Kuluma
Kulum
Kulu
Kul
Ku
K

Fire Prayer

Ashy Ballbox
Cunt Tattlemouse
The fire shall never go out in my house.

The Devil's Square

SATOR
AREPO
TENET
OPERA
ROTAS
To Awaken Love

Write on a red apple, with your blood, your name and the words:

    ORSA—FORSAY—FORSMA

Then it won't be long before she falls madly in love with you.

Or you could write

    S iopg f g li—

on a piece of bread and give her to eat.

Riddle (1)

Four rollarounders
Eight clippycloppers
Two fartfanners
and one up on top.

    (A Carriage)

    (that is: 4 wheels, 8 hooves,
    2 tails and a coachman)

Riddle (2)

A barn full of white cows
and a red calf dancing in the middle.

    (A Mouth)

Riddle (3)

Silk burning on a wall.
The fire far away.

    (Rays of Sunlight)
Riddle (4)

A green bee hive
with red bees.

(A Cherry Tree)

Riddle (5)

Armless and harmless,
Wingless and Stingless,
Mirthless and Worthless,
Calling for help at the time of birth.

(The Fart)

Threshing

(an imitation rhyme)

(when a single man did the threshing:)

Weight,
weight,
weight.

(when two did the threshing:)

Better,
better,
better.

(when three did the threshing:)

Missing one,
Missing one,
Missing one.

(when four did the threshing:)

Two pair breeches,
Coat and sweater.
Two pair breeches,
Coat and sweater.
The Wagon Wheels (an imitation rhyme)

(when the wagon went up hill, the wheels said:)

No grease.
No grease.

(when it went down hill, it said:)

It doesn't matter.
It doesn't matter.

The Thrush (an imitation rhyme)

Look at the girls saying. Look at the girls saying: "We don't want the prick. We don't want the prick."
Invite them. Invite them.
Give it to them. Give it to them.
They will take it. They will take it.
Knock them down. Knock them down.
Back of the tree trunk. Back of the tree trunk.
Stick in the prick. Stick in the prick.
Stick like a beeee! Stick like a beeeeee!

NOTES.
The mare—as in night-mare—is a female creature that rides sleeping people and animals at night. Symptoms: a pressure in the chest and awful dreams. Horses who had been visited by the mare were found sweaty and with tousled manes in the morning.

Against the shivers. This is the most common magic cure for the shakes. The formula was written on a piece of paper, and each day one line was cut off (starting with the longest line) and given to the patient to eat. When the paper was all gone, the patient would be well. This type of formula goes back to at least 200 A.D.

The devil's square. Also known as THE DEVIL'S LATIN, it is one of the most discussed of all "troll formulas." Word order the same if one reads from the upper left or the lower right corner, horizontally or vertically. It goes back to the beginning of the second century. The earliest Swedish example is on the bottom of a silver platter where it is engraved inside a pentagram. One tradition claims that the words are the names of Jesus' five sores. The formula contains the letters pater noster plus the god-symbols A & O.

For Wisdom. "Wittenberg letters" is the common name for magical signs (of Oriental and Cabalistic origin) used in books of black magic. The belief was that priests and others who were familiar with black magic and trolldom had learned their art in Wittenberg at a school for same.
(Serbo Croatian)

MAGIC FORMULAS AGAINST BAD LUCK

Omen went down the road carrying a pumpkin.
The pumpkin fell, Omen flew like a cloud in the sky,
Like the wind in the forest, like a wave over the sea,
Like dew over the grass. No sign of Omen.

They made a posse after Omen.
They measured the height of the sky,
The depth of the sea. They went far—
Where sun doesn't shine,
Where a rooster doesn't crow,
Where bones don't rattle,
Where God doesn't pray or sow his seed.

White bird flew over a white meadow.
In her beak she carried a drop of milk,
But in her flight she lost it.
White milk fell on a white stone.
That's how Omen's tracks were recognized.

No bridge over the sea.
No spots on the raven.
No brain inside a stone.
No feathers on a donkey.
No bells on the wolf.
No horns on the shewolf.
No omens after my son.

CURSES

May the Lord give you a hundred dogs
all silent
while you alone run around the house
barking.

May the Lord give you a coin
that weighs a thousand pounds
so you can't lift it or spend it,
only sit on it and beg.
May your child turn into a stone in the womb, 
the calf inside your cow, 
each seed in your field, 
and the soul in your bones.

May you count your teeth in the palm of your hand. 
Rabid, may you drink and drink forever. 
May you sit and never get up. 
May you eat your children roasted. 
May your dreams be as light as a millstone. 
May the worms be your spiggots. 
May the earth steal you from the sun. 
May the wind carry off your flesh. 
May your left hand not help your right.

THREE RIDDLES

(i) The Plum
A purple cow fell
Out of the blue sky,
Burst its womb
And kept the calf.

(ii) A Cabbage
We met one in rags and tatters
Neither with a needle sewn
Nor with a thread stitched.

(iii) Snow, Earth and Sun
A wingless dove fell
On a branchless fir-tree,
A toothless queen
Ate her for breakfast.
(Yiddish)

THE EVIL EYE (THE GOOD EYE) EINEHORE

The child frets
yawns
or cringes a lot.
The adult
yawns
"he just doesn't feel good."
or
they have a cold or a flu
"a light disease."

II. Diagnosis

The mother or the grandmother goes and
licks out the eyes.
'The child has einehore. The eyes are salty.'

"She takes a glass of water
and charcoal.
She puts in three pieces of charcoal.
If they fall down.
If they sink..."
or
"You take a glass of water
You put 3 or 4 twigs on top of the glass.
Crack an egg over the branches.
If the egg sticks in them..."
or
"Hold a new knife at the head.
If it turns black..."
III. Agents

"Etty Achs who is from Rumania explained that a person who had the power to give the evil eye was one who had been breast fed, weaned, and then returned to the breast. Everyone else agreed that such a person was born with something bad in their eyes. Leibel said, 'They got in their eyes something...

'If they think
If they see something
which is preferable
nice
they give einehore.'

Schneider said, 'The man or the woman is not guilty. It is such eyes. They are born like that. It is such eyes. There was a woman... and I was afraid when I had to go on the way where one must go... and just at that moment she stepped from her home...

I had to turn back
If this woman
If she went out
afterwards something had to happen

like a cat runs across.

You must not go. You must turn back. Something, on the way...

And she knew
this woman.

"You should believe me
that I do not intend anything.
I do not mean to do any harm.
What do you want from me?
Am I such an enemy?
As there is one god I am a woman
like all women.
I do not mean any evil.
What should I do if the Almighty put into me
put into me such a kind of
... a bad eye?"

If she looks at me and

something happens, it has come from a bad eye.
If I stay at home.
I sit and eat dinner or supper.
This woman comes in
the kind of woman that
after her
after eating
I might get einehore...
Something can come over me.
I see that she goes away.
I take off my shoe and turn it upside down.
No harm will come."

IV. Treatment

By fire
Sacrifice
Smoke
A pleasing odor
Sympathy

("With the smoke everything bad should go away.
Just as I don't know how it came
so I should not know where it's going.")

Enclose the afflicted in a ring of smoke
or beneath the bed
Burn:
an umbilical cord kept for this purpose
one of the willow twigs from the Succos hoshanna
the last bit of a havdala candle
a splinter of wood from the shul.

Pass a spoonful of salt over
the child's head
3 times in a circle. Then
throw it in the fire
and the child will sleep.

By water
Leibel:
"My grandmother used to drive off the evil eye. She bathed the
child with the edge of her long skirt dipped in urine."

or
It's very good to spit
in the child's mouth
especially when he yawns.
A young boy's is the best spit
even better is the spit from someone
who hasn't eaten yet
whose stomach is empty.

or
In a glass you throw 9
pieces of coal 3
times.
Counting, on the 1st and 3rd times
"Not 1
Not 2
Not 3
Not 4
Not 5
Not 6
Not 7
Not 8
Not 9." On the 2nd time you count
"Not 9
Not 8
Not 7
Not 6
Not 5
Not 4
Not 3
Not 2
Not 1." With this water
from flowing water
into which one has thrown
a little salt
wash the face and breast
and then
pour out the water:
on the doorhinges:
under the threshold:
in the oven: or in
any non-place.

By earth, by matter

Powder the dried cord
and give it to the child
in a little water.
or
Cut bread with the black knife
a clip of fingernail
into the bread
fed to a bitch
or dog.

or
Under the bed throw:
earth
gathered from 3 thresholds;
a piece of clothing
from the one who gave
the evil eye;
or throw pieces of coal
or salt
over his doorstep.

By charm
In silence, in whispers, facing east
Schneider:
"I once asked
'Tell me what it is, woman
what a good eye means.
How do you cast out a good eye?'
She says
'This is a secret.'
I say
'Teach me the secret. I should know too.'
She says
'I am only an old Jewish woman
Should I teach you to cast out a good eye?
It's nothing with nothing.
One time it may succeed
and one time it may not succeed.'
She teaches me.
She says:

'Woe is the child
So is the mama.'

She takes the corner of her dress or apron
She chants
'Orene borene
corones orike
greyuns and beuns
corones orike
blachere beuns:
he who gave you the good eye
from his head his own eyes fly.'

Or:
'In the rafters two cracks lie
in wait to catch the evil eye.
Cracks in all the corners lie
in wait to catch the evil eye.'

Or:
'No evil, no terror
no wheat and no bran
May Sarah abandon
her crying and pain.
Not til the ceiling crops with rye
shall she receive an evil eye.'

V. Prophylaxis

Positive:
A red band
around the wrist or neck.

A hen's head at the headboard

earrings, rings, necklaces
coins
coins on a string
coins of metal
coins to bribe the evil eye
coins blessed by a religious Jew.

When you see a new born child
you say
"Look I have no pockets
no place to hide the evil eye."

When you hold a nursing child
go back three steps.

Negative:
Dont count people in a room
or if you do, say: "Not one
"Not two, not three..."

Dont say how old you are.
Dont praise people.
Dont look at anyone directly.
Dont eat in front of a stranger.

Or if you do
when you are through
say
"KINEINEHORE"
and
spit
3
times.

Tunkan—the stone god—is the oldest spirit, we think, because he is the hardest. He stands for creation, you know, like the male part. Hard, upright, piercing—like the lance- and arrow-heads fashioned from it in the old days.

Inyan Wasicun Wakan—the Holy White Stone Man—that's what we call Moses. He appeals to us. He goes up all alone to the top of his mountain like an Indian, to have his vision, be all alone with his God, who talks to him through fire, bushes and rocks. Moses, coming back from the hill carrying stone tablets with things scratched on them—he would have made a good Indian medicine man.

—Tahca Ushte (John Fire Lame Deer), in Lame Deer Seeker of Visions, 1973
The account originally appeared in Celtic Heritage by Alwyn & Brinley Rees (Thames & Hudson, 1961) & was isolated as "found poem" in Paul Evans' magazine, Eleventh Finger 4 (Sussex, England, 1968). Compare the exclusion of aboriginal Celtic poetry (Irish, Welsh, Cornish, etc) from British anthologies with the situation vis a vis Indian traditions in U.S.A.

(Celtic)

From THE VOYAGE OF MAELDUIN: "The Fabulous Islands"

Maelduin, discovering that his father was killed by brigands, built a boat & sailed with his foster-brothers to avenge him. These are the Fabulous Islands they visited.

An island of Enormous Ants, each as large as a foal.

An island of Great Birds.

An island with a Fierce Beast, like a horse but with clawed feet like a hound's.

An island of Giant Horses, with a demon horse-race in progress.

An island where the sea hurls salmon through a stone valve into a house.

An island of Trees. Maelduin cuts a rod and each of the three apples that appear on it sustain him for forty nights.

An island with a Wondrous Beast, which can turn its body round inside its skin and revolve its skin around its body.

An island of Beasts like Horses, tearing the flesh from one another's sides until the island runs with blood.

An island of Fiery Swine, which feed by day on the fruit of golden apple-trees and sleep by night in caverns while sea-birds come to eat the apples.

The island of the Little Cat. Here they enter a deserted white house, full of treasure, four stone pillars in the middle of it and a small cat leaping from one pillar to the next. They partake of the food and drink they find there, and then they sleep. Before they leave, one of Maelduin's foster-brothers takes a necklace from the wall. The cat leaps through him like an arrow and he falls a heap of ashes. Maelduin, who has forbidden theft, replaces the necklace.

An island of Black and White. This is divided into two by a brass palisade, black sheep on one side, white on the other. Tending them is a big man who sometimes puts a black sheep among the white or a white among the black. Immediately it changes color. Maelduin throws a peeled white wand into the black section and it turns black.

An island of Giant Cattle and Huge Swine, separated by a river that burns like fire.

The island of the Mill and the Giant Miller. "Half the corn of your country," he says,
"is ground here. Here comes to be ground all that men begrudge to one another."

An island of Black Mourners, all wailing and weeping. One of Maelduin's foster-brothers joins them. He too weeps and, no longer recognizable, is left behind.

An island with Four Fences—of gold, silver, brass and crystal—which divides it into four parts, containing kings, queens, warriors, and maidens, respectively.

An island with a Great Fortress approached by a Glass Bridge. The bridge throws back those who seek to cross it. There is a beautiful maiden who thrice rebuffs the voyagers and then welcomes each by his name, saying that their coming has long been a matter of established knowledge. His men try to woo the maiden for Maelduin, but she replies that she has never known sin. They ask her again and she promises them an answer on the morrow. When they awake they find themselves at sea in their boat and there is no sign of the island.

An island of Shouting Birds.

The island of Birds and One Solitary Anchorite, clothed only in his long hair. He had come there standing on a sod of his native land, and God had made an island of it, adding a foot's breadth and one tree to it every year. The birds are the souls of his children and his kindred who are awaiting Doomsday. They are all fed by angels. He prophesies that Maelduin's company shall reach their country, all except one man.

An island with a Wondrous Fountain, which yields water and whey on Fridays and Wednesdays, milk on Sundays and some feast-days, and ale and wine on other feast-days.

An island with a Great Forge worked by a Giant Smith.

A Sea like Glass. "Great was its splendor and its beauty."

A Thin Sea, like a transparent cloud, and beneath it a fair land where they see a monstrous beast in a tree surrounded by cattle. In spite of the vigilance of an armed man, the beast stretches down its neck and devours the largest ox of the herd.

An island whose people shout "It is they!" at the voyagers, as though they knew of their coming and feared them.

An island with an Arch of Water, like a rainbow full of salmon, rising on one side of it and falling on the other.

A great Square Silver Column rising from the sea, its top out of sight, but with a silver net stretching from it away into the sea. Diuran hacks away a piece of the net as they go under it. (On his return to Ireland, he offers it at the high altar of Armagh.) A voice speaks in a strange tongue from the summit of the pillar.

An island on a Single Pedestal, a door in its base.

An island of Women. Here Maelduin and his seventeen men are received by a queen and her seventeen daughters. The women feast them, sleep with them, and try to induce them to remain there to live a life of perpetual pleasure and eternal youth. They stay for three months of winter which seem like three years and the men weary of it. When they
They stay for three months of winter which seem like three years and the men weary of it. When they embark, the queen throws a ball of thread which clings to Maelduin's hand and she hauls in the boat. She does this three times, and after each attempt to leave they stay another three months. The next time Maelduin lets one of his men catch the ball and again it clings to the hand, but Diuran strikes off the man's hand and they escape.

An island with Trees bearing Great Berries which yield intoxicating and slumber-inducing juices.

The island of the Hermit and the Ancient Eagle. A great bird alights on a hill above a lake and eats great red berries, fragments of which fall into the lake and redden it. The bird's plumage is decayed, but two eagles come and pick off the vermin and old feathers. The next day the great bird plunges into the lake, and it is further groomed until its feathers are glossy and its flight becomes swift and strong. Watching it they apprehend the words of the prophet: "Thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." Diuran bathes in the lake, and so long as he lives he loses not a tooth nor a hair, nor suffers illness nor infirmity.

The island of Laughter. The last of Maelduin's foster-brothers lands, laughs with the multitude there and has to be abandoned.

An island with a Revolving Rampart of Fire. When the doorway comes opposite them, they see inside handsome, luxuriously-clothed people bearing vessels of gold, and the air is filled with music.

The island of the Monk of Torach, who has robbed the church and put to sea with its treasures. On the instructions of a supernatural personage he had thrown his possessions overboard and let go his oars and his rudder. Eventually he landed on this rock where he was miraculously fed. He counsels Maelduin to forgive his father's slayer because God had preserved him and his men through manifold perils.

An island on which they see a Falcon like the falcons of Ireland. Following it, they row until they sight their native land. They are welcomed on the island of the slayer, where Maelduin's coming is even then the subject of conversation.

The Nature of my Work is Visionary or Imaginative; it is an endeavour to Restore what the Ancients call'd the Golden Age.

—William Blake
THE BARDIC MUSEUM,
OF
PRIMITIVE BRITISH LITERATURE;
AND OTHER ADMIRABLE RARITIES;
FORMING THE SECOND VOLUME OF THE
Musical, Poetical, and Historical Relicks
OF
The Welsh Bards and Druids:
DRAWN FROM AUTHENTIC DOCUMENTS OF REMOTE ANTIQUITY;
(WITH GREAT PAINS NOW RESCUED FROM OBLIVION.)
AND NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED:
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The Tombs of the Warriors, of King Arthur and His Knights; Regalias;
The Wonders of Wales, et cætera:
WITH
ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS AND HISTORIC ILLUSTRATIONS:
LIKEWISE,
The Ancient War-Tunes of the Bards: Viz.
The Tâlibanau; Gwâddjanau; Blaenau; Lâlףjdonau; Dettyddau; Tgyrâu; Cwyjneddau; Hymns;
Pastorals; Jigs; and Delights:
To These National Melodies Are Added
NEW BASSES; WITH VARIATIONS,
For
The Harp, or Harpsichord;
Violin, or Flute;
(Dedicated by Permission to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales,)
BY EDWARD JONES,
BARD TO THE PRINCE.

Let us now praise famous men,
The Lord hath wrought great glory by them, through his great power from the beginning
Such as did bear rule in their kingdoms, men renowned for their power, giving counsel by their
understandings, and declaring prophecies;
Leaders of the people by their counsels, and by their knowledge of learning meet for the people, wise,
and eloquent in their instructions.
Such as found out Musical Tunes, and recited Verses in writing.
All these were honoured in their generations, and were the glory of their times.
Ecclesiasticus, Chap. xlv. ver. 1, &c.

"Non esse dies stultorum fortitudo Antiquitatum;"  "Inquirit, invenies mens Rubrum, sed Rejam."

LONDON: Printed by A. Strahan, Printer-Street,
For the Author, 1802:
And Sold at No. 3, in Green Street, near Grosvenor Square.
(Price 1s. 6d.)
Entered at Stationers' Hall.
In the last two years of his life, Harry Crosby (1898-1929) had developed into a major image-making poet. The myth he unfolded was of the Sun—both as male & female—and he followed its orders through a striking series of structural innovations. Editor of Black Sun Press in Paris (which published works by Hart Crane, Archibald MacLeish & D.H. Lawrence, along with his own first books), Crosby's verse experiments included the use of found forms (racing charts, book lists, stock reports, etc.) & concrete poetry, all concerned with sun-related imagery. After his suicide in 1929, several volumes appeared, with introductions by Eliot, Lawrence & Pound, among others. But in the anti-"modernist" reaction of the 1930s he was turned into a virtual non-person. In the context of the 1970s & "alcheringa" (dream time), the importance of his vision would seem clear.

—J.R.

Harry Crosby

POEMS & PROSE-POEMS FOR THE SUN

Photoheliograph
(for Lady A.)

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Short Introduction to the Word

1) Take the word Sun which burns permanently in my brain. It has accuracy and alacrity. It is monomaniac in its intensity. It is a continual flash of insight. It is the marriage of Invulnerability with Yes, of the Red Wolf with the Gold Bumblebee, of Madness with Ra.

2) Birdileaves, Goldabbits, Fingertoes, Auroramor, Barbarifire, Parabolaw, Peaglecock, Lovegown, Nombrilomane.

3) I understand certain words to be single and by themselves and deriving from no other words as for instance the word I.

4) I believe that certain physical changes in the brain result in a given word — this word having the distinguished characteristic of unreality being born neither as a result of conotation nor of conscious endeavor: Starlash.

5) There is the automatic word as for instance with me the word Sorceress; when the word goes on even while my attention is focused on entirely different subjects just as in swimming my arms and legs go on automatically even when my attention is focused on subjects entirely different from swimming such as witchcraft for instance or the Sorceress.

Tattoo

I am the criminal whose chest is tattooed with a poinard above which are graven the words “mort aux bourgeois”. Let us each tattoo this on our hearts. I am the soldier with a red mark on my nakedness — when in a frenzy of love the mark expands to spell Mad Queen. Let us each tattoo our Mad Queen on our heart.

I am the prophet from the land of the Sun whose back is tattooed in the design of a rising sun. Let us each tattoo a rising sun on our heart.
Pharmacie du Soleil

calcium iron hydrogen sodium nickel magnesium cobalt silicon aluminium titanium chromium strontium manganese vanadium barium carbon scandium yttrium zirconium molybdenum lanthanum niobium palladium neodymium copper zinc cadmium cerium glucinum germanium rhodium silver tin lead erbium potassium iridium tantalum osmium thorium platinum tungsten ruthenium uranium.

Academy of Stimulants

Do you know what an explosion is or a madness? Do you know the three great elements in an attack? Do you know the voltage required to create a current between the artery of the heart and the Sun?

Madman

When I look into the Sun I sun-lover sun-worshipper sun-seeker when I look into the Sun (sunne sonne soleil sol) what is it in the Sun I deify—

His madness: his incorruptibility: his central intensity and fire: his permanency of heat: his candle-power (fifteen hundred and seventy-five billions—1,575,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000): his age and duration: his dangerousness to man as seen by the effects (heatstroke, insolation, thermic fever, siriasis) he sometimes produces upon the nervous system: the healing virtues of his rays (restores youthful vigor and vitality is the source of health and energy oblivionizes ninety per cent of all human aches and pains): his purity (he can penetrate into unclean places brothels privies prisons and not be polluted by them): his magnitude (400 times as large as the moon): his weight two octillions of tons or 746 times as heavy as the combined weights of all the planets:) his brilliance (5300 times brighter than the dazzling radiance of incandescent metal): his distance from the earth as determined by the equation of light, the constant of abberation, the parallactic inequality of the moon (an aviator flying from the earth to the sun would require 175 years to make the journey): his probable union in a single mass with the earth in the far-distant past: the probability that in some remote future he will begin to grow colder (there is a turning point in the life of every star): his allotropic variations: his orbital motion: his course through the
zodiac: his motion among the stars: his path along the ecliptic: his wingéd disk: his chariot: his diameter and dimensions: his depth and density, his rotation: his contraction: his daily appearance and disappearance: his image tattooed on my back: his image formed in my mind: the colors of his spectrum as examined with special photographic plates, with a spectroheliograph, with an altazimuth, with a pyrhlomelimeter, with an actionometer, with the bolometer the radiomicrometer, the interferometer: his unhabitability: the festivals held in his honor: the horses sacrificed in his honor: the verses recited in his honor: the dances danced by the Red Indians in his honor: the masks worn by the Aztecs in his honor: the self-torture endured by the Incas in his honor: his importance to the life of the earth, cut off his rays for even a single month and the earth would die: his importance to the life of the soul, cut off his rays for even a single hour and the soul would die: his importance to the life of the soul, cut off his rays for even a single hour and the soul would die: his disturbing influence on the motions of the moon: his attraction for Venus: his turbulence during a Transit of Venus: his contacts with Venus (internal and external) his cosmical significance: his splendor and strength, as symbolised by the seminal energy of the ox: his gold-fingered quietness in late Autumn: his whiteness in the Desert: his cold redness in Winter: his dark and sinister appearance before a Storm: his solid rotundity: his definiteness of form: his politeness in stopping for Joshua: his fascination for Icarus: his importance to the Ancient Mariner: his momentousness to the Prophet: his affiliation with Heliogabalus who married him to the Moon: his mad influence over Aknaton: the reproductions of him by Van Gogh: the reproductions of him on old coins, on the American Twenty-dollar gold piece, (the Eagle and the Sun) on the jackets of jockeys, on soap advertisements, in old wood-cuts, in kindergarten blackboards, on the signs of old taverns: his tremendous influence on religions (among the Vedic Indians, among the Ancient Greeks, among the Ancient Romans, among the Babylonians and Assyrians, among the Ancient Egyptians, among the Hindoos, among the Japanese): the temples erected to his glory (in particular the great sun-temple of Baalbek): his power of consuming souls: his unconcealed love for sun-dials (true as the dial to the sun): the height he attains at the meridian: his family of asteroids: the occurrence of his name in ornithology, witness the sun bittern (eurypyga helias): among the vertebrates, witness the sun-fish or basking shark: in horticulture, witness the tournesol, the heliotrope, the sunflower (helianthus annus) the marigold and the solsaece (from the word solsequium — sun-following): his light—an uninterrupped continuance of gradation from the burning sunshine of a tropical noon to the pale luminosity that throws no shadow: his faculae and flocculi: his pederastic friendship with the Man in the Moon: the smallness of the target he offers to a meteorite (sohl) arrowing toward him from infinity: the different behaviours of his spectral lines which are believed to originate at different levels and the relative Doppler displacements of the same spectral lines as given by his receding and advancing limbs: his importance in the Nebular Hypothesis: his personification in the form of a mirror in Japan: in the form of Ra in Egypt: his halos, rainbows and mirages: his eclipses, in particular the great Egyptian Eclipse of May 17 1882: his nakedness: his red effrontery: his hot-tempered intolerance: his attraction for the earth (equal to the breaking strain of a steel rod three thousand miles in diameter) : his temperature (if he were to come as near as the moon, the solid earth would melt like wax): his reflection in the eyes of a girl (perihelion and aphelion) his mountains
of flame which thrust upward into infinity: the fantastic shapes of his eruptive prominences (solar-lizards sun-dogs sharp crimson in color): his brilliant spikes or jets, cyclones and geysers, vertical filaments and columns of liquid flame: the cyclonic motion of his spots: his volcanic restlessness: his contortions: his velocity of three or four hundred miles an hour: his coronoidal discharges: his cyclonic protuberances, whirling fire spouts, fiery flames and furious commotions: his tunnel-shaped vortices: his equatorial acceleration: his telluric storms: his vibrations: his acrobatics among the clouds: his great display of sun-spots: his magnetic storms (during which the compass-needle is almost wild with excitement): his prominences that have been seen to rise in a few minutes to elevations of two and three hundred thousand miles: his frenzy of turmoil: his periodic explosions: his madness in a lover’s heart.

I Climb Alone

I climb alone above the timber line to burn with the setting sun. She is my paramour. Below in the valley the shadows lurk like a pack of wolves. The frozen lake is round like a zero. The smoke of a fire curves upwards into a question mark. The tall fir trees are sentinels guarding the virginity of the mountain. The setting sun disarms them kisses the snow-covered breast of the mountain. And I am jealous and the sun sets. And I leave my flock of stars and wander all night in quest of the lost sun. I am impatient desperate mad. I go swiftly in proud fury. In my haste in the darkness I knock against trees. My body is bruised against boulders. I am frozen by mountain torrents. At last there is a filament of gold. There is the color of the dawn. There is the rising sun burning with gold. She comes towards me as I stand naked on the highest mountain top. The flock of stars have vanished but the Sunstar rises. I feel my eyes filling with fire. I feel the taste of fire in my mouth. I can hear fire.

Fragment of an Etude for a Sun-Dial

let the Sun shine
(and the Sun shone)

on a wooden dial
in the garden of an old castle
(dumb when the Sun is dark)

on a pillar dial
in the Cimetière de l’Abbaye de Longchamp
(blessed be the name of the Sun for all ages)
on the wall of an imaginary house
Rue du Soleil Paris
(the initials of the makers H.C. and C.C. and date October Seventh 1927 are on the face)
(true as the dial to the Sun)

on a small stone dial
over the door of a farm
(Sole oriente orior
Sole ponente cubo)

on the exterior of a ring dial
worn on the finger of the Princess Jacqueline
("Es-tu donc le Soleil pour vouloir que je me tourne vers toi?")

on the dial on the south wall
of a tower
(the Sun is the end of the journey)

and there is a second dial
on the north wall
(I tarry not for the slow)

on a dial
over an archway in a stableyard
(norma del tempo infallibile io sono)
(I am the infallible measure of the time)

on a dial
in a garden in Malta

on a dial at Versailles

on an old Spanish dial
(the dial has now, 1928, disappeared a railroad line having been taken through the garden where it stood)
on the wall of the
Bar de la Tempete at
Breast facing the sea
(c'est l'heure de boire)

on a small brass dial in
the British Museum
on a silver dial in the
Museum at Copenhagen
on a gold dial in the
soul of a Girl
(“mais à mon âme la nécessité de ton âme”)

let the Sun shine
(and the Sun shone)

on a dial placed upon the
deck of the Aeolus
in the harbor of New London
on a dial placed upon the
deck of the Aphrodisiac
in the harbor of Brest
on a dial placed upon
the deck of the Aurora
in the harbor of my Heart
(“et quelques-uns en eurent connaissance”)

let the Sun shine
(and the Sun shone)

on pyramids of stones
on upright stones in
ancient graveyards
on upright solitary stones
on bones white-scattered on the plain
the white bones of lions in the sun
the white lion is the phallus of the Sun
“I am the Lions I am the Sun”

on the dial of Ahaz who
reigned over Judah
on a rude horologe in Egypt
("as a servant earnestly desireth the shadow")

on the eight dials of
the Tower of the Winds at Athens

on old Roman coins
unburied from the ground

on the twin sundials on
the ramparts of Carcassone

on the pier at Sunderland
(and where is the sound of the pendulum?)

on the sun-dials on the mosques
of Saint Sophia
of Muhammed
and of Sulimania

on the immense circular block of carved porphyry in the Great Square of the City of Mexico

on Aztec dials
on Inca dials
(Femme offre ton Soleil en adoration aux Incas)

on Teutonic dials built into the walls of old churches

on the dial of the Durer Melancholia
(above the hour-glass and near the bell)
on the white marble slab
which projects from the
facade of Santa Maria Della Salute
on the Grand Canal Venice

on the dial of the Cathedral at Chartres
(“the strong wind and the snows”)

on a bedstead made of bronze
(and Heliogabalus had one of solid silver)

on a marriage bed
(lectus genialis)
on a death bed
(lectus funebrius)

on a bed
style à la marquise
(“ayant peur de mourir lorsque je couche seul”)

on a bed
lit d’ange

on a flower bed
on a bed of mother-of-pearl
on a bordel bed
on a bed of iniquity
on a virgin bed
on a bed of rock

To God the Sun Unconquerable
to the peerless Sun, we only

let the Sun shine
(and the Sun shone)

Soli Soli Soli
The Ten Commandments

And the Sun-God spake all these words saying:
I am the Sun thy God which have brought thee out of the land of the Philistines out of the
house of bondage.
Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
Thou shalt not be a slave
Thou shalt never pull down the Flag of Fire.
Remember to be strong and arrogant and lion-hearted. Stamp on the weak.
Remember the pearl of great price.
Honour thy Rimbaud and thy Princess Mad that thy days may be as a comet upon the land
which the Sun thy God giveth thee.
Put on the armour of light wield the sword of fury and prepare your bed of delight.
Prehendere, to catch hold of your soul as a talent of pure fire enter into the absolute
possession of this fire make a chain to preserve this fire attack to defend this fire.
Be a bird in flight, be an arrow whizzing over their heads.
Thunder with the drum! Blare with the Trumpet of the Future!

... My own opinion is that we are now experiencing a surfacing (in a specifically "American" incarnation) of the Great Subculture which goes back as far perhaps as the late Paleolithic.

This subculture of illuminati has been a powerful undercurrent in all higher civilizations. In China it manifested as Taoism, not only Lao-tzu but the later Yellow Turban revolt and medieval Taoist secret societies; and the Zen Buddhists up till early Sung. Within Islam the Sufis; in India the various threads converged to produce Tantrism. In the West it has been represented largely by a string of heresies starting with the Gnostics, and on the folk level by "witchcraft."

Buddhist Tantrism, or Vajrayana as it's also known, is probably the finest and most modern statement of this ancient shamanistic-yogic-gnostic-socioeconomic view: that mankind's mother is Nature and Nature should be tenderly respected; that man's life and destiny is growth and enlightenment in self-disciplined freedom; that the divine has been made flesh and that flesh is divine; that we not only should but do love one another. This view has been harshly suppressed in the past as threatening to both Church and State. Today, on the contrary, these values seem almost biologically essential to the survival of humanity.

—Gary Snyder, Earth House Hold
NOTE TO HARRY CROSBY’S “TORCHBEARER” (1931)

The flavours of the peach and the apricot are not lost from generation to generation, neither are they transmitted by booklearning. The mystic tradition, any mystic tradition, is of a similar nature, that is, it is dependent on direct perception, a “knowledge” as permanent as the faculty for receiving it.

De Boschere, with what we take for Belgian pessimism, suggests that the mystic’s incapacity to transmit his vision is “perhaps the sole indication we have of any supernal justice.”

Crosby’s poems might better be turned over to a theologian for criticism than to a professedly analytical critic of letters, but there are no theologians left. Mr. Eliot sighs for an intellectual laity (vide Thoughts after Lambeth) but he might sigh equally vainly for an intellectual clergy, which latter, by now, lies almost beyond the borders of human imagination.

There is more theology in this book of Crosby’s than in all the official ecclesiastical utterance of our generation. Crosby’s life was a religious manifestation. His death was, if you like, a comprehensible emotional act, that is to say if you separate five minutes from all conditioning circumstance and refuse to consider anything Crosby has ever written. A death from excess vitality. A vote of confidence in the cosmos.

Confessed or unconfessed, analyzed or unanalyzed the art work, the poem, rests on a religious basis in the sense that there has to be a general Anschauung, a general disposition or relation to the totality, to a chaos or cosmos. I take it that Crosby was more concerned with the totality of this relation than with any particular verbal manifestation.

His Ten Commandments are a finer document than the one stowed away in Genesis or Exodus or wherever. They are pure doctrine and, as such, unacceptable in a world of compromise. They refute my first impression, dating from three years ago, that Crosby would never attain his maximum of efficiency in verbal manifestation.

You may broadcast a doctrine but you can scarcely broadcast the nature of a sacrament. On this rock the official churches have foundered. The difficulty of indoctrinating barbarians en masse was too great.

But the sacrum, the thing kept silent, persists. Padre X. attended the Russian Ballet and said that then for the first time he understood how the mass should be celebrated.

For twenty five years I have refrained from writing about religion, or when I have written anything I have destroyed it. It was on the tip of my mind to use these pages for a manifesto, which would nevertheless be out of place. Crosby’s message is to his own disciples, that is, to those who will understand it and who would only be annoyed by the exposition of yet another doctrine like it in some ways, and yet different.

Crosby’s first book brought me the pleasure that one might conceivably have in seeing an ally, let us say a natural ally who wd. probably never join one in any particular enterprise. After ten years of cerebralism, of intellectualism, some one at last started with what I incline to consider a sense of the poetic values, as distinct from the prose values of clear observation, or literary values, capacity for delineation and so forth.

Given the illumination there “arises” the question of art and of the critic’s judgement. Not that the critic’s judgement has ever created even a single line of iambic.

I take it one could make a very small but unassailable book by isolating the clear and unlaboured lines.

“I feel my eyes filling with fire. I feel the taste of fire in my mouth.”
“I can hear fire” is evidence for the cognoscenti. I do not know whether the general reader will know that it does not refer to something quite different from hearing the crackling of something burning. I imagine that any professor of rhetoric could fill as many pages as might be offered him with the discussion of similar questions. It never occurred to me that Crosby would submit himself to a technical discipline. Our intuitions, or my intuitions are usually right, but almost never foreknow the event or the ultimately discovered reason for their foreboding.

I felt three years ago that the author of “Chariot of the Sun” would not submit to certain technical pedagogies; that what he was to know he would know by immediate contact and not be having his elders tell him. Put it that he was too much alive to bother or that there was too much else in living, and too great an ease of circumstance. There were careers cut short in his decade. Walsh knew he was doomed and was trying desperately to get results in the time granted. Weeks was I think caught unsuspecting. His poems came to me as editor and I did not print them because it always seemed that, within a few months or fortnights, he would be writing so much better.

I am not sure that anyone will understand Crosby, in fact I think they will probably misunderstand him completely if they read his pages as promise of work unfulfilled. There is an antithesis between artist and illuminatus. Perhaps only craftsmen and gens de lettres will boggle and stumble over a matter that the plain man will take as a matter of course. The poet is there to tell him, the plain man, of countries unknown.

As artist I take it we find Crosby’s measure in “Fire-Eaters,” in the sense that this is a poem written, a dramatic lyric or persona, not the author’s personal statement. Ça commence.

In the rattle of achieved objectivity of the House of Ra, ça continue.

In this volume (The Mad Queen) we have good literature. I mean to say that the language becomes, to my point of view, satisfactory. I should incline to think the poem durable, meaning that the language will not be improved by tinkering.

These points can be discussed in classrooms and amid the foetor of American literary weeklies. Anybody but a blighted pedagogue subsidized to collect washlists and obstruct the onrush of letters will feel an ass in trying to concoct a preface to the magnificent finale.

“PREHENDERAE TO CATCH HOLD OF YOUR SOUL AS A TALENT OF PURE FIRE ENTER INTO ABSOLUTE POSSESSION OF THIS FIRE MAKE A CHAIN TO PRESERVE THIS FIRE ATTACK TO DEFEND THIS FIRE.”

An edition like the present seems to me no place for caution. The work is uneven. Very well. No two people will agree as to what should be omitted. Some of the dreams, in another volume, do not seem etc. etc. but they were left there in print by the author, and this is not a selected edition made to snatch at public attention. I should go beyond the author’s expressed intention and replace the suppressed parts of “Assassin.” Partly because the deletion itself is part of his assertion of values. Crosby’s disgust seems to me valuable. I have never seen why one should be expected to register pathos instead of disgust in the presence of certain phenomena. Doubtless all temperaments can not be expected to register the same sensation. When a social order ceases to satisfy even those who are most privileged by it, that order is very possibly ready for upset or alteration.

Perhaps the best indication one can give of Crosby’s capacity as a writer is to say that his work gains by being read all together. I do not mean this as a slight compliment. It is true of a small minority only.
Charles Olson

PROJECT (1951): "THE ART OF THE LANGUAGE OF MAYAN Glyphs"

"Christ, these hieroglyphs. Here is the most abstract and formal deal of all the things this people dealt out—and yet, to my taste, it is precisely as intimate as verse is. Is, in fact, verse. Is their verse. And comes into existence obeyed the same laws that, the coming into existence, the persisting of verse, does." (20 March 1951, Mayan Letters) Thus Olson to Robert Creeley some months after arrival in Campeche, Mex. Which would develop among other things into a project—never completed—to get at the glyphs first hand; or, as stated in the "title of project" he submitted, also 1951, to the Viking Fund & Wenner-Gren Foundation: "site investigations of Mayan glyphs (chiefly Copan, Yaxchilan, Piedras Negras and Palenque, with a formal expedition to Yaxchilan in collaboration with the Mexican artist Hipolito Sanchez and the epigraphist, Raul Pavon Abreu, both of the Campeche museum) as part of the field work in preparation for a book to be called 'The Art of the Language of Mayan Glyphs.'" What follows is the meat of the small essay Olson wrote for them, descriptive of the project & of the poetics behind it.—Eds.]

Both the scope and the significance of what I am doing here in the Mayan area—and now petition for aid to continue to do—are so involved with (1) the state which Mayan studies as a whole have reached and (2) with advantages I take to lie in approaching the same material from another methodological base, that there will be gain if I am permitted to describe these things at the same time that I outline my plan of work, time required, and publication prospects.

My own study is centered on hieroglyphic writing. The prime material for such study are the carved inscriptions, chiefly on stone, with a very few examples in wood, at the sites of the ancient Maya cities in Mexico, Guatemala, the Republic of, & British Honduras. There are two other primary sources: living Maya speech, especially the Yucatec and Chol dialects which appear to be closest to the spoken language in use at the time the hieroglyphic system of the writing was invented; and what "books" of that writing have survived—the three Codices, Paris, Dresden, Madrid, and the several Books of Chilam Balam. (The Codices are "written" in the actual glyphs, that is, they are "painted" by brush on a lime coating over a paper made of the wild fig; the Books of Chilam Balam are in modern Maya, written by an alphabet derived from Spanish, but are pretty definitely post-Conquest redactions of earlier hieroglyphic books like the Codices, at least uses of the material of same.) It is therefore clear that I am here to study the stone inscriptions and, coincident with residence in the Mayan area, to continue learning and using Mayan speech.

What has been done with this material up to now had to be concentrated on what now constitutes the great secondary source: the long work of the decipherment of the Mayan hieroglyphic system. For until the denotation of enough of the signs was known to declare the nature of the texts, little else could be done. And, aided at every point by seventy-five years of scientific archeology (I am taking Sir Alfred P. Maudslay's work as the first such to follow on John L. Stephens' discovery of the ruins of Maya civilization in 1839-41), the work of decipherment has gone steadily ahead, by way of the clues of the mathematics, astronomy and calendar system of the Maya, until today the denotations of one-third of the signs are known, and that an important third covering as it does what seems to have been the chief calendrical function of the stones—the recording of the movements of time and the planets.

The publication last year of J. Eric S. Thompson's "Maya Hieroglyphic Writing" by the Carnegie Institution marks the change. For he who is himself the climax of the great decipherers (Forstemann, Goodman, Bowditch, Beyer, Gates, Long and Teeple) argues, and demonstrates, the advantages to be got from opening up new paths, now that the paths to denotation, by way of calendrical decipherment, have begun to run out. In fact, he has forced forward, as a second huge secondary source, the whole panoply of beliefs, behaviours, objects, personages and stories which we are in the habit of
loosely calling the "mythology" of a people. Thompson includes the mythology of the neighbors of the Maya, to the north and south, as well.

My own purpose is to examine Mayan hieroglyphic writing without losing these gains but also without losing sight for an instant of another dominating control factor which has up to now, it is my impression, been obscured by the pressing necessities summarized above. It is this: Mayan "writing", just because it is a hieroglyphic system in between the pictographic and the abstract (neither was it any longer merely representational nor had it yet become phonetic) is peculiarly intricated to the plastic arts, is inextricable from the arts of its own recording (sculpture primarily, and brush-painting), in fact, because of the very special use the Maya made of their written stones (the religious purpose their recording of the movements of time and the planets seems to have served), writing, in this very important instance (important not only historically but also dynamically in terms of its use in cultures today), can rightly be comprehended only, in its full purport, as a plastic art.

So it has been the point of departure for my own researches that if Mayan hieroglyphic writing was examined exactly in its plastic relationships, was studied of, and for them (in other words was studied as close as it is now possible to how the Maya themselves brought it into being in the first place as well as to how they "published" the texts they "wrote" in it—even to the point of making the carved standing stones called stelae a focal element in the architectural plan of their cities) the laws of its nature, its making and its use should lie more open before us.

I confess I remain quite puzzled why this has not already been done. But then, it is only part of a greater puzzle, why Mayan art as a whole has not been engaged with anything like the vigor and intelligence the decipherers have brought to bear on the glyphs. For it is exactly the works of the major arts of sculpture, writing, architecture and painting which constitute the body of the material the Maya left behind them and that archeology has made available. And it is in these arts that the Maya have been considered supreme (by contrast, for example, to their neighbors who are usually taken to be superior in such other things as masonry and road-building, metals, ceramics, feather-work, plus, it is sometimes said, governmental and social organization.)

It is curious discrepancy, and one I am much confronted by in what I am doing, for what studies have been done of sculpture, architecture and painting are largely of a descriptive or historical nature, and almost the only studies of the writing — certainly the only valuable ones — have been done in the light thrown, not by the other arts, but from the chronology complex by way (again) of the great decipherers. Perhaps it is just that decipherment took up all the best energies, and that there was no real time or chance for an equal investigation of the arts. I don't know. But I should judge, from observation of the state of studies on other ancient civilizations, that it also has something to do with the important fact that only recently have men of art and language become capable of a scholarship like that of the Mayan decipherers, and that only now can we expect to get a methodology at once creative and morphological, thus able to produce studies of Maya art at least of equal validity to the work of said decipherers. In any case, in Mayan studies the decipherers have made themselves the measure, and my aim is to try to do a study exact enough to give the arts (and I include writing) the sort of attention I take it they deserve, admittedly dominating as they do the culture as it has survived to our use.

With these things in mind I have called the study, and the book I plan to be sum of the work here, "The Art of the Language of Mayan Glyphs". The "art" is a matter of the fact that a glyph is a design or composition which stands in its own space and exists — whether cut in stone or written by brush — both by the act of the plastic imagination which led to its invention in the first place and by the act of its presentation in any given case since. Both involved — I shall try to show — a graphic discipline of the highest order.
Simultaneously, the art is "language" because each of these glyphs has meanings arbitrarily assigned to it, denotations and connotations (it is the latter which have, up to now, proved so hard to come by), and because they are put together, are "written" over a whole stone (stela, altar, lintel, zoomorph, whatever) to make the kind of sense we speak of as language, however one must be on constant guard not to be "linguistic" about this language, not to confuse whatever "syntax" is here with what we are used to in the writing of phonetic language, in fact to stay as "plastic" throughout the examination as the Maya were in its making and to let this language itself— not even any other hieroglyphic system — declare what, for itself, are its own laws. I take it that such an examination ought to be of some considerable use to the scholarship of glyphs as well as of some certain use as a study of Mayan art.

My qualifications to do such a thing would seem to lie in a particular sort of scholarship and a particular sort of writing which, in their practice, have been one. They are what brought me to the methodology, and to Mayan hieroglyphs in particular. The scholarship was concentrated from the first on American civilization, with an increasing emphasis on the American Indian until, in 1948, I was granted my second Guggenheim fellowship precisely on the basis of research which was largely into Indian life — in that instance, how the coming of the whites impinged on it. The value of the writing to my work here would seem to be a matter of the insights which follow from the practice of it as a profession, particularly such graphic verse as a contemporary American poet, due to the work of his immediate and distinguished predecessors, does write. Two recent publications document the point of such practice, particularly as it applies to such things as Mayan glyphs: the essay on "Projective Verse" in Poetry New York No. 3, Fall, 1950, and the study of language in relation to culture, "The Gate and the Center", in Origin No. 1, Boston, Spring 1951. But I can state it here most quickly by using the words of John Milton which Mr. Thompson has had the insight to use as the epigraph to his glossary of Mayan glyphs. In his "A Tractate on Education" Milton puts what I have elsewhere called "the objectism of language" in these sharp words: he says, that though a linguist have all the tongues of the world, he would not be as wise as a yeoman or a tradesman if he did not have what they have from their dialects, the use of the "solid things" in speech "as well as the Words & Lexicon!"

It is these solid things which the Maya kept extraordinarily clear, and it is as my study is designed to get at them, at the way the Maya kept them alive in their writing and at the profound reasons in their life and make-up as a people why they did, that is distinguishes itself from what has preceded it, the way of the decipherers who gave us so much of the "lexicon" of glyphs. My emphasis is on the live stone, for all the value of its "relief" (it is this emphasis which makes the field work I am shortly to describe so essential) and, within any given stone, the analysis of two parts: not only the emphasis which makes the field work I am shortly to describe so essential) and, within any given stone, the analysis of two parts: not only the individual glyph and its elements (with the emphasis shifted from too close an attention to its denotation as "word" toward more understanding of its connotations, from its force as carved thing) but also that unit which dominates a stone visually and has heretofore received too little attention, the glyph-block, that "square" which can include up to 4 glyphs and which sets itself off into an area usually about 6 x 6 inches. The mechanics of the glyph-block (the way it organizes its glyphs and the way the glyph-blocks are organized to make up the "passage" of the whole stone) is the clue, my studies so far suggest, of the other important element of this art, time, as the Maya, great masters of time elsewhere, managed it here in their language. For the demand on my technique is a double one, the double nature of this unusual writing: it is at once object in space (the glyph) and motion on stone in time (the glyph-blocks).

But I am already getting inside the field work in progress, with its emphasis on plastic analysis, and I better, first, describe one further training I have
had for it and for my collaboration with the Campeche artist, Hipolito Sanchez. I describe our collaboration in some detail below, but the curious thing is, that all my joint work has been done with creative artists. It started with the Italian, and now American painter, Corrado Cagli (our last joint publication was the book y & x, Black Sun Press, Paris, with drawings by Cagli and designed by him). With Ben Shahn, during World War II, when we were both employees of the government, he in the Division of Graphics of the OWI, and I in charge of graphics for the Foreign Language Division, I did the pamphlet “The Spanish-Speaking Americans of the Southwest and the War”, published by the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs. And it was Joseph Alber, of the Bauhaus, Black Mountain College, and now Yale, who led me, two years ago, back to education as a member of the faculty at Black Mountain.

With that said we can square away at the plan of work. Let me preface it with what I was just saying about the results of the analyses Sanchez and I have so far made of the glyphs and glyph-blocks. The more we have examined and worked out devices to continue (1) to correlate the objects that the Maya levied of nature with the designs of the glyphs and their parts and (2) to graph the way these designs are moved from glyph to block to stone, the more it is borne home that his people’s vaunted brilliance about time and its recording (their invention of the concept of zero, their observations of the movements of Venus, the moon, the sun, their calendar) is not to be divided from their exactness about all the solid things which nature offered them and which, seized as they seized them and transposed them into their language, gives that language its exceptional subtleties and exactitudes. And it just might be the most important issue of the work (it has been so far) that by such reasoning from the stones alone, by staying inside the content of this sculptured writing and letting its achieved form solely dictate the conclusions, the precise specifics of the Mayan concept of nature and of time, can, for the first time, be defined. For what has so far come clear is, that in obedience to the phenomenal world, the Mayan imagination did very exactly maintain in the hieroglyphic writing the two things which the art of it seems to have demanded of them: the face and the proportion of nature in the glyph, resistant time in the composition of the glyph, the block and the stone.

The plan of work ahead divides itself naturally into two parts: (1) the site examination of the hieroglyphic stones both for themselves and as they are a part of the art complex, both of any given site and of the Mayan area as a whole; and (2), the publication of the results, or, in this case, because of the materials, the nature of the analysis and the necessity for illustration, what can better be called the “projection” of the results.

I am putting them together not because I think that the “projections,” especially the writing, can be done in anything like the year I am asking for support to finish the field work proper, but because, in the first six months of the field work which I myself have financed, I have found that there is material on one principal site which can be moved forward immediately and that, due to the peculiar necessities of the methodology and its material (not to speak of the peculiar complications of travel and camp-life in the Maya lowlands!) it makes a great deal of sense if some steps of the projection are carried out along with necessary expeditions.

The best way to make this obvious, and at the same time to make the field work now called for quite clear, is to summarize what fell to hand on the above mentioned site and what has been done with it. What I found, when I started work at the Campeche museum, was a collection of 115 pen-and-ink drawings completely and brilliantly recording all the stone inscriptions at one of the most important sites of all, Copan (in the Republic of Honduras close by the Guatemala border.) Now these drawings, despite all that has been done on Copan because of its importance as the scientific capital of the Classic Maya and as one of the four chief sculpture sites (in his monumental survey of hieroglyphic inscriptions, Sylvanus G. Morley found it necessary to give Copan a book by itself), despite all this these drawings are unique. Nor is it that they
are the first transcription of all the stones at one site. It is simply that they preserve the very quality of the carving of the stone, the very dimensional advantages of relief have been carried over successfully by pen on to paper.

I was introduced to Hipolito Sanchez by Gustav Stromsvik of the Carnegie Institution. Stromsvik had come to know the drawings when he had been in charge of the reconstruction, for the Institution, at Copan. I also knew from Stromsvik, before I met Sanchez or saw the drawings, that, because of them, Sanchez had been invited by the Carnegie and the Mexican government to join their joint expedition to newly discovered Bonampak in 1948 (the site of the finest murals now known in Chiapas, not far from the Usumacinta River). But I had to see the drawings myself to sense that Sanchez and his work was a perfect fit to my own work — a man of great plastic feeling and skill who was already at a great work, recording the glyphs in so sharp a way that one could feel them and read them as freshly as they must have been the day they came from the sculptors' hands. This has unusual value due to a fact I have not hitherto mentioned and an important one since all this is a matter of language, with the minutiae of details of which language is made up. It is this, that Mayan stones, especially the exterior ones, and they happen to be the very chief ones, the stelae, are much weathered and broken, so that the restoration that Sanchez's work represents is essential and is a work which even the camera or one's own eye, for that matter, cannot duplicate due to the problems of light on an instant. In other words, these drawings done on the spot over weeks and then, in this case, reworked for a year, are as important or in most cases more so than the reconstruction of buildings.

[A discussion follows of Sanchez's qualifications and of various schemes to publish and disseminate the drawings through museums, etc.—none of which seem to have been realized.—Eds.]

My field work proper, then — the site examination of the stones in place — comes to this:

I: If the Viking Fund sees fit to grant me aid I will proceed immediately to Copan, and establish myself in the village nearby the site to study the stelae (probably the finest of all), the altars, and the hieroglyphic staircase (the longest Maya inscription there is, containing some 1750 glyphs) and to work out their place in relation to the rest of the art and life of this principal city to the ends of the museum and book projects above, as well as to the use of Copan in my over-all study, "The Art of the Language of Mayan Glyphs". For Copan is the "fix" of any of this work and this trip to the site a must. I am allowing two months to cover it, considering that I am already, due to work done, especially the work with Sanchez here, very familiar with the inscriptions and with the literature of the city itself;

after Copan, basing myself on Guatemala City, I propose to visit the other major southern site for such study, Quirigua (easily accessible, on the railroad between Guatemala City and Puerto Barrios); though small, Quirigua is important for the high quality of its 12 sculptured stelae and the exceptional use made of 4 sculptured zoomorphs or huge animal forms made to emerge from the boulders used, and the glyphs incised on them ((time: two weeks —?));

and to go by chicle plane (the only sensible way in) to the ruins of Uaxactun and Tikal, both near each other (12 air miles) in the heart of the Peten of Guatemala, the two oldest sites known, mainly to touch base, to see for myself the first usage of the hieroglyphic stones in relation to architectural plan (especially, at Uaxactun, Group E, for the astronomical connection, and Group A), at Tikal likewise, plus what remains of the special use made there of carved wood doorlintels ((time required: three weeks to a month — in this case, because of the country, much dependence called for, on arrangements with others))

((total time, for 1, or southern part of field work: 3½ months, including study of collection at National Museum, Guatemala City, around 4 months))

Now, though there are in all about 1000 actual inscriptions distributed over a round 100 Mayan
Our purpose is to transcribe all of the inscriptions of this site, which are not only on monuments, as at other sites, but also on specific architectural elements as well — door lintels, door-steps, a monumental stairway, and molded in stucco on a facade. There are 124 inscriptions divided thus: 30 stelae, 21 altars, 59 lintels (the special mark of the site), 6 steps and a stairway, so far as is now known.

Though the site is only 4½ jornadas, as they call them here, 4½ days journey by mule or carreta beyond Tenosique, the jumping off place south of here (Tenosique is 12 hours by train from Campeche), it is Pavon's judgment, who knows the site, that the work as a whole calls for a year's expedition, with full equipment, doctor, radio, etc. But I do not now see that the use of the expedition to my own purposes can conceivably extend over such a length of time, despite the number of the texts, the special importance of the lintels, and the fact that Yaxchilan is the least worked, the least well known of the major sites — the last fact giving our planned work some certain archeological value. What seems to me now the most sensible arrangement is for me to enter Yaxchilan with the others, work with them as long as the study of the inscriptions in their place as parts of such important structures as those known as Structures 44, 21, 42, and 23 continues to feed my understanding of the writing and of the rest of the site, and then, probably using the Yaxchilan camp as a field base, pursue my studies at the other two principal sculpture sites nearby:

Piedras Negras, just off the route to and from Tenosique to Yaxchilan, and Palenque, the most accessible of all three, on the Campeche-Mexico railroad three hours beyond Tenosique. For the 74 texts of Piedras Negras, with its 22 consecutive 20-yr. marking stones extending from 608 — 810 AD unbroken, and its wall panels; and Palenque, with its extraordinary stucco sculpture, and its wall panels (these mark both these sites), including the magnificent full hieroglyphic tablet found in the 1949 excavations under my friend Alberto Ruz's direction — these two are quite as
important to me as Copan and Yaxchilan themselves. For the four of them are the four sites where sculpture and the hieroglyphic writing was at its very finest: (The climaxes of art here in the Usumacinta Valley are slightly earlier than at Copan, Palenque erecting her temples before 9.13.0.0.0 (692 AD), Yaxchilan hitting her peak 9.14.15.0.0 (726 AD), and Piedras Negras, the third of the tryptich, in 9.16.10.0.0 (761 AD). (‘Time: 4 month Yaxchilan, 2 each Palenque, PN.)

Which is about it (except for the chance that I may be asked to join the Mexican government expedition to Bonampak under the Mexican painter Augustin Villagra, but that will be, or not, before this petition will have had time to be acted on, and though there is one magnificent glyph stone at Bonampak, its chief value to me is the great painted murals in the House of the Tiger.) One thing I have not said is, that I have been able to be this definite about the work ahead because I do have the advantage of my work here in northern Yucatan. I have been able to see the full outline of the Maya and at the same time narrow myself down to the above sites for concentration because of the sites I have been able to get to here: the late cities of Chichen Itza and Uxmal (though I have found that the remains of earlier portions of both these sites are more valuable to me than the later, more dramatic and more acclaimed edifices, architecturally and for the aid they are into the morphology of Maya culture; the island of Jaina (still the puzzle it is, but its clay figurines a delightful gauge of the scope of Mayan modeling and carving); Kabah, Labna, Sayil and other ruins of the Puuc, or hill country, which, for their use of the roof-comb (especially its union, at Kabah, with a total cutting of the front facade into masks of the rain god Chac), have taught me prime lessons in Mayan architecture; and, last, the stelae of Edzna nearby and of small coast sites of my own finding and digging, which are the stelae on which I have cut my teeth (he said!), the first actual stones from which I have “read” hieroglyphic writing.

I hope I have now covered all the things which the Viking Fund should want to know. I have tried to be as full as possible, as requested. The presentation of a project in this area is complicated just by one of its pleasures, the collaborations called for. And in my case they are more than the usual ones which follow from the expeditions it takes to get into some, at least, of these sites. For the sites are more to me than ruins to be visited or excavated or reconstructed: they are quite literally “libraries” and “museums,” and they are the first such I didn’t just walk to, and in! On top of that, though — once in — the sculptures and paintings and buildings can be looked at like any others elsewhere, the other things, these stubborn carved stones, my “books” and “manuscripts” — they are not just read, like that, either! So if I have had to give space in this petition to the decipherers and to my man Sanchez, they deserve it for the great help they are. As well as this: the dependence of my own work on theirs, on the precisions of Sanchez’s lines, on the decipherments, leads me to think that the real reason why the house of Mayan art has not been entered is, that the only entrance is hieroglyphic writing, that only from these exactitudes and not from any assumed or traditional “aesthetic” considerations, that only by way of the freshness of the content of this sculptured writing can the forms be understood and presented, the forms that this art of language achieved inside itself and the forms that the other Mayan arts achieved along with it.

[Here ends the “essay” part of Olson’s projected contribution to the history and poetry of early American civilization. But the impulse goes clearly beyond the language of grant applications — however transmuted by Olson’s own voice — and remains central to much of the poetry and prose that follows. For which those coming fresh to Olson should get at the Mayan Letters, the seminal “Human Universe” essay, the various editions of letters and lectures, and the achieved poetry of the Maximus Poems and Archaeologist of Morning, wherein the vision finds its form. — J. R./D. T.]
THE STORY OF THE HUNCHBACKS

The Example of the Hunchbacks
What I will tell,
the example of the Hunchbacks.
How the Hunchbacks happened to end:
what the Hunchbacks did—their days ended.

Who will I send it to? to you, Allan Burns?

Allan Burns, I am here to tell you an example, the example of
the Hunchbacks.
The Hunchbacks that were; their days ended.
He said... It was said to Yum Saint Noey
by Yum... Yum Jesus Christ in the time when the world was
new before,
a new world before.
It was said then to the Saint Noey,

that he make a boat. He made a boat.
Well, Yum Saint Noey had good thoughts. Not bad thoughts.
All of the Old Ones of the town, the people of the town,
he said to them, "Well, all of you, it was just said to me that I
make a boat.
But I'm telling you,

You have to help me as it's such a big job I will do, such a large
boat I will make,
so that all of the friendly animals can enter."

The Hunchbacks answered: "You must be jerking off.
What day? What's a boat for?
For how many days it hasn't... it hasn't rained water here.
The land is always moist.
The earth gets water all the time."

Well then,
for one hundred... one hundred years
that Yum Saint Noey made that boat.

After all, he wasn't helped one bit by the Old Ones of the town—
the Hunchbacks.
The Hunchbacks saw so quickly that truly, the clouds rose up.
In the East, all, all was covered by the clouds.
"Ahh..." the Hunchbacks said then,
"Ahh, the boat that Noey is making will quickly rot—he won't get
off on it.
Wood."

"Not like ours—let's make a boat then,
limestone."

After they carved the boat out of limestone,
they drilled a drain hole so that the water wouldn't fill it up.
When the water would fill the little boat, it would drain out.
Uhuh, like that.

Well,
the rain began to fall. Forty days and forty nights.
Eighty days the sacred water fell.
The sacred water rose right up to
twenty five feet. It went up until it touched the horizon.
The sacred water was to the tops of the trees.
Well, how much, then... everything ended then.

Well, he saw then, then he saw...
All of the animals there in the jungle
All of the animals came together then.
The day the boat was finished,
it is said at midnight,
mmmmmm how many came? all of them,

Came to enter the boat.

Well, Yum Saint Noey got up too. He said, "What's coming?
What's that noise like so many horses coming?"
They all went into the boat.

Well, just when Saint Noey looked, "What next?"
He didn't know what the boat was for. He didn't know...
wasn't told why he made the boat.
He was just told to build the boat with a lot of rooms.

Well,
they,
all of the animals were stuffed in—all in pairs.
Two by two. Two of everything, like two wild pigs, two deer, two yuc, two gophers, two haleb, All of the species, even the birds. All in pairs, all went into the boat.

Well later, came a small baby girl, her eyes were just YELLOW-GREEN. A little WOMAN. A little woman. She said, "Mr. Noey, please take me into your boat."

"I'm so poor. I'll... I'll have to die here too, I'll also have to die here." That's what the woman said. That woman, what was she? When it was done, that woman wasn't a person—an evil thing, a snake!

The snake—it just had YELLOW-GREEN EYES. It went and asked for a place. Well, if it wasn't given a place then, today there wouldn't be any seeds of that snake.

Well, the sacred water went up to twenty five feet. It touched the horizon. The rain fell. Eighty days it fell—forty nights and forty days it fell.

Well, the vulture was sent then to see.

Forty days and forty nights The rain came down. The vulture was sent to see if the earth had dried up.

Well, the vulture came down to the earth. What did it carry off as a sign? As a signal, what did it carry off? What did the vulture carry off? It carried off WORMS—the WORMS of dead things, of all of the dead people—that's what it carried off. It came to the presence of True God. It threw up what it carried.
It just threw up WORMS,
that VULTURE.
True God said, "No. Not very good.
Bad."
This is how what you see came to be. The vulture was cursed:
"Anything spoiled that you see, you'll just have to eat it. That is how you will live."

It was said then,
The Jay was sent then,
Then the Jay was sent,
The Jay,
just ate seeds.
The Dove was sent
to see how the world was.
The Dove arrived on earth here,

What did the sacred Dove swallow? just sacred CORN.
It carried it off.
Well, because of this, that sacred... sacred

Dove wasn't killed.
It can just dive into sacred water and doesn't die.
It's said that it is nourishing.

Well, those... all of those millions of animals,
large seeds, large animals,
all were killed—all were ended.

Well, why did the poor Hunchbacks end?
Why? —So bad a people.
They went and slept at the side of their mothers
They went and slept at the side of their daughter
Even the father.
They had no respect if it was a daughter
They had no respect if it was a mother
They had no respect if it was a sister
They had no respect if it was a brother
They went and slept at the side of the brothers.
They went and slept at the side of the sisters.
Well, Wonderful True God saw all of this:
"Their seeds be ended!"
The Hunchbacks—That's how the Hunchbacks ended.
Evil.
The other people that we have here now,
Those who are here now, then,
There is respect for people:
You understand that you have a family.
You have a mother, you have a brother, you have a sister—all
of them.
Well, that's how we are now.
The hunchbacks ended.

Ended because it was seen that they were evil people, not very
good, those Hunchbacks.

"The Story of the Hunchbacks"—notes on its performance

The narrative is to be spoken as Truth and thus is
most suitably performed on a day of significance or
prayer. Time of day need not be important so long
as the people involved are in a reflective mood.

The place of speaking ought to be close enough to
allow the narrative to be spoken in a quiet voice. An
audience of seven or nine people would seem to be
maximum.

The Hunchbacks are people who lived in the cycle
of the world that preceded the present time.

The particular Mayan version from which this
version flows was performed by Paulino Yama of
Quintana Roo, Mexico. He is an old man, said to be
over one-hundred years old.

The narrative moves along quite quickly, the
whole thing filling up seven minutes of time. The
average length of the lines spoken in Mayan is about
four seconds (e.g. “By yum Jesus Christ in the time
when the world was new”—four seconds).

Following method developed by Tedlock for
translating Zuni narratives in this journal, I have
used line changes to signify significant pauses, in
this case breath intakes. These pauses represent a
performance of a narrative, and as such do not
constitute a rule which must be adhered to at all
costs. Just as “versions” of tales exist (as
performances of speech sounds), so do “versions”
of the pauses. Thus the line changes must be seen as
descriptive of the recorded Mayan version. Further
versions, in any language, might have a different
pause structure. In other words, these pause
markers should not constrain an English reader to
the extent of stifling the narrative.

The name in lines five and six should be changed
to that of the person to whom the narrative is being
spoken on any particular occasion. The use of a
person’s name tends to draw him more personally
into the event. In the recorded Mayan version, my
name was spoken.

Underlined sections are performed with obvious
gravity. They are spoken with a lower than normal
pitch to the voice, somewhat slower delivery, and a
minimum of gestures.

Sections in capitals are performed in a louder
than normal voice.

A few Mayan words are left in the transcription.
These include yum (Rhymes with zoom), which
might be translated “Mister” or “Master,” though
it is perhaps closer to Spanish senor. Master or
mister seem to imply a stilted English style which
doesn’t fit the narrative. Besides, these words are
all of two syllables, which makes the speaking of the
names a long process, when it should be short. Saint
Noey (rhymes with Joey) was left as it is in the
Mayan, because of the sound-humor involved in the
name.
THE FLOOD

There were still three suns in the sky
And the first people were dwarfs
And the flood came.

And they died
Some died.

And they shut themselves up in coffins
Some.
And they climbed trees
Some.
They broke the stones of fruit with their teeth.
Their meals were acorns
When the world was flooded
At one time.

Well they changed.
Their tails sprouted.
And hair grew on them.
Then they were monkeys.

Well that is how the world ended
At one time.

Then came a change of people.
It was us.

The dwarfs are below.
But often they talk with the gods.
They are tired of it underground.
The sun burns too much there.
They are tired of having nothing but mud to wear.
Mud hats to keep the sun off.

They want to come up here.

So now this world can't last long.
"The following was told by Luzilla Jones, an 18-year-old girl from Farmer's Hill, Exuma, in 1952 in a storytelling session at Tinshop Corner, Blue Hill Road, Grant's Town, the slums of Nassau, Bahamas, and recorded by Daniel J. Crowley. In her genteel Out Island English, a fig is a banana and a dow is a dove. Identified by Aarne-Thompson as Type 780, Motif E631, 'The Singing Bones,' the tale in myriad variants has been reported from every continent." (D.J.C.)

(Bahaman)

THE SINGING PEPPER TREE

Josh Albury: You don't know any old-story?
           You don't know nothing!

Luzilla:    Bunday. Eh!

Josh Albury: Eh!

Luzilla:    Once upon a time
           It's a wery good time
           Monkey chew tobacco
           And he spit white lime.

There was a man
He marry a woman
and they had one daughter.
Her name was Mary.
This day a husband went out fishening
so he leave his daughter and wife home,
and this day
they had a big fig tree into the yard.
She, the mother told Mary not to pick
   a fig off this tree.
So that day she went out,
and Mary went to the fig tree
   and she pick a fig.

So when the mother came home, she said
"Mary, didn't I told you
    not to pick a fig off that tree?"
So she said, "Mother," she said
"I were hongry so I picked a fig."
So that day she took Mary
and she chopped her neckt off
and she planted into the yard.

When her husband came home, he said
"Where is Mary?"
She said, "I sent Mary down the road
to kill sand dow."
So, after he had cleaned the fish, she said
"Would you go into the yard
and get me a pepper?"
Well, the place that she planted Mary head
had growed to a pepper tree.
So when she picked the first pepper, it say
"Do you, wretch, don't pull my hair
Do you, wretch, don't pull my hair
Do you, wretch, don't pull my hair
For you has kill me for one dead fig."

So she ran up to the kitchen.
She said, "M' Husband, M' Husband,"
he said, "Come here,"
he said, "I heard something."

He went down.
He said, "Pick the pepper."
As she put her hand onto another one
the same song
"Do you, wretch, don't pull my hair
Do you, wretch, don't pull my hair
Do you, wretch, don't pull my hair
For you has kill me for one dead fig."

So she pick another one
and the same song sang
"Do you, wretch, don't pull my hair
Do you, wretch, don't pull my hair
Do you, wretch, don't pull my hair
For you has kill me for one dead fig."

So her husband said
he said to his wife
"Well where is Mary?"
She said, "Mary went down the road
to kill sand dow."
"She, well, since she went thinking it isn't time for her to come back yet?"

So he went and started to pick the pepper. So she said

"Do, my Daddy
Don't pull my hair
Do, my Daddy
Don't pull my hair
Do, my Daddy
Don't pull my hair
For Mother has kill me for one dead fig."

Bunday!

Josh Albury: Eh!
Michael Corr

THE CRAFT (I)

Painting the block dark
Then the tools
making chips and slivers
to shape the print
Strokes lay bare
white poplar
Furrows pattern
and congeal
And hope
the first proof
is stark bright

THE CRAFT (II)

Kizuki bosho
high class bark paper
I melt ox bone glue
and brush it on
My brush of
Chinese sheep's hair
is white
Lays the sizing down
soft
soaking
each new sheet

on the pile
I lace my temple room
with rice straw rope
and hang the sheets
to drip out over
The Japan Times
and Akahata
The Red Flag
Either one will keep
the mats
dry
THE CRAFT (III)

My Osaka
horse hair brush
is stiff with ink
I douse the bristle
and work it
on the block
It softens
blotting
the fresh wood

A news print proof
lifts off
the first impression
chips
and loose hair

With knife and chisel
I trim back
a heavy ledge
and clip slivers

From my brush
an even black film
I rub the baren
heavy on
the bark paper
image soaking through

A good print
carries a crisp edge
embossed by the
hard poplar line

Wool black bold
and the whites
flash with their own life

Poems as instructions for the ancient art of wood-block printing, which Corr studied for two years in Japan—"an attempt to come to grips with relating poetry to what one really does with one's life." The seals on this page are derived from Hopi glyphs (paw with migration symbol; spider woman; the glyph "eleven years"). The opening print was "inspired by the generation of ordinal numbers in Halmos' Naive Set Theory. Reluctant to assume anything except rudimentary logical language, Halmos defines \( \emptyset = \{ x \text{ such that } x \neq x \} \), or intuitively, \( \emptyset \) is the empty set. With this set (object) he blithely generates the numbers

\[
\emptyset \subset \{ \emptyset \} \subset \{ \emptyset, \{ \emptyset \} \} \subset \ldots
\]

untrammelled by any worry over having assumed the existence of a material object in defining his initial set. . . . In principle, it illustrates the poem."
Sixteen of thirty “wishing bone” narratives gathered by Howard Norman, who lived among the Ojibwa & Cree since childhood. Major contemporary tribal examples of the “law of metamorphosis in thought & word” spoken of by Cassirer, Pound, surrealists, & others. “Our only measure of truth is...our own perception of truth. The undeniable tradition of metamorphosis teaches us that things do not remain always the same. They become other things by swift and unanalysable process. It was only when men began to mistrust the myths and tell nasty lies about the Gods for a moral purpose that these matters became hopelessly confused.” (Ezra Pound, 1918)

Howard Norman / Jacob Slowstream

From THE WISHING BONE CYCLE
Workings from Cree & Ojibwa

“Workings,” as in first listening to the narratives over & over in the source language, then re-creating them in the same context, story, etc., if not able, ultimately, to get a translation word for word.

These narratives are from a linguistic region now of mixed Cree & Ojibwa. Gathered over the summers of 1969-70, some were told in a singular tongue, most in a composite tongue. The character seems to be Cree in origin: the “wishing bone” who is capable of wishing himself into various circumstances “in order” to relate the narrative.

It’s been almost 4½ years now since I first heard Jacob Slowstream tell some of them up in Canada with just four or five other Swampy Cree elders around & a few children whose ears leaned. They helped me re-learn my own ears. Jacob fully realized I was to write them down but he made certain I could tell them first. He, again & again, said “You can’t know them until you tell them.” Thus we worked out a sort of personal phonetic system so I could carry them with me when the distance between us widened. Ultimately, after the batch that follows was completed, I recorded them & sent them up to Canada. Jacob heard them & again commented. They were in Cree & English on tape. Jacob was/is concerned with telling episodes which exemplify certain cultural particulars not dealt with in other oral forms. Thus the Wishing Bone becomes the first-“person” narrator (trickster) capable of wishing things into existence, etc. Thus, too, things like the origin of the salamander & the star on the nose-end of the star-nosed mole, show up here & nowhere else in Cree.

Howard Norman
Torch Lake, Michigan
1972/1973

(Then the Wishing Bone said)

I try to make wishes right
but sometimes it doesn't work.
Once I wished a tree upside down
& its branches were the roots
& all the squirrels
had to ask the moles
how do we dig down there
to get home?

One time it happened that way.
Then there was the time
oh I remember now
I wished a man upside down
& his feet were his hands
& in the morning
his shoes had to ask the birds
how do we fly up there
to get home?

One time it happened that way.

2.

This is for turtles, that's why
I'm telling it close to water.
Next time I might stick my head right in!
I say this
"Turtle, you bite me again
it's trouble.
I see you laughing those bubbles.
They come up & I break them
& laughing comes out.
Yesterday I was with my toes
in the river
& drinking some sun
from the top of the water.
Otter was there too with his toes.
But you got my toes!
Did you make a deal with Otter?"

3.

Over there is a cave I wished up.
Some darkness goes in & lives there.
Some water goes in.
Some blind animals go in.
And the darkness & the water
& the blind animals
never steal from each other.
Where would they put what they stole?
The darkness couldn't find it.
The water would drown it.
The blind animals might put it
in the wrong place
& it would get lost or drown.
4.

One time I wished myself
into a moose deer
& was lying down & sleeping
with my own shadow
& then you came along
saying the sun was in your mouth
saying you were thirsty!
I wished you to where you drank tears.
It was a lake
everyone cried into
full of people's tears.
At night some of the tears left
to look for sad faces.
Then the whole lake cried.
Some said it was the loons.

5.

One time I wished myself in love.
I was the little squirrel
with dark stripes.
I climbed shaky limbs for fruit for her.
I even swam with the moon on the water
to reach her.
That was a time little troubled me.
I worked all day to gather food
& watched her sleep all night.
It is not the same way now
but my heart still sings
when I hear her
over the leaves.

6.

There was a storm once
& that's when
I wished myself into a turtle.
But I meant on land!
the one that carries a hard tent
on his back.
I didn't want to be floating!
I wanted to pull everything inside & dry.
Here comes the waves
shaking me
& I'm getting sick in the insides.
I wanted to be the turtle
eating buds & flowers & berries.
I've got to wish things exactly!
That's the way it is
from now on.

7.

One time I saw
a tree with no animals in it.
I started walking around.
That's when each of my eyes
saw a different animal—
a bird & a porcupine.
So I wished them up in that tree.
But only one animal got up there.
He was a porcupine & bird in the same body!
How did that happen?
He flew up & got stuck in the clouds
with his quills.
Then he came down into some bush thorns
& lost some feathers.
The only place he could live
was in that tree.
He made friends with the wind there.
When the wind came
to shake the tree
the wind cleaned his quills.
When the wind came
looking for someone to fly with
under the clouds
the animal went.

8.

I'll tell you
how that salamander got legs.
It was a worm once
I'll say that first.
A fat worm.  
One day it came up to see  
if the ground  
still had sun on it.  
That's when a bird came after it.  
The worm crawled slow  
looking for a hole.  
But its tail & head found a hole  
at the same time!  
It was going two ways  
into the ground  
& stretching.  
Here comes the bird!  
So I wished the worm some legs  
& it ran under a log.  
Later it lived in a wet stump.  
Then I wished salamanders all over  
sleeping under leaves  
with their eyes & tails & legs—  
but the worm  
is still inside them somewhere.

9.

One day  
I wished myself among frogs  
& have been living with them  
trying to get their medicine.  
A day a while ago  
I left the swamp & returned home  
but all my wife wanted  
were my legs!  
She said I look like a frog now!  
Now I'm back  
trying to get the medicine.  
It's been half my life now.  
Do you think they're tricking me?

10.

One night I was wishing things all over.  
Then I thought there were  
too many stars in the sky
& not enough light down under
in the earth.
That's when I wished a star down
for that mole
to carry on his nose.
He took it down under.
He walked around with it under there
& tried it out.
Now he comes up sometimes
to let his star talk to the other stars
in the sky.
It's dark down there
but his nose sees where he's going.

11.

A snake lost his eyes once.
Don't blame this one on me!
It was the snowy owl
he was playing the moon.
That owl closed his eyes
& sat in a fog tree
with his white face.
The snake looked up through the fog
& saw that round face
& said "Moon, show me a meal."
Then that moon came down & took his eyes.

12.

One time I was tired of being young
so I wished myself into an old man.
But I was dying!
The children gathered around
saying
"Do not die
let's go out & have a day.
Look! the moon
is forgiving us with another sun."
But I was sweating
& said
"It is time.
That log has hollowed itself out
& waits for me.
My old spirit
already has its shoes on."
Then I crawled into the log
with the moon just beginning
to forgive me.

13.
Sure I saw the water monster
why do you think I got back here so fast?
Yes that was me
sitting in a tree
by the lake
wishing myself into a walking stick
& making cracking-leaves sounds
& making wishes on myself.
That's when I saw him!
I couldn't think straight so thought crooked
which is how I got this way
a snake
come winding out
& safe at home.
All because I saw him.

14.
I wished that fox
leaping out of the fire
& I wished those black birds
out of the smoke.
And now those ashes floating around
are bats.
Whenever I look into the fire
a long time
I see their faces
& they leap out.
I can't sit one night without this happening!
One time some twisting branches
that wanted to be antlers
came & jumped in the fire.
Watch,
I'll wish open those round rocks
sitting in a circle
& you'll see baby birds.
15.

I'll tell you what it's like
being the biggest fish
in the lake.
I know this now
since I wished myself
to be a sturgeon.
The smaller fish call me
with their voices
& the water birds too.
"Your big mouth,
use it to eat up our enemies!"
That's what they say.
But then I get hungry for them too!

16.

I see you bird bones
& you better get up & back together.
Where are the feathers?
It's cold
& my teeth are rattling the rest of me
& the ice trees are coming
& the weasel has his snow
all over him already.
I said this at the beginning of winter.
I found those other bones
lying there
& leaped in with them.
Then we walked around looking for the feathers.
I had my sack of old wishes
with me.
Then we found the feathers
they were on a little tree
that had no leaves
& trying to make it fly.
Ha! they thought those twigs were bones!
Then all the feathers
leaped on us
& we flew south.
This is what happened
this is how I went to make wishes
somewhere else.
I brought my sack of old wishes with me.
THE STORY OF HOW A STORY WAS MADE

On June 17, 1972 we were in Andrew Peynetsa's farmhouse near Zuni, New Mexico. The Zunis had recently celebrated the solstice (it fell before June 21 because they made it coincide with a full moon). At about 9:00 in the evening, while we were playing some tapes, Andrew suddenly said, "Tell me when you get to some empty tape. I'm going to tell a story." His suggestion could not have been more out of season: "telapnaawe" or tales are forbidden between the spring and autumn equinoxes, lest the narrator be bitten by the rattlesnake, who is intolerant of false behavior. Andrew had never before broken this rule, but he felt that it did not apply in the present case since the events of this story actually did happen, that is, it wasn't a "real" telapnanne because he was making it up out of real events instead of traditional fictional ones: Theoretically it is impossible to make up a new telapnanne; newness lies in the particular performance, not in the story performed. Even so Andrew wanted this new story to sound like a telapnanne, that is, he wanted the truth to sound like good fiction.

Given such a task, Andrew had the most difficult possible audience: most of the members were familiar with the real events which lay behind the story, and at the very same time they knew well what a "real" telapnanne should sound like. Even with these difficulties, the story received only one concrete criticism: Andrew should have portrayed the grandmother as crying in her distress over whether the two boys would cut the deer correctly. This detail would have worked in two ways: the real grandmother really did cry, and even in telapnaawe grandmothers cry over the adventures of their grandsons.

Andrew made several departures from ordinary good form which were more obvious than the matter of the grandmother, but these passed without comment. Perhaps because he was still worried about the season, he left off the first half of the introductory formula, the untranslatable "son'-ahchi," retaining only the second half, "sonti inoote" (once long ago); for their part, his hearers refrained from saying "eeso," the traditional response to a telapnanne. After "sonti inoote" Andrew should have mentioned the names of the places where the story events were to take place, but that would have been redundant in this case, since we were sitting in the very house where the events were centered. Since telapnaawe take place in the "long ago," there are normally no sheep in them, but sheep are mentioned in telapnaawe borrowed from Mexicans and here Andrew even uses a borrowed word (the only one in the story) for them, "kaneelu" (from Spanish "carnero"). He mentions his wagon and its tongue and bolts, but avoids mention of the fact that he pulled the wagon not with a team of horses but with a tractor. The knife in the story is no problem because it could have been a stone knife; the guns, on the other hand, should have been bows and arrows.

Normally the characters in telapnaawe are not given names, at least not when they are human; Andrew does mention one name here, Sayku, but only by way of indentifying another person (Sayku's mother) whose own name he does not mention. He avoids any other naming in the story, though all of the people in it are real. The grandparents are Andrew and his wife, the two boys are their grandsons, and the father of the boy who killed the deer is their eldest son. All of these were present for the telling except the eldest son.
At the end of a telapnanne, just before the closing line, there is often an etiological statement, such as, "That's why the coyote has yellow eyes." Andrew here turns this convention upside down by describing the making of the story itself: instead of a story which accounts for the way things are at present, he gives us present events which account for a story.

The translation which follows was made with the help of Joseph Peynetsa. Each change of line corresponds to a pause. It should be read while listening to the accompanying record, in much the way one reads the subtitles in a foreign-language film.

(here follows the translation of the story)

ONCE LONG AGO

it seems

the children—
when the hunting opened—
it seems their fathers left them and went out hunting
    in different directions
while these two (indicates his two grandsons)
let their sheep out, they let their sheep out and
the two of them
went out herding.
And their fathers had gone out elsewhere.
They went around, all day they went around.
And their grandfather
was working in the fields until late afternoon and
he came up and
their grandmother told him
"Our grandsons
killed a deer." "Where?"
"Over there someplace around back."
"I see.
What happened?" "ONE of them came after a KNIFE.
He got the knife and I
told him to castrate it, maybe they castrated it."
"I see."
"Oh dear, my poor grandsons
maybe you'll do it right."
That's what their grandmother had told them.
And now their grandfather had come and, "It looks like
    I'll have to go and get it,"
he said, and he
went to his wagon
and got it READY.
He headed out and went around to Tree Crescent, he got there and that's where the sheep were spread out, he got there. "Where? Where is it?" "At the far side of that clearing, by a grove of trees, that's where."

"Why don't you get in and we'll go."
Those two boys just left their sheep. Both of them were all covered with blood. Their grandfather took them along, they went on over there. "Where?" "Right over there by that grove of trees."
They went over to the trees. "Right over there."
On the north side."
They got to the far end of the trees, to a clearing, "HOW did this HAPPEN?"
"Oh— there were three of them. One of them was crippled, and there was a doe, and her—we just let her be.
When they came up the other two stopped with this one in front—pow!
I dropped him.
I dropped him but then I didn't have a knife.
So, 'Well well now—'
he said to the other boy, "Listen: you go get a knife and I'll look after the sheep."
So then this other boy went to get the knife he went to their grandmother's. He went to their grandmother's and ran all the way. "Oh dear, grandson why is it you're running like this?"
"Well we've killed a deer," he said. "WHERE?" she said. "Over there.
It's a great big buck." "Oh dear, my grandsons, so you've ended someone's ROAD.
Perhaps one of your fathers might end someone's road too."
That's what their grandmother said.
"When your grandfather comes I'll tell him."
Sure enough, when their grandfather came she told him, so now all of them were going along together, together the two boys with their grandfather, and when they got to where the deer was, it was so big.
"What are we going to DO?"
"LISTEN: why don't we put him in the wagon antlers first then we'll all lift up on the other end."
So then they put him in the wagon antlers first and they all got together and lifted him up and finally they managed to get him in. "Now that he's in, let's go back."
"Where are the lungs and the heart?"
"Well, lying over there."
"Hey—— they're big ones, a lot of fat around the lungs."
"Yes indeed there's a lot of fat, but it got sand on it, let's go."
Then their grandfather turned around and they came along came along until they got to where the road was too rough for the wagon and the BOLTS got LOOSE on the tongue.
Then the two boys got left behind there and their grandfather went on and when he looked back his wagon was way back there.
"Why didn't you SPEAK UP when that happened?"
They laughed and he backed up, their grandfather fixed it for them.
They came along, came along until they got to their yard. "How're we going to get it down?"
There were two old ladies, their grandmother and and Sayku's mother. "With those two women, we can probably get it down."
They laid a plank from the wagon to the door and pulled it down.
They put it down inside.
Now the sun was about to go down it was halfway behind the horizon when their fathers came home.
When their fathers came home their deer was lying inside.
It had thirteen points.  
"Oh— who killed it?"
"Well these two killed it."
"Thanks be."
After awhile
others came in.
Everyone breathed life from their deer and went back outside.
They went outside, went outside, and their grandfather
said a prayer, he said a prayer and they all came back in to sprinkle cornmeal, and in this way they completed it.
Then the father of the boy who killed the deer said,
"Now this was a day when something terrible happened to me." "What?"
"Well now I thought there was a bear in the canyon, that's what I thought.
It was growling-n-growling, 'Where could it be?'"
This was the father of the little boy who killed the deer.
"Where was it?" "Well right there by that gap in the canyon."
"Where? Where was it?" "It was right there by that gap, he was growling-n-growling.
I thought it was a BEAR, so I went up very quietly.
I went up very quietly and when I got CLOSE to it right up close it kept on growling-n-growling.
So I got my gun in a good position.
'Well, when I see him I'll blast him.'"
When he looked over the hill he wasn't GROWling-n-GROWling, he was SNORing-n-SNORing, ASLEEP.
It was a HUNTER.
"Aw— it sounded just like a bear."
Then he went on down there.
"HOW COME you're sleeping so hard, you're growling-n-growling like a bear," he told him.
This was the father of the little boy who killed the deer that's who was talking.
"Well I just lay down here and I must've slept for a long time, I was so tired."
That's what he said. "I see."
But that shouldn't happen."
That's what he told him.
"Anyway let's go now, the sun's going down."
Both of them went on down.
When their father got home he told them about it.
"How could this happen? A person out hunting isn't
supposed to go to sleep,"
he told their grandfather.

"Well then

well then, what can I DO about it?"
"Why not make up a story?"
"Why not?" he asked the boys' grandmother.
"It's up to you." "Let's go ahead and make one up.
We'll tell it as if it happened long ago."
So their grandfather talked about what had happened.
A STORY was MADE.
He talked about what had happened
and when it was all straightened out
it was about the father whose boy had killed a deer,
and that
hunter who had gone to sleep
and was snoring-n-snoring and wasn't a bear growling-n-
growling, it wasn't a bear but a sleeping hunter.
This happened long ago, the word is just so—short.

After finishing the story Andrew explained that the canyon walls amplified the snoring. His son (a
younger brother of the son in the story) said of this place, "It looks like it's two canyons, but it's only
one." The two grandsons went up on the roof to get the antlers to show us and then went out to put
them back up there again. After awhile they came running back into the house: "Come outside and
you'll see something amazing." We all went out and there in the north, coming out from behind the
horizon, were the pink and white rays of the northern lights. The lights are almost never seen at this
latitude, and no one in this family had even heard of them. On the way back into the house Andrew
said, nasalizing his vowels and changing his "g" to a "ch" so as to imitate a Navajo accent, "It's
strange." There are some days when everything turns around.
in vision of the Baal Shem speech came tracking thru the woods he must 've worn his famous beaver- hat Franciscan & a little crazy Calmed the wolf of Gubbio called him My Brother the lonely hunter exiled by his contemporaries stalks the woods I am (he says) a victim of Cherokees the fat buck plunged an axe under my scalp (o shall his heap of brains pour out all wormy do the pink Fish Dance upon the ground sob sob) I tell him You shall be comforted Our Master dreamed in his second vision Red Men tongues like little fish tails slopping from mouths o tongue tongue dingaling saliva pursued the Gentle Soul the hunter little funny kid his folks abused went crazy learned to do the Speech of Animals beaver talk first then wolf bear turtle "now I can go rap with anybody" said the Baal Shem too a simple boy they almost kicked his ass out of Volhynia (told him) go talk with Gentiles maybe worse 'n White Men yes that was the terror of the olden days for hunters those strange boys looking at their hands a little dizzy Saw a new language writ Instructions you will proceed by pressure in the kidneys southward at Red Mountain the Enemy will find you but trust in me Strip Naked they will beat you to the ground rip hair from scalp your earlocks even your beard be shorn Poor Boy he's lying helpless Comes a Bear o what enormous Sniffer (sez) this one's our friend he speaks the Language of Animals o little monster- man or Indian the others come now eager to tend him with love they dangle a Power tiny scrapings of their Flesh
their Vital Organs fluids
strained to the finest drop they smear
first on the scalp Saliva Mucus Semen Tears
burning His scarlet cover Is a Map
this wisdom will never leave me even your lips
Funny old Bear snout Honey-ringed
open my own (grunt grunt) I eat your tongue
enormous in my mind the Bear's Head grows
I suck his eyes O Vision the respectable table
drops away the Law is innocent for once
& priceless (sez the Baal Shem) in the woods
the children break out of their caves Naked happy
between life & death the Sun
is in the cup the Baal Shem walking by
river gets Vision of the Fish
renewed in China poems that make us
laugh & swim I must be
getting old (my son sez) seven
with a long white beard he sits
learning the Speech of Animals
who love us Sometimes will bring us medicines
"this one they call the Little
"Water stirs up real easy in the dish
"could save your life

Seneca Nation
Salamanca, New York
1972

The Baal Shem Tov used to go to a certain place in the woods
& light a fire & pray when he was faced with an especially difficult task—& it was done.
His successor followed his example & went to the same place
but said: "The fire we can no longer light, but we can still say the prayer." And what he asked was done too.
Another generation passed, & Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sassov went
to the woods & said: "The fire we can no longer light, the prayer
we no longer know: all we know is the place in the woods, & that
will have to be enough." And it was enough.
In the fourth generation, Rabbi Israel of Rishin stayed at home
& said: "The fire we can no longer light, the prayer we no longer
know, nor do we know the place. All we can do is tell the story."
And that, too, proved sufficient.
NOTES & COMMENTS. The alcheringa (="dream"-time) enterprise continues with attempts to show European manifestations of the source & mainstream of poetry: tribal, archaic, subterranean, folkloric, oral, etc. Plato is seen to have cause in banishing the poets from his republic, while citing the ancient struggle between "poetry" & "philosophy." A very hot struggle, it would seem, in which even transitional figures like Empedocles ("magician, weatherman & raiser of the dead" in Doria's translations) appear now as still within the old poetic line. And the same line to source continues into our own century in the conscious reliving of origins by profoundly contemporary innovators like Olson, Crosby, Schwerner, among others. . . . More of which (e. g. Eugene Jolas & Transition in the 1930s) will appear in later issues of Alcheringa. . . . Also, scheduled for Number Six, a section of works & workings by Jaime De Angulo (1887-1950), selected from the series of his books, many previously unpublished, that Turtle Island Foundation (2907 Bush Street, San Francisco, California 94115) is currently bringing into print. An avant garde anthropologist & proto-poet, De Angulo now appears as one of the first to experiment with unorthodox orthographies, visual realizations & verse structures as viable media for the transmission of tribal/oral poetry. . . . Along related lines, the latterday experiments of Dennis Tedlock are now available in Finding the Center (Dial Press), & the piece in the current issue by him & Andrew Peynetsa will be part of a sequel tentatively titled Deer Village: Hunting among the Zuni Indians. . . . Future issues of Alcheringa will also include examples of the poetics of talking, a lecture/poem by David Antin on "oral" vs. "literal" poetry, & an insert recording of narrative & verbal modes from a range of oral cultures. . . . The editors will also attempt to give greater recognition to the "dark" side of the primitive imagination: its developed sense of "realism" & "surrealism" as stances for experiencing the world. . . .

The front cover photo, one of four animal heads carved on the corner posts of a Viking sledge, is from the Oseberg grave site, circa 800 A. D. . . . The petroglyph (back cover) is from the Ramsund rock near Eskilstuna, Sweden. Pictures show events from the saga of Sigurd Fafnesbane—how he goes with the great smith Regin to kill the encircling dragon Fafnir &, tasting of its heart's blood, learns the speech of birds, who tell him to cut off Regin's head & take the dragon's treasure for himself. The runic inscription is apparently unrelated to this & reads: "Sigrid built this bridge. She was Orm's daughter."

For those interested in obtaining back issues of Alcheringa, some copies of Number One (with work from Crow, Mayan, Zuni, Seneca, Yoruba, Eskimo, & Serbo-Croatian sources; contributions by Pound, Edmonson, Tedlock, Merwin, Simic, Field, Schwerner, Beier, & others) & Number Two (insert recording from Jerome Rothenberg's "total translation" of Navajo horse-songs; Nathaniel Tarn's version of the pre-Conquest Mayan Rabinal Achi; Harris Lenowitz's translations of two Ugaritic texts; Dell Hymes' essay on the translation of Masset mourning songs; plus commentary & translations by James Koller, Robert Laughlin, Simon Ortiz, Stanley Diamond, Robert Kelly, & others) are still available at $5.00 a copy. Numbers Three & Four continue at $2.50, & complete sets of One to Four can be had at $15. The number of available sets is, however, very limited, & preference will be given to libraries & communal collections, with the possibility of price adjustments to be announced at later points. Address all inquiries regarding single copies, subscriptions (from Number Three on) & back issues to ALCHERINGA, 600 West 163 Street, New York, N.Y. 10032. The price of single issues will continue at $2.50 & that of current subscriptions at $9.50 for four issues. All multiple & trade orders should best be addressed to BOOK PEOPLE, 2940 7th Street, Berkeley, California 94710.
(Upper Paleolithic)

THE CALENDAR

Moon of the Thaw
Moon of the Spring Salmon Run
Moon of the Calving
Moon of the Flowers
Moon of the Moulting
Moon of the Rutting Bison
Moon of the Nut
Moon of the First Frost

From Alexander Marshack's "Upper Paleolithic Notation & Symbol" (in Science, 24 November 1972): a reconstruction, based on Amerindian & Siberian models, of early European lunar notations & calendar namings. "The Upper Paleolithic notations . . . suggest that they were kept by some specialized person. Leona Cope, writing of the American Indian, states: ' . . . the more complex & highly developed the ceremonialism . . . the more careful the determination of the solstices, the lunar phases & the time reckoning,' . . . The compositions by Upper Paleolithic artists which illustrate or imply seasonal & other periodic ceremonies & rites suggest that at least some were 'scheduled' in the year as in the Siberian & American traditions." Marshack's germinal work on the possible cognitive origins of writing is The Roots of Civilization (McGraw-Hill, 1972).