

John Clark Smith

COME, MYSTERY

IT

I hear the wailing of the mud of flesh and brains,
Heart, Head and Shaman wrestling with identity,
I strain to listen and give some unflinching amenity,
but what remains to do before such endless pains?
To watch you talk and do without meaning or care!
There it is! I have said it! I have given it air
in your stifling world, in the land of sleepwalkers;
my voice flounders inside your battered soul where stains
of blood and war blot out my once pristine presence.
Oh be not surprised! Once I and others were there
awaiting growth and life in your self-centered tomb
and we loved you, sad creature, even in darkness
we adored your potential, even when madness reigns
we waited and cried while the light shone less and less
and there was empty still space in your spiritual room.

For I knew none but I could drag the beauty from you,
none could sow the seeds of your resurrection,
none could give you song, erase your fears, bring a glee
of discovery and strength despite your imperfection.
The all is here, it swirls round your mind and shouts,
it bubbles up from murky days of suppressed confinement,
it screams out loud in silent messages no one ever doubts,
the I the yes which none denies and none can ever find or rent.
I come as dust, the beggar of the all which never pouts
about the ill-conceived plans of Nature's involvement,
the one who laughs at creases on a silken bed of truth,

I live as always unaffected and without resentment
a life transcending whatever Nature can produce or know.
I am the light that touches you from outside the light
yet buried long ago in a place far too deep for sight.

I come to tell a story now too long and slick with lies
about the way I am and was and how I move my arms
so that none can see me move or know my little chores,
a story long with growth and quiet without charms.
I am the story, the story I, no end, no start, no plot,
forever hidden in the stars but throbbing under feet,
a tale without a history and never more than nonsense,
but big to puffed up adults and seekers of my hallowed seat.
Oh not a yarn, I say, of silliness of what is most revered,
of thoughtless questions that only fools could invent,
of complicated ritual needing seminarians to complete.
Can I be when nothing's marked with my invisible intent,
when temples rise and I, entombed beside a coat of arms,
can no longer see the humble heart within my little tent,
when prospects and their guides, a-toting little maps and cameras
whose photos shine in family rooms prettily draped in dark,
refuse to see the many ways on which I make my mark?

I shall not waste my time on trifles nor excuse the race
of avoiding subtle guidance that rarely returned in seeing;
I take the blame since my saga bore the babes of promise;
they are mine, I say, and they emerged the sharers of my being,
but I could not give them everything nor reveal it in full.
My tale and I are beyond what is, beyond the imaginable or the glue
of life and death, beyond the thing, the thought, the instinct,
I am no I, I am no object, I am and not, word and silence, two,
three, seven and ten thousand, the number that cannot add,
the sound that no one hears, the stick that none can measure,
I revel in confusion but clarity is what I never eschew.
This and more is the mine that none but I can treasure.
I could not give what none can hold or use or love but I,
I do not cheat or trick, deceive with myth, offer life as lure;
what flows from hunger in my heart, invention in my being,
is part of me and I could not ignore the duty in a task
that can reveal in rehearsal not the actor but the mask.

Many sang it, you heard it often, and now I give you sight:
There is no mighty power, no force of things that rules,
nothing lives beyond the chasm, life itself is just some tools
without a goal, without a truth, without a wrong or right.
I have told you this, reality has screamed it in your ears,
a thousand times was it written in your script, but your mask
was hurriedly created to lift your pride and hide your fears
before the justice in your mind could lessen human might.
I know you believe in truth and love, and some of you may fight
to raise up virtue, enshrine the good in every minor task
but in vain you war for purity, your valiance is a waste,
a trillion virgins live no better than a tiny group of fools;
so let us know the food we eat, let us not conceal the taste
behind a wish to manufacture beauty and a logic of the not,
or every bite will be of acid and what is left will rot.

Yet you have ignored this well, my naughty little mice,
I have seen it in your crumbling cities and slacking values,
your golden age of dark deceit and tarnished hues;
you do not speak of it but I know well your every vice
and how proud you are of what is godless and impure.
Consider! Denounce what's now the human's troubled lot
and a mighty weight will raise itself, all will be secure;
you need but lift triumphantly a different banner to entice
a bit of integrity from a society run by throws of dice.
True, you bear a coat of errors so long I could reform a sot
more easily than change the habits you instill in youth.
Admit them now, show recognition, pay back your dues
and a light will burn within you that not even truth
discerns, and those horrid crumbs of your rodent past
will be abhorrent and help you seek a healthy human fast.

Yet why fast, you sneer, why survive when survival is the end,
why be if being has no change and identity never clear,
why enshrine the prophet, saint and those who have no peer
if words are lies on which an idiot only would depend,
why expect the excellent when excess the credible fact,
why talk of light when darkness melts the mold divinely cast
of love or life, and the short arm of pain is ever intact,
why flee when escape is never real and chains a friend
for which we all must yearn if ever we transcend
the silent repetition, the dullest search for what will last,

the boring hope for signs of god and kindness, when fate
is bold and stalks the earth, and forces all to fear
its fangs and threats, its giant tracks intimidating
even the bravest tracker and the just get no respect
or reward in a meaningless maze only money can effect?

Oh a sorry crew you are, you ship-wrecked navigators of pride
who only spy the knowledge icebergs in the sea of wisdom
yet still crash for words, flags and land, and seek to become
what only wisdom can bestow and what only dying has denied.
Have you no need for mystery anymore, do you not feel
the touch of the strange, you lubbers, must you reject
every outcast, is there no enigma that has a deep appeal
for your drifting aimless souls? Such a soft little suicide
awaits you, I swear, a killing of self you cannot hide
with drowning institutions and paper rituals, crises that infect
and inject you with gentle serums of rich apathy, despair
and knowledge of a greater creation than you; in delirium
you shall find yourselves only, ignore what I alone am fully aware
and be the hollow and dispirited who have debased beauty
by their obsession for piracy and a soulless booty.

No change, you boast, no turning, no shift, no repentance,
nothing moves the universe, all is fixed, all revolves around
a center in which none can grow, none can hope, all are bound
by Law and the Law is eternal, without progress; the lance
of fortune itself has no effect, you say, so why even revolt
the tradition when revolt has become traditional, when revolt
appears differently when viewed from the disguise of distance;
why nurture, why care, why create, why continue in a trance
of hope when genes are the rule, heredity the sterile woman
from whom nothing birth can come except the tyrannical dolt
of sameness and the doleful face of final disappointment?
Oh such tired questions from those who ignore solutions!
Must I drown your questions in the pollution of arrogance,
burn your lists of needs with the acid of ablutions,
turn away from your denial of change until repentance?

Each quest borne by layers of identity
billows up in the denial of the animal,
the lost creature intrigued by its desire;
it yearns for sight blinded by a humanity

craving for the lost unthinking existence
when none knew the other in the mystery of mating,
when opposites floundered without structure,
functions functioned without unity
as pictures with unmixed colors and rigid lines.
Does beginning begin in many spread into many
mating itself in twos, threes, fours centerless,
a many without harmony painted fully clear?
Does change rest unused in the archive of thought,
awaiting the will and catalyst of the mix,
seeking a Shaman who calls out longingly:

SHAMAN

Behold not two or three but many and one,
the riches of duality now infertile,
the poverty of triads in peevish demands of logic,
behold stagnancy, behold a frozen consciousness,
behold you, changing not, wallowing in settled mind sand,
Awake and change! You slack too much!
Heart, reply! Slumberer, speak! Categorize!

Rising naked from its warm bath of numbers and signs,
a woolly film of induction still clinging,
acid wet with everyday thinking of everyday things,
Heart drools formulae and sets, tables and stats
about the death of language and meaning,
the words freezing as they depart its mouth;
Heart knows nothing, Heart understands all, Heart sighs.

Deeper! the Shaman cries through the crust.

Heart strains, stiffens, its self locked by lips
soulless and icy from its crazed and relentless paths
of blackness and emptiness, eyes seeing things of eyes,
self screaming values and proofs until it bursts:

No more! the child-thinker whimpers pitifully
and returns to thoughts of cushioned concrete things,
to shadows in the cave of holism.

The world turns by warmth melting mind coldness,
the senseless force burning through its certainty.

Why not my heart! Why not my ways! Why not burn!
Am I so cold that my concepts yearn not for fire,
thoughts so strong but weak before self-witness,
a crippling arrogance of blind sight pretending sight,
ideas so firm no fire of thought moves them,
some troubling nuance ignored to butt styled truth,
brilliant argumentation toppling into entertainment,
its rationale lonely for health and challenge?
Oh heart, why enjoy the death of changeless sleep?

You, little worldly face with no features,
clamoring for growth when the whole world derides
true health and loves your sickness, behold this:
None now responds more quietly than the past
pasted on your shelves but empty in your heart,
oh sweet words on tear-filled papyrus you never heard!
You little worldly face, you poisoned complexion,
emulating barbarians and dozing adolescents, listen:
Hearts linked, they you, you they, move together,
the wheel a turn an eon synthesizes the race,
the movement forward begins centuries ago
in Ur, Egypt, India, Greece and China a step a time;
the end is the beginning, the motion up cosmic.
Slow beyond slow the motion of the ape of selfishness.

HEART

The same is tyranny! Heart objects. Are you blind?
Behold the glamour of cities and the progress of machines,
art so beautiful, books so masterful, religions
so transcendent, governments and ideologies so just!
What ape created in its sleep! We barbarians?!

SHAMAN

Your own whirl sweeps you up, you diapered child,
the bellows from your own monsters engulf
your fragile playpen of images, sand, and toys.
How monstrous your creations, how feeble your self;

Sit down! Listen! You dare boast of these!
Awake! Come out of it! Can't you think
how lonely the centuries without change,
how comfortably rock you yourself into trances?
See now the creature, not his dead prey and stools.

HEART

Heart hears only its ancient dream of self
synthetizing so loud nothing can challenge
the monotonous sentence of sameness,
patterns transcending nothing,
a system invented to explain itself.

Say the what is! Heart whines. Define! Oh words defiled, derided!
Such inept defense of detailed denial.
Define? Specify? Systematize? Categorize?
Say: What is change? What is what is?
What is is? What is what? What! Is!

SHAMAN

Calm down, speaks the Shaman, and consider this:
Suppose our soft minds, ever anxious to survive,
ever infants in the outer rings of reality,
succumbed to the first tune they heard,
singing bravely thereon in arrogant arias of insecurity.
Is it location our thoughts reflect in their melodies,
is it Head or the external world of floating deaf forests of knowledge
in which no melodies sound, though notation exists somewhere?

HEART

Where is you know who? Heart asks. Head could enumerate,
couldn't Head, couldn't all of the zeros number up
nicely in that naughty affair of the intellect
with none and one, a wimple of thought with face
face down since a wan dawn saw survival seize power.

SHAMAN

Oh feeble heart, oh coward, revolt I say! Return!
See how you long not to know, see how language sputters
(such a squawker is she, this tool)
at the dawn, when food was master, oh squall,
stand up, (the internalized interpreted In packed up
with semantic intension sprawls); sit thee straight,
curve not by the bends of mind, use head!

HEART

Heart's mind, drooping from big thoughts on waste,
the heavy lexicon on mind grammar digested,
If I pars, therefore I think, it regurgitates.

SHAMAN

Sad clock, such a mean little machine you've become,
thought is gone from you, you tick only and they obey,
laying down your individual categories that food mocks.
Foods mocks it all, you sense-filled semanticist. Consider:
The long hill struts tall even though it is oldest,
the jagged mountain fears the valleys from its youth,
each ageless river, peerless, meanders through both
as if hill and mountain supped on its water, but look:
Hill and mountain create the water for the river,
neither know, so entrapped, nor feel their own essence
pouring out from them, draining away to the sea;
the brush of X, the forest of Y, the shrub of Z,
the many legged creatures of A do not complain
or resist the river's birth but offer support.
The river lives, the river alone is alive, the river is
never the same, ever-changing, straining for mystery.
Hear me, Heart, not the clock, rip open your head!
Cease to be the hill or the mountain with big peaks
and little valleys, things of X, Y, Z and A; zip it!
The way is down, up, over, under; follow the river.

HEART

Behold a cloudy mind, Heart scoffs; all riddled
and rooted in metaphysics, metaphor and hope.
Yours fiction, mine fact. Subjectivize it,
poor soul, internalize what you sense to know it.
Can you change what you cannot clarify?
Perceive in mountains and sea what is rock and water,
talk not of rivers as if the mind cannot create them.
Know the truth: Them all you created and created them you
in the pits of your murky mind where the sources
of your feeble images wallow and lurk in medieval mud.
How sticky your thinking! What musical nonsense!
Each thing is what it is without your translation.
Can a triangle change into a square and be a triangle?
Change not! Learn to choose! Seek the triangle or square
before you assume of what is less is more
and what is more is best.
In the end the Hare will win.

SHAMAN

That old traveler in China, friend to all the moderns,
who proclaimed the monad monarch over thinking,
would have dismantled his machine had he imagined
what lengths you go to mangle the great harmony.
Even the Konigsberg professor would have cried out:

Why think only phenomena! Be noumenally free too!
Raise up the censor in your equations! You mix realities!
Subordinate a bit of thought to being and do it now!
And what of Jou, you joyless calculator, what of Nature?
There! It's already changed! The leaf falls again!
Your ashes are dead in the supposed clash of I with It,
of that with this, thought with sentence, essence with existence.
Boom! It's all the same circular spiral of cloudiness
lulled into the lush gush mush of Scotist melodies.
Confront too the Vedas nettling: You know too much!
Nothing, none, no is complete, all, yes; I am It, It I,
illusory your choice and purity. Stop creating a box
and stepping into it, as if you exist somewhere you think.
Where was I a moment ago? Not I but you fabricate an In,

you, little worldly face, all mind, no head, King Stool,
you seduce a self as lover and forget the loss of other.
Did you not create the self, you adulterer? Well, enjoy it!

HEART

Heart laughs and rebukes the boasts of the Shaman.

Where is head? Head what? Why does it not speak?

SHAMAN

It's always identity for you! What of transformation!

HEART

And who are you, old man, causing wrinkles in your wake,
whence comes wisdom's insults and where is Shaman,
a speaker of lost innocence paying back debts, I suspect.

SHAMAN

I? You? He? She? Head, Heart, Shaman and more,
all one, all united but fragmented by mind and body,
I speak as you, you as I, and with us the most
forgotten dimension, It, lives building its own realm.
I? You? He? She? Head, Heart, Shaman and more,
all separate, independent, creating without center,
and the most dependent dimension, It, cementing all,
whose nature is change, without form, unstable, endless.
Still identity plagues you! For you for many it is form,
a structure Veda, Pre-Socratic and Yin-Yang knew not.
Don't you see? If I identify, I choose and mystery hides.
I talk in poetry to puncture words with other words,
the word beyond the word, but the way is not word;
had I the word would I not speak it, but the word is,
the word is not spoken nor identified nor formed,
the word now this, now that; a word does not mean,
it is; the way of is, is to be, not to be Is. Consider:

Beyond the river's waters of hills and mountains
stand the idyllic sea of sources. Source? No no,

the rivers, you say, feed into the sea, take care,
what cause is result, what result cause?
There you are! There you fix yourself and quest!
The question tells your answer, and in your answer
makes the history of our fragile thinking inert.
Arise! Look outward, away from stagnant channels,
do a bit of supposing and suspicion, philosopher,
suppose there is no cause and no result, suppose
language is illusion and meaning transitory,
suppose the sea can feed the river and water goes up,
all is mystery from suspicion and supposition.
You begin with what you conceive is end, but suppose
the end and beginning are one enveloping spiral,
what then! Is end another mental sword that cuts
the unity and the entity? What say you, Heart?

HEART

I'll play. If this is true, ask: Whence the start?
Whence the end? Or, should I say, describe the spiral
which absorbs them and sets the pattern for the rest.
And how do I make ideas clear? What can cling to truth?
How thick was the mud whence thought had sprung! What!
The mud is thicker now? Thought injured thought?
Suppose the mud was thinner, what then? Suppose no mud!
Is thought not for itself? Whence comes thought, Shaman?

How muddy this all is! Answers without questions!
Must I enjoy swimming in the murk muddle of inception!
Is it pure or septic? In my youthful moments of amusement
I would wade fully clothed, fearful of being abused
by the acidity of those deceptively clear waters.
The liquid stung: an unprepared babe, I assumed,
my skin needing the toughness of reflection and caution.
Beware the origins, it blasted! Stay away from source!
But now I dive naked and am unscathed, unimpressed too,
untouched by any clarity, a pool of mud of shallowness.
Oh how I came to see it was clear or thick from me,
my thought drew it near or far, my powers were its end,
what I am it becomes, what I know it only knows,
I the thought machine, I the source, I the crystal
that envisions the vision and sharpens the razor,

from me it needs to know, from me it lives and breathes,
behold, Shaman, the creator, the true demiurge, the One.
There! Now you know! It is I, mine, me and the like!

Why do you not reply? Am I so blasphemous I make you dumb?
Why act surprised? In each philosophy is recreated
through the tools each is given and how those tools respond;
the source is in each, the language in each, without Ideal,
without standard, each reaches its own clarity, its own tutor,
a solitary quest to unlock the forces of a machine.

Speak! Has Heart blocked not only Head but Shaman?
Perhaps a story will teach your tongue some words!

HEAD

No! No stories, Head cries, I am taut with tales
too numerous to recall, too deep to explain,
I am drenched with imagination, dried with logic,
loaded by the loneliness of alternatives.
Oh Heart and Shaman, how can you enjoy the yarns
that sing away when all communication dies
and the yarn of yarns elusive;
like strokes of a Chinese brush you paint
and yet you define, providing me a dinner
of gracious beauty and masterful dialectic
but when do I rest and enjoy a wee the meal?

What say you? Do I not portray you truly:
longing to entrance me with your spells,
luring with math and science, the magic of the unknown,
the vision of the perfect concept and meaning,
pretending to know all and yet nothing?
Oh how I have felt them, my friends, how tasty
their spices of knowing that you have sprinkled
just when I have lost myself in other needs.
Yet food calls, mating beckons, survival stands high
and even more the inner quest for identity.
Why so much torn by what is not mine?
Why not after so much history known
or seen or heard, why not sensed, why not edible?

I've listened to your passions for this and that,
you vary but do not change, your stools the same,
you pontificate upon your poop but the winds come,
don't they? And I and It remain to recoup the wreck
from the storms of mirage just as the sea turns
into a desert without food or companionship.
Where were you, oh Shaman, and you, Heart, then,
when I hungered for any morsel and starved with fear
and thoughts of death, when the animal triumphed!
How often did I stand in the midst of nothingness,
arms outstretched, clutching It who would not eat the me
who was ravenous for a food to make me delicious.
Though weak and miserable from our storms,
I rushed to them with you beside me and we floundered
like tightrope walkers crossing Niagara Falls.
Yet after all these voyages where have I ventured?
Why have I not changed? There's the enigma!
Why have you not found what can make me esculent?
All these philosophies and religions have cooked me
into a limp vegetable whose scent repulses my lovers.
How long will I lack the juice to make me succulent!

No! None of your sagas please! Of them I have had my fill!
Behold one who no longer seeks the first and last
as a zealous Nazarene at the apocalypse,
I, who uses words to intimidate the folk
who rely on articulate fools,
wish I knew nothing of rhetoric and knowledge
and could not ponder why they poisoned Socrates.
Argument, the ordure of words, instead of freeing,
instead of changing the minds of his listeners,
was the charge, the offense, the sin which damned him.
I want not to damn but to acclaim him for sinning
against the god of knowledge and dialectic.
How many unknown because they denounced the gods,
how many books and pamphlets unprinted?
The most afraid history's devotees and darlings?
Only the hungry can let a hundred flowers grow?
Change or choose? Change or hemlock?
Can one choose without changing?
What is good philosophy? Whether it works?
Why should we not be scientific with philosophy?

Of course I'm suspicious! What has philosophy done!
What has religion done? What has science done?

I am Head, I am the ground that has to be worked,
the final verification, the end of ages,
the stone that must be sculpted into art,
and I ask again and again:
Why have I not changed? What have I done?

Crude as ever, poisoned by your suspicion of growth,
dirty with dusty halls of books and webs of thought,
clear in language, unclear in thought,
give me liberty from the lot of you,
replant me in the Vedas, the Pre-Socratics, the Yin-Yang,
when the gods come and go,
when the great stones met the dawn without uncouth thoughts.

I remember a day long ago that now is dear,
the joy of knowing nothing and I at one with all,
no thing defined but every thing a friend,
I was rough, I reckon, I had no information,
I could not spell or offer any explanations,
love and hate were neither words nor thoughts,
food was all, the group was master, Nature the god,
but how busy, how awful, how entranced, how involved were we,
the little creatures without time or meaning.
Came that Day of meaning and all seemed a dawn's bloody glow,
each friend mutated into thought,
the near into distant, the warm cold, the simple complex,
(can I not even speak without illusory opposites!)
we gawked and obeyed as the gods appeared
within us and bestowed their mighty powers on us.
The sword arose by itself and my companions were cut away
though I clung to them to pull them inside my soul again;
but they were gone, out there, the land of the unknown,
and I became I, the land within, the child of myself,
alone, alas, along the brightened channels of my mind.
It's gone! Alas, the art of non-thinking died undeveloped,
the extraordinary energy of silence withdrew.

Yet fear not, Heart and Shaman! To return I do not yearn!
I yearn for change, and change have I not! Not then,

not now, whenever now is, whenever then was,
what hope of changing is churned by the post-modern wheel.
I weep for the old substance which meant nothing
but expressed the what which no one understood or could articulate;
I weep for what was unknown and obscure,
for what bent the minds of the metaphysically inept;
I weep for mystery and the mysteries within it.
Tears fill the eyes which were lost to ideology
and clouded with the needs of conformity.

HEART

Such a sour entrance for a soul who drags needs,
Heart bellowed as bluff dribbled from its mouth,
for him who eats but starves on a full dinner.
Whom do you think you think with such complaints,
whom do you rail against and guard in this pompous diatribe:
some little mama wiping your runny lack of gratitude?
Bah! Such a granny! You conceal nothing;
we all know to whom your passion portends.

HEAD

The guilty are guiltless, I say, the guile washed away
down the river of pointlessness and waste.
Fear not! I accede to nothing now of nonsense.
The blood of hypocrites is hemophilic.

HEART

Again you blast your benefactors, your guts,
as if you could forget the reason in your tour.

HEAD

What reason can there be to endless sleepwalking!
I forget only why I forgot to protest my travels
and forge walls against the mad attacks of travelers.
I a thankless thinker? Have I starved my heart
to feed the ravages of my mind? Forgive me, Heart,
I have met the limit of patience in being and time;
like a proud mountain, my self has worn down to a hill

after an eon of heedless uses of the gifts of growth.

Save me, Shaman. I cannot perform the songs of Heart.

SHAMAN

Oh Head, oh feeble thing,
oh restless foolish thorn in Nature's wounded life,
do you not yet tire of analysis and wasted breath,
of being you and You,
can you not live and let your growth happen softly?

HEAD

Shaman's truth is so hot I am burned into shame.

SHAMAN

Truth? Another of your fancy terms refusing to mean,
wallowing both in what is and what is not
as a wench wiggles before eager men of wealth?
Oh Head, turn your mind to that one there, that Heart
which will not turn, that heartless madam of recent thought,
that follower of what claims to change but changes not,
that supplier of trollops of clarity to weaken you.
Be not fooled, my confused friend, Heart is lost
in the fun house confidently believing in mirrors,
where images are crystalline but have no reality.
Look upon it with an honest head and shirk not!
Behold that world replete with what it believes
yet belief seeping through a sieve of reality
touching, feeling, being, caring for nothing.
Oh, a tiny place has Heart now, an ice box heating up
from puny principles the thought of itself
and a plot of intrigue no bigger than a throne
enslaving what cannot live within its frozen barrier.
Its deceit has a softness that will not melt
even with the tenderness of beauty and compassion.
Yet look at its structure, peer into its heart,
take the pulse of its own nature and no beat pounds
which cannot march to the crescendo of kindness.
Ignore the Heart that has grown up with thieves

and brigands of self-advancement who abduct innocence
and make their victim infants of hopefulness and faith.
Say to it: Be gone! if you cannot give me depth~!
Be gone! if you live only as animal
with no will to climb out
of the grotto of selfishness and wantonness.

HEART

Hahaha! Heart snickered. Wantonness! Hahaha! Imagine!
Oh you devil, shaman, you little unforgiving wily imp!
who could give instruction on how to color the world,
how to squint and ignore what the slits will not see.
Be gone idealism, I say, be gone dopes who think they know!
Be gone such sightless audacity with a pulpit on its back,
its black leather book wagging its spine without mercy.
You think that I am entertained by your performance!
Grotto? Really? How shaman exaggerates what it fears!
It is not I who perches himself like a preacher spouting hell.
Oh no! I'm content here below with the poor and meek blessed.
Not I exaggerate the education of imps like you.
Ha! How did the centuries leave you so heartless?

HEAD

If I live less a heart it is because Heart will not live
but basks in the cynicism of death and contingency.

HEART

Why wheel out virtue in a world which turns on evil?
Why proclaim what we have never achieved or wanted!
Go ahead! Boast about forgiveness and compassion!
Go ahead! Turn the head of Head and fool the masses,
you hypocrite, you propounder of black and white.
Line them up for the slaughter of a bloodless dogma!
There is nothing in it, I scream, empty untrue drivel
from a mind never instructed or disciplined to think.

SHAMAN

There it is, Head, there the Heart you must turn.

HEART

Ha! I am the Heart who knows no turning can occur
unless Shaman matures and admits its deadly failures.
Say to Shaman: Illusion can no longer suffice, I want more.
Say: Be gone, back to your trees, caves and dying gods.
Teach me about thinking and growth first, about identity!
Let me know something that brings a real turnabout.
Insist on knowing why shaman's allies have never defeated.
Hahaha. Say that! See how pathetically shaman will crawl.

HEAD

I long to sing along with you who shout and hail,
who boast of ways to bust up thoughts and idleness,
I long to sing my tune in the counterpoint of reality,
but I cannot find the sound of truth in anything,
I the head without a quest, a mind without a character.
At night I scrape the sky to feel as those who passed,
I strain to return to what not even heaven remembers,
an innocent past when dreams could be enjoyed.
Yet what do the dead do now? Oh! My tears come! Stop!
Why mourn for mine own, for those primeval ancestors
who had so much promise and yet could afford to waste
because they were never as extravagant as their heirs?
Oh yes! Song! The luxury of the muses, the music of angels,
song could calm me, even give me strength, even inspire,
yet I the buzzard, the old rotting fixture in the forest, the stump,
the most hated island in the ocean of life, sing no more.
I protrude in the midst of depth and am being eaten away
by my own polluted noise, by the sorry acid of greed,
by the winds of power, the storm in confidence and pride.
Be gone pretension! Shall I not free the cork of deceit
and acknowledge the sound that deafens the universe,
that lonely voice of Nature bellowing out its ancient song?

NATURE

How long the quest, how hard to scold, how sorry the life,
oh purity, oh patient one, who must live to see the child grow;
your sadness reaches me and stains my little leaves of grass;
your heat of anger bursts upon the fields and melts the snow
of cruelty, neglect and hate; for you can slacken death,
you the cloud of conscience, you the pool of merciful tears,
I hear, I know, I listen, the sounds fill up my skies
with beauty and with sorrow, with blessed heat which sears
the rind of slavery to savagery and seals the impasse
separating being from identity, growth from need,
when Heart and Head and Shaman come to truth and none denies
that I, of Nature, and It, the core, are earth and seed.

Flowers watch me spread my clouds and give them lumps of drink,
they gather in the bright blue news which every sunrise hails,
a ray, a drop, an air that talks of peace and gentle songs,
these fields, these spaces, these sweetest scents of vales
avenge my prehistoric innocents and harvest innovative change.
Await no more! The silence and wild swell return in power.
Reign oh ant! Vote oh rose! Let the river live again and speak.
Arise oh wolf! Awake oh whale! Reject the dirty moaning tower
prepared and fossilized forever. Burn the list of wrongs
and doubt the list of rights. Know no mountain more than good,
feel no valley more than honesty. Be the flower, do not seek
to be the bee, enjoy alike the rain and sun as loving food.

But do they hear? And do they change? What gall! What ruin!
To see the tree and not the woods, to rot the pith and not the bark;
to yearn and moan for moon and mist but lack your universe
and my variety, the harbors from which a creature could embark
on a voyage back to unity and conquer storms of distraction
and moral confusion. To ignore such hope! What arrogance,
what weak navigation in an unpredictable human clime!
And what expect they now: a Christ to calm the sea perchance,
an Athena to appear or a thousand Bodhisattvas to disperse
the black clouds? What forgetfulness and careless thought!
How far to stray! To think that they could burst from slime
without help, to believe they do and think from naught.

So the ancient days are here again and we must start again,

we must see the task anew and choose another being and vision;
what grows too fast, what fades too soon, what lives too long,
becomes a monstrous plant unlike its seed, and flings out derision
on its makers, trampling its rights and demeaning its future.
Now back, sad prince, return to the tarnished cage of gold;
we beckon you no more to perform before us on the stage
of creaturely hopefuls; you embarrass us no longer with your hold
on our expectations. Sing behind the bars of desire your song
of purity and innocence, but its mournful entreaties and boasts
pass us by and will no longer be heard without a tune of rage
accompanying them. Arias without substance from the ghosts!

Can Nature come to care about you a little prince of mind
beside the towering redwoods, the mighty Niagara Falls,
when you lay still in the swamp as if you had never emerged,
when you talk as a lowly creature without any dignity who calls
out for recognition when no other creature even sees you?
No, the jungle again awaits, yearning for your hardy screams,
hungering with its wet for your dry flesh of stagnancy,
your scales of lust and your parched mouth which blasphemes
all which lives. There you could become not as one submerged
in the filth of discarded and forgotten products subjected
to the wear of ages, to the exaggerated tales of arrogances,
but as one who grows out of the slime no longer disrespected.

There is sadness in the encroaching deserts of land and heart,
a threat awaits in the night, afar in the sky and deep beneath,
there is loss in extinct flowers and vanished creatures of sea,
air and soil, and I mourn it all, for I lie alive underneath
each molecule of life, the whole of breath breathing in me,
I shiver with its chill and I glow with its warmth and none
escapes my pulse and no one dies unless I die too, each demise
a member of my family, the death of each ant or weed a sun
gone cold and the whole planet lifeless and I a smaller entity
shrinking into nothingness. Why admire what does not change
and yearn for sameness without creativity or surprise,
what is this spirit called human, this mind insecure and strange?

Now the blood of love is water, its pleasures burning nerves away,
its friendship, devotion and sweet touches of kindness just puffs,
of stale air in polluted relationships where parents ignore the child
without the guilt and warp into vengeful creatures with rebuffs

for gaffes and suppress the woes that wandering can bring.
Why love if lovers cease to love beyond the heartless passion,
dig a gulf of hatred so wide so strong another pattern arises
which none can halt except the power of my word in a fashion
most tremendous and destructive? Fear they not the darkness riled,
the nemesis of compassion, the vulture desperately searching
for tweeters of hate with souls of mighty boasts and tiny sizes
with spaces empty and pathetic song who sit there openly perching?

Hatred they demand. Yet bury them with death and up they come
like weeds unwelcome. Who can fathom their insanity and lust?
Injustice they deserve. Yet strike their little gods and scores
of muses fill their minds with meters and a rhyming dust
deceptively narcotic whose use is done. Who discerns such ends?
I have seen a river die, a canyon grow, a lake become a desert;
I have known the seasons a million times, humanity arise and fall,
the world wiped away and reappear; I do not flinch, I will avert
nothing since nothing its source and destiny; a human adores
the role as fool although the auditorium is bare, the stage
for one alone, the script human, the only prop a single wall
which makes one stupid, separate from the maker and the sage.

When no youth survives, the only young are old and the aged
have to learn to romp again. Like toddlers legs must exercise
when youth are feeble and brains are hungry for sleep
and bodies are wrinkled from artificial drink and many lies.
Is it the strange time, the transition, the slip into death?
Have I seen it all in other days, this drift toward inertia,
the only change to dread, the living out for hours or years
the lives which cannot differ and which make no difference?
I do not want it! I do not long for languor or ask to weep
when mourning comes and bows upon the sorry state of humankind!
Why must I grieve and see the light explode with clouds of fears?
Who sights the arteries of children harden and stays the human bind?

All for Mystery, all shrouded in visions only Mystery has designed.

MYSTERY

Ssss! (the dog, the cat, confront the other beside the river)
The cat's body curls, retracts and readies to spring boldly,
its fangs proud, its eyes gleaming, its hair upright;

the dog's black nose edges forward with a sharp bark,
one paw to test the claws, a growl to act the master.

The river busy creating the future,
rocks to sand, all in erosion under the mount,
the quick run to the great mother sea
who greets, absorbs, renews and returns,
a path to itself again and again.

A baby floats precariously on a raft.

The moon beheld them all, grinning with one half,
darkness hiding the other with teeth of blood,
a quiet murderer in the sky, awaiting victims.

It was earthly June, another moonlit spin,
a season for dogs and cats in sparing heat,
with a hundred rivers, the earth's fingers,
flowing, clawing by and into the hard stuff,
and those hungry planets reproducing kind,
all sharing in beauty and tiny destinies,
all becoming the seeds and fruits of mystery.

I, Mystery, was there,
the child with toys of time and thinking,
relishing play and puzzles with my pets,
my little Taos, testing the way of things.

you do not talk of what I know,
but speak of things outside,
of prisons, pain and inconsistencies
and I recognize no movement or struggle;

still I, Mystery, hear your song,
that confusing lyric on countless mirages,
those visions of touch and company
(though you arrive and depart alone);

like my little dogs and cats you scratch
and claw on the bones of rotting air,
like my cruel moon you know light
only in the blackest times,

like the child on my river you rush on
and miss the depth of you and now.
Like my hungry mountain you will not budge
but stick up and out to tempt any nemesis.
To Mystery you are no mystery,
you shadow in the light of creation,
you fat reminder to Nature of the boredom
and terror of overfed arrogance and sameness.

Once, when sorrow met me, the fire of fear surrounded them,
those cracked, tired, squeezed away souls hung dry.
I spit and a juicy breeze flung my essence upon them,
but the searing bodies burned it up; the sickness remained.
My mythology, my fairy and folk tales, my legends,
spent their energies and cured nothing before such pain.
They laid gaping at me, their souls with bleeding sores
of cynicism and hopelessness and the bleak pitch
of flaw and fault, of shame and contempt, babbling.
Why could they not believe me? Is nothing of light?
Oh wretched ones, baits of the universe, hypocrites and clowns,
what illusions they treasure, what flowers they ignore.

Now I am hidden and they talk of the mystery of Mystery.
Where is Mystery? The answer would, I think, question itself.
Where is the last rainfall, the first child, and the light?
Can we not all play? Make funny sounds? Go poof and stuff!
Ssss! Grrr! Pffff! Leekadeekapeepodoodlemannatickletol!
You try! With no less than thirteen syllables and one rhythm.
Just sounds we make into words and Words we force into sounds
and sounds we cannot speak and words we cannot say and such!
Say them all! Say the sounds and see the little death in them!
Hidden? In them is concealed nothing, in them nothing lives,
the long shot of the truth-attempter living in silence and such!

Grrr! (the dog and cat are climbing the mountain)
The dog murmurs begrunted thanks for the cat
as her claws found another refuge in their journey.
The moon near to the edge guides them in to rest
and reflect on the strange battles at the river

The mountain softens and seems to mold itself
to their tiny furry bodies, sticky with blood,

bloating its proud chest of evergreens to cool
their panting and coat the air with mint.
while the river, like a moist wind, strokes it with mist.

A baby sits precariously in the cave.

The moon beheld them all, grinning with one half,
darkness hiding the other with teeth of blood,
a quiet murderer in the sky, awaiting victims.

It was earthly June, another moonlit spin,
a season for dogs and cats in sparing heat,
with a hundred rivers the earth's fingers,
flowing, clawing by and into the hard stuff,
and those hungry planets reproducing kind,
all sharing in beauty and tiny destinies,
all becoming the seeds and fruits of mystery.

I, Mystery, was there,
the child with toys of time and thinking,
relishing play and puzzles with my pets,
my little Taos, testing the way of things.

a thousand puzzles I presented patiently
for none would listen to the simple truth
I offered god and goddess, philosophy and myth;
I showed the Movement in the image and the sound;

I sowed in meter, blocks of marble and of scroll;
and watched the toil of forgetting and remembering commence;
centuries censured, thrust my puzzles underground
and then proclaimed their own inventions as the rule;

like my little dogs and cats you scratch
and claw on the bones of rotting air,
like my cruel moon you know light
only in the blackest times,
like the child on my river you rush on
and miss the depth of you and now.
Like my hungry mountain you will not budge
but stick up and out to tempt any nemesis.
To Mystery you are no mystery,

you shadow in the light of creation,
you fat reminder to Nature of the boredom
and terror of overfed arrogance and sameness.

I, Mystery, now await and watch
with my little dogs and cats,
mistake no window open
for my winsome breeze to enter
and awaken the magic of your own mysteries
to escape the prison of their dormancy.

THE END