

## So Love Your Enemy

so easy to spout forth  
you comfortable believers  
who have never examined  
the notion that what is preached

so loudly boldly assuredly  
as if from some outside font  
of transcendental wisdom  
passed on dogmatically from on high

so that self-hatred might  
have room in the inn at night  
for darkness quits travel when  
dogs turn into voracious wolves

so vicious that children  
cover their faces blanket out the stars  
count their private sins on fingers and toes  
wish they could love the enemy

so familiar heavy long-harangued  
by the pulpit shouting clerics  
who shun the soul-devouring betrayer-  
hider in our human flesh

so often targeted for the stake  
flames inching up the sizzling corpse  
already dead crossed-over  
away from saw-toothed biting words

so must we say we who find  
the enemy within hidden  
under the false comfortless shroud  
begging pleading for mercy

so soon after the discovery  
our enemy lamb to lion close  
an early friend generous giver  
of the blinding dark our other self

so thus we toddle into the thereafter  
our inward eyes alone see the pillar  
of endless light love the enemy  
ourselves truly

## For My Sins, Yes

### Hangman

fearsome under your black hood  
slits for your reptilian eyes  
robe too large cinctured loosely  
ready noose in hand  
beneath sleeves too long  
as a rapist who would choke  
the flesh he sundered  
to mute plea for mercy

### Condemned

bound dragged  
filthy from tortured days  
in the bishop's dungeon  
rat bites bleed down your chin your arms  
leggings soiled by your own needs  
shoeless

### Crowd

gathers thick in the city square  
framed in the east by the cathedral's portico  
gargoyles hiss at the righteous  
piss down the drains  
steam crawls in the scars of century old  
blood stained cobble stones

### Children

hide behind heavy skirts  
young boys hurl rotten root-vegetables  
fresh dung at the condemned  
his offences nailed to the cathedral door

### Adults

raise their fists in assent  
in full view of the bishop's minions

### Condemned

your tears gather at the sight of neighbors  
with your last reserves  
you shout oh no oh no  
with the last gift of strength  
you plea beg  
accuse me of my sins  
these are not my crimes  
why the banishment  
why the gallows  
these are not my crimes  
flog me for my sins

sackcloth me for a lifetime  
ashes I would eat for my sins  
these are not my crimes

Crowd  
persists  
threatens the little ones with the same  
for their trivial misdeeds

Cart  
thick heavy splintered wooden wheels  
follow the beat of the old nag's stride  
led by the grave digger

Condemned  
roped to the wagon rail  
shakes stumbles  
lifts his chin  
mumbles oh no oh no  
accuse me of my sins please  
these are not my crimes

Cart  
halts in front of bishop  
high on chiseled  
episcopal throne  
set against thick oak cathedral doors  
for the solemn occasion

Bishop  
liturgically offers the condemned  
a last chance to plead guilty as charged  
atonement in exchange for absolution  
before the execution

Silence

Bishop  
pride wounded  
shouts out a teeth-clenched  
do you repent

Condemned  
for my sins yes  
not for these false accusations

Bishop  
red-faced thrusts his jaw  
entones a reluctant blessing  
washes his hands of it all  
proclaims  
to the gallows and to hell

Cart  
and condemned  
cross the crowded square  
to the chant of criminal be damned

Children  
feel the wrongness of it all  
join in the lies  
as they must to see another day

Soldiers  
release the prisoner to the unknown  
executioner

Trapdoor  
salivates  
hungry to devour the condemned

Noose  
adroitly set  
a hush smothers the crowd  
one last drop of putrid piss  
splashes in a puddle loud

Hangman  
defiant  
tosses hood to the crowd

Bishop  
jowls bloodless  
bolts upright  
loses miter  
drops crozier  
waves his arms surplice-laced  
mounts a frantic helpless reach  
oh no oh no  
arrest the hangman  
arrest the hangman  
stop the hangman  
stop the hangman  
she is that woman  
the deceiver

And the trap door unhinges all

## Always at Crossroads, the Unexpected

Always at crossroads, the unexpected.  
Which road to take?  
They all lead somewhere.

The small forbidden dog dressed in  
Yellow mustard, sweet relish, and onions,  
Half eaten, bottoms in the trash bin.

Anatolian and Australian shepherds,  
Hot in the SUV, suffer the old Tom's petulance  
Housed in the blue borrowed dog crate.

Which way is north? How to find the way  
Back to old Route 99 and on to Oregon?  
Lost at the Intersection in a no-name town.

I sidle the Escalade mirror-close  
To a vintage Dodge Caravan.  
Sure! Ask the 'hombre' in the van for directions.

Slick black hair, mustache, grim face,  
Eyes fixed, glazed. Of course he's eager to help!  
Do I have a choice?

I've had enough of the long-cut east on I-80  
Bound for Reno out of Sacramento. I don't  
Have another wasted 30 minutes left in me.

Desperate, I down the window, fist the horn.  
He turns his head. Reaches,  
Crank down the passenger side window.

"Hey! How do I get to 99 north?"  
He smiles a pricy warm golden reply.

Ecce homo! Behold!

"You're here. Turn right." He points.  
"That's it Right there. Goes right through town.  
Go. Go. Yes. Yes. That way." He waves.

"Thanks", I shout, and turn right on red.

Up in the Cascades a vista  
Unlocks a bound chest, a closed mind.

A smile releases a harried face, fills a driver  
to his cells, washes through him.  
What a prejudiced blind 'gringo'!

I met Him  
At the crossroad today,  
And He was WE.

## It Was Your Birthday Yesterday

All month long, the crows at the birth bath  
by the forest gate  
drink up my tears,  
wail the guilt knifed in my throat,  
warn the forest creatures  
to beware of the sadman  
who fumbled the ball at the one yard line,  
never touched down enough  
to gather the most precious players in his life  
and defect to Canada's  
great northwest wilderness  
and there keep them safe from the corrupt.

Today,  
I replenish the bird bath to the brim.

## For too Many Patients, I

suffer sun-stroked sorrow  
alone altogether abandoned  
when withered wishes  
caste cancerous caution  
aside away along  
long lingering lonesome  
trails trouble thoughts  
because bitter burdens  
thrash try trigger  
mutinous memories maim  
professional protection  
when windy wallowing  
is inept insufficient  
at atonement again always  
for failures forgiven