

Bird Song

I awoke one morning
to the sound of bird song
and as I slowly emerged
from the subterranean depths
of pregnant dream
I once again became aware
of the hard realities
of my structured bedroom
with its precise cubic walls
and the Promethean technology
of my clock radio and TV.
Reminding me of duty and schedule
and the straitjacket of commitments
to be an orderly piston
in the engine of civilization.

But as I rolled over and listened
to the red breasted robins
singing in the trees
outside my window,
translating the joy
of morning sunshine
and temperate spring weather
into a chirping celebration
of freedom
as ripe and as full
as succulent grapes on the vine
I said a silent prayer
of deep felt gratitude

that I too could savor the moment
and find my meaning
not as an engineered component
of a machine driven by strangers
but rather as a drunken dancer
to the rhythms of the tides
and the twilight
and the seasons
able to find the time
to sing the stars
of my own constellation
filtering my life into the language
that like the singing of the robins
expresses the joy
of being alive and free.

The Math of Matter/The Surreality of Spirit

The summer sun shines down bright
leaving little ambiguity or doubt
about the appearances
of what it illuminates-
the calm cool lake,
the rowboat moored to the dock,
the glistening leaves on the trees
and their long dark shadows;
an allusion to the mysteries of nightfall
when the precision of daylight,
like the calipers of reason,
that married matter with math,
and transformed the raw
commodities of the earth
into skyscrapers, sweatshops, and electronics,
comes up short under the
nighttime starry sky,
when the flames of Eros,
or the budding white rose of Love,
and the tempest of emotions,
as well as the synthetic alchemy of intuition,
seize you with midnight obsessions,
that like a thief or a riot,
can upset what you thought was in order.

The howling high winds of a hurricane
that hit your house with a knockout blow
shattering into bits a once safe dwelling,
with the awesome ferocity of the sublime

and shows that not withstanding
the math and matter molding of the engineers
some things remain unknown and belligerent
and mock all ideals and planning,
like a fierce ocean storm to a tiny sailboat,
a raging forest fire to a little rural town,
an avalanche to a mountain highway,
or the face and eyes that look back
when you're in front of a mirror,
and suggest a presence behind the actor
that statistics and studies
fall short of understanding,
and like an insurgent to the intellect,
scrambles your identity and ego sometimes,
and reminds you that when your remains
are lowered in your coffin
to your grave
all the math and engineering
would have been in vain,
and it's just the heart and wisdom
of your eternal Spirit,
that like a moonlit vineyard,
gives the promise of future joy.

Awakening

I was nearing the end
of a course well charted,
that had been traveled
by multitudes
before me,
as an intern on call
in an inner city hospital.
And I knew I could be thrust
into a harrowing situation
at any moment.
But as the night was slow
I found an empty room
in the on call suite
and tried to read
my copy of
Faust part two.

And as I read the beginning
with it's song of rejuvenation,
I felt the fire in my veins
grow with each passing line,
until out the window
the twinkling city lights
seemed surrounded by a
deep delicious darkness,
that contained priceless
unknown treasures,

that yearned to reach the light.
And I felt a moment
of deep satisfaction,
overwhelmed by the thought
that I could die then in peace.

Later when I returned to the wards
things took on a new significance-
I now saw the white coats,
charts and sterile tubing
as engaged in a hopeless battle
with the wild forces of nature,
and the stern relentlessness
of the lifecycle.

And realized my desire
lay elsewhere,
and I must soon
set out on my own,
and express my
new found vision,
accepting however far
it can take me.

The Patient

I was called to see a patient
rudely interrupted as I slept
in a tiny on-call room
in the inner-city hospital,
so I put on my white coat
and shaking out the cobwebs
I went to the emergency room
and there the nurse directed me
to an agitated man in a wheelchair
beads of sweat glistening
under the hot lights,
like dewdrops at dawn,
on his furrowed brow.
His eyes were distant but intense
darting back and forth
and with considerable difficulty
he tried to admonish me
that he needed help
although he could barely move his mouth
it being contorted in the most irregular way
as if someone had punched him in the jaw
and it now no longer worked properly.
And as I studied him further
I noticed his somewhat unkempt appearance-
his hair unruly like a bird's nest
with a few days growth of beard
on his pale, trembling face,
nicotine stains on his fingers
and wearing rumpled dirty clothes.

And the nurse told me
he was on psychiatric medicine
so on the off chance
he was experiencing
an uncommon side effect
I ordered a shot of the antidote
and left to go to the nurse's station
to write my note.

When suddenly like
the first blast of a rock concert
I heard a loud shriek
like someone had just won the lottery
and my patient burst out of the room
with a large grin on his face
saying that I had cured him
and with the satisfaction
of a job well done
I accepted his sincere gratitude,
told the nurse he could go now,
and let him out the door.