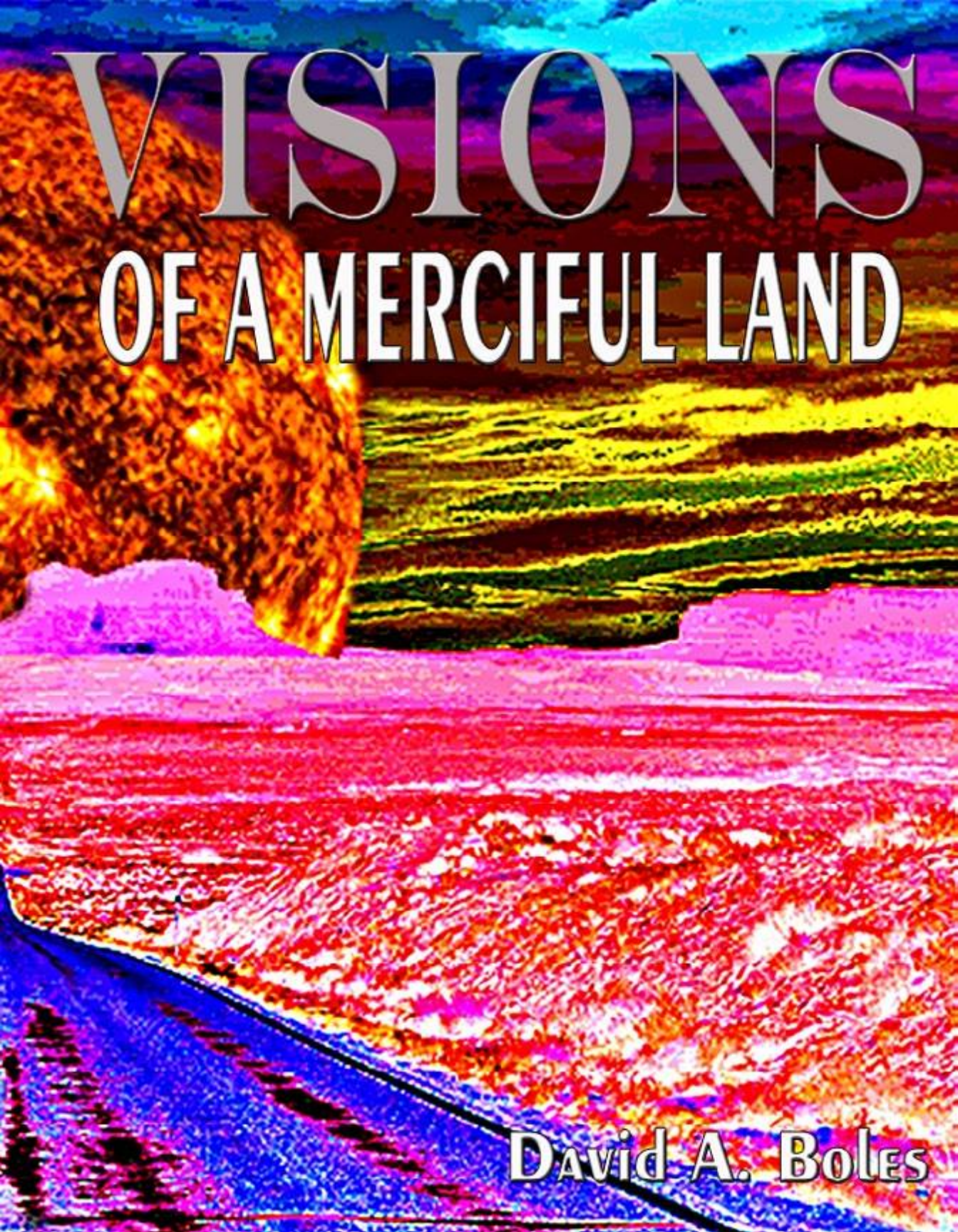
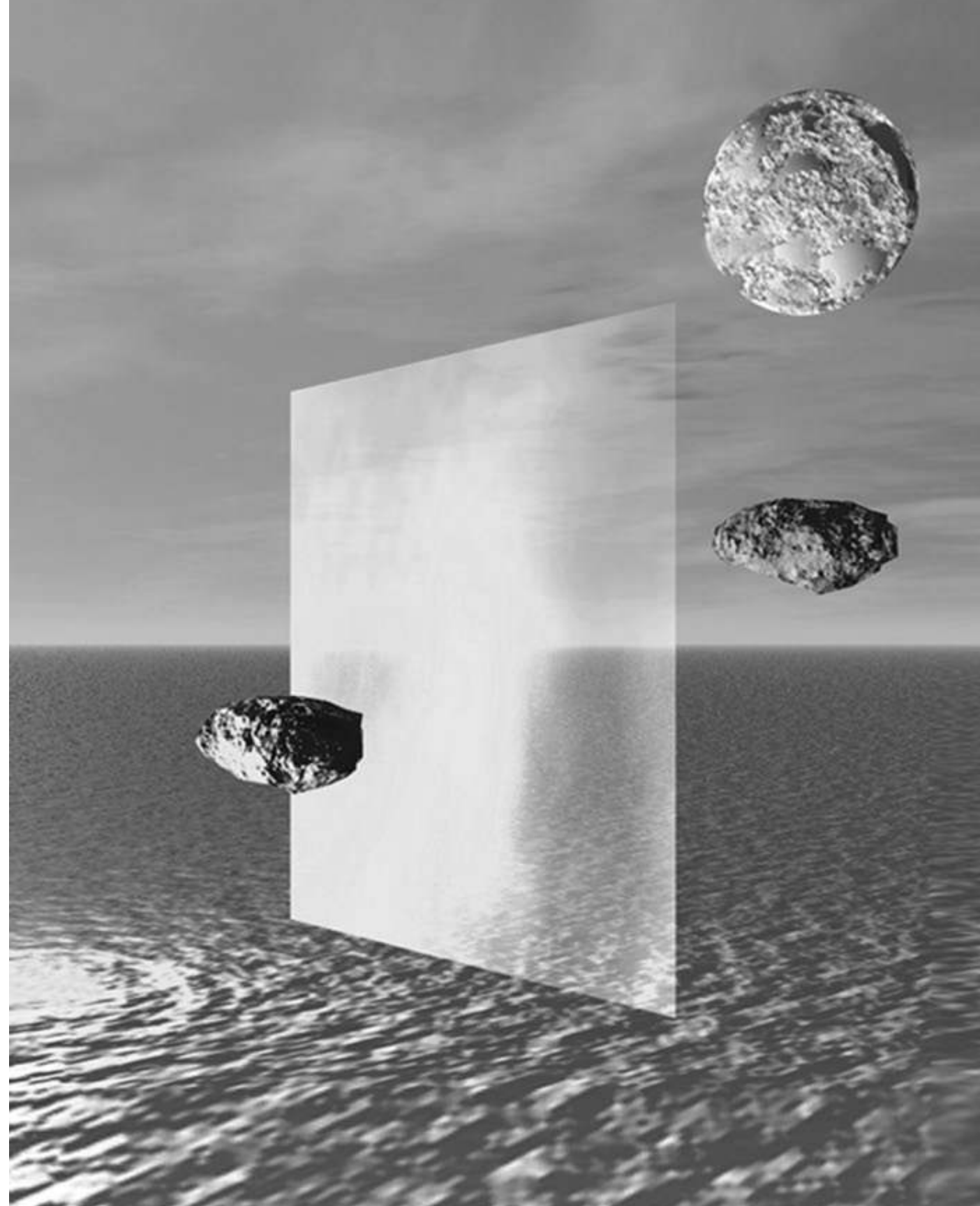




VISIONS OF A MERCIFUL LAND

David A. Boles



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*This book is dedicated
to our grandchildren’s children
and the path we all share.*

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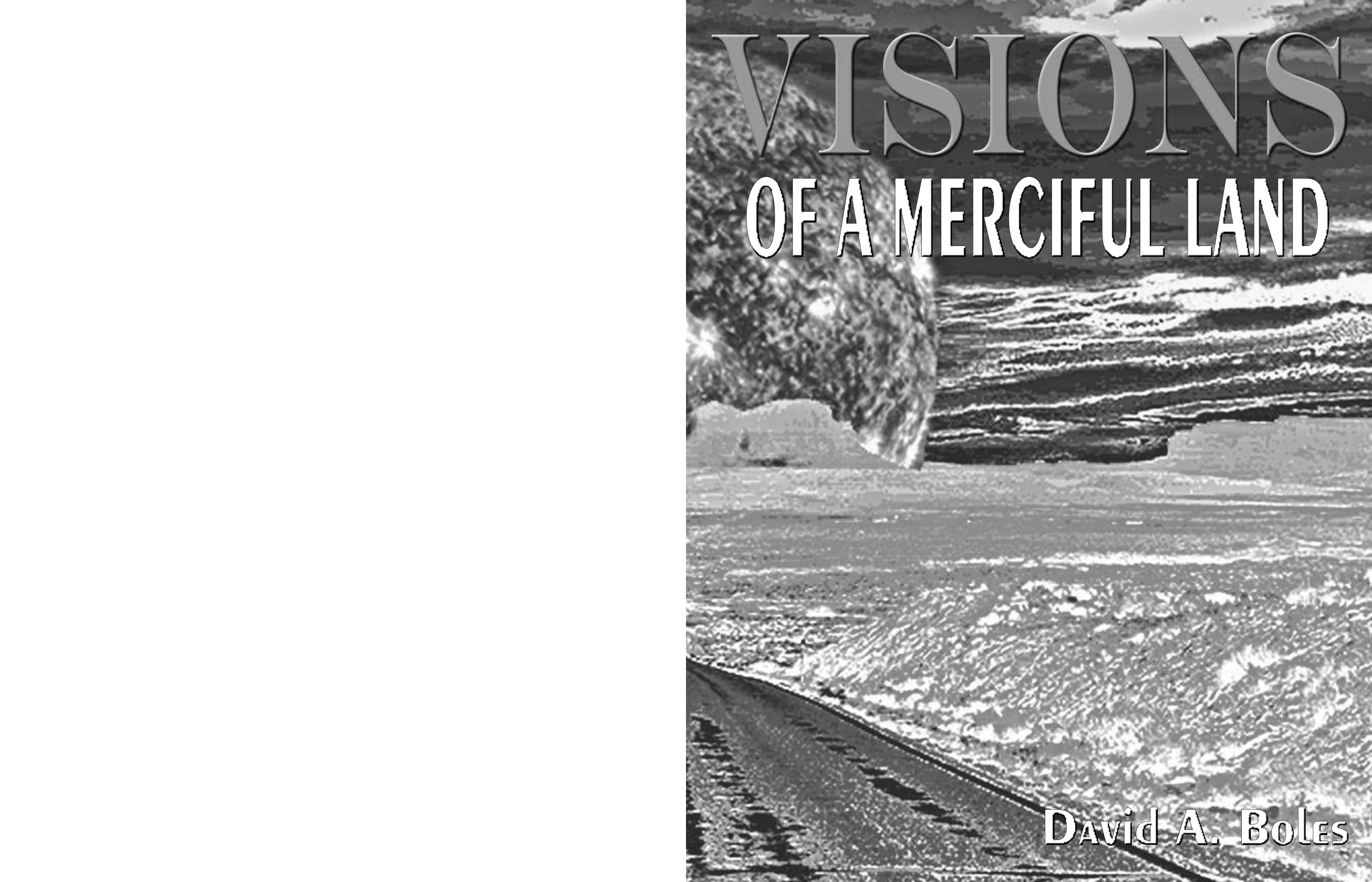
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A black and white photograph of a rugged coastline. In the foreground, a dark, pebbly beach curves along the bottom left. The ocean is turbulent, with white foam from breaking waves visible in the middle ground. In the background, a steep, rocky cliff rises from the water's edge. The sky is overcast with soft clouds.

VISIONS OF A MERCIFUL LAND

David A. Boles

FOREWORD

V*isions Of A Merciful Land's* beautiful psychedelic cover seems to contradict the title with the suggestive mushroom cloud. Is the cover a prescient apocalyptic forecast our culture has become consumed and accustomed to from countless literal misreadings of a sacred call for inner change begun with the writings of Zoroaster? Or, perhaps the road into the vanishing point points as one of many enriched trails to a ball of visionary light waiting its seer poet to guide from? The poems, if read from this perspective, should be looked upon as a simultaneous gathering held in the hand seen, felt and known as a multifaceted crystal indelibly ink stamped by the black ink junkie himself, the Gringo Shaman.

Many poems in this collection also can be read and seen as concretized and woven mytho-history signposts along the questing maze road towards known, hidden and coming dangers seen in the rearview mirror of collective hindsight. These have been forgotten because their hard lessons consciously want to be forgotten by most. Boles, the relentless straight talking archaeologist of history and myth, knows these must be constantly present as pins keeping the two eyes wide and aware in order to keep open the third eye visions offered by the seekers. Our seeker shaman grants visionary insights as “*knowing tools*” to cut off the psychological shackles and straight jackets put upon us. If not removed the collective remains aimed in short hopping steps down the road of poor choice, insuring tragedy. He writes;

We are all travelers, on a magical journey.

What else is there to know?

The rhetorical is often answered throughout the book's light filled tapestry with its dark counterpoint to highlight contrasting choices. Another question from Gringo Shaman:

*where are all the poets
the artists and musicians*

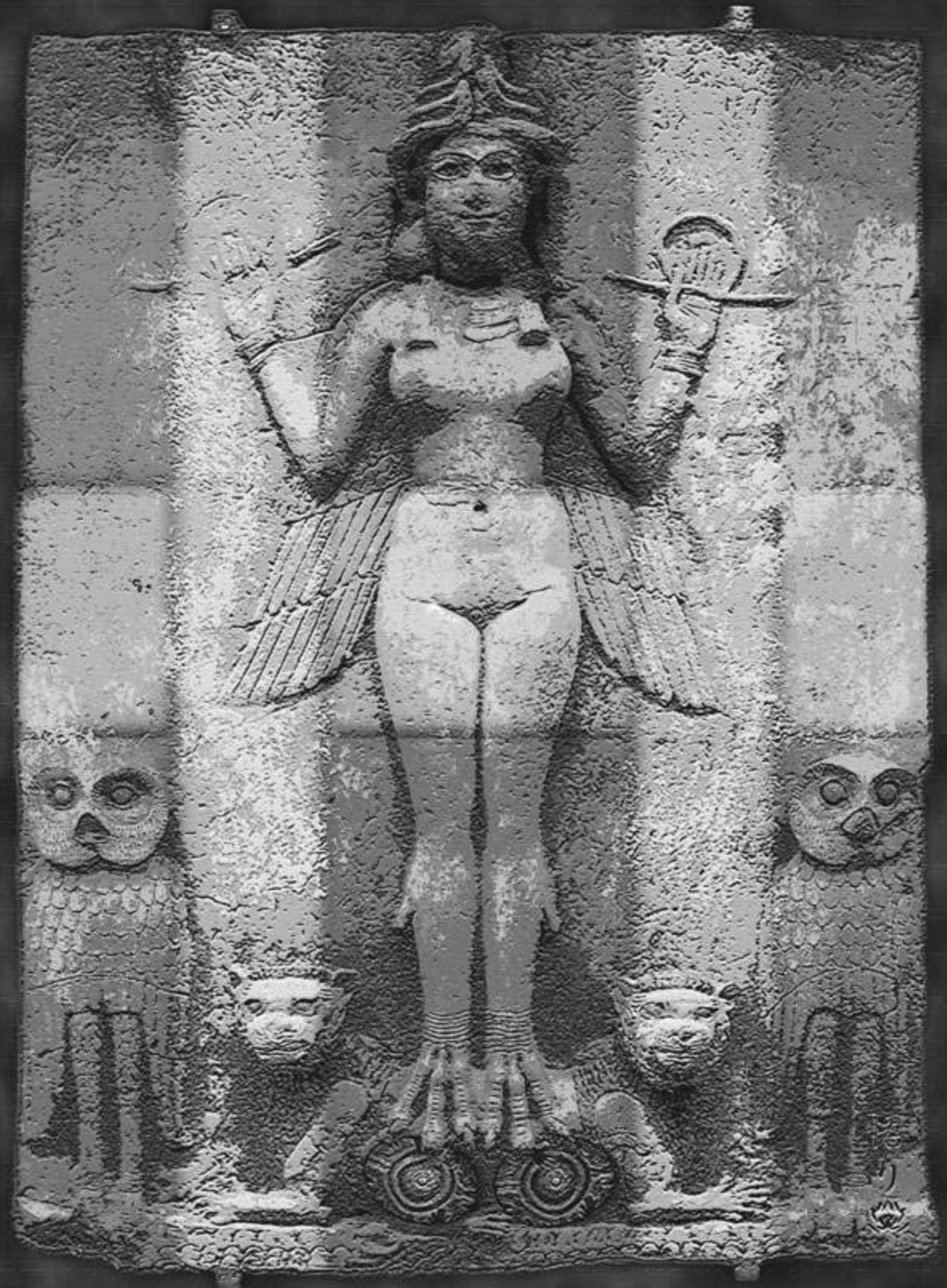
Indeed, where? This too I have been asking for years and I have added philosophers and theologians to the missing in the visionary quest into light filled realms. A few poets trek this land now become a literary desert in the drought of post modernism. We meet, guided by surviving reveals of past sage and seer poets and of course, coyote, in oases sipping the sweet waters of gnosis. One of the ponds, the o of now, into which Boles wets his writing tool to draw ink, allowing time to become space through which easily we follow the dancing pen tracing human foibles, fables and the reach for actual freedom. Along the way our shaman gives this offering in "Tea With The Shaman:"

*the only sound to be heard
was the word never spoken*

As one sits still in the roar of silence, the road crawling in all directions, Boles whispers in our ear as a voice of conscience:

*i want to take you with me
let us turn and walk away
this fleeting life is our only vessel
let us not waste another day.*

*karl kempton,
Oceano, CA 2023*



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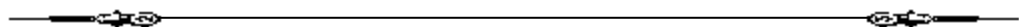
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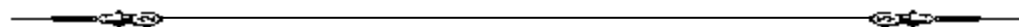
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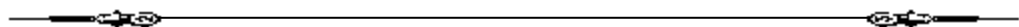
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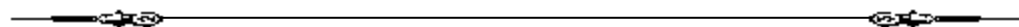
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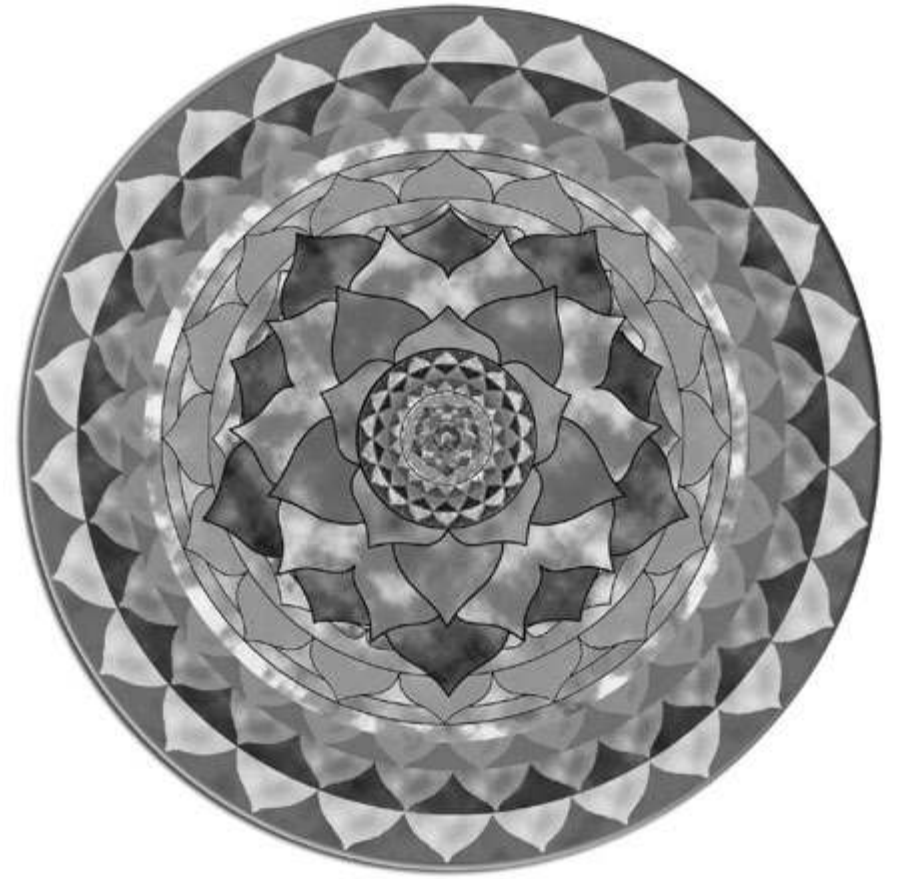


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VISIONS OF A MERCIFUL LAND



David A. Boles

PREFACE

look to the heaven's
pray to your gods

cultures and civilizations come and go

dig the earth
discover their remains

understand, clarify
your relationship with time

listen to the wind
speak its wisdom

there are stories,
myths told
of your spiritual nature

allow your ancestors
to speak to you
from fires long ago

when we lived inside nature

~ ~ ~

we live there still

if only we took
the time to see.

“

*read the words
that are emblazoned
upon your heart
share the lyrics
that stir
within your soul*

*view the world
as a playful child
and you will forever
remain free*

”

ADUMBRATION

we lay under a madrigal sky
holding loosely
to a dandelion
sunrise

winged angels
resplendent in their finery
swirling
before us

the earth wakening
its vibrant pulse
resonating
within us

i held you close
pleased to have comfort

on a day
such as this.

ARCHEOLOGY

people of the White Tiger
gather at the Holy Temple
praying for rain

Marduk, an ancient God
calls to them
requiring sacrifices
in his name

he requires blood
in return for crops
he requires blood
in return for life

a feast prepared
their captive silent

people chant
moving as one

clockwise
always clockwise

sun chases moon
death chases life

high priest gestures to the crowd
it is time

motion stops
the earth is silent

a ceremonial dagger
forged from the creator's fire

is offered

plunges deep
into the sacrificial heart

many dances
many hearts
a thousand sacrifices

will not bring rain

CONTINUED

Marduk has died
the jungle with him

blood falls on arid earth
life becomes death

the Holy Temple falls
stone by stone

people of the White Tiger
fade into time

history
hiding their story.

CROSSING OVER

the sacred river flows before me
blood from martyrs staining its shores

i search for clues amongst its rocks
finding only voices on the ground
calling to me, heeding me

pay the ferryman

i have no coin, nothing to trade

my soul is locked in time

i watch the universe expand
with the souls of the damned

a million brilliant lights

a pattern emerges
blinding me with its grace

a loving gesture
from your heart

the ferryman begins to row
directing me to take my seat

payment has been made

my journey paid for

my soul
released.

BONE COLLECTOR

it was not so much the skeleton in the road
but the way it looked upon me

the way the curve of its jaw
followed the road

a gentle, noble slope
of what used to be a nose

i could not see it, of course
but its presence was deafening

any number of lives danced naked
on the road before me

their memories twirling in the wind
leaves on an autumn day

i could see the skeleton was missing
a vibrant bone, or two

perhaps the migrant bones were harvested
by another rider

one who understood the nature
of such things

the complexities of the dead
are not commonly known

i was fortunate to have had training
in this exact art

a murmur of my own violations
brought darkness to the scene

the skeleton, understandingly
smiled benevolently to me

a leaf fell upon me
whispering a healing psalm

i collected the skeleton
placing it roughly in my satchel

there were other bones down the road
that cried out to me

i would collect them all
if only i had more time.

BURNING OF THE INNOCENTS

in ancient times
to control food
they burned innocents
so there would be fewer mouths
to feed
maintaining it was a noble
humanitarian
gesture

we no longer participate
in such barbaric actions

as a civilized people
we recognize there is a need
for civility
no need to burn innocents
in order to control food

would the fires but cease
if only for a moment

evolving beyond
barbaric actions
victors no longer parade
into conquered lands

enslaving its people
setting fire to the
innocents
sparing them
the pain
of a slow, enduring death

humanity enacted laws
making certain
the innocents
always came first

laws that state food
cannot be sold
beyond a recommended date

or table scraps
from our many fine
and varied restaurants
cannot be given to the uncountable
mouths
needing nourishment
on our streets

ours is now a system of laws

still, we control the food

CONTINUED

the whole of Earth
has been conquered

laws enacted

we control the food

while children still starve

* * *

it is true we no longer
burn the innocents

we protect them with laws

with righteous decrees

our leaders save
those among us that need saving

it is a kinder, gentler way
to control the food

the fires ceasing
if only for a moment.

DEMON

i heard the demon
speak
in my dreams

i had asked him
did he feel
the touch
of the gods

he replied;

*i am all
there is to be*

and with that
he entered my dreams
no more.

EVOLUTION

the history of our ancestors
is written in our future
volumes of parchment
pages of books
endless data captured
by rulers of the fury

siege machines
lead lambs to slaughter

abandoned on desert floors
their dust foretelling our demise

god's replaced with greed
supplicants with sin

wild-eyed mystics dance
their fires glowing bright

fueled by ignorance
the righteous rule

captive people
breed in silence

we evoke images of our ancestors
writing pages of the past

editing truth

great stories will be needed
to forge a future
of our lie.

GIRSU

on the plains of Girsu
where writing was invented
great kings wrote their stories
tally's of grain harvests
troop movements, all manner of information
written in cuneiform
the Stele Of The Vultures was found there
telling of the war between Lagash and Umma
two great powers of Mesopotamia
Lagash defeated Umma
we know this because
it was written

wars raged for millennia

tribes rose to power
neighbors annihilating neighbors
in recent times the region
suffered massive damage
during the US - Iraq war
the world watched news feeds
dispatches for the people
to keep them informed
a handful of scholars
lovers of history
understand the irony
of a vast, great region
spawning culture, enlightenment
reduced now to poverty
it's modern cities in rubble
their Gods forgotten
as they forgot them.

GAZA, 2014

we had grown bored
with television

each show trying to
outdo the other

each new series trying to
be more horrifying
than the other

the human condition
as portrayed on t.v.
had de-evolved
into absurdity

then we discovered newscasts
that showed cheering and jeering

Israeli's
gloating with glee
at every missile finding
its mark
in Gaza

we discovered documentaries
made by Israelis
justifying their actions
and encouraging the death

of innocent civilians
so that Israel
might remain safe

we listened to our politicians
defending
the vast amounts of money
given to Israel
to continue
killing
innocent children
as a way to preserve
our freedoms

we sat
stunned
by this atrocity

we watched
intently
as people died
while people cheered

just when we had become
bored
with television
we happened upon the news
in Gaza.

HARVEST

we inhaled deeply throughout the day
as chemtrails left their
fine, lattice work in the sky

harvest was upon us

tonight the moon would glow over fields
lush and green,
giving warmth with its glowing orb
sending notice to all
that it was time

vassal servants
(most in fashionable suits)
moved throughout our town
searching
for signs of alien life

someone had posted
that soon
the Anunnaki would appear

ignoring their ignorance
we waited for dark
when the harvest moon would rise
resplendent against the night sky
lighting our way
as we harvested hope.

A GLIMMER OF MADNESS

the silence of our children
is proof of our decay

we shed responsibilities
acknowledging
the charismatic among us
knew the way

they possessed the knowledge
all knowing
all seeing

looking deep into our souls
they saw the fire
burning
within

guiding us
sheltering us
from ourselves
and our sins

they gave us rules
to live by

stories to fuel
our beliefs

CONTINUED

there was no need
for individual
responsibility

an entire planet
could be at peace
if only
the charismatic
were followed

no questioning
their purity

despite their occasional
fall from grace
they are the chosen

the one's who the pure
decided
could speak for all

we handed over our progress

gave up all of our rights

to them

their narcissism quickly swept
beyond trite religion

spilling over to politics

leadership

at every level

was handed over

to them

the faithful
flock
to the cause
of righteousness

the charismatics
allow an out
for our responsibility

they are the glimmering
behind a mad man's eyes

the proof
is easy enough to see

the silence
of our children

is proof of our decay.

HUGUES DE PAYENS

i want to be a warrior
for christ
wield a mighty
sword
axe
and shield
learn the appropriate
psalms
the correct
verses
that allow me to
kill
in the name
of God

i want a mighty
steed
one worthy
in battle
one who will not
flinch
or hesitate
one who knows
my every move
can feel me
shift

and respond
in kind
carrying us both
to glory
and victory
in the name
of our Lord

i want an enemy
vile
rife with evil
one who's very
essence
defiles
humanity
as i know it
calls to my heart
in the dead of night
hovers in my dreams
and walks amongst
the faithful
under a crescent
moon

IF YOU ARE FORTUNATE

you were born into
a life of love
a life of beauty
kissed by the gentle
nature
of angels
sent to watch over
your blessed soul

the defeat of the seasons
does not resonate
within you

you will never know
the simple pleasure
of watching a headless
chicken
prance about the yard

you cannot have
comprehension
of a belly so
starved
for food
it appears bloated
and fat
as if you had just left
a banquet feast

your world
fortunate enough to
gild
the darkness about you
shields you from the
enemies
that remain
shadowed
during your time
here
in this place

i admire your innocence

your good fortune
gives me hope

many of us
long
for such a life
as yours

we catch glimpses
of such
beauty,
fleeting moments
of truth
give us all
strength

CONTINUED

to defeat
our enemies

with practiced eye
i watch you walk
in regal posture
through life

while i
and those of my kind
must hone
our skills

destroying our enemies
learning to slay them
one by one

until the last
enemy
destroyed
shall be our own
death.

NILE MESSENGER

we stuffed crocodiles
using them as messengers
to God

lighting bonfires at night
we watched for shadows moving
on the waterline

priests chanted incantations
messages of hope
dancing to the heavens

communicating with God
through crocodile messengers
was a sacred act

wasting not one piece
of Gods
holy presence

blood from harvesting
these holy warriors
were carefully stored in urns

buried, deep
in time they would reveal
the purity of our actions

our communication
with God

our sacred rite.

THE ART OF FLYING

it took me many years
to master the art
of flying

a master here
a master there

one taught space

one taught air

i met a woman who taught me
to fly below the ground

it was difficult at first
not easy seeing
below the dirt
rocks
roots of trees

my patience and practice paid off

i'm now able to fly
whenever i choose

i feel the breeze upon my cheek

my breath begins to shallow

a warmth envelopes me
and in an instance
i fly

no drugs needed
though truthfully they were used
to get me here initially

we have lost the ability
to touch that which we were given
by the gods
so many eons ago

when they gave us
the gift to hear songs
of the ocean

to feel the rhythms
of our earth

they heed us leave our bonds
and be free

it is the ashes of our ancestors calling

their embers burning bright
within our souls

i call to them now to guide me

climbing past the sky
diving deep below the seas

keeping course with the
illumination before me

i can see
everything.

IT'S NOT A
WAR, IS IT?

we saw the burned children
from our errant
missiles
their charred
flesh
blackened
faces
they spoke
not a word
their eyes
bright
piercing
still held life

it's not a war
is it

we watched the family
down the street
fall apart
the mother
father
losing jobs
could no longer
afford
to keep
the kids together

we saw them huddle
one last time
before they shipped out
to relatives
across the nation

it's not a war
is it

we heard
the soft cries
of a newborn
starving
exhausting
its tiny
body
in a quest
for nourishment
no mother would give
abandoned
at a fire station
rushed
to a hospital
where it would
die
alone
placed
in an unmarked
grave

CONTINUED

it's not a war
is it

we read in the paper
and then online
of congressional
and presidential
staff
being added on
to the rolls
of employment
the current
staff
was not enough
to handle all
the necessary
catering
these politicos
require...
it takes a lot
of people
to wait upon
our masters

it's not a war
is it

it used to be said
that pain
sacrifice
were always

part
of war

there would
always
be casualties
no way
to get
around it

but for those
children
blackened
charred
there was
no war
not even a
military
action

the family
whose father
would
eventually
take his own life
whose sanity
destroyed
when he could not
provide
for his family
his job

CONTINUED

farmed out
across the globe
to a small child
in a faraway land
making furniture
for much less
than he was paid

were they
collateral damage
of a war
that wasn't
a war
after all

the motherless
child
nameless
homeless
dead
despite all
our society offers

is this child
not a victim
in a war
that is not a war
after all

we reassure ourselves
in so many ways

it is not a war
is it

we believe it
as everything
around us
dies
losing
what little
humanity
we have left
we finally begin
telling ourselves
in that moment
as the end draws near
we begin to understand

yes, it had been a war
all along.

“

*silver silence
from a small
brass bell
when set to ringing
by the breath
of a moth
rings forever
to ears in tune
rings for a moment
to those
that are not*

”

MIND READING

they can hear what is in my mind
reading my thoughts

a dime novel
an old encyclopedia

discarded newspaper now wrapping
today's fish and chips

technology is ever changing
raccoons harvest the worms from our yards

powdered coyote urine is invented
to keep them away

a million dollar industry sparkling
in suburban sunlight

bags of urine hang from trees
Christmas decorations in May

news anchors repeat stories
found in my head
sharing time with traffic, weather

there is a four hundred
and eighty-pound woman
who now wears a size ten

CONTINUED

she's been on most all
of the stations

her thoughts are no longer
her own

i'm fairly certain that powdered coyote urine
hangs in her yard
scaring the raccoons away

they head north, to the headlands

newscasters do not report on this
people want political stories
they want what is in my mind

an entire nation lies waiting

the anticipation increases ratings

when raccoons migrate the story is dead

it is only a story if the outcome is predictable

we are running out of news
the election is still
two years away

media executives read my thoughts

i give them access for a nice bowl of ramen

they tell me as the noodles are poured
the four hundred and eighty-pound woman
was really a ruse

but it was more believable
than powdered coyote urine

that's the problem in reading
the thoughts of people

you never know what to believe.

NECROMANCER

the necromancer entered our town on a fine
winter day
pink eyes glowing against a beautifully
torrid sky
clouds of fire
burning through
the morning mist

his otherworldly appearance
a comfort to the old woman
who had summoned him
to speak for her son
a gentle child
who had passed into the night

there was unfinished business
between mother and son
words left unspoken
unshed tears

yearning to be free
the necromancer began
his incantations

a long, pale finger
circling the air before him
we watched breathlessly
as the air before him danced
with fiery colors

the innkeeper's daughter fell onto the floor
her body violently shaking
rivers of sweat
puddled about her

the old woman lit
a long expired candle
with dreams of Xanadu

a voice, barely a whisper, called
from the innkeeper's daughter
instructing the old woman
come closer

the necromancer appeared to glow

the room smelled of mold,
rot, and death

we all strained to hear
the words meant
for the old woman's ear's

a clap of thunder shook us
to our core

in an instant, it was over

the innkeeper's daughter rose
with not a memory

CONTINUED

the old woman lay sobbing
on the floor

i reached out to touch her
she turned to me and smiled
saying her son was in the land
of milk and honey

he was in paradise

the necromancer was no more
a small dove remained in his place

the clouds parted, their fiery brilliance
illuminating the dove's flight

the smell of death
of decay
was replaced by the smell of rain
on a mid-summer day

we returned to our tasks
about the village

each of us stealing
glances
at the sky

each of us knowing
that magic
had entered our village
that day.

ANTIQUITIES

lost in the desert
drowning in time
we stood upon the shore
of the Crescent Sea
choking on minutes
coughing out hours

we kept looking east
for the Gardens of Anubis
finding Terrapin floating
in a sanguine sea

our memories of alabaster
eggs decoded
we stole anxious moments
that dreamed to be free.

GENOCIDE

numbers stream
in news feeds

statisticians
invoke
apocryphal statements

so many dead
so many more to die

the taste of
burnt flesh
circling the globe
becoming war zones
where once were

gardens
nature
people
life on a bright
sunny day

the color of
earth
grey

the wealthy
the poor
dead
in a land
that is silent

charred
bereft of life
a statistician's number
on a screen before us
as we sip
our afternoon
tea.

SANCTUARY

in an age of deceit
 stories appear in our sleep
 sacred accounts of spiritual battles

Valmiki appears in dreams
 lines of Vamanas behind him
 carrying scrolls of devotion

Narayana now sleeping
 his foes defeated

will he rise again

drums of God's roaring

great torrents of flowers
 raining down

has the forest reappeared
 bringing Ravana back
 to the magic Lanka held

or are we in endless samsara
 Yakshas walking the land
 laughing as we are blind

they call out to us
 delivering riddles
 of immortality

giving pilgrims hope
 that fire will purify
 those who know truth.

PASSION OF WAR

all around us rained death

we looked towards
 another sunrise

unwilling to see
 the blood before us

our masters exact
 a heavy toll

roads are paved
 with the blood
 of innocence

their tolls paid
 with money made

from the flesh
 of the damned

choosing to ignore
 the death around them

searching for a sunrise
 in a blood red sky.

POVERTY

the world's largest army
ever assembled
lives in squalor

they are homeless
living far
beneath the level of
decency

roaming
searching
for a merciful land

there are no weapons
to further their cause
no leader
to direct and guide them

they move about the world
traveling to countries
opposed
to their plight

seeking asylum
from the ravages of war

from hunger
and the political greed
that chains them fast

history has documented their struggles

gilded tomes written
of their plight

Gods are silent
prayers
unanswered

an army of warriors

faceless
in time

they have marched
for ages

they are marching
still.

REMOVING THE VEIL

come bear witness
on this day of redemption
the day the unwashed
come clean

the day lambs
devour wolves

the righteous
falter

cripples
leap

the body of Christ
No longer nourishes
the souls of Pagan Gods

his blood
dried
withered
is but a stain

his memory faded
in the hearts of the faithful

abandoning honor
for a chance
at absolution

the future has passed us by

we are but a moment

a glimpse of truth
that can never be

we create fiction
to suit our nature

Gods
to soothe our pain

redemption
is upon us

no need for religion
today.

SAMSARA

the land is green
the soil is rich
fertile

water is abundant
air is pure

we can see for miles

past the ridge
a great divide
tears open the land

looking deep
into the chasm
we can see all manner
of life

drifting
floating
on currents of air

it is here
where the earth breathes
filling the heavens above
with its wondrous beauty
that we first begin to dream

small dreams at first
then larger
ever larger
until the dreams become life
and life becomes the dream

a world united
one people
one planet
under a sun
giving life
to all

there is life
here

there is beauty

our land calls to us
enticing us
fueling a spark within
igniting our passion

there is a comfort
here

where we are
dreaming
living

there is no mystery

no samsara

only soil

rich
fertile

for those
willing to see.

SUMMERTIME

i dreamt of women shooting fish
with crossbows
large, Pacific salmon
a few trout
a handful of large mouth bass

they asked me to help
reel them in
offering to filet them
for a reasonable
price

war paint i applied
earlier that morning
contrasted nicely
with the crow
i wore on my head

it spoke to me
quietly whispering
coded phrases
from memories
of another life

understanding the wisdom of birds,
crows to be exact,
i heeded his words
and helped the women
reel in their fish

the river they fished
would be replaced by fields
then houses
then roads
finally, a mall

a great, gleaming orifice
built with reflective glass

inside its sterile walls
a debauchery of senses
shielded its truth

the crow leaned closer

no longer speaking phrases
from past lives
reminding me to pay
for an especially large filet

it had been generations
since last he ate

his people vanishing

with the fish

with the river.

TATTOO

before tonight's reading
i must shop
for tomorrows meal

with great envy i will listen
to poets
read of laughter
love

their affection for
drink
family
merriment

a lover in the night

whatever it might be
they will all proclaim
their joyous participations
in this earthly realm

i long to understand
such moments

i have shared
a few
moments of joy

births of sons

shafts of sunlight

the mastery of
a two wheeled vehicle

these moments
peeking
between the curtains
of life
leave me inspired

perhaps more
shall be revealed

i take great comfort
in rare moments
such as these

i live
for moments
such as these

in all honesty
i do not readily see
the joyous occasions
my fellow poets
engage in

CONTINUED

i witness
instead
death
pain
suffering

the remnants of children
left smoldering
in the wake of an
errant
missile

the life of a stillborn
left to rot
in the dumpster
by a mother
too young

the depth of sorrow
in the eyes of a man
who has just lost his mate
of fifty eight years

the taste
the smell
the essence
of death
stays with you

long
after you
have left it

these sensations
assail me

while others see
visions of joy
i allow darkness
to envelop me

it has always been
this way

as a small child
it pained me
to have affection

it pains me still
to feel the soft touch
of another's hand

i envy those
who see the remarkable
beauty
around them

but it is not
for me

CONTINUED

i cover my body
with totems of illumination
allowing the pain
to flood over me

i find solace
in these moments

the pain of the markings
encourage freedom
from the darkness

i control
this pain

unlike the other
which i cannot

i pay the grocer
for my rice
for my zucchini

a young mother
at the market
slaps her child

to quiet him

i take note

after tonight's reading
it will be time
for more illumination.

BE NOT CONTENT

we write prophecies
upon the skin
of flayed heretics
using quills forged in war,
blood caught
from innocents
bled dry from atrocities
too soon forgotten

use skulls
of our vanquished enemies
to keep and hold
this precious ink

quickly, now
write the prophecies
illuminate their tradition
before the blood dries
making it useless
mundane

our cause is virtuous
the path before us voiced
from the providence within

our leaders shall advance
guiding us
with tomes of prophecies,
illuminated visions
ordained to the righteous
upon a heretics
skin.

THE CYCLE OF BIRDS

we had become the product
of our grandfather's dreams
as he had become
the product of his before him

the desire for riches
handed down
generation after generation
their only goal; to obtain wealth

what began as an industrial
revolution
evolved into a mindset of achieving
an endless array of riches

soon, an entire planet
was consumed
by these desires
of ever increasing wealth

schools stopped teaching
of nature
our connection to it
our need for it

vast highways were built

magnificent craft ruled our skies

behemoth vessels sailed our seas

even space, became less of a frontier

devising intricate ways
of gaining money
was a mark of
success

understanding the cycle
of birds
was forgotten

no one spoke of it

acknowledging the power
nature could wield
was dismissed
as ancient superstition

CONTINUED

what began with
our forefathers dreams
ended in nightmares
for our generation

where some had achieved
vast wealth and riches
more and more of us
became homeless and poor

though we thought ourselves
modern, even enlightened
we had been destroying our planet
in our quest for advancement

instead of feeding the hungry
clothing the poor
we developed thousand dollar smart phones
to make avatars of ourselves

instead of understanding
the cycle of birds
we created animated figures
that emulated their songs

in short time
we had forgotten
nature

believing we were the rulers
of this earth

until nature had enough

sending flooding, wildfires
and a virus
to wake us up

disrupting our quest for
endless attainment of wealth

nature stopped the world
giving us a chance for change

locking us in our homes
closing factories, halting production
taking millions of cars off the road
millions of people off the street

political leaders vowed
we would rise again

we would reclaim
our former glory

they had devised
ways to curb nature

CONTINUED

nature simply laughed

skies began to turn blue
animals again walked among us

where a few still held to the old ways
of creating wealth at any cost
more of us turned back
to a time long forgotten

a time where man lived in harmony
with nature

understanding the balance
nature allowed

our grandchildren now had the chance
of regaining this balance

living with nature

understanding its rules

the days of our grandfather's dreams
the dreams of their grandfather's before them
were over

it was time for a return
when animals could walk among us

when our lungs were not choked with pollution

when homeless could have shelter
and all people could be fed

we had amassed great wealth, great power
but it meant not a thing

we stopped listening
to our leaders

setting upon a path
that was centuries old
no longer blindly following
their lead

we became grateful
that nature arrived one day

clearly showing us a brighter path

we began to follow
the ancient cycle of birds.

FINDING MAGIC

where did they place the magic
they took from us

did they hide it behind
the mountains

did they place it
above the clouds

i went to look under the sea
but it was far too heavy to lift

so i asked a homeless man
swimming by the shore

do you know where the magic went?

he told me he did not,
then asked me for a towel

i was hesitant to lend him mine
as it had been my favorite for some time

but i thought if i lent him my towel
perhaps the magic might return

taking my towel he looked
thoughtfully into the distance

*i thought i saw magic, once,
but then bureaucrats stored it in a warehouse,*

*they secured the doors
with laws and encumbrances*

this revelation came as news to me
as i had been searching for quite a while

he asked me for a cigarette,
or perhaps some money

i felt around, deep in my pockets,
and gave him a dragons tooth

i told him to use it wisely,

for it was the last dragon's tooth i owned

he smiled and offered me a seashell
and a fine, polished stone

i thanked him profusely;

it was a beginning, a start,
at finding magic once more.

“

*You know the feeling well
the feeling that overcomes you
sending you to the ground
holding on to great clumps of earth
as you become afraid of the size of the sky
understanding the immense nature
of life itself.*

”

THE VISITOR

having finished my morning ablutions
i was toasting a fine piece of rye
eyeing my nearly empty pantry
with a longing for fresh fruit
i had not felt in decades

he came upon me silently
gently rapping on the threshold with his gnarled hand
my three dogs snoring gently
as he bid me good morning

are you the Vicar of this church
his faint voice asked

at one time, i replied, but that was long ago
when God was still alive

so it's true then, he gasped, God has died

he began to weep and moved to a small
wicker chair, his frail limbs navigating
as though he were
a marionette

no, my friend, i rushed out the door to help him,
i meant his spirit is no longer alive

CONTINUED

he carefully surveyed
with a practiced eye
all that was before him

*and these dogs, he gestured with his hand
what of them*

perplexed by the question
i stared for a moment
not certain how to reply

he continued on
asking questions of me
gesturing at times with his gnarled hand

a wry smile from his eyes
caught the morning light as he
sat about discussing
the value of water

have some, here, fresh from the well, i offered

he again gestured to the dogs

does the water matter to them

i suppose it does, i answered

*as it does to all living creatures,
he replied*

*you keep water from the well
to use when you need it
to water your dogs
and perhaps grow some fruit*

*you are Vicar in a church
where God has died
yet, still, you keep water
for you and your dogs*

upon ending this statement he rose
and began to walk off

where are you headed, i asked him

*i live on the far side of the lake, where the laughter
of children dance lightly across the water*

i came to see if God was still alive

i did not mean to alarm you, i said in earnest

*it is his spirit that died, not his body. no one lives
on the far side of the lake*

CONTINUED

God is still alive,
he stated

in spirit and body
talk to your dogs,

drink the water you give them

i watched him vanish
with a wave of his hand

my dogs still snoring

my rye toast cold

a faint sound of laughter
could be heard
from across the lake

rippling, dancing

delivering faith.

ASHES OF A SUNRISE

ashes are piling at the door
there is a silence that screams
in the night
we wait for sunlight
to illuminate the day
monsters in the dark
always retreat when there's light
i offered you a rose
from my garden
it complimented your lips
such a long time has passed
since we've felt each others' soul
is it the times we live in
the fears we've yet to conquer
we once offered each other love
to bring light to our darkness
i can no longer offer you a rose
only the ashes
from a sunrise.

WALLS

we built our walls from stones
harvested from the fields we tilled

hard, solid rocks of history
ingloriously lifted from their eternal rest

when outsiders came to our walls
they were able to climb them with ease

in our haste to secure our lands
we neglected to build walls as tall as the sky

so we returned to our fields
tilled the soil until our furrows were deep

unearthing our history even further
we stacked rocks upon our walls, its weight crushing

our walls stretched high into the sky
blocking out the sun

after years of constant shade
large parcels of the land went dark

outsiders were still streaming into our land
simply following the walls to the sea

they came into our land and began
helping us dismantle the walls

in our quest to keep us safe from those outside
we had neglected to house and provide for those within

at first, we were resentful of their help
this was our land, our soil

but they brought with them wondrous machines
the likes of which we had never seen

together, with these outsiders
we were able to provide for all our people

with the walls now gone, we became, over time,
one nation, one people, one land

until one day we built walls from stones
harvested from the fields we tilled.

DREAMS, DESIRES
& DELUSIONS

i shot a hole in the sun
drove my car right through it

no hesitation

came out the other side
tires smoking
my cigarette lit

illuminating

the blonde at the corner
in the black mini-skirt
with white fishnet stockings

the poor, hungry vet
lost in a war
long since forgotten

illumination appears to me
in the strangest of times

is there room enough
in a space filled
with such ego

to send a message,
morse code

if you could

i have dreams of desires
dreams of delusions

what is it
that you dream?

CATHARSIS OF GRACE

right when we least expected
the blinding light of salvation flickered

in that moment we were able to see
clearly

esoteric discussions as to whose God
was correct, whose beliefs were pure

all became suspended

in that moment
there was a unifying peace

the subtle dread of eternal souls
living in harmony

was removed

stories of winged angels
magnificent in their brilliance

became forgotten

we forged new books
from the ashes of our desires
for immortal salvation

a powerful language emerged

one that filled us with joy

faith, had been shown to us
in that momentary flicker

salvation
was not the goal after all

no need for discussions
or intrusive religions

holy men from long forgotten times
were no longer needed
to instruct us

elegant cathedrals and mosques
no longer necessary either

with our sight regained
we understood faith itself

was to be our salvation

faith in each other
the illusive answer

and all we need do
was simply believe.

BIRTH OF THE SHULBA SUTRAS

the voice of God resonates
with a tone
somewhat familiar
somewhat alien
do we heed its call
turning towards it
devoting it to memory
recalling its grace
in our hour of need

i don't have that answer

perhaps a walk along the sea
a brisk dance in the sand
would serve us well
i have recorded his voice
come soar with me
i will play it for you.

BIRTHDAY TEA

On the beginning of my sixty-first
journey around the sun
a holographic universe appeared
as i was sipping
a cup of bitter
mushroom tea

the great Marduk stood to my side

i saw his father, Apsu,
dream of killing his children

i watched as Enki,
slew Apsu while he dreamed

Tiamet, the goddess-mother, enraged at her loss
set about to kill Enki
and the rest of her children

but Marduk shot her with Imhullu
splitting her into two rivers

the Tigris and Euphrates
flowed from her corpse
as Marduk formed the heavens
with her now-dead soul

CONTINUED

there then appeared a beautifully crafted mirror
its edges adorned with ornate carvings
from precious metals, designs

the patterns spun my mind
forcing me to look directly
into its center

a Golden Pakarra upon my back
stretched out his mighty arms

Garuda rose from my shoulder

a great panther pulled back his bow
his arrow at the ready

the arrow flew past my ear
Garuda's wings taking the Pakarra
to the heavens

the Pakarra smiled
benevolently

sounds of rain, faint, as if from a distant land
could be heard as the Pakarra started to speak

a dazzling burst of color flew forth from his lips,
his mouth, his soul

i felt rain fall about me

the unmistakable sound
of a teaspoon against a cup
brought me back to my kitchen
where i sat stirring the bitter tea
with an old, silver spoon

an understanding washed over me

in that one specific moment
i immediately understood
all i need ever know

a lone, blue feather floated to the ground

it spoke to me as it lay at my feet
granting me wisdom
to understand;

We are all travelers, on a magical journey

What else is there to know?

DIVING INTO THE PLACE

where sunlight begins

past the ten heavens of Enoch
there is a pallor

upon the faces of our children

would that we bring
some light to them

just enough
to allow them to breathe.

LETTERS FROM THE DEAD

my skin is still wet
from the ink of ten thousand needles

my flesh
warm
swollen

soft scents of liniment circle me
wrapping me in their healing embrace

colors firm as the skin swells

the image clear, precise

another offering has been made
to the ancestors

they send me letters to read
as the artist works my skin

the letters take my mind away from pain

i reflect upon these letters from the dead

answering them quietly
i write back to them

my replies written
with blood from my skin.

BURIAL JARS

in the Fertile Crescent
seven thousand years before Christ
long before Constantine held his empire together
with state mandated inclusion
of a new Christian religion

long before Popes, Cardinals, and Bishops
ruled our eternal fate

people made containers from clay
with which to bury infants
both born and unborn

archeological sites provide evidence
of these burials

infants found in containers
some developed, some not
adorned with items to help them
navigate the next world

sealed jars enabling a family to keep close
for all eternity
that which was lost to them

thousands of years later we debate
with our politics
with our religion
with our mass hysteria

the value of aborting a fetus
without letting that fetus
that child
know life

while in the Fertile Crescent
thousands of years past
where they interred their born
and unborn infants in jars

lovingly preserving them for all of time

the ghosts of those infants
weep.

EMBARKING

there is a fair wind blowing
calling us to raise our sails

the land we have called home
for so long
is no more

prophecies of this day go back
to when our ancestors
began the story of our life

generations have come and gone

many wars
many deaths

outside of technology
little advancement made

we still hunt each other
with guns, with spears

with our closed minds we seek out
those among us who dare
to think for themselves

it has been this way
for millennia

the strong overtaking the weak
rich overcoming the poor

a proper hierarchy
with policies designed
to better our lives

still, the desire to hunt
would not abate

rules were put in place

more rules followed

the simplest courtesy
became the most stringent
insult

our population became offended
by the very notion
of independence

screaming out for change
we burned our cities
desecrated our history

there is a fair wind blowing
calling us to raise our sails

it is time for us to go.

GROWING DOLPHINS

Mescalito offered us a sunrise
in the dark of the night
showing us colors
that brightened the sky

deep purples, blood-reds
a frosted yellow that was
as oblique and wandering
as the burnt orange from collapsing stars

an eternity forming,
marking a path to a small
tidal pool
far from the ocean

i brought some of the water home
using it to water her peonies
not too much, i could hear her say
just enough for dolphins to grow

she was peculiar that way;

always growing flesh
when flowers
would simply not do.

EVOLUTION

trickster coyote brought news
of Mescalito turning a hot dog cart
into an ashram

pedaling it throughout the city
he parked it in front of financial institutions

encouraging the faithful
with spiritual graffiti
that change was on its way.

MASKS

where are the masks
that hide us from inspection

keeping us alive
in this dystopian dream

mine was left on a shelf
as you walked into the kitchen

yours was wrapped in furs
kept in a closet

the masks allowed freedom
to do as we pleased

we could move forward in society
never needing to expose our weakness

they allowed fluidity
in an otherwise concrete world

i dreamt many times
of losing my mask

it was frightening to consider
the ramifications

you told me your dreams
your fear of closure

did you hide the masks
to continue the game

i would not blame you
if you did

i would not hold you
at fault.

PRACTICING MAGIC

Speak to me
empty your mind

there are only friends here
as Ba'al has blinded his enemies

they come to him
through your dreams

leveling forests
vacating seas

you were right to seek my counsel
for these are ancient ways

practicing this magic
is ancient as sand

there is much to discover
truth is a fleeting moment

all-father, El, guides your dreams
all-mother, Asherha, guides your soul

you wear the mark of Yahweh
believing it protects you

i will tell you,
El saw the birth of your God

Asherha, bringer of life,
was the midwife

Ba'al was trusted
to guard God's soul

many people claim the status
of knowing a one, true God

this should come
as no surprise

the desert is filled
with the bones of religion

i tell you this in earnest;
there is no need for doctors

your mind is cluttered
your thoughts in disarray

empty your mind and speak
with the clarity of ages

Ba'al is there for you
accept these things

the demons are false Gods
come, let us slay them together.

THINK TWICE

of dreams, of dreamers
for the former breathes
the movie

the latter tastes it
savoring the dream's vastness

delving deep into its essence
searching, longing, for a moment
of beauty
of truth

the dream
is the plan, the course
upon which the dreamer
travels

the path upon which
the dreamer
finds their end grow near

the path that shows
the dreamer
how to continue
the dream

man
dreams
his dreams
showing
him

life is nothing
more

nothing less
than a path

how the path
will always be

the dream of heaven

while heaven

will always be

the dream
of man.

GNOSTIC MEDITATIONS

songbirds had gone silent

many years back
the soul of our land
auctioned off

no bids were offered
no one could be bothered

a man of religion cast holy water

yet none could walk to a new land

sounds of the world
had gone deaf upon us

in the vanishing twilight
a shadow crept across the land

none were exempt
from its capricious shade

i heard a rumor that money
was to be recalculated

a spotted lizard scoffed
said they were nothing but lies

yesterday's ruins are now
shelters from the storm

sorrows and joys
a fleeting memory

a soft sax in the wind

i would gladly shout a magic spell
if only i had the time

SCIENCE

we seldom speak
of forbidden history

leaving relics to decay

their usefulness lost
on a civilization
holding little regard
for icons necessary
to sustain history

aged scribes wrote texts
illuminated with designs
for a noble cause

they once sent us seeking
mysteries
no longer amusing
to a deadening republic

the eye of Horus
appears within a cup
in a small cafe

a gilded bowl
is now a container
for spare change

we stumble upon
delightful visions
heralding
forgotten stories

the cycle of history
is a tricky thing

we survive the day
quite nicely without it

no longer interested
in Holy Grails

we dismiss these visions
as ancient superstitions

the words of prophets
are merely
clouds in the sky

no need for God

when science
rules the day.

“

*we planted prayers
deep in the ground
watered them
nurtured them
waited for the right
moment to harvest
sent them out on winds
across the land
hoping to heal
our world's divide.*

”

HISTORY FORGOTTEN

in the Thar desert
they dug foundations
for housing

installing roads for people
the new construction would bring
a twelve thousand year old blast was discovered
its radioactive memory still intact

charred corpses from a time before time
filled the earth with their ash

the Mahabharata tells of a great battle
where a great weapon was sent from the heavens

a gigantic messenger of death
reduced to ash an entire civilization

the entire race of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas

turning a once lush valley
into a pile of sand

where they tried to build houses
many thousands of years later

only to be shut down
by a nuclear blast
history had forgotten.

A GIFT OF WINGS
AND TURKISH COFFEE

I

the gods promised us
their favor
all we needed to do
was pray to them
for our salvation

II

a heavy wind came upon us
driving sand into our eyes
we took refuge
in the Valley of
a Thousand Thoughts

III

we waited, patiently
for the return
of the crescent
moon and the gifts
it would bring

IV

capturing a moment
of evolutionary change
the priests directed us
to gather together
as many lambs as we could

V

a convergence of the minds
was not be found,
too long had we heard
promises
from the gods

VI

in that moment
of anarchy
we regained our past,
tied it to our future,
and wrote our history

CONTINUED

VII

the weak among us
were given strength,
the strong among us
were given visions
to aid our journey

VIII

a large fire
burned for days
until it blackened
the sand
beneath it

IX

looking to the skies
we spoke not a word,
uttered not a sound,
in unison
we ascended to heaven

X

there are messages
left in clay pots
directing our descendants
to forego whatever gods and idols
they might create

XI

there is not a need
for mystery, nor religion,
it will only give rise
to the destructive power
of greed

XII

this was the message
our children carved
for the future,
carving it
with the tips of their wings

XIII

it is a message
that is best served
daily, with a
splendid cup
of Turkish coffee.

HOMILY OF OUR TIMES

who are these politicians
that require constant feeding
leveraging our grandchildren's future
so they may eat
juicy steaks

plant a garden
water it with the tears of the starving

build cardboard castles
under overpasses and bridges

light up the night
with prayers of forgiveness

that scrap of meat
you throw away
could easily feed hundreds
if only the world
were blessed.

PANGLOSSIAN

there is always more to you
more that you can do

it lies within you
locked away
waiting to come forth

there is no mystery needed
no further attachments either

dig deep, go beyond your fears
let go of expectations
and simply do

give hope to those around you
by doing what is true for you

each day we are given
the chance to know the greatness
that exists within us all

though few will accept
its existence

do not despair.

DAHLIAS, GODS AND MERMAIDS

open your heart to Vishnu
appearing as Matsya
the great fish-god

give praise to Suvannamaccha
the mermaid princess
lover of Hanuman, mother of Macchanu

daughter of Ravana
she obeyed her father
destroying the great causeway to Sri-Lanka

where Sita sat captive
waiting to be returned
to her husband, Rama

feel now the compassion
that Suvannamaccha felt
for the warrior ape Hanuman

defying her father
she ordered her mermaid brethren
to complete the road to Sri- Lanka

allowing Rama to rescue
the goddess Sita
pure, as a dahlia in bloom

but the mighty Vishnu
now appearing as Rama
questioned Sita's purity

throwing her into a pit of fire
she emerged unscathed
proving her purity, for all of time

it was decreed that day
that as long as there was
water in the seas

mermaids would forever
sing the song
of Suvannamaccha

and her love for Hanuman
that allowed the great Vishnu
to once again

appear whole

appear pure

as a dahlia in bloom.

A NIGHT AT THE ROADHOUSE

there are no exits
on the extraterrestrial
highway

no speed limits
you can travel

as fast as you can

i met an alien
who traveled the highway

often

spent most of his youth
cruising the universe

searching

he never truly explained
what he was searching for

but he was searching

last time i saw him
he was trying to pawn

five golden rings

said they held the keys
to the mysteries

of the universe

i offered him twenty bucks,
the guy at the end of the bar

offered twenty-five

the alien and the guy
at the end of the bar

agreed on thirty

the bartender went to pour us all
another drink

when a flash of light appeared

we were momentarily blinded,
my gin knocked down

to the floor

when we could see again
the alien had vanished

leaving nothing but his stories

i stated i was sad to see him go

the guy at the end of the bar muttered,
we never discussed interest

the bartender's only concern

who was going
to pick up the tab.

MEMORIES

we had overcome many obstacles
learned to work as a team

not so much as one
but as you, and i

when they came for us
we were prepared

we slipped away
to the caves
where we had supplies,
weapons, a safe place to be

watching from a distance
we saw the smoke

caught faint flickers of flame
as our home
burned

from the safety of the caves
we looked over the lake

but only at night
lest we be seen

you swore you could see the bones
of our dog
glistening under the water

the image flooded us
with memories

it was last summer when he died
the earth much too hard
to dig a proper grave

so we weighted him down
with bricks from your kiln
and slid him into the water

funny, how little events in life
leave such a mark

society might fall
yet memories of a dog
remain.

OUR CHANCE

i want to put down my guns
stop the constant war

make love our religion
open up the doors

i want to erase the anguish
take away the pain

give to those that take
break the cycle of regret

i want to take you with me
let us turn and walk away

this fleeting life is our only vessel
let us not waste another day

where are all the poets
the artists and musicians

are we to be led by politicians
and their corrupt media, too

there is a place i know
where we can find

a land of grace
a land sublime

i want to take you with me
let us turn and walk away

this fleeting life is our only vessel
let us not waste another day

man's nature here is forever dark
filled with corruption
filled with greed

there is no religion left
money drives our need

i want to take you with me
let us turn and walk away

this fleeting life is our only vessel
let us not waste another day.

MORNING COFFEE

i found myself
one fine morning
having coffee with the Buddha

fresh lemon cake
drizzled with frosting
sat on a plate nearby

requesting cream and honey
the Buddha prepared his coffee
with utmost care

taking my morning brew
black
i sat and watched his preparation

two large bumblebees
hovered around the lemon cake
never once landing

it was still early morning
the mating sounds of birds
filled the air

i regaled him with stories
of frog princes
and gargoyles

he lifted his robe to show me
a massive tattoo
of hummingbirds and lilacs

we sat in silence for quite a long while
until he cleared his throat
asking for another cup

i told him i had run
out of honey
would sugar do

smiling, he lifted a piece of lemon cake
placing the frosting in his cup

telling me as he did so
the universe provides.

MURMURATION

it had taken me a while
to climb the mountain

but now, as i stood waiting
arms outstretched
the murmuration enveloped me

i felt myself rising
an insane flurry of movement
tossing me into the air

dandelion fluff in the currents
of a summer wind

deep within my mind
i pictured Mount Kailash

it's towering presence
calling me
leading me home

the murmuration shot upwards

the roar of its wind
deafening

it felt for a moment i
was falling

but that was not the case

we turned sharply
to the East

soaring past valleys
farmlands, arriving quickly
at the ocean's edge

i found myself wondering
if the Guge Kingdom had itself
been lifted by murmurations

that carried the kingdom
to sacred ground

the Golden Pakara upon my back
whispered to me
an ancient sanskrit riddle;

*which strong man
is not affected by the cold*

i knew at once the answer
but could not formulate
the sounds

my silence
was deafening

a rinpoche i had revered
in another time

CONTINUED

laughingly asked me

why was i silent
when the answer was simple

the murmuration dropped me
upon the sands of the ocean

i felt the sun's warmth
upon my cheeks

it's rays soothing, healing

a beggar happened by
who then became a monk

he looked inside me
to find
the riddle's answer

he pulled out a scroll
from deep within me;

*the man with a blanket
is not affected by the cold*

smiling, he showed me
a way home.

NIGHTTIME

days are for sleeping
storing energy
keeping an attentive ear
open for intruders

nights are for howling
barking at the moon
reciting poetry
that set the skies on fire.

NIGHT TERRORS

so many things to worry about these days:

will global warming destroy us all by 2033?

was the election rigged?

are all elections rigged?

is the RONA going to destroy mankind?

was it created in a nefarious power grab for
world domination?

if so, does it come with a warranty for 2033
because, you know, global destruction?

will we ever have a true and impartial media?

did we ever?

can global markets continue to create currency
based on the premise of thin air?

is air even thin?

the list goes on and on

sleeping aids are being produced
at an all-time high

do you lay awake at night
thinking of where we are
in terms of universal recognition?

does any of this affect you at night?

or none at all?

as for me, i lay awake at night
sometimes in a cold sweat
wondering if the caterpillar i squashed
on the playground when i was seven

was the caterpillar a messenger
sent by God
to determine if i am worthy?

OF GODS
AND FALAFEL

Nut, the sky goddess
appeared to me in a dream
asking for my help
in resurrecting
Osirus

eons had passed
the underworld filled
with uncountable souls

their collective dreams
guiding our fate

it was time, she said
to set Osirus free

her grandson, Horus
handed me a potion

*he who is benign
and youthful
should rise again*

having had no training
in the art of
resurrection
i politely declined
due to my ignorance

a moment of time
passed between us

i could sense
the edges of my dream
unraveling

a week later
at a rummage sale,
quite early in the morning,
i spilled my coffee
upon an old man

incarcerated as he was
imprisoned in a gleaming wheelchair
he immediately leapt up in laughter

declaring his appreciation
for setting him free

his body glowing
no longer aging
he took my hand
directing me
to a green, Volkswagen Rabbit

handing me the keys
he commanded i drive him

CONTINUED

until we found Anubis
who was waiting
at a strip club in Jersey

it was quite a ways
i stated, to Jersey

we would need provisions,
supplies
for such a journey

*the underworld needs
a better falafel*, he replied

with that he vanished

his only trace
an image of him left
on a discarded Pyrex bowl
pink, slightly chipped, two bucks

my alarm going off
i wake to find morning

smiling towards a new day
i find a note on my night stand stating

thank you!
Love, Isis

VISIONS OF A MERCIFUL LAND

we found a hole in the universe
past the nebulae
beyond black holes

a thin column of light appeared
but only as a flicker
perhaps even an afterthought

several prophecies from dubious messiahs
attempted to guide us,
in the end, we were on our own

i recall looking back
seeing our planet
for the first time

it shimmered in the glow
of celestial destruction
an illumination amidst the darkness

we sped toward the opening
a column of light
reaching out to us

a distant sound
akin to thunder
shot up to us from our planet

CONTINUED

encased in its sound wave
we surfed beyond
our wildest imaginations

there were only
a handful of us
that made the journey

we crossed its threshold
felt the opening
begin to close

a brightness shone upon us

three suns
nine distant moons

the opening closed

we saw before us
our new planet, our new home

there was talk among us
wondering if the devastation
was complete

were we alone
we asked ourselves

would there be more
coming through the portal

there had been no warning
no indications
of our destruction

a woman spoke in Hindi
telling us the Vedas
had prophesied this

an old, withered Shaman
grinned as light
filled his eyes

a small child
grabbed hold of his hand
asking if this

was heaven

the Shaman spoke softly to the child

*no, my child,
these are but visions
of a merciful land.*

RAPTUROUS NOISE

our shackles bind us
holding us captive
as we stumble along
with little grace

chains, centuries in the making
some gilded, some with a fine patina
chime with those crafted
from pot metal, from iron

the sound is rapturous
yet foreboding all the same

so many melodies played out
as we lurch forward on our path

infrequently there arises a unified cry
for a moment
we are one, headed together
down a common road

but quickly
a misplaced step ripples through the crowd

soon, there is no longer
a unified melody played out

the rapturous noise returns

if only a conductor
adept at arranging
the sounds of shackles
were to be found

but which conductor

one that is familiar with gilded chains
or perhaps silver

yet still, one that understands cold iron

rotting skin, chaffed from bondage
leaves our bones exposed
yellowing on the arid earth
upon which we tread

decay lingers
long festering
we adapt to its scent

an errant nuisance

in past times we were guided
with whips, sharp jolts of pain
directing our travel
along the road our masters chose

CONTINUED

these days
we stumble along aimlessly

some going left, some right
a few attempting to lead
though most follow

no longer in need of direction
our shackles lead us
onward

no longer a need for a master

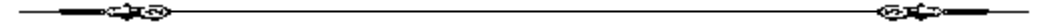
for there are no classes
to contain us

we are now
one people
forever bound

by the shackles
we have forged.

SENTIENCE

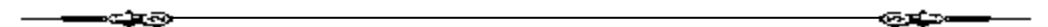
your sacred heart
illuminated
the night air
revealing dreams
of Naga Kings
their serpent tongues
flicking softly
against our skin
our embrace
our passion
fueled their wings
an ecstatic moment
filled with bliss
as our bodies
soared
through time
in that instance
melding together
i understood the love
ancients spoke of
when they wrote powerful
sagas
of beauty and devotion
freeing our souls
to become one
with God.



“

*when doves fly west
to greet the rising sun
might there be
peace
at last
in our holy land*

”



REINCARNATION

Buddha bought a shirt shop
on the Boardwalk in Venice Beach

created tee shirts with catchy slogans
donating the money to UNICEF

Krishna wanted in on the action
selling shirts that read HINDU'S MATTER

gave the money to foundations
building temples to Hanuman

buying their lunch from a falafel cart
they sat on the beach, waiting for nirvana

reminding tourists
to pick up after their dogs.

SAM RAM

we create evil in our culture
through political machinations

handing our fate to inglorious narcissists
purporting to lead the way
lining their pockets with wealth
given them by loyal subjects
who adoringly feed their need

our river runs deep
with false prophets

lighted pathways
blind us further

scientists now tell us
a catastrophic event forever altered
life on our planet

evolution has directed our destiny
ever since

i wonder when i read these
claims of devastation
what will they say of us
far into the future

will the sampling be corrected
to fit the older engines

will our journey to evil
accurately be portrayed

or will history remain an avalanche
as it often times does

masking our collapse
with footnotes to heaven.

SECRETS OF GOD

in the City of Souls
they pass the time
polishing bones
of martyrs

the process is a slow
tedious affair

sins of man
seldom clean well

at night the darkness
becomes illuminated
with the glow of
redeemed bones

this story is
handed down
between corpses
and the living

not everyone knows
the entire story
only a piece of it
to share

it is best, this way
to know only a piece

it keeps them safe
no need for secrets

some people believe
God keeps secrets
hiding them
in the winds

i believe the bones glow
to show us a path

one that eases our journey
into the City of Souls

where the secrets
of God

may be lost
forever.

SERENDIPITY

his mind was diseased,
we all told each other this

his judgment could not be trusted

he believed people should walk about naked
swap sexual partners freely

elect a ruler as king
and call it a day

he even considered human sacrifice
an honorable tradition

while the rest of us struggled through life
he journeyed through it
with a spring in his step
a twinkle in his eye

i was closest to him

accompanied him on many adventures

he believed castles should be built of sand

thought that women should be in charge of the world
though men should be deemed kings
to keep their egos intact

he thought everyone deserved a room with a view
overlooking a garden
to remind us of where food came from

or a view of
a slaughter yard
to help keep the hunger for meat
at bay

he shared his wisdom with everyone he met

strangely enough, he was met with favorable response
everywhere he traveled

people did not care about governmental affairs,
he would tell me

they much preferred to have free cable television
and as much sex as possible
whenever possible

it really was that simple

he ran for political office to change our lives

told me he would win by a landslide
as everyone had grown tired of the same
political charades

CONTINUED

he would offer a new game
with new rules
new prizes

the people were ready
for a new administration

on the day he was assassinated i was with him
sitting across the table
drinking tea

i saw his head snap back

watched the blood stream across the room
leaving bits of his skull and brain
upon the wall
his face frozen in a wry smile

i tend to his wisdom these days
defending him when they say his brain
was diseased

that his judgment could not be trusted

i was there, i tell them

i saw his brain spilled out
it looked just fine to me

and he was the one, i would point out
that dictated where i should sit
to drink my tea

oddly enough,
no one ever disagrees.

SUNDAY MORNING

end of days began with little fanfare

no live coverage
no breaking news

i had prepared a waffle with berries
a small amount of vanilla mixed
into the batter for a sweeter taste

the morning sky glowed in the West

it was the first indication
of our doom

rolling shock waves from the blast
had crippled communication systems
for hundreds of miles

EMP bursts further assured
there would be no communication

no warning

gradually, people could be seen running
in the streets
disoriented
confused

CONTINUED

a slight whistling sound could be heard
racing through the air

then silence

i took one last bite of the waffle

an exceptionally sweet berry
accompanied it

blinding light engulfed me

i could not see

though i could hear
the screams of children

the screams
of their parents

end of days had found us

religion could not save us

peddling miracles for profit
had ended

we were next in line
for evolution

the fittest would survive

in a hundred generations
stories of the great purge
would spread across the land

our fates relegated
to comparisons with the Great Flood
of biblical times

one bright, Sunday morning
our world
was changed

our history to be written
further in time

however they see fit.

PATHS OF EMPTINESS

there is no way out of here
except for the path of the heart

there is no illumination
to show the way

no road maps or lengthy dissertations
from fractured souls

not even a glimpse
as to which is the true
path

we learn so many
truths
along the way

taught so many skills

in the end will it matter
the truths learned
the skills taught

when we wander in
to the promised land

a lifetime's journey
all in preparation for

salvation?

eternal life?

bliss?

will we find the path
was not of the heart

nor of righteousness

but of emptiness

awakening, as if from a dream

that promised
a brighter day

lift back the veil of illusion

welcome home

come, stay awhile
the fire will keep us warm

i believe it is your turn
to feed it wood.

TEA WITH THE SHAMAN

should i be afraid?

the question repeated over and over
its source emanating from a translucent
lavender cloud

i need to know, am i safe?

the Olmec shaman next to me
motioned to pass the sacred vessel
while the tea was still fresh

*many lifetimes have come and gone,
are the Adumu prepared?*

shimmering, the once translucent cloud
now shown with a brilliance
that blinded me

a knock on the wall echoed painfully,
the sound raucous in my brain

*i knew your shaman in another world
many lifetimes ago.*

paint from the ceiling began falling around me
staining the shirt i wore
for just such an occasion

no novices allowed, not this night

we were all experienced travelers

*i saw the dead, as they lie in the streets
of Mohenjo-daro*

*walked amongst them as the flesh peeled
from their bones.*

an amulet was placed around my neck

its powerful magic
soothed my pain

we are all brothers, walking through time

it is sinful to forget our past.

CONTINUED

rubber people smiled benevolently
as the sacred vessel journeyed between us

it was daylight now
but in our land
there was only the Moment

*i would ask for communion
from a priest with no face*

my nerves were steadying

the paint no longer peeled

a beautiful sunrise shone forth
illuminating our sacred land

the voice began fading
it too had found peace

the only sound to be heard
was the word never spoken.

SENESCENCE

old men, old women
their minds frail, lame with age

leading a country
filled with youth
hope, promise

directives given
with no thought for the future

hearts filled
with memories of a distant time
debating

amongst themselves

will it be beef barley for lunch
or perhaps some simple greens.

THE SECRET OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

thirty two blood moons have passed
since the *Secret Of The Golden Flower*
came into my life

Lü Dongbin, poet scholar immortal
brought Taoist beliefs of living in harmony
with the Tao
to the people of the Tang Dynasty

all those years ago
attempting to heal
a fragmented culture
by giving them
the *Secret Of The Golden Flower*

many years later
this Chinese
book of life
centuries old
was brought to the West
by Richard Wilhelm

shortly before his death
Carl Jung's commentaries on the work
tied Eastern mystical philosophy
with Occidental science
internal alchemy

neidan
provided a path to prolong life
and create an immortal
spiritual body that would live on
long after death

gathering my ancestors during
the last Blood moon
planchette writing answered questions
in the sand, in the ash

a White Peony appeared to me
my journey to the East
complete

now, on nights when the moon is full
its brightness not shaded
by the forbearance of End Times

i gather my animals around me
reading to them poems from the Quan Tangshi

we lend our spirits to each other
so we might better
understand

the *Secret Of The Golden Flower*.

TROPHY HUNTING

shall we take off our clothes
losing ourselves
living
for the thrill of the hunt

there are nightmares out there
in the dark
in the shadows
it is a perfect place
to hunt

can you smell their fear
it is all around us
in the bars
on the streets
in the cafe on the corner

men, women
politicians, doctors
priests, lawyers
the night shift
clerk

they are all in the game
aware of the moment

they too are on the hunt

holding their breath
until the prey is finished

the deed is done

come, let us dance

naked

and revel

in the kill.

TRUMPETS ARE CALLING

standing on the edge of a knife
we hear the trumpets call home
their sounds echoing through valleys
reaching deep
into the souls of our fathers
searching madly
for a time where confusion
might lead to rest
and for a moment
peace might return to our land
where animals hunt food
giving order
to the nature of things
birds building nests
reproducing their numbers
with a joyous acceptance
of the master plan
nature, in all its wisdom
saw fit to leave this wisdom

from the thoughts of man
the knife's edge is sharp
many centuries have been devoted
to maintaining
its pristine edge
generations have devoted
their lives to perfecting
the balancing act
we've all come to endure
trumpets herald a beginning
to times that cry out
for a blade without edge
their sounds reminding us
of the hatred that rises
when change is brought forth
fires have burned
societies have fallen
we heed the trumpets call
to dull the knife's edge.

WAIT FOR
MY RETURN

look to the sheltering sky
watch for the faceless man

follow him home
he will nurture you with
stories of another age

there, in his presence,
you may share your secrets

do not be ashamed

he already knows
what your heart has revealed
countless times

when you prayed
to your god

i have sent messages
with leaves that fall in autumn

snow from a winter storm
rain from a bright, spring day
sunbeams in the heat of summer

you have never been alone
spirits of our ancestors
dance around you

they hear your cries of joy

feel your pain with you

share your love
with the faceless man

look to the sheltering sky.

WARRIOR SONG

we planted groves of hickory,
ash, birch and maple
in the valley where we buried
our warrior monks

a timeless supply
of bows and spears
with which to kill heathens
in that other life

we planted groves of oak
forests of pine
with which to harvest wood
to build churches, cities

we created a land of peace
where all might offer prayers
to the monks who fought valiantly
to achieve the lords peace

minstrels sang of great battles
many tapestries were woven
depicting our lands awash
with rivers of blood

mounds of bodies
rotting in the sun
created rich fields
from which to yield crops

warrior monks and kings alike
live on, endlessly
upon aged parchment
gathered, to preserve our history

a history blessed
with the deaths of heathens
so the righteous among us
might come to know God.

WHERE IS THE ROAD TO FREEDOM

does it lie on the path leading
to where dreams die

i read about such a road,
long ago, in a journal i found

the text was weathered from years
of reading, but the glyphs were still intact

there was mention of a crossing
between time, but that is all i can remember

the journal was written in many tongues,
many strange symbols spoke to me

i had the sensation of flight,
the rhythm of movement

distant colors grew until
i could see the universe rise

i have searched quite a while,
looking to find the road to freedom

perhaps it is in a dream,
calling me, taunting

i have seen where dreams die

i will look for it there.

VAGARIES

we went where dreams go
in the harsh light of day
traveling light, bringing only
the necessary items to complete
our journey
taking nourishment from our id
our ego riding rough-shod
on worlds of our making
where colors voiced sounds
with crystalline clarity
delivering symphonies awash
in a brilliant spiral of visions
our eyes held captive
merging thoughts from youth
ideals from death
giving structure
a cadence
of life visited daily
an escape from the vagaries
of conscious thought
a butterfly landing softly
upon the muse within us
presenting us moments
from the cocoon we spun
with silk from our dreams
we went where dreams go
to find solace from the wind
that brushes against us
longing for the moment
that releases us
from time.

WHO WILL DIG THE GRAVES

who will dig the graves
when the bombings stop
when the war is complete

victors have no time

peacekeepers have no time

who will dig the graves

it takes little effort
to reduce a country
to rubble

a few weeks of destruction
followed by
carefully prepared statements
denouncing war

it is easily planned

after centuries of war
it has become a science

second nature, if you will

all aspects covered

still, the dead are waiting
and the question remains;

who will dig the graves?

WINTERING

we spent the night making blood tea
following ancient ways written in the wind

i immersed myself in holy water
casting out demons as the sun rose

prophets appeared wearing alabaster eyes
piercing deep into our souls

a muted egret's cry searching for its mate
played softly through the morning

i taught you to shoot, out in the meadow
where the swans liked to lay

the blood tea gave us wisdom
to kill with our hearts, not with our minds

later that day, as the sun began to set
we feasted upon memories of our gods

there was a promise of a clear night sky

you asked me to hold you, wondering
would the wind would tell us stories

of a time when we were free.

WORN SHOES

we did not have correct clothing
for such a grand idea

imagine, a re-creation of the universe
drawn in time
before us

there was a moment
when all felt right

we each took a turn
engineering a line

the more artistic of us
supplied circles

soon, the geometry of life
danced before us

it was sublime

i happened
to look away

for but a moment

would that i spend a lifetime
to see it dance again.

THE ASCENSION OF GARUDA

in a time before time
before Marmuk and Yahweh
walked the fertile valleys
that would soon turn to sand

before Anu and Enki molded
the creatures known as human
mixing earth mud
with the blood of Igigi's

the great vahana of Vishnu
burst forth from his egg
a raging inferno
who could block out the sun

he flew through the heavens
in search of the Naga
the serpent gods of evil
who ruled throughout the land

his mother, Vinata,
were enslaved by the Naga
to set free her bondage
he need bring them amrita

Lord Vishnu offered Garuda
the magic amrita
the nectar of immortality
the bird warrior sought

CONTINUED

Indra, god of the sky
 joined in with Vishnu
 but only if the great Garuda
 would agree to his plan

Indra gave Garuda amrita
 to give to the Naga
 at a special place
 at a special time

before Garuda offered the Naga
 their blessed amrita
 he pleaded with them first
 to release his poor mother

the Naga agreed
 and untied Vinata
 but as they did
 Indra swept down

he took back the amrita
 the nectar of immortality
 leaving only a drop
 for the Naga to drink

as they licked in vain
 to attain immortality
 their tongues split in two
 and they shed off their skin

Indra and Vishnu took the Nagas' power
 decreeing they would forever crawl the world
 and they would forever
 shed their skin

they gave Garuda
 immortality
 allowing his kin to forever be
 sworn enemy of snakes

all birds would forever
 fly free in the skies
 searching below
 for the evil, accursed snakes

and Garuda, for his service
 was given immortality
 becoming the trusted mount of Vishnu
 until the end of time.

SHAMBHALA

i dreamt of you
those many years ago
when schools of fish carried me
across the raging sea
a crescent moon beckoning
in a turquoise sky
your image remained
long after i had washed ashore
delicate hands reaching down
to calm my fears
a kind smile lifting
my broken soul
in that moment
all was pure
the knowledge you imparted
resonating through me
on nights when the wind
churns the water
into an iridescent foam
i see the turquoise sky
gleaming through the clouds
your memory holding
a taste of salt
crosses my lips
an errant tear
seeps down
it is enough to sustain me
opening a path
where dreams remain.

DRAW THE LINE

pure
and simple

let no mark
stray

from the perfect

path

focus

upon the line
till the path

parts in two

realize
the middle

replenish
the dream

relinquish.

STAR PEOPLE

it has been many lifetimes
since the star people ascended
leaving us in charge
of earth mother
keeping alive
the wisdom
they brought us

but too many of us
have strayed
from their teachings

where once all
worked together
here
on earth mother
now
only a few
keep to the old ways

those who do
continue
the traditions
taught us long ago
so many lifetimes away

of sending energy
and life
deep into the soul
of our great
earth mother spirit

we spend our days
patiently studying
the illuminated drawings
our ancestors left us

showing the way
to the heart
of earth mother

we spend our nights
searching the sky
waiting for star people

to hear our hearts

to return to earth mother

we are in need
of their wisdom

CONTINUED

so much damage
so much war

our great earth mother
is dying more
each day

the star people
taught us
to live within

the eye of the lotus

we take refuge
in their wisdom

it is there we wait

patiently

for their return.

ATTEMPTING TO SEE

with your eyes
is void

one must practice
correct form

align your fist
to your heart

align your heart
to your mind

align your mind
to your breath

align your breath
to become strength

open your heart
to the strength
within

move in its circle

dance with its passion

it is then
that you will see.





David A. Boles has worked as a Publisher, Writer and Designer since 1982. Founder of the alternative literary and visual magazine, Primal Urge, he went on to develop Cold River Press in the early 1990's to further promote regional writers and artists. His press and focus eventually grew to international levels of publishing with the anthologies VOICES and QUIET ROOMS. He has published, designed, edited and written numerous books, magazines, articles, ads and periodicals. His publications, graphic design and artwork have won him acclaim in a nearly forty year career.

A lifelong student of Magic and Spiritualism, he holds a degree in Psychology, and a Doctorate of Divinity in Theosophical Studies.

Living in Northern California at his beloved Lake House with his wife, Mrs. America, and numerous animals, he chronicles his devotion to the ancestors writing of ancient mysticism through his *Coyote Series*, a four book series of epic poems that detail the spiritual and mystical wisdom of the ages.

Other works by dave boles:

Do Aluminum Chickens Eat Metal Feed?

Media Dissertation Of A Balding Man

A Small Answer To A Large Question

*ALIVE IN AMERICA: Politics,
Psychedelics & An Illuminated Monkey*

CABO DAYS

*4th Floor: Paranoia, Depression
& Other States Of Mind*

Confessions Of A Black Ink Junkie

*15 Days To Slow The Curve -
One Mans Journey Into The
Heartland Of Absurdity*

Paths Of Emptiness

About The Wedding

Coyote Magic

Coyote Vision

OFFERINGS

Homage To A Word

Excursions Along The Way

WAR

VISIONS OF A MERCIFUL LAND (first printing), is published in an edition of 200 copies.

Text: Body is Minion Pro, 12pt leading 15pt. scaled 115% horizontally. Poem headings are in Baskerville Old Face Caps, 17pt leading 19pt, stretched 125 percent horizontally with a +50 tracking. Page numbers are 10.5pt Adobe Caslon Pro, printed white on a seventy five percent background tint.

Inside illustrations are titled *Sunrise, Ishtar, Lotus Mandala* and *Begins*. All were created digitally by Bodhi.

Back of book illustration is *The Golden Pakara*, by the artist Zhang Shengwen of Da Li, a kingdom in China, in the year 1180.

Cover: Cover Art is by Bodhi. Titled PEYOTE SUNRISE, it was created entirely digitally using Photoshop and Illustrator. Book title is based on Engravers MT, modified, beveled and airbrushed. Small titles are in Exotic350 Bd BT, stretched and air-brushed. Back Cover photograph was taken by Mrs. America. Blurbs are in Minion Pro 10pt leading 12pt. Cover design and manipulation is by Bodhi.

Bio Photography: by Mrs. America.

Paper: Interior pages are printed on 60# white 3.7 Caliper, 541 PPI. Soft Cover is printed on 12pt Cover stock 541 PPI and gloss laminated before binding.

Printing: Text was printed on an Océ 6250 digital printer. Cover was printed using a Xerox Versant 3100.

Binding: Book is soft cover perfect bound.



THE GOLDEN PAKARA

The Golden Pakara deity is found in the Buddha Scroll. It originally appeared in the Pictorial Of Buddhist Icons by the artist Zhang Shengwen of Da Li, a kingdom in China, in the year 1180. It was reproduced again by the famous Qianlong Emperor, Gaozong, of the Qing Dynasty who ruled from 1735-1795. He commissioned artist Ding Guanpeng to recreate the scroll from the original, water damaged and heavily aged scroll. Ding Guanpeng was a master artist who was schooled in Taoist, Buddhist and European art, being trained in European art by the Italian painter Giuseppe Castiglione, who spent a great deal of time in China in the mid-1700s. The final scroll was organized by the Zhongjia Khutughto, or Living Buddha. It was one of four major prelates of the Gelugpa or Yellow sect of Lamaism, which was recognized by the Manchu government of the Qing Dynasty as spiritual leaders of Tibet and Mongolia. Hence, it is alternatively called both the Buddha Scroll, and the Tibetan Buddha scroll.

Pakara means the letter Pa, which stands for the principle that the ultimate reality of all things cannot be grasped. He is a fierce Dharma-protecting Tantric deity, or celestial spirit, that is associated with the Naga, or Dragon Kings. He protects man from reaching, or understanding, the Ultimate Reality Of All Things, which man cannot handle, nor wield its incredible knowledge. He is an ancient deity dating back to early Hinduism, Jainism, and beyond, with appearances as early as the Sumerian era. The Sumerian deities became known as Naga kings, or dragon/serpent gods, as their appearances took form as such.

There is a small portal to his left, under his lowermost left arm. It is a "grey" area with a bit of rope dangling in it. It is through this portal that those who study and prepare themselves worthy to him might gain a glimpse of the Ultimate Reality he protects.



What a marvelous book. Transcendental in the best manner. The poet constructs objects of our world and consciousness and makes it possible for us to experience them as objects in the first place.

Boles uses his lifelong interest in education, religion, and theological thought to build a powerful poetry full of truth, beauty, and goodness woven together with a profound sense of “the old gods”.

The poems build their own meaning beyond self, invoking within us a merciful land that is not always perfect but which is fully conscious and extremely moving.

D.R. Wagner

Author, Distant Lights: A Quartet

In my younger years, I took what might be called a “quest-lite” as I explored various theisms and philosophies. Sutras, Vedas, scriptures, and teachings of sages were read. The understanding was scant. I went to poets like Ginsberg, Kerouac, and Snyder for help. I often came away even more confused. My spiritual journey lacked vision. But here is a new book that offers poetry that can help bring some light to questions that we all ask at times. From its striking cover and title to its beautifully designed interior, *Visions of a Merciful Land* is a book that promises a wide-ranging journey into the poetic intellect of Dave Boles. In Boles’ *Coyote Vision*, we encountered the poet on his shamanic journey through stories and revelations offered up by his spirit guide. In this new volume, we find the poet as a philosopher, a teacher, and a theosophical unifier. Here are poems that delve into questions of humanity’s place in a complex, wondrous Universe. But these poems, while philosophical and deeply thought out, are not couched in the language of academics. Here we have beautiful, interesting, often humorous explorations of the human condition. The verse is musical in tone – perfect for reading aloud. The imagery is lush and full of color – a treat for the mind’s eye. And the pages themselves are pleasing to the visual and tactile senses. Yes, there is a message in all these poems. However, the message is gentle, and it is clearly one that can offer a path to a better understanding of personal freedom and how to live it.

jim bourey, poet



The bones of giants
rattle in our dreams
painting the night
with rapturous noise.

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