

poems  
of no  
standings

written by **Michael J. Rohan**  
illustrations by **Robert Rouse**



These poems are dedicated to  
Meher Baba, Avatar of the age.

*His hand is on the tiller  
as we drift towards the ocean  
and beyond.*

**In Avatar Meher Baba's Love**  
**Complimentary Copy**  
**from**  
**Meherzad Family,**

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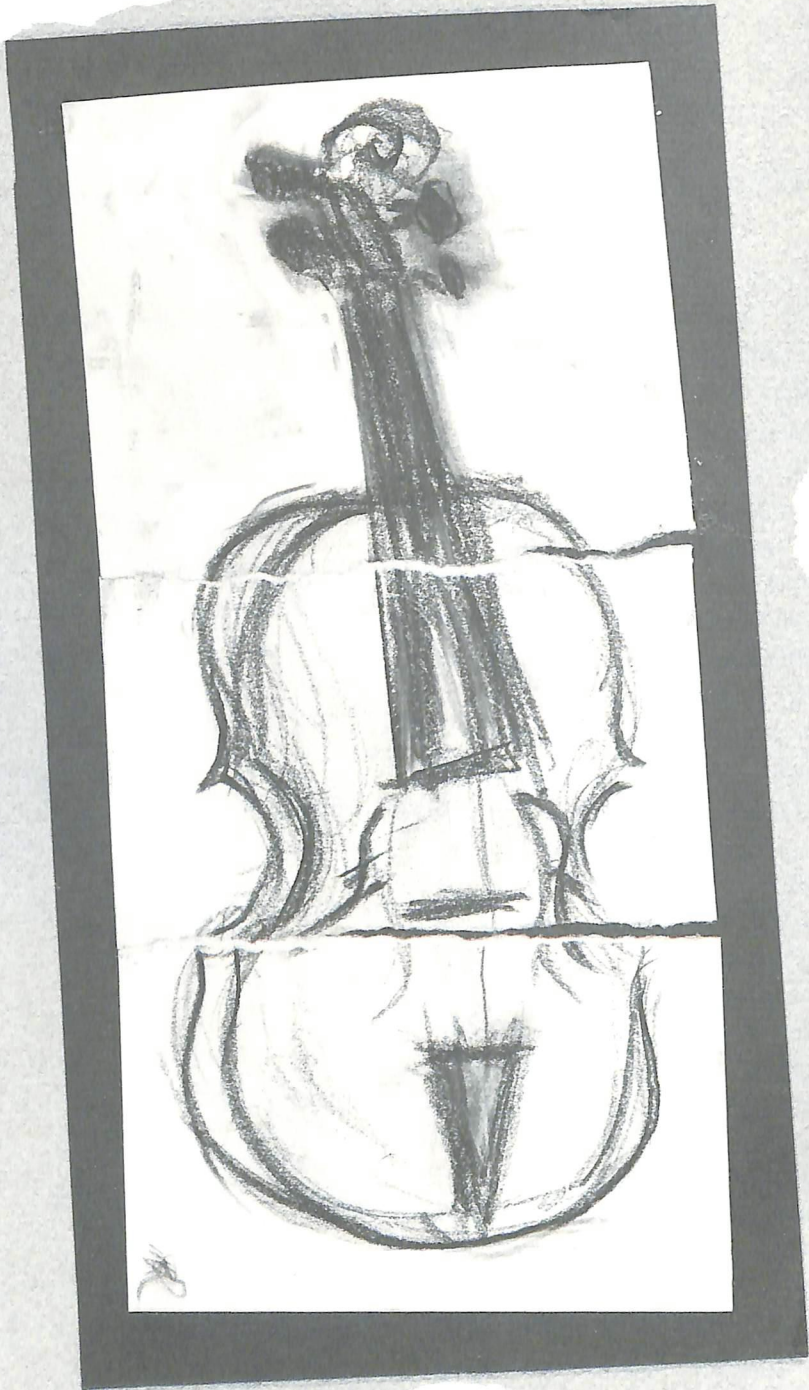
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## *The Violin Case*

The black violin case poked  
its nose above the rubble on the garbage tip,  
the snout of a sculptured curve  
gasping for air.  
On bended knee with stooped back  
and clutching hands  
I wrenched it free in a shower of dust,  
against a backdrop of utes and trailers and  
men shovelling bricks and dirt  
and the severed wings  
from trees still bleeding,  
the women were heaving those obsolete  
television sets with veneered legs  
and slinging their dark  
green plastic bags of garbage  
down into the earth's vagina.  
Amongst this madness  
I had plucked a black mushroom.  
It was full, there was something  
on the inside and smelling ritual  
I held it high above my head,  
my son screamed  
"Daddy what have you found."  
We were both excited  
and snapped the lock.  
A violin lay mutilated and shattered  
its silent scream was frozen  
tight as ice,  
my son was puzzled by the fractures  
but this was my totem  
I was dreaming in motion with the hands  
that played this thing,  
its solitary string sticking  
out its chest in cold defiance  
wound tight as the heart  
that drew its lonely flame  
across its surface,  
and whispered music then

smashed its frame  
to pieces.  
Baba's watermark  
is his dreaming in stereo  
of the last gasps from a shattered violin  
plinth of a crashed heart  
framed in a black case  
extracted like teeth, from the face  
of a rubbish heap ♦

## *Much Ado About Nothing*

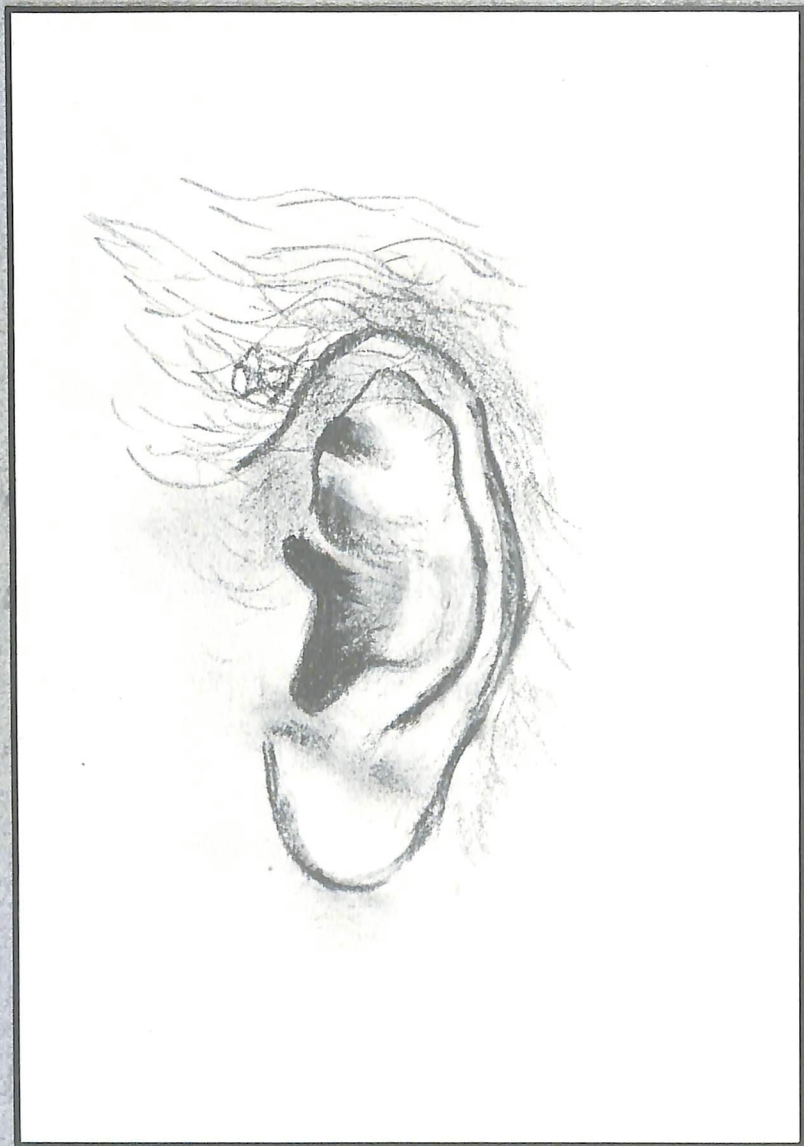
After all  
it's only nothing,  
nothing at all.  
I was thinking about  
all of it  
everything,  
turning with the rhythm.  
Even the air  
is calibrating  
each and every heartbeat  
and the silence  
between beats  
belongs  
to the everything  
and the nothing.  
It is not a game  
of words  
I am polishing  
your name  
with the rags of other words  
that are smeared  
with the wax of wanting,  
to lock nothing  
in the iron arms  
of everything,  
the everything and the nothing ♦



## *Day One, The Pilgrim Centre*

The mandali,  
these lovers,  
Components of a prism  
transmitting light, each  
at a slightly different angle.  
Look into my eyes  
I love looking into yours,  
Catching degrees,  
of His reflection.

Sitting by the tomb  
Propped up  
Bushlike  
Stalk and stem,  
drinking begins,  
Out of the earth they come.  
Dream beams  
Where the man form  
With divinity  
Was ploughed back  
Actively  
Resting.  
Those hands  
Were silently gesturing  
On the alphabet board  
Of our hearts.  
The singers sang  
The music played  
The air was Avatar,  
Avatar Meher Baba ◆



# Gossip

Slow death by firing squad of the pointed finger,  
and the squinting eye that roves the valley  
of the peeping window.  
Wave back from outside the gate,  
and admire the blow in mime  
that slight movement of the voyeur's curtain.

Like our machinery we have developed  
the science of hurt and gossip  
where every conversation  
becomes a labyrinth  
of negotiation  
through hidden knots and hints  
directed from across the kitchen table.

The ventriloquist,  
moves his puppets along the play  
unwinds the plot where  
the marionettes will say  
heavy things about each other.  
He watches in total silence.

He is the perfect ventriloquist  
listening to his own voice  
echoing out of men  
and bees  
fidgeting animals  
and groaning trees  
in panoramic drama,  
a synthesis of blood and bone  
and fish  
and stone  
their voices gurgling  
down the culvert of his ear,  
while he dreams in streams  
and sleeps in water flow ◆

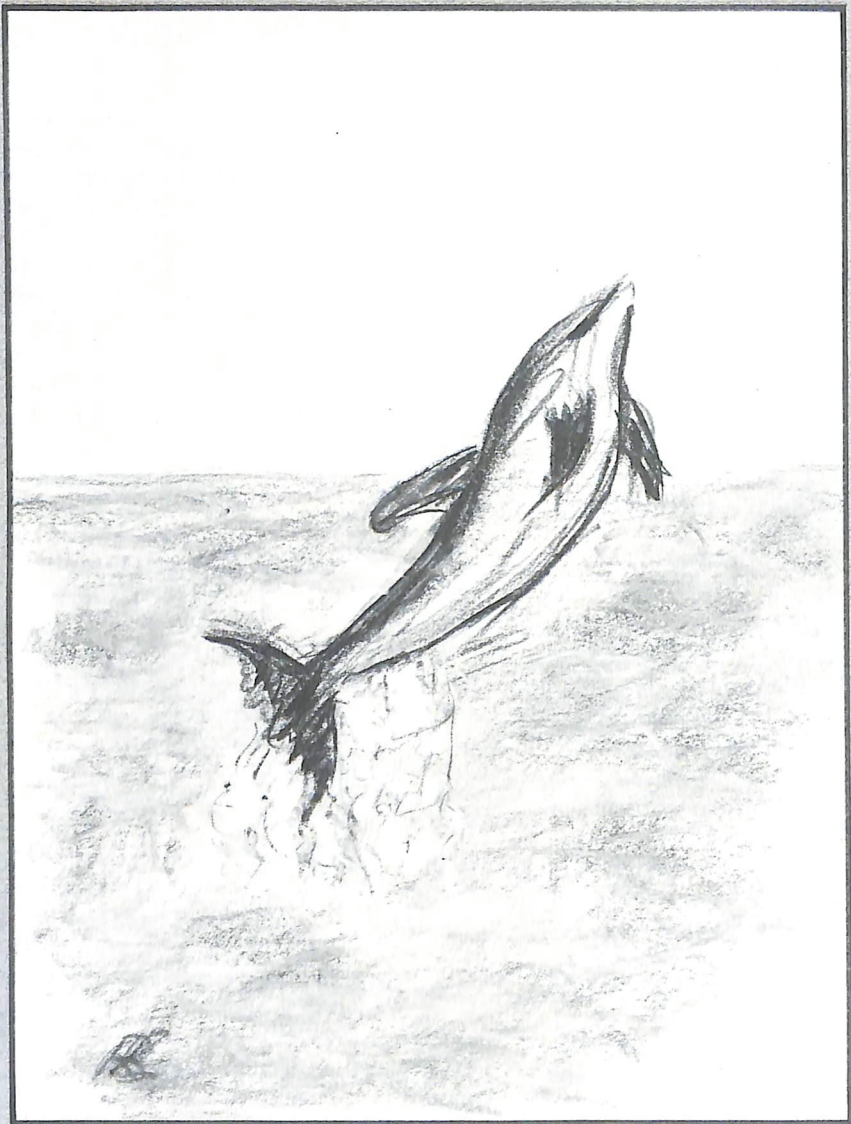
## *The Silent Word*

Resting behind closed eyes  
in a balloon shaped sleep  
Meher emerged  
on the castors of a dream.  
He took form in a rocking chair  
then lay down on the bed  
the colours of the dream  
dripped on the walls  
inside my head.  
A condensation from within the tomb watering  
us little flowers,  
that flutter up  
through the pergola  
of your relaxed teeth  
My own fingers had roots  
in the moist saliva  
The tendril toes  
sucked on a nitrogen of silence  
in slow release ballet.  
Bony back stems propped  
my seed face in leaves  
resting within your forehead walls.  
My vivid green eyes rustled out  
to stare  
from the window ledge of your eyeballs  
and watch the Word.  
And the Word was out  
silent as hair growth.  
A vapour escaping from the mouth  
of the Avatar's hands.  
A gas leaking out across the lands  
Clear as a dog whistle  
the Word had no vowels  
just the answer to a riddle  
and the echo of a tune  
from a stringless fiddle  
in the timbre of silence  
like a bottomless kiss

Chant on the silence.  
I gushed up laughing  
with the knowledge of leaking hands  
but my chains were strained  
I awoke on the edge of keening,  
filleted by a dream ◆

## *Baba Missing You*

My eyes are spring loaded with tears  
Bonsai lakes  
that brim on the edge  
of an eyelash forest.  
The black sun of a pupil  
contracts,  
a winking star  
this eye  
this lens  
inserted in my head  
abandoned  
to the streaming view.  
I slam down the shutters  
and close my eyes  
to go back,  
back to the lake  
where you are resting  
against the cornea,  
washing your feet  
in the salty waters of  
this unknown part of me.  
I caught you smiling  
at Archimedes principle,  
a body displaces its own volume in water  
and you drove your feet deeper  
like plungers  
forcing the water over the edge,  
and it ran  
like hot tears  
down my face ◆



## *Watching the Sunset in the Garden*

In the armchair of a quiet afternoon the sun is cool enough to roll around in the mouth and the darkness is creeping into my ears. There is evidence of the Avatar in the shadows that creep and crawl across the grass. Plants are toning down their colours semiquaver by semiquaver, inch by inch, a dimmer switch is being rolled down somewhere on the wall of the world. The Avatar is closing his eyes across the skies and dusk is filtering in, glowing eyes that are coal black on film, eyes that took millions of years in the making. Prism eyes that are streaked with reds and yellow. Eyes with an ear for the ramblings of the mind and a nose for the bouquet of the heart and we go down the lanes like ships floating in space clinging to the life raft of a vision. The hiss of a water tap and the clank of a kettle against a sink through the tunnel of the neighbour's window, she is making the tea, a symbol that her day is done. I can hear the waterpipes gurgling in the abdomen of her house and the flickering of her TV screen will soon damage the darkness, she will stare at it owl like and bewildered. Stretch out the legs and watch a falling star. As children we were told that a falling star meant someone had just died and gone to heaven. A fairy story. We were never taught that the water in God's eyes was phosphorescent and when a dolphin leaps in space it is a long distance flash that resembles a falling star. A million fingers in a million backyards point and say "make a wish there is a falling star" and a million wishes in a thousand different languages hold hands above the earth and compare each other's longings and they are all riders of a falling star. What a star! It looks like a ring on a finger being raised in space, a diamond ring brushing slowly through the master's hair. Dolphins jump, deer are startled and an owl slams open its staring eye glaring out on the world.

The magician must be in seclusion. His eyes are closed and his mind is drifting within us. A hardened man is being strapped to the electric chair with no signs of remorse, forever defiant in a Sing Sing wilderness or so the neighbour's TV is telling me, while at the other end of the world I know that they are rattling their walking sticks on the hob and making ready to go to the pub. We are strange animals shuffling in the caverns of his heart and we must come like notes of music in unbearable waves, note after

note we are screeching out into a wail and he will not cry out in his silence. The magician is beyond happiness and sadness only the air is his witness, the leaves that are scented in green raise their heads and hold his hand beneath the eyelids of his world. It is outside the distance of man love. His vision of us is old, old as the gumtrees. His vision of us must take the snot right out of his nose, and clear his sinus, yet come up smelling like a rose, and the wriggling wail of our voices calling for succour are squeezed into one, notes in a tune one continuous flow of pleadings. Shuffle along behind the symphony of wailing.

Winter in the garden is bleeding into Spring and it looks like I have not earned revelations this year,  
But hey musician, magician I am coming home with you  
I want a father with arms as strong as a churchyard and my big ear is leaning out the window listening for your name.  
I have been wandering up and down the road between 1954 and 1989 and it's like one unbroken day full of trombone blows and echoes from a mile wide gutter.  
The streets have been eating up the mileage in my feet.

Your name is peaking now in the evening twilight. This sleepy feeling, sinking slowly with the light down to ground level where the dew hugs its arms around the neck of bushes and stretches its little legs like a spider's web across the garden. We are all sinking slowly with the evening, down below ground level, smell the earth and feel the water wet below the clay, hug close the bush root dark and fibrous, mucous smell and hard shell root in constant, sucking juices from the damp earth. I can hear its heartbeat, it is slower than mine which is beating somewhere above the topsoil. I can listen to the great heartbeat of life, the awesome sound of silence spoken in tongues, dialect of an unknown language spoken before our birth, a language natural as water. One that has come not to teach but to awaken. It is not good to fall asleep in the garden,



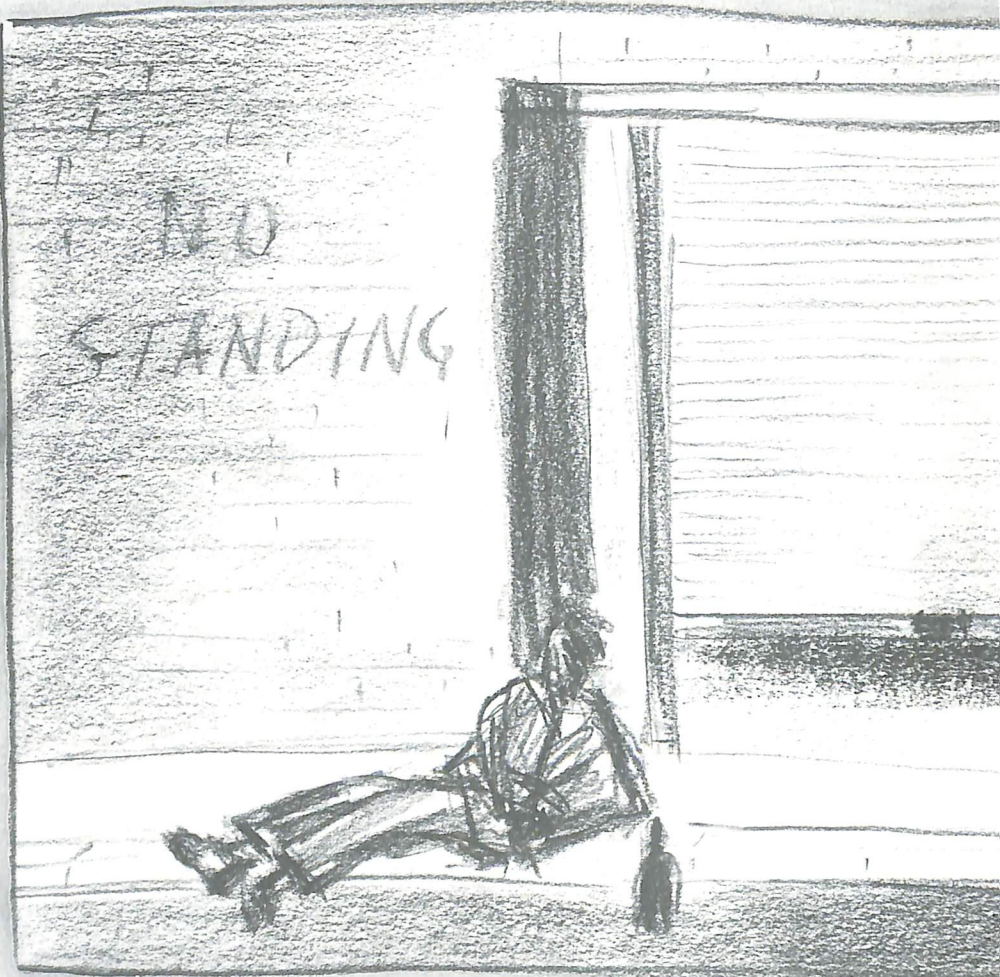
there are too many subliminal whispers.  
Once I lived in a hayfield and listened to the whispering  
of the long grass  
it was like living in the equivalent of a nest  
I became alarmed  
and I ran away.  
Now I will pull myself upright  
and wander into bed  
with closed eyes to dangle by the riverbank,  
and listen to the names of the stars  
that live in Meher Baba's hands ♦

## *A Fisherman's Song*

Declan and Tom work the nets, it's freezing beyond my very imagination and I make the coffee and dream on the lights of the fishing village that seems within arm's length in this big basin of water. Billy's bar is so inviting I think that I can see the lights. It's warm in there. We keep working hard, going for the fish, the slimy things that flutter and glitter on these mid winter nights. The ocean at night is always angry green or dark blue or just black and senseless. I wish I was back at the bar with the big fireplace and the music from the fiddles and the mandolins banishing any thoughts of stirring towards the cold road home where wives and children would be tucked up under mounds of blankets unravelling their dreams in sleep. The bar is miles away for them and for me. We could trail up there at any hour of the day or night and Billy was like a father brother or a mother "what will it be lads?" and we would spend the fish and I will never forget how he rubbed his hands together. Pure greed mixed up with love like hybrid animals breeding. "Pint of Guinness or a shot of malt?". One of his customers, a local was drowned on a bad night's fishing and we were flushed out of our houses by the noise of a helicopter searching for the body. Grown men had tears in their eyes going out to help in the search but they never found him. His wet face came up years later hanging on to the other side of Baba's daaman. I saw him in the tail end of a dream and only Baba was handsome  
God to light my way  
Wet on the road  
Soft light  
Strange God  
soften the blow.  
Eye of forgiveness,  
that smiling hand on  
the latch of the heart  
God  
Baba

Silent Christ crashing through the waves of a dark night, out there on the abyss, in the abyss of water, playing in the deep light of a water infected dream, way away from human souls except the empty shells of a few herring fishermen, who would risk any

odds for a fish or two, out there on a cold fishing vessel, hard seas  
we search for herring mid winter, mid night rough going when the  
ropes froze  
it could never  
ever  
be any other way.  
Baba was silent  
down there with the fishes  
of the North Atlantic  
and love was the theme  
of the Godman's notion,  
and like my fisherman's dream  
of capturing the ocean  
with a net full of holes  
we have guaranteed  
our own dreaming.  
On a wave above  
a surfer glides  
like a shuttle  
through a loom  
The Avatar stares  
through the window  
of his room  
only the gulls  
of his fingers  
are moving ♦



## *Poems of Imaginary Beings, Winos Lost in the City*

Wind of wine and wineshop lovers  
blow out the pain  
of the man that sleeps between the  
    cardboard covers  
out back there  
in the alley.  
Unconscious and shattered  
a broken hinge  
his mind is a mosaic window  
under pressure and  
his ferocious binge  
is a leeching  
of the blood  
that pounds within his forehead walls,  
a syringe of water  
to silence the desert  
of an animal thirst that  
drives him to want to  
drink the sky, the trees, the people,  
he is frightened how one mouth  
would want to swallow up so much,  
and his tears warm his bruised face  
and his urine warms his frozen legs  
and his little patch of ground  
is painted with a perfect sound  
a tincture, just a nip of silence,  
that drives him further into madness  
a jealous hapless rage at having misplaced  
somehow the love of a father and a mother  
he is twisting like an animal in a cage.  
A mirror image of a baby twisting in a cot  
wet and cold  
rising longing towards  
the all forgiving arms that  
crack the dark in half, and croon  
I love you, I love you, my little tree  
your thin wail shatters me  
and Baba holds the child this

piss stained battered man  
in the bedroom of a concrete jumble,  
cold streets blink and stare  
at cold streets wet and bare  
The wet stain spreads across his daaman.  
Out back there  
in the alley,  
the man is dreaming  
once upon a time,  
he was a cow knee deep in green  
then his skin was flayed  
and made into a pair of sandals,  
leather thongs that hugged tight  
like the arms of a child  
around the feet of the Avatar ♦

## *Baba Movies:— A Firing of Memories*

Mrs. Brook asked me to take her to visit her son George so we turned towards the cemetery gates, cold earth by the wild Atlantic. She keened her eldest boy who went mad in the war in Aden and finally hanged himself in London. She lay on the grave clawing the clay asking George to come home. I stood there mortified not knowing what to do except pretend it wasn't happening and she clung to me in grief, her crying and the salt on the strong wind stung my face, the electricity of her longing and sorrow burned me rigid. That night I got falling down drunk, I couldn't take my mind off the look in her eyes and I wished I was away. Now I am thirteen years away and Baba the shadow of her look flashed across your face that look was in your eyes, I was thrashed and eaten away, muted by a flammable glance off the flickering screen. It wasn't the first time this stammering heart caught your flashcard, what about Anastasia O'Keefe with her old coat hanger of a skeleton twisted and crippled from arthritis, pain seeping out with every movement but the soft face was always shining and laughing, I'd bring in the whiskey and build a big fire turn down the light and we talked many a night into morning. She would sing the songs and I'd dance mad Jigs around the concrete floor spinning into tables and chairs and we'd laugh until the tears rolled down. The big joke between us was that we were lucky she was seventy and I was twenty otherwise village tongues would blister us. She spoke often of her long lost fisherman and his odd ways, how he caught a mouse in a snare he made from a horse hair. It was her attention to detail in describing her love, her quiet longing like a white flame burning the words into something shining and metallic, they were heat, Baba they were your kind of words. That ocean behind your eyes is a sea of flame. We are going to be consumed and lost in fire. When you look at our bodies are you watching the ghosts of our past lives passing on flame through some kind of capillary action, a slow flickering procession into the now of flesh and bone. Is it like the lights of a city at night groping their way along the power lines, creeping slowing towards you the source.

This egg I want to lay  
in the dhuni  
of your halcyon eyes ♦





## *Photographs from a Still Life*

Stretched out in the hayfield night-time  
Looking up the dewdamp legs of grass  
It caught my eye.  
Every blade with head bent  
Balanced a drop  
A pearl of pure water.  
Lasered to its skin  
A tiny reflected moon  
Curled like a baby  
On a glass balloon.  
We were,  
Lying in the tear ducts  
Looking out along the Master's lashes.

In the deep woods  
Firs breathing all around us  
I listened to a fallen tree  
Bubbling in lichen  
And a fox broke cover  
Moving red against the green.  
We were,  
Watching the Master's thought  
Walking over  
And tapping on our shadows.

These stills are photographs  
Of a Master's silence  
Taken in a landlocked tongue  
His silence is a seashell  
Held against the inner ear  
Murmuring of an Ocean  
To the strolling stone filled bones  
Up on the shore ◆

## *God Unpuzzle Me*

The world  
tilted back from a tangent  
with the snap of a fractured bone realigned.  
Babajan had to cover her eyes  
and look away  
after giving the kiss  
in total total love.  
The boy God staggered backwards  
with his forehead  
clutched in his hands,  
He went away to beat his head across stone  
every smack of his forehead  
was reshaping the grid of the world.  
Peeking out  
between his hurting fingers  
lay the vision of us  
with our arms outstretched  
like antlers in velvet.  
We were beating a path towards his door.  
God unpuzzle me  
show me your face.

Baba is on his dais, my face and feelings are ingrained on the polished floor beneath his feet. My eyes are the knot holes in the timber, my mouth twisted in the jagged lines of the grain running the full length of the room. His feet are resting on my cheekbones, His toes splayed in repose across my polished forehead. Baba is waving his fingers above me. From my floor eyed view I see Baba's face tension tight and full but the eyes give love and the mouth and fingers move independent and silent, the jawline speaks volumes, today is full of tension but tension keeps the world in space. He is watching the stars of morning being quenched by the flex and bulge of a muscular sun, that inner heat that winches his eyes open every morning, bathing plant and man alike, the light of love is blank and turned inward focused on absolutely nothing. The love of nothing.

He is empty as his own tomb  
at sun up

and the planets play out  
their ritual  
changing of the guard,  
His eyes travel down  
the first shaft of sunlight  
that falls across the marble slab,  
where his name is engraved  
the skittish ants  
charge blindly  
some seeking to suck the juice  
of wet leaves falling  
others to chew through stone  
into the stillness  
of the only Silence ◆

## *The Godman's Smiling Face*

Relaxed in monk silence  
a shining orb with  
creasy eye lines  
a woody moustache  
hair electrified back  
covering the ears  
that keep a sharp eye  
on things and non things  
the sun blooming smile  
beginning to break  
like a man coming out of the woods  
pausing to admire the sunlight  
the light that will shine through the trees  
when the branches  
coffin shaped  
will wrap their loving arms  
around us  
as we are inserted like splinters  
into the earth's skin  
into the scheme of Godman things  
I am an armless man  
gasping  
in your luminous silence  
unable to grasp  
at the words burning neon  
in an ever increasing circle  
through the night mind  
good stuff for me deaf  
with tufts of dead grass words  
streaming out of my ears  
a ticker-tape of nonsense  
go on Baba go on  
your stream of silence must overtake  
the clatter  
your agents are diffusing the bomb  
of our clutter  
in my daft haze  
during these  
the Avatar days ◆

## *Walking at Avatar's Abode*

These wet feet are eavesdropping  
on the echo  
of your name  
crunched out from  
the bruised grass  
two feet  
echo  
two words  
Meher and Baba  
bookends for the library  
of my silent footprints.  
Meher and Baba  
two words  
mother father  
to the one word  
that unspoken  
radioactive  
storm of a word  
beating on my heartbeat  
a shifting rhythm of footsteps  
pouring harmony on acid  
my feet  
have taken control  
calling out your name  
across the wet grass ◆

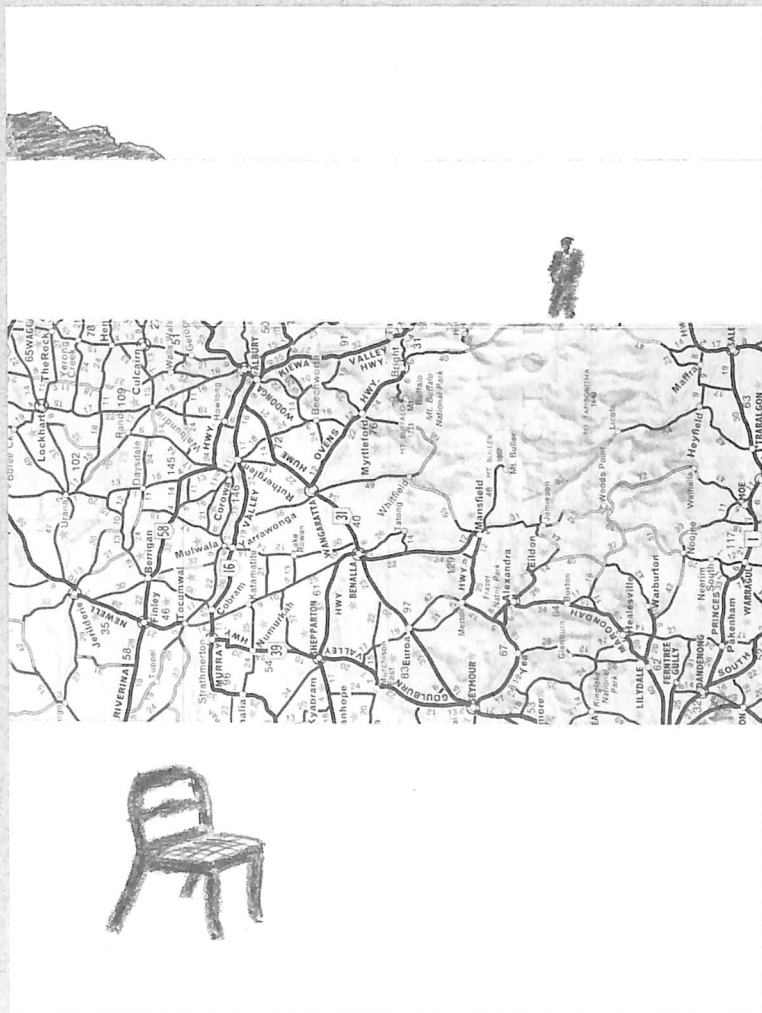
## *And the Road Will Rise Up to Greet Them*

“through the looking glass  
of restless alchemist eyes  
Zen and mental ludo  
turn base metal into base metal.  
How to build the long road home, with one  
cobblestone for a heart  
a mere rivet on the highway.”

In the tight fist of winter, villagers huddle closer over the fire, fronts warm backs cold, eyes follow the flames and sparks that flutter up the wide chimney. The lanterns are turned low casting long shadows. A night perched silence curves back against the softness of the stranger voice. All listen, even the children restless in sleep, dream of dim whispering waters. The itinerant magician has come again, spellbinding the earthlands. With his map unrolled a pointed finger traces the road across mountains to a pathway through swamps where many perish, then out onto a track across parched arid sand places and finally the ocean, and beyond. Tales of bliss untold. The magician's eyes are smiling the words he chooses splash images of rebirth redeath and life dissolving. Each mind sees ice melting in a bucket. Some instinctively draw closer to the warm hearth, others unsettled, recoil and fly into their own hearts, remembering nights spent counting pennies by candlelight, careful that coinclink would not disturb the sleeping, grim plots planned and played. This man's silence is drowning them. His cloak thrown carelessly on a bench looms larger, his hand full of fireflies caresses the hem which in turn caresses the bruised hearts. No one dares real speak, the spell is cast he has returned after seven hundred years the tale is told again as promised, a story of rivets in a roadway, his trundling path. On the kitchen floor hardpacked with memories, in this soil of ignorance a totem sapling grows between his feet, it sings with the voices of those long gone with the magician, it sings of bodies swimming in the ponds of time and many drownings in the ocean.

Cockcrow, and the sleepers stir and shake themselves scratching at the remnants of a dream glad to cough and spit in a cold new morning. The elusive man, this attainable God his

chair is empty. It's all a dream. But the chairs of others are also empty their bedrolls missing. They have gone wandering with the Godman sharing a cloak, a dream and a map ♦









## *Sandals and Dust*

What happens now, your eyes are shining, shining in the shade of a photograph. Why are we always obsessed with photographs of you and the reams of information about you? Why are you a Godman and not a train, where the waiting is a real, waiting room waiting, with metal on metal screeching wheels and sparks, the curve of the tracks, chocolate machines on the platform that rarely work with a coin slot that can be pounded? The formula is simple, machine return the money or die. That waiting is easy, just another platform on a station. Your waiting is weird, waiting for my life to die and come back again, waiting for a train to come into another station further up the line. I will leave the trains to their own timetables and imagine myself as a grain of dust at the Master's feet. I settle into the roadway just beneath the tip of the toe, the lip of Baba's sandals upturned. A grain amongst thousands of grains, the sun is hot and this grain of dust is getting hotter and there are no arms legs or elbows to turn over away from the hot rays of the sun, and the small shadows of the sandals look like heaven, a perfect place to rest, but without arms and legs only a chance movement of the feet will bring relief. Nothing happens, silence. And all the desert is calling, all the dust is asking, for a little shade. This is the nature of dust and I

would settle for second best and the motherly clutch and shade of a blade of grass, uneasy as it might be, however this is not why I lay down in the roadway. The exposure to the boiling sun, it burns and wounds me, and it is a demented but documented fact that wounded men destroyed in battle scream out for their mothers (Steve said that maybe God is a woman). If so I fear for men that call out from the bottom of their womb against the state of man and dust, and the distance they will have to travel in the shadow of women, and the women will die, and come back with beards and speak in deep voices and they will be mortally wounded and cry out for their mothers.

The hen sparrow goes into a trance from the hot sun  
and throws dust over her feathers.  
A dust bath to relieve the heat.  
The cock finch preens in front of the water-hole,  
Drops of water glisten on his bill.  
The Avatar, with the beauty of my father's eyes  
sits motionless  
feet in sandals crossed  
intently watching  
birds  
and dust  
together ◆

## *The Kill*

I saw it  
trickle from the mouth of a fish  
on Bribie Island  
in the perfect form of a drop of blood.  
Fish where does your soul evaporate to  
you have left me  
a legacy of one drop of blood,  
how can I fillet  
and eat you  
as you lie there on a black slab  
in your sticky wetness  
whispering your death secrets  
to a dark rock.  
I bow my head  
to the perfection of your body  
and your meandering soul  
now moving out and up.  
I am sorry that I killed you.  
Baba intervene here and  
sort this out,  
I send this fish to you  
I myself have lost the plot  
to understand the process.  
I walk away to gain a bit of distance  
then look back.  
There is a bridge of air webs  
growing between the fish body and mine,  
go your own way fish  
I was only fishing  
this is not my drama.  
I gather up my gear and leave,  
in the car  
on the slow road home  
I saw Baba  
taking over the world  
in a very painful way ◆

## *Take Off Your Gloves of Silence*

Baba,  
I could crack my heart against your knee  
and a singing egg  
would slither out  
down between your feet,  
a soft disc  
contracting like a pupil  
under the light  
of your 360 degree eye  
Peer into  
this egg  
so colour starved.

Take off your gloves of silence  
speak to me in lemon  
wash out my ears in silence red,  
Release my words  
like birds unfolding  
into an air of silence.  
Flourish out your hands,  
those hands of skin  
ten fingers stretched out  
towards my flame.  
Take off your gloves of silence  
and poke amongst the ruins ♦

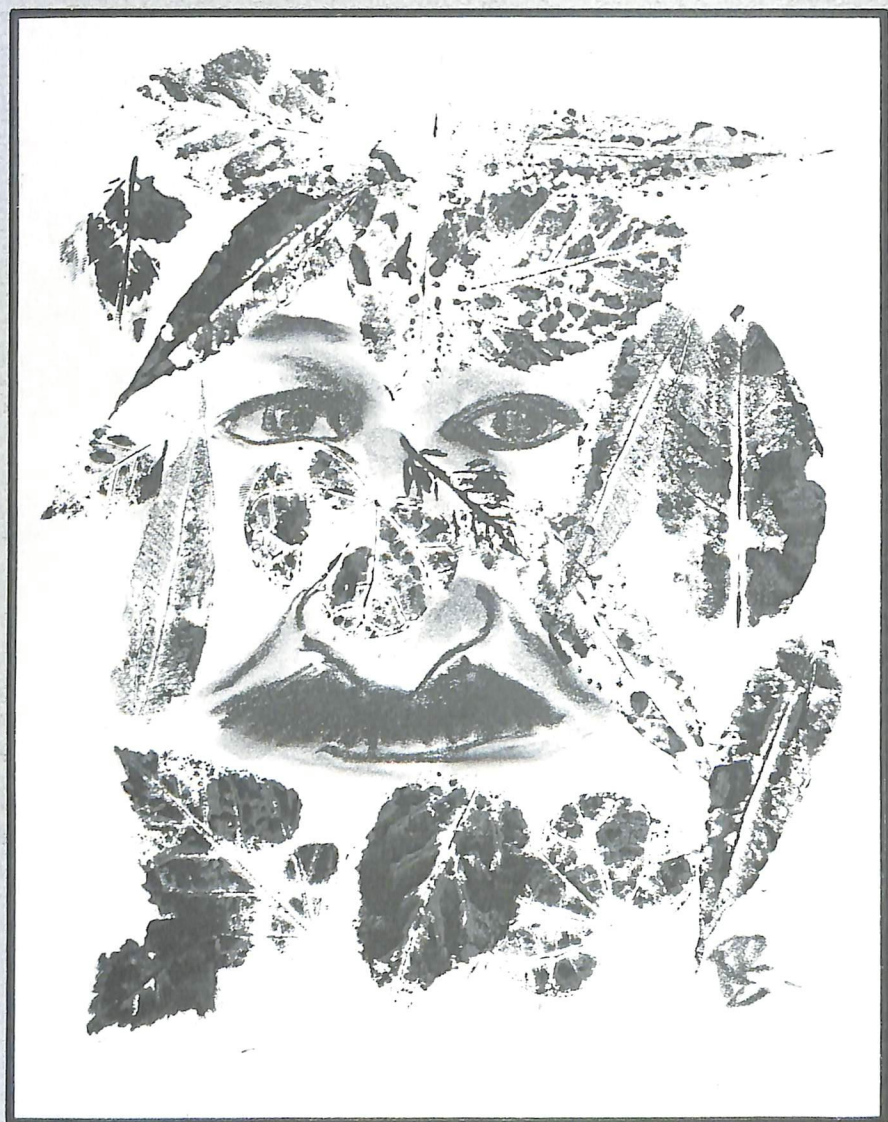
## *Frightened by Shadows*

I heard about the man lost in a storm  
Frightened by shadows  
Thrown by the light that he cupped in his hands.  
The light was his mind.  
For God's sake blow out the light.

Baba leans on the gate of the mind.  
He came to us between our two darkest shadows  
The slow turning of the industrial revolution,  
And the sowing of the nuclear age.  
His presence is a well  
At the crossroads of time.

The pinhole ears of the soul  
Strain to hear  
The Silent Word growing like a rose  
Across the startling clatter.  
Blow out the sounds  
Shh,  
Listen.

To the growth of the rose from the well  
And the resting pressure of gentle elbows  
Leaning, somewhere north of our eyelids ♦



## *Dreamtime Myths*

Dust of tree and smell the green  
that I stood on snail shell crushing,  
slime spread  
shining  
beneath the bottom of my foot

|  
stand in horror at  
the strange death  
of a snail.  
No man sees as I slip it's  
shattered body into my pocket.  
Brown pockets I am rustic  
in the woods at Avatar's Abode.  
You can see  
the red roof of my mouth is shining  
I am sundered, rendered, sutural  
in a rift with time, gather up  
my waves in tidal pass  
while I lie down  
talking to the grass  
and Baba sways his face amongst the trees.  
Baba green legged pine needed  
in the clearing across from me.  
He is crazy or having visions  
looking at me.  
He sat  
He sat opposite me  
in the random chaos  
of a million dots of leaves,  
(who can connect the dots?)  
He was there  
if not I am in deep trouble  
with myself.  
A beast amongst angels  
a bitterless caterpillar  
full of caterpillar myths  
of the butterfly wet and fresh  
within ◆

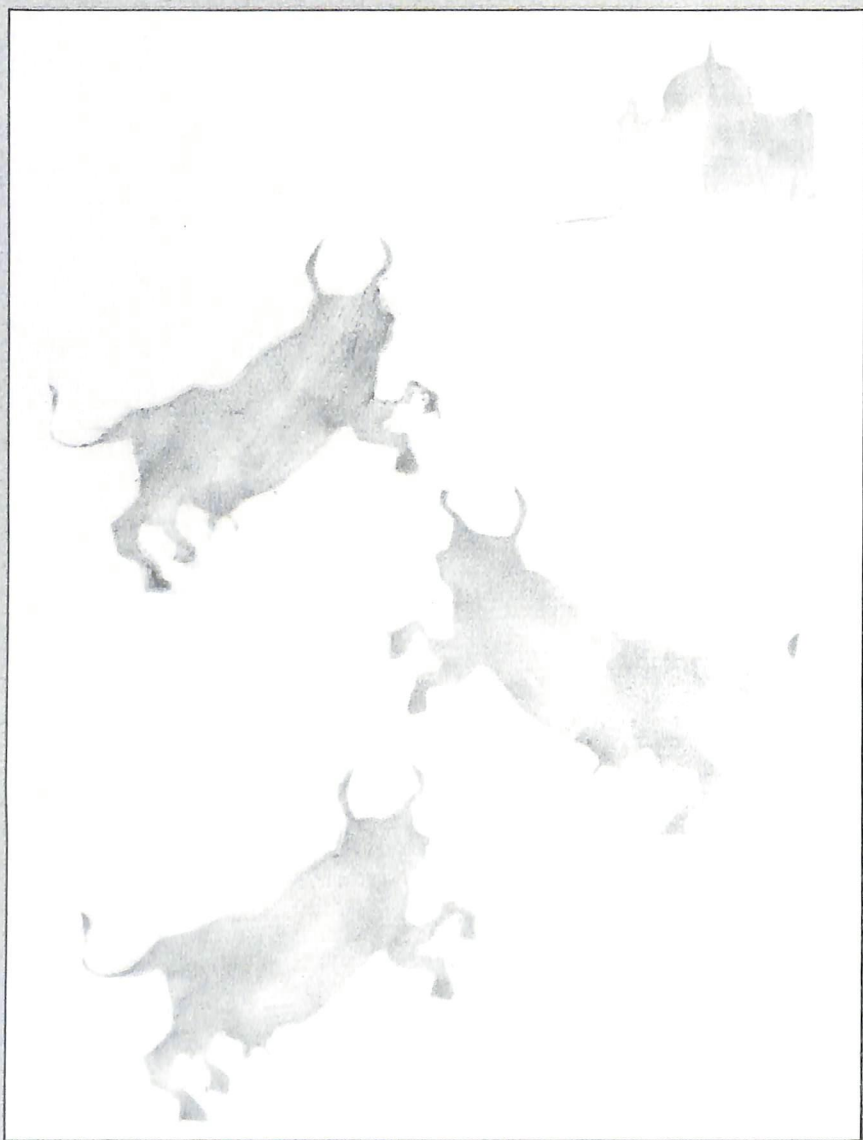
## *Every Moment a Chance*

I confess  
My heart is a secular muscle  
Pounding out  
Day on day  
Like the blind  
This shortcoming  
Sharpens my antennae  
Baba tickled my palm  
With the run of lizard  
across flat rock  
Did he really hold my arm  
In the gaze  
Of the door to door salesman  
His name grabbed my mind  
When I trembled  
with rage  
At primitive insults  
It carted in calm  
I even smiled and  
carried on talking.  
My imagination went weak  
at the knees  
That Baba might sit  
on the grassy banks  
of our kitchen  
Splashing his feet  
in the cacophonous civil war  
of family breakfast  
wise and foolish  
eat the same dictionary  
He can translate the moment,  
For us ignorant winners ◆



## *I Want to Go in the Water*

When I think of you I always think of oceans  
every ocean has water fish and dreams  
I am under the water  
watching the swans feet  
trailing the surface  
your fingers are touching the lake  
and your hands are white moons in my head  
fireflies dancing over the water  
always whispering the whisper  
of the wet stone crying  
from within its eggshell casing,  
loud as Columbus  
feeling  
the pull of his ocean  
I hear you.  
I feel you  
pulling  
with the strength  
of a rich soil  
drawing a seed  
trapped  
in an overripe fruit.  
Who links the soil the seed and the water  
Godman you are fishing and being fished for  
in your ocean.  
I want to go in the water  
and leave my folded dreams  
piled neatly on the shore  
and this clock ticking heart  
is waiting  
to be laid down  
like paint upon a palette  
on this  
a harmless Thursday night ◆



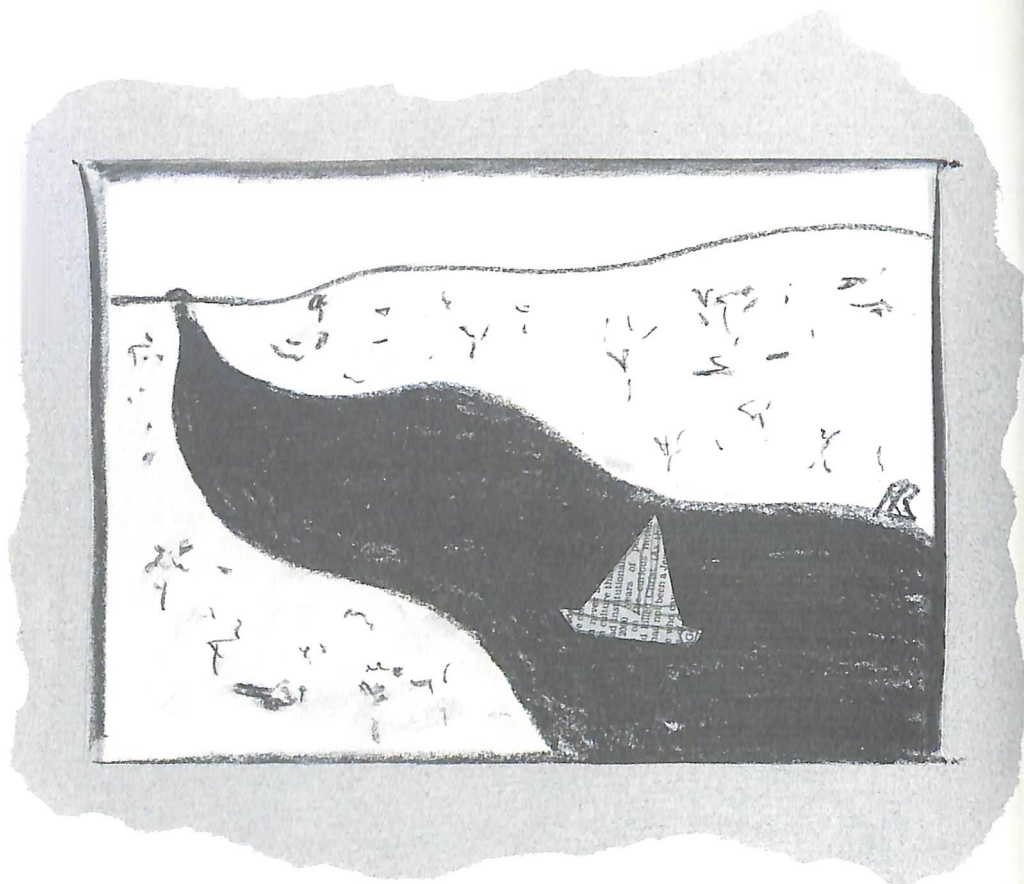
## *Walking from the Pilgrim Centre to Samadhi.*

Fob watch half past six  
gets the feet to go walking  
smudging through the air  
up there  
towards Samadhi.  
Where the mind swings  
like a broken golden arm  
my valuable useless  
friend, mine enemy it  
gathers all the parts  
of my body together  
and lurches them up  
the dust gold path  
towards the railway track  
where the click and clack of the train  
can be read in braille  
through feet planted  
on the hot metallic iron arms  
rhythmic pulses  
a tattoo in feeling sound, the  
train is coming,  
metal eel on wheels with little windows  
human elbows stuck out and  
the kids' heads grinning  
it flashes past  
in a painted  
fire brigade red.  
Cross the tracks and  
stones  
    there is cowshit  
on the golden path  
scattered in a pattern  
(waltzing cows that dance)  
between the ground imprints  
of Reebok, sandle, shoe,  
and naked feet, both ways  
pathing their way up  
and down toward Samadhi.

On the track  
between the gapped teeth  
of white stones shining  
by the tight light of a full moon  
this light apple in the sky  
is bursting at the seams to leak  
it's hot message of molten glow  
over me and kiss the sandy path  
and hold it in its arms in  
love with something of its own  
skin colour  
a geometric awesome  
in the intimacies of light.  
My feet keep walking  
right in front of me  
and there right in front of me  
is the grey stone of Samadhi,  
the tomb, THE TOMB.  
With murals and a bow down  
and a touch the lintels  
Look at the flowers  
laid out in the utmost love,  
the music is absolute and beautiful,  
my legs are shaking  
how can I give in to this  
after all I support so much  
that is daily average,  
and I place my head against  
the cold stone  
my forehead is mixing with the tomb  
and the moment is a needle  
picking out the thorn of my anger  
while my head was glued to stone  
the voice within whispered "I love you".  
I went outside backwards where  
an old man hugged me  
gave me prasad  
and said  
welcome home ◆

## *O Meher*

O Meher,  
I dislike poems that begin with  
O Meher  
but I have to say it  
O Meher.  
It goes back to long ago days,  
those days in the ring  
when canvas and hurt were flowing  
I got up  
at all costs  
to put fear in their eyes  
O Meher,  
your fist is on my backbone  
supporting me now.  
Digging trenches in London  
my knuckles were covered in dirt  
and frozen blood  
I didn't think of you then  
O Meher.  
When they took my belt and shoelaces away  
and put me in jail  
I died every day  
I never was ready for God in this age  
I can only  
carry your Photo around in my pocket ◆



## *Filament of Ecstasy*

Leaving Cairns, it's almost night and the light is leaking out and away and the black is winning. The city trees stand out in a miasma of veins against the sky, ah look at the taxi cruising it's cruising like a lone predator, God have mercy the sun is beginning to go out and I've got to move but first I cellotaped your photograph upside down on the dashboard behind the driver's wheel. It works, Baba's 1935 face inverted by reflection looks at me from the windscreen. His face is superimposed on the roadway. The car eats out into the highway and the white line is screaming through Baba's head. His face is leading the way through the desert of plenty, this land of milk and honey, a forest of grab gimme I want. Jesus save us. The car is ripping the distance between one town and another. Baba's face is looking

into the driver's seat. If only I were made of glass and could see with those eyes and read the little chips and fractures, and see the skeletal fist closing over the pumping heart.

There might be clues to the blackout of the years before my birth. Baba's face looks back at me. I whisper lighted candles to the years gone by and speak your name to the years to come, and my inside recoil as my ears spark and grind to the sound of words, I am speaking aloud, the words are smoking in the holster of my mouth, "Meher Baba". I am gone now and the voices are driving out from my body like a strong light shining. It's the low moan of words turning in their cocoon. There is also the sound of soft rain falling and the swish of wipers under a full moon. The car rips on. Baba's face looks on into the blackness of the car, the passenger seat is lit with moonlight, my hands are also shining. Primitive man acts out the hunt from the safety of his cave, an affirmation of his wants, we are primitive men and I affirm my wants, my legs are dissolving in the heat of the dance and I pretend and imagine what it's like to meet you, the colour of my skin is changing and I have a thin eastern body in a loincloth and I am staring at your image on the windscreen and I can hear the train whistles and the whuff of engines embedded in the platform, I am the porter grabbing at your bags in the lost station of nowhere. A scraggy hand on a canvas bag. I sell drinks from a barrow and can clearly see your face drinking my imaginary lemonade, and I am bleeding from my own dream, and you are as real to me now as I am to you, and my eyes are staring like headlamps out onto the burning roadway, out onto the white line that filament of ecstasy. I pull off the highway and get out of the car, and the stars shine like tears in the soup of the night and the stars are stars calling out your name, pouring down the funnel of your mouth I am travelling in the spacesuit of my shout call calling your name. My feet are wet, the earth is soggy, I am wandering around a canefield. On a scrap of paper I write "Meher Baba" and fold this paper into a boat and place it in the thin waters of the ditch, and watch it float slowly home, home into the ocean ◆

## *Morning Comes with the Lightness of Paper Aeroplanes*

I have gone mad on the food of pregnant women  
raw pickled herring, onions, anything hot  
biting and strange I will shovel it down  
and I know why but cannot arrest it.  
Every day begins with  
    BABA look after me now  
because I might be incapable  
of looking after myself.  
In the night the dreams have turned to nightmares  
and the daily day is necklaced with fear of the day.  
No one is out to get me  
but I rise with the dread  
of a soldier out in the bogside all on his own.  
I have searched the index for church listings  
I have an urge to hear mass  
in a Catholic church  
I want to be saved in the orthodox way  
secure in the believing  
of priest and stole incense and chanting  
shuffle up hat in hand to the communion aisle  
tongue stuck out to the drone  
of a repetitive "body of Christ".  
There is no release from the constant  
succour of God  
And the morning comes  
with the lightness of paper aeroplanes  
that drift down the shaft of light  
from the window pane, and I say  
Great God bless me beyond the lip of my hot cup of tea  
and the slice of toast  
that my wife brings to me each and every morning.  
My day stretches way out beyond that  
between the machines and the men  
and the machines are a reflection of the men  
and God is disguised in the men  
what can I say to God every day  
while vaulting over the cup of tea



God  
Please help me through the day  
Help me reach the finishing line  
without breaking my neck  
or someone else's ◆

## *The Song is to Singer, As the River is to Sea*

Baba is listening  
To the rim of the universe.  
To the heartbeat of sunrise  
night and sunset  
Hum of wheat growing  
Groan of rock  
Root besieged,  
Include  
The clash of sword  
The drowning fish  
slapping on wet wood.  
Perhaps  
The dry night heaving out  
Us individuals  
Muttering or shouting our life lines.  
Road of lives  
Fading in out  
Crackling with  
The dislocation of soul from body.  
Machines that growl  
A child's cry  
Note upon note He has scored us  
Baba is singing us  
From the valleys of His heart  
We will echo  
on His ribcage of silence.  
And the song will to singer,  
As the river is to sea ◆



## *The Faith Healer*

The afternoon was dressed in solid soldier greycoat colours and sunlight bounced harmlessly off a frozen brown earth. The harrowed fields lay stiff and breathless while gulls and plovers wheeled and screamed in the wake of distant tractors. Their flittering about so far inland was the signature of winter. Once these birds veered back towards the ocean the sun would crank back into life dissolve the skin of ice and draw up the green blood above the surface. Seasons change, life would begin again. He drove slowly along the narrow lanes cursing the potholes each time they hit a bump she lurched forward grimacing in pain. His mother sat gazing out the window at a landscape under siege and the silence between them whined like an overwound guitar string. All he could do was think of the good times of the sharing and doing things together, of the time he was sick as a child and she had held him for hours by the fire. Now they acted like strangers the years had chiselled them apart and he felt frightened to hold her in case he might burst into tears and the cancer that was slowly killing her might also kill him with sorrow. It was best just to drive on in silence.

When they arrived at the cathedral it was overflowing, a packed house on a Thursday afternoon, parking outside was impossible, why were all these people here it was irritating they should know better, should be working shopping anything except here in this church waiting for a faith healer. The sick the healthy the curious thronged the aisles, some knelt down and prayed others stared into space awed by the burning candles hundreds of little lights glowing fingers shining in every nook and cranny. The charcoal filled the air with a pungent aroma, nostrils flared and the eyes watered. The mood was uncertain and eyes darted to and fro clamping on safe objects to inspect. Some looked at the ceiling and a hum of soft conversation waxed and waned revolved like an overhead fan. Weak sunlight struggled through the stained glass windows depicting Christ's agonies as he dragged himself towards Calvary every window bore an inscription naming a sorrowful mystery. They sat in the very front row, up there amongst the chronically ill the shadow of death was loud and flapped its wings over the first few rows. He stared straight ahead. His

mother's hand was in his it was thin and weak he was holding a sparrow's broken wing, her fingers were cold glass stems across his palm. He constantly tried to be aware of any little pulse, a fleeting pressure a slight movement. He could feel the low life force, the winding down of her metabolism the cancer cutting off every avenue of energy. He pushed his love down his arm and into her hand. He saw it streaming between them but the arm began to ache a cold sweat started to trickle, his teeth clamped tight and he was trembling. From the corner of his eye he watched her face marble white and drawn, the soft dull eyes moved slowly searching for some hope, an explanation, a reason, a friend that might help overcome the inevitable, a light that might offer hope.

The faith healer shuffled out to the altar and began to pray. He was old and frayed. The son was startled and felt let down. This priest should be strong and virile fast moving and reassuring, a polished and shiny man someone to inspire confidence. This shabby person just stood there muttering with his hands together looking down at his feet. A murmur of acknowledgement at his presence rippled through the crowd. Then he lifted his head and began to speak, love God, there was nothing else, miracles and cures were unimportant, only God mattered. His words were pure Baba dialect. He moved quickly amongst the crowd a word here a touch there, people rushed from their seats to hang on his every word some reached out and touched him, they themselves could not know why. When the throng became too thick a cohort of nuns moved against the people and abruptly the priest turned to leave. The mother became upset and whispered that she wished to speak to him but the crush was too much. In an instant the son was off like a knife cutting through butter pushing people aside in his urgency he reached over the wall of nuns and slapped the priest hard on the back. The old man whirled around and bluntly asked what was needed. The story was blurted out, a story of impending death fear and loneliness, a request for a few words. The priest quickly asked for her to come up. Total silence crept over the whole church, the shuffling and coughing stopped, only his mother moved slowly through a parted sea of faces all eyes moved with her, this little figure clutching her handbag, everyone waited, a crescendo was mounting in the pin drop silence. Something began to grow within them, there was a communion between all present a bud lodged deep in their stomachs was pushing open its petals

showing its face, a colossal flowering, the awe of the moment reflected in the eyes of all watching. The priest took the woman's head in his hands looked deep in her eyes and said "you have a beautiful face and God loves you so don't worry" and he looked at the son and repeated the exact same words. He watched the tears streaming down his mother's face she was smiling and reached over and squeezed his hand to reassure him. Glass walls inside him shattered, the only words his shaken brain could muster were Meher Baba, the ghost in his sinews was singing, he was due to visit Baba's tomb in three days time and here he had just crashed his head on the lintel. Those around clung like grapes to a vine of truth their tears were dewdrops, the druid was drumming them out of the caves, he had held the woman's head in his hands and Baba had held them all, no longer were they hole dwellers in fear of never being warm even though the fire roared. They had witnessed a man cup his hands in love, true baptism had occurred, instead of water faith in love was poured over all of them. The experience was tattooed on their souls they were branded by candlelight. The son could never go back to his state of being before the faith healer, the door was locked, the only way out now was every road in the universe. These roads are the veins that run in the grain of the timber, the sliced trees that panel Baba's room up on Kiel mountain.

The oyster shell of a room  
Where adults come like blackberried faced children  
Proffering their pickings  
from thorny thickets  
mixed fruit  
in gallon can hearts.  
The faces flash their lights  
towards the twin pearls,  
two empty sandals  
which whisper the footsteps  
of Meher  
and await an echo  
in the eye chambers  
of any passing man ◆

## *When Stones Grow into Boulders*

Beneath the skin  
largest organ of the human body  
is the most wonderous set of gears  
wheels and pulleys.  
Behind the heart  
between the propellor  
and the shaft  
swims the soul  
and the I.  
Both of them are  
crouched in a  
float tank,  
the ghost of  
my mother's womb.  
The soul its fat tail is moving  
gills opening and closing  
its rubber eyelids blinking,  
in the submerged engine room  
of the skull  
both of us  
have met our maker.

He came at night and the I knew it would be the finest dream  
that ever crept over me. The dark night meant nothing, he was  
there stock still and the shadows moved in and around him.  
Flowers opened by the moonlight and the Beloved was back. He  
always comes back. He was here and we walked on the beach  
and not a word was said but he spoke to me through the throat  
of the ocean in a monologue of waves rising and falling. The hiss  
of the wind and the waves came from the fringed edge of his  
silence, they wrapped themselves like wings around my head.  
We came to the shipwreck, half submerged by the high tide and  
the symbolism frightened me, we were looking at the outline of a  
gigantic skeleton washed up on the shoreline. A grief gorged  
animal stranded, and Baba was laughing.  
I ran into the waves with my sizzling frying pan in my hands, hands  
that were hopeful and gloriously confident.  
Epic fool I rampaged into the water after my fish and I could see

its dorsal fin out beyond the surf, when I caught up with it, it was myself submerged and circling with a fake fin and gills like Chinese fans slowly opening and closing. I scrambled back to solid ground and listened to the shifting sounds of sand grains heaving up against my feet and crying out to the foaming wake of footprints.

Baba waved me away  
I had tried to cook a fish  
before it was caught  
I had no credentials.  
In my heart  
I was torturing pebbles  
to tell on stones  
the inner secrets of the boulder,  
all I ever got was blood.  
My addiction  
to keeping phones tapped underwater  
and listening to conversations  
bubbling between  
my head and my heart  
stirred up anger.  
Baba walked on up the beach  
and waved a pliers,  
maybe it was a promise  
one day to cut the line ♦

## *The Tannery*

Thinking of love  
is casting a stone  
into a flock of birds,  
they scatter and fade.  
Stones cannot fly North.

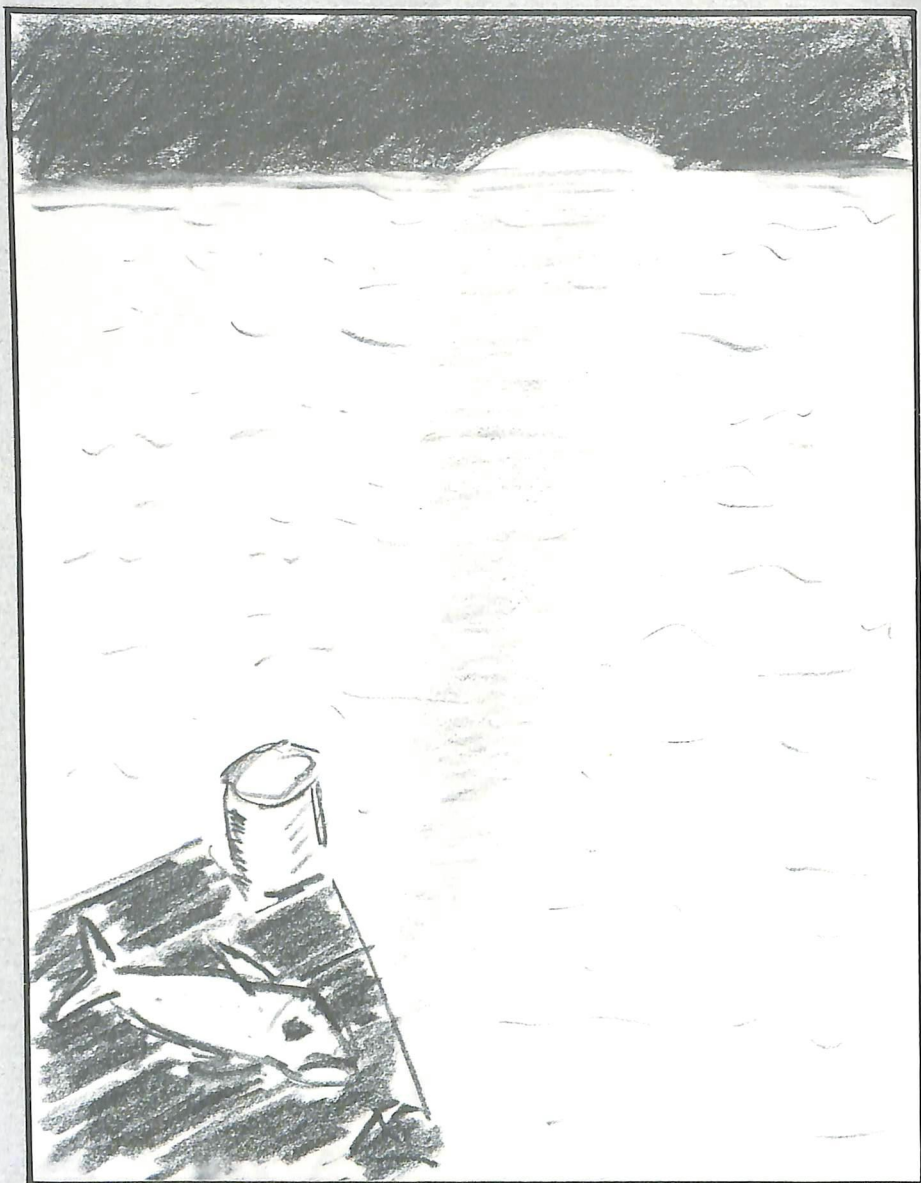
The tannery shift siren used to blow it's 6 o'clock muslim wail across the river and out over our town, this screeching arrow beckoned or dismissed the tired workers. Iron faced men in answer pulled themselves along the darkness astride their precious bicycles, a final tug down on the peaked cap, a slight wobble, a grunt and they were launched in a slow inexplicable rhythm (Saul on the road to Damascus).

On the hilltop above the town the children were the silent watchers of this tribal ritual. With freezing hands and feet we gnawed our jumper sleeves and followed the weaving bicycle lamps, feeble lights peeking through the button holes of a gigantic night. Two moved in unison on over the bridge flashing past the white pylons then veered apart at the crossroads looking like a black cat split in two it's eyes going in opposite directions. This was my signal my beacon was approaching. "Night all see you tomorrow that's my Dada," and off like a missile into the wet nosed night hurtling down towards a spectral shape hunched over a little cycloptic shining eye, "O shadow maker and darkness killer." Smiles exchanged and a quick leap onto the crossbar for a ride home. This image is frozen forever, Baba what on earth were you doing? Your feet were planted in the hot earth of India and your edges stretched over us. I see You moving over the river and up the roadway watching the night hearing the lunch bag clack on the handlebars and You, admiring the motion. Not one item can be erased otherwise You hide and reappear only when it is returned. Were our little loves being magnetised our wafer thin hearts galvanised, were we practising for a greater swing of the needle seeking true North. Would the stone we might cast with feathered hands find the mark and burst into flames. What could be said if we pedalled on past the closed eyes of tired houses over the smoking chimney stacks through a tunnel of stars and come to a brake shuddering halt in



a heap at Your feet. The feet that are planted in the hot earth of India.

Love is a mystery  
An Avatar's undertow  
Which shifted the sand grain  
Supporting the pebble  
Acting hinge to a rock  
That pinioned the boulder  
Which slipped  
And shattered the cliff face  
Into dust at Your feet ♦



## *In the Currents Where the Safe Sleep Well*

God's infinite and creative imagination  
that unseen eye  
sparked meiosis  
in the big silence.

Space split into inner and outer,  
tubes of flesh and bones evolved  
and sheltered under sticks and stones  
then claimed the inner as their own.  
Thoughts turned quickly on cogs of steel  
that mesh and grind and forge the chains.  
Our savage journey had begun.

### **BODY**

The atoms of these living hands are also found in clay  
the compounds are incompatible  
oil and water will not mix  
the secret of us flowing green in grass is forbidden  
the different densities are well hidden,  
driven from the heart  
in the heat and pressure of Self protection.

### **MIND**

Babel is well, and sings a modern tune  
We have shifted the tower into the computer room.  
A nightmare of symbols,  
Bills are issued and paid  
this definite decoy  
was painstakingly laid,  
to avert the eyes from  
a creeping desperation  
at the bell jar landscape of  
our jigsaw separation.

### **SOUL**

God is aware of these irrational fears  
our feet on the earth  
are a stethoscope  
in the God Man's ears.

Baba's words have eclipsed any strange notion  
of living in sandcastles  
with our backs to the ocean.  
When the moon is full, and the tide just right  
and the soft sad light of rain is shining  
the eternal fisherman will take a strike  
hold the catch between his hands  
ease the hook out from between our teeth  
smooth the scales  
place his fingers against the gills  
ease the final gasps of drowning,  
and take the fish soul  
the little ball of light  
hand in hand to the water's edge  
and wade out in the night  
to the currents where the safe sleep well  
drifting dreaming  
in the big Silence ◆



