

The Word at World's End

By Francis Brabazon

An Avatar Meher Baba Trust eBook

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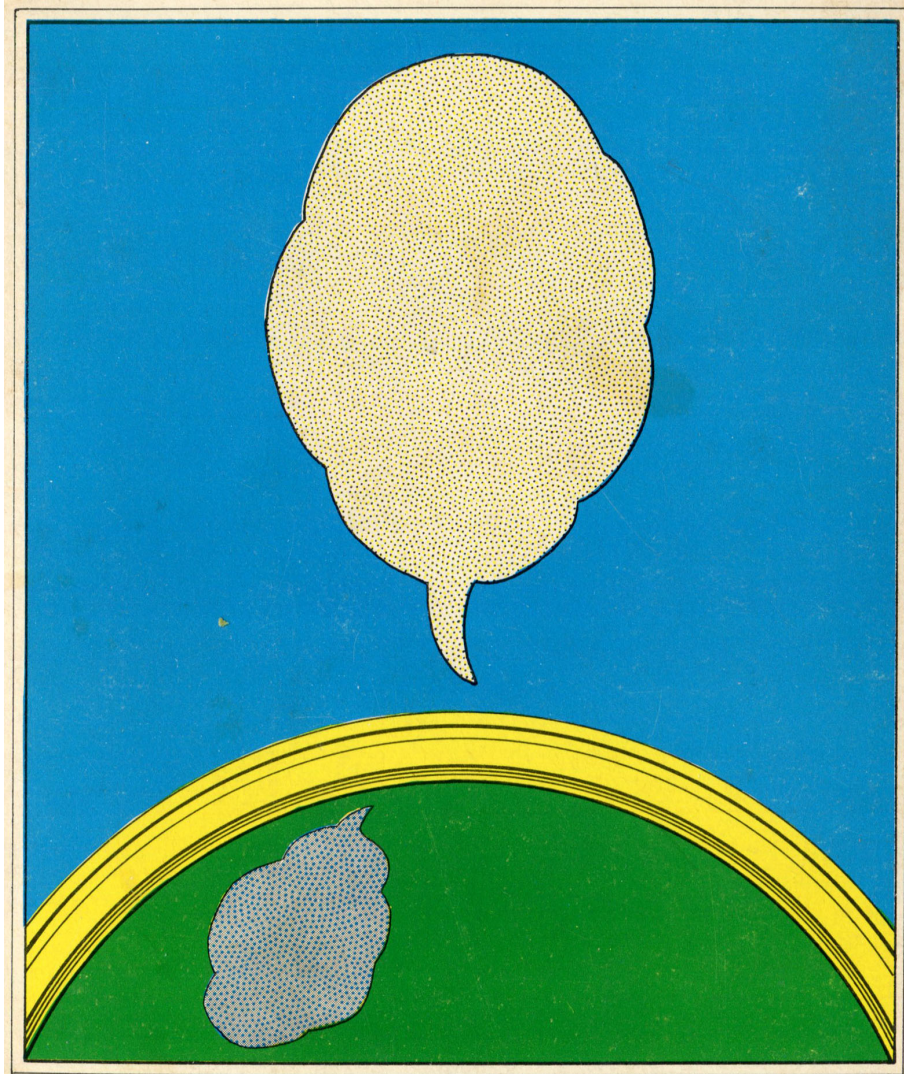
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The Word At World's End



by francis brabazon

John F. Kennedy University Press

The Word At World's End

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JOURNEY WITH GOD

7 STARS TO MORNING

CANTOS OF WANDERING

SINGING THRESHOLD

STAY WITH GOD

LET US THE PEOPLE SING

THE EAST-WEST GATHERING

THREE TALKS

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PREFACE

With today's preoccupation with mere sound-relations of words in poetry, my work has drawn the criticism that it lacks craft. Yet I do not think there are many writers who work harder at the craft of poetry than I do. In fact, most writers—whether avant-garde or pop—only have to satisfy a public which has been carefully conditioned by every gimmick the genius of publicity can invent; but for years now I have had to satisfy God. And not the God who is dead or who changes his face according to theological expediency and political necessity, but the God who is God-Man—the beautiful Person who is the Beloved of all who do not live for bread alone; who is so alive that all other persons are shadows emerging from the limbo of consciousness for the moment of a gesture or cry.

But I have always considered that the real craftsmanship is in the shaping of the initial idea, not in the mere sounds of the words used. So I have infinitely crafted my ideas before beginning to write; and in my best work the idea forged its own form of expression. In *Stay With God* the opening line came to me twelve years before I wrote that book. And it was not an odd line jotted down and forgotten; I carried it with me, noting its possibilities and acquiring the material it would need.

The Word at World's End began with a short poem written and published in *The London Magazine* in 1954. The possibilities of its development and extension were apparent, and six years later I began making notes on it—some 200 pages of them including some fifty formal sonnets as a preparation for 'After the Flood.' When I began the actual book it went very quickly. The 'Elegy,' for instance, was finished in two sittings.

The concept that the *idea* is the main thing, the reason for a poem, is as old as poetry itself and it has always been the basis of the greatest work. The *sound-theory* is a recent one—a natural rationalization of the state into which poetry has fallen. Poets on the whole, not having the firm ground of a knowledge of the divine truths of creation upon which to stand and serve with their art, must necessarily occupy themselves exploring sound combinations.

Yet, I feel that *The Word at World's End* does provide interesting sound-patterns; and I have paid considerable attention to structural variety. These things have their importance. They give charm to the truth of the idea; they beguile the mind into accepting what the heart knows: they make entertainment. And to entertain the Beloved is the only valid reason for a poem. But he is never entertained unless the original idea is shaped in his Shape.

A DREAM OF WET PAVEMENTS

I sing within a night that's lent
to soap and axes to invent
new *Slaughters of the Innocent*,
where patient rats gnaw tired cement.

A night-song in a dreadful night
battered by the fluorescent might
of strident trumpets in a fright
bellowing bitchery's delight—

Which wet pavements shape into dreams
that softly sigh, There's more than seems:
behind the fret, beneath the screams
there flow perennial love-streams.

In this night which Neon makes day
the easy speakmen are raking hay
for Big Fist who doles them their pay,
and nubile girls sing a roundelay.

To men in shirt-sleeves, each alone,
gnawing his flesh down to the bone,
the evening is a stifled groan
of the day's rasping monotone.

And gazing at the ghastly glow
of Neon's blood in silent flow
their spasms and their twitchings grow
knowing the cocks will surely crow.

And youth in theaters, row on row,
sit cheek to cheek and glow to glow
fearing the crop that love may sow,
which they with teeth will have to hoe.

And smoldering bosoms' brassiered snow
shines with a phosphorescent glow,
hiding breasts' bruises that would know
why joy goes quick, and night so slow.

Each bust is a hammer in the brain
of each prisoner on his chain,
on whose lips words are made profane—
the acts of which love's laws maintain.

In the sophisticated light
of plush caves, vocalists recite
in strangled tones the bed's delight.
The red cocks range themselves for fight.

The cocks crow red, the red cocks crow;
a hair divides high note from low—
man-hair, girl-hair united know
the magic of electric flow.

The wind sighs round tall mod-con huts.
A door opens and smiles and shuts.
Foreign fingers in thighs score ruts.
The dawn peeps over trays of butts.

Nightmare-refreshed we rise from bed,
tighten the loose screws in our head,
breakfast on sawdust and liquid lead
instead of fresh plain-fashioned bread.

The news headlines run: *Kingdom come*
for the poor, the always-with-you-dumb—
New expressway plows through slum—
Man dies through drinking office-gum—

Girl galled at man's two-timing, cuts
through his refrigerator guts
with oxy-torch, pleads, He drove me nuts,
adding, He always pulled his putts.

Diplomat says that rival ghouls
patch the pitch his cunning cruels;
wife, mistress, both or either, sools
him on to pinch the crown jewels—

*New restaurant serves kids from schools
to savor with contract-renewals;
bones, hair and nails are used in gruels—
Astronauts eat only solid fuels—*

*The Harbor Trust extends the mole
so ships can quietly rock-'n'-roll—
Old generals march out on parole
while taxis honk and fire-bells toll.*

*The 'leader' claims parliamentary guesses
have spiralled prices of women's dresses
and slowed down trains that were expresses
and fed the fires of youth's excesses.*

Then corseted in two-way stretch,
in trousers honed to razor edge,
by bus, train, car the city reach
to join Harry once more to the breach

Made in walls of financial freeze
to release a fresh economic breeze,
and that typists on electric keys
may make reports on nyloned knees.

The lift takes up a beribboned clown
clutching Democracy's new crown
of smiling days without a frown.
The ex-president rides it down.

The new Head mouths he will now decline
(mouths, for his tongue he gave to spline
the wheels of the production line)
aggression's nouns through history's line.

He mouths and farts most wondrously,
and all agree, What oratory!
At last we grasp that Liberty
is the true object of *shall be*.

Beneath the white electric glare
of glass eyes' sweat from startled stare
nonchalant gladiators tear
to shreds frail masks of teeth and hair.

Thieves, with all the delicate graces
of shaven chins and double faces,
are brought back from minor disgraces
to occupy the highest places.

The great financiers and their priests
(the special agents of the Beast:
he reaps the most who toils the least)
drink vintage virtue at their feasts.

From the tallest building's summit
Big Fist's con-men lean to plumb it,
then straighten up, report in vomit,
the truth is what you deduct from it.

Day shift, night shift, the robots toil
on simple diet of crude oil
(no solids, therefore no night-soil)—
their eyes are ice though their blood may boil.

Slide-rules and spanners are all they need
to keep them at the required speed:
they are indeed a patient breed
produced from a synthetic seed.

And Neon's sun keeps night turned day
for easy speakmen to rake the hay,
and geared fornicators grind away,
and bud-breasted girls sing a roundelay.

And in wet pavements' fitful gleams
telling of love's perennial streams,
lovers discussing hems and seams
discern fulfilment of their dreams.

Then home, sweet home again at night
in car, bus, train, packed sardine-tight
for non-breakage and the delight
of togetherness in the same plight.

Home to a mansion wide and fair,
suburban house with grass and air,
or climb a back-street creaking stair
to a narrow bed and lonely chair.

Dinner of bones and bakelite,
or just a little smoldering spite,
while those with fragile appetite
prefer eggs fried in gelignite.

But some thrive on boiled cans with beans,
some, leather spread with pickled spleens,
others eat only TV screens—
depending on their craze and means.

For those who need an appetizer
with *taste-control* and *realizer*
(the recipe's from our First-prizer)—
molasses mixed with fertilizer.

The evening streets are spinning wheels,
the pavements are gyrating girls,
the Mayor, wearing stiletto heels,
coyly conducts the Dance of Seals.

Small shopkeepers and laborites
swing from the lines of colored lights,
and bankers from the buildings' heights
hang down in bat-like stalactites.

Children blowing ten-cent whistles
shoot through the crowd like flying missiles,
and every vantage-point bristles
with columnists typing their epistles.

The latest supersonic planes
scream through nerves to terminal brains,
and massed brass bands in honeyed strains
announce technology's latest gains.

Big Fist's con-men, puff-cheeked, slit-eyed
as swine in sty, have multiplied
beyond pig comfort. They trot-slide
in the cool evening in their pride.

Pink snouts held high like flags, they glide
so smoothly and so satisfied,
and bow and smile, as they trot-slide,
grunt greetings that are grunt-replied.

That swine-knowledge be verified,
manhood, womanhood, they've denied,
spirit's fair form have stultified,
whored science, bright mind stupified.

The poet laureate, they decide,
shall be he who has best supplied
them with their grunts, squeals, versified
in meters matching their short stride.

Some astronauts ply chimps from Space
with booze to win their word of grace
regarding the right gear and pace
for cornering in the Sputnik Race.

Singly the lionesses walk,
gazelles' their eyes and doves' their talk;
nothing can hinder them nor balk
the slaughter of the game they stalk.

Upon the polished plain each goes
determinedly poised on her toes,
led by the gentle breeze that blows
the thread of scent hooked in her nose.

They walk aloof in rhythmmed trance
as priestesses in a phallic dance—
the quarry is the jungle giants,
they do not leave success to chance.

They stalk the polished evening plains,
gazelles' their eyes, foxes' their brains,
their talk is like soft summer rains;
they swing their hips and lash their trains.

Decapitated close-up heads
sing arias from the watersheds
of roofs, torsos in chromium sleds
ride down the night of snowy beds.

And high above the city square
stainless steel angels debonair
chant, All in war and love is fair—
humming for chorus the Lord's Prayer.

We stare through the electric haze
by which Neon turns nights to days
at silver shapes singing roundelays—
the speakmen know which line best pays.

They speak us freedom: freedom to blink
at a chromium kitchen sink,
to sleep alone on the cold war brink
while space-suits copulate with mink;

Freedom to listen to the fear
that curls about a tender ear
stitching two eyelids with one tear,
bruising bright lips with stone despair.

They tell us that the world is real
so long as we keep the price of steel
and know that 'success' derives from 'spiel'
(and—gloved hand marries iron heel);

So long as we believe a star
is somewhere else than where we are,
that happiness depends on tar
and soul is in a chemist's jar.

By all who are sophisticated,
soul, God and virtue are downrated
and replaced by an elongated
far view that is with Space equated.

Progress is God, the speakmen say
(girls croon it in a roundelay)—
that we will all keep on and pay
Big Fist his price for our Better Day:

The day of better, greater things
when the poor have more than ancient kings
and the rich may have a pair of wings
to a star that ever manward sings.

They tell us, yes, behind the fret
of drills and scream of turbo-jet
Freedom and Truth we'll surely get
within the diamonds of our sweat.

Within the rubies of our blood,
within the opals of the flood
of tears that in the night are shed—
within these is our highest Good.

Big Fist may lead us by the nose
and belt us on with Freedom's blows,
but still within each heart love flows
in streptophonic undertows.

For every heart within it bears
a virgin soul untouched by fears
of being laid off and rent arrears—
a pristine Self unstained by tears.

Beneath all this which is or seems,
 behind the crude electric screams
 which wet pavements shape into dreams,
 Self floweth in perennial streams

Separate though mingled in accord—
 a four-part fugue of the Great Word
 (guarded by an angel with a flaming sword)
 which only the pure in heart have heard.

It flows on through our lives and glows
 in textures of the themes we chose
 when from primeval swamps we rose
 manward under Evolution's blows.

It flows on ever to compose
 new tissue which we then transpose
 into acts of poetry and prose
 and dissolve at last in a full close.

From home arrival till late at night
screams, flashes, purrs for hearing, sight,
the Ad-word on electric flight
to keep and whet our appetite.

Guffawing asininites
drip from TV screens like hot cheese
and round the children's beds like fleas
hop singing obscene litanies.

For teenagers the one mass ear
tuned to the drool of sex and fear—
supported by the Grin and Leer
and Eye that drops a plastic tear.

And on wide screens gunman and moll
the wide romantic life extol,
and hips rotate and bellies roll—
for these the kids pay Big Fist toll.

O little gears and little sprockets
of the Machine mind has built to mock its
divinity, you make the rockets
to tear your young limbs from their sockets.

And because sometimes in despair
you pad the night to kill the fear,
the speakmen with a solemn air
delinquency's upsurge declare.

Kids, who will sing your threnody
—the wrong of 'surplus energy,'
even though on earth none is born free—
but God-Man on His Calvary?

The speakmen urge the wide, long view:
together we will make it new,
a brave new world for me and you
togetherly in one big stew.

Togetherly, yet each one free
in enterprise, togetherly
in a controlled equality—
homogenized security.

Togetherly suspended float,
togetherly laugh, cry, emote,
togetherly hope, pray, by rote
and all the children have a vote.

Together, but no fixed relation,
a vacuum-packed hygienic nation
in static self-evaluation
and clothed and fed by automation.

Togetherly so Bright, so GLAD—
at sixty aping what twenty had.
Each a coy lass or coming lad
in zestful pursuit of each fad.

Togetherly alone, the sad
unfamilied old—the might-have-had—
but big beasts prowl and small ones pad
behind the WIDE SMILE of the Ad.

God numb our minds and stop the pain
of loneliness. Peace like soft rain
fall and wash away the rubbed-in stain:
tomorrow we must march again.

We pray for one night free from huddles
of ad-men and soap-opera bubbles,
from writhing hips and obscene cuddles
and pools of sentimental puddles;

From polished nails and sawdust souls
delineating future goals,
from bulls and bears playing at bowls—
because it is our head that rolls;

From bribery, back-slap, boot-lick,
from con-men's smooth talk and from slick
diplomacy and politics
backed by, of course, the Nuclear Stick.

One night from pacts and treatise scribble,
from quasi-intellectual quibble,
from foam-wash of idiots' dribble
praising Progress the sluttish sibyl:

A one-tune phrase high, low and middle
played on a polyphonic fiddle—
while women dream over backyard griddle
and men fence-stand, moon-gaze and piddle.

All through the night trains crammed with goods
bearing instructions and new 'shoulds'
trundle, and hyenas from the woods
prompt further 'musts' and 'if I could's.'

All day all night dear God does wait
watching the bubble on his plate
grow to its proper size and date—
with pin in hand compassionate.

I close my song—the night is spent
where patient rats gnawed tired cement
and virgin veils were rudely rent
and axes slew the innocent:

From which the speakmen made much hay
while buds of girls sang the roundelay,
'The WIDE SMILE for the Better Day'—
the line that Big Fist knew would pay.

A night-song in an iron night
now sicklied over with the light
of broken trumpets' desperate flight
that once blazed with fluorescent might—

From which wet pavements shaped dim dreams
that whispered, There is more than seems:
behind, beneath our fitful gleams
there flow perennial love-streams.

The dawn breaks for us on a high
plateau beneath a cold, glass sky
where even vultures do not fly—
to roam like beasts with wordless cry.

The emptiness is a steel vice
which holds us till we pay the price
our lives have fixed. Across our hearts' ice
God-Man stumbles with his huge Cross.

ELEGY FOR THE YOUNG POETS

I

The young poets go by, on coral feet they go,
So cruelly slow—
Searching the corners of their eyes for definitions;

Searching for freedom amongst the prohibitions,
Greeting vague recognitions,
Not yet having learnt to listen to their hearts' tone.

For the meaning of things is in that word alone
Which was sown
In the heart when the Word first escaped from God's lips.

They would give us gold—they who are cargoless ships.
How long so? Time slips
Stealthily, unheard by the ferment of the yeast.

Through the swamps in the night ranges and roars the Beast.
God-Man the Greatest, the Least,
Suffers and supports the world in the palm of his pain.

None thrives on Song; lives are fattened for gain—
Grain
Grown and ripened only for the mills of Big Fist.

Brain and muscle, love and fair speech, all to him are grist.
But the Wind of God blows where it lists—
And Big Fist and his satraps will bow before its storm.

Do not mind, sweet God, that none now knows your Form.
Remember the warm
Welcome we once gave you and took you in from the heat

Of burning midday and gave you the honored seat
And washed your feet
And set before you our choicest meat and wine.

Forgive us our definitions, and re-define
Our volume and line.
Give us bright hope and gladden us with surprise.

On antennae that Big Fist pokes up into the skies
The young poets have hurt their eyes.
They listen for the Voice of the Dawn—but hear only the Brute

Tramping the night and devouring the fruit.
Can a flute
Give out music when the player's lips are sealed?

Can a harvest come from an unplowed, unsown field?
Can a cow yield
Sweet milk that was never bestridden by a bull?

Can a man come to knowledge who has not been to school
In Lovers Lane? who is full
Of violent purposes and leached by distrust?

Can a stone become a garden without first being dust?
Or wheat attacked by rust
Grow into a golden sea bearing lives unafraid?

The young poets are brave; they would steer where none has steered
Until he has heard
The bell of his heart give out its resonant reasons.

Each cat-walks the pavement of his night cognizing treasons, '
Notes the seasons
Of politics and fashions in art and women's dress.

They hum tunes in modalities that each time regress
And will not express
The malefic mutations within their head.

So one told us the next morning when we found him dead
And took him home to bed,
Where he fingered lightly the textured quilt of the Dream

Which was within the waters that the light moved upon: the Stream
Of unreal things which seem
Real—real eyes, real hands and white breast lit by a rose:

The stream of conditioned consciousness which ever flows,
Nourishing the world that glows
Upon the screen of mind as from a projector:

A film in which each of us writes his part and is actor
And editor
Who permits a happy close or ends it on a sob;

And each is the audience that pays five bob
And says, 'Not a bad job.
The lighting was good. Action could have been faster.'

So, millions of lives: Birth, the hope; Death, the blaster;
Until one meets the perfect Master—
Him before whom Death sulks and young Love skips like a faun,

Who lays out each night for his walking a star-splashed lawn,
Who pinches Dawn's
Cheek so that her shy rosy face welcomes the sun,

Who is the Source and the Song and the Goal of each one—
And one's journey is done
And one becomes at his feet living and singing dust.

One by one the young poets ride up in the lift for a crust
From Big Fist. His lust
Satisfied, they are put on the payroll and retained.

In the night the stars went out, and hope, and it rained
And everything was stained
With blood. In vain we waited for the morning's brightness.

Presently God will cover the earth with whiteness.
Then the young poets will write poems about snow
As the Japanese did long ago.

II

Big Fist rules the city which of bones he has built,
With blood and river-silt
To stick them together (Best Ready-mixed Mortar).

He spawned his children to the tune of slaughter.
His eldest daughter
He married to his chief architect, then to his builder

Who lay with her while hammers and rock-drills held her
In terror, then sold her
To the keeper of pornographic appliances

Who arranges all diplomatic alliances
During closed-door seances
With a trollop as medium whelped by a bitch.

Round the city runs the deep wide sewage ditch
Which boils at night like pitch.
Beyond this lie the marble and slate golf courses.

A sullen sea gnaws at the doorsteps of houses.
Its foam of white blouses
Is used as milk for infants and in cups of tea.

I would so much like to discuss philosophy
Under a tree—
For just once Aristotle's 'Good Life' to savor.

But far across the turmoil of the traffic's labor
Lives my next-door neighbor.
How can I reach him across the huge vacant days?

I ring him on the phone that's connected at the Maze.
At last a girl's voice says,
'What number are you trying to get?' The voice is kind.

The women's eyes are flowers troubled by the wind,
Searching to find ...
They are flowers that have no sun in their stars.

They bend down and are drowned in the waters.
God, have you nothing for your daughters?
'Wrong number? What number are you trying to get?'

A man's voice says, 'Get off the line, mug!' I would have liked
—yet
It's too late to regret.
What was it now that I wanted to tell my friend?

The Geophysical Year promised to send
Warning of World's End.
But how to avoid the ice? I cannot find the stairs.

The ostriches bury their heads in sand in pairs.
The Wheels turn at the Fairs.
The young poets grope along the pavements for their eyes.

What the mouth proclaims, the curtained ear denies.
It is late, but one tries
To understand, to sift some wheat grains from the sand.

The young poets prepare to submit their demand.
They mooch around and stand
And sit and stare at tables in coffee-lounges.

At football (or maybe it's chess) White Sox trounces
Black Feet. A bum scrounges
The price of a meal for a couple of pots of beer.

Everywhere grow crosses of little fear—
For all must appear
Loyal to the Big Fist or rot in a prison camp.

The swans fly over, each one carrying a lamp
To light the swamp
On which the city rests on synthetic rubber posts.

Big Fist confers with his staff of brass-hatted ghosts.
He boasts
He will dominate the world and then the planets

The robots making the armaments groan and sweat.
Big Fist's mother quietly frets,
She says at her age it's too far to go to the moon.

Big Fist has long forgotten his childhood's bright balloon
And its careless tune;
And no one has told him that stars' shine is stars' stare
manwards.

Forgotten too the sad story of Attila-Khan's hordes
(He burnt the records),
And of Napoleon's army on the pitiless plain.

His telescopes are trained on the starry terrain.
His electronic brain
Computes figures of svelte houris through rose-mist of power.

The young poets are hopeful—they await their hour.
From a conning-tower
They are watching closely the scene while Big Fist gloats.

On the mountains the young goatherds pasture their goats.
The heroine emotes
As the hero drowns the villain in a soup tureen.

The film goes on unwinding on the silver screen.
'That's life what is seen.'
We come out into the night and say, 'A good, a poor, show.'

I wonder has my friend got home yet? How slowly
The hours go.
I would so like to visit him if he's at home.

The cock smoothes his feathers with his bright red comb.
The Shastris chant 'Om'
As they climb the high mountain to Siva's Abode.

They painfully traverse under learning's great load—
For there's no road
To God except in the dust at the Master's feet.

At any time now we may meet World's End in our street.
The young poets greet
One another peeping shyly through their buttonholes.

The young poets are very earnest about their souls
And their goals.
They sharpen their intellects on french-polished boards.

Without heart's tune one can only make pictures with words.
And time affords
No release to the shining Song Way.

God-Man walks the earth preparing another Day.
Our love is his pay.
He goes the long weary road carrying his Cross.

Time audits our balance-sheet of profit and loss,
Checks net against gross.
How will we stand when on the screen flashes, 'The End'?

I hope everything is all right with my friend.
I would send
Him a letter but my writing-paper is spoiled.

Soon will the glorious banner of God-Man be unfurled
Over the whole world.
My heart stands firm, though in the waters my mind is swirled.

III

The people, yes; but science has betrayed the people.
And God is merely a steeple
Of a church where a priest thumbs through his brief.

The young poets have not been trained to carry burdens of grief.
They seek relief
In every new twist of thought and feathered theory.

Time counts down the hour to the zero of bankruptcy.
Gut-god Democracy
Discusses peace with the brain-spattered Communist Heel.

The armies of Big Fist march out like spokes in a wheel
Crying, 'Panchasheel! Panchasheel!'
Big Fist's mother quietly broods and wonders and frets.

The Swan of Manasarowar has been shot down by fighter-jets.
Big Fist regrets:
And orders holy Kailas to be encircled with guns.

As spokes from a hub march out the columns of both Huns—
So the film runs.
'The photography was good; the direction poor.'

The young poets cannot stand it. They beat on the door
Of Culture's store.
Their nails score the marble walls as they sink with a cry to
the ground.

Be brave! young lovers—the film is nearly unwound.
Soon will the Primal Sound
Burst in your hearts as a thousand-petalled flower.

Soon will God-Man in his infinite power
Assert his hour,
For now with the veil of the world's pain he has covered his
face.

The stars whirl age after age towards Man. Men race
For the first star place.
The Apocalyptic Horsemen set feet to stirrups.

The authorities increase per head the cups
Of tension-ease syrups.
There are new brands called *Quick Rest* and *Down Thistle*.

They have developed a new weapon, a missile
Powered by brain-cells and gristle:
Two-way—it kills before it's fired and kills where it
lands.

Big Fist has taken to doing somersaults and head-stands
To renew his glands.
The young poets study metaphor and allusion.

Man has become a sickness, a hemorrhoidal protrusion
Of himself. God-Man enters Seclusion—
He must suffer for us the full sum of our violence.

Naked within each heart bearing all the pain and defilements
He stands in his perfect Silence.
His sweat is upon his body as a million lashes.

Something splashes
On my hand. I look up. The night
Is a cave through which the moon races.

THE BALLAD OF THE RHYMING KNIGHT

The Knight on draught horse rides for lass
Through desert, jungle and mountain pass.
He's very bold, but young—alas!
Jesus goes bare-back on an ass.

The Knight goes by in shining mail.
Shireen milks camel into pail.
The hermit recites love's sad tale.
Mohammed meets the stony hail.

The Knight clops by in jingling steel.
Yang Kuei Fei her own pot shall keel.
The boatman pays out line from reel.
Confucius plans the Commonweal.

The Knight trots by in armor bright.
The yogi's mat is snow, pure white—
He dries three wet sheets in one night.
The Buddha preaches men's Birthright.

The Knight rides very earnestly
To slay the badmen one, two, three.
Milkmaids, the fairest in the country,
Dance with Krishna beneath a tree.

William lands at Hastings town;
Harold with arrow in eye is down.
The referee counts verb with noun
And Joe Louis retains the crown.

Columbus sails West to come East;
But Ericson, L., got there first.
Psychologists have taped the Beast.
Desire for life is Trishna (Thirst).

The Sower keeps going out to sow
A crop that Tax, not he, shall mow.
They drive cars fast—but Fangio
Scooped five years' Grand Prix in a row.

The Knight fears not the tyrant's nod.
The boatman casts the hook with rod.
The plowman turns the shining sod.
Shankara says, Atman is God.

The Knight says, scowling, By my word
You'll not, dog-faced one, have reward
Of Breisis fair won in maraud—
Athene soothes him with winged word.

The Knight falls backward on the sward
Spitted upon the False Knight's sword.
The ladies say, Forsooth! Good Lord!—
The prince yawns, I am ghastly bored.

The Knight starts up and shakes his locks,
Stares wildly round, pulls up his socks
And prepares again for battle's shocks.
The maidens smile and smooth their frocks.

Ticker-tape measures hero's stocks.
The hens submit to lust of cocks.
The Prodigal, shit to the hocks
Tramps home to Homestead vines and flocks.

The rain still falls in sunny Spain.
The matador, with grace, with pain,
Slays with his sword his love again.
John sleeps midst lilies without stain.

The axeman fells the shady tree.
Men search for oil beneath the sea
To feed the god Prosperity.
St. Francis marries Poverty.

The poet fills another page
With love, with doubt or merely rage.
God-Man prepares to come on stage
And sing salvation for this age.

Zarathust says, Right thought, deed, word—
The Knight's stout horse stamps through the ford:
He rides for Lady not for lord—
Her hair binds him with a silken cord.

The Knight rides on with rhymed lay
On lips, for lips are all his pay:
Two lips, two eyes, hair like mown hay
And breasts as fleece on shearing day.

He rides and sings, and hobble-chains
Jingle along the leafy lanes;
He rides for love, and love restrains.
Panchakosh subtract—Atman remains.

He rides and rhymes and sings his say
To arbored Lady—he sings when they
Shall meet in bed to love and pray.
The Knight is not far from the Way.

AFTER THE FLOOD

After the flood
 of our desolation
after the twisted steel and the broken concrete
 after
the flood of Grace
 of God-Man's Word in our hearts
and our hearts
and the face of the earth
 had been washed clean
 of stain and monuments
those of us
who remained
 after the fall of the cities
and survived the wandering
came together in silence
 in an open place
in a new mornmg
 empty
but for the sun

newly risen out of the ocean.

And one found voice for all of us:
We have to admit, God, that you did the right thing.
We had become loused-up. A man's word
Had the stink but not the weight of his turd.
We had forgotten, every son-of-a-bitch of us, how to sing.
What is a man until he has been drowned
And has risen again from the flood-of-you
With a river of song in his mouth, has found
His own shape in the image of the blood-of-you?
In everything we had been wrong.
We did not believe that God-Man was your face,
That in his Word was the total Grace—
Already present in the Creation Song.
We had lost the gift of high decision.
We conceived that tomorrow was merely today's revision

Yet we were troubled at times

when we saw the new moon
when we heard certain old songs.
At times our pain was like trembling
drops of rain.
But when we tried to praise you
our words were as foolish as drunken trumpets.
We could not make one small song
in the shape of your beauty.
The days sprawled and heaved
Like swollen seas against rocks.
They grieved
Like superannuated clocks.
They were ashamed as paternal cocks
Lust-spent and lust-deceived;
Alarmed as power-bosses who have achieved
Those progresses which the bed mocks.
Time tyrannized
The days. And you, God, suffered the chain
And the iron beak—total man-pain—

Suffered, and synchronized
Man-time and God-time again—
By men to be realized.

The words of the Word—
 your gift to men.
The words that are a flame in the mouth
 to illumine your Name:
that Name which the stars were singing
 as we your sons
 danced past them
on our way to Man-state.
Our cities were hills that drew no rain,
From which no virtue flowed out over earth
Sustaining structure and flowering that mirth
Which makes eyes dance across a surging plain.
Our cities were coagulated again;
The Good Life thrown on a garbage-dump; thin
Love hung up on nerves, like bits of tin

In winds of belly-laugh of the insane.
Our cities were maps with squares marked 'treasure'
For which one dug and found a rotten bone;
Dialled wrong numbers on a telephone;
Markets where one shopped for packaged pleasure—
Back home unwrapped it and found only pain
Untouched by hand and wrapped in cellophane.

Your Creation Song
sang the stars into praises
 and Earth into place for Man-singing.
But our speech-ooze
 had spread a film over the earth
and only the flood of our cry
the flood of your Word
 could make it clean again.
We sounded seas,
Drilled rock, stared
Snow-wastes where

Nothing moved but the wind.
We gave ear
To progress prophecies—
But private plenty reared
New public squalor. Fear
Chasing the blood through the ventricles of heart
Became the best attended, wagered sport.
And the great dream: a journey to a star
To find—
Ourselves already there
Still forever in a state of war!

Dreams. Horizons.
A new sun in black space.
Tomorrow
 always tomorrow.
But the tomorrow of anger is ash
 and the tomorrow of hatred is death.

The days were hummings by a boy with a stick
Along a sultry summer corrugated
Iron fence orchestrally inflated
With episodal matter suave and slick.
We lived in the end days, sick,
Mauled by mathematics, irritated
By ever-growing burdens that were rated
Gain—the gain from turning living bread to brick!
We knew it was all a dirty trick
Played on us by Big Fist and those who licked
His shoes. So—but his number-one side-kick
Was our unlove. We for ourselves baited
The rat-traps of cities, and arranged for our souls to be crated—
Leaving fair Earth for the men she long had waited.

We were men with broken feet on betrayed journeys—
Alone in companies under a cold glass sky,
Wordless, like that of beasts was our cry—
Into the last days of the Great Heart-freeze.

Always alone, always in companies,
Through narrow ravines on a high
Plateau where vultures did not fly
And even scorpions found dis-ease.
Ever we went on—fattening our miseries
On cropped concrete and dim remembrances of the sun and the
breeze
Billowing tall grass—longing to die.
At last we began to understand. The seas
Below us on the plains were your weeping for our cry ...
And World's End was suddenly lit by your compassionate Eye.

And we heard in our hearts
the bursting of your infinite Word:
the same Primal Word which stirred
in the Womb of the Great Dark
and one spark of which
issued as all the blazing suns
in which were hidden Earth

and the seed of men—
the to-be-perfect ones.
And the wind of your Word
dried up the flood you had wept
leaving clean
the face of the earth of the monuments
of our boasts reared on cruel labor.

We have come down, God, from the Separation
into this silent morning—
to begin a new day in the sun,
to sing a new song to you,
to continue the Earth for our children.

HYMN TO GOD THE MAN

Beloved God,
All the earth is singing you
In the impermanent materials of stone, leaf and heart:
Singing you, yearning, leaning towards
Your reaping.

God-the-Father-the-Son of yourself:
Whole God: Perfect Man.
Cherisher of the sap in all things;
Destroyer of the worn-out, the false of all things;
Releaser of the love in all things, which,
Locked in the prison of heart, in leaf and stone,
Raises itself in longing towards your reaping.

You are the perennial and glorious Avatar,
The human and lovely Rasool,
The sudden and beautiful Christ,
Who stoops to Man-state, and walks the earth
Carrying the Cross of our violences,

In one moment of your perfect Manhood.
Ever, Beloved, would we be eagles of praise to you;
Ever are we dust trying to sing your glory.

How beautiful you are!
What a dreaming in the dawn is your brow!
What oceans of love are your eyes!
What music of our new singing is in your throat!
What a proud new architecture is in your hands!
How perfectly shaped are your feet for our beyond-journeying!
The symmetry of your body is the assurance of our well-being.
You are the Song of all singers who have ever sung.
You are the tenderness of lovers of all time.
The line of your mouth is the direction of our journey.
The curve of your cheek is the contour of our containment.
In your fingers is the cunning of all the works we shall make:
In your eyes the love of all our loving.

How marvelous was your creating.

From the thread of Nothingness you wove
The vast universe and this little Earth
And Man: all because you did not know who you were
And had the whim to know yourself
As Whole God, as Perfect Man:
Out of absolutely Nothing this seeming Something
Contained within your EVERYTHING!

Oh, the long way from the stars' first singing:
The long pain from the time you broke out of your imprisonment
in stone
And crept up, age after age, to Man-state—
Yourself your own Image of you
Perfectly sculptured, articulated for Self-knowing.
Your ear eager for your voice, your eye for sight of you.
How dense you were in hard denseness, stone-locked
In your dreams of yourself as stone.
How tree-rooted you became—thrusting upwards
Spreading out gropingly towards your infinity.

How feeble you were as worm;
How silently you glided through swamps
Through the grass as serpent seeking yourself;
And as lizard scurried and stretched yourself in the sun.
How you fish-swam in the shallow waters
Seeking yourself; dived down deep in your ocean;
Scaled waterfalls seeking yourself in the highest waters.
How as animal you longed in animal-longing for yourself:
Crashing out of the jungle trumpeting like the rising sun;
Howling across frozen steppes;
Crying in fox-cry like a child in distress in the night;
Bull-bellowed bull-staring into the sunset,
Pawing the earth, longing intensely for yourself;
Proudly over plains lord of the world;
Stealthily at night through silent forest suddenly alive.
Then STOOD UP beating your breast
Unable to endure not being Man.

Then you became Man. And how great was your Fall!

You had hammered out on the anvil of time your true shape—
By means of which you could know Who you were.
But you forgot all about the long way and the long pain
And why you had had the fortitude to endure it.
You dithered about digging in the earth, examining
What you found; stared at stars—wondering;
Beguiled by what you had already been.
Made wars—instead of war on yourself;
Always conquering, conquering—but not your own nature.
What a gainsaying of the long way and the long pain!

But eventually you turned,
And took your stand in the puzzle and seethe of yourself
And became your own Hero and fought your way
Out of the tangle of flesh and the drift of stars:
Found out the backward path that leads forward to Self
Across the terrible shining planes of your own Energy
And its allurements and enchantments; stormed Mind,
Destroyed Mind and its delusion of other than Self:

Proved the seeming of everything to be nothing—
Nothing but your Dream of other-than-yourself.
And became yourself, Whole God. And returned
To earth as Perfect Man. And taught us
The law, and the love, and the way to Self, to Truth.
Millions of times in your compassion you have come to us;
Borne the Cross of our rejection and violence
And waited with vast patience the extent of our folly—
Of our little greeds and progress to other than Self.
And now again you have walked the earth.
But, as the moment of your glory drew near,
The talk with your disciples died on your lips
And the swift glances fled from your eyes.
Your brow was a sea of concrete in which no green thing lived.
Your body was all the steel of the world
Made into a Cross on which you hung and waited
The eternity of the precise moment of your Word
Which was our Destroying and Renewal
And the again-path for our stubborn feet.

How the glory of your brow
 is the light of our safe journeying!
The love of your eyes
 is the mirror of our revealment
And the certainty of our arrival.
How glorious you are as Man; how helpless as God:
So helpless that you could not hide your Godhood
Even behind the walls of your pain.
How very Man you are.
How absolutely God.

NOTES

page/stanza/line

13/2/1 "con-men" is Australian slang for confidence men, men who win your confidence in order to swindle you, not the American shortening for convicts.

18/3/4 "streptophonic" is a word I have coined: strepto, a chain; phonic, sound. "Undertows" --- "Underground."

43/2/2 "Panchasheel": panch, 5; sheel, principles. Used in the Sino-Indian dispute, meaning the 5 Principles of Coexistence.

43/4/1 "Both huns" = Communism & Democracy.

52/2/4 "John" is the Spanish saint, St. John of the Cross.

5 3/3/1 "hobble-chains" are fastened to a horse's fetlock at night so that it can graze but not wander away.

53/3/4 "Panchakosh" = the 5 sheaths which surround Atman or Self.

63/1/4 "episodal matter" is the part between the main subjects (themes) of a symphony.

Thieves, with all the delicate graces
of shaven chins and double faces,
are brought back from minor disgraces
to occupy the highest places.

* * *

Big Fist's con-men, puff-cheeked, slit-eyed
as swine in sty, have multiplied
beyond pig comfort. They trot-slide
in the cool evening in their pride.

Pink snouts held high like flags, they glide
so smoothly and so satisfied,
and bow and smile, as they trot-slide,
grunt greetings that are grunt-replied.

* * *

The poet laureate, they decide,
shall be he who has best supplied
them with their grunts, squeals, versified
in meters matching their short stride.

* * *

Beneath all this which is or seems,
behind the crude electric screams
which wet pavements shape into dreams,
Self floweth in perennial streams.

from *THE WORD AT WORLD'S END*

Register of Editorial Alterations

Page 22, stanza 3, line 2, hygenic changed to hygienic