

THE AUTONOMOUS SHE

Selected Poems

Don Eulert

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AUTONOMOUS FORCE/ BRIGHT DAY

Washing oranges in the sink
two sliced open for you
star-lines and cells Stack
the drainer full of them
and a touch of tart green limes

You are smiling talk about a baby
that waved and smiled at you
when you were at the window in your robe

gone now standing all curves globes
your white bottom both breasts crinkling
on the ends
though the sun warm today

The hollowed line pointing to your warm fur
a gesture of your arm

We are making coffee the foam
of waves huge in the sun the
power submerged in my belly
breaks against these coasts

golden green day you are smiling
the earth turns in moon's orbit

Seeing you this way these hands
spontaneously touch my *Muladhara*
and *Sudarshana-chakra*

it is love
and love's murder

CONFLUENCE

and even my touches have
grown musclebound and hard
have their way

how we lay beside the
fire then were naked and the most
loving hold gave pain

that's not it I will bruise you even
reaching to pick a seedtuft from
your hair purple
your temple most subtly

my weight presses you with
a violence on deeper bones
than those your body closes on me

but now your face
goes entirely out of thought
some loosened thing falls far
down and back petals of a
velvet-black flower fold

some perfect assurance

and I see you smile for this

as though you are happy split
open by this humming
carpenter with calloused hands

to be turned this way and that
to have scrolls gouged out and
stained-glass windows fit

ADAM BY CHANCE

found himself
by a small stream in a place he
had not known a boulder
warm beside the water surge of sun

Insect's insistence and birds just
accompanying an urge of his so
his seed fell into the pool drops
he watched in clear water loop
into misty pearl circles
and settle on the roots of an oak tree

Years before fire had struck it and
opened a door at its base the
tree grew an ornate scroll
around the arch and made ready

This door for the girl who grew in
the trunk of the tree sleeping
until her breasts tilted and her
hair netted around them her
legs grown long eyes deepened

in darkness all flowered in the
tree's earth smell.

On the full moon she crept
out the dark passage and
raised her silver arms.

Now the man had built a house down
the valley with another woman all on
another arrangement even god
ignorant of what had passed.

Once when Adam walked alone.
beside a tree-ringed pool he
believed he saw something like
a nude girl sitting high up in the
crotch of a tree.

The wild man ran to look
everywhere at once Finally he sat
on a rock and let his shoulders
droop in silence fixed his eyes on
something indistinct. Then her

eyes reached into him hands
scooped around some lost animal

CRADLE OF STONE AND AIR

Great green toad of a
rock, ragged lichen-
splashed and black, warted
with older stones in quartz

I am perched on him perched
on a house-sized boulder above
where we built fire
two weeks ago, where
like a kite on a string I
would reel us close in
honest talk, lazy after
eggs and beer.

Perhaps I am too thorough imagining
too much lost,
too much what the love was

Your eruption like this stone
lumped of older parts, some new
coloring, and to crumble
Or last quietly for centuries

in this size of time
and ancient mountains I know
myself an ordinary man,
unable to change
the shape of what I find

here, feeling my skin stretch
thin like an aging man in
today's sun falling through
thin air

DANCE

the poem turns its skirt
opens and widens

and sometimes flows
down like a breast
from its own gracefulness

A deer makes a circle for her
own reasons looks at you with
a curved neck

Tracks in deep snow around the tree:
missing bark and branches show
she ate them

The hunger: the gesture

its center a candle in a room in
a place silvered with living
we made seven sculptures

each an apostolate of silence
"reincarnation after the love-dance" Bring
the pieces, set them around

ah, I like to be the place I am
love, all the things our people are doing

mornings they join hands, moving first
gold lights their foreheads and then
and then

Praxinoscopic they dance
with silver eyes

END OF A SEASON

I slept until ten
and am pulled awake
watching a fly running
figure 8's down my room
with great speed
repeating
as if pylons guide it

something to do with the wind that
came last night
unmistakably winter enough to
kill all outdoor flies

2:00 AM when the snow came I
was reading Himalayan
wisdoms. The stones are tired.

Had breakfast after that can't
look forward to breakfast: I
lie and
watch the fly

wonder how it would be
to see her today think about
the cold air that drives
senses to a point

FOR YOUR BIRTHDAY

we have been where the
land went out
slowly from the arroyo
and then swept away

alone in that
silent world

clothes thrown on the
pinion's branches
flagging the sun down

we have been when the
wind outside
blows color from trees
just as it comes on
whorls of dust
drifted leaves

we move
through the last three days
you move to thirty

we move through an old
land, thin air the only
resistance

**FURIOUS CLOUDS POUR
GENTLY OVER THE
SACRED MOUNTAIN**

--for Kathy

1.

The ocean tides the highest
against the wall, foams across
the walk, we
walk out in the morning sun
carrying wine and sausage and eggs singing
the smooth curve of ocean turning
the muscled water in morning sun

2.

In your *sabi* grace
 bends a stem of goldplume grass
the wind blows mountain pinetops
clouds above us in a harped roar rush
in where they are eaten
the wind/dance echoes across this valley,
we rise dizzy
You again, "I get it from the wind"

3.

We sleep on the mountainside
 spread to the sun,
try our magic on deer
beside the gnarled cosmic tree
we find new strawberries coming
under the opening of oak leaves
in their first grey fur

4.

Find five kinds of flowers
before we pick the yellow ones for your hair

there a lizard, the mole-run soft underfoot
 the thrush beside you begs
 your giddy-imp smile

TEA AND ORANGES
--For Marlene

melon sweetness, i
inundate myself, you are
flowing silver

it leads to the pure
spring everything
unspoken

you shut your eyes
breathe light
your arms a cradle

your eyes talk, you say
"have your way"

motion the sun to
come through us
we shine with honey

the old barren hills,
they lighten and burst

in their stone slow avalanche

THE WHITE WITCH

I clap my hands four times
counting slowly the wind carries
it away to the south/
west toward the rising sun

The rocks resemble themselves
from before this dance turning
motionless
in the applauding sun

In front of me a valley
where you are I can't see
it is full of the heaviest of
this bright air it wants a
water of gold
to wash through

A dragonfly monitors how
quartz boulders journey
to arroyo sand
where we fell asleep

in a quail run windchannel star
course funnel for water and
morning sun

Quails cry suddenly like a
hike of young boys
discovering us in the desert
wake us in sun avalanche
flow down mountain

sky-pressed wanting water I
am bathed in sweet
sheen your dewed breasts

you roll up the sleeping bag
In the sand your feet sparkle
yes in the night

you witched the mountain's
lava rock to writhe witched
me a lizard's
hallucinated morning eye

THE ROOM

A woman I loved wanted to
rent the cabin way up on
Sandia Mountain with
adobe floors polished with
animal blood in the old way

She and the woman who owned the place
fought about something trivial
their agreement forfeit

except we had already made love
in the room

**MAGICAL MARE DESIRE SHALL NEVER
DIE OUT OF THE MIND**

--for Kirk

Your black dog would work ever evil, ah
through both eyes you see into his head:
 a spinning center, cosmos worked
from darkness to that small sun

spokes seven rays, nerve fibers
 and threads of sperm

Pleasure preceded by the idea of pleasure
 “fire is born from the
genitals of woman”

(agh, do what you want)
eager praise
 magical rage

I also fear the dying out of appetite
running its tongue into every form:

Under knees and loins, muscles
pulsing
imperceptible with her seven hearts,

the mare cruises w/out a bridle at
freeway speeds

MORPHOGENESIS, LOVE

I have for you frightful
green words
 this white season

snow on the hills snow on
the power pylons snow on
the snow on the wind
 coats the undersides of
crows

snow belonging to winter has
the weight of spring

colors of fall went crystal
anticipating
 another thing

now dark lines
form at the edges
 of February's high snow

could winter doubt itself? white

drifts shudder soggy

indiscriminate froggy

green

burning

spring

OUTSIDE, SOMETIMES

Night, and Orion cleared
by the Wind blowing on
and off for two days
and two nights

The doors don't keep it out or
walls the sound

Her father has died,
my father-in-law once

Winds that blow outside
us! I still love her think
of her in a plane her
mind in order
her feelings a fine balance

Sometimes I am lonely
The Wind comes down
into oak groves we say it
"rises and falls" among

the leaves And the frogs
who spend time
either thinking or singing
sound clear between gusts

An old man stops by sometimes
because he likes frogsong

Tonight centers a turning
around Orion end of a
daughter's cycle
start of Fall winds

PERFORMANCE

I have laid a stone wall.
Found flat rocks weighing 300 pounds
and laid them carefully as mosaic

and tonight
lift the bearskin from beside the fire
his eyes false, mouth made to smile a
clown with scarlet

Put it on my head, and dance for
the woman who crouches
and watches from a darker place

Strength holds in his shoulders made
of air, falling from
his great crown of bone. Dip and dance

put it on my head, and dance
for the woman who crouches I
dip for the woman
the teeth arcing

PAIRS AND OPPOSITES

the dove beaks into
the throat of
turtledove
thrust and throttle

she fluffs
he is on her

now his nervous head small
for his body
darts

with her bill
she lays feathers back
her tail her breast

the yellow eye of
the blackbird
fixed on them

your neck arches
like a raven and

very white they
preen two feet
apart she
creeps
into pine needles

under the shower we lather
against one another

your flecked eyes hang
on me you had shut
your eyes and
smiled

SHE

A rearing of rocks
the bigger the farther they go

She wants the
other side

A heart of light pulses on
the scrub and
tangle and

a crowd telling her
she can't walk up
there

far night
She doesn't know the way

stepping away She
follows a path
She sees

THAT WOMAN, FORESEEING DANGER, INCULCATED FEAR

These night-whispered orders are
for another hero this woman
threatened and brutally torn from him
whispers that the dark forgets

*The well-spring, sacred vessel: You are
18 feet tall, beautiful in white robes that
would glow in the dark.*

*The abyss, dark vacuum: You
are a hairy demonic fish with
teeth of long knives.*

Can I go in there and take a stand
in a heroic way

*(La off, Babayaga, he sd,
or i'm rammin this hot poker
up yr witch-mother ass*

*I wasn't doin a thing, she sd,
not any more you bet*

But our arms are withered by a secret
memory, O
she promises a golden oiled pheasant to eat
the gift of a path through tall grass sun-tinted
white flowers

Must be a way to the living princess
but the woman distinctly has spoken of
faithlessness, and

There is a hoax here
That is a head on my banquet plate
There is a blood on the festival grass

THE CEREMONIAL POINT

Points of ice at the start
May's first rain swept down
lightening gift of water &
silence after lightning

our narrowing below loins
makes a flight of arrows &
strange spring thunder follows

Or arms & hands you knot up
over my shoulders we escape
from some cave & blind Cyclops

& now we are pure
abstract points of light &
still you are dark hair &
skin glistening the clear
quartz arrowhead
I find in the morning

washed on rain-black earth

THE PLACE

we are on the mountainside in
the fair whiteface of the moon
all my shades standing

wearing one face
I stumble around

you open a door vista to
mountain distances
 in
song
walk through with me

the door disappears
you leave me
 to choose a way

THE WAY

We climb onto a great wheel of
brown wood
with crossed beams

another wheel inside

carved with embossed
leaves around the rim

*Complete the inner circle
one for each of us she says*

The ground far below I
have no rope no ladder
no tool for all this magic

Here is trying to get back the
way the light changed when
arcs closed on a center
with no circumference--

From this platform of intricate
carved celebration I lower
you with both arms drop you
gently you go away

THE RETURN

Huge hands of bone move through the night;
the great moose return and at dawn the
largest clubs his head at the cottonwood
tree

People compare pictures of christmas
reindeers
and other things they know and shake their
heads

He clubs his toothy antlers on the limbs and
waits for somebody to come out of the
houses

Dark shapes move in first light looking
for the girl who will mate with them

Black haunches hunch in slow motion
beside the creek under dark trees

THE TREASURE

The shelter of branches and colt's-foot has
indeed fallen down, rotting in rain,
the small stream dirty with new water

After our many joinings here the stars
swell with your prophecy, you give birth
to a song that disappears Do places
hold us?

wild strawberries still ripen
small bursts sweet on the tongue

I give you a curled ram's horn
You give me a burr seed-pod

I give you a cape of green
You give me a ring of daisy

Now the sorrel deer we heard trumpet for a
mate
the night the moon moved so quickly down
moves out with your grace and fearless
pulls leaves from a bush beside you

His power is his perfect ease you
walk out on the same ground, and a
second deer more golden than the first
comes out of the trees
three lives make some centerless ring,

and above you there are two moons
This is your insistence; who must you
convince?
there are two moons, one going to meet

a round moon, mirror of insouciance,

there are three moons

TODAY MY TIMING'S OFF AND

--for Tam

Today my timing's off and
I keep missing you
It's your birthday and I
can't even give a kiss
like I smiled to think of and

last night I was confused a
knight on a bony horse
camped a day's ride outside
the palace

Should I have shouted /
love you from out there
or wait for your surprise
that I arrive clanking /
remember today?

And now my timing's off! I
leave an absurd kiss on the
doorknob of your house.

I kiss your hand I remember
Stefan saying that in a foreign language
and how he bent down
about as low as a latch

it is a gesture left over
how a peasant greets his lady

TONIGHT

the keepers of dreamtime allowed
field and flower

*That miracle again, you
let me inside your body gently*

the memory in my body singing you
back moving under me
without care about the music

your eyes closed cannot speak it the
small-smile glint of teeth cannot

the ductile mind grieves, harassed by
the shadows of what it cannot hold:
candlelight under wood beams
your damp long hair

GILLIAN IN MOTION

you strip
yourself for
the ocean

i believe
in your trembling

those bare shoulder
blades
of belief

body a
long bare
turning

jade pebbles
washed up the
white beach

the curve of
your stomach

WHAT SHAPE OF FIRE AND FRUIT

You come into my private mania
for intensity in a mandala of
return or recovery of fire or fruit
after exile

How the braid comes out, the fallen hair it's
in all the dreams—
Where is that field of flowers, now
"I'm odd and full of love"

He came to find her they left
together these were
iridescent pigeons
flying one wing in common

SPYING ON HER

Through the lace-filtered bedroom window
she sits half-dressed on the bed and is still

It's full moon tonight and she seems to pray
while studying a circular calendar

When next I look a lift of sheets shadows
and settles on her undressed body

Arms over her head fluff pillows lift breasts.
The book she raises will take her to the
Congo

Dwight Eisenhower he of the Kansas grin
and "What me worry?" ears has Partice

Lumumba

hacked to death. Would you rather a

machete

so you hear your flying chin land across the

room

could watch yourself bleed to death

or be pulverized humming in line at the

coffee bar
9/11? "I'd just like mine natural, thank you."

Before I get another look her light's out she
sleeps
my lady sleeps she sleeps my lady sleeps

the moon on her my lady sleeps and dreams
she
moans

Then whispers to something small
she holds
in clasped hands

ONE MORNING

Because of the cold I
put both blankets
from the small beds
on one of them

When I came to sleep
at first
only the sound of her
breathing
breathing beside me now

Her hair loose her eyes
shut what is the ceaseless
mind
seeing and doing
inside itself

Now
the moon is slim a train whistles
over the snow the clock puts
its futile rivets the train-sound a grey

live dove her breathing mine
the dark the light

STUDY OF A WOMAN WITH LIGHT

If we smelled with her sense now we
could almost be fed
with that heavy ardor

of grass-smell but it is
a field of wheat
hip-high and still

green

the kernels on their stiffening ribs
milk inside soft skin ovum good
to eat or to drink the tongue can
press it out these small eggs
with sweet yolk

in a field entirely feminine

a field open to possible form

How is it that she runs such a
singular way? her breasts rise
and fall gracefully as her knees

Behind her the light bends from turned
heads darker green where she has
passed a banner at the tip of a green
arrow

driven so directly

what is she when she

bursts out

rupturing the folliculate field

CELLO

Your body carries this visible world's
spectrum and invisible past vibrating
alive in you back to the big bang

particles of light drift from your body the
molten core of constellations glow
behind your visage I caught a glimpse

did you know my dear with bluegreen eyes
you left a crack to see through when
you shifted embodiments?

what does the seeming silent Orion send to
color the sound of this world's traffic?

what does this gold string play
on the pillow where you lay so
fine as I lift its curl of song it
disappears into light

as did I last night when you
settled your gold cello

over me and quivered

THE MUSE

but finally you didn't hunker and
piss in the water

“The Spring of the Muses”
your double moons flashing in
the dark aside
the poetic mix

couldn't pass the chance to sleep
beside the cold spring, such a
funky name ants in the bedroll

waked up ahead of goat-herd bells that
come right on where we slept your
chaste head on my arm talking
talking they come
on trailing goat-turds

*

throw the head back let it float
to the moon coming over
olympus Shout motherwater

into the hot Mediterranean
i come legs tumbling
backward in a menstruum sac

voluptuous water voluptuous
mountain
voluptuous moon

salt smell green sea

SHE IS DANCING

She is dancing
that filmy white robe her hair fallen
her head thrown back

Flowers that were ready to bloom open
and close in her mind

O lady
this flower as long as you care for it

She stands shyly, her white
gown moves in the eucalyptus-
sounding wind her dark head
bent

*

Woman folded in a tree trunk, curve
of deer neck, snow queen

you rise from the sonorous water whose
depths are covered with men

who rode down the zodiac on whales who
signed up on that expeditionary believing they
were headed to Central America to collect
gold lashes from the sun's eye

O lady, a harvest after the
waiting, the deliberate
gathering of tools, the girding

after waiting I am ready the
harvest is ready the moment we
step into the field

GETTING LOST

*I have never been lost, but I will admit to being
confused for several weeks.*

Danial Boone

the last thing we say to each other before we go
off at night

into dreamtime

“See you in the forest.”

I love you

gratitudes

see you in
the forest