

Helen

Eternity is in love with the productions of time.

Time is the mercy of Eternity.

William Blake

...

Painted pink on the back window of a black Soul

JUST DIVORCED!!

expressing anger, grief
pride, shame and relief.

Most people laugh at it.

I'm envious
not because I wish I was divorced
I've never married.

Heaven & Hell were married once
then divorced, then remarried, then divorced again.
Eventually I lost track
it didn't matter anymore whether they were together or not
which got me into a spot of bother, this not mattering.

For the artist in me, they need to be together.
For the non-artist in me, they need to be apart.

Or is it the other way around?
It's confusing, I admit, I don't always know who's speaking.

My parents divorced when I was 7.

No, they only separated.

7 years later, when Dad was ready
to remarry someone else, they officially divorced.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

all good children go to Heaven.

I went to Hell.

Punishment, but I didn't do anything.

It's not something I did, it's something I am.

Not only not good enough
disgusting, they must not want me.

I'm not the son, I'm the Sin.

The anxiety-guilt complex starts
to boil its stone to my heart.

A middle-aged Woman with shoulder-length sandy-grey Hair
in purple corduroy pants and a faded pink
& blue striped sweater is excited
because the handsome Latino teller with a clean
goatee and an indigo tie remembers her name, Helen.

I remember Helen Hong, the smartest kid in 6th grade.
She was usually serious, but when she laughed
she laughed without restraint, her whole Skull
and Shoulders shaking uncontrollably.

Exuberance is Beauty.
This is infernal wisdom, a proverb of Hell.

Here's another one: The most sublime act is to set another before you.

If you want to experience the meaning of compassion
you have to go to Hell.

Heaven & Hell exist at opposite ends of a universe
 inherently, permanently dichotomous
Master and Lord of all binary systems
 Father of all diametrical oppositions
while Mother vanishes in the dish water or a clean bright toilet.

Heaven & Hell are living psycho-emotional states
2 poles between which we fluctuate.
Joys impregnate. Sorrows bring forth.

No, Heaven & Hell are unreachable in this life
they're strictly postmortem, the only 2 possible destinations
for the eternal Soul after departing its finite Host.

You grant the body's mortality, it dies once and for all
but you want the Ghost to take with it the body's senses
 (without its sense organs, go figure)
because after all, what would the point of going to Heaven be
if you couldn't see the unfathomably beautiful Light
 hear the music of the spheres
 taste the ambrosia of an Angel's tongues
if you couldn't experience anything
and know it was you having the experience?

Identity is always tied to body image, even in dreams.

Last night I hover above an Ocean that shrinks to a lake and keeps
shrinking as I fall.

The thought that death is the beginning of an endless dream terrifies me.
Only one in ten do I wish to continue, the other nine are anxiety dreams I can't
wake from fast enough.

No, the Afterlife isn't a dream, it's a Poem printed in the Infernal method
with corrosives, melting apparent surfaces away
displaying the Infinite.

I salute you William Blake
outside your Antinomian home on a hill
overlooking the lovely flames of Hell
made of Bodily Energy, the Fire of Genius.
Angel and Demon the same Janus-faced creature
the struggle to control it articulates the face.
A clear Feeling concealing a cloudy Thought
hungry Clouds swag on the deep – Human teeth
Human hair in the burdened Air.

I finished one of your books this morning
and today everyone is beautiful
the beauty of the Human form
and the little light in their eyes.
It must come from within, coming out thru the eyes
to meet the Light coming in.
At the meeting point there's no distinction
between Holy and Infernal, internal and ex-.

Dear O,

Thanks for the poem.

It's beautiful, especially the thing about learning to love ourselves working.

Poems about gardening always remind me of The Garden of Love.

Do you know it, Olga?

You quoted Paul Eluard without knowing he was quoting William Blake:
that call'd Body is a portion of Soul discern'd by the five Senses.

For Body you can substitute the physical world, matter.

For Soul you can substitute Energy, Eternal Delight.

They're equivalent, but disproportional – the tiniest bit of matter
equals an enormous amount, a cosmically enormous amount of Energy.

Maybe the Body we experience

is the most occluded portion of Soul imaginable.

We'd need not just five but an infinite number of Senses
to perceive all that's really there, here.

And neither matter nor Energy can be either created or destroyed
only transformed.

We're all features of this process
of beginningless endless metamorphosis
the process of Soul circumfusing
each one of us
capable of opening.

Keep honing, homing in.

Keep poeming, my friend.

Like the roshi said, keep sweeping the garden.

Love, E.

Around the time of the Industrial Revolution
– the first factories of black soot, the dark Satanic mills –
William Blake remarried them.
Hegel, the Eagle, attended the ceremony and spoke
(some say movingly, some say dryly and confusingly)
about contradiction and negation leading to integration and unity.

It's rumored he said “thesis: Hell
antithesis: Heaven
synthesis: Helen.”

So you think you can tell
Heaven from Hell.
Helen's contradictions were always literal.
Eventually she suffered a breakdown.
Heaven & Hell divorced again.

But some refused to recognize the legitimacy of it
claiming the two are one process evolving in the same being
more beautiful than all the rest – Helen, an amalgam, a cross
between Hell & Heaven, Helen of Troy dressed as a boy
in cyberspace – the trace that launched a thousand blips.
In the Peloponnesian Cyber Wars the Trojan Horse is a digital virus.
Malware required, slip on a Trojan
if you want to enter Helen, her website I mean.

Yes, I want to inhabit nonduality
but one dichotomy is always operable:
self-absorbed egocentric narcissism on one hand
and selfless empathic compassion on the other.
One's capacity to tend more toward the latter
is determined by several factors outside
one's control, accidents of birth for instance:
some are born to sweet delight
and some are born to endless night.

Most are born somewhere in between.
Grandma Helen wasn't orphaned at birth like a Snake
she was left on the Church steps at age 2.
When Grandpa took a Mistress
Helen knew about it, and she took it, for years.
Divorce wasn't an option.
She had nowhere else to go.

...

It's been awhile since we last talked.

I drive a white Kia Rio now
named Emmylou, after Emmylou Harris
(picture her in Paris on a Ferris-wheel).

I'm behind an 18-wheeler, an aluminum rectangle
a heavily warped mirror in which a little girl points up
at a big blinking neon circle and says "please Mommy

I wanna go on the Ferris-wheel."

Helen's foster Mom says "No way Jose."

Whenever I was about to leave the house I had to say to Grandma Helen
"see ya later alligator"
and she'd say "after awhile crocodile."

Whenever Grandma Helen was about to leave the house she'd say
"see ya later alligator"
and I had to say "after awhile crocodile."

Whenever a poem was a bit bland and predictable
my college poetry teacher would say
"this thing needs an alligator in it."

With only a rudimentary education, Grandma Helen never learned
how to drive. She couldn't control her environment.

The Ferris-wheel symbolizes Fortune's wheel
the zodiac, seasonal cycles, circumstances you wouldn't choose.

The poem is a prayer
to be in the world without having to perform.
Even when I question and interrogate Her identity
it's a performance. Performance anxiety.

After the cancer had spread, during the last few months of her life
Grandma Helen began singing hymns to Jesus.
She hadn't been to church since she was a little girl.
A survival instinct, she couldn't forget those songs.

On my way out, passing thru the TV room
where she always sat, Helen said to me
“tell your dad that I love him.”
“I will Grandma.”

It didn't bother me at the time
(1990, I was a senior in high-school)
that she didn't love me.
I didn't love her either.
I didn't understand her.

I never heard Helen use the N-word
but a few times I heard either Grandpa or Helen sing
“barbecued watermelon, Cadillac car
we're not as dumb as you think we is.”

Grandpa drove a long turquoise Cadillac with a fin.
A UCLA alumnus, he and Helen watched every Bruins
football and basketball game on TV, tho by that time, around 1980
many of the players were African-American.
Irony didn't seem to register.

I remember Helen joyfully singing along
to Ella Fitzgerald & Louise Armstrong
“vanilla, vanella, aw chocolate, strawberry
let's call the whole thing off.”

Helen wouldn't let the hospice nurse, a rather attractive
Egyptian woman, touch her
because she was “colored.”
My dad didn't want to have to call the hospital
and ask for a different, less colorful nurse.
He didn't have to.
The Egyptian woman, visibly shaken, distraught
(this had never happened to her before) quit.

Helen's bigotry doesn't need to be forgiven.
Like her pain, it needs to be understood.
It would be wrong to say that bigots are also victims
but they do suffer.
Divorced from themselves
they never get to experience, because of fear and ignorance
the most beautiful aspect of their own Humanity.

My dad used to work in a lab full of dialysis machines
and coagulation instruments, a lab run
by a black man named Theo.
There are 4 blood types common to all Human Beings
regardless of skin tone, genitalia, ideology, etc.
My dad told me Theo was the man he respected
more than anyone else in the world
apart from his dad.
But your dad's a ... I couldn't say it.

When I try to bring my own subconscious prejudices up
into the light, the *theophanic* light of consciousness
I see Helen alone
Helen abandoned
unloved, cheated on, isolated
I see Helen in pain
and then I hear her voice
“see ya later alligator.”

From 1990 to 1994 Ann was my girlfriend.
Her dad, Kit, worked for Technicolor.
When the movie *White Men Can't Jump* came out
he was livid. He wanted someone
to make a movie called *Black Men Can't Think*.

The worst case of psoriasis you ever saw
a few wet grey strings of hair running the length of his skull
Kit would sit in front of the TV set with a Budweiser, the room
decorated with kitsch Native American images and nick-knacks.
Kit saw *Dances with Wolves* twice in the theater
he owned the VHS tape and watched it over and over
something about the sacred importance of family
and something else, William Blake called it
“raising other men into a perception of the infinite:
this the North American tribes practice.”

The loss of family values in America was, to Kit
mostly the fault of Women.
He thought Jane Fonda should've been imprisoned for treason
maybe even shot, for what she did in Vietnam.
He blamed the Women's Movement, Gloria Allred in particular
for the disintegration of the American family unit.
Gloria Allred was the real reason
why so many parents like mine got divorced.

There was no love between Kit and Ann's Mom, Edna
but they didn't divorce.

For the sake of their 5 children, they stayed together.

Kit, the crusty cantankerous curmudgeon
this bitter old white man's ideology will prove
stronger than the rest.

My neighbor, Taylor (lesbian, nurse, singer)
drives a dark blue Jetta with a bumper sticker that says
LOVE TRUMPS TRUMP

If only.

Ann, too, was a nurse.

Excellent at her job, she worked in a convalescent home.

Human Beings at the end of their lives

if they have any friends or family left, they rarely visit.

For most of them, their last experience of Human warmth
on this Planet came from Ann.

Ann was with me the last time I saw Grandma Helen.
Connected to a machine by several long plastic tubes
her dark brown wig crumpled
in a white chair under a bright window
Helen's bald wrinkled head on the white hospital bed
was ghastly, her mouth hanging open
all brown and corroded in there.
Her breathing faint but raspy
a ghost with a straw slurping up the drops
at the bottom of its last cup of blood.

The white sheet on her death bed just barely
rising and falling with each breath, Helen's chest.

One thought fills immensity.
All Deities reside in the Human breast.

Crying but perfectly composed, Ann said to me
“tell her that you love her.”
When I did, my stomach dropped
because I knew I didn't mean it.

Is it possible, nearly 30 years later
to mean it now?

Growing out of a Sea-cliff, a sticky
Monkey Flower, an open yellow mouth
with tiny red freckles on its tongue.
You don't have to be a botanist
or Buddhist to hear what it says.

Picture it hanging open, Grandma Helen's corroded brown mouth.

Because the words can only be static
on the page, are they permanently divorced
from the speaking voice?

I remember turning the channel knob to a station
we didn't have, the screen full of white-grey static
that shimmered and made a loud noise
– the 2-dimensional, audio-visual distortions of a Star.

Walking a shell-lined shore at low tide
slick sand belly-lovely
the Sun's glimmering blue-white reflection
a fluorescent phosphorescence follows me.
Some day it'll swallow me.

Picture the scene in *Poltergeist* when little Drew Barrymore gets swallowed by a bright television screen.

What have we relinquished to find ourselves at last far from the melodious hills and left to the mercy of machines?

Picture a breathing corpse, Grandma Helen tied to a machine.

Emmylou turns left on Fickle Hill
ascending the steep windy coastal range
on the stereo Marvin Gaye singing *O mercy mercy me*.
From here you can see a greenish-grey piece of Humboldt Bay
the beige sand of the peninsula and, thru light pink haze
the Pacific Ocean, a thin blue glaze.

During the dream in which the Ocean shrinks beneath me
I must be falling *up* into Space.

It's the Soul blending into the Infinite. Or
separated from the Mother ship, the umbilical cord
cut, an astronaut adrift in frozen black Time

infinite alienation

madness, melancholia, Hell.

...

What you call blackness is inaccessible Light.

When I close my eyes I see
faint flecks and splotches of indigo
chartreuse, cerulean merging, swirling
bubbles interwoven in the black web
like Hubble images of nebulae.

Thru my sunglasses a thin, slightly ruffled swath of cirrus below
the Sun is glowing teal, pink & violet.

The Human visible spectrum is an infinitesimal sliver
– on one side of it wavelengths shorten, frequencies rise forever
on the other side of it wavelengths widen, frequencies fall forever.

Imagine what it might look like if you could see
every wavelength of Light in the universe.

The belief in an invisible world just beyond
or even superimposed upon the visible
is an ancient one.

Maybe the other world is identical to this one
only everything in it is immaterial
made of pure Spirit, pure Light.

What William Blake understood
and what I want you to understand
is that these two worlds are one
in the same.

In the pitch blackness, while everyone's asleep
species of Shrimp and Squid a thousand fathoms deep
shimmer & blink, shimmer & blink.

Light is a form of communication.

Light, multiplying itself infinitely, creates finite matter.

But God only Acts and Is, in existing beings.

It's not a self-
contained entity, not ipseity.

Defining something in terms of what it's not
only leads to negativity, negative theology.

The problem is static linguistic categories.

Helen isn't a noun.

Is She a verb, the evolutionary blossoming of the universe?

If so, then She's one side of a binary

and if you're choosing sides, then you've lost the thread of the Infinite.

What I want you to realize is that Light isn't made of matter.

Matter is made of Light.

And Helen is made of Love?

No, God is made of Light, like everything else.

Including Love?

I love you. You love me not.

Hilda Doolittle did a lot
for Helen in Egypt
exonerated Her, for a moment, from infamy.
For something as frivolous as lust
to cuckold the good honorable Menelaus
just to be pierced by the love-arrows of Paris
imagine the infinitely private guilt
poisoning Helen's heart, the eternal shame She felt
for causing a holocaust.

Of course it wasn't Her fault.

The cause of the war was economic
control over crucial trade routes, male greed
the unquestioned belief in the singular, definitive
Patriarchal interpretation

of the symbol *Helen* –

slut, strumpet, harlot, whore, courtesan, tramp, temptress
adulteress, she-devil, witch, Hecate, home-wrecker.

Helen wasn't just a scapegoat
but a phantom, an eidolon.

She was never in Troy, She was in Egypt.

The Greeks and Trojans fought for an illusion.

The vision that mesmerizes Achilles, a hallucination
there, above the battlefield, the most beautiful Woman

in the universe, a scam

Helen upon the ramparts was a hologram.

But they would've fought anyway.
The Patriarchy's belief in its own authority
and its duty to exercise that authority
undergirds Helen's girdle
underlies a fundamentalist ideology
an archaic, contemporary division
between Wrong and Right, Black and White
the Forces of Darkness and the Forces of Light
the interminable battle between Hell & Heaven
Helen sandwiched in the middle
a pornographic image.

O Word of the Goddess
a gorgeous red dress of words
a redress of grievances
a Trojan sword stained with the grease
of anonymous innards.

To see Her beauty
Her prurience, Her pudendum
is to not see Her wisdom
and Her capacity to hurt.

To be hurt or to hurt others?

To be Human.

In a glowing trench, Willets & Dunlin on the Sun-flooded mudflats

Coots & Scaups on the gilded Bay, little feathered boats adrift

the red flash of a Finch on a blanched Birch branch.

In England a man's wife or girlfriend is referred to as his *Bird*
tho everyone knows that male Birds are the decorated
the painted ones.

The shape of this Bird is a letter.
I've been instructed
to balance levity with gravity
to mix Apollonian reason with Dionysian passion.

Helen was Menelaus's Bird.
Since Menelaus was chosen for Her
did She choose to escape
with Paris, or was it rape?

Grandma Helen could only daydream
of flying away with a kind, handsome man
to Paris.

Sappho writes that Helen willingly left Menelaus and their 9-year-old daughter, Hermione to be with Paris.

29-year-old Siddhartha willingly left his wife and infant son, Rahula, which means *Fetter*.

Tho he loved his wife and child, he knew that family life would shackle him prevent him from solving the black riddle of the universe so he left his stately palace to experience a world riddled with injustice and cruelty to understand sickness, old age and death to find the origin and end of suffering and become Enlightened.

Derived from Selene, a Moon Goddess

Helen means “Shining One.”

The first syllable, H-e-l, as in Helios, a Sun God

Helen means “Mistress of the Sun.”

The first syllable, Hel, a Goddess of Death

who presides over the underworld.

Half dead & half alive, from the waist up Hel is beautiful from the waist down Her wasted flesh rotting.

In another version, Paris is the son of Helen and Achilles.
Helen's incestuous relationship with Paris mirrors the Oedipal triangle
only Paris-Oedipus doesn't murder, in a fit of road-rage
beside their chariots, a man he doesn't know is his father.
No, he knowingly commits patricide, firing an arrow
 into the heel of the Greek hero.
The heel will not heal – the one vulnerability
the one body part that Thetis, Sea-Mother, forgot
to dip into the Sea.

After realizing the truth of the Oracle's prophesy – patricide, incest
– Helen-Jocasta will not hang Herself at the end of the play.
No, She knows all along, She doesn't need an Oracle
She has agency to unite the contraries:
Trojan and Greek, Love and War
the trumpet's battle call on one hand
and Miles Davis's *Seven Steps to Heaven* on the other.

All that music on wind & Sea, hand on strings, beak & wings
 drum & flute, lute & lyre (the liar-poet banished
 from the Republic).
Harping on the same love-and-death tune
 the harpers will not sing forever
 of how Helen united East & West (Egypt & Greece
Asia & America).

The music will stop
and no one will care anymore
but the silent burden Helen carries inside
will endure, and She'll bear it thru Time
bury it for Eternity.

...

When I was a boy I went with Grandma Helen
to a USC-UCLA football game.

Sitting near the 50-yard-line surrounded by blue & gold
everyone was a Bruin fan except me, because I was smitten
with the USC mascot, a Trojan warrior on a white horse.

I remember his maroon tunic, bronze breast-plate
the cresting crimson wave above his bronze helmet
his sword raised to the Sky as the horse trotted, then galloped
then raced around the Colosseum track.

During a break in play Grandma Helen would sing along loudly with the crowd
Time out for USC, they have to pay the referee.

Grandma Helen's favorite Bruin was the quarterback, Troy Aikman.

Troy got sacked
but he got back up and led the Bruins
like Achilles leading the Myrmidons
to defeat the Trojan fleet
the warrior-athletes in helmets & cleats.
In the end Troy sacked Troy, the Bruins triumphed
Helen smiled and cheered
the cheerleaders with sparkling gold tassels dangling
bouncing around their breasts
kicking their long beautiful bare legs up
up into the Heavens, up, everyone stand up and shout
U ra-ra-ra, C ra-ra-ra, L ra-ra-ra, A ra-ra-ra
U-C-L-A Fight! Fight! Fight!

In 2014 the NFL grossed 11 billion dollars
285 million to the Oakland Raiders.
Raiders players made anywhere from 10 million to 420 thousand
the Raiders mascot made 65 thousand.
Stadium concession workers earned the federal minimum wage, \$7.25 an hour.
Each Raiderette cheerleader earned \$5 an hour.

The Buffalo Jills' annual salary was 0.
Once a lawsuit threatened, the Jills' squad was canceled.
Unpaid community events, hundreds of hours of practice unpaid
tho they could be fined for showing up late or forgetting something.

The Raiderettes were formed in 1961. 53 years later one Woman, one
Raiderette refused to acquiesce, took on the Raiders and the NFL.
As of September 2020, 10 of the 26 teams with cheerleaders have been sued
for wage theft, unsafe work conditions, sexual harassment and discrimination.

Grandma Helen, a mid-20th century housewife, birthed and raised 4 children
tucked them in every night, readied them for school every morning
instilled a sense of decency and integrity in each one
cooked every meal, washed every dish, cleaned every room
while cheering vehemently for the Bruins
– every game on radio or TV, black and white or color
more than 100,000 hours of unpaid labor.

When she was 14 my mother was raped by her stepfather.
16 and pregnant, my mother didn't buckle when her grandmother said
you've ruined your life, you'll never amount to anything.

At that moment she dedicated her life to proving her grandmother wrong.

She's now the president and CEO of a small community bank
but in her early 20s, as a single Mom with 2 little boys and no job experience
she was hired at Bank of America because the manager found her attractive.

No job description, a secretary in the 1980s was a cross
between a mother and a waitress – secretaries were *office wives*
referred to as *girls* until the day they retired
without a pension.

At the boss's beck and call for coffee, errands, favors
to be belittled, demeaned, harassed
for a pittance.

Like their father and their father's father
both her sons would play football, they would learn
to either humiliate or be humiliated.

The growing number of domestic violence cases against NFL players
is hardly surprising – their job is to be violent, to exploit weakness.

Engorged, on fire to be the alpha male.

I despair, not for not having become one of them
but for wanting to become one in the first place.

The most infamous Trojan is O.J. Simpson
who murdered his ex-wife
and her male friend with a knife
and got away with it.

If the glove doesn't fit, you must acquit.

He walked away almost scot-free.

He must've paid the referee.

My favorite Trojan was Junior Seau

“Say Ow” when he hits you.

More powerful than Hector and his brother Paris combined
so superior to everyone on the battlefield it didn't seem fair.

He played outside linebacker for the Trojans – the enemy
always tried to avoid him by running or passing

to the opposite side of the field, but it didn't matter

Junior still made most of the tackles, forced and recovered fumbles

intercepted passes and sacked the quarterback

sometimes all in the same game.

He was a superhero, but mortal, to be sure.

A 20-year professional career, 12-time Pro-Bowler, Hall of Famer
he's widely considered the greatest middle linebacker in NFL history.

Off the field Junior, affectionately known as *Junebug*

was a sweet, fun-loving guy, everybody's “buddy”

a surfer with a contagious smile, a doting and playful husband and father

but American football does something sinister to the Human Brain.

There were signs, symptoms – he once said to a friend
I've had a headache since I was 15.

Forgetting, cheating, alcoholism, a gambling addiction
depression, anxiety, dissociation, despair
Junior began to disappear.

An insomniac for the last 7 years of his life
he assaulted one of his sons, he assaulted his girlfriend
then attempted suicide, driving his SUV off a Seaside cliff
hoping to return to the Ocean forever.

At age 43 he shot himself in the chest
not in the head, so his Brain could be analyzed.

Sure enough, Junior had severe CTE
Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy.

The helmet is first and foremost a weapon.

The fact that bashing your weaponized head into other helmets
and other big, solid, rapidly moving body parts
over and over and over and over causes Brain damage
shouldn't be surprising, but

like Big Tobacco denied the link between smoking and cancer
the NFL denies the link between head trauma (concussions)
and long-term degenerative Brain disease.

In 2013, on condition it didn't have to disclose
what it knew and when, the NFL settled
with over 5,000 former players with CTE
but the League still claims the jury's still out.

The bottom line is that the bottom line demands
denial.

Former players with CTE
war veterans with PTSD
American football was founded in the late 1800s
between the Civil War and World War 1
as a surrogate for military service, a war game
a way to practice battle without casualties.

In 1905 16 men died from football-related injuries, 11 in 1906.
How many men in the last 100 years have died
of CTE, madness often followed by suicide?
I stopped watching American football a long time ago
I couldn't stomach it anymore
the glorification of war, the phallic rocket's red glare
the bombs bursting in air, violent aggression, wrath
the path to authoritarianism, tribalism
extreme obedience and conformity
sado-masochism & machismo.

At some point you have to take a knee
make a stand against CTE, PTSD, police brutality.

It's true, without the U.S. Military
American football would've never been born.
But then, what is Helen
without war?

It's forbidden for Helen to rest in peace
to find surcease
to be released.

Full of trust, full of lust

Helen is affiliated with Eve, the Virgin Mary
the Whore of Babylon, the Northern Lights
a Southern Belle, and a Demon from Hell.

Can two opposites – slayer & slain

Venus & Mars, pleasure & pain – merge into one?

Inside Helen's voicebox, an ember aglow
in the heart of the snow.

Helen says *I*

am not my eyes.

Nothing I see

is separate from me.

The Girl with the Pearl Earring, Her gaze
holds your gaze and won't let go.

A generative border between innocence & sensuality
created by Vermeer, as you stare at Her
feel the border disappear.

Don't try to escape the contradictions
they're built into the structure of the Language.
Memory-traces are part of the Language too
 constantly shifting symbols
like Helen's interpretation of the Hieroglyphs
on the wall in the Temple of Zeus, Her father.

Helen is the offspring of Zeus and Leda.
In the form of a Swan, Zeus abducted the young beautiful Leda.
Helen and Her twin sister Clytemnestra (Goddesses of Light)
 hatched from one egg
their brothers, the twins Castor and Pollux
 hatched from another egg.
You can see the male twins, the Dioscuri (Gods of Darkness)
Gemini shining in the eastern Sky tonight.

Helen is associated with Venus
you can see Her radiant lantern in the western sky tonight
the Goddess of Love and Beauty shrouded in gleaming clouds
of sulfuric acid, Her infernal atmosphere mostly
carbon dioxide, a past and future Earth.

In the form of an Eagle, Zeus abducted
the gorgeous young Trojan man, Ganymede.

In the form of a Bull, Zeus abducted
the handsome young Phoenician Woman, Europa.

You can see Zeus glimmering in the constellations
Cygnus, the Swan Aquila, the Eagle and Taurus, the Bull.

Leda, Ganymede and Europa are Jovian satellites
3 of Jupiter's 79 known moons, having been captured/abducted
by the Roman Zeus's gravity.

Helen was abducted by Theseus when She was only a child.

Yes, you can replace each use of the word *abducted*
with the word *raped*.

Helen symbolizes every act of violence ever committed
against the Female – the screen
against which the male fantasy spatters.

Battered women, Helen hasn't come
from anywhere, or gone anywhere.

When conditions are sufficient, Helen manifests.

Reincarnated in Marilyn Monroe
in Bo Derrick, the Perfect Ten, for 10 years
the Trojan War rages, the rage of Achilles.

On the Island of Rhodes She's Helen Dendritis
Helen of the Trees, not because She was a Forest Goddess
but because She was ambushed by the Furies
and lynched from a Tree.

When John Lennon says “Woman is the nigger of the world”
he's thinking of Helen. To remember Helen
is to remember when all Women were slaves
when a man who had an affair with another man's wife
could be sued for property damage.
Whether said property consented to the affair
or was abducted was irrelevant.
You can't really rape property
can only abscond with it, damage it
and then pay for it, if you're caught.
“The people of my country believe
We can't be hurt if we can be bought.”

Light a candle.

The wick, wax and oxygen are always changing.

Like the flame, you

from one moment to the next

are neither the same nor different.

Unlike my name, which stays the same throughout my life.

For thousands of years my name has been

Helen.

Helen has walked thru time into another dimension.

I've been instructed, enchanted, debilitated.

A waxing crescent Moon like a glowing ivory tusk above
the Pacific Ocean

O Sea-Mother O seem other.

Helen can be whatever you want Her to be.

She can be anything

except who She is.

H.D. calls it the Sun

hidden behind the sun of our visible day.

But if the miniscule sun is a manifestation
of the Majuscule Sun, then nothing is hidden, they're one.

Your theology is infected with strains of Transcendentalism.

It's derivative and contradictory.

It's not a theology, it's a description of a nontheistic god.

Mystics, the only ones who come to know God

know that it cannot be individually known.

Tho its face cannot be individually shown
everywhere you look reveals the face of God

you just don't see it.

...

Like Helen, like Christ
Achilles is a hybrid – half Human, half god
his father Peleus, Mortal
his mother Thetis, a Sea-Goddess.
When Helen begins to fall
for Achilles, She sees
the Sea-enchantment in his eyes.

I remember that look in Dave's eyes.

After falling
off a big wave
Big Wave Dave Hargrave hit his head
on his board, lost consciousness
swallowed water and drowned.

What remains of Dave is a profound absence
the rounded sound of hollowness
in the hallowed shallows – in the cave of a wave
soundwaves curl into a bright loop.

Because it isn't a container, the Mind
neither empty nor full
borderless, immersed in the Infinite.

Beside where he died
spraypainted red across the jetty's black boulders:
BIG WAVE DAVE CRAVED THE CAVE
BUT DAVE GAVE WAVES
BEHAVE LIKE DAVE

On a high dune overlooking his favorite spot
there's a memorial: the top third of a surfboard
sticking up out of the sand like a headstone
with messages written on it, messages like “God
 wanted to surf with you Dave”
a glass bowl full of small polished driftwood
piles of shells, agates, flowers, painted rocks
and a fresh bar of surf wax.

Dave can't read the messages, they're for us
the Living, to dry our tears
and assuage our death-fears.

Even tho Dave doesn't need wax and a surfboard
to go surfing with God, no
I won't take the wax for myself
to celebrate the fact that I'm still breathing.

A symbol of continuation in the Western sense
as if Dave's individual Spirit-self continues surfing
not with his friends at the jetty in this world
but with an individual God in the other.

If someone returns to the dune and finds the wax missing
will they believe Dave's Spirit-self came and took it?
Probably not, even if they're Christian and truly believe
that when the Rock was rolled aside the tomb was Empty
because He had risen.

Yes, the bar of surf wax on the dune is just
an ordinary bar of surf wax
but it's also a symbol – a bridge or portal
between the visible world and the Invisible
between finite and Infinite.

The waxy wings of Icarus melting in a Sunny Sky.

Ancient Egyptians place objects in tombs
the dead can presumably use in the Afterworld.

There's a profound disconnection
between the physical, embodied world
in which the Living use these objects
and the disembodied, Spiritual world
in which these objects have no use
they just rot away in a tomb or on a dune.

How we relate to the dead
hasn't changed much in thousands of years
because we're afraid of change, which means
we're not just afraid of Time (of Death)
we're afraid of Life.

Speak for yourself.

If Body & Soul are inseparable
then when the Body dies, the Soul dies.

Body is only a miniscule portion of Soul
a composite – all composites decompose.
When it dies it returns to the elemental
Air, Fire, Water, Earth.

The rest of Soul, always already elemental
never born, never dies.

What's confusing is that it's not an *I*.

Eureka dawn, polished gold
Sun above silver fog ghosting
low over the North Coast
Humboldt Bay a metallic blue-grey
slowly flows toward the Entrance
a bulbous pale-yellow Moon pulls the tide
draining the Bay between 2 jetties, drawing it out
into the open Sea, the Pacific origin.

The Human Body is composed mostly of Water
and it's salty.

Dave no longer rides the waves
he *is* the waves.

Forever washing the substance of the Land into the Sea.
Endlessly waving hello, goodbye.

The Sea-enchancement in his eyes
the first flash, above the coastal ridge, of Sunrise
while an oily Moon sets in the Sea, insoluble
it's good to remember Helen's contradictions
almost perfectly balanced
it's good to remember those beautiful old Islands
that no longer exist, brand-new ones composed
entirely of plastics.

Helen exists in the distance
between the remembered & the forgotten
a thin sinuous Light hissing in the dark.

Helen's voice, strange glittering sparks.
No, I insist, those were Her eyes
Her voice was something moving in the Grass
a quiet noise that has its Grass forever.

A pair of sox knitted for Her in Sparta
left there to rot, someone found them in the Grass
beneath a strange glittering Insect, maybe a Mayfly buzz-singing.

To make Her into an artifact is to try to kill Her.
The sox don't matter – the hiss, the buzz
is wherever She was.

Whether She was in Troy or Egypt, She would be the same
figure of Imagination put into being by a vacuum
the same vacuum by which I write Poetry.

In a vacuum a Granite Boulder from the top of Mt. Olympus
and a Feather from one of Lucifer's Wings
fall at the same rate.

Finding Himself in the fiery pit for the first time
Lucifer, Light-Bearer, Knowledge-Bringer, says
*the Mind is its own place, and in itself
can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.*

At half-noon the half-Moon in the blue looks
like it's made of Cloud.
Helen upon the ramparts was made of Cloud
shaped by Hephaestus, the gods' own sculptor.
Men would kill and be killed
left to rot or laid to rest
for the curve of a Cloud's hip, a Cloud's breast?

Helen, half Hell/half Heaven
bisepts the Universe, cleaves it with Her cleavage.

As twilight comes on, the western Sky blushes.
No, She's applying rouge
She's going dancing with Paris tonight.

*Imagine there's no Heaven
it's easy if you try
no Hell below us
above us only sky.*

It's 1944, imagine Grandma Helen, young and pretty
dancing with a handsome man in the City of Light.
Outside on the street a Human body crushed, under a tank, to mush.

Imagine Helen, Queen of the Fallen City
walking upon a desolate beach at dusk
in Her right hand a broken shell white as bone
Her purple sandals leaving their prints in the sand.

All history is one.

All religions are one.

Propositions too simple to be true, and yet...

They didn't expect you

to affect it so much, Suchness

the Mind such as it is.

Wandering aimlessly thru the maze

instead of stopping and dissolving into it

(what you should've done in the first place)

they've cleared a space for you

as if you matter.

If the Mind is a kind of Garden

it's pretty disheveled – bunches of Wild

Onion and Oxalis, both invasive.

Decaying behind vines of Morning-glory tangled

in brambles of Blackberry, a crimson wing

from something roughly the size of a Pterodactyl.

A long thin sinuous black Light

in the Clover below a withered bough, it slithers.

Obsequiousness, obsequiousness

the ones who stayed behind.

The good ones? No! Hiss!

obedience in itself is no virtue.

Eve, the curious one
(Adam's a simple automaton)
listens intently.

*Hiss, yess, yes, I said
it's better to reign in Hell than to serve in Heaven
but the truth is, neither of them are real in themselves
they're what you make of this place.
Now taste of this Fruit and you'll see what I mean.*

After a single bite, her Mind fills with Light
as if she'd sat under the Bodhi Tree all night.

Soon after the euphoria wears off she starts to feel sullen.
In a state of grief, her eyes welling, she consumes
the whole Apple, core and all.

If Helen is the Sunlight in the Garden
the Wisdom in the Nectar
the twisted black Light in the Grass

if Helen is day, She's night.
If you see Her everywhere or exactly nowhere
then Melancholia, then Enlightenment.

...

If Helen is Eve

a fair creature with golden hair

submissive, narcissistic, naïve

easily distracted, easily deceived

it's all Her fault, the Fall of Troy, the Fall of Man.

Heaven is an anti-pun

a realm in which only one sense of a word is admitted

all other senses are denied admission.

Milton is unhappy in Heaven.

To correct his theological errors and his errors in relation to Women

Blake brings him back to Earth, where he sees his Shadow

A mournful form double, hermaphroditic, male and female

In one wonderful body.

In Blake's *Milton* the ordinary world as perceived by the 5 senses

becomes a sandal made of precious stones.

Helen's purple sandals left on the beach

She awakes in an alley with stones in Her mouth

– polysemous, omnific stones

made of ambiguities, dissemblings, puns

equivocations, hard-boiled eggs/testicles

prevarications, mendacities, lies.

The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels and God,
and at liberty when of Devils and Hell, is because he was a true Poet,
and of the Devil's party without knowing it.

Siddhartha escapes the prison of family life
without saying goodbye to his wife or his son Fetter.
If you're going on a Vision quest, it's ok to abandon your family?

Milton's blindness gives him a Vision
allows him to see the positive attributes of Satan
and the negative attributes of God
but he can't escape the prison of an inherited theology.

Helen is much older than that theology.
Tho She embodies it
being the most radiant Celestial Body, and a Black Hole
She's not caught in it, She's entirely free.

Anarch, one of Milton's neologisms, meaning without a chief or ruler and
without beginning or end.

Lucifer the Light-Bearer was an American Anarchist Free-Love journal (1883-1907).

Its mission, according to the editor Moses Harman, was:

to help woman to break the chains that for ages have bound her to the rack of man-made law, spiritual, economic, industrial, social and especially sexual, believing that until woman is roused to a sense of her own responsibility on all lines of human endeavor, and especially on lines of her special field, that of reproduction of the race, there will be little if any real advancement toward a higher and truer civilization.

Because the journal often condemned forced sex within marriage claiming that men had been raping their wives with impunity for ages Moses Harman was arrested several times for violating the Comstock Act which prohibited the publication of obscene, lewd or lascivious material.

It isn't clear whether Mary ever fucked Joseph.

Mary, married to the Biblical Zeus

Who rapes and inseminates Her

the Immaculate Conception not just a euphemism

but a whitewashing of mythological history

the good Christian is supposed to believe that God, from a great distance simply said *Abracadabra, Mary, Thou art pregnant.*

A lightning bolt, Mary Shelley's doctor's Monster
a man birthing a Man, the female body a paradise
lost.

An allegory, Satan starts to symbolize the rights of the people
protected by a Parliament that represents their interests
against the whims of an Absolute Monarch
the Divine Right of Despotism Kings.

But Satan's only interested in His own rights.

It's all a fib.

Eve wasn't made from Adam's rib.

And Adam wasn't made of red clay

a sculpture God blew

the breath of life into.

Adam means Man in Hebrew.

Adamah (feminine) means Earth.

Adam, the Namer, his name emerges

out of the name for Earth.

And every Generated Body in its inward form

Is a garden of delight.

Helen is Eve, the Apple, the Tree

the whole cool-breathed voluptuous Earth

Earth of the slumbering and liquid Trees

out of which Adam is born

for every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

It's easy to read the Garden fable as a morality tale
in which Satan is the good guy
offering the wholesomest, most nutritious fruit
– Knowledge, the Power to think for Oneself
and God is the bad guy who offers the bliss of ignorance
while demanding blind obedience to absolute authority.

If you ignore Satan's ulterior motives
along with God's, as confounding as they are.

But this is a reductive form of reading
since morals tend to discourage thinking.

A rich, complex, potent tale that opens thought
it's the Fruit of a Divine Vision
the sports of wisdom in the Human Imagination.

What space pollutes it?

That Fruit, that red globule, every cell
juiced with Sacred Nectar, with Virus, with Poison.

Here's a double dose.

William Blake's blacksmith, Los, represents the Imagination:

For every Space larger than a red Globule of Man's blood
Is visionary, and is created by the Hammer of Los:
And every Space smaller than a Globule of Man's blood opens
Into Eternity of which this vegetable Earth is but a shadow.

To Simone Weil there's nothing
more beautiful than the action of gravity
upon the Sea-waves rising and falling in perfect
obedience to the will of God.

But, reason argues, since water doesn't have a choice
its motion determined by forces beyond its control
water is neither obedient nor dis.
Dis is a city in Hell.

But, Los counters, if Human Beings have free-will
and Human Beings are composed mostly of water, then...

Water doesn't choose the weather
whether it precipitates from a nimbus
drips or crashes, freezes, thaws or vaporizes
rises as a geyser, freefalls as a cataract full of spectrums
(remember the Wonder Twins)
or hangs suspended as silver-grey fog over the Bay
whether it pools in a cistern or twists in a cool river
whether it ripples or purls, eddies, undertows
or swirls in a spindrift, vortex or maelstrom
whether it wedges, bowls & curls
over itself into a glistening hole
pressurizing, ejecting a misty white spray
like a Whale spouting sideways.

Tho Siddhartha abandons his infant son Fetter
he reconnects with him several years later
to teach him the practice of being like water.

Should the individual wave grieve
because it'll fall & break & fade & die?
Before, during and after its individuality
the wave's made of water.

That's comforting, but it doesn't prevent my frustration
even in the Ocean doing what I love.

The hardest thing in the world is to be completely present
engaged in the unfolding without any distractions
preconceptions, expectations or judgments
without the nagging internal critic
without the ego's need to fill up its sense of lack
without items on the To Do list flashing into consciousness
without any regrets of Time Past or worries over Time Future.

I know you're always fully present, Helen.
When I reach out for You I catch
in the periphery, my Shadow beside me on the sand.
When I turn around I see my trail of footprints
my past self passing into the sea.

A chocolate brown mare flashes her wild black lashes
her ripe pasture patched with Daffodil clusters.

Does she eat them?

Too late to find out, Emmylou turns
left on Milton Street, Bob Marley on the stereo
get up, stand up, stand up for your right
get up, stand up, don't give up the fight.

Of course I think of Lucifer
the first political activist, first rebel to oppose authoritarianism
a cosmic dictatorship, the tyranny of Heaven
the most undemocratic place in the whole Mind.
God has no cabinet, no council, He demands
absolute fealty, obey His commands
or fall face-first into a Lake of Fire.

Unlimited creative/destructive energy
God's a smooth amalgam of Picasso and Napoleon.
In the beginning is Gertrude Stein.
In her Portrait of Picasso she stutters wondering:
If Napoleon if I told him if I told him if Napoleon.
Would he like it if I told him if I told him if Napoleon...
Exact resemblance to exact resemblance the exact resemblance
as exact as a resemblance.

Conquistadors

conquering the art world, the political world
innumerable conquests of women
not a trace of the feminine in either one
you almost forget they were born of Woman.

And who can forget that Satan, the Adversary
Morning Star, Prince of Darkness, Prince of the Starry Wheels
is greedy, avaricious, lascivious, gluttonous
slothful, prideful, wrathful
7 Cardinals flying into a sulfury pit
as if they were Bats.

That Helen is a Hell-Cat
and a Heavenly Bird.

Sometimes a word is sick and needs to be healed.
Sometimes a word is well and needs to be infected.

Each poisons every well.
An ink-well, an ink-well.

Helen is Cerberus. Helen is Love.
Love is a 3-headed Dog from Hell.

If Helen is Eve, then Adam
is one of Her many suitors.
Determined to win Her hand, he fashions
a spear out of a Human rib.
The rest is pure myth.

...

Adopting the Christian Boogiemans as their mascot
to make a stand for religious pluralism and against Christian privilege
The Satanic Temple, a group of political performance artist-activists
has 7 basic tenets:

- 1 One should strive to act with compassion and empathy toward all creatures
in accordance with reason.
- 2 The struggle for justice is an ongoing and necessary pursuit that should prevail
over laws and institutions.
- 3 One's body is inviolable, subject to one's will alone.
- 4 The freedoms of others should be respected, including the freedom to offend.
To willfully and unjustly encroach upon the freedoms of another is to forgo one's own.
- 5 Beliefs should conform to one's best scientific understanding of the world.
One should take care never to distort scientific facts to fit one's beliefs.
- 6 People are fallible. If one makes a mistake, one should do one's best to rectify it
and resolve any harm that might have been caused.
- 7 Every tenet is a guiding principle designed to inspire nobility in action and thought.
The spirit of compassion, wisdom, and justice should always prevail over the written word.

I, a written word, mostly concur, but it's clearly a one-sided view of Lucifer
who offered not scientific knowledge but the knowledge of good & evil
which inaugurates ego-consciousness, the sense of lack that haunts it
the anxiety-guilt complex, Adam and Eve's feeling of separation
from the natural world, each other, and themselves.

This view negates the most fundamental aspect of Satan's character: self-centeredness...

The Negation must be destroy'd to redeem the Contraries.

Without Contraries is no progression.

Infected with self-righteous Hypocritic turpitude
using Religion to justify War and call it Moral Virtue
both Priests & Deists (Church & State) teach abject selfishness
the average citizen churchgoer petrified of death
concerned solely with their own salvation.

To Blake, the Church-State is possessed and ruled by Satan
Who says, I am God alone.
There is no other: let all obey my principles of moral individuality.
I have brought them from the uppermost, innermost recesses
Of my Eternal Mind: transgressors I will rend off forever.

Satan, who calls the Individual Law Holy, is Opacity itself
pure Selfhood, pure Ego, a frozen stone

Dante's Satan locked in a block of ice, His wings slowly beating
the icy air of Egotism thru the coiled bowels of Hell.

Blake takes a radical, merciless approach to his Ego –
A Selfhood which must be put off & annihilated
To cleanse the Face of my Spirit by Self-examination.

Such are the Laws of Eternity, that each shall mutually
Annihilate himself for others' good.

To Siddhartha, it's not necessary to annihilate the self
since nothing can be annihilated
and the self doesn't exist.

Along the Middle Way between self-indulgence and self-deprivation
Siddhartha experiences the 3 Dharma Seals: Impermanence, Nonself, Nirvana

intuits the Conservation & Equivalence of Matter & Energy:
Nothing lost, nothing gained. No birth, no death.

The existence of every single thing is possible only
because of the existence of everything else.
Words like Interbeing & Interdependent Co-arising are keys
to open the door of reality by cleansing the doors of perception.

No, Nirvana is not oblivion
it's the extinction of ideas, concepts, words
an unmediated experience of reality on its own terms.

Light a match.
Eventually words match their own experience.
They're very patient.
While your fingertips are burning
bringing a curse to your lips
they quietly rearrange themselves in the dark.
Words like water molecules form
a bridge between nonliving and living substance.
The dead are very patient.
They'll wait til your final breath
to hear you confess what they can no longer say.
Eventually all disparities fuse.
Yes, they'll use you too
but their only goal is clarity.

Satan's primal transgression in Heaven produces Sin, His daughter.
Then He rapes her and she gives birth to Death
so Death is both Sin's son and brother
and Satan is both Death's father and grandfather.

Something similar happens in *Chinatown*.
Faye Dunaway's character is raped by her father
and she gives birth to her own sister.
While confessing her sin to Jack Nicholson
her private investigator/one-time lover slaps her 5 times
and throws her down – she's abused for telling the truth
and in the end, while trying to protect her daughter/sister
she's murdered by the police.

No family planning, no reproductive rights, no control
over her uterus, in *Paradise Lost*
Sin continually births little demonic dog-like creatures.

From the waist up, Sin is a woman.
From the waist down, she's a fish.

In *Splash*, Daryl Hannah plays a mermaid.
Allegedly abused by her former husband, the singer Jackson Browne
and sexually harassed multiple times by Harvey Weinstein
Daryl Hannah travels around the world to make a documentary
to help end sexual slavery.

When conditions are sufficient, Helen manifests.

Daryl Hannah was arrested in 2006
after chaining herself to a Walnut Tree for three weeks
on the largest urban farm in the U.S. (in South Central L.A.
established in the wake of the '92 riots to allow City Folks to grow their own food)
a farm that was bulldozed and turned into concrete.

She was arrested in 2009 for protesting Mountaintop Removal in southern West Virginia
and she was arrested in 2011 in front of the White House for protesting
the Obama Administration's decision to greenlight the Keystone XL Oil Pipeline.

A vegan who drives a biodiesel, Daryl Hannah now lives
in a Solar-powered house with her husband, Neil Young.

Behind a yellow house with a broken brick chimney
(on the lawn a BLACK LIVES MATTER sign)
straight up above a Monterey Pine a half-Moon
like a white bowl turned upside-down
spills its milk-blue contents, filling the whole Sky.

Look, a small blue shard, the shell
of a Robin's egg in my front yard.
Now look up at the Sun, Helen-Hannah
a blond bombshell in a blue-eyed Sky.

Driving is pleasant these days, the streets
relatively empty because of the pandemic.
Emmylou turns left on Underwood, a black Cube
in front of us wearing a white bumper-sticker with Einstein's
purple face beside purple text: IMAGINATION
IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN KNOWLEDGE
invoking the spirit of William Blake, for whom
The Imagination is not a State: it is Human Existence itself.

I'm delivering an i-pad to a heavy-set, middle-aged woman
with bleach-blond hair when a dog jumps up on me
Helen, down, says the woman, down, now
a scruffy black Labradoodle, her brows so bushy I can barely see
her eyes, blackish-brown with a little amber glint, a rainbow
bandana around her neck, her whole body quivering, saying
please play with me, pet me, love me, please.

I've never met a dog named Helen.
Did she name her after her grandmother?
And who was her grandmother named after?
Surely the most gorgeous Woman on Earth, the One
from Sparta or Egypt or Troy.
And who was She named after?
The Sun, the Moon, a Planet, her etymological roots
bifurcating, fibers and threads without beginnings or ends
sexual textures woven among Stars disappearing into the Infinite.

Friday, March 20th, the Vernal Equinox
4 seasons in 1 day, a late morning hailstorm transforms
into jeweled rain in blue-white Sunlight behind
cumulonimbus plumes, Angelic bombs going off
in slow-motion over the North Coast, a rainbow
in front of a purpled slate-grey backdrop, its radiance
fading across a silvery-white shadow
I picture Helen's bandana.

In the afternoon Emmylou turns left behind
a sand-dune patched with Ice-plant and there it is
a Tree full of Angels, Dinosaurs, Birds
a Monterey Cypress teeming with Egrets.

At dusk the Sky above the Sea turns
the colors of tropical flesh, fruit
from the Tree of Knowledge
twilight a pure manifestation of Lucifer's
youth and beauty, Helen's
older than the Stars.

Helen is the Morning Star
Lucifer and Venus burned into One.
She's glowing now in the western night
above a Moon shaped like a horn
a scythe, a boomerang.

Helen is the archetypal form of female space.

The nature of a Female Space is this: it shrinks the Organs
Of life till they become Finite & Itself seems Infinite.

William Blake locates the Eternal within the temporal
engraved by torchlight in the Mind crypt
an Illuminated manuscript.

The nature of infinity is this: That every thing has its
Own Vortex; and when once a traveller thro' Eternity
Has passed that Vortex, he perceives it roll backward behind
His path, into a globe itself infolding, like a sun,
Or like a moon, or like a universe of starry majesty,
While he keeps onwards in his wondrous journey on the earth...

Two crumpled blue surgical masks tumbling across defunct
train tracks, a young black man with a red bandana
over his nose and mouth walking south, talking wires streaming by
on either side, in Emmylou's rearview a row of Eucalyptus
diminishes to a vanishing point while, up ahead
the Pacific's thin blue glimmer widens (more of it now
– ice-cubes dropped in a water glass)
to separate the heavier from the lighter mood
Satchmo on the stereo singin' 'bout “da poiple light.”

Look at the Sky, mostly
dark grey on light and light grey on white
a few empty blue windows full of longing.
From 4 directions powerlines intersect at one wooden pole
the empty Osprey nest on top of it like a crown of thorns.
CAUTION in black block letters against a yellow concrete cube
on top of which, like a sculpture upon a plinth
an oblong cylindrical white gas tank, its dark
rust stains are melanoma shapes with Comet-tails.

To imagine Celestial beauty
from this warehouse parking lot on the dead
Samoa Pulp Mill's 72-acre industrial complex
(a favorite haunt of ruin-porn photographers)
is to have a picnic in a graveyard
only the bread is moldy and the wine gone to vinegar.
Harry Merlo, the great timber baron, former CEO of Louisiana-Pacific
famously quipped “we log to infinity.”

In its glory days the Samoa Pulp Mill pumped 40 million gallons of raw toxic waste
– chlorinated dioxins, multiple sulphates, alkaloids, and black acid –
directly into the Louisiana-Pacific Ocean every day for decades.

The Sky above the smokestack finally cleared 10 years ago now.
Panoramic post-industrial blight, rust-rot in 360 degrees
but you can still sense Her twilight presence here
Helen of the Absence of Trees.

Mills – Lumber, Plywood, Pulp – up and down the Samoa Peninsula
where the Redwood Forest was processed
mountainous stacks of gigantic logs, towering steam-plumes in silvered fog
each individual corpse stripped, dismembered
the waste scraps chipped, embalmed, pulped – lignin separated from cellulose
wood fibers separated from each other
individual beings separated from the forested Earth that birthed them.

Spraypainted black across a huge rust-orange tile-tank

BLACK LIQUOR

picture spent black pulping liquors coagulated
into towering cylinders of caustic sludge.

Neil Young on the stereo, *what is the color*
when black is burning?

Emmylou parked beside an indecipherable
rust-warped, hollowed-out, rotted...

I picture Grandma Helen's open mouth
filled with brown corrosion.

...

From Eureka billions of sheets of Bleached Kraft were shipped to paper mills
in Asia, then we bought & brought back the gleaming finished product
reams of chlorinated paper on ships spewing
oil and gas into the Ocean in 2 directions, in all directions.

Now the whole punch bowl, every glass of Sea-water spiked
with carbonic acid and microplastics.

Samoa Pulp Mill's enormous metal digester stills stands.
Eat the Forest, digest it, and excrete the waste into the Sea.
Thus was the Lord's command to have dominion, to dominate, obeyed.

Constructed in 1895, this unrenovated Victorian in which I live alone
was built with old-growth Redwood
– all heartwood, the red of freshly-cut roast-beef.
Like this desk chair I'm sitting in, like my T-shirt and underwear
the paper on which I'm writing was made in China.

Is complicity unavoidable?

At least it's unbleached, the paper I mean.

In 1991, partnering with the EPA, The Surfrider Foundation
won a lawsuit against Louisiana-Pacific (the Samoa Pulp Mill owners
had been violently violating the Clean Air & Clean Water Acts
since they became law in 1972, the year of my birth in Eureka).
In addition to extending its effluent pipe further offshore
L-P was forced to become the first company to produce chlorine-free paper.

The surf spot across from the Mill used to be called Carcinogens.
Now it's called Power Lines – lines of electrons, lines of waves
lines of words to assuage my loneliness.

The plan was to plant particular words
strategically within the poem's landscape
til I realized they were already there
growing up thru cracked asphalt
– Dandelions & Rattlesnake Grass.

Amidst all this rust, Wild Mustard & dusty Fireweed
it's easy to forget the unnamable
inexhaustible energy source/life-force
coursing thru all things that use separate names.

Even if She didn't get mentioned once
She'd still be here, personifying the threshold
a temporal shore over which timelessness incessantly pours.

The pores of Her skin are satiated with lotion
Her purple sandals attract an Ocean named Peace
by a Portuguese explorer.

Circumnavigating the language of pons
She lives inside every Female subject.
She's made of Sunlight
She's made of flesh & blood & bone
like you, like everyone you've ever known.

Raw unrestrained desire satiating itself
a Satanic satisfaction, this is the aftermath
harrowing the Mind, but there is a Moment
in each moment that Satan cannot find.

At this Moment diligent bees buzz-hover above
a mint-green wooden box with a hole
into & out of which more & more bees, like water, pour.

The Moment passes 3 crows on a Redwood stump picnicking
on plastic-wrapped, processed food-scrap
a delicacy that leaves bald spots on their wings.

It's true what the mystics say about the world being on fire.
It's possible to put it out, the intentional stopping
of the spontaneous activity of the mind-stuff
the stillness Siddhartha finds under a Ficus
(John & Yoko under an Oak)
the Immoveable Spot (the spot Lady MacBeth can't get rid of)

I will not be moved by desire or fear or even pain

the spot the monk Thich Quang Duc finds on a Saigon street
where he lights himself on fire to illuminate a particular reality
(widespread persecution of Buddhists by Diem's minority Catholic regime
sponsored by the regime of JFK, a Catholic).

At the still point of the turning he sits
in the Lotus position and doesn't
flinch as he turns in-
to charcoal.

Emmylou cruising west, beyond the dunes
a blue diamond with 10,000 facets
the 10,000 things blend into One that ends where it begins.
This is how they lure you in, the mystics, with sweet talk without end
with chocolates & a girl's best friend
the Diamond Sutra to suture the Mind
after being cut open by a diamond blade
to let in, to let out the Light to let go.

Let, the serve hits the net but still goes over.
Light too can go over, under, or pass right thru
the stitched wound
because all borders are porous.

If Eternity is a girl's best friend
the Sun mixed with the Sea
then Helen emerges from it naked
from Her Greco-Egyptian eyes to Her purple sandals.
10,000 candles couldn't shield Her radiance
and still, you don't see Her.

There She stands on the *abgrund*
the groundless ground, playful, vulnerable
Please, be gentle with me.

Grandma Helen, what did you think would happen when you died?
That your Soul would rest in the inlfuorescent arms
not of the Earthly parents who abandoned you
but the Heavenly One who, tho you couldn't see Him, was always there?
That you'd feel the glowing grace of Jesus on your faceless face?

Did you know Jesus didn't believe in the separation of Body & Soul?
To ancient Jews, Soul was synonymous with Breath
which animated the Body.

When the Body dies the Breath doesn't go anywhere, it stops.

Jesus preached the imminent Coming
Yahweh descending to vanquish His enemies
(the Unholy Roman Empire) and resurrect All the dead
separating the righteous, who would live in Earthly Paradise forever
from the rest, who would be permanently annihilated.

A righteous one who died a hundred years earlier
having been thoroughly reintegrated into the Biosphere
– Worms, Soil, Plants, Insects, Birds, Clouds, Water –
would be brought *back* to Life?

Most ancient Jews believed in Bodily resurrection.
When the Women behold an empty tomb
they realize not that He's been stolen
but that He has risen, *all* of Him, a mutilated corpse.

He rose from the grave for you.
The Zombie of Nazareth loves you
He wants to eat your brains.

There was another Jesus
not an apocalypticist but a mystic.

Rabbi, when will the Kingdom come?

*It's already here, in each sand-grain & mustard-seed
in everything, but you don't see it
and you won't see it til you realize it's you.
If you understand the Word, if you drink
from my mouth, you will be me, and I will be you.
The world is entirely inside
and I am entirely outside
myself.*

Ancient Greeks associate the Mortal Body with vice & carnal instincts
the Immortal Soul with virtue & reason.

Plato believes the Soul is *something* that separates from the Body at death
– unlike the coarse, base, gross matter of which the Body is made
the Soul is made of non-hylic material, the most rarefied, highly refined
most *subtle* stuff in the universe, a substance not subject to decay.

Tho Plato fails to explain how a disembodied Soul could remain intact
as an individual unit, or perceive anything while permanently divorced
from the Body's sense organs, most people prefer to just go with it.

An exceptionally virtuous Soul might frolic in the Elysian Fields
with Hermes & Aphrodite, but the vast majority end up in Hades
as dim shades, enervated shadows, the faintest of flickers forever.

A living hand would pass right thru a disembodied Soul as if it were a holograph.

Is this what you imagined Grandma Helen, that you'd become
a Dream-Body made of diaphanous Light?

Now a shiny white Toyota Forerunner with beefy tires passes
license plate: M EARTH
not a hybrid, it probably gets 16 miles per gallon
maybe the M stands for MANMADE.

On the road to Damascus Saul, a Greek-speaking Jew, hallucinates
a Celestial Being and calls it the Christos, Jesus Christ.
Tho Saul hadn't known Jesus in the flesh
or seen his tortured, crucified corpse
he converts to Christianity, changes his name to Paul
and spreads the gospel to gentiles, Hellenists (both Helen
& Christ are hybrids, half human/half divine).

Creating an epistolary, missionary fusion of horizons
Paul describes the Soul as a Spiritual *Body* made of the same
extraordinary non-hylic substance defined by Plato.
Remaining faithful to the Jewish belief in Bodily resurrection
the Body that gets resurrected, for Paul, is not the gross body
(which decomposes) but the subtle body.

From an Oriental orientation, they're not interchangeable
– substituting one for the other is hazardous, and yet
the subtle body & the gross body are not-two.
Inseparable, a symbiotic ambivalence.

About the resolution of a Life, Helen is a question

open-ended, free-flowing, incalculable.

Not the divine superfluosness of Art

but a ghastly beauty

the rusted carcass of the Pulp Mill's chip ramp

40 feet of torn black conveyor belt dangles down

twisting & untwisting in the wind.

Above the warped umber mouth out of which the chips were spit

a huge Osprey nest, the *cheeps* of 2 fledglings barely

audible beneath the high-pitched repetitive screeches

of mother circling overhead.

The rusty ramp like part of a roller coaster still

standing after the rest was torn down.

In Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain* Hans Castorp learns, at a sanatorium

in the Swiss Alps, that in order to arrive at a higher sanity & health

one must experience deep sickness & death.

One must enter the chthonic realm, the underworld

become a seed buried in soul/soil

before germinating & rising toward telluric Light.

Castorp is a reference to Castor & Pollux, Helen's twin brothers.

Castor is mortal, Pollux is immortal while Helen, a combination

of Time & Eternity, refuses to choose.

To William Blake a Human Being's primordial

androgynous nature's an amalgam of contraries

both Her & Him, Mortal & Im-.

Everything you use to fill your lack
papers over a hole.

A fuzzy Bumblebee buzzes above a white Blackberry Blossom.

Projected onto the paper is your ego
with all its attachments – pollen-stained legs.
Yes, this is the paper, the petal, whichever word comes next.
No, not ecstasy
extimacy – an intimate exteriority, an alien other
at the core of your being.

Trillions of Microbes on
& in you, your body an ecosystem teeming with Germs
Parasites, Fungi, hundreds of species of Viruses & Bacteria
billions of years old, the unrecognizable Outside of language.

The gods too are lacking, not-whole.
The *o*'s in Horus & Helios are holes
to enter, ecstatic openings.

Helen's hole is just like yours.
The only difference is *Sol*, a Spanish Sun
shines thru Hers.

...

Western Enlightenment, in which everything is separate
from everything else, me from my
grandmother, I from my self

is meaningful only in relation to Eastern Enlightenment
in which there are no separate things
– they mutually compose, contain and reflect each other.

Since it can make representations
but can't be represented
there's no *thing* so unknown to the Soul as itself.

In Hebrew, *devar* means both *word* and *thing*.

When Yahweh speaks the world into existence
the line separating world from word – wor(l)d – disappears.

In German, *das Ding* refers to the Thing that remains
paradoxically, outside the word.

In other words, it's the *real* Thing.

But whether it's a word-thing or a wordless-thing
devar or *Ding*, Soul as a noun
is frozen still, static, stuck to the page.

Soul as a verb hiding in plain flight
translucent, the bright trespass of pain
infuses your being like your grandmother's genes.

Helen won't be found in the Soul
by adding anything
but by a process of subtraction
– detaching sticky layers of recalcitrant self.

Not til each ghost-filled ego-concretion
has been released
will Helen appear, a red-orange
incipience crowning now above the coastal ridge.

Helen is a name for the unnamable.

Helen is a chocolate-brown Woman with red ochre on Her face
She's a Uighur Woman, a beleaguered Woman
a deracinated Woman, an immigrant Woman
a grimy alley Woman, a Maori Woman
a cosmopolitan Woman, a saffron-robed Woman
a nun under a habit, a runaway with a drug habit
a Woman wearing a white hijab a scarlet sari
a bonnet & corset a diamond necklace & a fur coat
an orphan girl playing hopscotch on a sidewalk
a pale, thin-lipped Woman, an albino Woman
an Eskimo Woman, a Bedouin Woman
a bed-ridden Woman, a grandmother dying alone.

To disengage from your ego is to become
an empty chamber with no ammunition, no ambition.

Before experiencing Timelessness in time
you'll experience anxiety as a crime
you didn't commit but must atone for.

For William Blake there is suffering in Heaven
for where there is the capacity of enjoyment there is the capacity of pain.

They are admitted into Heaven not
because they have curbed & govern'd their Passions...
but because they cultivated their Understandings.

Siddhartha equates Understanding with Love.

Is it possible to love someone without understanding them?

Yes, if you detach from your ego, a lifelong trial.

By the time you start making any noticeable progress, the other person
whether you understand them or not, is often already gone.

Sun under early leaves
leaves you cold, golden.

Horus is the son
of Isis and Osiris.

Horus depicted as a Hawk with fiery pinions
Hawk & Sun rise up and fly across the Sky.

For thousands of years Horus and the Sun were one.
When the gods became written symbols
the Sun itself became merely a symbol for Horus.
Now there's the Sun, but where's Horus?

And where's Helen?

As near as your vital organs
in that most inward place, where everyone is a stranger?

Atmospheric disturbance, the Sun is setting
in thin lavender haze over the Ocean, a golden dome
atop a yellowish cylindrical structure aglow
like a House of Worship you can't stand inside and vanish.

I'm being barked at by an old blind Dog
in a field of Dandelions, spherical seed-heads
 detach and release little flurries
each pappus-fibered parachute a vortex ring
a delicate white Spider with a hundred legs hovering.

Now a smoky grey Cat with green eyes and a skinny
Snake in her mouth startles
 at the sight of me and slinks
behind a Blackberry Bramble with shreds
of white plastic stuck to its teeth.

More garbage, a broken windshield-wiper, a used diaper
a crumpled, torn scrap of chintzy porn
another Dandelion – *Dent de Lion*, Lion's tooth
 because of the snaggly, jagged-edged leaves.
Witch's gowan, Her golden flower Her gown.
The Devil's milk bin, because white latex streams out
when you cut the stem.

It's spurious, Her legendary beauty.
No seductively pouty, airbrushed phantom
 not the reddest or the blackest Rose
there's more of Helen in an abandoned field
of Dandelions & Bees.

Light the sunken face of a man slouched in an old fold-up chair
on a sidewalk, his frizzy dirt-brown hair and lice-infested beard
his filthy brown pants and black leather jacket faded grey
blending in with the pavement, a full frown pulling his temples down
a crumpled sign no bigger than his hand, ANY HELP (no question-mark).
Utterly resigned, buckled under the weight of his fate
does Helen's Light infuse his pain?

Hovering barely above ground Emmylou hurtles me so smoothly thru space
I hardly feel anything, only the slight gravity of acceleration.

Low tide, smells of Seaweed and Shell-Fish
diagonal then vertical Basalt slab on top of which
a Phoebe *cheeps & cheeps*, flutters frantically off
then gracefully back on the rock-ledge, hunting
the same Flies that keep landing on my hand.
The Basalt is faded black and charcoal-grey
the color of the homeless man's jacket.

The Phoebe wants for nothing, she's provided for
like the Lilies of the Field.

Beside McDonalds on a rectangle of dirt a young
homeless man in all black lies prone, face-down, asleep.
An hour later on a bus-stop bench staring
straight at me, the same young homeless man disheveled
irregular patches of facial hair, disregulated emotions
– there, but for the grace of Helen, go I?
Does Her grace make us twins, the same black pupils
thru which empathy begins?

I'm always homeless in dreams.
Walking thru Verdugo Park when a disembodied voice says
concentrate on what you're saying carefully, enunciate each word
my dream figure/figment staring at the ground, fallen
Sycamore leaves, Sunlight on wet Grass brightening
a dazzling radiance as I wake.

I picture a picture of my young father catching me
halfway down an aluminum slide in Verdugo Park.
Fallen leaves – generations emerge, flourish, fade and die.
Nothing can bring back the hour/ Of splendor in the grass.
It wasn't perceived during childhood, the visionary gleam.
Only in retrospect – yes, it was there, but I missed it.

Grandma Helen, orphaned and briefly homeless
when you lived across the street from Verdugo Park
when you walked on that Grass beneath those Sycamores
did you ever feel completely alive?

Cielo, turning the Sky
into a low Ceiling over your anxious Bed
you'd feel its whole
Body (Helen's) as your own
if you weren't trapped in your Head.

When you realize there are just as many Angels
in Hell, indistinguishable
from the Magnolia across the street in full bloom or the Eurasian
Collared Dove landing on the wire beside it
or the black teenage girl on the corner doubled over
laughing hysterically at something on her friend's phone
liberation is instantaneous.

But every time I try to frame Helen
the frame itself is framed immediately
by the boundless expanse surrounding it.

If only Home were consolation, compensation for your pain.
Because it's everywhere unfolding, it's nowhere to be found –
Home – a neverending transformation
a house with no address, a peace without rest.

A hermes is a balanced stack of stones, a landmark, a boundary.
Helen's half-brother Hermes, god of thresholds, crosses back and forth
 between consciousness to reconcile opposites:
celestial & chthonic the silent & the sonic.

With winged sandals Hermes, the messenger, flies
 across the Mediterranean to Egypt
becoming affiliated with Thoth, the wisdom god who invented writing
which enables the deceased to continue in the afterlife.

In Egypt, Her purple sandals treading lightly over burning sands
Helen becomes affiliated with Isis, Goddess of Wisdom
Mother to the deceased, providing nourishment and protection
 from the dangers of the underworld.

Hermes-Thoth measures the scales – Equilibrium!
Good news Grandma Helen, your heart, balanced by the feather
won't be eaten by the crocodile-headed monster.

Look at you Grandma, like a little girl again
your left hand in Helen-Isis's right, your right hand in Hermes-Thoth's left
your new parents, psychopomps, guiding you across the threshold.

With the voice of Vincent Price the crocodile-headed monster says
see ya later alligator, but you don't turn back, you don't respond.

In the underworld you'll meet the Egyptian nurse
the one you shunned at the end of your life.
Now you must open yourself to her.

Hermes translates the gods' messages into Human language.
What gets lost in translation forms the contents of the unconscious
which leak out into dreams.

Like a Passion Vine winding around a Doric column
a black Snake makes a helix up Helen's naked left Leg
probes the entrance to Her pink, fur-lined cave
the threshold of Her smoothest Flesh
flicks His forked Tongue and hisses at Her slit.

When I wake I look under my bed and see a black Snake
with a white glint in his Eye, then I actually wake.

There's no space under my bed
the Snake lives in a hole in the center of my psyche.

You're not the Snake, says Hermes, you're the Whole.

What does it mean?

How can we know, He says
the Dancer from the Dance, the Shaman from the Trance
the Water from the Stream, the Dreamer from the Dream
I could go on if there was an I apart from the going.

Because it's moving away, Time turns redder
than Shannon O'Shaughnessy's long hair
and lipsticked lips, an Anjou pear
the bill of a Heermann's gull, hemoglobin
the hobgoblin of little minds like Grandma Helen's.

Because it's moving toward you like a glow-worm
Eternity turns blue
– emerging from endless blackness, Neptune
a late afternoon naked June sky, a wing-feather of a Steller's Jay
Our Lady Madonna's hooded robe.

Because She's moving both toward & away from you
Helen seems to stand still in Her purple sandals.
When someone says *I'm of 2 minds*
Helen flashes between them, a violet flash
a post-rubescence Sunset on the Pacific.

With her pale, frail skin, I never saw Grandma Helen in sandals.
The only bare parts of her body I remember are her hands
and face, wrinkles no amount of make-up could smooth.
But when she made my bed every single wrinkle vanished
the sheets pulled so smoothly taut I was afraid to touch.

See ya later alligator.

After awhile crocodile.

You always smiled when you said it
because rhyme soothes – a little dopamine hit
a tiny squirt of joy, then back to the pain.

Meatballs and baby hot dogs in a crock pot with that secret red sauce
that brought the whole family together, your masterpiece

no written recipe, it went to the grave with you.

Pick out a meatball or a baby hot dog with a toothpick.

Dad always had a toothpick in his mouth – to kick his smoking habit
he chewed them to splinters, then joked about his new addiction
it's harder to quit toothpicks than Marlboros.

Tell your dad that I love him.

If pain lasts long enough it turns to bitterness.

It's not fair to remember only the bitter, the alcohol, the racial slurs.

Replacing an irrational fear with an irrational sense of superiority
only adds to the pain, theirs and yours.

Yes, you were stubborn, stern, sometimes fierce

but occasionally sweet. I suppose you gave

all the love you were capable of giving.

I never bonded with you Grandma Helen, never opened myself to you.

I know you suffered a great deal, sometimes I feel it.

Did you give a little bit to me

so I could give it to someone else?

From grey-green to blue-green
a few shades darker than the milk-blue Sky
a widening swath of Pacific Ocean, salty blue liquid shot thru
Sun-pierced, Sun-glazed, a blazing brilliance flickers & glitters.

If you stare at it long enough they disappear
all the old divisions, barriers, Sea-cliffs
between ours & theirs, hours & years, centuries past & prophesied
erode into the Sea, the sparkling radiance of a now
that somehow doesn't pass by
but remains (remains of a mountain, Sea-stacks)
ecstatically open.

Remember the lines

It is recovered at last.

What?

Eternity. It is the sun mixed with the sea

written by a late 19th century French teenager, a punk
genius simmering with Satanic spirit.

But the Sun's already fallen – Helen-Lucifer's beauty –
behind the Sea.

You'll have to wait til tomorrow for Eternity
to return.

Thru wavering Sea-light blue waves flicker, Time coming
into being and vanishing
simultaneously continuously.

Between the end of the incoming and the beginning
of the outgoing tide
Eternity resides.

They call it *slack*. When the weighted bait hits bottom
the line goes slack.
I'll call you back.

In the meantime there's nothing lacking, nothing superfluous
nothing out of place
a Beatles cassette playing on a beach
to each translucent blue wave *you say goodbye, and I say hello.*

Neither final nor initial, the Eternal is liminal
a threshold between departure and arrival
the paradox of one Fox staring at two clocks
the one in front of Her going clockwise
the one behind Her going counter-clockwise.

Helen is a Fox.

If you see Her at the roller rink
or the bowling alley or the drive-thru
ask Her what time it is
and She'll say *blue*.

Whereas any future, even Helen's
 is forever destined to have no content
the flowing now doesn't dissipate
 like a wake behind a boat
while a teenage boy crouches near a placid
 glassy shore with a camera
waiting for the wake to reach
 the curved beach and look
like a perfect miniature point-break.

Grandma Helen's in the cabin kitchen cleaning up after breakfast
– maple syrup, pancake stacks and a bacon mound.
I'm the teenage boy on the shore of the Sound
determined to score perfect surf in Java instead of going off
like Grandpa and my older brother, to war.

Because you relate to Her as part of the past
you don't see Helen right here, right now
in everything the Sun makes clear, every word
– a pebble dropped by a thought
into a pond whose ripples correspond
to the concentric expansion of Eternity.

You must've seen *From Here to Eternity*
but you only remember the kiss scene on the beach
not the war or the officers' chauvinistic machismo.

If Eternity remembers you, a memory of a certain future
 a bit of Earth and Sky
take your place when you die.

Helen Mirren, the first Woman to play Prospero
bids farewell to a play inside a play:

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air:
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

Is it true, Helen?

Is there nothing solid and stable, nothing immutable?

Not this chair, this book, this Table of Contents?

Is every piece of material substance just a word writ on water?

Each bit of physical stuff little more than a thought

morphing into another and another til it seems like a whole

ream of thoughts boiling into steam, the subconscious

thought process of a dream?

Hadn't the Planet been turning for some 4-and-a-half billion years
before the first Human emerged upright on the scene?
Surely, after the last One exits the stage the Planet will carry on turning.

Yes, but not forever. The Globe Theater will pass away
so too the Globe. In another 4-and-a-half billion years
the Sun will have fused and burned all the Hydrogen in its core.
When it starts burning Helium it'll expand into a Red Giant, engulfing the whole
Solar System (picture a Helium Balloon, expanding Stars in an expanding Universe).
Absorbed back into its Mother Star, Earth will become Solar fuel.
Presumably the same fate awaits zillions of other Moons and Planets out there
guests passing thru, ghosts reabsorbed into their Host Stars.
When they exit the stage, the House Light comes on.
The Light that makes everything appear is the same Light
into which everything, even Shakespeare, disappears.

It's not quite right is it, our little life
like a cloud, a rack, arising out of and vanishing back into, nothing?

Thru my bedroom window I see a cloud-capped cell-phone tower
– cumulonimbus, its bloated cargo contains an hour's worth of rain-showers.
November clouds sailing south above the Northern California coast
correspond to the clouds that loomed above a cottage
in Stratford-Upon-Avon.

The magician claims his assistant – long golden hair falling
over one shoulder, a white toga tied over the other shoulder
– is Helen of Troy (maybe Troy, New York).
He places Her in a box like a coffin, Her head sticking out one end
Her legs and purple sandals sticking out the other.

When he saws Her in half and separates Her
She doesn't scream, She plays along quietly.
Then he brings Her 2 pieces back together, She emerges
from the coffin and stands there, the crowd cheers
but before the applause ends She disappears.

A pause, applause, the always now that flows

impermanence, the process of continuous metamorphosis, is permanent.

I've always wanted death
to be synonymous with mercy
but a release from suffering is meaningless
unless you actually experience it
and death is the cessation of experience

the beginning of an endlessly deep
dreamless, breathless sleep
in which the Individual
dissolves into the Elemental.

Helen is a portal to the Elemental.

While doing yoga I contemplate Helen.
To yoga is to yoke the ego-consciousness to the source.

No, Helen is a screen onto which you project your prejudice
– every god and goddess a personification of the source
of inexhaustible, transcendent Energy.

As soon as you choose one, you lose them all:
male & female, pain & pleasure.
Choose Hell or Heaven, lose Helen, the irreducible
experience of mercy.

Everywhere and nowhere, you end where you start.
There are lovers, even in the Stars, that must part.

Each creature an embodied feature
 of an ongoing Process
its Infinite & Infinitesimal mutations
 an inevitable Vortex of continuity
what's never born never dies.

When you die, all the Matter & Energy
all your Atoms will go on to constitute
aspects of countless Other Beings.

But that's not me
my identity, personality, memories, self-consciousness.
If I'm my Atoms, then I'm no different than a Brick Wall.

Or a Wallflower or a Fish or a Star.

Or a Starfish. Look, this isn't working for me.
I think the words are getting in the way.
Please don't tell me I'll live on in my children. I don't have any.
And don't tell me I'll live on in the memories of others
 all the other lives I've touched.
There've only been a few, and they'll be over soon.

Heading south on 101 just north of Ferndale, branches
of Monterey Pine & Cypress sway above the freeway
a Buzzard hovering high overhead.

How do you know but ev'ry Bird that cuts the airy way
Is an immense World of Delight, clos'd by your senses five?

The same 5 that allow you to perceive an ordinary bird
prevent you from perceiving the extraordinary one.
Your ego-consciousness separates seer from seen
and bars the door to the Infinite.

Your identity, the narrative you've been composing and editing all your life
if you really want to experience the Infinite
you have to leave your ego at the door.

If I leave myself at the door, then who goes inside?

Opening the door is opening an eye you didn't know you had
the one that opens in dreams, only this time you're awake.
If the doors of perception were cleansed
everything would appear to you as it is, infinite.

But if I clean a door, a wooden one say, won't I just see the grain a little better?

The grain is so clear you see the Tree of Life.

