

Collected Matter of a Renegade Pulse

© Robert Maurice Haas 2022

Contents

Love is the Gorgeous Limb.....	3
Icarus.....	4
Selecting Stones.....	5
Giraffe Song.....	6
Thanksgiving.....	7
The Hole in the Sky.....	8
Lines.....	9
Could You?.....	10
A Pound's Benefit.....	11
I Must See You Clearly.....	12
Father as a Young Man.....	13
Time as a Bit.....	14
Obscure Notions.....	15
Stepping Backwards.....	16
Post.....	17
Watching Gulls.....	18
What It Is.....	19
Flock of Birds.....	20
Openings.....	21
Palace of Tears.....	22
Smiling Skin.....	24
Beelzebub.....	25
Socket Caught.....	26
Rapt Vacuum.....	27
Sharing Blame.....	28
Verdant.....	29
Choices.....	30
Missing Pieces.....	31
Brinkmanship.....	32
If You Were a Waitress.....	33
Manifesto.....	34
About Conviction.....	35
An Eel's Maturity.....	36
Warped Definition.....	37
Winston.....	38
Small Package.....	39
In the Woods.....	41
Towards Anatomy.....	42
At the Edge.....	43
Where Wisdom Grows.....	44
Foxeye's Apocalypse.....	45
Gravity's Rotation.....	48
Lines Crossing.....	51
Theory of Relativity.....	52
About Smokey the Bear.....	53
Symmetry Failing to Prosper.....	54
When I Saw You at the Theater.....	55
Spiders and Flies.....	56

When Will the Little Boy Grow Up	57
The Stomach Groans.....	58
Maybe You Are One.....	59
Sizing Up Others.....	61
Ice Age.....	62
Lesser and Worse.....	63
Past Echoes.....	64
When the Tumbrel did Tumble.....	65
Our Weary Circus.....	66
Haiku.....	67

Love is the Gorgeous Limb

love is the gorgeous limb
on which you perch your heart
the flutter of its ecstatic wings
articulating the hunger for flight
and the cling of the gravity of kisses and sighs;

this brooding bubbling equipoise
is not easy to withstand, at once
girding for loss while
glorifying the echo of heights,
perhaps no longer reached.

Bob Haas, 12/07

Icarus

with those pvc wings
you wouldn't fly
you knew,
but falling was
at least a motion
outside the bars; there
are things much less beautiful than
broken bodies,
shards of stained glass
glistening in the sun.

RMHaas 10/19/84, rev. 4.13.90

Selecting Stones

for throwing,
 elliptic makes for electric smooth
 sides, an absence of points yields flight
honed like a blade; the polish of a gem one must pay for,
 aerodynamically unargumentative,
 a weight sufficient to gradually
parabolically and
 inexorably succumb to god gravity; manifestations
 of innate longing accumulated
 and borne over a millennium to be bird, not rock.

RMHaas, 1976

Giraffe Song

Muted siren on high,
but terrestrial and dumbstruck.
Bearing the majesty of non-utterance
beneath its ossicones worn like a crown of thorns,
honoring the noise of quiet.
Arrayed in abundant, conspicuous, dappled flesh,
its elongated neck and legs stretched like putty,
a figure seen in nature's funhouse mirror,
and celebrating the stark
white space between chords,
the thunderbolt without the thunder,
a taut stillness amidst tones,
the pause dividing echoes, earthly collisions, bird calls, words, and other
raucous detritus,
how a barren world speaks
when the wind calms to gone.
As silence goes to seed,
the pollution of spoken things, animal emissions, spewed epithets,
and other clangs and bangs,
fills the chasm left by
luxurious peace;
where before there had been
the absence of air clutter, rising cacophonous morsels
occupy what had been a hushed paradise.
But soon enough the kingdom will be recovered by the music
felt by the deaf and hearing worlds alike,
a song from no source,
but a palpable ricochet careening
from the origin of everything
across the scores of millenniums,
unleashed and fluttering
amidst the cud chews,
reverberating restlessly
again and again,
long after the last clamor.

Bob Haas
10.2021

Thanksgiving

The char of life,
The brittle edges
That mix the bitter and the honey-touched tastes
Almost accidental enjoyments and miseries
That dot the map you paint
With your days,
Certainly never intended
Like the contours of your face gaining age.

The need you have to savor the exquisite
Dissonance flounced by the polar sensate pauses
Of pain and pleasure, joy and devastation,
Envelopes, overwhelms, exhausts
At times, but
The need is the path to the relish of breaths
You've been given,
Not a choice, but a
Chance to taste the only cornucopia available.

The absence of an alternative frees you from the plight of judging if the
holiday of existence
Is good or bad, illusory or actual,
And to feast on the morsels of those moments
That you trust are plenty with meaning, if even
The string of all the dishes served to you and by you
Itself resists bestowing such satisfaction.

Bob Haas 112416

The Hole in the Sky

The hole in the sky
you punched to leave me
looms, a giant's smoke ring,
an endlessly seeping echo of our time
spent clasping awkwardly,
carelessly, needfully, tenderly
but not eternally meant to be.
There is nothing I might do
to return you to this stale planet, and
I have tried everything.
So it is the least that I press a finger to my lips,
hushing the dissonance you left behind,
kissing your soul
from where you abandoned it
to heaven.

B Haas, January, 2011

Lines

points gazing at points
in a world of infinite vectors, lunging to create
directions, chaotic ellipses, cooperating to
concoct perpendiculars and parallels, and
an embarrassment of other angles besides; strings of points like
ropes to cling to and which preserve and bind and limit, forming
rows in corn fields and ripples in rivers, parts in the scalp and
edges to the prehistoric spaces
and paths to things ahead.

a point emerges, less than a flicker,
the moment that becomes
history's sluice,
the juice of time.

the surveyor's code, a hopscotch boundary and
geometric eros,
the tending of points spawns lines, chains of souls and
comet tails which hurl across, beside, over, beneath other lines, framing
where we are and what we are, and who we will become,
the whole a fabric knitted from lines made of points,
fomenting romance, the line between hearts,
promising a version of immortality and escaping the reach of doubt
that life ends but never the lines created during,
certain as the thread wrought by angels making crooked celestial matter
serenely straight,
the points of the lines virally create,
starting everything and ending nothing and nowhere.

Bob Haas, February, 2011

Could you?

If I confessed my ardor for you,
a long-lived willow inflecting,
majestic in its bending
in the harsh evening showers, rather than thrusting
like an adolescent of any blunt species;
If I confessed, welcoming,
enduring the plight of our bodies and minds
as minutes ploughed against our shores, making havoc
of smooth cheeks, supple limbs,
our gorgeous youth.

If I told you that I could recall earlier episodes with others
when I felt reasonably sure that the sultry tumult cascading through me then,
and forcing immense shows of lovemaking,
or perhaps just exertion towards that,
was durably idyllic passion meant to spawn legend,
but only later you gave me the code
to a rage that dwarfs all that came before;

If I pleaded with you to understand that all these years
I was more at home in head and body than ever before,
that it was you who performed the alchemy for that,
and you who confirmed that the entanglement
of our synapsing limbs and glances and thoughts
fortified me against those huge tsunami waves of fear and age;

Could you overlook the disjuncting painful spasms of my curious mien of caring
As illusions, immaterial shadows that occasionally
Infiltrated our time, but never defined it.

Bob Haas, February, 2011

A Pound's Benefit

Angels finding their calling,
as water does
its level,
So whiskers and fur find
the more hairless,
certainly the more stupid, creatures,
unlocking their souls,
Posterity forever uncertain
as to whose lives
were spared.

Bob Haas
09.22.13

I Must See You Clearly

i must see you clearly
my eyes devouring every slope and cavity;
this unburdening of things hidden
will be inexorable, the fallow mask eroded so
that ageless fertility can be reached;
i must see past the horizon, around the corner,
through the mountain, beneath your skin, and after
your last conscious thought.

you have nothing to fear. i have rehearsed this in my
countless other eternities, kneading eros out
of exhausted husks, stale passion's lead plumbing,
the rot fruit of dreams left too long in the sun.

my terminal scrutiny is
not because your magnificent chaos indicates therapy, or because
i crave all things from you; rather
this liturgy is your passage from inscrutable cipher
to something which will then be known in all ways by me,
and once revealed as worthy to hold my mind heart
and eyes, you will prosper forever as my sanctuary of choice,
as near to heaven's colony as I will
ever be.

RMHAAS, 01.93

Father as a Young Man

The jutting jaw,
A drawn gun discharging
A sneer, never a smile,
The bloodless expression and a closed hand,
Together the empty holster
Triggering the moments
When my dreams bled out.

Bob Haas December, 2011

Time as a Bit

Time as a bit
Shy to reveal
More than a glimpse,
My shining splinter of space,
My narrow corridor of things;
On either side, and above and below,
Pavilions of pasts and presents and futures
I cannot embark to;
Such treasures demarcate
The frontier of my tightrope of moments,
A golden thread
I course and unravel, not endlessly,
Just until done.

RMH

01/08

Obscure Notions

analysis terms his problems
situational,

a miasma of
millions of currents
colliding at some meaty rivers' confluence;
he is a victim of the scenery.

couple that with his gift of echo
so he requires sound from elsewhere
to be beautiful;

since he is what he seeks,
increasingly he threatens to be unfinished,
a spirit pressing its nose up against the glass,
the sad limit to which this haunting can go,

and something forgotten
once the winds cease searching for the reed,
once he's no longer making shadows.

Bob Haas, 7.89, rev. 9.18.17

Stepping Backwards

stepping backwards, to
things barely
almost and
all but
yet neatly short of value, thereabouts
where orphaned notions and shunned relations, the
stray dogs of our passions, the shadows
of our thankfully dispensed habits, wander as ghosts
dismissed, though not forgotten,
lest we over honor our perfect selves now,
the past marked and haunted by hideous and marred
legacies of tarred and stained motions,
categories of wasted moments,
the worst of emotions, yet
imprinted
as keepsakes,
abandoned implements
in memory's shed, without purpose but
too dear to leave entirely behind.

Bob Haas
12.2021

Post

the oldness in me
 is getting out of control,
 seeping into my every erstwhile
 youthful quirk,
 each (formerly) ingenuous habit,
my innocence looks and energy decrease
measured by the spread
 of my unleashed midriff and my bald crease,
 such heinous growth rings;
I can now intuit too easily
 why old men crave girls cum women,
deluding themselves but not nature
 as if to recover seasons
 spent so long ago,
 savored all the more
 as the remoteness grows;
oh the days I could have filled even more
yes the ladies I could have loved to the core,
 like a fiend in the midst of cold turkey I recall
 the fresh syrup of the earliest springs
 when I was equal to the seasons' vigor,
 outlasting not suffering
 the moon and the tides
 times more countless
 than the stars we numbered.

Bob Haas, 8.89

Watching Gulls

when the gulls decamp
the landfill barge
after picking remains,
I move too;

Past sand and asphalt,
over bridged air
paved space
and infrequently,
where nothing has been touched;

we are kindred scavengers,
spending time and bone
notions and dreams and
judged sternly
by the words
moldering on different thinking lips
fatally touched themselves.

I am a trafficker in spent things
beholding the luster as it recedes from well-meant promises and hopes,
suffering the gleaming half-life of this temporary acreage;

we reside in
disintegrating time, and cherish things
demolished in time, our
existence a constant
passionate
rust;

we move, the minutes we partake of
rubbing against themselves
to make soil
to breed memory, hoping that way

to return to places been, before our thorough disintegration,
the gulls to their perfect
heap,
I to mine.

Bob Haas, 2.95

What it is

As cymbals colliding in the beauty of noise,
Percussive bedlam spawned by words
striding aimfully on a page,
The chaotic levers
engorging first the eyes, and gestating sounds for the ears,
Then commandeering all senses,
Metamorphosing the taker
into a holier version than what was before,
Sentient but more, now
orbited by the thwack of language,
Like the shock at birth,
That lifts them to heights,
No longer an inchworm crawling on a page
destined never to be read,
Some un-noticed wisp on a mere planet,
But unto themselves at once
another tilted world,
A fulsome tear hurtling on the creviced cheek of
an aging universe.

B. Haas 07.20.20

Flock of Birds

the last known frontier,
flock of birds without fear beyond
Let it be a without effort climbing
Let the sand there
mark each next and first step,
each footfall creating foxfire
to light the next,
overcoming dusk, birthing moments after it was thought all moments had
ended.
Let the husk of one pattern of breath be displaced by an altogether new means
of respiring,
photosynthesizing a virgin juice of existence, even if life, as known before, has passed.
Let the vistas be seen but even more tasted by the eyes,
No feast more savory
than the forest rising, and endless in its spread and incalculable hues.
Let the absence of limits and the ghost of
frailer times demarcate how finity is an illusion, and how perpetual discovery, like a blossom
unfolding for eons, mimics the always rising arc of flight that is eternal.

Bob Haas
August, 2020

Palace of Tears

from beer halls to the killing camps
 from seed to ravaging stalk,
a mania impersonating an idea
could swallow newyorkcity some day; it starts
 in indifference, spotlighted by the burlesque wedding of
clowns and halos, devils eating grapes in civvies,
 fascinated by the sounds of their teeth,
imagining greater sounds, bigger teeth, different grapes.

in another day they whispered
"something is going on at dachau", and so passive silt
 became beatified stench, dredgeable for few
generations' memories during which citizens are suspended
in a culture of depressed fascination
 and thus visit the ancestors' last turf;
a few summon shock, project disdain, even employ tears.

But, to find children's teeth at dachau city
 waiting under the bleached pebbles
 so generously coating the surface
 at this palace of tears, that is unacceptable as
mere idle history, a trivial episode amidst the febrile dubbing and chaotic splicing of events,
 these heroic crumbs have not scattered into oblivion
and this memorial, restrained by hygienic and aesthetic
 considerations for now, protests too subtly a bloody maw in our celebrated intelligence,
 any craven thought adored as precise and any emotion of grace dismissed as vague.

we still line up at dachau; the secrets beneath the grass
 yield to the luxury of memorializing someone else's
undesirable fate. buses take us home to dachau where we queue up
 for the film in the auditorium and then sign the guest log;
 records reveal there once was drawn the smoke of half a
generation within these gates; here history reeks even though
 the ovens are finally cold at dachau.

but the innocent ash of sisters and brothers has scattered
 to serve as stubborn fallout in the mind, a persistent pall,
 a suffocating prelude to the recoil so much at odds with sympathy, sunshine,
and fresh air.

 The sun does shine at dachau and sunflowers do grow
there as well; the breeze is so pleasant that dachau is almost
 a nice place to be these days, but there remains so many secrets
 under the grass, and although with each year the memory
requires greater effort, the fact that they are there is to be extracted
like the putrified rotten tooth it is.

 count the wonders of the world
whose number pales before the ovens' turnover;

sanity is not recouped and blessedness is not redeemed
by the memorials sanitizing the infamous episodes; the fabled original sin was
child's play
and now the child has grown.
paradise is dormant,
a shore obscured by fog and squalls
but beckoning, the new world waiting for the worthy,
while we tarry and the stars shine weary.

Bob Haas
Undated

Smiling Skin

Somewhere there is smiling skin
illuminated by a radiant conceit
and callow luster
so indifferent to the elements
that foul the topography of older flesh.

in its audacious defiance,
short-lived as it will discover,
resides such beauty, ephemeral as
the shift of a leaf in the wake of a breeze, yet
eternal in startling the memory after
eons of repose,
a line arcing to the nether end of time;

the renegade pulse
discerned in the bits
of matter that orbit and bend light on occasion
attests to the chaotic assembly that surrounds the temporary
which issues forth,
plumes of fleeting orbs and utterances, but

as the spark of my last day ever dims,
may I rejoice,
somewhere there is smiling skin.

Bob Haas
May, 2021

Beelzebub

deferred and now you've become scurrilous,
lending the talons of your eyes to the criminal
and not the blind.
Keener than sight is your unique capacity
to render your mind a fair rivulet
that can wind its way past a problem as formidable
as a range of mountains;
you've shucked the bloom and bottled the chaff, and
now you vow there's enough pleasure in the pain of others
to spare you the guilt of distributing the broken glass
for naked feet to change color on.

Bob Haas
Undated

Socket Caught

socket caught
in the backwash
of
gyrating ass, my high
strung attraction for legs with a force five
stress breasts from the upper
crust i can't forget a classical
face.
i can't help an artist's appreciation in spring,
have you ever tasted fine wine
after a winter of bitter ethanol?

Bob Haas
Undated

Rapt Vacuum

what occupies this room,
 the rhapsodic chuckles of crickets
 through the window,
 tires bleating on the road beyond,
a hoarse breeze,
 a floor timber elsewhere
 feigning being stepped upon,
 an ancient pipe calling whoever's near enough to hear;
the grisly cadence of silence,
the prolific agar on which all sounds ferment,
 thunder and whispers alike
 merged into a vast purity
 driving blind men mad;
what this place holds in its cavernous hollows
 is all the media furiously orbiting and resounding
its stiller gravity.

Bob Haas
October, 1987

Sharing Blame

Your shortcomings as father
wrought tidal surges of misery,
discomfiting a dutiful wife and
alternating between puzzling and terrorizing us children.
That was on you.

But my self-absorption,
choosing to envelope myself in pity and fear,
rather than push through to why you were so,
was on me.

The absence of my truth and hence my courage,
while possibly understandable given my delicate age
and our terse blood relations,
nevertheless, in the wake it caused,
was cavernous by comparison
to the small hole you made in me;
I could have healed the injury to me, to us, in time
had I only borne better
the scuffing of the tender skin of the surface of self;
father and son were forfeited by you,
yet we might have been friends
but for me.

R. Haas
11.2021

Verdant

Escaping the pallet, ever hovering
beyond the fickle spectrum
Where common shades and hues reside,
pigment's hoi polloi;

Beyond the notion of color, an aspiration, a place, a legacy,
The baubles of memory are kept, sugar juice of the spirit;

So many angels pulling at my sleeves, as if
Seeking to fill those spaces,
The holes rooted in the source of my blood
An occupying army of questions and
Amnesiac-like pauses, a network of nits.

With eternity winking, like a yellow traffic light,
That time is hurtling by,
Painstakingly building a self
Cell by cell, each particle a grain of consequence,
Solitary nonsensical syllables joining for meaning,
The deceptive way history and all other things are made,
Begun with a translucent, but never empty, waft of opportunity.

I have barked curses, standing alone
In crowds, precise epithets
Like glowing knotted fists of words,
What appears as a stone tethered to your feet is but a cloud; press on.

The trees shiver with squirrels,
Their boughs reaching for the empty spaces
And nodding greetings and farewells
to ancient currents fleeing through eternity.

Empty, most capable, hands
clenching in spacious pockets,
The spaces they reach for

As seductive as
the grind of her hips,
sing down sing up, sing on,
feel the riff of
Life.
the blink of an eye
before eternity.

R. Haas, 11.28.20

Choices

The things that didn't come
From the choices you didn't make;
How special the course selected,
Given how countless those rejected;
Destiny is as much a story
Of the foregone misery and joy,
Of the universe of unseen and unfelt sagas,
Dwarfing the galaxy
Which you made for yourself.

Bob Haas
10.2022

Missing Pieces (Episodes of Quantum Entanglement)

The jig without the saw
A tad bit shy for a masterpiece,
Blemished by the maw made
By what is missing;
In its celebration of the imperfect,
The lack of pertinence,
Appearances failing to show,
Occurrences forgone,
Not even forgotten since never known,
Destined, within the limits of what is counted,
To never seemingly have mattered,
Spending eternity evidently as
An overlooked and spectral footnote,
Homage to the spacious environs
Which hold all omissions,
But dwarfing all that is understood,
Momentously, supremely,
Mute with meaning.

Bob Haas
11.12.2022 (in 3rd)

Brinkmanship

You say that it must be more tranquil for us next time.
I tell you that such incendiary encounters are certain
if we wish to eschew the conventional and
dabble with nuclear kisses,
napalm climaxes and
other similarly grim joinings;
but believe me,
nothing is gained if we close borders to seek
separate calms because we will only upgrade our icbms,
and then bomb each other to hell at a distance,
only to take the snapshots, matchbooks, and scrawled upon napkins
to heart as deadly fallout.

Bob Haas
November, 1976

If You Were a Waitress

if you were a waitress
 and not some poor little rich girl,
 a waitress adorned in costume and not Tiffany,
using the subway as your bimmer
 and chewing gum like a real goil,
 and not simply feigning the lack of sophistication
with which you were not blessed; if you were a waitress
 hustling for rent and meals,
 not having ever seen the great cities of the world three times, and
 not having been turned into a pillar of salt by some perverse
 but excellent women's school in the east; if you were a waitress,
would you forgive me for the metaphysical beatings I gave your head and heart, and
could you simply be grateful that I didn't punch you out? If you were a waitress,
 bought for a flick and a pizza and a kiss good night, and
 happy to love me for wanting to make an honest/real woman out of you;
if you were a waitress, with no pretense to overworked etiquette and riches and power,
 to tropical orgies and the shameless dropping of names, that callous mien of living
that deadens the soul;
 if you were a waitress, wouldn't we have been set afire anyway,
 can't groundlings and not only royalty fuck well...maybe even better?
 if you were a waitress,
 if you were a waitress,
 you'd bend low for tips,
 and believe in having kids.

Bob Haas
Undated

Manifesto

beauty but
no big words; no
poly! syllabic! monsters!
just tiny
graceful animals which burrow
and nest in a mind,
keepsakes, not gaudy jewels.

with breath to spare, yet to say everything
that stretches thoughts, but
nothing perilously close to overbearing vocabularies;
beauty in the least,
brief like a first kiss,
and remembered as much.

Bob Haas
November, 1979

About Conviction

mourning for a cat
you don't wear black;
you can't sit with relatives,
you may be that frivolous,
but they aren't.
you dispose of him and
then his effects,
what is left you bury as trivial
to retain your self-respect.
but it isn't easy late at night,
to lie about and feel no warmth;
in the day you can avoid sitting in those chairs,
you can leave the smell of cat behind
and walk away from home,
but in the dark, you guess
you've lost an attendance more definite than any lover.
you are as foolish and insane as a spinster
at the conclusion of her canary,
but life, after all,
is a thing with the ability to cease at
the inopportune moment, when you are left behind;
the paws on your chest,
the only conviction you ever knew.

Bob Haas
Undated

An Eel's Maturity

there's only water
at the bottom of this well,
truth was a man that lived
until the cross,
and peddled some maudlin verse
and died half naked
without a friend
to help bear the pain,
and it is the wooden turning of trifles
to draw more than vagrancy,
or the inequity of every justice system since time immemorial,
out of his obituary;
there's only water
at the bottom of this well,
there's each day for more reason
to startle the trellis of an old man's belief.

Bob Haas
Undated

Warped Definition

more to life than despising its work
and losing your hair,
something beyond serving as whipping boy one moment
and executioner the next,
there must be a scintillating warp to the story
you are living, some palpable echo
apart from those unredeemable
smiles and sighs which you savor
only after they've been frittered away,
and exhumed as memories.

rising each day must have some meaning other than
the body is rested so the time has come to exhaust it once more,
there must be more definition than that traced in the vulgar habits
of limbs and the transparent thoughts lurking behind
opaque eyeballs;
such definition
as that promised on a perfectly straight country road
bounded by fallow land and its furthest reaches liquified by
the sun
as it unravels in front of you;
such meaning that waits
for you down the asphalt ribbon a piece, and which will there devotedly
linger, whether you pause or hurtle towards it, on your march to where
the roadbuilders have yet to be,
possibly a sentinel marking your destiny, or a fetching vixen,
or perhaps a Rubicon, forcing you to flee towards it as if you were being
pushed from behind
by an unrelenting boulder bearing down on you only to the point
where it will nip and curse at your heels,
only to where you realize that you would perish sooner
without the peril of it,
and then it will recede, a touching
out of reach,
and beyond, another illusion looms,
and eludes you.

B. Haas
Undated

Winston

a ghost draped in flesh and fur
you stir silently
against my dimension,
your inscrutable air
the camouflage from the preying hand
and your bridge to the nether corners
where you feast on small insects
and my thoughts.

you press through space
to find the vertical where you
mimic a climbing clematis, then
to transform to an earthworm sculpting soil in the rug;
you eschew paths across rooms' centers,
ways for mortals and clumsy dogs;
when you crunch some unfortunate's vertebrae,
it proceeds with a relish
that belies all guilt and
makes obscure any censure.

you are suspended
between realms,
needling the dawdling human pace
with your sly disdain and
mesmeric darting grace,
each passage of yours a
homerian motion and the
enunciation of a serene place
apart from the planet i inhabit;
other things may be bound by gravity,
you are merely bothered by it.

now as you rip
from my side
to unknown episodes,
your wake recedes
like foxfire;
you have once more
been that subtle interlude
between eternity
and my open hand.

Bob Haas, 8.89

Small Package

It's a small package,
this knurl of life,
this gift of space and time;
each receives this kernel
without asking for it.

it arrives
and you are unfit to have it;
you waste much of it
simply assembling the person
necessary to savor it,
a small package smaller still.

But there are those, a very few,
who are wired to jam with the kernel
from the very first moment,
kneading crops from it to feed
so many,
spawning meteoric passions, and melodic
structures of thoughts and conviction,
shelters and raiments in which so many others comfort and clothe
themselves.

These few jam consequence
into every millimeter of the package, sparing no
nook, not the smallest cavity, to be left
other than brimming.

Our cathedrals of meaning,
our monuments to purpose,
the testimony that what we have done and
who we are
do matter,
all flow from the few who jam,
and then jam even more
into their untidy but virtuoso packages.

Yearning for more space and time to fill with treasure,
and bumping steadfastly against every wall, angle and corner of their
package
until it appears they cannot jam any more in,
they fly from this galaxy
to jam elsewhere,
forever fomenting the joy of being
without the strictures of this time or this place.
Jam baby jam.

Bob Haas 11.26.15

In the Woods

early thirst. you smiled yesyes and
i rained glad music for a bed. Here was rancid love saved
for champagne, softened and pleated into vintage
swallows; For this i have often returned here to pray and
stalk the splendid shadows of the young hare
who alone watched us quench.

RMHaas, 1976

Towards Anatomy

“So what do you think? Women! A Mistake? Or did he do it to us on purpose?”
Jack Nicholson in “Witches of Eastwick”

to you i have opened my heart,
the rose within the fist,
hearing your vows of devotion and affection
most sincere perjuries.

to you i have spoken a language
of scars and tears,
love’s tongue;
i have been invincibly truthful,
the renegade pulse
of my own conscience.

i do not posture with raw lips and frayed brows,
these are remote tremors
the flash of lightning or
incoming artillery, not special effects;
just be thankful
there is nothing more for you to detect of the calamity roiling beneath;

this once listen.

i haven’t much time to chase you,
no spare wealth to lure you,
the coin buried
deep within my loin
is minted for you, and so

i have shown you the words i saved for occasions,
i have hinted at the rage my appetite for you might unloose,
i have not promised immortality, only eternal passion
(why then would you still wish to live forever?)

the exquisite siren that you are

the moans in your body reach me even
as i turn your portrait over
to the past,

your spirit an apparition

meant to torment, then

inspire

as it becomes dust in my soul,
i am kin to every man you have ever undone.

RMHaas, 7/87, rev. 11/93 and 12/15

At the Edge

at the edge, before
crossing to repose,
pausing to jabber a prayer, then
slipping beneath the shroud, kneading
equipoise from shadows,
nothing before now matters.

RMH
11/09

Where Wisdom Grows

You reach the empty
Behind the dark,
The bottom past
The nothing that lay beneath
The silence of earth,
Under certain stone.

Bob Haas, February, 2011

the insubstantial but highly significant
character of their original medium...heat glowing towards
the accumulation of spark to re-ignite
the conflagration of creation,
from which the cool metal of decadence will inexorably be borne;
there is no process by which to capture the spark without
having to swallow the entire holocaust;
the flame, therefore the blackened fuel.
The path of death leaves vacuous fields, empty rivers and sexless oceans,
but all the while the elegant pockets of motion
and disorder plot against the overthrow of silence.

taut time touches, the cymbals will chant in the dark,
the fountain spills again,
even a generation late; there are children
and oxen and crops and seasons
bestowed
during a sulfuric night,
while the moon writhes
depleted of its store of tides,
deprived of the tight little islands and
bested once more by pouting streams and the stunning elements
which come to blast fortune and incinerate the seaweed;

...now
the hallucination is a woman's body, a breathless
stream of salmon,
her limbs and sinews ravishing
the land; its peaceful places are kissed,
the golden serum flowing and
new mettle, numberless days and rust gathering.

i do not know but that it continues, the luster and the friction,
the dance with its shadows; each day is a summit,
a holy network of joyful reaches, burning and roaring until
it should blanch, finally
a climax at the gates of entire hell, and
the world's love exposed as dingy and decayed
drapes, a force finally unequal to appeasing the cauldron
erupting throughout time, the infernal chemistry
of man's evil and god's stomach; there will be the homicidal pressure
and its victim succumbing,
a tissue in flame; with a vengeance the clock will miscalculate
and stop, and here in this huge space,
it will be a room
in a universe

without a heartbeat
or an amen.

RMHaas
12.21.79

Gravity's Rotation (fleeing sanctuary)

turning to you now, still touching the
relentlessly familiar
ache of exile
even as the water pours over my breathless body,
I am anointed by succumbing.

having mastered the crustacean mantle raised
during a half-life of solitary leanings, glorious gestures
cast, stones breaking on surfaces
they were intended to pierce, i turn to you
now that i have turned and returned from
everything else.

loping towards the surveyor's stone laid for me
so long before eternity, with no respite
from encircling
time,

I can no longer sate my appetite with merely the gist of things,
through concocting sleep or the more insidious veil of consciousness;
that is asking too much of what is nonchalant and
casual and in the meantime accepting
too little
of the building gravitational embrace on organs and hopes;
there is little spendable weight in anything
that is done mortally, temporally,
which can reveal anything about mortality's frontier
and the spaces beyond;
what may be manifest are only the chaotic wakes left
by those who are given to illusions mothered by their desperation,
humanity's nonsense tolerated by mute divinity.

so i turn to you, grapple with you, provoke you, elicit from you as
a child imploring a parent to notice, to correct, to uplift,
to define and to confirm; only through the default of feeling
is our realm cursed beyond redemption as some gauzy cell so
incidental and trivial that
its very existence is a matter of indulgent and feeble suffrage, a token safely
relegated to hasty examination, so subliminal as to be marginally
and only temporarily symbolic, an impotent motion
for which no parry is
required,
an untidy speculation, a grunt in time; if the contrary is chosen, what is at stake
is larger than expressible notions of dimension or time or
justice or posterity; the logic to the bargain is not so simple that

this hyper age can fathom;

exercised by bearded and hooded people
served to simulate the path for transcending darkness before,
the interventions of all possible things have rendered such tried devices
anachronistic pabulum.

I seek a comfort higher and more self-proving and enduring,
a haven past language, more exalted than hope, determined before creation itself and
less indentured to capricious flesh than faith;

I want the tensile strength of stone married
to the effluvial temper of water; I am after
(the best of) both equipoise and change,
stasis and chaos,
measuring and memorializing the gait of the cosmic dance
the earth bowel chortle
the tenor of the heavenly voice, however ungodly,
the stunning grace of majestic suns rising
over inestimable mountain ranges and ancient forests
awed by the atmosphere spawned
because it was seen and understood and left alone.

I could have been scores of other things,
with horned fingers traversing
crevices in rocks, or levitating
over pastures and cities on my
braided feather engines, or solving puzzles
over smoking cauldrons or
making melodies of food
for others to pay me to eat;
I could have been sinister or hilarious,
I could have murdered innocents, early on I could
have believed in myself or someone else,
but such was not the case.

symmetry is a horizontal notion
a frame for a canvas it chances to fit, not some
natural phenomenon; it has the waft of fabrication,
man-made, unclean and empty below its surface;

likewise thinking there are limits to my search; I will
cease ambling through these marvelous gardens long before
I happen upon anything resembling a destination; I will find
dementia or worse far beneath any summit high enough upon which
any god could have ever glanced down.

Lines Crossing

between vanity and the vicinity of insecurity,

i labor without knowing, only consuming

but still going home, or so i am told;

remembering
there have been so many beauties
there have been so many exquisite moments; what is worth
but those instances when beauty was present, you were there
and you realized the rose at its unfolding, before noon;
and then beauty and its moment were gone, forgotten by the planets
but not by you; you are the chapel
to all the beauty which you have beheld, in company or in solitude,
in coming and going with open eyes and unleashed heart;

the heart is chained in time, the mind goes lame in time;
the rose always
passes, barely tasted, then devoured by history,
and so its essence eludes and tantalizes scribes to ape the wake
it casts with volumes, but still its glow lingers
just beyond the ken, the fleeting burst
at the end of the darkening hall,
enticing as it vanishes down the tunnel of things past being.

...she is the person whom you thought you saw and
noticed as beautiful in the wisp of time
before her disappearance; yet she reinspired.
you decided to fight some more after her, disfigurement occurring
with the second glance you failed to take; she will live
forever in that instant before it was trapped by the predicament of time;
she is an unsuspecting goddess and you are her momentary
devout worshipper, and down the path,
you are a god to one who does not see you long.

RMHaas, 10.10.79, Rev. 12.11.15

Theory of Relativity

a bite of hunger
laps from curdled esophagus
to witless abdomen
at ten hours past
the last morsel
for large bodies covered
in large clothes;
the consistency of gnaw
is acute and equal to
the mean arc of the immaculate ribs
of some mule
long dismissed
from service on a desert
far from dessert,
a vast loose usage.

Bob Haas 1976

Symmetry Failing to Prosper

springing the lust on you
was oh so yes
 necessary to my saner impulses; splitting
 the conclusions between our bodies
 and salting our pores and
spilling the yearning; frequently
 it seemed giants walked on this planet
when we ventured to blending the sighs and rampages
 which marked our dance together
 into the syrup of pleasure,
devoured by the moon; the shadows of these sequences are
nurtured by the moments i turn around
 now emptyhanded
left to settle the differences
 sublime
between the facts of where our bodies travelled
 and where our minds failed to meet.

Bob Haas
Undated

When I Saw You at the Theater

the credits, afterthoughts of a good flick; who
can gaze at names after two hours of un-nuanced love, laughter, tears
and all kinds of weather? i get up, she who sat
next to me gets up; we chatter as we collect coats, scarves
and glances; you are in my glance...i know you
from last year, i liked your body then too...you were seeing
someone in Colorado...i wonder if that blond pocked person beside
you is him; he is ugly...at least he is uglier than me, I'm thinking...
will you make eye contact...no,,,no you won't; have you noticed
and then avoided me...i assume otherwise because you are
wiping your eyes from the film's end...you are too wrapped up
in the celluloid-borne illusion of love to decide to ignore me...
i decide i will save your life from ole scar-
face...i say hello...you say hello...you stayed in boston...
you are living in brighton and swimming at the pool...our rendezvous
is determined in my mind...you seem engaging...you
introduce me to the marred hulk...joe...i hope he feels threatened
... i hope you feel stimulated...i know she who sat next to me
is feeling provoked...we say goodbye...that night i raise your
ghost and wipe the dust off its shoulders...
it still fits.

Bob Haas
November, 1979

Spiders and Flies

the man does not grin
so easily as the woman,
she's a fair rivulet
with falcon eyes

better versed in the wilds
when lovers convulse and depart,
while the man sleeps in fits,
a veteran and his empty sleeve,

and in the morning
the common predicament,
he is a free male

striding the joyless strand,
once more learning the gestures of living
in an urban broth

composed of the steely tremblings of
melting buildings and
strangers who boil within,

the light and the bloom
they wrench from the years,
a niggardly reflection of Camelot

and a futile salve; he and she and
they continue to break bones
and more substantial thorns

for any change, a syrup uphill
spent quickly in the gin of striving
for a separate piece of rotten space;

the least to be done
is to forgive; understanding is
unquestionably out of reach,

and offensive to the bland palate
cultivated by he and she and they,
dealt a kingdom of partings.

Bob Haas
June, 1978

When Will the Little Boy Grow Up

when will the little boy grow up,
said the wind in the ravine
as i sat nonplussed
and non-calcified, with blood and other innards
instead of ore and mica; i replied that maturity is not an act
but a process, like the winds boring down a rock, never noticed
until well in progress and that little boys resisted winds
better than most creatures, even used breezes to fly from
a chiseling of insight, and that i, an example readily scrutinized,
had run from the whittling currents so often
that i could sit anywhere in this ravine
without the wind tousling my hair a bit,
and yet hearing it rail against my tenacity all the while,
content to watch the rocks mold
as they await my turn.

Bob Haas
November, 1976

The Stomach Groans

the stomach groans, bleats, rattles and smells,
a retired cattle car and its reeking refuse,
the head is a jagged stone jutting from the angry ground, a symptom of
energy misused and grace abandoned,
the groin exposes itself, it waits to be kicked;
the heart goosesteps toward an early precipice,
a sacrifice to cause and effect and
the soul is chased and tormented to the bottom of its pit;
the entirety, a forest having come of burning age,
a grand tissue ready to succumb to the flame;
yes,
the season is somber and,
of precious significance,
the man, once young, is no longer.

Bob Haas
Undated

Maybe You Are One

"It is not customary in England, Miss Worsley, for a young lady to speak with such enthusiasm of any person of the opposite sex. English women conceal their feelings till after they are married."

Oscar Wilde in "A Woman of No Importance"

maybe you are one,
fleshing around with a vengeance;
you know there is a time and place for everything,
anyplace and anytime. While at first you were reticent
about the pleasures of first names only, cooking oil massages,
so many evenings and mornings with strangers, you then considered
getting fat in your forties and frustrated in your fifties
and sucked down into the abyss in your sixties. You say
"Let us fry our bodies in the sun, eating every available cake of sin,
and oblige our consciences by turning the portraits of our gods
to the wall, and let us use our orifices, limbs, glands, and juices for all
they're capable of,
remembering that all roads lead to decay, and chastity was derided
when we were each conceived, and is suspended until we die, and
the part which lies between is reserved for mature audiences wherein
they may wreak havoc on their bodies and souls."

or maybe you are one,
fermenting each possibility,
putting up sentiments and opportunities like so many jars of jam in a forgotten cellar;
you will discover them too late with violated seals,
rancid odors, fit to murder.
Who have you murdered with your deadened feelings?
How did you disgrace your genitals with mere dreams night after night?
Why did you seek the invulnerability of solitude, your soul talking
always in a solitary moan to your books, needlepoint, darkroom, jogging shoes.
You say "Let us liberate the mind from the body,
the needs of the body resulting in a variety of excretions
but virtually nothing with enduring value and certainty;
there is something
suspicious about a smile in bed; there is something tragic about
a mind lost in the dust of its heart;
love, while a poor topic in fiction,
is thoroughly craven in real life."

to those who dubbed their lives in whispers,
too frightened to seek solace in any intimate feast,
to those who were too impatient for the love yeast to take,
eschewing the erotic melody for any guttural jangle;
maybe you are one or the other,
extremely celebrating the fire of your body
or the contempt of your soul; the first time you sucked air
was already too late to tell the difference.
You have grown to knocking the bones into an insincere configuration;

you are stupefied by their resonant color, their limitless complaisance,
their consideration for your confusion,
their toothless kiss at the conclusion.

Bob Haas
July, 1977

Sizing Up Others

What can you tell me about sizing up others?
Do you calculate the eyes or measure the trigger finger,
or can you penetrate the skin to decode the blood coursing through the heart, and
erupting past all reason; or do you see between the teeth
and into the brain where the old man or woman traverse
the cerebrum, pons and medulla, wandering
on avenues laced with flowering trees
wishing to escape one day and die in bed.

Bob Haas
November, 1976

Ice Age

first the snow appears like a young shoot
from a steaming and dank piece of sod
that is rooted somewhere
near your medulla, i think;
this is no harmless vapor, but
a cryogenic kiss that evolves into
an arctic putsch of your mind. soon
you think of nothing
but staying warm between the ears and
later the words of thought become brittle
and shatter before they can convert to
heat and energy; your eyes reflect like
frozen puddles and the drifts clog your ears,
preventing the rays of music and
faith from penetrating the continent of snow.
The chill won't reach your heart; it doesn't have to,
ice loves ice or nothing, tenderness catapults away
from your presence like an inferno
seeking its fuel; eventually you resort
to the crude formula of motion to provide any warmth possible,
but then your soul fractures like an eggshell
under a colossus of ice, your desolate features revealing
nothing more than the faint tracks of a starving mastodon
which wearily trampled on the plain of snow
(which was your face)
a few days before it
collapsed in a ragged two-step,
having found its place devoured
by an avalanche of exposure;
the elements have laughed at you and the beast
when they gave too little or too much,
your teeth stay put,
too confused and numb to chatter.

Bob Haas
Undated

Lesser and Worse

things which crawl
and things which can't
make up this world
of mud and leaking ozone.

Louts laugh together or separately,
they do not discern the differences;
laureates must grovel alone, but
will perform jigs
on the head of a pin
to resound their virtuosity
in company.

both species are shriveled,
with undeveloped lungs,
and they lurk, never gambol, and
only concede a bit, such as smokestacks,
the follicles of an imperfectly sealed life
sending down their coloring onto the crazed
firmament, a Saint Vitus dance floor.

Bob Haas
February, 1976

Past Echoes

"The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there."

Harold Pinter in the screenplay "The Go-Between"

the past is
 here we are
 you laid your head
 I covered you with one arm
afraid to scramble the eggs,
 your echo calls me home.

chronic echo
 a night
 on my chest

 the shutters are painted
 in new shades, radiators are baseboard and
old hotpoints are now frost-free;
 new cars are parked on the worn and chipped brick road,
as unknown kids kick balls and strange pets defecate on familiar postage stamp lawns,

there is insensible reasoning here,
 hide in these walls,
 still your echo calls me home.

alien people

 the cause is plain enough,
 the census is doing splendid business
in order to replenish, as birds will clog jets,
 flights on occasion will have unplanned ends;
 my aunt died two weeks ago, she had no kids,
 so an aching cardiac cured her loneliness,
now she echoes so you echo I cannot go.

Bob Haas
Undated

When the Tumbrel did Tumble

when i sent you away,
 pulling off my great escape, it was not
as it seemed, an impetuous lark, no
not by any means; I had tunneled with blunt
 nuances for months, greased
the common friends with
 reasons that flinched, and laid low from our customary good times; I
 sharpened my coffee spoon on cinder blocks, resolved
 not to lose resolve or
 be thwarted by the romantic fiend yet subsisting
 in my mind.
I was viciously inclined to flight, our days were numbered,
 our dance marked for sacrifice, and when
 I flew from your walled and wired side to the dark sedan in double park,
I tasted the bile that flows back to the manacles that are left behind;
 now I must learn
 to counterfeit the exaltation and
 change the prints of remorse,
 smudge the love lines smooth and
 excise the demand of it,
 and shun the response of it,
I must pretend to be redeemed, free to be tied
 someplace else.

Bob Haas
November, 1976

Our Weary Circus

Our awry love,
we shoot live ducks in the gallery,
and they turn into our hearts;
mirrors array us with fangs and
blood drips,
The strong man walks away from us
in disgust; we are too heavy for him, but
we are lightweights elsewhere.
the ferris wheel plunges off its axis,
crushing the petting zoo
and its furry denizens,
the lion tamer lets down his guard once too often
while the apeman goes berserk;
the bearded lady commits suicide and
the midget is found floating face down
in a glass of our tears.
The MC begs us to leave, so
we leave in separate cars,
and collide on the way,
and believe we escaped with scratches,
having overlooked the concussion.

Bob Haas
November, 1976

Haiku in Triplicate

a green canopy
leaves become Joseph's coat and
then rush at the ground

my hand needlessly parts
extinguishing follicles
where once forests grew

Clocks spill my moments
the dew dries on memories
the still future waits

Bob Haas, 2010