



Emerald

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RATIONING EMOTIONS

The enemy of my enemy is my friend. The friend of my enemy is my enemy. The friend of my friend is my friend (unless that friend is a friend of the friend of my enemy). The feud of my family is a breach in the friendship of my blood. My blood is my enemy. This the edge of my world and how rotten is the tooth of my despair. Does peace have a pulse for peace? Does our world have a hope? I read seas are rising, glaciers disappearing, crops failing. When 30 years ago I asked great aunt Antonia Bellone how then she felt, she said “disgusted” (memento mori, rewind.) In San Francisco every wave in the Pacific Ocean here at Land’s End, where great ships foundered, brings back unfinished symphonies: the future is ugly, sharp paradigm shifts, earth jimjams a jungle, diamond skies, sea change, playground happenings, tree rats scurrying into the canopies, everyone here is there under the surface of consciousness along with all the bungled aspirations, mischances, mistakes, errors, crimes completing apprenticeships, and over the mind a brown shale—roomtone, mouthfeel, reordering parts, rationing emotions.

A NIGHT OF BLISS

1. I’m here I’m queer And sure I’ve felt some fear Because I don’t fit in And what I do others have called sin But last night after gloaming I drank a beer and later I had wine & then I lay my head On my spouse’s bed Where I slept until the morning When morning came I woke up fresh And took him in my arms And we sampled joys in the day light That is the love of us.

2. A night of bliss began with your kiss And forty-three years later we always pray We thank our Creator Who our River Keeper was And kept our banks secure. Up on the mountains Where the streams begin And the water starts-out pure There’s a light that showers Two guys like us And protects us with its power.

I AM A FACT NOT A FICTION

I am a fact, not a fiction a rite, not a ritual a progression, not a procedure a song, not a schedule I am in my life and I live it—partake it, enjoy it, wonder at it I’m green leaves aquiver red clouds aflutter alone in dark forests in short pants I am Niagara River crashing over the Falls cascading through the gorge to the Devil’s Hole sweeping into the last Great Lake—Eerie to Ontario—surging into the great Lawrence into my mother Atlantic rising forward & into the clouds into hurricanes I cut with

the knife of the times out onto the rocks the Cape of Good Hope to India South China Sea sieving through Oceania's islands Pacific kingdoms up past Galapagos north home shore Mission Rock San Francisco and my love's bed I am a fact not a fiction.

AFTER J

That first time, he called H on a snowy night asked H to come to his apartment for drinks with him and his mother. H wound up spending the night. J's roommate Arnie was a policeman away then. H lay down on the roommate's mattress. Soon they became intimate and J asked if H 69'd. Then "brown me" he said squirming over. But the next week he accused H of turning him queer, beat H. H was not naïve: left Amarillo within the week. J found H'd gotten a job as a reporter in Dallas and came to the copy desk at the Times Herald alternately saying he loved H and threatening H. H moved again. One day, years later, that old roommate phoned H in Boston and told him J had shot himself leaving H's telephone number on a note asking that H be called. J was 33, Arnie said, was a Korean War vet and had gotten a B.A. at North Texas in Denton on the G.I.Bill. Arnie said he didn't know what J's demons were. J was his best man at the wedding: Arnie and Maris named their first son, Jay, after him. Arnie said J had been fired from the Police Department for excessive violence in arrests, a questioned stakeout, but mainly because of his drunkenness. Through those years he'd mentioned H and kept the photo of the three everywhere he lived on the nightstand next to the bed. Arnie asked would H like it. He said: "Keep it for Jay".

HOME

Many of us could never go home even when we had not left it. Home is a windsong in our hearts. These hearts have exploded, repositioned themselves, ending as much the mends themselves as the remaindered hearts. This then is 'home'.

THE CONDITION

You don't need contrition for a condition. Maybe an explanation will do. Maybe it's an act-- not a crime. You don't need permission to seek sublime. It's the condition. Don't ask vindication. Brighten the dark. No negatives first. Follow your thirst. Trust intuition. It's the condition.

GREAT MATTER

We believed in progress, in the basic goodness of all persons. There was a stranger inside of me, an intruder, who was not me, yet part of me, who swallowed as I drank: I've lived as if he'll die when I die. I now begin to see that our 'strangers' within us are the sharpie fine pointed pens we thought "we" wrote with, but really are the life force, forces who lead, encourage, lift us through our nights. What this is baffles me. This is not mythic. It is here now. We pass out of history. This life force continues. While we

live we are stewards, mechanics, actors, helpers We matter, our actions matter, our thoughts matter. In our end all our beginnings are organized into this great matter.

IN ALL THE RAINBOW COLORS

Most everyone here Thinks the world of it. Yet here is not the world. That atlas speaks other climes. Here's mind's province. Beyond here worlds have No cause looking back, now. Out there becomes then a here. From personal to political to spires, Further and higher to travel. What was here then, there, remains. Here, now, resting time, still we seek. Beyond circles is twisting, continuing. Turning what was then back, forward, Here returns. That words dream motion makes life glorious puts raw silk to silence gives music tongue reveals nature becomes the prairie garnet and peridot leaving the wind behind. In all the rainbow colors.