

**THE UNIVERSE  
WHISPERS ITS SECRETS  
THROUGH THE STARS**

**POEMS & VIGINETTES**

*by Timothy Mason*



## THE UNIVERSE WHISPERS

The Universe whispers it's secrets through the stars  
translates with the breezes and the tides  
speaking clearly, in the silent voice  
of still things, being still  
of live things living  
of wild things, being free

The Universe whispers  
through the stars  
it's secrets  
You Are  
You Are

Echoes with the tides  
I Am  
I Am  
You Are  
You Are  
I Am  
I Am

## HONORING MEMORY

In his Inaugural Address, Jan. 1989, President George Herbert Walker Bush stated that "THE GREAT LESSON OF VIET NAM IS THAT A NATION NOT BE TORN ASUNDER BY MEMORY".

Inspired by a Viet Nam Vet and a bar  
"No one survived the draft. . . there is no maybe about it

I give voice to another generation,  
we were kids, literally children,  
just watching caused our scars.

Now is our time.

Our voices will be heard.

Aquarius is dawning still.

We make the new roles,  
for the new age.

We are warriors of Aquarius  
our energy to do battle wasn't spent in a rice paddy,  
but our psyche was there,  
(and in the streets)

The fuck ups and freak outs are our folklore,  
We know the history that isn't written yet.

Honoring Memory

We Act

Confronting Ourselves

We Act

Taking Our Lessons

We Act

We make the news that is fit to sing.

## JOSHUA

Like Joshua blew his horn  
and The Wall comes a tumblin' down  
The Iron Curtain parts to reveal rust.  
The Eastern Europeans are finally dancing in the streets  
and this is no ordinary polka they're doing,  
No this is the Democracy Tango  
but to the People who run the Party  
it looks more like slam dancing to a jig they just don't know  
and somewhere out there ol' Joshua is just finding the groove  
and the walls keep a tumblin' down,  
all those Red Walls of Jericho, a tumblin' down  
and us so smug - we knew Karl was no genius,  
bright kid, yeah but no match for Adam Smith  
whose slyight of hand was so slick they swore it was an invisible hand  
and we're so sure that it's with those invisible fingers  
that Joshua's finding that riff, hitting such sweet notes  
that even the Afikanners are starting to tap their feet.  
They're starting to groove below the Rio Grande too  
taking hands out of penniless pockets  
to point at the shaking Red, White and Blue walls  
and laughing in Spanish that Karl was only half wrong  
ARRIBA!  
they're so certain that Joshua's hitting a Calypso groove  
and playing from where he started  
some hill in Palestine.

# THOUGHTS OF A WOULD BE PONY RIDER

Tacked to the wall the poster reads:

## PONY EXPRESS

SAINT JOSEPH MISSOURI TO CALIFORNIA

10 DAYS or less

## WANTED

Young, skinny, wiry fellows

Not over 18

Must be expert riders

Willing to risk death daily

Orphans Preferred

WAGES: \$25 per week

APPLY PONY EXPRESS STABLES

SAINT JOSEPH MISSOURI

The dust is settling on the street. those little devils curling off Frederick and down round the slaughterhouse, lie down, flat as the Kansas Plains. Now this city kid's heard the talk of the 'shockers, waves of that golden grain, everywhere, as far as the eye can see, and beyond, the Lakota People, Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, Red Cloud riding hard for Little Big Horn. for Wounded Knee, with the look of a coyote eating off its leg to be rid of the trap. the look of a warrior, riding against the tide of genocide. Old Jacob down to the Soldier's Rest, he says its sheer madness to lock eyes with a brave whilst doing battle. "Tain't like killing a white man, there's no repentance in those eyes, no sir, none at all". Well ol' Jake's tales must be true or they wouldn't be paying no twenty-five dollars per week to no carpetbagging orphan kid, for riding haywire through the middle of it all, just to make California, in ten days with some "I Love You" note or other Official Business to urgent to send around the cape. No those wild tales must be speaking truth.

Now I can ride real good, use my pistol too. Take down a squirrel in any field, but I don't know 'bout locking eyes with no brave, making no orphan outta my parents. But i sure would be liking to see that wheat, waving everywhere, all around me. and to be riding, to beat the wind. carrying every christian's hopes for me to do it. Now that would be a change, would make no never mind that Vincent's riding with Quantrell, or that Nathan went East, with Mr. Lee or that Steven stayed put to plow the field and it would sure beat kicking the dust to revive those devils here off Lafayette Street

You know back then, a century and a score ago, much like today not everybody was literate and they didn't have T. V. so to find out about things folks had to rely on word of mouth, public oration and discussion with each other. See people would be gathered around in a bar or a hallway or out in the street and the pony rider would come by and leave off a newspaper, couple weeks old maybe, and sometimes the news would be dramatic and someone who could read and could speak clearly would stand up holding the paper and say TANKS ROLL INTO TIANAMEN SQUARE or MANDELA RELEASED or THE WALL IS DOWN and that would be the first folks would hear of it and the word would spread from mouth to ear to mouth and so on, and there would be heroes and villians and before T. V. there would be drama.

AMANDLA  
VIVA THE PONY RIDER

## ROMANCE LIVES

Romance lives upon the wild coyote winds  
and in calico eyes mirroring the clear Medina River  
beneath the loping circles of turkey vultures and hawks

Romance lives among the vagabonds camped in the Idaho hills  
south of the craters of the moon

Romance lives in Black Hills mystery  
reservation camping and on a Minnesota farm

Romance lives in a world without watches,  
without rush hour, without the calculations  
demanding the future be predictable

Romance lives in memory  
when I am in the East.

## SEASONS

In these winter rains  
the Canadian Geese fly north  
to freeze their feet in a New Hampshire pond  
The seasons only last a day in February  
It was Spring then.

## ON PONDERING THE QUESTION DOES THE OCEAN SLOSH OR CONTRACT?

There is evil in the world  
there is also redemption  
sang the dolphin to the starfish  
as they spoke about trusting the process

Proper reverence is assumed in their abode  
for high in the shadow of fear there is trust

The summer is so humid, we swim like dolphins,  
through oceans of ozone

Total adaption is required when the paper curls with moisture,  
recording the markings of the pencil as the scratchings of a blunt  
instrument

The Greenhouse Effect enables the ultimate in evolution.  
the mutation of the missing link,  
as dolphins and humans share the globe and the species truly intermingle

In a world where the air is so thick and soupy that dolphins ascend from  
the sea, Humanity's search for higher ground takes them from the soil  
and Man can finally Fly!!!

## COCKROACH

Lights!!!  
Oh Shit!!!  
Scatter guys!!!  
Look Out!  
Ha Ha missed again!  
I'm so quick Evolution can't catch me!!

## GREY SKY BOSTON

An urban seagull  
garbage baited off the harbor  
picks fresh litter  
from the pieces bronzed into brick cobblestone  
  
The tourists said it was cute  
but the bird wasn't fooled  
Faneuil Hall litter is the daily numbers game  
to the flock J. Livingston ignored

## AN AMERICAN DREAM?

Riding the treadmill of consumer debt.

Why do I work? To make the car payments so that I have a way to get to work, to make the bills that never die when the bankers calculate the interest of what the money could be making IF it had been invested wisely with the grey suits who speak the corporate code with the blue suits whose whims and tastes create the demand for a strong defense to protect the American interests overseas where the labor is cheap and not unionized, they mandate the use of jock straps and roll on deodorant.

You know, the chemical cleanliness of the locker room always did seem a bit Republican to me, who never understood the necessity of the alligator in Junior High, or the reason that stripes never ever went with plaids, or why I couldn't take time out of gym class to watch the clouds speed quickly overhead.

And today they are still after me, through the mail, with never ending bills.

Tell me, how can I pay on a five thousand dollar student loan for 10 years and still have a principal of more than three grand? and How does the government have the audacity to ask for a third of my income to support their war on the drugs they import? and to keep the bureaucrats well fed, the ones who protect the elite from the welfare "cheats" who work to earn an extra two grand to bring the ends within spitting distance for in the lower brackets we know the ends never meet and there is no relation between the ends and the means except that it means there will be a well paying job for someone to catch the cheats who have no choice but to be interested in the ends!

Whew! I push my chair back and put my feet up and I realize that all this is happening on paper, just on paper, and the thought crosses my mind that if I never check my mail box none of this would really exist!

Except Uncle never forgets to get his due, and as long as you play, you play by his rules.

So I'll say

**FUCK POWER, POETRY TO THE PEOPLE!**

## HARD LIQOUR & AQUAINTANCES

"They are watching even if they don't complain"  
Keep that in mind as the liqour starts to speak  
the truth may hurt those virgin ears  
Honesty, like modesty will get you nowhere is what they say  
and they have reason to say don't you know?  
Relying on common sense like the intellectual cites "the great mind"  
no one bothers to use their own head  
some say its a sign of the times  
but Old Grandad told me  
"hear what you want boy, there ain't no other choice"

## LOVE POEM FOR LIVING SONG

As a carefree boy in the role of a man,

was drinking life's wine, doing the best I can  
I met you by the ocean, thought I'd seen the light  
that daring night when love and lust were finally just right

We drank that wine experience, so bitter and so sweet  
shared some secrets, a tear or two,  
then wondered at the feat

We tried it at close quarters,  
just me and just you  
a moment lingers into years  
and life goes on despite the fears

Then sitting by myself one night  
I drank a toast or two,  
some new tunes on the stereo  
some of them sung by you  
listening then I silently sang the words that did ring true  
I toasted love, I toasted life,  
I drank a toast to you  
your love for life, your silent strife  
I dared to wish you for my wife  
I downed the thought, downed the shot  
and threw the glass at the old wood stove  
the fire flamed bright as homeward the idea drove

Now my hearts been breaking,  
a thousand times each day  
not knowing how to touch you, not knowing what to say  
to far along to turn back now  
to far to go alone  
I've lost the ways I used to be  
I'm lost in ways I cannot see  
I'm searching for a way to dare  
to be the me, you deserve to share

Now off we've gone to find our ways  
through life's unlikely maze,  
to hold our own within us,  
to truly be amazed  
to ride the winds when they may blow  
we're sailing wild on the billowing of the beauty of our souls

There's a cold wind wails this springtime  
singing freedom's on it's way  
There's a cold wind wails this springtime  
singing let us not delay.

## SHARING POETRY

I read to her my poetry,  
since I trusted her and wanted her to know that I was sensitive.

I read her old poems about other lovers,  
she was moved to tears and angrily ask why there wasn't one for her

I told her, Love you don't want one  
I write best looking back.

## THE HUNTER

Controlled urgency fills each subtle movement,  
creeping, belly to floor,  
intentions clear to all but one.  
whiskers sense a change in attitude,  
buried instincts manifest,  
focusing on the quarry.  
Tension builds as the moment nears,  
the Lunge and Strike  
which will mean meat, Today!  
a victory of survival  
powerful legs uncoil,  
the cat hurtles forward  
to disappointment  
as the clawless paws of the family pet  
slide off the windowpane  
and interrupt the robin's dinner.

## BUSH YEARS

On beating the Bush Years.

The first thing to do is to avoid the Quayle Effect, that strange yet common phenomena which rewards incompetence when it comes with the privilege of class and is cloaked in patriotism, the kind of thing which has made cheerleaders and jocks the best laid high school students, legends in their own minds, the cattle of the consumer culture.

It's what you've got to expect when assassinations have taken the first string out of a couple generations.

Next, one big grain of salt is called for, on the order of turning off the TV and *thinking* for your self,

then, after some consideration, speaking your mind, especially when you think someone might disagree.

And Now, the realization that what happens next is up to you, and you, and you, and you,

and if you don't talk nothing but shit

you don't get nothing but shit.

So the challenge is

getting to the point

while trusting that it is articulated best

by someone else.

## TEXAS TRIP

Not long ago I took a trip to Texas and what a trip it was! I saw many wonders and learned many things, including the wisdom of not messing with a Texan's hat. Although that's a story for a bit later and really must be related in the context of my showing Texas that messing with my hat is none to bright an idea as well. Course either option could liven up a party, especially if you don't mind a bit of structural damage now and again.

But you know the first thing I saw that gave me the opinion that these veehaws might be civilized after all was these signs they had aside of their roads, said "DRIVE FRIENDLY", what a concept, I coming from Massachusetts where we have the good taste not to mention such things was quite unprepared for this. In fact I thought it might be a trap and remained ready to resort to any means necessary to get to my exit when I wanted it. The three lane switch, passem on the right in the break down lane - kid's stuff to any veteran of Northeast traffic, no I was ready with my intimidate the cabbie in your face merge technique, the one most commonly employed upon leaving the six lane toll plaza for the two lane tunnel at twenty paces, or the form a single lane merge left situation, the one that most commonly occurs on the expressway, at rush hour. No I was ready for them all right and was actually a bit dissappointed when these macho specimens of Southern Pride who who cussed Yankee's and refused to forget The Alamo actually applied applied their brakes and stayed to the right!

One of these fellas told me he'd done some travelling of his own, been up to my neck of the woods, said sfter that experience he'd voted for Michael Dukakis. figured he'd do anything to get another Massachusetts driver off the road. Had to admit that was the best reason I'd heard. Then he asked me about these creations he'd swore were spawned in the very bowels of hell to confuse the devil his ownself. The Rotary - especially he wanted to know how we could be so calm referring to them, had they put us in a coma or were we always that treacherous when giving strangers directions! Seems like everytime he'd asked he'd

been told "just follow the road, pass through the rotary, and continue on." Said we made it sound so easy. I told him, "passing through" was an old Puritan term - for dying. He allowed where that put things in a proper light. It was a rare moment of cultural understanding, one that I was proud to have taken part in.

Yeah that was quite a trip, took me down to that Texas Hill Country, to Quiet Valley Ranch. It was there that Cool Breeze comes up and gives me a piece of the sky, kept it with me too, got it right in my pocket, a piece of the sky from Cool Breeze, said it was "a deed not yet done, a day not yet begun, the dawn, a time that must grow on" So Cool Breeze gives me this piece of the sky then the Dali Lama's bodyguard hands me this knife and says that its symbolic, got these three sides on it for cutting away Greed, Hatred and Delusion, says that delusion is the tough one, it all stems from delusion, says its also good for sticking demons whilest one explains to them that they are creating no joy for anyone, including themselves, and that there really is a kinder, gentler way of being on this planet, its a gentle sort of touch, symbolic really, works through meditation. So Cool Breeze and the Dali Lama's bodyguard leave me these things and have me telling you about it, like its a poem, just the facts, like its a poem. See I take my poetry from the people, like Vaclav Haval, "living in truth". just the facts, like its a poem, so tell me friend whats your story?

## GROWING UP IN SALT LAKE

Growing up in Salt Lake  
sharing the Avenues with Ted Bundy,  
that woman raping killer who didn't have the guts Gary Gilmore did.  
"Let's do it boys"  
The Saints call it Blood Atonement.

Growing up in Salt Lake  
I've never been so close to God  
visits the prophet regularly, right downtown  
says "It's cool Spence, blacks can be preists too, it's no longer politic  
to keep them down"  
The God of the Saints is a Just God

Growing up in Salt Lake  
my girlfriends were divorcees and strippers  
what does Jessica know of Margaret?  
Gail and Lee still waiting for letters.  
The Goddess was all around me  
as I walked  
among the excommunicated  
on psychedelic drugs  
and rode with Dutch driving,  
wheelchair tossed in the backseat  
another shot of booze then Taco Time Drive Thru  
8th South and State  
Dutch rams a shiny Camero for cutting in line  
then brandishing a Bowie knife  
yells about the rights of the disabled  
as the young Camero jockey stands in anger and awe.

Fuck the Tacos  
the snow is falling  
Margaret is shaking  
I'm shaken too  
and the night is still young

## NAKED CITY #1

Then there was the time I wrote this poetry that people said was all right  
See I would stand up and read it in these coffeehouse, bars, hallways  
and the like. I'd be hanging with these artists who were like very cool,  
sometimes surreal or sometimes just plain dumb but Man did we have  
fun! yeah we had us some fun while all that traffic out there on Brighton  
Ave. , stayed just outside the door, a whole world passing by not even  
knowing we were there, a kind of hide and seek where the seekers are  
hidden and we aren't really trying to find them.

So is it really a game when no one knows we aren't playing?

## OFF DuPONT

on DC streets the city steam brings the night to life. . .  
the families on the stoops and the old men on the corner  
the conversations go and everyone knows the neighbors  
on DC street my white face stands alone  
to see the patterns of society unfamiliar to me  
old fear and prejudice, like waves run through  
breathe in, transcend  
then look  
through the shroud of ignorance  
to glimpse the richness in another's way of life  
I walk alone, the DC streets  
on a city night  
pausing a moment  
a stranger smiles

## FOR JACOB KNIGHT

He said there was poetry in old shoelather,  
it was poetry only a junkman could find,

and the junkman found it indeed  
being the artist he resurrected it  
showing it to us  
on plywood,  
with varnish

he took our imaginations through the decay  
of soleless abandoned shoes  
to the beauty that was there  
as it is everywhere

when one looks  
beyond appearances

There is poetry in old shoelather

Look

you can see it too

## IN THE WOMEN'S RESTROOM

In the women's restroom  
where the young girls go in pairs  
the word is quickly passed that  
the makeup and the pantyhose  
may catch a man  
but if you want to keep him  
learn to cook or learn to fuck  
and the streetwise girls said  
if you learn to fuck  
you got more choices  
their skirts rode high  
they smoked their cigarettes  
so the nice girls cooked  
and found they could fuck later

## A TRUE STORY

Running,  
Stopping,  
Standing,  
listening to the complaints  
and questions  
Hey waiter Over Here!  
a regular chorus surrounding me  
and she insisting I see her artwork

I've been told I responded in the affirmative  
I deny it to this day  
but not recalling at all the specifics  
I accept as truth her version  
and place the gawdawful sculpture on the shelf  
to endure a month  
of viewing this creation  
a commemorative ashtray  
called "Holocaust Art"

## EAT FOOD - AN AFFIRMATION

Eat Food  
its good for you  
don't forget to do it  
don't get too busy or worried or vain

Eat Food  
and you'll feel better

Eat Food  
and you'll think better

Eat Food  
and your bowels will move on a regular basis

Eat Food  
it is basically a sound idea for maintenance of the human physique

Remember taste isn't everything  
steamed zucchini squash with a clear hue around the seeds  
may look like the membrane of an internal organ  
but it is food

it makes your eyes blue and your knees strong

Eat Food  
and you participate in the natural order of things

Eat Food  
although it leads to death, it may prolong the process  
especially if you start young

Eat Food  
and your stomach will bless you with a belch of ponderous proportions

Eat Food  
while you can  
after all not everyone has the choice  
consider it part of your patriotic duty to insure the survival of the species

Most Importantly

Eat Food  
because your mother would approve

Eat Food

with your friends and you will keep them longer

Eat Food

with your enemies and you will have peace  
while you stuff your face

Eat Food

with your lover and you may find new uses for chocolate pudding

Eat Food

alone and let your mind wander, when you cooked food  
you also eat the fire that cooked it

Eat only fruits and nuts and berries and vegetables and you may save the  
live of a cow, you may also save the rainforest

but only if you get alot of other people to cooperate

Eat Food!

## REMEMBERING ANOTHER LOVER

Sliding in the rain  
gliding up to Maine  
thru York and Wells  
grab a dog at Flo's  
just mind your manners  
or Flo'll mind 'em for you  
a slider and a white milk if you please  
Booth Bay to Bar Harbor  
Mt. Desert Isle  
climbing Cadillac Mountain through the mist  
picking wild blueberries  
being in love with you  
Camping in Canada  
finding that short cut down Tower Line Road  
you always knew the way  
to Queen Elizabeth's Way  
We were alive in love in Toronto  
never did make Thunder Bay  
Left you in Ann Arbor  
not really saying why  
like that catfish stuck upstream  
the reasons wouldn't come past the urge I had to cry  
So let your beauty show girl  
the way I wrote to you  
let your beauty show

## AFTER THE POKER GAME

We retired to my room  
I'd won her with something other than cards  
It took a little while to settle in  
I being the intrigue,  
the dessert on a night of post adolescent sin  
wicked in that delicious sort of way  
neither of us studied in the roles  
it took more time than was necessary  
to meet with more than our eyes  
then I was licking pink  
she was calling Mother and God  
hoping neither would hear  
it was a novel passion  
lingering moments  
lasting in memory

## COLD WIND

There's a cold wind wails this springtime  
Singing freedom's on it's way  
There's a cold wind wails this springtime  
Singing let us not delay

She hears the music playing, wild upon the winds  
calling her to dance, to let new life begin  
She's longing for her lover  
a man both wise and free  
Aroamin' wide to meet her beneath the maple tree

There's a cold wind wails this springtime  
singing live the moment too  
There's a cold wind wails this springtime  
singing love is coming through

but deaf I've been to melodies,  
to beauty not to strife  
holding to hard feelings, so far's defined my life  
why won't I hear the music play,  
t'would ease my aching soul, so sing to me sweet Jesus,  
there is more, now I may grow.

There's a cold wind wails this springtime  
singing cultivate your soul  
There's a cold wind wails this springtime  
singing let the flowers grow

## VOYEUR

When I sit with you and talk I feel the voyeur  
I blush within as our eyes meet,  
embarrassed, perhaps shamed  
by the passion of unbidden thoughts  
not expressed for reasons of timidity  
and no clear invitation  
so we talk and laugh  
and I as voyeur inhale you  
Perhaps this is why  
though not as broad,  
my smile seems to linger just a bit longer

## THE BEAR IS LOOSE

The Bear is loose on Wall Street  
she's clawing as she comes  
The Bull is in the White House  
where its always from

Now our history is written by petty little men  
with their dreams of keeping things  
the way they always been

the rich get richer on the backs of the poor  
every greedy opportunity shuts another door

Now my woman, she's a good one  
she feeds and clothes the kids  
I done my part, I left her  
more welfare will they give

Now I am on the streets again  
a drinking of the gin  
all my hopes are out there, blowing with the wind

Now there's scandal in the Pentagon  
pervasive as its ever been  
Corruption on the wiretaps, Bribery in the wind

Our leader says, well you've got to understand  
we spend \$150 Billion a day and well Boys will be Boys  
they must make a profit or two  
off the deadly little toys

Well in the alchemy of the new rage  
we'll turn your golden parachutes into golden showers

The Bear is loose on Wall Street  
she's clawing as she comes  
The Bull is in the White House  
where its always from

## STATISTICS SAY

At my age statistics say, that if I was a black man,  
the most likely thing to cause my death would be homicide.  
but I'm a white man, so I'll probably die of heart disease.  
Now ain't that some shit.

If I was a black man I'd have had trouble getting through high school  
and I did have trouble getting through high school!  
but I'm a white man an' I got my Master's Degree  
Now ain't that some shit.

If I was a black man, my women'd be having the babies and be headin'  
the households, but I'm a white man and she's had an abortion.  
Now ain't that some shit.

other titles by  
**TIMOTHY MASON**

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**1989**

**Observations of a Summer Snowflake**

**1988**

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