

Left-Handed Portuguese Zen



Images and Text by Bob Biderman

To
my dearest
Joy -
Poet
Teacher
and Healer
of the flesh
and
of the soul.



Seeing Eden

There is a moment
in a certain type of dream
when the veil of gauze
is lifted from your weary eyes
and you see with a clarity of vision
that is unlike anything in the raw, physical world.

For in such a dream
your sight becomes sharp and lucid,
as if made young again
by sipping the hypnotic vapours of somnambulant desire
and tasting the sweetness of release
that transports you to another land
where the magic of the rainbow
becomes the basic grammar of vision.
Oh, to see the fragrance of a flower,
to touch its delicate odour
and taste the texture of its hue!
Only in those dreams of rare transportation
can you shift the filter of recognition
so the world becomes fresh
and wondrous again.
Then and only then
may you re-enter
the real Garden of Eden
where apples are blue as pansies
and taste of phosphorescent blossoms
that glow like fireflies in the paleness of the moon.



Shifting Sands

Shifting sands
Rhythms of eternity
Contemplating footsteps
Of dinosaurs caught in time.
Impressions captured in oozing mud
Preserved now to remind us
That once, long ago
They were not just relics
But creatures who lived and breathed
Brought to life again
Through the imagination.
Are they were?
Or were they are?
Recreating flesh on bone
We construct not the creature
But a statue
Or a sketch
An animation of life perceived
In which to mirror fantasy.
For the creature
Is more than artefact
A shell is just a shell
What is past
Is not now
What was then
Was then.
Now it is shell, a bone, a shank of hair
And so has come to mean
Nothing more than spirits
Simply ghosts
Whose form perceived
Makes us wonder all the more
Of this earth
On whose soil we trod
Forever



Another Day in Paradise

What was the place again
that Adam was kicked out of
because Eve, that wicked woman,
deigned to eat
a wormy apple?
Paradise?
But what is Paradise
without Apples?
You may well ask.
And by asking perhaps you
yourself
will find the boot
of God
has zeroed in on your behind
and kicked your sinful ass
out of Nouveau Eden
where two hundred million
bushels of apples
are consumed
each and every day.
And two hundred million more
go rotting.



ENDS AND BEGINNINGS

Quiet and calm.

Leaves swaying in the breeze.

A distant melody.

Slowly, ever so slowly there is a faint stirring.

A rustle of leaves.

A furry head shakes its beady eyes and then darts back underground again.

A ray of amber light filters through the branches of a nearby tree.

The sky above is softly softly blue with powder-puff clouds

Cartooning into happy shapes of round.

A child of golden brown sits on the grassy slope

He leans over, lithely touches his foot and fingers his toes

And laughs with glee.

The laughter rumbles though him like gently rolling jelly in a crimson sea.

A tiny insect, no bigger than a speck of ink from a faulty fountain pen

Scampers across the Sahara of the child's leg into a crevice

That is a universe without end.

A bird with just one leg cocks its head

As it perches precariously on a dangling branch

Rocking this way and that

While below a bendy worm brown with ingested earth

Tantalises the senses of hungry sparrowdom.

Then without warning something happens.

A cosmic shudder.

An instant of momentary reverberation that transmits the echo of doom

Many light years away.

The child feels nothing but a hiccup.

The bird forgets the worm and looks up and blinks.

In that millisecond something went dark and somewhere a world ended.

Goodbye.

Somewhere else another world began.

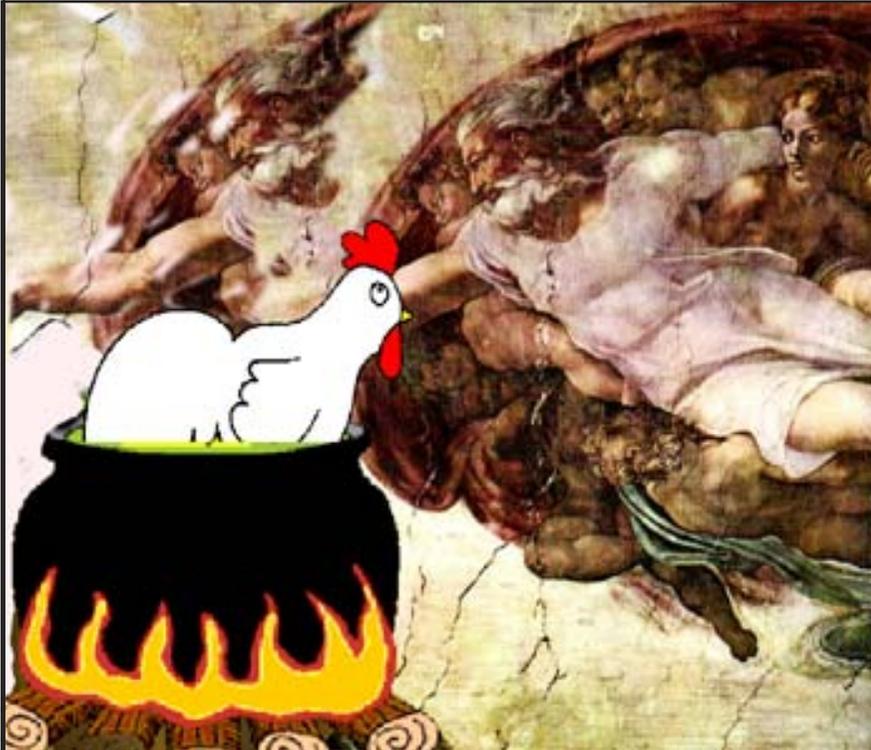
Hello again.



Mozart's Cat

Let's hear it for
The unknown cat
who became Mozart's fiddle.
The forgotten cat
Who lent the grizzle
That launched a thousand concertos
And sonatas.
Let's give a wag
To all the cats who gave their flesh
So bows could saw
Through reconstructed molecules
Taming savage beast
With melodic mews
Let's salute
The gutless cat
Who died so we could listen.

OF GODS AND CHICKENS



Chickens.
What a tender meat
to eat

How sweet
until you realise
what
it is
you're eating.

God!

Not that chicken's themselves are gods
In fact they're quite the opposite.

Like matter, anti-matter
there are gods and chickens.

Chickens cluck
Gods transmit
harmonious melodies.

Chickens flap around
with heads chopped off
madly fluttering

feathers from disconnected wings
Whilst the god-head smiles benevolently

But chickens taste good
Except when they're bad
And I've never tasted God

Have I?

(Unless the Catholics are right
about those insipid wafers.)



Oh to be a seed again!

The days go on
light and dark
dark and light
reaching out
endlessly
into the horizons of timelessness.
Beyond the clouds
a land of shimmering crystal
so bright you squint your eyes
in awe and wonder.
Gliding there
you see so far
into the forever
that your vision
goes round the other side
and back again
till you are nowhere
and everywhere
at the same instant.
For time has lost its meaning
and space has compressed
into a tiny atom
of the mind.
There you are nurtured
in a self-made womb
comfortable and numb
without thought or memory.
Just an essence of being.
Oh to be a seed again!



Soaring the Blue

The spirit flies
and with it me,
myself
and I.
The holy trinity of ego.
Lost
in the vastness
of the Great Eternal Blue.



Tree-essence

I wish to be a tree
says she to me
and what of thee?
If I were a tree I would be
and I would see
not with eyes
but with tree-essence
(which is a word that means the essence of a tree.)
You can see with essence
Better than eyes that see only what they want to see.
For then you see
but you cannot be.
So a tree which sees with tree-essence
sees more than you or me.