

The longer I look, the newer it is

Among the Cezannes
I began to wonder
What I might see
If I could see as an artist

Perhaps when I learned to read
I learned to misuse my eyes
Perhaps in effect I read all I see
Although my eyesight is fine,
I might be half-blind
Unknowingly, just by my way of seeing
I pray I can unlearn my blindness

Among the musicians
I know I am deaf
I can't hear what they hear
Only grasping a few notes at a time

If I died, and came back from the dead
How much sweeter would be all sights sounds and smells?
So glad of light and color and sound
All noise might be music to new ears
There would be no ugly colors

Oh, to see and hear as a poet
When every dull thing gleams
No need for extravagance and extremes
My brush does not need the brightest blue
Any blue will do

The longer I look, the newer it is
Shifting blue from white to black
As the sun rises and sets

And if I give up salt and sugar
What spice is needed when I can taste the simplest rice?

And holding hands with my beloved
Why would I long for adventure?
I wouldn't —
The slowest day passes too quickly.
As long as you are singing
Nothing is lacking, nothing is in excess

(continues)

Romance is not in diamonds or cruise ships
But in a quiet glance
An hour at the fire
When silence is comforting

One can not disagree with the moon
The mountains of course agree
 with the oceans
Wind, blow slowly enough
Carry this dandelion seed...up
Defying gravity
Forever

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Untitled

To the painter, a painting needs no title
To the sleeper, a dream needs no interpretation
For lovers, a kiss needs no translation
The heart has no use for critics and editors
Poetry can live without grammar
Museum is to folk art what the zoo is to gazelles
The divine does not depend on churches and temples
Inspiration does not wait for a convenient time

Lightning is required to apply to the government for permission
The flower to bloom must renew its permit each year
Gravity would repel upward if we let it
The moon refuses to set without an audience
The Alps would rise up in protest if we left the national borders un-armed
We must set a price on the Earth, the water and air
How could people value truth if we did not sell it?
The darkness is a powerful teacher
The peaceful must subdue the warriors.

Two Truths and a Lie

The man who is least confident
Is apt to be the most boastful
He can least muster the courage to be humble
Since his ego is at constant risk of feeling humiliated
The one who feels in his small heart inferior
Is most likely to act superior
Had Napoleon grown taller
He might have felt less need to conquer
And make proclamations and erect monuments.
The smaller a man's ego, the bigger his chateau
The more elaborate and shiny his frippery.
The insecure woman can never wear enough jewelry
Some of the holiest men and women walk naked.

Western Man does not value subtlety
His brash loyalties are obvious
Just look to the flagpoles
The "Golden Arches" are displayed on a pole
The same height as the national colors
The white man treats culture the same as he treats white milk
The milk of thousands of cows is blended together,
Homogenized, obviously we value uniformity
How terribly fortunate we are
For some places have escaped the Procrustean bed of the culture police
Through the French countryside
Some villages still hold the power to charm
Small cottages arranged around a church-spire
At all points the villagers know where they stand
And are reminded to what they aspire.
In the pastoral midwest U.S.,
Life depends on irrigation, and the water-tower rises above all.
In an industrial town, the smokestacks dominate the skyline;
In an age of democracy, or plutocracy,
All look up to the capital dome
And in this modern dark age,
When politicians are bought and sold,
Nothing rises higher than the banks and trading centers.
Ancient man revered the mountain tops
Apparently without the need to memorialize themselves
The altar stones they placed were unhewn
No less did they revere the low points
What could be more impotent than the rock of the Father
Without the cave of the Mother?
In this age of unbridled power
Electric lines and cooling towers blot the sky

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The Tour d'Eiffel is just a trifle
Sites historic and pre-historic
Could not resist the coffin nails of free speech, the cell-phone towers
What flag do you need to raise above the tree-tops?

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Two Dragons Not Separate

The anticipations and fulfillment of a lonely lifetime
Compressed into a few days
The meeting with an ordinary woman
Embodiment and receptacle of a lifetime's imaginings
The sudden justification of a marathon of solitude
Respite momentary in the still centrepiece of the volcanic tornado
Collision and dual orbit of two asteroids
Ripping heart-wrench of each moment's separation
Terrifying mind fear of missed appointments
Vacuous throngs of rushing zombies in the central Square
Love, the inverse of blind judgment
Every woman not you, not you
Delayed return to the village, the cottage empty in your absence
The keenest guttural silence of love's grasp released
Distrustful terror of opportunity unseized
Crush of sounds all noise without your voice
Crazing wait without your clasp for your return
Trust, trust the Universe and Angels and you and me
To guide you home to my arms
The wretched ugliness and disfigurement of every woman not you not you
Falling short of your height, your hair, your smile
Why did I depart? Why did I not carry you along on my minor errands?
You were my passport to Avalon
Our hearts are nothing but tears of joy and grief
Afraid to look away from my window — what if I missed you passing by?
What if you distrust my sincerity for even an instant?
Can our brief encounter sustain us through all hellish adversity?
Eternity collapses like some exhausted Sun
Into the blackest light-engulfing hole of each endless moment
Come home come home mon ami
The Gods in me struggle to overcome the despair of your absence
Sleep is insufficient oblivion to ease the turmoil of waiting
I pray for the reassurance of dreams
Fitful waiting... how did Love consume the present and future so instantly and
completely?
Let these rantings be a sufficient prayer for our reuniting and soon!
My heart is coiled so tight, so ready to leap!

Undone

Is this city the culmination of millenia of evolution?
A few stars are visible in a narrow strip of sky
Between rows of decaying edifices
Where groves of trees remain, they are fenced in, or off
As if their wildness threatens to escape.
Every rushing pedestrian wears a furrowed brow
Jostling from there to there.
No moment of silent reprieve between traffic and sirens
The church is surrounded by neglected tombstones and filled too with grisly remains
The ancient stones have been pulled down, or forgotten
Or encircled with wire, a gift shop and toll booth.
Museums filled with spoils of war
Obelisks proudly "captured" by the British army
Gold dredged up from the once-sacred Cenote,
Guardian spirit statues kidnapped from their shrines
Men take what little comfort they can
In pints in pubs with music or ball games too loud to permit a social exchange of
words
In the square where men had gathered for speech and strength
Monuments stand to warriors and dominators
And fountains now make such gatherings impossible.
It is safer to avert the eyes and ignore a stranger asking for directions
Even the rain cannot wash the city clean.
The common man may dream of seeing a Sequoia.
Though beautiful, women return my gaze with a glare
Making me feel a guilty lecher.
Rather than pluck out my own eyes
I find beauty in unlikely places
The textures of the old bricks and street-hole covers
The street-light shining on raindrops rolling down the window
Like so many falling stars
What attractions or demons can bring the multitudes
To such an overcrowded prison?
What key to release them but calamity?
How many prayers unanswered? How many prayers unprayed?
Merciful death, kind blindness, escape into insanity
The blessing where the pavement ends.