MEDICINE YOU JUST CAN’T BUY
(SEPTEMBER 2011)
Accumulation of Power

Each potential contribution
Likely deserves a few words on its behalf.

But am I up to the task
Of crafting the most fitting phrases,
Those that illumine
Or, at least, attempt to predict
The powers that might be manifest?

I am skeptical.

A Good Omen

When I asked you if I should begin this quest,
You told me to have confidence,
   to be steadfast and upright.
It would be good to have a place to go,
   but not too quickly.
By traveling alone, without hurry,
   I might find a friend.

You said a mountain above a lake
   would be transformed
Into a mountain above fire.
Viewing the adornments of Heaven,
   the seasons pass in beauty.
The flames shine at the foot of the mountain
   invigorating new pastures.

It will be good to have a place to go.
Seeking the Blessing of Artemis

Each quest has an element of mystery.
An initial offering to Artemis might be in order.
I would consult her oracle,
But couldn’t find the website.

Perhaps the old herbalists and Linnaeus got it right;
She has so many namesakes.
I should seek them out –
But which ones?

Which ones do elk prefer?

Bloodlines

My mother’s line is of huntsmen and farmers
From the Clan of the Little Stag,
My father’s is of tailors and cabinetmakers.
Is that why I now feel compelled to hunt and cultivate,
Not so much for the food,
But for stitching together life’s tapestry
And crafting marquetry made of words and spirits?
**Time for a Change**

When the last four fortune cookies were good ones,
And they’ve all come true,
It’s time to start looking
For a nice Mexican place.

**Even-ing Out**

If the greens seem too bitter,
Make a big pot of lentils.
If the beer seems too bitter,
A roast duck will do nicely.
If your life seems too bitter,
Watch calves run on lush meadows.

**A New Life**

As the first few bars of Suk’s fanfare ring out,
They seem much too Olympian for me.
At twenty – maybe…
But now,
In *this* new life,
I would be more than satisfied
To learn the fanfare of the meadowlark.
**Autumn in the Clan of the Little Stag**

In summer, we tend our plots with care,  
With pride in the beauty and sustenance that result.  
But when the mornings get cool and crisp,  
We run away  
To rediscover which apples in the fencrow  
Hold the brightest stars of flavor ’round their cores  
And which tangles in the woods  
Are home to mushrooms  
That make the most fragrant soup.

**Fragrant Temples of the Wasps**  
*(To Henny & Sherry)*

Love the wasp  
Love the mountain mint  

Burn lavender heads  
For the old world  
Burn mountain mint heads  
For the new one  

Pick a frisky mount  
With a mountain mint julep  

The summer wind bears  
The scents  
Of so many strains  
Of mountain mint  

Seek out its sweet nectars  
Taste them all
The Cut Field

Empty-handed, I emerged from the cool, dark store into the glaring sun.
The discounts were deep, but what did I really need?
As I changed my glasses, I paused…
And paused again.
The air was filled with the warm scent of sweetclover coming from just beyond.
Making hay on a hot day may be dirty work,
But it sure does pay.

Lost the Lyrics

Long ago and far away,
In the Moon of Pawpaw Marmalade,
There was a Sangamon Revival.
That meeting was a fine one – real inspiring.

Where in the world did that old hymnal go?
Maybe Catbird will know.
The world is ripe for another revival,
And the birds are gettin’ fatter all the time.
**Konza**

Yesterday, before the thunder,
A gang of bachelors stared at us
From their side of the fence
While calmly chewing their cud.

Our guide then mentioned the herd of elk
That grazes the high ground far to the west.

Turning around...
The view to the west,
With its endless hills
Quilted with prairie meeting a changing sky,
Seemed to go on forever.

**Bison Brand**

What were the motives that led them to take
a snippet of Grandmother’s hair
From beneath the eyes of the Bison?
Base or noble, it matters not;
They added it to the recipe.
Bison did not object.
And somehow, the profane was changed
into the ethereal.
And Grandmother’s fresh, new spring
can grace our toasts,
Blessing all good things that follow.
L’ELISIR D’AMORE

Has Kokopelli transcribed Donizetti’s dear love songs for the wooden flute?
Help me hunt for those scores.
I will need to practice them –
Way back in the woods
Where only lost wanderers and the chattering squirrels can hear.

SOULSHINE (FOR BURTON)

Drink in the moon shine
Let its light fuel your soulshine
Just before the dawn.

GLIMPSE OF LIŠKA

Vixen –
Woman-fox,
Your coat is so lustrous.
Your tail is so beautiful.
You move with such poise and grace.
Can’t you wait just a moment?
Can’t you take me away from this world for just a little more time?
**Living in Chestnut’s World**

The Chestnut, before the Blight,  
Long ignored the Third Treasure.  
Now, those that grow the strongest  
Are most likely to succumb.

In a balanced world,  
Striving is but natural expression.  
In a manipulated world,  
Striving creates vulnerabilities and trouble.

The troubles of trees are sometimes signaled  
By premature brilliance.  
Brilliance, too soon,  
Should always be a signal for caution.

**Could it be? (A Hint from Wolf)**

As I savor my lamb stew and a cup of mint tea,  
I think I’ve finally figured it out.  
A colleague of mine who’s been known to teach biology  
at a small college on the Plains,  
Is not exactly what he seems.  
Looking back, I suspect that Coyote was his major prof  
Or, at least, found a way to sneak onto his committee.  
Coyote’s lessons go well beyond biology.


**Repetition**

If I repeat myself,  
Let it be from joy.  
Like the brilliant bunting,  
On the highest branch,  
Calling out his paired song all morning long,  
Or the mockingbird,  
Exuberant in his soliloquy long past the sunset.

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**A.K.A. Dog Poison**

You hardly notice the Bluevine,  
Till it enshrouds your shrubs  
And wraps itself around your little finger.  

Late in the summertime,  
Its white flower clusters  
Let forth a dark, intoxicating fragrance.  

You should cut them out then,  
Before each cluster makes a pod  
And seeds that fly away to seek more sorrow.
**Hidden Music**

With the finest mist, the box waited.  
It was sitting on the front stoop.  
Too cold for the paper wasp guards,  
That duty was assumed by two downy feathers  
and some redbud seeds.

Inside, opened slowly, deliberately,  
It was packed with great care  
Befitting its contents.  
There were faint smells of leather and sassafras.

And as for the contents,  
Leave the last words to Carl —

“Look at songs  
Hidden in eggs.”

“There is a song deep as the falltime redhaws,  
long as the layer of black loam we go to…”

**Balance of Power**

Sacred balances danger in the sacraments,  
Not so gently teaching countervailing powers.

**In August**

On my walk to the rock that evening  
Two bluebirds called softly  
Nearly drowned out by the cicadas.
CLOSING without CLOSING

These verses begin with a beginning,
But they do not end with an ending.
The gathering of sweet medicine, once begun,
Only stops when the heart stops.