ODDS, ENDS, & ALIA
(OCTOBER 2011)
A Brief Toast

As we start this modest meal,
Let us begin with a toast.

Raise your glasses high!
To the climbing June rose of the woodland edge
To Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow!
To treasures lost and lessons learned
To all who gather at this table
And to the silent promises
of buds unopened.

Threefold Blessing

The other day, there was a knock at my door,
Just a quiet tap.
Then it opened…
And in walked White Buffalo Woman leading a lamb.
When she saw there was no grass in the dining room,
She led the lamb out back
Where it started to eat all the weeds.
She then came back inside,
This time, slowly followed by her Grandmother,
Who sat down on the floor.
She visited each room and aligned its energy
In a new style of Feng Shui.
Grandmother took a rest.
I offered them water and a smoke,
Soon, they had to be going.
They loaded the lamb in their cart
And took off for the Fair.
THREE SEERS

May those who seek the sacred powers
In the plants, the animals, the insects, and all forms of life,
For love’s sake, be blessed.

All life forms take some path on the Way.
It is always of value to see the world
Through different eyes.

But the ten thousand things,
The multitude of eyes,
Live in places, in times,
Which are sacred, too.

May those who seek the dynamic powers of place,
For love’s sake, be blessed again,
For they are seers
Whose vision goes beyond the eyes.

Their lessons, not surprisingly,
Are often overlooked.

Can we harness the raw oracle
Of Borchert as a young man,
Study the wee books of the Holmes
In our landscape
That was Watts, not Watson,
And learn to foresee the life and death of trees
That was in the gentle, geocentric heart
Of Ware?
**No GPS**

Two summers in the Skokie archives,
Long ago, was scant preparation
For recharting the cosmography.

**Evening Stroll**

In the oak grove just before nightfall,
A doe and four fawns jumped to attention.
The hundred crickets softly hummed, and they settled,
And grazed in peace.

---

**Everybody will be Dancing in the Moonlight**

The Year of the Rabbit finally comes to an end
And Coyote, Fox, and Owl just can’t wait.
I hear they’re throwing a party tonight
Out in the woods west of Luther.

Do you want to go?
...It might get kind of wild.
**Hard at Work**

Ten goats cutting brush  
Still liking their assignment  
Not fire, but lively.

**Sic Transit Alia**

In the world we know…
We transact our business.
We transfer the funds to pay the price.
If we’re good, what we buy transforms,
And we transport it back home.

In the world beyond…
Spirits transcend all business.
They are transfigured when we pay the price,
Transmuting what they’ve touched,
Then – transmigrate to new homes.

**And from the Other Side of the Fence**

Did deer make that noise?  
Looks like a human to me.  
What is it holding?
FLAVORS OF ATTRACTION

Eye candy? Let’s get real.
Eye… roasted almonds wrapped in bittersweet chocolate
Eye… rose lokum with pistachios
Eye… rich buttery pecan brittle

Why… limit it to candy?
Eye… ripe red raspberries picked to my mouth
Eye… a warm peach from an Anna orchard
Eye… late-season melon from Beardstown dripping down my chin

And for Wolf…
Eye… succulent lamb chops, rare.

LATE IN SUMMER

It rained on and off all day,
But that last band of showers was different.
It was driven by a fresh, new wind.
I can almost taste the buckbrush, the rabbitbrush, the buffaloberries,
And see the gentians in blue gaps above.
Summer may not be washed up yet,
But I’m itchin’ for Fall.
**Can You Take Me?**

Only with the true nature of your love,
Can I find my way on this road ahead.
In the kitchen fixing supper watching the news,
I could sense the true nature of your love.
As we danced to Los Lobos into the night,
I could feel the true nature of your love.
On the trail in the morning with the sun breaking through,
I could glimpse the true nature of your love.

Can you take me to the true nature of your love?
How did we manage to dig a well so deep?
Where flies the true nature of your love?
What skies are home to it now?

Only with the true nature of your love,
Can I find my way on this road ahead.
Can you please reveal the true nature of your love?
Yes, just the true nature of your love…

**Harvest Song**

This coolest morning of the season
Is a fitting harvest day.

As this special day begins, I ask…
Ceres, have we chosen good parents for this
next generation?
Have Earth and Sky and the Vital Spark
Aligned to create living beauty?
Was the timing right?
How better can I tend this field?
How better can I serve you?

And could you please bring a little wrath upon those
Who brought the shiny beetles?
How better can I tend this field?
How better can I serve you?

Ceres, your bounty will be shared with all;
May you rest well till Spring.
A FEW LEAVE THE PARTY TOO SOON (TWO FLOWERS LOST)

The old tulip tree still recalls the lovely ones
Who bore her fine corsages.
Every year, a few of her leaves
Turn a bright, clear gold
Well before the rest.

MANIFOLD CONSCIOUSNESS

Anytime Wako’d wants to ride the Dark Mare
Sparks will fly.
Each spark can light a new flame
Setting another bright jewel
Into the fabric of consciousness.

FROM THE BLUFFTOP

Down off the bluff, Skunk Creek flows.
Most of the time, it follows the rules.
When it’s feeling really strong, it makes its own.
Then the trees crash and the world shudders.

Up on the bluff, Dream Creek flows.
Sometimes it follows the rules, but you never know…
Hydraulics and gravity be damned.
My thoughts drift ahead and shoot back
all at the same time.
Without making a sound.

MA CHÈRE

Walk now in beauty
Feathers flowing in your hair
Like an avocet.
Bringing in the Corn

Attentively upright -- or heavy,
Hanging like tears to await the picker’s hands,
Beautiful packages all.

Red, white, and blue make a glorious purple;
Throw in some yellow;
And a rainbow is revealed.

A brief caress of silks reminds me of my lover’s hair,
Of sparkling strands of copper, gold, and silver,
Of laughing in the sunny field
And her Amish boy’s hat.

Why?

Nightmares ago,
Far away and right in our face,
This very morning, the world was rent.
Unholy, holy smoke rose, blood flowed.

The boy in Kyiv asked his Daddy
Halfway 'round the world,
“You aren’t staying in an apartment building, are you?”
That evening, Daddy broke bread with a man from Iran,
Who was preparing for a sleepless night in a strange land.

Nightmares pass.
The bleeding wound wants revenge (or is it justice?).
The pained body is left behind.
More blood, more nightmares…
Time passes.
Separate parts heal so much more slowly
Than the whole.
Dear Guy

Guy, as I husk these ears,
I think of you...
Of all the ears and lost causes
You wrapped your strong hands around.

Of all the fried chicken I ate that night
At the all-you-could-eat special,
And of your tales from when you were my age.

Of living alone
In a little, frame house
With your penstemons.

Of the ear of spotted corn,
Which I did not get,
And the pipe that we did.

Of the strong, pink rock
That lasts for a billion years,
And its dark vein of blood.

Then I wonder:
Will I live out my days like you
Taking on lost causes alone?
**Daybreak**

The northeastern sky  
The colors of salmon flesh  
Crow slices it – cawing

**Finding Lost Fruits (to Naa & Harlene)**

My friends, if you go to Saskatoon  
For the saskatoons, eat them there.  
Don’t bring them home.  
They’re rightly proud, but it’s all they can manage  
In that cold, dry land.  
Instead head east.  
If you take the north track,  
Look for small trees bent down by the bears.  
And if you turn south,  
Ask the young raccoon where he lounged last night.

**Break Free**

Racing to beat the sunset,  
I realize I’ve violated one of the first principles.  
The lawn is deeply rutted.  
The shadows show  
That, in my haste, I tied myself to the towpath,  
Ignoring the news that the best way to get a job done  
Is never the same way twice.

… No more?

**Behind the Altar**

Little Whitethroat missed the warning signs  
in the familiar that wasn’t.  
No looking left or right, forward or back,  
In the gray mist, he hit the glass straight on  
And rests in beauty on the sill in the new sun.
SALTY AND SWEET

The blood on my fingers is of the sweetest sort.
What better way to classify the blackberries
Than to assess, with care, the subtle interplay
Between the depth to which they stab and the pleasures
Of their luscious, ripe fruits?

NAMING DAY

The timing was right.
The little spider jumped off my face
And slowly floated
Down to my brown socks well protected.

BLUE KAUAI

In the winter
If I knew that I would not
Witness Vesna's return to my fields,
Would I fly away from here,
Off to the Garden Isle
To seek solace with the silent deer
That guards Kalaheo?

Would that deer send me
To the perpetual spring at Koke'e
Where I could await the end?

Or might I commit some small kapu
In the name of love,
Then walk down to the tide pools
And stay for the high tide
And the giant wave
That takes me away?