

William J. Margolis

Selected Poems



William J. Margolis

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The Anteroom of Hell. San Francisco: Inferno Press, 1957.

The little love of our yearning. San Francisco, Mendicant Editions, 1960.

The Eucalyptus Poems. Golden, Colorado: Croupier Press, 1974.

Gently The Moon

breathe in gently the moon
& lightly finger the nightleaves
(fragrances annoint the eyes
& birds quote broken riffs
in their skyblue dreams)
break the tongues of silence
muffling fast fingers' wishes
in shadows, mooncast creases
rejoice at unknown breaks
as they fall into unknown places
unheard halleluyahs shout
& handclapping traces diminished
receding paths through pain
forests of fright to discover
stone gods & futures redeemed
by moonlight & birds & reverence
for crushed yearnings of petals

Out Of A Turbulent Silence

(A Palm Sunday Poem)

words are blunt, dull means
for tending delicate
wounds ... & wonders
what we say can tell but such a minor part
of what is inside the multichambered
skull & heart of life
to break the seals of silence -
knowing the depths & heights
of confusions they may have
lightly knitted into
an appearance of solidity -
to speak from my inside to your inside
when there is such chaos raging in me -
to tell you, to count the many facets
of my love for you
when the brilliance is muddied so
by my own jetsam pain & anguish -
oh, the words are here, but my brain
is in such a storm of bodily disaster! ...
just know: I love you.
we will calm the storms
& walk on the waters.

Sonnet For A Half-Sleeping Muse

When the one-eyed grace
descends, light abounding,
when the thousand-eyed
oppression lifts, speculation
flee4.ng from clear vision,
focussed, uprooted pride
& scattered yearnings go pounding
up the steps of skull to trace
the limits of hope & trust in peace,
the inside touching fingers bleed
a little & subtle wounds release,
at last, the blessing of the deed.
To act at all is hard
enough - to act with love is art.

My Lady's Laughter

By candle, wick bent & steady
flame casting motionless point
where pen touches wordless
page, I wait. She wakes
& touches me, & the shadow moves,
black across the page of light.

Wail!

The laughter of candles
whickers in her hair & snuffle
deep in lovedrunk slumbers,
deep glacier darkness melted
to torrents of mirthful words
howling through this shadowed
hand, touched by the moon -
I know it's full tonight -
we tasted its secret rippled song!
Only when the moon is full
do poets become sane & sage,
only when the Lady touches cool
the page does poet know his word
& craft of cool dark light of inside
touching with tender sight - the love
begets more love & night forgets
that darkness is absurd - the moon
is full of my Lady's laughter!

Who We Are / Who We Seem

we, knowing ourselves,
realizing our selves,
wearing our own faces
in tailored othersuits,
present our stars
in square-fronted circles,
and everyone is happy,
others satisfied that we
are like them , while we
are happy knowing we
can never be
satisfied!

Geis

“Art is God is Love”—Wallace Berman

A dozen tasks await me,
yet it's clear: my geis is this:
to write clear words,
to clear my heart with words,
to hear my soul & make it ring,
to sing my love & bear my grief,
to grieve only in such manner
that all who hear my lamentation
will be deceived, feel joy, laugh
& praise life and pass on enriched.

A serious task, this; so long
I've doubted my fingers, doubted
my tongue had any word worth utterance.
Must I al ways find the source of joy
in pain?! Is grief the only key
to life ? ! I have so long decried
what seemed to me the myth .
of the suffering artist,. so entwined
as it is with mere suffrance
of the artist. Am I wrong?

Yet here I am, in this moment,
grieving ... yet finding words
in my fingers I'd swear were not there
before this moment. . . hearing songs
(sad now, but I have known songs of joy),
& my eyes violently open to fear.

A dozen tasks await me:
shit, shop, eat, sort out the past,
throw out these cluttered & dusty hopes,
destroy these erroneous pityings
{of myself}, ignore the seeming

force of pattern of missed beginnings,
restring the guitar with grace,
find order in these many aspects
of chaos, create trust {I've only
dust to work with), learn to see
what is, love. A dozen tasks.

The labors of Hercules
test each of us, & each
determines the growing path,
& judges when each goal is gained.

I am sworn & bound & quite committed;
my geis cannot be shirked or shucked,
my fate is unsealed & I cannot claim
ignorance. This is acknowledgement.
I neither will nor can deny it,
I have tried, sought excuses —
there are none; I must speak
clear words of love, must speak
with finger, tongue & being.

Only love can satisfy, can drive me.
This is my test: to live in & from love,
toward love, for love. "Art is God is Love."

The Radical

He goes to the roots.

/I've sd it all, time to .start a new poem ... but ...

Who goes to the roots sees both a virtual image
& reality - aboveground & underground -
the pejoratives may now be forgotten !

/I've sd it all, time to start a new

poem: that which makes you be me

... starting at the roots. That's it.

Time to make a new beginning a new being,
regarding carefully source of becoming,
seeing slippery alternatives at beginnings - but ...

He goes to the roots to start seeing /being ...

He finds newgrown paths to new ways of growing,
the beckoning of the leaves, the blossoms,
the need to continue, to breed new being!

That's it: Beginning at the roots & leaping up
through all the detailed cells, the many passages
through changes, at each moment, movement

a question that must be answered Now

if there is to be a leaf, if there is to be a flower,
flowing, the constant energy from all the lovers'
love, from the scholars, the workmen,

to transformation from cell to cell, faith & trust
in love flowing from root to eternity in the flower,
the one who flows, grows, knows the highest tree
bud ecstasy, & joy of intellect, the radical goes
to the roots & leaves, leaps to nectar & seed,
that which makes new joy, he goes back going forth,
forms change, joys must be reborn, Now.

Now, if there is to be the leaf, the artifact of living,
the manifest, if there is to be the bloom & need
for beauty, it is time. Now.

He goes to the roots of ecstasy & flows in joyful potency,
potentiality. It's time for beauty & it's time, then,
for its need, it Is time for source & end to see unity,
for, "nevertheless, it moves," & no pejorative
can force eternal ignorance, the seed cannot ignore
the root. & thus, he goes, down to find the top,
& thus, he goes making, being, being made. Joy.

The Nameless Wisdom

Soon another magic day begins ...

I say "another" as if any other
could be as this has been - none can;

but there are other ... magics

& it is knowledge such as this that lures
one on, to seek more magic, new magic,
the wonder of each day, and especially.
of those days we realize are magic!

Soon another chance begins, a gameless
gamble, a new stance ... before the Work,
the chance to make a wonder,
or to play a change

What brought about the miracle?
What wrought the change?
What different gesture in the making
of which talisman or pentacle returned
the lost? renewed, reborn, my heart.

The day was starred before I knew it.
& I listened carefully to each whisper
of the prophecies & chants - yet I am no wiser -
or have I a wisdom with no name?

The miracle has come, the change is made,
my talismans & pentacle all sing true harmonies,
I find no flaw - & perhaps it's this that wonders me ...
yet I know how to see wonder, & accept the good fate
with the ill

Another magic day begins,
& I know it is the magic that both changes
& is constant - the knowledge grows,
the talisman & pentacle are renewed, of necessity,
the changes take their own direction from the soul,
& give the constancy its growing wonder -

& draw the gesture as pentacle & talisman,
the knowledge, the wisdom, with no name
but wonder.

The Round White Rooms

And what did the trees say?
And what whispered the wind ?
Oh tell me what the seeds say
 waiting for warmth,
Oh tell me what the birds sing
 soaring in the sunlight.

The trees say Stand & Sway
& the wind whispers this way, & that.
Oh the seeds tell each other stories
 waiting to be born,
& the birds sing of round white rooms
 they'll return to when it's dark.

Poem In The Afternoon

Shadows on the fencepost,
shadows on the wall,
darkness in the centermost
rings of the trees,

liquid moaning urgency
between the porous cells,
fluids for the growing, unknowing
birth of bud & stretching arms
of gathering in of further fluids,

juices sweet and bitter, cells
tender and turgidly making way
for youngness, larger shadows,
more darkness on the mileposts,
ringing stillness in the paths,

death always loaning life
between the porous cells
of hell and heaven, unknowing
burst of hidden wretchedness
quickly gathered, dried,

juices sweet and bitter, hells
rendered giddy & forgotten
in youngness, mere shadows,
no larger nor thicker than a ghost

clanging impossible chains, a way
of dying simply, becoming just
shadows on the fencepost,
shadows on the wall.

