



Long and skinny I've never been, so my poems make up for me! And this collection, which will shortly become the opening section of a long-awaited trade publication from CHAX Press in Tucson AZ, *Postcards, From and To America*, sets the stage for what became characteristic of my style. Speedy on the other hand was my middle name, so to speak, and perhaps folks will discern from a few of the poems in this collection my predilection in the early Sixties for amphetamines which for a while I shot up pretty well daily until hepatitis killed my good friend Jeanne Choquette (in Vancouver) and nearly killed me while in NYC. The effects of my hepatitis get greater treatment in *The Connexions* which was published in 1966, tho there drug taking & hepatitis are never spoken of as directly as within *The Cold Light of Morning* to which in some measure the title also refers. It did not seem politic to be so explicit when I was on the verge of an academic career, so these poems were held back, along with another volume about to come out from Ekstasis Press in Victoria BC, *Not to Call it Chaos – The Vancouver Poems*, written a few years previously.

The figure of Nadia is based on a real person, who is still living and so remains unnamed. Her insouciance while I was recovering, after 3 weeks as a welfare patient in St Vincent de Paul Hospital in the West Village, brought about a relapse (frequently fatal) that resulted in my leaving her care as soon as I was able to head off to Buffalo mid January 1965 to begin my PhD in English and to study with Charles Olson. There, I spent the first several weeks in the infirmary, attending classes and teaching two sections of freshman English. It's a miracle that that didn't kill me too! Life can be hard if you go out of yr way to make it so! So I settled down near Ottawa to become a serious academic, organic farmer, half-decent husband & father, and long lived poet.

Robert Hogg, Mountain: 2022-08-11

Poems have appeared in the following Periodicals and Anthologies:

Café Review

Empty Mirror

Island Magazine

Periodicities

Peter F Yacht Club

Some Magazine

and in

*New Wave Canada* ed. Raymond Souster,

Toronto: Contact Press, 1966.

## Heading East

*Just heading east to Toronto  
on my way to New York  
City by way of  
Buffalo where this poet  
I know is teaching . . .*

I tell the young  
newlyweds hot in  
their big American  
sedan fresh  
from Honeymoon  
Vancouver English  
Bay in October  
who pick me up  
in the foothills  
west of Calgary  
near the end  
of day and drop  
me off past  
town they'll  
pick me up  
next morning  
if I haven't  
hitched a ride  
the young wife  
says and sure enough  
next day I  
roll out of  
my sleeping bag  
groggy and numb  
with cold stand  
with thumb out  
beside the Trans-Canada  
Highway and there  
they are and this  
goes on another  
day and night as we wing  
across the prairie the couple  
fighting gently in the front  
seat about this strange  
young interloper  
in the back offering  
to drive but Don the affable  
husband says  
no dice this is  
his car his  
trip despite  
what Sandy wants  
and what she wants  
is to know more about  
the kid they've picked up  
the poetry he writes what  
he plans to do in  
New York but me  
I've got the back seat

all to myself  
and I'm happy  
watching the sun  
go down (you don't  
get a ride like this  
every day  
and now that sun  
is a ball of fire  
behind us  
as we drive across  
a Manitoba  
prairie knows  
no end

But there is  
an end and it's a big  
full moon rises blood  
red somewhere east  
of Brandon the sun  
still burning my neck  
from behind and this  
uncanny  
counterpart of fire  
a twilight moon  
beams through  
the windshield  
the car  
whirling into it  
stars  
taking up their  
spaces  
in the dark above  
constellations  
forming as the moon  
burns red, turns  
out of earth, comes  
round in the air-  
fire above prairie  
almost liquid  
white and round now  
losing its blood  
red glow

Night  
cools into headlights

Flame  
falls into white  
moon-disc and star

The car  
hurls into and  
across Ontario tires  
whirring the pavement  
speed somehow  
a sacrilege the road  
whipping away

a kind of trespass  
in the night  
we rush so  
blindly through  
roaring down to  
Toronto where  
they've offered  
to drop me  
somewhere near  
the Y but it's way  
too late to go in  
so they leave me at an all  
night diner good luck  
in their eyes and head on  
home to Brantford  
or was it suburban  
Oakville  
and a cosy bed

I saunter in  
to the diner  
grab a stool drop  
my duffle bag  
by the counter order  
a coffee and roll  
a cigarette  
when some guy  
sidles over  
offers me a light  
and a place to stay  
so I think to myself  
the folks in  
this town  
are so damned  
friendly but that  
turns out to be  
more than I thought  
it would be

NYC Oct 1964

**Picus**, for Jane Harrison

The suffix is

e. r.

an order on

the verb

toward noun

:

I write

to be a

writer

where the agèd

live in runes

a secret

kept

on bronze, coin, stone

gut, bark, or bone

cut

is still there

above-ground

it is

quick it is

a mystery

:

that which is written

*writ*

a law pre-

serves you

hidden under tongue

your move in-

audible

fore-

ward

the mouth

a move made

a maker/mover

of tongue

turned

word

Now in the present

we

:

re-

turn

and are

the answer

answer back

a downthroat

vowel in  
a darker cave

*in*-mouth, the glottis  
velar  
hangs against light

gullet and  
old hide  
anciently carved in

taste become archive  
writ  
into tongue

the score is  
even, evenly  
set

down in old words

upset

we hear another  
music of the dead

:

dirge

a voice of children

a dance about corpus

*mythos*

our answer

a maypole

dance

strands that children  
wind and unwind

words become a season  
wound into spring

whose song  
the cuckoo  
sings

The legend is a bird  
reborn

:

air

holds him

be-

hold our imitation

word

In word  
inward, in-  
carnation

:  
the dead  
live in sleep

this is  
speech  
we dream  
a heritage of sound

a form the dead take

word

graven in stone  
round which the seed  
of children grow  
barefoot to the ground  
the earth  
become an echo  
syllable of year  
sound of the bird  
our children  
hear

omen  
a wingèd  
word

Air

is the carrier

:  
Picus

the sign of spring

hovers

air-borne

to sing

## Address

How can I send you  
what I am  
    be to each  
    a message

different yet  
the same

If in speech  
I say  
    I am

the pronoun  
stands  
    for me

but whom  
do I  
address

    who  
are you and who  
will you  
    be-  
come

if we both  
stand  
and cry

*love me*  
    *stay*  
*with me*  
    *be*  
*with me*  
*here*

what more  
is there  
to say

## Listening to the Silence

Madness  
will not be known

The sane  
don't believe  
their ears

But we who have not spoken  
hear what has not been said

Silence  
won't be broken

The dead  
contain their fears

## The Phonology of Love

I speak of love  
as though it were

a word as though  
it were syntactic

    simply  
said

    oval  
lips

breathe out  
a gesture

lungs send  
sound in a tonguecurl

palatal L  
down throat

a velar  
cord song

    voiced  
fricative

    lip  
to enamel

teeth where  
resonant

air is  
evocation

*love*  
that is a dance of tongue

teeth and tendon  
turn

    breath  
into word

**Manhattan Daimon** (for Nadia

As moon is to  
earth and earth  
about sun  
turns

so I  
dance at the tree root  
till woodpecker sing  
and footfall  
free Ge  
from slumber

See  
she rises  
cornucopia  
in hand a child  
in her arms

Manhattan Daimon  
I've made your

morning  
coffee isn't

it time  
you got up

## To my Friends

a hot morning sun  
white forenoon  
through glass

waves of hot  
blood in  
my spine

line  
a blue vein  
I go through

fluid as fire is  
a kindling  
surge

## High Boots for a (Second) Lady

October  
and  
another fall

new  
lady

New  
York

(coast away...

back into  
department  
stores

looking for shoes  
tall boots  
I hesitate  
to have her  
pay for

but I am broke  
and she buys them  
anyway

(unlike the first  
I pressured to leave  
in old shoes

## About a Sarcophagus - for Nadia

We walk  
among  
old carvings

talk about  
ruin, the forms  
that are left us

love or this  
sarcophagus

our life  
marble & blood  
unfolding

the stone  
gives way

the tomb  
falls against age

out of the death-stone  
Dionysos  
borne  
in the marble

hands  
made flesh

## Strange Alchemy

I have met the acid of life  
eating at the edge  
of dead things

the beauty of the vulture  
then

inbrain  
it is the concept  
burns, flares out  
yellow against blue

by counterpart, that  
wing of a dead bird

burning

your eyes

by candle

## Lunar Eclipse -- 1964-12-18

We stand amid imaginings  
counting our days  
the phases of the moon  
we call full  
at hemisphere

All that is the dark side  
lies unreflected

The smiling  
Man in the Moon  
draws tides  
the fractional season

Vision  
wanes into lunacy  
    a face  
in a cracked mirror

So we call the dark moon  
*new*  
and lie amid  
distractions amid  
*new faces*

Tonight as  
Earth slips  
silently between

it's the hair  
on the back of our heads  
that haunts us

**Mnemosyne** -- for Nadia

It is good  
I am not in your dreams  
where god is the wood  
made flesh  
                    dancing  
between the trees

                    These  
are your fanciful measure  
the will of your dried blood  
poured in libation  
upon your thighs  
the pleasure, the dried  
flood upon waking  
full with the nightchild  
stillborn without form

The cold light of morning  
lingers, an old  
love, a  
visitation

                    Or a vision of  
quicksilvered glass  
cut crystal  
                    belly & breast  
                    full, the wind  
                    from the South, the hymen  
                    healed for the long year

                    She is the maiden of the sun

                    There is no danger of  
                    the sea

Or so you have told me  
and kissed my long hair  
in passing  
and carried up wood  
for the fire  
and caught a splinter  
in your arm  
doing a man's work

## Feeding the Snake at Christmas NYC

She comes  
he is fed

and she is  
gone again

leaving the treelights  
on, a

jar of water  
at bedside

**What My Love Seeth – for Nadia**

My Love  
weareth no veil  
to no avail

The light  
is a Japanese moon  
in the mirror

My Love  
seeth no face  
to deface

*Only scars,*  
she said

## **Advice**

Fuck him  
then, go

fuck him  
for

all  
you are worth

## **Resolve**

Tonight  
not even  
hunger

only the dead  
white  
walls

## Nadia

Now  
I have seen her

pick  
tinsel from the tree

turn  
curlers in her hair

wear  
scarlet that  
becomes her

**A Song for the Magus** (for Robert Duncan)

Let him bear witness  
    (who would be a king  
        *of words the speaker*  
    among men

Let him bear children  
    (whose dream is death  
        *and of deeds the doer*  
    a testament  
    in stone

Let him be  
who begot the word  
so he bare  
the signet ring

so that he wear  
the red robe,  
the uroboros,  
a gold band  
in his hair

Let him bear witness  
  
    (who would be king

## A Return to the Garden of Childhood

I come upon an opening,  
a way back in:

no narrow hole, no  
honeycakes

:

the snake

does not strike

## The Snake's Predicament

Locked in con-  
dition

the snake can  
not uncoil.

This is his Cold Year

(the light in  
the South

The sun  
will not soon  
return

The lake ice  
contracts

The snake is  
spinebound to rock

Nor can the moon  
unwind him

**Not to be ex-**

tinct

the snake

inks

an ex-

ist-

ence

out

just

in

time

## Song of the Wrought Iron Rose -- for Nadia

I found an iron rose  
in the basement of a house  
wrought of old iron  
rusty & yet  
new because I found it  
and brought it home  
for you

And will you destroy it too?

You want to burn the house down  
burn all the gifts  
your lovers gave  
you listed  
articles in each room  
you wanted to consume  
by fire

One you forgot to mention:

it will not burn  
it will not wither  
it will not crumble  
to smithereens

it gathers dust  
and gathers rust  
and grows more richly  
darker

Even the plumber had tacked it on the wall.

Now the wrought iron rose  
lies on a plate  
in your windowsill  
awaiting spring  
cleaning a  
dustbin fate

Or with a little luck another finder.

## No thing in itself

the Poet has  
lost his head  
in the leaves of an opening  
rose

Face to the flower  
the petals that deny flame  
assuage him

Arms, hands & legs  
coiled about thorn

The thick stalk  
pricks his nakedness

There is no  
release—only the in-  
cense  
and the sting

## Precarious, The Poet Sees the Weight of His Command

The arch is up-  
turned

a figure in  
the hollow

stands legs  
athwart

keystone  
keeping

the balance  
the columns

of cut stone  
still

All this to hold  
wield

or let  
fall

## The Intellectual

All that is  
behind him  
awesome & un-  
seen  
falls into line:

The brain of a dove  
dull by com-  
parison

(the physics of wings  
(METAPHYSICS!)

The Phoenix

glows  
and is gone

The newbird  
flaps over his left

shoulder  
and is gone

## The Lady of Long Arms

*Mine eyes be dim, my limbs shake  
My voice is hoarse, my throat scorched  
My tongue to this my roof cleaves*

My tongue too  
to my gums pressed  
the rawness, the bleeding  
between the teeth

So much has gone  
on endlessly

the voice in the desert  
the girl in the corridor

fingers amid strings

voice in abeyance  
she sings in silence

and yet I hear

her voice across a distance, words  
that I have written her  
ring clearly

The Lady of long arms  
whose slender fingers  
over the harp stray

## Ode to Jeanne Choquette

O Jeanne  
how perfectly we lay  
naked not  
together you  
with Mike McLean  
me with Sharon it was  
quite a honeymoon night  
on Vine in Kits  
as I remember  
all high on pot you  
me and Mike also  
high on meth you  
stole from St Paul's  
Hospital  
we shot up  
an amp apiece  
and danced all night  
as they say two and  
two but never crossed  
thighs never flowed  
directly except the blood  
we shared  
vicariously  
fell quietly  
in love but never said  
what was really on  
our minds and you  
now suddenly dead  
from hepatitis  
silent forever  
in sad Vancouver  
a terrible coast  
away me out of  
hospital but still  
in the throes of recovery  
here in Buffalo  
campus infirmary  
and bound to live  
when all I want  
is to lie down  
gently in  
the garden of  
your mind my sweet  
Ophelia  
*whose petals are the sign I pick  
at the edge of the pathway*  
and scatter now  
in memory of  
your bright and shining  
life more love than  
any of us in  
your flashing  
eyes  
and smile

**Robert Hogg** is a retired English professor and organic farmer who now devotes his life to writing on his farm in Eastern Ontario, Canada. He has published 5 books of poetry, and six chapbooks; his work has appeared in over 70 periodicals, most recently *Pamenar Online*; *Empty Mirror*; *The Café Review*; *Dispatches*; *Arc*; *Some*; *BlazeVox Online Journal*; *The Typescript*; *Caesura*; *Ottawater 16*; *Sulfur Surrealist Jungle*, *Periodicities* among others. Recent chapbooks include: *from LAMENTATIONS (above/ground)*, *Ranch Days—for Ed Dorn (Battleaxe)*, *Ranch Days—the McIntosh (Hawk/weed)* *A Quiet Affair – Vanc '63 (Trainwreck)*, *The Red Menace (Hogwallow)* and *Apothegms (Apt 9)*. Forthcoming book length titles include: *Lamentations*; *The Cariboo Poems*; *Amber Alert*; *Oh Yeah—More Poems*. In progress are *Furtherings*, and *III Parodies – O*, a selection of satires. A new trade book, *Postcards, from and to America*, will be published with CHAX Press in 2022, and another, *Not to Call it Chaos – The Vancouver Poems* is forthcoming from Ekstasis in Victoria BC. An early, formative, poem from 1964 called 'What the Tide Does,' was featured in the UK magazine, *Imminent* May 2022.

