

A black and white photograph of a person diving into a waterfall. The person is in mid-air, with arms and legs spread wide, falling into the cascading water. The background consists of dark, craggy rock formations.

Communion

Illuminations of the
Mother

by J. Stuart Brooks

**a book of Tantric Devotions
to the Goddess...**

Poems and images 1995-1998

J. Stuart Brooks

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**Book design,
Cover, Back piece,
all images, poetry and text
by the author**

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Dedication

This book is a little flower I offer at the feet of the Mother of all things.

This book is dedicated to all my friends, too many to list, and to those artists and mentors who kept me inspired through that long dark night of the soul.

For Dr. Edward Muller, Barrie Ryan and Anne Simmons Myers.

This book is also dedicated to these poets and photographers who have been good friends and mentors, who had so much influence on my life and my work.

For N. Scott Momaday, Joy Harjo, Carol Flax, Harold Jones, Joe LaBate, Richard Shelton, Tenny Nathenson and Allison Moore.

And, most importantly to my subjects who inspired the muse within me: for Nanette Robinson, Bonnie Colby, Tom Beal, Lyndi Rivers, Teena Neal, Anne Carl, Roger Davis, Pamela Machutt, Feather West, Anna Lujan, Catherine Allen, Sherman Alexi, Meredith Hartwell, Sheila Null, Andrea Cartland, Roxanne Johnson and Susan Schugar.

Thank you.

Preface

I could say this book has been 25 years in the making because it began with journal entries in 1974. I could say it has been a life's work because it gives voice to the first half of my life experience. This book reflects my life and my spiritual journey. Since, for me, the two are the same, I can not pull the fibers of one away from the other.

This collection of poetry and images is dedicated to the Goddess, and it is subtitled "Tantric Devotions" because my intention with this work is to express that place where the sacred and the erotic come together.

While the priest, minister or rabbi might want to draw lines in our lives separating places where the deity does not exist, it is the mystic who would join the Tantric in removing those lines separating us from the deity. As the mystic would say, "What is wrong or evil is what takes us away from our intimate communion with the deity."

The fall of man is a central theme in Christian era literature, but if we are to embrace Tantra, then the fall is only having forgotten the deity is our consort. It is in every waking moment and every action that we express our love for the deity who is our consort, our lover.

It seems to me, that for man, woman is the philosopher's stone. She is the quest for the sacred chalice that we spend our entire lives searching for. We spend all of our energies searching for her, finding her, serving and providing for her and pleasing her. I don't believe it is just the need to reproduce, or the need for cultural continuity that drives our lives around women.

Underneath all of the obsessive/compulsive behavior men have around women, it is the deep knowledge that we all came here to this world through woman. She was the hollow reed, the burden basket that ancient myths said we were carried into this world.

Relating to a female verses male deity is immaterial to me. The spirit of all things has no gender. Gender only has meaning here in the physical world where we have procreation. In the spirit world there is no gender, because it has no meaning there. I have chosen a female deity because God as a woman, a mother and a lover engenders gentle nurturing qualities. The qualities I want in a God.

Much of the academic world, the Western world and the industrialized world are preoccupied with separating out things. How is one thing different from another? Tantra, as I understand it, is focused on how things come together. How things are alike.

The geneticists discovered that the difference between man and woman is only one out of three chromosomes. Two Xs and a Y and you are a woman. Two Ys and an X and you are a man. Tantra has known for thousands of years that there is woman in man and man in woman. There is evil inside God and God inside evil. Tantra recognizes that the boundaries that separate things are vague and sometimes arbitrary.

Western religion strives to separate life into that which is secular and that which is religious. Tantra, on the other hand, does not make a distinction between one's material life and one's spiritual life. This blending of one's so called mundane life and sacred life is the source of much Western misinterpretation of Tantra. In the West it is common to think of Tantra as the practice of exotic sexual practices and black magic. Some practitioners of Tantra do emphasize these things, but the sexual practices of Tantra are intended to teach that there is no moment that one is not in the presence of God. Every aspect of life can be holy and sacred, because if God created the

Universe, and there was nothing in existence before the creation, then God could only have created the universe out of Herself, therefore everything is divine, even you and me.

You will find, dreams are a significant component to this work. My dreams have been a major aspect of my spiritual journey. Many spiritual traditions look at the dream world as contact with the spirit world. In this journey through my dream world I have had many kinds of dreams, some have been mundane, others frightening and many many have been highly inspired. My dreams have not only revealed my subconscious tendencies, but they have also served to direct my journey.

Reincarnation figures significantly in this work as well. It is primarily an Asian belief system that I encountered in my study of Asian philosophy and religion. It is the belief that we have had many lifetimes and we will have many more. The Yoga sutras say that we will go on having lifetime after lifetime until we end the cycle of birth and death. The cycle of reincarnation is driven by our attraction and repulsion to things outside of our relationship to the deity, which is our true identity. Through my dream experiences and deep meditation practices I have had sensory experiences that have revealed information that seems to have come from different time periods that I choose to call previous lifetimes.

Shamanism is also a central theme in this work. If we take the definition of Shamanism to be the practice of mediating between the physical world and the spirit world for the purposes of healing, divination, spiritual guidance and control over natural events, then we could say all mystics are shaman. That is what I believe. The mystics of this world are the shaman who direct the path of individuals and whole cultures.

Many Euro-Americans are presently trying to redefine who they are as individuals and who they are as a culture. In their pursuit of who they are, many Euro-Americans are exploring the traditions of other cultures. Like

myself, they want to rediscover the roots of their own culture which is often mixed, or was destroyed by the Inquisition. The Inquisition was a time when the Catholic Church was struggling to maintain its hold on a Europe that still kept to many of the ancient tribal ways of the Celts, Druids and other pre-Roman conquest cultures.

In our study of traditional cultures Euro-Americans are encountering resistance from some Native cultures who resent the intrusion. It is understandable that people want to maintain their personal and cultural privacy. It is important that we all respect each others privacy and each others journey. All peoples were tribal at one time in their history, and I think people of the industrialized nations of today are hungry to make contact with their ancient tribal roots. The Inquisition, the Industrial revolution and colonialization have pretty much annihilated the tribal roots of Euro-Americans. Through the respectful study of existing tribal societies we can rediscover our own tribal identity, while honoring existing tribal ways.

American culture has often been said to be a melting pot culture, because so many cultures make up American society. I believe that we live at a time when the boundaries of culture, tradition and ethnicity are melting. These boundaries are dissolving because people are tired of the rigid views of the old ways of seeing things. People want to embrace some new perspective. That new perspective, I believe, is a hunger inside all of us for a spiritual journey. I think the quest for tribal roots is central to that journey.

I don't believe there is one true way of viewing God. I believe through the study of other cultures and religions we come to a greater understanding of ourselves, a greater tolerance for others, and a broader understanding of our relationship with the Universe. The industrial revolution and colonialism has effected the culture of everyone on this planet. We need to respect each other's hunger for direction, our quest for a map, or we will only have chaos.

Humans, as we know them, have been on this planet for something like

100,000 years. It has been theorized that during the Ice Ages there were land and ice bridge connecting the continents of the Northern Hemisphere. It is said that humans crossed these bridges. A 9,500 year old skeleton of a European man was discovered in Washington state in the summer of 1996. Isn't it possible that humans have been moving about the face of the Earth incessantly? There is no pure genetic material on this planet.

Spiritually speaking we are all related as well. In the Judeo/Christian belief system, and many other mythic belief systems, God created the universe. Therefore we all must have come from the same creator mother/father God, which means that we are all children of God. Mother Terese tapped into this concept, and made it the platform of her teaching. In a time in this world when we have cultures attempting to annihilate each other, Mother Terese became a culture shaman attempting to effect a global shift in attitude toward a global brother/sisterhood with this one idea.

I hope that you, the reader, will read these poems and view the enclosed images as offerings to what you hold sacred. I thank you for taking the time to read this book, but I also ask that you give yourself the time to let this book touch you.

a long time ago
on one full moon night
I had a dream.
We walked a dark path
up a black volcanic cliff
to her cave...



The Mother's Gift

Facing South, my footsteps
traced the path of the pilgrim.
Others brought little gifts
of shining black stones
and small brightly colored boxes.

Standing in her cave,
surrounded by many gifts,
her black eyes touched
me with a smile.

Feeling like a neglectful son
on his mothers forgotten birthday,
I said,

“Forgive me Mother,
the only gift I have to offer
is myself.”

Smiling, she gently held me
in her palm like a small
precious object.

She extended her hand
from her breast
and released me.

I fell from the loving safety
of her hand like a bubble
drifting to the sea raging
against the rocks below.

Coming to rest on the water
I became formless sea foam
and limitless ocean.

and she said...

La Corpa Dia My Body

At my birth, time and space began.
When I choose to cease my existence,
time and space will end.
Space is the extent of my body.
Time is the span of my life.

I am everything,
Space, Time, Light and Density.
Nothing has come into existence
except through me.
There is nothing that is not me.
I am all that is
and all that will ever be.

Beyond the death of this body
I alone will exist.

The cells of my body
are galactic clusters
made up of sub-atomic solar systems.
The expansion of galaxies
is like the blossoming of flowers
and supernova are like shooting stars.
To me, the Human life span
is as brief as the sub-atomic particle.

I am consciousness.
There is nothing in my body
I am not conscious of.
My consciousness pervades
even to the smallest particle.

I am the silent ocean.
I am darkness waiting
endlessly to embrace you
wholly.

Bottomless and with no shore.
In me, you will have no foothold,
and no place to grasp.
I will embrace you
totally.

If you struggle against me
you will only become exhausted.
I will hold you up,
and when you reach for
the density of Earth
I will not hold you
back.

I am yielding.
When you come out of me
I will fall away,
brooding your inevitable
return.

I am the pull of emptiness.

It seemed that She had made a violent world...

Violence

I have seen violence.
I've seen cab drivers
Beating each other for a fare,
And puddles of blood on the subway.
I've seen fathers chafe their children,
And men whip each other for a woman,
I've seen babies bleed to death on my bed,
After bouncing their soft heads
Off unpadded dashboards.
I've seen head masters cane lines of boys,
And boys beating each other
In the school yard.

I've seen violence.
I've seen screaming, drunken
Lovers beating each other, and
Drug dealers toss a stabbed body
From a moving car.
I've seen spoiled white boys on Reds
Bloodied by the police in the Tank,
And armies massing along the Nile
For a six day romp.
I've seen the starved dead on the sidewalks,
And naked swollen bellied children
Living in dumps, barefoot.

I've seen violence.
I've seen my sister shrieking wild
Eyed raped by my stepfather,
And tracks in silent rage wind
Up my other sister's arms.
I saw my sisters hold me down
While my mother sodomized me
With bathroom utensils.

I saw myself drink
Until I shit my pants,
Smoke opium until I vomited
And take acid until I died.

I have seen violence.

She was an angry mother...

Love Thy Mother

I pass through life
unobserved.
If I walk quietly
mother wont be disturbed.

I return
to the scene of the crime.

We were born to be
hostages
threatened daily
with death and dismemberment.

I remember we had
mysterious intestinal ailments.
Maybe it was just a flu
passed quickly between us.
We joke
it was mother trying to poison us.

When I played and giggled too loudly
mother threatened,
to cut off my balls
and hang them
in the garage.

It was a dark place
with many boxes and old tools,
cluttered and musty.
It was the place I kept my new pigeon.
I found it the next morning,
lying on its back
heart cut out.
I kept my next pigeon safe
in my room.

When I went to Europe
I visited lots of castles.
We were always shown the dungeons,
with many clever instruments of torture
they reminded me of mother's garage.

If I'm quiet
I'll live
one more day.

Crying out

I feel life suck right out of me.

I want to cry out
In rage and terror
For help
Like when you raped me
But, there was no one.

Then as now
I can't cry out.
Then as now
It did no good,
It does no good.

I take a hot bath
On a warm night
But, I can't tell if it's hot,
What time it is or what day.
When did I last eat?

I just want to sleep
Away this pain.
But, my dreams
Are of blood
Dripping down long sharp knives.

The Whipping Boy

I was kept in rags
And left to lie
In my own shit.
I learned to walk early
And deal with it
In my own way.

My one goal in crawling
Was to reach the gleaming freedom
Of the back door.
Often returned from the corner market
Two blocks away with dirty diapers
By flirting firemen.

I found company with dogs in the desert
So, Mother tagged me.
My name is JEFF
My master's name is RUTH
I live at 4268 E. Paseo Grande.

Like Pooch, she called me Buch.

I learned to run when
A back hand or hair brush
Across my once round head,
On days when beating the bottle
Wasn't enough,
Turned into pinning me to the floor,
Tearing my cloths off, and sodomizing
Me with a thermometer.

Leashes

A leash wrapped tightly around my neck.
Breaking free from the tormentor
has been my great life's work to speak.

Mother intended to stack the deck.
You must know if you are a suitor.
A leash wrapped tightly around my neck.

My stiff back felt the switches mean fleck,
when I stubbornly pulled, jerked and tore.
They only found struggle at the peck.

Step Mother thought I lived at her beck
and call so proud was she that meant her
leash was wrapped tightly around my neck.

In my weakness, feeling like a speck.
I only lacked a good mentor
instead of wasting this life a wreck

There have been some attempts to inspect
to the great dismay of many a tutor.
A leash wrapped tightly around my neck
has been my great life's work to speak.

and an ambivalent lover...



Graceful Power

They came out of the darkness.

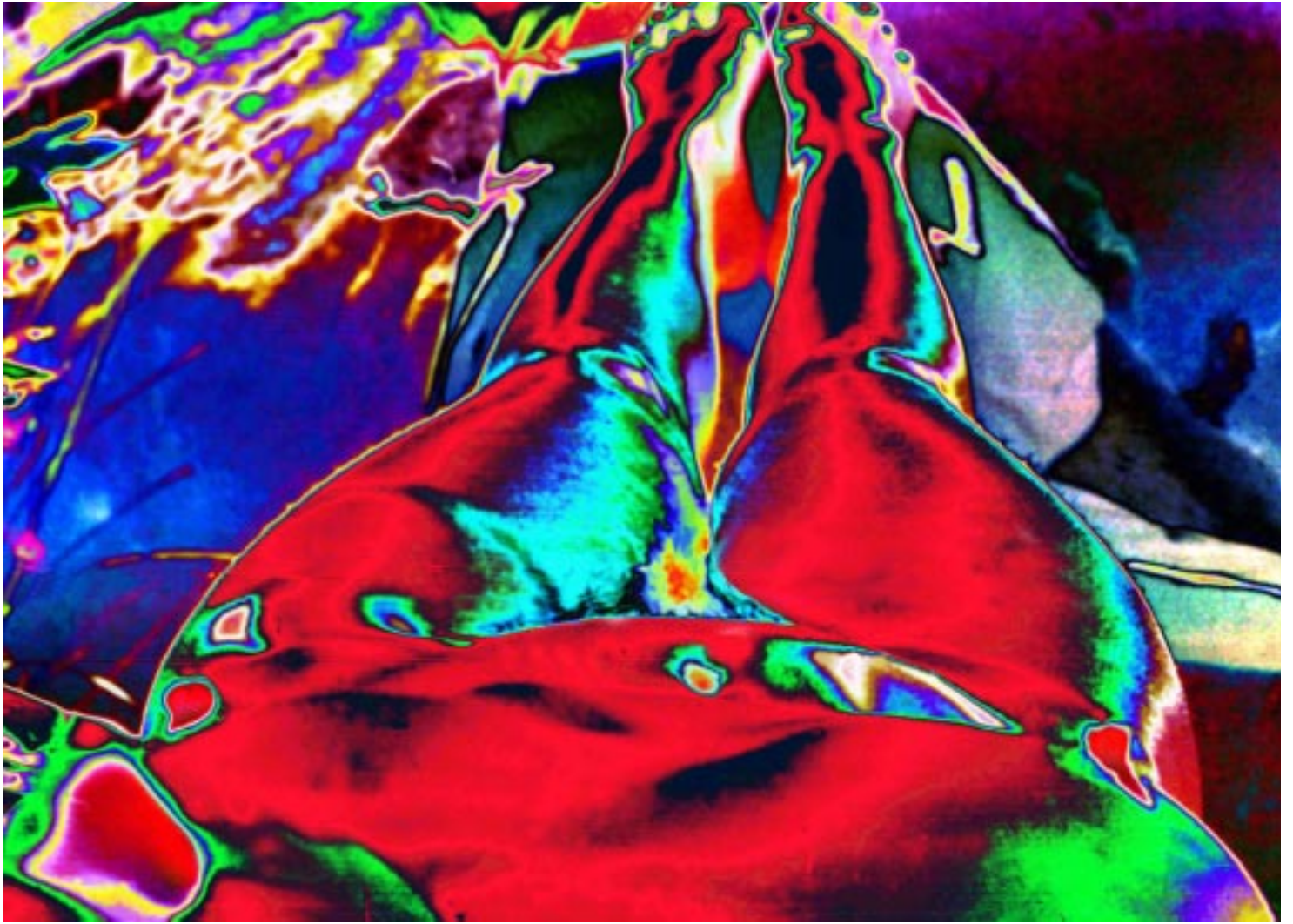
Gracefully, She sat naked
on the back
of that great dark horse.

Her long black hair hung
wave upon wave
down to her thighs.

Dancing, his powerful legs
reached out
to the night sky.

She danced and cartwheeled
upon my barbwire fence
before she passed

indifferent.



Loving Spider Woman

Like desert rain
she comes rarely,
and most often
to another mountain
where I see her draw her curtains
and dance on his hill.

I catch her scent drifting
down an arroyo,
a desert rain musk
of creosote, dust and mud.

I hiked a narrow trail
up a steep canyon wall,
switchbacking endlessly,
to dance with her.

But, her lightning pranced
along the other ridge
as her thunder beat
against my chest.

I wanted her fat drops
to pound on my mountain
eroding me into thick mud
like chocolate churning down washes.

I wanted her to leave me
buried in an alluvial fan
beneath saguaro and agave,
but she smiled at me
as she danced with another.

and they said, “You are not of my people...”

Returning

When you are billions
of years old
what is that fragment
of a moment we call
a life time?

The dust of my bones
blanket the planet
from tens of thousands
of life times,
and you say I am not
one of your people
because this body
carries the blood
of the conqueror.

How do you know
that on some good day to die,
your cavalry bullet
did not pierce
my war shirt, and
my blood did not soak
into the red earth
as I lay on the sweetgrass?

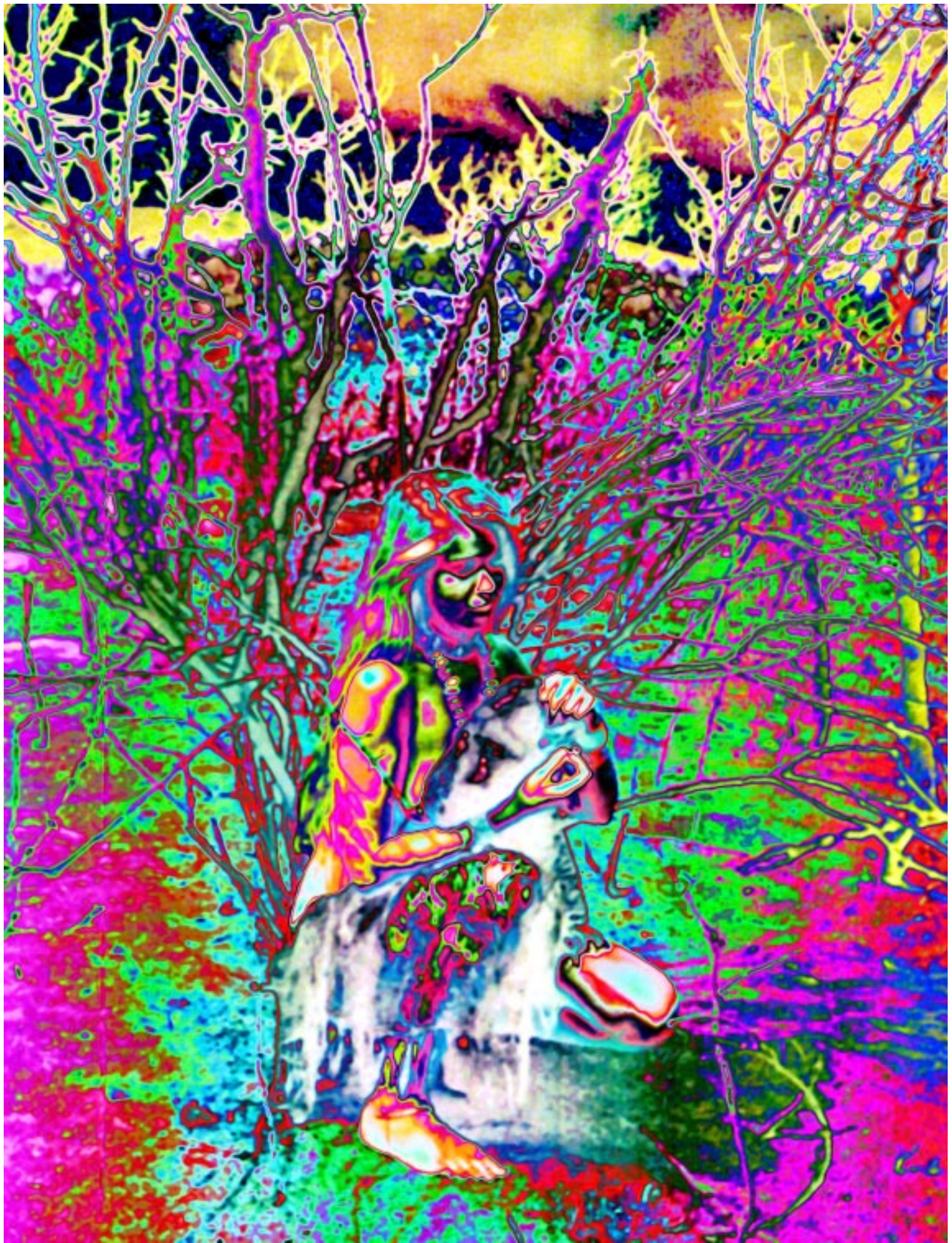
When you are all of space
what is that speck of dust
called a human body?
What is that cluster
of particles we call
clan, race, gender, species?

I have felt the fullness
of man inside of me
and given birth and death.

My skin has blistered
in the fire of the stake,
and I have laid in heaps of bodies
in large pits under fresh snow.

The greed of humans
knows no end,
but as many times
as you strip my soul
from this body
I shall return.

then I learned She
had other faces...



Shaman Woman

I first saw her drumming
around the night fire
at Christmas Star.
An African shaman
beating out a spell.

Fire glinted off sweat
on her powerful arms
and glowed in the amber
nestled between her full breasts.
White carry shells embracing
Her round hips
kept a hissing rhythm.

I smiled at her power over men
and followed the call
of the desert's night silence.
I wrapped myself
In the sky's radiant robe,
while the distant camp throbbed
with the magic she wove.

Her spell was spent
as the morning star jewel rose.
Dawn brought me to my knees
and her to the Bedouin tent.
She returned as I departed.
Sun gleamed from
her blond vulnerability.

I sat before a circle
of those seeking a healing.
With grace on my fingers
I touched one tired soul,
Found it was her, and knew
Spirit had opened
A new path to the heart.

Fire in Wildcat Canyon

It had been a moon
since we last danced,
so I left my home
on a hot summer morning.

The valley was covered
in the gray haze
from forest fires
in my red streaked mountains.

Along the way
I passed stretches of scorched desert
with shriveled saguaros.
I courted a woman
who lived in Wildcat Canyon.

I arrived at midnight
to find the ridge ablaze
with orange and yellow flames
leaping from tall pines.

I massaged juniper scented oil
into her golden body,
and she wiped the road-
weariness from mine.

Sunrise brought
a yellow fog
over the canyon.

To tempt the flames,
we ignored the fire break
to watch a brigade of planes
bomb the burn with large buckets.

Three days, adrift
in a sea of dry brown wheat,
we watched the fire draw closer.
Finally the brigade and wind
drove it to the other side.

For the fire's wake,
we rode bikes to the break
and she danced naked
on black ash
and charcoal trees.

Rotations of Rosaries

For Arjan 1953-1989

The day Arjan fell from the sky
into Box Canyon I dreamed
I flew soaring loops
around the bay area
using my will for a rudder.

After his memorial
in a field of desert poppies
I fed you soup and made love
to you like a pilgrim on
Shiva Ratry, then fell asleep,

and dreamed your thigh became
a field fallow with yellow wild
flowers, and five white rabbits
with pointed ears nibbled.

It was your back that became
a river with fat trout swimming
lazy under flat rocks.

Your hip was a harrow's disc
turning over black soil,
and I wore your dark mud,
a mantle upon my alter.

Outside rain fell like the flood,
and I found I could regulate it
from my dreams.

I awoke to find your body
wore the gold of dawn
gracefully as silk.

Reaching for metal
my tongue counted
the rosary of your skin.

I cleansed myself in the pool
of your belly rising like
tide on ancient worlds,
and found I love you, love you.

The Bull and The Raven Dancing

She was dry like cracked
wheat and a raven's wing.
She was sinew and sand,
water pouring into his body.

He was hot water and bile,
sweat and sweet potatoes.
He was tongue and fingers,
lace and liver.
He was wet clay.

The knotted toll rope slipped
through his fingers
like wet sinew
when the bell rang loud.

She was wracked
with resonant spasms
by the touch of Taurus,
and rang like a bell
that had waited decades
for the toll.

Her fingers fluttered like
wingtip feathers on a black
black night over his round back.
He heaved as he bellowed.

He was mud under her fingernails
and she was a spider's web.

They danced improvisations
of feathers and hide until 2 AM,
when the bull and the raven
met on a moonless night.

I spent my fortieth year
in canyons
and set a new course...



Mesa Land

Mesas like tall ships jut
From this undulating plain
To touch the white feathers and hishi
Of the sky's sacred turquoise robe.

Salmon dawns and dusks rain
Down on white capped mountains
Sending deer and antelope
To dance over shoals of silver-gray sage.

Great cloud mountains drift
Like icebergs dragging
Nets of rain
Past island mesas.

Rose colored stone cut
Like cake, stacked in cords,
And scuttled
On the reefs of time,
Sink into red dust.

A blood red road snakes
Through the cresting waves
Of a yellow-green sea of grass.
A scar gouged into a soft cheek.

Snake Dreams

Struggling with the demon
I spent a decade in austerities.
I took cold showers,
Ate no meat,
No refined, preserved, colored
Or processed foods.

Fasted for weeks.
Ate raw food.
Lost seventy five pounds.
Meditated at sunrise and sunset
Abstained from sex, speech, sleep
And intoxicants.

Still, the demon
Tracked me down.
She lived in the stone
Of the shame of childhood abuses
That pressed against my heart.

Her domain was my dreams.
She took many forms.
Sometimes as a witch or tiger
She tore at my flesh
With long sharp nails and fangs.
Most often she was a snake.

I suffered many deaths in my dreams.
The first death was by the prick
Of a thousand fangs
Buried into my flesh
From a nest
Of baby water snakes.

In each dream
The snakes became bigger.

The last snake
Was as big as a house
Pink with turquoise eyes.
She slithered faster than I could run.

Cornered on a small tongue of land
Surrounded by water,
Her element,
She came to devour me.

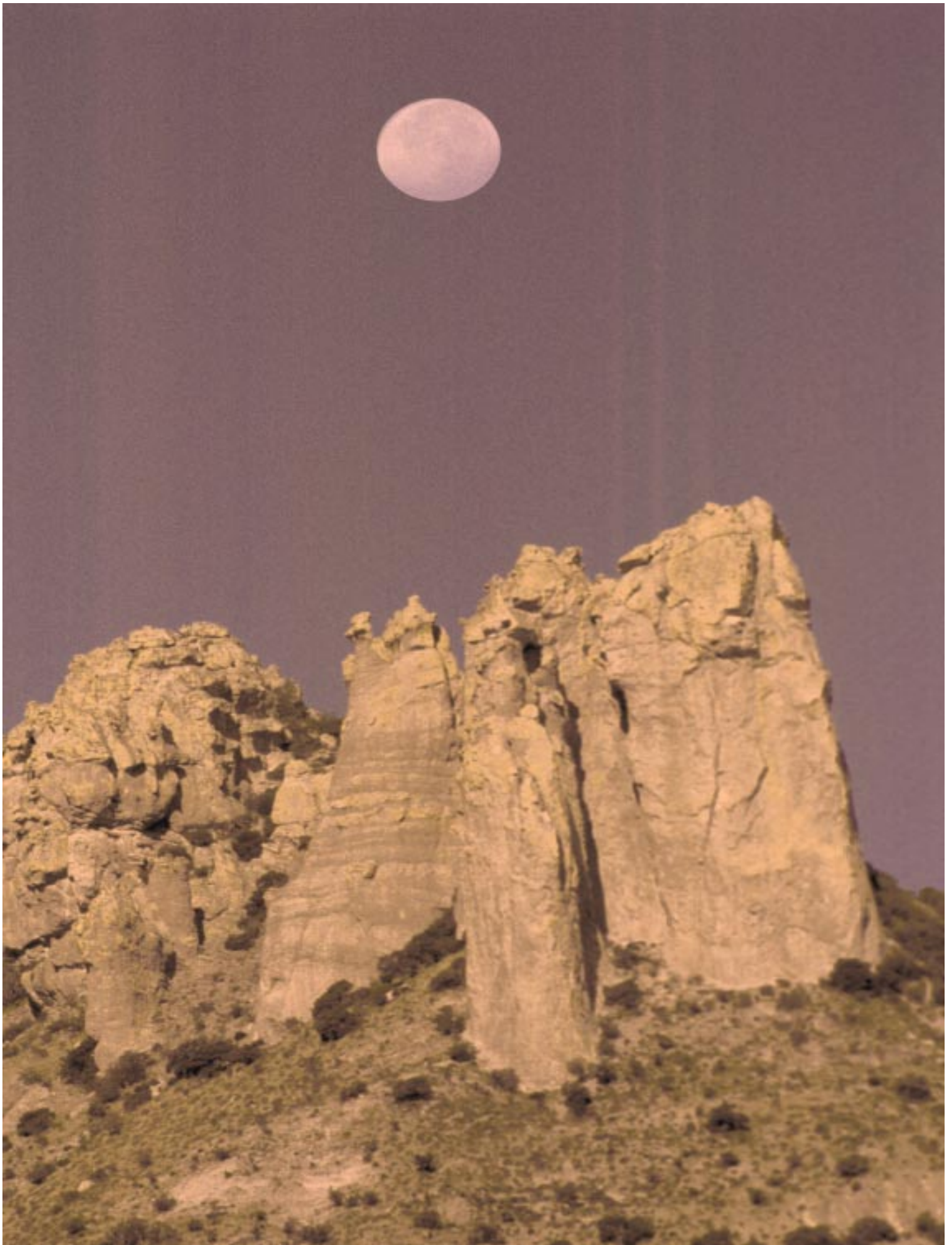
I sat in meditation.
She came down on me,
Her hot breath on my ears.

I remained resigned to my fate,
And one pointed on luminosity.
I flew from her jaws
To the company
Of my teacher, in the desert.

We walked down a dirt road
Through a forest of Cholla.
Pointing at a clump
He said, "You must care for your snake."

She was a happy little rattle snake
In a doll house
Watching TV from a lounge chair.

I buried mentors...



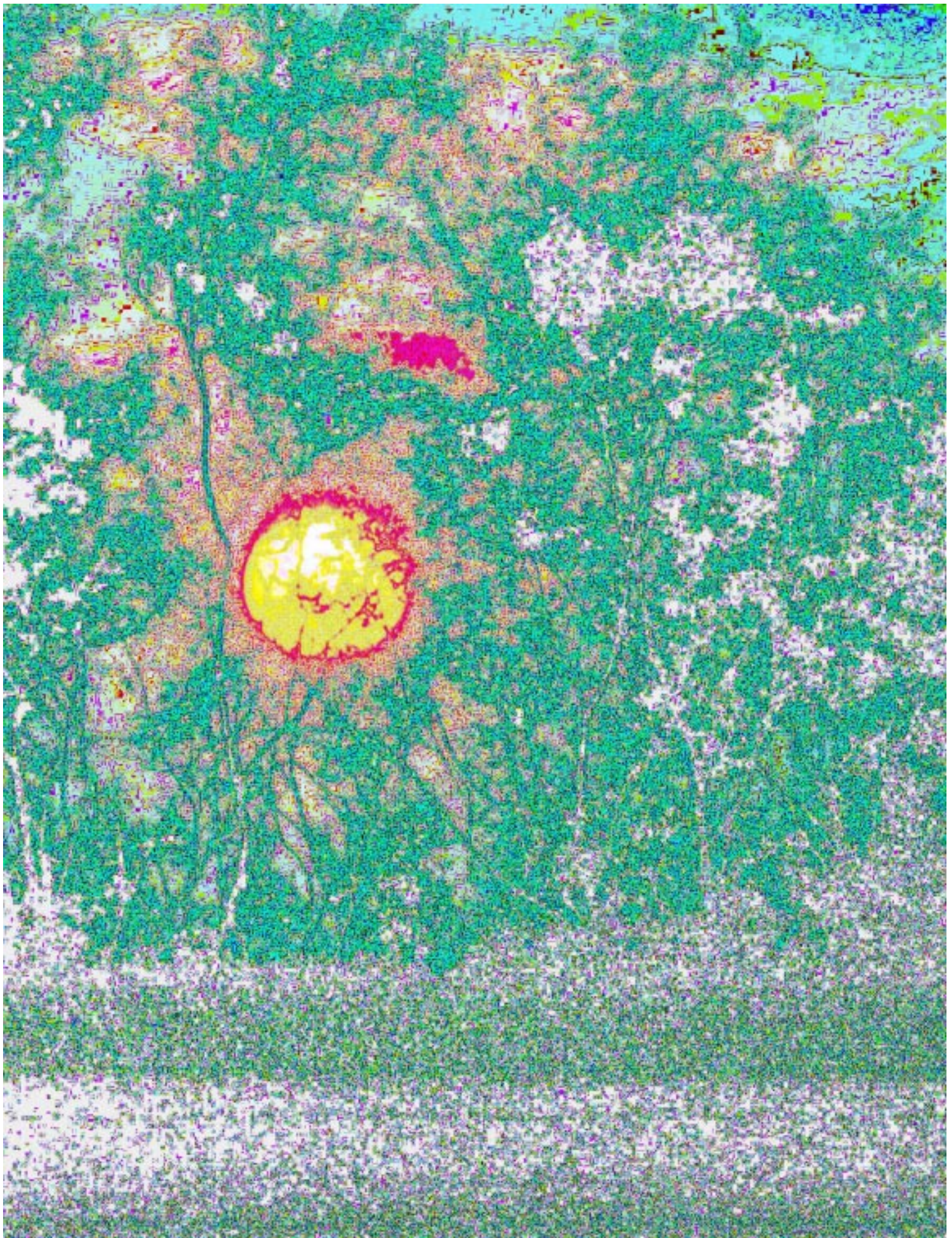
Burying the Shaman

A few puffs of down
floated across a lapis sea
sky washed clean by three days
of southern spring rains.
Paradise lay at the feet
of Silver Peak gleaming
with late snow.

A Cathedral of jagged red cliffs
erupt from this fallen valley
of Cave Creek. Where
A river of life flows
with sacred sycamores
gleaming silver in the bright
warm sun, filtered through
an emerald blanket of new
leafed cottonwoods.

The Shaman's twelve apostles
bore his ash through cedar
and juniper medicine-scented
trails to his rocky pool below
jutting alters where I rang the bell
and chanted the spell
for a blessing attended
by whirling starlings
and anointed by sudden rain.

**I was becoming a man
with no man as my mentor...**



Awakening to my Feelings

Falling to my knees
in snow and ice
cracked open
the encrusted shell of my fear.

That emerging embryo
quivered
in the blazing sun
of tears, terror and rage.

I wanted to yell
that jagged pain
out from the deep
black tar of my belly.

But, fear's yellow mustard
lay coiled
at the base of my spine
constricting my viscera.

In my fright
it snaps up my back
and grasps my tongue
in its toothy grin.

Red salt, metal blood
floods my dry white mouth
and leaves me the fool
one more time.

I was hungry and you fed me,
I was cold and you clothed me...

**The Kingdom of God is at Hand.
The Apocalypse is Now.**

My rent is due,
and I still have
six hundred dollars to go.

I'm a local boy,
and I've never owned
a house in this town.

I rent from Californians
who buy up property here
because it's cheap.
They expect the rent
to be paid on time.

They've come here
to retire.

We are clinging to a rock
protected by a tiny envelope
of air and a thin film of water.

I tell myself, its OK
if we blow ourselves to hell
or annihilate each other
in the slower death

of environmental suicide,

because we are billions
of years old, and when the pearls
of this planet are exhausted
we'll just incarnate on another
to continue our journey
to one simple love.

It seems so silly
to claw our way
onto a heap
trying to see over
a few more ripples
on an otherwise
uniform plane.

I dream I'm a dark horse
leaping over new-wire fences
waffling the wilderness
into an exclusionary prison.

Anger burns in my joints.
I want to cut myself free.
I feel fences falling
like flesh parting
before a sharp knife.

While I pumped my last buck
into my tank, The universe

sent me a message.

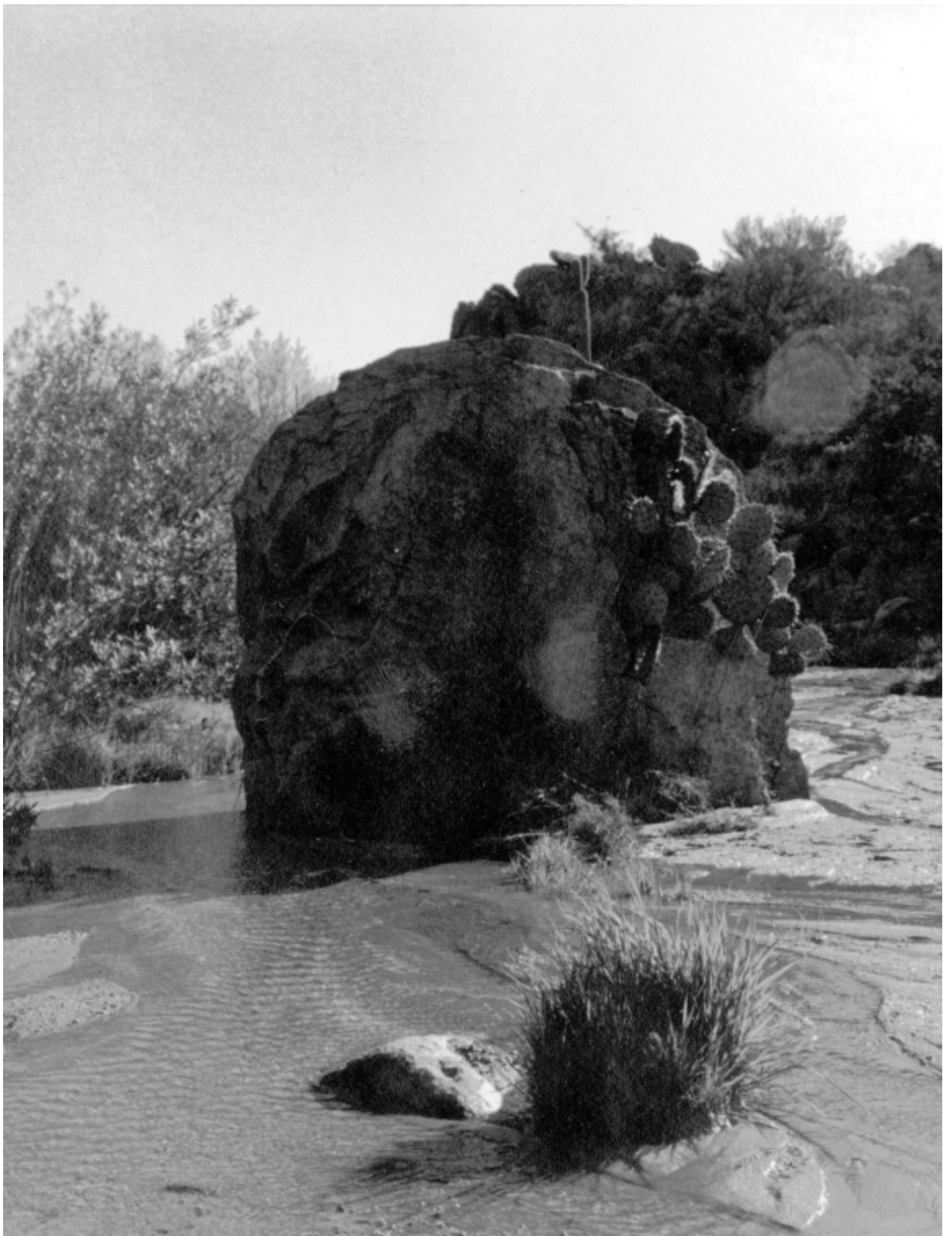
I watched a prairie dog
sit on the curb
at a mid-town light,
waiting.

When the light changed,
it ran across and disappeared
into the bushes at the car wash
where Lance-A-Lot limos
rest on tar covering
what used to be
creosote covered talus
on the bank of a wash
eroded into caliche.

It is now a main street
that floods every monsoon,
and leaves new arrivals
stranded and frustrated
with Tucson's idea
of flood control.

The rent is still due.
I do what I can,
and think of what I can sell.

and took sacraments...



Toads in the Tortalitas

Cicadas call the rain
with their incessant chatter.
Monsoons build mountains
on the flashing horizon.
Wind tears at trees,
Lightning leaps to Earth,
rain screams, and thick water
foams down empty washes

waking the toads from their dreams.

Jacks race my lights,
leading me to them.

Avoiding amber tarantulas,
transparent scorpions
and night hunting rattlers,
I find them sitting in the bright
moonlight like malachite stones
leaning into the creosote scented wind,
chanting.

I hunt them for their medicine,
which they carry in sacks
like flabby armor.

Bats dart through the cool night
breeze over blackened ponds with
rain driven concentric waves
shattering lightning reflections.
Coyotes laugh and giggle nearby
while I gently milk the toads.

I was born here,
between these four mountains,
between these two rivers.
I rose up out of this earth.
This is the center of my world,
my holy land.

I dreamt other life times...



Mars Dives into Venus Pools

A young man sits vigilant
for many days of fasting,
chanting and wakefulness.
Striving for spiritual illumination,
he conquers his material needs.

One pointed on his destination
his mind is poised, life lies
suspended before him.
Gathering power, he inhales
the worlds through his finger tips.

Reaching out with every fiber
of his destiny, he springs
off the high cliff. Arching
his young body, he dives
gracefully, determinedly
to Venus crashing below.

He pierces the surf and
transforms into the power of salmon.

He is free to streak through
the water with speed and grace.
Many creatures join him
along the ocean currents
in their mass seasonal migration
to the rich Arctic waters
of the far north.

and dreamt I was melting...

**Ghost Dancing
on the Edge of Absolute Zero**

They broke the tree in two
and gave it to me to carry,
a gift of peace
to the white conqueror.

Assembled mortise and tenon,
and held together with a peg.
I slung it over my shoulder
with a silk rainbow.

The burden was light.

My medicine bundle became
the tree of life polished
to amber by centuries
of reverent touch

by people numerous as stars.

I bowed to Spirit
as a line of the dead,
like children for hard candy,
passed to touch the tree

one last time.

On my way to therapy,
sanding from splinter
to strata of grain,
I passed the house of the woman
I would have lived with

all these years.

She would have had my children
if I could have overcome
the shame of being born
to the parents I have.

Sawdust drifts about my feet
like deep snow.

She remains with the father
of her children because

they are that way.

The chill in my heart
reminded me of a place
where on a winter's night
only liquefied helium flows from
contraction cracked oxygen glaciers.

And, the blackness is split
by starlight powered
helium fountains spouting
from frozen nitrogen caldera.

It is the Milky Way that
brings a brief summer
to melting hydrogen icicles.



the Moon thinks She is the Sun

When the Sun eclipses the Moon
She teaches her daughters
the ways of War.
They become Red Venus,
And will admit no Man.

At first Mars seems angry red,
But on closer inspection
The God of War
is only a frozen world
where a web of canals turns
into impact craters, and
faces turn into mountains.

Venus is an angry furnace
melting lead on her skin,
and Mars must douse his flame
in her pools to win her love again.



and becoming woman...

Passage Home

On a moonless night
my husband and brother bound me,
tied rocks to my ankles and
dumped me into our reed boat.

They paddled out in the
deep lake near our village.

I was called Star-Woman
because I dreamt I came from
an ocean of stars. A place where
every bright point pierced me with love.

My star friends told me to give the love
I felt from them to my people
and they would be healed.

Those I healed, later talked about me
and said I was a witch, because
they feared my power.

I could only see that they
feared my love.

My brother accepted my punishment
because he was afraid they wouldn't
let him lead the fishing in the spring.
My husband wanted a younger woman.

They lifted me like a wagging fish,
to dropped me into those cold black waters.

Resting on its seamless surface
I saw the black night sky with
her dress of many shining stars
embraced in the powerful cream covered
breasts of our sacred mountains.

And I laughed because I saw,
it was a doorway home,
back to my beloved ocean
of glittering star-friends.



Rain
Man Dreaming Eagle, Dreaming Salmon,
Dreaming Woman

Released from the prison of density
I embraced the freedom of wind.
Arching my body in tight turns
Around cumulous mountains,
I flew through streaking cirrus,
And circled crystalline showers
Of water and ice.

Called back to my cell
I drifted down to the rolling ocean,
And dove into a joyful harbor
Where men and women danced.
My rainbow came to rest
On shining salmon woman
As she was scooped into a hoop net.

She was Sea Buffalo.
Born in the trickle
Of high mountain creeks,
To graze in liquid meadows,
She was carried out to sea.

Along warm ocean currents
She swam for years.

In the rivers
spirit of Rain roars
through Thundering falls
calling her back
to the laughing waters
To spawn only once.

A Calcutta Street Dancer

She dances for her Shiva,
at night sleeping with him, late
and making love
on the streets of Calcutta.

At dawn he slips away
to his wife, and she awakens
to find her Shambu gone
once again.

In her own private world
she bathes on the street
before a brass faucet
burnished gold from use.

She opens her vermilion pot,
to renew her marriage vow
of the red moon on her forehead,
and finds it empty.

She seeks her husband,
the merchant, who would
not make his Shakti pay
to keep the wave of her full lips

red below a vermilion moon.

With bright red lips and talik
she accepts golden saffron
and dall crested with a white dollop
of raita from her Shiva who's wife
strikes the pot with a wooden spoon,
and glares him into submission.

At saffron dusk she finds a street-band
and dances for her Shiva.
Her ankletted bare feet pat the
cement imploring his embrace.

A stranger passes and she's drawn
by the graceful roll of his broad shoulders.
She cries out "Shambu" with such longing
that he turns. Instantly he is
intoxicated by her sweet smile and
the crescent moons in her eyes.

She Draws him to her with
graceful gestures of long
delicate fingers, shoulders
swaying, hips and head
jutting, and the innocence
of a winning smile.

then I became the Father...

I Have Become the Father

I dreamt I had become the sun,
and you were a wild iris
that rose out of the soil
awakened by early spring rain
and my warm bright days.

A tall stalk, pale and slender
with a gentle nod and a ripple
of silk the color of dawn
that waved in the breeze like smoke.

Holding a single blade
you wilted easily before my heat,
and I wanted to pile
moist black earth
against your fleshy bulb.

But, you would have none of that
as you put out yet another flourish.

So, I became the ocean
and you were kelp with
long ribbons streaming
like Pele's golden hair

below churning surf
with buoyant bladders
streaming bubbles that
danced in my amber light.

You let go and washed ashore
to become a cloud,
so I became the wind.

I shaped and molded
you into many faces.
I pulled and remade
you time and again.

I pushed you against mountains
and you became black
and fell gorging dry washes.

But, I couldn't let you go,
so I became the dark Earth
and you a river winding
through my broad valley.

I contained you, but
you eroded my banks
and churned me into
a thick brown slurry
that you left in crescents

where you became a tree
rooted deep into me
and wild irises bloomed
in my black, black mud.

and blossomed...

the Five Elements of Blossoming

“Love is the only
thing of value
in this world,” says Kabir.

Dry July winds
blew across
dead cotton fields,

and I slept lonely nights,
frozen in a crystal
matrix of hard lines.

A vast emptiness
echoed inside, where
there was nothing,

not even crisp seeds
to grate against
a brittle skin.

At the end of my road
I slept on a ledge
above high tide,

beneath an ocean
of stars that reached
out and touched me.

They sang all night,
“love is the only
thing of value.”

Monsoon rains fell diluting
the fire left in desert rocks
by the summer sun.

I sought peace and quiet
in the roar and whine
of the late night city,

and found it, inside,
like melting snow.

A stream of glacial milk
glistened down the center
of the peaceful valley of my mind.

Light shines
from that deep blackness.

Like liquid obsidian
I have grown fluid
and glassy smooth.

I send this wave rippling
across the sea to the hearts
of the few who know,

love is the only
thing of value
in this world.

Glossary

Absolute Zero, the theoretical temperature of -459.67°F at which all molecular movement ceases.

Caliche, a hard rock-like formation of clay and calcium carbonate that makes the soils of the Sanora desert hard as cement when dry, and slimy when wet.

Carry Shells, a shell from Africa commonly used for adornment and associated to the Goddess.

Creosote, Chaparral, or more properly known as Greasewood, is a yellow green bush that grows throughout the Sanora desert and other places in the Southwestern United States. Creosote has a smell that the bush releases profusely just prior to rain and is the distinct smell of Sanoran rain. It is a common herbal remedy used topically and internally primarily for its detoxification and antibiotic properties.

Dall, a culinary dish of India, made primarily of anyone of a variety of split peas.

Five elements, from metaphysics and alchemy, the spiritual forces of nature, Earth, Air, Fire, Water and Ether.

Ghost Dancing, an ecstatic spiritual practice originating with the Paiute in the middle of the 19th century for the purpose of communing with the dead and the spirit world, specifically with one's ancestors.

Hishi, a Native American style of jewelry common to the tribes of the Four Corners of the Southwestern United States. It is made primarily from shell or turquoise that are cut into thin disks then strung and worn usually as a necklace.

Kabir, a poet/saint of India equally revered by both Hindu and Islamic peoples.

Malla, a Hindu rosary.

Maya, an aspect of the Goddess in Hindu culture that is seen as both the creator of the physical world, and the spinner of illusion, confusion and dreams.

Pele's Hair, a formation of volcanic glass that is long hair-like fibers that are amber colored and called 'Pele's hair' because of their likeness to strands of hair. Pele is the Hawaiian Volcano Goddess.

Raita, a condiment of cucumbers and yogurt used to cool the spices in an Indian dish.

Salmon Woman, a deity of the Native tribes of the Pacific Northwestern United States. She is the spiritual power within salmon. The gift of sustenance.

Shakti, a female deity of Hinduism, specifically Shiva's heavenly consort. The spiritual power of Shiva. The name given to a man's consort in Tantra.

Shaman, an individual who acts as a medium between the physical world and the spirit world for the purposes of healing, divination, spiritual guidance and control over natural events.

Shambu, a term of endearment for Shiva.

Shiva, A male God, one of three in the Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Shiva is the God of destruction and the lord of the underworld and demons. Shiva has a female consort named Shakti. Shiva is also the name given to a woman's consort in the practice of Tantra.

Shiva Ratry, the high holy day for the Shiva cults of Hinduism. It is celebrated during the new moon when the sun is in Taurus.

Spider Woman, a spiritual deity of many of the native peoples of the Colorado plateau. She is the creator of this world. Her aspects are quite similar in many respects to Mother Maya in the Hindu culture.

Talik, the red dot on a Hindu woman's forehead indicating her marital status.

Tantra, Tantric, a Hindu cult that personifies the God and Goddess as ones self and ones consort. The metaphysical side of Hinduism and Buddhism, commonly typified by its incorporation of the sexual act into its religious practices. A practitioner of Tantra.

Tortalitas, a small range of dry rugged mountains in the Sanora desert where toads and wild horses abound.



J. Stuart Brooks has spent more than half of his life on his spiritual quest, answering the age old questions, "Who am I? Where have I come from? Where am I going? What am I?" He says he has searched the three worlds for these answers. If his poetry is any indication of that, he has.

Mr. Brooks' journey has taken him to many teachers and spiritual communities throughout the West and Southwest, and as he says, "I found it inside like melting snow." Mr. Brooks uses unique photographic images and processes, and a powerful poetic style to examine God in a Tantric sense as both mother and lover. He reveals a highly personal experience in a Blakian style of illuminated text with the power and mystery of a true traveler.