SUCCEEDING PETALS

by Steven McCarty

author of PILGRIM'S POEMS

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2941 Kalawao St.
Honolulu, Hawaii
"The Parable of the Lion and the Fish"
by Steven McCarty

ONE DAY a lion met a salamander at the crossroads. He nodded to it, saying "How are you, Stranger?" And it answered: "As an amphibian, I live both on land and in water." This intrigued the lion, because he had often dreamed of the depths. So he asked, "What is the watery life like?" It responded, "I feel the flow there . . . and I gather that you want to meet a feminine fish." Now this startled the lion, who had to agree: "Will you lead me to such a one?" "I will do better than to rejoin you with your childhood dream," it
mused, "if you'll follow the impulse I give." "And do what?" he exclaimed. "You'll see," it retorted, "if you look down."

By this time the lion had no choice but to accept the challenge. Thus he forgot his fears and proudly followed his guide. Soon they happened upon a deep reflecting pool. Shyly, the lion looked at his own image, and the mirrory surface opened onto the sky behind him. Then, suddenly, he saw a silvery face below, and recognized her as a fish. He made a move in her direction, but she darted down just as quickly out of sight.
“Can you swim?” the salamander interjected. “Yes, but I can’t breathe underwater.” “Very true,” it returned sagely, “you are a land-dweller, so I must mediate between you two.” No sooner said than did the amphibian plunge into the darkness below. Now while the lion waited unaware on the surface, communication was going on beneath, to the effect that they meant her no harm, and that new friendship awaited her, if she were willing.

She did not answer, but joined the salamander in swimming up towards
the sunlight. Then, the lion and the fish stared into one another’s eyes. This made the lion feel uncomfortably speechless. She offered, “Well, I hope you don’t love me so much at first sight that you could eat me!” He laughed heartily, marvelling at her intuition into their new relationship. “I want to teach you telepathy,” she suggested, “if you’ll only listen. That’s how we can really be together.”

But the lion was saddened by his understanding that they couldn’t stay united that way forever, even though it can be achieved for a few fleeting moments. “Just be aware of me,” she stated, seeming to know his feelings, “then we’ll always be in touch in our hearts.” He gazed at her refracted image, wondering whether to trust the windows of his eyes. “What else can I do?” he resigned to himself, for her element was eternally different from his.
Struck for a moment, a light began to dawn in him. He turned to the amphibian, whose moist skin was sparkling in the sunshine. “With you as my companion, I’ll always carry a part of her within my experience.” “Yes,” it rejoined, Sphynxlike, “for I am a man, a woman, both, and ultimately neither.”

The lion breathed a deep sigh, and said, “Come, let us go.” And finally, looking warmly down at the graceful figure below, he said, “I am grateful the universe created us out of itself, so we could meet here to share this.” From her stillness, a voice rose to his consciousness . . . “Go with love.”
PARACHUTE

What I've learned
Could be likened
Unto a parachute
Falling from the clear
To the cloudy known
Sky of my mind
Where unknown wind
Charted the course
From bodily ground
Leaving me to legged walk
Searching for the clear I
Evidencing the force of life
While the wind blows strong
And the parachute goes on
Falling beneath the earth
Leaving I to imagination
My power to freely will
Could be likened to a man
Guiding a parachute
Through a wind-flute
A phosphorus particle
Glowing from within
Divining the surf wave of nature
As he is cascaded onto the shore
AFFECTION

All speculation returns home
I - at best, us - here & now
Mutually arising meaningful coincidences - us
For this moment we are - what more?
Are we living or thinking of living?
Inwardly a person can resolve his own energy state
There are symbolic peaks, but as to the who - it is us
Here I am - I'm alive, I'm young, and I'm free
Man, burn it slowly
If you can't see it, hear it, or feel it in your heart
Is it worth it?
After adapting to what one must
Shape reality to the higher vision
It is absurd to raise the money matter
Above the level of sheer necessity
Stick to the family feeling of trust
Human affection is the true perfection
A LIVING SYMBOL

A bird flies like the mind in balance
By flapping both wings at once
Higher than air he is harmonious
Sublimated to the heavens
Of absolute identification
He is the reason
She is the moon face
Love is his compensation
Soaring high by going deep
On the way to becoming it all
By renewing a living mandala

OWED TO AN ASIAN FRIEND

Eventfulness, thanks; writing a poem
Vindicating the urge to live on
Communication of the revelation
I am both myself and the All-One

ANSWER TO ZEN

In the wilderness
Beyond the doors of the zendo
No emptiness!
A PROSEM ON THE MEANING OF RELIGION

Religion is like a white robe
Clothing a man's naked nature
According to tradition
Concealing his individual form
While fitting human nature

Religion is like a pole man vaults with
Over his measured self-constructed limits
Letting go of the pole as he transcends
Transforming and surpassing himself

Religion is a symbolic vehicle
Within which man finds himself
As he becomes himself
He realizes himself
As he creates himself

Religion is a world-view
As well as a plan of action
Through which man formulates
The quality of life he lives

Religion is a value and therefore a goal
A way and a method, unique and universal
A decision with a fate
Faith and doubt, belief and openness
Articulation and awe, fear and love
Religion is all this religiousness
Born and given to man

"The word and the presence
"God" and interdependence

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They start out in life
And they just fade away
As we awaken, and ultimately,
As we can only say when awake
Fade away for good

I was born to wake up God
To total recognition
In the same sphere of being
One paper shell
In the necklace of humanity

Searching for love
Symbolized by the sun
Radiating light and warmth
Suspended, still spinning,
Swimming within all existence
PUNCHBOWL SUNRISE

Awareness hovering over the earth
Going from a partial to a full
Realization of the truthful
Like a sunrise all the time
Eternal freshness, poised beauty
Like Leimomi, Hawaiian hostess
Where East crosses West
LOOK DIRECTLY AT LIFE

This is the full flowering of the world
Then what indeed is realism?
Flowers wither and decay
And become other flowers
Aggregate in the seasons
Motionless for us humans
We change fastest who live long
Suffer much but glory more
In the radiance of youth
As much as later wisdom
We know only life
We fear the dark unknown
We can only look
At the after-life of plants
Becoming progressive beings
Reading the tide-charts
Choosing the high time
Bordering on eternity
Experience represents it
Through many masked as a man
Personality personifies it
Opaquely conscious vision
Waking out of a deep dream
I can do some gesture
On my own initiative
Accepting the wanting to keep
The chance to break through
Anew with a free mind
Into states of liberation
Nothing to quibble about in words
High note of a harmony
Only different chords
Can make a melody
In fact to touch reality
Look directly at life
WE ARE THE MEANING OF EXISTENCE

We are simultaneously all the time
Living and feeling all the worlds
Connected to the body
With its strange perceptual space
Between myself and others
A peculiar illusion, however,
So solid energy seems
Dividing mind sees multiple worlds
Divided man seeks his other half
Unknowing his complete unity
Solidarity with all that is
Being is self-realizing
We are the meaning
If we could but appreciate
How we originate
From all planes at once
All interdependent causes
Converging on the present
All leading up to this
Existence . . . we are it
We are the meaning of existence
EGG OF THE SNAKE

We can never go back
Because of evolution
The familiar cannot further
the desire for eternal return

This morning moving forward
Diversifying friendships
New eve theme of cheer
Egg of the Snake Year

Shake off the old skin.
The soul of the leper is gold
Cry heal to the power within
Let destiny decide

The perfect is incomplete
Embodied voice to implement
The complete is imperfect
It includes the ignorant

Hole in the holy whole
Empty for the future to fulfil
All religions are languages
Doors that open and close

The struggling everything
A germinal power latent in nature
Stirring to hatch the world awake
Egg of the snake
SUCCEEDING PETALS

In quest of answers:

How can one man
Caretake the universe?

Awake Buddha-Nature

What can one man do
To make harmony
Out of battle
Gentle as judo?

Equate the highest
With the low

How can one man
Reduce the perils
Of a suicidal mass?

Realize we are
Succeeding petals
In quest of answers
LIFE-FORCE

Invisible source
In the center of all
Burning pure life-force

Karmic coating over my life
Making it tragi-comic
Masking cosmic life

Invisible source
In the center of all
Burning pure life-force
"BABY, THE RIVER NOW

Islands and is passed

When the joined in the deep core

To abandon the worldly wheel

Eye lens

set in the bone

Osiris

get back together

What is the spiritual life?

He is said to have said to her:

Observer

complete the picture

His story, communicated, goes on

We are

Till Reba replanted the seed

the Living God

As Alan expressed in his way

The sound

carries it forward to you

Today, the way:

"Baby, this is it"
The nature of the ego lies
In characteristics of mind:
Identification, evaluation,
Attachment, and resistance:
Antipoles, the rest is okay
A Tibetan dance to be free:
Understood, the ego is good
Unfree, the flesh bedevils
Ego hides the bestial side
That dogs the gods offstage
Turning two faces away from the whole
Disturbing dream unwanted to see
Turning disgustedly back to sleep
Ego fears the self is a body
Mounts religious repressions
Impressing surface neighbors
Weakly bowing pretense
Proselytizing ignorance
Closing others to ward off doubt
Conflictive, furtive social net
In the continuum of qualities.
Exclusive chosen excellences
Turfs of acknowledged virtue
Competing to better one another
Killing any foreigner
With another word for God
Sword of spiritual pride
Sublimated ego on the rise
Glorified war the only way
To destroy the impure
To save the pure
Animals kill to live
Plants just photosynthesize
A way the mind can realize
Evolution goes forth and back
Emerging alone to forget
We are the past
Embodying all evolution
Like the environment
A man can stand on a peak
Gazing past his followers
Unable to take a seeker there
Tied to the last man there
A deep breath of acceptance that
The universe is already there
The future is already here
In the middle of the hourglass
Our dreams seed the future
Projections into dimensions
Reflections to remember the future
All life moving through the now
A fire in the heat of the flow
Expressions, the next appears
This is where it is
So get moving, go on living
In the heat of the conflict
Life is the fire of the heat
INDIVIDUALIZED LIFE

Many former paths
Seem like a mystification
I can no longer mystify
Zen mind goes directly ahead
Without hesitation
There is still the wonder
Of existence but not of obfuscation
I was born by the Mystic River
Flowing into Boston through Cambridge
I spoke metaphorical language
Until the second phase became explicit
Readable and understandable
Deeply personal communication
This is my unique contribution
To the path of human evolution
The pilgrim of consciousness
Expanding to a natural sharing
Intimacy with innocence
Reiterating over collective lives
Errors and growth
Stagnation and renewal
Aspiration and attainment
Giving, later letting on
The torch of inspiration
The mutually kindling flame
Be he Lama or equally layman
Here an earthly coincidence of energy
Fates tied to the same boat of the living dead
The Great Vessel that contains all in one
Spares none, the inscription is read
Barge and body sail to the macrocosm
Each a level of magnification
Harmonizing the integral cosmos
In totally individualized life
A NEW NOW

How can we find, harmony?
Tired of sleeping, way?
Waiting instead of living
Wanting to make it permanent
Weary of disappointment
Hope of relatedness
If we can avoid
Past patternedness
to her
It's a new now

Endowment of happiness
Synergized among us in
It's blocked, lost
And we're fighting
To grasp it back with pride
Yet the best events
Come of themselves
We can't go it alone
Related all along
How can we find harmony?
In a complementary way?
What desires are valid?
Judgement of values?
Where emotion rules?
She may need a teacher
But not a master
A lover is special to her
A potential father to her children
A reliable man
With lasting devotion
Not too self-preoccupied
To see her side
Not so filled with pride
That diminishes humanity
But with humility
Not an antagonist
But a humanist
I need not convince you
Or label it virtue
But only live it
To give your ears is easier
Than to give your heart
Reservations precede it
But I must unlock it
The situation in this world
Appropriate to my real nature
To reciprocate affection
To cooperate and plan
To share in creation
A loving wisdom
Where both are one
A goal to come from
Human liberation
Ever available somehow
Every new now
HONESTY IS TRUTH

Small dreams and carried
We are compelled lively
To keep to ourselves

Big dreams God-Man identity
We are impelled tact
To share with tribal selves

An open omen public

Outer truth living political
It is accuracy succinctly
Inner truth to book length
It is honesty space of trees
To face reality universities
It is experience words of worth
Time is really life
diversity activities

The pace of change
evolving society

Inert mass mentality stimulating
Stoning its own heroes

Teaching beyond the LCD

Pleading for some TLC

Awakened sensitivity

A bigger dream than words can presage
Big dreams hand-carried
To market aggressively
Publisher be savior
Deleting God-Man identity
References lacking tact
Authors of no renown
For the reading public
Wood for the living politic
Time to say it succinctly
Unextended to book length
Save the green space of trees
From papermill universities
Better a few words of worth
Leaving the page for activities
Time to look deeply
Into the whole story
The nothingness seemingly
Behind sight is emptiness
Recepticle of greatness
Image of symbolic language
Pictorial meaning to express
A bigger dream than words can presage
Still the part
Stands for all
And the unit points
Towards unity within
Whole constellations
Standing under consciousness
Understanding is being it
Waking daydreams
Big dreams, small dreams
None can be suppressed
Representing the core self
Innermost strength
Manifesting by daylight
To find oneself as one
Whole human being waking
The universal dream