



# **Heaping Abuse On The Master**

Poems by Jon Adams



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## Heaping Abuse On The Master

This chapbook presents poems I wrote from the mid nineteen-seventies until the year I left Long Beach - 2004. They are dated but not arranged chronologically. The title is a line from one of the poems in this book. There are also two essays, one on writing and one about snails.

I heard a critic say that poetry is the ultimate literary form of self absorption. I believe it is more the ultimate form of literary self immolation. The art form requires synthesizing senses, scene, emotion and events. It becomes words internally and it emerges from the soul until it accretes on paper - almost meaningless to readers.

Poetry is very difficult to understand unless one wrote it. The exceptions are the Japanese forms - Haiku and Tanka. These highly structured poems are little lightning flashes of nature, and need no intellectual consideration. They are tiny stamps of beauty on a natural canvas.

Coleridge wrote, "The poet... brings the whole soul of man into activity..." Robert Frost wrote to Louis Untermeyer, "A poem... begins as a lump in the throat... It finds the thought and the thought finds the words." So, I must apologize that I cannot explain it better than those two giants of the form.

The final poem, SOLILOQUY... was a farewell to my home of twenty-three years. I wrote it on the last evening I lived in the house. It is also a goodbye to a woman.

I think it is the best poem I ever wrote. I haven't been able to write one since.

– Jon Adams, December 2004

Dedicated to Sappho  
c. 612 B.C.

*"Deathless Aphrodite on your rich-wrought throne."*

ROAD SCENES I (1991)

Putting his cart before his horse  
the old man tempted premonition.

In one hand he grasped the reigns  
of futile force played against the wind.

In the other he held a clump  
of grass to tempt fate.

A howling wind followed the silent  
procession of illusion and failure.

A red sky gathered.

LATITUDES (4/31/91)

Warm permutations  
smack my face  
from some other clime;  
Where fronds stir  
and gators croak  
and dew drips naturally  
So I take my brandy  
with branch water  
tonight.

INTROSPECTION MUSE (3/13/89)

Consider rowing against sand  
arrayed in waves and swells  
against your back/and wonder  
about going into each day  
backwards/in the first place.

BRASS RINGS (5/2/89)

I love this time in Spring.  
Watching the garden grow;  
you don't have to do anything.  
It's bedded, fertilized and trimmed.  
Just water it now and then  
to spend more time there.

Will I get the new computer today  
or tomorrow?

Should we eat the old  
asparagus before the new;  
or get the spare room cleaned  
before the computer comes?

Does the difference really matter?  
Or does only the coincidence count?

## BIRTHWEEK (5/2/89)

When the date of your celebration  
comes around again too soon, you  
become wary of steps before you -  
weary of steps behind.

Anniversaries, too.

## A LINE FROM JOYCE (1993)

"Wavewhite wedded words shimmering on the dim tide." When my muse's granary runs low and words fail effort, I reach for Ulysses and go to original page ten, and begin with "Woodshadows floated silently by through the morning peace . . ." and usually can't read beyond "Wavewhite wedded words shimmering on the dim tide." I put down the well-worn wrinkled pages and wander off to Hibernia for an ale and a hike along the sandstrewn shingle, sniffing at the scent of Buck Mulligan's shaving lather. How can I write another word when that line exists, daring me to get past it?

CONVERSATIONS AT  
A PARTY IN GLENDALE (2/1/88)

Was I invited here?

Did you see the Superbowl?

Whose seven thirty-three is that?

(How did I come to this dry stream?

Where are the stepping-over stones?

I live here to grow carrots, ranunculus,

and paintings and haiku and

where the sun is a road sign.

This is another aspect.)

Is this great Brie, or what?

(She brought me to this place

of wool and polyfabric

penguin walking calculators.

Defer, she said. Don't talk too much.

Don't detail them to death.

Nice tie!

(I am entertained when I walk among Melvilles,

vivid minds, splashes of color against rotting;

or when I hear the dance of words

caring about least metaphors, or

tracing alizarin brushstrokes,

but I also enjoy social zoology.)

Trick shoes!

(I take things home in my wordsack,

mileposts of passage and style over substance,

from places where the rough feel of hunger

never transcends wallets, where success

means a new suit.)

Let's go!

(Diogenes will not look here!)

JUSTICES (8/15/88)

The system is the enemy  
when it serves only  
those who can pay its rate.

Caesar Chavez  
lay on his back  
weak arm held  
against pale face,  
listening to visitors.

We will pick it up for you,  
the black man said softly.  
You can't go on, said the actor.

He stared at them  
thankful that they  
brought cameras,  
rolled his eyes and said,  
Justice must be done.

In the land of Milken money  
"crime doesn't pay" is bullshit;  
ask a lawyer how well it pays.  
Up the Barricades!

I am the criminal who pours  
catsup on grapes in the Safeway,  
plasters stickers on the price tags,  
wears the button proudly (HUELGA!),  
goes to parties where the deadly fruit  
is served, and trash it in the hosts' faces.  
Where Chavez fasts  
the campesino's children  
die in cancer clusters  
because when you buy the grapes  
you kill them!  
Up the Barricades!

Bankrupt viper coils, beneath black robes,  
protecting other snakes who rattle cash tails.  
Slap a boycott sticker on a market shelf  
and go to jail.  
Spray carcinogens on grapevines  
and go to the bank!  
Up the Barricades!

Every fruit they pick is fatal.  
Every time I hear "justice"  
spoken like a treasured heritage,  
I want to reach for my gun,  
storm the halls of "Justice"  
with my dying brown-eyed army,  
and rip her blindfold off.

FINISHED SATURDAY (1991)

Tobacco & brandy,  
lawnchair and shade,  
digging done and  
seeds planted,  
water hissing from  
beyond the neighbor's fence  
announce the day is finished.

Frozen deeds,  
random thoughts,  
empty buckets and  
stained knees,  
a day's last late honeybee  
tells me it's time to go in.

COMING DOWNPOUR (3/13/89)

Hollow thumps of thunder  
echo over distant horizon  
at once with light's flashes.

Pure ozone streams about me  
here in the safety of concrete  
and wooden porch roof.

This patter, patter will rise  
to crush the grass, bend the limb  
and wash the paved place near

where I sit noticing only  
silence, like the thunder  
and the patter, patter.

WOODCHOPPING (3/13/89)

Bring me tea  
and branches!

Feel how well this blade cuts  
honed by my own hand.

Trust the bark to cling  
as long as it is allowed.

Is there no mercy  
for old giants,

or, must we kindle their bones  
for our own warmth?

Even this tea was born  
from the death of promise.

What was the instrument that  
struck down this giant...

The blade, the sharpening file,  
the thirst?

GERMINAL POEM (10/15/88)

October sun burns the raspberry leaves.  
Bottom light pours over the spent Geranium.  
The angle grows shallow in the flower beds.  
I turn the soil carefully looking for bulbs.  
Next Spring is down here.

SEMINAL POEM (4/3/91)

Hungry; Eat.  
Tired; Sleep.  
Curious; Ignore it!

The old Zen Roshi  
lay on a hard board,  
watching a fly  
land on his nose.

Eyes crossed,  
back howling in pain,  
he faked disinterest  
and the insect flew away.

The lesson is  
there is no lesson.

Or, the lesson is  
you can catch a fly  
with a poem.

## SQUARING OFF WITH POLITICAL CORRECTNESS:

An Examination of Cultural Language Revisionism  
and a Personal Response (1993)

Milan Kundera is perhaps the most important existential writer and novelist to be published in the second half of the twentieth century. Aside from being the literary descendant of Broch, Musil and Kafka, he also knows how to invent titles. The author of "Life is Elsewhere," "The Book of Laughter and Forgetting," and "The Unbearable Lightness of Being," among others, has written "Once upon a time I too thought that the future was the only competent judge of our works and actions. Later on I understood that chasing after the future is the worst conformism of all." In his book of speeches and essays titled "The Art of the Novel," Kundera traces the development and the decline of the novel from the beginning of the "Modern Era" (a euphemism for the last four centuries of European culture). In the chapter entitled "The Depreciated Legacy of Cervantes," he writes about a paradox: "The Modern Era has nurtured a dream in which mankind, divided into its separate civilizations, would someday come together in unity and everlasting peace. Today, the history of the planet has finally become one indivisible whole, but it is war, ambulant and everlasting war, that embodies and guarantees this long-desired unity of mankind. Unity of mankind means: No escape for anyone anywhere."

Against such "terminal paradoxes" as this, Kundera warns of the disappearance of the novel as an art form, preceded by what he calls "the process of dizzying reduction" that reduces our lives to "social functions" and our history to "small sets of

events that are themselves reduced to a tendentious interpretation." He asks: "if the novel's *raison d'être* is to keep "the world of life" (Husserl) under a permanent light and to protect us from "the forgetting of being," is it not more than ever necessary today that the novel should exist?" Developing this, Kundera concludes: "I know that the novel cannot live in peace with the spirit of our time: if it is to go on discovering the undiscovered, to go on "progressing" as novel, it can do so only against the progress of the world."

Milan Kundera, recognized as a powerful force in literature and point-man for the existential movement in philosophy, lives in Paris. From his domicile in the balliwick of French Deconstructionism, the other and diametrically opposed contemporary movement in philosophy, the Czech emigre novelist must feel as I do. I've become a lyrical linguasaur surrounded by double-talking New Age, newspeak multiculturalists.

I have committed my literary direction toward writing *as I see my writing must be accomplished*. Even if I have no audience other than myself, it is the path I choose. My work will not bend to 'political correctness,' formula or marketability. My creative conscience cannot allow it.

THIS & THAT (3/13/89)

I.

There's a thin line between  
This and That.  
This is my head  
and That's my hat.

II.

There's a really thin line between  
This and That.  
This is my hand  
and That's a cat.

RYEGRASS, A MASK, FLAVOR (2/88, Three Haiku)

Severed breaths of cat  
crouching under wavy grasses,  
prepared to spring – Butterfly!

Beard clings hopefully  
to my naked countenance –  
Grass on a smooth rock!

Touch the warm wind with  
the tastebuds on my forehead –  
The breeze tastes mindless!

ON THE AMARYLLIS GROUND (3/13/89)

On the amaryllis ground  
lay the splintered shells  
of ancient snails, ground away by  
tools and weather's bleach.

The greenest place around.  
Where grow the Amaryllis bells?  
In soils enriched by old dry  
shells next to each.

LESSON I (8/20/92)

Buddha was reproached  
by a wavering student  
heaping abuse on the master.

"Hold!" the pure one said.  
"If you offered a gift  
to another man, and  
if the other man refused,  
to whom would the gift belong?"

"To the giver," answered the student.

"Keep your abuse," said Buddha.  
"Enjoy it yourself."

EYE IN GOLD (9/16/88)

I require you in a view  
walking along  
this edge between  
firm sands &  
endless ocean

to be there  
to be holding your  
fingers to your mouth  
as if trying to hide

from me? From what  
harridan or echo?  
I will paint you thus.

Your eye in gold  
perfect hair 'cross  
perfect cheek,  
slight lowering of  
your face against  
the bright backdrop  
of earnest hopes;

Silent humming  
your song heard  
and understood  
deep in my own eye.

Eye in gold,  
more than known colors.

Eye in gold,  
I have painted you thus.

IDEAS (2004)

It is better  
to plant your seeds  
in the minds of men  
than to ejaculate them  
on the wind.

5 HAIKU (1990)

Springing many ways,  
the antelope spirit moves  
-so capriciously!

A tree cannot grow  
against its grain. But see!  
It grows against all winds!

Oh! Silent morning.  
How sparrows break the misty  
night's embrace. With song!

Chirrup! Chirrup! What  
do they sing, these tiny birds,  
that signals morning?

Ah. Ah! The eagle  
dips her wing to say, "I know,"  
but soars in silence!

FRUIT (2004)

Do not deny your tongue  
the sharp quality of new apples  
even in your fullest day.

The master craftsman  
nearly always holds new tools  
in careful appreciation.

But never let the lasting raisin  
out of your arm's reach.

Its taste may bland, but  
it will outlive tomorrow's peach.

NAKED KARMA (2000)

If my chest burst  
suddenly with hair,  
wouldn't you miss  
my baby's ass skin?

## COYOTE I (2004)

The hum of many years  
sounds now to my unforgiving ear.

New day.

Breakfast in a sold kitchen,  
accompanied by birdsong,  
awaiting the arrival of no one.

Mind's ear is always tuned  
to birds that sing of  
tomorrow, carefully reminding  
me of today's imperative.

A languor falls aside  
with empty eggshells.  
Light fills the concrete land.  
Smiles regain my countenance.  
All expands with motor noise.  
I gaze again at another horizon.

## SURPRISES (1982)

Not your father;  
I want to be  
your autumn sky,  
a clear umbrella,  
held yet hard to imagine.  
Go easy when you feel  
like treating me  
to a surprise.

## PEOPLE EAT THESE THINGS? (1997)

Morning, March twenty-second, the second full day of Spring, I go out to smell the first roses. What a glorious morning. The sun is out and tugging at the seedlings. I'd better get some garden work done.

I decide to check the seed flats which I keep alongside the southern side of the house. Last January I built a temporary shelf along the stucco wall. I made it from cedar fence boards and some rusty wire racks that used to hold mugs in a restaurant dishwasher. That way I could be sure no snails would get into the sweet green shoots while they struggled up from the potting soil in my plastic packs.

I walk around the corner and head for my darling pepper plants. Yesterday, I counted two shoots per pocket, each about an inch-high. I have Big Berthas, Ivory Hybrid and Purple Hybrids. That's six to twelve plants of each. It's going to be a task finding room to stick them in the garden, what with the abundance of marigolds, zinnias and snow peas I already have growing. Then there's the tomatoes, the radishes and the leaf lettuce! Maybe the radishes will be devoured at our table by the time I have to transplant the peppers.

I stop at the spot and look at my tiny pepper shoots. My eyes fall on barren soil, punctuated by the tiny stumps of what were yesterday's green hope. Gone!

Frantically, I lift the plastic trays, searching along the sides and bottoms for the culprits. No snails! I tear at the boxes, flats and water-holding trays, spilling liquid garden gravy on my clean jeans. My shoes runneth over with muck and smelly stuff. Yuck! On the back of a tray I find the solitary snail!

Our back yard is a little green paradise. It is about

the only thing left that makes it worth remaining in the southland we once loved and thrived in. Fenced away from the real world out there where you can get mugged at your local ATM or shot at for picking your nose on the freeway, the garden yard is our last refuge from the madness. Around Easter, the amaryllis bulbs burst out in radii of white and apple blossom colors, with giant flower trumpets the size of basketballs. There are over three hundred bulbs back there, and they all produce each spring. My cutting-back begins in November. By Christmas I have got to the roses, the bulbs beds are fertilized and the annual beds are dug, composted and ready for the spring planting. In January, I begin the seed work. My many rows of flats and recycled plastic six-packs are filled with potting mix and planted. After watering them in, I line them up and start spreading snail control powder everywhere I can.

Snails (terrestrial gastropod mollusks, esp. those of the family Helicidae, having a spiral shell, as *Helix pomatia*, an edible European species, and including the shell-less slug, *Limax maximus* . . . ), sometimes called slow and lazy creatures, are actually critters of nocturnal habit with ravenous appetites and accelerated reproductive programs. If not controlled, snails and slugs will overwhelm any garden. That's a fact. They eat when you are in the house watching N.Y.P.D. Blue, paying your bills or sound asleep. That makes them nearly invisible, because by the time you arrive where they had dinner, they've meandered down a hole or are craftily concealed under a felicia Marguerite. As do many southern California gardeners, I employ ample quantities of commercial boxed snail killer. It's made of pulverized mica and other stuff that gets into the snail when it is forced to crawl on its belly-foot (gastropod) over the stuff.

This material is ingested by the snail and it paralyzes the vermin. When the sun comes out, the snail bubbles, bakes, and fries to death in the heat. This method is preferable to slaughtering the snail either by stepping on it and having to scrape off your shoe - or the tried and true fastball into the fence method (The latter doesn't work if you don't get a clean hard toss). Besides, Buddha, whose all-seeing figure squats between my New Zealand flax and the English lavender, frowns on murdering anything, including the lowly snail.

When Long Beach started its incomplete compulsory recycling program (The city won't take organic wastes such as tree clippings, logs or leaves. These items are very difficult to compost.) I read the information mailing to see if they would take snails. I couldn't find anything about them, but I have dispatched many plastic bags of the crawlies in that ugly trash can with wheels.

I stand in awe that one tiny mollusk, retracted now into its Winnebago, could wreak such havoc in my pepper pots overnight. It consumed sixteen starts in one meal! I am livid!

Running now, I go for the red and yellow cardboard box of poison. I take it to the seed flats and cover the soil of every tray, the cedar boards, the tray bottoms, and for good measure, the ground beneath the whole shebang. I empty the box.

Next, I replant the peppers. In a week or two I should have replacements stretching for the sun. I run around to the Amaryllis, now sporting two-foot high spears ready to burst into flower. Several had been nibbled, but none is seriously damaged. I pick through the leaves and find twelve more culprits. They survived my week-ago dusting. They all go onto the sunniest spot in the lawn, cooking territory.

I decide to get more powder and dust the bulb beds again. My larder is empty. I used it all. I must buy more.

Then I check the petunias. I previously dusted little circles of the stuff around each plant. I pick up forty more snails, eye a spot along the fence and after a quick glance at Buddha deposit them on the lawn. From the marigolds I get seventeen more. I find twenty eight around the new herb plants in front of my rose beds. My search complete, the spot on the grass resembles the remains of a fine French meal, with the shells of gastropods littered and bubbling in the bright sunlight. PEOPLE EAT THESE THINGS?

At the store, the checkout lady rings up my total. "That's a lot of snail killer! Should last you all year."

"I intend to use it all today," I say, fumbling for another quarter.

"You must be overrun."

"Not for long."

The shoppers behind me smile. They know, I can tell. Their shopping carts are filled with red and yellow cardboard boxes. They, too, look as if they are in a hurry to get home.

I unload my car and head to the rhubarb. My glorious three plants had been attacked in my absence - IN BROAD DAYLIGHT! Still in the shade, the plants attracted seven snails that morning.

Total war! Buddha smiles, reminding me that it is not correct to pitch his friends against wood. I break my windup and step off the mound, tossing them on the smelly pile. I tear open the first box and get on with the dusting. It takes me over an hour to complete. When I am done, only one box remains.

I stand in the middle of the lawn and consider the scene. A cream film nearly covers the soil, everywhere. My Amaryllis leaves are the color of lace. The

flies buzz near my feet, seeking snail flesh. Buddha grins from his shady place. I look at the Petunias near his bare feet. They are in shambles! The varmints trashed his garden, too! He gives me a ceramic smile, knowing all, and yet nothing. I am the one whose task it is to make the garden survive, not the stone Absolute. Enlightenment! I run into the house.

The brown paper bag fits right over his head. Buddha's bare toes are all I can see. I quickly pluck the last snails from the ruined petunias and add them to the litter on the grass. Then, I perform a victory dance on the spot, smashing them into a gooey paste, ignoring the moral and philosophical consequences. I will not allow them to destroy this last refuge! I will have flowers to smell, lettuce to dine upon! I will not surrender!

MY EPITAPH (1984)

Make much of me!  
This is only temporal  
and may soon fail.

A careful touch  
have I, you said.  
But does it reveal  
my trembling hand?

So travel my way  
for a while,  
know well my  
sea-dark wine.  
Inhabit my  
sea-going spirit!

FROM A BROWN PAPER BAG (1994)

The vagaries of pleasure  
led me to believe my lifeline  
ran up to my elbow, until  
I noticed it was just  
a hardening of arteries.

FLIER (1976)

My body healed  
your many wounds.

I walked away for years  
and every time now,  
I look up expecting  
to see you,

and there are only  
eagles in high places.

ADDENDUM (1976)

and if I thought  
for a minute  
you were trying  
to get to me,  
I would have given  
you all the time  
in the world.

SHADOWS (2002)

Standing in the lawn  
some fluffy shadows  
scudding under foot.

Nothing encumbers this  
but a solitary dragonfly  
becoming a cloud  
to tinier beings.

FAMILY GATHERING (1989)

In satin flowered room  
great with cards and whisper,  
sympathy and love;  
thus, uncle.

My coat too bulky for the day,  
I stood smoking in the foyer,  
waiting to carry him down  
where even he passed  
the last time we gathered here.

My mother was in L.A.  
I told my aunt she couldn't make it.  
We then went out  
to the soft cool earth  
that tenderly takes our dead.

## TRACKING (1976)

While commending me  
for telling you  
I loved you,  
you chastised me  
for hiding so long.  
But does the lion  
tell the antelope?

## SECOND TRY (1982)

Chasing all those dreams  
sleepy pleasures of my own...  
I grabbed once for  
a wild and sandy mushroom  
and came up with soft stained hands.  
"Tomorrow," I said,  
and walked away  
with boardwalk visions  
of carnival life.

3.15.75

the poet is  
man of few words,  
& in most cases  
strictly to himself.

but words pulled  
from perfect memory  
can be forced at  
high rate of speed  
through  
    electric tunnels  
burning  
    holes in  
steel.

TOYMAKER'S NOTE (1989)

Another surprise!  
When I stick wet boots  
into fire -  
steam makes smoke rings!

FOR YOU, TOO (1976)

I wish it well  
this thing;  
to go out among mountains  
of new spirit for  
many fruitful seasons.  
If it were only up to me.

A Careful man  
even sometimes rushes  
headlong at his life,  
to trip on his doorstep.

Talk well, tongue,  
words of life and death.  
Talk well of how  
we've made  
the choice at last.  
And mention all of this  
with certain breath:  
The future's prologue,  
just as well as past!

So it is up to me,  
that only by the fact of roads  
does place exist.  
Only by the fact of clocks  
do years construct the future.

WHITE (1976)

Snow squirrels leaving  
tiny tracks where soon the wind  
will dust them over.

Snowy birds come north  
in this season, March wind from  
south, her warming breath

pulls buds from frozen  
twigs, and lighting on the pond  
I see dragonflies,

little helicopters  
with tiger-striped fuselage.  
Where do you fly from?

## RELIQUARY (1994)

From the curb, half left half right,  
cemetery and city split this horizon.

Look down the hill  
at rows of granite and limestone,  
perfect harmony, weathered,  
on the cusp of earth and sky.  
Light and dark, up and down,  
steel and glass, city and tombs,  
so perfectly obvious!

Spread me along  
this sheer divide  
between heaven and earth.  
Don't lose me at sea!  
Don't cover me!  
Let the ground be my back,  
the sun find my face  
where I will imagine  
the stones in a line,  
the city, the graves.

Spread me along  
this fine distinction  
between heaven and earth.  
The shade of summer  
and spring downpours  
will be my clocks.  
The black of winter night  
and mold of autumn  
will grace my resting place.

I must be on this edge,  
invisible ashes,  
witness to all these things.

LANDING (10/1/96)

Palm Springs, San Jacinto's green shadow,  
flickers under the wing  
and I see the washboard ridges of Route Sixty.  
White caps point from Mount Gorgonio  
to the haze of rumored desert.  
The great vessel lowers  
and we glide on the promise of electric angels,  
into the shifting maze of cities  
clustered so improbably here.  
I see winking lanterns, square perfection,  
capillaries of headlights,  
through holes of orange flint  
signalling, "I am here. I am here."  
The human cargo rustles awake,  
offers its cups and peanut wrappers.  
Fasten your seatbelts, please.  
And we all gaze down on heaven,  
renewed that it has waited for us.  
One minute and there's the river.  
Oh, there's my bank, and isn't that our street?  
Over the four-oh-five and there's the runway.  
Welcome to God's Country.  
Watch your step, please.

OCTOBER HAIKU (10/15/88)

Gray cat curls around  
a rose bush's trunk, sleeping.  
-The claws have thorns!

ROSE WINTER HAIKU (2/88)

Pruned for better growth  
and old wood thrown in a heap –  
these roses will thrive!

SOLILOQUY AT A TWO-WAY MIRROR (2004)

I.

This Atlantis  
beneath the pond where only turtle necks  
break the surface,  
this invisible heavy place must have an ear.  
Once again, then.

II.

How is it that we pluck roses  
worshipping their beauty only  
as we mourn their deaths?  
Only after life is snipped away  
do we delight in its fragrances.  
How is it then that love should be  
plucking the rose, felt after  
more than before.

III.

Even in this shallow evening, you!  
This empty place lies in repose,  
as if I had turned it away, too.  
Subdued and hungry,  
it's hard to feel you here  
from miles of tiny magnets away.

IV.

You said you need to be alone  
for some time and how I know you  
have been for some time.

You said it's not an easy thing to do  
and I am here again at the pond  
of old reflections, longing for  
something in its two-way mirror,  
waiting for your warm wind  
and once welcoming ear  
to let me mouth better rhyme.

V.

In hard days when all things  
were cast aside for purpose,  
the heart slowed intentionally.  
So many weights could break it.  
I begged you to slow yours  
and match my forlorn pace.  
You stood a bit away.  
When I reached the bottom,  
you were gone.

VI.

Light is surfacing.  
I am going.

You were the rose.