

MENKE
KATZ

&

HARRY
SMITH

Two Friends II



For David,

With great love,

Harry

TWO FRIENDS II

Other books by the authors – Menke Katz: *Land of Manna, Rockrose, Burning Village, Forever & Ever & a Wednesday, Two Friends, A Chair for Elijah.*
Harry Smith: *Rainscent, Trinity, The Early Poems, Summer Woman, Sonnets to PLA, Two Friends, Snow Poems, Me the People, Ballads for the Possessed.*

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Menke Katz dedicates “Lonely Sister” to his sister Bloomke Levy; “Epitaph for My Grandmother Moyneh” to his nephew Alan Katz; and “Cave-Maiden” to his nephew Michael Katz. “Grandma” and “A Visit to My Childhood” by Harry Smith appeared in *Ballads for the Possessed* published by Birch Brook Press in 1987.

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Two Friends II



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SMITH



BIRCH
BROOK
PRESS

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Because this volume is a sequel to *Two Friends*, published in 1981, we toyed with such titles as Harry & Menke 11, *Two Friends Return*, *Two Friends Revisited*, *Son of Two Friends*, *Two Friends Write the Range*, and *Two Friends to Hell & Back*, before settling on the simplest.

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66

We continue the creative interplay which has given birth to many poems. As our friendship approaches its twenty-fifth year, the immediate task is to write a fresh preface to a work that is more of the same process. Therefore it seems appropriate to note the uniqueness of the process. Simple as the premise is, that we agree to write matching poems, no other books have been done this way. Menke mentions the closest literary relative, *Lyrical Ballads*, where Wordsworth & Coleridge shared a terrain & philosophy but did not write in direct response to each other. Closest to us, Keats & Leigh Hunt wrote their pair of grasshopper poems together but did not proceed to other sets. By now, Menke & I have composed many sets, sometimes in complex series, often with dialogue & debate.

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In our earlier poems, we tended to dispute more – Menke the utopian kabbalist & pacifist vegetarian, me the fistful skeptic quick to kick God's ass. Lately we tend toward intricate harmony, as Menke's kabbalism leads him to question God and my ecstatic irreverence leads to secular mysticism of sorts. We choose a common starting point, sometimes to be carried in very different directions by imagination & memory, as when conjuring old loves or revisiting our childhoods. As easily, we write in the same form at the same time, as when we play in the Garden of Eden. One of us may also respond directly to the other's poem in simple or reverse symmetry or resounding asymmetry, while defining hell & time or envisioning Messiah.

Menke, at eighty-one, is enjoying what Homer called a green old age, limber in body & spirit. At fifty-one, I learn from Menke how imagination may accelerate as the years do, as we wander waterfalls and climb the tree of life and dally with Lilith.

– Harry



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– Harry



DAYDREAMING AT DINGMAN'S FALLS

for Paragoolt

Waterfalls serenade you on the waterharps at
Dingman's Falls,
ever and anon, my nameless love whom I, your dead
lover,
named Paragoolt. Stone-eared, I hear you dance in
neverland,
like Miriam in the midst of the Red Sea. O which
dawn can outbeam your light within me? I don't
know
whether overdammned or overbold am I
so wondrous, I can throw my grave to the
archfiend, can bypass Eden and hell,
reach a world where God is not all
mighty, just a true pal of
the downtrodden, of the
sundowner, of the
fallen angel,
the worm, you
and me.

Pocono Mts., Pennsylvania

– *Menke*

DESERTED WINTER HOUSE

for the lovers of Michalishek: Elchik & Dveirke

The house stands like a
frozen ice-bound boat. The wind
shakes the loose beams of
the mossbushed walls, plays through the
cold chimney as on a flute.

Stray voices remind
of yesterfolk. The dying
day donates the last
moments of its light to the
dark stove, blind as its ashes.

A forsaken scythe
mows time, dreams of ripe-eared corn
fields, of sated barns.
A saw aches with broken teeth.
Death is a next door guest here.

A lucky horseshoe
on the restless door bangs to
and fro the dream of
a dead lover, reborn by
mother frost on a moonlit

windowpane, gallops
on a flying horse to meet
his snowfair love who
waits for him in an iceboat,
to sail to bygone ages.

Tempest. The tall oaks
storm-tossed, leave their wild forest,
follow the lovers
in search for their village, lost
in fire-mouths and high waters.

- *Menke*



LOBSTERMAN'S CAMP

Who has been happy
in a palace or penthouse?
Love builds a cottage.
Poetry finds rude shelter
in unfriendly wilderness.

The chill-chambered prince
covets the peasant's snug hut
one small hearth can warm.
The pent lady in her tor
wants a poet to save her.

Poetry & love
led my love & me to land
on a wild island
to live in an old gray shack
once a camp for lobsterfolk

who came a-rowing
soon as labrador tea winked
white in the cold bogs
and handploughed the peat to grow
weird, huge, thin-skinned potatoes

loveliest to taste,
too soft to store all winter.
They stole seagull eggs,
stayed till cranberries' end
and awful seas of autumn.

Folks toiled the hardest
and say they were happiest
before power boats . . .
rough summers of paradise
we light their kerosene lamps.

I am manlier
fetching from a well I bailed
or hauling lobster traps.
My wife is wifelier
when she goes raspberrying.

Life is liveliest
in slow free nights of the sea.
No bed is better
for sleep or full-muscled sex
than our old mattress of straw

in a tiny room
just big enough for the bed
in a ship-tight shack
for a heart-home she loves far
more than her room-layered townhouse:

a nice nest, I guess –
comfortable cluttering
true to an instinct
that can't abide too much space
(that proud science can't admit).

Who has been happy
in a place too grand and queered
by show of status
or the decorator's hand?
Can no fashion satisfy?

Can a woman thrive
who has no vital hearth to tend?
Can a man be right
who has not brought hewn wood home
nor watched his mate in firelight?

– *Harry*

PATCHES OF SKY

Angels mend the old
alley with patches of sky.
The day ends like a
dying candle, a blinking
eye on every windowpane.

A beggar girl with
a homemade harp, strings of horse
tails plays heartrending
melodies. She asks her fate:
was I born out of a stone?

Did God say there shall
be darkness? A tall pine stands
proud of its birth rank,
the oldest of family
trees, fought storms and sterile earth.

Out of the dark of
back ages fly in the night
a crowd of witches.
The wind scatters the fallen
pine needles like witches' brooms.

Here comes the witch of
Endor, calls Samuel out
of his grave. King Saul
falls – a log of fear, he sees
death: bone to bone, eye to eye.

Here comes from Salem
Cotton Mather – father witch
hunter, leads nineteen
doomed women with tatoo marks
of toads, pregnant with horned frogs.

All heavens are sad
and yearning as memories
of forgotten graves.
A yellow moon seeks the sky
in heaps of generous trash.

Cats meow against
God. The beggar girl dreams in
her chimney corner,
she is Cinderella, in
a castle of prince charming.

– *Menke*

SKY-PATCHED FOREST

Budworm rends the young
forest with patches of sky
Eye-alleys: Brown wounds.
Blue avenues through manged heights
of discolored evergreens.

Balsam firs fade first,
then the budworm gets its spruce,
their dry deluge – dead
needles weaving wavy mats
covering the green-patched.

Brittled saplings creak
& sway. Sharp-limbed young corpses
barricade bear paths.
Decrepit woods in wind cry
& groan like a nursing home.

After the plague worms,
three years to harvest the pulp –
clearcut before rot –
take the logs & leave the waste,
make a mangled nude, tread-tracked:

Or let all fall down
and leave it to the lightning –
the falling forest
providing its own kindling,
waiting for windrushed fire.

Ashes, ashes . . . and
blueberries follow a burn;
raspberries gather
over the evergreen deaths
however Death fells its trees.

– *Harry*



PRAYER OF THE TREE OF LIFE

The tree of life, in the Garden of Eden invites everyone:

Come, eat my forbidden fruit and live forever.

Alas, my shadow is my only visitor. O I am eaten by the beast of solitude since the dawn of time.

Humped by overloaded fruit, my apples overlived, fall in the deathful mouths of ghosts. I am an untouchable in heaven, let me fly down to earth to feed all God's creatures with the fruit of eternity.

Deep, from my roots I call you.

I pray world in, world out:

if not in Eden,

O let the cursed

eat my fruit

in hell.

- *Menke*

FACTS OF THE TREE OF LIFE

Each
shall die.
Only the tree
too large to be seen,
only the tree of trees
which is all trees and no tree
may grow into eternity,
for its roots are older than Eden,
and its branches bear all fruits & futures –
all possibilities yet no promises:
no self nor cell, nor Adam's God nor gods to be
shall remain intact within the process of the tree.
Therefore look no further for the true purpose of life
nor for life after life, as each feeds the tree that
nurtures all
in the continual communion of being:
these are the facts of the tree of life and will suffice.

– *Harry*

FIRST FUCK

When Eve, the first bride on earth lay nude to make
love
with Adam her newly born bridegroom, he loved
only her side rib out of which she was
made, it was all his own. She was lured
to his enchanted middle horn:
She said: stab me, my love, in
the middlepit. He thought
her middle thrill is
God, leading Cain,
Abel, Seth:
mankind.

- *Menke*

FIRST FUCK

Eve,
bending,
showed Adam (!)
with untaught guile
her fanny divine
and her little eden
love-dewed between her springy thighs,
and Adam saw that It was good,
and because they were perfectly paired,
he did enter easily where they stood
as Eve stooped sighing, his arms encircling her,
his hands enjoying her hips and belly and breasts
while she arched, nuzzling and melting, and their
hosannahs
scared the doves: Yea, the first fuck was a pure act,
quick but loud.

Though it was the best first fuck, the first fuck is
never best.

Adam did not ask *was it long enough, was it good?*
And neither did Eve wonder *how do I compare?*
Lightly sweating under the boned umbrella
of the cherimoya, they lay watching
the flying fucks of rainbow dragonflies
and swishtails of courting quetzals
as Eve popped lice plucked out of
Adam's kinky hair. Sha-
man schlang! – rod that changed
to cute serpent:
she petted
its head.

And
Eve gasped
at Adam's
sweet asp slither-
ing: grasped its puffed neck,
laughed while it writhed to wand,
licked a love drop from its mouth
and rejoiced in its proud-poised sway.
When Adam turned unto her, she shrieked
(mock fear) & fled and, ah, fleet-lithe she was.
As he must, and as she had tried him to prove
in the utmost play chases of their first courtship,
he overtook her, bellowing mightily, took her
down gently and lay down upon her: that was the
first lay.

And after all of Adam's roars and Eve's yips & love
nips,
Adam snored and Eve lay tingling with the after-
shocks,
those surprise-glowing, gentler waves of passion's
ebb –
those funny fleshquakes! Eve lazed & arched, amused.
Reviewing the acts, she wondered What Next?
The more she thought of the beginning,
the more she wanted to begin
the next act of beginning,
and as her garden grew
taut, she grew annoyed

at his slumber,
and meanwhile
Adam
dreamt

of fuck
while flying
with huge sheer wings
like the dragonflies –
he & Eve hovering
in airy ecstasy as
zephyrs played with his dreaming prick . . .
Eve, beholding its Godsent ascent,
therefore came right joyously unto Adam:
she mounted him, sliding down upon his horn,
impaling herself gloriously, and writhed and
rocked and swivelled and cunt-clutched and was
orgast
meltingly as Adam woke and multiplexly
before the last squish-thrust, and swoon . . . of equals
in Eden.

– *Harry*

MAKING LOVE TO THE WITCH OF ENDOR

The dust of my forsaken grave will always remember
me.

Grass, my closest friend, afflicted with grief, will not
leave me.

Forgotten, as if I were never born, I may still
be visited by the ancient witch of Endor
who will come to my grave with bearded teats, at
midnight-gloom to vow her true love for me,
will hum my time-eaten name as a
prayer for the cursed to a deaf
heaven, will see me alive
with her only half-mooned
eye, will lure me out
of my grave to
make love in
limbo.

- *Menke*

THE QUEEN OF THE NIGHT

The Queen of the Night
greet me with great red apples,
serves me deep red wine
and cocaine in candlelight.
We breathe hell's fair, bitter snow.

The Queen of the Night
plays chess with me, trades her queen
in a no-win game
which becomes a universe.
We stalemate life, and bend time.

The Queen of the Night
in the neap time of dark tide
overbrimming brings,
tremulous, the sacrament,
The gift of forgetfulness:

to inject with love,
which is the new moon of love,
liquid of Lethe
in a fang too sharp for pain.
She is tender with my blood.

- *Harry*

ON THE BIRTH OF ELOHIM

First there was the dream, before time, before God
was born.

(Ask a speck of dust how old are Adam and Eve.)

Dream is en-sof – infinity. You, I and
no one were in tohu-bohu, waiting
for heaven, earth. We were the void-end
like God craving for birth. A void
struck a void, there was first spark,
Zohar, child of light brought
the sun, stirred in space
a still small voice:
Elohim.

- *Menke*

ON THE BIRTHS OF THINGS

*Black unto blackness ascending
And a heavy spark engending
Space with form & form in time
In storm creating worlds and life:*

This was the beginning:

I was sixteen. After having read Lucretius, I was beginning a modern (1952) *On the Nature of Things*. I did not know I was writing kabala. I did, somehow, have very early word of George Gamow's Big Bang theory. My cosmological epic – I got one fragmentary line further – proved to be the world's shortest history of the universe.

I believed it.

And now I celebrate its kinship to kabala:

first spark = primordial fireball!

Yet I have come to believe more in creations than Creation, and I believe continual creation:

I dream *en-sof* without end or beginning in time:

universe & meta-universe universes:

Infiniversity:

Elohim *is* plural

- *Harry*

THE MESSAGE

O ask
any wind
to read to you
the message which we
unborn children send each
daybreak through the seven arch
angels (who guard our souls in the
seventh heaven) to the queen of the
cities – New York, crowned as the slaughtering
capital of the unborn humanity
of America: (voted unanimously,
at a heavenly assembly) We, the unborn New
Yorkers, such as the brides of tomorrow, deprived
of our
glowing bridebeds, we vanished pilots, poets,
presidents, shoe-
shiners, astronauts – protest our doom without
trial and error,
to mix our souls with the witches' brew before we
are born,
on the altar of the devil Moloch, to move our
Genesis to the end of time. — To solve the drab
austerity budgets of our penny pinched
mothers, we leave, on sale, our unshed tears:
gems, to open jewelry shops in
hell, for all the death-wise who junk
unborn children in their wombs,
to spill our dawns like beans,
change our lives into
porkpies, nightmares,
dreameries
of fiends.

– *Menke*

MESSAGE FOR REV FALWELL

Answer
Rev Falwell:
if you really
believe a tiny
human is manifest
in the earliest fetus,
why do you not give funerals
for these dead and honor them with stones –
the tiniest tombstones – or thimble urns?
Should we not erect in platinum & pearls
the exquisite tomb of the Unknown Embryo
to be consecrated by you on the White House lawn
with lilies of the valley wreaths bedight by Uncle
Ron?

- *Harry*

THOUGHTS AT DUSK

A miser is a
cloud which gives no rain. A mute
is a linguist who
understands the language of
stones, fish, elves, wingless eagles.
The wind will never cease
its endless wander in
search for the unlived
days of doomed children: baby
snakes who seek in dust snake milk:
infant mice – dolls, en
snared before they grow whiskers,
all children deprived
of joy and sorrow, bereaved
of dawn, of their only lives.
Only spurned lovers
know why weeping rocks can not
stop oozing tears, why
suicides are in love with
the ill light of late sunsets.

– *Menke*

THOUGHTS AT DAWN

“Living’s dangerous,”
says my wife who never shirked
the risks of voyage
nor weakened when the graywave
bulked: Life loves brave lovers.

The loveless fear life.
Narcissine phobias flower
with one self to tend,
the lone self encasing them
(ice-brittle shields against life).

And the more I live,
the less I fear my dying.
Death’s most dreadful
for the young, before the full
meet & make of love’s lifestorm.

– *Harry*

A WREATH

(cinquains)

You bought
me, my love, a
wreath of May, fit for you.
the mayqueen, kissed in the Song
of Songs,

A wreath
of cut flowers,
a laurel of grief. The
torn roots ache in tea roses, in
lilacs.

Flowers,
many colored
wounds, even God can not
heal, flowers craving for a lick
of dew.

Flowers –
mourners bereaved
of tears, store gall instead
of nectar. Honeybees lament
their fate.

Flowers,
like dead, dolled up
brides in coffins, deprived
even of the earth of graves – doomed
flowers.

– *Menke*

LIFE IN A POT

Flowers in a pot
yearn for the fields as fallen
cherubs for the skies.

– *Menke*

CARNATIONS

Rotten
red carnations
in a tall green tin vase
stuck on my father's grave smell like
all death.

– *Harry*

VOICE OF MESSIAH

I saw Messiah
the son of David, he said:
The dead will not rise.
'There will be no end of time,
no end of doom, of hangman.

No. I will not lead
the dead to seven heavens.
Heaven is divine
boredom. I will lead nude Bath
Sheba to the roof of sin.

God is a child of
dust like you and I, like all
children of dust he
will return to dust. Only
the unborn live forever,

will awake from their
eternal sleep on earth, will
inherit all nine
planets, will populate all
the dreams beyond life and death.

Messiah fled. The
huge ears of his white donkey
heard his unheard cries:
Stone me, my chosen people,
if I ever lived or died.

– *Menke*

VOICE OF MESSIAH

I saw Messiah
fuck the black Queen of Panthers,
howl a hurricane.
Then in half gale voice he jeered:
Wanna try? Sans of Scumbags,

*Your standard screwin'
bores my father in heaven.
Not even Baal can
cream the dreams of your cow-eyed
women tamer than the kine.*

*Know this, you sinners:
Love's purest pleasure gushes
through pleasure-giving-
shameless, shamless, deepdream free . . .
Don't do it the same way twice.*

And the panther purred
and instant Eden lushed up
where Messiah played.
Then a whirlwind closed & sucked,
leaving only blank bright sand.

- Harry

EPITAPH

(cinquains)

Ask a
plucked lily what
life or death is like in
heaven, our neverland, beyond
time, God.

O leave,
my friend, a jug
of wine on my grave. Ask
the desert how much thirst there is
in dust.

OUR LAST FAREWELL

Do not
say to me good
bye. The wind will ever
wave, with invisible hands, all
good byes.

– *Menke*

EPITAPH

Give me
No lily wreath
No grave no eulogy
No elegy no epitaph
No death.

- *Harry*

WE WERE NOT BORN TO DIE

Not an
echo of an
echo, from our first cry
to our last laughter will ever
be lost.

Long, long
forgotten, we
will rise with the first dawn,
beyond the last night on earth, a
world hence.

- *Menke*

WE WERE NOT BORN TO DIE

“No fair,”
fair children shout,
“No fair, no fair!”, echoes
on each deathbed: Life and God are
no fair.

– *Harry*

LATE EVENING

I

(*haiku*)

All the undreamed dreams
dream of you and me and all
the dead since Adam.

2

(*tanka*)

All bygones ask the
dying day: Did we ever
live? Were we ever
born? A last ray on a dim
windowpane answers: no-no!

– *Menke*

APRIL MIDNIGHT

(Friday, the 13th)

All the ghosts of love,
changling wraiths across the moon,
visit from far springs.

*Let me become spring,
Let me love as I once loved.*
Life answers: fuck you.

– *Harry*

WONDER

There is more wonder
in idle talk, nonchalant,
at a lechaim,
than in the ode of Keats to
his immortal nightingale.

– *Menke*

ST. ELIOT'S INFIRMARY

A stuffed nightingale
is palpable & mute as
Bukowski's foreskin
within a bowl of globed fruit.
A poet's lies become truth.

- *Harry*

OLD LESSON

Learn from Abraham
to hail unknowns like angels.
Learn from Eve at the
first apple tree to share the
forbidden fruit of Eden.

If God said, to taste
an apple of his tree is
evil, ask Lilith
what is more sacred than sin,
what is more Godly than God?

- *Menke*

FIRST DEFINITION

The knowledge eaters
stew old things and slurp regret;
they drool for lost fruits,
reek of fear for the morrow
or shame for the night before.

Strangers to the earth,
the lone creatures who ever
forget the present
to remember things past, lay
their dead upon the future.

Eve's little apples
take us to the Big Apple –
every branch a graft
of the original tree:
the definition of Man.

– *Harry*

ON SIN

In the beginning,
God was the only sin for
creating heaven
and earth, Eden and hell, Eve
and the serpent, the newborn

and the grave, the skunk
and the rose, the dull angel
and the gay ghoul; man
and the gallows. All winds swear:
God is the first and last sin.

– *Menke*

PURE SIN

Now I learn pure sin
in the pale arms of Lilith
in the asphodel
of her skin. I sip easy
evil, – narcotic nectars

and shrill moonpowders:
entranced, intent, indifferent,
I lead her Dis dance.
That she-demon says I am
the damned best she ever had.

– *Harry*

LAST WAR

(cinquains)

Last war
over Eden.
Angels fall like fire and
brimstone. Even God is bombed out
in flames.

Left of
the tree of life
is a heap of ashes.
It is the end of sword and plow
on earth.

Still here
is the wind to
hymn what is left of life:
mice-folk, puppy love of piggies,
skunk-gods.

The boat
man Charon trans
ports the iron souls of
victor, loser, across the Styx
river.

Naiads
play on water-
harps in a dream without
man: nets, snares, flags, judges, gallows –
ha-hah!

– *Menke*

AFTER THE LAST WAR

After
the last war
sick Eden shines:
We, Adam & Eve
Again, as gods no more,
inherit our first beasthood,
and all the future of our race
depends on our scrounged roots & found fruits
and the success of our leafy mating.
Ah, Love, poor Love, the last war shall be our
werewish.

– *Harry*

REINCARNATION

(beyond the atomic bomb)

The dove from Noah's
ark will drop its olive leaf
and change into a
vulture with a naked head,
with carrion in its mouth.

The last man on earth
will turn into a mouse in
a trap, squeaking for
help to death but death will be
bombed out of heaven and earth.

The last Eve will be
a maimed fly in a cobweb,
spidered in a silk
shroud – a zooming doll of fear,
will frighten God down his throne.

You, I, he and she
will be kind sheep, the angels
of peace, under the
knife of the slayer, crying:
Hallelujah, death is here!

Only
Satan who leads
the downtrodden, the cursed,
the doomed away from the
gallows,

will save
us from saint ghoul:
lover of graves, medaled
dead, our saviors – the divine
evil.

– *Menke*

REINCARNATION

(*beyond ourselves*)

We are
born of dead stars –
recombinant starbits –
dead stars walking, talking, fucking!
starborn

our dust
will be starblown
beyond the shape of earth,
will in the womb of Everything
breed stars.

– *Harry*

IN STERILE DAYS

(*cinquains*)

A pen
is a splinter
in the eye. I fear the
pen more than the sword. O vanish
cursed pens.

Our black
cat Midnight writes
on snow, with her steps, my
unwritten poems which all cats
can read.

I screw
the nine sister-
goddesses of poets.
I laugh like a hyena, cry
havoc.

I hear
a dying swan
sing its last song to me:
It is the end, the end, the end,
Menke.

I know
I am doomed. Job
led one by one his six
thousand camels through my private
dreamland.

The witch
of Borough Park
tells me, I just died, hence,
I am young with death as at birth
with life.

I live
on the Isle of
Nowhere, who can find me
beyond night and day where the sun
is blind?

Sterile
days. Time to pray
to fallen angels to
lead me to hell. Eden is a
cruel dream.

– *Menke*



STERILE LAUGHTER

I hear
Death's laughter
in the trained warmth
of the President
and the timely chuckles
of the well-cast newscaster
and the computed amusement
of TV's late night Mister Talk.
Long ago they laughed themselves to death,
and we laugh their laughter, reflex laughter,
to con-laugh and can-laugh with Cain raised,
 convulsed
in the computer; imploding, mushroom laughter.

– *Harry*

DARLING WOLF

(cinquains)

It is
the end of days.
Blake's God-loved lamb cries peace,
in the teeth of Isaiah's dar
ling wolf.

God and
Satan are pals,
like the kid within the
leopard, like the calf in the young
lion.

The gold-
charmer Mammon
lures peace out of the hole
of an asp; stocks boom in soldiers'
new graves.

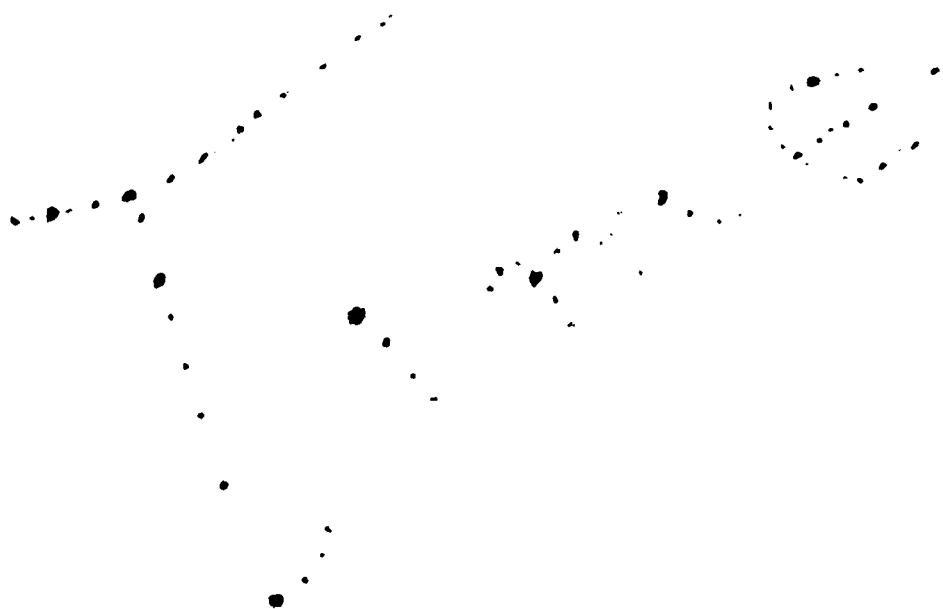
The last
war rages in
all heavens. Seraphim,
cherubs, archangels fall from hell
to hell.

The moon
wraps each fallen
angel with a white shroud,
feeds the unborn with witches' milk:
kind moon.

A swan
song lulls to sleep
each stormbird. Hurricanes
are, at rest, over hill and dale
yeh, peace.

A stray
little child leads
us all to the Land of
Nod. Satan is everywhere and
nowhere.

- *Menke*



AFTER DAYS

After
the end of days
time turns black but flutters
onward, beyond the wolf & the lamb
sans suns

two one
God & Satan
are the same conception:
Hank Mammon Markets Born Again
Futures.

Future
can not exist.
In a past present
Future was blastula.

- *Harry*

BEYOND GOD

Harry,
will the world end
beyond your last laugh, will
there be no trace left of heaven
and earth?

Will you
still be a voice
in the wind to ask no
one, where are you and I, where is
time, space?

Will you
know night and day
died of ennui, of their
endless, repetitive sun and
star games?

Will you
not even know
you are dust? Will you not
even know if you ever lived
or died?

– *Menke*

BEYOND US

Menke,
the world will end
beyond the last ripple
of my last laugh, beyond the lost
windsong

when we
shall stream past night & day
in the voiceless wind of the stars
and God,

and stars
will war with God
beyond the idea of God
or dust.

Our dust
will not know us, nor we
our cosmic dust, yet we – it may
be known.

- *Harry*

VISIT TO THE VILLAGE OF MICHALISHEK

(cinquains)

The wind
tells desolate
alleys, there were people:
laughter, cries here once upon
a time.

A shot
rowan tree with
ailing red pomes, in late
dusk, stands as in tubercular
fever.

The last
bits of bygone
days hide in cracks of
walls, live in peace with the prince of
darkness.

Greenhead
flies, in a danse
macabre, mob the swamps.
Ghouls with eyes like louse-berries feast
in graves.

Still left
is Velfke the
mystic, in sackcloth and
ashes on his head, mourns the death
of God.

Malke,
the queen of the
village, in moonlit shrouds,
joins a stray wolf, barking against
heaven.

- *Menke*

from A VISIT TO MY CHILDHOOD

long narrow the world
of my broadhoured childhood:
Glendale, villagy,
tucked 'tween trainbanks & trolley
CLANGALANGER
'long Myrtle

The cemetery stops the world
on the other side of Myrtle.

I like the trolley more than anything
ROUNDTRIPPING
Grandma takes me
to Ridgewood
END OF THE LINE

Trolleyman turns the giant key in the tracks
makes the trolley go back
by
the great big movie
where I hide my face from The
Phantom of the Opera 'n they play \$64
Question in The Intermission
Give that man 12 silver dollars
'n Grandma

gets a plate at the door
CLANGALANG
Ridgewood's got all the big stores
real Department Stores

CLANG
back through Glendale

past the cemetery
Mount Lebanon

through Forest Park

Everybody's Picnic!
CLANG all the way –
Richmond Hill
END OF THE LINE

Richmond Hill's sort of like Glendale.

Three fat trolley men
push

turn the car around

I go CLANGALANG I pull my baby trolley
Baby Trolley's gotta clang too.

ME

skinny little

hold hands with Daddy walking

'long Myrtle Avenue in the dark pulling

Baby Trolley who's just like grownup trolley

with One Eye Lit in the

middle of his face

I roll him down Myrtle with all the trolleys

– *Harry*

EPITAPH FOR MY GRANDMOTHER MOYNEH

Here lies grandmother
Moyneh. Whoever can count
her good deeds knows how
many stars Abraham saw
when he heard the voice of God.

From dawn to dawn she
brought light to the blind, walked the
legless, cursed the fiend
out of the evil eye who
stole the crusts of beggar bags.

She dolled each bride of
the poorhouse with a snow-wreath
dress made by cherubs
for moon pennies; graced their
braids with swan-river daisies.

She washed the under
pants of the maimed, in limpid
brooks of the village.
She saw God's tears in the scare-
eyes of each sobbing mouse-child.

She saw June bud in
dream gardens sowed by frostwork.
She warmed with her last
breath the ice-skied windowpanes
of twisted Beggar Alley.

She mourned the end of
each sundown, guarded the hopes
of every sunrise.
She entered with the humble
through a back door of Eden.

- *Menke*

GRANDMA

Grandma Sophie said,
“Green is the color of Death.”
Mommy killed Daddy
cause she gave him a green washcloth
the same morning when he died.

My Grandma Sophie,
not to miss Niagara Falls,
honeymooned with Mom & Dad.
Grandma never missed a trip.
Mom was “just a girl” –

married at nineteen.
They lived with Dad’s folks first till
Mom didn’t clean the toilet right
'n Grandma dragged her by the hair
'n shoved her head in it.

Grandma was tall – wide on top,
taught me how to box.
Grandpa Smith was kinda small
but he promoted Sports.
He showed Grandma Fisticuffs.

They use to box out in the kitchen.
Grandma gave good as she got.
Grandma could throw a handline
further than a man –
caught eels by the bucketful.

Grandma kept my hindy clean,
put me crost her knee
to fingerpick my poo hole,
told me not to tell.
The hindy game was swell.

I liked gin runmy even better.
Grandma let me win at gin.
She gave me trolley roundtrips
and worldbest apple dumplings
with strong vanilla icing.

Grandma got sick 'n lost a breast,
came to live with Mom & me,
and sure was scared to die.
She read Jehovah's Kingdom
and said that she was good.

Grandma could make animals
out of pipecleaners,
people out of wax or soap.
They sure looked like who they was.
Mom got mad at that.

Mom dragged her by the hair
from the backyard to the house,
Grandma said – I dunno.
Grandma made moms out of soap
and stuck pins in them.

Mom got sick headaches.
Her legs got weak - they hurt bad.
Mom found one soapcarved momdoll
with pins in the head and legs.
Mom said Grandma's magic worked.

Next room to mine was Grandma's.
She muttered curses every night.
Sometimes I could hear her breathing,
listening & spying,
pressed against my door . . .

Saw me playing with my dick,
told me worms got made that way -
my thing would rot 'n fall off
or turn me to a moron
always playing with myself.

I knew that stuff was stupid.
So she told on me to Mom.
I said Gran's mind was dirty.
"You'll die in the 'lectric chair,"
Gran said, "You'll go straight to Hell."

I heard Grandma by my bed
and peeped: moonlight shined
on her long sharp sewing shears.
She was whispering to herself.
Grandma went to Florida

Grandma came back North to die
in a nursing home nearby.
She called me to her deathbed
to say I didn't love her.
I lied and said I did.

I was sixteen – old enough
to bury her – did it right.
Satin-lined mahogany.
White-robed Eastern Star ladies
chanted the Masonic rites.

Six months of champagne nights,
blurred pageant – how many girls?
Spent my inheritance
quick as I could.
Grandma needs no metaphor.

- *Harry*

VOICE OF A DEAD LEAF

(tanka – cinquain twin)

Listen, a dead leaf
which fell many suns ago,
beyond our forest
house, suddenly awoke in
the wind, to tell us all: No-

no-no!

There is no such
dust as eternal sleep.
Even our tombstones will bloom in
Eden.

– *Menke*

THE REACHES OF A LIFE

(for Liselott, on her 80th birthday)

I believe in the continuum of life and the infinity of a
life

in life waves rippling-ringing outward onto
the future

in the immeasurable motions of our mo-
ments, lives times lives

in immemorial dreamseeds in undreamt
futures growing

as the lost past lives in us as we shall be in the last
reaches of our kind

as my words bloom from your life, which is a strong
life, and growing,

one with the beginning & endlessness of all.

- *Harry*

ETHEL

Ethel, I see you
drinking Keats' hemlock in a
New York garret. I
see you making love with death,
and I am jealous of death.

I hear
you calling me:
Menke, let us elope
to neverland, beyond God, rush
my love!

Autumn.
Crickets never
tire to repeat your name.
All shadows, like the blind, dream of
lost dawns.

The late
day like you, like
all self-doomed is eager
to die. My first dawn, your last dusk
embrace.

– *Menke*

SILLY LOVE POEM

I love women who make silly faces when they are
happy
 and who are happy at silly little things;
I love women whose faces are the Silly Putty® of the
act of love –
 free to be silly – and who love to be silly,
utterly,
For I am their poet, their silly poet, the poet of the
silly-beautiful:
 their silly-sweet soft shining is like dogwood
blossoms in my nightwoods . . .
For them I am a moonstruck bull!

- *Harry*

HEAVEN WRITING TO RIVKE

(in the year two thousand)

A ghoul
wandering through
the graves of New Jersey,
stole my fingers from my grave to
write these

cinquains,
to serenade
you on my orphaned man
dolin, Rivke, my charmed, little
woman.

- *Menke*

LAST ODE

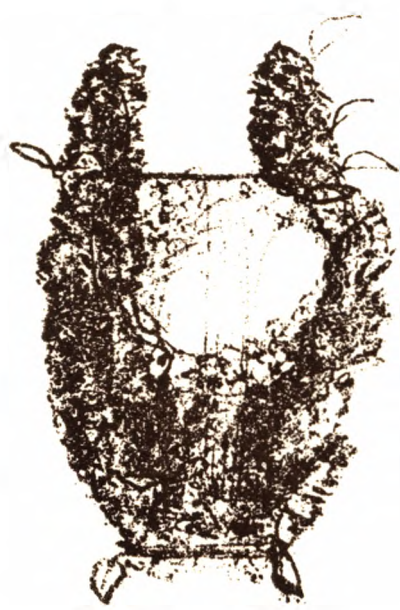
The day they told me you were dying, the air was
 oversexed with Spring,
the first full musky heat of Spring, and lovers
 bloomed in every park
like lilacs, and lilacs sang like love, and the song of
 lilacs smote me,
cut me open to the quick of love; lay open all the
 years onto
such a day in a little park with lilacs: God! You
 reeked of lilacs,
after having bathed in a tub of lilac water for the
 Spring, for me!
And I sneezed and laughed and gave you lilacs.

The day they told me you were dying, Death's soft
 lilac shadow bathed you
from our first Spring, renewing love, and it was the
 first Spring heat of love,
filling us with each other, dispelling all the business
 of the years,
returning us to full-time love, and we called our
 destiny a gift.
Finding in Death's infinite transparency all pleasures
 godly pure,
we called it lucky to be young for Death.

When you were missing from your place, I searched
for you in the labyrinth
deep in the hospital underground. And I was
Orpheus. *Love has led me here*
to these realms of silence and cold creation. The lords of
those terrible abodes
trembled at my sacred rage and let me pass, hearing
Orpheus ask,
“*Where is my wife? What have you done with my wife? I*
have come for my wife.
Which wheel can spin the thread that was her life?”

When they returned you to your place, yet missing
from yourself, pale, blighted
shadow, Death's grip graven on your brow, I learned
to envy Orpheus.
O lucky, lucky Orpheus! For love plucked in the full
of beauty,
for the starry lyre of lament and the consummation of
death.
What if his Eurydice had followed from shadow into
sunlight
yet stayed a shade *forever lost* beside him, without a
last farewell.
I make a lyre of lilacs for my wife.

- *Harry*



VISIT AT MIDNIGHT

Rivke, my little
woman, I came to you
at midnight, in this old
forest house where I died,
a fugitive from Eden.

See me
in our yestermoons,
on each windowpane, hear
me calling you, night and day, in
the wind.

See me,
in the mirror
of the brook, across the
road. See me in each breakbud of
young Junes.

I came here to hide
from the pious eunuchs who
sit a thousand for
evers and again, under
the apple tree of Eden.

Come O
come with me to
make love in the valley
of hinnom, through the firestorms of
all hell.

Hell is
a haven for
you and me, for the doomed,
for loved Shemhazai, the fallen
angel.

Look, stars – the eyes of
our unborn children hide in
every crevice of
these weary walls, in fear of
birth – in fear of Eden.

Come O
come with me, my
little woman, we are
infinite in never-never,
hell-land.

In this poem we
shall live to the end of the
last lover on earth,
until we learn from dust the
language of silence, my love.

– *Menke*

LISTENING TO NIGHT

In the loving bed,
that mat of lay-shaped straw
I listen to midnight,
alone in the old shack
of my wild island eden

ticking . . .
Not clock. Not watch.
Nor pulse, nor heart. It is
the house itself, gently alive,
that ticks . . .

Listen:
at the threshold
of hearing, the low, soft
thrumming, a tiny-louder where
the sills

are aging into
earth, and where the ear
nears a weathered wall:
crickets, only crickets
countless, their back legs rubbing.

Come O
come to me to
me the song of Sirens
rises, reaching out of
sea night –

Oh, yes,
the tales are true.
They sing sailors to shoals.
I know them too. They sing me to
the sea.

They are only song
of the wind before the wind
comes, the wind's passage
over shoals – rockwind pipings –
yet my Sirens are no less

lovely . . .
and they do call,
and men do long for them
when storm-tossed, lost, beyond a hope
of home –

the last romance
for the wayfarer
past reveries
of fair flesh, the far reebsong
Come to thy fairest lover.

– *Harry*

CAVE - MAIDEN

Someone always cries
in this ancient cave. Is it
the cry of a cave-
maiden who dreamed of me a
million and one years ago?

O she
always cries in
the wind. All the cries from
the first to the last life are in
the wind.

And I am doomed to
pine away for her as long
as there is night, day,
as long as there are love-gods,
and never-Edens on earth.

— *Menke*

WAVE MAIDEN

Can I, earthshaker,
compared to Poseidon, be
doomed in a sea trap
of undertow & breakers?
Absurd! I'll wait for my wave.

Wendy
the wave maiden
would cry: I will not call.
It would be a bad way to say
Goodbye.

I want no wailing
on Wendy's Wall on Watch Hill.
I leap to embrace
a kind wave that carries me
back to Wendy-of-the-Wall.

- *Harry*

TWIN FRIENDS

The falling eagle
and the rising sun are twins;
birth and death are twins.

The first ray and the
last shadow, the moth and the
fire, love, hate are twins.

Eve and the serpent,
good and evil, hell
and Eden are twins.

Genesis and the
blindworm, the first sunrise and
the last dusk are twinned.

There is a first dawn
in the last night, a last
night in the first dawn.

– *Menke*

TWIN FRIENDS

Alpha & Omega,
Abbott & Costello,
Menke & Harry are twins.

The first fuck and the
last kiss; love & art,
dog & man, man & god, space, time.

Exxon & Nixon
a nixon and a buddha,
Russia & America,

Homer & Virgil
Yaweh & Allah
construction & destruction:

a dialectic
of diagnosis:
The mind's a hegelhopper.

-- *Harry*

LONELY SISTER

What is
loneliness if
not my yearning sister,
making love with her dead lover,
in dreams.

Dream in, dream out she
sees him, awestruck, rush out of
their wedding picture
to her bridebed with all the
kisses of the Song of Songs.

From all the gardens,
left is a barren rose: a
baldhead, playing
solitaire with its own bleak
shadow, with her bygone moons.

She dreams
of wounded song
less robins, dropping the
end of summer from under their
hurt wings.

Autumn.
All flowers tire
of their own beauty, all
welcome death, die naked in
the wind.

Twilight turns her dolled-
up rooms into gold cells for
the bereaved gods of
love. She is a child of dusk,
the queen of the loneliest.

– *Menke*

LOVE'S POEM
WRITES ME

As love's poem writes me,
the sister I never knew,
Sister May, Dad's Toots,
poses in a purple dress,
smiling, tall amid flowers.

I am my father's love.
Another Toots, also tall,
comes as a daughter
in my sister's purple dress:
"Who *is* this that cometh?"

I, as Solomon,
behold how our loves converge:
"my sister, my spouse,"
daughter-mother-Shulamite,
as love is stronger than death.

- *Harry*

UNNAMED

(haiku)

No beginning is
faithful as the end, no love
is as kind as death.

FOOLED LOVER

(tanka)

You threw me like a
trodden doll in the gutter,
yearning for the hands
which played with it, hankering
for the feet which trampled it.

– *Menke*

TANKA

Fool-sap of false spring:
love comes as a lone flower
in the wrong season –
quickly damaged. Yet see it
lives, burns yellow in the snow.

– *Harry*

WELCOME MY EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY

Only
a short span to
my eightieth birthday,
still left are not years but choice days
with you,

dreamworlds
and wine, still left
are a thousand and one
wonders. When last days will shrink in
to hours,

I shall
split each second
into bits, every bit
undying as Adam's first glance
at Eve.

O leave
for me, my love,
each night a blank page. I
will come to write my unwritten
poems.

- *Menke*

48

I reach
My Father's span,
Tread the year of his death.
My love, like his, becomes homeless
by loss;

detached;
wanders the world,
chases a speckled thrush
and gets lost in red hibiscus
all day.

My love
invents an art
of the perfect evening,
invites dreams for the Ideal Night.
Lady,

I will
want what you want.
I am your teddy bear
I can dance - out-Zorba the Greeks!
Celia,

we learn
silk ritual,
harmonium of dance,
which in the light on your bedspread,
Sarah,

we move
in Movieland
skaters, instant roses
a moonlit carriage through the park.
Dear Anne,

we share
the secret shores
of radical desire
I shall be your father in hell.
Woman,

Women,
I have given
12 Ideal Nights to 8
of 18 women
this year.

Only
93 days
of Sunturn 48
extend till all vain numbers end
again.

- *Harry*

GOD'S GOLD ON THE OLD STREET

The late day shares all
its gold with the streetful poor.
Here is Elijah,
the beggar of Gilead.
Here is Lot, the drunk, lying

with his two daughters,
entangled in the fires of hell.
Here is Abishag,
the frightened whore-child, keeping
young, King David's old bosom.

Here are dopefiends, crowned
by the setting sun: the kings
of the dreamlands. There,
are fallen angels, chased out
of Eden, wallow under

the Brooklyn trees of
heaven, with bruised wings
struggle, in vain, to
fly out of the stone claws of
the old pennyflowered street.

Through broken mirrors
of the falling sun, I see
the comely folks of
my doomed village, dying with
the mute cries of the twilight.

A die-hard moth on
a God-lit windowpane prays
to its bygone day;
confesses all its sins to
a tribunal of heavens.

One wing
dust thieves stole, the
other still left for a
half round over the **end of life**
on earth.

Stars, un
reached dimes crowd the
skies. Eyeful thugs – Satan's
armies ambush each stirbug of
the night.

– *Menke*

BURNT FOREST AT SUNSET

Sky of ash & fire.
The burnt forest at sunset
relives holocaust
black trees in thinned ranks standing
askew, weak, leaning

into each other
& holding each other up,
trembling, gaunt & bent,
each image of agony,
news of blood & smoking bones,

losses, senseless blanks.
Open us to the beauty
of pointless humanity,
the abyss of history
and the life songs in this dark.

- *Harry*

ON THE EVE OF THE LAST SPRING

Last ice-floes on the
Viliya river still fight their
enemy – Spring; winds
are still mighty with frost, with
the last wail of the war-bleed.

Nightfall.
Mothers sew fresh
snow-white shrouds for newly
dead children, for the saddest graves
on earth.

Only
the lucky dead
lie safely in their graves;
the unburied are in fear of
vultures.

Angels
die in heaven
as you and I on earth;
each cloud – a grave for each doomed
angel.

When God
will die, Satan
will bury him among
the gassed Jews of Treblinka or
Auschwitz.

All winds gossip, spread
rumors that Messiah is on
his way here, rides on
a white donkey, will bypass
heaven, earth, God and evil.

Beyond
the last grave, a
new God of love will dawn,
a new Elohim will be born
Amen.

- *Menke*



ON THE EVE OF
THE LAST SPRING

Spring frostwinds wail war.
Messiah dies in Auschwitz.
Burning children ex-
tinguish angels, their anguish
shrilling Satan's victory.

O Prince of His world,
overlord of history.
thy kingdoms come, thy will
is forever done on earth.
What shall we say of Heaven?

- *Harry*

UNNAMED

No martyr's death is
handsome as a live pupa
doll, the dream of a
tomorrow's butterfly to
fly a thousand and one Junes,
in its ever oneful day.

- *Menke*

UNNAMED

To God, a martyr
is precisely as handsome
as a dying fly,
and Theresa's orgasms
with the Holy Spirit count
the same as the rut of a deer.

- *Harry*

SATAN SAID

The holy ghost was
a eunuch who could not pierce
through the flower-cup
of nude virgin Mary,
when she yearned in a bed of fire.

- *Menke*

MARY SAID

Mary said the Ghost
was a jolly good feller,
but good old Joe
could do it better.

- *Harry*

FISHERMAN

No cries frighten as
the mute wailing of fish-folk,
raging with trapped mouths
to Eden and hell, tangled
with God in old serpent's net.

- *Menke*

FLY FISHERMAN

A stuffed fat fish stares
from the bore's dining room wall,
a world-record catch,
brown trout big as a salmon,
taken on number four line.

He'll show you clippings,
official certificates,
letters from experts
on the fish's history –
at least an *uncommon* bore.

Fish fattened himself
for years in a reservoir
before the honor
of becoming second best
taken by fly from a stream

and of course biggest
ever caught on number four line.
He didn't fight much.
Someone in New Zealand set
a new world record last year.

The bore will offer
to teach you the fly fishing art.
By the mummy of
his immortal fish, he'll say,
"A once-in-a-lifetime thrill."

– *Harry*

HELL AND HIGH WATER

Hell and
high water. All
the dead since Adam rage
against God: down and out puny,
mean king.

Where shall God run from
the wrath of the dead? They are
beyond the first laugh,
last cry, the born, the lucky
unborn: the true eternal.

God shrunk from fear, hears
the hospitable squeak of
a mouse: "Welcome to
my mousehole, we are chased by the
same fate, the same Satan."

"Hide, pal,
mice and God-hunts
will rule to the last sun
down on earth: squeak-squeak, we are al-
mighty."

- *Menke*

OUTLINE OF THE NEW INFERNO

Hell is a timeless continuum,
constantly expanding at the speed of life,
as in the puny perils of Pac-Man
pursued by his own killer symbols
& doomed to eat dots in his computer-void
or to play the stock market with computer games.
Each of the outer limbos – the gamester's,
the businessman's, the fetishist's or sexnik's,
the gambler's or the technik's or the drug addict's –
begin & end with pleasures and are Hell
because of the absence of hope for Heaven
in love, just truth, and beautiful work.
and from each outer limbo of the sphere,
the way is always open all the way
down to the Inferno's frozen center,
so cold it burns the imprisoned life force
stiffening, fluttering helplessly,
hopelessly. This is the truth of Dante,
that Hell's hallmark is *Abandon Hope*,
but Hell is less hopeful than Dante dreamed,
for there is Heaven's hope if Hell be hence,
but Hell is here & now and nowhere else:
Hell's in life, expanding at the speed of life.

– *Harry*

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