

Poetry Series

Barry Van Asten
- poems -

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Barry Van Asten()

My name is Barry Van-Asten and I grew up under the shadow of the great Sarehole Mill, a place Tolkien often visited as a boy; living nearby he drew much of his inspiration from it - there is a magic about the 'Shire' which is timeless and immeasurable.

Books quickly became the greatest joy in my life, in fact it was Edgar Allan Poe who was my introduction to this sacred world! I immersed myself in the classics and began writing poetry at a young age. My early influences were: Akhmatova, Edward Thomas & A. E. Housman.

After enrolling on a writing course and an Open University course in the Humanities, I became an undergraduate and completed a degree in art at Roehampton University, Surrey. The poems from my first collection of poetry 'Ghost Blooms' and a few from a further collection 'Night Flowers' can be found on PoemHunter. I have also included a sonnet sequence called 'Songs of Love and Infinity'.

I also enjoy playing the guitar and have been in several bands. My other interests include: History, Landscape & Gardens, Archeology, Walking, Novels & Biographies, Films, Architecture, Ancestry and the Supernatural...

A Night Prayer

Dark sentinel of the ways:
My heart has given to the strange;
This ache of sadness torments my days
When I am lost of all your change.

And sufferings in childhood, long ago,
Have returned to see me half as deep:
This longing haunts my spirit so
And time erodes that which I cannot keep.

But love, the force that broods my mind
From depths, the white palsy of despair...
Life's tapestry lies oft' handsome lined
In the soft curls and twilight of your hair;

To measure the lone tide whence you came
On moth wings that beat back an eternal sky;
The sweet cauldron kisses that flame
From lip to lip, and eye to eye.

And if I could in scented idyll dream
Of that perfection and that pain
That carries me on its silver stream
Of love: a prayer will join us once again.

Barry Van Asten

A Seashore Ceremony

Our bodies purified to love; anointed
By our seven sacred seals:
Blessed by the glory of love that reveals the
Dreams within our hearts, we sadly wove.
And there upon the stones, a circle drawn. Four
Candles: north, east, south and west.
At the autumn equinox, love was blessed by
Midnight unto the eternal dawn!

By the seashore, we banish and invoke, to
The four quarters, by the light
Of Venus, summoned sevenfold by night, where
We sat in the circle, filled with smoke.

And a ribbon bound our hands together, like
Enchantment; a solemn prayer
Of love, that mingled with rose-incensed air, as
we kissed and joined our souls, for ever!

And the circle was banished.
And the candles extinguished
As a thick mist swept in from the sea...
And we gave thanks to the sea that
Witnessed our union!

The remains of the feast and the cardinal
Flowers and our sacred box containing
Hair and nail clippings were cast
Unto the tide!

Barry Van Asten

A Song Of September Woods

Soft was your hand in my hand,
As your lips parted gentle, and red;
And our kisses were ecstasy, fanned
Beneath the bright moon of the dead;
Our embraces girdled a band, Veronique,
Beneath the bright moon of the dead!

And here the veil of long ago
Was drawn in the silvern surprise,
By fingers that flickered white as snow
Like the moonlight caught in your eyes...
And suddenly the song did grow, Veronique,
Like the moonlight caught in your eyes!

Silver-skirted, in the glade...
Your sweet lips towards September, flow
As your long pale legs dance in the shade
Where the light of moon fears to go -
You are ecstasy perfectly made, Veronique,
Where the light of moon fears to go!

All night in the woods, you danced -
I suffered your beauty, and sighed;
I was struck by your form and entranced,
O sweet maiden where moonlight just died;
And I stood for all time as I glanced, Veronique,
O sweet maiden where moonlight just died!

Barry Van Asten

Against Us

What strange apostle of wisdom comes
From the hermitage, filled with fear?
He of old pagan enchantment, drawn,
To wear the wild ways beneath his skin;
With history hidden in fingertips:
A seasoned man, forever touching
Love's last seduction...brain-stepping...

And what appalling strength is this
Glut of desire upon us bringing?
The blood-air about us ringed: we kissed
To the cycle of ceremonial sighing!

Yet there was a time once, when song
Was glad in our souls...we listened;
We heard love's language linger long,
As we mouthed the words, not comprehending
The sorrow in the songs we sung.

And beneath the West wind, the end was falling;
We sipped at moon poison and passed into nothing.
My deeds, still dark with worshipping:
I knew, in those degrees of intimacy,
With my blood-lips on your scented skin;
The death-flowers of your craft, in me,
Shall remain, monstrous and stupidly human!

Barry Van Asten

Always

I looked in the cool of an autumn
As shadows dripped from her white dress;
Remembering the brush of her hair
Against my face as we kissed.

We laughed in the crimson madness
As I pushed into her hand, a charm:
Some green-sparkling glass, of no value,
Except a gypsy once kept it warm.

And together we walked by the shore;
She, with her white dress flapping
As the salty sea breeze was drifting
Over the wet sand, and keeping

Secrets from the wind, and knowing
That the feelings found in those first days
Will be kept like some sparkling glass charm
That remains in our hearts for always.

Barry Van Asten

At Boleskine

Oh wizard, tend my body, do,
And plant kisses in the garden of time;
Conjure spells that thunder through
My soul's sweet sleep sublime.
And if in haste, this world should be
Torn from our hearts, and thrown
From century to idle century
In the garden, overgrown...

Wand of desire, this love shall be
A rose-lipped hell of our own making...
In the dull roar of his monster voice - the sea!
A rough sea over the rocks was breaking!
And time will twist as our hearts fade
To the ceaseless echo, and remain
Nameless, deciphering the horror that's made
As we dance between the Devil and the Divine, again!

Hail to thee, great rapture of my heart;
I have sought the glory of thy name.
Let Love crown our souls in this Royal Art;
Let Love linger long in the hour of our fame!
And dark is the water that we know,
And steep the hill that we climb.
Oh passion, oh prophet, I fearless, grow
Towards a new dawn, touched by your time!

Barry Van Asten

At Brecon

In the old ways and the names, have I
Steadfastly learnt to grasp a stone,
Crush it in my palm, and look away;
Away into a past...away into a sky...

But haunted was I by the ghost of a hornet;
The countryside darkness crawled over the deck;
Hidden by trees: the hoot of an owl
Softened our sleep and our dreams were set.

And beside the crushing Usk's mighty flow,
We slept, to rural music and witchcraft's call;
A ritual on the water as the boat gently swayed
To a landscape known by the Roman, long ago!

The stars told their own story, by darkened bowers;
A mythical grandeur struck retina and nerve;
Blood swelled to the time-aged rhythms, we knew,
And a Carpathia of longing for that time was ours.

And I shall return, to the place, one day,
And look upon each stone and lament;
Lament for the passing of all sacred things,
And the dear ones we love, that pass away.

Barry Van Asten

Aureae Rosae - The Heart's Sadness

Listen! For the heart no more sings with time
As the wind drums it's hollow dreams in chain...
It is the heart that seeks it's joy in pain;
Perfected in darkness, to fall in it's prime!
And now, wasted between ourselves, I sigh
For time turned back and those things, now past;
Where a tedious curse in the heart was cast
Upon one who lingers in days gone by,
To mirror the wonder of all, and see
The sorrows of dreaming that I embrace...
And still those eyes leave their awful trace,
Where things unsaid, remain: I'll return, maybe...
But I cannot comprehend those cold eyes now
That kept me from the world I used to know.

And I knew nothing of love's ways, or it's pain,
Pursuing by degrees where passions flow
Into the changed worn ways of long ago;
Into the eternal ache of emptiness again!
And the rose hath long wound it's frail wanderings
Through the dark dimensions and the lonesome night;
Stronger than the stars and the charmed moonlight,
To fathom the beauty found in all things.
But those lips of unwritten time shall fade;
Fade strange, in the endless curve and strain
Of other lips, in other ways, to fall lifeless again!
But between the risen art and this slain shade
Are meanings to things in which I care:
I sought love in sadness and never found it there!

And I'll turn away from the songs of love, I said.
When innocence falls, my heart shall follow
The dread whisper of betrayal, and tread
The dawn of desire...this rosy globe of sorrow,
To rest among the weeping rushes, calling:
Who is passing? Who leaves the dark silence there?
Who steps between the scented blossoms falling?
But I'll find no voice returning on the air.
And with ribbons in the wind, I will sow her name

That the heart's sadness shall bud and bloom in beauty.
I shall wander far and wide, with this accursed shame
That dared to keep me from love's mystery.
And in turning from life's pure ways, an eternity
Of shadows and what could have been, eluding me!

O flower of inevitability, I now see beyond
The dark continents of your tender kiss,
Where more is lost between the light and this
Utter nothingness that I cannot understand.
But what blissful past returns again to weep
Like some cathedral ghost, outside time?
This triple-throated scribe of love's pantomime
Is time's honoured maid in the regions of sleep.
And the hollow tappings of a God, still shakes
At the memory of love, thrown into sorrow,
When I would to her sweet lips, softly go...
Yet what rage grinds against the soul, and wakes
The pitiful heart without her touch,
That given would have meant so much?

Barry Van Asten

Betharnu

This animal life is governed by time
And I hath loved and dared to know
Why the soldier in my soul lies still;
Why my eyes are spun with sorrow now.
I hath touched upon forbidden things:
Things mysterious and things dreadful...I go,
Unto the ache of Osiris, for Isis, sighing
In depths measureless, to love thee, Betharnu!
What fiend hast cast this awful spell?
What darkness pass'd through halls in chain
To stain thy beauty? - dare I pray
To she who gives my heart to pain?
This vivid substance, this mortal clay
Thrown unto her smooth embrace...
She breathed and the ghost of things unsaid
Remained silent in the tomb of Betharnu!

Yet I saw her as she turned and glanced,
But not all as I thought her to be,
For I saw the tormented maid of Sidon
Still grasping at immortality.
In her eyes - the bearded face of Christ,
As she whispered: O heavy heart,
Why dost thou lieth strange and far
In dreamless destinies of love? - O Betharnu,

I hath savoured thy kisses in regions drear;
I hath glimpsed thine ecstasies from afar;
I hath sung the sweet rapture of thy heart
To rest easy in thy idyll. O perfect star,
Through my immeasurable shame and woe,
'Twas ever unto thee, my love...
Through my wanderings from thy true desires -
'Twas ever unto thee, Betharnu!

I hath dwelt amongst ungodly things:
Drawn death from darkness - life from light;
I hath roamed in wickedness and greatly sinned
To bring this vision of love to sight.

Viewless in vistas, yet I stray
'Twixt the darkness that falleth on thy lips
And the tears that falleth from thy light
That is ever in my heart, thy name, Betharnu!

Yet her veins pulse, not with the heart
And here was dawn and dusk caressed;
Light unto the dark's damnation
When her lips to mine, were gently pressed.
But remember me in the songs, she said,
The songs thou adorest by night.
But thou art light, I said, to my darkness,
Doomed always to love thee, the light!

Barry Van Asten

Birthlines

It is in my mind to be
Rested, in this dark urgency...

Gnarled god of infinite beauty,
With ancient tongue, the hills awake
To nature's call and the season's duty;
To the magic and menace that you make!

And in these things we love the most,
Great beasts of boughs are lost to us.
They wear the darkness like some ghost
That rattles around the rooms of a house.

With their bulged limbs of lump and grot
Deep-twisted through the roll of land;
Green-skirted in your rooted rot:
Horror and history, grooved and grand!

Gorged on darkness, this heart finds
A terrific sadness, deep, that clings...
Death strikes where the river winds
Through a changed landscape that sings

Of experience and gnosis, of hedgerows lost;
Of pathways and barrows and Saxon slain...
To wake the sleeping sylvan ghost
And thunder over mound and hill again!

Barry Van Asten

Blue Interlude

Frail, iridescent star
In the cosmic green of man:
She has fled our bournes and brooks now,
Too cruel to understand.

But imagine a time of not knowing;
Of seasons measured in fingernails,
Where a theatre of mistakes, unwinding,
Still dowses after death, and fails.

Where someone keeps the hours, someone
Still listens for womanhood's corrosive call,
Into a silence that leaves its listener cold,
Longing for birth tracks, and that is all.

But here, the glass tower's dreaming
Under time's hooded flow,
Where the innocense of love falls, is falling
Into a world we do not want to know.

And there, waiting at the gates of the lodge
According to her habit,
A woman wept to see us still
Defying time and not changed by it.

For my heart reflects your sadness,
And changeless - sings, but sees
No love of life, nor love for us,
Nor love of mortal things.

Yet something animal in it's nature;
Something cold and magical
Is born in us, and programmed to lure
The tide of man's sorrow to worship still.

But will time beat out this tragedy
Between our souls that sigh?
Two unshaken blossoms, that
Each side of a woodland lie.

Frail, iridescent star
In the cosmic green of man:
She has fled our bournes and brooks now,
Too cruel to understand.

Barry Van Asten

Capricornus

A model of pure reason,
He bounds to the glory of the day,
Awake, with a galaxy of imagination
That corrupts and conquers in his way.
Upon his noble brow - distinction,
Creases with time where horizons play;
Immortal in the dawn's expansion
That looks on the crimson waste, to pray

As he struts aflame through every nation -
Vile, the tongue that speaks his name.
It is but one to him: religion -
They are but mirrors of the same.
And in his abysmal trail of devotion
He can compel each heart to shame;
Extreme upon extreme abstraction,
Curled by the blasphemy of his frame.

His torso, a war-engine of destruction,
Monstrous in his will to pursue;
His brain: a trigger of perception
Sees the cosmos streaming through
To stride the elements of perfection
And sing, as lover to lover, will do;
Where the wide excellerated passions
Lies weeping in the glistening dew.

Bored by the limits of cruel creation
He broods on a world, unable to forget
The grind of the axle to every motion;
The sacred scratchings of the prophet.
Thick and rounded, this dimension
Strains to express the course that's set
Through the lower regions of comprehension,
And the perfected beauty of woman. Yet,

His eyes are flames of satisfaction,
Bristling with strength and vibrant with lust,
To redeem the madness of evolution

And crush a universe into dust.

Barry Van Asten

Chalk Grasslands

The day wheel turns – the air is ringed
And teeth of dark assembly grow;
Her flesh lawned in sunned ecstasy,

Sipped and sweetened by geological rage.
The night holds the riddle of enchantment:
Marjoram, wild thyme, early gentian... time rolls
The nerve system, jerked into existence
By the mode of the mind, sublime...
A moon-gulf of wisdom approaches
Like an engine of tears on the wane;

Eyebright – the ghost song's arising
In the tor-grass, on the hills again...
And the dead they are here, they are cheering,
They come, as lights across a distant port;
Dull with death, and enthralling,
The embers of their thought, console me,

And retain a sense, a deviant call
Where the heart, vacated in heat
Is lifted to the contours of magical thought –
A voice – the brain's delusion in regret!
The stars, they are laughing, above us
And seem to know, we're here;

In the planes of new life, young seed
Where darkness holds the animated spirit...
Wild rabbits tunnel the chalk...
Speeds across the heath
And hides in the flowering undergrowth
From the ever-hungry beak!
Thoughts elevated in soft song,
Thistle-mown: the furrows shall remain;
Where stone curlew and Adonis blue
Sometimes measure and haunt the chalk hills, again.

Barry Van Asten

Death Of Mr Barry Philip Van-Asten. B.A.1969-2009.

A biblical wind opened out
A trackway from the heart that passes
Through a mind mapped by science and doubt -
His life was all acids and gases,

And Dante and Chaucer and churches
And old books and nettles and thunder
And teapots and ghosts and strange forces:
Froebel fellow... laird something or other...

And numbers and hills and dark places
And rivers and Shakespeare and stone
And legs and eyelashes and faces
And death and bird-song and bone...

A man of great thought there's no doubt -
At sunset he peacocked with ease;
A mind switched by solids and salt;
A poet and painter of dreams.

But bored at the prospect of life -
He absorbed knowledge forbidden by time:
His love was a cascade of failed rites
Crucified in their prime.

And with a handful of secrets and songs,
Torment was damned to his knees;
He thumbed for the meaning of love
As he unstitched his heart at the seams.

Barry Van Asten

Dracula's Cousin

Dracula's cousin
Lives in a suburb of Birmingham,
Lisping after the severity of flesh:
His only weakness and his sole outlet.

A bachelor of modest needs
With divination roots that thread
The immemorial sleep of day
Like dancing sea-shore feet,

As faces collapse like dropped buds
Between the sunrise and the dead.
His fingers black with printer's ink
Leaves yesterday's headlines on drained necks.

But no stranger to enchantment, no,
He courses as some satellite,
Steering his blue-shadowed skin that shakes
And sinks into beauty without regret.

And in his most brilliant of moments, one finds
No hesitation, no awkward talk, none,
Just spontaneous in thought and outspoken
On things he's not seen and not done.

But it matters to him, this world of nothing,
This 'creating symbolic magic' by hand.
Yet he was nothing but dead apologies
For a world he could not understand.

Barry Van Asten

Finding Orpheus

Under love's not sleeping,
We turned our backs upon the wind
And made a picture book of symbols
From dry leaves and feathers and things that
We'd found.

And we whispered softly into bird madness
Which gave less dread of volume.

Herded like cattle over ley lines;
All night we sang sorrow's tempest is done,
Spun of the fairest years, now flown;
Flung back to a braver and radiant realm
To give the death's-head force of nature form.

But a memory of love persisted
Where meanings in broader mysteries cling,
Through this simplicity, drawn
Like a dark veil over everything:

A watery voice; an echo of time's arrows
That murmurs softly from afar,
Blowing it's visceral night ballads that roll
Through easeless age and what we are.

But now, a Macbeth in the heart
And a Caesar in the brain
Have given meanings to symbols, and thoughts
Are the beginnings of speech - silent again...

With the spirit's core, we erode our past
And find it's obscure language dead;
As dead as the Latin word that seems
A thumping Caliban of things once said.

Still with eyes closed, we feared to look
Upon the eve of another day
Where evolution leaves us sick again.

God, I Have Said Awful Things

Not for the ceremonies of each day
Do I ring with wrongs, and look away;
Away to where a forgiving light
Brings comfort to the solitude of night.
And I will not take the sacred word
As just another lie, unheard,
For there is love and peace of mind
If we only had the will to find
The blessed wisdom which is more than
All the complexities found in man!
And as the world so ancient sings,
Still God, I say awful things...
But is forgiveness blindly given
To those who choose the path of Heaven?
Is love's becoming on this plane,
Gloriously born and filled with pain,
Spread across a simple earth
To show what human love is worth?
Yet, there must be some immortal star
To make us awful! What we are
Is nothing more than broken beams
Of light destroyed in tearful dreams;
Perfect voids to comprehend
The might of God! And when worlds' end,
The might of Man in man's mild voice
Will shake and tremble and rejoice!

Barry Van Asten

Ham House

Death in Tunbridge Wells - 1682;
Its unbolted memory has never left these walls.
And its iron ghost climbs down the centuries, and walks,
To rattle, blundering through our thoughtless days now.

This is a house of dignity, a sombre war horse
Poised on the edge of its stately decline:
A mummified relic of the seventeenth century,
Swallowing modern age; force fed with our time.

Autumn has bludgeoned in, finding its way
Between the locked gates and the rusted rails;
Unfolding before me in this strange light,
Hidden from searching eyes, lost in the maze;
Unattended and overgrown behind the gateway,
Forgotten and spiralling out beyond control.

Yet in the moonlight, chambers grind
To their passion-filled decline.
And through panelled rooms, she'll walk tonight
And enter the Great Hall in her phantom glide;
Winding towards the Great Stair and the chapel door
That's thick with each season's remembrance that dies.

Misshapen trees slant from the house, listening
For the sledgehammer thud of Victorian whispers
Among the flower beds and spread boughs that
Still harbour the thumping crimes of yesteryear.

An aeroplane breaks the still and desperate air
And a seated girl springs to her feet again,
To push her lawn mower over the wide sweep
Of tree-shadowed expansive ruin before her.

The carved busts in the brick walls groan and grin
Over the East Front's low shrubs and hedgerows,
Listening to the barbarous hum of twentieth-century:
A whirring mower; a plane in the distance that fades,
Where perhaps once a strummed lute was the only

Sound heard to the faint crackle of fireplaces in rooms!

Clocks for ever ticking - guests talking...
While all around is the slow crumbling and
Shutting down and boarding up of interiors.
Here, some suicide has scratched his name
On the library window pane: John...tun 1780,
(He jumped to his death at the age of seventeen) .

A gentle breeze blows between the boughs;
A wheel barrow is pushed by a girl in overalls.
The sun behind a cloud, white and grey,
Looks towards the horror of the house again
Kept from its natural decay; clambering
And stuttering through present time
And sad for the sleep of eternity.

[South Front Terrace]

Barry Van Asten

He, In The Wistful Air

He, in the wistful air,
Turned away like sheets, twisting,
And still our love was inward, pressing...
As our hearts in displaced care
Made each his own cell, silent, wishing
That two souls so dark and rare
And so in love, would sing:
O lucky his bed now, I thought
And lucky his numbing smile to me.

Barry Van Asten

Her Witchcraft

All this artful energy is divine, and legend -
Never a watched moment lost in tenderness;
Never the ghostly whisper of your gentle kiss,
Always the sweet surrender of the damned!
Look! Our frail past eclipsed by time;
Our meanings shouldered far away...they grew
Under our heartache, pushed past their prime...
Inside, I knew, that fateful day, I knew
Something stupid was summoned which closed our eyes;
Eyes drawn by exhaustion at the dread end game,
Making no sense at the mountain growth of lies...
And in this, I carefully erased your sacred name:
You have drowned me in your crafted world of pagan joys!

Barry Van Asten

Hopeless Perpetual

I wandered through your gentle craft
In the twilight of remembered things.
Yet behind the veil of loneliness
An infernal beauty brings
A strange, destructive force within,
That in our hearts will stay.

You read Kafka in your musical Spanish
And each fearful shadow rolled away
As the sun poured in at the window.

We fanned our faces in the heat;
Your head resting on my shoulder,
Yet still our hopeless lips could not meet.

Trapped in the meteor silence of the bed,
I looked deep into your haunted eyes
And saw dark regions passing in Spain
That looked on where the sea-world cries.

But the night had left it's magic still,
Till the day brought with it stupid things:
Your painted toe nails in the sun,
And my foolish heart that always clings
To the embers of that first encounter,

Manipulated by memory;
That great mystery of age, worlds between us -
Lost to you and lost to me.

Barry Van Asten

In Afterthought

There is a certain mood of mind
In which the fount of youth, flows through
The stunning sacredness of you...
Met inescapably, I find:
Lit with lip-gloss and eyes of blue,
And all your beauty re-defined.

But somewhere deep there is this bliss;
This ache of madness that takes hold
To rush senseless through brain, and fold
My aged frame, dreary, to your kiss...
The years fall, I'm wrapped in your gold
Sun-lit hair and your loveliness!

I brood in darkness and regret...
Suffering of sacrament, kept
In a small place, where I have wept -
The nonsense of two hearts, not met.
I give no name to this love, swept
Through the stone of my soul, that's set

In Kingdoms ruled by passions bent:
I give idle dreams wings to flee
Down the byways of history;
Lips locked in sweetness, sealed and sent:
I do not see strange things in me,
Just this passion of discontent!

Barry Van Asten

In Her Remarks

When the blossom came, I noticed
Only half a tree had bloomed,
And a cavity showed me more than
The geometry of skull;
Through an opening, asteroids flew
And fired those scarab eyes still.

An Atlas, impaled in the cornfields
Surrounded by bird forms and iron gates:
An on/off receiver of white noise;
A device for scrying the airwaves.

And I saw, within a room
A hurried ghost had come to view,
With its motions steered by planets
Whistling through the here and now;
An inner chamber, of silk in winter blue,
Where a woman sat gazing down
Towards her triangled desire,
Where her dress had creased to the moon.

But nearby, and unable to sleep,
Stinking Death and spinster Brunnhilde
Turned to weep at the decay
And tangle of the tenanted tomb.

In her eyes, something's not done,
These opera ghosts had drawn from the room
All the passions and pains of a life,
Like a kingfisher waltz,
Wasted before her sighs,
Making a Troy of her thoughts.

I heard her say: 'I don't feel this pain;
I don't know of this world's time.
I worship the solemnity within
And the stillness around'.

In the air - mummy dust,

Penetrates the smell of afterall,
And among the tombs and groves
That brings you down towards a stone sun,
Where a filmy mist hangs low
On a landscape changed for evermore:
Glooms of terrific sleep that fall
Dead and form - Egyptian death,
Grim and hoping to blood-in.

An undertaker's palate clicked
In the dry, immovable air.
The elements had plundered, dead from dead,
Yet he was more dead than they were.

Over a dry stone wall, by a tree-lined path:
Solomon's seal in a green moon's gaze,
As ancient as time's rays cast
From the depths of black rage, at those
Terrible trials - I could not register
Nor comprehend the shapes drawn
From the mind:

The ritual of summer;
The marble halls -
The words remembered...
The dark sacrifices recalled,
Where thy ruby gaze was but a cloak -
A Beatrice of perfection; a Persephone of desire...
And Judas shall sleep, sleep, sleep,
When the flesh folds over itself in fear,

While outside, snoozing among the vines,
Displaying stigmata's to the sun,
Dreamt the so-called saviour - Jesus Christ,
Baptising everyone!

Barry Van Asten

In Wake Woods

Those seven ages of man, look upon
The star-bashed solemnity, and give ease
As the sky trembles to a canopy
Of ancient trees - the shire-sturdy oak.
Where I in all my moods of change
Could not look upon those sad-haunted woods
Or feel the mild February rain
Fall with secrets, never mine.

Where a time echoes to the muse of life
That dwells where hearts hurt, and scare
The impassioned soul of girl-turning-woman
To remain at her shaped idyll, once more.
Shadows are pulled by the light and the dark -
Spring soothes in avenues, to red campion, flows
As the woods ache with old anger, to unfold
With light in the bee-drone, and valerian.

A mist is upon me... if lips had met -
Silvery-wet, and softly painted
To tortures of the heart's distress
And a love no longer there, nor true.
An innocence lost, now masked by shade
Where the ceremony of death, stains
And lingers dreadful beneath the moon
That the inmost eye too soon, should sail.

Pale Will, with his myriad lines
Shows how little times have changed
In matters of the heart, for love
Is death, un-measured, destroyed by word!

Black cedar, where you stretch and twist -
The rhythm of the woods can never catch
That firing stem, that growing bud
That circles the aged wood... a glimpse
Of foxglove and betony twined - a link
Where the burnt mounds lie hushed in sleep;
A sleep of sun-dappled paths, that hold

Things in which we care to remember, no more.

And the brush and the birdsong, did give way
To the call of the beasts at eventide
That echoed like the twinkle of Iscariot's feet
With each step a betrayal... But night nears
And moonlit pools like phosphor pits
Plop to the falling of decay and death;
The bulge and bloat of boughs, creak
An unearthly music, cloaked by night.

The hunger and harmony of woods, are shown;
Its bluebelled sanctuary - a mad things delight!
That thunderous mill pond, in the rain;
The crossing of footpaths like words that wind
Between blackened mounds and mud-filled hollows,
With the beat of roots, below each step.

Let the clouds gather, grow dark and brood
Over the mill water, turning the reeds.
Birds now fill the vacant space, where
The grinding of wheels and great sluices were heard:
A haven of a time when the wood was worked
And horses stamped the long days away.

But how I have left those tearful woods;
Left those trees and buds, to walk
With lips aflame and tormented heart -
Eyes like death's-heads in the dark,
And the fourteenth day of that dread month
Left me, haunted in those hushed groves.

A wind in the musk mallow, shrieks,
The forked path, shrouded in mist,
Glides in veils over columbine
Like wisps of history that won't be lost.
The dark boughs beneath the shade
Twist towards the light - they move,
Beneath willow eaves, water tracks glisten
As something fearful and ancient,
Through the old wood crawls.

The witch-o'-the woods, still
Dark and autumnal as the mill;
A ring of reeds, shadows the pond;
Rustle in the breeze, they sing
A language lost to us, and strange.
Roots, tugging at the river's roll
Where life flows throughout the wood.

Iris, violet and sorrel, sway
Beyond clumps and the bosky bole, towards
The scent-filled serenity of the daisy-glade,
Where dwindling red was overcome
By grey - they are long gone!

Barry Van Asten

Is This Madness Or Just Dark Stuff?

With our monster heads in trouble
We talked of everything and willed matter
As my clumping, cavalier love rushed in

To see something not there and never there.
It's the little things you do, I said,
That drains me of this utter absolute.

Unwholesome in love, these senseless strategies
Lead us deeper into extreme measures
Where beauty can't find it's natural release.

And I don't hurt you, is that what's wrong?
Is that why we crash through our dreams
Into this Caligula of things not done?

This is sick, you say...I know;
This cathedral of little things I give,
Labelled and kept like icons, locked away...

But there's something sinister in love, I said.
Not that I know of, you sighed;
We make time for the good things in life.

And time is on your side, you said;
Nothing's changed, your heart is just the same.
But time's on no-ones side, I said.

And this is a dangerous game we play
For love will fold it's arms with fear
To sit, zombie-eyed in a magazine stare.

And when no one's there, something
Stirs the substance of our ruin,
Yet we elevate above these things

To find love is nothing more, or less
Than some antique devotion, where
We are lunatics wiuth arsenic breath.

Barry Van Asten

Isis Blossom

Vast, that starry abode of love,
Is an empire ruled by man's intrusion.
The ache of falsehood from above
Is death's complexion and delusion.

Captivated by Orion's pains,
This pyramid sealed, the corpse fiend fled
Into the darkness that contains
The Isis blossom and the dead;

Where Nephthys's black robe was blown wide
To reveal her ruby kiss of gold.
Yet sphinx-filled madness, there had died
In the ceremonies of old.

Tura - na ab - k am (1)

These lips are sweet and delicately veiled,
Crowned by a flaming diadem;
Where the new moon to the full moon sailed
Beyond the midnight khunt of Khem;

Beyond the shroud and the scarlet caress
Into the silence of the tomb, so deep,
To kiss the serpent-sighing darkness
And the gonging beat of man in sleep.

And in mourning the beloved...come, O come!
For here great sadness lies before
These cursed lips that hath been knocked dumb,
For Thou art the Goddess I adore!

Henen - a em Amsu.
Auf - a Net. (2)

The rose of antiquity hath broke its stem,
And its scented glory hath all but given
Its blood to the ceremonial khunt of Khem
To shineth in the mask of Osiris risen.

And beneath the death-filled mercurial sky
The pyramid of Royal blood hath ran,
As the oracle crumbled with a sigh
To see the slain God's nemess fall on man!

A Anset. (3)

Notes:

1. I have purified myself and my heart is filled with joy.
2. Male: My phallus is that of Amsu.
Female: My flesh is of Net.
3. Hail Isis.

Barry Van Asten

Leander

Down below the waves that keep
My restless heart so incomplete;
Wet with kisses from the deep:
Swim with monster fuel, my sweet,
Through the blue energy of aqua-sleep -
Drawn by darkness and defeat!

Let the pearly chambers of your heart be still -
Caress the cool suspension of liquid blue,
Where the dead dance by a dim lit oracle...
A brain burst of baptism shall subdue
And kiss the dark reaches of worlds that chill
The soul that's cleansed and born anew!

And in submerged sensuality, she
Is leaving her dread decline;
Under the rolling, galleon-haunted sea,
By the light of an incandescent shrine;
Under the water's dorsil-finned beauty
Beneath the black bewitching brine!

Barry Van Asten

Lilith To Asmodeus

Struck, by the bornless core of man;
Serpent of doubt and drab dimension;
Bruised bowel of blasphemy, curled anew
And shaped fourfold to our reality and cosmic law:
A crucible wronged - per vas nefandum;
Kteis, let me love thy contour once more.
A uraeus of nature's unleashed force;
The brain beginnings channel electric
Moods of night...the mind is stomping
Over flesh, foretelling the equinox of woman.
Shaitan courses earth-wards, His unholy malevolence:
A union by rite of Lingam damnation
swathed in Ararat silk, and artful - our Lord.
The Hierophant and the Star...
Design and deliberation - bleed
Astrological systems releasing: blind force!
Bones, beautiful bones, I thought.
Kundalini collapse by the fold of coffins,
Cold in the grave, where pulpit geraniums
Are nectar and neutral apparatus in the soul, new born.
Radiant with laughter, Achille's sister, the seashell,
Quim-swelled for feasting, and jewelled
Under the night stars, evoking...
Pan, Pamphage, Pangenetor!
In asphodel gardens, a human-beast lurking
Slumps and splutters over the dreaded Goetia,
And Power Words vibrate those ancient shells
And darkness, damned once more to rule
The decay of this spinning speck of a world.

Barry Van Asten

Lines Upon A Portrait Of Mr Edward Alexander Crowley

Lion, you fix your stare upon your prey
And sit, as some oyster-gorged demi-god;
With eyes like Death's nostrils, smoking hate,
And your fingers manicured like vampire stakes.
Dreamer of dischord and demons and darkness -
Confuser of hearts and sex: you sit
Like a bow-tied Osiris, adrift in the tomb,
With a brain full of chess nonsense...

And the menace of Choronzon's distant star
Penetrates beyond the confines of mind,
Bent with hunger, the soul assumes
A persistence of darkness that remains
As you stagger shaven-headed into the unknown -
Nosferatu bringing pestilence from afar...

And in old age - a portly Pan
Sipping Cognac at the Cafe Royal,
Manipulating forces around you
With simple gestures and words of power.

And his eyes through winding pipe smoke glare
As death flowers, amidst the stones,
Dark with pagan poetry... Flames
Toast his solemn heart... He comes
Like a huge bulk of Godhood, summoned
To the enchanted scent of flesh and song!

And in your defence, Monsieur Beast,
A sigh of surety and relief,
Handed down and placed in hearts -
A kiss from Kingdoms great and far:
A law unto our lovely star
And a dream of love for who we are!

Sat like Satan in your Trinity room -
Great Beast of your mother - Leamington man!

Lilith-scented, you huffed and you puffed
Through the galaxies of faith and waste;
Through the gardens of the damned
And every haunted place... But
What was said? What bombs of wit
Were delivered before the camera click?

With your sails full, you were unstoppable,
Crossing continents... a cocained collosus
Who had outgrown the human, and known
The habitation of the Gods, and what they are.
But the human lingered still, and sat
Heavy with its failures on your brow -
And now, what man of iron will shall come
To watch over the aeon, and sing
A lament for the World Ash, wonder sap?
A song of all time, to bring
A light from afar, to worship still -

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law.
Love is the law, love under will.

Barry Van Asten

Lost Hearts

But for a shared moment, long ago...
Your voice is painful to me now;
There has been too much said and done between us
And I have shrunk from the world I used to know.

And there are no simple words, just stupid
Things that we said in the past;
Now an impossible cosmos of hurt feelings
Where two hearts had won and lost.

But it's awful how we dream, somehow,
Of sorrow's wickedness in the heart,
For I made a Pompeii of my love
And buried the whole damn lot.

And you will pass as in some dream
Where echoes of those far off days
Shall murmur, winter-thick and constantly:
Love and us remain always.

But my mammoth love was cooled by Severn
Since long before your birth, I said.
Yet still the soft voice whispered near:
Give our unbroken love delight.

And I am obsessed with dead time
And other things shall follow soon.
I do not know of love or its ways
Because of unnatural reserve, nothing evolves.

But like ancient stones we'll stand,
Labouring under some misplaced spell
That will tick us to the end of time,
Into it's blue-lipped oblivion.

Barry Van Asten

Magpies

When willows touch, we're there
Like dreary phantoms incomplete;
Our hearts and our tomorrows, softened
To the death embers that we consumate!

And these the holy fires, these our hearts;
These, the elements of love's decay...
And all that we embraced in trust
Were ordeals in truth that passed away;

Away into that slow realm of sleep!

Dance and give joy O boundless light
For the spirit of love has folded away
All that we assumed was wrong - was right!

Barry Van Asten

Metamorphosis

Love's sweetness calls,
Through the nothingness, curled
To those words that grooved me
And kept me from the physical world.
Reduced to the beating of chemistry
In the wheat field's dreaming dawn
Where beauty's native soul is born.

Time's angel knocks,
Where change was longed and won by man,
To weave over this spinning age to stray
Upon his astronomical glance
That crashes and drops and looks away,
Glimpsing the history of love's oblivion
That's torn by the lamb and loved by the lion.

Man's beauty falls,
And eternity's cruel device
Will speak of love no more and fade
And gaze no more on the sacrifice
Of midnight lips that often strayed
Upon fair Ganymede's sweet allure
that sought the Baphomet obscure.

Death's spectre raps,
To measure the sweep and curve of experience
Found within this awesome frame.
He is sipping over the heart's expanse
With the promise of an immortal name,
In search of molecules more than mine
And a structure harder to define.

Barry Van Asten

Moon Breathing Deeply

Under the moon's slant grin, we rushed,
Howling in the rain like Neanderthals;
Storming through an avenue of pink roses
That seemed to climb the skies outer reaches.
With electric heads in blooms - we stumbled,
Like two Frankenstein monsters fleeing
A mad professor's dynamo menace.

Beneath the rose archway, it struck suddenly
As our whispers became sledgehammer thuds.
And I studied the lips on your singing mouth,
While above, the stars, in silvery-timbred boredom,
Eased back into their snug soft pockets
And looked on...we gasped,
Under night's snoring cauldron, knowing
Something had walked away from us;
Something unreal without a word.

I was at the mercy of your tra-la-la,
As your chin doubled with excitement.
Is this all there is to what we are?
Are there no new horizons breaking? Won't
You tell me of love's pensive ways?
I want to dwell in the groves of it's pain.
Tonight, by the zodiac, all iron and zinc,
I want to feel love in the curves of your sleep.
Reveal by the wrappings, a world unseen
Where oceans are born and tides quickly turn.
Where a life-force stares like a great solar lion
Back upon this obscene creation - earth.

The heave of time's momentum swings,
Shoved around a sunlit room where it finds
A history lingering in your clothes.
With bedroom veins in slack suspension -
Circuits are probing the unforeseen.
About the room, things sit and listen,
Monitoring the awkward silences again.

Outside, the sun's all pain today:
The nemesis of external change.
Sat like Buddha - this is pain,
Ruled by symbols...My rejected torso
Seemed as old as the pyramids again.
We both collapsed on a cigarette
After totaling the wounds on our arms and legs,
As we paused to capture the necessity of now:
Must we destroy and re-build everything in our way?
Must we shape history to our own desires?

The hours passed, I watched them pass;
Pass strange into that dream idyll,
Where there is words in tears, afterall,
To leave me with the traces of your faith still.
I saw how we fell to the glance and gloom
Of another April's boomerang dance.
And it's terrible, I thought, this obsession in the heart,
Always looking for the place you've been coming from.

But perhaps the concrete dark sun of August
(That omen of ends and beginnings)
Will earth us in this great nothingness;
Or perhaps some inner star sign will show
Internal change is change too late, for us.

Barry Van Asten

Natasha

I gazed through the half-open window
In the dimmed afternoon;
And sombre, my heart set me dreaming
As I paced from room to room.

I saw the sun-scorched lawn,
And thought: the rain will come soon.
The frogs lay screaming in a dry pond
And the cat was securing their doom!

But I'll soon send words to Natasha -
Ballads to a baleful moon...
But this house, still gripped by ghosts
Keeps my love from its first bloom!

Barry Van Asten

Nothing Adored

This our dream of man, upturned
By frantic cycles, by reason formed
Into his minor art - his brain
Will suffocate nature once again.
Stripped of senses, he will come
To gaze on multiple man, knocked dumb.
But what fiend slips it's infernal rest
To strut in Sunday morning best
And shuffle in it's eyelid dance
And wade ear-deep in elegance?

Wretched at the invisible kiss
Of nothingness into nothingness,
He investigates the opposite sex
With a pencil, a mirror and a cardboard box.
This, the dark side of his reputation;
The poison in his marrow's infatuation.

His favourite armchair was a veiled gateway
To love's adoration where passions play
Speechless, in courtesan charm and wit
Till Death with his soul-catching net
Sat grimacing over knife and fork
To lure the silent one into talk.

But teatime came and went so quick
Like some effortless magic trick;
His screw-eyes searched for resurrection
As he fisted the air with a perilous question,
But nothing in the question was worthy of an answer.

On his feet, blisters, the size of Alaska,
But he saw sweetness in most things:
His blisters weren't blisters, they were his wings
And this is the tragedy, half concealed
By grim anticipation and love's shield
That has revealed the infinite light,
Cup 'n' saucered through the night.
But in looking back there was no art

To hide the Romaness of his heart,
Prized of all emotion, bent
Upon the workable structure of his element.

Yet some talk of twilight, some of Queens and Kings,
But he squirmed at empty words, darting at nothings;
Audible thoughts were painful to his ears
And he wished them silent for all his years,
For there were no words that could express
The nothingness of adorable nothingness.

Barry Van Asten

Nothing Dead Is Here

'My child', said a stranger, 'come into my tomb,
There are lots to see and do in here, and fairies light the gloom;
There are tigers and dragons, and unicorns to ride,
There are pink baboons and elephants: but nothing here has died!
Do come into my little room, my door is open wide!

And so the child, he entered in, and what a big surprise!
The stranger had not told the truth, in fact, it was all lies!
He shut the door and took the child and bound him round with chains;
Then took a spoon from round his neck and feasted on his brains.
He sucked upon his little eyes, and laughed like dirty drains!

'That will teach you, foolish child! ' said the stranger, weird,
As he sat picking little bits of brain from out his beard!
'Now let me say this one more time, for I'll make one thing clear:
This tomb may be a tomb, my friend, but nothing dead is here!
Must I repeat my every word? Nothing dead is here! '

Barry Van Asten

On Seeing A Picture Of Hermia & Lysander By Julius Simmons.1870.

In these nocturnal woods, my heart finds
The sacred light of a forgiving sun -
Her radiance through the wild boughs, winds
To the dark beauty of unending woman.
But what difference drives her delicate skin
Over life's complexities, to my arms again?

Her name repeats upon the wind
And I hear secrets in the leaves
That whisper on the branches, thinned
By summer's sedate way, that weaves
Collosal dreams from far away,
To echo over streams, and stray

In the dread fields of eternity...
But the heart's unearthly song will come
From its haunted arcadia by the sea,
Pausing in the heather, broken and dumb,
To magnify love's timeless art
Caught in the confines of her heart!

Barry Van Asten

Parting

Animated from the deep-rooted sentence
To take some half-glanced-at look
At your slowly turning heard. I said:
There is no need for us to end like this!
And I made some silly cold stare
Appear more than it was ever supposed.
I wanted to hold you in my arms and make
All those hurt feelings disappear...stay here!

For each day will see me twice as old,
Still heavy with decisions that I cannot make.
And the growth of time creeps always onwards
Into corner cracks and cold stairways,
Powered by desires more than mine...

Then suddenly, your hand slipped
From my tight goodbye,
And I wanted to say more than this,
But when it came to it I just said
All the wrong things and nothing else!

And I was silent as I watched you go
Into the arms of somewhere new.
And I thought: this is horrible, because I know
Nothing will mean more than how you mean to me now;
Nothing will replace the love my heart did not show!

Barry Van Asten

Pratyahara

Hanging skeletons dangle like catkins
On the lime shoots, tumult of time
Breathing sleep and sexual nutrition;
Liquid loquation - wonder and wisdom:
A space full of meaning with your name upon.
Departing from vision, distorted sensation -
Bodies were straying to half-aged man.
A confession and an obligation;
A battery of bells where patron Austen,
Roman builders, Greek thinkers, all transgress
Cracked frustration and ornamental flourish
Where uterine ecstasy's shape transforms
The accent of freedom, the earnest of gender -
The sacerdotal solace of spirit, now born.

Within me blew an orchard, a temple formed
Of tribe and trance, a summer house
Open to elements and friends.
A misfortune of mind, a neuro malfunction
As youth blossom-bombs reason, stretching
Nicotine wings from frontier to frontier.
Consumed by the praeternatural within -
Virgin on the hexagonal, assume
The turned point of no return.
Agape - free from abstract will
Relieved and delivered of evil, shows
Moss lanes to some cathode erased time
Rooted with beauty...Doom ships carry
Torments of entangled ecstasy, ringed
By wild confusion, the soul's salvation
Lost in the words of a prayer again.

Barry Van Asten

Prunes And Parallelograms

To see beyond this veil of stuff
And glimpse the things that I once saw;
To feel the same strange formlessness
Weave its way and create once more.

To mourn loss in this world of skin;
To keep a name close to the heart;
To shine a light in the darkness;
To feel the hurt inside depart.

And all the shadows of the world
Hold opportunity and doom.
The sensual rhythm of our bodies
Are linked by silence in a room;

Linked by the great things and by change,
Kept under the eye of shame's face;
A mind distilled to movement's music
And then fragmented into space.

Barry Van Asten

Resurrection Of The Butterfly

In kamikazic state and crisp,
Steered and wrenched from soft illusion;
Terrible, it's fragile, dust-blown shape
That carried it's fat world within -
A sarcophagus tick, hear it crack
With sunlight spooned upon its back.

A Cinderella slipper; the Cutty Sark
Sailing between the earth and moon.
Precision filled waste - an engine of love,
Clumsily ripped it's world apart.
Nightfall and O how everything's changed:
Nature and dimensions, re-arranged.

But unlike the stink crazed filth obsessed fly,
That celebration of the Gothic:
There are no songs, there are no buzz ballads;
No embarrassing moments and no bad manners,
Which is why the fly finds it difficult to get
Into butterfly circles and butterfly etiquette.

Yet behold! Pharaoh and his aphrodisiac
Filtered by moon powers
Into a gossamer-sighing Icarus,
A testament of beauty's charm,
Soured by the need to explain
The difference between sacred and profane,

As some 'dressed up' doctor with sulphurous eye
Sat under the stairs by a dim bulb to break
Sachets of sea salt and stare through glass jars
Of bright coloured inks, and investigate
Nature's larder of breathless experiments
And the periodic table of the elements.

And in attempting the cathode resurrection
With veins sighing for Frankenstein,
I saw those wings beat once, and no more
One Summer's day to the song of a lawn mower.

Yet life sat blinking far away, and Colin Clive
Was as silent as the grave:

There was no 'It's alive! It's alive! It's alive! '

But life's intrusion will wound it still
Soldiering over the centuries
To flicker like Caligari's ghost;
To sigh, measureless at moon's kiss
And yawn beneath some superior pulse
That beats full stops and nothing else!

Barry Van Asten

Six Moons Of Abramelin

I am called:

The times of destruction,
By awaiting star-manifold seers.
The room lay in never-ending
Procession, from half-world shades
Intent on preserving their disjointed
Sphere, with the tiresome trappings
Of being.

In a blue light that replaces living,
Are replicas of idols: gods,
All for seeing; worshipping,
On the tatty icon box.

Eyes -
Yellow and time-swelled, slowly
Scanning the transfigured air
Beyond the Thoth-enamoured night,
Seek a kindred spirit to rage
Intricate rhythms upon...

He took his ceremonial robes
And went into the dawn -
I never saw him again.
Just that vanishing solar blaze
With the moon conjoined in his eyes.

Barry Van Asten

Something Supernatural

At twilight, I imagine her as before,
Assembled from posted fragments, gathered
Into an alphabet of her ways and more,
Until the female form is covered -

Girlhood's expanse, recurring somehow...
But her eyes only show the reach of dreams
Cutting through the hallway's glow,
Concealed by something more than she seems.

And yes, it's terrible, how she will never say
Those words I need to hear the most.
And when the feminine part inside falls away
To the flood of grim September's ghost,

I won't leave the room, instead I'll wait;
time won't tell but time will pass,
With my lens fixed to the iron gate
to see it's shadow fall across the grass.

For something supernatural keeps her near,
Where desire, dying under dream's wing
Is something sealed that our hearts' won't hear:
Too involved in ourselves to love, and ending.

Barry Van Asten

Something Unfinished

No god and no perfection...
Three pilgrims we, our course was set;
We climbed the hill without distraction
To worship the oak tree and circle it.
And beneath its ancient limbs we stood:
The joy upon your face was gold!
But what echoes of time within that wood
Were bound within that tree of old?

Barry Van Asten

Something Will Be Done

I live by the power of the amulet;
Of stones and consecrated objects.
Kept in an iron place, I no longer hear
The oracle of sickness: love's undoing.

Between elbows - signs of conjuration
Performed in my anatomy.
A talisman holds you in my sphere;
A goddess in flames: love's ruin.

Let me breathe in your existence
And define the perimeters of love;
To feel the workings of your skin
And the softness of it's touch.

But the plague of youthful adoration
Drifts like ribbons on the sea,
Fearful of the ocean guardian
Between the ceremonial waves again.

And I destroy myself by constellations
Where memory's a museum of my love.
We are guided by astronomical phantoms
To intermingle, blood with blood.

But my body is an almanac
Bruised by the morning sun,
And for all these crafted calculations
Something will be done.

Barry Van Asten

Sonnet I

Could love but be here by my side
In fairest measure and motion, veiled
By the empty half-light, all aglow;
Where dark centuries come crashing from the void
Into the miracle of existence, like something hailed
By the extremity of love, though long ago,
And this is how my sad heart sailed
On music's broken wing - and died.
O if I could glimpse its light once more
And this movement lost in evening air
Were not some vision of youthful ways
Worn by the passing of time, before
Passion's resurrection sought it there,
Arranged in the splendour of my days.

Barry Van Asten

Sonnet II

And I would not be alone, with your heart and your hand,
Caressed into celestial surrender, joined
For an eternity of songs, sung from the heart,
To radiate love with nought to command.
But it's not in the tenderness that soothes, I find,
This perpetual resolve for a dying art;
Nor in the joy that's found in companioned mind
When heart and hand are one. To understand
Love's transference, drawn into nought,
Like embryos in amber, where two worlds hide -
Those planets unshaken by time and man
Are unaware of reason and finer thought;
Yet a simpler form of sorcery will decide
The magnitude of love and evolution.

Barry Van Asten

Sonnet Iii

For the rhythm of the heart cannot explain
What sick invention lies in man,
When love's momentum falls away
From the chain of possession it can't contain.
A silhouette of strange emotion
Tumbles upon truth that it cannot say;
To curl at a universe because it can,
With no fear of destiny, or mortal pain
To blind it by the growth of woman's beauty.
And we sigh as the songs of love within
Our beating breasts, gently unfold
Our smooth skins to this tragedy;
Afraid of our delicate passions that spin
Spells of love beneath a rose of gold.

Barry Van Asten

Sonnet Iv

And if my love with me now lay
As oft' in my dreams I saw her set,
Like some proud Venus with satyr stare:
What words could I conjure in me to say?
These tears from the avenues of regret
Where I fall from grace - but she is there,
All warmth and loving, and lips are met
By the dark afternoon and the perfumed day.
But still more is lost between her and me,
Within the green-shaded pause that led
To reflections of loneliness and time remaining.
Yet we could not embrace, for sadly we
Were like the interlude that left words dead,
Sunken and separated by everything.

Barry Van Asten

Sonnet IX

That love which I seek no stranger grows
Than that which is of the dark always,
Torn, to crawl down the centuries
And ache with the sound of man's sorrows.
The wild appetites, the cruel scent that strays
Through the long summer of her mysteries;
To breathe the music of nights and days,
Cursed to blow where the rough wind blows.
And in that expansive - love, there lies
Some rich echo, absorbed by darkness,
Filled with rage and terribly wronged,
Where the penetrating light destroys
And spoils those beautiful lips that kiss
In evening dreams, where everything's changed.

Barry Van Asten

Sonnet V

And what will be is what will be,
With no sense of my sole sphere that shuns
The veiled root of beauty's bloom,
Unchecked, by nature's simplicity;
To flower in darkness, that subtly succumbs,
Unmasked, into the arms of sorrow's gloom.
And this wretched blood through dark veins, runs
Directionless, to unanswerable beauty.
But what love would seek this heart and stay
To find its fourfold chambers grim?
For these are the dreams of midnight's dread,
Where stars are born and turned away,
Away from the silence and the tragedy and the dim
Eternal echo of love's soft tread.

Barry Van Asten

Sonnet Vi

In seeking this divine light of love
There is sadness ripped from history,
Where the ghosts of words lie silent and curled.
And my body yearns, yet cannot move
Through time, and no nearer each are we
In perfecting the music of our world.
I grow different and ways once known to me
Are delicate in ordeals that seem to prove
That beyond these songs nought can compare...
As morning blossom begins to fall -
Fingers, caressing the silken flow
Of shoulder-shaken midnight hair,
Find love in sadness, afterall,
And tears of glass are music's sorrow.

Barry Van Asten

Sonnet VII

Should this veil between us ever part
To reveal love's course and astronomy,
Where the gentle ballad of womanhood
Sings soft and sweet within my heart;
Triumphant in strength, caressing me
With songs that soothe my every mood.
To pass through this memory of sleep, and see
Beyond nature's infinitesimal art,
Perfected by changes, still unknown;
To whisper solemnly, that beautiful name
That lives in the one light I adore,
Where childhood's blossom, first was sown
In that dread temple, like a flame
To flicker in darkness, for evermore.

Barry Van Asten

Sonnet Viii

Where wild in the heart and mad with love,
Cold of all thoughts which were not of you,
As the moon, in its darkling embrace, always slips
From my fiery mantle and my every move.
And thus I am shaped, and hopelessly drawn to
The curve and precision of your lips;
To cling to their ecstasy, and pursue
This vision of delicate creation, above
All passion. Where tombs of violet night,
See more than tears in this lyrical death
And surrenders to the silence of the dead.
To hear only whispers from the radiant light
With the aroma of roses upon your breath;
To touch only shadows at your fearless tread...

Barry Van Asten

Sonnet X

And there is a sadness in beauty beyond all things;
Its many petalled mystery remains unknown,
Like the midnight flower in fear of the night,
Startled, awaits the dawn and sings.
But that which is concealed and that which is shown:
Two ghosts grown separate that shun delight.
For below is the root and above is the crown:
Creation, destruction, their understanding brings
A marriage of opposites by enchantment;
A continual song like an echoing prayer
Of devotion, to release love's shadow
By seduction, from its element;
To flow from the heart that cannot bear
To wonder at its sensual might, and go...

Barry Van Asten

Sonnet Xi

Will sleep not take me far away
And fold me in its fiery wings;
To rest in the hollows of its sonorous sigh
Where midnight masks this world of clay?
And is there momentum in all things
That live upon the earth, and die?
The soul is stricken by strange sufferings
And has no will nor belief, to pray -
But this is blasphemy, you say - I know,
For the spirit in sick retreat of night
Finds no perfection to adore;
It is incomplete and compelled to go,
Soft in breath and tread, into the light:
Be it devil, be it god - it cares no more!

Barry Van Asten

Sonnet Xii

I know no tender ways, I know
Nothing of that strange delight
That the melody of the heart can bring.
And there is no feeling for words, and no
Complete devotion that can unite...
Lift up your joyous soul and sing,
Sing of love's madness and its might;
Of spring and creation, and unto them go,
When the gulf between our hearts, once wide,
Is no more so - and I will come;
Will come by satin moonlight cast,
To linger softly at your side
And part those pressed lips that lie dumb,
And wrench you from the varied past.

Barry Van Asten

Sonnet Xiii

O adorable youth! - has your love fled;
Has that which filled the heart, now gone?
And is my world fallen where shadows lie long
Through remembered seasons of the dead;
Steered into silence by a serpent sun?
O heart, empty of ceremony and song,
Where the light divine once brightly shone.
And these are the last words of an old world, ended,
Lost to the unutterable shades of fate;
Fearful of what is to become
Without the glory of your radiant name
In this masquerade of tears and hate;
Crowned a fool by wisdom, dumb,
And born of sorrow, to die the same.

Barry Van Asten

Sonnet Xiv

No peace of mind, nor spirit, pure,
Can show me love how it shall be,
And not these dull senses of desire,
That sink before her radiant nature
And dance by the pale moon-hungry sea.
The song is still, but the heart is fire
And will for evermore, adore thee,
By the sacred light of your timeless allure.
But I will not look on youth again,
For dreams are false, and this I know:
We sigh at nothingness, yet we sing
And tire and tremble to the strain
Of our awful selves, and go... and go...
Unto the end, and still sigh - nothing!

Barry Van Asten

Sonnet Xv

Three loves have I, one for the heart,
One for the living and one for the dead.
Love's threefold essence, strange and strong
And silent, in its praise, to part
The words of joy that won't be said;
The songs of love that won't be sung.
Time that the rose of youth ran red
And loneliness gave up its sick idol - art,
Where the night perfume of summers gone and to come
Have grown stranger by the brute of desire,
Where those songs of love and infinity
Still long for the pains of angeldom;
Governed by solitude, where three loves are
Silent of song in love's trinity.

Barry Van Asten

Sonnet Xvi

But to sing of that splendour from afar
Is to lie with the anguish of the dead,
Where the continuity of sleep shall yield
The secret ardour of a star.
And when the momentum of the heart has fled,
A palace of song shall be revealed;
A resolve of longing, and of reason, that dread
The senseless conclusion of what we are.
But in search of your radiance, still I rove
From moments great that I too have known;
To the featureless changing of the land
And the terrible truth that's told by love:
Love in despair, love immemorial, blown
By a lyrical torment, too cruel to understand.

Barry Van Asten

Spoon Bending

The house is empty and seems so cold;
Rooms are dying, winding down, all through,
Where childhood thumbed long ago.

And in seclusion, I dummy death,
With fingers touching, still content
To draw stars and circles in the air.

Here, lion-crouching or war dancing;
Test-monkey sitting and laboratory squatting,
Waiting, expectantly, as if you would come in.

Round and round, without touching
Floors and walls or appliances:
These interiors have become your Himalaya's, you said.

And in my hunchbacked morality - I hypnotise...
Corners are head-shaped and I fit in.
Both as giant and insect, table-drowning,

Wanting to hear your voice, but then
Electric socket dreaming and spoon bending
Have taken you from me once again.

Barry Van Asten

Telescope Dreaming

This eye-glass on Byzantine worlds
Of our own mythological fate,
Locked upon some distant star
Like Gullivers' gulping on dead space.
A penetrating lens that strays
Beyond those satellites that sing,
To pause on the past and make
A flash in the sky our everything.
As if looking on the microscopic
Where seasons are big things unknown
To single-cell abominations
Content to let big things alone.
A distant supernova detector
Viewed by voyeurs of light years,
Where we are but an eyelash in the soup
Straining at things too far away.
But our little world of telescopes dreaming
Of space...infinite space,
Can't tell us that we're not alone
In a universe of illusion that remains
Content to let big things unknown.

Barry Van Asten

The Birth Of Pan

This earth calamity;
This new-born man:
Short on form, long on reason...
At the coming of the Golden Dawn
Wood whisperings reveal: Great Pan is born!
Born into a world absorbed by war
Where darkness is thy maiden whore!
And at the fount of our man-god, take
This treacherous rot of globe and make
A Kingdom, wonderful with gold
And goat-god lust both brave and bold:
Awake! Masturbating man of old!

This root of life;
This earthward bowel:
This token charmed from midnight foul!
Here, vomit up your history
To see the scum of Sodom pouring forth,
From the night to light this mystery;
Where loathsome is the flesh within
The sanctity of salvation's throne,
To reveal a great god, shook from dust;
His thighs thick with honey lust:
Mad, for the passion-bashed clitoris of fire
Where his seed shall flow and never tire
In the endless gash of mortal desire!

Barry Van Asten

The Heather Garden

I dream of a garden I don't know,
It's mystery blossoms through the seasons.
And here, I wander where the unknown root grows;
Where pathways are words written over hills and streams.

I

Dark Journey

O dark witch of my heart, retreat
Into your fabled land of dreams,
Where I await your icy mythology
Gallop through this emptiness of skin.
Come out and speak of your Northern past
And the tales that have been handed down.
Come out and weave for me, my love,
For here in the heartland I don't want
To be folded away by the garden gate
And unable to see beyond the glass
Where a roomful of cat-magic lies within,
Undisturbed in a grey-powdered mist.

I know her and she will not wait;
She has promises that she cannot keep.
But I imagine her always close to me,
Thinking in secrets while she weeps.
Veiled Aurora - unfathomable,
And changeless where sorcery sleeps.
With hair as dark as the dreamless grave
And crystal orbs glowing from the seventh sphere
Show shades of an incredible past. I know
We will embrace in the fiery red planet's wake
For the first time and the last;
We will walk through the midnight garden,
Through its silhouettes and shades
Till our voices no longer strain to utter
All the hurt that love no longer hides.

But unknowable in her lamplit gloom,

She desires the forceful sway of the sea:
Perhaps she was born of it's foamy spray
Somewhere in a Northern bay? But
Winter brings new ordeals and sadness
Like a visitor, flowerless and unwelcome,
With a fist pushed firm into your mouth.

And from her dark room she gazes out
To the broken railings round the pond;
To the black remains of the mill, and beyond,
To the sunlight on the silver stream
That reveals the mayflies breaking free:
How I envy their short lives, she said,
Dreams on Neptune's weary wave...
A trout twists and spins in the pools of shade,
Drawn to a dry-fly in the sun's haze;
Magnified by a ghostly fish eye,
Snatched from dimensions of black sanctuary, again.

Two figures stood gazing into the pond:
He loved her once...long ago, one said,
Like something beyond the living and the dead.
And now, she won't leave the house, she won't leave,
And death has become a recurring theme
Now that there is blood in words once again.

A white mist has descended upon the house
Like a blanket spread over it's awful hold,
And I can't see beyond the smoky glass.
But I imagine her cocooned inside, somehow,
Wrapt up tightly as a moth,
Awaiting the end of her labyrinth of sleep
And the end of her wordless universe.

Yet the garden remains to her tender touch;
Full of love, though dark as the night.
She is the whispered wind in the swaying boughs
And the autumn leaves upon my face.
She's there in the gentle air that soothes
And sweeps across this lonesome place.
But no memory of sleep nor it's release
Can give these pale bones what they need.

For I am lost because I cannot keep
The one that I desire inside, the most.

Come and embrace the darkling wound
That you have wrought upon my flesh.
It glows in the interminable shame of night,
In the brightness of these sufferings.
Yet who is it that walks in the garden
By night and remains unseen?
Who is it that hurts my endless heart
When each night I awake to find
That love has walked with nothing more to say?

Seen from the mill pond, nothing moves;
The old gate hangs on it's rusty hinge.
Yet the dark windows speak of lives
Falling away...forever away, inside.
And a presence lingers to be loved
Where the riddle of the garden soothes.
A tree grows across it's dim threshold,
And here will be an eternity, I thought,
Now that the spell is cast.

II

Conifer Dreaming

Black witch of all my days, afraid
To come out of the house again.
Trapped between the threshold and
The surface of the skin.
A darkness through which we cannot pass,
Closes around and over us;
An immense mass, pushing forwards,
Separating our frontiers into afterlife,
Where nameless, we shuffle closer to the grave.

Heel me into the disused summerhouse
Where I can become part of it's genealogy,
Living among the dry seeds that hang
From the wooden struts like rococo beams.
There, amongst the old papers and rusting tools

With the smell of sawdust, oil and wood preserver
Rushing like alchemy through my nostrils.
I shall see the house from this dwelling place;
See when lights go on in rooms:
Is that your spectre descending the stair
Like a mannequin in tears?

Behind the fence, I'll stretch and sigh
And straighten my crooked, mossy fingers
Upon the cracked glass of the window pane,
Warmed by the early morning sun.
But here, I won't grow beyond the glass,
I'll dissolve into new constellations
That are forever looking back.

Alone, I'll lie beside the lavender path
Where you will forget me in time, I know...
But still I'll listen for the sweep of your dress
Brushing past in the night like a great lunar wing.
In the long summer evenings, I will sigh
Because I will not hear you come,
Saddened by the drone of bees
Blundering through the undergrowth,
To map the last regions of heart and brain,
Soon honeycombed into a perfect chamber
that makes a snug home for a fat queen.

Hidden in my breast is a black root
That spears through my heart and shoots,
To spiral ever downwards, through
Spine and soil, where blood becomes clay.
Trapped in the watery wheelbarrow tracks:
My life flows in these rivers of rain,
Where the garden has held me, spellbound,
But there are things in this place I cannot say.

In the woods as the sun went down,
I came here to remember her:

A July day...
Walking through the dark rooms
Where other worlds come close and listen.

Inside, the atmosphere's electric,
It crackles under my inspection.
And so I slipped out, unable to turn
Those pages filled with thunder.
I thought: Am I an invisible intruder here?
Does no one see I have come to this place?
They sit so close, yet do not see.
They don't see me. There is no answer.
But I have come here often, yes,
Many times I have come here before death,
And so I almost think it a shrine for my pilgrimage.

Nearby the buried monks in the playing field ache
To hear the close woods call to them;
I know that call and I know that ache
And it's insufferable.

As the years pass
I am wrapt in the wild ways;
streams cut through my inside
And I become part of it's flow.
Nettle and laurel seed from my palms
Towards the sunlight I fear now.
The rain, with it's ancient anger, stirs
And hammers on my brow again.
For here, no one can know the ache of the grave
And the crime that lies so deep within.
I hear the wind whisper and I wake,
Thinking your soft lips are near;
I call out and suddenly I remember
Only sad things whisper here.

A winter night and in the wood
A fire is burning down below
The steep bank that meets the road.
Figures are flickering in the flames
And far-away voices, laugh and shout.
Smoke is rising up the bank,
Winding through the broken fence,
And the air is damp with woodland smells.

Do you look at me and think of the wild places?

I am as ancient as all the world and all it's sorceries.

Beneath the rolling acres - beyond,
Corpses have no time to command;
They listen to the crumbling hearts, like mine,
And laugh beneath the decaying woodland.
But your face looks out from the window pane
With it's ghostly mask, devoid of life.
Those eyes are afraid to look on the world again,
Or perhaps they just died too long ago.

In the green pools of the bog
Those corpses gasp and remember death,
As the sunlight shifts above their heads,
Skimming over the water's surface.
At night between the trunks, they walk,
Crisp, to the snapping of twigs;
Between the submerged mass of roots,
Caught in the striking yellow light
Upon the shallow water's shoots:
A story is unfolding of my youth.
I opened my heart's sadness, and thought:
Here I will wander for eternity.
There are no names, there are no stones,
But lives have fallen to the wayside woods.

III

Walking through the White Wire

Witch of all the world, awake,
The woods have rung, but it's too late
To rid me of this elegiacal imprint
That reduces me to the furniture of the grave.
There's a dance of death between the boughs
That calls her name and winds away...
You're here, and you're here now, to stay,
Not even my silence will turn your heart
From loving me for all eternity.
And I saw all the centuries and celebrations pass,
Marching before me, yet I turned away,
wanting only to see the one who leaves me

In the final moments of the year.

I did not summon you, yet you came,
And all those dreams...I let them go,
Like afterthoughts weaving through my veins
Only to glimpse - Ulysses, in female form.
I remember those long, sleepless nights
When through my tears I ached for you:
Nothing seemed impossible, I thought,
I'll weave my flame into your heart
And make a universe of your name.

Seen in the garden is spectacted Death,
Not quite whole, but sure to manifest
His loathsome shape in the nothingness.
In the space of his predatory motions
His vaporous step is incomplete.
Between thumb and forefinger, I measure his pace:
Four days to reach the end of the fence.
While in the woods a darkness grows
Around the limitations of my heart.

My intestines dropp from the trees in coils,
Bronzing in the morning sun.
And here I have widened the margin of love
To include the garden that's wrapt in death.
My insides are clay, and I am dumb;
My lungs are ballooning in my breast.
My eyes which once sparkled, are now dull
And lie at the bottom of a dry well,
Inside a half-buried porcelain pot:
It's cracked spout is my telescope
Where I'm blinded by the language of the stars.

Come to me, this dark evening,
Now that December's ghost is near;
I have fallen to pieces inside with thinking
Of your soft flesh and this divide,
In the garden's winter beauty, where
I weep in the place where love has died.
But love is a ghastly business,
It corrodes one's soul from the inside,

Depriving one's self of the entity within.

My body shall yield to spring blossoms,
To cover acres in it's wide search.
But my sick heart will always remain
Locked in the sentences of your dreams.
But your heart is darker than buried bones,
And I can do no more than pass through time
Singing of the name I love.

This is how I imagined the end:
You cannot cross and I cannot leave;
Between shadow and light, unable to release
Our hold upon the worlds we know.
Still, the wind tells me of all you used to be,
And the dark house hides what you are now.

Perhaps she won't stay, but the garden remains
True to her identity, and I can never leave
This place where we were parallel in our make-believe.
But how can she not say what's in her heart
When I am sick with thinking of love?
While passion's ghost is fleeting, I know,
To be near her now is all of my world.

Across the water, words pass
Down the silent waves of change,
But I am beyond reason, and less of man,
Drilled into the hillside once again -
I am nothing in nature's infinite way.
And Death has won his timeless reign,
But I turn to the dark secrets of the house
Where the whispered heart has turned to stone
And the love it held has turned to dust.

I hear the voices that I dread,
Speaking of the past again -
They are a bridge to worlds unknown.
And here, the white lines of death are near,
Constant and caged by the twilight oaks;
A storm is gathering with cathedral fear
As the intricacies of sleep unfolds

The stages of our lives, retold.

Embrace me in the confusion of white death;
I linger on in after-worlds,
Bound only by the starry perimeters
And it's soliloquy of dreams, that yields
A space for dying. I heave with seasons:
You are part of my world,
And I, yours, for always.

Barry Van Asten

The Little House In The Woods

There was a man lived in a house
Made of graveyard bones!
'But bones decay: Why not use clay? '
A young girl said, 'and maybe sticks and stones? '
'Arhh, but these 'ere bones remind me that
This life on earth shall end.
For see, I took an axe to each;
Yes, mortal trees, for each one was my friend! '
And so the little girl was slain
In a most undignified way:
'How dare you say: 'use sticks and stones',
I will not! I say, use sticks and stones and clay! '
So he stripped her skin down to the bone
Which he placed in a pot, to boil;
This he would use to fill the cracks
Where wind whistled all the while!
The bones would mend his chimney stack
And the head he would keep, for he said:
'She has nice lips and eyes and hair...
Yes, all things nice, to keep me warm in bed! '

Barry Van Asten

The Mania Society, That Is

The mania society, that is,
Looks on me in its awfulness.
I shook and accepted, without thought:
Urania - that ilex beauty, sunned
And turned to a brilliant red drift
Where my captive brain belongs.

In this room of indecision
I lie with some kept dread
Of sentimental night, wrapped
In hollow light from the void.
I paced about in Mesmer-white, and
Withered, as I rattled past
That awkward, cumbersome ghost:
Fetish of imagination;
Solid winding hoax.

And in the hours of the left panel
I sought isolated doom...
In contrary tension,
March dust and cyclamen
Hungered for Araradia,
Where the scent of wild daffodils
Filled me with rapture.

Nothing but the ghost and I
Stirred in this awful room.
I thought: What's at the end
Of this nonsense - Utopia?

I calculated:
The sun's not real, nor am I,
And I won't wake to the loathsome day
Where eyes brighter than mine still shine.

And through history's wickedness, when
Some fear entwines us, menacing,
I wait...no terror, none,
Seeks its mad divine rite:

God, accept me as I am!

Barry Van Asten

The Mayfly Hatch

Indifferent to change - I'm electric,
You're electric too, I said,
Oscillating and reflecting.
And by these fruits we suffer,
Yet neither of us more than the other.

And I yearned for all this in my youth:
A space among divine flesh, and summers;
A device to calm the sorrowful breast
Gripped by the neutrality of woman and universe.

Still, I hoped for better things to come:
Things said and not said,
Things done and not done.
But behind the north wind - Avalon
Still draws the line of her descent
To clamber and fall with colossal fear again.

Dawn, swans and aeroplanes...
I awoke to your Saturday morning cough
And found it impossible to face myself.
I tried to recapture love in semi-solids,
But when the hour came, I was Golem,
And not some clean-shaven Adonis
I could never be. And so

Remembering the old ones in words and ways
I found myself in her circumference of skin.
Hooked like a lead ball about her heart:
A weight to weigh her emotions with.
To navigate the nucleus, and begin
Observing the cycles of motion and rest:
A universe in a chemical system
Turned by moon tactics over centuries.

But still I hoped for better things:
For this thing between us to unfold;
For this thing between us to evolve.
Yet we retreated into a world of old bones,

Into the cold, grey tombs of the minster,
Afraid of TV's and telephones -
Gripped by the intensity of man and world.

And I hide epileptic secrets, I said,
Like pathway gates locked shut.
But as past masters of the broken heart,
We will always be scum devouring scum.

Barry Van Asten

The Myth Of Masks And Origins

With half a mind for metering,
We all must wear the same mask here.
Where sorrows mapped upon our faces
Are lines written on our hands.
And here, I find, I will be wandering
Those dark and silent corridors,
Holding on to girlhood's pigtailed
And touching her bronze limbs once more,
That quickly turn to powdered chalk
Beneath my wild and roving hands
That draws death nearer with each stroke
To smudge over our yesterdays and our origins.
Yet her lullaby lips would not say yes
To my chosen words - those foolish things.

And I look towards the mirrored doom
To see my own soul shown in selected time,
As the hawker in the cosmos climbs
Behind some womanly vision,
Like a gold and ever flowing stream -
A Xanadu of imperfection
Vanishing down the long gardens
Into the passage of time,
To scribble this mess of life away
And write the damned lot from my brain.

Years later,
The bitter ring of puzzled myth
Stopped me loving someone.
And through my own unnatural vigour
I thought: why can't I be free;
Free from one's own cellular making
Where we are preludes of invented
Evolution's mockery?
Free from this thick ether we breathe
And free from one's dreams, forever.

I

Under correct lighting, she is
Venus in trouble;
Thrusting herself into opposites
By the green light that glows.
Within her lips a universe:
A chapter-house of indecision.

Dimensions change and ghosts listen
To the jet boom and march of pensive time,
As crossed Demeter, by broad meadows,
Matchless in her unstoppable decline,
Turns over her cosmos and dreams once more
Of some Hercule's at the coal-face, again.

And there, by the rivers of sharp time,
A day of words, worlds away
Along the red rush of madness, where I find
I am under eternity's watchful eye
That cannot see past dawn's perfection,
Or this intrusion that cannot love or die.

Cathedrals groan with a sea-ward glance
Where words repeated softly chime.
I make this mask my own, and find
I juggle the sun and the moon through space
That whistles through my afterlife -
A delicate obsession in its prime.

Yet her rose hath bloomed in womanhood,
Cyclones away...so far away...
Sculpting herself under daydreams
Where through our eyes we are exchanged.
But the black woe of the tide has called me:
Movement of the Seine.

These hours locked in solitary ways;
Stung in animal death (come soon)
Have spared me. And by degrees
Nothing changes, or so it seems...
You're worlds to me -
You're worlds away.

II

In artificial light, he is
Adonis - adorable,
Flinging himself into opposites.
Upright in Arcady,
One sees oneself and retreats
Into a Northern vale, and poison.

Seducing under my skin, eels glisten
In this jet age where early mother's blooming.
Between the light, I fall away
Into a day of black suspension
Held by a devil with a slow hand.
And in my anguish I grasped passing time...

Like angels in swansong darkness, I find
The winter trees and I glow.
In the grandeur of our dreams, we are there,
Yet who sits with me but cannot know
That a machine has declared itself our god,
And we are dreams, dreaming there?

The life I lead bleeds me dry and fire
Beneath an altar warms a jar,
Changing my dimensions within;
Singeing nerve-endings and soft tissue:
You keep me always ruined, I said,
Wrapped inside this endless skin.

In his sterile, easy slumber -
He wants me: thief of beauty.
Dead inside, he has drowned me
In the wide orbits of his cobalt eyes.
He whispers and wants all of me:
Movement of the Thames.

My living tree - genealogy,
Holds secrets of statues and stones.
And to the changeless tide, I will go,
Because I cannot stay, I know,
In this mask always and look on you

Worlds and worlds away.

III

How I am damaged by the afternoon's light
Where larger worlds than this resist
To crease in the depths of love and death.
Yet, through the laws of alchemy,
I am a blue monkey and I glow
Like a torso full of gypsy rhythm.

And I am gold and I flow through the midsummer fires
That engulfs the head's accumulation of lifetimes.
And at the stroke of midnight - a vermilion swan
Is wrenched from purple veins that rot;
Concealed within a moated mausoleum -
I hear them signalling under my skin.

And in baroque splendour - Death,
Is snorting in corners and dunging,
Shuffling by sorrow's robe of regret.
While a eunuch in the monument is searching
The darker regions. Nothing sleeps -
A violet panther through the midnight creeps,

Shaping itself by the light of this room.
Here, Behemoth's squat frame dangles wax fingers,
Dripping like sodium candles aflame.
There, in macabre rutting, a red bristling pig,
It's eyes broken in the morning sun,
Performs staggering routines by outside force.

And in antique times - Babalon,
Is transfixed by the light of the moon,
Longing for the kiss of madrigal lips,
Only to look on Sodom's pink gaze again:
Am I dimensions dreaming in your skin,
Where this black owl's flight weaves its bygone days?

Watched Hector, cold, like Sunday morning death,
Hiding family secrets in every crease...
I must unravel time and go beyond this wilderness;

Beyond the governable by instruments and iron marionettes,
Where womanhood has tumbled to activate in me,
Response, as we hunger through the centuries.

Barry Van Asten

The Name Helen

The utter darkness, the hopeless pull,
Spun through brains and approaching dawns...
There I stood, like stone Saint John,
Devoured by the night's dark assumption.

And coming in from time, I awoke
To the white walls and half words
That shifted to and fro between us
In the tiled glow of the hospital wards:
This is all of it, I thought, and I have seen
The hollows of your language and the wickedness there.

But I believe in her, in this wilderness,
Though my soul could harbour no Gudrun:
My veins - streams of poison,
My heart - swims with passion,
My brain - the unknown god
That dwells without span or spoken reason.

We are towers that reach into the sky,
Each sinking into different hells.
And if you knew, that within my frame,
Packed away into little cells,
I am the hills and meadows that wander
Far away and touch no one.
Then my God, think of me and do not shout,
For it is something fearful that brings me here.

I am the years and I am alone,
Like an invisible phoenix in memorial glass -
I rise only to find your name and nothing else.

Her dual nature, fixed with the stars,
And timeless, I ache for the meaning of love,
But life is impossible and too cold to stay
In the vain hope of knowing its indifferent ways.

I heard the golden throng of woman
Give musical magic to her name, and then

She fell to the fear of the wretched blue silence
And shut away all hope of change:
My eyes won't open on this world, she said,
My sorrows grow great where shadows remain.
But it's no use my speaking from the heart,
I can never release the hurt inside that I feel.
And an angel stooped near to her and whispered:
We have drank our souls dry and come through,
Time now for you to live again.

But night of many wonders - birth,
Is revolved along the dim-worn waves;
Concealed by the fringed mystery that rages...
You're wasting your time in meaningless things,
(And frightening me) for I am dumb;
Locked away...rotting away...
Paled by the war-weary turn of the moon.

I heard the lonely song of man
Echo over the haunted lawns, now forgotten.

But we cannot return, no, nor look back
Upon the past and all that's been said before.
There is too much dark matter come between us
And afterall, I must name things, always name...
For evermore.

And these hopeless lips that will never kiss
Or speak another name but this,
Will forever be still, though inwardly uttering:
This despair within our hearts is drear,
Yet we said nothing, damned nothing!

For something ceased in her dimension
Like so many shapes in the frozen waste.
Her sweet tones, now dull beneath the boughs
Said nothing more than dreams could say
When I realised the adventure was too far away.

Barry Van Asten

The Occupiers

I

She keeps a warm place in her heart
Where the ghosts of children cry;
She has buried her principles in filled graves
And there she lets the secret lie.

The sordidness of life makes her sick
As she breathes the chemistry of the bed.
Lost in the preciousness of skin, she prays
For the resurrection of the dead.

In the evening's half-way light she sat,
Like an empty purse on the kitchen floor:
Useless, utterly useless, she cries
Between bashing her brains against the door.

There, in the dying of the old year,
Still directionless and dumb,
She cements the circles of her sex
In a broken line between thigh and thumb.

The love inside is dead, she said,
Let it's bug-eyed flame rest eternal.
And a crown of thorns between her legs
Still weeps for the Christ, maternal.

Seized in the white laughter of suspension,
A rhapsody of whispers calls her name,
And faces lie crumpled in the cushions
Where the experimental ape became

A carousel for Newton's physics;
A secret hid behind a door,
Committed in the name of science
And spread across the kitchen floor.

Her dry brain sips at cartomancy,
To turn the Lovers her heart yearned,

Yet in the extension of the grave,
Death was the only card she ever turned.

II

He says the need within him hammers
Obscene patterns on the pillows;
And in the folds of his cardigan - Niagara,
Wheezes through truncated bellows.

Why should he speak of the moonlight?
He knows its monster power sucks
Life from lemons and tobacco dust
And rips the bindings of his books.

He said his universe is upside down;
Pulled inside out about his home -
The minuscule smudge on the mantelpiece is
A little bit of Paris and a little bit of Rome.

With a broken heart and a broken throat,
Consonants and vowels were easily spread
Across the feared carpet inhabitants
And the old songs of the dead.

Like an ancient oak among the stones
His magpie sex was crucified.
With wicker bones and thorny thighs:
Here was Christ identified.

Smoking between secrets and astrology;
The long hours roar like pipes full of wind,
Where he is discharged by torchlight
Into the Manx-lipped wunderkind.

He is a bathroom grotesque
That stares through misty eyes of green
To see beyond the measure of skin
And the inch-thick waste that lies between.

He keeps a map of the world on his wall
Where he plots journeys near and far.

But he knows he'll never leave this cruel
Circumference that governs what we are.

Barry Van Asten

The Passion And The Prayer

What occupant beats beside a lover's brain?
Who hears the whispers of the past?
It is the old world that comes again
With dreams, softly as a ghost,

Creeping from the thresholds beckoning,
Breezing in and out of age...
As Death's ticking knuckle is hammering
Unseen shapes of fantastic rage.

And through the night the flesh did sing,
Touched by unseen hands in the dark
That showed only the nothingness in everything,
Like a dead candle lit by a spark!

A brief pause in the rail of change
That strays over time as some star,
Where we are but mannequins in the strange
Laws that govern what we are;

Drawn like some architect worm to the cell
Where the suspended pulses of our way,
Rot, inside the timeless shell
That carries our decay.

Through the passing of tiresome years,
The blue-veined curve of sleep's release
Is sickened by the sound of tears
Where the activities of the dead don't cease!

For love has stirred some unseen rite
Amongst the shadows of the lost;
Steered some wanderer from the night
That won't relinquish the world as host,

To flow from out the tomb and grin,
And break a body with deceit,
For science and atomic faith won't win
When the passion and the prayer's complete!

What ague has surfaced from the unknown
To blow like leaves through viewless space
From depths to mingle moan with moan,
Always returning to this place?

Where I mourn a prayer that won't be heard
For a love I cannot have,
That hungers for the passionate word
And all that transpires in the grave.

Barry Van Asten

The Totem Elect

Under the steed breath and warlock eyes,
His granite stare lifts a Canterbury miracle
And a death... Lips like a drained lake, reveals
A winding path amidst the sunken graves...

The thump, thump of hideous thought
In gloomy gardens... violated remains
Castrated to the crack of horse hooves,
To jab like wax-work, and become
Insane at some vile ache of time.

And at the summit of imagination -
Black angry marks; a widow's tongue
Cuts like some cancer through the heart,
Snorting at pantry fever and kitchen dust.

While above the tree-tops, from a steeple
Swooped a raven, thrashing low
Over columns and pillars, to the waterside
Where it earthed with ineffable joy,
And placed itself upon a pendant.

Here it wove for a thousand years:
Dreams and domes and all things lost;
All things smothered in their prime
By twilights charging at dawns...

Some dead foetus tumbled down
From out of the summer lightning;
Performing staggering etudes
In its unsteady playing.

An idea came to me:
Why not show it life?
I'll take it to the idol room
And breathe into it, intellect!

Barry Van Asten

The Veil Of Eden - Dedication & Part I

O long ago, long ago, did I dream
That I had wings and a joyous heart,
And I sang sweet songs over hills that roam,
Of undying love and the eternal star.
Sang as my soul in soft moonlight
Found glorious things in everything,
And rejoiced in the wonder of day and night.
But now the deep echo of my regret
Leaves only my heart to hang and long
For that far twilight where dreams are met
And the heart that's empty of its song...
O pity me, I pray, these, my misgivings:
God love me, and give me back my heart!
God love me, and give me back my wings!

Part I - The Flower And The Madness

This, our cosmic stage of sorrow,
This our curtain, lifteth up!
Lift up the veil and therein follow
The glories of love's zenith cup!

Through the celestial realm of night
That overthroweth day,
Stars were magical and bright
In their dumb decay.

And planets shook to music's mode
By the gods that reach
Through infinite space and abode,
Masterful in speech.

And the song of ecstasy was born
To the lips of our goddess.
Yea! her bosom's splendour - dawn,
Sighed with love's madness.

With darkness was her hair aflame
With diamonds and with pearls,

That glittered ceaseless, to her name,
Hung soft in shaken curls.

But cameth whisperings in halls
As some sick phantom stirred,
For 'tis the veil of Eden falls
At his whispered word.

And all the stars were pale and rent
Of light in darkness now;
Those fixed points in the firmament
Wept long in love's sorrow.

See! we are but moonbeams cast
Upon some ruinous river
That sweeps beyond the starry vast
Lie of God, for ever.

Be life not such a delicate bloom
Of gentleness and sighing,
For thou art fragrant in the tomb
Of the old god, dying.

Quick! with thy mortal hands
Break the chain - restriction,
And raise thyself up, love demands
Thou art the resurrection!

Sprite:

Strike! strike! the chain that binds

Chorus:

Thy body beautiful unwinds

Sprite:

Into regions of re-birth

Chorus:

Unto pleasures of the earth!

Sprite:

Here, sickness in Eden falls

Chorus:

Into dark extended halls.

Sprite:

Would'st thou be saddled with the fear

Chorus:

That wrappeth round thy manly spear

Sprite:

And gives thy sister thought to thirst

Chorus:

Damnation's hunger? Thou accursed

Sprite:

Universal Lord of lies,

Chorus:

Man's spirit, hearest, Thou denies!

Sprite:

Strike! Strike! the chain that binds
Thy body beautiful unwinds
Into regions of re-birth;
Unto pleasures of the earth!
For man hath tired, man's brain is bent
Upon the veil of Eden, rent!

Invocation:

Come, not when the moon is lying
Low upon thy prow;
Come, not when the rose is sighing
Sweet upon thy brow.

Come, by the bud of thy perfection,
Not in thy despair;
Here be the bloom of thy redemption:
Thy synagogue of prayer.

For in the words that we remember
Upon our altar - dawn,
We praise the light and praise its keeper
Worshipped by the morn.

This sword thrust deep into thy side
Wills midnight's work be done.
Thy wound a token for thy bride
That hast sighed long for devildom.

Come! Come! and see thy world
And be not overcome
By the treachery unfurled
On thy brave bosom, numb!

And this thy origin revealed,
And this thy regal right,
For thou art sworn to sword and shield
And to thy crown of light.

Phoenix rise ye, onward, on
Into the void of flame
Where death is sweet and calls upon
Dread Baphomet, by name:

To call upon the ghost of love
And unto its shade sing,
Great prophecies shalt love's ghost prove
By this immortal ring!

The Ghost Of Love:

I am Love, disfigured, and I bring
Thee tales of misery - my shame,
For love destroyeth everything
That falleth in its name!

And what sick fruit from Eden's bowel
Hath nursed thy pains? O man,
What plagues within thy garden, prowel
And speaketh of salvation?

What cometh when the rose of knowing
Dieth in thy hand?
It is thine own self, ever growing
In thy wisdom, to expand

Thy flesh of sorrow, that here yearneth
With passions that hath bred
The rot within ye; the core that burneth
Unto the soul that's dead.

Yea! sayeth of the flower, I,
Ye crusheth in thy fate:
That which is born, is born to die
With lusts immaculate!

Sprite:

See ye how the dye is cast

Chorus:

Man's body, beautiful, hath passed

Sprite:

From its sufferings, from its woe

Chorus:

And thus must into silence go,

Sprite:

Into the charnal-house of truth

Chorus:

The womb of wisdom be his proof!

Sprite:

Thy body through the pylon, passed
And thy death was sweet,
Ye are but as sepulchral dust
Of death beneath mine feet.

Chorus:

Let thy flower, lust unfold
Unto the timeless gods of old.
Slain, thy horror shall foretell
What moveth in thee be not Hell.

And lips incarnate of desire
Shall burn with subtle flames of fire.
And thy crown that sleepeth - tragedy,
Shall give untold delights to thee!

O child of beauty and of chaos;
Child that singeth the song of madness,
Thou art impenetrable in thy tomb
To crush the flower of its bloom.

And ye shall sing unto the world
Of thy strange enchantment, curled
From the portal of Eden's dream,
Beyond thy chrysalis, extreme!

But thy season be not over yet,
Thy rose-cupped beauty, thy coronet
Still aches for womanhood and her charm

That can breedeth upon thee man, much harm!

Sprite:

Ah, I see man's heart anew;
I see his immeasurable soul shine through
The fragrant portal of decay,
Where virgin lips hath kissed the day!

And this be sorrow for he knows,
This be the madness of the rose
That unfurls to taste the golden dew:
The spring of man's heart born anew.

Closer, ye not fear the morn
Of thy tender soul, re-drawn
Into a world that is thy making
And thy sufferings, awakening.

Give! Give all! and thou shalt know
Why God feared give ye knowledge so;
For there be sadness in wisdom's joys
When innocense falleth down, and dies.

Ah, but what of woman, sayest
Hath she not her part to playest?
Hath not the organism of man's lust
Crumbled before his eyes? I trust

Ye see'st the sickness of dimension,
Changed by form into corrosion,
Capable of supernal things
Is man, free from woman's wings.

And these be secrets to unfold
When thou redeemest the world of old:
What brute-beast comes in exultation
At damnation's arrival? - Man!

.....

And the creatures of the wood did sing

In each its special voice of God,
Turned with angered hearts, to sting
The folly of fallen Eden, trod
With madness, in the mire of sin -
Thus, the tragedy within!

Chorus:

O things of sorrow, O things of mirth,
Silent, is thy freedom cast
Into the abysses of the earth,
On this, our triumphant hour, past
Into glories that displeaseth God,
For in the wind His voice is oft'
Heard to thunder bold and sad
Before the victory cheers, aloft
Call for the mantle that He wears.
And God in ancient wisdom, frail,
And silver-haired sits with His tears
At the tearing of the veil.

Sprite:

Ah! but what of love?
We think: has it taken stranger?
Some will say that loves knows not
Which of the twain are stronger:
Be it sorrow with its sombre thread
Of deep regret, returning?
Or be it joy, as some hath said,
Cools a heart of yearning?

Mask not thy burning germ of fear
In the sentinels that rot
And bear thy burden in good cheer,
Where passion comforts not
The heart of sighing, for as dust
Hath it fallen gladly -
Breathe! Breathe! deep of the lust
That is divine and Godly!

This thy right and this thy will,

Shade not thy loves in regret;
Thou hast built a temple, here distil
Its pure force into light and set
Thineself within thine amulet. A shrine
Of consecrated wisdom, sealed
By earthly bread and fiery wine
Is the distant matter of thy brain revealed.

Yea! thy crimson death shall be as sweet
That giveth all unto the Lord,
Thine heart shall serve, swift wings shall beat,
Resurrected by the sword.
For man hath built himself a bridge
Void unto void, world unto world;
He standeth at the spectral ridge
With expectations curled

Towards the aeons that shall come,
Towards the sounding of the drum,
And the narrow birth of devildom,
Framed by the leprosy of the sun
And the limitations of the Holy One,
For man's argosy hath here begun!

Chorus:

And dress yeself rich unto God;
Drinketh of His brews, from casks
That flow hearty. Set thee a period:
These thine ordeals and thine tasks,
Measure thine experience and be strong
And man shalt hereby reigneth long!

Thy flesh be as a shoreless bark,
A beacon of thy liberty,
That shalt illuminate the dark
By courage and virility!
Let thy prow look only on man's face
And thine helm taste of his sweet disgrace!

God of alchemy, God of reason,
Let His blood course through thy veined

Temple. Child of glory, in the season
Of thy paradise regained -
Yea! ye hath raped long of God's sanctuary,
Sweet ark of thy discovery.

Sprite:

Breathe of midnight's intoxication,
Lift thy limbs upon its shore,
And bow thee down in adulation
Of love, pure love, thou dost adore.

This, man's joy and abomination:
Giveth all unto the cup
Of thy ceremony and salvation -
Quench thy thirst and drinketh up!

This, thy primal invocation,
This thy will to be declared
Unto the sons of initiation
Who art strong for they hath dared

By secret light, their evocation
And by knowledge deemed it so
Wrought with danger, consecration
Giveth strength that they may go!

Chorus:

What monster passions lie in thy breast?

Sprite:

'Tis the fiend of love's unrest.

Chorus:

Be it of nocturnal fire,
The aspiration of the higher?

Sprite:

It liveth and it breatheth great
In its crucible of hate!

Chorus:

Seen ye yet death's wing come near,
In cheerless agonies, appear?

Sprite:

Death be like the serpent. wise,
His shape is formed fast to disguise;
He breatheth necromantic dung
And sings of fatal heartache, flung
Upon the corpse of youth, ran red:
A grotesque visage of the dead!

Barry Van Asten

The Veil Of Eden - Part 2

Part II - The Serpent And The Sorrow

Here, I fortify the wine of disease
With my liquid tongue of blasphemies.
For I hath wrestled from the sacred bough
The true lusts of man - these seeds I sowe;
The dark dimensions, the black centuries,
Unto the wind and watch them grow!

I conjure whoredom's flickering flame
And curse the Almighty without shame.
Man, that walketh with the moon
Hayh harkened to the immortal tune
And sought the perfume, without name
That's supped by gods and all too soon

Consumed in thy cup of amethyst, drained,
Unto the end was its vile filth strained
By mortal lips. Now man hast seen
The beginning, the end and the in-between.
The cup of destruction, red-ruby stained!
The perfume of release - our Queen,

Unto Heaven's vault did'st seal
Man's disobedience and conceal
The architecture of man's fate
That strikes at the chains of inviolate
Love, for by wisdom and by zeal
Did man tire of his righteous state.

And thus possessed of gods did'st man
Tear down the lie: no mortal can
Be as a god and walk with might
And rejoiceth in the eternal light.
Yet his bosom yearned and stranger, ran
Into the sorrowful realm of regal night.

And I am the circumference of thy skin
And all that it containeth within,

For I am fashioned to thy breast
And I swim with poisonous unrest.
I am thine own sorrow and thy sin:
Thy north and south, thine east and west!

And many are mine horrors and mine name;
This legion, mirrored, be but the same
Cross of desire in darkness, falling
Unto the circle of lust's calling
Thine golden seraphimed head of shame
That sought the sanctuary. This appalling

Pyramid of thine own making
Found ye sorrow for thy taking
And this dim star, thy profile, cast,
Is mine Royal seal, for here at last
Is an apparatus re-awakening:
A man perfected of his past!

The Song Of The Serpent:

Ah! the fruit is ripe upon the bough:
Shalt desire snatch it from me now
And plant its knowledge on thy brow?

And what mystery of flesh shalt sing
When unto man falls everything?
But lo! 'tis more given when 'tis nothing!

Yea! for all of man's temptation,
The fool regreteth not his action:
This is his sorrow and salvation;

This is his rapture that is sweet,
Soft and fragrant and complete:
But when shalt man with serpent meet

And caress the dim shore of his pain
And break the rhythms of his brain
That's circled by a serpent's chain?

When this night of mitred elegance

In its fleet-footed pageant dance
Doth ache to passion's darkling glance,

That shoots through youthful veins of fear,
For here, love lingers long and drear
Before the God, Love doth revere,

Thou shalt shame thy God before thine eyes,
Thou shalt conjure His immortal cries
And damn His sacerdotal sighs!

O blow wind, yea! eternally blow
For speech and shame and sin follow
The endless summit of man's tomorrow.

But life's miracle that we dare expand,
This tortured madness of command
Hath given scope to understand

The nature of desire, that slept
Firm in thought as sadness leapt
Where the soul of Eden wept.

And thrice was beauty turned to stone,
Banished from her golden throne
To lie with lustful ways, alone.

She dreams, but nothing more than this
Hath fallen unto sleep, to kiss
The awful ache of our mistress.

And mortal unto dying breath
Shalt find a certainty in death,
That death shalt all too sooneth cometh!

.....

I see thy wound, it runneth deep
Through the centuries of sleep;
Deep, deep, so vast and deep
In the fiery fathomless place of sleep.

This little world of man's content;
This infernal fold of past desires,
Death's rapture clings to his element:
Man unto the arm of man aspires.

Here death's feather hath weighed ye right,
And judgement manifold, thy fate
Upon the lips that kissed the night;
Lips of thine own incarnate hate.

Lips that cursed the ancient moon;
Lips of thine unspeakable hell,
Pressed to the prison of the womb
Of thine resurrecting angel.

He giveth up and giveth all,
He rejoiceth in his sad suspension
That dances, beast-like in the hall
And clings to man's incomprehension.

O come, I adore thee, come O come
While death's scent hath found release
From the pangs of falsehood's angeldom,
And the terrors, pray ye now may'st cease!

Sprite:

But hark! what vision of loveliness doth tread
Between the living and the dead?
What frenzy of lust doth speak its name;
What salacious mollusc, revered by shame
Doth come? Its robe cast in the mud,
Its high art a stain of womanhood,
Purple, from the fount of Hell
Like some magnificent Jezebel.
And as nature bows before our Queen;
As the elements flicker, and stir unseen
She assumes Her Royal right, anon,
And comes before us - Babalon!

Babalon:

Blessed be midnight, blessed be shame;
Blessed be the paps that seal my name.
Blessed be the season of desire:
Blessed the unquenchable Holy fire!
This head be death's head, reared for war,
This heart be rotten to its core.
Witch of the moon, whore of the sun:
I am the ghost bloom - Babalon!
I am thy work of silk and gold;
I am thy mysteries untold.
My lips, the claret of the moon;
My breath, the scent of sweet perfume.
My limbs as lithe as panthers, move
Through the Holy abodes of love,
For I am thy midnight jubilation:
Thy dawn, thy noon and thy dusk damnation.
My hair, a stream of lust, unendeing,
My body yearns to thy ascending
Light; thy palace remains unmoved -
I see it ever thus, unloved.
For I am love, cloaked in desire,
Rich and strange, I burn with fire.
And I desecrate the Holy place
And trample the contours of God's face.
I am thy tempest mind, awake
To bloodless sighings of the snake.
I bear the cup of fornication
That gives thee sweet intoxication.
I, the Queen, who doth assume
Thy purple passions, to illumine
Thy body, leveled in the tomb,
Clung to the flower of my womb.
Thou did'st seekest, yet I was found not
In those shapes of shade that rot
Thy hungering, for doth not ye see:
I hath always dwelt in the heart of thee;
Since virgin, thy initial breath
Smote the catacombs of death
And drew forth thine eyes unto the sun,
Ye whispered one word - Babalon!

Sprite:

And through the intricacies of sleep
Doth Babalon in Her whoredom, creep,
To rise on smoke, foul of the air,
Her teeth fixed firm on flesh, to tear
The heart of man, from out his breast,
Softened to Her glance, caressed
By slender hands that woo with lust
And grind the humble into dust.
O star! my litany of desire,
Desolate in seduction's mire
To see thy nakedness crowned with gold
Upon Love's altar, where of old
Did'st Babalon cherish unto death,
The ache of man that lies beneath
The splendour wrapt, the sapphire tomb
Of virtue veiled deep in Love's gloom.

Babalon:

O desirable man, I give thee rest
From thy hierophantic quest;
I warm thy flesh and give thee ease,
Trimmed in the wrappings of disease,
Where nothing moves, nor shall it stir
The masked sentinels of sleep and fear.

Sprite:

Animal-sighing - we are all dark now
As man passes into that which he cannot know!

Barry Van Asten

The Veil Of Eden - Part 3

Part III - The Eye In The Sanctuary

In the phosphorescent hush of the dark wood,
Came Eve, that delicate blush of womanhood;
Her body, an ecstasy of celebration:
A temple of song that she sings of creation!
But her eyes hang sad for the veil is rent;
She weeps for she can foresee man's discontent.
And here passes the star, in its sickness, grown
Awful before the meteor that was God's throne;
Where there once was passion, dark and deep,
Radiant by night, where the light doth keep
Its vigil strong. Gone, O 'tis all gone now
Where woman walks alone and weeps unto her shadow.
Her heart a stone cast in the pit of motherhood,
Lost unto the shades where she weeps within the wood.
Thus tormented she sees things fate hast chose to be,
This be the song sweet Eve sings of man's destiny.

Sprite:

And having tasted of desire
She swooned at the unspeakable rites
Foretold in a vision of the higher
Realms of angels and of sprites.

Thus, her eyes drawn unto fire,
She sang as sighing satellites
Perished in the unalterable mire
Of mightier things in their delights.

Struck with beauty, sang the choir
From their heavenly heights;
But blood lust gave the great destroyer
His joy amongst the parasites.

Eve:

And I saw thus blazing from the hordes,

The shining ones come forth and listen
With bloody hands clasped on mighty swords,
Upon the emerald hilts that glisten
Radiantly at their armoured sides.
These winged warriors with giant strides

Came to rest beside a stream,
The fight not lost, though their eyes told
The light had'st lost God's brilliant gleam,
For eyes were as the darkness, cold;
Like lunar lamps, and all put out
As shadows fell to unseen doubt.

And Paradise raged against God's Law
At the full rise of the sun,
Where the beauteous bankside maidens saw
The light retreateth into one.
And here were stars in the folds of sorrow
As darkness came down, thick and low.

And morning light did'st turn his head
Aloft unto God's mighty throne
And back upon the field of dead
Celestial seraphims of stone:
Come home! Come home! His pitiful voice
And all the dim stars did'st rejoice!

Our saviour crosseth on the prow,
Watched by darkness at the helm;
With names of blasphemy on His brow,
He surveyed the measure of His realm.
His broken sword aloft, He swore
To reverseth all God madeth Law!

And God's voice did'st tremble in the wind
Unto shameless sinners and the sinned:

Make why thou wilt, my brother son,
For 'tis writ that there shalt cometh one
To un-good the good that I hath done
Unto this Paradise begun.
Thy broken wings of undying hate

Are folded in combustible fate;
Where the zenith hath appeared too late
To save the Kingdom that falleth great!
Thou may'st have thy rule, thy period
Where thou may'st strut thyself a God,
But lo! as from a lightening rod
Shalt God's word find thy Kingdom shod
In filthy labourings of the dead:
A crown of thorns upon thy head
Shalt bloom no more, for it hath bled
The terrors of the tomb ye fed.

.....

And the muse of all time sat in wonder
As dark, those ones of evil, born,
Tore the brotherhood of Light asunder,
Terrible to that scarlet dawn
Where the phoenix of the flames had'st flown
In the splendour of damnation's crown.

And within the city of souless slaves
Were vast pyramids of corpses, lying
Skinless, shovelled into graves
Of red streams unto midnight, sighing;
Here man in fear of his true fate
Did'st pray to terrors, insensate.

And the filth of an hundred days of war
Had'st spoilt six days upon the earth;
Death's cloud did'st appear to blot the star
And violate its swift re-birth.
Iron death and scent of skin
Had'st let infernal darkness in!

From the night our master fell
And in war's wake the moon had'st turned
With fastened lips - a sunlit Hell
As victory in death's madness yearned
Unto man's cerements of fear:
Lo! the goat-foot God was here!

And man breathed fire and man breathed force
Throughout the depths of eternity,
And God revealed His unholy course
For man and woman's destiny.
And woman sighed, sealed in the tomb
For she was as blind within its gloom.

Her love, shalt creaseth to the moon
And man's unto the sun
Where he shalt sheathe his splendid plume
In sorrow's fruitless womb,
Where demon lusts slays, without pause:
Man, in the calamity of its jaws.

And love divided, conquered all,
Arose damnation on its head
That whispered softly, Eden's fall
Was thrice glimpsed and thrice blessed!
And this thy pleasaunce and thy shore
God giveth greatly to adore.

And tears shalt wash away the work
Of God whose mind cannot contain
The will to penetrate the murk
That clouds upon the human brain,
Where imagination and the dream
Be thus like fishing in the stream.

Man long betrayeth for he hath wronged
The omnipotent eye that all doth see
The myriad miscarriages, triple-tongued
In sad songs sung in serpentry.
Yet came the lone voice from afar
Curled towards that elusive star:

Hast thou seen the lion loveth the lamb?
Hast thou seen the hawk loveth the hare?
Hast thou seen the she-wolf loveth the ram?
Hast thou seen man weak in woman's snare?

And his shadow shalt darken and grow with time
Before the threshold of the dawn

That shalt awaken him to the sublime
Seeds of sorrow, upon him, born;
Unto the dying of the old year
Wilt man wait, and beauty re-appear!

Barry Van Asten

The Veil Of Eden - Part 4

Part IV - The Blossom And The Sigh

From this holy place I go
Unto a wilderness unknown;
Unto a place where love, outgrown,
Lies barren, for it cannot grow.
Here, the spirit of silent birth
Hath thundered long unto the sea,
And virtue thrown to devilry
Is all that purity is worth.
For upon this world mankind doth tread
'Twixt an everlasting faint dimension
And things beyond man's comprehension;
Beyond the living and the dead.
Yet what bright moon on the horizon
Will sail the oracles of space
And revealeth love's eternal face?
In measure met - all things are one,
The Lord of Life hath wished it so;
For He gaveth man his opposite,
His dual expression - black and white.
And time and spasmodic change shall flow
As the body yields to spring passions
And there, breathe life - it breatheth yet,
Strong by nature's calling, set
Into a robe of dreams - man's visions
Are life's remembrance of the dead.
The stars are sown, the torn veil rent
And the Host of the Heavenly sacrament
Fell tearful at man's side and said:
Enough of unholiness and of death,
For all that liveth in vain, shalt sing
Of life's beauty over everything!
Thus, the great lie of man, beneath
The starry sadness of Heaven, drawn
Unto soft whisperings that revealed
Nothing in joy is twice concealed
By woman, at her darkling dawn.
And time wilt cease for moonlight priests

At the extinguishing of the light,
For darkness be their God of might;
A continual conjuring of strange beasts
That come, by Royal sacrifice
To trample hooves in tribal dust;
To work their foul alluring lust
And in the madness found - rejoice.
On the Holy mount shalt man seek
The glory of his radiant star
That hath retreated, and gone far
From the ceremonies of the meek.
Here shalt corpses come to lie -
The glory of our loved dead:
Every one a good man's head
Unstirred by the blossom and the sigh!
And God hath cast thy fortunes great
Into scented halls of hate;
This be thy mannequin of woe
For the elements hath found ye so
Rich in joy on wings of sadness:
Thou art sent scrying into madness!
And with thine new-found love, retrace
Thine footsteps to the Holy place
And supplicate thine self in prayer!

Sprite:

But soft! here I invoketh to thee - Air!

Air:

I am loud and silent: I am Air;
I am the words of war and prayer,
On streams to carry love and hate
Drawn from hearts both small and great!
And I am flattery which is joy;
I am thy breath, I am thy sigh.
And I make tempests of thy bones
When mine rough winds upon thee moans.
Within, without, I am the storm
Of change, thy progress without form!

Chorus:

O carry, carry, wings of Air
Man in his boat adrift, despair;
Seeketh still man, of the higher...

Sprite:

Here, I invoketh to thee - Fire!

Fire:

I am thine inmost: I am Fire;
I am thy flower of desire.
I am thy flickerings, set in pain:
Thine serpent of unsaintly reign!
And I bring joy and ease and love
From under the cloak of lust, I move,
Ever burning, though, thee be still -
I goeth onwards in thine thrill
Of ecstasy, that in thee be
Flames of uncontainable devilry!

Chorus:

O burn, burn, thy flames of Fire
Unto man's heart that doth aspire;
Thy love, thy melancholy rapture...

Sprite:

Here, I invoketh to thee - Water!

Water:

I am thine thought: I am Water;
Thy mother, thy bride, thy Holy daughter.
I am thy wanderings that resteth not;
Thine river that ever disturbs thy lot!
And I am the flow of fate, foresee
Thine own miracle of thy destiny.
And I be calm and showeth the moon

Or whipped by tempest and typhoon
That turn thee swift upon thine will
Unto mine waters - magical!

Chorus:

O roll, roll, thy Waters sweet
Over man's brow in defeat
And strike thy pleasing chords of mirth!

Sprite:

Here, I invoketh to thee - Earth!

Earth:

I am thine form: I am Earth;
I am thy firmament of birth!
I am thine glories and thine fear,
Slow of change, I doth appear
Dull and heavy, I confess
I am the vacuum of thy stubbornness.
I am thy surface, point and plane -
I am the laughter in thy pain.
I am thy dream of lips unmet:
Yea! I, the spectre of regret!

Chorus:

O fold, fold, Earth manifold,
Thy temple stones, thy bed of old
Upon man's boundless breast, and sit...

Sprite:

Here, I invoketh to thee - Spirit!

Spirit:

I am thine core: I am Spirit;
I seize thee by thy brain and will it
To mine works that centre thee;

To thine masked wonder: Liberty!
And I be stirred and moved by song
For I am the fortunes of the strong
Soul that sleeps and wakes once more:
I am thine entity to adore!
Mine kisses giveth endless joy
For they be sweetness to thy sigh.

Chorus:

O kiss, kiss, Spirit bliss,
The lips of man that doth caress
Passion's ardour and repents...

Sprite:

Here endeth the song of the elements!

Barry Van Asten

The Veil Of Eden - Part 5

Part V - The Angel And The Abyss

Shall the lie of God be told;
Shall His mysteries unfold
And swell thy bosom to victory
That thou hast sipped of His glory?
And this be rapture in thy brain;
This be thy star, risen and slain
And risen, once more into light
That once was darkness of the night.
That once was far beyond thee, cast
Into the formless void, so vast,
For 'twas the wrappings of the tomb;
Thine pasture of nocturnal gloom
That leads thee here. What visions tell
Why thy lusts are darkness, drawn from Hell;
Thy lie of madness and desire -
Thy penetrating star of fire?
Thou hast slipped thy fetters, see them fall
And unto thine own Angel, call.
Thy bondage broken by a kiss;
Thy liberty strong in rapture's bliss.
Ah, but what hath made thee so?
What pause in thy eternal ring
Hath brought misfortune's silver sling
And dealt thy heart a mighty blow?

Chorus:

Draw back thy flesh;
Hold back thy veil:
Hail! unto thine Angel, hail!

Sprite:

Speaketh monster!

Angel:

I magnify man's little sorrows
Into steps of doom;
I bringeth the Abyss, that swallows
Thy radiant bloom.

In this thy park of discontent,
Ever at thy side
Was thine Angel - thy sacrament
Of fire, long denied.

Thou art risen on the wings of fate
That leadeth ye aright.
O sire! be not ye desolate
And forsaken in mine sight,

For thou walketh as a god, new-born
In thy robe, aflame;
Thou art glorious in the distant dawn
In thy crown of shame!

I sing of thine own sweet embraces
That in thine heart doth grow;
For 'twas in those wild abandoned places -
There I loved ye so!

Sprite:

Thou hast seen thine opposite attract
Itself to thee in every act.
Thou hast glimpsed thy birthright, from afar:
Thy flame-flecked wisdom of the star!

Chorus:

Hail! unto thine Angel, hail!

Sprite:

Thou cometh swift from restless sleep
Into casms, dark and deep.
But lo! thine Angel, more must speak,
Soft and low - 'tis very weak!

Chorus:

Hail! unto thine Angel, hail!

Angel:

If in sleep thou dreamest, I come to thee
In love's unfolding of the unseen,
Be ye ever a sun that burns, serene,
To die in the arms of eternity...

Sprite:

Hear ye Adam! these words are gold
Rushing through thy veins! Unhold
Thy feared forebodings, be as one:
Dimensionless unto the sun!
Here, the inhabitant of the Abyss
Summons ye to its nothingness!

The Dweller Of The Abyss:

Adam, Adam, come, not linger,
Come with Royal lips aflame;
Fear not the song, thou art the singer
Robed and crowned in Adam's name.

Adam, Adam, there be sweet joy
In all thou givest unto love:
Joy be the heart of man and boy
That sings thy praises from above.

Adam, Adam, fruit of God's labour,
Thou art not condemned by God;
Loveth thyself and damn thy neighbour;
Maketh madness thy method!

Adam, Adam, breathe salvation,
Redeem the urges of the beasts
That elevate their jubilation
In sacred rites and forest feasts.

Adam, Adam, raise thyself up
And seekest thou swift brotherhood,
In damnation and the cup
That thou hast drained dry of its blood!

Adam, Adam, fear not thy shame,
Fear not the wind that carries thee
Into strange places, thou art the flame
Of fortune and of sorcery.

Adam, Adam, thy flesh is bold;
Thine heart hast run its course of lust.
A mirror of thyself, behold,
Is what thou seekest in the dust!

Adam, Adam, hide not thy tears
For this sweetness, come to pass;
Thine is the Kingdom that ye steers
'Twixt thine Angel and Abyss!

Sprite:

Ah! 'tis like a broken bone
That love disgraced, before it fell
To find its roots are firm in Hell,
Where two mortal souls are thrown.
For the great adulteress hath begun
The unison of the moon and sun,
And its fulfilment shalt be done:
Hark! how the whore was saved and won!

Barry Van Asten

The Veil Of Eden - Part 6

Part VI - How The Whore Was Saved And Won

Lilith, on Her mighty air
Hath led the way through darkness, where
She lay Her flesh and cast Her spell
And showed man mortal, lusts of Hell.
In dream, spoke She unto the son
To show the Whore both saved and won.
And She sang of the mysteries that unite
The eternal darkness and the light.
For the Lord of Night sits oft' astride
The infernal sadness of His bride
And blasphemes nature with His lust
To abide with devils and with dust.
His bride, the Whore, sick to Her breast
Found no ease in sleep nor rest,
Till one night, in the leafy shade
Came footsteps nearer, unafraid,
For 'twas the Lord of Day, that came
To witness Night with Whore in shame.
And in Day's hand a mighty sword
Was drawn and raised without a word;
'Twas thrust into the heart of Night,
Thrust with all His regal might
That split the Lord of Night in twain -
From head to toe, the Night was slain!
And as the thunder clouds rolled by
The Lord of Day looked to the sky,
While Whore sang sweet beneath the beast
Of Night, to gaze on Her saviour priest.
And She rose and danced and kissed His feet
With gentle kisses that were sweet.

Whore:

My Lord, my Lord, this very night,
Day hath turned my darkness light!
I who loved each maid and man
With all the skill of an artisan;

I who conjured man from boy
And dashed his dreaming with a sigh,
For 'twas the love that carried me
Into the doomed realms of devilry.

Lord Of Day:

Thou art the harlet of the world, it's Whore;
The fount of all splendour to adore!
Tho were shameless before all men,
Returned to shame and shame again.
Through the spring and summer air
Did'st thou in thy purple, perfumed lair
Stain with blasphemies, thy cup
And bid the goat god drink it up!
Autumn, winter, came and went
And still thou stolest thy sacrament.

Whore:

O how mine womb sings in the night
Sweet songs of love and songs of fright!
For I am but an instrument of man's desire,
And man is but a stringed bow to my fire.

Lord Of Day:

O, my thrice-blessed daughter of Hell
That hath sighed through aeons...I cannot tell
Why my path hath led me here
In priestly mock that's thread with fear.
For I gaze upon thy limbs that wrought
Joy to life and death, unsought.
And I ache with passions, born anew,
For thou see'st, I am but mortal too!
And here, beside the Night in twain,
He of dark appetites and of pain,
I hunger thine unnamed caress
That foldeth fear within thy kiss.
O harpy of infinitesimal lust,
Thy body is as dust and dung;
A chariot of disgust that must

Wield by magic, thy foul tongue.
Crescent form and lissome limbed:
Thou hast seen the bloom of midnight dimmed!

Whore:

Nay my Lord, for see, I blush.

Lord Of Day:

How I long to hold thee near, and crush
Thy soft bruised flesh, and kiss it sweet,
And feel thine heart upon mine beat.
For 'tis madness that within me lies
And yearns to thine cup that destroys.

Whore:

I see thine passions runneth deep:
Thine sting of holiness doth sleep!
Mine change was swift - see how it turns
Unto Whoredom's grip that burns!
My breasts are ripe with motherhood
Where beauty's flame hath flickered in;
Veiled with roses and with blood:
I hath long been the Queen of Sin!
Mine limbs doth ache, mine heart be tired;
Mine flesh is soft, yet weak and sore.
Flames of passion hath I fired
In this sacred vessel known as Whore!
Beggar, Prince, wench and King -
To all hath I sworn my lusts to sing!
By streams hath I lain with beast and brute;
To poets, strummed soft on lyre and lute.
In chambers hath I soiled with bliss
Mankind's threefold consciousness
That unlocked the gates that case the womb
To reveal the glories of the tomb.
A flower, cursed and midnight, dead,
By morn shall resteth on his head.
With flames I coil and weep and sing
To the ecstasy of lust's everlasting spring.

But I see thou art cold to nocturnal pain;
Those tongues of fear hath dulled thy brain,
Yet wine is sweet! My Lord, cometh near,
Be ye not afraid of regions drear,
And when next thou see'st the sun goeth down
Thou shalt bear the sceptre and the crown!

Sprite:

Child of thy bowel, the war is near won:
See'st how the moon lookest to the sun!

.....

And the Lord of Day remained all night
In the arms of Whoredom, painted white
As the pure snow driven, soft and deep
Upon abominations that will not sleep.

Whore:

O my Lord, how art thou weak;
How art thou senseless in thy reign.
Thou hast planted wisdom on mine cheek,
I hath invoked horror in thy brain,
And defiled the holy seed of man
To bronze his passion in the womb
And sin unto the Holy Lamb.
Yea! I hath sheathed his purple plume
In depths unutterable, till it blooms
Where rose and lily fold as one.
And limbs are still in crimson tombs
Now the dark God's work's near done!
But hush, dost thou not hear mine womb burst
Into song, now quenched of thirst?

Sprite:

Harketh! dost thou hearest the moan of Hell
Rise in triumphant madrigal?

Chorus:

It be the solar rays of light:
It be the lunar washed of white!

Whore:

I am the horror of thy bowel;
I am the obscene whorings, come
By fragrances both fair and foul,
For I am corruption and the sum
Of man's extension into shame,
That shall by fear and bliss, enflame
Thy brain, by copulation's bud
And disintegrate thy nakedness
And giveth thee to brotherhood
In the excreta of excess!

Barry Van Asten

The Veil Of Eden - Part 7

Part VII - The Holy Place

Sprite:

And thus the tragedy is revealed:
Vir puris cunni - Adam's shield
That shineth golden, from afar
To light the darkness as a star.

Chorus:

Cometh, yea! above all this
Lies thy destiny. Thou hast seen
The sacred sword that lies between
Thine Angel and thine Abyss.
Goeth unto the realm of light
And kiss the apex of the night!

Sprite:

And by thrice moons was Eden rent
Of manhood's self-slain element!

Adam:

Eve, fair Eve, be thou not afraid
Of God's cruel wonder - night and day
Where sin and shame in the same shade play.
Oft' I hath seen its beauty laid
Upon a tear-stained marble mount
Within the sanctuary of unrest;
Where forest beasts lie breast to breast
And taste of knowledge from the fount
Of life and death. But tremble not
At the sword of light I wield,
For hath I not this golden shield
To reflect the agony of Eden's rot?
And changed, thus far, I must retreat
Unto the dark forest, and there find

A love that be not of thy kind
That gives mine flesh to comforts, great.

Eve, fair Eve, knowest I loved thee,
Yet now, cannot I, my sweet, conceive
How born of Adam's rib, my Eve
Should'st be so blind she cannot see
That God, in all His grace, that blessed
And gaveth man breath, created pure,
Should'st fasten woman to some fleshy core
And wake the elements from their rest.
O dark this love, and of God's flock
Hath come by different waters, gay;
Hath wished the gentleness away
And sought the pains thou did'st unlock.

Eve:

O Adam, weep not for thy sighing,
O Adam, curse not the unknown night,
For I see the day upon thee dying
And darkness where there once was light...

Adam:

Hush! for the ache of flesh is pain:
I desire mine maker's hands again!

Eve:

O Adam, I hath long here dwelt
And known thy pains and always felt
That what thou seekest is wrong by God:
Thou treadest not the path He trod!
I fear for thee and almost wish
Thou had'st thy way with eager flesh,
For I cannot giveth, all ye seek:
I cannot offer shame my cheek
And lie with sin. O what thou art
Hast wounded me within mine heart.

Adam:

O Eve, fair Eve, I am strong, yet weak,
Thou hast all within thee that I seek,
Yet I asketh thee not, for truth it be,
Mine body will not yield to thee.
And I am cursed to walk alone;
To shame myself before God's throne.
As mortal to immortal, met
To find His liquid gaze is set
Upon the flesh that breadeth shame:
Upon the body without name.
This in mine heart, shalt not be moved
Till unalterable love is found and loved!
I must away to solitude
And retreateth from this painful mood
And give mine lusts a stronger bough
To shelter fancy's fear of now.
For I hath buried the lone star of desire
Deep in the whiteness of the snow;
I hath felt its burning light expire
In sorcery, and sleepless, I go
Unto the sword of Liberty's light. I give
All that I hath that I may live!

.....

And Adam was wrought with lust
And rage and sickness,
For the sweet perfume and
The darkling caress.
And great citadels of shame were his
Shadows erect in the Abyss.
Yet what untold horrors lie in wait
For Adam on the path of fate?

Serpent:

O fate, draw back thy bow
And sing, sing long thy virtuous note
That purity's thought cannot know
For thou art ever concealed and remote.
In thy bleak simplicity - tremble

And let thine arrows pierce
Unto man's universe and dissemble
With actions subtle, swift and fierce.
Break the harmony that is sorrow,
Go, go with thy lustre, look
On man's dawn and man's tomorrow
Where thine arrows hath with beauty struck
The chambers of his dim lit reign.
Here be sadness, for the bud
Of spring rejoiceth long in pain -
Thy rose hath drowned in brotherhood!

Adam:

O mother earth, what pains I see
To carry this dread misery
That in me burns both day and night -
Lust, in all its colours, bright!
And in seasons pass, I alone:
Would'st to God mine heart were stone!
I lie in fate and lie with truth
For stars of Heaven be my roof
As onward unto welcome breast
Is my perfection and my rest;
Where strong arms gently fold around
The limitless wonders they hath found;
To feel the ache of thighs caressed,
Kissed by lips that hath never kissed.

Serpent:

O see the sun upon thee frame
The flowered passion of thy name.
This, thy music serves thee well
Before the throne of Raphael.
This, thy guiding light of Hell
Before the throne of Michael.
This, thy sufferings that doth swell
Before the throne of Gabriel.
This, thy heartache that doth tell
Before the throne of Uriel.

Adam:

'Tis myself grown dim, for I am dust,
Cursed by the ache of brotherhood's breast:
Wine be mine poison, bread be mine shame
And burn the flesh of sin with flame!

Serpent:

What devil this of thy construction?
Let nature's course, divine, compete -
To lie with death is thy destruction:
Thou must tasteth the bitter and the sweet!
Thy downfall? Never! thou art uplifted
Unto the rose of God, divine.
The scent of greatness, here hath drifted:
Speaketh not of bread nor wine.

.....

And his skin that longs for love anew
Shalt weary where desire breaks through,
And Adam in his loneliness
Shalt reflect on his lost gentleness.
But he is young and unafraid
Of what the Gods upon him laid -
The fear of man, the weight of God
That strikes night with His blasting rod.
Break Adam, break, all concentrated hate
For thy flesh and for thy fate.

Adam:

In fields of Eden will I dream
The hands that built me, slew me.
Through this foul sleep, I resteth not
Mine dark seed - O how art
Thou sighing for brotherhood...sighing!

Serpent:

Pity not ye man of sighing

For the old moon that is dying.
This thy Kingdom thou hast won:
Be strong! thus thine will be done!

Eve:

Mine womb be as the desert sands
Scorched by an everlasting sun;
Mine garden foldeth in mine hands:
No rose on the horizon!
Yet mine womb doth sing, though barren be,
For 'tis half the fruit of humanity.
Yea! life upon the earth - awake!
To beauty, to mine child - the snake!

.....
Epilogue:

On Eden's veil did'st man caress
The splendour of his nakedness.
The wine of life was his true goal;
The crushing arrows of his soul,
And that which stained God's pure creation
Was Hell's thrice-formed abomination.
For love had'st soughtest he the most:
His desire for the Holy Ghost.
His sword thrust to the heart of reason -
Thus was man's fall Eden's treason.
And faith in liberty and in light
Crowned by the dyad of the night.
Yet freedom cometh from afar,
Beyond the radiating star
That giveth truth unto the soul;
That giveth will to what we are!
And so in many splendid ways
Did'st man desireth of its rays
To light the Kingly regions, dim
O'ershadowed by the seraphim,
Who keepeth the secret of the fire,
Saddled with its strange desire -
But man is born to seek new things

In his earthly wanderings.
And now that man hath been ordained
Unto the highest sanctuary,
Let splendour in his heart be framed
By Love and Light and Liberty!
For he hath crossed that great divide
That separateth God from man;
He hath distilled pure from the void -
The universal organ!
Speech shalt flameth that within
And destroyeth that which lies without;
His noble brow shalt look on sin
With no shame, no fear and no doubt!

Sprite:

Looketh! see how man hurries in
To see his evil seedlings sprout!

The End.

Barry Van Asten

There's Something There

I'm an elegant sod, a chemical savant:
We're killers in flared jeans.
We are beautiful
When we're cutting worlds in half.

We strained through glass canons
At the moon that night.
Love was cremated in the hollows -
We're never safe to be around.

Drowning our Northern sorrows,
Stalking through the bars...
Below the surface we are far
From thinking kind things. We laugh,

And together we shuffle through our thoughts -
What has suddenly come between us?
Why this change in you and me?
But speechless, we sat and smoked in sequence.

Now, our dreams have come to nothing,
And my strategy, in its flawed process
Has collapsed by the stone steps
Where we are beautiful, once again.

Barry Van Asten

These Simple Things

Because she keeps me young and foolish
And does not ask for explanations,
We go, towards the one world that we know
With lips poised and pressed upon secrets,
Unstoppable in our own absorption.
But in all her craft - dull tenderness

Is consumed by this unchanging passion
That blots the world out with a stare
As we turn love's corpse inside out,
Only to worship at it's feet once more.
And unable to focus on what we have,
It is only the simple things in which we care.

But still I keep a little something near
Which I warm between fingers and thumbs,
Like some saintly relic or astral shrine
That looks back on our strange art that wove
Delights unfathomable to our love.

And with these simple things we feel
How this existence grinds us thin -
Love's minstrel without vocabulary,
That silent enemy in the veins again
Which overshadows what we have and
Transfigures what we can't sustain.

For something monstrous now has grown
To find it's strength with agile steps,
While somewhere, a couple, falling to bits,
Fall from inside - do you see?
Sighing and falling inside,
Were outside falling to bits.

And I want you in my world again
As I go thumping and shaping life.
I'll do what I'll do and go, I said,
If only these simple things would remain.
But dearest, we have said awful things,

And I will never leave you while there's
Still hope within.

Barry Van Asten

These Things We Forget

Man, in the prose of life,
Where only memory can contain
The fragments and fibres of our ruin;
The importance of dates and their meaning.
Where the impressions of song gave us something;
Of horoscopes, of twilight, of dreaming,
Like the passing into that which we have known.

And I followed a pathway through the marsh
Describing things in the language of her birth:
Ravens, cow-parsley, buttercups...
Love's universal tongue never stops.
But feelings then were something secret
And only in memory do I find her now
Amongst the echoes of the past I used to know.

Yet, what passions still might fall
As we distance ourselves once more in speech?
Between the remembered and the forgotten,
Where only the necessary shall remain...
And this dark momentum of past destroyed,
Where life unresolved, and for all that,
Time accepted now will stay.

But what simplicity has begun
To lie only in memory's broken beams?
Am I to remain here, dismantled and dumb
With love always to mean more than it seems?
And what awful hour nears? Time's honour!
That in lighter moments and calmer days
Finds all things gone which once were ours.

And these things we forget,
Like the instances between us,
Governed by love's viewless ways
Where the noise of time bleats, bleary-eyed,
Devouring the chronicles and space
Between pleasanter moments and measures:
Sees itself, yet beyond can't pass.

Barry Van Asten

These Wretched Feelings

These wretched feelings I conjure
Only darkens the soul with regret;
This requiem; this Rubicon of rue -
These wretched feelings! I conjure
Sadness in eyes so blue,
Wanting more than this, to forget
These... wretched feelings I conjure
Only darkens the soul with regret!

Barry Van Asten

Things, Shape And Change

Not one atom of her do I know -
It makes a Tartarus of my pains. I'll go,
Quick and crooked as a grey ghost in rhythms
That boom to the beating of brave decisions.

And the things that we said yesterday
Will return in their own unstoppable way
To shape this devotional act of ours;
To haunt us with words that creep through the years.

And in the seven world, she is the wind
Where I am the other world's calling.
But I cannot see past my twenty-ninth summer
Or the flicker of the old world's glamour.

While stammering through my introspection:
I am dumb in my disappearing origin.
And love will bleed, where it has tumbled
To the great mechanism of the dead,

Gazing like Narcissus at the watering hole
To find love a shadow of his own soul
And the calamity of passion too much to bear
On one so young that lingered there.

Yet, we dreamt beneath the deep and dark meandering
While inside our hearts the universe was falling;
Locked in strangeness, surprised in our skin:
We are minuscule in our momentum within.

But history is awakened and made for twisting -
My heart sleeps in the fold by the lake's light, drifting.
And smiles of alabaster, return lipless grins
Stretched over dreamt isles - asleep in our skins.

Barry Van Asten

To Aimee

It lives and dies - but who can tell
What lease of love life grants us well?
The delicate touch of affection, given
By a pure heart: the light of love, that's driven
In the wonder of soul, with you, in me
And the bloom of love in its infancy.
The rapture; the look of tenderness
Exchanged between us in that kiss!
Your hand in mine, I cannot forget
In an eternity of age and weariness, set
Upon my heart... to glance upon your grace
Where gentle eyes looked long upon your face...
And in the embrace, your lips upon me, fell,
And I reeled in eternity, under your spell!

Barry Van Asten

To Foyers

By the Loch, the dead lie easy,
Masked by the veil of world's clay;
Eternally thrown to strange spaces
In the mists of hearts gushing away;

Away into a stone enclosure
For all time to stand and declare -
In the madness of the moon that outshines me,
An ogre of enchantment lies there.

And the great pagan gods of old
Shall tremble at the dark storm's force
That shakes through the woods and the hills,
To pulse with the waters course.

Yet what menace of years still haunts?
What elements of ritual press near?
The pilgrim journeys far, and strays
For something evoked and eternal lies here.

And those eyes peer from the shore
To thunder through ruins and roll
Onwards, into after-realms, and fall
Like a great beast at the brute of the soul.

And I will build you a garden
Out of ivory and stone,
By the meandering shores of Loch Ness,
For love and legend and time gone!

Barry Van Asten

Tomorrow, The Sun...

Tomorrow, the sun will shine
And look upon our hearts, as we
Build together, a sacred place
To consecrate our love upon;
A secret bower in a garden
Where roses sweet in fragrance grow...
A sunlit pool where we may linger
And share the happiness that we show.

And you, my dear, my vision of love;
My angel, how our passion has become
A serenade and seduction that yields
To the bright dawn of another day,
Where the wonder of two souls can see
The beginning and the end, as one!

I adore you lips, my May morn Queen
And the wilderness that lies between
The passion and soft touch, where we
As one true spirit for eternity,
Peer lovingly into the unknown,
Guided by someone we know...

And still, with tears in your eyes, we kissed
And explored the strength of love between us!
And I will follow you into the light, I said,
Into the magical world that you create,
For it is you, my love, my love it is you...
It is you, and I won't leave you, for we are one,
For every tomorrow and every sun!

Barry Van Asten

Troubled By Time

To the memory of A. E. Housman.

Born, in the year of Darwin's 'Origin',
Where secret worlds of unrest grow;
His inward lips were tenderly pressed
Over the lines of Juvenal.

His passion: silent - humanity's ache
Under the touch, lies far away...
And in the night, there is no sleep
To stamp over the angles of each day.

Words lived, yet he was dead,
Caught in a season's oblivion.
His sombre thoughts were all but lost
On boys to which the war had won!

Ballad-whistling, yet still no-one,
For he would not stay...
His spy-hole on the liturgy,
Kept like photos locked away!

Now, he is going into rooms
Where his heart lies with the dead;
His romance found in Latin graves, and
All that need be known - was said!

Not wanting to remain, no,
Our poet-scholar built a tomb -
A small wound bleeds his sex away,
To flow like wine in printing bloom.

But how could a passing flower give
Life to old bones and dust,
When sorrow thought it fit to stay
And cauterize his lust?

Barry Van Asten

Unreachable Now

Too late in the forest, sunken and dumb,
Unable to penetrate beyond the track
Where fallen leaves and dead things are burying
A universe of footprints in the Anglo-Saxon muck.

I thought: here, there's always been a space
And nobody knew why she came and said:
So you find somebody in these woods
Where only the march of death remains.

And yes, I'd say nothing, for she will come;
Come when all the woods are winding down.
And I'll say into the woods, (I'll whisper) -
I will not go again into that unknown!

Barry Van Asten

Venta Belgarum

We stood within that great cog of Christianity,
Hushed by its history, thick as honey...
The tapestry of faith hung heavy, in the Quire;
A walled mystery concealed by doctrine and desire.

Here, a revolution of thought, a battle of will
Echoes through time...and blood through veins
No longer flows on Magdalene Hill.
All things remain: the Itchen, the City Mill,
The College and the Pilgrim's Hall...

Sad to see wind chimes beside a grave:
The song of nature, unto a child, caught
In the soft moving of words, wind-sighing,
Sung in a dead dialect of thought!

From Morn Hill we marched on the South Downs;
The rain tore into us like Flanders' lead.
In the Cathedral, the shade of St Swithin
Sweeps over the stones...and Jane Austen
Frowned, as the crypt emptied its dead!

In the Deanery Garden we sat and gasped
At the measure of change; of people and places.
We climbed St Giles's Hill and paused on the past:
A medieval monster; a great limb of faith
Withstanding the tide of banal change
That consumed a way of life, forever lost!

Winchester.

Barry Van Asten

Wych Elms

Beneath the stones, shallow hearts press
The hours into their starry margins,
And the irregular tide of time turns
The years that are passing away.

The shadows in the swept gardens shake and cease,
Winding a heart in as it repeats.
And beyond the boughs, those remembered things,
Where childhood's ghost is interposing

It's secret world: bones of Roman loneliness
Root with slow life and remain;
Signposts in the green hush, where magnolia's
Lose their language and waste away

In dumb reserve... storm's electric menace,
Winding along the lanes again,
Under the cross-hum of pylons
As the steel-ribbed sun is setting.

Wrists of ancestors make a wilderness
Under the pale beam where we wander,
And in the dark woods something dreadful sleeps,
As love careers into view and slips away.

Barry Van Asten

Your Image

Your image, painful and unsteady,
Caught by the curve of dawn's light;
And not thinking, I whispered your name
As the fragrance of you fired my thoughts.

And your name, like a beautiful bird
Flew from my still and simple breast
Into the sad swirls and mournful hours
As I stood, like a silver cage, waiting...

But why does my tired heart sing so sweet
Like a slow waltz in everlasting dream?
These beating rhythms rise and fall, in vain,
Only to disappear at end of day...

Cornfields compressed and coppices bare;
Morning mist on water, curls,
Wheeling behind the blue hills, where
The moon is quietly sliding...

But your image, still vague and calm -
Yesterday's ghost in the mist again...
And you don't know what it costs for me
To live in the light with your image!

Barry Van Asten