

# WIND SONG

Poems

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For my wife Deloris.  
Her constancy, strength, and love  
lift and inspire me.



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## Wind Song

*“Drought May Have Killed Sumerian Language”—  
Headline from LiveScience.com*

The voice of language, wind song,  
scatters its notes across the score of time.  
Flickers of thought that flash across the nerves  
translate the impulse into sound and word,  
as thunder in the clouds gives lightning voice.  
Then energy to matter, word to flesh,  
as writing coalesces into form.

Lascaux’s Old Stone bestiary  
charges out of darkness  
from the dim past, ancestral signs.  
From pictographs and hieroglyphs  
to cuneiform and script,  
Aleph to alphabet,  
from signs to semiotics.

Dirt scooped and shaped into tablets  
then inscribed with wedges of cuneiform,  
the parade of patterns, the epic deeds  
of Gilgamesh, now crumble into dust.  
Desert-scoured hieroglyphics obliterated  
like Braille beneath the fingers of the wind,  
the prayers to Aten, celebrations of the kings  
now whisper on the dunes.

From reed-pressed sheets of papyrus  
to stretched and smoothed pages of vellum,  
flashes of thought press onto fragile film.  
Essene Scrolls buried and hidden from all  
but the corroding touch of mortality and time,  
the word made fragile by the shifting sands.

The voice of language, wind song,  
scatters its notes across the sands of time.  
The modern text, now digitized  
and stored on disks and flash drives,  
is saved to strips of silicon.  
Our thoughts and consciousness upload  
to drifting I-Cloud memories.

## Cantus Naturae

Inconstant breath, the wind across the reeds  
touches the leaves, the vegetative voice,  
untranslatable whisper to our ears.  
I cock my head to lapping of the waves,  
the sibilant *sotto voce* on the rocks.

Enigmatic as the Sybil, the universe  
mutters a cryptic message, semaphore.  
As pulsars, galaxies, and quasars flash  
their codes, the notes of chaos from the edge.

I crouch between and listen to the song  
from quarks to quasars, complicated chords,  
the notes unrecognizable: the trills  
and grace notes of some score, the mode unscaled,  
a song, the final measure unresolved.

## Feeding the Buddha

Hotei the laughing Buddha,  
the spirit of generosity,  
sits serenely beneath the feeder  
among butterfly bushes.  
I offer sunflower seeds, millet, and nuts  
and place a peanut on his head  
like the sudden idea of a legume.

His enigmatic smile, equanimity unchanged  
through seasons, through snow and summer heat,  
beams his compassion.  
Before his chubby toes his devotees,  
birds and chipmunks, accept the offerings.  
Gray doves, meek as nuns, perform obeisances,  
bowing small heads in gratitude,  
intoning cooing mantras.  
Cardinals, crimson as their clerical namesakes,  
wear ironic bandits' masks,  
as their staccato awareness protects.  
Crows, stern Zen abbots, chastise  
the congregation, the flock of novices.

A chipmunk perches on the Buddha's head  
peanut held between prayerful paws,  
like a haberdasher's mindful offering.  
Hotei with a chipmunk and a peanut on his mind  
smiles unperturbed by the absurdity.

I sit still as zazen, sharing the creatures' communion.  
My smile, beneficent as Buddha's,  
I beam to furred and feathered beings  
as they bow to Hotei  
and to me.

## Danse Poetica

Seven veils, diaphanous, conceal,  
    reveal through whispered silk  
        the swirl of images.  
Her flashing glance entices.  
    Metaphors,  
the flow of lines,  
        cadences of syllables,  
the swish of sibilants:  
    sensuality, simple and complex,  
dances like swaying trees  
or Krishna's whirling maids.  
Symbols tempt and tantalize  
    to tease the reader.  
In rainbow hues each scarf  
    wafted and dropped  
    as shades of meaning float, revealed.  
Plies and pirouettes en pointe,  
    she swirls in sacred Dervish dance.  
Her patient devotee  
    bows whispering over welcoming sheets,  
as verse by verse,  
        the muse with coy seduction  
    stands revealed in naked splendor,  
blissful epiphany.

## **Feather**

Barred feathers, rigid fluff  
uplifting flight of fancy.  
Eagle, hawk, a raptor  
floats beneath the clouds.  
Sharp eyes, talons, and beak  
plummet to the earth.  
The furry prey scurries  
unaware of feathered death descending.

The quill that hovers over  
the sheet of pristine paper  
descends, brings consummation  
in the force of poetry.

## **Christmas Bizarre**

At the Ag Center among the crafts and Christmas ornaments,  
the bows, the wreaths, the crocheted scarves,  
the poets' tables huddle.  
Like the last outpost of culture,  
we crouch behind posters and books,  
piled like sandbags before us.  
Fragrance of pine, tinkle of ornaments,  
a metaphor for forests of conifers,  
icicle-draped, somehow transformed  
to wreaths and mantle garlands.

Shoppers clad in Christmas sweaters,  
like peddlers carry purchases of painted gourds,  
stained glass, and pottery.  
We offer our literary wares.  
Occasional curious passersby select slender volumes  
like ripe fruit at produce stands,  
read cover blurbs, flip through pages,  
replace on stacks with quiet smiles.  
We nod like monks requesting alms.  
A pony wearing jingle bells and antlers passes by,  
led by a Christmas elf.  
They are less an oddity  
than poets selling books  
among the kitschy crafts.



## Circles

Our lives revolve in cycles, end on end:  
the days, the weeks, the years an upward gyre.  
Enumerated moments, multiplied,  
divided, added, calculate a life.  
Like ripples radiating on a lake,  
concentric circles spreading shore to shore,  
our waves thus intersect as, wave on wave,  
expanding arcs of energy extend.

Augustine's image of divinity,  
Euclid's perfect geometric form:  
circumference equi-distant points revolve  
around a point, inscribe eternity.  
Our formulas thus measure circles' space:  
the ratios of rationality.  
And yet, our calculations' numbers fail.  
Our compass wobbles, circumscribing space.  
Irrational, the ratio of Pi:  
mysterious paradox of math defines  
the limits of our rationality.

Our calculated cycles emanate  
from Einstein's pointless point in space and time:  
Our rippled lives, not measured or defined,  
and yet complete in circularity.

## **Dark Dreams**

They walk along the darksome boulevard,  
devotees of Eros and Cupid's broken dreams,  
where shattered hearts lie, glittering, jagged shards  
and Venus' love meets Plutus' lustful schemes.

As dark desires prowl the urban night,  
the nymphs and satyrs haunt the shadowed streets.  
Beneath the garish glow of neon lights,  
illuminating passions, indiscreet.

