

1  
2  
3  
415 JULY  
5**WRITING**  
6I shall seize what silence  
7and absence offer  
8and listen  
9as I tell myself  
10to the other  
11listen to the other  
12and hear her  
13tell herself  
14to me  
15  
16In departure we find  
17salutary release  
18that essential escape  
19the other plane  
20virgin and vacant still  
21free of frozen thoughts  
22and a heart grown numb  
23to have then each sense alert  
24bared and keen  
25freed from trivia  
26  
27I take in each smell  
28with my whole hand I push I palpate  
29I press, I seek out the bone  
30seek the muscles find  
31nerves viscera vessels veins  
32arteries and ducts I press  
33pinpoint the pain  
34where the brain raises barriers  
35I press harder still  
36until tears flow and surrender follows  
37  
38Nothing more  
39nothing  
40but the bright gaze  
41keen and uncompromising  
42there  
43only  
44in the silence of the cave  
45lies that impulse of sincerity  
46telling talking of what is true  
47we will walk resolutely once more that same path  
48until we drive out arrogance  
49until we unmask the arbitrary within us

50confront ourselves in our true light  
51and thus present what is pure  
52calm caring and patient  
53in the humility of paths  
54trod together  
55

56  
5716 JULY  
58**ROOTS**  
59Fire  
60full roots  
61roots aflame  
62Smoke  
63hidden roots  
64roots in dark clouds of smoke  
65Ashes  
66elusive roots  
67roots in ashes  
68Earth  
69missing roots  
70roots flung into the wind  
71Alibi  
72alibi roots  
73without roots  
74And again alibi  
75roots without soul  
76my roots  
77so remote  
78multidimensional  
79so dubious  
80my roots undone  
81by the least breath of wind  
82Fear grips me  
83my name is no more  
84my footsteps upon the tree  
85where it lies on the ground  
86sink  
87And at the frontiers  
88roots without  
89roots without ties  
90  
91Seeking  
92not seeking  
93wishing  
94not wishing  
95needing  
96neither needing  
97nor desiring  
98the void is the loam I feed on  
99the sky my mineral salts  
100can you hear me  
101in the mountain  
102in the ocean  
103serene  
104you as I know you to be

105so sure  
106the cordyline by your door  
107as I saw you  
108your graceful movements  
109inscribed in the land  
110Kanak your roots  
111and my roots in embers  
112together sketch a faint horizon  
113and our breaths become one

114  
11517 JULY  
116**THE OTHER**  
117Fix your eyes on the distance  
118on a mountain's side  
119as if it were your heart  
120let the wind cool you  
121forget  
122the moment will come again  
123of the vision  
124that awareness without artifice  
125of the other  
126  
127Have you found the time  
128to lift to your lips  
129the palm  
130that lay upon your skin  
131unannounced  
132such world-awareness  
133can draw a whole host of beings  
134of names impossible to forget  
135of others never spoken  
136of faces  
137of feet deep in dust  
138  
139Come suddenly one evening  
140the other will  
141neither be your death  
142nor disquiet to you  
143merely  
144the nagging thought that you are alone in the world  
145with these others  
146my salvation and the ground  
147 I have touched  
148together we shall be the other's  
149other  
150and then we will know  
151being  
152for each passing second  
153other than fear  
154other than domination  
155other than power  
156other than rape  
157and the burned hut  
158and the eyes red with blood  
159other than the hatred  
160of the barricades  
161the ambushes  
162the slaughter

163the tears  
164and the blood  
165that other here  
166the soul  
167as it breathes  
168calms the body  
169and embraces beauty  
170for it is the foam  
171of the breaking wave

172  
17318JULY  
174**DEATH**  
175To live for the day  
176without ever allowing yourself  
177to steal or borrow  
178to feel fatigue or despair  
179to admit you have lived  
180to read Neruda  
181and then go off  
182to take the long last road  
183like so many others gone  
184after so many years  
185of refusing that dreaded silence  
186of fighting of falling  
187of victories  
188of joy  
189of periods of peace  
190of existence  
191in the face of foul oppression  
192To keep your gaze  
193high  
194and know you have not let yourself down  
195for any reason  
196the silent path  
197of love and compassion  
198the insistant will  
199to remain human in the face of the beast  
200  
201To leave  
202having read  
203Machado Li Po  
204Omar Khayyam  
205*Akhmatova*  
206Jimmy Hendrix  
207Buckley father and son  
208at Bu Raï  
209the gaze of the old man  
210to cross with him one last time  
211the final mountain  
212and leave still loving  
213stones and sand  
214that ground from which the children disappear  
215To have raised your voice  
216denounced what is unacceptable  
217rejected the easy chains  
218and submissive silence  
219when it seemed the only way  
220

221To leave  
222having read  
223the day as it dawns  
224on our friendship  
225Then dying is nothing  
226dying is not giving in.  
227



228  
22919JULY  
230**INDEPENDENCE**  
231What did I do today?  
232this morning  
233I crossed a part of the bay  
234right at the southern end  
235in a small craft  
236the weather cool and calm  
237a light wind from the south-east  
238whispered discussions  
239of people nearby  
240yachts in regattas  
241on shorts legs/courses  
242sailing close to the wind  
243our craft can almost touch them  
244other vessels are already there  
245this morning  
246this sunny morning  
247a clear sky the public square  
248still in a festive mood  
249this afternoon  
250I did nothing  
251in Noumea  
252nor anywhere  
253on the other hand I did recall  
254when I crossed a large part  
255of my Northern territory  
256last month  
257Calm weather following a few days  
258a whole week  
259of storms  
260a patch of lawn  
261between the trees and the bare rocks  
262friends on the verandah  
263to write read and talk  
264and so await the moment  
265to rake the dead leaves  
266low tide releases odours  
267freeing the stomach of bitter *humours*  
268At night five nights in a row  
269a little rain keeps us awake  
270and Tao is at peace  
271And then on the last evening  
272the unexpected arrival of a friend from *Netchadt*  
273I had lost contact with him until this moment  
274this afternoon  
275last month  
276once again a peaceful stay

277  
278What was it  
279last night       *simply*  
280life  
281the declaration of independence  
282

283  
28420 JULY  
285BEING  
286First of all  
287grant us  
288your pardon  
289for having been  
290inhuman  
291for having been  
292with no other thought but to have  
293your land  
294to be thus  
295is like not being  
296Now  
297I want to be  
298to be seen  
299for what I am  
300  
301This is a special moment  
302the time to slough off  
303the old skin  
304to be skeleton  
305bone and cartilage  
306and create our humanity anew  
307  
308From Knowledge and from Compassion  
309will come the real being  
310elsewhere is so far away  
311we have our own lives to shape anew  
312  
313Now  
314let us confront one another  
315I see  
316your skin your body  
317the genealogies the *poles* planted  
318in the ground  
319and firmly planted there the old man  
320leading his people  
321  
322Tell me you see  
323the person in *the other*  
324become human once more  
325

326  
32721 JULY  
328**BEING ALONE**  
329What is this loneliness that kills  
330leaves us at dawn blind and bare  
331on virgin grass and and broken branch  
332What other loneliness saves us  
333when deaf to the echo of our souls  
334the days pass in the sunless lair  
335that urgency of being in the world  
336builds a bridge of rope and wood  
337above bottomless abysses  
338in which pile up our shed skins  
339  
340Free from inquisitive gaze  
341I clasp beauty in close embrace  
342I love and I sing without restraint  
343the moment I find myself again  
344  
345The hours of solitude feed  
346my thoughts tone up my muscles  
347send my breath deep down  
348my back and so see the ego  
349dissolve before their manifold presence  
350See fear dissolve in the beat  
351of the body's rhythmic writhing  
352simmering on the city's fringe  
353  
354To be alone to be true  
355excluding nothing  
356the heart welcomes the hand as it gives  
357

358  
35922 JULY  
360**THE LAND**  
361Tell me of your land  
362my friend  
363that imprint of your soul  
364tell me of your blood  
365your soul's source  
366teach me  
367to see my soul  
368when the path is not plain  
369show me in the song of the conch  
370the breath's birth  
371  
372Land that is yours  
373host land  
374land of welcome  
375other blood  
376land to beach on and moor to  
377land to wait on to pass through  
378land  
379to come and die in  
380to be be reborn in  
381land with no aim  
382except  
383simply living  
384since such is our destiny  
385on this earth  
386Kanak land  
387land for its own sake  
388land to breathe in  
389where to transgress  
390can mean combat  
391land existence  
392  
393Many-faceted  
394land  
395mine is a chunk of concrete  
396but in the breathing of the ground  
397through this transitory shell  
398I can feel rise through my feet  
399heart mouth and gut  
400up to the mountains  
401the age-old existence I know so well  
402

403  
40423 JULY  
405**WAITING**  
406I know  
407your waiting  
408I can see  
409it  
410ancient  
411come from afar  
412from the years without understanding  
413year of nothingness  
414your waiting  
415fills space  
416companions the circle's arc  
417sunlight and blood lost  
418I hear  
419you tell of the land of the Kanak  
420tell of hope  
421that to heed the other  
422will lead us to men in their new-found pride  
423two destinies in one  
424as we live together  
425  
426Let us be wary of closing our ears  
427to the words that tell  
428demand grasp give  
429take make  
430the Other Land  
431if we hear not we cannot breathe  
432waiting is cries  
433writing  
434simple everyday gestures  
435and listening  
436uplifts the heart a thousandfold  
437  
438The echo of your waiting  
439shows me my own path  
440I shall follow it  
441faithful  
442to my innermost urges  
443and my heart races  
444  
445many voices  
446an image of myself  
447on the face of her  
448to whom I listen  
449

450  
45124 JULY  
452**FEAR**  
453The clear blue tropical sky  
454will not hide forever  
455the uncertain gestures nor the stunted bodies  
456their strength gone  
457the fear of having all too often  
458submitted to terrible contortions  
459which an obtuse mind  
460dictates with the intransigence  
461of a camp warder  
462  
463The cloudless sky  
464conceals nothing  
465of the fear  
466felt those who have never expressed  
467the incomparable thirst for freedom  
468when having long known the muzzle  
469they speak out at last  
470in words inscribed  
471on the bark of the banyans  
472  
473No fear can free  
474no fear delight  
475the stranger  
476she whom I know not  
477the newcomer  
478he whom we know but too well  
479or too little  
480on whom is projected  
481my hell  
482on whom  
483is poured my hate  
484my fear of the intruder  
485As we breathe we become aware  
486we will rid ourselves of these bitter vapours  
487like cries of hate  
488if we gaze at the horizon  
489we look directly ahead  
490without threatening glance  
491nor convenient amnesia  
492nor fear that numbs the brain  
493To bathe then in the pure clear water  
494of our own home  
495

496  
49725 JULY  
498**BEING WITH THE OTHER**  
499Giving is not a sacrifice  
500is nothing to sacrifice  
501neither my love nor my friendship  
502nor the beauty I cherish  
503nor the heart  
504I surrender to  
505no sacrifice  
506in loving this other  
507who is suddenly before me  
508one evening of revolt  
509no sacrifice  
510hearing the waves  
511crash upon my skin  
512nor the family estate  
513nor the land I believe in  
514no sacrifice  
515in taking the time  
516to follow the other path  
517  
518The dead of the years of violence  
519have their blood the colour of earth  
520accompany those from the present  
521mingling with tears  
522love  
523and memory  
524thus to consign to darkness  
525selfishness  
526the passion for power  
527the AIDS of easy money  
528Let us one day offer them in joyful sacrifice  
529for they are but old skins  
530old rancour and resentment  
531old rifles old colony  
532which we fling at death  
533our aged body naked and exposed  
534ready at last to become drunk with perfumes  
535smelt but faintly the other night  
536  
537And so sacrifice sacrifice  
538for life is full of riches  
539truth is found in forgetting self  
540who in their home  
541will now speak of useless deaths  
542of wasted destinies  
543instead of torrents swelling to life  
544



545  
54626 JULY  
547**CREATION**  
548In a moment of great sorrow  
549God created  
550the universe and the earth  
551as we know  
552and then he returned  
553to his remorse  
554and we mortals  
555must take care of the rest  
556the earth and what goes with it  
557  
558And so we created everything  
559higgledy-piggledy  
560the beautiful the ugly  
561in one neat package  
562a complete list of all we got wrong  
563would be too long  
564too sad and sickening  
565and the list of good things  
566well that needs some thinking about  
567but there must be some  
568  
569As for us  
570we could tell of a few  
571from the crimes of colonialism  
572to the virtues of conscience  
573from the crimes of cultural extinction  
574to the virtues of friendship that transcends barriers  
575from the subtle evils of "I will teach you"  
576to the immediate benefits of "teach me your ocean  
577cosmogony"  
578and "all the rest" as stated above  
579  
580"Died out of an inability to create  
581a dance a song a text  
582or love or emotion"  
583that is the epitaph that awaits us  
584if we continue as we are  
585believing that we are unable  
586to have things as we would wish them  
587Man takes care of the rest  
588and of himself first of all  
589what an exciting thought  
590that we might assume a little ignorance  
591in welcoming the words of the other  
592

593  
59427 JULY  
595**LISTEN**  
596Silence pursues me  
597even to what I hold most dear  
598my mind in tatters  
599I listen  
600to the sound of our mountains  
601as they tell me of my life  
602At peace now  
603I listen  
604to the whispering of the wind  
605between the walls  
606grubby walls each with its tale  
607each tagged with graffiti and covered in cracks  
608between early morning  
609and the anguish of certain nights  
610I listen  
611to the occasional sudden sound  
612soft or resounding  
613from the suburbs to the north the shanty towns  
614or the bays in the south  
615to those many sounds  
616the piles of stones  
617simulating symphonies  
618then lapsing as if surprised back into silence  
619the many mindless words  
620sound common sense and words of wisdom  
621which are but a single  
622unchanging heap  
623of rusting rubbish  
624that will not die  
625  
626Through my lips through my footsteps  
627through my entire body  
628and the pores of my skin  
629I listen  
630to the thousand and one words of our land already here  
631  
632As for those who are stubborn  
633still  
634a simple love  
635without character or thought  
636will bear them unfailingly  
637to the heart's heart

638  
63928 JULY  
640**HOPE**  
641To have hope  
642this day  
643and in the void  
644inscribe a name  
645or paint a face  
646an idea  
647a wish  
648another time another sky  
649no more than waking  
650the simple expectations of a day  
651heralded by the dew  
652on the bamboo by the gate  
653  
654Hope is that ability  
655to impose on absence  
656or on the fading day  
657a fresh vision  
658The sun that every evening  
659promises its return  
660which it announces as it sets  
661those moments of wild imaginings  
662our whole attention  
663focused on the moment  
664awaiting the next new breath  
665  
666To return  
667the children's gaze  
668without compromise  
669without hatred  
670a simple but sufficient hope  
671to see our land grow greater  
672made strong by our presence  
673and a virgin space  
674in which we can  
675invent a life for ourselves  
676  
677To read the prints left  
678by a thousand feet and bodies stretched out  
679on the white soil  
680of the day to come  
681to see there the many directions of the diversely-peopled land  
682summoned in silence  
683by the divers lines  
684of concrete bitumen and dampened earth  
685which each day  
686repel the void



688  
68929 JULY  
690**TO TELL THE TRUTH**  
691To tell the truth  
692that we might survive  
693to tell the truth  
694holding nothing back  
695to feel flow beneath the skin the tide  
696of life  
697too many eyes averted  
698too many looks of disappointment  
699  
700Who will come  
701to speak in our stead  
702no-one  
703so much the better  
704the field is free  
705and now we must occupy it  
706and live and hold within us  
707humanity as the ultimate end  
708and so what if the honest word  
709exposes us to those who delight in thinking  
710of the risks that we will take  
711walking barefoot on the broken glass  
712of our former lies  
713the truth  
714of a life  
715its body and memory  
716bared  
717today  
718which is no ordinary day  
719otherwise  
720how can we look in the face  
721those who will follow us  
722our children  
723to tell their bitterness  
724at having been deceived  
725by the arrogance  
726and other sorry masks  
727retrieved from other places  
728from the dead of other battles

729  
73030 JULY  
731**ELSEWHERE**  
732«Elsewhere exists»  
733  
734There exist elsewhere other meanings  
735there exist other doors  
736and other doors open  
737on other skies  
738I spend more time  
739hours and toil  
740reading the poet William Cliff  
741than those poets present here  
742he is as close to my heart  
743as those other itinerant writers  
744  
745Borders of our states  
746in the eight directions  
747states of consciousness rather  
748some immutable reality  
749To read humanity in each encounter  
750while letting the body  
751of my house open itself  
752to the planet's breath  
753  
754Open and vulnerable  
755without adornment or distinction  
756without waiting  
757for replies or precise directions  
758With just enough of the void inside us  
759to gently rest our simple hearts  
760on the swelling tide that they may float  
761to the frontiers of other worlds  
762  
763The eye laved with the salt of magical storms  
764to see that in the mirror of the beyond  
765there dwells like a kindly irony  
766the true heart of our immediate neighbour  
767

768  
76931 JULY  
770**TOWARD TOMORROW**  
771From a distance  
772it is true there are only  
773a few of us  
774packed skin to skin  
775on a few acres  
776of old earth  
777old sand  
778beneath a sky  
779too often mute  
780and for company  
781merely stones  
782that make no sense  
783Elsewhere  
784where we are called upon to go  
785our tenuous lives  
786begin to resemble  
787a journey from which there is no return  
788one of imminent death  
789so indispensable and with no guarantee  
790of a second birth  
791  
792Drifting during these days  
793on the ocean's face  
794the shadow of a memory  
795and my heart far from empty  
796it has snatched a few phrases  
797loneliness  
798and to love more  
799presence of the other  
800vigilance in the land of the living  
801

802  
8031 AUGUST  
804Before  
805leaving Sydney  
806I went and walked on waves of stone  
807over lichen large leaves and damp grass  
808on the ochre sand  
809which had worked its way among the dead branches  
810fallen from nearby trees  
811The sounds of our conversations  
812still echo on this swell  
813as it ends at Coogee  
814I heard in it confidences shared  
815when words and foam unfurl  
816foam light as the imprint of our lives  
817  
818And in the thousand waves that beat ceaselessly on the rocks  
819I hear already the well-known sounds of those we love  
820fill the silent spaces  
821lost in the hubub  
822that unfurls behind us  
823