

THE SPIRITUAL BEAT POETICS OF DAVID LIGHT

FANCY THAT!

Who knows but God is
some besotted sailor
gone into the night,
playin' his harmonica
or concertina

Who knows but
God's footprints
on the other shore
made all the stars



YEARS AGO YOU COULD FIND HIM ON BROADWAY AND 72ND STREET, hawking dollar jewelry. Now you'll see him teaching ESL to kids from seven countries in the Brooklyn inner-city schools, or caring for his elderly mother, living upstairs. Or walking his dog and three or four cats at two in the morning after writing himself into "a happy exhaustion." David Light, dubbed Anand David by his beloved teacher Osho Rajneesh, pours forth a quirky blend of humorous "fool-osophy," bold heart-truths and outlandish realities, spoken through the eyes and soul of a wide-eyed Dervish spirit. A "Hidden Poet," he writes volumes and volumes of unpublished work on his old Olympia typewriter.

As Editor of *The New Sun Magazine*, I last published his poetry in nineteen seventy-something; *Wild Heart Journal* is pleased to present his work again here, over two decades later. Still passionate after all these years: David Light.

I believe in the power of poetry to heal, to raise us and exclaim us. Poetry, at its most real, can be distilled, deep truth. Nothing can be more powerful than that, unless silence. Real poetry approaches silence and takes us along.

Me, personally, I love playfulness, I love space, I love poetry that breathes. I don't even mind poetry that sneezes as long as it's honest.

When I think of authentic poetry, poetry that connects head to great heart, I remember the Russian poets who moved me so, poets like Vozhnesensky, Yevtushenko, Yevgeny, Bella Akhmadulina, bella! And Vladimir Vysotsky. Before their Berlin Wall fell, I knew old Communists would have to give up, when I heard the vigor, the passion, the honesty, the bravery, the bravado, the braggadocio, the vulnerability, the sensibility, the male directness, the youth, the juice, the shout, the cry, the whisper in Vysotsky's voice. I knew that voice and knew it would wake up the generations!

The poet is spiritual messenger, keeper of the flame, a gatekeeper. Poets, real poets love so, they'd let us all in. And poets must die, die before they die, if they are to find their real voice. Like mystics...

What is a poet? Just a mystic singing, praying or reaching beyond prayer, love reaching beyond mind.

Everywhere, all over the world, I see the people who are naturally artisans bringing real beauty and a great unpretentious, direct celebration of life into spirituality. The world has had enough of sad, serious, utterly dry and lifeless religions, dogmas, creating a repressed and morbid, neurotic humanity.

Poetry is release! It's James Taylor singing You've Got A Friend. It's Pete Seeger's banjo singing with us, If I Had A Hammer. It's Odetta being Odetta. It's Woody painting Pastures Of Plenty. It's Judy Collins' love and longing being poured into Jacques Brel's The Sons Of...

Whether in music, song, song-sculpture, poetry-painting, dance, I agree with Osho, the arts are more and more becoming the religion of the future, how we naturally give thanks. We don't need to think our scriptures are the only truth. We don't need preachy belief systems. We make up the rules. We follow the inner voice, the honest inner voice that is poetry.

When I'm gone, just gone, into the poetry, it's as close to me as breathing. I know a great secret now. It's between poetry and breathing, breathing and healing, poetry-and-healing. I hyphenate now because I can't separate them.

I love a poetry that's daring, that's funny, that's earthy, that's human, that steps out of the way and paints it, or only asks to enter life.

Brother, poetry has been a friend my whole life. It has never deserted me, even when I put it aside for many months or even a year or two at a time. Like a naughty little boy, I kept sneaking back to it, often avoiding the dire pressing responsibilities of life, by staying up the greater part of many nights, and then being utterly spent the next day when I'd have to go in there and teach to these overenergetic kids.

Poetry has been a friend. Poetry has been a window. However crazy or muddled my own life became, just set me before the page and sooner or later all would become clear.

Poetry writing is the way I can make myself feel chipper fast. Poetry is the way I relax. It's funny. I relax but it can be so exhausting, too. Exhausting and exhilarating. When I'm playing, really playing, I often imagine I'm somebody like a leprechaun and go on telling myself jokes, or like I have three leprechauns sitting just beside me, egging me on, helping me out.

Poetry is the way I can visit the no-mind. Don't ask me what that is. That's asking too much. Poetry is not something the mind really can do. It's not the mind that manages. Poetry is what does me, or, rather, what undoes me. Poetry is not an affair of the head, the way it's mostly taught in colleges. The writing of poetry is a sacred act. It can be sacred. It can be sacred like Francesco di Assisi's poem-prayers. What a longing of love overtakes me when I read them.

Poetry can be written as prose, too. What is Tom Joad talking in Steinbeck's Grapes Of Wrath but poetry? Prose like Antoine de Saint Exupery's The Little Prince, that's

poetry. See, there's a simplicity that's so wide, so deep. There's not an unnecessary word, not a word extra, just right . . .

Yes, letting the poetry visit is sacred, it's grace. It's the music and silence and ease in poetry that takes us, that reaches and connects us with Universal Heart.

It's like that tenor sax player, blind, I think, blowing soulful-soft, clean and cool, cool and yet hot at the same time, blowin', blowin' easy in an underpass of Riverside Drive Park 'round two, three in the morning as I jog on by.

Poetry! The snapshot. The whole movie's inside the one love's glimpse.

I'm a poet. I'm a Universal Poet. I sing The Poet's Internationale. I'm a lover. You might see me turned to one corner in a crowded bus or subway, writing. I could be on line for an hour or more at the bank. Just give me a pen and paper and watch the hour fly. I won't care where I am...the others there may feel stuck, I'll feel free.



VAIN ATTEMPT

Thinking I was late for work,
I woke up in a blur
round midnight

Mistaking the cat's tail
for a dark gray sock,
I tried but couldn't get it on

THE MEETING, THE LINGERING

As our lady of
easy sighs
rolls her hips unto the sky,
the sky comes down,
comes close and
in slips the dawn.



When anyone writes with the attitude of lover, the wonder is that the larger love answers. I can wait years for the right words or just the right turn of phrase. I *have* waited years. I have honored knowing it was not good enough, not true enough. But while I'm waiting, I'm likely caressing, honoring the great memory of this heart-experience I'd share. The wonder is, if I wait like that, the right words always seem to find me.

As I wait, I go on watching. I watch, get lost and disappear. It's amazing! I go back and love lets me see more. I may be back in that redwood forest, waking up and feeling myself leaving, taken with the star-breeze. Though the room and windows are closed, I'm breathing that sky, testing it, I'm there.

The most meaningful thing is to honor one's truth. Honoring is everything if one's truly an artist. Friend, it's the honoring makes everything possible. As the Little Prince might say, the heart of the heart of your rose is all that matters...

I've become grateful seeing poetry now as a necessary failure. Knowing words are too small gives a great freedom. For whatever you, I, would say about the Mystery, the love, the life, it would always be too small. So what to do? Nothin'. Just chirp...I'm a chirper. I'm like a chirpin' cherub quietly bringing it to your ear. Once we know there's nothing to do, then there's nothing to do but celebrate.

It's not complicated. It's not serious. It's not a spiritual practice. Love. Love just loves. Love just loves to come out as poetry. And when love is full, it must touch. It must speak its truth, or dance its truth, or dance its words. When love is full, or overfull, like Zorba said, it must go out into the night under the stars by the surfside and dance!

More of David's poetry will be posted on our website. He would like to teach creative writing at the university level, and can be reached at (718) 648-3049.

