

I descended from the abused rock of the shoo fly complex of the
Sierras
Created by the old continent colliding with the ocean floor
Coast bound on Highway 20
From the edge of the old continent to the new
Past pillow basalt deposits at the Yuba River
Here crows circled back to settle on trees extruded amid stations
Bleeding the earth free of excess fluids
While the high altitude flight of geese
Skewered the compass rose impeccably
Not confused by the turbulence of the scavengers below
Past the Sutter Buttes miniature volcano
Visible far upwind, in the slack tide of crops and condos
Through the wetlands of gold rush gravel overflow
Past the volcanic ash hoodoos of Clear Lake Oaks
Listening to "Satellite of Love" left in the car
By my last ex-wife
Past Mt. Konocti with molten rock a few feet down
The sunset reflected in lavic light
Off the tan hue of Clearlake's waters
Clearly a shortcut through purgatory, heaven unreflected here
To the San Andreas fault at Manchester Beach
Refuge in the Franciscan complex of the coastal range

Living on the crest of the wave
Oblivious of the molten undertow
Of repressed discontent below
I hurried to her
Never stopping at official view sites bereft of view
Past an "Oasis" in foreclosure
And then at Elk similar respite
On the serrated edge of our ancient separation
But there in Lake County pushing the speed limit
Past desolate roadside stands of combustible intoxicants
Trying to see it all in abstraction
As an ocean current of subatomic stuff
In the equilibrium of gravity
Learning not to see the delineation so sharply
Whether rusted Rambler or volcanic remnant
But there at the Manchester Grange Hall
Rented by a magus of Java
Uncle Bill as maestro would have us see peripherally
So that we can get past this time
To wind and sky and broken buildings
And abandoned cars
All here just the same
Uncle says, "When you can see clearly

you are neither holy nor wise
just an ordinary fellow who has
completed his work."
But in Taostic wisdom he decided
To fall on the ice in Denver
And let us work out the circuit
Of our own actions and reactions
Remembering that he says,
"When you think like a human
you make human mistakes."
Just as a few days before
My third ex-wife also fell
Insuring that our son, born three minutes before his brother
Whom I'd brought to her there
Where the towers fell
Would find the compassion to forgive her
While I was viewing the hell of Ground Zero
Immense and bitterly sharp shards
Erupting from the depths of fears
And underground floors of submerged consciousness
Removed by fathers of fallen sons
Digging for meaning
Driven by memories

In an immense diabolically surviving blowhole
Amongst the lesser towers
Which never allow but a little
Of the grace of a sun in winter declination
While the ocean-filled winds
Freeze to a heart chilling temperature
Which no amount of fire retardant layers could temper
So that only a few genetically anointed
Could brace to a workday in that place
Acknowledged by the pre-dawn thousands
Waiting patiently to lighten a little
The load of uninsurable dread
While those bound fast by secondhand scripture, fearing the
Buddha's
Compassionate curves
Compounded the shards of their feared relativity
While they fixated on a mere idea of the pure
(For they have renounced likeness)
They clutched without tenderness mundane finality
Death is just the last word recited in a language they can't read
Foregoing the relative pleasures
Of the great Satan's liberations
Naturally washed onto the reefs

A SHORTCUT THROUGH

PURGATORY



The extension marking the edge of the new continent face lift
I'd noticed S. Groggins for sheriff-coroner
Over a hand-painted Studebaker proclamation
Pasted and peeling on a wall in the Collusa
Of the Sacramento valley's imperative of valley value and weather
There was Chick Montgomery's billboard
While I hurried for late Sunday service at the Ukiah Wal-Mart
No longer puzzled by the fury
Of those resisting the cultural mudslides
Of our embrace of stuff
Hopelessly bracing the toe of sliding value
-This is an obscure redneck description of a hill with no base-
-Remembering Sam promises the most for the least-
Hurrying on to the coast to say sorry
To an ex-wife determined
By her own genetic granite weathered
Into a surviving grus, finely filigreed by life

Of affordable depravity
They played video games and ate kosher pizza
Resisting Babylon's diminished evils
They unknowingly adopt the pimp's knowing sneer
They -with no internal messenger-
Reach too easily with similarly dulled imagination
For their true sweetheart, the Kalashnikov
Or casually pushing the controls
Into a final dive
Exactly mirroring the sinkpool
Of the weak minds they abhor
So the Taliban and the purveyors
Of cheap pleasures
Grope for each other
As perhaps long separated twins
Needing most of all
The mutual destruction of Ground Zero.