



Instruments for a New Navigation

Introduction - Nine Days at The Lake

The poems included here were all written at a November 3-12 residency at The Lake, the mythic final home of legendary artist Morris Graves. (The prose passage was not written at The Lake. One other poem from the *Pig War* project was not included in this selection.) The title of this collection comes from a series of sculptures Graves created. He created them to suggest a different perspective and these poems, in many ways, represent an alternative perspective as well, hopefully in the spirit of Graves' work and that of The Lake. A perspective that Robin Blaser would suggest includes "a spiritual chase" or Michael McClure a "hunger for liberation." I hope readers will get even the smallest sense of the consciousness of this remarkable place. While at the retreat it came to me that The Lake is like Monet's Giverny without the tourists. Surely The Lake, more than any of Graves' abodes, will go down as one of his most inspired creations.

During the residency, two book projects were completed: *Pig War & Other Songs of Cascadia* and *Haibun de La Serna*. When I finished writing the 99th haibun in the latter series, an eagle cried twice within ten seconds of the end of the composition process, one of the many remarkable signs that something magical was at hand during this visit, at this spot. An overused word, *magic* in our era may be the simple (but deep) connection to place, a connection that's our birthright, that has been the experience of many people throughout the ages and has been a special quest of mine long before becoming involved in exploring the bioregion some call *Cascadia*. One can't know their own self until they know where they are and are grounded there. So, in some respect, mission accomplished, but any conclusions are, as Sam Hamill would say, *provisional*. That I resonated with the persnickety Virgo idiosyncracies of Graves and his final home was personally illuminating.

To be concerned not with emails, phone calls or the toxic mundanities of life in the digital age, but with writing, tending the fire, taking good care of myself (cooking, yoga twice daily, daily walks) and getting to know Graves and The Lake better, was a glimpse of how life can be and how clear one can get with the right setting, inspiration and the profound morphic resonance which exists there. I will never forget The Lake, Robert and Desirée Yarber and all the critters from Joey the otter to the eagles, ravens, hummingbirds, redwings, Stellar's Jays, gray jays, deer, coyotes, dragonflies, Grandfather Redwoods and will (for good or bad) judge future residencies by this one. I

am grateful to all the people who made it possible for me to have this experience, including Robert and Desirée Yarber of the Graves Foundation, Sam Hamill and Jarret Middleton, Buffy and Joe Sedlachek, Halimah Collingwood, Sanderson Morgan, Stephan and Rashidah Solat and the Subud Arcata community, David McCloskey and most of all Meredith and Ella Roque Nelson. Without them no residency, no *Clues from Hell*, no *Howling Autonomy Sutra*.

With huge gratitude,

Paul E Nelson

N.18.13
Seattle WA

Instruments for a New Navigation

poems by Paul E Nelson

For Almondina

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94. Dilettante Periphery

Nothing is repeated: it just looks similar.

- Ramón Gomez de la Serna

& here at The Lake (Graves built) sunslip past cedartops that side tiny lichen-festooned islands & w/ yr head a certain angle here are “instruments for a new navigation.” Monet sd a finished work of art an “unreasonable pretension” & this unfinished work’s Cascadia’s Giverny more a monument to solitude (practice of inside) & grove of Grandfather trees date from the late T’ang era. No. Tourists. Ever.

“The dilettante periphery has so little to do but keep these things stirred up for their titillation” / won’t get the red meat of fotos nor see what light left on this Sunday of the thinnest veil becomes another tiny lichen-festoon’d island. (Iris island.)

Redwood canopy sways
backlit by Cascadia
azul - above Graves’
lake.

Nothing looks similar as this yearning for an *auspicious wind* / yearndeeep to abide *Securely Beyond Obstruction*, a sober puer-fueled invite to the *all pervading light* lit by horsetails & sword ferns, ciananthus & Italian marble, a soft path up & elevate the heart rate. “Here is the heart of this bulletin”

Clover grows in needles
dropped by Redwood trees on
the path to bench three.

& lie there looking up sure NOT to squish a banana slug & cd die there if required - give the dilettante periphery sumtin' to put in their pipe when they cd be re-sounding their own lost twin's broken hosannahs.

Homebuilding as
enlightenment practice
while citizens "tweet
& sleep through the wars."

6p - N.3.13
The Lake
Loleta, CA

Quotes:

- 1) Morris Graves
- 2) Claude Monet
- 3) Guy Anderson to Morris Graves in a 1957 letter
- 4) Morris Graves in a 1958 letter
- 5) Brenda Hillman

Morris Graves Mesostic

Consciousness assuming the foRM of a man
partial to sOlitude y ciananthus that side The Lake
under 800 y.o. Redwood gRandfathers stifle the machine age noise.
Consciousness assuming the foRm of a cup
chalice, snake, bIrd, moon, blooming flower or
lotus blossom breathing forth itS own birthing chamber.

Consciousness assuminG the form of an avalanche in which
no casualties, a foRest fire in which a single deer
mAy find safety in a mountain creek, in a
Vedanta Sutra, a Gurdjieff Hymn
playEd back by a
rapturouS vocalizer or a winter in Chartres or

Harlem. consciousness assuMing the form of a
purification rEtreat & banana slugs, pasta with meat
sauce, goat cheeSe, puer and a stolen peppermint
chocolate patty. ConsciOusness assuming the form of a
snake bathing in the light of the Snow moon, a querent
in retreaT from all the machine age
noise. *Evil Is*
mechaniCal. No pretending this is no vigil.

8p - N.3.13
The Lake
Loleta, CA
Quote from D.H. Lawrence

2) **Responses: a)** There is a Graves manuscript on display at the downtown Seattle Public Library the title of which might be *Silence Over-Worded*. To place the context, I'll reproduce it here:

Silence over-worded:--This is It--now--perfect--everchanging--illusory--.

We each project our Spirit's environment--private, apparently, beyond mind's comprehension--yet including the universe + its Humanity--indebtedness + responsibility within the knowledge that the "Creation" has not been created--the interplay of paradoxes which governs our subjective-journey-through Deity--our journey back from sense's-world-of nature to that conscious recognition that we are our undefinable Origin.

Only when conditioned by a "Vision of God," + its resultant detachment, does man significantly use the language-of-his-actions to praise his journey's environment-- + to worship the miracle-of-the-illusion of his consciousness seeking + finding Rest.----"Yes--so it is--so be it--Amen." All is Void.

From the title we get a sense of what may have come to Mr. Graves in meditation, or in a similar state, an effort to put words to the ineffable. There are many similarities in this statement to my own process and to the kind of process I have been investigating since before 1995, when the poet Michael McClure brought the Charles Olson essay *Projective Verse* to my attention. To sum up that stance toward poem-making I would use a Denise Levertov quote: *Form is never more than a REVELATION of content*. (My capital letters.) What it suggests is that, as artists, we can sing from our selves, or we can transcend that sense by a process of surrender to the divine, or what Graves calls *Deity*.

From the second line: "We each project our Spirit's environment--private, apparently, beyond mind's comprehension--yet including the universe..." I am reminded that the subtitle of Olson's essay: "Composition by Field" and the title of a lecture William Carlos Williams gave at the University of Washington in 1948 *The Poem as a Field of Action*. I believe that, in composing spontaneously, we allow ourselves to be vulnerable, open to impulses beyond the notion of one's "self" (certainly to a sense of self one would describe as "non-local") and that the resulting work is more deeply a projection of that self. McClure (again) once said *We swirl out what we are and watch what returns* in his 1974 poem *Rare Angel*. So the poem (or the

painting, sculpture, &c) acts as a feedback mechanism, similar to how a scale lets us know how effective our recent diet and exercise regimen has been. A sort of spiritual check-in. To have such a quest in one's own praxis renders typical American notions of artistic success somewhat irrelevant.

2 b) The second piece is a 1979 painting entitled: *The Great Blue Heron and the Great Rainbow Trout Yogi in Phenomenal Space, Mental Space and the Space of Consciousness.*

It is a triptych, as the title would indicate, and the images start as a fairly conventional painting, but then turn abstract and colorful. I am taken by this piece because of the three images, the progression in them and the title which (in my view) in part, shows us that since the advent of the camera, painting and art in general has been liberated from direct representation to more fully reflect deeper levels of consciousness and impulses below the superficial level. By the third panel reds, yellows and sky blues replace the blue gray pastels of the first two panels. In addition, the trout has appeared to merge with the head of the heron and a thick red brushstroke gives the appearance that the heron's wings, or at least one of them, is now flexed. The heron also appears to be looking on the opposite direction from the first two panels, suggesting the attention has been turned completely.

That artists in our age would still be satisfied with a praxis of copying nature, rather than getting in touch with the deep nature inside our deepest self, is one of the great mysteries to me. That there is considerably more color, action and energy at the deeper levels of consciousness is intimated here, at least in my view. That the images are iconic Cascadia images, at least the Great Blue Heron, suggest a deep sense of place, one of the attributes I seek to enhance in my own work. (Hence the focus on Cascadia and its history and culture.) That a view would change 180 degrees with such a focus, or depth of seeing, suggests that we can move to acceptance, gratitude and other deep levels of being by training ourselves to see what is deeper than surface level, that we should, in the words of Allen Ginsberg, be people who *notice what we notice*. The implication here is that one is given the opportunity to develop a deeper consciousness while here on this planet. It is our birthright, but is especially the calling of the true artist in these dark times of whole system transition. Having such a praxis grounds us and, in a humble way, provides a model for other creative seekers...

I have written extensively about the Organic approach in poetry. I think I have outlined here how I see the work of Morris Graves reaching a level beyond the self, allied in spirit with Robin Blaser's *Practice of Outside*. The levels reachable by transcending self are much more energetic than those available by staying within the heart and mind and certainly beyond the ego.

But there is an interesting anecdote about the process of composing this application. While I had gathered my materials on Morris Graves in preparation for sitting down and writing this, I had a Morris Berman book at my bedside, *The Twilight of American Culture*. On one or two evenings I wondered why I was reading this book when my work required that I more fully immerse myself in materials on Mr. Graves rather than this apparent sidebar. Well, lo and behold, there appeared a passage from Mr. Berman on one way in which we may get through the inevitable dissolution of the American empire and to a more just and sustainable existence, something that turned out to be quite relevant.

Mr. Berman has a chapter in the book entitled: *The Monastic Option in the Twenty-First Century*. He writes:

I have argued that we are in the grip of structural forces that are the culmination of a certain historical process, so a major change is not likely to be quick or dramatic; but individual shifts in lifeways and values may just possibly act as a wedge that would serve as counterweight to the world of schlock, ignorance, social inequality, and mass consumerism that now defines the American landscape. At the very least these "new monks" or native expatriates, as one might call them, could provide a kind of record of authentic ways of living that could be preserved and handed down, to resurface later on, during healthier times... we are *drowning* in information; hence, what is required is that it be *embodied*, preserved through ways of living. If *this* can get passed down, our cultural heritage may well serve as a seed for a subsequent renaissance.

Mr. Berman then quotes Basho:

Journeying through the world
To and Fro, to and fro
Cultivating a small field.

It is my own small field I wish to cultivate more deeply and it is apparent that a stay at The Lake would enhance that, in my view. As an author I interviewed said years ago, *if you do not see auras and wish to, hang out with people who do*. I wish to deepen my own artistic gesture and feel there may be no other place in Cascadia better than The Lake in which to do it.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Paul Nelson

Instruments for a New Navigation

Consciousness manifesting as a whale hunt dance shawl
or as an Instrument for a New Navigation. The age
that ended as humans entered Space

might have been ruled by machines.

A poem is not a machine, nor a noble human, nor an otter
 sending wavelets from Under the studio dock or from just beyond
 the horsetail or giant Members of the skunk cabbage
 tribe. "An odd blend of totemism, Art Deco and
 Nautical apparatus" might be consciousness
 manifesting as that but dressed as a bell ring. Consciousness
 manifesting as a "Strong whiff of the 19th Century."

Consciousness maniFesting as a reflection of the dominant
breeze On the lake
oR

an Ache to escape by water.

PreteNd this is not a vigil. This is
consciousnEss
manifesting as an oar in the Water w/ ripples reflecting

sun on the tiny island's lichen-besotted Wax Myrtle tree. In search of
another new tool for transcendence or to learn the
invisible language of birds. Redwing blackbird,
coot, window-ramming tit bush or nut hatch, consciousness
manifesting as a Gander in ecstasy,
a certain empathy for invisible natural forces but
are there
sure as Orion and the steamy puer leaves thrice steeped
in the hall of witness, going everywhere unimpeded in Southern
Cascadia November, fire quiet as "some half caught
telepathic message."

3:06p - N.4.13

The Lake, Loleta, CA, Quotes: 1 & 2) Barry Schwabsky, 3) Kenneth Rexroth

The Lake as P.U.D. (Personal Universe Deck)

Limitless	conifers	connote	the bioregion
we salute	as Cascadia.	But south	at The Lake
find	Wax Myrtle	lichen	-festooned
& reflecting	(telepathic)	constellations	made
by waves	created	by a row boat's	paddle.
Illuminated	insistence	in waves.	Better than
Otokoyama	free	from distress	and the
puer's	insistence	on the	genius
of desolation.	Honeymoon	w/ noble self	without
dimension.	Here a	freerange	sunbreak.
Hear The	Lake	as field	of reckless
Hosannahs,	as ritual	birdbath	for coots
& dragonflies	of symbols	that	annihilate
the apprentice	in any	querent.	Make a
postcard of	these	Redwoods,	or see a
swordfern	dreadlock	whose	"cutting"
suggests	a prehension	he yearns	to subdue
w/ care	& fire	intentional,	ritual
insistence	& the glass	crash of	ancestors.
Consciousness	is a	pacifist	ember
or an	eyebrow	or veiled	iris
who'd	bloom in	praise of	Avatamsaka
process	or an	otter	who'd
double as	wood	if not so	slick.

95. Sending Out Tendrils

Skulls in museums are laughing at their labels.

- Ramón Gomez de la Serna

To label is to control & control is to dominate & who can dominate when that which does not rot wills itself through skulltop out of this “sigh between two mysteries.” Creator paints The Lake w/ swirls of duckweed survive wade of single file coots, otter trips & seemingly impervious to wavelets, same that mirror Monday morning November Southern Cascadia sun up the tiny island’s lichen-festooned Wax Myrtle. (Wax as mask of fat, *contains the life-substance, hence its use in witchcraft. Myrtle as joy, peace, tranquility, happiness, constancy, victory... the feminine principle... a vital essence and transmits the breath of life.* A more apt symbol for the Master of the Lake may never be met.)

& so hang on
to the morning duckweed swirl long as we can w/o possession, laugh out the top of our skulls after latihan, break from inane demands of the digital world, product of this “military contaminated age.” In its place firs and lichen lichen lichen. Tiny islands of cat-tails & ancestors, consciousness left here to manifest as swordfern & sunbreak. Dreadlocks & giant skunk cabbage. A haymocker of a white, functioning, ritual cleanse so necessary in the age of hummers & drones, GMOs & narcolepsy.

a 150 acre paeon
of ancient redwoods, grand firs
& lichenized wax myrtles
to “the living vine of my
nervous system.”

In the dream world they want to date your sisters
and you want to pee. In the dream world Dominick
can pop finger bits into the air to the sound of
Curley Howard. In consciousness manifesting as a
lake retreat the heart of this bulletin is the occasion
of a coot landing beyond horsetails or distant
gunfire confirming the world's not had its coming
sudden revelation. And we go on, longing for
butter, coffee, beer & bioregional animation. And
we go on, offerings for the dead of piano hymns &
picadillo, telepathic conifers & constellations as
bird baths. & we go on improvising one prehension
after another here, because he said it's not death
the opposite of life, it's time.

This living vine
 sending out tendrils
(invisible)
 like the smoke of my
 well-tended fire.

10:38a - N.5.13
The Lake
Loleta, CA

Quotes:

- 1) Old County Cork woman attributed by Morris Graves
- 2) Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols
- 3 & 4) Morris Graves

96. The Gift

I am rich thanks to all that I cannot afford.

- Ramón Gomez de la Serna

Your entry is a gift & a gift your exit. Try the labyrinth, for instance. Cd function as feedback or divination strategy depends on insistence of the querent/quality of her hymn. Gebo reflects triple gift of Odin: consciousness/ life breath/ form. Cd be life breath manifesting as lichen-tipped conifers & one cd deduce the air be good here. Cd be form manifesting as a visit by Rufous hummingbird to neighborhood horsetails, nature's kind of cursory check-in. Maybe manifesting as a *Portrait of a Residential Schoolboy* how *post-colonial stress syndrome's* lampooned in turquoise, rust, azul, tan, green, blues y pepsodented teeth. An involuntary offer akin to Odin's self-sacrifice to the World Tree or a whole Wiyot village's World Renewal Ceremony.

A gift's not a bribe to persuade a god, nor a payment, nor to stave off nature's penance. A gift's the joy of non-attachment, unlike the Bezos or any such center for innovation or legal larceny. A gift may be a human-eyed hallucination or Redwood autonomy designed to stave off the glass-crash of ancestors lolling behind the tiny island's Wax Myrtle waiting for better weather. Tongue out, ovoid-eyed you can call in Picasso or Geronimo, Chief Seattle, Yeats or Bugs Bunny. Or take a frame drum as halo, but you learn all blood's one, Doc.

In Denmark, call on the Goddess Gefion, sign off w/ plethora of capital X's, same consciousness as what some call sustainability, some survival of the species. Otter will remain. A free-range gift Hosannah of the moment, his dive always unrushed, impeccable &

leaves only the simplest ripples. (A lake ritual.) You
go out as you come in, a gift.

Gebo in the impeccable
silence
 & cloud drift of duckweed swirl
in the infinite Wednesday
 Redwood
 afternoon.

1:59p - N.6.13
The Lake
Loleta, CA

Written in part after the Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun
painting referenced in the poem.

X X X

Seven Poems After Graves, Rexroth and WAY After The Japanese

After so many sunny days
at the November Lake
reading, writing, tending
the fire
FINALLY, the rain.

Rain so soft so
indigenous to Cascadia
can't disturb the Lake, gives
a spiderweb in the horsetails
new jewels.

Bubbles in mid-Lake
beyond where duckweed rests.
I wonder if that's otter
& if he sees the intercourse of
low clouds & smoke from my fire.

At any moment a poem
can arrive, secret
as the silent rain
or the spider hitchhiking
on firewood I crushed.

Tops of the conifers
can't see me here watch
birds that fly like magpies
pass by over n over
'til I write about them.

Too many poems.
The coffee's cold now
the fire quiet
even the Lake needs
a mid-day nap.

Oh spider. If only
you'd stay'd on the
log I had to chop
to size. You'd've had
a proper cremation.

11:58a - N.7.13
The Lake
Loleta, CA

Portrait of the Artist as a Joyous Young Pine Mimicking a Cup

Chalice (in this case)
or in the 30's in
Be Lifted Up he'd
as chalice (the red-
maybe) or no lips
rage for Miss Mod
sated by fish, chicken
chased out with broom

made  f

branches or glass
his twenties in *If Eye*
be depicted w/ head
eyed guile of potential
holding all back, but
whose *eternal yowl* not
nor fresh meat, eventually
or tossed halfway to the pond.

Chalice always, according to Pauline
symbolic. Calyx or cup. Flower'd =
renewal/growth. Karmic cup (he
or its twin (spirit) *cannot ulti*
Mr. Graves. Without empty
function, w/ no inturning
(partition) in it, holds
both at once. Chalice
content wasted willfully
symbolize *the negative*
duality. When made up
it, symbolic unity - or out
projection of consciousness. &c &c &c. & one white cup in the
studio. & pine needles assembled to act as chalice. & Mr. Graves
one time feeling more plant than animal. & Mr. Graves one of 118
Loleta masturbators. & Mr. Graves (at the end) feeling nothing
but a *5th-rate rural American painter of the 1930s and 40s*. &
Mr. Graves at 89 felt he'd lived too long and life no longer FUN
-- or FUNNY. & Mr. Graves living here still as
a grey jay lifting off toward the Friday
Redwood morning sun, above the coots
on the log, life fun again as a jay
watching the continental
drift of the duckweed or
the re-tuning of the
horsetail to a different

Governor established the
potential of essential experience/
felt (unalterable) filled w/ pain
mately be rejected she'd say, for
space, the cup cannot serve its
lip = holding back, w/ division
neither one pole or the other, but
distorted or w/ bent or tilted stem,
or consciously. Chalice shattered'd
effort to recapture the belief of
of stuff which apparently surrounds
of the phenomenal being the illusory
& one white cup in the
studio. & pine needles assembled to act as chalice. & Mr. Graves
one time feeling more plant than animal. & Mr. Graves one of 118
Loleta masturbators. & Mr. Graves (at the end) feeling nothing
but a *5th-rate rural American painter of the 1930s and 40s*. &
Mr. Graves at 89 felt he'd lived too long and life no longer FUN
-- or FUNNY. & Mr. Graves living here still as
a grey jay lifting off toward the Friday
Redwood morning sun, above the coots
on the log, life fun again as a jay
watching the continental
drift of the duckweed or
the re-tuning of the
horsetail to a different

frequency. Painting as
a branch of *literature*
(as in India or China)
or *poetry*. (His
emphasis.) Ultimately
experiential as only a
nature-loving Virgo
cd deduce in a
quintessentially
Cascadia way.
His destination zero,
w/ a *genuine (or self-*
dramatizing) doomsday
plaint or as
an

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10:26A - N.8.13
The Lake
Loleta, CA

97. Clues from Hell

Smoke rises to heaven when it ought to descend to hell.

- Ramón Gomez de la Serna

& a heaven's of yr making a home be it the Rock or Careladen, Woodtown or the Lake, Ka'gean or Cloud Nine, Slaughter or a little corner of Hillman City survivable by p-patch. Make it w/ enough care to notice *from the lichen to the day moon*. From the library to the Japanese Maple. From the giant sunflowers to the three steeped cedar points to better weather.

In it & in the chaos of the marked-up books, the three-toed vase, the empty Otokoyama bottles in the recycle bin, clues. To sift through the wreckage one day they'll want clues. Clues to how you ended up next to a fire (well-tended) & clues to the spiritual chase. Clues to the record & direction (for future seekers) & clues to where you hid the Humboldt Fog. Clues cd hide right in front of you as does the sponge plant by the duckweed drift which smears the morning Lake. Clues of cigarette butts & grief.

Old growth Redwood
800 years old
300 feet tall
heard its share
of prayers.

They were always there we'll say, prominent as miniature islands w/ salal, blue huckleberry & dwarfed spruce. Calm as the Lake ripples made by a coot flock landing. Subtle as the woodsmoke rejecting hell in the making of its new home as it courts the morning Cascadia fog. Sincere as autumn bouquets (*sweet little nose-gay like*) for every dead stranger in the cemetery made w/ the spirit of *great*

cobwebs of geese in the sky & mild-mannered
hallucinations of reverse snow in September Olympic
Fireweed or the hush of dropping fir needles w/ each
new exhale from Blue Glacier.

So stock up on cake mix
& tequila, butter & turkey bacon. Mangoes y pan de
banana. Have handy jasmine rice & altar candles,
fresh garlic & olive oil. Cashew bits & blush wine.
Wool socks & binoculars. Photos of the loved ones &
always the clue-enabling ancestors.

Decoding the sea
 & the heavens
 ain't for sissies.
 Lend a hand
 or stand back.

4:08p - N.8.13
The Lake
Loleta, CA

All quotes from Morris Graves

American Sentences Written at The Lake

N.3.13 - Top of Redwood sways backlit by Cascadia blue - view of Graves' Lake.

N.3.13 - Clover grows in needles dropped by Redwood trees on the path to bench three.

N.4.13 - Waves of oar-made ripples reflect sun off the small island's lichen-caked tree.

N.5.13 - Single file coots cut a trail through November morning duckweed.

N.5.13 - Stellar Jay outside studio window wants to know when Latihan starts.

N.5.13 - In time it takes to fix the fire puer's steeped the duckweed still there.

N.5.13 - That's not Jesus coot standing on water (part of the tiny island's submerged).

N.5.13 - The occasion of spider web rides an updraft floating above the Lake.

N.5.13 - "Integrity" he told me, "is not just for when someone is looking."

N.6.13 - I went to the Lake's so-called *Vista View* just for a quick look-see.

N.6.13 - Chris takes makeshift raft & a rake to eradicate sponge plants from the Lake.

N.7.13 - Stellar Jay watching me eat lunch - it's only leftover breakfast tofu.

N.7.13 - Not a dead hummingbird dropt from the sky - just a leaf after the rain.

N.7.13 - Shopping list: lamb patties, cheese Danish, tweezers, whores & a llama.

N.7.13 - Me, Morris, each went after eternally yowling cats w/ a broom.

N.8.13 - I love the sound of redwing blackbirds in the morning - smells like solitude.

N.8.13 - Enjoy them now because the redwing blackbirds won't be singing all day.

N.8.13 - C'mon slug! You don't need a life vest and this one too big anyway.

N.8.13 - Lichen-tipped conifers in corrugated waves reflection - pixellated.

N.8.13 - Slugs on the trail are about the same color as the Lake's duckweed.

N.9.13 - Still spitting out seeds from first attempt at eating a dogwood berry.

N.9.13 - Almost every place I go at the Lake, coyote got there first & shit.

N.9.13 - Slug stuck flat four feet high on the window tryin' to get a good look.

N.10.13 - That slug on the window last night left a trail of slime & curly slug poop.

N.10.13 - Just as I finish the last of 99 haibun, Eagle cries twice.

N.10.13 - Ground rules for afternoon coot races: No wing must ever touch the water.

N.11.13 - At death (energy out his head) Blue Heron's squawk split the 3A.M. night.

N.12.13 - "The day after Morris died a symphony of birds sang on the Lake."

98. Why Redwings Sing

Moonbeams always manage to find water, because all they want is a little drink.

- Ramón Gomez de la Serna

& redwings sing to announce the coming of the moon. The coming of the day. The coming of the pale green smear of morning duckweed. Redwings sing to count the time left. Because there are no cuckoos in the Lake. To satisfy a procreant urge. Redwings sing because they can see soundwaves made by their song on the November Lake in miniature ripples that pixillate reflections of conifers. To lighten things up a little, Jesus! To avoid mortal combat. To remain sane.

Redwings sing out of an ancient contractual obligation. Because Raven stole the sun. To startle frog into believing the swim meet's started. To warn any querent away from factory-made & migraine-inducing "Danishes." Redwings sing twice each day as ritual song for the ones that went before them who visit them during afternoon naps & - when the veil is thin, & the future dangerous, to remind them of the fierce redwing will inside them to carry on, put aside petty personal redwing politics & sing as their papa taught 'em, as if there'll be no singing tomorrow & only the sounds of doors slamming shut or endless chain-sawing or rainrainrain or worse.

Redwing's song can be translated to mean: *Hallelujah! Another day in paradise! Did you see that stunning wall of stars last night? What's for breakfast? Who was that startled the buck yesterday? Where's coyote? Where's cougar? Here come the shadows. Thanks.*

Redwings sing because that's how a yogi w/ a red spot on a black wing demonstrates the loss of self-preoccupation & the assumption of responsibility for

all living things in the Net of Indra. How howling
autonomy manifests in the late November Redwood
afternoon.

Redwing blackbirds stop singing.

How silent the eternal

Redwood

night

.

5:48p - N.9.13
The Lake
Loleta, CA

Howling Autonomy Sutra

(A Mesostic for Morris Graves & Robert & Desirée Yarber)

s**T**op. It's a moment of phenomenal space, a
moment of **h**owling autonomy. The
Lake as one of Cascadia's

Great sutras. Joey the otter as much a yogi
as the **G**reat Blue Heron Graves paints. Resident
coots who almost walk on water. Song of the redwing
blackbird as **d**ay starts. A fire, piano hymns &
respite from the **t**orture of machine age needs.

Ro**B**ins land in the dwarf spruce above
the blue huckleberry bush adorns (adores)
the **s**utra one tiny island's become, one
the slug might **g**et to one day in

anot**H**er life. Coexistence (limitless)
& Gurdjieff's Sacred Hymns as
today's sound**t**rack. Dig the *Hymn to the Endless*
Creator. And Cascadia azul above a robin
congregation **n** or a Wax Myrtle leaf

liberated **b**Y the sound of a buck with
antlers startled by the start **o**f my
(whistled, studio-**g**ifted) spirit song. Elegance in a mossy
lichen festooned spruce. Howling autonomy fed by

the field of sentience (**a**nd gut
hunch) confirming
Dōgen's notion, the natural world itself a

great **s**utra.
How the horsetail's
wired to some **e** kind of

Galactic impulse. How the
sword
fern &

cattails'll be bent awhile from the
time you came

aRound the bend with that
oak walking stick for
communion with the sassy
dragonfly. Remember? Filled with
the bright fire of any
dragon acting as Rain God or its deadly
enemy. Howling autonomy. You can hear it

in the laTihan, how something doesn't
take over much as you move over
to co-create a *Space of Consciousness*
Graves'd say, to (human-eyed)
take in innumerable November

wavelets barelyY caress the surface of the Lake.
Innumerable November wavelets, pixellate
reflections of light green lichenized Wax Myrtles
at once witchcraft & expression of the sacred

feminine. Relax. It's
not a dead hummingbird

droPt from the sky. It's just
another leaf falling in
recognition that: *We have to get me out of the*
way (he'd say) after a long enough time
ensconsed by sutras of his own
making, his own
design. Coyote sees it as a time
to shit on the trail to the
Grandfather Redwoods.
Slug sees it as lunch in three days.

Raven Sees & tells everyone within a day's
wave of his throaty proclamation.
Electric (in a calm way) a ritual with
innumerable epiphanies, a clear bioregional

animation to quiet the **d**emons

as the **M**ove to the level of Noble Human
commences & you remember
to floss **and** take your butterbur & magnesium
watch the mild hallucination of coniferous reflections
noticed in the **l**atest ripples
on the **L**ake.

Sometimes **S** for a moment you wonder, are your eyes
failing you or is someone **p**reparing you for
a coffee break **or** the
much-delayed
harvest

of potential? The brightness of
lichen and the
day moon.

The five **L**oleta widowers on Social Security
and **the** need to
create a space for the **a**ges for those who share

the hate of the **S**paces machines make and the
people who love them.
It's a great impression of what some'd
call a **C**unning Artificer
who'd make **e** paintings &

navigation devices w/ a **p**oet's mind
& the depth of grief **f**rom someone whose father'd

commit suicide. All the **C**igarettes
you cd ever **s**moke wd never
bring him back.
So you paint, assemble, build homes
as the **a**ncients would make a sutra.
Discover new **s**pirit
songs to carry you **t**o the next whirl & invocation.
Or maybe **y**our great creation will be a

son or daughter cd make
a new sutra for an
age in desperate need of
something obviously
sacred.

10:42a - N.9.13
The Lake
Loleta, CA

99. Dragon-Necked Hallucination

Smoke is the fire's conjuring trick.

- Ramón Gomez de la Serna

& the whole time he had a dragon around his neck (he wanted to *inhale* fire as well as exhale without burning his tongue, lungs & arsenal) & he'd revisit each of his 99 lives: bluesman, balladeer & barbituratist, find the clear white ashes of what they left: *the nerve that carries the load of reaction to beauty*, seeds inside the dogwood berry, astronauts in a dream (impervious to villainous freight trains) & the chance to sacrifice an eye.

& even w/ dragonfly urging him on in the eternal November Redwood afternoon he cdn't figure if dragon were blood or come, giver of form or taker of soup. & he'd petition Odin w/ thunderbolts of his own grunting & d forego seduction as the means for swindling the mead of poetry. Wd settle for a mere murmur, a song that some'd call a *stumble*. Well pilgrims, we've hit on the dilemma. & while there'll be woodfrogs, fat California bug-fed woodfrogs, there'd be no L U N G drugs nor work, nor rent money & in their place the inner eye in focus (sometimes. Not unlike the feeling of joy in the room & feeling as groom to the eternal witch that runs things. Good witch.) There'd be

higher doses only now matcha & puer, a little more fat on the bone, gray ear whiskers & more shit-filled diapers. The coffee mug brain dent hangover remained as a migraine & the rage? The rage'd lose some of its foam to a few more malas palabras y real herbs (lavender & rosemary) & zinneas, more sunflowers & the growth of a tranquil beak as in Graves '68 *Light*, human-eyed w/ enough meat to satisfy.

Cats get nine lives & how long the life of your typical dragonfly?

He'd petition Mercury & the sphere of Hod in the Kabbalah. He'd stop the boast, the teasing of table-mates at the feast & find the aid of a couple of willing Ravens who, too, knew well enough to stifle when the redwings have the stage. & figure out how to squish seventeen years into four neo-barroco paragraphs. In the end

he'll take that black
Stetson & oak
walking stick
into the rain & feel each raindrop
(like us all, only)
a reflection
of a reflection
of a reflection
of a reflection
of a...

12:15p - N.10.13
The Lake
Loleta, CA

Quote from Morris Graves,
from a Nov 1, 1948 letter.





Paul Nelson founded SPLAB in Seattle and the Cascadia Poetry Festival. Author of ***Organic Poetry*** (essays), a serial poem re-enacting history, ***A Time Before Slaughter*** (shortlisted for a 2010 Genius Award by The Stranger) and ***Organic in Cascadia: A Sequence of Energies***, he has interviewed Allen Ginsberg, Michael McClure, Diane diPrima, Sam Hamill, Robin Blaser, Anne Waldman, Nate Mackey, Wanda Coleman, George Bowering, Joanne Kyger, Brenda Hillman and others, has presented poetry/poetics in London, Brussels, Qinghai & Beijing, China, has had work translated into Spanish, Chinese & Portuguese & writes an American Sentence every day. Awarded a residency at The Lake, from the Morris Graves Foundation in Loleta, CA, he's published work in Golden Handcuffs Review, Zen Monster, Hambone, and elsewhere. He lives in Seattle with his wife Meredith and youngest daughter Ella Roque. www.PaulENelson.com