

Memo For A Hip Pocket Poet

Study the lesson of Li Po.

*Put a seagull in a summer sky,
it helps the gullible.*

It's easy to be a giant in the realm of IF.

*Watch your meter when you park your moon
too close to soon.*

Define the ache of spring in less than ten syllables.

*The king is dead. Do not try
to beat e.e. cummings through the wry.*

The best poem is the one that wasn't written.

*Form is the mind, content the heart,
style the dress, art the miracle.*

Snow is a cliche for christmas.

*It is not enough to know everything,
it is enough to be alert.*

Indifference is the mask of cowards.

*Life put the squeeze
on Weldon Kees.*

Life is a verb.

*There is a core in all complexity
where the senses do not lie.*

Ruins are incentives.

*Crane found Atlantis in the "diced bones,"
Auden thought he found it in the Nones.*

History is a metaphor, man repeats.

*Hopkins scaled the highest ridges
but Hopkins never burned his Bridges.*

Desire is stronger than denial.

*Rimbaud's head was full of beauty,
Allen Tate is dull as duty.*

Marianne Moore is a mirage.

*Rimbaud's hair was full of lice,
Villon played with dames and dice.*

Enemies make our reputations, not friends.

*This is the age of the HOWL and the swish,
half the girls are fowl, half the boys are fish.*

Never scan a broad with narrow hips.

*In the archives of the square,
a poet's word is a bomb, not a bond.*

Revolution is the reaction against reaction.

*Pray that you survive the freeze
of windy anthologies.*

Necessity is a rival of wisdom.

*Remember when you write to please,
the bigger the ulcers, the bigger the fees.*

An optimist is a man who laughs at a funeral.

*Never use a villanelle
to tell an editor to go to hell.*

Heaven and hell are ambiguities.

*Beware of spring, it has inspired
more bad poetry than love.*

Echoes are boomerangs.

*Advice is just dishwater;
critics are pearl divers.*

Intuition is the reality of the artist.

*The skill of the knife thrower is less
than the thought of the act made art.*

There's no approach to reason without love.

-- Harold Briggs

New York, New York

It's Nothing

to you,

you never saw tenderness in garbage cans

you never tripped on a skyscraper,

you never played leapfrog with a dolphin.

Did defeat ever spit in your eye?

Choke on your silver spoon

you --

maybe I'm talking to a tomb.

I waited all day,

the postman brought me blackmail

from the finance Co.

When I phoned

the secretary

screened me for a clown.

A breast in the hand is worth two in the bra

I said.

I'll call the manager

she said.

Do that I said.

A dream boat is no collateral

he said.

Tomorrow is a mirror I can't face.

-- Harold Briggs