

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 cliché 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