
1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, & 1964

poems by

Wm. Whittling

Initiation

What were we doing, being
cool?
That argument Kitten, on
the freeway
I couldn't keep up our
habits and
We cruised along sick,
seeking magic
And you said — Hit some
chump over his head
But I didn't dig that so
you offered
To find some good tricks
I got hot, indignant like
a square with tears
And you felt pity, saying
— Don't cry Daddy, it's just
another way to burn a sucker

1/59

Two Paradoxes

at the market place
we sell many things
including love and courage
... but these you must bring
with you
and pay for as you leave

fortunately
I now remember
what once they instructed me
to forget
under threat of torture
... it was something like a promise
of immortality
or was that the threat?

... I have
forgotten ... again
but if you hear laughter sudden in
the night
or a scream
or a song
then you will know, and have remembered for me

2/60

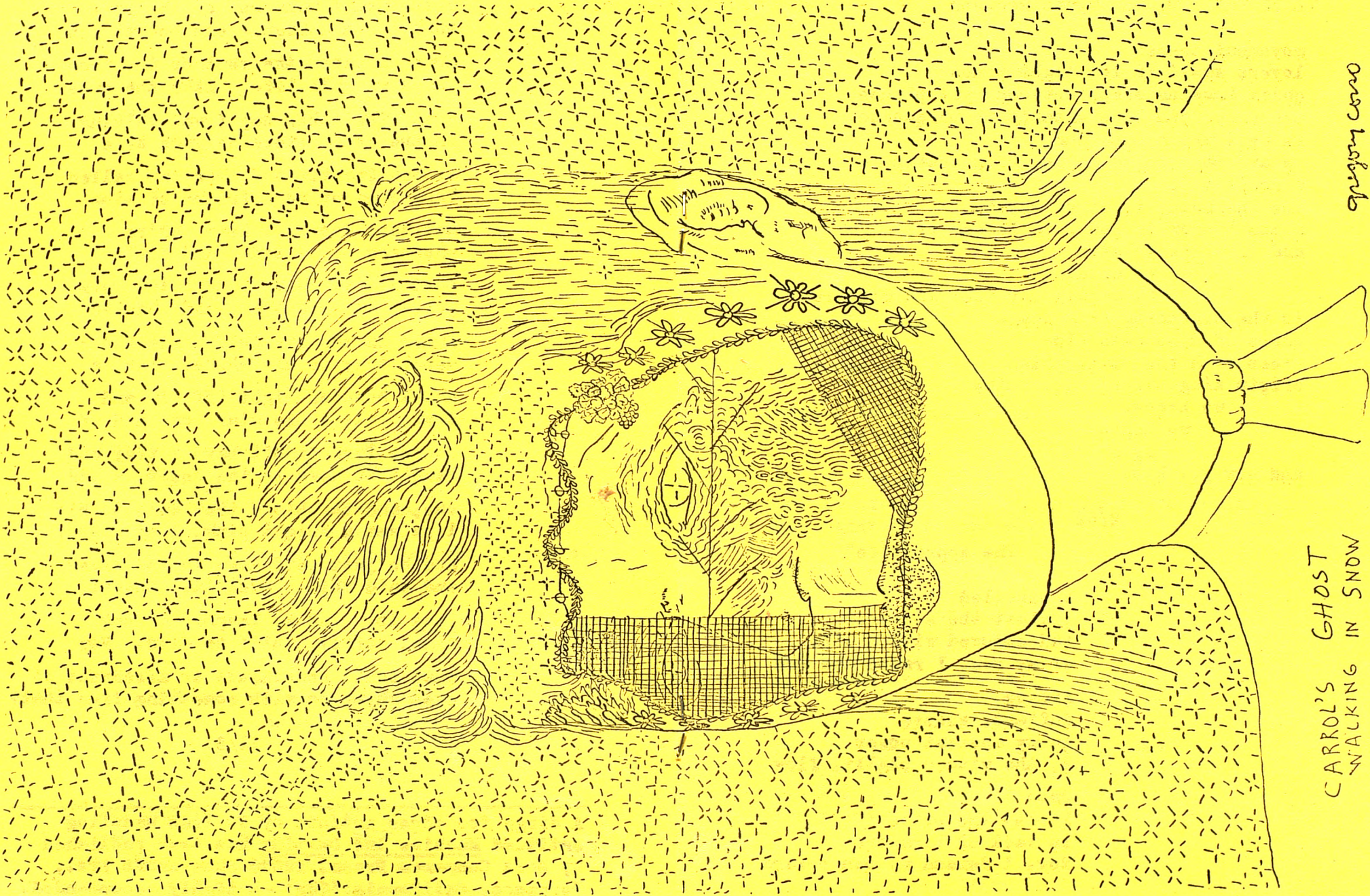
Poetry

I've got to be honest. I can
make good word music and rhyme
at the right times and fit words
together to give people pleasure
and even sometimes take their
breath away — but it always
somehow turns out kind of phoney.
Consonance and assonance and inner

rhyme won't make up for the fact that I can't figure out how to get down on paper the real or the true which we call life. Like the other day. The other day I was walking on the lower exercise yard here at San Quentin and this cat called Turk came up to a friend of mine and said Ernie, I hear you're shooting on my kid. And Ernie told him So what, punk? And Turk pulled out his stuff and shanked Ernie in the gut only Ernie had a metal tray in his shirt. Turk's shank bounced right off him and Ernie pulled his stuff out and of course Turk didn't have a tray and caught it dead in the chest, a bad one, and the blood that came to his lips was a bright pink, lung blood, and he just laid down in the grass and said Shit. Fuck it. Sheeit. Fuck it. And he laughed a long time, softly, until he died. Now what could consonance or assonance or even rhyme do with something like that?

11/61

A dirge for three artists by William Wantling entitled Machine And Destiny has been published by Hers Commerce Press, 22526 Shadycroft Ave., Torrance, California (75¢) — highly recommended.



CARROL'S GHOST
WALKING IN SNOW

-- Gregory Corso

Each Small Death Begets Rebirth

movement ceases
lovers swell in low tight tones
quiet knowing seeps between blue places
and uncertain blue expands to turquoise
we feel white sand and
we are the breeze moving palm leaves —
a small stir
the beginning throb of rhythm
a small drum tapped with finger taps
and we begin to stir
 to undulate
 to twitch our feet and fingers
in the beginning of a dance
odors of sweetness flow
sweet with the small pains
origin sings within our loins
 we become
 we begin
 we exist
and now you know

2/62

The Apprentice

I rebelled
against the sorcerer
and endowed with a life
of my own, I raced the sun

Arcane
defiant, secure
in my ancient power
I, the winged phalli, flew

Once
I paid the price
in lack of pleasure
Now, I demand my own reward

Avoiding
the hierarchy
I become the fruit
and issue of fire and ice

Dream
of question
and spasm. Tomorrow
we wake to new violence

7/63

From "Korea, 1953"

In that strange war that was not
a war ...

We found a certain inner logic to
our violence

A game in which each player and
his mate

understood all rules
(each sensing his brother's center)
And at expense of this — genius of fools
One might purge oneself
so clean

That love would come to our dead
winter

for one cannot hold
an inner void ...

Yet we became
as a pack of maddened dogs that race
caged, snarling, for the hand
which flings

The one small piece of rancid meat
in the center of our corrupted sand
... And the single victor cannot eat
The prize before dying in his blood's
slow-cooling heat

11/63

Springsong

White jungle
you know now
you must go

The time of sleep
is over, the sap
of spring is seeping
in, bringing
green, green, bringing
green

See! A squirrel
sneaking through
your whiteness
bringing song
of what must come

His forepaws
bundled back
to hind
he hunches
shoulders and
humps ahead
by leaps and
bounds -- twitching
furry flag of
ruddered tail
he knows, he
knows
he knows the green
is coming in
and the solstice-
sleep is over, the
green is seeping in
again; the song:
... Goodbye
Hello!

3/64

-- William Wantling
Peoria, Illinois

Practice

I keep practicing death
and as the worms jack-off
in agony of waiting
I might as well have another
drink, and I am thinking
I am there
and I cross my legs
in the patio of
some Mexico City hotel
in 1977
and the birds come down
to pick out my eyes
and the birds fly away
and I no longer see
them.

or is it shotguns of cancer
or sun-madness?

the rotting of the heart,
the gut, the lily.

now there's Hem. I always thought of Hem
as a tough old guy frying a steak
in some kitchen
under a bright light. what
happened, Ernie?

Hem was practicing too.
Everytime he watched a bull die
he got ready. when he lit a cigar
at four in the afternoon, he
got ready.

the bulls, the soldiers, the cities
the towns ...

my sadness, my sadness
(let me have this drink)
could be strung across guitars
everywhere
and played for 10 minutes
with all generals bowing