

BUDDHA POEM

I saw you around
when I was stationed in Japan
I saw you at shrines
in warehouses & bars
in the tiny rooms of streetgirls
even in back of a rickshaw-taxi

the clump of sacred bamboo
in front of my work table
on the porch reminds
me of you

I see you
now in the constant grin
of the treefrog who lives
in a vase in the kitchen

I'm not a Buddhist
I'm not a Christian
I'm not anything
just like the universe
isn't anything

I like your blissful
nitty-gritty grin

IT'S ALL PART OF BEING A POET

sometimes I'm called selfish
just because I'm a poet

I've never heard lawyers
called selfish just
because they're lawyers
or teachers just
because they're teachers
or truckdrivers just
because they're truckdrivers
etc

it's ok to make money
but not to make poems

RISING SUN BEER

I began to drink
when I was 20
in Japan

the beer I liked
had a rising
sun label

red sun
red spokes
white background
just like the Japanese flag
I liked the Japanese flag
I liked the label
I liked the beer

most of it was free because
I was on Shore Patrol
in the Military Police

I met a lot of stunning streetgirls
& went to bed with some of them
one of them introduced me
to Sun Tory whiskey
also with rising sun label
but more elaborate & fiery

I began to drink
fuck whores
question everything
in my own quiet way
& at the same time
I began to write
just letters to a girlfriend
but they were my start

Japan was one of the most
beautiful periods of my life
women
booze
liberty
power

I was the buck sergeant
in the Military Police
who wrote poems
with a siren

#10

I had a grandfather I never met
who went to the opera every week
for 30 years in Boston
he worked for the railroad
my mother said he was always
singing or whistling arias