

# the lonely day

*Carlos B. Summers*

With special thanks to my editor The Reverend Jim Rorie,  
a truly "splendid spur" of grace and talent under fire.

A word of introduction:

*My poetry is an expression of soul and  
something I've done since adolescence  
when asked, or challenged, or tasked.  
know I've collected and selected words  
all of these years for reflection's sake  
and for sharing with friends.*

If not for the poets Jim Rorie and  
Lewis Chesser I shouldn't have  
hoped to publish. They inspired me to  
think that I could and maybe should.

I think my  
poems are a grunting born  
of affection and disaffection,  
childhood and fatherhood,  
for and about and without theology.  
In the feel of the real I see through  
words and hear the tone of the reading  
and then hope with my soul with  
our human race a trace of peace  
in these our troubled and perilous times.

### **THE COMFORTING OF LAZARUS**

To be in the "outer darkness"  
is not easy or happy  
But parched, and pitiful.  
You, Lazarus, cannot come to comfort me,  
Or dip your finger in the water  
For me to suck upon.  
For the chasm is deep, and fixed,  
Twixt tether and time.  
Parchance, you ask me,  
What was my crime, unmask me?  
I put my hand to the plow and looked back,  
And turned into a pillar of salt.  
It's my fault, it really is.

And since you can do nothing  
And yet feel for me anyhow,  
Yours is the heavenly hell.  
And, I feel for you too...  
So, let us both bow  
Before the one  
Who's love unbound  
Trancends this separation  
And rends our adulation  
On the truly holy ground  
Of the crossbridge.

## 7000 Years

t's leaping in the air  
and coming down hard with a hard rock beat  
sportin wacky rhythms with the rubber soled feet  
Jimmy Hendrix feedback  
and Sadsackattitude... with gratitude

to them I was "the sound man"  
as an older guy, just doing the gig  
just gettin' by  
in my faded blue jeans and a baseball cap  
thinking in my mind, this is better than rap

2002

## A poem for John

Sometimes I don't know  
if you're irreligious,  
or irreflective,  
or saturated,  
or maybe irradiated with the light of his love.  
I think of the dove.. that descended upon him,  
I wonder if he waved?  
I think of Jesus in times like these,  
the making of a president,  
a question of justice,  
the making of a president,  
a question of solace,  
the making of a president...

CB 11/8/00

## Original Recipe

And so,  
I apologize for the hostility...  
An indication, I'm sure, I'll need therapy  
to convince these OK people  
I too am competent  
and honest.

And so, ironically,  
it's this gate of incompetency  
and dishonesty  
I'll have to convince  
to let me be  
within the Methodist fence.

So do we all  
to some degree,  
it's the original recipe you see.

## I really am

I really am  
humble and contrite sometimes,  
and I'm arrogant  
and full of myself too.  
I have,  
at least in my mind,  
become more accepting of being a monk.  
Ah, the safety of celibacy.  
If ever I were ready,  
it is now.

May of 2000

## To The Side of the Path

To the side of the path,  
not too far from the house,  
just after the rain  
was a drain of cool water with crawdad there, where  
the world of moss and timidity, gurgle and felledtree,  
enveloped me like a womb of extraordinary  
green and dirt.

And I, with a snail stained shirt  
and the telltale muddy knee  
was thinkin'... "Oh, mamma's going to be mad at me."  
and then I'm lost again in a bird whistle-chirp  
and listening for sign of animal in the brush  
and amazed at the hush  
wherein flies and mosquitoes are heard.

April 2003

## Babe in the woods (for Belle)

The babe in the woods, crying--I need, I need  
To be. She wants the snow to fall and make  
Her clean. She'll be cold but covered up fake,  
Lying so still so to not disturb,  
Her pure white shape. I know she's absurd  
In love of life's doing, the this and that  
For those not known except by their hat  
Of categorical imperatives and feelings so stirred.

She lies there, the babe. Her breath barely shown  
Her breast shaped yearning, reaching upward and strained  
The love of my life in a groan so intoned  
For she wants to share so deeply, so pained.  
She's hoping for peace in a kiss.  
And so, so warily I place myself...  
my lips, in eveslight, of snowwhite shaped stealth.

## **Ah, the Pho**

Ah, the Pho blessed me again,  
Saved me from sin and  
Made me warm within.  
The Pho spoke to my illness  
And brought to me the holy food  
Of a culture older than ours, and wiser.  
Undefeated powers are like that  
For they've been around long enough to know  
The show is just the show.

The Pho is a balm of mercy,  
Forgiveness and sensation in a bowl  
Not unlike the one that served up the soul  
As the blood of the savior called wine  
Ends the war of a people gone blind  
From pride and fear of losing.

Or, the washing of the feet  
Of the disciples so called...  
Is a taste of the sweet.

5 / 03

Pho, is pronounced Pha' A Vietnamese word for soup...

## **I already told you**

I already told you  
I love you this morning,  
I'll tell you this afternoon  
I love you today.  
"I'm good to you," you say?  
Take me for your own...  
Never look back...  
Embrace the goodness we feel  
Accept the realm of the real, Thou.

Peace,  
Carlos

## I Shot a Sparrow

I shot a sparrow  
    once  
    then twice  
Told my mother  
    but it was broken  
Dashed its head  
    and cried  
For death was better than  
    to suffer  
    I died

## Sodium & Salt

Watcha doin'  
    Consuming!  
    Sodium & Salt Sodium & Salt  
    Sucrose and Sugar  
It's the junkfood craze is what it is  
It don't make sense unless it's  
    recompense  
    For what?!?!?  
They say there are people starving  
That else would compel us so...  
Completely  
To treat ourselves to sodium & salt  
    sodium & salt  
  
    sucrose and sugar  
    sucrose and sugar  
    sugar... sugar... sugar

## The vicissitudes of

The vicissitudes

of the bowels  
of me

free is truly  
nearly given  
in the event  
the preeminence

of failure

of the cross.

Death is a kind

of failure.

Life is a kind

of success.

But, what kind

of each

is but... what kind

of breach

of the soul  
of us

in the fuss and tuss

of living

from time to time  
instead

of eternity?

4/27/91



Well, Pearl

**Well, Pearl**

Harbor is 63

but I am 57.

Six years apart are we,

**but aware... at that same space-in-point... when the earth  
rounds the sun to there... where we share... the care**

for those who have been attacked.

But we have nothing in common... we have everything in common,  
for our purpose for being is peace.

And, can't I talk about war!

But I've never been there... I've always been there.

I was born because of war,

**lived and became myself in consciousness through conscience,**

through the fire-storm of Vietnam,

the draft, the craft of being better than that

without being arrogant and self-serving... fat chance.

Yet always serving the self in the serving of others... no other way,

until burned out in the fire-storm of nuclear family madness,

and at-least in part

because of the yen for forgiveness.

Hey,

haven't you ever thought

**that Sony is good equipment?**

A poem inspired by a friend, Talmage Van Spence.

## Plane Window

Today/tonight  
Through a plane window  
I watched a sunset  
At about 34,000 feet  
Struck by the darkness  
    of the earth  
        by the afterglow  
What do I know about  
    stars and earths?

Descending to Dallas  
I sought repose for  
    my soul...  
    centering...  
    whole...  
night-lights appearing  
roads endearing  
wing lifting  
seat belt

### **we just do**

Rhythm is the word  
like flying is a bird  
and trying is absurd  
we just do, that's all  
we just do

we just do, that's all  
we just do

2002

## Wide-Eyed Traveler

I am a wasteland  
Dry, no longer spry or  
Crying. No tears are found  
To wash away the sound of desert cold  
Dying rattle and gasp of a wide-eyed  
Traveler. Thirst no longer leads me  
Or even moves me for I cannot  
Be replenished anymore unless  
My sand-scraped landscape be.

For, I am one with survival only.  
Lonely except for companions  
Who are shadows of my former self  
Trapped in canyons of dusty doubt  
And doomed to drought where cactus and lizard  
Are guru and sage and rage too is forgotten  
In the matter-of-fact sun and wind  
Begotten now. My face feels like  
Leather, touched by cracked and painful  
Fingers that hardly bend.

## The Last Vestige

Approaching the last vestige  
    of what it is to be human  
And yet the hesitation for fear  
    of losing  
The world           while  
The lips remain curled  
    upward in a smile  
The matter of style  
    of supposition  
Of what is now known of  
The last vestige

1984

## You're Only Human

Where would we be without our gladiators...

Who would know who we are?

Without them to represent us

our state

our nation

our school

our family

How would we last

against odds insurmountable?

First blood is always important

To prove the weakness of your opponent's shield.

But, you tell the enemy early of the stakes

Perhaps before you-yourself have

counted the cost.

The killer instinct is necessary...

Your might not win without it.

And if you have a sense of sin about it

Then, what the hell

you're only human.

Eat 'em up

Kill 'em

We're number one...

We're number one...

We're number one...

we are number one.....

198?

### **Yes, the old demon**

Yes, the old demon keeps trying...  
but the "little boy" of me  
is less the man than he used to be  
and now more, even more  
the day of Christ we see  
as the waters of life pour-favor'

June 2002

### **Your Loss My Gain**

Consider the cross  
And feel the feel the shame  
The grave its aim... the grave its aim

Such a loss  
And who's to blame  
It's me...it's me the same... me...me

I've cried...I cry  
And die...and die  
And why not  
He died for me  
And Jesus is the name...Christ  
Your loss my gain

### **To Will One Thing**

And so I will one thing -  
That I may not fear the cross too much,  
So that  
Destiny will find me constrained  
Each day  
For the sake of peace;  
And love's own savior  
Shall make me his own  
Eternally.

## To The Side of the Path

To the side of the path,  
not too far from the house,  
just after the rain  
was a drain of cool water with crawdad there, where  
the world of moss and timidity, gurgle and felled tree,  
enveloped me like a womb of extraordinary  
green and dirt.

And I, with a snail stained shirt, and the telltale muddy knee  
was thinkin'... "Oh, mamma's going to be mad at me."  
and then I'm lost again in a bird whistle-chirp  
and listening for sign of animal in the brush  
and amazed at the hush  
wherein flies and mosquitoes are heard.

April 2003

## the lonely day

struggle the lonely day  
push and pull it through  
taste the fell swope bell curve brew  
of life, sweet life  
He strode the hills of Galilee  
sanded steps, bended knee and leg lifted,  
argued with words against the hardened heart  
sifted and shaped masses ancient part  
until it all boiled down to you  
who sees Him human, moving about  
on the side of a hill  
of rocks and doubt  
and your ear strains to hear  
and you smell His breath  
and you follow on  
watching, waiting, sensing,  
gone your wonder,  
His dance with death april of 2002

A poem based upon Luke 24: The road to Emmaeus story  
Also, in conjunction with Adita Duffield's baptism

## Plum King

When I open myself to  
The editorial page for God's sake  
It's like feasting  
On a German chocolate cake  
It's sweet  
To understand what God is  
doing  
In the world. . .  
To share in the debate  
between  
Liberal and Conservative  
Young and Old  
Rich and Poor  
Communism and Capitalism  
But understanding can make you fat  
with worry.

And  
Ever since the Beatles used  
Every sense  
to say  
"Let it be"  
We haven't been able to.  
We still can't . . .  
Thank God.

And so it is. . .  
The world is  
A plum for the picking  
A King for the tricking  
of the fools for Christ.

## Unwasted Lives

You saw the old man, pitiful as a farce  
And heard your name  
As the name of another.  
You must have known he never knew you really  
But he might (you feared) have known your mother.  
He might have been your father  
And he might have been a bother  
To those who didn't feel the friend  
And recognize the talent.  
To those who couldn't yet attend  
To the image of the gallant...  
The cigarette holder, the yellow lips,  
The same silk shirt, the coffee sips.  
He is your legacy  
He is your destiny  
He is your shame  
And he heard your name (corrected)  
And then he knew, he'd given you, something...  
And perhaps he knew, at the dying breath  
You loved him after all, his last request.  
And now it is you know you know,  
It's unwasted lives that haunt you so.

cs / 10/2002

## TOMMY AND HIS CLARE

O' dear Lord, please... bless Tommy and Clare.  
The embrace of your loving arms  
And your face O' so meek  
Are the shelter they seek.

And there, may they... enter into your rest, and  
Feel the comfort of your breast, and  
The sway of your rocking chair, where  
The babes in your tender care  
Are named, Tommy and his Clare.

3/03



## **American pockets...**

the bigger the pockets,  
the more they will hold,  
the more we will have,  
our story be told;

the bigger the greed,  
the more they will need,  
the less we will feed,  
our story be bold;

the bigger the better,  
the throat of the debtor,  
the arm and the leg,  
teach them to beg;

the bigger the pockets,  
the more they will hold,  
the more we will have,  
our story be sold;  
our story be souled.

2001

## **To her, to me...**

To her they're a bunch of  
butts, clothes, sores, and toys;  
To me they're the  
claiming, clowning, dreaming, competing boys  
It seems like it's always been real.  
It's the only reality I know.  
It's God conducting symphonies  
OR antiquating...OR being at ease enough  
To show the hurt honestly...

It's a comedy really  
A dog named Buddy  
A kid who writes stories  
"The pig...who couldn't get muddy."

## Tightrope

So, you're on a roll...  
in control  
full of soul  
and quite the happy dope.

One step in front of the other, feet...  
Careful, careful, don't think about the fall  
Applause, applause, daring is a praiseworthy treat  
and pause, and pause, steady... the crowd holds it's breath and all.

And what is the name  
of the game we play  
when we nay say  
about approval (when it's really all about approval, isn't it?)

I know, it's tightrope...

Of course, we should we know  
if life is apropos  
and bouncing we will go  
into the center ring or no.

And climb the ladder's height  
to the platform, feel the fright  
of the audience's identification  
and hear the drum roll's anticipation

Then time's up to hope...

For then, there we'll be... showing off for pay  
balance come what may, agree  
upon a safety net or no  
on a high wire path, to and fro...  
why, see the people and the clowns below.

2002

## **The truth of the love**

The truth of the love  
that we love to be loved  
is a word of grace...  
a place, *selah*  
especially for those  
who are poor in spirit...  
a space, *selah*  
and even those of us  
who are sure we are near it...  
a face, *selah*  
the word of peace,  
is the name we shall never cease  
to praise...  
Jesus

## **I'm sorry**

I'm sorry to be so pushy sometimes...  
There is no excuse  
Except to say  
I want you to want  
To see if you blame  
And if life is the same  
Without me as with me  
Or if I can tame the chaos  
With all the knowing  
Of all about me  
Apologies...  
I must be so sorry  
I'm sorry to be so pushy sometimes...

10/2002

## **Making Twilight Sacrifice**

Making twilight  
    Last till midnight  
Waking darkness  
    Up to uptight  
Saving all the things that  
Just won't wash  
    Away  
Without sacrifice

A human term  
    Little understood  
Given time  
    You'd think we would  
But not for nothing  
    Not for nothing

Which is the despair  
Of how to get there

198?

## **Sisterhood Unchained**

And so, I have begun to believe in sisterhood,  
    An ability hither-to unrealized...unknown...unlike  
The myth of jealousy and strife over the common goal  
    Man.

What an ego trip that was,  
    How superior I was in Brotherhood...  
How subject I was to motherhood...  
    Ah, come sweet breath of freedom from ism,  
The genderized prism through which we see the colors  
    Of our prejudice / self-righteousness.

## IN EVE'S LIGHT

(for Belle)

The babe in the woods, crying--I need, I need  
To be. She wants the snow to fall and make  
Her clean. She'll be cold but covered up fake,  
Lying so still so to not disturb,  
Her pure white shape. I know she's absurd  
In love of life's doing, the this and that  
For those not known except by their hat  
Of categorical imperatives and feelings so stirred.

She lays there, the babe. Her breath barely shown  
Her breast shaped yearning, reaching upward and strained  
The love of my life in a groan so intoned  
For she wants to share so deeply, so pained.  
She's hoping for peace in a kiss. And so, so warily I place myself...  
my lips, in eveslight, of snowwhite shaped stealth.  
198?

### The Process

It is that love  
That gets unlocked  
    And some of us get unfrocked  
When the lord comes around  
    And some of us get found  
In the process  
    of  
    Faith working through love

1978

## THE TAN YOUNG MAN

The young man, tan, and in his green suit  
Shifted his eyes, his stance,  
And I offered him my hand  
And we shook, mine to his;  
His was clammy, and then, I saw it on his face...  
The sweat, the fear, the very idea  
That I was his peer;  
The bet (that I knew,) oh dear, he is a victim...  
He has the dreaded leprosy...  
The AIDS bound lethargy.

I wanted to wipe my hand on my pants;  
I needed to smile and offer understanding;  
I ultimately, sadly, stood there watching  
(At a wedding reception no less)  
As a friend to the bride  
Stood by my side  
And hoped (I imagine) that no one knew  
About the dread of the dead  
With the awkward gaunt face  
Chiseled too much for his age...  
The tan young man  
On the edge of the stage.

2/2003

### **awakenaware**

awakenaware  
to stare down with impunity  
the secrecy ...the timidity ...the selfless impurity  
to share drown insecurity  
the tell to me...the history...the timeless clarity  
of the momentary  
awakenaware

December 1, 2001

## For His Mind and His Heart

Daddy I'm scared  
my little boy said  
It touched me and I  
became like dead  
So that's who it was  
I thought  
It was real, he said  
Yes, I said, In your heart  
It really was, he said  
Yes, In your mind and In your heart  
So I told him the story  
For his mind and his heart  
Of how I raced and mine beat faster  
Of a moment of tenderness  
And the morning after  
When he was born  
Before the Kansas corn  
Had even been planted

*for my son Jeremiah in January of 1984*

## Oneself

To look at oneself in the mirror  
    To know that one exists  
Say I feel it, Go on and laugh  
Cause you still can't deal with it:  
I - You Pocracy.  
Still oneself is better than too:  
Too fat  
Too thin  
    Doesn't know  
        Can't win...  
What the heck  
What's for supper?

## The Prayer of Boomerica

Oh Lord  
what  
have we done  
to deserve  
the unthinkable punishment  
of spilling our children's blood  
in a foreign land?

O' God How have we offended Thee?  
When have we failed to serve Thee?  
Have we not been generous to the poor?  
Have we not been gracious to our neighbors?  
Have we not visited the prisoners in their distress?  
Have we not suffered this before?

Why must we suffer again then  
The sacrifice of innocents  
And why must "our" innocents  
Bring the responsibility of the slaughter  
Of "their" innocents upon our heads?  
Why must our generation be at war?  
Did not our fathers and mothers also know war?  
Is this not now for us the war of our youth  
And the war of our parenthood?  
Do we not have a belly full of war?

Help us to "learn war no more!"



## **instead of fear**

Must needs, re-resolve the residue  
(the time stirred foam of oblivion)  
Wipe clear the quaking anxiety  
See the great-ness in humanity  
Intead of - of fear... a booth...  
One for Moses, one for Elijah, and one for you, Lord.

You seem so different  
In your pure white suit  
Like the sound of the soft blown flute  
That's piercing yet soothing  
And given to clarity.  
Now, how about that booth?

6/03

Typically, a reflection upon the New Testament  
Transfiguration theme. Found @ Mark 9:2

## **pencil**

Once upon a time

The pencil was a spaceship  
Powered and suspended  
By my invisible hand  
Down the path of feet on dirt  
Beyond the world of time and hurt

## **the end of glad**

The man was a dick  
And my friend said "fomp"  
As his hand chopped down  
And I knew what he meant  
And I laughed at the sound  
And the man slapped me  
And I didn't go to his store anymore  
And I couldn't tell my dad  
And I couldn't be glad

(for Kathleen Norris)

## Wide-Eyed Traveler

I am a wasteland  
Dry, no longer spry or  
Crying. No tears are found  
To wash away the sound of desert cold  
Dying rattle and gasp of a wide-eyed  
Traveler. Thirst no longer leads me  
Or even moves me for I cannot  
Be replenished anymore unless  
My sand-scraped landscape be.

For, I am one with survival only.  
Lonely except for companions  
Who are shadows of my former self  
Trapped in canyons of dusty doubt  
And doomed to drought where cactus and lizard  
Are guru and sage and rage too is forgotten  
In the matter-of-fact sun and wind  
Begotten now. My face feels like  
Leather, touched by cracked and painful  
Fingers that hardly bend.

## **Lying**

Lying on the rug  
You don't know what to think  
The past is past they say.  
    Eat a bunch of carrots  
and see the price we pay.

Looking at the time to come  
Keeping stock of rhymes for some  
    of those who just want  
    to be free...  
But lies are lies and  
    what you say...can be...  
    used against you.

1985

## **pendulum of pride**

What a ride  
    on a pendulum of pride  
Sitting astride  
    the round time tick tock  
    grandfather clock...  
Moving from side to side  
    left to right  
    far and wide  
    true and tried  
    constant and feeling  
    rolling and reeling  
What a crock...

## **All About, an important difference**

An important difference  
between the British  
and us is that they  
name their aristocracy.

The ruling class  
is identified  
with title and pomp.  
And the circumstance  
of the middle class  
is SUPER...  
quite the CONSCIOUS matter.

No illusions  
of power... really.  
A theatre of the absurd politik  
works and brings clarity  
to the purpose  
of that bludgeONing middle ...  
that is  
to communicate  
the reality of the matter.

Not  
that the communication  
is in itself the creator  
but rather a communication  
of the circumstance already created  
by the feeling of pompADORE.

And  
where are those  
who are with us always,  
unseen,  
untalkative,  
yet willing always willing?  
All about.