

50 Poems From The Mountain
by
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First Edition

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You can walk so far
everywhere is home.

"From now on
a nameless traveler;
winter's first rain."

- Basho

Dedicated to my beloved friend Marshmallow
who walked each step up and down
the mountain with me. RIP.





A Forward

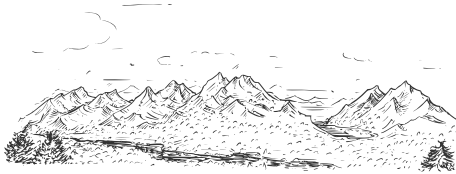
My few meager thoughts, some call them poems, written in Matagalpa, Nicaragua during 2019 and 2020.

Each morning I'd rise and take the dogs up the mountain, Cerro Apante, a nature reserve that served as a background to the farmhouse, the "quinta" we rented. We'd hike up many different trails, always arriving at the huge cross at the top.

I wanted to get back to nature and simplicity. I grew up on a farm and have always yearned for that quiet, that time beyond time that nature offers. For my own health but also just to feel alive again. To touch the elemental, something I think we all have lost living in our boxes, stuffed together, only scampering for a few moments on weekends or holidays, into nature's lush bosom.

I brought a whole chest of books with me. My children. One of the books was Rexroth's - 100 Poems From The Chinese. As a poet, they reflected my own time and place. Poems of simplicity, set in the arms of mother nature. Each day I'd read them and reflect. Soon, after each day's march up the mountain, I'd return and write my own poems under the ones I was reading in the book. This collection is the sum of that activity.

The directness of the Chinese poets of the Song dynasty hits you. It's something sadly lacking in today's too fancy, too sophisticated poetry by MFL graduates, numbed into sophistry.



The view from Apante

I'm sure Gary Snyder, Sam Hamill, Ezra Pound, Rexroth would agree. Those who I value and who have come before me. If poetry is anything, it is freedom. And freedom doesn't seek complexity - it is direct and IS. We need more poets to tell things as they are. Yes, there is enough room for many kinds of poetry but directness is an approach most poets need to master, in one form or another.

And also the recognition of nature as a primacy, something beyond man, beyond the modern pomposity the world dresses itself in. We have divorced ourselves from the natural world and I see that as the true road to our end, our ruin. I don't need to bore you with an essay about it - I'm sure you understand. We all understand but the hard thing is to do, to not align oneself with that devil.

So I give you these few poems, these crumbs off the table of my homeless mind. I do hope they bring you some sustenance and meaning. A green fuse for your greener soul. For that is the true purpose of poetry and the poet - to bring to others a sense of wonder and the sacred for this world we live in - here and now.

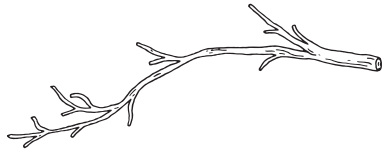
Yours,

David Deabelbeiss

I
ENERGY

I wake up.
No electricity.

A cold glass of water
then outside to run
the dogs.



I return.
The electricity is back on.
My house has weather.

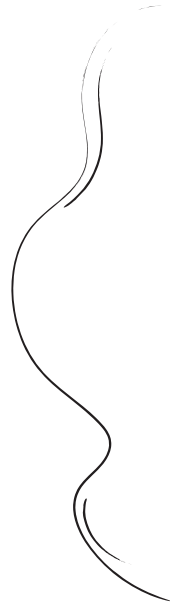
Only nature is faithful.

AMOR FATI

The dogs follow me
up the mountain.

But some days
turn back.

Only the mountain
is free for
it is beyond utility.



3

HOME

Dew on the flowers.
The wind through the trees.
The birds in the sky.

What need have I
to keep looking,
now that
the cock has
crowed thrice?

A man's home is where
he needn't keep looking.



TRAVELING

I am a homeless mind.
A traveler with only books.
Time is my currency and
I spend it on nothing.

The fruit trees sustain me.

Evenings
a little wine and
I'm someone else.

Now,
nothing is foreign to me.



5

POVERTY

You can't see it
or hear it.

It sticks to each boot
along the path
and makes
each step up
harder
but
more true.



6

ROUTINE

The garden
is finally giving.

We bring in some beets and
wash, cut, cook, eat.

The vultures
soaring on
the mountain's breath
look at us
with disgust.

Tomorrow
we'll do this all
again.



7

AN EVENING

The wind is quiet this evening.

The mango trees no longer protest.

The valley is spread out below
with a last light.

The mountain stands
triumphant
in its temporary
forever.



WEIGHTY FATE

I weighed 140 when I left.

I return 45 lbs. more.

I think I remember
what it was like
once to be so virile
and stalk in the night
women with short smiles.

Now, old ladies stare at me.
They ask themselves,
"Might he have been the one?"



9

AGAPE

Since you said
you are leaving,
I walk the mountain trails
with heavy, determined steps.

I punish myself
for being the coward
that cannot be anything else.

The mountain remains.
It embraces me in a way
I could not.



IO

NOT CARING

We rest on the hill
with cows gazing below.

The place where the path
veers toward the river.

As the sun rises
I am overcome with indifference.

The mountain behind me laughs.
I can hear the river in the distance
laughing too,
calling me to try and cross her
without getting my boots wet.

II

SAMSARA

There is a stream on the mountain.
I cross it each day.
It is always empty
by the time I get there.

The night's rain,
long disappeared.

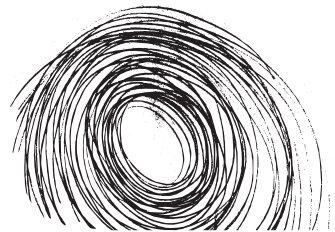
Full of potential
the rocks rest still
until nature's wheel
turns again.

THE JOURNEY

The dogs bark.

The men with machetes pass.

The dew begins its journey
every morning
rising back to where
it is from,
like I do
each day
in a dream
well lived.



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CERRO APANTE

A giant cross shadows
the valley below.

Trees of mist keep secrets.

The monk that climbs
to the top each day
never asks which way
he'll walk down.



EBB & FLOW

Walking up the mountain path
I have to watch and place
each step carefully.

There is no free ride.

In the house I put my feet up
and lounge
watching CNN and dreaming
of a colder beer.

Without attention or effort
life leaves
life returns
like the day on the shoulder
of the east wind.

15

TRUTH

Sunrise.

Hungry vultures.

Cool winds.

The mountain still.

There.

The way up

is to follow

the way down.

TWO FACES

Walking up the mountain
I met
two rabbits
going at it.

A few moments of effort
for a lifetime of joy
or
a lot of effort
for a lifetime of pain.

VIRTUE

Each day,
the same footsteps
up the mountain.

One after another
after the other
under the effort,
my legs
hard and sturdy.

Here, in this land alone
you keep what you give.

MAYA

On top of the mountain
looking out on
ripples of ridges
disappearing into the horizon.

Then, four large vultures
soar by
just feet away.

The farm worker beside me
takes a long drag
on his Chinese cigarette,
picks up his machete and says,
"They're beautiful."

It was the first time
I realized that.

FOR GOOD MEASURE

Too many rums
from too many countries.

I am unable to call things
by their right names.

The empty glasses
laugh at pour me.

ALIVE

Dogs bark. Crows crow.
The distant noise of civilization
drifts up the mountain.

The banana trees are still
and appear as statues,
armed guards outside
my bedroom window.

I awake to the sound of mice
scurrying through the pasta.

Who cares if Rome is burning?
Or what Cesar did or didn't do?

DESIRE

For weeks I complained
how dry it was.
I cried for it to rain.

Now that we've had
two straight days of
heavy rain,
all I do is
complain about the mud
while the papaya trees
glisten and sway
in the wind
oblivious and
mocking me.

EPHEMERAL

The sun goes down.

Why don't we fear
just once,
it might not
come up again?

Down below in the city
I see a flashlight
wandering through the cemetery.

After a few moments
it goes out.

I return inside the house,
turn off the lights
and dream of
yesterday's light.

UNNATURAL

The day awaits.

So much I need to do!

The papaya tree
looks at me
through the kitchen window
with a baffled look.



INVISIBLE

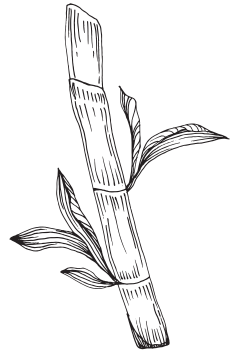
The bamboo creaks
under the heavy wind.

The hawk soars
on the unseen wind.

The world is fueled by
noise and invisible forces.

Not for me to argue.

I continue up the mountain
to enjoy the forever view.



25

PRIDE

On my mountain top
I stare into
the distance,
triumphant.

I only see
other mountain tops
in the distance
and myself
always high
in significance.



ENDURANCE

The cock crows.
Coffee's on.
Each day,
I ask myself
to stay a little longer.

Outside
the smoldering ashes
of last night's fire.

Mangos fall off
forgotten trees
to die on the ground.

ECHOES OF BASHO

We walk up the mountain
to the cross on top.

Along the way
the dogs lap water
from streams
seeking their demise.

At the top
the wind comes out
of hiding
and kisses our cheeks.

To the left, Matagalpa.
To the right San Ramon.
But the sky is forever.

COMMUNITY

The neighbor's dog
barks madly
every time
a person passes
on the mountain path.

For days
it was so quiet
as the rain pelted down.

Now,
it is constant
breaking news.

APPEARANCES

I once thought
some people,
some things
were lazy.

But I was seeing
the zucchini
without
its roots.

One hand is
always clapping.



WISDOM

When I was young
I roamed city streets
afraid
I was missing out
on something.

Now I'm old.

I scratch my whiskers
and smile back
at the mountain breeze
that keeps me still
in my hammock
each afternoon.

POETRY

He swings his machete
all day.

It's a fortune that awaits,
\$5 USD.

Then it is
rice and beans
in the dark
after a long walk home.

I won't write a poem
about this.

It is for humanity
to resolve.

DIRECTION

The road snakes along
the mountain's edge and
paths weave off, left and right
into the dense canopy.

The dogs,
tongues long and heavy
push on to the next stream
crossing our path.

We'll return the way we came.
Everything the same except
direction.

33

THAT IS

The clouds have descended
and cover the house.

You can walk outside
through solid rain
guided by baying cows
and climb the mountain
in this dream
that is.

DASEIN

The valley below
is hidden in mist.

I drink my coffee
and my head clears enough
to see the door knob and
let life in.

The sun is peaking around
the mountain's shoulder.

The world is a dance of
the seen and unseen.

I put on my shoes
and go nowhere
up the mountain.

35

MAYA

So much to do!

Fences to mend.

Wood to chop.

Got to weed the garden.

There's gas to buy for
the generator.

The dogs need their run.

Outside my window
the banana fronds wave
and laugh at me.

PRACTICALITY

Early morning with coffee.

Reading Hegel
on the shitter and
watching the ants crawl
across the tiled floor
in front of me.

My wife hollers,
"We need to buy toilet paper today!"

37

DUALISM

Night time.

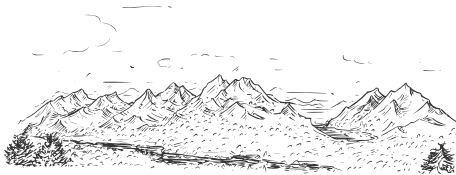
City lights twinkle below.

I reach for a match.

One has.

One has not.

Tomorrow
we'll both bathe
in the sun.



RAINY SEASON

From all the paths
on the mountain.

You can hear
the raging streams.

Nowhere
can you hear
the rocks' anger.

Everything has
its season.



ENLIGHTENMENT

Every morning
the dog and I
walk up the mountain
to the cross.

He never refuses.
He never asks why.
He never asks where we are going.

He walks. He is.

With no dreams of arrival
he laps in gratitude
at each stream
we cross.

GOING AWAY

I see so many creatures
on my way up the mountain.

Cows, snakes, vultures
chickens, rabbits, sparrows
sometimes a sloth.

I wonder
if
they see me?

GREED

There are many paths
up the mountain.

One through a creaking forest
of bamboo.

Another lined with
stone crosses.

On top
only one destination,
a sky that has abandoned
the greedy hands of earth.

RECURRENCE

The ripe papaya without
the bird.

The mountain without
the view.

The path without
the destination.

The circle without
the end.

Sound without fury.
Mirror without reflection.
Stop without go.
Me without myself.

ONLY NOW

Only now
is the wind soft
on your cheek.

Only now
the sun warm
on your skin.

Only now
are you the person
you were meant to be.

Only now
not
then.

THE FUTURE

From now on
only
the mountain.

From now on
just
the moment.

From now on
a nameless passenger;
winter's first rain.

EXCELLENCE

You cannot put
a mountain
into a tea cup.

You cannot mix
wind and sky.

You cannot succeed
when trying.

Trying is only practice.

46

A LIFE

A narrow path
through the trees
to the opening

a cemetery.

ON SILENCE

A white dot
on a whiter page.

Not the absence of
but a filling of.

An immensity
that we can
hear, feel, discern.

What we do not know.
We must not define.

NO HUBRIS

I throw a bone outside
and in 10, 15 seconds
the ants appear
in their thousands
for the spoils.

A dark black mass
appears over
the pearly white
of the bone.

So human!

Just our bones are
a different size.

BUDDHIST LAMENT

The hills groan under marching footsteps.
The sky is choked by expensive fumes.
A frog searches for the last lily pad.

Everyone is smiling.
They don't get the seriousness of it all.
This joke.

Blessed are them that know none of this.

A still lake where desire is embraced
and the moonlight
reflected everywhere.

Who can see how the fist opens up
into a hand?

ALMOST HEAVEN

It has been 6 hours now.
No electricity.
Glory! Halleluja!

So calm.
No internet noise.
No TV selling me stuff.

Just the vultures overhead
keeping watch
and the wind
a pleasant roar.

Every crisis is an opportunity.

THE OFF BUTTON

I'm tired.

Truthfully, there should be
a place to go where
you enter, relax
and then don't come out.

There's too many of us
anyway.

Why does life make it
so difficult
to do the sayonara?

Where's the off button?