

The Breathing Room:  
Spirit Light Naming Sound



Mark Fleury  
a Down in the Dirt 2009 chapbook

# Table of Contents

The Guardian .....	4
Christmas .....	5
An Elegy For Paul (From The Locked Unit) .....	6
Cigarettes and Coffee .....	7
Meditation .....	8
For Life (To Genevieve, My Wife) .....	9
Last Sunset Behind The Willow .....	10
Here's a Window.....	11
National Spleen .....	12
Who We Are.....	13
Solstice Tree Trinity.....	14
I Decided (Title Not Decision).....	15
God Saga .....	16
Leaves .....	17
Western Meditation #1 .....	18
Western Meditation #2.....	19

Thanks to the following for publishing some of these poems:  
“Transcendent Visions,” “The Storyteller,” “Ruah,” “Ceremony,”  
“Down In The Dirt” and “Poet’s Haven.”

These poems are dedicated to The Muse

# The Guardian

A basement apartment, sweating out the addiction.  
A fever, on the verge of breaking a Demon,  
Stoned and screaming, although there is no one  
To wake up.  
A window shatters in the opposite direction  
Of the search, through celestial darkness,  
For the end of the night  
And the end of the scream.

As the sun rises an owl descends  
Over a field of blowing snow,  
Where the cloudless sky defines  
A leafless tree.  
Landing, he is a wolf: fur wrinkled  
In between the eyes, teeth glistening,  
Growling and ready, from a separate  
Point of view, to attack.

It's the place where darkness ends  
And the mind, that is free will,  
Must choose: innocence or madness.  
Huddled against the tree, the wolf has transformed.  
First the shadow is seen.  
Then the embodiment of dualism:  
The perpetually agreeable, slow-healing Angel.  
The Face,

A tangibility pervaded by half-flesh  
And half-dream, and pained by the shrill  
Brightness of ancient grief, is childlike,  
Wounded and bleeding from a violent struggle,  
Only as important as Life and Death,  
Between where one is and where one  
Wants to be: to merge looking within  
And looking without.

How quickly The Guardian heals  
When the struggle is over! The slow lifting  
Of wings, transforming into the wide open,  
Eternal instance of Light.

# Christmas

Windowed lights above icicles  
Hanging on the sill;  
Every flake falls, behind the bulbed  
Candy-caned tree, a different color.  
Gifts, carefully wrapped and  
Adorned at our feet,  
With bows and ribbons:  
Enjoyed more during the close  
Warm huddle on the couch  
With the pitch of combined laughs,  
As presents, before they're  
Opened to become  
Possessions.

## An Elegy For Paul (From The Locked Unit)

Paul has been made obedient by medication.  
This morning, much the same as every morning,

He challenged, as though it was a timeless  
Duty, the results of his diagnosis,

And following the peaceful impulses  
Of his heart, made us laugh, telling jokes

In the smoking room and creating for me  
Poetry, spontaneous joyful and lucid, about

Playing baseball as a boy in the sunlight.

Though he's barely 30, we were all children  
To him. He took care of us.

Now, ordered to get a clean shirt,  
He wraps a bed sheet around his torso

And walks across the gray carpet  
With a broad smile, drooling like an infant,

Eyes glazed and drained of dignity.

## Cigarettes and Coffee

The Demon comes back when it rains  
On the deck outside.  
The birds are still quiet, so I listen  
To the red hot tobacco burn  
Away the paper until the butt chars  
To a golden brown:  
Long gray ash, fragile and untouched.  
I gently poke it,  
Watch it collapse into the ashtray, rub  
Thumb and forefinger  
Together until there's a fine powder.  
"There is a light  
Directly behind your head. When you die  
There will continue  
To be a light."  
A few chirps as the rain lets up.  
It's rained  
Every day for a week. It scares me.  
To surrender  
To whatever guides me. To be gone  
Forever.

# Meditation

Nature is silent, so as to compel  
The movement of the sun

That, all morning, was time.  
Now distances: the plush, moss-

Covered rocks and black trees,  
Are dependent upon each drop of

Rain: brightening the contrasts  
Between the colorless sky  
And lime-colored leaves.

Rebirth is because of separation  
From Nature,

Silent so as to constellate breath,  
Concentration and renewal of

The trail, indistinct from rising  
Steam, shadows of swamp bushes  
And the buzz of mosquitoes.  
Each step: boots streaked with dew,  
Ahead of the last. Gone.

A sudden clearing. A coating of twigs  
On the ground. Pine trees creaking.

Nature is silent, so as to make  
A pure sacrifice, into the Creation  
Of Sound: flowing.  
Gray dust, cooling, surrounded by  
Charred stones.

# For Life

## (To Genevieve, My Wife)

Your father drank a quart of vodka a day.  
Now he lives near an Egyptian pyramid  
And in your dream he held a knife  
That fell like a siren's scream  
And combination cut of light  
And darkness engulfing each other.  
A police car wailed by between buildings,  
Responding to an emergency or just  
Fuckers with too much power?  
We woke and saw each other in the darkness.  
You stood and turned on the light;  
A water glass shattered on the floor.  
I heard you scream and saw terror  
In your eyes, your body clenched and trembling.

In Arles we could see how much the sun exposed  
Each needle of the cypress trees.  
That many generations of them have sprouted  
Since van Gogh. Small birds circled overhead.  
We walked along the river, away from stores  
That had postcards of his paintings, down  
Narrow cobblestones, passing drunken locals.  
Blue sky contained between red roofed brick ghettos.  
The sun flickered above a blue shirt rippling on a line  
Between windows in walls with relieved Demons'  
Bulbous eyes and carnivorous teeth.  
May 25<sup>th</sup> 1996, our first wedding anniversary.  
We kept the hotel window open, lulled to sleep  
By chirping birds buried within  
Branches swept by a mistral wind.

## Last Sunset Behind The Willow

A crow is already perched  
On next summer's stump.  
But for now the crushing  
Weight  
Of the sun-contained  
Crystallized rain,  
That next winter  
Will do it in,  
Is just water, taken  
Through the rooted soil  
And ringed deep within  
The still-living trunk  
As a hundred birds  
Chirp and fly  
To and from branches  
Being slowly  
Consumed by ants.  
A nocturnal world,  
Concealed by a full,  
Beautiful body of light-  
Glinted, yellow-tinged green leaves  
Circling and touching the grass.

A warm 10 AM breeze  
Rustles awake the scent of  
Lilac through the hedges.

Recently sprayed with pesticides,  
The lawn is lush and flawless.

## Here's A Window

Here's a window, collected from and defined by  
The surrounding environment, and oppressive  
Predawn rain; each other torn apart is time,  
The grand distraction, like the great

Unholy other  
Side, the psychic wound's trinity of racism,  
Homophobia and sexism, the obligatory abomination of  
The human spirit; hell is rage-defined, connecting

As thought watching. Still, paranoia, though cutoff from  
Natural light, is power: given to others for learning and healing  
(Oneself with dry mouth, sweat on fingers) and most dangerous  
When it feels good. "I'm winning."

More known, less  
Felt/perceived, and the wound deepens.  
Reconciliation is a removal, revealed to be real,  
Such as the predawn rain turning into morning

Snow, collected back into the earth, or condensation's  
Union of hot and cold: water, casting its own shadows,  
Beaded, sliding down the windowpane. Heat rises and thins  
So mountains are cold because heaven,

A kind of cyberspace  
Opposite, is angel-defined: like a child on a bed safe  
From nightmares. The Guardian, the Aether,  
Is clear breath, oxygen, empty of division.

# National Spleen

The failing health of a nation  
Drools out identical buildings.  
The tops of trees, clear cutted  
In gravity's shadows (the end of lives)  
Such as the embarrassing  
Horror of our own masks  
Falling off, pulled downward  
By way of the spleen (blood  
Filtered, below the stomach)

And before the Cross in the skull,  
Like a dying door, a Ring, electric,  
Of planet shaped and sounded life,  
Surrounding our flesh and  
Passions, in between the heart  
And its rhythm, such as where

Is a breeze's beginning? unanswered  
By the ruthless, clinical clock.  
Blue sky exposed by the trees, felled  
For sprawl or prisons: rows of  
Beige houses, like painted faces,  
With fenced in, dark green grass,  
Mowed plush; the scent reaches  
A child in a crib, standing for  
The first time, arms reaching upward  
Behind the wood bars; the parameters  
Of the parents' lovemaking has  
Become a pure mind, looking and  
Listening undivided, like a death row  
Inmate at a table in a library.  
Experience, after all, until it dies,  
Is our teacher: the top of a fence,  
Barbed wire angled inward. Diaphragm  
Downward, synchronized with Spirit.  
All of our teachers are prisons.

## Who We Are

It's about attention  
(I'm a windowless vehicle)  
Or a haunted room:  
Clouds: silhouettes  
Of red smoke water,  
Preceded by the Clear  
Mind (apocalypse)  
Of their own  
Imperceptible movement,  
The blue from beyond  
An orange bucket  
Of sand on a beach  
Near a yellow shovel. Where is  
The child?

I braked a car.  
A crow wouldn't leave  
A dead robin on  
The broken yellow line;  
Traveling of its own accord,  
Feathers spreading shiny blue,  
Won't leave me alone.

It's about attention,  
Like the Angel ignored  
Sickens into demonic  
Temptation for all  
Outside its calling:  
The simultaneous, limited  
Labyrinth of thoughts,  
An exitless maze,  
The passage of time,  
Over during a blink:

Descent and ascension  
As from a dimly lit  
Staircase to a living  
Room of the Soul:  
(The place in between...)  
A yellow couch, backed  
By a green comforter  
Below a robin's nest  
On the sill.

Place is extended  
during wretchedness,  
Like the baby birds  
Pecking out of  
Their own blue eggs.

Unexpectedly, the Angel  
Is a tension  
From who we are.

Deep as hearing  
Drowned in knowing  
That's against, not as what's  
Shown (as in shining)  
The Goddess  
Of Sadness  
Is also the Earth's youth,  
Her dress a snowy field,  
The rising moon

A stone

Over the center  
Of her forehead.  
Safety is the hand  
Of a lover, reaching  
Through a cross,  
Of which, one's  
Leave, beyond an  
Enshrined, centuries old

Solstice  
Tree  
Trinity

Statue,

Is taken.  
Her tears are dew  
On the grass kept warm  
By the soil (Mother to  
The roots) beneath  
The Solstice Tree's branches,  
Like bones given up  
For initiation, and circled by

Its shadow, led by the mandala moon.  
The Solstice Tree frames, as it's  
Crystallized by,  
The naked, sea blue  
Northern Lights, empty  
So not forsaken,  
Broken by the light,  
Crossed.

## I Decided (Title Not Decision)

I decided it might be best to ease into  
Ink's journey from the deepest cores  
Of all of the histories of every rock,  
Pebble, grain of sand, speck of dust or  
Jewel you've ever seen and/or dreamed.  
After all, the purple in one of the jewels  
That we both see now in a museumed

Glass case (bulletproof probably) was/is  
Easily the combination of a t-shirt that  
I saw at the edge of periphery while  
Walking downtown to work and also in a  
Plastic kid pool (both the water and  
Plastic) in a neighbor's front yard: Glow

Of water, blade of grass floating on top  
And the sadness of the pool having been  
Abandoned by children are all reasons for  
Why the jewel encased in bulletproof  
Glass is in this poem.

As for the deepest cores, they're all  
In the loneliness shared by the jewel  
And the kid pool, the separation of  
Them brought together by how it's felt  
That they share more than color.

## God Saga

Ashamed often enough to need  
The sky as example of how to  
Open, I collected straw from  
The kitchen floor that'd fell

From the broom during sweeping  
And made a nest for the mirror  
I broke. All of the shards

Worked against my widening  
Eyes in the sense that I had  
Known less than sight: a team  
Of Holy Spirit and Father  
Held by the Soul  
Served as evidence in my case

Of what I saw as God  
Versus how they became spines  
And eyes for humans. The hard  
Sell for the jury though had to  
Be what became of The Serpent:

Spinal cord? Father as a  
Backbone maybe but how did  
They get one chord into the third  
Of two eyes? And I saw,

Tho, the whole team of God  
Standing on a street  
Corner at dawn, holding where  
Holy Spirit, Soul and Father

Met the angle  
Of the Heart, mid-leafed, branched.  
The Ring and length of the sun  
The same as me.

# Leaves

At last a space for my mistakes, namely that I  
Can leave here, being heart, to touch thought.  
So in translating vision to listening,

The ageing of a human body withering also has  
Beauty of brown and yellow of November leaves,  
The way the sun always seems to be behind  
Each tree's brightest dusk. And by the time

The ground's frozen with the coldness of moon,  
Wind-tossed tatter of separate and together,  
The hollow of  
Moon's whiteness is deeply carved with the

Blue from sky black enough for flickers of  
Fireflies, stars, thoughts as  
Leaves. And the degree to which  
Earth and sky shelter each other into winter and  
Prevent, in summer, either from drifting out of

Themselves is why the stem of a leaf will  
Break when most vivid. Exposed from form  
To space as flesh, between green and yellow,  
Falls, closer to root than

Glass to sand; dryness: death's only claim  
To what leaf and body share.

So I thought I'd  
Hide in the shadow of that lampshade on the  
Shag yellow carpet before autumn's arrival:

From childhood evening of a distant past  
That has to be, as oxygen and flame, here,  
Extension of mind as future. I can see,  
Clear as white sheets of an old age bed,  
The living room, and what, in the change of  
Hands, warmth and feeling together become.

# Western Meditation #1

Working to fill the tank. What flows from  
The pump? My glass is full of it if empty,  
I mean transparency: the way the filter  
Of a cigarette, tar-saturated, is clear, is  
My heart pumping oil? And if I fill my glass  
With gasoline would the smell repel or thrill?  
The wall where the sun became a setting

Road for tunnel vision, according to the  
Windowsill, it should've risen. Then I,  
Glad to look over the edge for the underbelly  
Of the moon, would've bet my shadow on it.  
Darkness when and where I tried to chain a  
Serpent to an east outside myself. Inside

Is worse, as if looking directly into night is  
The opposite of behind me. Still a spine has  
To start somewhere, otherwise raindrops'd be  
Much longer, and the dagger on the sill of

Each of my eyes would be cause to pull back  
My tongue. I'd stuck it out at being able to  
Walk into the darkness of a wall, much the way

A book is entered and reading stops above and  
Before the spine. You see, if you could see  
Where mine starts I'd want to rattle it so who  
Can blame the snake? Even vision narrowed to  
Tip of flame can see that gasoline fumes blue

A human face. So I had to back up and try to  
Find the other side of darkness. The other wing?

So I imagine a book where seven  
Is the first number (as in lowest). The real  
Reason is because my favorite rhyme is angel  
And angle, but only if real doesn't mean serious.

## Western Meditation #2

Consumed by surrender (mind/body  
The same) is the opposite of God  
As Father. The Angel stirs from slumber,  
Yawns, wipes eyes of misty sleep and is  
Gone, smiling, can finally go home.

Oh the lengths gone to prove manliness,  
To get energy from the ground. "Solar's too girly,"  
Says the man who'll kill or die for oil, the man  
Whose God is a man. Crawling is not

I gathering the ground up for contents of  
Machines, collecting, consuming, addicted,

I is the same as you, or you the same as I.  
Who can I kill? There is a million mirrors in one  
Chirp of a bird. How many millions of chirps in  
Your mirror? And just as

The conscientious objector says  
"My freedom comes from my faith  
That tells me not to kill anyone,"  
So my taking for granted that this  
Exhale will be followed by an inhale  
Has nothing to do with being a U.S citizen;  
Besides, How can I kill or be killed for  
What I've only ever perceived as the word  
Itself? America. Crawling is sprawling.

# The Breathing Room: Spirit Light Naming Sound Mark Fleury

scarsuoppesjqqnd

Editor@scars.tv

<http://scars.tv>

Down in the Dirt magazine



the Copyright for the written pieces is retained by the author  
Design Copyright © 2009 Scars Publications and Design

cover image of a window in Tallinn, Estonia, from Scars Publications (photographed 2006).

## other publications from Scars:

**Magazines:** *Children, Churches and Daddies* (cc&d magazine), founded June 1993; *Down in the Dirt*, conceived 1994, founded 2000

**Books:** *Hope Chest in the Attic*, *the Window*, *Close Cover Before Striking*, (*Woman.*), *Autumn Reason*, *Contents Under Pressure*, *the Average Guy's Guide (to Feminism)*, *Changing Gears*, *the Key to Believing*, *Domestic Blisters, Etc.*, *Oeuvre*, *Exaro Versus*, *L'arte*, *The Other Side*, *The Boss Lady's Editorials*, *The Boss Lady's Editorials (2005 Expanded Edition)*, *Duality*, *Seeing Things Differently*, *Change/Rearrange*, *Death Comes in Threes*, *Moving Performances*, *Six Eleven*, *Life at Cafe Aloha*, *Creams*, *Rough Mixes*, *The Entropy Project*, *The Other Side (2006 Edition)*, *Stop.*, *Sing Your Life*, *The Beauty and the Destruction*, cc&d v167.5 (*Writing to Honour & Cherish*, editor edition), *Blister & Bum* (the Kuypers edition), *S&M*, cc&d v170.5 *Distinguished Writings* editor edition, *Living in Chaos*, *Silent Screams*, *Taking It All In*, *It All Comes Down*, *Rising to the Surface*, *Galapagos*, *Chapter 38* (v1, v2 & v2), *Finally*, *Literature for the Snotty and Elite* (v1, v2 & part 1), *a Wake-Up Call From Tradition*, (*recovery*), *Dark Matter: the Mind of Janet Kuypers*, *Evolution*, *Sulphur & Sawdust*, *Slate & Marrow*, *Blister & Burn*, *Rinse & Repeat*, *Survive & Thrive*, (not so) *Warm & Fuzzy*, *Torture & Triumph*, *Oh.*, *the Elements*, *Side A/Side B*, *Balance*, *Chaos Theory*, *Writing to Honour & Cherish*, *Distinguished Writings*, *Breaking Silences*, *Unlocking the Mysteries*, *the Book of Scars*, *We The Poets*, *Life on the Edge*, *Revealing all your Dirty Little Secrets*, *Decrepit Remains*, *Charred Remnants*, *Hope & Creation*, *Bending the Curve*, *Layers of Creation*, *Dark Matter*, *Survival of the Fittest*, *Crawling Through the Dirt*, *Laying the Groundwork*, *Infamous in our Prime*, *Anais Nin: an Understanding of her Art*, *the Electronic Windmill*, *Changing Woman*, *the Swan Road*, *the Significance of the Frontier*, *The Svetasvatara Upanishad*, *Harvest of Gems*, *the Little Monk*, *Death in Málaga*, *Memento Mori*, *In the Palace of Creation*, *R.L.P.*, *Bob the Bumble Bee*, *Remnants and Shadows*, *I Saw This*, *the Drive*, *Thomas at Tea*, *Crashing Down Nineteenth*, *Blue Collar Ballet*, *nopoem*

**Compact Discs:** *Mom's Favorite Vase* the demo tapes, *Kuypers* the final (*MFV Inclusive*), *Weeds and Flowers* the beauty & the desolation, *The Second Axing* *Something is Sweating*, *The Second Axing* *Live in Alaska*, *Pettus & Kuypers* *Live at Cafe Aloha*, *Pointless Orchestra* *Rough Mixes*, *Kuypers* *Seeing Things Differently*, *5D/5D* *Tick Tock*, *Kuypers* *Change Rearrange*, *Order From Chaos* *The Entropy Project*, *Kuypers* *Six One One*, *Kuypers* *Stop.*, *Kuypers* *Masterful Performances mp3 CD*, *Kuypers* *Death Comes in Threes*, *Kuypers* *Changing Gears*, *Kuypers* *Dreams*, *Kuypers* *How Do I Get There?*, *Kuypers* *Contact • Conflict • Control*, *the DMJ Art Connection* *the DMJ Art Connection*, *Kuypers* *Questions in a World Without Answers*, *Kuypers* *SIN*, *Kuypers* *WZRD* *Radio* (2 CD set), *Mom's Favorite Vase* and *The Second Axing* *These Truths*, *assorted artists* *String Theory*, *Oh* (audio CD), *Life At The Cafe* (3 CD set), *DMJ Art Connection* *Indian Flux*, *DMJ Art Connection* *Manic Depressive or Something*, *Chaotic Radio* *Chaotic Radio Week #1*, *Chaotic Radio* *Chaotic Radio Week #2*, *Chaotic Radio* *Chaotic Radio Week #3*, *Chaotic Radio* *Chaotic Radio Week #4*, *Chaotic Radio* *Chaotic Radio Week #5*, *Chaotic Radio* *the Chaotic Collection* *Collection #01-05* (5 CD set) etc. (audio CD, 2 CD set), *Chaotic Elements* (2 CD set), *Chaos in Motion* (6 CD set), *5D/5D* *Screetching to a Halt* (EP), *PB&J* *Two for the Price of One* (EP), *Kiki*, *Jake and Haystack* *An American Portrait*, *Kuypers/the Bastard Trio/Paul Baker/the JoAnne Powtlers Trio* *Fusion* (4 CD set).