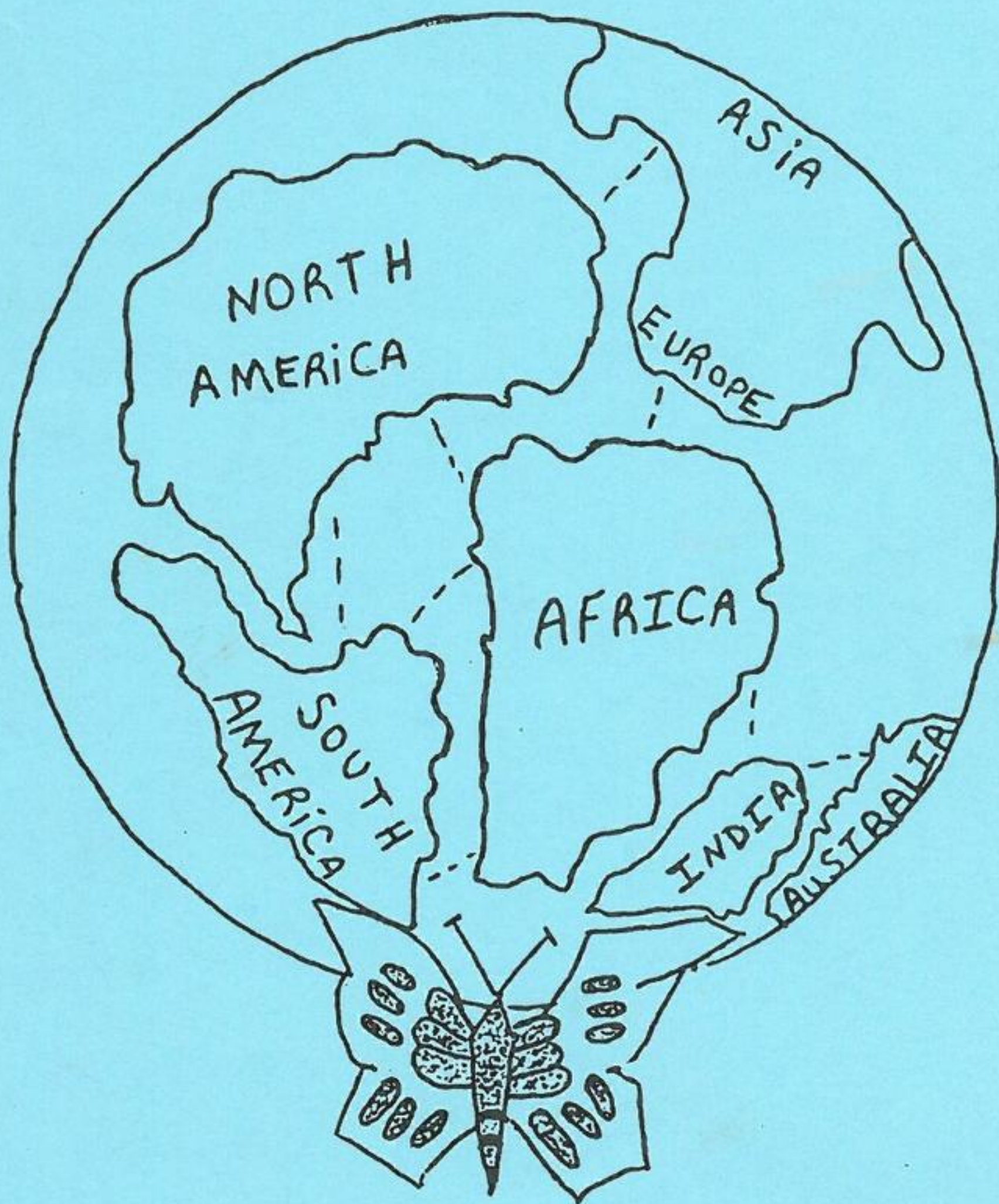


MONARCHS IN BLOOM



JAMES COLLINS

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SPECIAL THANKS

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK TO MY GOOD FRIEND BILL HERR. WITHOUT HIM THIS BOOK WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE. HE HAS BEEN MY MENTOR AT EVERY STAGE IN THE MAKING OF THIS BOOK. HIS CONSISTENCY AND DEVOTION TO HUMANITY HAS BROUGHT LIGHT TO MY LIFE. TRULY LOVE CONQUERS THE DOORS OF HATE, LONLINESS AND IGNORANCE. TO HIM I OWE MUCH.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JAMES COLLINS WAS BORN IN RIVERHEAD, NEW YORK. HE IS THE YOUNGEST SIBLING OF FIVE. HIS FATHER SERVED IN THE AIR FORCE AND WAS TRANSFERRED TO SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA. AT AN EARLY AGE JAMES STARTED GETTING INTO TROUBLE WITH THE LAW. IT WAS THIS HARDSHIP THAT HAS BROUGHT THE PEN TO PAPER. WRITING HAS TRANSFORMED HIS LIFE. EVEN THOUGH HE IS INCARCERATED HIS MIND IS TRULY FREE.

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CHAPTER

I

**FAMILY
UNITS**

THE DOOR TO FREEDOM ARRIVES WHEN EDUCATION
ARRIVES...

SHIPWRITING

I FOLLOW A LEAGUE OF STATUS
I AM LIKE COLUMBUS
EXPLORING WITH PAPER AND PENCIL
I KEEP A JOURNAL
TO SECURE KNOWLEDGE
BUT LIKE LOVE
IT HAS A TIME FOR RELEASE
PENCIL ON COURSE
KNOWLEDGE ON BOARD
AND CONCENTRATION AT THE BOW
THE TIME HAS COME
TO WRITE THE AMERICAN THEME



MELTDOWN

AS THE SUN PICKS UP PACE, SO DOES A CHILD WHO HOLDS A CHOCOLATE SCABBED CONE. QUICKLY HE HURRIES TO DEVOUR THE CREAM FILLING BEFORE IT STARTS A FLAVORED RIVER

COLD, BUT TASTES GREAT. IT'S DESTINED TO MELT AND BRING A DEEPENING SENSATION INSIDE A SHELL -

WHAT IF THE INSIDE STARTED TO FREEZE LIKE A HANGING ICICLE. DRIP, DRIP INTO THE WASTELAND BELOW WHERE ANTS CAN'T DIVIDE THE SPOILS

HE LOOKS OVER AT HIS MOTHER WITH A FROWN, BUT WITH A SMILE SHE GIVES HIM ANOTHER. AGAIN IT STARTS TO MELT

PAINFUL DISCOVERY

MY SON PURSUED A SANDPIPER
AS IT JITTERED AWAY
IT STUMBLED ACROSS THE SAND
A DEFENSE ANY MOTHER COULD RECOGNIZE
ITS CRY BLENDED
WITH THE ROAR OF THE OCEAN
"SEE," THE BOY SAID
"I TOLD YOU IT COULD NOT FLY"
HIS EXCITEMENT BROUGHT TO MIND
THERE IS PAIN IN DISCOVERY

MOTHER

THIS IS A DAY
WHEN STOVES SHOULD BE OFF
AND APRONS HANGING ON PEGS

IT IS A DAY FOR REST
WHILE CHILDREN HONOR WITH GIFT
IT IS A TIME FOR THUMBING THROUGH
FAMILY ALBUMS AND REMEMBERING
ALL THOSE DISTANT LAUGHS

MOTHER, THIS IS A DAY
WHEN CHILDREN DO NOT TAUNT AND HARRASS
SO ENJOY THIS DAY
FOR TOMORROW IS A NEW DAY
HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY...

LOVE CAN CARRY

MOTHER
YOUR LOVE IS ROOTED
LIKE THE GREAT OAK
IT SHADED ME EVEN BEFORE CONCEPTION
YOUR BREASTS NURTURED ME
MAKING MY CHEEKS SWELL
MY DIAPERS YOU ATTENDED WITH NEEDLE PRICKED
THUMBS
AND YOUR COMPASSIONATE UNDERSTANDING
TOOK ME THROUGH ADOLESCENCE
NOT ONCE DID I HEAR YOU COMPLAIN
NOW IT IS MY TURN
TO PAMPER YOU WITH LOVE

LOVE IS BINDING

MY FAMILY PICNICS
WITH ZANY LAUGHTER
WE SIT IN A CIRCLE
AND ELABORATE ON THINGS OF PAST
WE ARE QUICK TO QUOTE
WHILE UNDER CALIFORNIA SUN
HOW WE ENJOY THE GATHER
EACH SHARES AN ENJOYABLE GAB
WHILE MOTHER'S EYES
TAKE ON AN APPRAISING GLEAM
OF EACH PIECE OF HER ESTABLISHMENT
AT THE END WE HUG AND KISS
AND SAY "I'LL SEE YOU AT THE NEXT GATHER"

FESTIVE TIMES

IN A CIRCLE OF DANCE
MY MUSIC GOES OUT
OVER SACRAMENTO'S TOWN
RICH AND POOR PARTAKE
IN THE FESTIVE TIME
CHILDREN AIMLESSLY PLAY
WHILE THE ADULTS
LAUGH INTO THE WEE HOURS
I KNOW MY SYMBOL SOOTHES
WHEN THE COLOR OF FACES
ARE NOT DISTINGUISHABLE

A SPLENDER FOR US ALL

THE MAGIC OF A FATHER
THE PATIENCE OF A MOTHER
AND THE REBELLION OF THEIR WORK
A UNIT OF CONSTANT EMOTION
THE EMBRYO THAT SHINETH
GIVING DIRECTION TO THE MAGIC
A MEETING OF LIFE
AND SOMETIMES DEATH
NEVERTHELESS, IT IS A DANCE
OF SPRING, SUMMER AND FALL
A SPLENDER FOR US ALL

LOVE IS LIKE CRAB MEAT. IT IS ALWAYS FRESH
AND TENDER

A SECOND KISS

LEAVES HAVE MATED WITH THE PAST
AND WHITE HANGS FROM TREES
IT IS A TIME
WHEN MY WIFE'S MEMORIES COME ALIVE
SHE WAS SWIFT
TO SILENCE OUR EMBRACE
SHE SAID SHE NEEDED TIME
SOMETHING I COULD NOT GIVE
PERHAPS WHEN THE WHITE CHANGES
SHE WILL COME LOOKING
FOR OUR FIRST KISS

NEXT RISING SUN

COWGIRL
RIGHT FROM THE START
I KNEW THE STAKES WERE HIGH
YOU DEALT ME CARDS
THAT TUGGED ON MY HEART
THEN A SAD SONG PLAYED
THIS IS WHERE THE COWBOY RIDES AWAY

YOU SAID IT WAS TIME
TO SAY GOODBYE
TO THE SONG THAT SANG
THIS IS WHERE THE COWBOY RIDES AWAY

OUR DAY WILL COME
WHEN LOVE WILL RISE
ABOVE THOSE THINGS
THAT WE WISH WE WOULD HAVE DONE
SO TO SAY GOODBYE
IS NOT THIS COWBOY'S WAY
I WILL MEET YOU
AT THE NEXT RISING SUN

OLD LAUGHTER RENEWED

OUR EYES ADJUST
AS OUR FEET RETRACE
THE TIP TAP TIP TAP
OF THE SEVENTIES BEAT
WITHIN US OUR BLOOD STIRS
NUDGING LAUGHTER
HER VOICE FILLS MY EAR
AS WE DANCE WITH SWEET MEMORY
IT IS AN OLD NOTE
THAT IGNITES A NEW BEGINNING
FOR THE LAYERS OF YESTERDAYS LAUGHTER

LOVE IS QUICK - EVEN WITH ANCHORS

CHANCES ARE

LIFT UP YOUR HEAD
LOOK AT THE BEAUTY BEFORE YOU
THERE'S A MIND OF PROMISE
FLOWERED FOR LIFES OCCASIONS
YOU ARE UNIQUE
TINTED OF THE MANY COLORS
ROUNDED WITH A SMOOTH SMILE
AND ELEGANT FOR THE SEXES
CHANCES ARE YOU'LL SEE YOUR BEAUTY
IF YOU'LL JUST LIFT YOUR HEAD

COURT OF HUMANITY

YOUR APPRECIATION IS ADRIFT
YOU FAILED OPPORTUNITY
HIGH ON THE CREST OF FORTUNE
PONDER IF YOU WILL
LOVE, DEVOTION AND KINDNESS
LET TEARS RECORD YOUR JOY
GIVE FEAR, ANGER AND LONLINESS A REST
STEP INTO THE COURT OF HUMANITY
AND LOVE IN OPPORTUNITY

THE TRINITY

I AM A MAN
THAT HOUSES THREE
ONE IS A MAN CHILD
OF THIRTY-TWO
AND ONE IS A MAN
THAT FEELS ALONE
THEN THERE'S ME -
WITH AN INDIFFERENCE

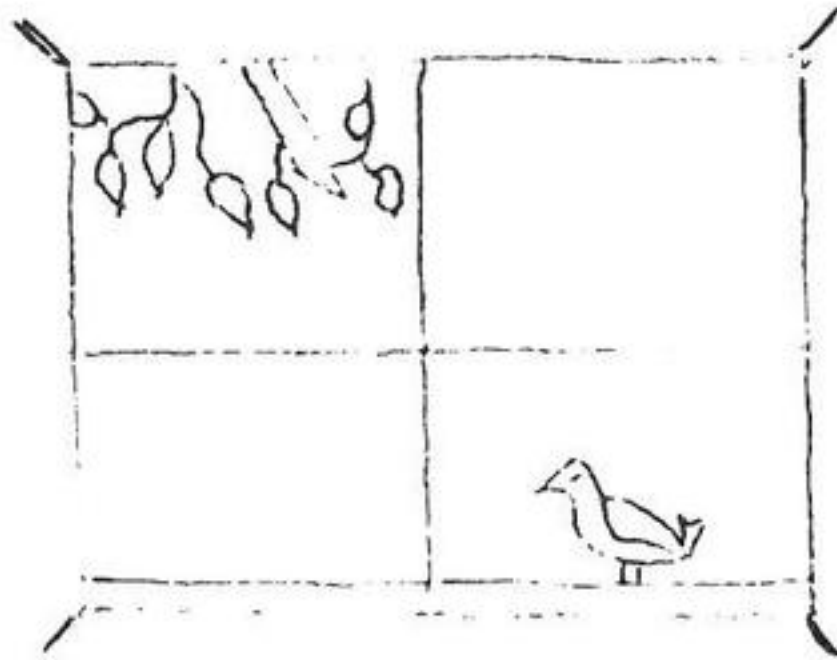
THE MAN THAT FEELS ALONE
WALKS ALONG THE BEACH
HE VIEWS HIS STEPS TO BE HIS LAST

AND THE MAN CHILD IS SPONTANEOUS
HE ADVENTURES TO A SPOT OF BREAD
GENEROUSLY HE PARLEYS TWO SHARES
IT IS IN THESE TIMES
WHEN ALL THREE OF US
SHARE IN THE SAME THOUGHT

CHAPTER

II

GOD



A MESSAGE IN DISGUISE

OUT ON MY WINDOW LEDGE
A THRUSH HAS RETURNED
HIS SONG IS SOOTHING
SENDING SHIVERS DOWN MY SPINE
TWEEDLE DEE DEE
TWEEDLE DEE DAW
HIS SONG BRINGS A MESSAGE
THAT GOD IS NOT FAR

THE SINISTER'S ANTHEM

ADAM
SINCE YOU WALKED IN EDEN
WE HAVE BEEN PLAGUED BY WAR
OUR WOMEN BUTCHERED AND DISGRACED
LOCUST MOW OUR FIELDS
AND OUR BABIES STARVE IN OUR ARMS
COME AND SEE YOUR SONS
SPRAWLED OUT ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE
THEIR BELLIES HOUSE LARVA
WE ARE DRIVEN BY THE SCENT OF DEATH
ALL BECAUSE YOU DESIRED
GOD'S FORBIDDEN FRUIT

A DIFFERENT VIEW

I AM BEING STALKED
BY MEN IN GLASS
WHEN THINGS LOOK BAD
THEY REMIND ME I AM UNFIT
THEN ANOTHER MAN APPEARS
WITH A DIFFERENT VIEW
HE SAID I HAVE BAD TENANTS
AND EVICTION IS OVERDUE
WE WALKED THROUGH ALL THE ROOMS
IN THE FIRST ROOM
WAS A BOARDER NAMED GRIEF
HERE HE SAID WE HAVE LITTLE TO DO
FOR MY NAME IS JOY
AND I WILL DWELL IN THIS ROOM
FURTHER DOWN WAS ANOTHER TENANT
HE WAS CALLED PAST
"NO PROBLEM," JOY SAID
I WILL ADJUST THE MIRROR
TO GIVE YOU A DIFFERENT VIEW

PRAYER IS FRAGILE - SO SPEAK WITH CARE...

HE AWAKES THE LAND

A DEER ENTERED MY CIRCLE
HIS NOSE STRETCHED INTO THE WIND
PERHAPS IT SENSED
I DID NOT WISH RED MEAT
HERE THE CALENDAR
IS THE CHANGING OF THE WHITE
IT STREAMS DOWN
ENRICHES THE SLEEPY LAND
TREES START TO FLOURISH
AND FLOWERS SPECKLE BARREN VALLEYS
MY EYES CONTINUE TO HOLD FAST
AS GOD MAKES SPRING PREPARATIONS

PASSING THROUGH

EVERYTHING IS STILL
UNTIL MY BIRDISH FEELINGS STIR
MY ARMS LIFT
AS TO CATCH A GALE
BUT NO WIND COMES TO MY RESCUE
I READ IN GOD'S WORD
THAT I AM JUST PASSING THROUGH
AND NEED NO WINGS OF FLIGHT
FOR MY STAR LIES WITHIN
AND CAN REACH AN ETERNAL HEIGHT
IF I PUT MY TRUST IN HIM
FORGETTING MY OWN EMOTIONAL STIR

THE LAST GATHER

THE WHOLE IS GATHERED TOGETHER
A FAMILY'S - FAMILY
ALL UNDER ONE ROOF
PRAISING THE ETERNNAL TRUTH
STRANGE IT IS TO SOME
THAT HEAR THE PRAISE
AS IT LIFTS TOWARD THE SKY
IT IS AN ECHO
FILLING THE HUMAN VOID
AND DRAWING THEM CLOSER
TO THE LAST GATHER
THEY RAISE THEIR HANDS
AS IF TO PULL THE WORLD TOGETHER
BUT IT IS GOD THEY HONOR
FOR THEY ALREADY KNOW
THE BATTLE HAS BEEN WON

CHAPTER

III

NATURE

THE WONDERFUL CYCLE

FROM A DISTANCE
I VIEW LIFES BEAUTY
FLOWERS ARE DRESSED TO DAZZLE
AND RAINBOWS DRAPE THE SKY
I AM ENTHRALLED
AT GOD'S ARTISTIC HUMOR
SQUIRRELS COLLECT NUTS
DOGS CHASE CATS
AS BIRDS RAISE THEIR YOUNG
IT IS A WONDERFUL CYCLE
YET I WONDER
WHERE IS MY BEAUTY IN ALL THIS

THE WILLOW GOLDFINCH

AS THE COLUMBIAN HURRIES BY
A WILLOW GOLDFINCH
BOBS AMONG THE BEAUTIFUL ASPEN
SWIFTLY IT MAKES SPORT OF MOSQUITOS
THEN IN A JITTERY MOTION
HE DIPS HIS HEAD INTO THE COOLNESS
THE AIR IS CRISP AND FRESH
UNLIKE THE CITY'S CONFINES
THE RIVER SNAKES ON
UNCARING FOR THE LITTLE THIEF
OR THE PRESENCE OF A STRANGER
THAT CAME TO SPY

A decorative border made of a continuous spiral line surrounds the page. The spiral starts at the top left, goes right, then down, then left, and then back up, creating a rectangular frame with decorative flourishes at the corners.

FEATHER THOUGHTS

HERE ON THE FEATHER RIVER
PEACE IS CONSTANT
AND PAIN DOES NOT TRESPASS
THE RIVER SWIRLS AND TWISTS
CARRYING A HEAVY LOAD
OUT OF THE JAWS
A SALMON HURDLES
PERHAPS HE WAS A LOOKER
THAT GIVES ALARM
THE WATER PRESSES ON
WASHING AWAY CITY MEMORIES
I HAVE BECOME A NEW FORCE
PENETRATING INTO CONCISE THOUGHT

DESERT EYES

I SAT BESIDE A STERN CACTI
THE WIND HOWLED
IT WAS MILD AND FRIENDLY
SNAKES AND LIZARDS
SCAMPERED UP THE DUNE
TRYING TO ELUDE THE RESTLESS SUN
I DON'T KNOW WHY
BUT I WATCHED AND WAITED
I WAS WARM AND CONTENT
UNTIL A BIRD BORE A HOLE
IN THE TOP OF THE CACTI
THE HOLLOW ECHOED
BE STILL AND LEARN



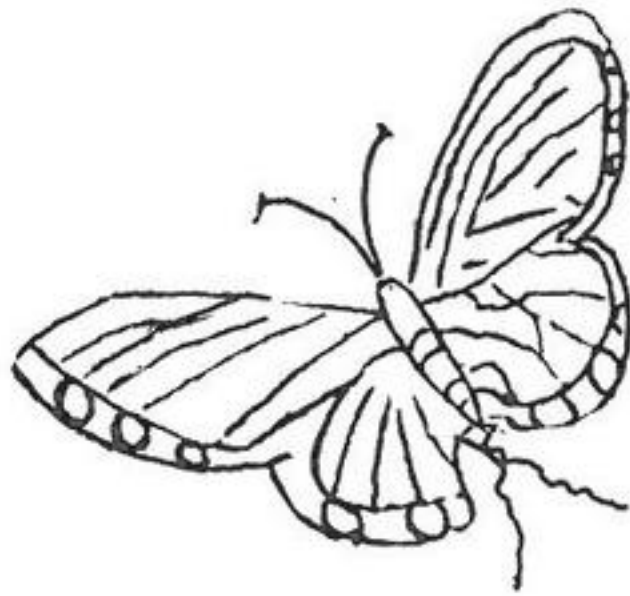
AMERICAN RIVER

ON THE AMERICAN
THE RIVER SLITHERS AND SWELLS
I WADE INTO THE DEPTHS
AND WONDER HOW MANY
HAVE BEEN LAID TO REST
PERHAPS I AM A THIEF ALSO
FOR SIPPING THE COOLNESS
THE RIVER PUSHES ON
WHILE AN OWL WATCHES IN SECRET
AND LIKE THE WATER HOLLOW
HE WILL DOWN THE UNAWARE

BEAUTIFULLY NAKED

REMEMBER THE FLOWER
HAVE WE MISSED THE UNFOLD
THE PETALS LOOM OUTWARD
AWAITING A GREEDY BEE
THE SUN BATHES THE OUTER FOLDS
WHERE APHIDS BOARD FREE
THEN A CARELESS HAND
SNIPS THE BEAUTIFUL HEAD
NOW IT STANDS STERN

A LASTING GLIMPSE



OVER MIAMI
MONARCHS ARE IN BLOOM
THEY WILL THE CHANGE
TO COMMUNE AMONG TREES
SOME ELUDE THE THRUSH
WHOSE MOUTH RUNS RED
MANY ARE CAUGHT
IN A SPECTATOR'S WEB
FOR YEARS I HAVE COME
TO THIS HARMONIOUS SETTING
AND I AM STILL AMAZED
AT THE COLORFUL VIEW

**CHAPTER
IV**

TRAGEDY

THERE COMES A TIME WHEN ONE MUST FIND
HIS OWN PEARL...

EMPTY HOME

I KNOW WHAT IT IS LIKE
TO BE HATED WITHOUT CAUSE
I KNOW WHAT IT IS LIKE
TO HAVE NO MONEY
I KNOW WHAT IT IS LIKE
TO HAVE NO HOME
I KNOW WHAT IT IS LIKE
TO STEAL FROM PEOPLE
BUT WHAT IS IT LIKE
TO HAVE NEVER BEEN LOVED?

OF LITTLE MEANS

PEOPLE ALIGN SIDEWALKS
AND VIEW ME AS AN UNWANTED EXHIBIT
THEIR EYES ARE SORE
AND AVOID CONTACT WITH MINE
I AM SHUNNED AT STORE FRONTS
AND TOLD I AM OUT OF BOUNDS
IF I STEP RIGHT OR LEFT
I AM TOLD I AM BREAKING THE LAW
WHAT CAN ONE DO
WHEN HE'S A MAN OF LITTLE MEANS

HOMELESSNESS

WHEN DAYTIME COMES
SO DOES A BEARDED MAN
WHO HAS LEARNED TO MAKE DO
NEWSPAPERS AND TELEVISION
REGARD HIM AS TROUBLESOME
LIKE THAT OF THE COCKROACH
HE HAS BECOME WEARY
OF FIGHTING SOCIETY'S UNWANTED VIEWS

WHEN NIGHTTIME COMES
HE BEDS DOWN ON PAVEMENT
AND LISTENS TO FROGS
SING THEIR NOMADIC SONGS
HE'S A MAN OF LITTLE COMFORT
HE OWNS ONE SHIRT
AND ONE PAIR OF PANTS
BUT HE KNOWS HOW TO MAKE DO
EVEN WITH SOCIETY'S UNDESERVED VIEWS

BETRAYAL

NOVEMBER IS CRUEL IN NEW YORK
UNPARTIAL TO THE HOMELESS
THE RICH HUDDLE INSIDE THEIR HOMES
WONDERING WHY A STRANGER
PACES UP AND DOWN THEIR STREETS
IN ONE ARM HE TUCKS HIS SLEEPING BAG
THE OTHER HE POKETS FOR WARMTH
HE CRINGES AT SIGNS
THAT SAY 30% DOWN
HE REMEMBERS HIS FAILURES
THAT LED HIS FAMILY
TO SEEK HIGHER GROUND
HE KEEPS THE MEMORIES ALIVE
CLUTCHING PICTURES INSIDE HIS JACKET
HOPING DECEMBER WILL BE KINDER THAN NOVEMBER

LEARNING IS A PICTURE WE ALL HAVE TO TAKE...

A POINT OF NO RETURN

BITTERNESS CROWDS MY BODY
AS I CLIMB UPON A BUS
I KNEW IT WASN'T TEMPORARY
MY CHAINS TOLD ME SO

YESTERDAY I COULD ORDER COFFEE
NOW I AM SERVED WITHOUT A MENU

YEARS HAVE GOTTEN ON
WHERE I DO NOT KNOW

SEEMS LIKE ONLY YESTERDAY
I WAS TIPPING A WAITRESS

AN UNNOTICED MAN

FOR HE WHO HAS AN EAR
PUT IT TO THE WALL
FEAR IS REAL
ANGER TELLS ME SO

I SHOUT BUT WHO HEARS
I WRITE BUT WHO ANSWERS
THE LETTERED PAIN

REBELLION, HOLLERING AND SCREAMS
COME ALIVE - EVEN THE DEVIL
WISHES THE BARS WOULD BREAK

NOW I HAVE LEARNED
THE SWEETNESS OF LIBERTY
BUT IT HAS NOT SOFTENED
THIS JANGLE OF CHAIN

BEHIND THESE WALLS

BEHIND THESE WALLS
OPPORTUNITY ELUDES ME
MY INSIDES SWELL
WITH MANY UNDESIRABLE THOUGHTS
EACH BUILDING STIRS WITH MIXED EMOTION
OF PAIN, VIOLENCE, RAGE
AND OF UNATTAINABLE FEATS
MY FRUSTRATION ESCALATES
ALMOST INTO A MENTAL DEATH
I FEEL ALONE IN THIS PIT
DEVASTATED BY THE STATE'S CHAINS
THEY HAVE DEEMED THIS PUNISHMENT
TO BE AN EVEN EXCHANGE
AT NIGHT A TINY VOICE
COUNSELS THE BURNING SWELL
AND IT RECEDES
UNTIL THE NEXT DAY OF PAINFUL EXPLORATION

HANGING OUT WITH BOREDOM

I HAVE A CELLMATE CALLED BOREDOM
WE SHARE THESE CONFINES
EACH DAY HE PLAYS THE SAME GAME
WHEN I HAVE AN ITCH
HE DARES ME TO SCRATCH
THEN MAKES SPORT OF IT

I WISH HE WOULD FIND SOMETHING ELSE TO DO
THAN TO SIT HERE WITH ME

I LIGHT UP A SMOKE
AND THEN ANOTHER
WHILE BOREDOM PACES THE CELL
PERHAPS IF I IGNORE HIM
HE WILL PICKLE OFF INTO OTHER THOUGHT

A QUEST FOR DEATH

DEATH
HAVE YOU COME
TO STOP MY RED PUMP
WITHDRAW YOUR FATAL ATTRACTION
AND TREAT ME AS A LOVER
WHEN I SLEEP
YOUR PRESENCE TAUNTS
MY WILL TO LIVE
YOU CHARGE THAT IT IS TIME
TO COVER ME WITH BLACKNESS
MY BLOOD IS SWIFTER
THAN YOUR BITE
YOUR QUEST IS DENIED THIS NIGHT

