
THE COLLECTED POEMS OF
PHILIP WHALEN

EDITED BY MICHAEL ROTHENBERG

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EDITOR'S NOTE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Collected Poems of Philip Whalen contains all of the poems from Philip Whalen's poetry collections, his uncollected poems published in small press magazines and anthologies, and *Calendar*, his graduate thesis from Reed College which Whalen considered his first "completed" book of poems. (Whalen's "Notes and Appendices" to *Calendar* appear in the appendixes to this volume). The poems gathered here are organized chronologically by date of completion, according to the dates Whalen gave them. He used many different formats for noting the date, and I have preserved these variations here.

Although Philip Whalen talked about his poetry as a "picture or graph of the mind moving," I believe his heart is what moved him to record the "nerve movie" in his mind. This is the poetry of a body, speech, and mind consciousness that exceeds all expectations, hinged to humor and playfulness. The love and respect felt for Philip Whalen by friends and students remains with us still, in our thoughts and in our writing.

Whalen's book *Highgrade* is made up of pieces often referred to as "doodle poems" or "visual poems." The intended titles of these pieces are not always clear. Within this book, I have chosen to use dates (when available) and/or prominent lines for titles. I have bracketed these titles in the table of contents to indicate that they are my approximations and should not be considered Whalen's choice.

Although it is always important to know when a poem was completed and published, it is also interesting to know how poems are organized into manuscripts. I have included the original table of contents from each of Philip Whalen's major books to provide additional insight and show his compositional and organizational perspective and aesthetic.

However, sometimes Philip Whalen's "creative process" was simply to allow a publisher or editor to make their own organizational choices. For example, when I asked PW why the poems in *On Bear's Head* were not organized chronologically, he told me he had no idea, "It just came from the publisher that way."

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