
THE COLLECTED POEMS OF
PHILIP WHALEN

EDITED BY MICHAEL ROTHENBERG

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CONTENTS

Editor's Note and Acknowledgments	xxv
Foreword, Highest and Driest: For Philip Zenshin's Poetic Drama/Dharma, Gary Snyder	xxvii
Language as Transient Act, The Poetry of Philip Whalen, Leslie Scalapino	xxxi
IV	1
VIII	1
XVIII	2
Three Desert Poems	2
The Great American Desert	2
Saguaro	3
New Canaan	3
<i>from</i> The Temptation of St. Anthony	3
The Plaster Muse : 6 Poems in the Classic Mode	9
I. Moshe Sur l'Eau	9
II. Ode	9
III. Leda	10
IV. Thursday in Byzantium	10
V. "A l'Ombre Des Jeunes Filles . . ."	11
VI. Sonnet for Valentine's Day	11
Advent	12
"A Country Without Ruins"	12

In the Palace of the Heart	13
Invocation to the Muse	13
November First	14
An Elegy Upon the Untimely Death of Mrs. W. F.	15
The Road-Runner	16
Three Ormolu Pieces for Stanley Moore	16
Song	17
Apostrophe to a Borrowed Tiger	18
The Sealion	18
Theory	19
“Of Course,” She Said	20
Three Satires	21
The Engineer	22
The Great Instauration	23
The Rose Festival Parade	26
<i>Meta</i>	27
“The Shock of Recognition”	28
Two Miracles	28
The Five Queens	30
Homage to Lucretius	31
A New Voyage	32
Scholiast	33
Out of It	33
Tell Me More	34
“Plus Ça Change . . .”	34
Martyrdom of Two Pagans	36
If You’re So Smart, Why Ain’t You Rich?	37
Sourdough Mountain Lookout	40
<i>from</i> Three Variations, All About Love	46
Sauced	49
Unfinished, 3:xii:55	50
Denunciation, or, Unfrock’d Again	51
Homage to Robert Creeley	52
Invocation & Dark Sayings, in the Tibetan Style	53
The Slop Barrel: Slices of Paideuma for All Sentient Beings	56
Small Tantric Sermon	62
Further Notice	63

I Give Up	64
The First Day of November	65
<i>Esprit d'Escalier</i> Rant, Directed at Dr. P.'s class in English 106-B	66
The Same Old Jazz	67
Anchor Steam Beer, for Michael McClure	69
Soufflé	70
Takeout, 15:iv:57	75
For C.	76
A Dim View of Berkeley in the Spring	77
Literary Life in the Golden West	79
Take # 4, 15:viii:57	80
Against the Magic War: An Open Letter to Robert Duncan	83
Harangue from Newport, to John Wieners, 21:ix:57	85
10:x:57, 45 Years Since the Fall of the Ch'ing Dynasty	87
Apedeath	88
In Memory of a Statesman	88
LETTER, to Mme. E. T. S., 2:i:58	89
For My Father	92
"While the Patient Slept"	92
Translation of a Lost Play by M. M.	93
Senseless Commentaries on Chao-Chou	94
Sincerity Shot	95
Metaphysical Insomnia Jazz. Mumonkan xxix.	96
Letter to Charles Olson	97
Unsuccessful Spring Poem	101
Corvallis Down the Road	101
Trying Too Hard to Write a Poem Sitting on the Beach	102
20:vii:58, On Which I Renounce the Notion of Social Responsibility	103
Newport North-Window View	104
From an Envelope Addressed to Charles Olson	105
Hymnus Ad Patrem Sinensis	105
Complaint: To the Muse	106
Prose Take-Out, Portland 13:ix:58	107
Self-Portrait Sad 22:ix:58	108
I Think of Mountains	113

Fond Farewell to the Chicago Review	114
From a Letter to Ron Loewinsohn, 19:xi:58	115
Delights of Winter at the Shore	116
Something Nice About Myself	119
[The end, of a month of Sundays]	120
Motion Day	121
a very complicated way of saying “appearances deceive”?	122
4:2:59 Take 1	123
Self-Portrait, from Another Direction	124
I Return to San Francisco	127
Take, 25:iii:59	132
A Reply	133
For a Picture by Mike Nathan	133
A Distraction Fit	134
With Compliments to E. H.	135
[Awake a moment . . .]	139
I Am King Giant Dragon Sun	139
Poem for a Blonde Lady	141
“Everywhere I Wander”	142
Haiku for Mike	142
A Reflection on My Own Times	143
Address to the Boobus, with her Hieratic Formulas in reply	143
Boobus Hierophante, Her Incantations	145
Song for 2 Balalaikas on the Corner of 3rd & Market	146
To the Moon	147
All About Art & Life	147
Temporarily Insane	152
Farewell!	152
Since You Ask Me	153
New York City	154
To a Poet	155
An Irregular Ode	156
Haiku, for Gary Snyder	156
Warnings, Responses, Etc.	157
Goodbye & Hello, Again	159
[Take dandelions first salad.]	161
[March 3, 1960, A Beautiful Page]	162

Palace Café	163
A Vision of the Bodhisattvas	163
Itchy	164
Dream	166
Essex Was a Cowboy in Vermont	166
Movie Night	167
Historical Disquisitions	168
Short Explanation of Everything	171
[Requiescat]	172
[Try doing a small thing well.]	173
Address to a Younger Generation	174
Dream & Excursus, Arlington Massachusetts	175
The Death of Boston	176
For Albert Saijo	178
[Government]	179
Homage to Rodin	179
Staying or Going	185
The Treasures of Rage	186
Real San Francisco Sunday Afternoon	187
San Francisco Sunday Morning Palimpsest	188
To Ruth	189
Duerden Says: "Life is Therapy"	190
Philippic, Against Whitehead and a Friend	193
Twin Peaks	196
[under/beneath]	197
Caption for a Picture	198
Life and Art	198
[Red Rover]	199
The Daydream	200
Ignorantaccio	200
[Driving immediately past]	201
[hoist great blocks of language into place]	202
That One	203
[I have eaten]	204
Monday in the Evening	205
Vector Analysis	228
[Coca-cola chairs]	229

[" . . . my FBI, my peace, my war"]	230
Saturday Morning	231
[B.C.]	231
Early Autumn in Upper Noe Valley	232
Easy Living	233
The Poor	234
The Revolutionaries	234
One of My Favorite Songs Is Stormy Weather	237
Friendship Greetings	238
Statement of Condition	238
The Idol	239
The Chariot	240
The Admonitions	241
To the Muse	243
The Prophecy	244
[Monday early before bedtime]	245
[Lamp]	246
[Very Early Monday]	247
[Tender]	248
There It Goes	249
Saturday 15:ix:62	249
A Short History of the Second Millennium B.C.	250
Fillmore Hob Nob Carburetor	251
The Art of Literature	251
The Art of Literature, 2nd part	252
The Art of Literature, #3, A Total Explanation	252
The Art of Literature, Part 4th	253
The Art of Literature, Concluded	254
[Hum]	255
[a community temple]	255
[Albert's Antarctica]	256
Minor Moralia	257
Applegravy	270
Sunday Afternoon Dinner Fung Loy Restaurant	
San Francisco 25:xi:62	271
The Saturday Visitations	272
Song to Begin <i>Rōhatsu</i>	273

The Gallery, Mill Valley	274
Heigh-Ho, Nobody's at Home	274
Hello to All the Folks Back Home	275
[CEconomy]	276
The Professor Comes to Call	277
The Coordinates	277
[a major communication]	278
[Worse than ever . . .]	279
Spring Musick	280
How We Live the More Abundant Life in America	280
Spring Poem to the Memory of Jane Ellen Harrison (1850–1928)	282
[careful & empty]	284
[More light seems to fall]	285
Re-Take 20:xii:63 from 7:iii:63	286
Letter, to Michael McClure, 11:iii:63	287
For Brother Antoninus	291
Night and Morning Michaelangelo	292
How Beautiful	292
PW His Recantation	293
[Someplace, Neb.]	294
Three Mornings	295
World Out of Control	296
Life and Death and a Letter to My Mother Beyond Them Both	297
[Expansion]	302
[Obsessions]	303
Plums, Metaphysics, an Investigation, a Visit, and a Short Funeral Ode	304
[The San Francisco Symphony Orchestra]	309
[“Chooky”]	310
[One Page Poem]	311
Friday Already Half-	312
Tennis Shoes	314
Epigram	315
To the Muse	316
Where Was I	318

Oh Yes. Vancouver.	318
Vancouver	318
Golden Gate Park	319
That Dream	319
Mysteries of 1961	320
Breughel: "The Fall of Icarus" 20:ix:63	321
[My karma has to do with ears]	322
[Octopus]	323
Raging Desire &c.	324
Social Graces	324
Mystery Poem, for a birthday present	325
The Fourth of October, 1963	326
Song	326
Illness	327
[For John Lee Hooker]	328
[The shape of it]	329
Somebody Else's Aesthetic	330
Gradus ad Parnassum	330
Inside Stuff	331
Roxie Powell	331
Native Speech	331
[aches and pains]	332
[Crown Fruit]	333
[Treasures, left panel]	334
[Treasures, right panel]	335
St. Francis Lobbies Allen G.	336
To a Nervous Man	336
The Double Take	337
Homage to WBY	338
Salamander	338
A Recall	339
Native Speech	339
The Walkers' Patio: Giant Plant	340
How Was Your Trip to L.A.?	341
Whistler's Mother	341
Last Part of an Illustrated Children's	
Book in a Fever Dream	342

Some Kind of Theory	344
Winter Jelly	345
Theophany	345
[Native // Folk Speech]	346
[Native // Folk Speech with doodles]	347
[Epiphany]	347
Papyrus Catalogue	348
A Botanical Phrenzy	350
Clean Song	350
The Great Beyond Denver	350
Technicalities for Jack Spicer	351
[March 1964]	354
Corinthian Columns	355
Mexico	355
Chagrin	356
Composition	356
The Lotus Sutra, Naturalized	357
A Mistake	357
Early Spring	357
The Mystery	358
The Problem	358
[Hope for the best]	359
Invocation and Theophany	359
The Metaphysical Town Hall and Bookshop	363
The Ode to Music	363
[Time Poem]	367
Absolute Realty Co.: Two Views	368
15:v:64	369
[The End of the line]	371
[Nasturtium]	371
Trinity Sunday 1964	372
Tommy's Birthday	372
[air and earth combine]	373
Late Afternoon	373
Magical Incantation	374
Goddess	374
Buck Rogers	375

The Chain of Lakes	375
Dying Again	377
To My Muse	384
True Confessions	384
The Best of It	384
EAMD	393
[Groundhog Day]	394
The Season	395
[Futility]	396
[The Great American Boob, Lecture Notes]	397
[Lecture Notes, GSS Berkeley]	398
[Lecture Notes—II—G.S.S. Berkeley]	399
Bleakness, Farewell	400
[skoolie-bau]	406
Homage to William Seward Burroughs	407
Fragment of Great Beauty & Stillness	409
The India Print Bedspread	409
[Dear Mr. President,]	410
Grand Historical Ode	410
Priapic Hymn	411
Doukhobor Proverb	412
“Merry Meet; Merry Part”	413
Disgust with an Poetickal Evening at Miss Q’s House	413
Japanese Tea Garden Golden Gate Park in Spring	414
“A Penny for the Old Guy”	415
Fragment of a Letter, Unsent	416
Art & Music	416
Mahayana	417
My Songs Induce Prophetic Dreams	418
April Showers Bring Rain?	438
Love Love Love Again	439
A Morning Walk	440
Message Before Aram Awakes	441
“The Sun Rises and Sets in That Child,”	442
The Second Day of May 1965	443
“California Is Odious but Indispensable”	444
Imagination of the Taj Mahal	444

T/O	445
“The Great Heidelberg Tun”	446
[Nasturtium shadows]	447
Sleepy	448
A Satire	448
Card #21 <i>Le Monde</i>	449
[Strange?]	450
1935	451
The Feather Truth Weighs 10,000 Pounds	451
M	452
The Life of Literature	453
What Finally Happened to the King	453
[Lightning of the sky]	455
[This is my life]	456
America!	457
The Education Continues Along	457
Giant Sequoias	469
Pop Doughnut	469
Secret	470
That Eyes! Those Nose!	470
The First of August	471
The Greeks	472
Vignette of an Ice Axe	474
L’Enfant Prodigue	474
The Mystery of the Alphabet	475
Genetics	477
Higher Criticism	477
The Promise	477
Good News and Gospel	478
Paranoia Revisited	479
The Honeymoon	479
Palimpsest	480
[the beginning of a long silence]	481
The Task Rejected	482
Homage to Dante	482
Tara	483
Labor Day	484

Sad Song	484	
“Plaster of Paris: Helen of Troy.”	485	
Opening the Mountain, Tamalpais: 22:x:65	486	
Lemon Trees	487	
Trip, 30:x:65	488	
Portland in the Evening	489	
Opening Rainy-Season Sesshin	489	
White River Ode	490	
Eikei Soji	492	
Ginkakuji Michi	492	
“The Flexible Mind”	493	
The Judgment	493	
Sanjusangendo	494	
Synesthesia	494	
Crowded	494	
A Platonic Variation	495	
A Revolution	496	
Above the Shrine	497	
Point Richmond	497	
The Trolley	499	
The War Poem for Diane di Prima	499	
Waiting for Claude	505	
Some Places	507	
Ten Titanic Etudes	510	
Champ Clair Modern Jazz Coffee	513	
Ushi Matsuri	514	
The Garden	514	
Confession and Penance	516	
The Grand Design	516	
“Sheep May Safely Graze”	521	
Success Is Failure	521	
[Another Blank Discovery!]	522	
[I keep hunting through the house]	523	
The Winter	524	
Demachi	524	
The Winter	525	
[All of it came to nothing]	530	
[All of it went on the wrong page]	531	

["NEFAS"]	532
Poem	533
[Winter money gloom]	534
George Washington	535
[Pet Shop]	536
[What do I know is a small yellow]	537
The Dharma Youth League	537
[Outside]	538
Failing	538
To Henrik Ibsen	539
We Sing in Our Sleep. We Converse with the Dead in Our Dreams	539
The Encore	540
A Romantic & Beautiful Poem Inspired by the Recollection of William Butler Yeats, His Life & Work	540
"Never Apologize; Never Explain"	541
17:III:67	541
Something Childish but Completely Classical	543
Regalia in Immediate Demand!	543
Characteristically	544
Grace before Meat	546
A Wedding Journey, an Opera	546
Ultimate Frivolous Necessities	547
Dewey Swanson	548
The Apparition	549
The War	550
October Food	550
In the Center of Autumn	551
A Couple Blocks South of the Heian Shrine	551
International Date Line, Monday / Monday 27:XI:67	552
America inside & outside Bill Brown's House in Bolinas	552
25:I:68	553
Life in the City. In Memoriam Edward Gibbon.	554
Allegorical Painting: Capitalistic Society Destroyed by the Contradictions within Itself. (Second Five-Year Plan.)	556
At the Red Whale Bar & Restaurant, Stinson Beach	556
The Unidentified Accomplice or, The Transmissions of C. W. Moss	558

The Evasive Answer	563
The Madness of Saul	566
To the Revolutionary Cadres of Balboa, Malibu & Santa Barbara	566
To All My Friends	568
Larry Kearny at Stinson Beach	568
Duerden's Garage, Stinson Beach	569
Birthday Poem,	571
Bill Brown	587
Scenes of Life at the Capital	587
Walking beside the Kamogawa, Remembering Nansen and Fudō and Gary's Poem	648
May First Revolution Day	649
To Edward Dahlberg	649
Science and Language	650
For Kenneth Rexroth	650
Four Other Places, More & Less	651
Behind the Door	653
Life at Bolinas. The Last of California	655
For Kai Snyder	658
A Letter, to Bill Berkson	658
Allen Marlow	659
Leaving the Capital	659
"Home Again, Home Again . . ."	659
Many Colored Squares	660
"Not Heavily"	661
"Up in Michigan"	662
"Old Age Echoes"	662
The Letter to Thomas Clark 22:VII:71 from Bolinas where He Sat beside Me to Help to Write It	663
Portland Again	664
Untied Airlines	665
"Horrible Incredible Lies": Keith Lampe Spontaneously	665
Imaginary Splendors	666
Public Opinions	667
Monument Rescue Dim	668
The Summer Afternoon	668

“I Told Myself”: Bobbie Spontaneously	669
Look Look Look	669
Mozambique	670
The Turn	670
A Return to San Francisco from Kitkitdizze	671
Growing and Changing	671
Rejoice!	674
October First	675
Rome	678
New Mexico, after Many Years	678
Occasional Dilemmas	681
Minuscule Threnody	682
Ode for You	682
New Departures	684
Alleyway	685
In the Night	686
Weather Odes	687
Looking for Help	689
Impatient Poetry for Ted and Alice B.	689
Something Marvelous	690
“Stolen and Abandoned”	691
Desperately Awaiting the Arrival of the China Dinner Man	692
Tassajara	692
The Universal & Susquehanna Mercy Co. Dayton, O.	693
Monumental Beer	694
Message	695
Kitchen Practice	695
The Sesshin Epigram	695
The Autopsy	696
High-tension on Low-pressure Non-accomplishment Blues	697
Mask	698
Detachment, Wisdom and Compassion	698
Homage to Aram Saroyan	699
“La China Poblana”	699
Money Is the Roost of All Eagles	700
“The Conditions That Prevail”	700
Zenshinji	701

The Talking Picture	702
Dream Poems	702
Murals Not Yet Dreamed	704
Epigram, upon Himself	704
The Vision of Delight	705
Luxury in August	705
Pacific Telephone	706
How To Be Successful & Happy Without Anybody Else	
Finding out About It	706
Look Away	707
Organized Crime	708
Ice Plant	709
Compulsive Obligatory Paranoia Flashes	709
Saturday	710
Conclusions	711
For Clark Coolidge	711
A Crackling	712
Window Peak	712
Blossoms of the Lemon Tree	713
Dorje Quandary	714
The Bouquet	714
Prolegomena to a Study of the Universe	715
The Radio Again	719
Somebody Else's Problem Bothers Me	720
Bead	720
Blurb	721
Where or When	721
Escaping April	722
Powell & Market	724
La Jolla in the Morning	724
Brutal Landscape	726
Mnemonotechnique	727
Defective Circles	727
The Simple Life	728
Obsolete Models	728
Many Pages Must Be Thrown Away	729
Wild Talents	730

The Congress of Vienna	730
To the Memory of	732
Lines for a Celebrated Poet	732
The Wind Chimes	733
That the True Nature of the Universe Might Be Like a Vast Klein Bottle	733
Song	734
“Past Ruin’d Iliou”	734
Garden Cottage #1	735
“Back to Normalcy”	736
For a Bluejay	736
[A Little Sickness]	737
“I Used to Work in Chicago”	738
Messages	738
Switch	739
Tears and Recriminations	739
Waste. Profligacy. Fatuity.	740
Discriminations	740
Homage to St. Patrick, García Lorca, & the Itinerant Grocer	741
Wandering Outside	742
The Laundry Area	743
Schubert Sonata	743
What About It?	744
Cynical Song	744
“Can’t You Be a Little More Selective?”	745
The Inspection of the Mind in June	746
Treading More Water	746
I Can Look Any Way I Feel Like	747
Treading Water	748
The Holding Pattern	750
What? Writing in the Dining Room?	750
How Many Is Real	752
Lost Fragment from <i>The Impatient Monument</i>	752
Rodomontade	753
What’s New?	754
Songs	755
La Condition Humaine	756

Welcome Back to the Monastery	757
Violins in Chaos?	758
Litany of the Candy Infant of Geneva	758
Extravagance (comma,)	759
Homage to Sosa-No-Wo-No-Omikoto	760
The Bay Trees Were About to Bloom	760
Dying Tooth Song	761
Rich Interior, After Thomas Mann	762
Treading Water. Backing & Filling.	762
Chanson d'Outre Tombe	764
And Then. . .	765
The Ghosts	765
The Phantom of Delight	766
Divine Poisons	766
Labor Day Again, 1979 at San Francisco	767
<i>Hot Springs Infernal in the Human Beast</i>	768
Homage to Hart Crane	769
What Are You Studying, These Days?	770
Mama	770
The Roast Is Lost	771
The Critic	772
Definition	772
Epigrams & Imitations	773
Dharmakaya	774
The First of 20 New Poems	775
Normally	775
Somewhere Else	776
Some of These Days	777
[Quack]	781
Splendors	782
The Elizabethan Phrase	782
For Shunko Enjo	783
“Silence in the middle of traffic”	784
Naturally Museum	784
Partition	785
Snow Job	785
The Kenwood Hotel 1928	786

Thanksgiving	786
“The Dilemma of the Occasion Is”	787
For Allen, On His 60th Birthday	788
Gamboge	788
Pathogenesis	789
Maps and Mountains	789
At Dharma Sangha	789
On the Way to the Zendō	790
Gourmets	790
“My Fellow Americans,”	791
Action Traction Satisfaction	791
By Accident or Design	792
For Robert Winson	792
Grievances	793
Never Again	793
The Expensive Life	794
Oyster Music: Robert Schumann	794
Affliction	795
Jack’s House	795
[Poeta Nascitur . . .]	797
Friday	798
The Imperfect Sonnet	798
Nothing Comes to Mind at the Moment	799
Unagi-Don	799

Appendixes

APPENDIX A: Contents of Whalen Books in Their First Book Publication	801
APPENDIX B: <i>Calendar</i> : Notes and Appendices	817
APPENDIX C: Essays and Prefaces by Philip Whalen	827
“Goldberry Is Waiting” from <i>The Poetics of The New American Poetry</i>	827
[from <i>Highgrade</i>]	834

The Preface [from <i>Every Day</i>]	835
Author's Note [from <i>On Bear's Head</i>]	835
Preface [from <i>Decompressions</i>]	836
About Writing and Meditation [from <i>Beneath a Single Moon</i> , ed. Kent Johnson and Craig Paulenich, Shambhala, 1991]	840
Preface [from <i>Enough Said</i>]	844
APPENDIX D: Biography and Bibliography	846
Index of Titles	853
Index of First Lines	861

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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