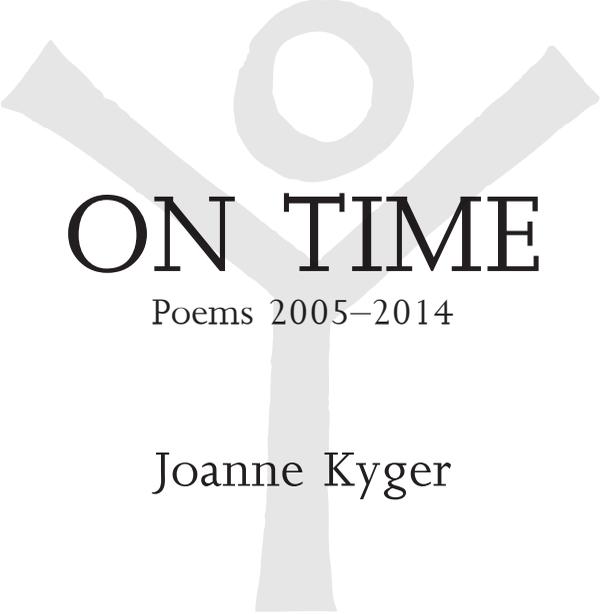


ON TIME

Joanne Kyger





ON TIME

Poems 2005–2014

Joanne Kyger



City
Lights

City Lights Books | San Francisco

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WATERS 2009 by Arthur Okamura
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Sunday

When your “mind” flies
away with a poem on a page, do you both
end up in a lonesome place
in the backyard of words
as soft and familiar as the bee
buzzing the blue glass
which is the only company
you have

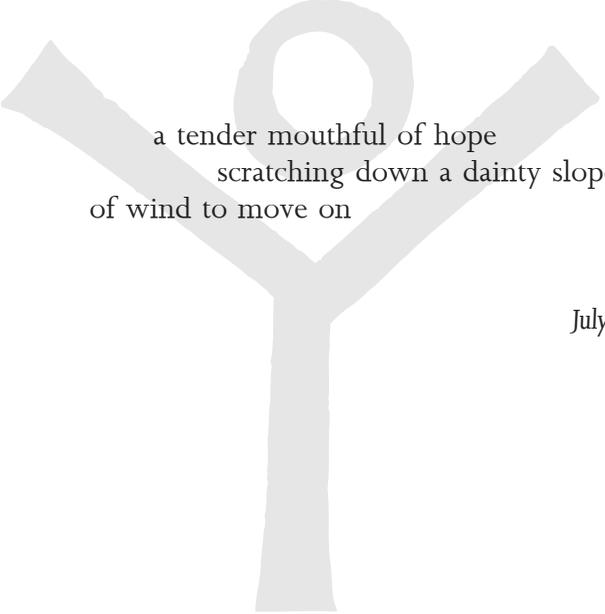
Sharp rap in the knee
—a tiny apple falls through gravity

You have a “way” with your words—
“thinking is a pathology”
that has found freshly discovered ground
but if you “think your way
into the next scenarios”

Good luck!

Buster Bush and Co. have whacked the globe
a hard blow of the uglies pathogen
and it’s a disastrous scene

Note the tiniest first baby quail
in the far scallop of shadow—



a tender mouthful of hope
scratching down a dainty slope
of wind to move on

July 24, 2005

City Lights

“You Go to War with the Army You Have”

“The froth of rapid associations”
is entirely in the mind
This “here” is not moving

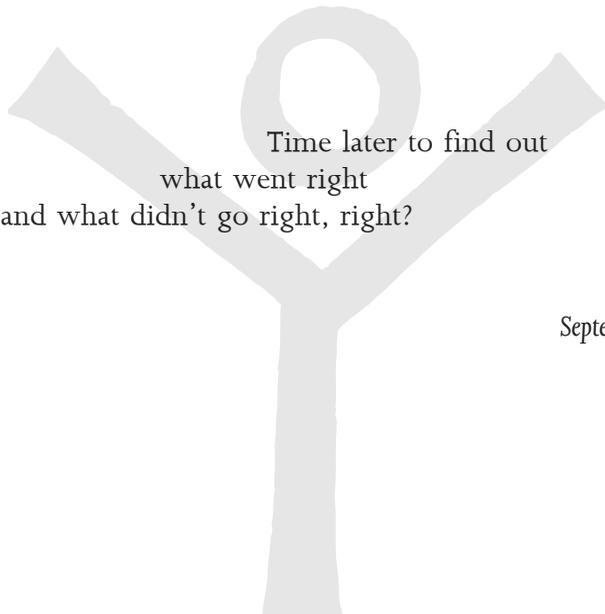
Our garden has become over run
with a new generation of scrub jays

They make very loud sounds
and fly about aggressively
pecking holes in the apples

To make them fly away we clap our hands
or tap on the window
They mostly learn to shut up

The other day, our friend from Argentina
saw us run out on the deck
after lunch
and clap our hands

He thought it was some kind
of New Age California ritual
to end a meal



Time later to find out
what went right
and what didn't go right, right?

September 2005

City Lights

Happy New Year

Into the storm tossed year padding
and scudding across the brain
pan of the holidays
—there's my door mat
blown into the bushes

Was Mao really a repellent mass
murderer, an untalented liar
and never brushed his teeth?

John Yoo tells George Bush
there are no laws
that limit
his power—
no laws of war apply.

So when Bush is captured
there's no way he'll have
a painless or legal time
locked up with his holy tostado—
God the Revelator

Lights

January 2, 2006

All Night

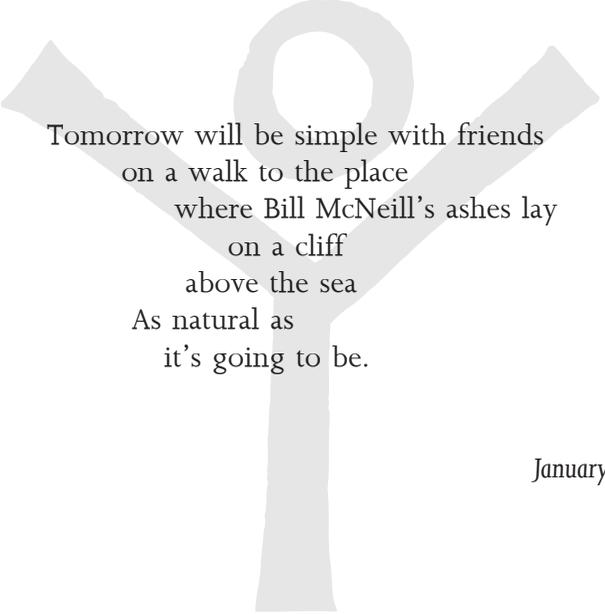
All night
my neighbor's son was the object
of my dreaming. Towards dawn
he patted my shoulder
in farewell as I ashamed
of my youthful longing
pretended not to care,

Where did you come from kiddo
—Tab Hunter's "Confidential"?
fresh from the library's biographies
& the '50s sexual firewall

A probe blasts off from earth to Pluto
It's getting more violent in Afghanistan

But newly elected in Chile
is the first female president
socialist Michelle Bachelet

Little thicket house of privet
the quail ease in and out of
dust bath in wood chips



Tomorrow will be simple with friends
on a walk to the place
where Bill McNeill's ashes lay
on a cliff
above the sea
As natural as
it's going to be.

January 19, 2006

City Lights

What the Storms Did

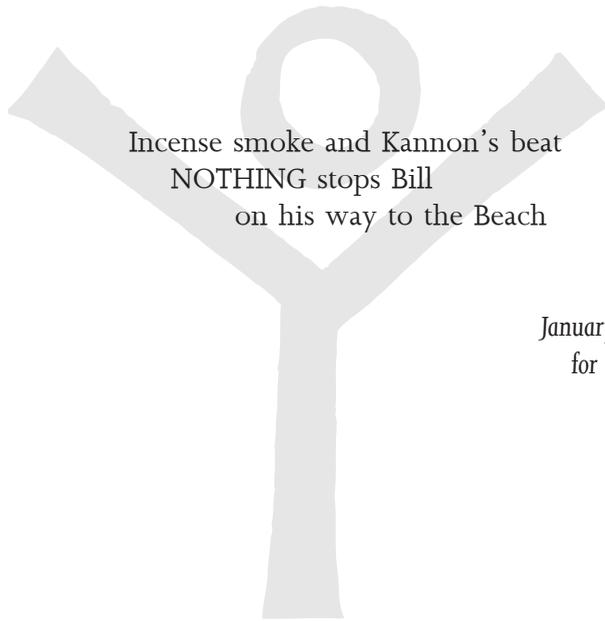
Remember that teenage horror movie
where kids are walking
through the graveyard

And a big hand comes out
of the murky earth
and drags them down
to hell or worse

Well we find Bill's site
split in the middle
by a gash three feet deep
running towards the cliff
and the sea

Can't find any bones or ashes
where Whalen and Dorsey
ceremonially chanted
for a Zen comrade's last feat

Joko, Judy and me
marvel
at the showman he is



Incense smoke and Kannon's beat
NOTHING stops Bill
on his way to the Beach

January 20, 2006
for Bill McNeill

City Lights

The Studio

Septic tank is full
not working
after all day rain

thrilled with the news?

I need friends from outer space

to save me from knee jerk belligerence
and total lack of coherent thought

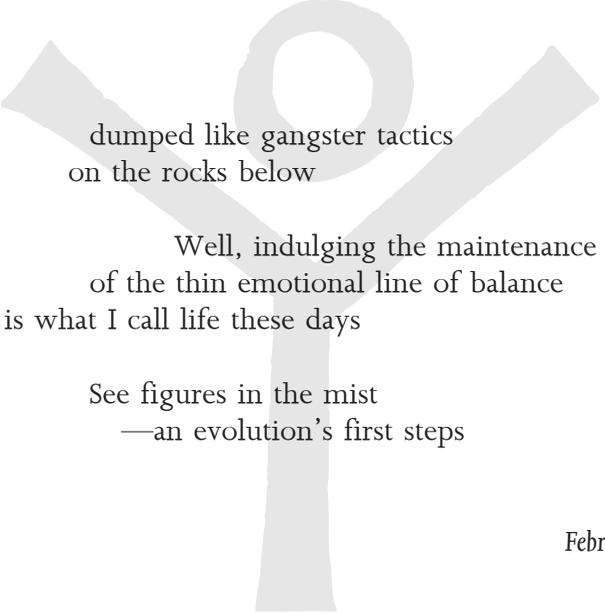
Let me look south to the “existence of good”
and the indigenous inheritance of autonomy

“Okay go ahead and do it!”

in this rhetorical exercise

before I again gain the prone
thru the afternoon

and the cliffs slip downward
just like democracy
carrying the pine
and surrounding vegetation



dumped like gangster tactics
on the rocks below

Well, indulging the maintenance
of the thin emotional line of balance
is what I call life these days

See figures in the mist
—an evolution's first steps

February 2006

City Lights



Targeted Killing

“There are a few countries where the president has decided we can ‘whack’ someone without approval or knowledge of the host government”.

—former CIA official

February 4, 2006

City Lights

White Kites

Oh those gorgeous White Kites
courting in the tops of the pines
around here they sound

a sweetish dove grey whistle
to each other

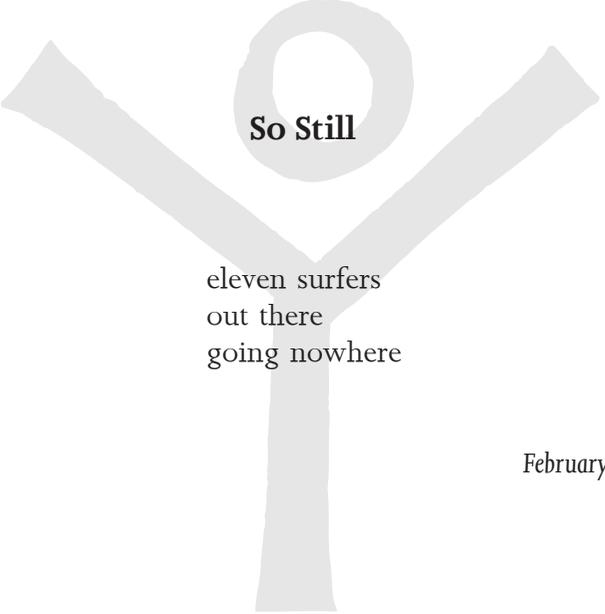
February 6, 2006

For a Moment

for a moment
it's agonizing, sad, final

February 8, 2006

Lights



So Still

eleven surfers
out there
going nowhere

February 11, 2006

City Lights

A Record

Thirty one days in the month
Twenty six had rain

U.S. government
radical religion, oil, borrowed money

Good morning
fragments

of last night's travels
in that invisible state called "dream"
sneak around with cardboard boxes
full of old poetry

cold ocean, but few salmon

Everything happened anyway
but not in Veracruz

Quick go out, before it rains.
Several days a week
just lay there and read

Get guilty over listening
to the assurance of news
reporting voices that say
“We’re acting in the best interests
for your security, making you ‘safe’”

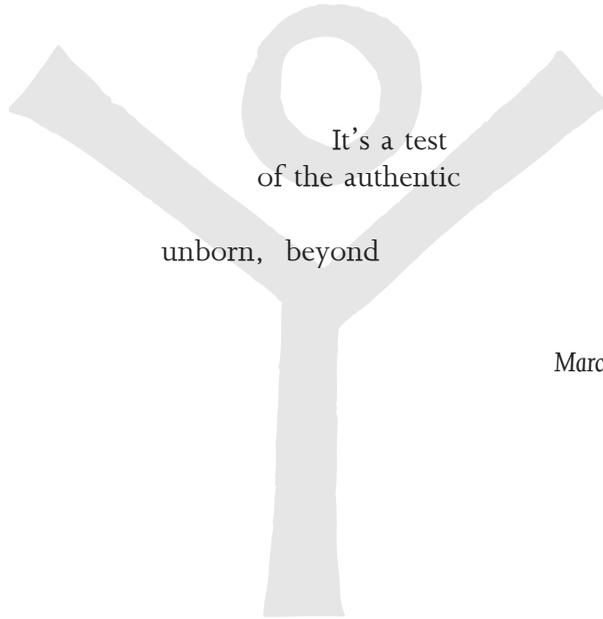
Here with a border just under you
that’s totally OPEN

looking more like a cradle
of the heart to come

“What is it that I started
long ago
and how can I get back
to that”

Walt Whitman said
when he wrote
about California

Okay, let the winds blow, let the storms come
the real estate fall off the cliffs
into the sea
banging noisily



It's a test
of the authentic

unborn, beyond

March 31, 2006

City Lights