

THE POCKET POETS SERIES

WHEN I WAS A
POET



DAVID MELTZER

NUMBER SIXTY

WHEN I WAS A POET



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11:9:01

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PART I



When I Was a Poet

When I was a Poet
I had no doubt
knew the Ins & Outs of
All & Everything
lettered
in-worded
each syllable
seed stuck to
a letter
formed a word
a world

When I was a Poet
the World was
a cluster of Words
splattered upon white space

When I was a Poet
I knew even what I didn't

I thought I knew the Game
whereas the Game knew me
played me like an ocarina

When I was a Poet
I was an Acrobat
a Tightrope Walker
keeping balance
in my slippers
on a wire above
Grand Canyon
Inferno
Vertigo

Oh I did prance
the death-defying dance
whereas now
death defines each second
of awaking

When I was a Poet
everyone I knew
were Poets too
& we'd gather at spots

Poets & Others
met at & yes
questions yes
w/out pause
w/ no Answer

Ultimates
certainly
Absolutes
absolutely
but otherwise
Nada
Zilch
great Empty
blank page
blank stare
into the core of it All

When I was a Poet
Willie Nelson
was back to back w/
Paul Celan
side by side
on the Trail of Tears