

roots  
and  
frag  
ments



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*Most of these poems came from half-formed fragments that had to sit a long while in a notebook before becoming whole.*

*Craig D. Miller • August 2013 • Minor revisions November 2020  
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IN THESE CHILLY WATERS

in these chilly waters  
i sail the sea  
what course is required  
to go  
where i want to be?

downwind, downwind  
the port of fools  
where hankerings  
and gusts of folly  
push the sea

would i turn upwind  
and curse the earth  
sending chops and spray  
into my berth?

no neither an angry chest  
nor an eye of fear  
would help me here

with your own guiding hand  
says the wiser thought  
change the tack  
towards the Buddha's land

*CDM March 3, 2009*

R O O T S

these roots  
– hard –  
are enjoyed  
by no one

they must  
bake and bake,  
– at least an hour –  
until softness  
comes

to keep hunger  
– at bay –  
we bake these  
potatoes  
twice each day

*CDM April 9, 2009*

PULLING THE CORD

pulling the cord  
does not undo  
the knot

what ever joy  
what ever peace  
what ever  
wisdom we have  
adds up  
to a lot

*CDM October 28, 2009*

AS THE EARTH TURNS

As the earth turns  
the elements mix

How will  
knowing anicca  
get us out of this fix?

Learning not yearning  
is the mode  
of the wise

From the eye of the cyclone  
we see all around  
knowing anicca  
lessens our surprise

*CDM April 29, 2010*

RACE RELATIONS

My heart goes out to you  
my friend  
my heart goes out to we  
our problems are tall  
our problems are deep

resilience,  
compassion,  
and joy –  
this is the  
inner life  
we wish  
to keep

*CDM July 16, 2009*

A M I C O N T R I B U T I N G

Am I contributing  
to the welfare of the world  
from this particular point  
in space and time?

This whirlwind  
we call the mind  
flowing through a thicket  
we call the body  
has very little chance

very little chance  
of moving  
more than a few grains  
of sand

Having heard the wisdom  
of the great ones  
can I stand a little taller  
and shift these mountains of misery  
that have stood  
since ancient times?

*CDM May 15, 2010*



TOWARDS THE LIGHT

meditating at sunrise  
meditating at night

here is the well of darkness  
the fountain of misery

may the mind  
be quiet and calm

amidst  
this commotion

and with strong  
determination

find its way  
towards the light

*CDM May 18, 2010*

THIS VERY SPOT

The creators of half-broken machinery  
want them to be perfect  
they are not

The users of half-broken machinery  
want them to be perfect  
they are not

To see beyond  
these  
shiny screens  
far beyond  
our desires  
back to the root of craving

To flow with a new kind  
of machinery  
a new source  
of understanding,

how to cool  
the blood  
and bring peace  
to this very spot?

*CDM July 4, 2010*

PARTICLE AND WAVE

What do you know  
about the particle  
and the wave?

Are we individuals  
acting with certainty

or are we pawns of the field  
of mild effect  
before the grave?

In this physics  
we find uncertainty

however improbable  
we are learning  
about blameless actions

that bring peace  
to this life  
of change

*CDM April 4, 2010*

A D I F F E R E N T P A G O D A

Very briefly  
before my first course  
I met the Buddha  
in the form  
of a golden box  
in a secret chamber  
on top of a white pagoda  
on a hill.

Yes, I had given service  
to that Buddhist sect  
on that day  
and the day before  
and had to walk by  
the golden relics  
to paint the top of the  
white pagoda dome.

Never before had I felt  
what I felt near that box.  
Five years passed before I returned  
to the neighborhood of that pagoda  
and found that the Buddha had  
moved on to a different hill  
a different pagoda.

I am grateful to you  
Dhamma Dharā  
for helping me find  
where the Buddha lives on

*CDM August 6, 2010*

THE COMING AND GOING

The end of summer  
is sweet indeed  
with you by my side

Glorious bright days  
a little shorter  
crisp cool nights  
like a dimpled smile

Your quick song and smile  
brighten the autumn days

June was hard, unripe  
for the likes of me and you

But now we harvest  
the seasons themselves  
even knowing  
that the rough stone  
was always there, my peach,  
the core of our union  
that will outlast  
these ancient days

*CDM September 26, 2010*

P R O G R E S S I V E

Progressive liberation

what does it mean?

awareness

equanimity

and focus

each moment

on the space

in between

*CDM October 14, 2010*

SHADOW OF THE MOUNTAIN

Why can't I just say  
what I mean?  
Because I can only  
say what I feel  
and what I feel is fear  
from the shadow behind me,  
the shadow of the mountain  
that may be of my own making.

Why can I stand tall?  
Because the ground is uneven.  
Because I fear of falling,  
here on the high ground  
of a mountain  
of my own making.

Why do I walk?  
Because I've opened my eyes,  
having seen through the disguise  
having heard the call  
of those who stand tall.

Off to the low ground I stumble  
to the bright plains I go  
down from a huge mountain of misery  
that may not even be  
of my own making.

*CDM October 17, 2010*

S T R A N G E N E S S

The strangeness of the mind  
is that it believes  
in the smoothness of time

*CDM January 3, 2011*



## W E D A N C E D

We danced this summer she and I and I feel so fortunate because I learned so much from her and even more so as she was preparing to leave. The feathers of the arrow were pointing to where we are headed now.

Twenty years ago it was two dances and rescued branches that caught my attention, and I felt so fortunate having learned so much from her even as we were just beginning to meet. The feathers of the arrow were pointing to where we are headed now.

Now we are separated and our house is filled with that direction, without her but full of her wisdom, feathers of the arrows that point the way to this unknown day.

*CDM October 18, 2011*

*After meeting Susanne at a dance or two in 1991, on a first date we walked through the woods of Whately. She impressed me with a curious kindness where she would stop here and there to rescue the branches of trees by clearing them of debris from a recent wind storm. Curious too was the feeling of dancing around the kitchen, in early 2011, a little fun with Susanne, knowing she is weakening yet feeling fortunate for all of the learning and growing we have had together.*

M I R R O R

in the mirror of change  
what do i see  
is it all stubble and warts  
or blemish-free?

these imperfections  
of skin  
merely reflect  
the turmoil within

may i find  
sīla  
samādhi  
and  
paññā  
and change what  
I see

correction of action  
may it be achieved  
step by step

eventually

*CDM April 18, 2013*

M O V E R S O F E A R T H

movers of earth  
show your worth  
show your worth!

sun shine down  
on sea and surf

depth of ocean  
–rise–  
to meet the sky

I am liberation  
you work hard for me

Dhamma worker  
–move–  
–rise–  
with depth  
and warmth  
fly  
fly!

*CDM September 26, 2012*

T A K E T H I S P O E M

If the universe  
of happiness  
is ultimately  
personality-free

take this poem  
if you like it  
it's yours

because the stepping stone  
before me  
is movement

with goodwill  
from I  
to you  
to we

*CDM April 11, 2013*