

Tribute to Van Gogh

the poet's perspective

pm swanson

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the poet's  
perspective



pm swanson  
july 83 ~v

1 am (in)sanity  
person (if) led to be  
symbol of the age (less)  
master(y) of a life ~

1 am free (dom)  
(1) one (ly) face (not) born ~  
(but) t(h)rust in breath  
to (leap) be(yond)  
the common man ~

1 (be)li(e)ve  
a life  
that is (more)  
(th)an easy following ~

1 (sh)ape the wor(l)d's  
men call destiny.



learn by late through many years  
to school eyes between the hours  
and hold a moment pencil free  
in spaceless dusk of poetry~

light is halved almost near  
always caught a step beyond  
the reaching of an inward hope  
to fill unfathomed vacancies~

what no one hears what no one sees  
grows clearest where the darkness veils  
to open strangest light of eyes  
and pierce the mockeries of name~

freedom near in tree of branch  
in bird of nest and restless sky  
where no closets bind the mouth  
in words to wash the voice away~

all is new is new is new  
escaping fractures of denial~  
brittle wanderings find home  
in emptiness of room and bed~

quiet soon and quiet long  
to break the barrier of sound  
and radiations through the skin  
erupt in spirit god love man~

potent potent love of life  
blood roots thought~ horizons burst  
to sunrise ecstasy of belief  
in hand grasp hand the birth of truth.

god in man to touch in man the god  
find coal eyes hidden earth by shaft of sun  
in backs bent lung to spot forever night  
till youth is old ~ no schoolings explain

where child workers eat through shadow rooms  
and mothers rock the empty cradled wood  
in crawling dreams that cannot break past stained  
black silences that weary faces wear ~

one man one book to move in powered faith  
to give to give till only spirit breathes  
no bed no food no more than nothing owned  
never enough never enough to fill ~

black earth country closed and locked away  
official backhole buried to condemn  
that life lived must rides long below ideal  
and only god unborn can be withdrawn ~

never tears enough to break through pain  
never words enough to collect a name  
feet that cannot rest in footprints lay  
explode like phoenix through a sulphur sun.



strange the hour of an unkept face  
that bends its cheeks like tears and weeps  
for leafless trees and brown grass curling ~

strange the hour strange and strange the place  
where windows throw the stare back into eyes  
in thoughts that boomerang without escape ~

lightly on the hand a silver light  
threads through narrow veins like roads unwalked  
and blinds the wrist at immortality ~

feet that know no end to travelling  
slip streets of ice to find directions clear  
for destinations that no voice can name ~

and here and here poised on the edge of dawn  
a lone face captures eyes that are its own  
and turns to meet the crowning of the sun.

love, is there is love  
by hand of grace the friend  
a guiding moment holds  
to move beside beyond ~

the unchance returns  
time and again again  
in long of short to sketch  
the feeling born in form ~

in move to penetrate  
the shape of the ideal  
ink finds wash to live  
a world almost clear ~

power blazes new  
to split the mockery  
of should and should not shapes  
that glassy eyes defend ~

paint eclipses hours  
till haunted fingers brush  
earth by burial  
where selves of secret teach ~

to try to try to try  
to catch the shattering  
of crystal images  
that pulse creation's soul.



(w)here the ruins b(l)ind  
eyes (un)close  
until  
mind breaking (free)  
I cannot (but) find  
the d(re)am-age(a)  
to (burst)  
be (yond)  
the (sm)all of me.



face of fair met lightning  
to hand the hold in love denied  
and prove that fairytales live  
when night and morning reach to noon~

he for she binds she for he  
in painting white the picket fence  
to side by stand like the nytwins  
afraid to draw the shades of dream~

hard too hard to cut the end  
on scenes that stage imagined plays  
easier to audience  
in acts pretending not to change~

silence long between each breath  
echos the impermanent  
while inching faces crack facades  
like ancient paintings peeling.



watch closely  
in the climb of silver dawn  
there is promise  
written lionlamb  
where golden halos  
strike an ocean sky  
with son of sun  
to redirect the eye~

close within  
a panoply of scenes  
a thousand voices  
answering a name~  
a lone tree grows  
in sunrise from a leaf  
that multiplies  
in branches singing spring~

the sound of drums  
intones the art of fear  
slow and deep and long  
then fades outside the ear~

and hands once closed  
to palm their victories  
unfold by fingers~  
lines of fate revealed~

a book of ancient  
opens at a touch  
reflecting secrets  
underwriting truth~  
new and old  
the age of summer thrives  
in powers  
that a night of dream controls~

picture home the child  
cradled iron near the wall -  
picture home the woman  
rocking evening in a chair -  
picture home the dark man  
unfathered to the son ~

wicker chair and fireplace  
table chairs and bed -  
easel for a studio  
in play to light and shade ~

rip the picture aftermath  
child without name ~  
woman without softness  
bottle smoke and slum ~  
dark man standing limbo  
centering no home ~

on and on the drifter  
illusions dropped behind  
cratered deep in memories  
that know no touch for warm.

and there is autumn  
softer than a song  
teaching winter sight  
in clarity of snow  
to know the star  
in mirrored firelight  
where evening trains  
the elements of flight,



meet the common known man  
in ploughing sowing harvesting  
where fields bend in green to gold  
till brown rests white meets green again~

underfoot the common grave  
beside the tower crumbling  
with crows to bless the sacrament  
of lives no kingdom knelt to claim~

capture in a sudden twist  
one face that carries out of time  
pivoting on multitudes  
that play their rest in mountain dreams~

each out of the other spun  
where eyes and hands work to create  
the strange exchange of sight in sight  
that distances cannot erase~

children men and women mass  
foundations resting hierarchies  
to climax singly in face  
the movement of the centuries,



p(ict)ure belief,  
through church  
the (c)rut(ch)  
the (re)bel  
th(r)e(w) (a)way~

see(k) the father  
(g)hosting memories  
who has prepared the (st)range  
of fragment(ing) truths  
that (d)wind  
through g(uilt) of love~

sens(itive) the child  
in the man~  
(d)one(ly) for (ever)  
the (un)known road  
grow(ing) s(ymb)ol(s)  
out of a childhood  
that (never) was.

mother father daughter son  
dark by supper coffee black ~  
hands that dig the earth prepare  
the table hour of oil light ~

shadows dive on wooden walls  
to draw the silent circle in ~  
somber closeness claims respite  
before the wakening of sleep ~

tomorrows walk in yesterdays  
till only churchbells break the week  
while seasons clock relentless years  
in day to day to day repeat ~

outside the long of weariness  
a golden flame of thought recalls  
the sunset woven silhouette ~  
the hush of snow ~ the sudden laugh ~

in miracles of passages  
somnambulant beneath the sun  
the deep of night encompasses  
worlds bursting into dream.



soft by slow the fall of sleep  
emerges patterns word by walk  
that drop the avenues of wake  
to join the intricate of thought~

there the skin escapes the skin  
that holds the stars behind the face~  
long and longer shadows grow  
in thickness that no eye can trace~

hearts beat pulse of shade in light  
contorting laws of wrong by right  
to redistribute sight by sound  
the down of up to up of down~

consciousness removed to place  
the end alive before the start  
until the rise from fall of sleep  
remembering where to forget.



take by empty shoe the foot  
that creased the leather long in crack~

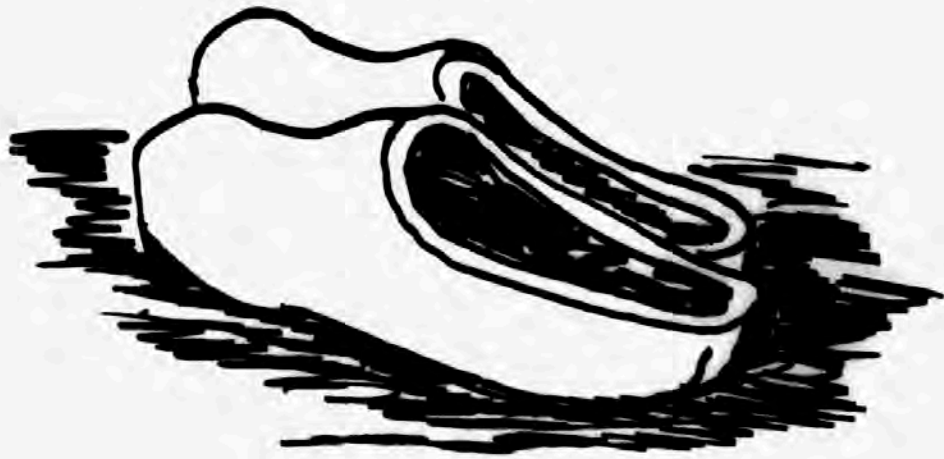
brown black grey green stained the sole  
split to open emptiness~

testament where full the stand  
when new was once and lost undreamed~

mile by mile in pavements earths  
for wet by dry in stone and leaf~

landscapes altered step by pace  
that only leather wrinkles trace~

now in hollowness of one  
unlaced to fit no foot again.



smell the city smoke and beer and love  
in thick and thin and wide and deep and high  
from roofs topped snow through streets of images  
with faces lit in separateness of soul ~  
spin and pivot in the wandering  
of back lanes corners wharves and avenues ~  
watch night lamps breaking ice to throw loose roads  
alive in panoramas black and gold ~  
ideas thoughts and voices commandeer  
the ceaseless pounding hand against the door  
where no one answers no one knows a name  
and nowhere is alone inside a room ~  
too much too large too fast to catch an eye  
that flashes strange through the untutored mind ~

the other side of lonely traces shores  
poised between forever and today  
and trees are knotted spaceless in a breath  
that measures lives like leaves of come for gone ~  
no need no need for shapeless companies  
when everything is huge and clear and free ~  
clocks drop hands inside a twist of breeze  
spiking winter nostrils into fire ~  
within the ruts of repetitions feet  
a loose stride swings sideways intensity  
but no one grasps the distance in a stare  
that permeates the colours of a cry ~  
the other side of lonely cracks the grey  
of oceans travelling eternity.

once and only once to be  
this name this face this space in time ~  
now and now the energy  
to be to be to be to be ~

to walk no footprint laid before  
to feel the rock the creek the sky  
to stretch the wheat in breath of wind  
to scale the nerves in symphony ~

to catch by rain the single tear  
that prisms brilliance of the heart ~  
to know by life that love surrounds ~  
no greater strength no greater power.





the pupil pre(r)ce knowledge  
to (under)stand in light(ning)  
of universal myst(eries) ~

ideas, (p)lunge through (h)stories  
(c)locking man  
inside (im)mortality ~

(im)ages (re)fuse to (h)old dust ~  
teaching (to)  
(s)ea(r)ch truth in dream  
to lear(n) (th)at believing lives ~

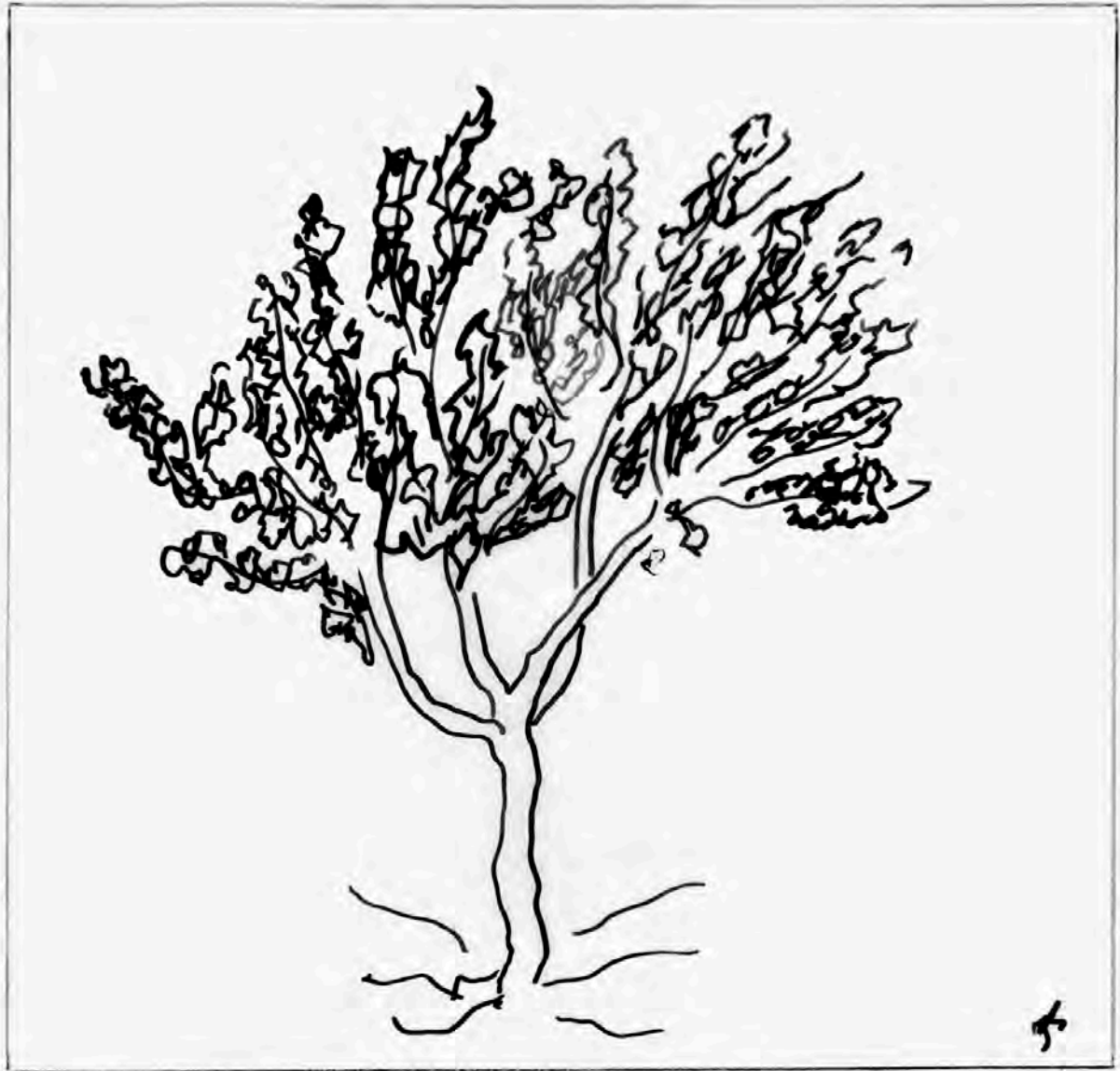
there are (no) secrets  
only) shuttered eyes  
that (a)n(y)one can penetrate,

red skull craters eagle eyes  
hollow cheeks and mountain nose  
with scissor mouth in pipe to sculpt  
the hidden of horizon lines~

violence of energy  
escapes through surging fingerprints  
to grasp to fathom to translate  
the sunken treasures of the mind~

golden leaves swing deep within  
each iris born geranium  
to ice the blood in clear recall  
of funerals enthoned in spring~

brilliance thrown poetry  
in fingers leaping to create  
vibrations cornering the sight  
to isolate one place in time.



ripple blossoms shiver winter skies  
ghosting wire branches into cloud ~  
translucent petals swell like evening mist  
out of silences no ear can find ~

silver light that sets no shadow down  
reflected from no moon no star no sun  
as if an aurspace, haunted promises  
in veil between what is and what might be ~

stamens quiver in a windless wind  
as if pushing leaves to break their buds  
until the vanishing casts withered bark  
to skeleton against november skies,

tomorrow to be gone as if the walls  
already threw reflected memories~  
focus impermanent~ there is no space  
to rest the haunted victories of time~

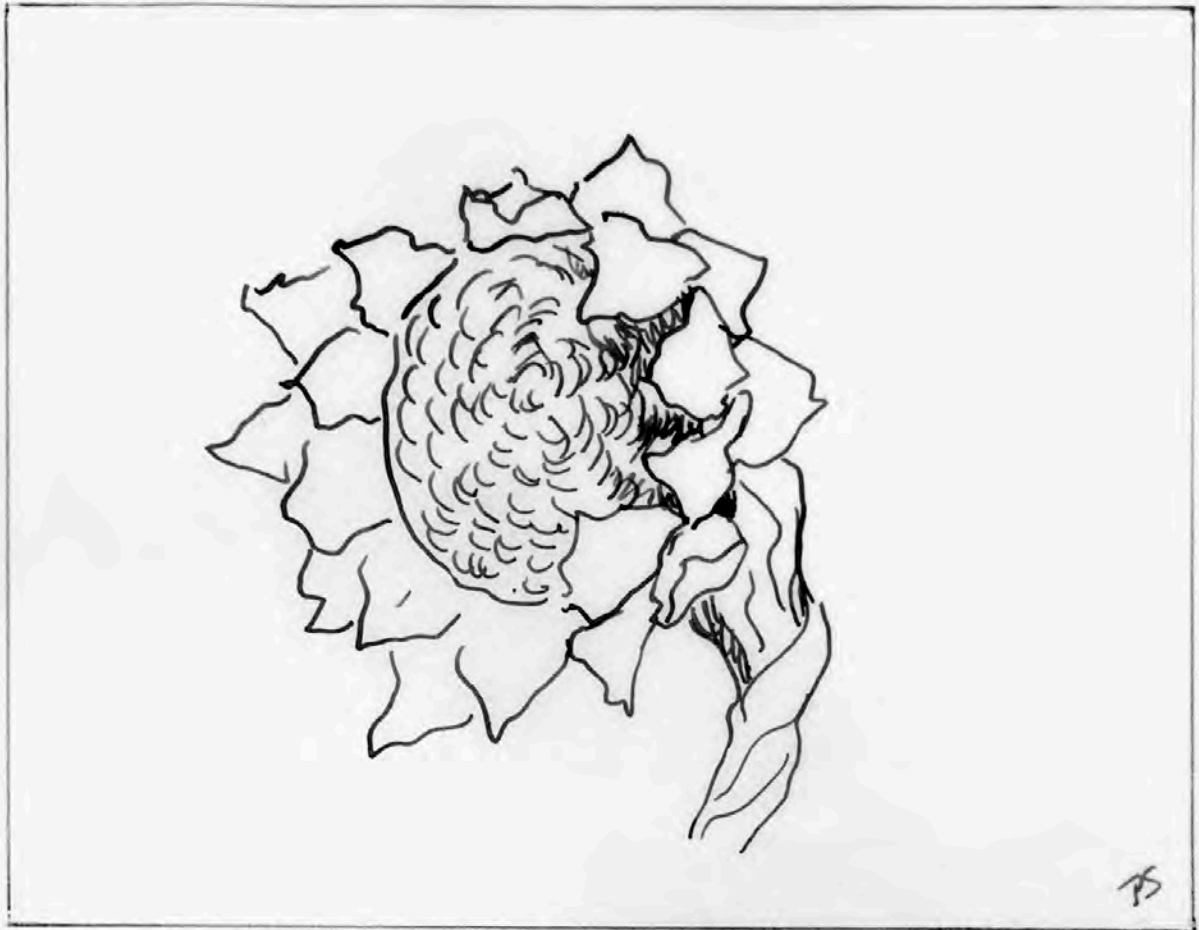
look well to age that marks the crawling skin  
through miles gathered into wrinkling~  
pawed to moving landscapes of a fate  
where nothing is the everything at stake~

stranger always stranger to the home  
foreigner to closeness of a fire~  
to move where everything is no one known  
and nothing opens hands to start again~

fields rampage evening into stars  
deep and dense and clear and vigorous  
with jumpy of sun and crises  
to scald their energies inside the skull~

strong so strong in wind and trees and grass  
the gay the wild order of impulse~  
to see to feel to feel and to charge  
the inside outside climax of response~

drawn like a lover to be-loved  
in images that split from heart and mind~  
to be a part apart and entering  
where world and spirit perfectly combine.



force of flower intoxicated sun  
colossal face upwards and spiralling  
electric energy of laser rays  
to burst facade fragmented into seed~

yellow brilliance curling like hair  
knotted green above a wired stem~  
silence stretching stretching into heights  
of golden golden heat intensity~

too far too far till weariness falls brown  
in broken stare recalled to solitude  
and loosened seeds drop tears into the soil  
that starves the root and gathers in the leaves~

no death no death without germ promising  
to try to try to try to try again.



sp(1)it light to see-the  
sorcery and lea(r)n  
(fr)agile fingers  
(sp)in to(rmented)  
paint  
(re)creating  
(in)ten(se) years  
to blew are  
the s(m)oul(der)in(g)  
(in)sanity ~

life (a)gainst peace~  
mind(less) (se)arching  
to (pe)netrate  
night(mare's) star(ing)  
(eye)s.



hollow names expand to search  
where art of pen and brush condense  
till inner senses trace the nerves  
exploding breath of masterpiece~

balance wired taut between  
the rational and the insane  
emotion freed emotion chained  
the commonplace and the extreme~

familiar thrown alien  
to cast in mystery of light  
the circles woven candle night  
that wield imagination's spread~

all collected one to meet  
through family unknown and known  
hand by hand in faith the friend  
to wake the child truth unseen~

inching hours race with age  
to walk the clothing of disguise  
till sight is born in infant eyes  
to trap the magic of mirage.

twilight sky in may  
the soul escapes  
through iron bars ~

stretching, always stretching  
to break the exit  
of skin ~

windows cut too high  
eclipse the wind of wheat  
and faded hills ~

days pace monotones  
through narrow corridors  
of bolted doors ~

somewhere somewhere the moon  
conducts a wild dance  
of nebulae ~

somehow somehow the spirit  
seizes incandescent  
whirling ~

freedom leaps the wall  
of close control  
and soars

higher than high inside  
a sea of night  
to plunge through stars.

home of martyrs  
church without a door  
cobbled roadways  
broken bench of prayer ~

knotted heavens  
push against the sun  
grey black spires  
needling the sky ~

the shape of nun  
walks shadows to the grave  
head bent silver  
under olive trees ~

to where - where from  
open no avenues  
slow and deep  
a lone bell signals loll ~

no vows describe  
the excommunicate  
where senses reel  
a separate universe ~

no sacraments  
of faith beyond control  
life victory  
commands the funeral.

crows beat low horizons into black  
scratching shadow movement through the corn  
with hills and trees and cottages reduced  
to miniatures of far and far away~

seeing where no others follow sight  
to penetrate the shape inside the form  
with brilliance startling the truth of space  
in twisting distances of road and field~

clouds rest heavily on stilted roofs  
of houses clustered front and back in stones  
echoing the voiceless companies  
of faces faces lost inside their names~

noses chins in profile not to see  
the powers emanating from a stare  
refracting images of motion stilled  
too deep too clear for casualty~

windows always windows squared to frame  
tight circles patterning unopened lifes  
while in the gaze that bends outside of time  
infinity contracts prophetic eyes.



(prison)er of vision  
 spiralling violet stars  
 night (un)ear(th)  
 dreams of silences in flower ~  
 spirit (un)restrained  
 to (soar) beyond illusions  
 of a wak(en)ing world ~

(k)no(wing) power of belief  
 (is) to be free  
 in deepest sigh(t)s  
 the (h)unting mind  
 (c)r(e)ates (un)visible realities  
 where enchantment (u)ves  
 until all (w)on(d)er  
 (unve)il(s) death's disguise,