Nova City: A Collection of Poems

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Nova City: A Collection of Poems
Joshua Bradford Oakley
Professor Marilyn Kallet, Creative Writing
May 6, 2005
Nova City:
Poems

Joshua Bradford Oakley
Thanks to:

My best friend Mary Evangeline
Marilyn Kallet, Allen Wier, Arthur Smith, Michael Knight
My other friends
My mother, my father, my brother, my sister
My grandmothers, My grandfathers (living and dead)
All of my ancestors
All of my descendants waiting to be born (maybe)
Ghosts
My House is a Museum With Many Doorways
The Origin of the Species
Descent
Second Thoughts
The American Sweetgum
The Voice in the Darkness
The Garden of Spirits
Death
Foo Dogs Speak
Justifying Life Through Funerary Rights
I paint the hills
Never Know the Joy Again
Crows in the Wheat Field, for Mary Ward
The Found One, for Micah Ward
Not Saving the Peace Lily
Love
Love
Party Supplies
The Cat Crouches at the Window in the Slanting Sunlight
Waiting on a Friend
A Dream Encounter
Thoughts of Women in the Shower
Evangeline
Lover’s Memory
Speaking Only of Possibilities
Now that you are gone, to a Lost Love
Family
My Grandfather
Alchemy, for my mother’s father
Lady of the Mountains, for my great grandmother
Playing Pretend, For a Bum
Nova City
Public Transit
Night Walk Home from a Reading for an Anthology of Local Writers
What Living Is?
My Hymn to the Full Moon
Forgotten Idols
Meeting the Buddha Under the Bo Tree
A Dream of a Mountain Larger than Myself
A gardener dreams of a seed
The Sun and Moon Are Jealous Lovers
Walking the Dog
Even now at the center of our galaxy, a black hole rages
   silently in the void*
Ghosts
My House Is A Museum With Many Doorways

The raven calls up old ghosts for a mad American,
Citizen Hurst's pleasure palace lies forever incomplete,
and an Irish aristocrat at the top of his broken tower
ponders secrets revealed to him by spirits
who come by night and whisper in his ear.

Poetry is not a fiction,
we must write what
our hearts tell us to write
The Origin of the Species

The angel warned them both not to trust the garden, but Eve wanted the feel of the serpent between her thighs. She arose that night and walked alone through the junipers, laurels, oaks, maples, figs, and apples; It would never be the same, after this night; the perfume of life forms passing passions in perfect delight would not ever come again. Eve's children would never be able to name the true names again.

In those times the world was young
And the garden was green
Full of fruit that granted unconditional love
Life without pain or worry or fear
And the cool wind blew through the trees at night,
Bringing the musical tones of the Lord to His sleeping children.
Descent

A doctor examines my brain
full of bugs and decay, even ghosts.

"Nothing to fear, don’t mind the ghosts.
They can’t hurt you as long as there is light."

I descend into the void of my darkest self.
I spark a match, giant monsters squirm around me.

My light turns into a fireplace in a cozy study.
When I open my eyes, the monsters are my size,

And rather polite. We drink tea and read books together
in a circle during the otherwise lonely twilight hours.
Second Thoughts

I walk away from Lucifer, over a long sloping valley of green grass. The sun sets in front of me, lighting the clouds with specks of red and orange. Then his dark shape passes over my vision; I see nothing but black. I have never felt colder than I do now. I can hardly remember the warmth of the sun. I walk now in darkness, with no memory of how to get back to the fields I know. I stand on top of a high hill, and feel like I am the only person left on the planet. The moon appears barely out of her first quarter, sitting in the sky whether waxing or waning I do not know and do not think to ask. Venus, the morning star, appears brightly shining over the moon.
The American Sweetgum

Pathways in the wide bark
roots reach deep underground
creating small valleys
the ridges of the bark
keep time and memory apart
towering above humanity,
knots eyeing all that passes
recording history dispassionately,
ghosts blowing like dead leaves
whispering in air through garden,
death means little to age of ages.

Her branches, the branches
hold no rest for pigeons or the living,
only room for ghosts of women and children
soldiers from the front lines of war,
the ashes buried in the grass
the roots feasting on memories
nourishment from bodies no longer
giving new life to existence without spirit,
forever trapped, forever tied
to this place of healing and pain.
The Voice in the Darkness

What of the demon who hides and whispers
Distorted secrets to me in the dark?
Its words are deceit and I know better
But none of that matters when
The green dragon comes to call on my soul
And overhead I fly across the dark moonless sky,
Breaking the clouds in pieces and not caring
About the damage I am causing to sleeping children below
So be it: I will fade away and another will take my place
Eager to stake his claim on life,
he will find the same fate as me,
The demon will gnaw at his soul,
And he will long to break free,
But he will not before the end of time.
The clouds are silent milky white and succulent
I open my mouth and float through them without fear
Of falling or death or anything else in the universe
The Garden of Spirits
for the little girl who stared at me while I was sleeping*

Through my window I see the hundred foot Sequoyah.
The cathedral steeple on the left, tall walls on each side.
Blood red clouds cover the horizon so I move my bed.
Outside these cursed walls the sky is clear and blue.

A Jewish girl died under the floor seventy years ago;
Every night she wanders the hallways of this huge building,
searching for her mother, taken by the Germans,
watches with contempt those who dare to dream in her domain.

A Nazi pilot crashed his plane into the courtyard,
screamed in burning metal and buried himself without blessing
under the foundation of a building interrupted by the war.
He whispers secrets in the wind around the garden, up to my window.

In my room, the old woman with black hair spent months coughing up
blood.
When the nun tried to bless her at the end, the witch woman laughed,
cursed the sisters’ god and the church steeple she saw every night.
She left her body that night, but her spirit never left the room.

The next day I sit in the garden under the Sequoyah: the sunlight
drifts down at my feet in patterns of light and dark between leaves.
Pigeons shuffle and spread their wings on the gutters far above;
I hear faint whispers of something that could be language.

* For four months, I lived in a former hospital called Saint Elizabeth,
in Leiden, Holland. This was a boarding house for temporary students.
Over the course of its history, the site of the building had been an
almshouse, church, hospital, boarding house, and refugee shelter.
During World War II, the nuns of the hospital decided to hide Jews and
other “undesirables” in the basement and in between certain floors.
Death
"You guard the gate, so speak, tell me what you will
For I wish to pass and I do not know if I should be afraid."

The female lion’s eyes slowly opened, a strained voice as if she spoke through water. Then a shriek, they were open wide and staring at me.

"Come to me, my child, I will smell your hand.
Don't be afraid, for the first test is painless."

I walked up to the lion mother, let her sniff my hand. The cub at her feet snarled, scratched my leg.

"You reek of selfism, and the demons fear, arrogance, insincerity. You are not ready to pass out of the wasteland into our domain."

"I am the only one who can help." The father lion did not move. He was larger than the mother. "I must eat your flesh before you pass."

"I’ve tried so hard to find what I lost so many years ago, and I am willing to do anything to reach it," I murmured as he chewed.
Justifying Life Through Funerary Rites

A beautiful woman once told me history could be explained by a faithful observation of markings in Etruscan tombs. But all we know of these people is how they worshipped their dead. I am reminded of the silence after a modern American funeral, when the family, friends, and acquaintances come together try to take away the sadness of decay, the absolute truth of it, that the person is in a better place; he or she no longer suffers as we suffer the regret of a thousand missed opportunities. I wonder if our ancestors thought of death quite differently before the modern timelines, the unsustainable explosions.
I paint the hills

I paint the hills & mountains with my mind
The watercolor paint blends together in red, blue, & purple
From the vague outline of stones in the hillside
Form the eyes & bodies of large toads—
Wise beyond any living toad, any living creature
Water, saturating rain, a great deluge falls upon the hills & spreads
my colors
Down the sides, color spilling into color beyond the consistency
necessary for purity—
Purity is impossible and purity is undesirable
The only way I am going to enjoy this mess of color is if I learn to
accept them mixing
If I allow the water to spread the colors down the sides of all hills &
mountains
Down to the makings of the ocean & the dry places of the lowlands
Never Know the Joy Again

Body under rotten stairs
Why are you leaving me
It is dark
I need you here with me
Now you are my only comfort

I will meet you
Beyond what
I have seen
With living eyes

No use for you to linger here
Mysteries wait for you to discover
Crows in the Wheat Field
for Mary Ward

She lies in the cadmium yellow wheat shafts,
soft hair and yielding thighs, scented skin and green eyes
soft lips and ample breasts for the taking, and giving away.

Crows beat their wings and caw against the wind from the west.
I want to die with her, moaning whispers in darkness,
my eyes safe for a moment from the sharp beaks of the watchers.
The Found One

to Micah Ward

Last night I dreamed of the time right after sunset in the Smoky Mountains, when rosy tinged clouds die away and night spreads its wings over the world. Two haggard men lowered your casket into a hole. All was quiet then. Your brother left a rose for your body to rest with underground. Your parents sat quietly in their car, waiting for the time to leave. Black sparrows flew in formation on their way into the mountains you love. I imagined I heard your voice as a gust of wind "Take care of her, and don't fuck up."

The phone rang in the early morning; I quickly hung up without waiting to find out who might be calling so late.

Fifteen minutes later, I made scrambled eggs while your twin sister showered. Mary wanted to be clean before she entered the hospital. I cracked the shell and two yolks slipped out into the mixing bowl. I mixed the yellow and white together until there was no difference.

We talked about other things while we waited for a taxi: children, love, money. Dawn opened into red tinged clouds strung like fluffy pillows across the sky. It was one of the few and happy times when the sky seems to stretch out forever. The grass in front of my apartment rejoiced and soaked up the first rays of the sun. A red-breasted bird leaped from his perch and soared on a gust of wind over my head. Time slowed for both of us, things felt like they really weren't happening—Any moment we could wake up and everything would be as it was before.

We saw you in the critical ward, on a stretcher with tubes tied to machines blowing air into your lungs. I dared not come closer to you, hissing and struggling to hold onto life. Painkillers coursed through your veins, and the poor man's heroin. I hope to God you didn't feel any pain. Mary touched the brittle skin on your arm; spoke your name.

We joined your family in this cruel reality of loss and foreboding in the waiting room (private for the hospital wanted to show it cared for critical patients' families) Some prayed to save you, others that God would stop your pain, but we all prayed. Your father had not even begun to grieve. When he told us he was happy to see his son, we knew what he meant. Perhaps smoke inhalation was the Lord's way of a blessing.

Mary and I drink coffee outside in the courtyard, where the sun is still shining.
and the birds are still singing; though we think others should feel differently now, nobody seems to notice the change except us. It’s eight in the morning. Through a few hundred feet of cement, you do not breathe, you are the one who is breathed. This isn’t an end or a beginning, it just is. Even a star must die. My end will come easier now that he has given me time to prepare.

These Smoky Mountains are on fire
rain may yet come to cleanse the ashes.
Stretched between earth and sky,
the sun rises and sets at the same time.
I imagine a voice in the powerful wind.
“Thanks for taking care of her for me.”

I feel like he is a part of me now. In the distant sky, clouds rush fast towards something hopeful, far away, unseen.
Not Saving the Peace Lily

I know that this plant will die unless I first give water,
But saving life is so much harder than doing nothing
At least this way I will not be responsible for what might happen
After All, I am not God, I am just a guy who would rather let his plant
die
If I water it there will be water on my floor
If I shelter it from the sunshine I must exert my energy
If I sing to it I must lose my individuality, my precious ego
Why should I feel guilty for allowing a plant to die?
It has no feelings, it has no presence, it has no money.
Love
Love

An irrational act
Sacred, Necessary.
Love haunts the
Catacombs of our hearts,
Never letting go—
It fights for survival.
Party Supplies

I have a suitcase: inside, one French unrated romance movie with copious nudity, a study guide for Psychology 101, German dictionary. In my backpack, a plastic bag of pot, a few condoms, vodka, and a bag of panties you requested. Birds chirp in the trees and heat rises up from asphalt in the hot armpit of fall, on the way to your apartment.
The Cat Crouches at the Window in the Slanting Sunlight

He licks the gray fur on his paw, then rubs his head. The cat does not know much of the outside world. He sees a brick wall, avenue, cars parked, and a few buildings. How can he know of the temple heart? I will tell you. He watches from inside the window. As an orange and white female sniffs the tire of a Jeep. He's just fallen in love.
Waiting on a Friend

Nowhere else to go, and a thousand places left to be
I sat all afternoon at the fountain of Europa and her Bull,
The Bull Himself waiting for another lover, but late.
How did Zeus carry Europa over the ocean?

I watch men and women, some coupled in modernized
Romeo and Juliet fashion pass talking to themselves,
acting as if there was such a thing as a new idea.

Several hours into the waiting, after looking and listening
the sound of squirrels feasting on acorns above my head
in the laurel trees the sounds resound again and again
over my head. Pieces of nuts fell after the sunset,

The library built by Hodges, his one hundred eyes
the hexagonal boxes stacked like a maniacal preschooler’s
lego set, lincoln logs, or KNEX—everything shines
daring darkness to envelop it all until the dawn
and maybe just maybe she whom I wait for will arrive.
A Dream Encounter

The moon was full & shining in the garden
I saw the blackberries glistening in the grass
It was dark & the fruit was sweet
A woman with hair long & bright red
Skin white & flushed, her cheeks & her thighs
She lay on her back & called for me.
I picked a blackberry & brought it to her
Mouth & she sucked my fingers & moaning
She sighed too & I dropped to my knees
Moved on top of her & felt her thighs
Cool against my body & her pleasure
Flows from within her body & into mine
Red-hot as her hair spoting in my vision
And the movement between us lasts
Long enough for me to forget a beginning
Only the pleasure & the mind less ness—

I awake in the early morning to find her gone.
All that remains are the blackberries in the grass.
Thoughts of Women in the Shower

A cockroach climbs the shower curtain; tiny whiskers twitch in time to the Court of the Crimson King. The swirling drain sucks the insect down. All sins imagined and real wash away in rain caressing body and the man sings to the memory of the cockroach.

He sees a blur in front of his face. Maybe it’s God. Maybe it’s the devil. Maybe it’s just himself, but there is something thinking in the darkness. He wants to know what it is: a beginning, an end?

The music of the water droplets mixing with the emanations of the stereo are over. He longs for the sensation of mouths, thighs, breasts. He stands naked in front of the fog covered mirror. The tattoo of a sleeping sun over his right nipple blinks its eyes, radiating life energy out in blinding light. There he sees his love’s face. She heats heart and flesh rising in blue hot lightning. Their bodies explode in a million orgasmic nerve endings. No more idea of time bills fears homelessness loneliness coldness or death.

When he turns off the light, only love peace war lust hatred fear jealousy laughter ignorance pride power life death reason imagination dreams and his shadow remain.
Evangeline

In my dreams I see you sitting on the rail of the fence, smoking a hand rolled cigarette, and drops of rain seeming to slow their fall, your crimson hair glows in the light of lanterns: all is quiet in this night garden. Your eyes are clear and blue green as the sea after a storm
"I want to spend the rest of my life with you, But how much longer do we really have anyway?"

In my dreams I taste your cool lips, you whisper secrets and dance in the garden--glowing. I hold your hands behind magic words flow from your lips and I cry joy or sadness I do not care which just to release the water from my body onto the fading desert of your reality.

We woke in bed, naked, groggy but whole In the first moments of mornings long gone. Now with groggy eyes and brain the illusion I have built for myself comes back to haunt me: Instead of the emptiness I feel you, Instead of the silence I hear you. I call out your name as a ward against the pain of truth, of reality. It takes a lot to realize no one’s there.
Lover’s Memory

I touched your soft body, once
I loved you, even thought I would die
when you danced under the weeping willow tree
in the full moon at midnight.
There is nothing left for me now but to
wait for the end of another life.
Speaking Only of Possibilities

a phone call, a reminder of another lover for you
the sound of your voice as you call yourself a bitch
loud rock music and drugs help to numb the pain
pain is necessary just as the separation of
body from body will tear us both to pieces
I wait for the goddess to come and revive my
broken body and spirit so that I may walk with her
in the garden of paradise as the sun warms my steps
There will always be a chance
That we can find happiness together again,
One day when the darkness of our lives
Does not threaten to drown us in misery
Now that you are gone
to a Lost Love

Every time I search for your face in a crowd
On their way to and from work
On their way to and from school
On their way to and from life,

I think about you.
I think about the space & time we shared together.
Mostly I think about the fact that we could talk to each other without
requiring anything else than just listening.

In the morning as I sleep,
In the afternoon as I wake,
In the evening as I walk through these city streets,
I continue my search for you.

Sometimes I make do with a version of you that only disappoints
When I remember the silence we shared together
When I remember how we always thought it was "us against them."
When we were together it seems I never said I needed you.

Now that you are gone it is hard for me to say that I did not need you.
Now that you are gone your name is all I hear when I stop to listen to
the silence within my own mind
Now when I lie in my own bed & the sun is just rising

I almost feel your presence next to me,
I almost smell your body next to me,
I almost see your warm breath on my pillow.
Family
My Grandfather

My Grandfather stands before me with eyes of sadness,
skin like wax, story old and tired, trapped in the shadow
on the other side of the impossible chasm. Why do I yearn?
You are the one who will see soon enough this pale imitation
of life is not supple flesh, es ist transformation, a warning
You will not rest until you find that other way to die
of the hidden way between pain and weakness into feeling.
Alchemy
for my mother’s father

Sometimes he visits me in my dreams
in his Masonic lodge uniform

“What do you think you’re doing down there?”
“Are you loving the right people?
“Helping those who should be helped?”

Why do you want me to hear you?

“My boy you must surely understand,
it’s hard to resist the desire for your own extinction.”

Your voice tells me what to do and not to do,
the one I try to forget. I suspect,
(my rational mind forces me to think this way)
you are only a part of myself.

In my secret prayers
there is something to rumors
of sea fishermen who return
from the belly of the whale,
and whisper to strangers in bar rooms
that they will never be afraid again.
Lady of the Mountains
for my great grandmother

She lost one of her first born to tuberculosis. He was only three years old when his throat closed for the last time. She often told me, I looked like him when I smiled. Seventy years have passed since this phantom uncle died.

One by one the other children died of broken livers, poisoned by years of drinking Bud and cheap whiskey. Those that survived to mourn their brothers’ passing continued to drink, determined to kill themselves before old age got to them first. They piled beer cans, sat around them and told stories about Vietnam, the small victories in their equally small lives.

Through all this hard work of raising nobodies, my great grandmother survived most of her children, one relic of the time before FDR chose her land as his vacation spot, of the Appalachian mountains before there was such a thing as the Smoky Mountains, TVA electricity, and the New Deal.

With late night TV reruns playing in the background, she stops reading, bends down to get the snuff tin as the tall dark and handsome man sweeps the buxom young virgin away to his impregnable tower. She wipes away the brown mucous from her nose, turns the page and smiles to think of eternal peace.
Playing Pretend, For a Bum

When you were a child
Everything was good, everything was bright
And you might still see traces of that
You will also see that guy over there kicking the shit out of his friend
But you know what happens when you don't share
You get the shit kicked out of you
And this is about real money
Five bucks left by that stupid college kid
That's a lot of money
Enough for a wonderland
Look at yourself
People passing by giving you money
Sounds like a good life
No problems just
a bottle of wine
Nova City
Public Transit

From the south side of town, where the cripples and the degenerates live,
The bus rolls over pot holes the size of asteroid craters. A man with boils
Makes his girlfriend laugh by removing the patch where his eye used to be.
Night Walk Home from a Reading for an Anthology of Local Writers

How easy it would be to stand in front of oncoming traffic. When I get home, I turn on the stovetop on high and stand there for a moment. I reach out without thinking and grasp the metal grill of the stove eye, Causing intense pain to blossom on my thumb into an immediate slow swelling. As the shock forces my senses back into raw, harsh reality, I try to imagine the surface of our sun, itself only medium sized as stars come, Millions of degrees hotter than the trifling pain I so recently experienced.
What Living Is?

An old man walks through the city at night, fat with a long gray beard. He drags his broken leg to the side like a faithful dog. Tonight, in the body of the full moon, a star explodes. He sees the star's death, and stops for a moment to study the sudden bright flash in the sky. It happened before us, and it will happen long after men and women cease to walk the earth.
My Hymn to the Full Moon

A blood red ring rises around her white body Wondering in the midnight sky. A man lives there: the sun king in disguise, her first lover.

The wind blows cold and shocking from the north. Liars and false leaders of men entice my sleeping brothers to meet their fate in the desert over the sea.

The poppy fields burn with their farmers. Execution squads singe only the people, not the oil. Fragments of their bodies, as snow, fall to the desert ground.
Forgotten Idols

The gate was locked from the outside.  
He watched the succession of kings in the city,  
The genocidal waves sweeping through  
Leaving men and women dead in the streets,  
And always there was a new group of men  
To rule over the bones of their predecessors.

He was jealous of the men and women,  
Of their ability to fade away gracefully,  
To give up their place in the world  
And transfer energy to their next life.  
Even he did not fully understand  
what made him "divine."

All he knew was that he  
would live forever, yet  
He no longer wanted to live.

He ran his fingers through the grass,  
Searching for the perfect flower, something  
To make his sister’s time bearable in the night,  
While he dreamed of when the wheel would turn,  
the gates would open, and his sister’s dogs would fill  
an entire city with something beside the sounds  
of helicopters, tanks, chainsaws cutting through  
metal and flesh.
Meeting the Buddha Under the Bo Tree

He sits and waits
in the yogi position crouched on top of
a deadly cobra whose many heads
form a crown with faces of despair to
protect him from the raging storm.

"We struggle daily to find meaning
in our transitory and temporary lives;
if we only knew that at the center of ourselves
we would see what the under mind wants us to see."
A Dream of a Mountain Larger than Myself

I rise up like a bird, newly born, unsure of his wings borne up as if a feather hidden by the cloudy veil. It helps to trust yourself. Flying is easier now that I can. After what could be a moment or a lifetime I reach the top of the sky curved dome, and a tiny glass ball hangs there, suspended in air: inside the ball is a microcosmic crystalline globe, complete with trees animals people water wrapped into a world of its own. What will I do in this place of wonder and joy? Will the sorrow that stems from knowing too much return forevermore? I must embrace the life I live now until I grow weary and am ready for another one. At least I will have fun in the meantime.
A gardener dreams of a seed

The wings of an angel close,
and it dreams a human life.
It wakes up,
eats breakfast,
washes itself,
drives to work in the city,
flirts with the women on its floor,
smokes a cigar in the parking lot,
meets a girl for drinks at a bar,
gets her drunk,
and takes her home
an hour later.

After it is done,
it falls asleep,
only to dream
of what it would be like
to be in the presence
of the divine forever.
The Sun And Moon Are Jealous Lovers

The sun sends down waves of heat and light.  
The glowing heat sphere eats my flesh. 
The skin on my arm curls ever so slightly, 
like old paper with burning edges. 

I can no longer hide my lust 
from my king in the summer sky. 
I have taken his wife as my mistress. 
Walking the Dog

I.

"We must unlearn the constellations to see the stars" - Jack Gilbert

The stars are out tonight, and every night

Just last night, the heat and humidity lay heavily on the air. Tonight the piercing cold night air sharpens my senses, giving me time to pause and consider what intelligence really is, and what it is not.

I walk fast under the laurels, maples, oaks in cover of darkness, My dog by my side, breathing heavily in her old age, working hard to keep up. Hundreds of acorns lie on the ground, crunching under my feet.

Little yellow leaves resembling Chinese fans cover the path too. We reach the highway, and ambient light emanates from each building and car, blocking out the stars. My dog looks up, whines, shakes her head. I agree with her so we turn around; Lampposts line up on the path back to my apartment like way stations. We follow the lights back the way we came, before turning once again into the darkness.

II. (after I grudgingly agree to take the dog out again)

Up there, gargantuan balls of energy burning millions of degrees
Down here, dead maple leaves falling and turning in the wind through trees laden with an evening's rain on the hill behind my apartment.
Lassie sniffs every blade of grass. Starlight shines on helicopter petals spinning and reflecting down. One lands on my lap. It is as if all of these falling petals are gifts from the stars. The dog's nose twitches as she sniffs the cold air. The world seems quiet from the top of this hill, only an occasional passing car to break the silence. I count the lights, give up after forty-one. Lassie points with one paw.
She is trying to tell me something. Timmy in the well again.
A sound? I look up one last time before going inside. In blinking lights lies the fuel to burn a billion years.
A tiny blossoming of white opens with a dark circle expanding in the center.
In that space a billion years ago, a star has just died, exploding dust particles brighter than our entire galaxy for only a moment. Then the dark space comes back and it's as if nothing ever happened.
Even now at the center of our galaxy, a black hole rages silently in the void.

I imagine the soundtrack to the death of a star
something like Beethoven's Ninth Symphony
at high volume with ear firmly pressed to speaker.

In their final sacrifice, the huge stars
give us radiant jewels of heavy metals
from the very core of their being.
More than any other event inside or outside
of human history amazes my small mind.

Things will end in different ways,
like to like and each to each
just as it has been from the beginning,
just as it will be for the future
until the last star burns out and
there is no fuel to burn another.

*The small ones die peacefully; the big ones grow hot not cold, and collapse
inward as the mirror opposite of their birth, a fraction of a second later exploding
in a brilliant stream of energy releasing more light and heat than all of other stars in the galaxy. The energy disperses throughout the universe a permeating spray of rich metals impossible to create other than in the star's death.
Abstract

The purpose of this project is to collect my efforts in the field of poetry to represent my writing ability in my senior year of undergraduate university coursework. This poetry collection represents a year of work in poetry classes as well as work outside of classes. Many of the poems were revised with the help of professors Marilyn Kallet and Arthur Smith. The majority of the poems were finished between the beginning of fall semester 2004 and the end of spring semester 2005. I would like to work on these poems in the future so that they might be published in a small book, perhaps with newer poems as I will be writing this summer and for the foreseeable future.