



Front cover art: Thanh_Nguyen_SLQ
<https://pixabay.com/illustrations/futuristic-space-imagination-sci-fi-7868642/>

Stardust and Flesh

Elements of Human Experience

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6 sections
73 pages
7971 words

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BACK COVER AND LINER NOTES

ORIGINS ABOVE AND BELOW

Earth Family

What is above is like what is below, and what is below is like that which is above. The Sun is the father, the Moon the mother; the wind carried it in his belly. With this knowledge alone you may work miracles.

So teaches The Emerald Tablet.

So poorly have we learned these lessons, although
We are born of the stars = expanding giants and supernovae

Planetary nebulae are stars turning into us
So clearly is the sun our father we forget
What is above and what is below, which are alike

Constant streaming of Sun's energy toward us = Solar Wind
Without which we freeze and die, lost on Earth
Whose inhabitants barely realize how to tap its power

Reflecting its intense glory is the Moon
Reminding us of our origins, one family alive
Rising and falling tides, waxing and waning new to full

Possibly science has tapped into the secret
For we now begin to see the truth in deceptively simple
Hermetic principles

We are made of elements no different than the heavens
Lives reflected in the birth and death of living stars
Soon we will realize the reason to work miracles.

AA+

Astrology

Told stories of the sky
Powerful, mysterious, distant but personal
Telling of the past, leading to our future
But no longer trusted as particularly useful.

Alchemy

Art more than science, promised a
Journey from base metal to gold that is precious
Through seven steps: occult and misunderstood
Today not believed to be working within us

A+A

These two A's are still fully alive today
We just need to recognize them as a new golden dawn:
Stars forever drive nucleosynthesis
Creating the elements in us for living on

AA+

So let us begin a new understanding
Based on principles eternal and elemental:
We come from stars alive as we are
Continuing to burn like all life fundamental

Facts to Feel

Air	Invisible vapor
Breath	Spirit unseen within
Water	Life's pure essence
Baptism	Spirit reborn
Earth	Everyone's body
Gravity	Attracts all heavenly bodies
Fire	Plasma too hot to bear
Energy	Stars in fusion everywhere
Elements	Based on properties
Processes	Working in us
Knowledge	Things that should be
Facts	To feel unity

Not All the Same

We think particles are elementary
As if just starting grade school
In truth they have been around the cosmic block
Since before we were ever imagined and
Depending on where and when they have been are
Distinctly different in the Heisenberg sense

This would explain a lot.
How planets of the same sun could be either
Inner and rocky, or outer and gassy
How identical twins can still be different
Even if wearing the same clothes (which cannot be the same
Since there are two different sets of them)

From one origin we came
Above to below
Which universally is certain
But what is in the details is devilish
So we must understand the fine distinction:
What is One is not all the Same

Double or Nothing

Two
Is (or are) taken for granted numerically

Two, when crossed, are transformed into four
Cardinal points and Euclidean planes

Crossing again orthogonally
Becoming all of 3D space

Travelling far enough north or west
Eventually you discover south or east

Meanwhile, time is the vehicle of fluid for
Transporting us to destinations unknown

Only hindsight and history are unique and true
All else remains mere possibility for me and you

All the while day fades to night
Night gives birth once more to day

Magnets pull closer and closer together until
They line up as one again

The only odds available for two are
Double or nothing

Simple as 1-2-3 Degrees

Once there was a singularity
Not a zero; One
Who would be Everything

Because One could not contain itself
One had to simply explode to
Divide and bravely face itself

From this point on appeared opposites
Sometimes attractive, sometimes antagonistic,
We know them all too well

North and south, up and down,
Positive and negative, light and dark
Male and female, old and young

Hot and cold. Now curiously
When they meet each other
Their common ground is average, in equilibrium

In this way two fall and give rise to three
Unlike either of them originally
All sons and daughters of singularity

Other forces are not so simple
Annihilating each other, chasing, fighting, procreating
Not as simple but complex by degrees

About Four

As numbers go
One-two-three-four:
Pause right there to consider all that
You've never added up before

To sum them up, one through four
Will give to you an even ten
Suitable for handy digits
Exponents of them and so much more

Four is stable, square and complete.
Divinity comes before with three
And soon thereafter, pentacles with
Well-dressed suits that can't be beat

How can Four Elements be so smart
Creating everything that we've got here?
Skies above, rivers through, energy all around?
I'd say it counts as perfect art.

The Fifth Way

Where there once were just corners four
Based on absolute reality that came before
Must emerge now something more

No longer constrained
Emerging from the plane
Beyond solid dimensions do the cards proclaim

Freedom is moving out of bounds
Off the grid and out of the cloud
Choosing new ways and feeling proud

Looking in and looking far
What there is and what we are
At the pentagram's head we become a star

What is missing?
Just one
More

Correspondence

“Talk it up
Talk down to them
Lift your sights
Lower your ambitions”

What is below is not like what is above
If we fail to know how it works
Ignorant of the order of operations
Blind to truth and deaf to reasoning

From the earliest times we knew
We are small in the space of the universe
We need to know more than we know
We rise only if we wish to go higher

One can understand order in many ways
Not unlike the sides of a circle
All is circular, and in three dimensions, spiral
In the fourth dimension, yet unknown

Correspondences include
Steps of alchemical transformation
Planets and our Solar System family
Zodiacal signs from light years away

Icons and archetypes to connect with time
Those from venerable traditions
Tarot, I Ching
All the books of wisdom

Correspondences are many
More than we can use, so
Select your partners in life
Grow with them forever

Down and Up

What comes down from the skies?
We think of rain, or sunshine
At night, Moon's reflection of the Sun
Stars and everything beyond

Little do we know of the stories going on:
Birth from cold, collapsing clouds of dust
Ignition into blasting nuclear fusion
Collapse from old age, burned out, exploding

We give back very little
Feeble light from burning things here
Trash, pollution, greenhouse gases
Hope, despair, greedy human emotions

We can raise ourselves up to meet the sky
Confident, greeting what is up there
Meeting infinity halfway
Becoming much more than we are today

These are the Keys

Calcination

Lead

Saturn

Sagittarius, Aries

The Fool

Dissolution

Tin

Jupiter

Cancer

The Queen

Separation

Iron

Mars

Scorpio

Justice, The King

Coagulation

Copper

Venus

Taurus

The Moon, The Lovers, Strength

Fermentation

Mercury

Mercury

Leo

Capricorn

The Hermit, The Heirophant

Distillation

Silver

Moon

Virgo, Libra

High Priestess

Coagulation

Gold

Sun

Gemini, Pisces, Aquarius

Death, The Heirophant

ELEMENTS OF LIFE

Really Long Time

A rock
Piece of stardust
Breaks down
Making smaller pieces
Eventually becoming
Particles of Earth's crust
Nutritious enough for
Plants to start and forests to grow
Then they become the food and shelter
For animals that live there
Until one day among those animals
Emerges an organism just like us.
Don't tell me the whole chain is not alive
The clock just has an eternal sense of duration
So it seems that waiting at the station
Takes a really, really long time.

My Iron Death is Your Birth

I was once large and beloved
A sphere of gravity balanced by fusion

One counteracting the other while
My furnace was growing ever heavier

Up through the elements I built until
I could get no energy in return

As the devil Iron robbed my outgoing nature
I was pulled to collapsing death by my own weight

Once a builder
Now destroyed- but wait-

You call me a Supernova and you know
My death and life are in your blood

Before the Revolution

Before the revolution of Physics
We nonetheless were able to move

Before we know any Chemistry
We saw how things react

Before we knew Biology
We witnessed natural life

Before Astronomy, Nucleosynthesis and Stellar Evolution
We knew not from where we came, but it did not matter

Now that we know
We remain clueless as ever as a race

If what we know outside
Is not burned into knowledge within

True knowledge must come
From the Heart

It All Depends

Once upon gazing up at the Sun
We wondered how it had all begun

Soon, mythical lives begin to show
Themselves to be all we could know

Human rage, love, lust and deceit
Could explain the blinding, infernal heat

Turning to more distant stars
We started to piece together who we truly are

Written in patterns in the sky
We saw life greater than ours explaining why

We are who we are
Where we are coming from and much more

And knowing now of thermonuclear fusion
Do we still know very much more?

Still we look up blindly to the sun
And wonder how it had all begun

Still Learning

Grow legs, stand up, walk about
Lean to think and speak and shout
 Play with fire, keeping warm
 Finding out just why we're born
Soon we grow some plants and use
Horses, mules and oxen to do the work
 Language? Yes, by the thousands
 So many that no one can understand us
Arrows from rocks led to spears and sticks
Metal swords, shields and clubs like bricks
 Gunpowder, cannons, mortars and bombs
 Bigger, meaner and more inventive than ever
Until prospects of overkill deterred us from
Going back to dust from where we came from
 Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Industrial Age
 Into the Space Age conquering distant places
If technique doesn't do us in
It's back to the old "my way the highway" thing
 Worse yet, kill in the name of God
 Whatever that's called in your mental sling
We can be doing so much more
Learning, listening, understanding each other
 Building, healing, enjoying, having fun
 On this journey we've barely begun

Extensions

I have felt vibrations since my birth
Seismographs feel rumblings of the Earth

I see colors in the sky
Spectrometers refine and quantify

I sense chemicals through taste and smell
Chromatographs separate them fully well

Even if I had a perfect sense of rhythm
It would not be as accurate as the nucleus of cesium

I've memorized some very basic things
Nothing compared to what the internet brings

How can I bring these extensions of myself
To improve what I feel, and how I live?

You Need to Know

Something broken?
Call an expert to fix it
Where did come from?
Let someone else do the research

What about a few feet ahead of you?
Pay no attention since it's so far away
Anything out there that interests you?
Or is it no fun if you don't have to pay?

How does your clock work?
Your oven, microwave, TV, or phone?
Do you believe it's magic or
Is there no way to tell?

A couple hundred years into the
Scientific Revolution
Has left most of us in the past
There's much more now you need to know.

Us and Them

We consume oxygen like burning machines
They produce oxygen from sun and water

We produce CO2 like machines burn too
They consume CO2 like angels breathing

We both need water but you know
Machines make water as a byproduct of fire

We consume carbohydrates while tanning in the sun
They produce carbohydrates by greening in the sun

Machines consume hydrocarbons for fuel
We need green machines to simply eat the sun

Uncertain

Quantum steps seem exact but
Can only be vaguely known.
Where are you? How fast are you going?
One of them must remain a mystery ongoing

How much do you weigh?
What about your energy?
Whatever we do to find you will
Throw you off your course, and us from our quest.

Are you something real
Or just ethereal?
Are you a lowly particle or
A wave so superior?

Who knows?
Nothing
And
Everything.

Because

Because spirit penetrates you
Infusing every cell with thought
You wake and begin to move

Because you are connected electrically
You are a radio engine
Moving with collected energy

Because you alone are the intelligent switch
Deciding what to turn on or turn off
You may be a glowing light or burned out bulb

Because so much energy is all around
You must choose your frequencies
To resonate or disconnect

Because you have a mind to help decide
How to use magnetism and electricity
Your reception should be tuned carefully

Small Mystery

Here I am
Take away real estate
Vehicles, possessions, stuff

Who am I then?
Just the same
Nothing less

What I am since
Born a naked man I
Took forever to grow and learn and be just that

How can I know
What the future knows, how it does so and
Where it's going to go?

How am I
Going to get beyond all these things?
Could it be they are one and the same?

CRITIQUE: FIRE AND FAILURE

Fallen Leaves

A simple, bare table stands in a quiet room
Waiting for whatever shall fall upon it

Over the years did I find
Collections of leaves printed purposely
Bound together in ordered stacks with
Spines not unlike yours or mine

So upon the table did I lay a
Baghavad Gita, Bible, Book of the Dead,
Dhammapada, Koran and Tao Te Ching
With room for others when comes their day

While all their power (not superficial weight!)
Could have crushed the table to the ground
Destroying the room and
Vaporizing the building to Earth beyond

It did not.
A quiet peace never before heard,
Pure sweetness bathed in radiant rainbow colors,
In perfect harmony now filled the room

Leaf by leaf then did the texts
Begin to weave themselves together:
Different sizes, disparate ages,
Languages unlike each other no barrier

Leaf by leaf continued the texts
Weaving their pages into one
Comparing, discussing, unifying and shining
Like lasers welding, bonding one to the rest

Then one human joined the events
Unaware of god, mankind and our history
Crushing the leaves and crashing the table
Dooming our backward race ever since

No longer simple, bare or quiet
Ignorance is our dagger and we fall upon it.

Local God

Sign in front of United Christ Church
Duncannon, Pennsylvania
June 21, 2014
“*Past, Present and Future*
God Bless Our Military!
Join us
Sunday School 9:30
Worship 10:30”

Maybe St. Luke got it wrong when announcing the birth of Christ:
The heavenly host praised God, saying
Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace
Good will toward men (Lk 2:14)

Not just a sentiment from God to man
Jesus taught this on the mount:
Resist not evil, turn the other cheek, walk the extra mile
Love your enemies (Mt 5:38-44)

These acts are true Defense as defined from above
Combined with the strongest offense: that of universal love

A military organization can defend too.
Buildup of mutually assured destruction
Was called détente between superpowers with the most money

Otherwise there is bullying on a national scale:
We are bigger than you so don’t try anything funny

Military operations could be peaceful
If they do nothing, there is no ill will

When carrying out their stated purpose they
Destroy, wound and kill

If God truly made all of us
How is our local group better than the rest?

How did we end up less evil or somehow
More favored by God than them?

Maybe this blessing completes the circle of life since
The Lord giveth and the military taketh away

God could just as easily bless the poor
The struggling, the oppressed, the peacemakers (Mt 5:9)
Those who reach out to help others: teachers, ministers,
Scientists, artists and poets seeking truth

Those who have lost loved ones in battles of the past
Deserve every comfort offered in the present
But why continue the suffering they have been through
With a blessing that curses us into the future?

Saddened, confused and doubtful of my beliefs
I'm afraid I missed attending the blessing service.
Local God is not United enough for my needs
So I wrote these words and end with these:

United Christ Church
Should be the crown of the astral light
Universal, eternal, at one with our maker
Since the beginning, giver of life, not the taker.

Atrocities and Cities of Saints

Sifting through burnt pages of human history
Promising, yet sickening, full of inequality

Millions killed by many a sick ruler's agenda
One life saved through love never ending

When the powerfully wrong get endless control
A simple man may breathe no more

We struggled with strength beyond us all to
Turn the tables back once more

Top down power can be pure evil
Fighting back may know no equal

Let the balancing forever begin
No more dark side; let light win

And what is light but life from Above?
It's here Below we need more of

Cities of Saints to multiply goodness
Defeating those who reign atrocities down on us

IS/IS Not

Killing

In the name of your God

Kills God

Erasing your name

From The Book of

Eternal Life

Too Much

AK47, RPG, SAM.

Civilians now all unwitting combatants

Take a stand

Join one side fight and escalate

Make more weapons so

Killing people and destruction is our fate

Or step out and say not today

Take away their toys from play

Stop any way their endless hate

Make there be a void between states

Where are all the true sons of Abraham?

Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, please, I ask them

Did you want this crap to happen?

Why has your legacy turned so rotten?

Be a fighter and kill and die

Is that the way to ascend to the sky?

Stop, too much

Leave me out of this

I may be alone but will never give in

By joining armies no one wins

More

I went to the store
Buying all I could eat
But soon found I needed some more

I thought all was well
In my own little world
But outside was nothing but hell

I burned what I had
To be free from it all
But still I was empty inside

I rose to the top of
The mountain of dreams
But once there I never could stop

I need nothing; at least not the best
My soul cannot rest
I need more.

Johnny C

Johnny was tragically not too bright.
He made up for that shortcoming by being mean.

He loved to play with stuff of carbon
Bouncing carbon balls day and night
Strings and things of carbon all four seasons.

It's all he ever thought about while he
Pushed and shoved everyone around to do the same.

One day Ray came into town;
Ray was smart enough and more importantly
He kept his head up 'cause his interest was the Sun.

Ray got all he needed from up there and knew full well that
Everyone else could take it free too without a push from anyone.

Meanwhile Johnny kept bullying everyone about his carbon
While Ray and more folks all the time just wouldn't buy it
Meanwhile it was making people sick and tired from it.

Johnny was getting sick too
Since playing with carbon burned the air
Making poison that went everywhere.

Finally Johnny had too much of his own toxic C
And he died.

The world rejoiced
They listened to Ray
And they gladly turned to the Sun.

And we all lived much more happily
Ever after.

Critique of What We've Done

Air

Polluted
Full of noise
Burned to make products of fire
Constricting breath of the soul

Fire

Too much combustion
Too much fire power
Did we tame fire or become its slave?
Where is the fire of the soul?

Water

Ignored
Polluted
Scarce
Unsuitable for baptism or dissolution

Earth

Defiled
Reverence lost to materialism
Mined, drilled and consumed
How we have screwed our mother

Not the prettiest picture
But that's who we are
Or is it?
Can we change?
Will we ever get it?

Let Us Think About It

You ask too many incisive questions
Their knife edge is divisive among potential answers
Rather than give a dull but quick response
Let us get back to you after we think about it

Faced with so many big decisions
Weighing each one is a serious business
Looking in the mirror for direction
Leads backwards, so let us think about it

All these issues accumulate like
Cumulus clouds pregnant with rain
Avoiding the storm let us seek shelter
Ahead of the front, while we think about it

In reality our thoughts are stillborn
Full of promise but sadly never to breathe again
In fact we are not really thinking about it
We just put you off to think about ourselves.

Question Your Freedoms

Speech

Do you create new ways to speak your mind?
Express your love or
Spend your words on thoughts unkind?

Religion

Do you always practice what you preach?
Preach just to the choir and
Deny anything beyond your reach?

Assembly

Do you hang out with no purpose?
Seeing same old friends or
Collectively try to further a good cause?

Bearing Arms

Are your weapons for sport or self-protection?-
Collector's items would be fine- or
Your personal arsenal intent on destruction?

The Press

(While pressing and printing are getting out of date)
Do you blog, email, post or tweet
Thoughtfully or are quick to berate?

Question Your Freedoms

They're free to you
No cost unless
You kill them by misusing them.

Honor – Not Worship

Simple. Green. Leaf. So amazing
How effortlessly sun and air make oxygen we breathe.
If topped off by a brilliantly colored flower
How much more marvelous could it be?

We appreciate but do not share metabolic footsteps

Flowing webs of tributary streams
From gentle creeks to raging rivers
These are living veins of life-giving water
To whom we thank for most of what we are made of

We honor but do not mindlessly flow along

Majestic mountains, backbones of the land
Alive, but moving so geographically slow
We barely see the passing of the plates
Until one above the other suddenly shakes

We stand in awe until we fall all over you

Mighty mammals, dominant kings of the land
You birds of the sky, ever free to fly
Domestic creatures for whom we deeply care
Exhibit much in common with lives together we share

We treasure you but do not bank on you for salvation

Stars across the endless sky
Our own dear sun upon whom we daily rely
For life, and hope, and endless rebirth
From where we came to where we will return

We exalt you, yet worship still beyond you

This page is filled with reverence
Respect and honor for all these things
We value, adore and even love
What is natural approaches supernatural, but

We alone are the final steps to god

LIGHTEN UP AND LAUGH WITH TRUTH

Knock on your Door

One night hearing a knock on your door
You ignored it
And it went away

The next day you heard it again
Went to the door
But saw no one there

Ignoring again the third time
The door became transparent
Letting in visitors of light

You did know them so you
Turned them away
Expecting them to get lost in the darkness outside

In truth they stayed inside
They are within you now and
You should listen intently for the next

Knock on your door.

Stuff

Sitting on just a dirt floor

Too cold

Too hard

Eating leaves and nothing more

Too green

Craving meaty flesh you know

Carrying water like a sieve in my hands

Too inefficient

Needing some bigger and better cups and pans

But containers full of drink

Could have easily filled everything

Leaving me with nothing to think

So I raised myself up

On pillows and some

Softer stuff

I expanded my diet

Beyond leaves and grains and soon was

Eating everything in sight

Yes. We need some stuff

Just a little,

Not too much

The only problem is

You never know how much stuff

Is enough

FlipFlop

Steam-emitting sweaty summers cause
 Dreams of crisp and cooling breezes
Endless numbing pale white winters bring
 Hope for anything but what freezes

Poor times, broke without a dime will make
 Wishes for a chance and then some
Rich ones still never know a good time
 Convinced the poor have too much income

If only I were taller, I would be a better man
 If only shorter, I could move quicker and get more done
If only smarter, could take control
 If only that not this, if only just the other one

Why is it that the flip side is always better
 No matter where we reside today
Tomorrow will improve with a change in the weather
 Meanwhile efforts flop to accept the current state

Backwards

It started out so great!
Everybody was interested in me and couldn't wait
Just to pick me up and check out my weight
 Kindergarten was an easy breeze
 Got accepted into every one like a sneeze and
 Excelled like I was just pure style and ease
Playing was fun, kids were everywhere
Days grew by without a care just
Passing tests and growing lots of hair
 But what was up with those Ivy Leagues schools?
 All they sent was a fancy no-thanks that left me drool
 While learning how to feel like a fool
Anyway a good college was in my sight
Made the most of it and did it right
Never mind at the end Uncle Sam wanted me to fight
 And so it went, working, playing, procreating
 Blessed by family, working and giving
 Punched out by layoffs close to senior living
Lived, learned or burned, the future is still bright
What I know now has turned out all right
If only it was all loaded in my very first sight

Kind of Uncertain

Doing the same thing repeatedly

Expecting a different result:

Insanity

No two repetitions being ever

Exactly the same:

Variability

Random probability rules

Statistically speaking:

Reality

How Do You Like Your Room?

You checked in early since
 You're not even sure where you've been
But it's high time for some rest
 And it seemed like a pleasant inn
And it will soon be much better
 'Cause you didn't get where you are
From being in a mood to shop all around
 Rather just thank a lonely star
It's just a room.
 There's nothing permanent about it
So please sit tight and enjoy
 Even if there's nothing right about it
Your next place, so you say,
 Will truly be your dream home
And nothing can get in the way
 Of what shall become your very own
We are all renters
 No matter what the agents say
Our most solid, permanent castle
 Is only made of clay
Princess had expected
 A bed so perfect in every way
But she couldn't stand perfection
 When a tiny pea got in her way

Adapt Richly

The key to evolving up the chain is
Doing something better

 More uniquely than has ever been done before
 Thus establishing yourself with highly selective DNA
 Becoming the survivor over the years

All this is true in biology
Where basic forces so designed

 Tell the future how to score the game
 Count the survivors, reward who is left
 Then move ahead

Otherwise in human domains
It seems to be a more lopsided enterprise
 Those who have, swim in more and better
 Those who do not, get drowned out.
Choose your parents' banks well to adapt

High on Electrons (Oxidize Me)

It seems I have been too preoccupied
In the universe of electronics
Sound, light, telecommunications
Computing for the fun of it

When one accumulates excess electrons
We say the condition is called Reduced
I think I need to stop reducing
Shed some negatrons and get more positive

When this little track has run its course
Please do not send me underground
Decaying, rotting, feeding worms.
Light me on fire to Oxidize me again.

An Emcee Square

One ounce of anything
Fully converted to energy
Is for one second of time
2,500,000,000,000,000 Watts

Don't feel cold and dim
Lighten up, brighten up
Know the power in everything
If you can only release its potential

What I Do

They wrote of nature
I see a flowering universe

They spoke of freedom
I feel responsibility about to burst

They battled for riches
I fight for no more war

They drill for fossils
I bask in solar influx

They rhyme about love
I love to rhyme about love too

Whatever is good that has gone before
I select for what I do

Thank You

HERE, THERE, NOW, AWARE

Vibrations

What is our purpose? Listen
To find the true frequencies of our song
Hidden in the noise that surrounds us all along

In sight reading any new score we first encounter
Notes high and low, fast and slow, noting where
Practice will be needed to sound our best there

Moments we should soar, elsewhere lay low
Not to be stuck on the same monotonous drone
Where to play literally, where to jam freely

Building on the groove, rising to the top of the tower
But not to be fooled by faster, louder, and higher
Knowing when the time is right to bring it down lower

In that perfectly simple open sentence
We open up the room for silent meditation
Accenting well-chosen sounds with spacious punctuation

Since in the grand scheme, you know, our brainwaves are slow
In some tenths to tens of cycles per second
Under the bass line there, and what could be better?

Knowing we could choose sounds up to ultrasound
Radio, light, X-rays and even beyond
We shall prefer to find the true frequencies of our song

Wherever they may belong

Spin

Potter

Handily spins a shapeless gray body
Into a tower of artistic beauty
Glazed with vibrantly colored design
Fired into solid longevity

Dancer

Twirls, leaps and jumps
Effortlessly becoming an arrow in flight
Timeless space of the moment is the medium
Leaving the watcher motionless and breathless

Storyteller

Weaves her twisted threads
In and out, over under, through warp and weft
Capturing our minds in her web
Twisting us in conflict then triumph

Earth and Moon in a

Pas de deux
Face to face, day to day and month to month
Annually circling about our Sun
Repeating each performance with perfection next to none

Everything spins

Quarks, electrons, odd numbered nuclei too
Enabling useful spin resonance imaging of what's within us
Not ending there, happening endlessly in
Planets, stars, and galaxies far beyond us

So let me now

Build a tower of dreams with
The clay I am made of freely
Reading the map of the heavens I see
To ride upon the spin all around me

Combinations

We are not all the same! Yet have many common parts in fact
What's in common? Nuclei and electron clouds
What's different? Everything else when we react

Some – an elite few – are truly gold
Sought after, retained, recycled, revered
Pure and fine, desired, and expensive

Next would come silver as found on fingers or wrists
Platinum and palladium who also compete to be named Precious
But behind the scenes just as commonly act as catalysts

Durable ones: iron, nickel, tungsten
Shiny ones: chromium, aluminum
Soft and hyperactive: sodium and the alkali metals

Mercifully, everyone need not be metallic flavors
Just mention carbon and life starts designing
Attractions to oxygen, nitrogen, as polymeric players

Light and useful: think magnesium alloys in flight
Great conductors: think pure copper in electrical circuits
Inert gases: to noble to mix at the royal ball tonight

Halogens? too aggressive for everyone's taste to bear
Transition metals? Best to keep them moving ahead
Rare earths? What if they are not really all that rare?

Truly, we are all distinguished by our differences
Given our diversity we must react endlessly
Regardless of any human imposed influences

We are not all the same! Yet are built with the same relations
What's in common? Nuclei and electron clouds
What's different? Everything else in endless combinations

Pure Light

White light
Light of the maker
Golden light
Giver and taker

Seen through a prism
Single colors do reveal
Less than the composite
With more individual appeal

How can this be, that
The sum of parts and parts of the sum
Add up somehow differently?
It all depends on the looking one

Daylight is bright
But give me a rainbow
One color at a time
For me to personally know

Fingers of Fire

From a humble fall
Some paper, leaves and twigs
A spark begins it all

Burning at light speed in cremation
Growing once more as before to the sky
Embodying alchemical calcination

Out of dark ashes cool to sight
Does the red hot body glow, waving arms,
Gesturing with nimble fingers so bright

Were this you or me
Would we not cry and complain
At such a stripping of our right to be?

Fire (I sense) feels no pain
When completing the endless circle of life from
Air to Earth and back again

This is because the tree is superior
Knowing no disconnect between
Physical, mental and spiritual:

Eternal
Fingers of
Fire

All Renters

When you checked in to life

You were given a brand new location
To begin all your journeys

We all rent or lease
Though we truly own the experience
Thinking it will last forever

Bad times can seem like forever
Good ones end way too soon
Time is like that

No permanent addresses here
We all just check in to the hotel
Hoping the room will be OK

All renters. All tenants.
All travelers. All transients
In search of a better room.

It's a place all your own
Take care and it will last
But not forever

Choose your landlord with care.

How I Feel on the Trail

Walking through Appalachian woods
I hear no conflict or unrest
Only harmonious rustling of leaves as
A bird settles into her nest

Quiet, passive air
Fills everything in between
Earth and rocks and sky with
Room for trees to breathe

Down below, winding slowly
Rivers flow in tribute song to the
Broad Susquehanna
All of them knowing where they're going

Four Elements here are neutral
Not without intention, force or direction
But missing all the negativity brought by
Humans since our first inception

Pure, yet active
Primal, and clear of purpose
Moving in rhythmic natural progression
Somehow much better off without Us.

Measure of a Man

What's the measure of a man
Is it being perfect
Or doing the best he can?

One man's dealt a wining hand
Aces in all four suits
The world is at his command

Another born with nothing
While faulted for wanting more
Works till he feels he is King

It may not be perfect or
What you dreamed but
It's what you've got, so live with your scheme

Is it by inches or how many pounds
Dollars and cents
Or what's inside that counts?

Not well prepared, or helped when it was tough
Not bothered by opinion
Never give up to make yourself measure up

One More Chance

Gambler
Spends last dollar, hollers
 Give me one more chance!

Batter
Strikes out in the bottom of the 9th, signals
 Give me one more chance!

Racer
Barely misses the last turn, falling to 2nd place, roars
 Give me one more chance!

Artist
Nearly creates perfection in her last work, imagines
 Give me one more chance!

Student
Misses final A by a single point, plans for next test to
 Give me one more chance!

Parent
Launching new life with uncertainties except love, prays
 Give me one more chance!

Average Joe
Makes a small mistake so a chargeable offense makes him plead
 Give me one more chance!

Poet
Hopes to embrace all these stories, sensing time may
 Give me one more chance.

Use What You Choose

Had I wished to be a Star
(Not in Hollywood, from light years afar)
Living my life accordingly
Where mass predicts how long you'll stay
A few billion years would pass until
I walked down the main sequence and up the hill
Burning up, meeting my ultimate fate
Collapsing back into an empty shell (and doing it well)

Or had I chosen to be a rock
Cold, hard derivative of a planet's good stock
Tossed by pounding oceans, belched from molten iron
Surrounding me with quakes and falling mountains
Braking down and building up would rule my sight
Different rules yes, still hard to learn them right

More down to Earth, this is my view:
A carpenter: build straight and true
A doctor: heal with best knowledge of what you do
A peasant: no choice but enjoy what life gives you

Don't throw it all away like the fools
Use and use well what you choose

I Don't Know / I Do

Lost between here and there
My pendulum life still swings

Neither here nor there
Somewhere in between

Out of the motion grows a
Passage like a boardwalk over raging seas

Sidewalks between fire and ice
Choose one or else make ice water

Best of all possible worlds
Lemons to lemonade

I may not know but out of not knowing
I do and I know what I do

ENERGY TO MOVE AHEAD

No No's to New

What turns us on these days
Goes back a long long while
To when we first discovered ourselves
As distinct from rock and bees and trees

This awakening must have been most exciting
To find that beside looking for food or
Seeking a mate with whom to make good
We had time while fully awake for just dreaming

To feel, be it happy or sad or whatever
To turn off too and not be hyper forever
Expressing ourselves through words and symbols
As free to choose as the summer wind blows

When we felt fire, and passions rose higher
Knowing of plasma could have intensified desire
Or feeling the wind blowing, moved by knowing Coriolis
Understanding the physics only deepens the knowing

Words are just shortcuts to seeing and believing
Connected to an internet of things where we're living
Always between us, but lately just recognized
Our electromagnetics are stronger than we've been achieving

Poems arose out of human challenges-
Overcome it or you will succumb to it!-
Battling each other in dirt, on oceans and over cliffs
Meeting death by predictable results of natural forces

Knowing how flowers grow from photosynthesis:
No less beautiful than magic it is!
Eating and breathing: Metabolize and Respiration
Creating offspring: Spiral chains of DNA.

Our language limits us unless we look ahead to
Tomorrow where we are offered new expressions:
Whatever we feel benefits from deeper meaning, so
Let there be no No's to New words to use.

Progress

1000 years ago - Four elements

Air
Earth
Fire
Water

Now – Standard Model of the Universe - Four forces

Strong
Weak
Electromagnetic
Gravitational

1000 years ago - Three Alchemical principles

Sulfur
Mercury
Salt

Now – Three basic atomic particles

Proton
Neutron
Electron

What is progress?

New names for old
And new understanding
Until Tomorrow changes names once again

Enter quarks, leptons, bosons... for another poem

Turn It Around

Viewing
TV sound and light

Watching
Movies loud and bright

Absorbing
Everything in sight

Reacting
Will require a little more might

Pushing back to
Put up a thoughtful fight

Getting in control
Making it better, creating what is right

Turn it around
Put energy in to achieve new heights.

Merging Traffic

From bits of dust
A man and a woman arose and walked freely
Populating our Sun's planet plentifully

Along the way we found signs of our Maker who
Any of ye who have ever lived could know:
Brahma, Gaia, Tao, Isis, Zoroaster, and more

Moses and Abraham, Jesus and Mohammed
Gurus and gods not named but nonetheless Named
Who in principle stand for One and the Same

As pedestrians divided in today's fast lane
Let us divert our vehicles from mindlessly crashing:
Get over what happened back there and merge ahead.

Water and Blood

I've sung about rivers and streams
Sincerely, not just some stuff of dreams and
Believe that our livelihood is much more than it seems

When did we invent pollution
Guessing it was righteous ambition
Making problems instead of preserving the solution

Water is in us more than any other thing
And where does it come from? Must be the surrounding
Environment where we falsely think we rule as King

No, in fact, what is around us is within
We cannot separate the flowing out and in
What we throw away quickly comes back again

So take a simple pledge
To first recognize we're at the edge
Clean up the mess before we've all gone over the ledge

Rivers are our veins
Renewed whenever it rains
How long it continues to last... on us depends

New Energy

Why do we mine?
Why do we drill?
Is it for money
Or also a thrill?

Why is raping Earth so
Profitably cool?
Not because we're smart
Or doing anything new

Stop. Look around
There's a strong solar wind
Hitting us daily to
Move ahead from where we've been

Drilling and burning stuff are
So yesterday
Radiant energy all around
Will soon lead the way.

Free From the Parade

Having once risen, now descends the dove
Merging strife from Below with peace from Above

Waking up lambs who gather to roam with their flock
Grazing new lands avoiding danger in the rocks

There wolves lay waiting for food, hungry, ready for more
Not hearing the approaching lion's roar

Strong is the lion, ruler of lands, respected as king
Stalking for weak prey and capable of anything

In slithers the serpent sidewinding left and right
One way to evil, the other to bright light

Soaring above all, the eagle brings peace to the dove while
Lambs slip past the wolf, giving the lion a serpent's choice

To make all free from the parade
At last

The Will of Iron

The King needed a great war of vanity
To make him famous in history

The economic lords need perpetual war
To make perpetual money

Some believe it is the nature of Iron
An enemy of life and peace.

The Iron Age was filled with
War, death, slavery and poverty

But swords can be beaten into plowshares
Bringing us food from the land

Can we move past the legacy of the Red Planet
To discover more peaceful spaces beyond the will of Iron?

How the Motor Works

Enough energy
To burn matter into much more energy

Enough matter to burn and burn
For billions of years

Enough time for us to
Be part of the grand party where

Magnetic spirals are dancing
Catching us up in the Solar Wind

Where we dance along
Outside, then inside, ever twirling around

Up and down, in and out
In cycles layered in days and years

Plasma charged particles
Induct us into the hall of fame

Charges, fields, powerful winds are ours
If we can only catch the breeze

Google Nikolai Kardashev to Start

We were once cold
Shivering at night
Needing some warmth before
We discovered burning firelight

From there developing
More and more concentrated juice
From Wood to Coal to Oil to Tar
Ever more destructive to break it loose

From Mother Earth, who holds it all
Not complaining but fully seeing
We are failing to grow up but yet
From her breast we are still feeding

But not on a diet of Uranium!
While surely that's where we've been
It remains dangerous for millennia, and crude
Nuclear reactors are but a glorified steam engine

Meanwhile the solar wind does blow
Streaming electromagnetics forcefully in our face
Until we figure that out, and more beyond
We remain a primitive race.

Is it Enough?

Pinnacles of human achievement have we seen
Classical works- sculpture, painting
Music, opera, masterpieces of stage and screen

Architecture, temples, coliseums, pyramids
Great Wall, Stonehenge, ancient cities
Edifices of the written word, creative and scholarly

Scientific method and tangible results
Medicine with power to cure diseases
Maps of the human genome, understanding life within us

Railways, vehicles, highways on earth and in air
Exploration of depths and heights of Earth
To the moon, probing the solar system and beyond there

Evolution of governance from slavery to democracies
Astounding social progress among the people
Enlightened moments, endearing discoveries

Is it enough momentum for the time in which we now live
To progress to the next level in the humanity's evolution?
Or will we retreat back to the dark ages and stay primitive?



Back cover art by YolGezer

<https://pixabay.com/illustrations/ai-generated-universe-space-planet-9248607/>

LINER NOTES

Stardust and Flesh is about the puzzle of being human.

Stardust and Flesh is a small book that asks us to become more.

Stardust and Flesh offers a map of the cosmos, ourselves and the future we might yet create.

This is not just a book of poems - it is a map of human possibility, drawn from the classical four elements, modern chemical elements, the stars, and the stories we tell ourselves.

Across six interconnected sections, *Stardust and Flesh* invites readers to rediscover themselves as creatures shaped by cosmos, culture, conflict, and choice. The voice is both contemplative and bold, weaving together elemental imagery, scientific insight, and moral clarity.

This a collection that illuminates, comforts and challenges.

See and hear more Roger Hammer at www.rogerhammer.net