

Peter Hoheisel

BREAKING THE HYPNOSIS

(for Walt Whitman)

Blue sky soaks me into it through
the late March wetness,
end of the week's work at L'Anse High School.

Walt's agent in 1980
padded down the corridors,
told the class:
"All right, I'm going to read you a long, long
poem by Walt Whitman. Go to sleep if you'd like,
daydream."

Demand nothing of them, as Walt would do,
only present,
witness and wait--
subvert school's constant demand that
the young drink and spit out an ocean of
Abstractions,
calling it knowledge
while their bodies hunger for the world,
its taste and touch and scent.

Patiently pour his words
over their conditioned minds,
secret agent of the unconscious--
their faces light, then dim, then puzzle;
Walt dances down the aisles,
soul transplant into the passion heart hunger
of the young of L'Anse
the song of himself, themselves,
tender, interminable.

he loosens their defenses & unknown to themselves
prepares them

to walk in the world.