

Cynthia Golderman

WORKING WITH WALT WHITMAN

When in the throes of deepest darkness I called to him,
my Muse of long ago, needing something to hold onto,
something of mine own, I cried within my heart for him
to give me prose,

 within darkling changes of myself
brooding imageries woven deep down threaded with regrets
honoring false gods and having no sense of worth I called
to him, Walt Whitman, of my childhood's dreaming,
come come I called,

 the sibilance of my utterings rung and
wrought with pain,

 come and bring me hope again, from all the
stifling plastic pandemic wizardry, deliver me to
your thrush-filled song world, your traveling
loving,

 giving, bearing and offering solace.....

I cried again and again as I held tight to the *Leaves of Grass*
a bible for me in the eons of long lonely life.

Then one day,

 in the heated arguments of trivia that can
mortify and eat one's soul,

I felt him near, he became real to me, wrinkling and rough,
a man with the greatest and least of all faiths,

picking up the fragmented particles, he in a split second
wound them like a web, leaving shadowless their permanence,
passing into that void I had come through, saying you can do it
you are my sister and a poet, give it your prose,
work, sister work, write,

 and the sweat poured night and day,
and I of all fears and agonies, melted away from ennui
and purposeless living,
striving ever striving for that lilac bush to be real,
and it

 came as silvery boughs in the rain,
it came as thundering hooves upon the red dust of solitude
it came as heartsease and winning,

shining in my eyes' blinking irises,
the beast inside became a rose.
No one now can diminish me,
as he sits with me, comes and goes,
reads and laughs and hits my thigh,
you are working now, sister, a poet,
be gentle and composed,
no sense to lamentations, when all is well with you
write from your heart
to not be false is everything,
I give you handful of work and pleasure
a measure of yourself to make you whole.



Fritz Hamilton

NOTHING LEFT

Unemployed again ... always
unemployed ... nothing to do but
walk to the top of Mt Tam to

pocket the clouds ... go
sit on the rocks at Stinson Beach with
the ocean beating at my feet ... capture

the stacks at SF Public Library to
read up on George Orwell's poverty and
Thomas Chatterton starving at his writing desk and

Ernest Dowson staying in Paris each night with
a prostitute more cheaply than he could if
he had his own crib ... listening

to Turk Murphy's dixieland at Union Sq or
standing just outside the Wine and Cheese Cafe in
Ghirardelli Sq to hear baroque ... then