# OUT OF THE BOX
## Dedicated to Robert Creeley
## Who wrote me
## “Guys like us are always outsiders”

**Oh ancestor, where there are blue skies there is blue paint. So it is in nature that red, yellow and black follow what came first, the landscape that is seen and the one that is imagined. Imagine the imagination if it is given a chance to expose what we do is do what we know. And I now know what I didn’t know, I am an abstract thinker and everything that I have painted and written is being fulfilled knowing this.**

**Pause**

## OUT OF THE BOX No 1

**Oh ancestor, do you tell me the truth? Do you honor the hallucinations of men who hallucinate that they are pigeons? They are outsiders. Border people always crossing over a given line. The sidewalk they walk on**

**covers the sound of the wind tracking a pigeon flying 90 miles an hour over roofs and tops of trees, troubled skies, Constable clouds**
**Poetry teaches the poet**
**Words of sorrow**
**Of joy of ---**
**Pause**

**In the beginning ancestors divided 800 species of pigeons and sent them to thrive in different parts of the world. One million Pigeons that derive from the feral rock dove live in New York City. They nest where ever it is convenient and eat the discarded food left by humans on the sidewalks and streets of the city.**
**A pigeon can see their surroundings without turning their heads. Their eyes have 360 degree vision. Pigeons processes visual information faster than people on the street can do and they can see for miles in front of themselves. Homing pigeons can fly 600-700 miles in a day and some homing pigeons can find their way home from a distance of eleven hundred miles.**

**Feathers cover a pigeons body. They have four feet, three forward and one backwards. Their legs and feet are covered in scales similar to their reptile ancestors.**
**The French brought the pigeon to America in the 1600s for food. There were farms and escaped pigeons are the ancestors of the present pigeon. All pigeons take advantage of the derelict behavior of men, women and children. Pigeons eat the garbage thrown on the sidewalk and into the streets by humans that wear shoes and possess two legs, two arms and a head with two eyes that rarely has 360 degree vision.**
**Vision, when a male pigeon takes a mate he takes her for as long as he lives.**
**Pause**

**Oh ancestor, tell your story before the bells chant stories that will never take place. Human legs unlike pigeon legs, are scaleless. Human feet have five toes that point forward. A female pigeon as big as a car births a human child. The father is bewildered. He accepts what the mother says. He has taken**

**an oath and has mated with her till he dies. There is only one species of homo sapiens, modern man. Domesticity is the wildest.**

**OUT OF THE BOX No.2**

**Oh ancestor, did you expel the Rock Dove (Columba Livia} the common pigeon from cliffs and rock ledges and give them to the population of Southern Europe, North Africa and Western Asia.**
**Did you snatch pigeons from farms in France where they were kept cooped up like chickens for Sunday dinner.**
**There is always hunger. Everyone needs food to nourish the unfamiliar rotation of our emotions. And in the 1600s the French brought pigeons with them for food when they came to North America.**
**Pause**

**Oh ancestor did you want the orange eyes of the pigeon to deflect the shadow of dogs and cats and their history of marking territory.**

**Pigeons coo**
**Drop their poop**
**And call**
**BE WITH ME**
**DO NOT REST**
**Homo sapiens throw away**
**What they cannot eat**
**And what they eat**
**supplies the rhythm**
**the trot to nature's constant beat**

**Pause**
**Jesus, your mother knows who you are. You came and sat down with us and told us we are common Rock Doves. We came and we stayed and he said before he left as seen in da Vinci's "Last Supper." He said, tell the city we want Justice. Pigeons are not intemperate they cannot afford extra fat. Pigeons fly Homo Sapiens do not. Some humans are forever at a**

**cross road of their own making since they use the Roman cross, the crucifix has been a symbol of dismisal, of revenge. History is memory and it asks and it tells us.**

**He asked for mercy and mercy did not come, in translation there is invention. Your mother knows who you are, you are her son, and when you speak of justice you speak as a poet. Michaelangelo painted you as Christ the son of God. But I am not a Christian, and I hear you in a living room denouncing evil just as Jack Spicer used The Place, a bar in North Beach, as his living room. So Charles Olson used Black Mountain College to voice Maximus's advice to the town of Gloucester in Massachusetts.**

**OUT OF THE BOX No.3**

**Oh ancestor, in 1961 a photograph of Becket and Giacometti standing next to the tree Giacometti made for Becket's "Waiting for**

**Godot" has the author and the sculptor smiling and they are pleased with the tree and each other, they are friends and the author and sculptor's doubts and complexities are paused but not forgotten. The tree is complete. What remains is conjecture.**
**Is there more, more to give or has it already been given?**

**What has been given has passed into a the present and the present are the decades that we live in. We witness the arbiters who make changes socially, politically and artistically. We can chase those changes, but can we change our present? Is it important and is it possible?**

**I've had a fantasy that if I was young I would be a wall painter, use spray paint and become a graffiti artist or writer. But the more I've thought about it emotionally I have to live in my decades, my present, my given subject, between Europe and America.**

**OUT OF THE BOX No 4**

**Oh ancestor, Eric Weinberger and I were like all the other students and faculty. We were Pigeons (Rock Doves). We had lost our rock, our ledge and were going to a place we did not know.**
**It was 1956, Black Mountain College closed its doors. Eric and I drove cross country from North Carolina to San Franscisco to meet up with a number of BMC students who had flown to San Franscisco.**

**Pause**
**What would California be if it wasn't for the Beach Boys? They told us what to expect, "California girls." But none of the girls that patronized the places (bars, galleries, and poetry readings)I knew were from California except for one, Joanne Kyger, whose language generates self, conviction, and is not wasteful.**

**Pause**

**I had written Creely about the move to San Franscisco. He sent me Allen Ginsberg's address. It was late morning when Ebba**

**Borregaard and I knocked on Allen's door. The door opened and a very sleepy young man stood there. Allen asked if we could come back in the afternoon. Allen at that time was a box jockey at Greyhound. He worked nights loading and unloading the passengers' bags.**
**Ebba and I retuned in the afternoon and we met Peter Orlovsky. Allen and Peter were lovers and they lived together. We were walking to The Place, a bar where poets and artists congregated to drink, give poetry readings and exchange information.**

**The Place was unlike the Cedar Bar in New York. Its space was smaller and it cloistered intensity with a balcony and a clientele of mostly West Coast poets and some drifters from HOLLYWOOD and specialty night club acts appearing in swanky hotels. The Place sold beer and wine and no whisky and it was never as noisy as The Cedars.**
**And then there was the remarkable poet Jack Spicer. He used The Place as his living room and he held court for those who were interested.**

**Pause**

**Whereas there was no space for a domesticity at the Cedar Bar, The Cedars was New York, fun and business. There were the established painters of Abstract Expressionism. The painter Franz Kline would be at the bar most nights drinking beer. Guston and de Kooning came infrequently. Jackson Pollock would appear and he always stirred the unexpected with his drunken shyness.**

**A group of writers who admired the painters came to the bar. Hubert (Cubby) Selby, Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) Gil Sorrentino, and me most nights when I was in NYC. Then there were the second generation of Abstract painters, Joan Michell, Micheal Goldberg, etc. And there was the constant din, everyone talking at the same time. Galleries, buyers, who was in and who was out coalesced the evening with humor, impatience and aesthetics. There were times when the need for position splintered friendships and serious disagreements broke up relationships.**

**Pause**

**The Cedar Bar became as famous as the painters who were its clients and this brought tourists from up town and out of town celebrities. Gil said he kept staring at a beautiful woman in one of the booths, couldn't take his eyes off her and finally he recognized her. It was Ava Gardner. Sterling Hayden came into the bar not as a movie star. He came as a seaman and talked about his yacht and his children.**

**Pause**

**It happened as if we were in a silent movie. Focus on Peter. He bashed a cat sitting on the sidewalk with a plank of wood and the cat died. Allen was silent, Ebba was silent, I freaked I lost it. I denounced Peter for his brutality, he murdered a cat, a mammal that wasn't about to harm anyone of us. And from that day to the day Peter died fifty years later Peter and I never said a word to one another.**

**Pause**

**Allen was reading "HOWL" the next night at a high school and he hoped we would come. The following evening Allen was introduced by Rexroth and Allen's reading was a revelation; it mesmerized the audience. Allen's "HOWL" told us what he had taught himself, responsibility. Not speaking to Peter did not stop me or Allen from seeing each other. And I did drawings for Allen's 1974 book, The Visions of the Great Rememberer.**

**Pause**

**Our daughter Hetty came home very angry. A teacher in one of her classes spoke about Allen in a way that she objected to. Hetty told the teacher that Allen wasn't like what the teacher was saying about him. Hetty told him that Allen was a friend of her father. That he came to our house, had dinner with the family. The teacher implied that she was lying and making up a tall story. I went to school with a copy of Visions signed by Allen and told the**

**teacher if he didn't apologize to Hetty in front of the class I would see the principal. He apologized, end of story.**

**Pause**

**Allen became a major poet. A great performer and a public figure who befriended the Beatles, Bob Dylan, and scores of notables around the world. He was a naked American, this gay Jew, who confronted hypocrisy with tart intelligence. With some stretch of imagination he could have held his own with the Borscht circuit comedians that hung out at Rappaports on 2nd Avenue late at night.**

**Pause**

**On one of the last times I saw Allen before he got sick we were sitting alone as a party was going on and Allen put his head on my shoulder. He looked very sad and said, "I hate being famous." And I said, "Then you should give it up." He looked at me. "Baz, I can't."**

**OUT OF THE BOX, No.5**

**Oh ancestor, I drew and painted abstract expression for more than a sixteen years and during that time insight found me. I am seven or more different people. And it is insight that incites me to concentrate when all seven of me wants to leave home, meet strangers and learn to draw.**

**Oh ancestor, I didn't graduate high school. I was 16 when I went to Black Mountain College in 1951.I wanted to be an artist, leave home meet strangers and learn to draw. I wanted to see America so periodically I'd leave the school and travel around the country. Other times I'd get a job and live for months in New York City.**

**In 1955 I left New York and returned to Black Mountain College with the intention of completing the two-year program for graduation. This was aborted when the school closed in 1956. That year I went to San Franscico. I was miserable. I had wanted to graduate and finish something that I had**

**started. I stayed for two years. Instead in San Franscico I graduated cooks' school and got a seaman's ticket to go to sea. I didn't go to sea. I met Martha and I moved in with her. I had savings as she did. We spent all of our savings having a wonderful time as if we were on an extended honeymoon.**
**Meeting Martha and moving in with her was no brief encounter. We are still together.**

**When our monies were gone Martha got a job as a secretary and I went to work for Railroad Express as a box jockey unloading--boxes seven days a week. Sometimes working ten hours or more a day for the overtime. We lived on the money Martha earned and saved my pay check for our return to New York City.**

**Pause**

**The first place we lived in New York was 33 Whitehall Street in lower Manhattan. And I'm writing about it because we lived in unusual circumstances, I became a super for an empty building. There were no occupants and the building was eventually sold. But in**

**the meantime the owner wanted the building occupied and kept clean. It had a rent free apartment with a fully equipped kitchen, bathroom and shower. The live-in Super would be required to keep the front door polished, the hall floors clean, and all the celling lights burning After we moved in**
**I asked the owner if it would be okay if I tore out a number of beaver board walls that separated offices and make a large space for a studio, she said yes, and I made myself a large sunny space to work in.**

**And in the newly made Whitehall studio I drew abstractions, with black ink on large sheets of paper and with oil paint on smaller sheets of paper.**

**Pause**

**During the week, come five o'clock**
**All the office buildings emptied out and then there was silence. Even after the office buildings emptied out South Ferry lacked silence. A low din remained to remind us of the work week and the past. Herman Melville**

**and Albert Pinkam Ryder walked the streets of lower Manhattan at different times with doubts and no assurance of what the future would bring.**

**In summer evenings we would take the Staten Island Ferry over and back just for the breeze and go to a store in the Ferry building that sold assorted fruits and flowers. They would give us free of charge fruits that were getting old or had bruises on them.**

**Pause**

**Silence is multiple, it is heard and seen in paintings Clyfford Still's exuberant landscape paintings. Jackson Pollock creates worlds of motion and riffs that express nature's best intentions. In Franz Kline's paintings people are talking as they cross the structures and there is silence. The silence of thought. In Rothko's paintings the Jews are never seen, Rothko protects them by painting them behind colorful bands of color. In Adolph Gottlieb's paintings everyone works an eight-hour day. In Philip Guston's paintings there is no shame. The beastly clansmen need no**

**explanation, silence surrounds the void. And in De Kooning's women who love and hate there are delicate and brutal summations as the women portray the vulnerability of power.**

**Pause**

**After Whitehall Street we moved four more times in Manhattan and then to Brooklyn. In 1969 we bought a building in Park Slope Brooklyn. I painted and drew there and except for a two-year stay (1970-72) in Grand Haven where we lived in Michigan and I was artist in residence at Thomas Jefferson College in Allendale.**

**When we returned to Brooklyn I moved my studio to the shared building that I bought with Mark Weiss on Hudson Avenue near the Navy Yard. After we sold the building I moved into a loft of 3,000 square feet on 39th street in Brooklyn with a view of the East River. After nine years I moved back into our house on 4th Street.**

**I have worked in our house ever since. Each time I moved I painted and I drew, not always to satisfaction but I always drew lines, straight lines, curved lines that could tolerate oil paint. Paint is elusive. It is different every time it is used, and for me this meant I had to learn patience.**
**Pause**

**Oh ancestor, I am seven or more different people. And it is insight that incites me to concentrate my confusion. And it is the line that incites me to concentrate when all seven of me wants is to leave home meet strangers and learn to draw.**

**Pause**

**Bob Beauchamp and Jackie Ferrar were going to Europe on his Guggenheim and we subleased their loft at 1681/2 Delancey Street for a year. The back room was for painting and it had windows and light and I loved the cool space. It had two walls to paint on, and paint I**

**did. And the paintings began to sit on the canvas in ways they had never had before.**
**Pause**

**It was a given that everyone in the building could use the shower in the hallway. Bob Thomson who lived around the corner came over regularly.**

**Unlike Whitehall Street where there was no domestic shopping at all Delancey Street was in walking distance of the old Essex Street Market where we got all of our eats and then some.**

**Pause**

**Ferry Street was the third place we lived in lower Manhattan but Ferry Street doesn't exist anymore. The whole district was very close to the fish market. We had the top floor of a nineteen-century former warehouse. It was cavern-like but had a shower with hot water and plenty of space for our brass bed, a**

**stove, a refrigerator and a magnificent slanted roof with skylights. It was a great place; I had light and space conducive for work.**

**But with no heater it was cold. That winter Ginsberg received a surprise check for $500 and I asked him if he would lend me a hundred, he did and Lee Sams installed a space heater. George Stanley moved in with us. I had installed a wall like easel behind which there was plenty of room for George to have a place to sleep and some privacy.**
**Pause**

**Living and painting on the floor below us was Jean Cartier, a Frenchman who was our age. He had lived thru the German occupation and was very independent. When the witch hunt took place driving artists out of living in lofts he refused to move and re-did his floor disguising everything that could spell domesticity.**

**I continued to paint abstract paintings in the loft for a year or more. Jean went back to France before our second winter and we never**

**heard from him. Until last year. We were shocked when we got news from Jean's wife that Jean had--without any explanation--left his family and gone into an adjoining room and shot himself. She sent me a package of drawings I'd given him when we were living on Ferry Street.**

**Pause**

**We moved out of the big loft into an apartment on Avenue D that Joel Oppenheimer had just vacated. Baraka (Leroi Jones) helped me give the apartment a new coat of paint.**

**At that time in the 1960s Avenue D was a slum and the streets could be dangerous. A friend coming to see us was mugged and his money and watch taken from him.**

**Summer came and Martha took the kids to visit Cello, North Carolina, where her parents rented a mountain cottage. After being by myself for a week I took the bus to Ashville where I was picked up by Martha's father.**

**It was late August when we returned, the City was wet from heat and high humidity.**

**When we got to our floor the door was hanging open. Everything except our large brass bed was gone; shoes, typewriters, most of Martha's fall and winter clothes. An empty box of chocolate graham crackers was crushed on the kitchen floor.**

**Pause**

**And then, like in a movie the phone rang. Lita Hornick wanted to buy a painting. Lita came to Ferry Street and bought two of my oils for $1,600. I met Lita at her bank and we took a taxi to the Algonquin for lunch. When we were seated Lita took money out of her purse and proceeded to count the money out, one hundred, two hundred, etc. I don't know if I blushed. But Lita made sure all the other tables saw that she was paying me off.**

**After lunch I went over to Random House and asked Martha's boss if she would let her off early. Maybe it was a strange request but the whole department knew Martha needed clothes.**

**Besides buying Martha clothes and a winter coat we a bought some second hand furniture and rented an apartment on 2nd Avenue between 3rd and 4th Street. I stopped painting on Ferry Street and rented a room at 1681/2 Delancey Street.**
**Pause**

**The building on 2nd Avenue had a rickety elevator that didn't always work and we lived on the 6th floor. Frank Lima, poet, and Sheila Bakal, photographer, were on the 5th floor just below us. While we were living in this apartment our two daughters, Mallory and Hetty, were born. Mallory was named after one of the cooks at Black Mountain and Hetty Jones soon became Big Hetty. Max Thau the owner of the apartment building owned the restaurant next to the building. The restaurant and the building had seen better days when the Yiddish theater across the street was open and plays were given six days a week.**
**Pause**

**I can't remember how long I painted in the front room of 1681/2 before I stopped painting abstractions. But there came a time when I knew I had to change, but at that time I didn't know how to change or what to paint.**

**I stopped painting but I didn't want to throw away what I had made. Domonic Capobianco had a very large loft and he offered me a space to store the 50 -60 paintings I'd completed. It felt right at the time because I didn't know what I was going to do.**

**Oh ancestor, unfortunately before I could decide there was a fire in Dom's loft and I lost all the paintings. Between stopping to paint and the loss of the paintings I went into months of depression before I was able to paint again.**

**Pause**

**I rented the second floor of the abandoned Anderson theater that was directly across the street from the apartment on 2nd Avenue and painted organic shapes until I found the figure and their landscapes.**

**Pause**

**My first plunge into the figure was a large painting I called**
**Aldgate narcissus**

**When it was completed in 1966 I asked Charlie Egan to come to my studio. Charles Egan of Egan Galleries came to 2nd Avenue and after looking at the paintings said, "if I was a young man I'd roll up my sleeves and go to work for you. But you must grow a pole up your back, you are going to have a rough time of it. Most dealers don't want to work very hard."**

**Alas, what he said had truth. In fact many years later the painter Jerry van der Wiele asked me, "Why do you put up with all the shit you are given and keep painting?"**

**My answer was, "If I didn't think I am contributing something I'd stop."**

**Pause**

**Have lived most of my life in Manhattan and Brooklyn, NY. I have from an early age admired Edward Hopper**

**Edward Hopper 1882-1967. His paintings are of people and places often situated in Manhattan and Brooklyn.**

**Hopper painted people in urban and country spaces who are lonely, isolated and often unstable. Architecture is stable, as stable as his birth place Nyack, NY. And he rarely wandered in his thinking beyond those confines.**

**Pause**

**Automat. Woman eating alone in a restaurant. Gas. a gas station at night. Early Sunday morning. a painting of a block of three story houses in Brooklyn is a minimal masterpiece.**

**Hopper's paintings take place in places that have no special advantages, they are common places, restaurants, bedrooms, diners, empty streets.**

**Hopper's 6'5" shadow recognizes that he like the people he paints are lonely and disconnected from each other. They are dulled**

**by inertia, maybe fear, but of what? Everything is more important than they are.**

**In Edward Hopper's Nighthawks 1942. Sidewalk lighting surrounds the diners giving the diner its shape. The ceiling lighting inside the diner shows a man sitting at the counter on a stool and a man behind the counter who serves the coffee and the eats. The couple sitting at the counter in the corner of the diner are a focal point, because they are a couple and we do not know what they are saying.**

**Does the lighting become more important than the people in Hopper's Nighthawks?**

**The light from outside and inside the diner is transfixed and tends to emphasize that the four occupants are small and inconsequential and they are trapped, there is no door for them to enter or exit.**

**This piece was as hard for me to write it as it was for Edward Hopper to paint it. He loaded in so much that isn't said.**

**Out of the Box (No.6**

**Oh ancestor, a flock of pigeons are eating scraps in front of Bagel World, a coffee and sandwich shop in Brooklyn. And a pigeon says to his flock. "See that old man, Basil King sitting at a table drinking a large coffee He and his wife go shopping on Thursdays. He usually gets through shopping before she does. He buys a coffee and waits for Martha to come and join him."**

**Sitting at a small round table Basil watches human traffic pass him. Young mothers with good legs and dads with good legs and their babies, children and their dogs. And he remembers his time spent in San Franscisco, and the things he learned when he lived two months in the desert.**

**George Herriman's Ignatz and Krazy Kat tell us if you've never spent time in the desert, you will never understand what makes America different from Europe.**
**Pause**

**Oh ancestor, Jack Spicer's Magic Workshop had a magical influence on the people who took it.**

**Oh, Magic Workshop, Joe Dunn became a White Rabbit. John Ryan has one eye. Burt Lancaster is an Apache, and Robert Duncan grows side-burns. Ebbe, dear Ebbe, is not the tallest man in the world. Tom Field swims the Pacific all the way to Japan and brings back a tea pot as big as Max Ernst's Elephant. Ron marries Sue. Dora marries Russell. Basil moves in with Martha.**

**Pause**

**Sipping hot coffee I remembered I wrote this for a piece that was never finished.**

**In the private life of a painting there is a train that goes forward. collecting disparate things. I have never stopped taking that train. I ride it like some young men rode the Pony Express.**

**I also wrote this for the same piece; In the private life of a painting the ego challenges every line. Every line that comes from outside struts as if it has a coat of many colors.**

**Pause**

**Many colors, and many intangibles influence the painter. Take Cezanne's painted apples. Their solid surfaces contemplate the beginning of modern painting. And it is possible that Cezanne read Spinoza and consciously applied Spinoza's insight. The mind and the body are not separate entities, but rather two aspects of the same thing.**

**And another way of saying this is**
**what we experience as the mind and the body are different ways of understanding the same underlying reality.**
**Pause**

**Painting isn't a race.**
**There is no finish line.**

**Pause**

**In 1929 Philip Guston 1913-1980. Born Philip Goldstein in Montreal, Canada, he moves with his family to Los Angeles in 1919. When Philip is very young, his father commits suicide.**
**Along with Jackson Pollock (1912-1956) Philip was expelled from Manual Arts High School in Los Angeles for disorderly behavior and for drawing cartoons ridiculing the academic program.**

**Pause**
**Ever been in jail**
**Ever been blue**
**Ever been poor**
**Ever been rich**
**Ever lived in the desert**
**Ever had breakfast with a desert rat**
**Ever sat in a bar and seen somebody get shot**
**Ever seen a man walk on water**
**Ever seen a Spider crawl up the wall**
**Ever seen a Spider crawl down the wall**
**Ever seen a square ball**
**Ever seen Krazy Kat**

**Ever seen George Herriman**
**Ever seen George Herriman with his hat off**
**Ever seen Raymond Chandler**
**Ever seen Raymond Chandler without his gloves**
**Ever seen Philip Guston without a cigarette**

**Guston knows he shouldn't smoke in bed**
**Philip Guston wants a comic strip of his own.**
**He knows Van Gogh slept with his boots on**
**Guston paints boots (Socialist symbol)**
**Mountains of empty cans**
**Oversized fish discarded sardines**
**Only the cigarette gives comfort**

**A mound of red pigment dries on the newspapers covering a small table in Guston's studio. Guston buys cheap pigment and dries out the excess oil, saving himself the hassle of going to the art supply store with little money.**

**Pause**

**Oh ancestor it was some time before 1985 and I was in Manhattan sitting outside drinking coffee when an old man with long white hair and a white beard passed by. Gil Sorrentino had asked me if I'd come with him on his next visit to William Carlos Williams. I knew WCW was involved with the visual arts but I felt very self- conscious about meeting him and declined the invitation..**

**I wonder would I have passed up meeting Walt Whitman? I didn't know in 1984 he thought of his poems having sensations, moving visual qualities that permeate to this day.**

**Pause**

**Leave home, meet strangers and learn to draw**
**Pause**

**Before moving to Camden N.J.**
**Walt Whitman lived in Washington, D.C.**
**During the Civil War Whitman visited**
**And nursed the wounded**

**Whitman brought fruit, paper and pencils, tobacco and books**
**Whitman always comes washed and cleanly clothed.**

**Walt, you write letters to my wife. She is a tall woman. I always liked it that we could look each other in the eye. She, like you, knows how to nurse pain. I wonder if she will keep my letters? I wonder if she will read them to the children when they are older?**

**Pause**

**Walt! I remember you told us the first time you saw the President you were in New York City. I also remember how overcome you were with his appearance when you saw him again in Washington.**

**Walt! I want to write prose, long lines with no commas or full stops. Let this period be meaningful. I want my wife and children to know that my time has not been compromised. I wanted to fight for the Union.**

**I was brought up, as the President was, by a father who detested slavery. You told me that the Whitmans had owned slaves.**

**A soldier writes home**
**And tells his family**
**The men want to go home**
**Psalms Psalms**
**Slavery has to be abolished**

**Pause**

**Whitman sharpens his pencil and reports. Men being brought back from the prisoner of war camp Andersonville, are starving. Most of them can't walk and have to be carried off the boat. Whitman describes the horrors of the camp and the traumas the prisoners endured. Documentation reveals that the South inflicted cruel, inhumane treatment on their prisoners. Documentation shows that**

**both North and South were known to show mercy to the enemies, wounded.**

**Whitman brings a cake to the hospital and divides it into eight equal pieces. Equality, trust survives and Whitman continues to be mindful of the Pigeons who are always ready to hear new stories.**

**A boy stands next to his mother holding some flowers in his hand. He does not move. She does not move: they are posing for a photograph.**

**Pause**

**He is an American. He sits on his horse rolling a cigarette with one hand. He has lived outdoors most of his life. He knows the wild flowers, their fragrance and their colors and he uses this knowledge when he becomes a painter. His mother is slicing apples. She will bake his father a pie. At night in bed his parents talk. The father tells his wife that he**

**still has the photograph that was taken of the two of them when they were young by an itinerate photographer. He remembers the two of them didn't like posing. They had to be still and not move for what seemed like eternity. He remembers his son was always picking flowers, wild flowers that he would bring home. His wife doesn't say a word. She has been reading Walt Whitman. He's the poet who held strangers in his arms as they lay dying. He's the poet who wrote about Lincoln's assassination. He's the poet who had his portrait painted by Thomas Eakins photographer, painter, sculptor and educator.**

**Pause**

**Oh ancestor, American photographer**
**Diane Arbus photographs**
**H.D. poet**
**She could have been a spy She could have been a saint**

**H.D. became a patient of Freud, she traveled, visited Egypt, starred in silent experimental**

**movies, and worried about not having enough money. Sometime in the 1950s on one of her trips to America H.D,'s friend Bryer had a conversation with Harold Doolittle, H.D.'s brother. She learned to her surprise that H.D. was a wealthy woman in her own right. Together with Bryer's 1940s settlement on her and brother Harold's investments of the family's money on Wall Street, H.D. was worth two million dollars. Still she worried about not having enough.**

**But for a few short return visits to America the poet H.D. lived in Europe in the company of D.H. Lawrence, Ezra Pound and European artists.**

**Pause**

**Before Pound broke**
**Off the engagement**
**Before D.H. Lawrence**
**Grew a beard**
**Before Ezra Pound left for Italy**
**Before there was a war**

**Before there was H.D. Doolittle**
**Before there was slavery**
**Before there were bombs**
**Before there was a war**
**Before there was a war**

**Out of the Box (No.7)**

**What isn't said is as important as what is said. I have always had fond memories of eating SPAM during the war in England in the 1940s. For me SPAM was something special. It had a taste that is different from every other food that we ate. And to this day Martha makes SPAM and eggs, real eggs, not powdered eggs for breakfast.**

**We were in a pub in Penzance, Cornwall and we were overhearing a conversation with an elderly man who was about our age and two boys who because of their familiarity with the man must be his grandsons. The boys were putting SPAM down as an inferior food. It was "music to my ears" to hear the grandfather being indignant. He told his grandsons he**

**didn't want to hear one word deriding SPAM, they had no idea how deprived the country was for something special to eat during the war. He said, he was younger than they are during war and SPAM was a treat, it helped him forget the powdered eggs when SPAM was served at breakfast.**
**Pause**

**What isn't said is as important as what is said.**

**On the other side of the Penzance dining room a young man and a young woman were sitting at corner table. They were both dressed in clean clothes. The young woman's eyes were extended and when she moved it was to open her mouth and let the smiling young man sitting next to her feed her food on a fork, one mouthful at a time.**
**Pause**

**Seeing this disturbed me. I saw a young woman accepting an unpleasant fate. But it is possible that my interpretation of the scene was incorrect.**

**The young man was not bullying the young woman, they were acting out something that had to be played in front of an audience. And if this interpretation is incorrect there may be other enactments of this scene and what I saw had nothing to do with subjugation.**
**Pause**

**Unfortunately the new nation of America used subjugation. It subjugated the American Indian and black slaves. Individualism was so necessary in earlier America when brave families opened up the west, built ranches and farms. But now in contemporary times, individualism has become mystic, outmoded and too often corrupt. America cannot afford the innocence of "Me First" and "Everything for my family and fuck my neighbor if he can't do what I can do for my family". America is beautiful and it is huge and diverse and its population needs assurance that there is stability in the home, educational institutions and the work place.**