



**On The Road To Dharamsala**  
John Moncure Wetterau

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## New Section

On the Road  
to  
Dharamsala

John Moncure Wetterau

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*Pu'u Hue—Poems from the Big Island, Straight Walker*, and a previous edition of *On the Road to Dharamsala*.

*For w.cat*

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*Even Kings and Queens are old and useless one day.*  
Namdol Kalsang Methok

## untitled

remnant of cane  
at roadside,  
segmented, pale yellow,  
curving up,  
long sharp leaves  
tossing in rain shower,  
green calligraphy  
on a gray sky:  
here, now,  
changing

Kohala,  
Big Island, Hawaii

## Pu'u Hue

### 1

Climbing toward Pu'u Hue  
the road snakes and wiggles  
through a shaded gulch—  
smell of ginger, flaming red  
lehua blossoms, avocados,  
wild pigs—then: sunny fields,  
higher views of ocean,  
Haleakala across the channel.  
Up a long hill,  
new houses with the old,  
past the Pu'u Mamo turn,  
up and up and out onto  
the western slopes  
of the Kohala Mountains,  
green and gold and brown,  
the grade less steep,

still climbing toward Pu'u Hue,  
the first cone mauka.  
Past Pu'u Hue,  
the twin tops of Lahikiola,  
Pu'u Lepo makai.  
On to the crest,  
then steeply down to Waimea—  
Mauna Kea, Hualalai,  
Mauna Loa in the sky.

## 2

Bamboo poles drying four months.  
Today: cut three, 32 inches long,  
bottom cuts just below a joint  
for strength.  
Lay them side by side.  
Lash them at the centers  
and twist them  
to a double ended tripod  
wide enough to sit on.  
Stand it upright.  
Tie one cord from top to top,  
limiting the poles  
from spreading farther.  
Hawaiians made rope from  
the inner fibers of Olona,  
grown and tended for the purpose;  
fishnets lasted fifty years;  
Swiss mountain climbers bought  
all they could. I use nylon  
from Ace Hardware—  
not as good, cheaper.  
Weave a seat attached  
to the top cord.

Straighten legs and tie to backpack.  
Sit by Pu'u Hue.

### 3

Stool very pretty, but  
bamboo too thin.  
Crack!  
Thump!  
Back on ground,  
feet in air,  
blue sky.

### 4

Staying alive,  
maintaining  
your thoughts,  
hard work.  
Sometimes—  
let your tears fall,  
like rain  
on Pu'u Hue.

## 5

On the ridge, coffee  
behind an empty dump truck  
rocking in the wind.  
Ahead, gray in showers:  
Pu'u Hue, full belly,  
and the breasts  
of Lahikiola;  
chi chi mountain woman  
on her back,  
relaxing in the rain.

## 6

Sunny, windy,  
the heraldry of roosters,  
on the way to Pu'u Hue.

Higher: clouds, driving rain,  
white egrets lined along  
a green hillside,  
still as markers

at a veterans cemetery.  
Grazing Herefords,  
Brangus, Baldies,  
red and black,  
moving slowly;  
calves chase each other,  
break away, return;  
a cream-colored stallion,  
dappled dark,  
gallops to the herd,  
kicking up his heels,  
grass rippling and running  
before him.

## 7

Rain. Wind.  
Half a mile away, Pu'u Hue,  
rounded, iron gray  
lightening to platinum  
with a green cast,  
turning silver,  
now translucent, glowing.  
Sun! Grass!  
More clouds  
trail scarves of mist  
across  
the darkening top.

## 8

“Let's blow the conch shell,  
gather together,  
address the problem!”  
They were talking  
about hard drugs in Kohala.  
Four hundred years ago  
it might have been:  
who would take from Pu'u Hue.

In the Han Dynasty,  
when Jesus staggered  
beneath his cross,  
only birds sang here.

If we forget the conch,  
only birds will remain  
by Pu'u Hue,  
green,  
sinking slowly.

## 9

Light breeze, clouds billow easily  
over the mountain.  
After the rain,  
I thought the cattle would be frisky,  
but they are lying down, resting  
for their own reasons.  
Pu'u Hue seems smaller  
in the clear air.  
Passing clouds obscure  
the farther mountains,  
and Pu'u Hue grows—  
land's end—  
pale green  
before white and gray.  
From every angle, different.  
From every distance  
and in every weather,  
different. No can capture,  
only praise  
Pu'u Hue.

## 10

*Silent night,*  
*Holy night ...*  
standing in the Kohala Diner,  
surprised by Christmas,  
surrendering to the music,  
grateful,  
longing for love,  
hoping for peace,

remembering  
Pu'u Hue far above,  
mute,  
eloquent.

## 11

Early sun,  
green fields,  
a black horse grazes  
in the shadow  
of a eucalyptus.  
A pinto, black and white,  
moves toward me, eyes clear,  
pale blue-gray,  
the sea off Scotland.  
We talk.

On the ridge, vog  
creeps up from Kona.  
West of Pu'u Hue  
the water is quiet,  
shining dully.  
Once, on the shore  
of San Juan Island,  
I said to Terry, Shannon's mom,  
"How beautiful!"  
"Yes," she said. And then,  
"Every place is beautiful."

## 12

Over the water,  
vog reflected,  
merges with itself,  
obscures the horizon.  
Sky pale blue,  
a smaller, calmer world.  
Between the passage of  
trucks and cars,  
the drone of bees  
on tiny yellow flowers,  
vertical purple  
blossoms, roadside weeds;  
birds chitter and call  
across the meadow;  
a bull bellows, far away.  
The news is good  
from Pu'u Hue.

## 13

Old friends now, Pu'u Hue.

Where the fence crosses over  
like stitching, probably  
one day will be  
an executive ranch house,  
for show, a medal  
pinned on a green hat.  
We can laugh about it.  
Joke about my cane.  
All things change.  
Farewell, my friend,  
we will meet again  
as we have met before  
in different forms,  
knowing each other  
lovers of sun and rain  
and wind, transients  
in the eternal.

Kohala

## Surfing

In the darkening harbor,  
turning back,  
up, over a wave  
before it curls  
against the breakwater,  
glimmer of silver  
draining from rocks,  
brown skin, black hair,

knees bent, arms alert,  
again and again,  
until night—  
one red light, one green,  
the Pacific,  
stars.

Nawiliwili,  
Kauai

## **The Emperor of Kindness**

Rasta Man, young,  
eyes bridging OneSoul  
to you and me,  
Rasta Man with pretty wife  
and laughing clutching child,  
alone on his bicycle,  
pedaling silently.  
Dark, thin, Rasta Man.

Doves call.  
A rooster cracks the air.  
Last night  
a familiar face returned—  
tender, determined, weathered  
as a mask left out  
to guard the village.  
She was not the favorite child;  
no one gave her the presents  
she needed; she was true to all,  
invisible herself. Impossible

not to love her.  
In my dream she was happy,  
a new job in a lonely territory.  
I was proud of her.  
I was whole again, relieved  
of the pain I caused her.

Walking down this mountain,  
the Pacific spreads before you  
flattening time; your past  
ripples with each footstep  
as though it were confined  
to the island, as though  
you had always been here.

Dozens of bees swerve by,  
leaving, returning to  
a hollow ironwood.  
Wild pigs in the gulch,  
hunted on the ridge  
with horses and dogs.  
Guavas.  
Sweet scent of ginger.  
Humpback whales migrate  
here each winter;  
the first was sighted yesterday.

Down by Nanbu Courtyard  
a garden spider waits  
at the center of its web,  
bright yellow,  
big as a blossom.  
Joe Rodriguez tells me  
about Rasta Man:  
"You know who he is,  
really? He is  
the Emperor of Kindness."

Kohala

## At Akiko's Mochi Pounding

“Good House has another meaning  
in Japan. Means: in a better  
part of town.  
Maybe, Blessed House?”  
“Yes.”  
“O.K.”  
Shigeko becomes calm,  
brush held straight  
above the paper.

Her first stroke,  
slow,  
establishes proportion.  
Wet black lines  
follow faster,  
idea infusing ink,  
ink becoming sign  
alive with  
heart and mind.

She pauses—  
tapered bristles  
lower, flatten, draw out,  
and lift,  
characters and moment  
met.

Wailea,  
Big Island

## Named

Two women,  
comfortably sixty,  
"Oh, we see you  
all da time walking.  
Every day. We say:  
look how straight he walk.  
Straight walker!"  
"Too old to bend over is why,"  
I say. We laughing.  
Only later I realize  
what they have given me.  
I am Straight Walker.

Kohala

## Pidgin

In the Kohala Diner,  
"Dat buggah jury rigged,"  
"watering the weeds,"  
"horses dey get da good stuff,"  
"he is more to me  
than my other brothers,"  
"you have him  
a little longer yet,"

“My boys going to Iraq.  
I tell them: do your job  
but don't turn your back,”  
words rising, diving,  
wheeling like white birds  
at sunset, baring  
the meaning above  
the meaning,  
this music  
sung from birth,  
laughing, judging,  
forgiving.

Kohala

## Nechung Temple

Salmon-orange roof,  
blue trim,  
a stand of eucalyptus,  
a stone Buddha,  
quiet rain.  
A tall palm flexes slowly.  
Prayer flags on horizontal strings  
repeat:  
green, yellow, red, white, blue.  
Small gardens, moss rock walls,  
herbs, bananas,  
flowering bushes.  
A carved turtle glides  
over a boulder.  
The light leaves upward,  
to the west.

Upside down, clinging  
to a crimson blossom,  
a tiny bird, wings  
the color of bay leaves;  
it could have ridden  
in my shirt pocket,  
flown from my chest.

Ka'u

## **Pebble Walk**

*for Dane*

Rust black a'a, so jagged,  
you throw a piece,  
twenty minutes to pick it up.  
A single line of gray stones  
undulates across,  
wave smoothed, chosen  
for a flat side,  
passed hand to hand  
from inlets  
battered into sea cliffs,  
each one carefully set,  
large enough  
to bear a foot,  
bear a load,  
for centuries.

Ka'u

## **Petroglyphs, Ka'u**

On this pahoehoe,  
dark, weathered, cracks  
curving along least resistance—  
I speak with straight lines.  
Until this island sinks below  
the water, or Pele angers,  
you will know how long time  
we live here, how many were lost  
to the fighting, to the sea.  
What I say is: how beautiful  
are our women, and today,  
I have a son.

## **Praying with Tiapala**

Sweet smoky incense,  
golden Buddha overlooking  
offerings of fruit and flowers,  
Tiapala chanting, face  
like a mountain  
above tree line,  
a lifetime, a thousand years

intoning prayers and sutras,  
as a dolphin leaps or  
a cloud drifts,  
singing the way.  
We join and follow,  
swaying slightly in rhythm,  
becoming slowly  
what we pray for.  
Tiapala strikes a gong—  
pure sound vibrates  
into birdsong, evening,  
the deep welcome  
of Mauna Loa.

## On Mauna Loa

Earth trembling,  
water every side,  
brown rock pure,  
so high,  
clouds upslope,  
green below.  
Momentary  
dipping line of red, a cardinal  
flies deeper into  
macadamia orchard.  
Three locals,  
truck and chainsaw,  
steal koa from  
haole newcomers.  
Across the valley,  
a temple bell,  
struck by hand,

calls us  
to compassion.

## No Need Say Goodbye

Soft May morning,  
spent clouds drift  
to sea,  
birds singing  
in trees,  
on telephone wires.  
A roadside bank  
of nasturtiums  
glows red and orange.  
Cows graze  
far up the mountain,  
tiny dots—  
how can you say goodbye  
when all things  
are changing?  
Roads. Faces.  
Only the deep heart  
is constant;  
and to that,  
no need say goodbye.

Ka'u

## **P.S.**

Scatter my ashes,  
please,  
on Mauna Loa  
at the tree line,  
where ohia cling  
to gray brown rock,  
and the apapane flies  
in bright air,  
red wings  
to red blossom.  
I will go there  
with my last thought  
and wait happily  
in all weather.

## **Shannon & Clara**

breastfeeding at 4000 feet,  
gray spired rock,  
Douglas Fir clinging  
to the ridge.  
Sunlight on a fallen trunk,  
moss, dark bark,  
rotting sapwood  
salmon red,  
mother & daughter  
three weeks old,

breathing in  
the breath of trees.

Mt. Pilchuk,  
Washington

## Handball, West 4th Street

*for Alan*

Playground, cement wall, warm day,  
men & women crowded against  
a chain link fence, watching  
three Latinos and a white guy  
between gray lines.

Big men.

Gold jewelry, shorts, cut-off T-shirts;  
one slighter, bare chested, long arms.

White guy: beefy, no neck, broad  
rubbery shoulders.

"C'mon Ricky!" The one with skin like  
glistening walnut goes still, crouches,  
serves deep.

The white guy returns, fast off the wall,  
picked clean in the air by Ricky's partner,  
exploding back, smashed, grunt, ball wide—  
point, Ricky's team.

"C'mon, go crazy, Ricky!"

"Another comeback," somebody says.

Ricky serves—players shift, both hands  
left, right, left, like heavyweights,  
sickeningly hard. White guy's partner  
hits low to the corner; Superman  
couldn't have gotten to it.

Heads shake, drink from bottles.

Ricky closes on his partner, directs him,  
slaps his arm.  
"17-15," the ref says, thin, older,  
face impassive under a baseball hat.  
He squeezes the blue ball,  
throws it twice easily against the wall,  
checks it again, tosses it to the white guy.  
No one talks.  
Serve goes to Ricky, hit back at white guy  
too fast to see, let alone dodge. White guy pivots  
like a bullfighter, somehow blocks it soft and low.  
Ricky's partner goes slow motion  
full length on the cement, can't reach it.  
"18-15."  
White guy sneers, serves fast at Ricky,  
challenging. Ricky drops it to the other guy.  
Weak return. Ricky's partner puts it away.  
Back and forth.  
Ricky hits a winner, exhales, pounds  
his chest three times with the ball,  
looks up at a cloudy sky,  
then ties, 20 all, with a lucky bounce.  
"Only fucking way you win," white guy shouts.  
"Ricky don't speak English," a watcher calls out.  
Ricky walks a tight circle, small smile,  
let him talk, give the man something.  
Lethal blur, percussive, shoes squeak, over  
suddenly. Ricky's team wins.  
He pumps one arm.  
No taunts. No regret.  
People nod, satisfied.  
Faces shine.

New York

## Goodbye

Sisters, 94 and 81,  
late afternoon sun turns  
a small backyard gold and green.  
Brown birds flit from fence top  
to pine woods and back.  
A butterfly pauses.  
Death and life—  
transparent tapestry  
in quiet air,  
glittering and splendid.  
The next summer  
I shoveled the first dirt  
on Ad's grave.  
Then Rosy's mother died.  
We never properly said goodbye,  
but it had already been done, there  
in Ad's yard in Poulsbo, Washington,  
three lives come  
to a curtain of sun  
on a fence.

## The Day I Threw Out My Journals

(5 thirty gallon trash bags / 45 years)

Tanker,  
the *African Future*,  
high in the water,

through the drawbridge.  
By the museum  
on Congress Street,  
a man beats time  
with drumsticks  
on his boot sole.  
A wagon holding a dog,  
a boy, and pastel chalks  
waits outside  
a coffee shop.  
Behind them,  
pink and blue lines,  
an arms width apart,  
trail and curve along  
the sidewalk.

Portland,  
Maine

## **Zero Self**

Incense smoke  
rising  
like a swimmer  
to the surface,  
rolling face  
to the sun.  
Through  
the window:  
breeze,

a maple tree,  
city streets.  
Dreams, regret,  
accomplishment,  
whispered words,  
stepped away from,  
colors folded  
on the curb.

Portland

## Pilgrim

Ice grains spinning,  
swirling, filling,  
scouring brick, leaving  
nothing untested. Walk  
or freeze  
or stay inside.  
The panhandler with  
an artificial leg  
lurches slowly  
up the sidewalk. Usually  
I avoid him.  
Today, I  
take off my gloves  
to find a dollar;  
he takes off his gloves  
to receive it, grunting,  
a warm sound  
blown instantly away,  
restoring  
my own begging heart.

Portland

## **On the Road to Dharamsala**

Goat bells: muffled,  
low pitched.  
Quick high whistles  
in thin air, cheerful,  
spontaneous—  
a complete music  
unscored, for  
goats, herders,  
new pasture,  
cliffs, sun &  
melting snow.

Himachal Pradesh,  
India

**Goods Carrier, HP296054**

Massive, mythic, snorting,  
overbearing, importuning,  
Gods protect, get out  
of the way, gold, red,  
orange and black,  
silver metal doors,  
flags, pennants, tassels,  
hanging chains, black longhorns  
painted on the radiator,  
padded steering wheel  
in dim fringed interior  
high over the hood,  
demon truck  
carrying goods and hope  
through villages,  
along gorges, around  
blind curves.

Dharamsala

## Three Movements

*Down*

Tiny dash of turquoise  
across the valley,  
eighth of an inch  
moving quickly down  
a bare ridge,  
path curving by paddies,

steep brushy hillsides,  
rocky stream below,  
brown with run-off.  
Barely visible  
in front of her,  
back & forth—  
a dog?  
Fifteen hundred feet lower,  
she reaches the bluff, turns,  
and walks downstream  
to a fallow terrace  
where she sits, waiting,  
bright dot on lush green.

*Moonpeak*

Monsoon cloud truncates  
green mountains;  
occasional rain, the stream  
a ribbon of ochre  
far below.  
Late afternoon,  
movement north,  
clouds break  
around Moonpeak,  
two miles above us—  
gray, inaccessible,  
keeper of dreams,  
thousands of years.

*Pas de Deux*

Sunset moves up  
the Dhauladhar—  
rock brightens  
to bronze; light

crossing from the west  
sharpened fluted ridges,  
casts vertical shadows,  
pas de deux,  
earth and fire,  
last touch  
before night.

Dharamsala

## **Kamal**

Kamal drunk, declaiming  
by his brick two-room house,  
one up, one under for the cows,  
high over the valley.  
He drinks his army pension,  
works the rest of the month  
with his wife and teenaged sons.  
“They beat me,” he tells us.  
“I haven't eaten in 48 hours;  
I have a very bad wife.”  
He is stronger than any of them.  
His wife is loving. Strange.  
He raves into the night  
for hours using practiced  
dramatic gestures,  
pausing to sing, pacing  
back and forth.  
I asked Mickey what  
the Hindi words meant.  
“It's all bullshit,” he said.  
Yes, Kamal  
is acting badly again—  
reproachful,

indignant, angry  
to the point of violence,  
long hands pleading  
in the moonlight.

McLeod Ganj

## Study of an Oil

A Tibetan mother  
pours hot milk into a bowl  
held with both hands  
by a young boy.  
They stand in a dark room  
by an open fire,  
both warmly dressed—  
he in blue shirt and  
knee length leather vest,  
she in faded red tunic,  
long brown skirt and apron.  
They are bent toward each other,  
intent on not spilling.  
Pale light from a window or door  
touches the back of his vest,  
the top of his hair, her face,  
the stream of milk.  
Outside, unseen:  
mountains, snow,  
the biting pure air  
of the Himalayas.

signed: *Sodhon La* 2006.04  
McLeod Ganj

## Tears

Eggshell, broken edges,  
smooth inner surface,  
empty, clean.  
In Botswana,  
Eleanor tells me,  
ostrich eggs are used  
to carry water.  
This one is for tears.  
“Our Dad will fix it,”  
Rosy reassured Ono, the cat.  
But I left.  
Standing in the doorway  
of a refugee house,  
a Tibetan girl hopes  
for a father,  
considers me, appealing  
with her eyes,  
mouth held  
against disappointment.  
Beggars sell humanity  
for a rupee;  
nothing buys back  
innocence or trust.

McLeod Ganj

## **Early Morning, McLeod Ganj**

The Spirit Seekers leave  
in mighty Jeeps;  
a small dog yelps, jumps sideways;  
old Tibetans smile and pray,  
walking daily kora. The caravan  
roars toward another temple  
or perhaps to Delhi for  
return to the West.  
As they pass, you  
can see them putting words  
in place, rehearsing stories.  
The engines fade. We hear  
small sounds far and wide,  
the singing. Young girls  
nudge shoulders, gazelles  
on the Serengeti.

## **Youdon Meets Her Former Roommate Behind the Japanese Restaurant After a Long Separation**

Standing close,  
saying almost nothing,  
pure horses, sensing.  
Both slim, straight,  
twenty years old, Tibetan  
long black hair, dark eyes.

Between them, sparkles,  
a clear smoke,  
as of diamonds.  
Gray concrete deck,  
a few empty tables,  
the mountain  
partially obscured by cloud.

McLeod Ganj

## **Namaste**

London, 5 a.m.,  
dove & copper,  
still,  
a hint of rain.

I can board a plane,  
but I cannot  
leave myself behind.  
In India,  
a billion people sleep  
sharing beds, floors,  
makeshift shelters,  
sidewalks.  
Primary colors  
call in the dark;  
leopards and snakes  
move silently.

In the morning,  
on Khanyara Road, a man  
covered with soap suds,  
sitting on his heels,  
bathes from a bucket;  
a young woman in a turquoise  
kameez sways by  
balancing eight bricks on her head;  
a group of boys, blue pants,  
white shirts, blue ties,  
laugh and chatter, arm in arm  
on their way to school;  
an old woman, stumps for hands,  
begs mutely, smiles,  
brown eyes glowing;  
beneath an umbrella, a quiet man  
breaks rock for road fill  
using a hand sledge and chisel.

All look at you. No one  
is afraid.  
You join them,  
stepping farther from your  
fortress of dreams  
with each exchange:  
*"Namaste."*  
*"Namaste."*

## Woman Standing on Sunny Sidewalk

Bronze  
for her high cheek bones,

straight nose, long jaw.  
A painter  
for her short blonde hair,  
the clear green of her eyes,  
white teeth, wind-touched skin.  
A fiddle for spirit and melancholy.  
A dancer for the slim body  
that, at 50, could dive and swing.  
A magician with cupped hands  
and a flourish of scarf  
to make her sadness  
disappear.

Peaks Island,  
Maine

## **Molly Running on Black Rock**

Red-brown white blur,  
legs flying too fast to see,  
streak of color and purpose,  
all delight, short-sighted,  
big-hearted, chasing her  
next need. Waves collapse  
on shore. The long curve  
where blue meets blue  
takes you too far out  
to stay for long, only  
endings and beginnings  
there, no fruit trees,  
no lights of home, no  
short-haired pointer  
running free.

Peaks Island

## Vikas Kumar writes from India

*"You have told me about your Island I never been any  
Island even never saw the Sea, So when I emagin  
of Sea and Island I fill with joy."*

## Two, Then Three

Snow, wind,  
slate gray sea,  
northeaster coming.  
Two crows feed  
on frozen sumac.  
They fly to a dead spruce,  
joined by a third,  
facing different directions,  
puffing their feathers,  
eyes scanning.  
One springs up,  
a few wing strokes,

a tilt of its head,  
soaring across the road.  
Two, then three  
swerve freely over the marsh,  
black trails vanishing,  
lightening  
the roar of waves.

Peaks Island

## Preparing Croissants

Atsuko, hands  
working quickly,  
black hair pulled behind  
slim neck,  
one long lock falling  
before her right eye,  
wide mouth. The  
cream colored dough  
will brown—calm,  
disciplined, tasting  
of sunrise.

Standard Baking,  
Portland

## January

Sunny,  
below zero,  
coffee & muffin  
in Peaks Cafe,  
no one talking much,  
sea smoke,  
fine black branches  
flex slowly  
in a paling sky,  
chickadees, crows  
hunt for food,  
deer and people  
bunched.

Peaks Island

## Lion's Mane

Our loves,  
by death  
and divergence,  
one by one  
we lose them.  
Each leaves  
a color  
loosely woven

with the others,  
astride  
our naked shoulders,  
a lion's mane—  
precious, radiant,  
with us  
to the end.

## Lunch at Anthony's

Below sidewalk level,  
between a movie rental business  
and a music store,  
blues harp & keyboard,  
easygoing jazz,  
accountants, secretaries,  
mailmen laughing  
at small things,  
smells of eggplant Parmesan,  
marinara sauce.  
A few tables.  
A takeout line.  
You have to know  
about the place  
to be here.

Portland

## Hoot's Triumph

In front of The News Shop, glistening,  
green, chrome, black leather,  
throbbing at rest—  
Hoot's Triumph,  
ready for the road,  
5:30, a summer morning,  
cool and gray.  
Hoot finished his coffee,  
held one hand up,  
revved the bike twice,  
and took off.  
He was heading for Denver,  
bringing his wife home  
after a separation. What,  
1500 miles from Woodstock?  
Earsplitting. He accelerated  
flat out past the green, around  
the corner at a 45 degree lean,  
down the long hill, shifting  
all the way.  
We listened, mouths open;  
he must have been going a hundred  
at the bottom.  
"There goes Hoot," someone said,  
finally.

That was in '66—Vietnam,

lies, waste, the cultural partitioning,  
the beginning of the decline  
of the U.S.A. Worse now.  
But, we can rebuild.  
Hoot got his wife back. And,  
as they say in the mountains,  
“He did it right.”

## **American Buddhas**

At Hodgman's Frozen Custard:  
two Harleys, side by side  
pointing opposite directions,  
front wheels nosing inwards,  
gleaming spokes, bulging fenders,  
pin-striped fuel tanks,  
riders leaning back  
on mighty thrones under  
a summer evening sky,  
300-pounders,  
shy as bears,  
broad whiskery faces,  
licking raspberry cones.

New Gloucester,  
Maine

## **Bach**

Each morning,  
in a small courtyard  
across the alley,  
a teenager walks  
slowly back and forth  
reading a schoolbook  
or manual,  
repeating phrases  
in rhythm with  
the peaceful movement  
of her legs through shade;  
she turns as a line  
of Bach turns,  
defining old ground  
newly, dark hair  
bumping gently  
on her cotton shirt.

Chandigarh,  
India

## **Still Life Flowing**

A steep thirty meter gulch:  
large rocks, tipped, exposed,  
balanced on each other.  
Brown dirt fringed  
with weeds, tiny flowers,  
sapphires for a week.  
Mantras  
chiseled into flat surfaces,  
painted white, green,  
yellow, blue, red.  
Plants, prayer, mountain,  
flowing to the sea.

Jogibara Road,  
McLeod Ganj

## **Beth**

Karma or  
a hand of cards—  
thirty years  
to clear away  
sadness and abuse.  
Now you smile  
the beautiful smile  
of what is,  
nothing excluded,  
nothing false;  
and I am

inexplicably set free,  
on the Dharma path,  
able to be plain.

McLeod Ganj

## **For Kalsang**

When I see the moon  
and think of you  
in sunshine, I will jump  
up and down!  
Your feet will laugh,  
no world between us.

McLeod Ganj

## **Kamal Repents at Dawn**

Cross-legged on his roof,  
rubbing his face briskly,

extending long arms,  
circling his wrists,  
Kamal surveys the valley.  
A devotional chorus issues  
from a loudspeaker below.  
At the solo, he  
begins to sing; his voice  
reaches and spreads  
throughout the settlement.  
Slowly, musically,  
suffering is forgiven;  
blame becomes blessing;  
Kamal repents.

## *Afterword*

I work from the outside in. Each poem is an attempt to see more clearly. When I think of you reading them, seeing in your imagination what I saw, reacting in your own way, it is as though you were standing next to me. This is why I write.

J.M.W.

Also by the author:

*Joe Burke's Last Stand*

*Every Story Is A Love Story*

*O+F*

*Wild, Hard, Sweet*

*Michelangelo's Shoulder*

*To Keep You Company*

*The Book With The Yellow Cover*

*Pu'u Hue—Poems from the Big Island*

*Straight Walker*

*One Hand Clapping*

*The Shirt-pocket MFA—Poetry & Fiction*

*The Shirt-pocket Guide to Enlightenment*

*The Market FAQbook*

## From the same author on Feedbooks

Sans Fin (2010)

Note: poems added

*See, feel, understand---each poem is a journey for the writer. The interesting stranger is you, yourself, and there is time for love or what you will.*

Every Story Is A Love Story (2010)

A story of first love in Woodstock, N.Y. during the early sixties. Patrick, an army brat, and Willow, a musician from an academic family, drift separately into town and are attracted to each other in spite of their differences. The cast of characters includes Bob Dylan and Joe Burke, of "Joe Burke's Last Stand," Wetterau's first novel. The writing is sunny and clear. The author says, "It was an exciting time in an exciting place. I'm not Joe Burke, but I was there."

O+F (2010)

Note: edited for italics formatting and a missing paragraph at the close of Chapter 2. Sorry.

A solitary man in a diner on the coast of Maine. A tall beautiful stanger. A whip. A bronze heart. Hawaii. The Northwest ... How far will he go to face the truth about himself? ... This is a story about borders: between sex and love, between life and death.

Michelangelo's Shoulder (2010)

Note: 2nd Edition, added one long story.

"The line across her eyebrows and tapering along her jaw was right. He'd left out a lot, but that didn't matter. If what was there was true enough, you knew the rest---like a Michelangelo shoulder emerging from stone."

Maine, Seattle, Hawaii, and India are the settings for these stories of late awakenings, integrity, and persistence.

*Wild, Hard, Sweet (2010)*

Harry is determined to outdo his smooth successful father. Charley is a local hero, an athlete, good natured, fiercely independent. They join forces in a drug buy and are busted on the Maine coast. Charley runs; Harry games the system, using his family's money and connections. This is a story about mavericks growing up. Sexy, visual, and honest.

*Joe Burke's Last Stand (2010)*

Joe Burke is handsome, graying at the temples. Divorce has left him wondering what's next. He throws a few belongings in his truck and leaves town to find out, a search that takes him from Maine to Hawaii. A powerful and joyful book about sex, love, art, and finding one's teachers.

*The Book With The Yellow Cover (2010)*

Note: reformatted with table of contents

This book is modeled on a book of Chinese and Japanese poems that I gave to a friend on the west coast. It was a very small book with a yellow cover, stapled together. No adornments. Just the poems, alive after hundreds of years. J.M.W.

*The Shirtpocket MFA: Poetry & Fiction (2010)*

The Shirtpocket MFA is for anyone who cares about writing. What is "Fine Art?" Who is a poet, and who is a storyteller? What is the writer's responsibility in publishing? This brief essay will remain relevant year after year.

The Shirtpocket guides were first printed and bound in a format that fit in a shirt pocket. They are written in the spirit of "The Elements of Style," (Strunk & White) and "The C Programming Language," (Kernighan & Ritchie), models for expository writing.

*The Shirtpocket Guide to the Market (2010)*

The important things to know about investing and the market are in this book. How to apply this knowledge is up to you; no two

people will (or should) invest in the same way. Investing is a voyage of self discovery. J.M.W.

*The Shirt-pocket Guide to Enlightenment (2010)*

A brief introduction to meditation and enlightenment.

Q: Why should you care about enlightenment?

A: Because life hurts.

Enlightenment is not a cure for toothache. It frees you from deep anguish, the pain of loss, loneliness, defeat, and (insidiously) of success that keeps you chasing for more, like a mouse running in a caged wheel. This kind of pain kills people every day. It puts lines in your face. We all suffer it eventually, unless or until we are enlightened.

J.M.W.



**[www.feedbooks.com](http://www.feedbooks.com)**  
Food for the mind