

THE LOVE THAT STRETCHES US

April 23, 2003, 63rd Birthday

It's that day again.
Usually I call friends
and party at the Bocce Café
with pasta and wine flowing
jazz trio in the background.
But this year I have turned the curve
toward a possible end of journey.

I have been through blood tests
sound scans, cat scans, PARIS, nuclear scans,
and the medical world of dire possibilities
and invasive hopes that tearing and cutting my body
will revive my threatened life.
Yet, I am feeling well enough
even as the virus and tumors
attack my liver.

While America indulges in belligerent ignorance
my internal war overshadows my will,
obsesses my mind, not with fear
but with a sadness, a sense of loss –
that I will not hold a woman
in my arms again nor
hear Miles Davis again, or Trane
nor Beethoven's last quartets,
or the Beatle's "Here Comes The Sun,"

nor watch Barry Bonds stroke another homer.
Will I be able to remember Jackie Robinson
dancing dangerously off third base
then head down stealing home?
Will my spirit be able to dance
to the Dead or the Airplane
as I did flowingly at the Avalon?
Will the sweet smell of Rhododendron petals
follow me through the darkness?

While the doctors guard the frontiers of my body
I search for a kind, compassionate hand
and a miracle herb or mushroom.
I know I want to live.
I have worshiped the muse
waiting for her renewing initiation
into the doors of the word and
what lies behind the dark halls
through which the poem leads.

And I have lived for Peace
to reveal its true implications
for the harmony and survival of the world,
merging the inner peace and
peace with each other and among nations.

And for love – the love that stretches us
beyond ourselves and merges
with unspeakable consciousness
that knows no bounds
the all in one universe

that explosion from a compressed point
from a dynamic infinite thought
creating gases and galaxies and planets,
and all matter seen and unseen
of which we are an appearance
continually wandering and wondering
searching, experiencing flowing and falling
until we pass into something or somewhere else
a moonless night, a flickering light, a dream.