



so facing the carp pond the carp face you and through the gelatin  
see the Mayan scenario that seems to outlast all nostalgia, but  
nothing is more tedious than arousal, and nostalgia is only ambition set in

reverse

what was it Laurel called it? A gas?

## Through a Bear Republic (Epithalamium)

*(for PC)*

Against love in the frontier the call of the wild seems strictly an amateur's  
song  
the melody of eccentrics whose sense of timing has never been established  
though the clock  
still ticks the arms are nowhere to be found but little good has come from  
metaphor,  
symbol or Nevada only another infuriating set of figures brings any two together  
whether in the name of carpool lanes or an irrational devotion to survival,  
as the book of Mormon says, whatever survives must be marriage the rest is  
banjo, debt,  
and hysteria particularly in the eyes of the saloon owner, who finally reconciles  
himself  
to our newfound temperance represented today in the signature on the bottom of  
a bowl  
flutes of champagne tomorrow the squeal of fighter jets and an army corps of  
engineers  
come to eyelevel at last with the Comanch and their notion of beauty as a hungry  
coyote  
who on occasion refuses the extravagance of carrion but who can refuse the  
extravagance  
of coyotes given the boom in parade permits and the bust in petting parties  
that lead blessedly to surrender blessed too are the abandoned mines, the  
surrender of  
the bible salesman at our neighbor's door but blessed most are they who found  
their  
saloons on big rocks and wild fire, for they shall know marriage not as hunger  
nor as ornament, but as a distillation—what the late Shoshone say Nothing is  
more loyal  
or more febrile than a family of wolves or two hearts that howl in unison  
against what is only the flourishing of a bare and blundering love as it annihilates  
that unbound feeling that comes from being prepared.

## ***Standard Schaefer***

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### Statement

*No sense/In crossing a mountain with nobody living in it. No sense/In fighting their fires./West coast is something nobody with sense would understand./Cross them mountains, eating each other sometimes.../We are a coast people/There is nothing but ocean beyond us./We grasp the first thing coming.*

JACK SPICER

I've been writing about place. In particular, the American West. These poems are taken from a series and were conceived of in regard to a long serial poem called *Water & Power*, which was the original name of the film "Chinatown". So here the content is dictating form. The history of "revisions" made for political reasons, such as those common to Hollywood, is a major theme (hence the John Wayne pronunciation of Comanche). A corresponding theme is one of anti-utopianism—the West as anti-Emersonian. So I've decided that one difference in the literature or the two regions is that the West has virtually no "moral essays." So I've written some, but something I find strong in Jack Spicer, even more so-called spiritual writers like Mary Austin and Joanne Kyger. For this reason, I don't use persona exactly. I think more that I use an "authorial stance"—the effect of the playful proclamations. I've chosen to run counts of English, of a traditional English. Hopefully, the result is mimics the wide-open West as Edenic, of new beginnings. Part of the appeal of working in long series is that the whole poem becomes a bit of a community, no rugged individuals really rising above the lot, again an idea counter to the myths of the West. Despite the prose-like appearance to these pieces, I hope that a music occurs, something shared between the two that allows suggestions where the "logic" of the essay falls apart. When the logic is not clear, it places emphasis on the form, on questions of whether or not the piece is really a parody narration. I use a lot of conjunctions to highlight the forced nature of trying to find order in a place famous for not having any, but also use actual historical detail to suggest that an order does exist, but it isn't the one taught in school. The wedding poem, the epithalamium is actually an occasional verse, ostensibly for some friends that think it is cute to know a poet so requested the piece for their wedding. I didn't want to write an anti-love poem, but rather one where what is suggested about love is more ambivalent, so it is part moral essay, part epithalamium.