

John Berryman

- poems -

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Dream Song 1

Huffy Henry hid the day,
unappeasable Henry sulked.
I see his point,--a trying to put things over.
It was the thought that they thought
they could do it made Henry wicked & away.
But he should have come out and talked.

All the world like a woolen lover
once did seem on Henry's side.
Then came a departure.
Thereafter nothing fell out as it might or ought.
I don't see how Henry, pried
open for all the world to see, survived.

What he has now to say is a long
wonder the world can bear & be.
Once in a sycamore I was glad
all at the top, and I sang.
Hard on the land wears the strong sea
and empty grows every bed.

John Berryman

Dream Song 1: Huffy Henry hid the day

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unappeasable Henry sulked.
I see his point,—a trying to put things over.
It was the thought that they thought
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John Berryman

Dream Song 10

There were strange gatherings. A vote would come
that would be no vote. There would come a rope.
Yes. There would come a rope.
Men have their hats down. "Dancing in the Dark"
will see him up, car-radio-wise. So many, some
won't find a rut to park.

It is in the occasions, that--not the fathomless heart--
the thinky death consists;
his chest is pinched. The enemy are sick,
and so is us of. Often, to rising trysts,
like this one, drove he out

and gasps of love, after all, had got him ready.
However things hurt, men hurt worse. He's stark
to be jerked onward?
Yes. In the headlights he got' keep him steady,
leak not, look out over. This' hard work,
boss, wait' for The Word.

John Berryman

Dream Song 10: There were strange gatherings. A vote would come

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that would be no vote. There would come a rope.
Yes. There would come a rope.
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will see him up, car-radio-wise. So many, some
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leak not, look out over. This' hard work,
boss, wait' for The Word.

John Berryman

Dream Song 100: How this woman came by the courage

How this woman came by the courage, how she got
the courage, Henry bemused himself in a frantic hot
night of the eight of July,
where it came from, did once the Lord frown down
upon her ancient cradle thinking 'This one
will do before she die

for two and seventy years of chipped indignities
at least,' and with his thunder clapped a promise?
In that far away town
who looky upon my mother with shame & rage
that any should endure such pilgrimage,
growled Henry sweating, grown

but not grown used to the goodness of this woman
in her great strength, in her hope superhuman,
no, no, not used at all.
I declare a mystery, he mumbled to himself,
of love, and took the bourbon from the shelf
and drank her a tall one, tall.

John Berryman

Dream Song 101: A shallow lake, with many waterbirds

A shallow lake, with many waterbirds,
especially egrets: I was showing Mother around,
An extraordinary vivid dream
of Betty & Douglass, and Don—his mother's estate
was on the grounds of a lunatic asylum.
He showed me around.

A policeman trundled a siren up the walk.
It was 6:05 p.m., Don was late home.
I askt if he ever saw
the inmates—'No, they never leave their cells.'
Betty was downstairs, Don called down 'A drink'
while showering.

I can't go into the meaning of the dream
except to say a sense of total Loss
afflicted me therof:
an absolute disappearance of continuity & love
and children away at school, the weight of the cross,
and everything is what it seems.

John Berryman

Dream Song 102: The sunburnt terraces which swans make home

The sunburnt terraces which swans make home
with water purling, Macchu Pichu died
like Delphi long ago—
a message to Justinian closing it out,
the thousand years' authority, although
tho' never found exactly wrong

political patterns did indeed emerge;
the Oracle was conservative, like Lippmann,
roared the winds on the height,
The Shining Ones behind the shrine, whose verge
saw the impious plunged, 6000 statues
above the Temple shone

plundered, centuries plundered, first the gold
then bronze & marble, then the plinths,
then the dead nerve—
root-canal-work, ugh. I—I still hold
for the saviour of teeth, & I embrace
only he threw me a vicious

John Berryman

Dream Song 103: I consider a song will be as humming-bird

I consider a song will be as humming-bird
swift, down-light, missile-metal-hard, & strange
as the world of anti-matter
where they are wondering: does time run backward—
which the poet thought was true; Scarlatti-supple;
but can Henry write it?

Wreckt, in deep danger, he shook once his head,
returning to meditation. And word had sped
all from the farthest West
that Henry was desired: can he get free
of the hanging menace, & this all, and go?
He doesn't think so.

Therefore he shakes and he will sing no more,
much less a song as fast as said, as light,
so deep, so flexing. He broods.
He may, rehearsing, here of his bad year
at the very end, in squalor, ill, outside.
—Happy New Year, Mr Bones.

John Berryman

Dream Song 104: Welcome, grinned Henry, welcome, fifty-one!

Welcome, grinned Henry, welcome, fifty-one!
I never cared for fifty, when nothing got done.
The hospitals were fun
in certain ways, and an honour or so,
but on the whole fifty was a mess as though
heavy clubs from below

and from—God save the bloody mark—above
were loosed upon his skull & soles. O love,
what was you loafing of
that fifty put you off, out & away,
leaving the pounding, horrid sleep by day,
nights naught but fits. I pray

the opening decade contravene its promise
to be as bad as all the others. Is
there something Henry miss
in the jungle of the gods whom Henry's prayer to?
Empty temples—a decade of dark-blue
sins, son, worse than you.

John Berryman

Dream Song 105: As a kid I believed in democracy: I

As a kid I believed in democracy: I
'saw no alternative'—teaching at The Big Place I ah
put it in practice:
we'd time for one long novel: to a vote—
Gone with the Wind they voted: I crunched 'No'
and we sat down with War & Peace.

As a man I believed in democracy (nobody
ever learns anything): only one lazy day
my assistant, called James Dow,
& I were chatting, in a failure of meeting of minds,
and I said curious 'What are your real politics?'
'Oh, I'm a monarchist.'

Finishing his dissertation, in Political Science.
I resign. The universal contempt for Mr Nixon,
whom never I liked but who
alert & gutsy served us years under a dope,
since dynasty K swarmed in. Let's have a King
maybe, before a few mindless votes.

John Berryman

Dream Song 106: 28 July

28 July

Calmly, while sat up friendlies & made noise
delight fuller than he can ready sing
or studiously say,
on hearing that the year had swung to pause
and culminated in an abundant thing,
came his Lady's birthday.

Dogs fill daylight, doing each other ill:
my own in love was lugged so many blocks
we had to have a vet.
Comes unrepentant round the lustful mongrel
again today, glaring at her bandages & locks:
his bark has grit.

This screen-porch where my puppy suffers and
I swarm I hope with heartless love is now
towards the close of day
the scene of a vision of friendlies who withstand
animal nature so far as to allow
grace awhile to stay.

John Berryman

Dream Song 107: Three 'coons come at his garbage. He be cross

Three 'coons come at his garbage. He be cross,
I figuring porcupine & took Sir poker
unbarring Mr door,
& then screen door. Ah, but the little 'coon,
hardly a foot (not counting tail) got in with
two more at the porch-edge

and they swirled, before some two swerve off
this side of crab tree, and my dear friend held
with the torch in his tiny eyes
two feet off, banded, but then he gave &
shot away too. They were all the same size,
maybe they were brothers,

it seems, and is, clear to me we are brothers.
I wish the rabbit & the 'coons could be friends,
I'm sorry about the poker
but I'm too busy now for nipping or quills
I've given up literature & taken down pills,
and that rabbit doesn't trust me

John Berryman

Dream Song 108: Sixteen below. Our care like stranded hulls

Sixteen below. Our care like stranded hulls
litter all day our little Avenues.
It was 28 below.
No one goes anywhere. Fabulous calls
to duty clank. Icy dungeons, though,
have much to mention to you.

At Harvard & Yale must Pussy-cat be heard
in the dead of winter when we must be sad
and feel by the weather had.
Chrysanthemums crest, far way, in the Emperor's garden
and, whenever we are, we must beg always pardon
Pardon was the word.

Pardon was the only word, in ferocious cold
like Asiatic prisons, where we live
and strive and strive to forgive.
Melted my honey, summers ago. I told
her true & summer things. She leaned an ear
in my direction, here.

John Berryman

Dream Song 109: She mentioned 'worthless' & he took it in

She mentioned 'worthless' & he took it in,
degraded Henry, at the ebb of love—
O at the end of love—
in undershorts, with visitors, whereof
we can say their childlessness is ending. Love
finally took over,

after their two adopted: she has a month to go
and Henry has (perhaps) many months to go
until another Spring
wakens another Henry, with far to go;
far to go, pal.
My pussy-willow ceased. The tiger-lily dreamed.

All we dream, uncertain, in Syracuse & here
& there: dread we our loves, whereas the National Geographic
is on its way somewhere.
We're not. We're on our way to the little fair
and the cops & the flicks & the single flick
who'll solve our intolerable problem.

John Berryman

Dream Song 11

His mother goes. The mother comes & goes.
Chen Lung's too came, came and cramp & then
that dragoner's mother was gone.
It seem we don't have no good bed to lie on,
forever. While he drawing his first breath,
while skinning his knees,

while he was so beastly with love for Charlotte Coquet
he skated up & down in front of her house
wishing he could, sir, die,
while being bullied & he dreamt he could fly--
during irregular verbs--them world-sought bodies
safe in the Arctic lay:

Strindberg rocked in his niche, the great Andrée
by muscled Fraenkel under what's of the tent,
torn like then limbs, by bears
over fierce decades, harmless. Up in pairs
go we not, but we have a good bed.
I have said what I had to say.

John Berryman

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John Berryman

Dream Song 110: It was the blue & plain ones. I forget all that

It was the blue & plain ones. I forget all that.
My own clouds darkening hung.
Besides, it wasn't serious.
They took them in different rooms & fed them lies.
'She admitted you wanted to get rid of it.'
'He told us he told you to.'

The Force, with its rapists con-men murderers,
has been our Pride (trust Henry) eighty years;—
now Teddy was hard on.
Still the tradition persists, beat up, beat on,
take, take. Frame. Get set; cover up.
The Saturday confessions are really something.

Here was there less or nothing in question but horror.
She left his brother's son two minutes but—
as I say I forget that—
during the time he drowned. The laundry lived
and they lived, uncharged, and went their ways apart
with the blessing of the N.Y. Police Force.

John Berryman

Dream Song 111: I miss him. When I get back to camp

I miss him. When I get back to camp
I'll dig him up. Well, he can prop & watch,
can't he, pink or blue,
and I will talk to him. I miss him. Slams,
grand or any, aren't for the tundra much.
One face-card will do.

It's marvellous how four sit down—beyond
my thought how many tables sometimes are
in forgotten clubs
across & down the world. Your fever conned
us, pal. Will it work out, my solitaire?
The blubber's safe in the tubs,

the dogs are still, & all's well . . . nine long times
I loosed & buried. Then I shot him dead.
I don't remember why.
The Captain of the supply ship, playing for dimes,
thinks I killed him. The black cards are red
and where's the others? I—

John Berryman

Dream Song 112: My framework is broken, I am coming to an end

My framework is broken, I am coming to an end,
God send it soon. When I had most to say
my tongue clung to the roof
I mean of my mouth. It is my Lady's birthday
which must be honoured, and has been. God send
it soon.

I now must speak to my disciples, west
and east. I say to you, Do not delay
I say, expectation is vain.
I say again, It is my Lady's birthday
which must be honoured. Bring her to the test
at once.

I say again, It is my Lady's birthday
which must be honoured, for her high black hair
but not for that alone:
for every word she utters everywhere
shows her good soul, as true as a healed bone,—
being part of what I meant to say.

John Berryman

Dream Song 113: or Amy Vladeck or Riva Freifeld

or Amy Vladeck or Riva Freifeld

That isna Henry limping. That's a hobble
clapped on mere Henry by the most high GOD
for the freedom of Henry's soul.
—The body's foul, cried god, once, twice, & bound it—
For many years I hid it from him successfully—
I'm not clear how he found it

But now he has it—much good may it do him
in the vacant spiritual of space—
only Russians & Americans
to as it were converse with—weel, one Frenchman
to liven up the airless with one nose
& opinions clever & grim.

God declared war on Valerie Trueblood,
against Miss Kaplan he had much to say
O much to say too.
My memory of his kindness comes like a flood
for which I flush with gratitude; yet away
he shouldna have put down Miss Trueblood.

John Berryman

Dream Song 114: Henry in trouble whirped out lonely whines

Henry in trouble whirped out lonely whines.
When ich when was ever not in trouble?
But did he whip out whines
afore? And when check in wif ales & lifelines
anyone earlier O?—Some, now, Mr Bones,
many.—I am fleeing double:

Mr Past being no friends of mine,
all them around: Sir Future Dubious,
calamitous & grand:
I can no foothold here; wherefore I pines
for Dr Present, who won't thrive to us
hand over neither hand

from them blue depths nor chopping down skies
does Dr Present vault unto his task.
Henry is weft on his own.
Pluck Dr Present. Let his grievous wives
thrall lie to livey toads. May his chains bask.
lower him, Capt Owen, into the sun.

John Berryman

Dream Song 115: Her properties, like her of course & frisky & new

Her properties, like her of course & frisky & new:
a stale cake sold to kids, a 7-foot weed
inside in the Great Neck night,
a record ('great'), her work all over as u-
sual rejected. She odd in a bakery.
The owner stand beside her

and she have to sell to the brother & sister jumping
without say 'One week old.' Her indifference
to the fate of her manuscripts
(which flash) to a old hand is truly somefing.
I guess: she'll take the National Book Award
presently, with like flare & indifference.

A massive, unpremeditated, instantaneous
transfer of solicitude from the thing to the creature
Henry sometimes felt.
A state of chancy mind when facts stick out
frequent was his, while that this shrugging girl,
keen, do not quit, he knelt.

(Having so swiftly, and been by, let down.)

John Berryman

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John Berryman

Dream Song 116: Through the forest, followed, Henry made his silky way

Through the forest, followed, Henry made his silky way,
No chickadee was troubled, small moss smiled
on his swift passage.
But there were those ahead when at midday
they met in a clearing and lookt at each other awhile.
To kill was not the message.

He only could go with them—odds? 20 to one-and-a-half;
pointless. Besides, palaver with the High Chief
might advance THE CAUSE.
Undoubtedly down they sat and they did talk
and one did balk & stuck but one did stalk
a creation of new laws.

He smoked the pipe of peace—the scen? tepees,
wigwams, papooses, buffalo hides, a high fire—
with everyone,
even that abnormally scrubbed & powerful one,
shivering with power, held together with wires,
his worst enemy.

John Berryman

Dream Song 117: Disturbed, when Henry's love returned with a hubby

Disturbed, when Henry's love returned with a hubby,—
I see that, Henry, I don't put that down,—
he thought he had to think
or with a razor like a skating-rink
have more to say or more to them downtown
in the Christmas season, like a hobby.

Their letters will, released, shake the mapped world
at some point, in the National Geographic.
(Friend, that hurt.)
It's horrible how near she was my hurt
in the old days—now she's a lawyer twirled
halfway around her finger

and I am elated & vague for love of her
and she is chilly & lost for love of me
and we are for each other
that which needs which, corresponding to Henry's mother
but which can not have, like the lifting sea
over each other's fur.

John Berryman

Dream Song 118: He wondered: Do I love? all this applause

He wondered: Do I love? all this applause,
young beauties sitting at my feet & all,
and all.

It tires me out, he pondered: I'm tempted to break laws
and love myself, or the stupid questions asked me
move me to homicide—

so many beauties, one on either side,
the wall's behind me, into which I crawl
out of my repeating voice—
the mike folds down, the foolish askers fall
over themselves in an audience of ashes
and Henry returns to rejoice

in dark & still, and one sole beauty only
who never walked near Henry while the mob
was at him like a club:
she saw through things, she saw that he was lonely
and waited while he hid behind the wall
and all.

John Berryman

Dream Song 119: Fresh-shaven, past months & a picture in New York

Fresh-shaven, past months & a picture in New York
of Beard Two, I did have Three took off. Well. .
Shadow & act, shadow & act,
Better get white or you' get whacked,
or keep so-called black
& raise new hell.

I've had enough of this dying.
You've done me a dozen goodnesses; get well.
Fight again for our own.
Henry felt baffled, in the middle of the thing.
He spent his whole time in Ireland on the Book of Kells,
the jackass, made of bone.

No tremor, no perspire: Heaven is here
now, in Minneapolis.
It's easier to vomit than it was,
beardless.
There's always the cruelty of scholarship.
I once was a slip.

John Berryman

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John Berryman

Dream Song 12

There is an eye, there was a slit.
Nights walk, and confer on him fear.
The strangler tree, the dancing mouse
confound his vision; then they loosen it.
Henry widens. How did Henry House
himself ever come here?

Nights run. Tes yeux bizarres me suivent
when loth at landfall soft I leave.
The soldiers, Coleridge Rilke Poe,
shout commands I never heard.
They march about, dying & absurd.
Toddlers are taking over. O

ver! Sabbath belling. Snoods converge
on a weary-daring man.
What now can be clear'd up? from the Yard the visitors urge.
Belle thro' the graves in a blast of sun
to the kirk moves the youngest witch.
Watch.

John Berryman

Dream Song 12: Sabbath

There is an eye, there was a slit.
Nights walk, and confer on him fear.
The strangler tree, the dancing mouse
confound his vision; then they loosen it.
Henry widens. How did Henry House
himself ever come here?

Nights run. Tes yeux bizarres me suivent
when loth at landfall soft I leave.
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Belle thro' the graves in a blast of sun
to the kirk moves the youngest witch.
Watch.

John Berryman

Dream Song 120: Foes I sniff, when I have less to shout

Foes I sniff, when I have less to shout
or murmur. Pals alone enormous sounds
downward & up bring real.
Loss, deaths, terror. Over & out,
beloved: thanks for cabbage on my wounds:
I'll feed you how I feel:—

of avocado moist with lemon, yea
formaldehyde & rotting sardines O
in our appointed time
I would I could a touch more fully say
my consentless mind. The senses are below,
which in this air sublime

do I repudiate. But foes I sniff!
My nose in all directions! I be so brave
I creep into an Arctic cave
for the rectal temperature of the biggest bear,
hibernating—in my left hand sugar.
I totter to the lip of the cliff.

John Berryman

Dream Song 121: Grief is fatiguing. He is out of it

Grief is fatiguing. He is out of it,
the whole humiliating Human round,
out of this & that.
He made a-many hearts go pit-a-pat
who now need never mind his nostril-hair
nor a critical error laid bare.

He endured fifty years. He was Randall Jarrell
and wrote a-many books & he wrote well.
Peace to the bearded corpse.
His last book was his best. His wives loved him.
He saw in the forest something coming, grim,
but did not change his purpose.

Honest & cruel, peace now to his soul.
He never loved his body, being full of dents.
A wrinkled peace to this good man.
Henry is half in love with one of his students
and the sad process continues to the whole
as it swarmed & began.

John Berryman

Dream Song 122: He published his girl's bottom in staid pages

He published his girl's bottom in staid pages
of an old weekly. Where will next his rages
ridiculous Henry land?
Tranquil & chaste, de-hammocked, he descended—
upon which note the fable should have ended—
towards the ground, and

while fable wound itself upon him thick
and coats upon his tongue formed, white, terrific:
he stretched out still.
Assembled bands to do obsequious music
at hopeless noon. He bayed before he obeyed,
doing at last their will.

This seemed perhaps one of the best of dogs
during his barking. Many thronged & lapped
at his delicious stone.
Cats to a distance kept—one of their own—
having in mind that down he lay & napped
in the realm of whiskers & fogs.

John Berryman

Dream Song 123: Dapples my floor the eastern sun, my house faces north

Dapples my floor the eastern sun, my house faces north,
I have nothing to say except that it dapples my floor
and it would dapple me
if I lay on that floor, as-well-forthwith
I have done, trying well to mount a thought
not carelessly

in times forgotten, except by the New York Times
which can't forget. There is always the morgue.
There are men in the morgue.
These men have access. Sleepless, in position,
they dream the past forever
Colossal in the dawn comes the second light

we do all die, in the floor, in the morgue
and we must die forever, c'est la mort
a heady brilliance
the ultimate gloire
post-mach, probably in underwear
as we met each other once.

John Berryman

Dream Song 124: Behold I bring you tidings of great joy

Behold I bring you tidings of great joy—
especially now that the snow & gale are still—
for Henry is delivered.
Not only is he delivered from the gale
but he has a little one. He's out of jail
also. It is a boy.

Henry's pleasure in this unusual event
reminds me of the extra told at Hollywood & Vine
that TV cameras
were focussed on him personally then & there
and 'Just a few words . . . Is it what you meant?
Was there a genuine sign?'

Couvade was always Henry's favourite custom,
better than the bride biting off the penises, pal,
remember? All the brothers
marrying her in turn & dying mutilated
until the youngest put in instead a crowbar, pal,
and pulled out not only her teeth but also his brothers' dongs & no
doubt others'.

John Berryman

Dream Song 125: Bards freezing, naked, up to the neck in water

Bards freezing, naked, up to the neck in water,
wholly in dark, time limited, different from
initiations now:
the class in writing, clothed & dry & light,
unlimited time, till Poetry takes some,
nobody reads them though,

no trumpets, no solemn instauration, no change;
no commissions, ladies high in soulful praise
(pal) none,
costumes as usual, turtleneck sweaters, loafers,
in & among the busy Many who brays
art is if anything fun.

I say the subject was given as of old,
prescribed the technical treatment, tests really tests
were set by the masters & graded.
I say the paralyzed fear lest one's not one
is back with us forever, worsts & bests
spring for the public, faded.

John Berryman

Dream Song 126: A Thurn

A Thurn

Among them marble where the man may lie
lie chieftains grand in final phase, or pause,
'O rare Ben Jonson',
dictator too, & the thinky other Johnson,
dictator too, backhanders down of laws,
men of fears, weird & sly.

Not of these least is borne to rest.
If grandeur & mettle prompted his lone journey
neither oh crowded shelved
nor this slab I celebrates attest
his complex slow fame forever (more or less).
I imagine the Abbey

among their wonders will be glad of him
whom some are sorry for his griefs across the world
grievously understated
and grateful for that bounty, for bright whims
of heavy mind across the tiresome world
which the tiresome world debated, complicated.

John Berryman

Dream Song 127: Again, his friend's death made the man sit still

Again, his friend's death made the man sit still
and freeze inside—his daughter won first price—
his wife scowled over at him—
It seemed to be Hallowe'en.
His friend's death had been adjudged suicide,
which dangles a trail

longer than Henry's chill, longer than his loss
and longer than the letter that he wrote
that day to the widow
to find out what the hell had happened thus.
All souls converge upon a hopeless mote
tonight, as though

the throngs of souls in hopeless pain rise up
to say they cannot care, to say they abide
whatever is to come.
My air is flung with souls which will not stop
and among them hangs a soul that has not died
and refuses to come home.

John Berryman

Dream Song 128: A hemorrhage of his left ear of Good Friday

A hemorrhage of his left ear of Good Friday—
so help me Jesus—then made funny too
the other, further one.
There must have been a bit. Sheets scrubbed away
soon all but three nails. Doctors in this city O
will not (his wife cried) come.

Perhaps he's for it. IF that Filipino doc
had diagnosed ah here in Washington
that ear-infection ha
he'd have been grounded, so in a hall for the ill
in Southern California, they opined.
The cabins at eight thou'

are pressurized, they swore, my love, bad for—
ten days ago—a dim & bloody ear,
or ears.
They say are sympathetic, ears, & hears
more than they should or
did.

John Berryman

Dream Song 129: Thin as a sheet his mother came to him

Thin as a sheet his mother came to him
during the screaming evenings after he did it,
touched F.J.'s dead hand.
The parlour was dark, he was the first pall-bearer in,
he gave himself a dare & then did it,
the thing was quite unplanned,

riots for Henry the unstructured dead,
his older playmate fouled, reaching for him
and never will he be free
from the older boy who died by the cottonwood
& now is to be planted, wise & slim,
as part of Henry's history.

Christ waits. That boy was good beyond his years,
he served at Mass like Henry, he never did
one extreme thing wrong
but tender his cold hand, latent with Henry's fears
to Henry's shocking touch, whereat he fled
and woke screaming, young & strong.

John Berryman

Dream Song 13

God bless Henry. He lived like a rat,
with a thatch of hair on his head
in the beginning.
Henry was not a coward. Much.
He never deserted anything; instead
he stuck, when things like pity were thinning.

So may be Henry was a human being.
Let's investigate that.
... We did; okay.
He is a human American man.
That's true. My lass is braking.
My brass is aching. Come & diminish me, & map my way.

God's Henry's enemy. We're in business ... Why,
what business must be clear.
A cornering.
I couldn't feel more like it. -- Mr. Bones,
as I look on the saffron sky,
you strikes me as ornery.

John Berryman

Dream Song 13: God bless Henry

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as I look on the saffron sky,
you strikes me as ornery.

John Berryman

Dream Song 130: When I saw my friend covered with blood, I thought

When I saw my friend covered with blood, I thought
This is the end of the dream, now I'll wake up.
That was more years ago
than I care to reckon, and my friend is not
dying but adhering to an elite group
in California O.

Why did I never wake, when covered with blood
I saw my fearful friend, his nerves are bad
with the large strain of moving,
I see his motions, stretcht on his own rack,
our book is coming out in paperback,
Henry has not ceased loving

but wishes all that blood would flow away
leaving his friend crisp, ready for all
in the new world O.
I see him brace, and on that note I pray
the blood recede like an old folderol
and he spring up & go.

John Berryman

Dream Song 131: Come touch me baby in his waking dream

Come touch me baby in his waking dream
disordered Henry murmured. I'll read you Hegel
and that will hurt your mind
I can't remember when you were unkind
but I will clear that block, I'll set you on fire
along with our babies

to save them up the high & ruined stairs,
my growing daughters. I am insane, I think,
they say & act so.
But then they let me out, and I must save them,
High fires will help, at this time, in my affairs.
I am insane, I know

and many of my close friends were half-sane
I see the rorschach for the dead on its way
Prop them up!
Trade us a lesson, pour me down a sink
I swear I'll love her always, like a drink
Let pass from me this cup

John Berryman

Dream Song 132: A Small Dream

A Small Dream

It was only a small dream of the Golden World,
now you trot off to bed. I'll turn the machine off,
you've danced & trickt us enough.
Unintelligible whines & imprecations, hurled
from the second floor, fail to impress your mother
and I am the only other

and I say go to bed! We'll meet tomorrow,
acres of threats dissolve into a smile,
you'll be the Little Baby
again, while I pursue my path of sorrow
& bodies, bodies, to be carried a mile
& dropt. Maybe

if frozen slush will represent the soul
which is to represented in the hereafter
I ask for a decree
dooming my bitter enemies to laughter
advanced against them. If the dream was small
it was my dream also, Henry's.

John Berryman

Dream Song 133: As he grew famous—ah, but what is fame?

As he grew famous—ah, but what is fame?—
he lost his old obsession with his name,
things seemed to matter less,
including the fame—a television team came
from another country to make a film of him
which did not him distress:

he enjoyed the hard work & he was good at that,
so they all said—the charming Englishman
among the camera & the lights
mathematically wandered in his pub & livingroom
doing their duty, as too he did it,
but where are the delights

of long-for fame, unless fame makes him feel easy?
I am cold & weary, said Henry, fame makes me feel lazy,
yet i must do my best.
It doesn't matter, truly. It doesn't matter truly.
It seems to be solely a matter of continuing Henry
voicing & obsessed.

John Berryman

Dream Song 133: As he grew famous—ah, but what is fame?

Hi There! I see you're enjoying the site, and just wanted to extend an invitation to register for our free site. The members of oldpoetry strive to make this a fun place to learn and share - hope you join us! - Kevin

John Berryman

Dream Song 134: Sick at 6 & sick again at 9

Sick at 6 & sick again at 9
was Henry's gloomy Monday morning oh.
Still he had to lecture.
They waited, his little children, for stricken Henry
to rise up yet once more again and come oh.
They figured he was a fixture,

nuts to their bolts, keys to their bloody locks.
One day the whole affair will fall apart
with a rustle of fire,
a wrestle of undoing, as of tossed clocks,
and somewhere not far off a broken heart
for hire.

He had smoked a pack of cigarettes by 10
& was ready to go. Peace to his ashes then,
poor Henry,
with all this gas & shit blowing through it
four times in 2 hours, his tail ached.
He arose, benign, & performed.

John Berryman

Dream Song 134: Sick at 6 & sick again at 9

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four times in 2 hours, his tail ached.
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John Berryman

Dream Song 135: I heard said 'Cats that walk by their wild lone'

I heard said 'Cats that walk by their wild lone'
but Henry had need of friends. They disappeared
Shall I follow my dream?
Clothes disappeared in a backward sliding, zones
shot into view, pocked, exact & weird:
who is what he seem?

I will tell you now a story about Speck:
after other cuts, he put the knife in her eye,
one of the eight:
he was troubled, missionary: and Whitman
of the tower murdered his wife & mother
before (mercy-killings) he set out.

Not every shot went in. But most went in:
in just over an hour
with the tumor thudding in his brain
he killed 13, hit 33:
his empty father said he taught him to respect guns
(not persons).

John Berryman

Dream Song 136: While his wife earned the living, Rabbi Henry

While his wife earned the living, Rabbi Henry
studied the Torah, writing commentaries
more likely to be burnt than printed.
It was rumoured that they needed revision.
Smiling, kissing, he bent his head not with 'Please'
but with austere requests barely hinted,

like a dog with a bone he worried the Sacred Book
and often taught its fringes.
Imperishable enthusiasms.
I have only one request to make of the Lord,
that I may no longer have to earn my living as a rabbi
'Thou shalt make unto thee any graven image'

The sage said 'I merit long life if only because
I have never left bread-crumbs lying on the ground.
We were tested yesterday & are sound,
Henry's lady & Henry.
It all centered in the end on the suicide
in which I am an expert, deep & wide.'

John Berryman

Dream Song 14

Life, friends, is boring. We must not say so.
After all, the sky flashes, the great sea yearns,
we ourselves flash and yearn,
and moreover my mother told me as a boy
(repeatedly) "Ever to confess you're bored
means you have no

Inner Resources." I conclude now I have no
inner resources, because I am heavy bored.
Peoples bore me,
literature bores me, especially great literature,
Henry bores me, with his plights & gripes
as bad as Achilles,

who loves people and valiant art, which bores me.
And the tranquil hills, & gin, look like a drag
and somehow a dog
has taken itself & its tail considerably away
into the mountains or sea or sky, leaving
behind: me, wag.

John Berryman

Dream Song 14: Life, friends, is boring

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John Berryman

Dream Song 149

The world is gradually becoming a place
where I do not care to be anymore. Can Delmore die?
I don't suppose
in all them years a day went ever by
without a loving thought for him. Welladay.
In the brightness of his promise,

unstained, I saw him thro' the mist of the actual
blazing with insight, warm with gossip
thro' all our Harvard years
when both of us were just becoming known
I got him out of a police-station once, in Washington, the world is tref
and grief too astray for tears.

I imagine you have heard the terrible news,
that Delmore Schwartz is dead, miserably & alone,
in New York: he sang me a song
'I am the Brooklyn poet Delmore Schwartz
Harms & the child I sing, two parents' torts'
when he was young & gift-strong.

John Berryman

Dream Song 15

Let us suppose, valleys & such ago,
one pal unwinding from his labours in
one bar of Chicago
and this did actually happen. This was so.
And many graces are slipped, & many a sin
even that laid man low

but this will be remembered & told over,
that she was heard at last, haughtful & greasy,
to brawl in that low bar:
'You can biff me, you can bang me, get it you'll never.
I may be only a Polack broad but I don't lay easy.
Kiss my ass, that's what you are.'

Women is better, braver. In a foehn of loss
entire, which too they hotter understand,
having had it,
we struggle. Some hang heavy on the sauce,
some invest in the past, one hides in the land.
Henry was not his favourite.

John Berryman

Dream Song 15: Let us suppose, valleys & such ago

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Henry was not his favourite.

John Berryman

Dream Song 16

Henry's pelt was put on sundry walls
where it did much resemble Henry and
them persons was delighted.
Especially his long & glowing tail
by all them was admired, and visitors.
They whistled: This is it!

Golden, whilst your frozen daiquiris
whir at midnight, gleams on you his fur
& silky & black.
Mission accomplished, pal.
My molten yellow & moonless bag,
drained, hangs at rest.

Collect in the cold depths barracuda. Ay,
in Sealdah Station some possessionless
children survive to die.
The Chinese communes hum. Two daiquiris
withdrew into a corner of the gorgeous room
and one told the other a lie.

John Berryman

Dream Song 16: Henry's pelt was put on sundry walls

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John Berryman

Dream Song 17

Muttered Henry:--Lord of matter, thus:
upon some more unquiet spirit knock,
my madnenses have cease.
All the quarter astonishes a lonely out & back.
They set their clocks by Henry House,
the steadiest man on the block.

And Lucifer:--I smell you for my own,
by smug.--What have I tossed you but the least
(tho' hard); fit for your ears.
Your servant, bored with horror, sat alone
with busy teeth while his dislike increased
unto himself, in tears.

And he:--O promising despair,
in solitude-- --End there.
Your avenues are dying: leave me: I dove
under the oaken arms of Brother Martin,
St Simeon the Lesser Theologian,
Bodhidharma, and Baal Shem Tov.

John Berryman

Dream Song 17: Muttered Henry—Lord of matter, thus

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John Berryman

Dream Song 171: Go, ill-spiced book, and whisper to her or

Go, ill-spiced book, and whisper to her or
storm out the message for her only ear
that she is beautiful.
Mention sunsets, be not silent of her eyes
and mouth and other prospects, praise her size,
say her figure is full.

Say her small figure is heavenly & full,
so as stunned Henry yatters like a fool
& maketh little sense.
Say she is soft in speech, stately in walking,
modest at gatherings, and in every thing
declare her excellence.

And forget not, when the rest is wholly done
and all of her splendors opened, one by one,
to add that she likes Henry,
for reasons unknown, and fate has bound them fast
one to another in linkages that last
and that are fair to see.

John Berryman

Dream Song 172

Your face broods from my table, Suicide.
Your force came on like a torrent toward the end
of agony and wrath.
You were christened in the beginning Sylvia Plath
and changed that name for Mrs Hughes and bred
and went on round the bend

till the oven seemed the proper place for you.
I brood upon your face, the geography of grief,
hooded, till I allow
again your resignation from us now
though the screams of orphaned children fix me anew.
Your torment here was brief,

long falls your exit all repeatedly,
a poor exemplum, one more suicide,
to stack upon the others
till stricken Henry with his sisters & brothers
suddenly gone pauses to wonder why he
alone breasts the wronging tide.

John Berryman

Dream Song 172: Your face broods

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Your force came on like a torrent toward the end
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John Berryman

Dream Song 176

All that hair flashing over the Atlantic,
Henry's girl's gone. She'll find Paris a sweet place
as many times he did.
She's there now, having left yesterday. I held
her cousin's hand, all innocence, on the climb to the tower.
Her cousin is if possible more beautiful than she is.

All over the world grades are being turned in,
and isn't that a truly gloomy thought.
It's June, God help us, when the sight we fought
clears. One day when I take my sock
off the skin will come with it

and I'll run blood, horrible on the floor
the streaming blood reminds me of my love.
Wolves run in & out
take wolves, but terrible enough
I am dreaming of my love's hair & all her front teeth are false
as were my anti-hopes.

John Berryman

Dream Song 176: All that hair flashing over

All that hair flashing over the Atlantic,
Henry's girl's gone. She'll find Paris a sweet place
as many times he did.
She's there now, having left yesterday. I held
her cousin's hand, all innocence, on the climb to the tower.
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Wolves run in & out
take wolves, but terrible enough
I am dreaming of my love's hair & all her front teeth are false
as were my anti-hopes.

John Berryman

Dream Song 18

Westward, hit a low note, for a roarer lost
across the Sound but north from Bremerton,
hit a way down note.
And never cadenza again of flowers, or cost.
Him who could really do that cleared his throat
& staggered on.

The bluebells, pool-shallows, saluted his over-needs,
while the clouds growled, heh-heh, & snapped, & crashed.

No stunt he'll ever unflinch once more will fail
(O lucky fellow, eh Bones?)--drifted off upstairs,
downstairs, somewhere.
No more daily, trying to hit the head on the nail:
thirstless: without a think in his head:
back from wherever, with it said.

Hit a high long note, for a lover found
needing a lower into friendlier ground
to bug among worms no more
around um jungles where ah blurt 'What for?'
Weeds, too, he favoured as most men don't favour men.
The Garden Master's gone.

John Berryman

Dream Song 18: A Strut for Roethke

Westward, hit a low note, for a roarer lost
across the Sound but north from Bremerton,
hit a way down note.
And never cadenza again of flowers, or cost.
Him who could really do that cleared his throat
& staggered on.

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Weeds, too, he favoured as most men don't favour men.
The Garden Master's gone.

John Berryman

Dream Song 19

Here, whence
all have departed or will do, here airless, where
that witchy ball
wanted, fought toward, dreamed of, all a green living
drops limply into one's hands
without pleasure or interest

Figurez-vous, a time swarms when the word
'happy' sheds its whole meaning, like to come and
like for memory too
That morning arrived to Henry as well a great cheque
eaten out already by the Government & State &
other strange matters

Gentle friendly Henry Pussy-cat
smiled into his mirror, a murderer's
(at Stillwater), at himself alone
and said across a plink to that desolate fellow
said a little hail & buck-you-up
upon his triumph

John Berryman

Dream Song 19: Here, whence

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John Berryman

Dream Song 2

The jane is zoned! no nightspot here, no bar
there, no sweet freeway, and no premises
for business purposes,
no loiterers or needers. Henry are
baffled. Have ev'ybody head for Maine,
utility-man take a train?

Arrive a time when all coons lose dere grip,
but is he come? Le's do a hoedown, gal,
one blue, one shuffle,
if them is all you seem to réquire. Strip,
ol benger, skip us we, sugar; so hang on
one chaste evenin.

--Sir Bones, or Galahad: astonishin
yo legal & yo good. Is you feel well?
Honey dusk do sprawl.
--Hit's hard. Kinged or thinged, though, fling & wing.
Poll-cats are coming, hurrah, hurray.
I votes in my hole.

John Berryman

Dream Song 2: Big Buttons, Cornets: the advance

The jane is zoned! no nightspot here, no bar
there, no sweet freeway, and no premises
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no loiterers or needers. Henry are
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Honey dusk do sprawl.
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Poll-cats are coming, hurrah, hurray.
I votes in my hole.

John Berryman

Dream Song 20

When worst got things, how was you? Steady on?
Wheedling, or shockt her &
you have been bad to your friend,
whom not you writing to. You have not listened.
A pelican of lies
you loosed: where are you?

Down weeks of evenings of longing
by hours, NOW, a stoned bell,
you did somebody: others you hurt short:
anyone ever did you do good?
You licking your own old hurt,
what?

An evil kneel & adore.
This is human. Hurl, God who found
us in this, down
something . . . We hear the more
sin has increast, the more
grace has been caused to abound.

John Berryman

Dream Song 20: The Secret of the Wisdom

When worst got things, how was you? Steady on?
Wheedling, or shockt her &
you have been bad to your friend,
whom not you writing to. You have not listened.
A pelican of lies
you loosed: where are you?

Down weeks of evenings of longing
by hours, NOW, a stoned bell,
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us in this, down
something . . . We hear the more
sin has increast, the more
grace has been caused to abound.

John Berryman

Dream Song 21

Some good people, daring & subtle voices
and their tense faces, as I think of it
I see sank underground.
I see. My radar digs. I do not dig.
Cool their flushing blood, them eyes is shut--
eyes?

Appalled: by all the dead: Henry brooded.
Without exception! All.
ALL.
The senior population waits. Come down! come down!
A ghastly & flashing pause, clothed,
life called; us do.

In a madhouse heard I an ancient man
tube-fed who had not said for fifteen years
(they said) one canny word,
senile forever, who a heart might pierce,
mutter 'O come on down. O come on down.'
Clear whom he meant.

John Berryman

Dream Song 21: Some good people, daring & subtle voices

Some good people, daring & subtle voices
and their tense faces, as I think of it
I see sank underground.
I see. My radar digs. I do not dig.
Cool their flushing blood, them eyes is shut—
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(they said) one canny word,
senile forever, who a heart might pierce,
mutter 'O come on down. O come on down.'
Clear whom he meant.

John Berryman

Dream Song 22

I am the little man who smokes & smokes.
I am the girl who does know better but.
I am the king of the pool.
I am so wise I had my mouth sewn shut.
I am a government official & a goddamned fool.
I am a lady who takes jokes.

I am the enemy of the mind.
I am the auto salesman and love you.
I am a teenage cancer, with a plan.
I am the blackt-out man.
I am the woman powerful as a zoo.
I am two eyes screwed to my set, whose blind--

It is the Fourth of July.
Collect: while the dying man,
forgone by you creator, who forgives,
is gasping 'Thomas Jefferson still lives'
in vain, in vain, in vain.
I am Henry Pussy-cat! My whiskers fly.

John Berryman

Dream Song 22: Of 1826

I am the little man who smokes & smokes.
I am the girl who does know better but.
I am the king of the pool.
I am so wise I had my mouth sewn shut.
I am a government official & a goddamned fool.
I am a lady who takes jokes.

I am the enemy of the mind.
I am the auto salesman and I've you.
I am a teenage cancer, with a plan.
I am the blackt-out man.
I am the woman powerful as a zoo.
I am two eyes screwed to my set, whose blind—

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forgone by you creator, who forgives,
is gasping 'Thomas Jefferson still lives'
in vain, in vain, in vain.
I am Henry Pussy-cat! My whiskers fly.

John Berryman

Dream Song 224

Lonely in his great age, Henry's old friend
leaned on his burning cane while his old friend
was hymned out of living.
The Abbey rang with sound. Pound white as snow
bowed to them with his thoughts - it's hard to know them though
for the old man sang no word.

Dry, ripe with pain, busy with loss, let's guess.
Gone. Gone them wine-meetings, gone green grasses
of the picnics of rising youth.
Gone all slowly. Stately, not as the tongue
worries the loose tooth, wits as strong as young,
only the albino body failing.

Where the smother clusters pinpoint insights clear.
The tennis is over. The last words are here?
What, in the world, will they be?
White is the hue of death & victory,
all the old generousities dismissed,
while the white years insist.

John Berryman

Dream Song 224: Lonely in his great age

Eighty

Lonely in his great age, Henry's old friend
leaned on his burning cane while hís old friend
was hymnéd out of living.
The Abbey rang with sound. Pound white as snow
bowed to them with his thoughts—it's hard to know them though
for the old man sang no word.

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Gone. Gone them wine-meetings, gone green grasses
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White is the hue of death & victory,
all the old generousities dismissed,
while the white years insist.

John Berryman

Dream Song 23

This is the lay of Ike.
Here's to the glory of the Grewt White--awk--
who has been running--er--er--things in recent--ech--
in the United--If your screen is black,
ladies & gentlemen, we--I like--
at the Point he was already terrific--sick

to a second term, having done no wrong--
no right--no · right--having let the Army--bang--
defend itself from Joe, let venom' Strauss
bile Oppenheimer out of use--use Robb,
who'll later fend for Goldfine--Breaking no laws,
he lay in the White House--sob!!--

who never understood his own strategy--whee--
so Monty's memoirs--nor any strategy,
wanting the ball bulled thro' all parts of the line
at once--proving, by his refusal to take Berlin,
he misread even Clauswitz--wide empty grin
that never lost a vote (O Adlai mine).

John Berryman

Dream Song 23: The Lay of Ike

This is the lay of Ike.

Here's to the glory of the Grewt White—awk—
who has been running—er—er—things in
recent—ech—
in the United—If your screen is black,
ladies & gentlemen, we—I like—
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at once—proving, by his refusal to take Berlin,
he misread even Clauswitz—wide empty grin
that never lost a vote (O Adlai mine).

John Berryman

Dream Song 24

Oh servant Henry lectured till
the crows commenced and then
he bulbed his voice & lectured on some more.
This happened again & again, like war,--
the Indian p.a.'s, such as they were,
a weapon on his side, for the birds.

Vexations held a field-monsoon.
He was Introduced, and then he was Summed-up.
He was put questions on race bigotry;
he put no questions on race bigotry
constantly.
The mad sun rose though on the ghats
& the saddhu in maha mudra, the great River,

and Henry was happy & beside him with excitement.
Beside himself, his possibilities;
salaaming hours of half-blind morning
while the rainy lepers salaamed back,
smiles & a passion of their & his eyes flew
in feelings not ever accorded solely to oneself.

John Berryman

Dream Song 24: Oh servant Henry lectured till

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the crows commenced and then
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smiles & a passion of their & his eyes flew
in feelings not ever accorded solely to oneself.

John Berryman

Dream Song 25

Henry, edged, decidedly, made up stories
lighting the past of Henry, of his glorious
present, and his hoaries,
all the bight heals he tamped-- --Euphoria,
Mr Bones, euphoria. Fate clobber all.
--Hand me back my crawl,

condign Heaven. Tighten into a ball
elongate & valved Henry. Tuck him peace.
Render him sightless,
or ruin at high rate his crampon focus,
wipe out his need. Reduce him to the rest of us.
--But, Bones, you is that.

--I cannot remember. I am going away.
There was something in my dream about a Cat,
which fought and sang.
Something about a lyre, an island. Unstrung.
Linked to the land at low tide. Cables fray.
Thank you for everything.

John Berryman

Dream Song 25: Henry, edged, decidedly, made up stories

Henry, edged, decidedly, made up stories
lighting the past of Henry, of his glorious
present, and his hoaries,
all the bight heals he tamped— —Euphoria,
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which fought and sang.
Something about a lyre, an island. Unstrung.
Linked to the land at low tide. Cables fray.
Thank you for everything.

John Berryman

Dream Song 26

The glories of the world struck me, made me aria, once.

--What happen then, Mr Bones?

if be you cares to say.

--Henry. Henry became interested in women's bodies,
his loins were & were the scene of stupendous achievement.
Stupor. Knees, dear. Pray.

All the knobs & softnesses of, my God,
the ducking & trouble it swarm on Henry,
at one time.

--What happen then, Mr Bones?

you seems excited-like.

--Fell Henry back into the original crime: art, rime

besides a sense of others, my God, my God,
and a jealousy for the honour (alive) of his country,
what can get more odd?

and discontent with the thriving gangs & pride.

--What happen then, Mr Bones?

--I had a most marvellous piece of luck. I died.

John Berryman

Dream Song 26: The glories of the world struck me

The glories of the world struck me, made me aria, once.
—What happen then, Mr Bones?
if be you cares to say.
—Henry. Henry became interested in women's bodies,
his loins were & were the scene of stupendous achievement.
Stupor. Knees, dear. Pray.

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what can get more odd?
and discontent with the thriving gangs & pride.
—What happen then, Mr Bones?
—I had a most marvellous piece of luck. I died.

John Berryman

Dream Song 265

I don't know one damned butterfly from another
my ignorance of the stars is formidable,
also of dogs & ferns
except that around my house one destroys the other
When I reckon up my real ignorance, pal,
I mumble "many returns"--

next time it will be nature & Thoreau
this time is Baudelaire if one had the skill
and even those problems O
At the mysterious urging of the body or Poe
reeled I with chance, insubordinate & a killer
O formal & elaborate I choose you

but I love too the spare, the hit-or-miss,
the mad, I sometimes can't always tell them apart
As we fall apart, will you let me hear?
That would be good, that would be halfway to bliss
You said will you answer back? I cross my heart
& hope to die but not this year.

John Berryman

Dream Song 265: I don't know one damned butterfly from another

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my ignorance of the stars is formidable,
also of dogs & ferns
except that around my house one destroys the other
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That would be good, that would be halfway to bliss
You said will you answer back? I cross my heart
& hope to die but not this year.

John Berryman

Dream Song 27

The greens of the Ganges delta foliate.
Of heartless youth made late aware he pled:
Brownies, please come.
To Henry in his sparest times sometimes
the little people spread, & did friendly things;
then he was glad.

Pleased, at the worst, except with the man, he shook
the brightest winter sun.
All the green lives
of the great delta, hours, hurt his migrant heart
in a safety of the steady 'plane. Please, please
come.

My friends,--he has been known to mourn,--I'll die;
live you, in the most wild, kindly, green
partly forgiving wood,
sort of forever and all those human sings
close not your better ears to, while good Spring
returns with a dance and a sigh.

John Berryman

Dream Song 27: The greens of the Ganges delta foliate

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close not your better ears to, while good Spring
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John Berryman

Dream Song 28

It was wet & white & swift and where I am
we don't know. It was dark and then
it isn't.
I wish the barker would come. There seems to be eat
nothing. I am usually tired.
I'm alone too.

If only the strange one with so few legs would come,
I'd say my prayers out of my mouth, as usual.
Where are his note I loved?
There may be horrors; it's hard to tell.
The barker nips me but somehow I feel
he too is on my side.

I'm too alone. I see no end. If we could all
run, even that would be better. I am hungry.
The sun is not hot.
It's not a good position I am in.
If I had to do the whole thing over again
I wouldn't.

John Berryman

Dream Song 28: Snow Line

It was wet & white & swift and where I am
we don't know. It was dark and then
it isn't.
I wish the barker would come. There seems to be eat
nothing. I am usually tired.
I'm alone too.

If only the strange one with so few legs would come,
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run, even that would be better. I am hungry.
The sun is not hot.
It's not a good position I am in.
If I had to do the whole thing over again
I wouldn't.

John Berryman

Dream Song 29

There sat down, once, a thing on Henry's heart
so heavy, if he had a hundred years
& more, & weeping, sleepless, in all them time
Henry could not make good.
Starts again always in Henry's ears
the little cough somewhere, an odour, a chime.

And there is another thing he has in mind
like a grave Sienese face a thousand years
would fail to blur the still profiled reproach of. Ghastly,
with open eyes, he attends, blind.
All the bells say: too late. This is not for tears;
thinking.

But never did Henry, as he thought he did,
end anyone and hacks her body up
and hide the pieces, where they may be found.
He knows: he went over everyone, & nobody's missing.
Often he reckons, in the dawn, them up.
Nobody is ever missing.

John Berryman

Dream Song 29: There sat down, once, a thing

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Often he reckons, in the dawn, them up.
Nobody is ever missing.

John Berryman

Dream Song 3

Acacia, burnt myrrh, velvet, prickly stings.
--I'm not so young but not so very old,
said screwed-up lovely 23.
A final sense of being right out in the cold,
unkissed.
(--My psychiatrist can lick your psychiatrist.) Women get under
things.

All these old criminals sooner or later
have had it. I've been reading old journals.
Gottwald & Co., out of business now.
Thick chests quit. Double agent, Joe.
She holds her breath like a seal
and is whiter & smoother.

Rilke was a jerk.
I admit his griefs & music
& titled spelled all-disappointed ladies.
A threshold worse than the circles
where the vile settle & lurk,
Rilke's. As I said,--

John Berryman

Dream Song 3: A Stimulant for an Old Beast

Acacia, burnt myrrh, velvet, prickly stings.
— I'm not so young but not so very old,
said screwed-up lovely 23.
A final sense of being right out in the cold,
unkissed.
(— My psychiatrist can lick your psychiatrist.) Women get under
things.

All these old criminals sooner or later
have had it. I've been reading old journals.
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I admit his griefs & music
& titled spelled all-disappointed ladies.
A threshold worse than the circles
where the vile settle & lurk,
Rilke's. As I said,—

John Berryman

Dream Song 30

Collating bones: I would have liked to do.
Henry would have been hot at that.
I missed his profession.
As a little boy I always thought
'I'm an archeologist'; who
could be more respected peaceful serious than that?

Hell talkt my brain awake.
Bluffed to the ends of me pain
& I took up a pencil;
like this I'm longing with. One sign
would snow me back, back.
is there anyone in the audience who has lived in vain?

A Chinese tooth! African jaw!
Drool, says a nervous system,
for a joyous replacing. Heat burns off dew.
Between the Ices (Mindel-Würm)
in a world I ever saw
some of my drying people indexed: "Warm."

John Berryman

Dream Song 30: Collating bones: I would have liked to do

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Henry would have been hot at that.
I missed his profession.
As a little boy I always thought
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Between the Ices (Mindel-Würm)
in a world I ever saw
some of my drying people indexed: "Warm."

John Berryman

Dream Song 31

Henry Hankovitch, con guítar,
did a short Zen pray,
on his tatami in a relaxed lotos
fixin his mind on nuffin, rose-blue breasts,
and gave his parnel one French kiss;
enslaving himself he withdrew from his blue

Florentine leather case an Egyptian black
& flickt a zippo.
Henry & Phoebe happy as cockroaches
in the world-kitchen woofed, with all away.
The International flame, like despair, rose
or like the foolish Paks or Sudanese

Henry Hankovitch, con guítar,
did a praying mantis pray
who even more obviously than the increasingly fanatical Americans
cannot govern themselves. Swedes don't exist,
Scandanavians in general do not exist,
take it from there.

John Berryman

Dream Song 31: Henry Hankovitch, con guítar

Henry Hankovitch, con guítar,
did a short Zen pray,
on his tatami in a relaxed lotos
fixin his mind on nuffin, rose-blue breasts,
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who even more obviously than the increasingly fanatical Americans
cannot govern themselves. Swedes don't exist,
Scandanavians in general do not exist,
take it from there.

John Berryman

Dream Song 32

And where, friend Quo, lay you hiding
across malignant half my years or so?
One evil faery
it was workt night, with amoroso pleasing
menace, the panes shake
where Lie-by-the-fire is waiting for his cream.

A tiger by a torrent in rain, wind,
narrows fiend's eyes for grief
in an old ink-on-silk,
reminding me of Delphi, and,
friend Quo, once was safe
imagination as sweet milk.

Let all the flowers wither like a party.
And now you have abandoned
own your young & old, the oldest, people
to a solitudinem of mournful communes,
mournful communes.
Status, Status, come home.

John Berryman

Dream Song 32: And where, friend Quo, lay you hiding

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own your young & old, the oldest, people
to a solitudinem of mournful communes,
mournful communes.
Status, Status, come home.

John Berryman

Dream Song 324

Henry in Ireland to Bill underground:
Rest well, who worked so hard, who made a good sound
constantly, for so many years:
your high-jinks delighted the continents & our ears:
you had so many girls your life was a triumph
and you loved your one wife.

At dawn you rose & wrote--the books poured forth--
you delivered infinite babies, in one great birth--
and your generosity
to juniors made you deeply loved, deeply:
if envy was a Henry trademark, he would envy you,
especially the being through.

Too many journeys lie for him ahead,
too many galleys & page-proofs to be read,
he would like to lie down
in your sweet silence, to whom was not denied
the mysterious late excellence which is the crown
of our trials & our last bride.

John Berryman

Dream Song 324: An Elegy for W. C. W., the lovely man

Henry in Ireland to Bill underground:
Rest well, who worked so hard, who made a good sound
constantly, for so many years:
your high-jinks delighted the continents & our ears:
you had so many girls your life was a triumph
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in your sweet silence, to whom was not denied
the mysterious late excellence which is the crown
of our trials & our last bride.

John Berryman

Dream Song 33

An apple arc'd toward Kleitos; whose great King
wroth & of wine did study where his sword,
sneaked away, might be . . .
with swollen lids staggered up and clung
dim to the cloth of gold. An un-Greek word
blister, to him guard,

and the trumpeter would not sound, fisted. Ha,
they hustle Clitus out; by another door,
loaded, crowds he back in
who now must, chopped, fall to the spear-ax ah
grabbed from an extra by the boy-god, sore
for weapons. For the sin:

little it is gross Henry has to say.
The King heaved. Pluckt out, the ax-end would
he jab in his sole throat.
As if an end. A baby, the guard may
squire him to his apartments. Weeping & blood
wound round his one friend.

John Berryman

Dream Song 33: An apple arc'd toward Kleitos; whose great King

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wroth & of wine did study where his sword,
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he jab in his sole throat.
As if an end. A baby, the guard may
squire him to his apartments. Weeping & blood
wound round his one friend.

John Berryman

Dream Song 34

My mother has your shotgun. One man, wide
in the mind, and tendoned like a grizzly, pried
to his trigger-digit, pal.
He should not have done that, but, I guess,
he didn't feel the best, Sister,--felt less
and more about less than us . . . ?

Now--tell me, my love, if you recall
the dove light after dawn at the island and all--
here is the story, Jack:
he verbed for forty years, very enough,
& shot & buckt--and, baby, there was of
schist but small there (some).

Why should I tell a truth? when in the crack
of the dooming & emptying news I did hold back--
in the taxi too, sick--
silent--it's so I broke down here, in his mind
whose sire as mine one same way--I refuse,
hoping the guy go home.

John Berryman

Dream Song 34: My mother has your shotgun. One man, wide

My mother has your shotgun. One man, wide
in the mind, and tendoned like a grizzly, pried
to his trigger-digit, pal.
He should not have done that, but, I guess,
he didn't feel the best, Sister,—felt less
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of the dooming & emptying news I did hold back—
in the taxi too, sick—
silent—it's so I broke down here, in his mind
whose sire as mine one same way—I refuse,
hoping the guy go home.

John Berryman

Dream Song 35

Hey, out there!--assistant professors, full,
associates,--instructors--others--any--
I have a sing to shay.
We are assembled here in the capital
city for Dull--and one professor's wife is Mary--
at Christmastide, hey!

and all of you did theses or are doing
and the moral history of what we were up to
thrives in Sir Wilson's hands--
who I don't see here--only deals go screwing
some of you out, some up--the chairmen too
are nervous, little friends--

a chairman's not a chairman, son, forever,
and hurts with his appointments; ha, but circle--
take my word for it--
though maybe Frost is dying--around Mary;
forget your footnotes on the old gentleman;
dance around Mary.

John Berryman

Dream Song 35: MLA

Hey, out there!—assistant professors, full,
associates,—instructors—others—any—
I have a sing to shay.
We are assembled here in the capital
city for Dull—and one professor's wife is Mary—
at Christmastide, hey!

and all of you did theses or are doing
and the moral history of what we were up to
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who I don't see here—only deals go screwing
some of you out, some up—the chairmen too
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a chairman's not a chairman, son, forever,
and hurts with his appointments; ha, but circle—
take my word for it—
though maybe Frost is dying—around Mary;
forget your footnotes on the old gentleman;
dance around Mary.

John Berryman

Dream Song 36: The high ones die, die. They die

The high ones die, die. They die. You look up and who's there?
—Easy, easy, Mr Bones. I is on your side.
I smell your grief.
—I sent my grief away. I cannot care
forever. With them all align & again I died
and cried, and I have to live.

—Now there you exaggerate, Sah. We hafta die.
That is our 'pointed task. Love & die.
—Yes; that makes sense.
But what makes sense between, then? What if I
roiling & babbling & braining, brood on why and
just sat on the fence?

—I doubts you did or do. De choice is lost.
—It's fool's gold. But I go in for that.
The boy & the bear
looked at each other. Man all is tossed
& lost with groin-wounds by the grand bulls, cat.
William Falukner's where?

(Frost being still around.)

John Berryman

Dream Song 37: Three around the Old Gentleman

His malice was a pimple down his good
big face, with its sly eyes. I must be sorry
Mr Frost has left:
I like it so less I don't understand—
he couldn't hear or see well—; all we sift—
but this is a bad story.

He had fine stories and was another man
in private; difficult, always. Courteous,
on the whole, in private.
He apologize to Henry, off & on,
for two blue slanders; which was good of him.
I don't know how he made it.

Quickly, off stage with all but kindness, now.
I can't say what I have in mind. Bless Frost,
any odd god around.
Gentle his shift, I decussate & command,
stoic deity. For a while here we possessed
an unusual man.

John Berryman

Dream Song 38: The Russian grin bellows his condolence

The Russian grin bellows his condolence
tô the family: ah but it's Kay,
& Ted, & Chris & Anne,
Henry thinks of: who eased his fearful way
from here, in here, to there. This wants thought.
I won't make it out.

Maybe the source of noble such may come
clearer to dazzled Henry. It may come.
I'd say it will come with pain,
in mystery. I'd rather leave it alone.
I do leave it alone.
And down with the listener.

Now he has become, abrupt, an industry.
Professional-Friends-Of-Robert-Frost all over
gap wide their mouths
while the quirky medium of so many truths
is quiet. Let's be quiet. Let us listen:
—What for, Mr Bones?
 —while he begins to have it out with Horace.

John Berryman

Dream Song 39: Goodbye, sir, & fare well. You're in the clear

Goodbye, sir, & fare well. You're in the clear.
'Nobody' (Mark says you said) 'is ever found out.'
I figure you were right,
having as Henry got away with murder
for long. Some jarred clock tell me it's late,
not for you who went straight

but for the lorn. Our roof is lefted off
lately: the shooter, and the bourbon man,
and then you got tired.
I'm afraid that's it. I figure you with love,
lifey, deathy, but I have a little sense
the rest of us are fired

or fired: be with us: we will blow our best,
our sad wil riffs come easy in that case,
thinking you over,
knowing you resting, who was reborn to rest,
your gorgeous sentence is done. Nothing's the same,
sir,—taking cover.

John Berryman

Dream Song 4

Filling her compact & delicious body
with chicken paprika, she glanced at me
twice.

Fainting with interest, I hungered back
and only the fact of her husband & four other people
kept me from springing on her

or falling at her little feet and crying
'You are the hottest one for years of night
Henry's dazed eyes
have enjoyed, Brilliance.' I advanced upon
(despairing) my spumoni. -- Sir Bones: is stuffed,
de world, wif feeding girls.

-- Black hair, complexion Latin, jewelled eyes
downcast ... The slob beside her feasts ... What wonders is
she sitting on, over there?
The restaurant buzzes. She might as well be on Mars.
Where did it all go wrong? There ought to be a law against Henry.
-- Mr. Bones: there is.

John Berryman

Dream Song 4: Filling her compact & delicious body

Filling her compact & delicious body
with chicken p´prika, she glanced at me
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Fainting with interest, I hungered back
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The restaurant buzzes. She might as well be on Mars.
Where did it all go wrong? There ought to be a law against Henry.
—Mr. Bones: there is.

John Berryman

Dream Song 40: I'm scared a lonely. Never see my son

I'm scared a lonely. Never see my son,
easy be not to see anyone,
combers out to sea
know they're goin somewhere but not me.
Got a little poison, got a little gun,
I'm scared a lonely.

I'm scared a only one thing, which is me,
from othering I don't take nothin, see,
for any hound dog's sake.
But this is where I livin, where I rake
my leaves and cop my promise, this' where we
cry oursel's awake.

Wishin was dyin but I gotta make
it all this way to that bed on these feet
where peoples said to meet.
Maybe but even if I see my son
forever never, get back on the take,
free, black & forty-one.

John Berryman

Dream Song 41: If we sang in the wood (and Death is a German expert)

If we sang in the wood (and Death is a German expert)
while snows flies, chill, after so frequent knew
so many all nothing,
for lead & fire, it's not we would assert
particulars, but animal; cats mew,
horses scream, man sing.

Or: men psalm. Man palms his ears and moans.
Death is a German expert. Scrambling, sitting,
spattering, we hurry.
I try to. Odd & trivial, atones
somehow for my escape a bullet splitting
my trod-on instep, fiery.

The cantor bubbled, rattled. The Temple burned.
Lurch with me! phantoms of Varshava. Slop!
When I used to be,
who haunted, stumbling, sewers, my sacked shop,
roofs, a dis-world ai! Death was a German
home-country.

John Berryman

Dream Song 42: O journeyer, deaf in the mould, insane

O journeyer, deaf in the mould, insane
with violent travel & death: consider me
in my cast, your first son.

Would you were I by now another one,
witted, legged? I see you before me plain
(I am skilled: I hear, I see)—

your honour was troubled: when you wondered—'No'.
I hear. I think I hear. Now full craze down
across our continent
all storms since you gave in, on my pup-tent.
I have of blast & counter to remercy you
for hurling me downtown.

We dream of honour, and we get along.
Fate winged me, in the person of a cab
and your stance on the sand.
Think it across, in freezing wind: withstand
my blistered wish: flop, there, to his blind song
who pick up the tab.

John Berryman

Dream Song 43: 'Oyez, oyez!' The Man Who Did Not Deliver

'Oyez, oyez!' The Man Who Did Not Deliver
is before you for his deliverance, my lords.
He stands, as charged
for This by banks, That cops, by lawyers, by
publishingers for Them. I doubt he'll make
old bones.

Be.
I warned him, of a summer night: consist,
consist. Ex-wives roar.
Further, the Crown holds that they split himself,
splitting his manward chances, to his shame,
my lords, & our horror.

Behind, oh worst lean backward them who bring
un-charges: hundreds & one, children,
the pillars & the sot.
Henry thought. It is so. I must sting.
Listen! the grave ground-rhythm of a gone
. . . makar? So what.

John Berryman

Dream Song 44: Tell it to the forest fire, tell it to the moon

Tell it to the forest fire, tell it to the moon,
mention it in general to the moon
on the way down,
he's about to have his lady, permanent;
and this is the worst of all came ever sent
writhing Henry's way.

Ha ha, fifth column, quisling, genocide,
he held his hands & laught from side to side
a lovely time.
The berries & the rods left him alone less.
Thro' a race of water once I went: happiness.
I'll walk into the sky.

There the great flare & stench, O flying creatures,
surely will dim-dim? Bars will be closed.
No girl will again
conceive above your throes. A fine thunder peals
will with its friends and soon, from agony
put the fire out.

John Berryman

Dream Song 45: He stared at ruin. Ruin stared straight back

He stared at ruin. Ruin stared straight back.
He thought they was old friends. He felt on the stair
where her papa found them bare
they became familiar. When the papers were lost
rich with pals' secrets, he thought he had the knack
of ruin. Their paths crossed

and once they crossed in jail; they crossed in bed;
and over an unsigned letter their eyes met,
and in an Asian city
directionless & lurchy at two & three,
or trembling to a telephone's fresh threat,
and when some wired his head

to reach a wrong opinion, 'Epileptic'.
But he noted now that: they were not old friends.
He did not know this one.
This one was a stranger, come to make amends
for all the imposters, and to make it stick.
Henry nodded, un-.

John Berryman

Dream Song 46

I am, outside. Incredible panic rules.
People are blowing and beating each other without mercy.
Drinks are boiling. Iced
drinks are boiling. The worse anyone feels, the worse
treated he is. Fools elect fools.
A harmless man at an intersection said, under his breath, "Christ!"

That word, so spoken, affected the vision
of, when they trod to work next day, shopkeepers
who went and were fitted for glasses.
Enjoyed they then an appearance of love & law.
Millenia whift & waft - one, one - er, er. . .
Their glasses were taken from them, & they saw.

Man has undertaken the top job of all,
son fin. Good luck.
I myself walked at the funeral of tenderness.
Followed other deaths. Among the last,
like the memory of a lovely fuck,
was: *<i>Do, ut des.</i>*

John Berryman

Dream Song 46: I am, outside. Incredible

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Drinks are boiling. Iced
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Their glasses were taken from them, & they saw.

Man has undertaken the top job of all,
son fin. Good luck.
I myself walked at the funeral of tenderness.
Followed other deaths. Among the last,
like the memory of a lovely fuck,
was: Do, ut des.

John Berryman

Dream Song 47: April Fool's Day, or, St Mary of Egypt

—Thass a funny tittle, Mr Bones.
—When down she saw her feet, sweet fish, on the threshold,
she considered her fair shoulders
and all them hundreds who have them, all
the more who to her mime thickened & maled
from the supple stage,

and seeing her feet, in a visit, side by side
paused on the sill of The Tomb, she shrank: 'No.
They are not worthy,
fondled by many' and rushed from The Crucified
back through her followers out of the city ho
across the suburbs, plucky

to dare my desert in her late daylight
of animals and sands. She fall prone.
Only wind whistled.
And forty-seven years with our caps on,
whom God has not visited.

John Berryman

Dream Song 48: He yelled at me in Greek

He yelled at me in Greek,
my God!—It's not his language
and I'm no good at—his Aramaic,
was—I am a monoglot of English
(American version) and, say pieces from
a baker's dozen others: where's the bread?

but rising in the Second Gospel, pal:
The seed goes down, god dies,
a rising happens,
some crust, and then occurs an eating. He said so,
a Greek idea,
troublesome to imaginary Jews,

like a bitter Henry, full of the death of love,
Cawdor-uneasy, disambitious, mourning
the whole implausible necessary thing.
He dropped his voice & sybilled of
the death of the death of love.
I ought to get going.

John Berryman

Dream Song 49: Blind

Old Pussy-cat if he won't eat, he don't
feel good into his tum', old Pussy-cat.
He wants to have eaten.
Tremor, heaves, he sweaterings. He can't.
A dizzy swims of where is Henry at;
. . . somewhere streng verboten.

How come he sleeps & sleeps and sleeps, waking like death:
locate the restorations of which we hear
as of profound sleep.
From daylight he got maintrackt, from friends' breath,
wishes, his hopings. Dreams make crawl with fear
Henry but not get up.

The course his mind his body steer, poor Pussy-cat,
in weakness & disorder, will see him down
whiskers & tail.
'Wastethrift': Oh one of cunning wives know that
he hoardy-squander, where is nor downtown
neither suburba. Braille.

John Berryman

Dream Song 5

Henry sats in de bar & was odd,
off in the glass from the glass,
at odds wif de world & its god,
his wife is a complete nothing,
St Stephen
getting even.

Henry sats in de plane & was gay.
Careful Henry nothing said aloud
but where a Virgin out of cloud
to her Mountain dropt in light,
his thought made pockets & the plane buckt.
'Parm me, lady.' 'Orright.'

Henry lay in de netting, wild,
while the brainfever bird did scales;
Mr Heartbreak, the New Man,
come to farm a crazy land;
an image of the dead on the fingernail
of a newborn child.

John Berryman

Dream Song 5: Henry sats in de bar & was odd

Henry sats in de bar & was odd,
off in the glass from the glass,
at odds wif de world & its god,
his wife is a complete nothing,
St Stephen
getting even.

Henry sats in de plane & was gay.
Careful Henry nothing said aloud
but where a Virgin out of cloud
to her Mountain dropt in light,
his thought made pockets & the plane buckt.
'Parm me, lady.' 'Orright.'

Henry lay in de netting, wild,
while the brainfever bird did scales;
Mr Heartbreak, the New Man,
come to farm a crazy land;
an image of the dead on the fingernail
of a newborn child.

John Berryman

Dream Song 50

In a motion of night they massed nearer my post.
I hummed a short blues. When the stars went out
I studied my weapons system.
Grenades, the portable rack, the yellow spout
of the anthrax-ray: in order. Yes, and most
of my pencils were sharp.

This edge of the galaxy has often seen
a defence so stiff, but it could only go
one way.
--Mr Bones, your troubles give me vertigo,
& backache. Somehow, when I make your scene,
I cave to feel as if

de roses of dawns & pearls of dusks, made up
by some ol' writer-man, got right forgot
& the greennesses of ours.
Springwater grow so thick it gonna clot
and the pleasing ladies cease. I figure, yup,
you is bad powers.

John Berryman

Dream Song 50: In a motion of night they massed nearer my post

In a motion of night they massed nearer my post.
I hummed a short blues. When the stars went out
I studied my weapons system.
Grenades, the portable rack, the yellow spout
of the anthrax-ray: in order. Yes, and most
of my pencils were sharp.

This edge of the galaxy has often seen
a defence so stiff, but it could only go
one way.
—Mr Bones, your troubles give me vertigo,
& backache. Somehow, when I make your scene,
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de roses of dawns & pearls of dusks, made up
by some ol' writer-man, got right forgot
& the greennesses of ours.
Springwater grow so thick it gonna clot
and the pleasing ladies cease. I figure, yup,
you is bad powers.

John Berryman

Dream Song 51: Our wounds to time, from all the other times

Our wounds to time, from all the other times,
sea-times slow, the times of galaxies
fleeing, the dwarfs' dead times,
lessen so little that if here in his crude rimes
Henry them mentions, do not hold it, please,
for a putting of man down.

Ol' Marster, being bound you do your best
versus we coons, spare now a cagey John
a whilom bits that whip:
who'll tell your fortune, when you have confessed
whose & whose woundings—against the innocent stars
& remorseless seas—

—Are you radioactive, pal? —Pal, radioactive.
—Has you the night sweats & the day sweats, pal?
—Pal, I do.
—Did your gal leave you? —What do you think, pal?
—Is that thing on the front of your head what it seems to be, pal?
—Yes, pal.

John Berryman

Dream Song 52: Silent Song

Bright-eyed & bushy tailed woke not Henry up.
Bright though upon his workshop shone a vise
central, moved in
while he was doing time down hospital
and growing wise.
He gave it the worst look he had left.

Alone. They all abandoned Henry—wonder! all,
when most he—under the sun.
That was all right.
He can't work well with it here, or think.
A bilocation, yellow like catastrophe.
The name of this was freedom.

Will Henry again ever be on the lookout for women & milk,
honour & love again,
have a buck or three?
He felt like shrieking but he shuddered as
(spring mist, warm, rain) an handful with quietness
vanisht & the thing took hold.

John Berryman

Dream Song 53: He lay in the middle of the world, and twicht

He lay in the middle of the world, and twicht.
More Sparine for Pelides,
human (half) & down here as he is,
with probably insulting mail to open
and certainly unworthy words to hear
and his unforgiving memory.

&I seldom go to films. They are too exciting,
said the Honourable Possum.
&It takes me so long to read the 'paper,
said to me one day a novelist hot as a firecracker,
because I have to identify myself with everyone in it,
including the corpses, pal.'

Kierkegaard wanted a society, to refuse to read 'papers,
and that was not, friends, his worst idea.
Tiny Hardy, toward the end, refused to say anything,
a programme adopted early on by long Housman,
and Gottfried Benn
said:&We are using our own skins for wallpaper and we cannot win.

John Berryman

Dream Song 54: 'NO VISITORS' I thumb the roller to

'NO VISITORS' I thumb the roller to
and leans against the door.
Comfortable in my horseblanket
I prop on the costly bed & dream of my wife,
my first wife,
and my second wife & my son.

Insulting, they put guardrails up,
as if it were a crib!
I growl at the head nurse; we compose on one.
I have been operating from nothing,
like a dog after its tail
more slowly, losing altitude.

Nitid. They are shooting me full of sings.
I give no rules. Write as short as you can,
in order, of what matters.
I think of my beloved poet
Issa & his father who
sat down on the grass and took leave of each other.

John Berryman

Dream Song 55: Peter's not friendly. He gives me sideways looks

Peter's not friendly. He gives me sideways looks.

The architecture is far from reassuring.

I feel uneasy.

A pity,—the interview began so well:

I mentioned fiendish things, he waved them away
and sloshed out a martini

strangely needed. We spoke of indifferent matters—

God's health, the vague hell of the Congo,

John's energy,

anti-matter matter. I felt fine.

Then a change came backward. A chill fell.

Talk slackened,

died, and began to give me sideways looks.

'Chirst,' I thought 'what now?' and would have askt for another
but didn't dare.

I feel my application failing. It's growing dark,
some other sound is overcoming. His last words are:

'We betrayed me.'

John Berryman

Dream Song 56: Hell is empty. O that has come to pass

Hell is empty. O that has come to pass
which the cut Alexandrian foresaw,
and Hell is empty.
Lightning fell silent where the Devil knelt
and over the whole grave space hath settled awe
in a full death of guilt.

The tinchel closes. Terror, & plunging, swipes.
I lay my ears back. I am about to die.
My cleft feet drum.
Fierce, the two-footers club. My green world pipes
a finish—for us all, my love, not some.
Crumpling, I—why,—

So in his crystal ball them two he weighs,
solidly, dreaming of his sleepy son,
ah him, and his new wife.
What roar solved once the dilemma of the Ancient of Days,
what sigh borrowed His mercy?—Who may, if
we are all the same, make one.

John Berryman

Dream Song 57: In a state of chortle sin--once he reflected

In a state of chortle sin—once he reflected,
swilling tomato juice—live I, and did
more than my thirstier years.
To Hell then will it maul me? for good talk,
and gripe of retail loss? I dare say not.
I don't thínk there's that place

save sullen here, wherefrom she flies tonight
retrieving her whole body, which I need.
I recall a 'coon treed,
flashlights, & barks, and I was in that tree,
and something can (has) been said for sobriety
but very little.

The guns. Ah, darling, it was late for me,
midnight, at seven. How in famished youth
could I forsee Henry's sweet seed
unspent across so flying barren ground,
where would my loves dislimn whose dogs abound?
I fell out of the tree.

John Berryman

Dream Song 58: Industrious, affable, having brain on fire

Industrious, affable, having brain on fire,
Henry perplexed himself; others gave up;
good girls gave in;
geography was hard on friendship, Sire;
marriages lashed & languished, anguished; dearth of group
and what else had been;

the splendour & the lose grew all the same,
Sire. His heart stiffened, and he failed to smile,
catching (enfit) on.
The law: we must, owing to chiefly shame
lacing our pride, down what we did. A mile,
a mile to Avalon.

Stuffy & lazy, shaky, making roar
overseas presses, he quit wondering:
the mystery is full.
Sire, damp me down. Me feudal O, me yore
(male Muse) serf, if anyfing;
which rank I pull.

John Berryman

Dream Song 59: Henry's Meditation in the Kremlin

Down on the cathedrals, as from the Giralda
in a land no crueller, and over the walls
to domes & river look
from Great John's belfry, Ivan-Veliky,
whose thirty-one are still
to hail who storms no father's throne. Bell, book

& cradle rule, in silence. Hour by hour
from time to time with holy oil
touch yet the forehead eyelids nose
lips ears breast fists of Kruschev, for Christ knows
poor evil Kadar, cut, is back in power.
Boils his throne. The moujik kneels & votes.

South & east of the others' tombs—where? why,
in Arkhangelsky, on the Baptist's side,
lies Brother Jonas (formerly Ivan the Terrible),
where Brother Josef came with his friend's heart
out of such guilt it proved all bearable,
and Brother Nikita will come and lie.

John Berryman

Dream Song 6

During the father's walking--how he look
down by now in soft boards, Henry, pass
and what he feel or no, who know?--
as during his broad father's, all the breaks
& ill-lucks of a thriving pioneer
back to the flying boy in mountain air,

Vermont's child to go out, and while Keats sweat'
for hopeless inextricable lust, Henry's fate,
and Ethan Allen was a calling man,
all through the blind one's dream of the start,
when Day was killing Porter and had to part
lovers for ever, fancy if you can,

while the cardinals' guile to keep Aeneas out
was failing, while in some hearts Chinese doubt
inscrutably was growing, toward its end,
and a starved lion by a water-hole
clouded with gall, while Abelard was whole,
these grapes of stone were being proffered, friend.

John Berryman

Dream Song 6: A Capital at Wells

During the father's walking—how he look
down by now in soft boards, Henry, pass
and what he feel or no, who know?—
as during hís broad father's, all the breaks
& ill-lucks of a thriving pioneer
back to the flying boy in mountain air,

Vermont's child to go out, and while Keats sweat'
for hopeless inextricable lust, Henry's fate,
and Ethan Allen was a calling man,
all through the blind one's dream of the start,
when Day was killing Porter and had to part
lovers for ever, fancy if you can,

while the cardinals' guile to keep Aeneas out
was failing, while in some hearts Chinese doubt
inscrutably was growing, toward its end,
and a starved lion by a water-hole
clouded with gall, while Abelard was whole,
these grapes of stone were being proffered, friend.

John Berryman

Dream Song 60: Afters eight years, be less dan eight percent

Afters eight years, be less dan eight percent,
distinguish' friend, of coloured wif de whites
in de School, in de Souf.
—Is coloured gobs, is coloured officers,
Mr Bones. Dat's nuffin?—Uncle Tom,
sweep shut yo mouf,

is million blocking from de proper job,
de fairest houses & de churches eben.
—You may be right, Friend Bones.
Indeed you is. Defy flyin ober de world,
de pilots, ober ofays. Bit by bit
our immemorial moans

brown down to all dere moans. I flees that, sah.
They brownin up to ourn. Who gonna win?
—I wouldn't predict.
But I do guess mos peoples gonna lose.
I never saw no pickle wifout no hand.
O my, without no hand.

John Berryman

Dream Song 61: Full moon. Our Narragansett gales subside

Full moon. Our Narragansett gales subside
and the land is celebrating men of war
more or less, less or more.
In valleys, thin on headlands, narrow & wide
our targets rest. In us we trust. Far, near,
the bivouacs of fear

are solemn in the moon somewhere tonight,
in turning time. It's late for gratitude,
an annual, rude
roar of a moment's turkey's 'Thanks'. Bright & white
their ordered markers undulate away
awaiting no day.

Away from us, from Henry's feel or fail,
campaigners lie with mouldered toes, disarmed,
out of order,
with whom we will one. The war is real,
and a sullen glory pauses over them harmed,
incident to murder.

John Berryman

Dream Song 62: That dark brown rabbit, lightness in his ears

That dark brown rabbit, lightness in his ears
& underneath, gladdened our afternoon
munching a crab-'.
That rabbit was a fraud, like a black bull

prudent I admired in Zaragoza, who
certainly was brave as a demon

but would not charge, being willing not to die.
The rabbit's case, a little different,
consisted in alert
& wily looks down the lawn, where nobody was,
with prickt ears, while rapt but chatting on the porch
we sat in view nearby.

Then went he mildly by, and around behind

my cabin, and when I followed, there he just sat.
Only at last
he turned down around, passing my wife at four feet
and hopped the whole lawn and made thro' the hedge for the big
house.
—Mr Bones, we all brutes & fools.

John Berryman

Dream Song 63: Bats have no bankers and they do not drink

Bats have no bankers and they do not drink
and cannot be arrested and pay no tax
and, in general, bats have it made.
Henry for joining the human race is bats,
known to be so, by few them who think,
out of the cave.

Instead of the cave! ah lovely-chilly, dark,
ur-moist his cousins hang in hundreds or swerve
with personal radar,
crisisless, kid. Instead of the cave? I serve,
inside, my blind term. Filthy four-foot lights
reflect on the whites of our eyes.

He then salutes for sixty years of it
just now a one of valor and insights,
a theatrical man,
O scholar & Legionnaire who as quickly might
have killed as cast you. O! Stormed with years
he tranquil commands and appears.

John Berryman

Dream Song 64: Supreme my holdings, greater yet my need

Supreme my holdings, greater yet my need,
thoughtless I go out. Dawn. Have I my cig's,
my flaskie O,
O crystal cock,—my kneel has gone to seed,—
and anybody's blessing? (Blast the MIGs
for making funble so

my tardy readying.) Yes, utter' that.
Anybody's blessing? —Mr Bones,
you makes too much
démand. I might be 'fording you a hat:
it gonna rain. —I knew a one of groans
& greed & spite, of a crutch,

who thought he had, a vile night, been-well-blest.
He see someone run off. Why not Henry,
with his grasp of desire?
—Hear matters hard to manage at de best,
Mr Bones. Tween what we see, what be,
is blinds. Them blinds' on fire.

John Berryman

Dream Song 65: A freaking ankle crabbed his blissful trips

A freaking ankle crabbed his blissful trips,
this whiskey tastes like California
but is Kentucky,
like Berkeley where he truly worked at it
but nothing broke all night—no fires—one dawn,
crowding his luck,

flowed down along the cliffs to the Big Sur
where Henry Miller's box is vomit-green
and Henry bathed in sulphur
lovely, hot, over the sea, like Senator
Cat, relaxed & sober, watery
as Tivoli, sir.

No Christmas jaunts for fractured cats. Hot dog,
the world is places where he will not go
this wintertide or again.
Does Striding Edge block wild the sky as then
when Henry with his mystery was two
& twenty, high on the hog?

John Berryman

Dream Song 66: 'All virtues enter into this world:')

'All virtues enter into this world:')
A Buddhist, doused in the street, serenely burned.
The Secretary of State for War,
winking it over, screwed a redhaired whore.
Monsignor Capovilla mourned. What a week.
A journalism doggy took a leak

against absconding coon ('but take one virtue,
without which a man can hardly hold his own')
the sun in the willow
shivers itself & shakes itself green-yellow
(Abba Pimen groaned, over the telephone,
when asked what that was:)

How feel a fellow then when he arrive
in fame but lost? but affable, top-shelf.
Quelle sad semaine.
He hardly know his selving. ('that a man')
Henry grew hot, got laid, felt bad, survived
(should always reproach himself'.

John Berryman

Dream Song 67: I don't operate often. When I do

I don't operate often. When I do,
persons take note.
Nurses look amazed. They pale.
The patient is brought back to life, or so.
The reason I don't do this more (I quote)
is: I have a living to fail—

because of my wife & son—to keep from earning.
—Mr Bones, I sees that.
They for these operations thanks you, what?
not pays you. —Right.
You have seldom been so understanding.
Now there is further a difficulty with the light:

I am obliged to perform in complete darkness
operations of great delicacy
on my self.
—Mr Bones, you terrifies me.
No wonder they didn't pay you. Will you die?
—My
friend, I succeeded. Later.

John Berryman

Dream Song 68: I heard, could be, a Hey there from the wing

I heard, could be, a Hey there from the wing,
and I went on: Miss Bessie soundin good
that one, that night of all,
I feelin fari myself, taxes & things
seem to be back in line, like everybody should
and nobody in the snow on call

so, as I say, the house is given hell
to Yellow Dog, I blowin like it too
and Bessie always do
when she make a very big sound—after, well,
no sound—I see she totterin—I cross which stage
even at Henry's age

in 2-3 seconds: then we wait and see.
I hear strange horns, Pinetop he hit some chords,
Charlie start Empty Bed,
they all come hangin Christmas on some tree
after trees thrown out—sick-house's white birds',
black to the birds instead.

John Berryman

Dream Song 69

Love her he doesn't but the thought he puts
into that young woman
would launch a national product
complete with TV spots & skywriting
outlets in Bonn & Tokyo
I mean it

Let it be known that nine words have not passed
between herself and Henry;
looks, smiles.
God help Henry, who deserves it all
every least part of that infernal & unconscious
woman, and the pain.

I feel as if, unique, she . . . Biddable?
Fates, conspire.
--Mr Bones, please.
--Vouchsafe me, Sleepless One,
a personal experience of the body of Mrs Boogry
before I pass from lust!

John Berryman

Dream Song 69: Love her he doesn't but the thought he puts

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—Mr Bones, please.
—Vouchsafe me, Sleepless One,
a personal experience of the body of Mrs Boogry
before I pass from lust!

John Berryman

Dream Song 7

Henry is old, old; for Henry remembers
Mr Deeds' tuba, & the Cameo,
& the race in Ben Hur,--The Lost World, with sound,
& The Man from Blakeney's, which he did not dig,
nor did he understand one caption of,
bewildered Henry, while the Big Ones laughed.

Now Henry is unmistakably a Big One.
Fúnnee; he don't féel so.
He just stuck around.
The German & the Russian films into
Italian & Japanese films turned, while many
were prevented from making it.

He wishing he could squirm again where Hoot
is just ahead of rustlers, where William S
forgoes some deep advantage, & moves on,
where Hashknife Hartley having the matter taped
the rats are flying. For the rats
have moved in, mostly, and this is for real.

John Berryman

Dream Song 7: 'The Prisoner of Shark Island' with Paul Muni

Henry is old, old; for Henry remembers
Mr Deeds' tuba, & the Cameo,
& the race in Ben Hur, & The Lost World, with sound,
& The Man from Blakeney's, which he did not dig,
nor did he understand one caption of,
bewildered Henry, while the Big Ones laughed.

Now Henry is unmistakably a Big One.
Fünn; he don't fél so.
He just stuck around.
The German & the Russian films into
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He wishing he could squirm again where Hoot
is just ahead of rustlers, where William S
forgoes some deep advantage, & moves on,
where Hashknife Hartley having the matter taped
the rats are flying. For the rats
have moved in, mostly, and this is for real.

John Berryman

Dream Song 70: Disengaged, bloody, Henry rose from the shell

Disengaged, bloody, Henry rose from the shell
where in their racing start his seat got wedged
under his knifing knees,
he did it on the runners, feathering,
being bow, catching no crab. The ridges were sore
& tore chamois. It was not done with ease.

So Henry was a hero, malgr' lui,
that day, for blundering; until & after the coach
said this & which to him.
That happy day, whenas the pregnant back
of Number Two returned, and he'd no choice
but to make for it room.

Therefore he rowed rowed rowed. They did not win.
Forever in the winning & losing since
of his own crew, or rather
in the weird regattas of this afterworld,
cheer for the foe. He sat himself to time
the blue father.

John Berryman

Dream Song 71: Spellbound held subtle Henry all his four

Spellbound held subtle Henry all his four
hearers in the racket of the market
with ancient signs, infamous characters,
new rythms. On the steps he was beloved,
hours a day, by all his four, or more,
depending. And they paid him.

It was not, so, like no one listening
but critics famed & Henry's pals or other
tellers at all
chiefly in another country. No.
He by the heart & brains & tail, because
of their love for it, had them.

Junk he said to all them open-mouthed.
Weather would govern. When the monsoon spread
its floods, few came, two.
Came a day when none, though he began
in his accustomed way on the filthy steps
in a crash of waters, came.

John Berryman

Dream Song 72: The Elder Presences

Shh! on a twine hung from disastered trees
Henry is swinging his daughter. They seem drunk.
Over across them look out,
tranquil, the high statues of the wise.
Her feet peep, like a lady's in sleep sunk.
That which this scene's about—

he pushes violent, his calves distend,
his mouth is open with effort, so is hers,
in the Supreme Court garden,
the justices lean, negro, out, the trees bend,
man's try began too long ago, with chirrs
& leapings, begging pardon—

I will deny the gods of the garden say.
Henry's perhaps to break his burnt-cork luck.
I further will deny
good got us up that broad shoreline. Greed may
like a fuse, but with the high shore we is stuck,
whom they overlook. Why,—

John Berryman

Dream Song 73: Karensui, Ryoan-ji

The taxi makes the vegetables fly.
'Dozo kudasai,' I have him wait.
Past the bright lake up into the temple,
shoes off, and
my right leg swings me left.
I do survive beside the garden I

came seven thousand mile the other way
supplied of energies all to see, to see.
Differ them photographs, plans lie:
how big it is!
austere a sea rectangular of sand by the oiled mud wall,
and the sand is not quite white: granite sand, grey,

—from nowhere can one see all the stones—
but helicopters or a Brooklyn reproduction
will fix that—

and the fifteen changeless stones in their five worlds
with a shelving of moving moss
stand me the thought of the ancient maker priest.
Elsewhere occurs—I remember—loss.
Through awes & weathers neither it increased
nor did one blow of all his stone & sand thought die.

John Berryman

Dream Song 74: Henry hates the world. What the world to Henry

Henry hates the world. What the world to Henry
did will not bear thought.
Feeling no pain,
Henry stabbed his arm and wrote a letter
explaining how bad it had been
in this world.

Old yellow, in a gown
might have made a difference, 'these lower beauties',
and chartreuse could have mattered

"Kyoto, Toledo,
Benares—the holy cities—the
and Cambridge shimmering do not make up
for, well, the horror of unlove,
nor south from Paris driving in the Spring
to Siena and on . . ."

Pulling together Henry, somber Henry
woofed at things.
Spry disappointments of men
and vicing adorable children
miserable women, Henry mastered, Henry
tasting all the secret bits of life.

John Berryman

Dream Song 75: Turning it over, considering

Turning it over, considering, like a madman
Henry put forth a book.
No harm resulted from this.
Neither the menstruating stars (nor man) was moved
at once.
Bare dogs drew closer for a second look

and performed their friendly operations there.
Refreshed, the bark rejoiced.
Seasons went and came.
Leaves fell, but only a few.
Something remarkable about this
unshedding bulky bole-proud blue-green moist

thing made by savage & thoughtful
surviving Henry
began to strike the passers from despair
so that sore on their shoulders old men hoisted
six-foot sons and polished women called
small girls to dream awhile toward the flashing & bursting
tree!

John Berryman

Dream Song 76: Henry's Confession

Nothin very bad happen to me lately.
How you explain that? —I explain that, Mr Bones,
terms o' your bafflin odd sobriety.
Sober as man can get, no girls, no telephones,
what could happen bad to Mr Bones?
—If life is a handkerchief sandwich,

in a modesty of death I join my father
who dared so long agone leave me.
A bullet on a concrete stoop
close by a smothering southern sea
spreadeagled on an island, by my knee.
—You is from hunger, Mr Bones,

I offers you this handkerchief, now set
your left foot by my right foot,
shoulder to shoulder, all that jazz,
arm in arm, by the beautiful sea,
hum a little, Mr Bones.
—I saw nobody coming, so I went instead.

John Berryman

Dream Song 77

Seedy Henry rose up shy in de world
& shaved & swung his barbells, duded Henry up
and p.a.'d poor thousands of persons on topics of grand
moment to Henry, ah to those less & none.
Wif a book of his in either hand
he is stript down to move on.

-- Come away, Mr. Bones.

-- Henry is tired of the winter,
& haircuts, & a squeamish comfy ruin-prone proud national
mind, & Spring (in the city so called).
Henry likes Fall.
Hé would be prepared to líve in a world of Fáll
for ever, impenitent Henry.
But the snows and summers grieve & dream;

thése fierce & airy occupations, and love,
raved away so many of Henry's years
it is a wonder that, with in each hand
one of his own mad books and all,
ancient fires for eyes, his head full
& his heart full, he's making ready to move on.

John Berryman

Dream Song 77: Seedy Henry rose up shy

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John Berryman

Dream Song 78: Op. posth. no. 1

Darkened his eye, his wild smile disappeared,
inapprehensible his studies grew,
nourished he less & less
his subject body with good food & rest,
something bizarre about Henry, slowly sheared
off, unlike you & you,

smaller & smaller, till in question stood
his eyeteeth and one block of memories
These were enough for him
implying commands from upstairs & from down,
Walt's 'orbic flex,' triads of Hegel would
incorporate, if you please,

into the know-how of the American bard
embarrassed Henry heard himself a-being,
and the younger Stephen Crane
of a powerful memory, of pain,
these stood the ancestors, relaxed & hard,
whilst Henry's parts were fleeing.

John Berryman

Dream Song 79: Op. posth. no. 2

Whence flew the litter whereon he was laid?
Of what heroic stuff was warlock Henry made?
and questions of that sort
perplexed the bulging cosmos, O in short
was sandalwood in good supply when he
flared out of history

& the obituary in The New York Times
into the world of generosity
creating the air where are
& can be, only, heroes? Statues & rhymes
signal his fiery Passage, a mountainous sea,
the occlusion of a star:

anything afterward, of a high lament,
let too his giant faults appear, as sent
together with his virtues down
and let this day be his, throughout the town,
region & cosmos, lest he freeze our blood
with terrible returns.

John Berryman

Dream Song 8

The weather was fine. They took away his teeth,
white & helpful; bothered his backhand;
halved his green hair.
They blew out his loves, his interests. 'Underneath,'
(they called in iron voices) 'understand,
is nothing. So there.'

The weather was very fine. They lifted off
his covers till he showed, and cringed & pled
to see himself less.
They instaleld mirrors till he flowed. 'Enough'
(murmmered they) 'if you will watch Us instead,
yet you may saved be. Yes.'

The weather fleured. They weakened all his eyes,
and burning thumbs into his ears, and shook
his hand like a notch.
They flung long silent speeches. (Off the hook!)
They sandpapered his plumpest hope. (So capsize.)
They took away his crotch.

John Berryman

Dream Song 8: The weather was fine. They took away his teeth

The weather was fine. They took away his teeth,
white & helpful; bothered his backhand;
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his hand like a notch.
They flung long silent speeches. (Off the hook!)
They sandpapered his plumpest hope. (So capsize.)
They took away his crotch.

John Berryman

Dream Song 80: Op. posth. no. 3

It's buried at a distance, on my insistence, buried.
Weather's severe there, which it will not mind.
I miss it.
O happies before & during & between the times it got married.
I hate the love of leaving it behind,
deteriorating & hopeless that.

The great Uh climbed above me, far above me,
doing the north face, or behind it. Does He love me?
over, & flout.
Goodness is bits of outer God. The house-guest
(slimmed-down) with one eye open & one breast
out.

Slimmed-down from by-blow; adoptive-up; was white.
A daughter of a friend. His soul is a sight.
—Mr Bones, what's all about?
Girl have a little: what be wrong with that?
Y´u free? —Down some many did descend
from the abominable & semi-mortal Cat.

John Berryman

Dream Song 81: Op. posth. no. 4

He loom' so cagey he say 'Leema beans'
and measured his intake to the atmosphere
of that fairly stable country.
His ear hurt. Left. The rock-cliffs, a mite sheer
at his age, in these places.
Scrubbing out his fear,—

the knowledge that they will take off your hands,
both hands; as well as your both feet, & likewise
both eyes,
might be discouraging to a bloody hero
Also you stifle, like you can't draw breath.
But this is death—

which in some vain strive many to avoid,
many. It's on its way, where you drop at
who stood up, scrunch down small.
It wasn't so much after all to lose, was, Boyd?
A body.—But, Mr Bones, you needed that.
Now I put on my tall hat.

John Berryman

Dream Song 82: Op. posth. no. 5

Maskt as honours, insult like behaving
missiles homes. I bow, & grunt 'Thank you.
I'm glad you could come
so late.' All loves are gratified. I'm having
to screw a little thing I have to screw.
Good nature is over.

Herewith ill-wishes. From a cozy grave
rainbow I scornful laughings. Do not do,
Father, me down.
Let's shuck an obligation. O I have
done. Is the inner-coffin burning blue
or did Jehovah frown?

Jehovah. Period. Yahweh. Period. God.
It is marvellous that views so differay
(Father is a Jesuit)
can love so well each other. We was had.
O visit in my last tomb me.—Perchéute;?
—Is a nice pit.

John Berryman

Dream Song 83: Op. posth. no. 6

I recall a boil, whereupon as I had to sit,
just where, and when I had to, for deadlines.
O I could learn to type standing,
but isn't it slim to be slumped off from that,
problems undignified, fiery dig salt mines?—
Content on one's black flat:

soming no deadline—is all ancient nonsense—
no typewriters—ha! ha!—no typewriters—
alas!

For I have much to open, I know immense
troubles & wonders to their secret curse.
Yet when erect on my ass,

pissed off, I sat two-square, I kept shut my mouth
and stilled my nimble fingers across keys.

That is I stood up.

Now since down I lay, void of love & ruth,
I'd howl my knowings, only there's the earth
overhead. Plop!

John Berryman

Dream Song 84: Op. posth. no. 7

Plop, plop. The lobster toppled in the pot,
fulfilling, dislike man, his destiny,
glowing fire-red,
succulent, and on the whole becoming what
man wants. I crack my final claw singly,
wind up the grave, & to bed.

—Sound good, Mr Bones. I wish I had me some.
(I spose you got a lessen up your slave.)
—O no no no.
Sole I remember; where no lobster swine,—
pots hot or cold is none. With you I grieve
lightly, and I have no lesson.

Bodies are relishy, they say. Here's mine,
was. What ever happened to Political Economy,
leaving me here?
Is a rare—in my opinion—responsibility.
The military establishments perpetuate themselves forever.
Have a bite, for a sign.

John Berryman

Dream Song 85: Op. posth. no. 8

Flak. An eventful thought came to me,
who squirm in my hole. How will the matter end?
Who's king these nights?
What happened to . . . day? Are ships abroad?
I would like to but may not entertain a friend.
Save me from ghastly frights,

Triune! My wood or word seems to be rotting.
I daresay I'm collapsing. Worms are at hand.
No, all that froze,
I mean the blood. 'O get up & go in'
somewhere once I heard. Nowadays I doze.
It's cold here.

The cold is ultimating. The cold is cold.
I am—I should be held together by—
but I am breaking up
and Henry now has come to a full stop—
vanisht his vision, if there was, & fold
him over himself quietly.

John Berryman

Dream Song 86: Op. posth. no. 9

The conclusion is growing . . . I feel sure, my lord,
this august court will entertain the plea
Not Guilty by reason of death.
I can say no more except that for the record
I add that all the crimes since all the times he
died will be due to the breath

of unknown others, sweating in theri guilt
while my client Henry's brow of stainless steel
rests free, as well it may,
of all such turbulence, whereof not built
Henry lies clear as any onion-peel
in any sandwich, say.

He spiced us: there, my lord, the wicked fault
lodges: we judged him when we did not know
and we did judge him wrong,
lying incapable of crime save salt
preservative in cases here below
adduced. Not to prolong

John Berryman

Dream Song 87: Op. posth. no. 10

these hearings endlessly, friends, word is had
Henry may be returning to our life
adult & difficult.
There exist rumors that remote and sad
and quite beyond the knowledge of his wife
to the foothills of the cult

will come in silence this distinguished one
essaying once again the lower slopes
in triumph, keeping up our hopes,
and heading not for the highest we have done
but enigmatic faces, unsurveyed,
calm as a forest glade

for him. I only speak of what I hear
and I have said too much. He may be there
or he may groan in hospital
resuming, as the fates decree, our lot.
I would not interrupt him in whatever, in what
he's bracing him to at all.

John Berryman

Dream Song 88: Op. posth. no. 11

In slack times visit I the violent dead
and pick their awful brains. Most seem to feel
nothing is secret more
to my disdain I find, when we who fled
cherish the knowings of both worlds, conceal
more, beat on the floor,

where Bhain is stagnant, dear of Henry's friends,
yellow with cancer, paper-thin, & bent
even in the hospital bed
racked with high hope, on whom death lay hands
in weeks, or Yeats in the London spring half-spent,
only the grand gift in his head

going for him, a seated ruin of a man
courteous to a junior, like one of the boarders,
or Dylan, with more to say
now there's no hurry, and we're all a clan.
You'd think off here one would be free from orders.
I didn't hear a single word. I obeyed.

John Berryman

Dream Song 89: Op. posth. no. 12

In a blue series towards his sleepy eyes
they slid like wonder, women tall & small,
of every shape & size,
in many languages to lisp 'We do'
to Henry almost waking. What is the night at all,
his closed eyes beckon you.

In the Marriage of the Dead, a new routine,
he gasped his crowded vows past lids shut tight
and a-many rings fumbled on.
His coffin like Grand Central to the brim
filled up & emptied with the lapse of light.
Which one will waken him?

O she must startle like a fallen gown,
content with speech like an old sacrament
in deaf ears lying down,
blazing through darkness till he feels the cold
& blindness of his hopeless tenement
while his black arms unfold.

John Berryman

Dream Song 9

Deprived of his enemy, shrugged to a standstill
horrible Henry, foaming. Fan their way
toward him who will
in the high wood: the officers, their rest,
with p. a. echoing: his girl comes, say,
conned in to test

if he's still human, see,
therefore she get on the Sheriff's mike & howl
'Come down, come down'.
Therefore he un-budge, furious. He'd flee
but only Heaven hangs over him foul.
At the crossways, downtown,

he dreams the folks are buying parsnips & suds
and paying rent to foes. He slipt & fell.
It's golden here in the snow.
A mild crack: a far rifle. Bogart's duds
truck back to Wardrobe. Fancy the brain from hell
held out so long. Let go.

John Berryman

Dream Song 9: Deprived of his enemy, shrugged to a standstill

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truck back to Wardrobe. Fancy the brain from hell
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John Berryman

Dream Song 90: Op. posth. no. 13

In the night-reaches dreamed he of better graces,
of liberations, and beloved faces,
such as now ere dawn he sings.
It would not be easy, accustomed to these things,
to give up the old world, but he could try;
let it all rest, have a good cry.

Let Randall rest, whom your self-torturing
cannot restore one instant's good to, rest:
he's left us now.
The panic died and in the panic's dying
so did my old friend. I am headed west
also, also, somehow.

In the chambers of the end we'll meet again
I will say Randall, he'll say Pussycat
and all will be as before
whenas we sought, among the beloved faces,
eminence and were dissatisfied with that
and needed more.

John Berryman

Dream Song 91: Op. posth. no. 14

Noises from underground made gibber some
others collected & dug henry up
saying 'You are a sight.'

Chilly, he muttered for a double rum
waving the mikes away, putting a stop
to rumors, pushing his fright

off with the now accumulated taxes
accustomed in his way to solitude
and no bills.

Wives came forward, claiming a new Axis,
fearful for their insurance, though, now, glued
to disencumbered Henry's many ills.

A fortnight, sense a single man
upon the trampled scene at 2 a.m.
insomnia-plagued, with a shovel
digging like mad, Lazarus with a plan
to get his own back, a plan, a stratagem
no newsman will unravel.

John Berryman

Dream Song 92: Room 231: the fourth week

Something black somewhere in the vistas of his heart.

Tulips from Tates teased Henry in the mood
to be a tulip and desire no more
but water, but light, but air.
Yet his nerves rattled blackly, unsubdued,
& suffocation called, dream-whiskey'd pour
sirening. Rosy there

too fly my Phil & Ellen roses, pal.
Flesh-coloured men & women come & punt
under my windows. I rave
or grunt against it, from a flowerless land.
For timeless hours wind most, or not at all. I wind
my clock before I shave.

Soon it will fall dark. Soon you'll see stars
you fevered after, child, man, & did nothing,—
compass live to the pencil-torch!
As still as his cadaver, Henry mars
this surface of an earth or other, feet south
eyes bleared west, waking to march.

John Berryman

Dream Song 93: General Fatigue stalked in, & a Major-General

General Fatigue stalked in, & a Major-General,
Captain Fatigue, and at the base of all
pale Corporal Fatigue,
and curious microbes came, came viruses:
and the Court conferred on Henry, and conferred on Henry
the rare Order of Weak.

—How come dims one these wholesome elsters oh?
Old polymaths, old trackers, far from home,
say how thro' auburn hairtidbits of youth's grey climb.
My beauty id off duty!—

Henry relives a lady, how down vain,
spruce in her succinct parts, spruce everywhere.
They fed like muscles and lunched
after, between, before. He tracks her, hunched
(propped on red table elbows) at her telephone,
white rear bare in the air.

John Berryman

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(propped on red table elbows) at her telephone,
white rear bare in the air.

John Berryman

Dream Song 94: Ill lay he long, upon this last return

Ill lay he long, upon this last return,
unvisited. The doctors put everything in the hospital
into reluctant Henry
and the nurses took it out & put it back,
smiling like fiends, with their eternal 'we.'
Henry did a slow burn,

collapsing his dialogue to their white ears
& shiny on the flanges. Sanka he drank
until his memories blurred
& Valerie was coming, lower he sank
and lovely. Teddy on his handlebars
perched, her. One word he heard

insistent his broad shortcomings, then lay still.
That middle-sized wild man was ill.
A hospital is where it all has a use,
so is a makar. . So is substantial God,
tuning in from abroad.

John Berryman

Dream Song 95: The surly cop looked out at me in sleep

The surly cop looked out at me in sleep
insect-like. Guess, who was the insect.
I'd asked him in my robe
& hospital gown in the elevator politely
why someone saw so many police around,
and without speaking he looked.

A meathead, and of course he was armed, to creep
across my nervous system some time ago wrecked.
I saw the point of Loeb
at last, to give oneself over to crime wholly,
baffle, torment, roar laughter, or without sound
attend while he is cooked

until with trembling hands hoist I my true
& legal ax, to get at the brains. I never liked brains—
it's the texture & the thought—
but I will like them now, spooning at you,
my guardian, slowly, until at length the rains
lose heart and the sun flames out.

John Berryman

Dream Song 96: Under the table, no. That last was stunning

Under the table, no. That last was stunning,
that flagon had breasts. Some men grow down cursed.
Why drink so, two days running?
two months, O seasons, years, two decades running?
I answer (smiles) my question on the cuff:
Man, I been thirsty.

The brake is incomplete but white costumes
threaten his rum, his cointreau, gin-&-sherry,
his bourbon, bugs um all.
His go-out privilege led to odd red times,
since even or especially in hospital things get hairy.
He makes it back without falling.

He sleep up a short storm.
He wolf his meals, lamb-warm.

Their packs bump on their' -blades, tan canteens swing,
for them this day my dawn's old, Saturday's IT,
through town toward a Scout hike.
For him too, up since two, out for a sit
now in the emptiest freshest park, one sober fling
before correspondence & breakfast.

John Berryman

Dream Song 97: Henry of Donnybrook bred like a pig

Henry of Donnybrook bred like a pig,
bred when he was brittle, bred when big,
how he's sweating to support them.
Which birthday of the brighter darker man,
the Goya of the Globe & Blackfriars, whom—
our full earth smiled on him

squeezing his old heart with a daughter loose
(hostages they &re)—the world's produced,
so far, alarms, alarms.
Fancy the chill & fatigue four hundred years
award a warm one. All we know is ears.
My slab lifts up its arms

in a solicitude entire, too late.
Of brutal revelry gap your mouth to state:
Front back & backside go bare!
Cats' blackness, booze, blows, grunts, grand groans.
Yo-bad y˜m i-oowaled bo v'ha'l lail awmer h're gawber!
—Now, now, poor Bones.

John Berryman

Dream Song 98: I met a junior--not so junior--and

I met a junior—not so junior—and
a-many others, who knew 'him' or 'them'
long ago, slightly,
whom I know. It was the usual
cocktail party, only (my schedule being strict)
beforehand.

I worked. Well. Then they kept the kids away
with their own questions, over briefest coffee.
Then kids drove me to my city.
I think of the junior: once my advanced élève,
sweetnatured, slack a little, never perhaps to make,
in my opinion then, it.

In my opinion, after a decade, now.
He publishes. The place was second-rate
and is throwing up new buildings.
He'll be, with luck, there always.—Mr Bones,
stop that damn dismal.—Why can't we all the same
be? —Dr Bones, how?

John Berryman

Dream Song 99: Temples

He does not live here but it is the god.
A priest tools in a top his motorbike.
You do not enter.
Us the landscape circles hard abroad,
sunned, stone. Like calls, too low, to like.

One submachine-gun cleared the Durga Temple.

It is very dark here in this groping forth

Gulp rhubarb for a guilty heart,
rhubarb for a free, if the world's sway
waives customs anywhere that far

Look on, without pure dismay.
Unable to account for itself.

The slave-girl folded her fan & turned on my air-condtioner.
The lemonade-machine made lemonade.
I made love, lolled,
my roundel lowered. I ache less. I purr.
—Mr Bones, you too advancer with your song,
muching of which are wrong.

John Berryman

Filling her compact & delicious body

Filling her compact & delicious body
with chicken paprika, she glanced at me
twice.

Fainting with interest, I hungered back
and only the fact of her husband & four other people
kept me from springing on her

or falling at her little feet and crying
'You are the hottest one for years of night
Henry's dazed eyes
have enjoyed, Brilliance.' I have advanced upon
(despairing)my spumoni.-Sir Bones: is stuffed,
do world, wif feeding girls.

-Black hair, complexion Latin, jewelled eyes
downcast...The slob beside her feasts...What wonders is
she sitting on, over there?
The restaurant buzzes. She might as well be on Mars.
Where did it all go wrong? There ought to be a law against Henry.
-Mr. Bones: There is.

John Berryman

Go, ill-spiced book

Go, ill-spiced book, and whisper to her or
storm out the message for her only ear
that she is beautiful.
Mention sunsets, be not silent of her eyes
and mouth and other prospects, praise her size,
say her figure is full.

Say her small figure is heavenly and full,
so as stunned Henry yatters like a fool
and maketh little sense.
Say she is soft in speech, stately in walking,
modest at gatherings, and in every thing
declare her excellence.

Forget not, when the rest is wholly done
and all her splendours opened one by one
to add that she likes Henry,
for reasons unknown, and fate has bound them fast
one to another in linkages that last
and that are fair to see.

John Berryman

Keep your eyes open when you kiss

Keep your eyes open when you kiss: do: when
You kiss. All silly time else, close them to;
Unsleeping, I implore you (dear) pursue
In darkness me, as I do you again
Instantly we part .. only me both then
And when your fingers fall, let there be two
Only, 'in that dream-kingdom': I would have you
Me alone recognize your citizen.

Before who wanted eyes, making love, so?
I do now. However we are driven and hide,
What state we keep all other states condemn,
We see ourselves, we watch the solemn glow
Of empty courts we kiss in .. Open wide!
You do, you do, and I look into them.

John Berryman

Our Sunday morning when dawn-priests were applying

Our Sunday morning when dawn-priests were applying
Wafer and wine to the human wound, we laid
Ourselves to cure ourselves down: I'm afraid
Our vestments wanted, but Francis' friends were crying
In the nave of pines, sun-satisfied, and flying
Subtle as angels about the barricade
Boughs made over us, deep in a bed half made
Needle-soft, half the sea of our simultaneous dying.

'Death is the mother of beauty.' Awry no leaf
Shivering with delight, we die to be well..
Careless with sleepy love, so long unloving.
What if our convalescence must be bried
As we are, the matin meet the passing bell?..
About our pines our sister, wind, is moving.

John Berryman

Sonnet 104 - A spot of poontang on a five-foot piece

A spot of poontang on a five-foot piece,
Diminutive, but room enough . . like clay
To finger eager on some torrid day . .
Who'd throw her black hair back, and hang, and tease.
Never, not once in all one's horny lease
To'have had a demi-lay, a pretty, gay,
Snug, slim and supple-breasted girl for play . .
She bats her big, warm eyes, and slides like grease.

And cuff her silly-hot again, mouth hot
And wet her small round writhing—but this screams
Suddenly awake, unreal as alkahest,
My god, this isn't what I want!—You tot
The harrow-days you hold me to, black dreams,
The dirty water to get off my chest.

Submitted by Holt

John Berryman

Sonnet 115

All we were going strong last night this time,
the mosts were flying & the frozen daiquiris
were downing, supine on the floor lay Lise
listening to Schubert grievous & sublime,
my head was frantic with a following rime:
it was a good evening, and evening to please,
I kissed her in the kitchen -ecstasies-
among so much good we tamped down the crime.

The weather's changing. This morning was cold,
as I made for the grove, without expectation,
some hundred Sonnets in my pocket, old,
to read her if she came. Presently the sun
yellowed the pines & my lady came not
in blue jeans & a sweater. I sat down & wrote.

John Berryman

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John Berryman

Sonnet 117

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Judges xvi.22

John Berryman

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Judges xvi.22

John Berryman

The Ball Poem

What is the boy now, who has lost his ball,
What, what is he to do? I saw it go
Merrily bouncing, down the street, and then
Merrily over--there it is in the water!
No use to say 'O there are other balls':
An ultimate shaking grief fixes the boy
As he stands rigid, trembling, staring down
All his young days into the harbour where
His ball went. I would not intrude on him,
A dime, another ball, is worthless. Now
He senses first responsibility
In a world of possessions. People will take balls,
Balls will be lost always, little boy,
And no one buys a ball back. Money is external.
He is learning, well behind his desperate eyes,
The epistemology of loss, how to stand up
Knowing what every man must one day know
And most know many days, how to stand up
And gradually light returns to the street
A whistle blows, the ball is out of sight,
Soon part of me will explore the deep and dark
Floor of the harbour . . I am everywhere,
I suffer and move, my mind and my heart move
With all that move me, under the water
Or whistling, I am not a little boy.

John Berryman

The Curse

Cedars and the westward sun.
The darkening sky. A man alone
Watches beside the fallen wall
The evening multitudes of sin
Crowd in upon us all.
For when the light fails they begin
Nocturnal sabotage among
The outcast and the loose of tongue,
The lax in walk, the murderers:
Our twilight universal curse.

Children are faultless in the wood,
Untouched. If they are later made
Scandal and index to their time,
It is that twilight brings for bread
The faculty of crime.
Only the idiot and the dead
Stand by, while who were young before
Wage insolent and guilty war
By night within that ancient house,
Immense, black, damned, anonymous.

John Berryman

The Traveller

They pointed me out on the highway, and they said
'That man has a curious way of holding his head.'

They pointed me out on the beach; they said 'That man
Will never become as we are, try as he can.'

They pointed me out at the station, and the guard
Looked at me twice, thrice, thoughtfully & hard.

I took the same train that the others took,
To the same place. Were it not for that look
And those words, we were all of us the same.
I studied merely maps. I tried to name
The effects of motion on the travellers,
I watched the couple I could see, the curse
And blessings of that couple, their destination,
The deception practised on them at the station,
Their courage. When the train stopped and they knew
The end of their journey, I descended too.

John Berryman

Winter Landscape

The three men coming down the winter hill
In brown, with tall poles and a pack of hounds
At heel, through the arrangement of the trees,
Past the five figures at the burning straw,
Returning cold and silent to their town,

Returning to the drifted snow, the rink
Lively with children, to the older men,
The long companions they can never reach,
The blue light, men with ladders, by the church
The sledge and shadow in the twilit street,

Are not aware that in the sandy time
To come, the evil waste of history
Outstretched, they will be seen upon the brow
Of that same hill: when all their company
Will have been irrecoverably lost,

These men, this particular three in brown
Witnessed by birds will keep the scene and say
By their configuration with the trees,
The small bridge, the red houses and the fire,
What place, what time, what morning occasion

Sent them into the wood, a pack of hounds
At heel and the tall poles upon their shoulders,
Thence to return as now we see them and
Ankle-deep in snow down the winter hill
Descend, while three birds watch and the fourth flies.

John Berryman