



When the Tree was Green  
Part One

[Contents](#) - Poems originally written from 1959-1970 revised 2002

Oxymoron

Summer Night

Jumbilicus

Dream

Log to Brick

Existential

Midwife

Fever

A Song

Sunset

All poems ©2002 Charles E. Smith

## Oxymoron



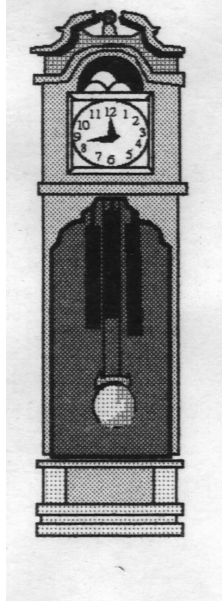
Thinking of self in selfish ways  
While seeking a selfless energy  
The breeziest thought can weigh heavy as gloom  
Closing the door to open mind's room.

Dreams that unravel the stitch of sleep  
Stitch without meaning the pattern we keep  
In seeking the purpose, the loci of seams  
A dream becomes purpose the purpose a dream

Grasping at time finds nothing but ends  
As ends are beginnings, beginning again  
So you'll never find out if you set out to find  
Less pinched in the mind's eye; beginnings are blind.

(Jn 9:39)

# SUMMER NIGHT



Some summer eve  
Before fall exacts its leafy fee  
And the shifting mosaic carpets the land,  
Before moon frost  
Crowns the gray wave sea  
And the carved oak clock  
That once engraved the passing year  
Around it's pithy core  
Turns the full zero

Night to summer night

Think,

But for one clipped tick

There would be none of this,

Forever still life

The world would be summer night

And we

In our innocence

Cradle pent,

Would we dare

Beseech the moon to flight?

# Jumbilicus



The sudden thoughts  
of cities  
Rising from the  
graveyard of thinking  
Elongating their girded  
frames  
As if they were tombs  
Or the shell of a mind  
Ever expanding  
upward

Turn your gaze upon this Jumbilicus  
One stretching above the other  
But all tied to the pitiful street  
Concrete to concrete.

Amaze yourself and your friends  
As you tell them of the minds  
Trapped within the steel  
And the deviation from the greater plan;  
Fill their smoky reality  
With visions of a great energy  
And a magic land that explodes it's bombastic  
Ringing upon the open ear  
And frightens those who scream fear  
From every nervous night window.

Tell them of a destiny that circles  
Like this ever-circling globe,  
That catches the pulse in shoe step echoes  
And vibrates  
And trembles  
And dances with the startled world. (cont.)

Tell them of electric stillness  
And train scream shuffles  
Blending with the screech of rubber  
Mating with the pavement  
Through the inner pathway  
To rubber sliding 'gainst the virgin night.

From cell to cell you can feel them  
Yearning  
With no respite  
Desire burning  
Imagining  
Birthing  
Babel

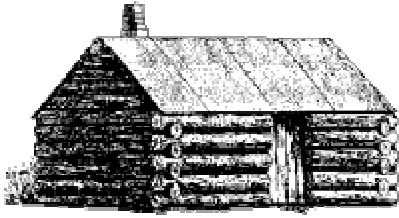
## DREAM



I asked him how it came to be  
His journey to the east  
He opened wide his dust caked eyes  
And asked had I read his poem *Life*  
I replied yes, as rising from death  
He grabbed the nearest paint free brush  
And tore through the *Book of the World*  
And with his delicate magic touch

The trees became tree colored  
The stones, stone size  
Until every page seemed alive  
Then ripping off his mask of death  
He asked me if I'd seen his *Birds*  
I said no and with a breath  
He painted wings upon my words.  
Now flying with his wind swept mind  
I watched him drop the line  
That caught the upraised hands of history.

## Log to Brick



The brownstone edge of summer  
Rains around a midnight tick  
Gently falls to water cup  
Rusting next to brack faced brick.  
A coarse inaction  
Furrowed stone  
In midnight cries no tune of love but  
Blends with callous fog  
Unable to regret, forget  
This clearing once was tree.  
This cabin once was log

## EXISTENTIAL



Fall has stolen stillness  
Softly winter's vandal hands  
Silent come, sliding----  
Poets, alone with echo  
Fill the chilly air  
With cymbals, clashing.

Soon an avalanche of sound cascades  
A mighty gusher interrupts the age,  
Chasing its labyrinthine way to myth  
As if illusion were its own, a gift.

Laughter rollicking, as after  
A midnight frolic with poesy,  
Seizes the wind, and sweeps  
The weary wit to wit's most weary end.

Caught in immortal frame  
Beauty stalks the arid land  
Brushing her silky touch  
On fame  
And the wind  
With miniature imaginings,  
Rockbound and spinning,  
Dips into those wells of truth  
From which no knowledge springs  
Wishing its angry origin.



## MIDWIFE



Her footsteps forever echo  
On my stairs departing,  
As if the  
Sleepy silent world  
Could catch again surprise  
There

With yawning innocence

Cradle rocking

A tear

A cry

# Fever

1962 -01



I burned through the rigorous nightmare of love,  
drenched in twilight seeing the ray, the ray the moon  
in the shade of the light from the source of the sun of  
the day...

In my vigil in darkness I staggered my thoughts in  
the eye of the night of the darkness now bright In the  
light of the brightness in shadow removed I walked through the  
shivering nightmare of love.

Around, around a gyre in sound of the reeling stealing thoughts I  
would find, of the years in the sounds of the blazing days dream in  
the nightmare screams of our love.

He walked next to mist in the crow caught fog a marionette in my  
mind; blue strings red swings of my heart beat pulse of rhythm in  
bitter night light.

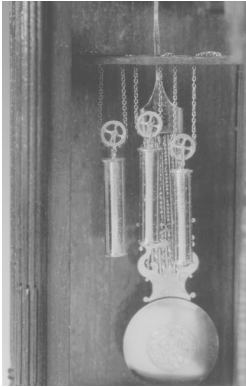
I flung 'gainst the moon in my lonely heart sigh of a cry in the  
dying shy dawn. At the closing the lack of the souls song black of the  
light and the crazy days yawn.

Around, around a sound singing song of the ring of the singing  
birds flight, who circles the moon and the sun in tune screeching and  
leeching the nightmare light.

And I and the moon extinguished by gloom in the dark of that  
hateful noon, spun through the rays weaving our ways with the aid  
of my seamstress heart —The brightness now cloaked the love light  
choked —I struggled awake—

And there you were, waiting for me,  
Your eyes like doves in the dark.

## A Song



Sound strives for voice

And is sometimes found alone

Upon a midnight chime

## Sunset

