

# Left-Handed Portuguese Zen



Images and Text by Bob Biderman

To  
my dearest  
Joy -  
Poet  
Teacher  
and Healer  
of the flesh  
and  
of the soul.



## Seeing Eden

There is a moment  
in a certain type of dream  
when the veil of gauze  
is lifted from your weary eyes  
and you see with a clarity of vision  
that is unlike anything in the raw, physical world.  
For in such a dream  
your sight becomes sharp and lucid,  
as if made young again  
by sipping the hypnotic vapours of somnambulant desire  
and tasting the sweetness of release  
that transports you to another land  
where the magic of the rainbow  
becomes the basic grammar of vision.  
Oh, to see the fragrance of a flower,  
to touch its delicate odour  
and taste the texture of its hue!  
Only in those dreams of rare transportation  
can you shift the filter of recognition  
so the world becomes fresh  
and wondrous again.  
Then and only then  
may you re-enter  
the real Garden of Eden  
where apples are blue as pansies  
and taste of phosphorescent blossoms  
that glow like fireflies in the paleness of the moon.



## Shifting Sands

Shifting sands  
Rhythms of eternity  
Contemplating footsteps  
Of dinosaurs caught in time.  
Impressions captured in oozing mud  
Preserved now to remind us  
That once, long ago  
They were not just relics  
But creatures who lived and breathed  
Brought to life again  
Through the imagination.  
Are they were?  
Or were they are?  
Recreating flesh on bone  
We construct not the creature  
But a statue  
Or a sketch  
An animation of life perceived  
In which to mirror fantasy.  
For the creature  
Is more than artefact  
A shell is just a shell  
What is past  
Is not now  
What was then  
Was then.  
Now it is shell, a bone, a shank of hair  
And so has come to mean  
Nothing more than spirits  
Simply ghosts  
Whose form perceived  
Makes us wonder all the more  
Of this earth  
On whose soil we trod  
Forever



## Another Day in Paradise

What was the place again  
that Adam was kicked out of  
because Eve, that wicked woman,  
deigned to eat  
a wormy apple?  
Paradise?  
But what is Paradise  
without Apples?  
You may well ask.  
And by asking perhaps you  
yourself  
will find the boot  
of God  
has zeroed in on your behind  
and kicked your sinful ass  
out of Nouveau Eden  
where two hundred million  
bushels of apples  
are consumed  
each and every day.  
And two hundred million more  
go rotting.



## ENDS AND BEGINNINGS

Quiet and calm.

Leaves swaying in the breeze.

A distant melody.

Slowly, ever so slowly there is a faint stirring.

A rustle of leaves.

A furry head shakes its beady eyes and then darts back underground again.

A ray of amber light filters through the branches of a nearby tree.

The sky above is softly softly blue with powder-puff clouds

Cartooning into happy shapes of round.

A child of golden brown sits on the grassy slope

He leans over, lithely touches his foot and fingers his toes

And laughs with glee.

The laughter rumbles though him like gently rolling jelly in a crimson sea.

A tiny insect, no bigger than a speck of ink from a faulty fountain pen

Scampers across the Sahara of the child's leg into a crevice

That is a universe without end.

A bird with just one leg cocks its head

As it perches precariously on a dangling branch

Rocking this way and that

While below a bendy worm brown with ingested earth

Tantalises the senses of hungry sparrowdom.

Then without warning something happens.

A cosmic shudder.

An instant of momentary reverberation that transmits the echo of doom

Many light years away.

The child feels nothing but a hiccup.

The bird forgets the worm and looks up and blinks.

In that millisecond something went dark and somewhere a world ended.

Goodbye.

Somewhere else another world began.

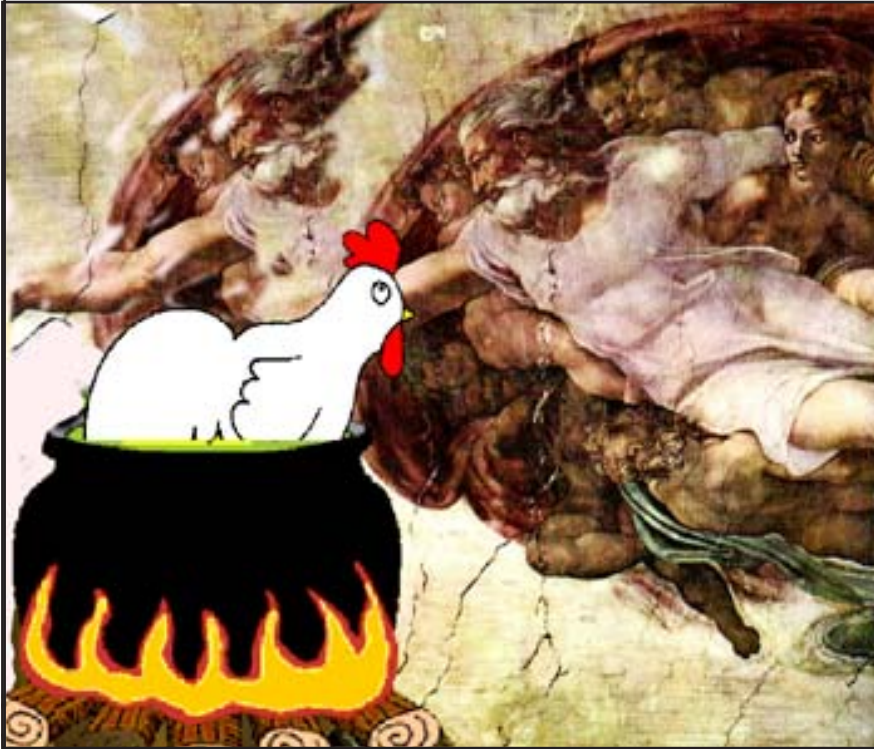
Hello again.



### **Mozart's Cat**

Let's hear it for  
The unknown cat  
who became Mozart's fiddle.  
The forgotten cat  
Who lent the grizzle  
That launched a thousand concertos  
And sonatas.  
Let's give a wag  
To all the cats who gave their flesh  
So bows could saw  
Through reconstructed molecules  
Taming savage beast  
With melodic mews  
Let's salute  
The gutless cat  
Who died so we could listen.

## OF GODS AND CHICKENS



Chickens.  
What a tender meat  
to eat

How sweet  
until you realise  
what  
it is  
you're eating.

God!

Not that chicken's themselves are gods  
In fact they're quite the opposite.

Like matter, anti-matter  
there are gods and chickens.

Chickens cluck  
Gods transmit  
harmonious melodies.

Chickens flap around  
with heads chopped off  
madly fluttering

feathers from disconnected wings  
Whilst the god-head smiles benevolently

But chickens taste good  
Except when they're bad  
And I've never tasted God

Have I?

(Unless the Catholics are right  
about those insipid wafers.)





### Oh to be a seed again!

The days go on  
light and dark  
dark and light  
reaching out  
endlessly  
into the horizons of timelessness.  
Beyond the clouds  
a land of shimmering crystal  
so bright you squint your eyes  
in awe and wonder.  
Gliding there  
you see so far  
into the forever  
that your vision  
goes round the other side  
and back again  
till you are nowhere  
and everywhere  
at the same instant.  
For time has lost its meaning  
and space has compressed  
into a tiny atom  
of the mind.  
There you are nurtured  
in a self-made womb  
comfortable and numb  
without thought or memory.  
Just an essence of being.  
Oh to be a seed again!



### **Soaring the Blue**

The spirit flies  
and with it me,  
myself  
and I.  
The holy trinity of ego.  
Lost  
in the vastness  
of the Great Eternal Blue.



## **Tree-essence**

I wish to be a tree  
says she to me  
and what of thee?  
If I were a tree I would be  
and I would see  
not with eyes  
but with tree-essence  
(which is a word that means the essence of a tree.)  
You can see with essence  
Better than eyes that see only what they want to see.  
For then you see  
but you cannot be.  
So a tree which sees with tree-essence  
sees more than you or me.