

∞ Contents

Editors' Notes	xxiii
Acknowledgments	xxix
Introduction	xxxiii

Theory of Flight (1935)

1 Poem Out of Childhood	
Poem Out of Childhood	3
Song for Dead Children	5
In a Dark House	6
Effort at Speech between Two People	9
Notes for a Poem	11
Place-Rituals	12
<i>Tradition of This Acre</i>	12
<i>Ritual of Blessing</i>	12
Wooden Spring	13
Sonnet	13
Letter, Unposted	14
Sand-Quarry with Moving Figures	15
Wedding Presents	15
Three Sides of a Coin	16
Breathing Landscape	19
Four in a Family	19
This House, This Country	20
2 Theory of Flight	
Preamble	21
The Gyroscope	24
The Lynchings of Jesus	25
1 <i>Passage to Godhead</i>	25
2 <i>The Committee-Room</i>	26
3 <i>The Trial</i>	29
The Tunnel	31
The Structure of the Plane	38
1 <i>The Structure of the Plane</i>	38
2 <i>The Strike</i>	41
3 <i>The Lover</i>	42
Night Flight : New York	44
Theory of Flight	47

3	The Blood Is Justified	
	For Memory	48
	<i>Life and Works</i>	48
	<i>Holy Dying</i>	49
	<i>Ritual for Death</i>	50
	City of Monuments	51
	Study in a Late Subway	53
	Child and Mother	53
	Eccentric Motion	55
	Sundays, They Sleep Late	56
	Thousands of Days	57
	The Surrounded	58
	Burlesque	59
	Movie	60
	Metaphor to Action	61
	Citation for Horace Gregory	62
	Cats and a Cock	63
	The Blood Is Justified	68

U.S. I (1938)

1	The Book of the Dead	
	The Road	73
	West Virginia	74
	Statement: Phillipa Allen	75
	Gauley Bridge	77
	The Face of the Dam: Vivian Jones	78
	Praise of the Committee	79
	Mearl Blankenship	82
	Absalom	83
	The Disease	86
	George Robinson: Blues	87
	Juanita Tinsley	88
	The Doctors	89
	The Cornfield	92
	Arthur Peyton	94
	Alloy	95
	Power	96
	The Dam	99
	The Disease: After-Effects	102
	The Bill	104
	The Book of the Dead	106

2	Night-Music	
	A Flashing Cliff	111
	Girl at the Play	111
	Burning Bush	112
	Eel	113
	Homage to Literature	115
	The Handclap	115
	Trophies	116
	Panacea	117
	In Hades, Orpheus	118
	The Drowning Young Man	119
	Boy with His Hair Cut Short	119
	Course	120
	More of a Corpse than a Woman	121
	Three Black Women	122
	Formosa	122
	Night-Music	123
	<i>Time Exposures</i>	123
	<i>The Child Asleep</i>	124
	<i>Adventures, Midnight</i>	126
	<i>Night-Music</i>	127
	Driveway	128
	Lover as Fox	129
	Gift-Poem	130
	Woman and Emblems	131
	<i>Woman and Bird</i>	131
	<i>The Birthday</i>	131
	<i>Woman and Music</i>	132
	Outpost	132
3	Two Voyages	
	The Cruise	133
	Mediterranean	144

A Turning Wind (1939)

1	Moment of Proof	
	Reading Time : 1 Minute 26 Seconds	155
	Song, the Brain-Coral	155
	Target Practice	156
	Otherworld	157
	<i>Landing at Liverpool</i>	157
	<i>The Island</i>	158

<i>Otherworld</i>	159
Nuns in the Wind	161
For Fun	162
Correspondences	164
<i>Democritus Laughed</i>	164
<i>Tree of Days</i>	164
1/26/39	165
<i>Correspondences</i>	166
Noguchi	168
Seventh Avenue	169
The Shortest Way Home	170
Palos Verdes Cliffs	171
Paper Anniversary	172
From the Duck-Pond to the Carousel	174
Asylum Song	174
The Victims, a Play for the Home	175
M-Day's Child	177
Speech for the Assistant, from <i>Houdini</i>	178
Judith	179
2 Lives	
"The risen image shines, its force escapes, we are all named"	181
Gibbs	182
Ryder	185
Chapman	188
Ann Burlak	191
Ives	195
Wake Island (1942)	199
Beast in View (1944)	
One Soldier	207
1 Beast in View	
Ajanta	207
1 <i>The Journey</i>	207
2 <i>The Cave</i>	208
3 <i>Les Tendresses Bestiales</i>	209
4 <i>Black Blood</i>	210
5 <i>The Broken World</i>	210
Mortal Girl	211
Child in the Great Wood	212

The Meeting	213
The Key	214
Darkness Music	215
Song	215
Shooting Gallery	216
Suicide Blues	216
Wreath of Women	217
Madboy's Song	221
Drunken Girl	222
Love and Its Doors and Windows	222
The Minotaur	223
Gift-Poem	224
Holy Family	228
Who in One Lifetime	228
<i>from</i> "To the Unborn Child"	229
Leg in a Plaster Cast	230
Bubble of Air	231
Sea Mercy	232
Long Past Moncada	232
Chapultepec Park—1	233
Chapultepec Park—2	234
A Game of Ball	235
Gold Leaf	236
All Souls	236
Evening Plaza, San Miguel	237
Beast in View	238

2

Letter to the Front	239
1 "Women and poets see the truth arrive"	239
2 "Even during war, moments of delicate peace"	239
3 "They called us to a change of heart"	240
4 <i>Sestina</i>	241
5 "Much later, I lie in a white seaport night"	242
6 "Home thoughts from home; we read you every day"	242
7 "To be a Jew in the twentieth century"	243
8 "Evening, bringing me out of the government building"	243
9 "Among all the waste there are the intense stories"	244
10 "Surely it is time for the true grace of women"	246

3

The Soul and Body of John Brown	247
---------------------------------	-----

The Green Wave (1948)

- "Let poems and bodies love and be given to air" 252
Water Night 253
Eyes of Night-Time 253
This Place in the Ways 254
Song, from "Mr. Amazeen on the River" 255
Cloud, Airs, Carried Me Away 255
Salamander 256
His Head Is Full of Faces 257
Mrs. Walpurga 257
A Certain Music 259
The Motive of All of It 259
Green Limits 260
The Children's Orchard 261
Christmas Eve 261
Crayon House 262
A Charm for Cantinflas 263
Traditional Tune 264
Foghorn in Horror 265
Summer, the Sacramento 265
Speech of the Mother, from *The Middle of the Air* 266
Then I Saw What the Calling Was 267

Translations: Six Poems by Octavio Paz

- The Bird 268
Poet's Epitaph 268
Spark 269
Two Bodies 269
The Street 269
Lovers 270

Rari from the Marquesas

- Rari for Tahia and Piu 271
Rari for O'Otua 272
A True Confession 272
Careful of the Day 273
Rari for Hepuheku 273
Rari 274
Rari to Encourage Youth 274
Rari, to Be Bothered by Mosquitoes 274
Not Before I Fall Asleep 275

Easter Eve	1945	
Easter Eve	1945	276
Private Life of the Sphinx		277
Nine Poems for the unborn child		280

Orpheus (1949) 287

Elegies (1949)

First Elegy. Rotten Lake	299
Second Elegy. Age of Magicians	302
Third Elegy. The Fear of Form	304
Fourth Elegy. The Refugees	307
Fifth Elegy. A Turning Wind	310
Sixth Elegy. River Elegy	314
Seventh Elegy. Dream-Singing Elegy	318
Eighth Elegy. Children's Elegy	321
Ninth Elegy. The Antagonists	325
Tenth Elegy. Elegy in Joy	328

Body of Waking (1958)

I

Haying Before Storm	333
Phaneron	333
The Young Girl of the Mississippi Valley	334
A Birth	334
King's Mountain	335
Mother Garden's Round	336
Rite	337
Ringling	338
After Their Quarrel	338
Tree	339
Night Feeding	340
The Return	341
Unborn Song	342
The Two Illuminations	342
F. O. M.	343
Exile of Music	344
On the Death of Her Mother	344
"Make and be eaten, the poet says"	345
Hero Speech	346
The Watchers	347

- A Ballad Theme 348
 Asleep and Awake 349
 Of Money. And the Past. 350
 “Long enough. Long enough” 351
 The Loan 352
 Pouring Milk Away 353
 Children, the Sandbar, that Summer 353
 Born in December 354
 The Sixth Night: Waking 354
 Nevertheless the Moon 354
 Speed, We Say 355
 The Birth of Venus 356
 The Place at Alert Bay 357
 Voices of Waking 357
 Divining Water 358
- 2 Translations: Octavio Paz
- “The hand of day opens” 359
 “At daybreak go looking for your newborn name” 360
 Fable 360
 Day 361
 Proverbs 362
 “In her splendor islanded” 362
 “Like ivy the creeper with a thousand hands” 363
 Life of the Poet 363
 The Prisoner 364
from Sun Stone 366
- 3
- Suite for Lord Timothy Dexter 367
 - 1 “*They face us in sea-noon sun, just as he saw them waiting*” 367
 - 2 *How to Impress Massachusetts* 367
 - 3 *Three Nights I Dreamed* 369
 - 4 *Kings and Contemporaries* 370
 - 5 *The Pickle, the Temple* 372
 - 6 *The Kind of Woman* 376
 - 7 *Guessing Time* 377
- 4
- Are You Born?—I 379
 “Murmurs from the earth of this land, from the caves and craters” 380
 “The tree of rivers seen and forgotten” 380
 “The power of war leads to a plan of lives” 381

“A tree of rivers flowing through our lives”	382
“The sea has opened, the limit of his dream”	382
Powerplant	383
“In the last hour of night, a zebra racing dawn”	384
Fields Where We Slept	384
Portrait of a Man, with a Background of Holdings	385
“A red bridge fastening this city to the forest”	386
“Power never dominion”	387
“The sky is as black as it was when you lay down”	388
“On your journey you will come to a time of waking”	389
“This is the net of begetting and belief”	389
Body of Waking	390
“Sounds of night in the country of the opposites”	395
Willkie in <i>The Gulliver</i>	396
“Then full awake you will recognize the voice”	396
“In your time, there have been those who spoke clearly”	397
He Had a Quality of Growth	398
Are You Born?—2	399

Waterlily Fire (1962)

The Speaking Tree	403
To Enter That Rhythm Where the Self Is Lost	403
For a Mexican Painter	404
A Song of Another Tribe	404
Song	405
Waterlily Fire	405
1 <i>The Burning</i>	405
2 <i>The Island</i>	406
3 <i>Journey Changes</i>	408
4 <i>Fragile</i>	409
5 <i>The Long Body</i>	409

The Speed of Darkness (1968)

I Clues

The Poem as Mask	413
<i>Orpheus</i>	413
What Do I Give You?	413
The Transgress	414
The Conjugation of the Paramecium	414
Junk-Heap at Murano	415
Clues	416
In Our Time	417

Double Dialogue:	417
<i>Homage to Robert Frost</i>	417
The Six Canons	418
Forerunners	418
Orgy	419
The Overthrow of One O’Clock at Night	420
Among Roses	420
What I See	421
Believing in Those Inexorable Laws	421
Song : Love in Whose Rich Honor	422
Niobe Now	422
Song : The Star in the Nets of Heaven	423
Air	423
Gift	424
Cries from Chiapas	424
The War Comes into My Room	425
Delta Poems	426
Spirals and Fugues	427
Anemone	428
Fighting for Roses	428
For My Son	429
Poem	430
The Power of Suicide	430
The Seeming	431
Song from <i>Puck Fair</i>	432
Not Yet	432
Landscape with Wave Approaching	433
Segre Song	434
Bunk Johnson Blowing	434
Cannibal Bratuscha	435
What Have You Brought Home from the Wars?	437
One Month	438
Silence of Volcanoes	439
What They Said	439
A Little Stone in the Middle of the Road, in Florida	440
The Blue Flower	440
Woman as Market	441
<i>Forgetting and Remembering</i>	441
Word of Mouth	442
1 <i>The Return</i>	442
2 <i>Word of Mouth</i>	443
Endless	445

2	Games	
	The Backside of the Academy	445
	Mountain : One from Bryant	447
	The Flying Red Horse	447
3		
	The Outer Banks	448
4	Lives	
	Akiba	454
	<i>The Way Out</i>	454
	for <i>the Song of Songs</i>	455
	<i>The Bonds</i>	457
	<i>Akiba Martyr</i>	458
	<i>The Witness</i>	459
	Käthe Kollwitz	460
	1 "Held between wars"	460
	2 "Woman as gates, saying"	461
	3 "Held among wars, watching"	462
	4 <i>Song : The Calling-Up</i>	463
	5 <i>Self-Portrait</i>	463
5		
	The Speed of Darkness	465

Breaking Open (1973)

1	Searching / Not Searching	
	Waking This Morning	471
	Despials	471
	What Do We See?	472
	Looking at Each Other	473
	Desdichada	474
	Voices	475
	Fire	475
	Waiting for Icarus	476
	<i>from City of Paradise</i>	477
	The Question	477
	In Her Burning	478
	Rondel	479
	More Clues	479
	Myth	480
	Searching / Not Searching	480
	1 "What kind of woman goes searching and searching?"	480

2	<i>Miriam : The Red Sea</i>	481
3	<i>For Dolci</i>	481
4	<i>Concrete</i>	482
5	<i>Brecht's Galileo</i>	482
6	<i>Reading the Kieu</i>	482
7	<i>The Floor of Ocean</i>	483
8	<i>H. F. D.</i>	483
9	<i>The Artist as Social Critic</i>	484
10	<i>The President and the Laser Bomb</i>	484
11	<i>Not Searching</i>	485
12	<i>The Question</i>	485
13	<i>"Searching/not searching. To make closeness"</i>	486
14	<i>"What did I see? What did I not see?"</i>	486
	<i>A Simple Experiment</i>	487
	<i>Along History</i>	488
	<i>Boys of These Men Full Speed</i>	488
	<i>All the Little Animals</i>	489
	<i>Next</i>	490
	<i>Two Years</i>	490
	<i>Iris</i>	490
2	<i>Orange and Grape</i>	
	<i>Ballad of Orange and Grape</i>	492
	<i>Rock Flow, River Mix</i>	493
	<i>Martin Luther King, Malcolm X</i>	494
	<i>Looking</i>	494
	<i>Don Baty, the Draft Resister</i>	495
	<i>Te Hanh : Long-Ago Garden</i>	496
	<i>Welcome from War</i>	496
	<i>Facing Sentencing</i>	497
	<i>Secrets of American Civilization</i>	497
	<i>Wherever</i>	498
	<i>Bringing</i>	498
	<i>A Louis Sonnet</i>	499
	<i>After Melville</i>	500
	<i>The Writer</i>	502
	<i>Gradus Ad Parnassum</i>	502
	<i>From a Play : Publisher's Song</i>	503
	<i>In the Night the Sound Woke Us</i>	503
	<i>In the Underworld</i>	503
	<i>Afterwards</i>	507
	<i>Flying to Hanoi</i>	508
	<i>It Is There</i>	508

	The Running of the Grunion	509
	Sacred Lake	511
3	Northern Poems	
	Songs of the Barren Grounds	512
	1 <i>The Old Days</i>	512
	2 <i>Inland, Away</i>	512
	3 <i>I'm Here Again</i>	513
	4 <i>Not Much Good</i>	514
	5 <i>My Breath</i>	514
	I Recognize This Song	515
	The Black Ones, the Great Ones	516
	Trout Fishing	517
	How Lovely It Is	517
	The Word-Fisher	518
	Stroking Songs	518
	<i>A Girl for a Boy—Stroking Song</i>	518
	<i>The Baby on the Mountain—Stroking Song</i>	519
	<i>The Wiping Moss from the Ruins</i>	519
	Stroking Songs, Childhood Songs	520
	<i>Being Born</i>	520
	<i>Shooting Star</i>	520
4		
	Breaking Open	521
	<i>Columbus</i>	523
	<i>Burning the Dreams</i>	526
	<i>Death and the Dancer</i>	526
	<i>Rational Man</i>	526
	<i>The Hostages</i>	528
	The Gates (1976)	
I		
	St. Roach	533
	Dream-Drumming	534
	Double Ode	534
	Painters	537
	Rune	537
	How We Did It	538
	Islands	538
	Blue Spruce	539
	Artifact	540
	Ms. Lot	540

Boys in the Branches	541
Song : Lying in Daylight	542
Hypnagogic Figure	542
The Lost Romans	543
Canal	544
For Kay Boyle	545
Resurrection of the Right Side	545
The Wards	546
The Sun-Artist	547
Poem White Page White Page Poem	549
Fable	549
Neruda, the Wine	550
Before Danger	551
Song : Remembering Movies	551
Work, for the Day Is Coming	551
Recovering	552
Parallel Invention	553
Poem	554
Not to Be Printed, Not to Be Said, Not to Be Thought	554
Back Tooth	555
Destruction of Grief	555
Trinity Churchyard	556
Burnishing, Oakland	557
The Iris-Eaters	558
Slow Death of the Dragon	558
Mendings	560
Then	561

2

The Gates	561
1 "Waiting to leave all day I hear the words"	561
2 "Walking the world to find the poet of these cries"	562
3 <i>New Friends</i>	562
4 "The Cabinet minister speaks of liberation"	563
5 "Among the days"	563
6 <i>The Church of Galilee</i>	564
7 <i>The Dream of Galilee</i>	564
8 <i>Mother as Pitchfork</i>	565
9 "You grief woman you gave me a scarlet coverlet"	565
10 "Air fills with fear and the kinds of fear"	565
11 "Long ago, soon after my son's birth"	567
12 "For that I cannot name the names"	567

- 13 “Crucified child—is he crucified?
he is tortured” 567
 14 “So I became very dark very large” 568
 15 “All day the rain” 568

Juvenilia

- Antigone 573
 Cities of the Morning 573
 Autumn in the Garden 574
 The Ballad of the Missing Lines 575
 November Sketches 576
 To a Lady Turning Middle-Aged 578
 Place-Poems: New York 579
 O City 579
 Fourteenth Street 579
 The New School for Social Research 580
 Sheridan Square Conversation 580
 The New Bridge 581
 Park Avenue 581
 College Special 582
 Empire State Tower 582
 “Dear place, sweet home” 583
 For an Aesthete 583
 Pastorale No. 2 584

A New Poem

- An Unborn Poet 591
- Abbreviations 595
 Annotations 597
 Textual Notes 637
 Bibliography 651
 Index of Titles 655
 Index of First Lines 663