

THE GATES OF PARADISE

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Visual Poetry: The Shape Poem: Shapes tell the words what to say and words tell the shapes what to form.

I have been creating words out of shapes and shapes out of words for over sixty years. When I was young, I dreamt of a magic oil painting where one could over-paint over and over again on a permanent magic canvas without ever ending in mud. I dreamt of a writing where one could continuously re-draft, correct, and perfect on the same piece of invisible lined magic paper without eraser crumbs and rips and endless rewritings by hand and irretrievable losses of covered ideas. Electronics have made the impossible possible. Magic has once again become science. Before the computer my poems would not have been impossible to do. I might have created 20 with a roomful of kind patient 12 hour a day lead shaving linotyper monks in 200 years. My process is this: I invariably wake up at 2 Or 3 AM with a visual and word idea. I write it down 2 or 3 sentences at most on a piece of paper and go back to sleep. I place the note next to my computer the next morning. In a few hours or days or weeks I look at the idea on the piece of paper and start writing. I print out almost every change as I work to save my work safely and to see what it looks like printed: Minute differences are sometimes difficult to catch on screen. What You See Is What You Get is not yet perfected. Examples of my poems printed out at each modification, (up to 250 for one poem,) so that every change from slight to gross is recorded, may be found archived at: The Poetry/Rare Books Collection State University Of New York At Buffalo [1] and at: The Sackner Archive Of Concrete And Visual poetry. [2]

The most prevalent question I am asked about my shape poems is: Is it true that you create these visual poems in Microsoft Word? My answer is yes. I use Microsoft Word 2000 installed in Windows 98 on a PC with a

Cellaron 4 Mega Hertz motherboard Mega Hertz plus 256 MB Ram plus a 4 gigabyte hard disc. and a 21" SONY G520 color monitor. I started out in 1988 with a 286 PC with Word 1.0 in Windows 2.0 on a 10 MB hard disc and a 15" color monitor. I have rewritten and reshaped as I have up graded computers over the years. I believe this has allowed me a hitherto unknown subtle possibility for refinement in my poems. When my poems are perfected in Word, I print my poems to Adobe Distiller which makes .pdfs. Many different printer drivers print text differently which ruinously distorts spacing, condensation and expansion of lines and ruin enlargement and shrinkage of font sizes. .Pdfs are universally viewed accurately with every printer driver. I print my Word texts done with my Laserjet4+ printer driver to .pdfs with Adobe Distiller to enable them to be identically viewed on every computer. Sometimes to do this I have to make a few changes to my text.

At this point I am able to publish on the Web with .pdfs and/or publish in print from .pdfs or Word documents. The large prints on exhibit at COSIGN 2002 were printed by a local printer from the same Microsoft Word generated .pdfs as are seen on the web. The print copy of The Gates Of Paradise was Xeroxed from a 1200 dot per inch Duplex HP Laserjet 4000 TN PCL 6 master.

A fabulous artistic pleasure in .pdfs is the magnifying glass. With the magnifying glass one may enlarge or condense the image. This allows the use of ^{minute font sizes} fonts for buried counterpoints, etc. When the fonts are enlarged they become giant sculptural entities which have the capacity to overlap transparently or opaquely. As the reader enlarges or reduces the fonts they create a myriad of object and meaning relationships. I have used over 100 fonts and symbols out of 400 fonts and symbols available to me in my system. I am happy in my use the of the gray scale gradations and colors available for fonts in Microsoft Word.

I wrote the 350+ poems of The Gates Of Paradise in Microsoft Word in 3 hours every morning for 15 years: 5475 days: 16425 hours. Whenever I have shown anyone how I create shape poems they have

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run out of the room. They invariably explain that it disturbs them to see someone working as slowly as I do on a computer:

Each of the over 350 poems of *The Gates Of Paradise* is an icon of our world, with idea, picture, meter, prose, or melody all shaping each other. *The Gates Of Paradise* is a poem that exhibits some of the many ways I've seen living and dead human beings struggling to find happiness inside of themselves and outside of them. These gates are paradisiacals of people, and animals, and objects from dancing body parts to Las Vegas lounge singers, from Brooklyn Dodger fans to cyborg Babbits, from nerve wracked saints to Los Angeles bottom feeder rabbits, from lovely air heads to heads of state to heads of lettuce, from black holes to pear shaped planets, with one often transforming into another as the poems proceed.

The *Gates Of Paradise* are created in the light of, yet unconstrained by, Shape Poems from *Technopaegnia* of the Greek Anthology: Theocritus, Simias, Marcus, Besantinus: Persian Garden Rugs, Chinese Phoenix Dragon Writing, Zenga, Hyginus, Herbert, Mallarmé, Chi Pai Shih, Appolinaire, Cocteau, Delaunay-Turk, Marinetti, Lissitzky, Mayakovsky, Hollander, et al. [3] In many of these poems, shape burdens as meter might and counterpoints as meter may. Often the picture is the Schubert sunmelody, the words the buried Verd imosquitogun violins. Often the picture is the Reubens silverfish flesh underpainting, the words the surface Rodin shoepolish. Font is frozen sound. Often the small fonts are the Mozart sungossamer icepeaktink, the huge fonts, the darkling Beethoven avalanchethunder.

Yes: Shapes, words, pictures, rhymes, rhythms, ideas, pokes, jokes, folks, hoax, cokes, and yokes all at once-

This poem is a deeply complex work of art, ranging from intricate metaphysical forms to regional dialects, to just plain old fashioned crap. No dimension, or pretense, or any fad of soul crushing iron tedious small mean increment of human training is left unilluminated.

My endeavor in the shadow is to create a light effect that goes down past the walls of habitual prejudice, down past the huge vault of slow incremented little trainings, down to the unhelped hope broken buried human Self, through the scattering of ideas, images, and words, too quick or sad or happy for the merciless dog training to reject. My endeavor in the shadow is to nourish the buried real human inside so that if the buried Self ever arises to take its place in the conscious life, the unbound Self will be strong enough to survive the vicissitudes of our daily life. Part One of the poem: *The Gates Of Paradise, The Breath Garden Entrance: Explores breath.* Part Two: *The Flux Garden: Explores change.* For human beings breath and change are the same. And they are different. The same is the gate.

[1] (<http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/units/pl/collections/manuscripts/index.html>)

[2] (<http://www.rediscov.com/sackner.htm>)

[3] Representative works at www.thegatesofparadise.com

As also is: *The Gates Of Paradise*. (Also at www.ubu.com/) Also see: David Daniels' YEARS

1933-2002 at Biographical Notes (www.thegatesofparadise.com/bioNotes.htm)