

# The Creation Cabal



"The Creation Cabal" at Blackfish Gallery in Portland, Oregon. <http://www.blackfish.com>

## Poems in conversation with the art of Sandra Roumagoux.

<http://webpages.charter.net/sroumagoux/>

The poems and commentary in this booklet are the work of Dave Brauer-Rieke, a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. At the time of this writing he served Atonement Lutheran Church in Newport, Oregon. He may be reached at [bishop@oregonsynod.org](mailto:bishop@oregonsynod.org).

## About the Poet

**M**y father was a professor of law. As an attorney he taught me that words have meaning. My mother was a speech therapist and special educator. She knew words could bring healing and hope. With their support I went to school and earned a BA in Economics, but money words always felt disingenuous to me. So, like my maternal grandfather and paternal great grandfather before me, I went to the seminary. There I picked up my Masters of Divinity degree and more questions than I started with.

As a preacher I work on words. As a poet words work on me. My oldest son is now headed to law school. My daughter has her sights set on pastoral ministry. Apparently they have caught the family disease. A third child still waits to pick his path, but all three find their way into my writing.

My life partner, Gretchen, is a midwife. Her trust in the birth process and patience with pregnancy supports me, as it has countless women. I do not believe I wrote poetry before we labored together.

Currently I pastor with the community of Atonement Lutheran Church in Newport, OR. It is there that I was privileged to meet Sandy Roumagoux.

## The Creation Cabal

**T**he "Creation Cabal" is a conversation. "Cabal" actually means "conspiracy," which is probably closer to the truth. It also suggests an artistic collaboration.

Sandy Roumagoux is a deeply thoughtful and amazingly gifted eco-artist. Over time we have discovered that much of what she seeks to say with oils I try to paint with words. We are both concerned about our world, the environment and our impact on it. We also grieve the erosion of common language between 21<sup>st</sup> century arts and religion. The "Creation Cabal" is as much about spiritual connections as it is environmental ones. Both beg for our attention.

Unfortunately, only some of Sandy's paintings are included here. Our hope, though, is that these images and words will find a home with you. Feel free to find your own voice and join the conspiracy.

**Dave Brauer-Rieke**

October 2006

**T**he creation mythology of Genesis 1 apparently took on its present form in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The people of Israel were in captivity in Babylon. Their walled cities had been overrun. Their holy places were destroyed. Artisans, crafts people and everyone who was anyone had been dragged away across the great desert with no hope of return.

Israel's captors had their own creation myths. In the Babylonian story *Enuma Elish*, the water gods spawn a dysfunctional family of divine beings. The heavens erupt as a violent, brutal and misogynistic battle ensues. Tiamat, the mother of life, is eviscerated. Her skin, internal organs and tears of pain become the raw material of a carnal creation. An upstart godchild, Marduk, creates "savage-man" only as an after thought. Humanity's primary purpose becomes service to Marduk's court and the gods' greedy and abusive and pursuits.

So Israel writes, "*In the beginning God created!*" As the primordial seas (false gods) thrash about in darkness the Divine simply speaks. "*Let there be light!*" Talk about a subversive text! The God of Israel, in calmness and love, brings life from death and order from chaos. Let the powers of Babylon do their worst. Night will always give way to a new day.



The poem here is built upon the theme of "Illumination." Today more than ever we need to discern what powers are true and which ones perpetuate violence, pain and prejudice.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.  
And the earth was without form, and void;  
and darkness was upon the face of the deep.  
And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.  
And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.  
And God saw the light, that it was good:  
and God divided the light from the darkness.  
And God called the light Day,  
and the darkness he called Night.  
And the evening and the morning were the first day."

Genesis 1:1-5

1.

**I**ntersecting impotence involuntary ire

**I**lonely loveless limbo

**I**eaving lazy lifeless liars

**u**rban ugly unresolved

**m**ating madness mindless malls

**i** am

**n**odding notice netting night

**a**nd

**t**here was

**e**vening reaching out for sight

**W**ho knows what a "firmament" is? Presumably it is something solid, something "firm." Modern day translations of Genesis use the term "dome" instead. This word we understand.

Like a salad bowl plunged upside down into a sink full of dishwater, so the dome created here is more important for what it does than what it is. The "firmament" creates a space, an air bubble, a physical pause in the midst of insanity. This place also has a name we understand well - "Sanctuary."

Meaningless battles over evolution, intelligent design or biblical literalism totally miss the point. Such battles only add to the tsunami of cultural chaos. How sad that so many who claim this beautiful myth fail to understand its deepest meaning. Divinity separates the waters from the waters, the fury from the ferment, the angry from the oppositional. It is the space in-between which is called "Heaven."

✎

"Separation" is the theme of this second poem. As the God of Israel forces the gods of pain and arrogance into their respective corners, so true Divinity sidelines violence and abuse. In the middle of the worst we can do to our world there is still a space, a place of safety and hope, which is the Genesis of all life.

"And God said, Let there be a firmament  
in the midst of the waters,  
and let it divide the waters from the waters.  
And God made the firmament,  
and divided the waters which were under the firmament  
from the waters which were above the firmament:  
and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven.  
And the evening and the morning were the second day."

Genesis 1:6-8

2.

**S**anctuary safety shelter sky significance

**e**vaporating envy energy extravagance

**p**arasol partitioning

**a**n atrium and aisle

**r**everie reversing random raging room renewed

**a**nd

**t**here was

**e**vening calling morning with a freshness

touched by dew

**H**ere the false promises of "might makes right" are pushed further aside as Divinity calls forth the fertile soils of possibility. From earth's richness come herbs and foliage of all kinds, each with their own seed. Order, greenness, a future and beauty spring into being.

The priests of Israel, who compiled this story, invoke the sacred patterns of daily life as they knew them. The seven days of creation reinforce the rhythms of the Jewish week. For six days one works. After that there is the need for celebration and praise – Sabbath rest. Furthermore, a day which begins in the evening and moves into the light proclaims a different reality than what we often acknowledge. Our journey begins at sunrise only to find us collapsed and fatigued as evening sets. The sacred, daily rhythms of ancient Israel were infinitely more hopeful. Evening proclaims possibilities and looks ahead, "never more the same."

cs

"Designation" is the theme of this poem. Space is designated for life. Rich soil is designated for growth. Green plants are called to produce their own seed. The cycle of life moves continually towards tomorrow.

"And God said, Let the waters under the heaven  
be gathered together unto one place,  
and let the dry land appear: and it was so.  
And God called the dry land Earth;  
and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and  
God saw that it was good. And God said,  
Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and  
the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind,  
whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.  
And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after  
his kind, and the tree yielding fruit,  
whose seed was in itself, after his kind:  
and God saw that it was good.  
And the evening and the morning were the third day."

Genesis 1:9-13

3.

**D**usty dry desirous dirt  
**e**nigmatic emerging earth  
**s**oil sensation seedy sod  
**i**nvoke invest inspire involve  
**g**ravelly ground grizzly grains  
**n**estling nurture needing names  
**a**nd  
**t**here was  
**e**vening never more the same

**T**he ancient word for "lights" used in this story, **מְאֹרֹת**, literally means "lanterns" or "luminaries." It is a diminutive word, a functional word, perhaps even a festive word. It is purposely applied to the sun, the moon and the stars which the Babylonians regarded as their gods. People still consult the stars today, do they not?

Not Israel, though. On this fourth day, Divinity simply lights the birthday candles of life. The sun, moon and stars are only decorations hung joyfully from the ceiling of the firmament/dome. The heavenly orbs serve creation (not the other way around) by lighting up the day and allowing darkness for sleep. They also tell us when to plant our peas and invite us to make love on moonlit shores.

עכ

"Dangling dots" doesn't sound too spooky does it? Queen Cassiopeia, in all her vanity, is dethroned. The great hunter Orion must set his sword aside. Evening knows truth and tomorrow will bloom with a new depth of enlightenment.

"Decoration." That's all that happens here.

"And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day."

Genesis 1:14-19

4.

**D**angling dots define divinity's design

**e**ngaging effervescence excellence enshrined

**e**capricious cassiopeia

**o**rion ostensibly opine

**r**adiant resplendent red

**a**nd

**t**here was

**e**vening hearing what was said

**P**erhaps it's some grand, cosmic joke that Divinity requires the rebellious seas to cough up the first forms of life. "Behave chaos, be functional!" Birds flood the air flying back and forth across the dome of the sky. Giant sea creatures course through the waters, created "just to play around," according to the Psalms. The joy and beauty of life soars to new heights.

"Blessing." For the first time "blessing" enters the story. Blessing is the primary energy of Israel's God. "Be fruitful and multiply!" Divinity cries. Take part in the great adventure of creation. Be blessed. Be happy.

∞

"Propagate!"

"And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day."

Genesis 1:20-23

5.

**P**arrots penguins pirouetting plankton  
**r**obins roosters ribald rainbow reefs  
**o**ctopus outlandish osprey  
**p**ainting paradise pursuing play  
**a**dvancement ambition ants aphid angelfish  
**g**reat gulpers graceful gay green guppy guests  
**a**nd  
**t**here was  
**e**vening hoping for the rest

## Lawn Ornament



"Lawn Ornament," Sandra Roumagoux, 31" x 42" oil on board, 2006

"And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature  
after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing,  
and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.  
And God made the beast of the earth after his kind,  
and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon  
the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.  
And God said, Let us make man in our image,  
after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of  
the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and  
over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth  
upon the earth. So God created man in his own image,  
in the image of God created he him;  
male and female created he them.  
And God blessed them, and God said unto them,  
Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth,  
and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and  
over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that  
moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold,  
I have given you every herb bearing seed,  
which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree,  
in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed;  
to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth,  
and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth  
upon the earth, wherein there is life,  
I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.  
And God saw every thing that he had made,  
and, behold, it was very good.  
And the evening and the morning were the sixth day."

Genesis 1:24-31

**T**he command to “have dominion” bothers some who enter this story. As subversive counter text, “dominion” is indeed a question of concern here. But consider, it was the Babylonians who dominated other people. It was the followers of Marduk who held humanity in contempt. “Dominion” as it is used here implies limits, responsibility and care. The God of Israel creates *sanctuary* not suffering, *greenness* not greed. If Genesis 1 has been interpreted so as to allow the rape and disregard of creation, it only shows that its message has not been heard. Clearly, false gods and ignorant seas still rage in the darkness. One can only hope that the spirit of the Divine continues to move over the face of those waters today.



“Delegation” is the theme of this poem. We, you and I, bear the image of a creative, blessing, great Greenness. So live, learn, love luxury. Explore, experiment, esteem every day. Guard greenness, graze on gratitude – greedily!

You’ll have to excuse the preacher who takes advantage of the poet here. It is an occupational hazard.

6.

**D**ivinely designed dedicated delight  
**e**nlightened evolution enveloping expectations  
extravagantly engaged  
**l**ive learn love luxury  
**e**xplore experiment esteem everyday  
**g**race greatness guard greenness  
greedily graze gratitude  
**a**nd  
**t**here was  
**e**vening chasing morning purpose hope  
and attitude



"Sanctify," "sanctuary" and "sacred" all come from the same root word. To sanctify is to make holy. Rabbi Abraham Heschel in a wonderful little book simply entitled, The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man, points out that of all the things Divinity calls into being at creation only one is deemed "holy." It is not a person, not a process, not an object or a being. The only thing "sanctified" during creation is a time, a day - the Sabbath.

Just as evening chases morning and light beams through the darkness, so this first week moved towards celebration, rest and recreation. Every week does. Even the God of Israel observes Sabbath, not by decree of course, but by invitation. The beauty of the earth calls for wonder and awe. The Divine appreciates this no less than we her creatures.



So it is that "Celebration" must be the theme of this last poem. There is excitement everywhere for those with eyes to see and ears to hear!

"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished,  
and all the host of them.  
And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made;  
and he rested on the seventh day  
from all his work which he had made.  
And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it:  
because that in it he had rested from all his work  
which God created and made."

Genesis 2:1-3

7.

**C**osmic chords

**e**xcitement everywhere

**l**iberating love long life

**e**xuberant emotions everyone entice

**b**rimming brilliance booming brass

**r**elationships rapture rich repast

**a**nd

**t**here was

**e**vening holding morning with a promise  
that would last

## ***The Flood***



"The Flood," 41" x 120" oil on unstretched linen canvas, 2006  
Sandra Roumagoux

**S**adly the story of a flood belongs with this Genesis 1 creation myth. Sometimes violence and those who practice it reassert themselves. Oftentimes they even appear to win the day. Not all stories end well. Or, at least, not all stories go well before they end.

In the Genesis story of the flood, the windows of the firmament are thrown open. Chaos ruffles Gaia's skirts. The waters of madness violate the sacred space divinely ordained for life. Once again the wars and the angry lies of selfish powers become the norm. All is lost . . . almost. Yet riding the waves of insanity is still one small craft, one tiny sacred space reinforced with gopher wood. Sometimes it gets down to that. You won't find that little boat in this particular poem, but it is out there somewhere.



"Recalibration" is the theme here. I do not know if it is Divinity herself who reboots the world or we who need to choose differently. Either way, creation is overcome by the storm. As for us, we either book passage on that little boat or die. The glorious celebration of life proclaimed in Genesis 1 is counter-balanced here by the awesome capacity we ourselves have to make hell of the holy. Both Creator and creature, it would seem, are called to difficult decisions.

"And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them . . . In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened."

Genesis 6:5-7 & 7:11

**R**uinous reprobates reigning in  
**e**mbryonic envelope way too thin  
**c**hicken crapture crazy cows  
**a**llowances acerbic vows  
**l**yrics giving way to form  
**i**nsistent cadences the norm  
**b**rackish burbling burning bath  
**r**aging radon random wrath  
**a**nd  
**t**here were  
**e**ndothermic Ecstasy  
    flowing free  
    flooding me

**T**here are two distinct stories about creation in Genesis. One is structured, powerful and aimed at the heart of arrogance. This is the seven day story of Genesis 1 just considered. The other story is whimsical, relational and just plain a “good read!” This is a story centered around that garden called Eden - which means “paradise.”

The paradise story is about connections. It was written much earlier than the seven day creation story, most likely during the good old days of Israel’s most faithful kings – say the 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Everybody has a job. There is time to go see a few good movies. “Why do guys think that way?” or “Really?! My wife says that, too!” are the typical banter around the water cooler. It is also this story. Genesis 2-3 is all about men and women and that strange dance of life called love.

Of course, human love is not the only relationship of concern. The primordial earth does not yet grow grass because there is no rain or caretaker to encourage it. So, Divinity makes a human from the humus, a creature from the clay, “Adam” from the “adamah.” (The Hebrew word for soil.) The word play is intentional. We are indeed creatures of the earth. We are also something different as Divinity herself breathes the breath of life into our being. What an interesting experiment, we humans - sacred, inspired dirt!

In this second story animals come into being as the Divine seeks a fit companion for the dirt child. What a hoot! “Adam, how do you like this one?” “Not really, God, looks a lot like a toad to me!” And so all the animals of our world are made – and named. One should not take this story too seriously. It is meant to be fun. At the same time we stand in awe of the warmth and kinship humans share with both the common and the extraordinary.

But at the center of it all is that relationship which occupies so much of our imagination - that quirky polarity between the masculine and feminine. “I’ll never understand (wo)men!” (Take your pick.)

Following a glimpse into paradise three stories follow. Each, under the craft of their author and editors, follows a similar pattern. First the earth creatures, Adam and his soon-to-be-named wife Eve, fall into error, pain and mistrust. Then their children, Cain and Abel end up in strife.

## **Muse: After the Flood**



“Muse: After the Flood,” Sandra Roumaçoux, 30” x 40” oil on canvas, 2006

Abel is murdered. Later, as humanity spreads, people decide to storm the heavens as one. As human acts change the face of reality, Divinity explains what has happened. Each time Divinity’s children reject their new, self-made, reality, and each time this rejection has further tragic implications. Yet, the Sacred still reaches out in love. There is a whimsy to these stories, but it is laughter through the tears.

## Ode to Adam

Clay caked fingers.  
Dusty lips.  
Garden path through stream beds slips.  
A tree for life.  
One sweet with soul.  
Child of earth, are you not whole?

Breath and beauty.  
Work to do.  
Is this not enough for you?  
Friendly tiger.  
Gay blue jay.  
Not yet all you want you say?

Sleep and slumber.  
Stand up tall.  
This one is your all in all.  
A kiss for love,  
So sweet with dreams.  
Paradise ain't all it seems.

Now you wonder.  
Now you see.  
Lover's lane with sacred tree.  
Would it matter,  
Could you hide,  
If you hate the other side?

Shamed and helpless,  
Naked, new.  
You're not me and I'm not you  
Once protected.  
Now betrayed.  
Can't go back but wish I'd stayed.

Crusty fingers.  
Stir up weeds.  
Primrose path winds round deceives.  
Pain in newness.  
Can't let go.  
Hope for life in death bestow.

Fading beauty.  
Flaming sword.  
Now is lost what you adored.  
Now you wonder.  
Then you'll see.  
Paradise was never free.

The stories of Eden and human folly behind this poem have not been reprinted here. They may be found in Genesis chapters 2-3.

## Study for Genesis 2



"Study for Genesis 2," Sandra Roumagoux, 31" x 42" oil on board, 2006

**T**hose who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." (*Santayana*) How long will we continue to believe that paradise is free? How long will we burn up history and plunder our planet's future? Is a vision that cannot be sustained really so seductive? Now we wonder, then we'll see. When does it become too late to change?

"Now the man knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have produced a man with the help of the LORD." Next she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller of the ground. In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel for his part brought of the firstlings of his flock, their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard.

So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it." Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let us go out to the field." And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him.

Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" And the LORD said, "What have you done? Listen; your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground! And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it will no longer yield to you its strength; you will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth."

Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear! Today you have driven me away from the soil, and I shall be hidden from your face; I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and anyone who meets me may kill me." Then the LORD said to him, "Not so! Whoever kills Cain will suffer a sevenfold vengeance." And the LORD put a mark on Cain, so that no one who came upon him would kill him.

Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden."

Genesis 4:1-16

## Without You

Back before the dawn.  
East of envy, error or wrong,  
That's where I wish to be.

I want to walk a land sans time,  
Where harmonies and life still rhyme.  
Without a past that haunts my soul,  
Where no one dies and Abel's whole,  
where I belong again.

A mark burns on my brow.  
Imprisons me in now.  
Robs all possibility.

The brand was given me in love,  
Forgiveness breathed by winds above.  
I can't be killed, nor can I live  
without a tie to what I did.  
I stalk the in-between.

City streets of Nod.  
Furtive glances, small iPod.  
What hope is there for me?

**I** felt Cain deserved his own voice. How many of us have lost contact with our families, not to mention our kinship with the earth itself? Do we despair because of our own violence? Is there any hope for this gracious blue planet if we will not own up to our own murderous practices? Perhaps it is time to go home.

"And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top *may reach* unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, Behold, the people *is* one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth."

Genesis 11:1-9

## **But oh so high**

All the same, the lies of life;  
 one word, one spin, perpetual strife.  
 Over and again we hear,  
 what they've done and why we fear.

Tigris and Euphrates merge,  
 joining in a deadly dirge.  
 Towers reaching to the sky  
 impotent, but oh so high.

Merger frenzy, Merrill Lynch,  
 Chief Examiner, Stanley Finch.  
 Bears and bulls, buy outs and fame,  
 over and again the same.

Spoken here, "One word, one truth."  
 Vital votes in sacred booth.  
 Mighty dollars, leveraged cents;  
 golden calf, electric fence.

Brick for stone and gold for wire.  
 Optic fibers all conspire.  
 Over and again we hear,  
 what they've done, what might appear.

Confusion now, divergent tongues;  
 "Confound the sense of senseless ones!"  
 Towers reaching to the sky;  
 Puncture pride, they're not so high.

Stop the rhythmic march of Sin.  
 Let what could be enter in,  
 While bears and bulls still play the game,  
 never over, still the same.

Spoken now, "Cacophony,"  
 small shards of Love's reality.  
 Stuttering dollars, fledgling sense;  
 disparate hopes in scattered tents.

**W**hen arrogance and disregard for creation becomes the culture – how lost is that? Have the confusion of Adam and the murder of Cain become the status quo? In the Babel story, Divinity seeks to confuse the language of her children and so throw a wrench in to the well-oiled machinery of arrogance, but she is only buying time. Are we using it well?



## **Modern Babel**

"Modern Babel," Sandr Roumagoux, 72" x 108" oil on canvas, 2006.



**O**ur stories, from Genesis 3, 4 and 11, all share a structural and theological parallelism. The same basic story, although spinning increasingly out of control, is told three times. I wanted to capture this in my poetry somehow.

So, after rigorous study and prayerful preparation I sat down to write, only to be seized by the spirit of Dr. Seuss. Go figure! I sent the resulting three poems in a carefully encrypted email to Sandy, under the subject line, "Three for the round file," but she insisted Dr. Seuss be part of the cabal.

Here, then, are three 'Odes to Obstinace' just for fun. The journey to wholeness and healing need not be gruesome. It simply needs to be taken.

## The apple thing

**I**t's not my fault, that apple thing,  
just hanging there where angels sing.  
It shouldn't be where I can see.  
It's not my fault you know, not me.

But now you say I've crossed the line,  
that things have changed well, that's just fine.  
You called, ya right, and I was "hid."  
It's no big thing, this thing I did.

Now grass won't grow, the wine's gone sour.  
It's more confusing every hour.  
I'm rude you say? Come on, get real.  
It's really not a big fat deal!

So put your freakin' sword away.  
It's not as if I'm gonna say,  
"I'm sorry" or "I guess I'm wrong."  
I'm outta here, goodbye, I'm gone.

You made me pants? Well that's just grand.  
I'll think of you while farming sand.  
You're always here to talk you say?  
Well whoopy do, you've made my day!

## The city thing

**H**e hit me first, the little brat!  
"Hey Stupid, what you lookin' at!?"  
He said my attitude was bad.  
It's not my fault; he made me mad.

The earth cries out? Rock's aren't too bright.  
They don't know nothin' 'bout no fight.  
My brother's blood? How should I know?  
It's up to him to stay in tow.

Now grass won't grow, the wine's gone sour.  
I have to leave this very hour!  
Lost and 'lone you think I'll be?  
Nah that won't happen, not to me!

It's all your fault, this brother thing,  
and now they'll hate me, blam, kabling.  
I'm gonna suffer 'cause he cried,  
So catch me on the other side.

A mark you say? It won't be so?  
When they see me they're gonna know?  
Well take your shot before I flee.  
It's now the city life for me!

## The tower thing

**S**eems like God could use some help,  
'cause things down here don't  
We'd better get us to the top,  
and once we're there we'll never stop.

Building, building to the sky.  
First we walk and then we fly.  
I bet that God is really pleased,  
to see we're building green with trees.

But we don't need no grass to grow.  
With asphalt you don't have to mow!  
The wine's gone sour? Well, try the gin.  
It's not as if it's some big sin!

So what's the problem, S'il vous plait?  
Wir sprechen Deutsch? What's that you say?  
¿A más honor, a más dolor?  
Ya, bring it on Lord, we've got more.

You think you've won, our spunk is gone.  
You've slowed us up, but you're all wrong.  
You bought some time, that's all you've done.  
You can't stop progress, it's too fun!