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From The Book of Life

Paul Vangelisti
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'Voted, that the earth is given to the Saints.'
More Jack to Ferlinghetti: "The enemy is in your own country, Rosa Luxemburg said and she, poor dead thing, was as unsuccessful revolutionary as I have been.
My own country is poetry—and the singlehanded revolution I attempted was about as intelligent as assassinating President McKinley.
There are presidents (many of them) that come after him and will be worse."
Are books and mirrors better left to books and mirrors and doubt and sky here below?
Vaseline. Apparently a junction of saints.
'Voted, that we are the Saints'. Milford, Connecticut. Vaseline. 1640.
All around the mouth, here and there, watch the world turn. *Word*, it's been said, implies a real procession whereas *book* implies procession only according to a way of understanding. Often as a verb it takes a T-shirt, dildo, billboard, etc. or a stretch of blue sky behind an airplane. Or a heart-shaped cloud on the face of rum. On the contrary, we can name God only from the things that exist here below. On a day too rainy for most angels in Massachusetts or Connecticut.
A stench of blue sky behind an airplane.
O bury me not on the lone prairie.
A small heart-stopping world once thought to be
what a mouth was about. Everything
strives to express, to define itself,
therefore to perish behind a pail of rum.
The deer and the antelope definitely
find cause to roam over questions of.
The sex of angels, for instance. Roam, roamed, rum.
Or maybe too the beauty of double suicides
after a night of no or yes. Bouzouki.
The apparent junction of earth and sky,
palms foreground and the rest urgently pale.
The infinite hand we have for rum. That's not funny, except in Hadrian's reign when water consumption almost doubled in Rome. I'd written for love though that was more than 17 years ago when everyone was married and happy and didn't have much of a sense of humor. The hummingbirds are still gone. What could be keeping them? Everyone has ideas. From the heat fermenting their sugar water to a new family of squirrels. Nobody's considering angels and the upswing in their activity. Heat's finally broken and the birds louder. Who can tell in the rain, sulky or not?
I never knew fear until I kissed Becky.
Be bop de beep. Spring can really.
With lots of hair and big brown eyes
just an angel in disguise. As what?
Fresh sugar water in the feeder;
though the other was out ten days untouched.
Still no birds. Gender of angels
seems beside the point now especially.
‘And the Lord spoke to Moses face to face’,
while the gloss reads, ‘No man, no angel
has ever seen the essence of God as it is’.
Instead are married angels or babies
especially in the rain? There now.
First hummingbird in almost a month.
Bird at the feeder only that once.
Like a little prayer no end and no beginning.
Unlike men are angels part of nature,
you know, one oar in Eden? Or not.
At the market on the cover of *TV Guide*
Joan Collins says, "I'm no angel." Bouzouki.
Missed being by thirty years. Maybe the daughter
she doesn't have. Or that day in '59
she can't remember, when Robert and I saw her
in some western at the Esquire on Market St.,
underwater and at least twice under a sheet.
We are very quiet on the bus home
and don't even transfer as usual
to a cable car. Oh well. Be bop de beep.
Angels is how man reads God. Bazooka.
In the fridge in the kitchen downstairs
He turns the lightie on. Feels like flying.
He loves to sleep or cook or write in the rain.
November 23 and April 12
Adriano and Antonio dead
of the heart. O the morality of rain
O the infamy of drainpipes.
In less than five months. Be bop de beep.
The air is asleep, the cowboys weep,
mockingbirds hot as pistols this soft morning.
At what time can workers legally start
in a residential area? Flitting from
branch to willow to palm to No Parking sign.
Time, says Uncle Ez, time is the evil.  
Three times in the last hour hummingbird's been at the feeder. Seventy-one years of oxygen is all we have left, a doctor told David who yesterday told me when I asked if he wanted children. Perhaps you would want to manage your pregnancy differently, a doctor said to John and Lucia before testing for birth defects. Be bop de beep, the Indians went to sleep with the birds.  
Do wop de bop, in the fridge in the kitchen downstairs Who turns the lightie on?  
De beep de bop, angels have one oar in Eden the other in a pail of rum, do you?
What Are the Four Intelligent Creatures?
Chinese have no man in the list, I guess, because who needs brains most of the time.
Fresh sugar water's in the feeder but not yet any birds. Dogs I might have thought but then the Chinese roast them and are after all too loyal to be thought intelligent unlike cats. Or is there a problem of translation with the term 'creature' if no birds come? Though plenty of white moths and mockingbirds hotly in song. Shakespeare. Bazooka. Feels like flying or hovering maybe. They are: the Unicorn, the Phoenix, the Tortoise and the Dragon.
Windows on two sides of me are critical. Communists and beatniks have little to do with each other except in the minds of Jack Hirschman and Samuel Goldwyn. Be bop de beep. Who've always had a thumb on the pulse of Indiana. Two walls of windows here above. And a childhood full of dragons, paper and otherwise, didn't sound too broadening at the time. Do wop de bop. Stop the bus and let my brother Jack off. Quando Amor ditta dentro. Whose Jack? The birds are still as someone drills next door. When love brought in all those s's. That Jack whose love ate the red wheelbarrow.
Quando il cor ditta dentro. Last week
the heart brought in Antonio and Sugar Ray
140 days after Adriano.
Fighting weight. The news wasn't sure of
Robinson's age, at least 67
it said. Antonio was 54,
Adriano 47. When the heart
wanted in. Sugar Ray was the coolest
dragon of my childhood, pound for pound.
Jack Hirschman did a fine poem
of a boy on a Bronx street on one knee
fielding when RR's fuschia
Cadillac convertible turned the corner
like a rainbow. Listen to her big feet.
"That's for the birds," my mother used to say. Like the 100th birthdays this week of Charlie Chaplin and Adolf Hitler. Charlie, astonished more by angels than marches, built Tudor cottages on Ponsettia Place to billet all of his. Adolf went in for Wagner, Broadway and Busby Berkeley. Charlie liked them young and naughty or naughty and young. United Artists. Sloshing up and down the provinces. Be bop de deep. Hath murdered sleep. Just when the heart wanted in. There. An angel flits by downhill crouched over handlebars. A pale. A punctured mind. In purple and white.