

DAY



Frank Samperi

Illustrations by Claudia Samperi-Warren

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Foreword by John Pearlman

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*This Volume is dedicated
to the memory of my father.*

Claudia Samperi Warren

Foreword

tragic
shackle
of an angel's
wing

The crux of the matter is, of course, interrogating that “tragic.” That is to say, shall the term apply to the angel in descent, journeying on and about the Earth, or to the angel in ascent? I scarcely considered the question at the time I wrote these words, but I did/do have Frank in mind, as ever, when angels come to mind/heart. The wings themselves are a trope of gravity and of the flesh's encounter with fluid media. Perhaps the tragic dimension exists most “on and about the earth,” in the loss or forgetfulness of the wings' history, and the unawareness of that past as a prefiguration of their immediate potentiality. Such obliviousness would be to move through one's days-literally, aimlessly. Thus, the quality of one's suffering partakes of an ignorance which is unremitting, irremediable, horizontal, political. A choice? “Tragic” applied to such a life is itself the call to compassion. But, what of the being that will not, does not, cannot, so forget? Surely this is a life graced by consolation, but also profoundly burdened by the passionate awareness of distance, of remoteness, inversion:

...day
Tumbling
As far as
The very heart
Of the matter

But these words admit of no doubleness, no terminal exile. The true “heart of the matter” is the presence through sight of the transience of things, as species in and eternity, this very moment thereby, the gift, proffered, of uniqueness, in distinction, a Cardinal relation. And not tragic. Thus Frank has written, “I will have mercy/and not sacrifice.” Perhaps the greatest hurt the angelic knows comes from the renunciation of the call to recollection, that those who speak of it find themselves, if not merely unheeded, then, of necessity, silence. And because the reminding is inevitably accusative, the suffering becoming most acute, the reflection of, the falsity of, self unendurable viz. “the knowledge/of God was more than Holocaust.” Who would see?

One who looks
Looks because
Light from sight
Sights the light

Sight the light
From above

One remembers Meister Eckhart's formulation: "the eye with which I see God is the same with which God sees me."

see lovely girl
picking
flowers
by river
see lovely writer
picking words
from air

A poetry, not of prophecy, but of sight, the invoking of the visual as that trope, which is conversation even of the trope itself, the turning toward, a vector, an approach to the anagogical which always already in-spirits. The faith in the poem as of and as the work one is called to. As Frank wrote in a letter of 1980: "preserve the (my) work, so that the few may have a share in the Gift, prevailing by reason of their own difference." These "few" are those who understand that the relation is not comparative, not hierarchical, but vertical. Each and all so Gifted, but called, again, to the offering, "mercy and not sacrifice."

Just human, finally, though, "just asks full lexical paly. Here is a full Day, of the (Frank's) work, which is (Being) preserved. Whatever else, the shackles have been annulled. The angel? This constancy, this humble relation:

Then the dwelling of the angle in
the soul
or rather the odor
sign
of the dwelling
continuing
habituating the man
to the daily
drawing out radiance
preparing
rendering
transparent
the surroundings
the universe
the aureole
receiving
truest
ray

John Perlman
January 1998

moment
ruse
existential
doctrine
additive
temporal
although
eternal
sang
the man
expected
to win
his day
by breath



Spirit
the spirit
embarassment
no
state
willing
to
see
it
any
other
way
but
potictically



no ground
only
fire
and
spirit

if
you
don't
have
time
then
levitate

stellar places
interplanetary
no
point

this is
all
wrong
better
start
again

can
a man
write
a book
in a day
that's
what they're
trying
to say
and it doesn't
matter
what gets
in
as long as
it gets in

You're in outer space
imaginatively
who's the joke
on

a productive mind
can turn this
stuff
out
daily
call it inspiration
and
to boot
get
away
with
it

You've found
a little
corner
in
the
mind
no
comfort
really

a
bird
files
from
a
branch
twang
for
both



You can't be serious
a
writer's
a
junk man



I sit out the day
out writing
the
day

And when you
finish this
there
s
more
paper

see lovely girl
picking
flowers
by river
see lovely writer
picking
words
from air

if you had more money
you
wouldn't
be
so
circumspect

I know
you know
poetry's
da
i
ly

Take a vase
place
it
on
a
window
sill
as
is
empty

don't tell me
you're
out
to prove
you
can write
50 poems
in
a
day

a man
sitting on
an enormous
root
guzzling
qt. beers
got up
went center
addressed
the
other
leaves

here I am
lost
to
all
purposes

you say
man
the cop
beast

if it were moments
and you had
to respond to
every one of them
you'd soon
break
momentarily

run
the
risk
of
being
laughed
at

ashtray to my left
to my right
candle
front
wall
dead center

a little logic
would be
well placed here
that is there
more

Flame
poised
mathematically
correct

what wins
is 3000 pages
to your
300

blusterer
do you really
think
bulk



having coffee
a bottle of
Old Grand-Dad
to the side
one shot
left

c'mon
you know
no one knows
what a poem
is

willow
outside my
bedroom
window
folksey beyond
contempt

New York poet
you falsify
you're up to
your
head
in
shit

move round
lucifer
lead us out
you
holding
candelabrum

I wish you all the luck
knowing
of course
you wish
me
the
same

Look
at
my
ceiling
all
peeling

So much
of our speech
is just
that
and no more
not
poetic
but a
century
later
how quaint
nothing
but
poetic

Could
go to the
waterfront
watch the sun
go down
return
home

the
moment's
no
help

how
many
moments
in
a
day

suppose
you
miss
a
moment

the
heart
skips
a
beat



fear
then
the
determinant

if
you
can't
keep
at
it
you're
done
for

no
rush
no
working
at
it

Spirit
the spirit
not
breath

moment
now
time
not eternal
no
twisting
can
right
it

Spiritual
man
lives
eternal

walker
hills

enters
city





Frank Samperi, 1933-1991.

American poet Frank Samperi was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1933. Discovered by poet Louis Zukofsky, his first poems were published in the early 1960's. Through study of such masters as Aquinas, Aristotle, Dante and the Hindu Vedantist, Shankaracarya, Samperi created a body of work that was a unique exploration of the ability of language to exist in a pure musicality apart from thingly reference. "Frank's work was truly abstract, truly resisted the things of the world and boasted rather the refining fire of the spirit," said Robert Kelly. In his lifetime, he published 20 collections of poetry, including the trilogy *Prefiguration*, *Quadriarium*, and *Lumen Gloriam*.