

## **THE GREAT ARTIST**

by Brian Long

Cadence of moon-spun ocean tides  
and sonnets of snowflake symmetry.

Songs of Summer storms  
and the prose in desert sand  
and red-rock canyons.

He has written me with  
His ink in my veins,  
and I have been painted  
by the brush of sun- and starlight  
while facing skyward,  
I drank into my soul  
the poetry of rain.

Nature is the muse of God,  
this Earth but a poem in edit...

--(c) brian long Jan 01 1998

## **SYMBOLS**

by Brian Long

Shadows fall like flooding rains to pool and form the  
night

as time withn its secrecy moves on in restless flight.

Sparkling, spinning, falling lights on black and endless  
sea,  
and subtle, shining Orb of Night casts meaning down to  
me:

In darkest times and deepest night, light is there above;  
encircling stars and graceful moon are symbols of God's  
love...

(c) 1998 brian long

## **EDEN**

by Brian Long

The plaque screamed out to me in raised letters:

"JOHN WHITE SETTLED HERE IN 1797  
AND THUSLY WAS THE FOUNDER OF ALL YOU SEE  
AROUND YOU"

So I looked around me:

Plastic bags and forgotten paper  
scuttled along the concrete  
like lost and fallen spirits,  
they scraped the pavement  
and bunched in filthy corners,  
their rustling voices whispering

**"uselessss, uselessss."**

A thin stream of murky water,  
speckled with oily rainbows,  
seeped from a choked drain  
as if it were a wound;  
the city bleeding its sickness,  
the stream seeking a downhill route  
out of this forsaken place,  
craving dilution.

Smokestacks, somewhere just out of site,  
coughed black clouds of cancer  
into the haze  
above decrepit buildings that rose upward all around  
me,  
reaching for what, I may never know,  
but it is obvious they never made it.  
Their windows were all broken,  
the doors boarded up,  
they towered above me,  
staring at me with hollowed, sightless eyes  
like corpses;  
Pigeons, frail sooted wings,

huddled together in the windowsills like flies  
gathered around a carcass,  
and I willed them to just fly,  
take wing and get out of here.

But they only walked around in circles,  
their voices in a derelict chorus,  
muttering complaints that no one will hear  
and have no resolution, anyway.

I couldn't help but wonder:  
was this plaque  
a celebration of our progress;  
a salute to the dead giants propped up around me,  
or was it  
an apology to the ghosts who haunt us?  
"Look at what we've done to your meadows  
to your streams,  
look at what we've done to your bright blue sky..."

There was no answer to be given.  
The wind moaned to me a dirge:  
"ssoorrooww, ssoorrooww",  
and I stepped off the curb

to find my way home.

At the corner  
a homeless man stood leaning  
against a lamppost, sagging in his filth.  
I stopped to ask if all was well,  
but he only looked at me with eyes  
that reminded me of the buildings around us  
and whispered,  
"I am John White. Where is my Eden?"  
But before I could answer,  
he walked past me,  
and was gone.

We have already burned this Eden, sir.  
That's why God has made us another in heaven,  
where when we get there  
we are already dead,  
and can do it no harm.  
(c)--1996--Brian Long

## **FUNERAL**

by Brian Long

The day is dying.

Time has thrown its spear  
and the wound is more than mortal;  
it is mortality itself.

Clusters of clouds  
embay the injured sun like hastily applied bandages,  
and are stained pink  
at the bleeding of the light.

Moths appear like tattered angels  
to usher the present into past.

An owl haunts the darkening marsh,  
mourning into the dusk  
and its knell asks,  
"Who?"

Who will bury this day?  
Who will lower the sun into the cold and waiting earth?

The day grows dimmer,  
tiring in its hemorrhage  
as the treefrogs and crickets sing in hushed, peaceful  
chorus  
a requiem to its passing.

The stoic night arrives,  
Dressed in priestly black,  
to whisper rites that become the breeze,  
sending chill into the marsh pond's soul  
causing its skin to wrinkle.

At last this light has died, the day is gone,  
and the night embraces the world  
in quiet sympathy.

We grieve in our survival, abandoned.

Like ancients seeking wisdom from signs  
we peer heavenward for consolation  
to find the sky full of many suns;  
many todays, many yesterdays, and tomorrows.

How clever of God to fill our darkneses  
with reminders of what once was,  
and small, sparkling promises  
**of what will yet be.**

Grieve not the day.

(c)1994--Brian Long--

## IDOLTRY

by Brian Long

This is how it all began  
with nothing else but shapeless space  
God made nature, Earth, and man;  
a balance delicate as lace,  
**but we wore our Eden wan.**

We made our walls of dry hard stone,  
made our spears of dull grey ore.  
We worked ourselves to withered bone,  
sold our souls for cash (and wanted more)  
**to find we were agnostic and alone.**

We made an idol and called it science,  
and worshiped well our indifferent god.  
We schooled our children into compliance,  
researched in earnest our arrogant fraud,  
**and held it high to heaven in defiance.**

To all our praise to all we thought we were  
God waited and sadly listened.

To our numbers we would all defer;  
our souls were bought rather than christened.  
**Right, wrong, good, bad, we would "spin" into a  
blur.**

This is how it all will end:  
we will amass a giant debt  
to an earth we cannot mend.  
This idol god will slay us yet,  
at least for that on science, we can depend.

**(c)1998--Brian Long--**