

Mango García Poems

2021 - 2025

Burnt Cold Distance

Smelling burnt haze
Morning sunlight
Warming back
Hot coffee aroma
Steaming face
Jays squawk
Chickadees cheep
Hummingbirds twizzle
Pale light caresses
Smooth barkskin, leaves
Green fading to dull rusts
Silence, mostly
Police siren far far away
Downwind stillness
After deep night cold fog
All our sins infected air
Drying, burning, flooded away
Nature claws back
At our flawed caresses
Sleepwalkers everyone
Sad unseeing
Paradise shrivel
Staccato minds
Illusions coiled
Atomize
As we all sink
Beneath fantasy clouds
Fragments floating on the sea
Of a void, avoid
What could be
Voices calling out deafly
Ears awash in echoes
Falsely, drones
Of inner emptiness
Engulfed by ignorance

Despite the richness
Embracing us
Cocooned in shells
Of helpless absorption.
The world collapses
from our loss of soul.

23 April 2021

<https://manuelgarciajr.com/2021/04/23/burnt-cold-distance/>

The Coldness of Distant Burning

The morning's hazy sunlight smells of burning
From far off distance past last night's cold deep fog

Coffee aroma steams waking in my face
The spreading sunlight soaks warmth into my back

Jays squawk, Chickadees cheep, Hummingbirds twizzle
Pale light caresses smooth eucalyptus bark
And drying leaves that fade dull from greens to rusts

The silent air hints of sirens far away
This downwind stillness infected by our sins

Of dying life, burning lands, flooding away
As Nature claws repelling our failed caress

Sleepwalkers everyone sadly unseeing
Paradise shrivel with their staccato minds

Illusions coiled so tightly we atomize
To sink like stones under fantasy's clouds

Our shattered world floats as frgements on the sea
The once so certain is now a void of dreams

Unrealized castaways are droning still
Engulfed by echoes from shallowness within

Despite nature's richness embracing us all
Cocooned in our shells of helpless absorption

So the world collapses from our loss of soul.

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1 September 2020

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First of May in World's Autumn

Bright sunlight falls through clear air with fresh coolness in the shadows touching skin with warmth as imperceptible eddies sway green leaves gently beneath a blue sky under which an unmeshing fragmenting spray of white wispieness skims over the hillcrests framing my canyon ringing with the songs of thrushes, the darting sparkling forays of twizzling hummingbirds, and the chirping calls of White-Throated swifts swooping all about to and fro from their attic-hidden nests through corridors of tree fronds with scattered emerging hints of drought yellowing, while Brown Creepers flutter by in their nervously butterfly-like dropping flight hops; and all is under the confident and commanding eyes of Red-Tailed Hawks, a pair, wheeling majestically so close overhead, their shadows whisking across the panorama arrayed to view, their tails glowing gold with translucent sun, their arcing wingtip feathers scribing crisp the moment flashed to eye onto the crystal of memory.

O Nietzsche! Reading your words is like gargling with gravel to sift out gold! I am sinking in my deepening dotage awash in memories of youthful debaucheries! Is this deserved punishment for my unintended cruelties and ignorant harshness, or rewarded grace for my clumsy kindnesses and stumbling harmlessness?

I marinate in memories of your presence, my fulsome love, flesh-instilled beyond the force of thought, punished by the absence of presence irredeemable by time, rewarded by the presence of absence of fading spirit, the scent and hunger and skin-feel of that lost eternity of your warm smiling gaze enfolding all. My candle flames melting the cold hardened wax of the past lofting its vaporous luminosity into the pitch blackness of all futures's oblivion, a flare along the passage from the unknown to the forgotten. Stars are the luminous hot bubbles of light in the roiling cold boil of existence into nonexistence, time into timelessness, space into self-absorption, substance into void.

Smoke from extinct rainbows burnt in offerings by dead souls to imaginary gods lifts memories of lost oceans into night's blackness to fall slowly rolling down from canyon rim hillcrests the cool mist diffusing space disappearing before penetrating earth's thirsting embrace, submerging this island of forest

in an ocean of quiet whose silence can be heard far past distant unseen horizons beyond which the sun is being reborn in the womb of eternity, as hummingbirds sit hunched on their perches snoring. The singing light of day again will wake me soon, for all I know.

1 May 2021

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First of May in World's Autumn

2 May 2021

<https://manuelgarciajr.com/2021/05/02/first-of-may-in-worlds-autumn/>

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Tides

The lives that once inscribed my memories
Now all fall away more quickly
Leaving me in vast and empty silence
As surging winds of time
Shush through swaying fronds
Across my panorama
Cascading twirling brown pirouettes
Down in streams of light from azure through the green
Taking down the once remembered
Into forest floor deep shadows of the now forgotten
And so I feel the eternal tides of impermanence
And so I know the eternal truths of inconsequence.

17 June 2022

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REFLECTIONS OF OUR WASTELAND

The war in Ukraine, by Russia's invasion,
has led me to reevaluate my connections.

As long as there are refugees on Planet Earth,
nothing will be done about Climate Change.

As long as conquered nations stay occupied,
nothing will be done about Climate Change.

As long as colonial territories remain unfree,
nothing will be done about Climate Change.

As long as merciless power murders the weak,
nothing will be done about Climate Change.

As long as vast wealth starves the dispossessed,
nothing will be done about Climate Change.

As long as we prefer sophistry and lies to truth,
nothing will be done about Climate Change.

Climate Change is our reflection by Nature,
of the pathetic ugly failures we choose to be.

War waged against Ukraine is as Tacitus wrote:
they have created a wasteland and call it peace,
It is a crime against both Humanity and Nature.

23 March 2022

**Lao-tzu's Last Words on Exiting the City Gate
Into the Western Desert,
with Congestive Heart Failure:**

Appreciate life, and be grateful.
Don't be greedy, don't waste.
Love nature.
Be kind, quietly.
Accept that people are unreliable
and irredeemable, mostly.
Don't cause suffering.
Don't tell others who to love
or who to hate.
Don't argue, it's pointless.
Be at peace, don't talk much
if anything.
Read good books.
Forget religion.
Drink water.
Walk.

7 June 2024

THE MOURNING OF THRASYBULUS

is the name given to the following poetic fragment etched on an ostrakon by one "Thrasybulus," and found at Samos in 1922, but it is of disputed authenticity. One translation renders it as:

...

I, Thrasybulus, mourn for children yet unborn
destined to die fighting to regain our freedoms
this generation now so determinately discards
marching forward with ecstatic ignorance
into the impoverishment and slavery
our once great city will degenerate to
subject to the tawdry ambitions of unworthy men
clambering for laurels and leadership
imagining themselves elevated by the gods
to save a civilization they cannot comprehend
which they are so furiously degrading to utter ruin.

Why must unborn innocents expiate in distant years
the follies and insults committed against honor today
by a demos debasing itself with fearful superstitions
to avoid each citizen's duty of striving for excellence
in action, mind and body to uphold the noble ideals
forged by the trials and stamped by the triumphs
of our worthy ancestors and passed down as their legacy
to inspire and guide us in shining the light of our own times
instead of ignobly prostrating ourselves before base sophists
of raw ambition without culture or dignity
seeking with cowardly indecency to be our tyrants?

...

23 June 2024

Maybe The Best We Can Ever Really Do

To make the world a better place, is
Never forget to be good to the ones you love,
To tolerate their foibles quietly
And their harmless illusions for comfort.

Let them speak, and listen patiently,
Intervening subtly or contradicting gently
Only when really needed for their own good.
Evaporate into a quiet calmness of care
They can anchor in sheltered from loneliness.

Be truthful, but realize that facing unfiltered reality
Is too intense a blaze for most unblinking gazes.
So moderate for them the cruelty of that hot light
Without obscuring its full spectrum of truth.

To make the world a better place:
Try to be a little kinder to strangers
By the manner of your presence for those close at hand
And by the nature of your attitudes for those remote,
only touched by your civic self.

The world will always wax and wane
Between the radiance of enlightened compassion
And the bloody blackness of malevolent degeneracy.
In truth we have little, if any, control over that.
But to make the world a better place regardless,
even if just for moments,
We can be good to the ones we love
And try to be kinder to strangers.

After three quarters of a century on Earth
All I have learned has fallen away except for this.

14 July 2024
Liberté, égalité, fraternité

CIVILIZATION

The ultimate logic of segregation is genocide.

The political framing of that logic is fascism.

The moral justification of that framing is "God's Plan."

The desirability of that plan is for profitable personal power.

The root of that desirability is fear of personal inadequacy.

The ground of that fear is lack of strong moral character.

That strong moral character is the essence of soul.

The soulful individual experiences fulfillment in life.

The soulless individual sinks into fascist mass anonymity.

Civilization is the extent the soulful can diminish soullessness.

19 November 2024

Ode a Cassandre

Mignonne, allons voir si la rose
Qui ce matin avoit desclose
Sa robe de pourpre au Soleil,
A point perdu ceste vesprée
Les plis de sa robe pourprée,
Et son teint au vostre pareil.
Las ! voyez comme en peu d'espace,
Mignonne, elle a dessus la place
Las ! las ses beautez laissé cheoir !
Ô vrayment marastre Nature,
Puis qu'une telle fleur ne dure
Que du matin jusques au soir !
Donc, si vous me croyez, mignonne,
Tandis que vostre âge fleuronne
En sa plus verte nouveauté,
Cueillez, cueillez vostre jeunesse :
Comme à ceste fleur la vieillesse
Fera ternir vostre beauté.

— Pierre de Ronsard (11 September 1524 – 27 December 1585)

Ode to Cassandra

Sweet girl, let us go see the rose
Which this morning has disclosed
Its gown of purple to the Sun
To be lost when vesper's rung
Those draping folds of purple lush
The same complexion as your blush
Ah! see in how such little space
Sweet girl, it sets herself above the place
Where she lets passing beauty fall
Oh! Mother Nature truly cruel
Lets no such single flower endure
But from its morning to its night!

So, if you believe me, my sweet girl,
While yet your visage's still in bloom
Your novel greenness still a boon
Grasp, grasp, your youth enjoy
For as with flowers time will only
Tarnish all your lovely beauty

— Pierre de Ronsard (11 September 1524 – 27 December 1585),
— very loosely translated by Manuel García, Jr. (1 October 2024)

UNDERCOVER MAN

I am an undercover man gliding low past your radar scans and close horizons, ranging far out through resplendent fields of my imagination while you huddle safe confining me as holograms in your cupboards of convenient expectations, or box me in as an address where strangers dump appeals of endless urgency to fund their schemes, crusades and karmic shortfalls, or be their saviors from fates undeserved, and which may in time — who knows? — metastasize to engulf me. Such is how happiness is lived openly in stealthy solitude in this restless confused and tortured world that flees redemption and true peace to avoid responsibilities.

7 January 2025

THE PARTY'S OVER

The party's over, but people haven't realized it yet.
We are a species that talks but doesn't listen
searching for extraterrestrial life
in a universe that listens but doesn't talk.
When Republicans want to steal something they call it waste.
None will notice except the dying, and they don't count
so don't worry, brainwipe will be complete,
screenglow told me so.
What happens when we run out of lithium?
the end of the world
or just a fatal hangover?
Will we finally hear the song of the Wood Thrush,
feel the pulses of stones,
the ripples on silence?
For the universe does sing.

Manuel García, Jr.
2 April 2025

RACHEL'S GARDEN,
mid morning 6 May 2025, Santa Rosa, flowers everywhere.

Plants are fountains of Life, Flowers are pure passion. We delight in looking at flowers because we are experiencing the sensation of being loved. That love is as enduring as Life on Earth, for though flowers are ephemeral and their fading reminds us of death, the blooming and fading of flowers are just glints and ripples on the waves and tides of Life on Earth, and it is that deeper pulsing that endures far beyond the brief spans during which we bloom and fade. If you feel yourself as a glint and ripple on the pulsing of All-Life, then you are experiencing the eternal. Water, light, air and earth, we are all that.

6 May 2025

TO THE YOUNG, FROM AN OLD GUY

It is very important that you have fun,
now and often.

Have fun when young, don't delay,
don't wait "till everything is settled,"
because it never is,
so don't miss out on life.

Having real fun in your springtime
etches memories to console you in your endtime,
when you are:
frail, lonely, weak, debilitated, in pain, dying.

It is very important that you be kind,
now and often.

Be kind when young, don't hesitate,
don't wait "to be sure I won't lose,"
because in any case you often will,
so don't miss out on character.

Being honestly kind in your springtime
builds self-respect to console you in your endtime,
when you are:
frail, lonely, weak, debilitated, in pain, dying.

Memories of a joyful youth
and of having lived honorably
cannot be stripped from you
even by the closing in of death.

Together they are the best consolation
in our endtimes
for all the sorrows, pains, defeats, regrets and losses
we endured and may still be enduring
as our circle closes to naught.

3 July 2025

Since you've been gone
I sit by a still pond
Watching ripples raised by old pebbles
Fade out to the edges,
Again and again.
Your love became my life
In the light of your soft grace
The glow in the temple of my heart
Illuminating eternity for me alone
In silent gratitude.

14 August 2025
Manuel García, Jr.

Maintaining a romantic love
is like caring for an orchid
in a cold climate: you must
shelter it with warmth,
water it with kindness,
and appreciate it
with full attention.

6 September 2025

God is your conscience.
Salvation, acting in accord with it.
Peace is knowing you do so.

“Yea, though I walk through the
valley of the shadow of death, I
will fear no evil: for thou art with
me; thy rod and thy staff they
comfort me.” — Psalms 23:4 (KJV)

And so we flash our brief lights
like fireflies in the endless night
to sustain sparkling inspiration
for those gazing out in hope.

“As far as we can discern, the sole
purpose of human existence is to
kindle a light in the darkness of
mere being.” — Carl Gustav Jung

7 September 2025

MANTRA FOR THE REMAINDER

1. Keep your focus
2. Don't panic
3. Deal with it
4. Let it go