

APPENDIX ONE

**MANIFESTO OF  
THE LIFE POETS' SIMPLICITY COLLECTIVE**

A THEORETICAL ROMANCE

LET US BE PIONEERS ONCE MORE

## INVITATION / INCITATION

A respected elder of a small town is strolling one spring evening in the woods. While circling close to the shores of a secluded pond he crosses paths with an apparently disaffected romantic poet, but one who seems temporarily in the mood for society. As the sun calmly ushers itself from the scene, the following civil confrontation takes place.

ELDER:

*Citizen poetic,  
I find deliberately astray,  
You seem a being without having,  
As if having didn't pay,  
Wild mystical enigma,  
Is the state of your inside,  
It has you even as I speak,  
Devouring yourself alive.*

*Expecting tranquility in gentle soliloquy,  
Through wandering woods to this pond,  
I left my business alone in the township this eve,  
In search of what might lie beyond,  
Yet no surprise should it have been,  
This far from good society,  
That I cross upon a militant romantic,  
Of some quiet crossbred variety.*

*Are you one of those who propose in revolt,  
'Find your path that simplicity has broken'?  
Don't tell me that you're an inciter of this!  
Perhaps we should never have spoken,  
I tend to tire of such romance, you see,  
Please forgive me my honesty here,  
A life lived imagining some 'Other' to gold,  
Would explain your kaleidoscope stare.*

*With eyes of infinite affirmation,  
To each their own black hole,  
They glisten with free spirit,  
And leak of radioactive soul,*

## VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY

*Still something in their glow sings,  
In melancholy keys,  
The tune is of a mind gone diving,  
Far too deep for me.*

*But enough of my impressions,  
Which so rudely forth I spew,  
I'll bid you now good evening, sir,  
And leave you to your view,  
Unless of course a bard you are,  
Without a place to be?  
In which case might you fight twilight,  
Inciting verse with me?*

LIFE POET:

*Witness O mysterious other,  
Who wanders in from beyond,  
Like mist emerging from the woods,  
To settle on the pond,  
With etiquette poetic,  
Charm refined by some sixth sense,  
You seem a gentlemanly brother,  
If not a little like Clamence.*

*As for me a place to be,  
Is none but than right where I am,  
Passing through in awe,  
What commerce cannot understand,  
You could too see through this worldview,  
If you saw what yours ignores,  
Please don't be quick to think I'm lost,  
For simply wandering these shores.*

*Just bathe your eyes in these soft ocean skies,  
Of blue, purple, and pink,  
And you will find in this sublime,  
That there are worse places to sink –  
Crass rat race, not to my taste,  
Out from the rush I stepped with haste,  
It gave me twisted faces,  
Only here I find my grace.*

*A welcome cosmic accident,  
Of time and chance I trust,  
That we should meet this setting sun,  
Among all Nature in the dusk,  
So come and join my meditations,  
Burning in the dew,  
Tonight I'd like to fight twilight,  
Inciting verse with you.*

*A discourse did ignite,  
Two lanterns on a kite,  
Which we cast out at darkness,  
To carry forth light,  
This may lead us past yonder,  
But before we go too far,  
Perhaps you would tell me,  
Who on earth you are?*

*'Who are you?' it is asked of me,  
With a seriousness hitherto unseen,  
Please may we start with an easier question,  
Or next you'll ask me what I mean.*

*'Tis best methinks you evaded the subject,  
Because now my suspicion is this,  
If you tried to tell me the truth of your meaning,  
You'd never stop changing the script,  
So rather than bother you, and cause you the trouble,  
To live only a life of review,  
Agreed we should start with an easier question,  
Why not just tell me what you do?*

*On the far side of the shore,  
Beneath a tree there sits a chair,  
Where I front every morning star,  
With questions God is meant to hear,  
Then later in the day,  
Like a mad Dostoyevskian clown,  
I chase my butterfly thoughts fragmented,  
And try to write them down.*

## VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY

*With your ink among the birds,  
A sojourner in search of words,  
In this strange way to spend your day,  
Have you found something new to say?*

*I have yet found but few new words,  
In this sense I'm a flightless bird,  
So destiny has me,  
Repeating only things I've heard:  
– Just enough is plenty –  
– Abundance is a state of mind –  
Since this can cure the Golden Plague,  
My fate is not part-time.*

*So will you quietly revolt?  
This is my soul refrain,  
Like Abraham, if you give up,  
You'll get more back again,  
Compose yourself a simple life,  
The poet's leap of faith,  
At the edge of the abyss,  
Creation seems to be at stake.*

*Come, let us foresee the starry night,  
That perfect economy,  
Alone, together,  
In silence.*

## TRAGEDY AND THE POETIC CONCEPTION OF LIFE

1

The bleaker and emptier life becomes under capitalism, the more intense is our yearning after beauty.<sup>1</sup>

★ ★ ★

2

The paradox of the human situation yields no resolution.<sup>2</sup>

★ ★ ★

3

Love thy fate.<sup>3</sup>

★ ★ ★

4

Imagination is more important than knowledge.<sup>4</sup>

★ ★ ★

5

Poetry can be defined as the expression of the imagination; it is at once the center and circumference of knowledge.<sup>5</sup>

★ ★ ★

6

We will never arrive at descriptions of reality or the meaning of human existence so perfect that imaginative redescription will become pointless.<sup>6</sup>

★ ★ ★

7

Take care of freedom and truth will take care of itself.<sup>7</sup>

★ ★ ★

## VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY

8

The important thing is not to stop questioning.<sup>8</sup>

★ ★ ★

9

We absolutely refuse a discourse that would assign us a single code, a single language game, a single context, a single situation; and we claim this right not simply out of caprice or because it is to our taste, but for ethical and political reasons.<sup>9</sup>

★ ★ ★

10

Deconstruction is not an enclosure in nothingness, but an openness to the other.<sup>10</sup>

★ ★ ★

11

The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious.<sup>11</sup>

★ ★ ★

12

Let us work out honorable terms upon which philosophy might surrender to poetry. Let us poeticize culture.<sup>12</sup>

★ ★ ★

13

We must create the taste by which we will be judged.<sup>13</sup>

★ ★ ★

14

Imagination is the chief end of the good. Art is more moral than moralities.<sup>14</sup>

★ ★ ★



15

Art has the spiritual quality of religion.<sup>15</sup>

★ ★ ★

16

Creativity can save some who could not be saved any other way.<sup>16</sup>

★ ★ ★

17

God's away on business.<sup>17</sup>

★ ★ ★

18

By mediating between the transcendental sublime and the common, one is able to condense a cloud of metaphysics into a drop of grammar.<sup>18</sup>

★ ★ ★

19

Metaphor is less in the philosophical text than the philosophical text is within metaphor.<sup>19</sup>

★ ★ ★

20

Proceed within aesthetic metaphors.<sup>20</sup>

★ ★ ★

21

The world is but a canvas to the imagination.<sup>21</sup>

★ ★ ★

22

The world may be justified as an aesthetic phenomenon.<sup>22</sup>

★ ★ ★

23

We are citizens of the world.<sup>23</sup>

★ ★ ★

24

We are condemned to be free.<sup>24</sup>

★ ★ ★

25

We will be what we make of ourselves and nothing else.<sup>25</sup>

★ ★ ★

26

We must compose as an aesthetic project the meaning of our own life.<sup>26</sup>

★ ★ ★

27

Aesthetics and ethics are one.<sup>27</sup>

★ ★ ★

28

Our life is our message.<sup>28</sup>

★ ★ ★

29

Life as literature.<sup>29</sup>

★ ★ ★

30

The personal is political.<sup>30</sup>

★ ★ ★

31

The objective of global political society is to create a free association of human beings within which each has an opportunity for self-creation.<sup>31</sup>

★ ★ ★

32

The subject is not a substance; it is a form.<sup>32</sup>

★ ★ ★

33

Give birth to oneself.<sup>33</sup>

★ ★ ★

34

Do not take for granted the distinction between art and life.<sup>34</sup>

★ ★ ★

35

In our society art has become something which is related only to objects and not to individuals, or to life. That art is something which is specialized or which is done by experts who are artists. But couldn't everyone's life become a work of art? Why should the lamp or the house be a work of art, and not our life?<sup>35</sup>

★ ★ ★

36

From the idea that the self is not given to us, there is only one practical consequence: We must create ourselves as a work of art.<sup>36</sup>

★ ★ ★

37

Search for an aesthetics of existence.<sup>37</sup>

★ ★ ★

38

Be the poet of your life.<sup>38</sup>

★ ★ ★

39

If it is not poetic it is not life but death we get.<sup>39</sup>

★ ★ ★

40

Beauty rests on necessities. The line of beauty is the result of perfect economy.<sup>40</sup>

★ ★ ★

41

Art is the elimination of the unnecessary.<sup>41</sup>

★ ★ ★

42

Simplify, simplify.<sup>42</sup>

★ ★ ★

43

If not us, then who? If not now, then when?<sup>43</sup>

★ ★ ★

44

Old deeds for old people, and new deeds for new.<sup>44</sup>

★ ★ ★

45

Poets are the ones who 'make things new,' and thus to fail as a poet is to accept someone else's description of oneself.<sup>45</sup>

★ ★ ★

46

We can always make something new out of what we have been made  
into.<sup>46</sup>

★ ★ ★

47

Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.<sup>47</sup>

★ ★ ★

**VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY**  
THE POETICS OF A QUIET REVOLUTION

48

Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.<sup>48</sup>

★ ★ ★

49

One day a 'why' arises, and everything begins in that weariness tinged with amazement. 'Begins' – this is important.<sup>49</sup>

★ ★ ★

50

We will be revolutionary when we revolutionize ourselves.<sup>50</sup>

★ ★ ★

51

The individual who goes it alone can start today.<sup>51</sup>

★ ★ ★

52

The inner crisis of our civilization must be resolved if the outer crisis is to be effectively met.<sup>52</sup>

★ ★ ★

53

Let thy walk be an interior one.<sup>53</sup>

★ ★ ★

54

Rouse yourself from the daze of unexamined economic habit.<sup>54</sup>

★ ★ ★

55

Do not be a bourgeois compromise.<sup>55</sup>

★ ★ ★

56

There is no wealth but life.<sup>56</sup>

★ ★ ★

57

Superfluous wealth can buy superfluities only. Money is not required to buy one necessary of the soul.<sup>57</sup>

★ ★ ★

58

People are rich in proportion to the things which they can afford to leave alone.<sup>58</sup>

★ ★ ★

59

The essence of civilization consists not in the multiplication of wants but in their deliberate and voluntary renunciation.<sup>59</sup>

★ ★ ★

60

The cost of a thing is the amount of life which is required to be exchanged for it.<sup>60</sup>

★ ★ ★

61

Most of the luxuries, and many of the so called comforts of life, are not only not indispensable, but positive hindrances to the elevation of humankind.<sup>61</sup>

★ ★ ★

## VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY

62

How we spend our money is how we vote on what exists in the world.<sup>62</sup>

★ ★ ★

63

Though gold and gems by the world are sought and prized,  
To us they seem no more than weeds or chaff.<sup>63</sup>

★ ★ ★

64

It is better to have fewer material wants than to have larger resources.<sup>64</sup>

★ ★ ★

65

Those who know they have enough are rich.<sup>65</sup>

★ ★ ★

66

Economy of means and simplicity of life – voluntarily chosen – have always been the secret to fulfillment, while acquisitiveness and extravagance are a despairing waste of life.<sup>66</sup>

★ ★ ★

67

Abundance is not a specific quantity of goods; it is a state of mind, a set of attitudes.<sup>67</sup>

★ ★ ★

68

By changing our attitudes of mind, we can change the world.<sup>68</sup>

★ ★ ★



69

To solve the problem of poverty, we must first solve the problem of affluence.<sup>69</sup>

★ ★ ★

70

Voluntary simplicity and non-violence are closely related. To consume material resources heedlessly or extravagantly is an act of violence, and while complete non-violence may not be attainable here on earth, there is nonetheless an ineluctable duty on us to aim at the ideal of non-violence in all we do.<sup>70</sup>

★ ★ ★

71

The plain fact is that we are starving people, not deliberately in the sense that we want them to die, but willfully in the sense that we prefer their death to our own inconvenience.<sup>71</sup>

★ ★ ★

72

Live simply so that others may simply live.<sup>72</sup>

★ ★ ★

73

Any proposed solutions to the problems of poverty, environmental degradation, social decay, and spiritual malaise, are destined to fail unless we first address the role that commodity fetishism plays in creating those problems.<sup>73</sup>

★ ★ ★

74

Simple living is both a humble, personal endeavor and at the same time a socially, economically, and politically radical form of life.<sup>74</sup>

★ ★ ★

75

Voluntary simplicity is an expression of human freedom, one of whose aims is an increase in that freedom.<sup>75</sup>

★ ★ ★

76

Those who have a *why* to live can bear almost any *how*.<sup>76</sup>

★ ★ ★

77

One does not have to be sad to be militant.<sup>77</sup>

★ ★ ★

78

There is an infinite variety of exhilarating ways of life compatible with living simply on an equitable share of nature.<sup>78</sup>

★ ★ ★

79

Hasn't the artist always kept the true balance between the poverty of riches and the riches of poverty?<sup>79</sup>

★ ★ ★

80

We are lovers of beauty, yet simple in our tastes.<sup>80</sup>

★ ★ ★

81

Always bear in mind that very little indeed is necessary for living a happy life.<sup>81</sup>

★ ★ ★

82

Pleasure and simplicity are two old acquaintances.<sup>82</sup>

★ ★ ★

83

Amazingly small means lead to extraordinarily satisfactory results.<sup>83</sup>

★ ★ ★

84

Less is more.<sup>84</sup>

★ ★ ★

85

Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.<sup>85</sup>

★ ★ ★

86

Consider the lily; we say unto all that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like it.<sup>86</sup>

★ ★ ★

87

Through voluntary simplicity the needs of the individual uniquely match the needs of society. Of what other emergent life patterns can this be said?<sup>87</sup>

★ ★ ★

88

Western civilization is set up structurally to oppose voluntary simplicity.<sup>88</sup>

★ ★ ★

89

Private property is a concept that has many conceptions. Choosing a conception implies a vision of the social world.<sup>89</sup>

★ ★ ★

## VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY

90

The ethics of voluntary simplicity provides common ground not only between traditional political oppositions, but between all major world religions. Why not meet there and continue the human conversation?<sup>90</sup>

★ ★ ★

91

A shift in values in relation to the material aspects of life emerges as individuals and societies evolve from a postmodern to a voluntarily simplistic age.<sup>91</sup>

★ ★ ★

92

The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we, through their eyes. Why should we not also enjoy an original relation to the universe?<sup>92</sup>

★ ★ ★

93

The spirit of simplicity is not an inherited gift, but the result of a laborious conquest.<sup>93</sup>

★ ★ ★

94

Simplicity is the peak of civilization.<sup>94</sup>

★ ★ ★

95

Light dawns gradually over the whole.<sup>95</sup>

★ ★ ★

\* Indicates a minor adaptation of original quote.

(ENDNOTES)

- 1 Georg Lukacs\*
- 2 Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg
- 3 Friedrich Nietzsche
- 4 Albert Einstein
- 5 Percy Bysshe Shelley\*
- 6 Richard Rorty\*
- 7 Richard Rorty
- 8 Albert Einstein
- 9 Jacques Derrida\*
- 10 Jacques Derrida
- 11 Albert Einstein
- 12 Richard Rorty\*
- 13 Samuel Taylor Coleridge
- 14 John Dewey
- 15 Silentio
- 16 Silentio
- 17 Tom Waits
- 18 John Dewey\*
- 19 Jacques Derrida
- 20 Silentio
- 21 Henry David Thoreau
- 22 Friedrich Nietzsche\*
- 23 Diogenes\*
- 24 Jean-Paul Sartre
- 25 Jean-Paul Sartre
- 26 Silentio
- 27 Ludwig Wittgenstein
- 28 Mahatma Gandhi\*
- 29 Friedrich Nietzsche\*
- 30 Carol Hanisch
- 31 Silentio
- 32 Michel Foucault
- 33 Harold Bloom
- 34 Silentio
- 35 Michel Foucault
- 36 Michel Foucault
- 37 Michel Foucault
- 38 Friedrich Nietzsche\*
- 39 Henry David Thoreau
- 40 Ralph Waldo Emerson
- 41 Pablo Picasso
- 42 Henry David Thoreau.
- 43 Origin Unknown
- 44 Henry David Thoreau
- 45 Martin Heidegger / Richard Rorty\*
- 46 Jean-Paul Sartre\*
- 47 Percy Bysshe Shelley
- 48 William Wordsworth
- 49 Albert Camus
- 50 Ludwig Wittgenstein\*

51 Henry David Thoreau\*  
52 Lewis Mumford  
53 Blessed Henry Suso  
54 Epictetus\*  
55 The Steppenwolf\*  
56 John Ruskin  
57 Henry David Thoreau  
58 Henry David Thoreau\*  
59 Mahatma Gandhi  
60 Henry David Thoreau  
61 Henry David Thoreau\*  
62 Vicki Robin\*  
63 Fu Hsuan  
64 St Augustine  
65 Lao-Tzu\*  
66 Theodore Roszak  
67 Robert Theobald  
68 William James\*  
69 Clive Hamilton and Richard Denniss\*  
70 E.F. Schumacher\*  
71 Victor Gollancz  
72 Mahatma Gandhi  
73 Silentio  
74 Mark A. Burch\*  
75 Mark A. Burch  
76 Friedrich Nietzsche  
77 Michel Foucault\*  
78 Jim Merkel\*  
79 Honore de Balzac  
80 Thucydides\*  
81 Marcus Aurelius  
82 Charles Wagner  
83 E.F. Schumacher  
84 Mies Van der Rohe  
85 Leonardo da Vinci  
86 From the Sermon on the Mount  
87 Duane Elgin\*  
88 Michael Jacobson\*  
89 Jeremy Waldron / Joseph Singer  
90 Silentio  
91 Silentio  
92 Ralph Waldo Emerson  
93 Charles Wagner  
94 Jessie Sampter  
95 Ludwig Wittgenstein