

'IN THE GRIP OF A RON BERRY': A CORRESPONDENCE

by Phil Maillard.

In 2003, Chris Torrance published a book called 'Wobbly Chair', an out-take from a longer, as yet unpublished book, 'Path'. In 'Wobbly Chair' there's a humorous piece called 'Anthologies Poem', in which Torrance characterises himself by way of some magazine and book titles:

I have been

an origin & a diversion

I have been

a green horse

I have been

a child of albion

& an angel of fire

I have been

a conductor of chaos

& a temper of hazard, etc

As the poem progresses, however, it expands into a more generalised self-portrait, including the lines

I have been

in the grip of a Ron Berry

punishing the syntax of my soul

As an image, this suggests a physical embrace of greeting, but also perhaps a more psychological relationship, forceful and challenging.

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Ron Berry (1920-1997) was just over twenty years older than Chris Torrance. Born in Blaenycwm at the very top end of the Rhondda Fawr, he lived for much of his life in nearby Treherbert. As a writer, he had a zig zag of a career, never achieving the financial success which would allow him to 'just write'. A restless soul, he began his working life as a miner, then had a sequence of jobs to which he appeared superficially uncommitted; yet all his work provided him with valuable material for novels, short stories, plays and a posthumous autobiography. In the 1960's, he published a series of novels with London publishers (mostly with W. H. Allen), and had some success with radio and television drama. By 1970 the popularity of 'regional writers' (not my phrase!) was waning. Berry was a few years older than his north-of-England 'kitchen-sink'

contemporaries, Braine and Barstow and Sillitoe, but never got his full share of the attention. In the 1980's and '90's he published mostly in Wales: short stories mostly in the magazines of the time, Planet and The New Welsh Review, and a novel and non-fiction with Gomer Press. The Introduction to Berry's 'Collected Stories' (Gomer, 2000) by Simon Baker attempts to place Berry in the tradition of Welsh writers in English. To be fair to Baker, he does quote Berry's answer to the question 'Do you consider yourself an Anglo-Welsh writer?': "I don't give a damn for Anglo-Welsh. Tapeist gurus and shorthand dabs from the University and Arts Council be buggered". To quote Baker again, Berry was always 'an outsider, a political agnostic and religious atheist, sceptical of all systems and institutions'.

It seems likely that it's the short stories that Ron Berry will be most remembered for; and if they remind me of anyone else's writing – particularly the early stories in the 'Collected' – it's Charles Bukowski. The similarities include characters who define themselves against the jobs they're doing, the down-to-earth descriptions of conflicts between men and women, and the attraction to the technical vocabularies of work, and sport. Bukowski loved horse-racing and baseball; Berry was a cyclist in his youth, and played rugby and especially football. Bukowski and Berry shared their birth-year, 1920; they even once shared a publisher, although that was more by coincidence: in the very early 1980's W. H. Allen's paperback off-shoot Star was publishing Bukowski's low-life tales of 'the under-paid and the over-sexed', 'Factotum' and 'Women'. I don't know whether Berry was familiar with Bukowski's work. He mentions Ginsberg, Kerouac and Henry Miller in his letters to Torrance; but the American writer he praises most is Cormac MacCarthy, "whose real power still crinkles my nape".

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Ron Berry and Chris Torrance lived no more than ten miles from each other, as the hawk flies. By road, it's further – 15 miles or so. Environmentally, it's further still, with Berry at the head of the strip development of the industrial Rhondda, and Torrance in the upper Neath valley, within the Brecon Beacons National Park.

The journey between those two places is a remarkable one. Torrance described his cottage as being 'two fields from tarmac', which was pleasant enough in the summer, but more of a challenge on a cold wet winter's day. Beyond the field gate, to the left, a narrow lane drops down to the bridge over the Neath, Pont Melin-Fach. To the right, it twists upward past the farm, past piles of timber on one side, past a beautiful spreading oak in a rough field on the other, and out onto a small plateau of common land. There are views north to the peaks of the Beacons, south to Craig y Llyn above Rhigos (our route to the Rhondda), and south west, on a clear day, to Swansea Bay.

From here, the road from Ystradfellte drifts down to Pontneddfechan. It's best taken slowly, to avoid the sheep. Pontneddfechan village is now more of a daytripper destination than ever, since the National Park authorities closed their Visitor Centre and leased it to a cafe. In the summer, cars line the road on both sides for some distance.. Chris Torrance, who walked this way to get his shopping in Glynneath, or to travel to Cardiff for his creative writing class, seemed resigned about the crowds. Ron Berry, I'm sure, would have been less taciturn. Some humour can be rescued from the situation: a large sign proclaiming WATERFALL COUNTRY is screwed to the side of the public toilet.

From Pontneddfechan the river loops away from the road. It's a quiet stretch of water, across some fields. Recently, otters have been seen here. At Glynneath, river and road draw close again at the T-junction. Instead of turning right into the town, or across to the elevated section of the Heads of the Valleys road that bypassed Glynneath in the early 1970's, a left turn takes you up through a small settlement of terraced houses called Pontwalby. From here it's a long haul up to New Inn. This was the course of the original Heads of the Valleys road, and pretty terrifying it must have been to live at the bottom of that hill, with buses, trucks and other traffic hurtling straight at you.

When this was the main road, there was a greasy spoon caff at the top of the bank called the Don Cafe. Beyond New Inn, the landscape becomes harsher; ‘industrial rural’ might describe it. The stark bulk of Craig Y Llyn rises up on the right. The road that scales it starts at the next roundabout, the A4061, linking the Neath and Rhondda valleys. On the left is the open cast mine; on the right, the old Tower Colliery. There’s a new feature here – a zip wire chairlift ride that takes the stout-hearted up towards Llyn Fawr lake.

After one sharp uphill turn, then another, you start to come out onto the forested plateau above the lake, the blade-tips of a wind-turbine turning over the trees ahead. A mile or so further on there’s a popular layby, where there’s usually an ice-cream van. The view north across the Brecon Beacons is worth stopping for, particularly on a late-summer evening. On the rough land below the car park there’s bright fireweed. Scraggy Welsh sheep eke out a living. Llyn Fawr lake under the cliff is a dark place; some people think it’s melancholy, or unappealing in some way. The Czech photographer Josef Koudelka perceived something about it. Whilst touring post-industrial Wales in 1997 he stopped here and took a panoramic black and white shot of the lake and the road that climbs up to the layby.

From here you start the long descent down into the Rhondda. For most of the way the road is a curving ledge along the hillside. Not far along, on the left, is a small, white-painted hut, once the home of a hermit. Judging by the psychedelic flowers he liked to plant around and about, he was something of a visionary. The flowers have gone, and so, presumably, has the hermit. On one wall of the hut there’s now a red heart.

Lower down, there begin some quite lengthy views southward along the Rhondda. To the right is the small side-valley of Blaenycwm, where Ron Berry was born. Suddenly, round a sharp curve, you’ve landed back in the Valleys – allotments, rough fields with ponies, then Treherbert: terraced streets lined with cars, small shops, pubs and clubs, takeaways, tattoo parlours, chapels, small blocks of flats.

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Chris Torrance kept about twenty letters from Ron Berry, written between 1987 and 1996. They are written mostly in fountain pen, with the writing slanting slightly upward from left to right, on a range of coloured paper: pink, green, blue and yellow.

The first extant letter from Ron Berry to Chris Torrance is dated 6th June 1987, from his home in Treherbert. It starts by thanking Chris for his ‘report on black kites’. It also mentions that the person who was with Ron Berry when they last met at Chris Torrance’s cottage was still talking about the home brew they’d had there – ‘Elixerish alright’. This is evidence that Ron Berry and Chris Torrance had met in person prior to June 1987.

There is a back story to the ‘report on black kites’. On 11th May 1985, working in his garden, Chris Torrance was sure he’d seen a black kite, flying up from the SSW direction. He wrote a short piece about it, which looks as if he intended to send it to a local ornithologist for verification. Chris was basing his identification on several factors, including the large size of the bird, its colouring, which was different from either a buzzard or a red kite, and, above all, its tail, which was not ‘deeply forked’ like a red kite’s.

It seems unlikely, but not of course impossible, that the bird was a black kite. They winter in tropical Africa, and come up to Spain and France in large flocks in the spring. They are occasionally seen in Kent and up the English east coast; recently their numbers in southern Europe have been increasing, and the lone individuals seen in Britain might be looking for new territory. In general, they don’t like crossing large bodies of water like the English Channel, but do like to be near coasts, to feed on dead fish. They haven’t bred in Britain so far. All in all, a sighting in the Brecon Beacons in May would be unusual.

Ron Berry, though non-committal, seems dubious too. He’s sure Chris’s report wouldn’t convince

the 'County Rarities Committee', although he wonders whether Chris would be concerned about them anyway. 'Expert ornithologists are funny people.'

In this letter, Ron Berry laments the changes in the Brecon Beacons since the years he spent there birdwatching. He mentions Pont Rhyd Y Cnau, which is the next bridge upriver on the Neath from Pont Melin-Fach. Nowadays, says Ron Berry, Ystradfellte is 'on the itinerary' for some of his pet hates: Outward Bound, Orienteering, 'carnival parties from the Home Counties', tourism – evidence of 'a lemming humanity'. He contrasts this with his experiences years previously, when he used to walk to Pontneathvaughan from Blaenycwm. He uses a wonderfully evocative detail, describing the area as 'pastoral, coloured by silica miners dusted like millers'.

At the end of this first letter, Ron Berry mentions that his book about peregrines is finally about to come out from Gomer Press. Apart from exchanges about writing and the writer's life, it is the shared love of the natural world, and particularly of hawks, that is the essence of the friendship between Chris Torrance and Ron Berry. Torrance of course saw his observations of bird life around his cottage as part of his vocation as poet. There is a list among his papers of birds observed locally from 1970 to 1980, which includes over 70 varieties, some common, some rarities; and there are numerous examples of poems featuring birds throughout his 50 years residence in the upper Neath valley. In his first published writing from there, 'Acrospirical Meanderings...' (Albion Village, 1972) there is his poem 'The Sparrowhawk'; on a CD including some of his last writing ('A Book of Number', 2013) there is a lament for a dead goshawk.

Both Torrance and Ron Berry, judging by the tone and content of the letters, valued each other's friendship. Torrance liked to interact with other people, to gain material for his own writing from their expertise, or to collaborate more directly on creative projects. His work with musician Chris Vine is an example. For Torrance, Ron Berry was a source of knowledge about the history of the area, and, more specifically, about bird life. From Ron Berry's point of view, Torrance kept him in touch with that part of the Brecon Beacons he'd known so well, particularly as his health began to fail as he got older, and he couldn't do the walking and birdwatching in remote places which he used to do. Also, I think he sensed that they had a lot in common, both being vocational writers and instinctive individualists, haters of organisations, who wrote what they wanted without the need to identify with any movement or ideology.

From April 1988 we have a rare letter from Chris to Ron Berry – I say 'rare' in the sense that Torrance didn't usually keep copies of his letters. This one records a couple of sightings of a pair of peregrines, and was probably retained because of its vivid descriptions of the birds: 'I was groaning over a garden fork at the time, bashing buttercup roots, when I heard this distinct double rip of wings overhead.... 2 lean, scimitar-winged hawks zapping overhead together at a height of say, 35-40 feet... They left a sort of steely-powder blue impression of colour'. A couple of weeks later Torrance sees either '2 falcons or hawks', one of which flew into a hole in a nearby wall and deposited 'a fine-looking homing pigeon, ringed on the right leg I think, colour of feathers white and light brown'.

Ron Berry replied a few days later, confirming that there were five pairs of peregrines within a ten mile radius of Blaenycwm that year, and identifying the sites nearest to Chris. He also says that the difference in size is the way to tell falcons and tiercels apart, although when seen individually in the air, it could be tricky.

In letters from the early '90's, Ron Berry reveals his generous side. He sent Chris a copy of his book 'Peregrine Watching' – 'my first non-fiction'. Following a visit to Chris in 1993 he sent a small sum of money, being "'better off"' now than in all my three score and thirteen'; and early the following year he sent Chris a jumper – 'few more available, with zips and collars' – plus the offer of some reams of A4 (pink). Ron Berry was obviously concerned about Chris's isolation, saying that he couldn't live in such a place now himself: 'I'm drawn to experience wilderness, but I'd sooner bear boredom & fury among people than have to live in it'.

Ron Berry was, however, to some degree critical of Chris's writing. In response to 'The Slim

Book/Wet Pulp', sent by Chris in 1994, he says 'Frankly it's too esoteric for my taste. By and large meaning style moreso than what's said.' It didn't stop Berry trying to push Torrance's work with Seren Books, to no avail. Berry was also unimpressed by Chris's performances as one half of Heat Poets: 'Can't hear the words on your tape. I've listened closely, felt frustrated too. Something's wrong in the sync, I mean moreso than my ear. In truth besides, the words I hear are often banal, unworked on, also cloudy, clouded by fashion, avant-gardeish... Of course, it's easy for me, my lot, because I feel the transience of performing. The vaunted "performance arts" currency. Equally & again, of course, we must do what we have to do. Key being DO.'

In return for Chris's tape, Ron Berry sent a tape of his radio play 'Everybody Loves Saturday Night', which had been originally broadcast by BBC Wales in the 1960's. He mentions that the pace of the play seems less pressurised than current drama; his Narrator 'rambles willy-nilly, a little icon unto himself'. An interesting snippet is that the actor who played the Narrator 'played opposite Mae West in his day'.

In 1995, Ron Berry attended a reading by Chris and the Cardiff poet Lloyd Robson, at the Ton Pentre Workmen's Hall. His reaction illustrates their very different approaches to writing. Ron Berry says: 'Never having heard you before, what most registered was old fashioned chicken & egg egoity, a lively stress on sources validating sequences. Evidence, in all truth, of "watching" oneself via time out of mind, self-consciously revising, polishing the conduit instead of the product. A kind of psychic palavering... The stuff of diary keeping, either/or & weather/nor. Your small audience enjoyed these pre & in-between talks as interesting, integral, but (from witnessing eyes & faces) the actual poetry went lost, hitting and/or missing, memorable only for sweet congruences & apt or otherwise fancy word placings.... But God damn, of course you're bedded in poetry for life. Moreover, Chris, you have learned the cadences, nuances, intonations of readings on TV & radio & public performers. They don't sound to be your own'.

Berry goes on to explain that there's nothing malicious in his comments, and that since the early 60's he's had to walk out on poetry readings, unable to get anything from them, 'especially the Danny [sic] Abse mode'. I think that probably neither Ron Berry nor Chris Torrance fully appreciated each other's writing. This was partly a generational effect. Ron Berry had had some success in the commercial world of publishing and the BBC. I suspect that, without being materialistic, he considered that being paid for a piece of writing was one measure of success. Chris Torrance, a leading member of the British Poetry Revival along with close friends Lee Harwood, Barry MacSweeney and Iain Sinclair, equally considered himself a professional writer; but his income stream was different. He had little expectation of being paid much by publishers; but he earned money from readings and performances, and from running a very successful creative writing class. Torrance wasn't particularly interested in Anglo-Welsh writers or magazines. Moreover, there's a radical difference between their basic approaches to writing. Ron Berry looked outward, on the natural world, and on relationships and stories that illuminate the life of the community he lived in. He thought too much introspection could be a dangerous thing, negative as well as positive coming from inside. Torrance was involved in a much more inward journey, although equally observant of the natural world around him, and always remaining well grounded. Although not quite a mystic, Torrance was focussed on his own inner reality, and on how experiences affected his own psyche. However, despite his interest in ley lines, the wilder shores of Egyptology and such like, there's usually a steely precision and economy in Torrance's writing. Ron Berry's style is intense, very lively, with a volcanic urgency – it comes across in the letters too – as if he were wrestling with the life in things, going all out to get it down in prose.

I don't know when and how Chris Torrance and Ron Berry met. We've seen that Ron Berry had visited Torrance at some time prior to Berry's first extant letter in June 1987. They both featured in a large format book of photographs by Stuart Smith, called 'Picture: Welsh Poets'. That book is an interesting amalgam of image and text, in that each image of the twenty three poets featured has a handwritten poem written over it. Ron Berry is the exception: his picture has a short prose piece on

it, from his novel 'So-Long, Hector Bebb'. In fact, Ron Berry is one of the few writers in the book who wouldn't have self-identified primarily as a poet, although presumably Stuart Smith regarded Berry's prose as having the qualities of poetry. Berry is photographed in an armchair, presumably at home, with a picture frame and the architrave of a door set at a slight angle behind him. Chris Torrance is portrayed standing beside the Roman stone Maen Madoc, on Sarn Helen in the Beacons. Although 'Picture: Welsh Poets' was published in June 1987, the date of Ron Berry's first letter to Torrance, Stuart Smith must have spent time with the writers prior to publication, taking the photos, so maybe he told Ron Berry about Torrance, or vice versa.

Another possibility is via the magazine 'Arcade'. This was an attempt at a radical magazine for Wales, published fortnightly in Cardiff between late 1980 and March 1982. It was the era following the failed Welsh Devolution vote of 1979, the time of the Women's Peace Camp at Greenham Common, and the beginning of the Thatcherite policies that 'restructured' the industrial heart of Wales. The Achilles Heel of 'Arcade' was financial. Co-operatively owned, it could never be self-sufficient, and relied on grants from the Arts Council of Wales. When the grant was stopped, the magazine couldn't continue; of course, there was a strong feeling that the decision was political. It was a brave, intelligent magazine, and – politics aside – it gave unusual prominence to literature, with Peter Finch, Nigel Jenkins and John Tripp regularly featured. In issue 12, April 17th 1981, there was a two page biographical piece about Ron Berry, by David Smith. In issue 31, dated February 5th 1982, the cover story was a 3-page illustrated spread called 'Peregrine Watching: 1979', by Ron Berry himself. This was a brief foretaste of his book from Gomer, 'Peregrine Watching', published in 1987. Torrance also had a substantial article in 'Arcade'. This was by Chris O'Neill, titled 'Diary of a Nobody?', in issue 13, May 1st 1981. It has a photo of a depressed-looking Torrance hunched over a mug of tea in some cafe, and an excerpt from 'The Diary of Palug's Cat', recently published by Galloping Dog Press. The following issue of 'Arcade', Number 14, May 15th 1981, contained a truly ridiculous letter from the poet Mike Jenkins, titled 'Vote Oblong', defending traditionally-shaped poems, in contrast to Torrance's work, which, in Jenkins' view, was mediocre, derivative and banal. Being blasted by Mike Jenkins might have made Ron Berry think Torrance was on the right track in his writing. Also in that issue was another piece by Ron Berry called 'How's It Going, Brawd, Al' Right?', about changes in the Rhondda since his days with Blaenrhondda AFC in the late 1930's (including a photo of the team). So possibly it was via the pages of 'Arcade' that Ron Berry and Chris Torrance became aware of each other.

By the mid-1990's Ron Berry's letters become more frequent, and his health becomes worse, limiting his ability to visit Chris in person. He has osteoarthritis in the spine and knees, and various other problems. He is still watching and thinking about birds. In the autumn of 1995 he had been seeing and hearing redpolls over his garden, which prompts a memory of trying (with difficulty) to locate redpoll nests in conifers twenty years previously.

Ron Berry also voices his fears about the future of the wilder countryside, given a basic human flaw – the obsessive need to expand, to colonise, to interfere: 'What irks my senses, my acquired nous, the increasing numbers of experts & leaders who make pelf by taking ignorant innocents out into the country, or rivers & seas or woods and deserts, & inevitably thereafter whatever lives & breathes in wilderness diminishes. Whereby, till doom-crack, the world shrinks. Because we cannot leave things alone. Leave be.' In this context Berry cites the decline in woodcock breeding near Chris. He also mentions a farmer near Pont Rhyd y Cnau who told him he never heard nightjars now, calling them 'Crow of the Night'.

In September 1995 Ron Berry writes to Chris, 'Your bird notes brought a sense of loss because (being something of a whole-hogger by instinct) I had to quit the field a few years ago'. He goes on to mention 'word of mouth' reports about goshawks nesting successfully above the Rhondda and in forestry in the Vale of Neath. He goes on to talk about a variety of birds of prey and their habits, including sparrowhawks, buzzards, and peregrines who can 'kill by starlight, when all colour has gone from the world'.

In early 1996 Ron Berry is writing about sparrows and chaffinches in his garden pillaging nuts meant for tits, and jackdaws which 'gollop lumps of fat & remains of dinners on the bird table'. He remembers, while peregrine watching, when a 'single eyas [i.e. young peregrine] left the quarry, she clambered, hooked & grappled herself to the rim of the mountain, where she screamed herself hoarse until 3 a.m. next day. Parent birds refused to feed her, but she sailed her maiden flight out, around & in with smart serenity'.

By late summer 1996, Ron Berry classifies himself as 'almost housebound. There's a terminal sameness on streets & pavements, the coming & going of values. Of energies. So I'm discontented, always have been, perhaps, schismed by dream'. He reports talking to TV researchers regarding a programme about himself due to be broadcast in the autumn, following the publication of his novel 'This Bygone'. In fact, Chris had been approached to participate in the programme, but declined – his opinion of TV was always uncompromisingly negative. Ron Berry wonders to Chris who had told those TV people of 'our connection'; in fact it was Peter Finch, laudably attempting to drum up a fee for Torrance.

At the end of the late summer 1996 letter, Ron Berry wonders if Chris will see a ringtail harrier 'passing through your bailey'. Berry once saw them in early autumn at Whitford Burrows and Point, at the far end of Gower, opposite Burry Port. In his next, long letter, he explains that the ringtail harrier is a name for Montagu's Harrier, although 'the female Hen Harrier's colloquially a Ring-tail too. I used to see Montagu's Harriers butterflying over bogland and heather along the upper reaches of the Hepste. Wild enough territory'; but 15 or 20 years ago he saw a family had driven a Range Rover across country for a picnic on the upper Hepste, queering the pitch. This memory unleashes a diatribe against the Forestry Commission, ramblers from the Home Counties, Duke of Edinburgh medallists etc. 'Nothing's sacred any more... Because we're a lethal species.'

Berry also reports that a friend of his had visited recently, with the still-warm body of a 'jack sparrowhawk', killed by hitting a windowpane. 'The mad yellow rimmed eyes. Body size smaller than a storm thrush. Thin yellow legs, long life-squeezing toes and talons. And all the absolute, quick brilliant certainty gone. Essence beyond human comprehension.'

The last extant letter from Ron Berry to Chris Torrance is dated 27th November 1996. He says, 'Your description smacks of a ringtail harrier. They have butterfly ease, flip and stall, turn, dip & swerve. Crows are arcane, avian mafia. Trouble is we attribute Homo Sapiens principles. Old R. S. Thomas regards peregrines as "killers". Bluetits on aphids are rabid. Kingfishers go beserker with minnows. Cockney William Blake knew best, but he wouldn't join the RSPB.'

Berry signs off, 'Being legerdemained from God's pocket into his hands, when I'm fit enough I'll be seeing you, Ron'.

AFTERWORD

In reply to Ron Berry's 'late summer 1996' letter, Chris Torrance wrote a prose piece which is part letter and part creative response to their correspondence as a whole:

Dear Ron,

The "St Luke's Little Summer" period a great wash of
tropical maritime perhaps given spin across the pond
by hurricane blows N. American Indigo Bunting to
Ramsey Is I guess you picked that up a proper
blow-in, unlikely to have hitched a tanker lift etc

so everything moist moist life crawling on every wet surface

well I could have seen "ring-tailed harrier" as described by
you large hawk flew over just above the roofridge
intimately tailgated by a crow & as I glimpsed this the
hawk, bigger than a sparrowhawk, flared its tail out &
gave a miraculous jink & suddenly it was the hawk chasing &
very close to attacking the crow as they fled immediately
over the trees & within seconds the air was full of other
crows appearing & making a huge fuss & converging I sort of
have that image freeze-framed, looking up, of seeing the pattern
of that tail, fanned out, & just thinking, "ring-tail" - fitted
the name at least

whatever
an indelible thrill, just to see that manoeuvre which ended up with
the crow suddenly on the wrong end of things

Feel as you do about the destruction of what is here, the
behaviour of the Forestry Commission, the scar roads that
accelerate steep slope erosion, the Bronze Age tumuli surrounded
by monoculture “development”, in whatever form (the inhuman
pedestrian bridge over the new road at the Resolven turnoff – a
steel walkway exposed to the funnelling winds of the Neath Valley
from NE or SW, which if stretched out is probably a ¼ mile long

kids will be tempted to take short cut straight across
the roundabout bridge high exposed & unfriendly, a gothic
suicide pact for the new millennium

but a voice says

that Nature, like Cleopatra is fractal i.e., infinite in
her variety which is maybe why we have to be stoic in the
face of the destruction of our world by unfettered Money. It
can be seen as a purely geological process: just another
transformation of matter. We are merely human, we merely
live in it, for awhile, for a microsecond, have a few orgasms
of creativity of misery then die away to provide fossil
fuel for the future one could be a permanent
protester I just haven't got the energy, now, I've got
too many other things to do & the world may yet be saved,

I suppose & meantime writing is a BIG topic still, & worth doing, & I have 21 signed on to my class, & that keeps me fertile.