

Circle of Happiness

**a book of poems
by Willie Watson**

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also by Willie Watson:
Diamonds on Uranus
Sentience
A Country's Just a Place
Everyday's a Butterfly
Cup of Tea
The Quest for Enlightenment and Stuff
Paradox
Wild Pigs of Fukushima
The Meaning of Life in Easy English
Geology
Pink Snow
155 Sonnets
Uncle Willie's Very Silly Animal Poems
The This of the That
Tarot Poems (with Marie Brožová)
The Alchemist's Notebook
Four Syllables on Water
The Guru Kalehuru and Other Poems
Poems from Prague

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Introduction

I chose to call this book “Circle of Happiness” because of all the titles of all the poems in the book, I felt that would make the best title for a book. It is a happy title, a joyous title, and I like it a lot. As a poem (opposed to just a title), I don’t know that it’s the peak of my poetic achievement, or even the best of the book, although it’s a good one and I’m proud of it. Poems are like children, a bit, and I wouldn’t want any of the others to feel bad. I love them all.

It is, however, something I’ve been thinking about a lot lately. Moods being contagious, that is. It is the theme of Circle of Happiness, but also of Communion, The Role of Infants in Society, and Bad News, although Bad News is a much darker version. The idea that we can all make each other happier is a powerful one, but the other side of that is mass hysteria and mob rule, and we are susceptible to both. It’s a beautiful world we live in, but a scary one, too. Living with 8 billion other people can be stressful, for sure, but it would be lonely without them.

I wouldn’t say that Mood Contagion is the overall theme of the book (although that would make a great name for a band, don’t you think?). Like most of my poetry books, this is just a collection of all the poems I’ve written since the last book, which was Diamonds on Uranus, less than a year ago. (Damn, I’m on fire!) So, no specific theme.

But there are several poems about the beauty of nature, the cycle of the seasons, and how living on a

spinning planet, alternating between day and night, has shaped our perception of the universe.

There are several animal poems. I wrote a book, “Uncle Willie’s Very Silly Animal Poems,” way back in 2012, and I just haven’t been able to stop. I like animals. I truly do. I think the one in this book just called “Animal Poem” could be a good book in its own right, if I could find the right artist. If you like drawing pictures of animals and aren’t a pain in the butt to work with, contact me.

There are three poems – The Infinite Void, If You Look at One Thing, and The Guillotine Song- which were written as songs, and if any musicians reading this would like to play them, record them, produce them, feel free. I’d love that. In fact, probably a lot of my poems could be made into songs, even if I didn’t hear them that way in my head when I wrote them. They are words which rhyme and have a rhythmical pattern, which is pretty much the definition of lyrics, I think.

A few of the poems are political, sorry, and way too many of them are about the art of writing poetry, which is a cliché and only appeals to a very narrow audience and is something I have frequently criticized other poets for doing so it’s all a bit hypocritical of me. What can I do, though? The words come, I write them down, and then what am I going to do, NOT include them in the book? That’s probably what an editor would tell me to do, which is one of the reasons I don’t have an editor.

So, I urge you to read this book and, if you like it, maybe even buy it. It would make a lovely gift for someone, I’m sure. Also, if enough people buy it I will get a place

in the country which I will call an artist's colony and an experimental, organic, environmental space, and you'll all be welcome to visit.

Thanks for reading!

Willie Watson

P.S. As always, I have my wife Helena to thank for the actual compilation and production of this book. I could not have done it without her.

I'd also like to thank all the people who have attended the Poesie Par Tous et Pour Tous, Dark Romantic Club, Literary Lavatory and Spit it Out poetry readings in Prague over the last year. They have been a test audience, always very encouraging and often helpful. I hope these poems come across as well on the page as on the stage.

Circle of Happiness

It always makes me happy
to see other people happy
it's contagious, it's a circle,
it's a cycle, it's a loop
We are individual creatures
with our individual features
but our greatest happiness
is happy as a group

An Ambience of Ignorance

**The fish who's swimming in the pond
knows nothing of the world beyond
has never seen a book, a tree
a bicycle, or a cup of tea
and we, upon the planet's face
can only stare up into space
a place where it's so hard to go
and there's so much we do not know**

A Change in Perspective

When I was young
my biggest fears
were that the world
would turn without me
also, when I left the room
what other folks
would say about me
Now the things that I once feared
are the things that help me cope
I know the world will carry on
and that's what gives me hope
as to what will people say
about me when I am not there
when the time has come to go
I see no reason I should care

Critical Race Theory

Our history is dark, indeed
full of pain and fear and blood
how could it have been any other way?
Each plant was once a single seed
still and silent in the mud
until it grew to meet the coming day
We stole, we raped, enslaved and maimed
We killed, there is a lot of blame
all of that is clearly understood
Yes, we must confront our shame
but nothing ever stays the same
the question now is if we can be good

Pre-Historic Proclivities

**Denisovans, Neanderthals
perhaps a couple other species
help make up our human, mostly
Homo Sapiens DNA
Scientifically this proves
our primitive propensity
for shagging anything that moves
and that is true up to today**

Night Vision

By day we only see the world that we are
living on
because the sun is shining, big and bright
but a never-ending darkness comes to
light when it is gone
and then we see the things we see at night

The stars, a billion miles away, across the
universe
wink at us, their mockery is clear
the light of the obscuring, yellow sun has
been dispersed
and now all sorts of other things appear

Ghosts and ghouls and zombies are
escaping from their graves
it's time for them to all come out and play
the werewolves and the vampires seek the
substance that they crave
and all of those who won't come out by
day

are revealed, perhaps not so
coincidentally
in the darkness, where we cannot see

The Global Ubiquity of Clouds

I watch the clouds up in the sky
puffy, soft, white wisps of vapor
as they're slowly drifting by
and as they change their shape

a hat becomes a cup of tea
a map of France a shoe
and then the thought occurs to me
folks in Australia see this, too

The world is just a great big ball
floating, silently, in space
the sky above surrounds it all
and keeps us in our place

Light Pollution

**On all our city streets at night
the lights are shining, nice and bright
it can be a pretty sight
but it dims the stars
Things are not as they appear
We only see what's standing near
we have obscured the universe
and don't know where we are**

Making Do

**You can't always get what you want (the
Stones say)
and you don't always get what you need
but you get what you get and if you make it
fit
then it will be something, indeed**

Ode to a Galaxy 3 Billion Light Years Away

**The farther away, the less we know
so, in our ignorant state
we see a faint and distant glow
and start to speculate**

Planet of Infinite Wonder

**(along with some thoughts on free will
v. pre-determination)**

**Bippity boppity
Flippity floppity
Recipricocity
quiddish pro quo**

**Balance and symmetry
some flexibility
Long short short, long short short
that's how it goes**

**First, one thing happened
and then there's another
and then there's another
and then it explodes**

**It's all held together
by gravity's tether
stack enough units and
call it a load**

There is a power
and there is a rhythm
there is an energy
there is a flow

There is a current
that runs like a river
through all of existence
as far as we know

and sometimes it's faster
than when it is slow

Great grosses of grundles
and bundles of bunches
the water that sprinkles
the fire that burns

the Earth that gives birth to
all things in the springtime
the spiraling flowers
the fractals of ferns

The tree roots and fungi
form underground networks
neurons are firing like
in our own brains

The trees give us fruit, nuts,
and shade, while the mushrooms
might either kill us or
drive us insane

This is a planet of
infinite wonder
from whales in the deep
to the star-spangled sky

We are just starting to
know what it is but we
still have no clue to the
how and the why

Some people may think so
but some people lie

The spider web's network
of lines and right angles
all just to tangle up
incautious flies

So they can graze on them
slowly and lazily
they will survive, but
somebody must die

Elegant, intricate
we could all learn from it
each is unique as they
build them from scratch

like footprints and snowflakes
and DNA helixes
there are no two in the world
which will match

Each individual
clings to existence
life is a miracle
but, that's the price

**Patterns repeat, but each time
it is different, we
can't set foot in the
same river twice**

**Isn't it beautiful?
Isn't it nice?**

**Effect follows cause, it's
just one of those laws that
the law-loving folk seem
to think we should follow**

**But those not content
with the way things have went
up to now, might just think
that's a bit much to swallow**

**If all our experience
is pre-determined
and we have no choice but
to do what we do**

**Then we should sit back and
enjoy the experience
always a pleasure to
see something new**

**But if it is not, (and
I'm certain it isn't)
We have self-awareness
we have a voice**

**The future will be
what we've made when we get there
I only hope that we make the right choice**

Mass of Wishes

**Wishes drift on dandelion clouds
or sail down to Earth on falling stars
they're in the birthday candles we blow out
at any age and anywhere we are
the universe is such an empty place
but wishes fill up all the empty space**

The Necessity of Individuality

**Arguments are tedious
the future can seem bleak
but, if we all thought alike
we wouldn't be unique**

First Step

It would be lovely
to talk to the people
on other planets
throughout the galaxy
improve and heighten
our perceptions
of our position
in this reality
it would be lovely, but here is the twist
they're too far away and they might not
exist
but we can talk to
all sorts of people
from different regions
in different nations
with different languages,
different religions,
different genders and generations
We can, yes, we can, and we know that we
should
Communication is always good

Imbalance

In most human communication
there is something missin'
everybody wants to talk
and no one wants to listen
(this is true
on the internet, too)

Wheel of Feelings

Strange is just one of the
ways we can feel
like loving or lonely or happy or sad
content or resentful, grateful or mad
which are evenly spaced
on the great feeling wheel
which is constantly turning
frustration and yearning
we must feel them all
both the good and the bad

Recipe for a Poem

Put the proper number of syllables
in each and every line
iamb, which are also known as feet
if correctly accented
then they'll come out just fine
and words will flow like honey
oh, so sweet
add a metaphor or two
just to set the scene
tell the folks what they already know
add a clever ending
(nudge, nudge, wink, y'know what I mean?)
Voila, Q.E.D. and there you go

Socially Constructed Lives

**We live behind walls to block the wind
and under roofs to block the rain
we go out and come back in
and we take pills to stop the pain
We wear shoes to save our feet
and wear cool shades to block the sun
we drive our cars along the street
we go out dancing, we have fun
The sun still rises, and still sets
the world insists on spinning round
the rivers run, the water's wet
and trees still grow
straight from the ground
But we, the people, by and large
students, workers, husbands, wives
thinking that we are in charge
live socially constructed lives**

Failure to Defend

**The space inside your head is free
your thoughts are all your own
It's a region of autonomy
an independent zone
a sanctum for your sanity
free of slant and spin
but if you watch too much TV
you let the fuckers in**

Ian, and Others

**When hurricanes sweep in from the sea
at least the birds
have sense enough to flee**

Reinforcement

A way that's been traversed but once
will leave a trail, however slight
that a keen, perceptive eye might find
and each that follows leaves it more,
just slightly, than it was before
broken branches, footprints left as signs
and more and more till, do the math
eventually it becomes a path
a way to go that's easily defined
this woodsy metaphor holds true
whenever we see something new
along the neural pathways of the mind

Communection

The roots of trees spread far and wide
beneath the forest's fertile ground
they work with all the other trees
but do not make a sound

The mushrooms live down there as well
in a world we cannot see
and they're in symbiosis
with the roots of all the trees

the bees returning to the hive
do a dance to show
all the other honey-makers
where the flowers grow

The little puppies wag their tail
to show their joyous state
Everything upon this great,
green Earth communicates

**the birds are singing in the trees
the frogs are croaking in the pond
the fish are swimming in the seas
and we are dancing on the lawn**

**the words we write, the songs we sing
the wind, the clouds, the blazing sun
it's all a part of one big thing
though we are many, we are one**

For the Love of Summer

Summer, in the temperate latitudes
is the crown and glory of the year
leisure is the ambient attitude
the sky above is baby blue, and clear

Autumn is the time for back to school
Winter's wicked cold, and kind of dull
Spring springs up
and Spring is kind of cool
but in summer, all the world's alive and full

Surfers go out surfing on the waves
some like walking barefoot on the shore
or scarfing tons of drugs at desert raves
and food tastes better when it's cooked
outdoors

**We could go walking through the deep
green wood
Long afternoons of Frisbee on the lawn
The sun, so warm upon our skin
feels good
Let's go swimming naked in the pond**

**The sky, the sea, the universe is one
summer is a time for having fun**

The Ongoing Evolution of Language

Language is still evolving
grammar's evolving, too
why use a semi-colon
when a little dash'll do?

Science

There is no God, there is no plan
all that came from the mind of man
There is no heaven, nor a hell
and, perhaps, it's just as well

Procrastination

You should be doing something now
that is very true
there are an infinite number of somethings
which we always ought to do
some of which we've done before
or maybe something new
but even doing nothing at all
is still a thing to do
it doesn't do much damage
and it's quite relaxing, too

The Bad Thing About Autumn

I would love the autumn more
if it were not foretold
that autumn leads to winter
and in winter it gets cold

The Infinite Void

In the infinite void
there are infinite possibilities
with a great deal of flexibility
in their combinations

In the infinite void
there are islands of existence
which have duration and persistence
as part of their situation

we live on one of these islands
and it's a pretty nice place
it's got its own kind of style, and
it's surrounded by billions and trillions
of miles of open space

In the infinite void
there is mostly non-existence
but there is some resistance
to its perpetuation

**The infinite void
we see the fires burning
there is a constant yearning
for new creation**

**We don't know how it all started
we were created somehow
we're just a minuscule part, and
we don't need to worry too much
about any of that right now**

The Love of Guns

The love of guns is a mental illness
healthy people love flowers and trees
cheeseburgers, french fries,
kittens and puppies
a tropical sunset, a cool summer breeze

music and dancing, a bit of romance
the beach in the morning, the salt in the air
the thrill of a Ferris wheel,
maybe the bump cars
bright lights, cotton candy,
a night at the fair

Some like champagne,
and some like peyote
while others love smoking a doobie or two
we make our choices,
it's part of the beauty
everyone does what they most like to do

**Good books that will take you to
faraway places
some people love fashion
and elegant dress
beautiful people with beautiful faces
Basketball, hockey,
backgammon and chess**

**There is so much to love
in this world that we live in
there are so many ways to have fun
there are some people
who just never see it
because of their non-stop
obsession with guns**

Animal Poem

Dogs are loyal
Cats are aloof
Squirrels like to scamper across the roof
Horses can run fast
Cows say "moo"
and nothing can hop like a kangaroo

Foxes are clever
Owls are wise
Chameleons are in disguise
Meerkats like living
under the ground
and bats can sleep when they're upside
down

Pigs are fat
and chickens lay eggs
Flamingoes are pink
and have crazy, long legs
Monkeys and Lemurs
play in the trees
Birds can fly, and so do bees

**They also make honey
for us to eat
without them, life wouldn't be as sweet**

**So, if you love animals,
Boys and girls,
Don't let the grownups destroy the world**

Day and Night

The world we live in every day
is visible and clear
the trees are green, the streets are gray
it is as it appears

But when the sun has turned its back
or we, in truth, on it
the curtains part, all is revealed
not just our little bit

The stars are bright and beckoning
the stars are far away
the night, by any reckoning
is greater than the day

By day, we have to think of things
like where to catch the bus
and are the people who we see
much different than us?

What do we stop to look at?
when is it wise to run?
our day-to-day survival
in the kingdom of the sun

Then, at night, we lie in bed
and close our eyes to sleep
and all those thoughts go from our heads
we sink into the deep

It's all a trick, how it's designed
reality's not what it seems
When we can see is when we're blind
but in the world of dreams

The curtains part, and there we find
the universe inside our mind

Opening Hours

The world is open for your entertainment

24/7

365

It's the closest you'll ever get to heaven
at least, that is, while you're alive

Utopia or Oblivion

If we want the Star Trek future
and I really think we should
then we must survive the present
and it isn't looking good

The Momentary Prison

**This meeting could go on for hours
Time, outside, is fleeting
We are trapped inside this room
Good Lord, how I hate meetings**

Relativity

**It takes a bit of effort
to use our mental power
meditation can take forever
thirty seconds seems like an hour**

If You Look at One Thing

If you look at one thing
you won't see the other thing
can't look up, if you're busy looking down
looking at the clouds as I walked across
the meadow
suddenly I stepped in something brown

If you go one way
you can't go the other way
You will never know what it would
have led you to
the path not taken is forever forsaken
how can we ever know
what we oughta do?

Oh, everything you do
there is something that you didn't do
sometimes you do
and sometimes you don't
If you wanna be happy
just do what you wanna do
Sometimes you will
and sometimes you won't

**This way, that a way, binary choices
butterfly effects and sliding doors
Think too long and you're gonna miss your
window
you might come out even
but you won't get more**

**Everything you say,
there is something that you didn't say
Even if it ain't right, doesn't make it wrong
Each word leads to another word, another
word
that's gonna change the meaning of the
song**

**Oh, everything you do
there is something that you didn't do
sometimes you do, and sometimes you
don't
If you wanna be happy just do what you
wanna do
Sometimes you will and sometimes you
won't**

The Magic of Mountain Goats

Mountain goats defy the laws
of physics
they are truly awesome
climbing mountains
they take physics
that would make
most humans dizzy

The Ambiguity of Etiquette

We often try to be polite
and don't say what we mean
we do not want to cause a fight
don't want to make a scene
so, when I say I'll be there if I can
I hope you're smart enough to understand
that being there is not, in fact, my plan

Crazy World

**The world has always been crazy
which can be explained thusly, in part:
its dominant species is people, and
most people are not very smart**

Token Change

**Thousands, out of millions
isn't nearly far enough
Marijuana's good for you
so legalize that stuff
It can cure your cancer
ease your stress and give you bliss
Nobody at all should ever be in jail for this**

The Inherent Horror of the Night

**Why do horrors take place at night
and zombies from the graveyards creep
and banshees wail and vampires bite
when we should be in bed asleep?
By day, the demons go away
and sunlight makes the world so clear
but people cannot see at night
and ignorance is fear**

Frog's Life

When tadpoles are born
they come out of their eggs
like fish, in that they don't have any legs
but, they change, and soon they stand
or squat, I guess, as best they can
Each generation's resolution
a microcosm of evolution
a graphic view of the ancient plan
of how life went from sea to land

The Guillotine Song

Oh, the billionaires have all the money
the billionaires own all the banks
the working class do all the working
the bastards don't even say thanks

The billionaires have fancy parties
out on their luxurious yachts
the billionaires live in big mansions
and don't even know what they've got

So, bring back the guillotine
It's sharp and it's swift and efficient and
clean
bring back the guillotine
and let's chop off all of their heads

The billionaires never pay taxes
their kids never fight in the wars
because dying in wars is for losers
and that means the kids of the poor

The billionaires own all the governments
they own all the media, too
The billionaires could end world hunger
but that's not what they want to do

So, bring back the guillotine
it's sharp and it's swift and efficient and
clean
bring back the guillotine
till all of those fuckers are dead

The billionaires wear fancy jewelry
poor people mine out the gems
they don't give a rat's ass about us
so why should we care about them

We could leave them a small loophole
they don't want to die, that's O.K.
we won't give them a new neck hole
if they give all their money away

**So, bring back the guillotine
it's swift and it's sharp and efficient and
clean
bring back the guillotine
we'll chop all their heads off and then**

**The world will become a more beautiful
place
and we'll all be happy again**

Words of Fire

Like flames from a campfire
rising in the night
our thoughts go out into the empty air
there they flicker and go out
it is a pretty sight
but in the end, it seems it isn't fair
Poetry's a lonely art
we write and write and write
although it's clear that no one even cares
I'll just keep on writing, though
perhaps I'm not too bright
These are my words
and what I have to share

Art Copies Life

**There are too many war films
warping our minds
art copies life, and life copies art
the reason for that isn't too hard to find
it is no mystery
throughout our history
all of the lives that have gone before
people have always had too many wars**

The Natural Order

**When squirrels decide to fight with crows
it's best to just stay back
they're in a world that they both know
and either might attack**

Closure

If it doesn't hurt, then you can't feel
not all wounds are meant to heal

Point of View

Algae is loved
by the frogs and the bugs
but to people it looks kind of gross
It's a critical part
of the world that we're in
but we do not have to be close

Hidden Depths

The alligator's eyes
are the tip of the iceberg
danger lies below
the surface of an underworld
where people fear to go
It is completely alien
although it isn't far
as different as a planet
that goes round a different star

Global Warming

**When each summer's hotter than the last,
it's clear that the planet is warming.**

**When Greenland is melting way too fast,
it's clear that the planet is warming.**

**When wildfires rage, and asphalt melts,
and people are dropping dead from
strokes.**

**Of course the planet's warming, dude,
this is not a joke**

The Beginning of Civilization

**Our arms don't reach
the center of our back
and so we're biologically compelled
to seek out others
who can scratch that itch
who possess the qualities we lack
and thus our civilization is enriched
and in the end it all works out quite well**

The Role of Infants in Society

**Babies brighten up the world
babies brighten up your day
they make you smile
and when you smile
everything's O.K.**

Bad News

The sun gets hotter
the forests go dry
there is no hint of relief in the sky
the rich get richer
the poor just die
we have more information
but we don't know why
there's no place to park
and the traffic is bad
the pressure builds up
and the people get mad
people will yell
at whatever you say
and the world gets a little bit
worse every day

Freudavision

The movies in your head at night
produced, directed and starring you
dreaming is the most narcissistic thing
we ever do

Waiting for the Day

Chat bots are just copycats
they aren't what you'd call smart
they emulate other posters
with no intelligence or art
We'll know they've passed the Turing test
turned into something more
When one writes something brilliant
that we've never seen before

Method of Writing

I call myself a writer
I can put my words on paper
it doesn't take real talent
like a painter or a singer
but I line them up like soldiers
check the spelling and the grammar
and hope that every now and then
I come up with a zinger

Get Ready

When the leaves start turning color
they also get drier and small
when you can see space between them
get ready for the fall

Looking Forward

I'm better than I was before
but not as good as I will be
at least that's what I tell myself
contrary to reality
I am old and past my prime
and in so very many ways
such as fitness, strength and looks
I know that I've seen better days
but, in other ways I'm fine
and satisfied with all I've got
health and home and family
it's really quite a lot
While looking for enlightenment
there is no point in keeping score
I'm not as good as I will be
but better than I was before

Plausible Deniability

In the pub, when they are drinking
people say what they are thinking
far more than they would at work
or even with their family
with their lowered inhibitions
in their loosened-up condition
words flow freely as the wine
and folks say what is on their minds
their nasty, dark and twisted minds
with zero culpability
in the morning, they can say
"I'm sorry, I was drunk, O.K."
and everyone goes on their way
and no one thinks about it
this is a necessity
in our complex society
plausible deniability
what would we do without it?

Portals

A mountain that's reflected in a lake
a classic painting that could be a fake
the images we see through panes of glass
the symmetry of energy and mass
a seed that grows into a mighty oak
a pun of phrase intended as a joke
a book, a chair,
whatever you could mention
is a portal to a parallel dimension

The Advantage of Perspective

By day, the garbage overflows
on all the city streets
the traffic is a nightmare
and the smells are not so sweet
There are broken windows
and graffiti on the walls
and there's the smell of urine
in the stairwells and the halls
Life can be harsh and brutal
when you're living in the city
but, at night, from far away
the lights look oh, so pretty

A Bit of Technical Advice for Online Poets

**If you are writing something online
you will see the squiggly red and blue lines
Use them well, and give them
some credit, for
they are your very own online editors
In case of errors they still can't mend
it's best to read twice before you send
if it's sent and posted but still not so hot
You have, at the side,
those three little, gray dots**

Impostor Syndrome

I read the words the poets wrote
a century or two ago
and wonder where it is we went off track
nobody rhymes like that anymore
were they really so much cleverer before?
Or do things just always look better
looking back?

Polarization

Society is polarized
the left against the right
We're as disparate in our viewpoints
as the day is to the night
as the ice is to the fire
or the summer to the winter
If you're still sitting on the fence
you're going to get splinters

Balance

I love the cool and shady lanes
beneath the leaves on summer days
that give us respite from the pain
of the blazing sun and its searing rays

But when the world's grown cold and white
those rays will fall upon the snow
and cause a brilliant, glancing light
and there is magic in that glow

I love the rain upon the roof
when I am warm and dry inside
the worse the storm the greater peace
when all of that is nullified

**The world keeps turning, day to night
and then again, from night to day
both in darkness, and in light
we continue on our way**

**How fortunate that we reside
in such a pleasant universe
which has so many different sides
and all of them can be reversed**

**Some live in houses made of stone
some live in houses made of wood
contrast keeps the world in balance
and the balance feels so good**

Treasure Hunt

In a world of ancient treasures
In a world where new days dawn
there are things we cannot measure
running streams go on and on

but somewhere in the starry night
Somewhere upon the open sea
somewhere in the forest where
the squirrel's race from tree to tree

In a world of clouds and rainbows
in a world of sights and sounds
is the meaning of existence
Let me know when it is found