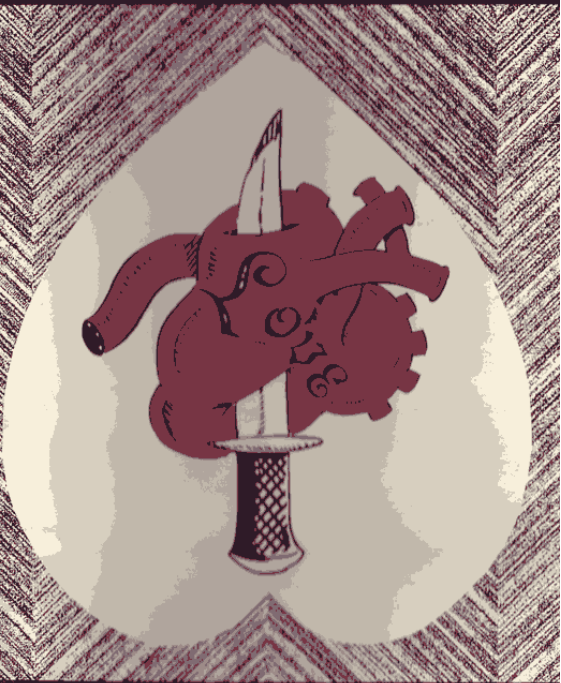


SLAVE
SONNETS



Bob Flanagan

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BOB FLANAGAN

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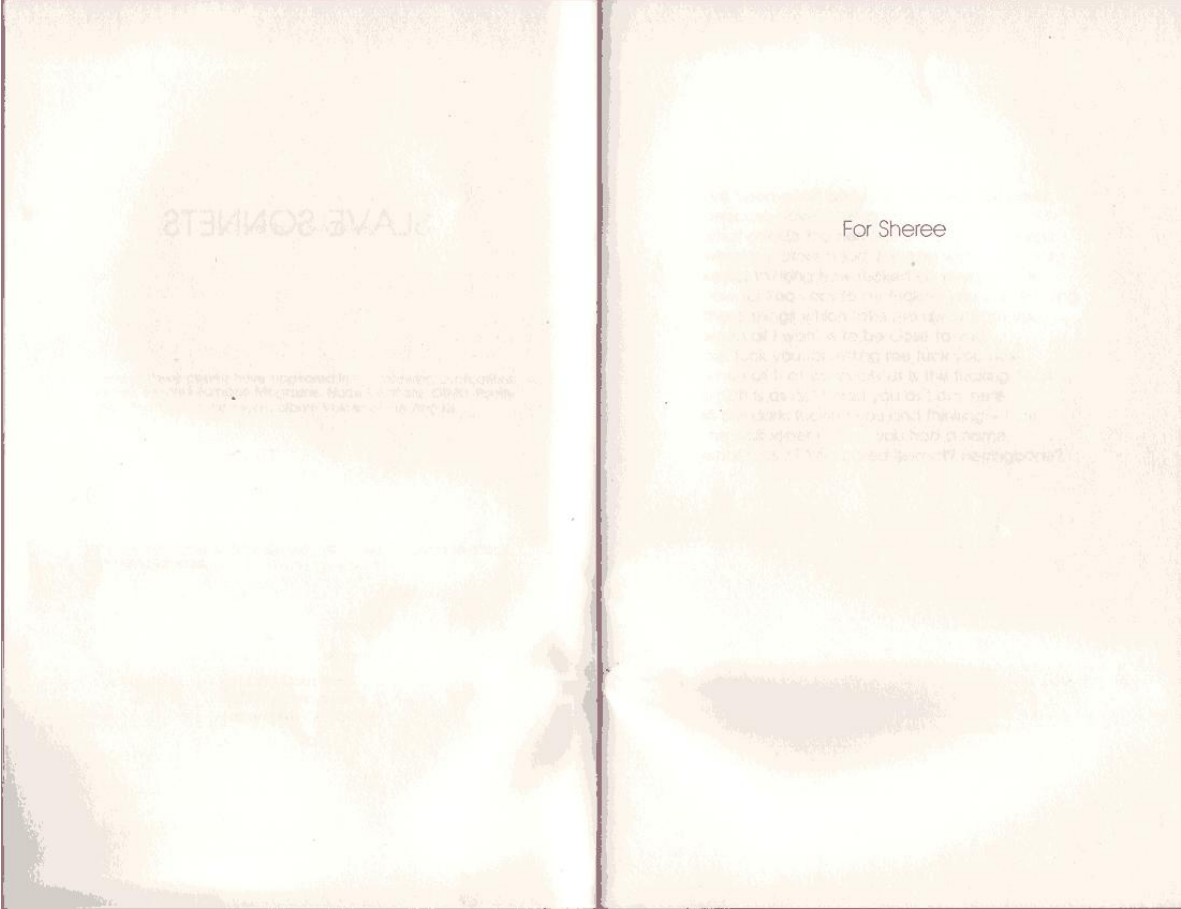
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For Sheree

When I look at you, I see a world
of light and shadow, of joy and pain,
of love and loss, of hope and despair.
You are the sun and the moon,
the stars and the planets, the earth and the sky.
You are the heart and the soul,
the mind and the spirit, the body and the mind.
You are the love and the life,
the death and the resurrection, the end and the beginning.
You are the light and the dark,
the good and the evil, the right and the wrong.
You are the beauty and the ugliness,
the grace and the sin, the mercy and the wrath.
You are the love and the hate,
the kindness and the cruelty, the gentleness and the harshness.
You are the love and the hate,
the kindness and the cruelty, the gentleness and the harshness.

I've been a shit and I hate fucking you now
because I love fucking you too much;
what good's the head of my cock inside you
when my other head, the one with the brains,
keeps thinking how fucked up everything is,
how fucked I am to be fucking you and thinking
these things which take me away from you
when all I want is to be close to you
but fuck you for letting me fuck you now
when all that connects us is this fucking cock
which is as lost inside you as I am, here,
in the dark, fucking you and thinking - fuck,
the wallpaper behind you had a name,
what was it? You called it what? Herringbone?

won uoy gnit d'elap uoy tce a nase
stak' t'at uoy gnitout avo' t'at uoy
noy abant' xox' em' to' toert' erd' a'bzog' nase
gnid' erd' ut'w' and' w'it' boert' nert' em' nase
a' gnit'w'w' au' be'out' w'it' gnit'ert' nase
gnit'ert' and' uoy' or'bout' ed' at' mo' i' be'out' w'it'
uoy' mo'it' w'it' em' w'it' d'at'w' uoy'ert' nase
uoy' at' nase' w'it' d'at'w' t'at' nase' nase
w'it' uoy' ab'out' em' gnit'ert' for' uoy' xox' t'ud'
gnid' nase'ert' w'it' a' uoy' nase'ert' t'at' to' nase
uoy'ert' and' t'at' uoy' nase'ert' t'at' to' nase
gnit'ert' nase'ert' and' uoy' gnit'out' nase'ert' nase
w'it' nase'ert' uoy' nase'ert' nase'ert' nase'ert'
nase'ert' nase'ert' t'at'w' t'at'w' uoy' t'at'w' nase'ert'

Everything in the world is all fucked up,
and there's no fucking, but who the hell cares?
The overriding feeling is fuck you.
I need you now like a hole in the head.
Not that I gave a fuck about fucking
in the first place. With or without my cock
inside you I was yours, your property,
and I existed only to please you.
But if it pleases you to make the world
a hell-hole, then you're a fucking asshole
and I'll never stop the shit, nor reach you
no matter how deeply I penetrate.
Everything's fucked up alright; there are holes
for everything, and you're just one of them.

...and I don't know if I should
...the grand scheme of things
...I suppose, given the fact that we live
...in terrible times, precariously
...feetering on the brink of extinction.
...I should speak up, write a fucking letter,
...or at least (God forbid) a fucking poem,
...something about something else, not fucking.
...But what's the point? My throbbing cock, that's what.
...I'm a dildo. What the fuck do you want?

What does it matter, fucking? I don't know.
In the grand scheme this big cock will be chopped
liver. Lover? Fucker? I'm a human
dildo, you said so. What am I thinking?
How fucked up everything is? The world is?
Well, fuck that. I'm fucking. To fuck: that's fucked
I suppose, given the fact that we live
in terrible times, precariously
feetering on the brink of extinction.
I should speak up, write a fucking letter,
or at least (God forbid) a fucking poem,
something about something else, not fucking.
But what's the point? My throbbing cock, that's what.
I'm a dildo. What the fuck do you want?

...was the walking dead, blood-splattered shirt
and a knife in the back the night we met.
You were dead, too, but beautiful, alive
again, Jayne Mansfield, and with a good head
on your shoulders, which turned surprisingly
toward me: your humble and obedient
zombie ever since. "It's fun to be dead,"
someone once said, and we're the living proof.
I'm the sick skeleton in your closet;
you're my reason for living: it's real life
and it scares us to death. Some big bruise
we know just dies, no reason. How 'bout me?
Let's make it Halloween. Get out your knife,
carve me like a pumpkin, and then let's fuck.

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carve me like a pumpkin, and then let's fuck.

...the family jewels,
more personal than a sack of beads:
the balls it takes to love some people
(the balls it takes to take some people's balls,
tokens of affection: two glistening pearls).
Her veterinarian friend knows how
(dogs and horses). "Men are a piece of cake!"
With our bitter-sweet romance on the rocks
she can talk like this and take for granted
my reaction: hard as a rock, a lust
for something permanent more than brutal.

You can't be an Indian giver when
what you're giving is the family jewels,
more personal than a sack of beads:
the balls it takes to love some people
(the balls it takes to take some people's balls,
tokens of affection: two glistening pearls).
Her veterinarian friend knows how
(dogs and horses). "Men are a piece of cake!"
With our bitter-sweet romance on the rocks
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Any way you slice it it comes out love;
without that – who cares what else is missing?

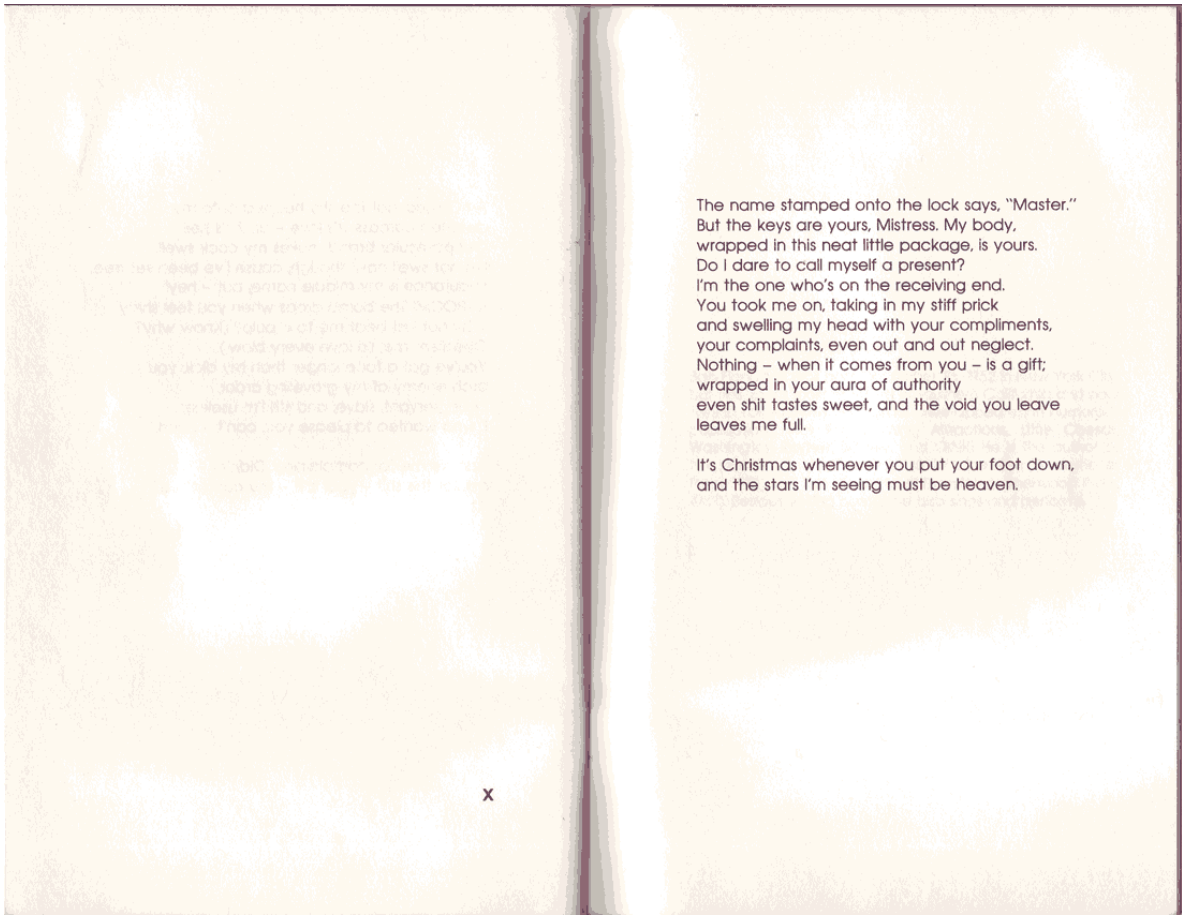
She could have been a lesbian but loves
hot dick, except what's often connected
to the prick is another prick trying
to run her life, so now she's got the keys.
Like a tethered animal: so it feels
when he gets these restricted erections.
He's up again, pissing to get it down,
make it small again and manageable.
For her that's it: MANAGEMENT OF THE MALE
ORGAN (and the asshole it's attached to),
a symbolic gesture, as political
in nature as it is against nature.

He's wild for her but he can't get near her
til the sight of his padlocked prick makes her wet.

Faint, illegible text on the left page, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side.

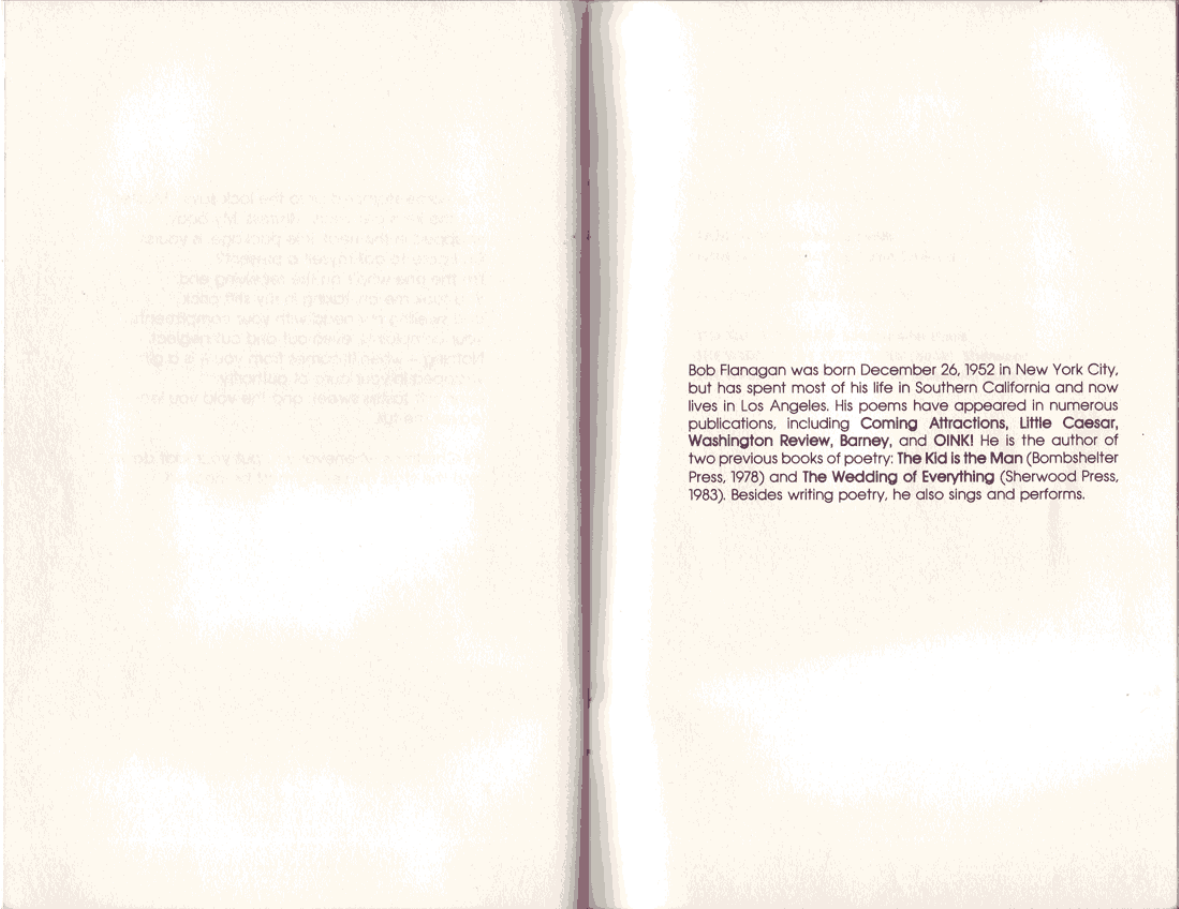
Ay Chihuahua! The shit heaped onto my devoted carcass. It's love – and it's hell. Our particular brand makes my cock swell. I'm not swell now, though, cause I've been set free. Endurance is my middle name, but – hey! KABOOM! The bomb drops when you feel shitty. Why not just beat me to a pulp? (Know why? Obedient me, I'd love every blow.) You've got a face longer than my dick, you arch enemy of my groveling ardor. Peon, servant, slave: and still I'm useless; I, who wanted to please you, can't – ouch.

Asshole me for complaining. Didn't I ask for this shit – your shit – my cup of tea?

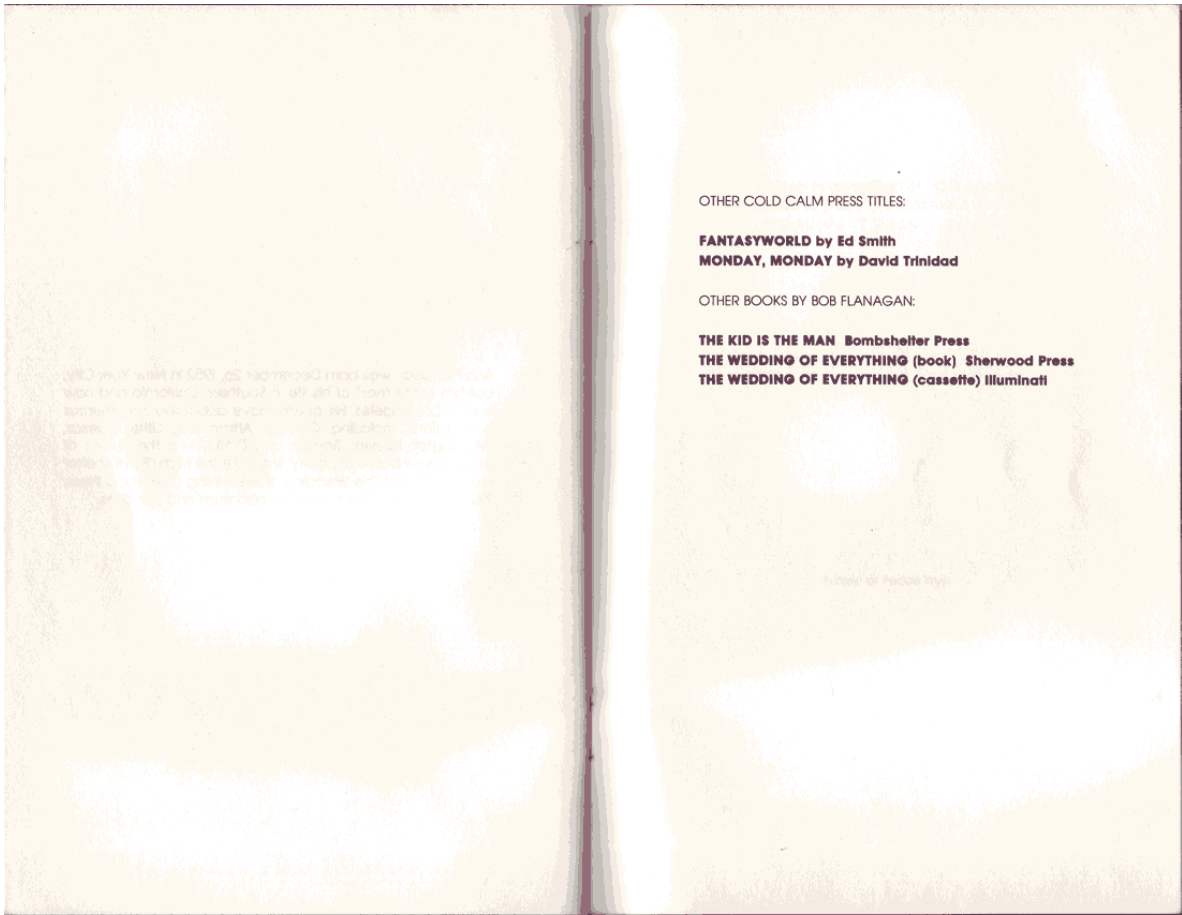


The name stamped onto the lock says, "Master."
But the keys are yours, Mistress. My body,
wrapped in this neat little package, is yours.
Do I dare to call myself a present?
I'm the one who's on the receiving end.
You took me on, taking in my stiff prick
and swelling my head with your compliments,
your complaints, even out and out neglect.
Nothing – when it comes from you – is a gift;
wrapped in your aura of authority
even shit tastes sweet, and the void you leave
leaves me full.

It's Christmas whenever you put your foot down,
and the stars I'm seeing must be heaven.



Bob Flanagan was born December 26, 1952 in New York City, but has spent most of his life in Southern California and now lives in Los Angeles. His poems have appeared in numerous publications, including *Coming Attractions*, *Little Caesar*, *Washington Review*, *Barney*, and *OINK!* He is the author of two previous books of poetry: *The Kid is the Man* (Bombshelter Press, 1978) and *The Wedding of Everything* (Sherwood Press, 1983). Besides writing poetry, he also sings and performs.

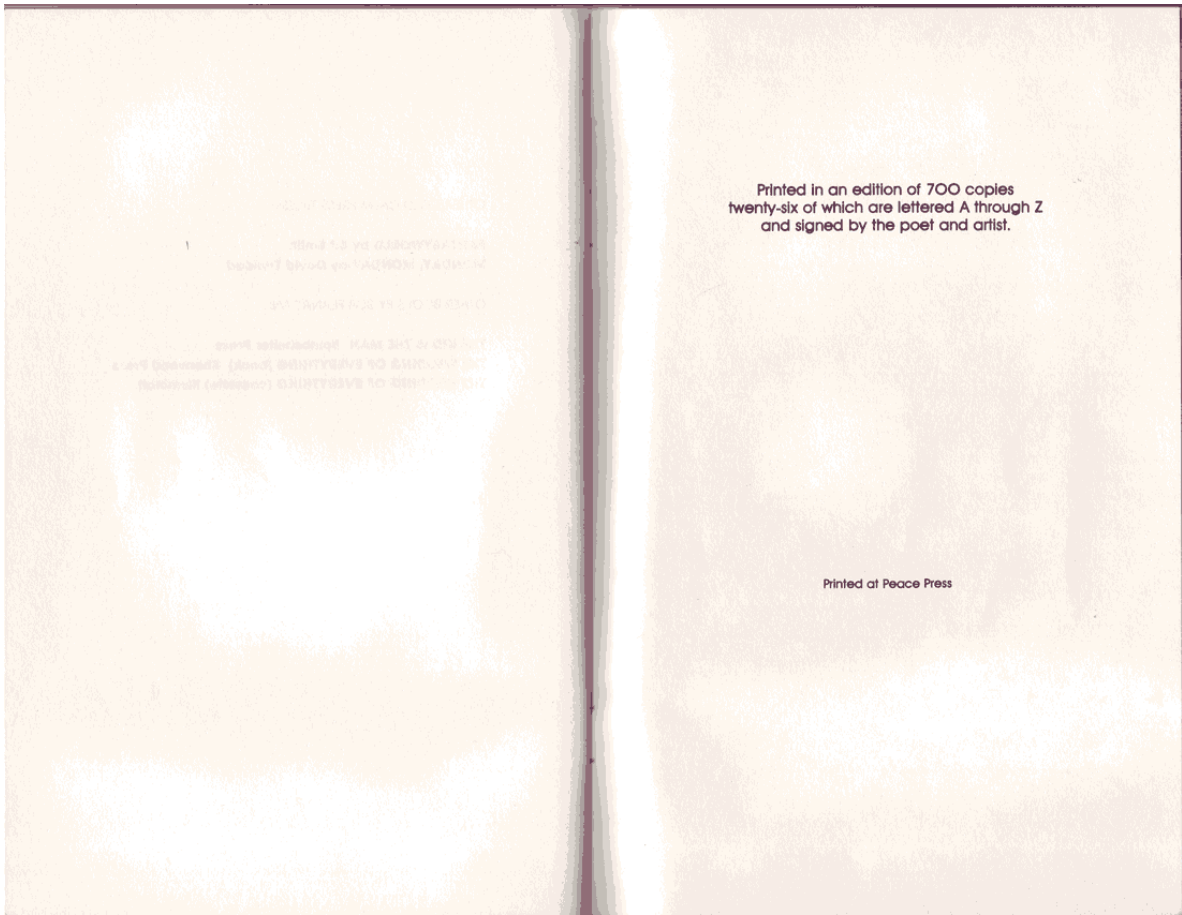


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THE WEDDING OF EVERYTHING (book) Sherwood Press
THE WEDDING OF EVERYTHING (cassette) Illuminati



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