L.Z.’s notes

to 80 flowers

selections and
comments by

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plan

“BEGINNING AT 70 TO FINISH FOR MY 80\textsuperscript{TH} BIRTHDAY A BOOK OF SONGS CALLED 80 FLOWERS”

(We came to Port Jefferson in the fall of 1973. Louis, approaching 70 was completing “A”-23. We had worked very closely, through many difficult years on “A” (40 years), Autobiography (22 years), Bottom: on Shakespeare (13 years), Catullus (18 years). Would he turn his poetic genius to “short” poems again?)

substance

“ONLY THE FLOWERS I HAVE ACTUALLY SEEN AND WHATEVER BOTANY I CAN LEARN IN 10 YEARS (‘DRIVE,’ ‘HORSES’), cf. \textit{ANEW} poem 33 & “A”-7.”

(\textit{ANEW} poem 33, for C written Dec. 12-13, 1939. “A”-7, the first of his poetry Louis had shown me shortly after we met late 1933. How far had we come from the early scene; how much left by the way and how much found, labored and achieved? 80 flowers for C was begun 12/25/74 and completed 1/21/78. The 80 flowers were all with us – indoors and out.)
form

“8 LINE SONGS OF 5-WORD LINES: 40 WORDS TO EACH POEM, GROWING OUT OF AND CONDENSING MY PREVIOUS BOOKS. AS TO 40 WORDS cf. OLD TESTAMENT, TETRAKTYS. LET TIME DETERMINE THE BOOK SEQUENCE OF THE 80 AND THEIR ‘ORDER’ – THAT IS THE CHRONOLOGY OF THEIR WRITING.”
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“And love be an 8 in a precise walk”

“Eight records . . .
  Thinking what it is”

“On a wagon drawn by eight mules
  A counter-bass more than
  Eight yards tall . . . ”

“eight words to a line for love”

“ait, aight, eyet
  eyot, eyght sing the same”
“a month before he was five”

“The last five evenings”

“Five strings . . .
Five notes . . .
Yü – North’s black winter water
Chiao – East’s blue spring wood
Kung – Compass’ center yellow prevails
over all four seasons’ earth
Shang – West’s white autumn metal
Chi – South’s red summer fire”

“five
owned
snapshots”

“at five . . . from
the Pentateuch”

“da capo five times”

“5 fingers of a hand”

“5-lobe-leaf maple”
“Manhattan 40 years ago”

“... Aint tasted
that kind of ADmired chocolate
for 40 years —”

“songs planned?
40 years
gone —”

“... God’s my life
forty years later”

“but when I sang
for forty years”
“And the flood was forty days upon the earth”

“And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years”

“And the land had rest forty years”

“holy holy tetraktys  
of the Pythagorean eternal flowing creation”

“80 odd dwellings burnt imagery of the poets”

“justice . . . holy holy  
tetraktys root  
and source  
generate gods  
and men  
(bless us)”

“. . . when 80  
flowers the new lives’ descant”

“man and earth suffer together:  
. . . 10 years – 80 flowers”
| "A"-8/92  | "A"-12/253 |
| "A"-12/161 | "A"-13/265 |
| "A"-13/287 | "A"-14/316 |
| "A"-18/393 | "A"-18/395 |
| "A"-23/557 | "A"-21/499 |
| "A"-12/128 | Genesis 7:17 |
| "A"-13/275 | Exodus 16:35 |
| "A"-13/300 | Judges 3:11 |
| "A"-13/305 | "A"-15/368 |
| "A"-14/339 | "A"-18/403 |
| "A"-15/366 | "A"-19/419 |
| "A"-23/531 | "A"-23/538 |
| "A"-23/554 | "A"-23/562 |