

*L.Z.'s notes
to 80 flowers*

selections and
comments by

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plan

“BEGINNING AT 70 TO FINISH FOR MY
80TH 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. *ANEW* poem 33
& “A”-7.”

(*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”-12/161
“A”-13/287
“A”-18/393
“A”-23/557

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“A”-12/128
“A”-13/275
“A”-13/300
“A”-13/305
“A”-14/339
“A”-15/366
“A”-22/531
“A”-23/554

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“A”-12/253
“A”-13/265
“A”-14/316
“A”-18/395
“A”-21/499

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Genesis 7:17
Exodus 16:35
Judges 3:11
“A”-15/368
“A”-18/403
“A”-19/419
“A”-23/538
“A”-23/562