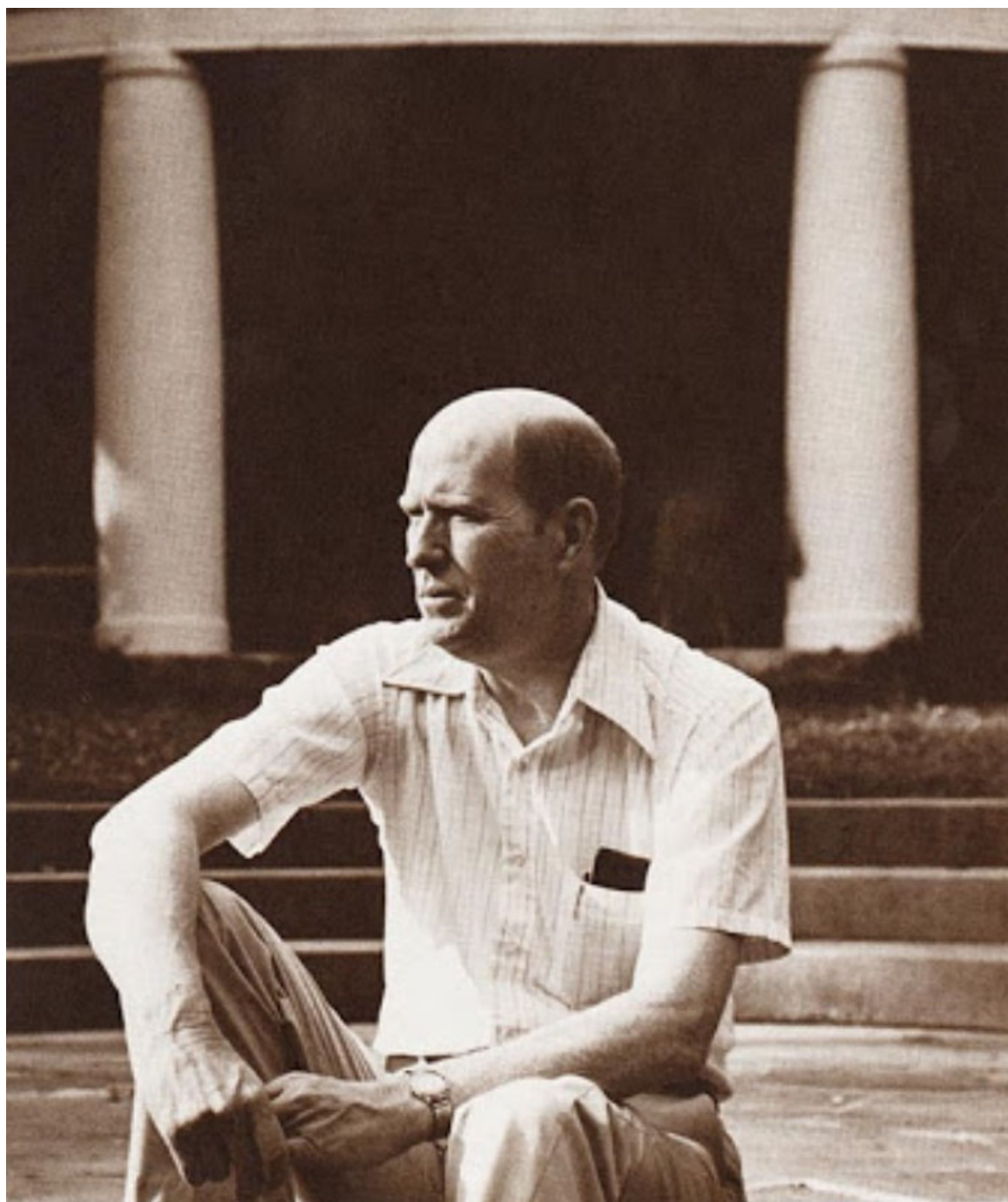


“I’ve brought / you everything”:

*The Complete Poems
of A. R. Ammons*

Volume 1: 1955-1977
and *Volume 2: 1978-2005*

(W. W. Norton, 2017)



Bad Goods

All my
life I've

been saving
myself for

something; I
wdn't go

here, do that:
hello, death,

I've brought
you everything.

The Complete Poems . . .

gathers the 966 poems from his 22 books,

plus 103 he saw into publication but left uncollected in his books,

as well as 24 seen into publication by colleagues and collaborators over the decade following his death.

The poems range in length from one line, as in . . .

COWARD

Bravery runs in my family.

and . . .

THE STORY

Oblivion keeps the caterpillar bright.

. . . to five poems so long they were published as separate books:

Tape for the Turn of the Year (7035 lines)

Sphere: The Form of a Motion (1860 lines)

The Snow Poems (7783 lines)

Garbage (2217 lines)

Glare (5142 lines)

... for a total of 55,257 lines
in the two volumes combined.

The Complete Poems also . . .

gives poems' dates of first composition, when Ammons recorded those;

tracks variants in reprintings and aims to establish authoritative texts of the poems;

offers endnotes detailing the poems' publication and textual histories, and also annotating some allusions and other references.

So I Said I Am Ezra

So I said I am Ezra
and the wind whipped my throat
gaming for the sounds of my voice
I listened to the wind
go over my head and up into the night
Turning to the sea I said
I am Ezra
but there were no echoes from the waves
The words were swallowed up
in the voice of the surf
or leaping over the swells
lost themselves oceanward
Over the bleached and broken fields
I moved my feet and turning from the wind
that ripped sheets of sand
from the beach and threw them
like seamists across the dunes
swayed as if the wind were taking me away
and said
I am Ezra
As a word too much repeated
falls out of being
so I Ezra went out into the night
like a drift of sand
and splashed among the windy oats
that clutch the dunes
of unremembered seas

compositor.
 (1) align poetry thrust
 as typed unless
 otherwise specified
 (2) author has typed
 & #'s after colors; they should be
 set with normal # between
 color + new word

(A) SO I SAID I AM EZRA

So I said I am Ezra
 and the wind whipped my throat
 gaming for the sounds of my voice
 I listened to the wind
 go over my head and up into the night
 Turning to the sea I said

I am Ezra
 but there were no echoes from the waves
 The words were swallowed up
 in the voice of the surf
 or leaping over the swells
 lost themselves oceanward
 Over the bleached and broken fields
 I moved my feet and turning from the wind
 that ripped sheets of sand
 from the beach and threw them
 like seamists across the dunes
 swayed as if the wind were taking me away
 and said

I am Ezra
 As a word too much repeated
 falls out of being
 so I Ezra went out into the night
 like a drift of sand
 and splashed among the windy oats
 that clutch the dunes
 of unremembered seas

→ line up these two
 "I am Ezra's" with
 the one in the
 first line - ~~give~~
 so they form a
 common left hand
 margin
 →

R:
 repeat indent
 to align

20859- Collected Poems - AMMONS
 NOR-004
 1-509

6 Dec:

today I
decided to write
a long
thin
poem

employing certain
classical considerations:

this
part is called the pro-
logue: it has to do with
the business of
getting started:

first the
Muse
must be acknowledged,
saluted, and implored:
I cannot
write

without her help
but when
her help comes it's
water from spring heights,
warmth and melting,

stream
inexhaustible:

I salute her, lady
of a hundred names—

Inspiration
Unconscious
Apollo (on her man side)
Parnassus (as her
haunt)

Pierian spring (as
the nature of her



TODAY

(12/6/63) (which is the
title of my poem) I
decided to write
a long
thin
poem

employing certain
classical considerations:
this
part is called the pro-
logue: it has to do with
the business of
getting started:

first of all the
Muse
must be acknowledged,
saluted, and implored:
I cannot
write

without her help
but when
her help comes it is like
water from the heights
in spring--there is
warmth and melting--and
the stream seems
inexhaustible:

I salute her, lady
of a hundred names--
Inspiration
Subconscious
Unconscious
Apollo* (on her man side
Parnassus (as her
haunt)
Pierian Spring (as
something of the
nature of her
going)

Hippocrene
Pegasus, and so on, but
most of all she is a
woman, maybe
a woman in us who eats

they don't ask what is:
 bamboo shoots,
tender, cool:
they have a head man:
 they pair off
 & raise babies:
 they defend:
 they sometimes rest in
clearings
and groom themselves
 in sunlight:
have our minds taken us too
far, out of nature, out of
complete acceptance?
we haven't remembered our
bodies:
 let's touch, patiently,
 thoroughly: beyond
 vanity:
but for all our trouble
with the mind,
look what it's done:
 a fact at a time:
 a little here (there's
the red ink
turned into the light!)
a little there:
let's be patient: much
remains
to be known: there may
come
re-evaluation:
 if we don't have
 the truth, we've

since
thousands of errors:
haven't seen the
jay:
 a sparrowhawk
can stand still
in a high wind, too:
coming home:
 how does one come
 home:
 self-acceptance:
 reconciliation,
a way of
going along with this
world as it is:
nothing ideal: not as
you'd have it:
testing, feeling the way:
 ready to
 readjust, to make
 amends:
self, not as you would
have it:
 nevertheless, take
 it:
 do the best you
 can with it:
I wrote about these
days
the way life gave them:
 I didn't know
 beforehand what I
 wd write,
whether I'd meet

but for all our trouble
with the mind,
look what it has done:
a fact at a time:
a little here (there's
the red ink
turned into the light)
a little there:
let's be patient: much
remains
to be known: there may
come
a re-evaluation:
if we don't have
the truth, we
have shed
thousands of errors:

reason for hope:
reason to go on:
if we foreknew,
we would indeed be
meaningless:

haven't seen the
jay:
a sparrowhawk
can stand still
in a high wind, too:
isn't that something?

a high, changeable
wind:

coming home:
how does one come
home:

2

garbage has to be the poem of our time because
garbage is spiritual, believable enough

to get our attention, getting in the way, piling
up, stinking, turning brooks brownish and

creamy white: what else deflects us from the
errors of our illusionary ways, not a temptation

to trashlessness, that is too far off, and,
anyway, unimaginable, unrealistic: I'm a

hole puncher or hole plugger: stick a finger
in the dame (*dam*, damn, dike), hold back the issue

of creativity's flood, the forthcoming, futuristic,
the origins feeding trash: down by I-95 in

Florida where flatland's ocean- and gulf-flat,
mounds of disposal rise (for if you dug

something up to make room for something to put
in, what about the something dug up, as with graves:)

the garbage trucks crawl as if in obeisance,
as if up ziggurats toward the high places gulls

and garbage keep alive, offerings to the gods
of garbage, of retribution, of realistic

expectation, the deities of unpleasant
necessities: refined, young earthworms,

garbage has to be the poem of our time because
~~any~~ garbage is spiritual, believable enough

to get our attention, getting in the way, piling
 up, smelling, turning brooks brownish and

creamy white: what else deflects us from the
 errors of our ill-chosen ways, not a temptation

to trashlessness, that is too far off, and,
 anyway, unimaginable, unrealistic: I'm a

hole puncher or hole plugger: stick a finger
 in the dame (dam, damn), hold back the issue

of creativity's flood, the forthcoming, futuristic
 the origins feeding trash: down by 95 in

Florida where flat land becomes ocean or gulf
 mounds of disposal rise (for if you dug

something up where would you put what you had
 dug up when the hole was ^{full} (as with graves)

- the garbage trucks crawl as if in obeisance,
 as if up ziggurats toward the high places gull

and garbage keep alive, offerings to the gods
 of garbage, of retribution, of realistic

expectation, the deities of unpleasant
 necessities: refined, young earthworms,

drowned up on macadam by spring rains, moistened
 out white in a day or so and, round spots,

A reader here -- a president here -- finds
"stick a finger in the dame" overly
risque and has rendered an objection.
For myself, I do think that it lacks
something as a figure of speech, or is
it a pun? Whatever, it comes off as
unfortunate once you read it a couple
of times. Is there, um, so other way to
say this? Too late -- what wd I put
in its place. (OVER) ~~It~~

I'm trying to establish a kind of
wide-swinging narrator so as to
get through the garbage and "garbage"
later on.

And it means to be taken as having
been a Freudian slip.

the hills are alive with indifference,
a trembling, high-voltage

who-gives-a-hoot: I am so glad I
feel it so strong: they are not

after me, the hills, nor is anyone:
and I am not responsible to raise

them high or treed or consoled:
mountains could bother them: but I

don't care: mountains don't bother
them, though, because mountains,

too, are indifferent, only bigger:
no imperatives are delivered from

the peaks—except, of course, it's
hard to get up them and not much

easier to get down: but I don't
have to follow lofty urgings

ignoring which could bring pain:
except, perhaps—"don't stand below

high boulders on a deforested slope
in pouring rain": I mean, one does

have to mind the constitutions and
configurations of things: pay no

**PHARMACISTS'
CHOICESM**



**Look for this seal
to identify the
non-prescription
medication most
recommended
by your Fay's
Pharmacist.**

**If you have special
needs or are getting
medication for a
child 6 years or
younger, always
talk to your Fay's
Pharmacist first.**

Ask Your Fay's Pharmacist

72
A. R. Ammons
606 Hanshaw Rd
Ithaca, NY 14850
J.

Finishing Up

I wonder if I know enough to know what it's really like
to have been here: have I seen sights enough to give
seeing over: the clouds, I've waited with white
October clouds like these this afternoon often before and

taken them in, but white clouds shade other white
ones gray, had I noticed that: and though I've
followed the leaves of many falls, have I spent time with
the wire vines left when frost's red dyes strip the leaves

away: is more missing than was never enough: I'm sure
many of love's kinds absolve and heal, but were they passing
rapids or welling stirs: I suppose I haven't done and seen
enough yet to go, and, anyway, it may be way on on the way

before one picks up the track of the sufficient, the
world-round reach, spirit deep, easing and all, not just mind
answering itself but mind and things apprehended at once
as one, all giving all way, not a scrap of ~~heart~~ holding back.

~~At a question of heart~~
↑
Question