

INTRODUCTION

[to Larry Morris's *Natural Man*]

A collection of poems with a person as the sole subject matter may seem presumptuous and smack of hero-worship and religious cultism. Why should anyone but the writer be interested in such an act of adoration? Who is this U.G.?

Once there was a person called U.G. He grew up like everyone else, went to school, practiced various spiritual disciplines, married, had children, went practically insane, and by some chance what has been called 'the Calamity' happened to him. And then that person ceased to be. The physical organism is still here. Some habits, conditioning, and memories are still present, without, however, any force behind them, for the person who previously tied them together is now gone.

Once the person called U.G. ceased to be, Universal Energy manifested Itself through U.G.'s organism. Somehow, in some inexplicable way, this Energy now seems to use all the peculiarities of whatever U.G. was in the past-his conditioning, idiosyncracies and patterns of living, indeed U.G.'s voice and his body-without being bound by any of them, to relate to the world. U.G. now functions as a Being among beings. He is "a finely tuned instrument",

responding and relating to everything around him and yet capable of changing with circumstances with great ease. Depending on whom he is dealing with at the moment, the Universal Energy that is now U.G. may appear assertive or yielding, ruthless or loving, and yet free from the divisions of the self. (U.G. calls this state of his Natural state", whence the title of this book.)

Although we see and deal with U.G. on the surface as a person like us, yet, inasmuch as we come to realize that he cannot be known through any pattern, we begin to suspect that there may be no person as U.G. at all. At any moment, in any context, we attribute certain characteristics to him, but we know that at the next turn we are liable to be proven wrong, that he may turn out to be the exact opposite, and that all our attributions are merely interpretations and projections based on our own predilections, background, and self-centered interests.

Yet, U.G. is nothing outside of these attributions. We do not know what to do with him. When we are ready to throw out our own hang-ups, we begin to suspect that there is nothing there in U.G. except this Energy and that this Energy is also in us, and everywhere. And we see that U.G., being that Energy, by constantly hitting and upsetting our interests, goals, aspirations fears and what not, in other words, by striking at the dam of the self

in us, is continually attempting to reestablish the unity of existence. Whether he succeeds or not is not his concern. And, of course, our suspicion that there may be no person called U.G. "there" brings into question the reality of our own person.

Such an Energy calls forth Itself in Its dealings with us. No wonder we feel in U. G.'s presence that excitement, that sense of "unsettlement" that existential dread, that sense we may be "freaking out", and that surge of the feeling of utter love.

Larry's poems reveal his response of personal devotion to U.G., his *bhakti*, as well as express his attempts--adequate or otherwise--to come to grips with U.G.'s extraordinary impact on his life. If sheer exuberance of Energy, that excitement, that pounding of the heart, and a feeling of melting into an abyss in response to U.G., is *bhakti*, then Larry's poems express *bhakti*. How can Larry, or we, contain ourselves if an opening is made in us, thanks to our at least temporary readiness to let go of our guard, and an Energy bursts out? This Energy keeps on coming, blasting and expressing itself in spite of our doubts, fears, hopes, despairs, petty and selfish desires, our bickerings, and our clingsings.

Yet, in spite of these phenomenal outbursts, we mostly keep falling back on our own resources; we don't trust this Energy and

we keep shutting It off through our calculations and fears. This Energy is constantly drawing us toward freedom, freedom from self-concern, freedom from all the turmoil of existence, freedom to dance in joy with life, freedom to live a carefree existence. U.G.'s example shows us how utterly easy it is to change with all that is changing around us. It is our concern for ourselves which makes us so dreadfully serious, as we drag our existence, heavily laden on our backs, for what may seem like an eternity. When shall we be free if not now? And how best to be free except by letting go of every concern including the concern to be free?

Larry has known U.G. for the past seven years and has been writing these poems ever since he met U.G. Larry's response to U.G. was immediate and continuous: he has written over two hundred poems, and the present work represents a selection of them. These poems are simple and elegant. They vibrate with sincerity, feeling and vitality. Many of the poems depict a concrete aspect of U.G., say his cooking or shopping, his hands or his eyes, and go on to reveal how Larry is affected by it, or rather how each of these aspects are an occasion of U.G.'s love. Some others describe Larry's own condition-which is ours too-of forlornness, and some of his ecstatic joy. Larry understands what U.G. is after-that is, removing all that is false and sham in us (some

of the poems describe this condition of ours) which we normally confuse with our true self. And Larry is bidding U.G. to "finish him off."

How many of us across the world have been touched by U.G. may not be apparent to the general reader: we have felt and been moved by what we understand as his unconditional love, the great joy and laughter that surrounds him, his wrath and fury, his utter ruthlessness, the "good" feeling we experience when we are with him-the feeling that we are so special, the feeling of intimacy and understanding, as also by the utter simplicity of his living, and above all by the Presence of a vastly powerful and profoundly Creative Intelligence. (We know that U.G. himself would brush all this as with one sweep of his hand as our own projections.) And Larry too has experienced U.G.'s unconditional love and the absolute peace that surrounds U.G.; he sings of the ways he is touched by U.G. and of his longing for U.G. This is where an answer could be found to the question of "Who would be interested in a collection of poems concerning one man?"

Like the Heart Sutra, which reflects our emptiness to ourselves and invokes the great Emptiness that is in us all, Larry's poems open us to U.G. and the great Love and Joy that is in us, too.

Seaside, California
March 6, 1993

J.S.R.L Narayana Moorty

