

## POESSAYS

John Pereira

<b>Basho</b>	where	childrens'
I'd rather	one	lunches
look at	is	and
	never	dinners
daffodils	too young	
	to learn	with
than	how to	an
read	look up	American
a poem	to	flag
by	America	hoisted
Wordsworth	and	on top
	all things	of the
Somehow	American	custard
with Basho		pudding
it is	even	
different	the	
	restaurants	<b>No God's Country</b>
because	in Japan	Every morning
he is	join hands	I wake up
still	in a	with
necessary !	love story	the prayer
	unlike	" Thank God
	no other	there's no God "
<b>America</b>		
In a	and	<b>Logic</b>
country	serve up	When

my classes	alone	urban
go well		man
I know	amid quiet	and
it is	surroundings	woman
because		
I'm	So	Yes
a great teacher		
	just ignore	don't think
and	the	
when	bad music	just
my classes	and	play
go badly	cigarette smoke	them balls
I know		
it is	as you	and
because	sit in	allow
my students		your mind
are terrible !	a	to stop
	neon-lit	
<b>Balls</b>	electronic	Keep on
Pachinko	temple	looking
is		
a hi-tech	doing	at them
religion	a	balls
	non-doing	
not	cathartic	Yes
an old	technique	keep on
zazen		looking
technique	designed	
	for	at them
to be		balls
done	the	
	frenzied	until

no thought  
can exist

are  
a Zen device

They don't  
speak

Yes  
until  
no thought  
can exist

to help  
people

Fifteen  
minutes

and  
before  
you  
know it

to get  
involved  
with their  
food

without  
a word

Bingo !  
you  
are  
a  
Buddha

and  
to make  
conversation  
irrelevant

Then  
he  
says  
“ Let's go ”

She nods  
and  
they leave

### College Date

### Etiquette

Forks  
and spoons  
and  
knives  
  
don't  
add up  
to anything  
  
Chopsticks

In a  
chic  
coffee shop  
he sits  
across  
from her  
and  
reads  
his  
comic book  
while  
she reads  
hers

### Give' n ' Take

Walking up  
the stairs  
of  
Mister Donut  
  
my milkshake  
hobbling  
above  
my left hand

I

hold on		and
to my bag	and	offering
with	slide out	it to me
my right arm	of the seat	so lovingly
	and	
finally	the store	
landing safely		<b>Neighbors</b>
on the	when	She
second floor	a hundred steps	sweeps
	later	the leaves
only		off the
to spill	a pat	street
most of	on my shoulder	in front
the contents	makes me	of her
against	turn around	house
the wall		
	and	and
as	there she is	mine
a dozen		too
gaping eyes	the girl	
	who had	On
watch me	served me	Wednesdays
	the milkshake	and
quietly slide		Saturdays
into	once again	
my seat	holding	she
		takes
I	another	the neighbors'
drink up		blue
	in both	
what little	her hands	and
there is		my black

garbage bags

and

creates

a beautiful

garbage

arrangement

I'm not

ashamed

to say

I've

rushed into

my house

brought out

my camera

and

clicked

clicked away

at her

art

collection

## En not Yen

When

people

ask me

What

brought you

to Japan

I answer

an

Air India

jet

but

they persist

always

so

I compromise

and

tell them

fate

destiny

but

I know

I'm lying

because

I should

really

have said

“ I came

to marry

my wife ! ”

( who

I

met

for the

first time

after

arriving

in Japan )

but

then

they

wouldn't

understand

## Heart

Like

children

and parents

countries

also

go through

the generation

gap

China  
some say  
  
is  
  
the  
Mother  
of  
Japanese culture

and  
  
India  
the Father  
  
but like  
a lot  
of children

the  
Japanese  
too  
have  
turned  
their back  
on their  
parents

Yes  
the children  
have  
grown up

can  
learn  
  
nothing more  
from them  
  
are  
no longer

dependent  
on  
  
their  
old and  
weak  
parents

and  
so  
  
they  
  
no longer  
need them  
  
embracing

all  
and  
everything

from  
the young  
  
and  
  
wealthy  
West

## International Relations

While  
it is  
fashionable  
for  
universities  
to open

## International Relations Departments

all over  
the country  
  
it does  
no harm  
to remember

No  
so-called  
political scientist

anywhere  
on  
this planet  
was  
able  
to  
predict  
  
two  
very important  
political changes  
  
the  
break up  
of  
the Soviet Union  
and  
unification  
of Germany  
  
leaving me  
with a  
bad taste  
in my mouth

### Communication

Isn't  
it  
wonderful  
to be able  
to speak

a  
language  
fluently  
  
and  
to discover  
at the end  
of the  
conversation  
  
how you  
and  
the other  
person  
  
have  
absolutely  
nothing  
in common?

### Drugs

For  
respectable  
people  
the  
ultimate  
high  
  
is not  
  
marijuana

cocaine  
LSD  
or  
women  
  
No  
no  
no  
  
it  
is  
the  
joy  
of  
controlling  
young  
minds  
  
Believe me

I've  
tried  
it  
all  
  
and  
I say  
  
this  
is  
it !

## Mind Games

	a system	
No one		intellectually
can	with	
destroy	endless	and
what	arguments	finally
is beautiful		understanding
the way	and	nothing at all
the		
scholar	counter	
does	arguments	<b>Art</b>
		Orwell
maybe	and	showed us
because		clearly
they have	footnotes	and
a special	and	taught us
talent	whatnot	so well
for it		how
	with	colonialism
They	no desire	was
can take	at all	nothing more
	to	than
a	understand	economic
Buddha		exploitation
a	the	
Christ	experience	but
a		no one
Mahomet	behind	listened
a	the words	
Lao Tzu		Instead
	always	they read
and	understanding	Kipling
make up	everything	who

painted	the world	every
a glorious	another	year
picture		
known	Daisetsu Suzuki	You inform me
as		
The White	or	Japanese
Man's Burden		people
	Okakura Tenshin	who
winning		study
for himself	You	English
the	ask me	today
Nobel Prize		
for	Hundreds	do so
Literature	of thousands	
	study	I tell you
while		
Foster	live	to get
fretted	and	better jobs
and	work	
twiddled	in	move up
his thumbs	English-speaking	the ladder
	countries	of
and		success
Honest George	You tell me	
bled to		and
death	And	so on
No Way	fifteen	They
	million	are not
Why can't	Japanese	
Japan		inward
give	travel abroad	looking

	seems	at least
can do	to be	
without		more
going	always	to do
within		with
	from	power
and so		
	the	than
they	less powerful	politeness
cannot explain	to	Show me
anything		a man
significant	the	or
	more powerful	a woman
I say		
	and	who
	although	treats
<b>Politeness</b>		a child
While	this	or
studying	system	anyone
Japanese		
honorifics	is	without power
	known	respectfully
I	as	
stumbled on		and
a simple	the	there
discovery	language	you'll find
	of respect	someone
the way		
keigo	it seems	who
works		understands
	to me	

the  
real language  
of  
respect

at  
some point  
words

## A Way with Words

Some people

start to  
get in

the  
way

say  
words  
are  
fine things

so long as

words

can  
bring us

closer  
to reality

But  
like the

Law of  
Diminishing  
Returns