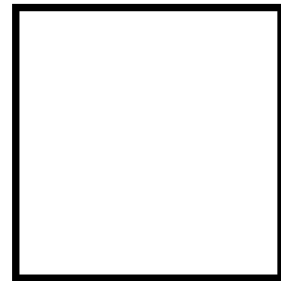
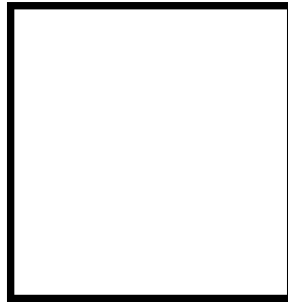
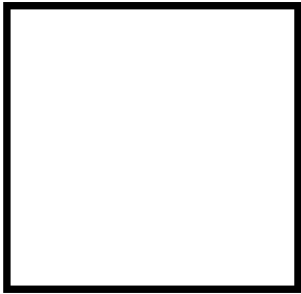


seven

poems

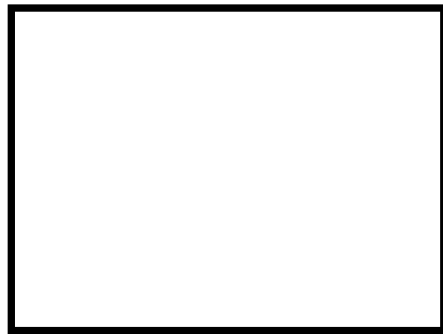
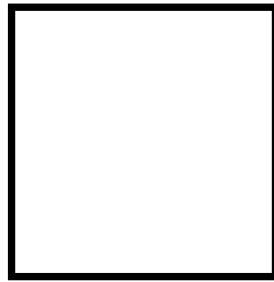
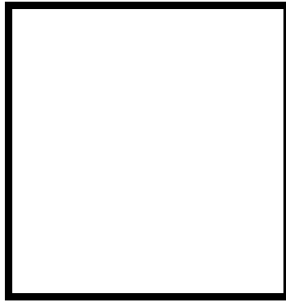
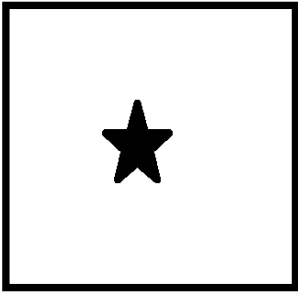


(by Michael Mander)



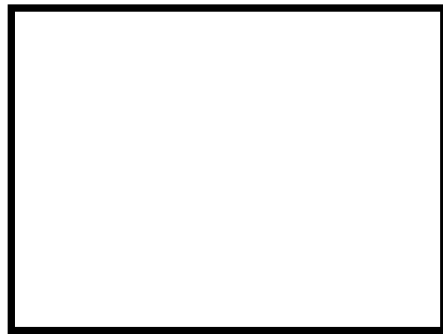
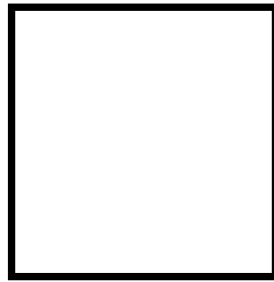
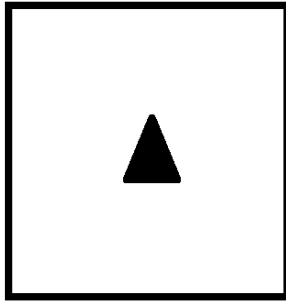
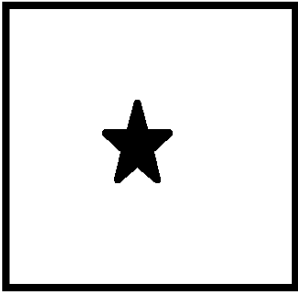
\*

dried figs appear in your pockets  
it's a sensation almost akin  
to learning what your real name is  
another undeserved miracle  
the only remaining evidence of which  
is a dog-shaped stain on the wall  
the origins of which will be debated  
by future generations for decades



\*

desire is a door you're shoved through  
for a fleeting instant your sins are entirely forgiven  
like an imbecile pursuing the simple pleasures  
of the incredibly stoned  
you open yourself up to ambiguity  
because ambiguity is where all of poetry comes from  
human beings have overrun the world  
you wonder if you care  
you stumble outside like an old man searching  
for something valuable lost long ago in a past life  
you melt some butter and you pour it in a bowl  
the bowl is made of blue-glazed clay  
and you don't know where you got it from



\*

Archilochus

soldier-poet

apparently wasps hover over your grave

you died the way you lived

wine-mired

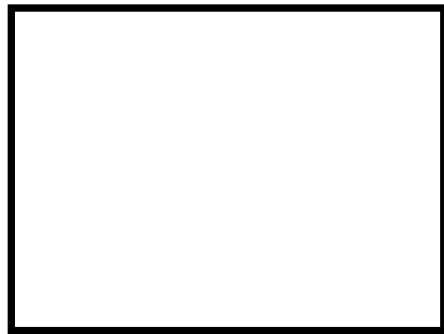
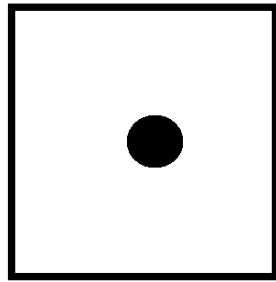
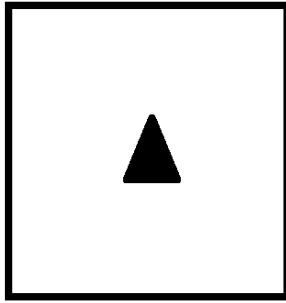
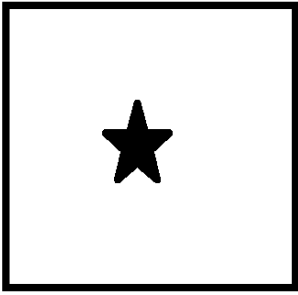
nomad-philosopher

“a thistle with sweet-smelling leaves”

seventh-century B.C.

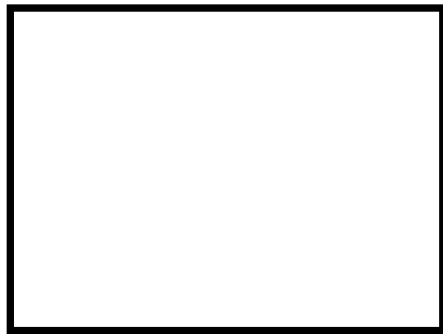
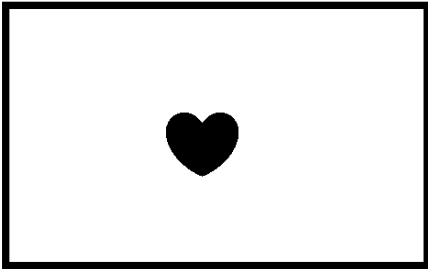
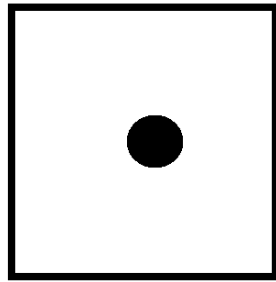
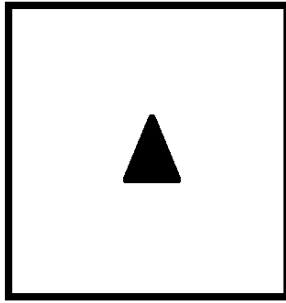
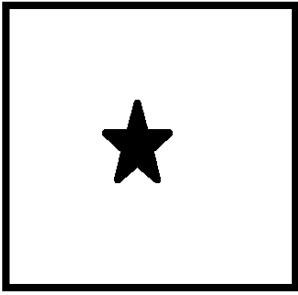
singer and a bastard son

of a slave



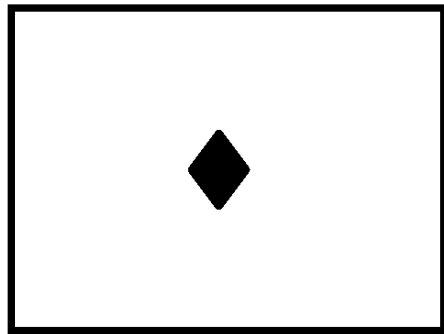
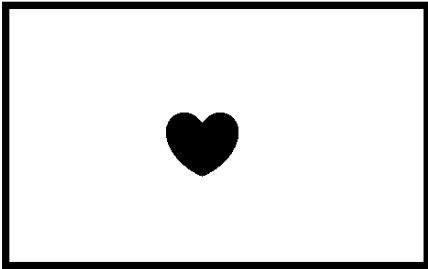
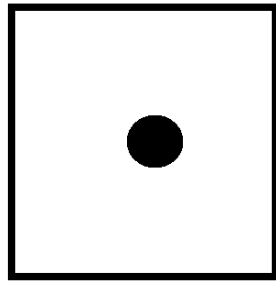
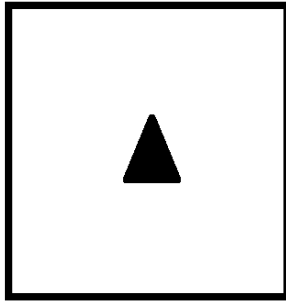
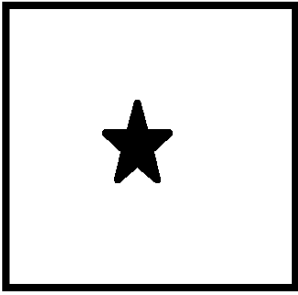
\*.

it's morning and my name is written in gasoline  
there's a mark on my arm where a wasp stung me  
a figure resembling an adolescent Karl Marx  
makes helicopter noises outside my window  
unable to coast into this HarperCollins-approved future  
nourished since birth on recurring visual stimuli  
until we become like sentient gift cards  
or tiny asteroids orbiting a second-rate hologram of the Sun  
you submerge your head in a bucket of paint for eight hours a day  
while politicians trade their brains in for quantum computers  
because the algorithm says something that might be true  
it stops raining  
there's a brief spell of leisure  
then the bloodshed restarts  
everything is new



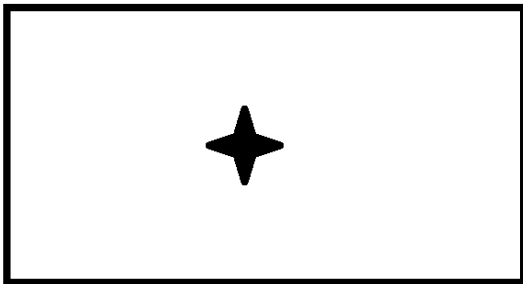
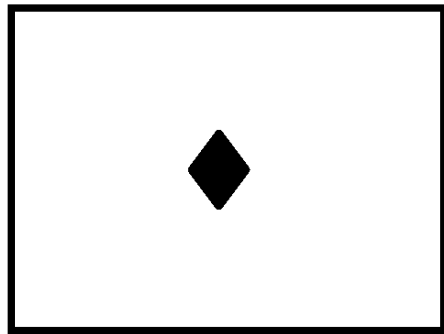
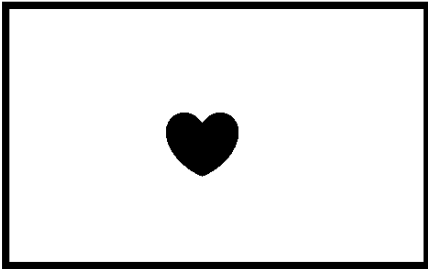
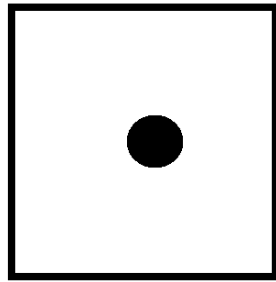
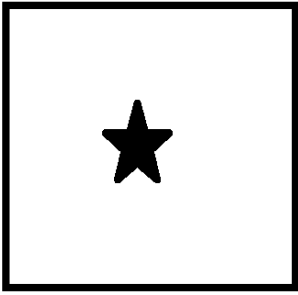
\*

the energy it takes for you to throw it all away  
the energy it takes for you to come home again  
these poems are meaningless but I write them anyways  
because words exist  
“truth” is a word  
so is your name  
and only then does it become obvious  
that a hand is stretching slowly across  
this canyon between us



\*

holy water pours  
almost imperceptibly  
into a certain section of your life  
you never assumed had any real volume to it  
you wake up and fend off some ever-approaching  
obligation to a debt collection agency  
and move as far away as possible from everybody  
nothing in the world is as new as it seems  
the videos you see projected on the walls  
are videos you've seen a million times already  
without really knowing how you managed to do it  
you've entered into a state of quasi-direct contact  
with what you assume to be the world  
there's nothing left for you to turn off anymore  
you sit in your apartment's darkness patiently as a lake  
freezing over during Christmas  
the government has seemingly given up on you  
crows trace weird cursive through a reddening sky  
the truth lies somewhere between these things  
or else within them  
the truth lies shivering in a ditch



\*

imbued with some misfortune-fueled spirit  
you try to erase the tired look from your face  
and read some more books in the morning  
the relentless pace of the space-time continuum  
deposits you on the verge of some great  
and ultimate truth  
you convince yourself of this  
on a diet of lasagna and instant coffee  
and totally unforeseen miracles  
as if you'd been swept into some strange  
and possibly magical land

