

3 poems from "Parables for a Rainy Day" (Green Fuse Press, CO)

### The Ultimate Halloween

Dry old house, midnight party, ghost stories.  
But they don't huddle together and scream.  
Instead, the stories are piped over the intercom  
and they have been assigned separate rooms.  
They huddle apart and scream.  
The rooms are large, the halls are large  
the entire house is large, large.  
Finally she gets so scared she breaks the rules  
leaves her room, stalks the halls, calling his name three times.  
The answer comes. Her name three times.

She moves to the next corridor. "Are you there, there, there?"  
"Yes," he answers, "I'm there, there, there."  
But she calls again, "Are you there, there, there? Or am I alone, alone, alone?"  
And so they keep calling out like that  
ghostly questions, a trifle flirty but mostly lonely  
and not decreasing the distance between them.  
Always speaking the last word three times  
to beat the echo to the punch.

### After-Hours

In New York City lives an old woman in a wheelchair who, every midnight and on 'til 3:00 AM, hangs out in the various schoolyards. She's poor but educated and she loves education. She's just there, available, to teach anybody who happens to come along and want to be taught. All the teenagers and young men go to her, they who would otherwise be out doing drugs or nothing. Nobody mugs her, they love and respect her, little kids too. Parents of kids who don't want to go to regular school take them to her non-regular school. She does this every night in as many schoolyards as she can.

Meanwhile back In Hilly... well, you know how the buses run pretty late but not all night, so there's this young man who, after-hours, climbs aboard one of the buses, Septa leaves the key for him, they're happy he's doing this, he drives that bus around for those who have to get to work at 4:00 AM or who just like riding the bus at night. He's got a full bus and as he drives he talks, tells us about the New York woman who runs the outdoor night school for those who don't like indoor day schools.

She's a distant cousin of his and there are other distant cousins in other cities. It's a chain they're running, a human chain.

### Judgment Day

We're not all alone.

There are other planets with reasonably intelligent life.

We communicate, we visit, we intermarry.

Soon we construct one giant planet and live on it together.

And *then* we're all alone.