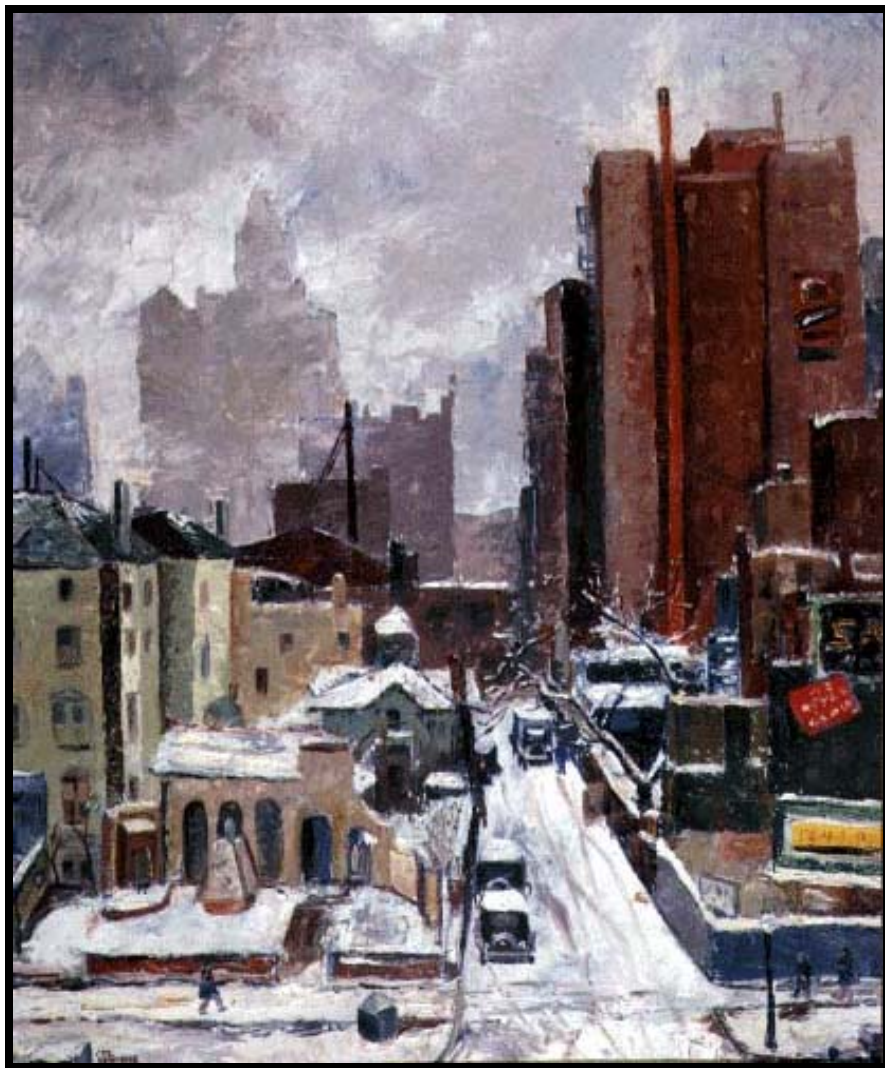


Cloud Boulevard

Cloud Boulevard

A Collection of Poems

By Doug Tanoury



FUNKY DOG PUBLISHING



Cloud Boulevard

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DETROIT, MICHIGAN USA



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Cloud Boulevard

Alter Road

In summer children play in the front yards
With hair disheveled and dirty faces
Amid wooden frame homes
Ill kempt and needing repair
That line the street and sit wedged
Side by side and close to the road

Looking neither right nor left
In silence I pass them
The children continue to play as if I were invisible
Like a visitor from a nether world or some ghost
From the hereafter who has come down their street
Just to say hi how are ya

But my mouth cannot bear the banality
Of such an average greeting to interrupt their play
For they are to me the poorly dressed reminders
Of a past troublesome and grim
Of days when childhood rested on me
Like an affliction both serious and dire

On this dark street like a Dickens novel
If I stop to talk to one child
I would be addressing my own pain
On a street crowded with regrets
Where problems pile up on the curb
Like the belongings of evicted tenants

Cloud Boulevard

Intersection

On the corner of S. Main and W. Fourth Street
In a morning without sunlight
I survey a street lined with low
Brick storefronts and
Locust trees with thin green foliage hanging
Over wide sidewalks largely empty

And I have come here again
To this intersection
That I have studied in various lights
At an assortment of times
In each season
The crossroads of my life
That diverge like a path that Frost might write
And I have pondered here
Often and long

In snow and rain
Light and darkness
In the weak stained light sunrise
And in scarlet tints of twilight
And if I could write each
Lazy Sunday morning and invest
The fruit of each idle hour
Of silent contemplation

I would place my palms on each
Temple of the reader's head
And gently guide their scope
Of vision to two roads that intersect
And diverge beyond in four directions

And stretch off into suburban cityscapes
That I have traveled over and again
Like some reoccurring dream that plays
In endless repetition through
A series of one-way streets and cul de sacs
That seem to forever deposit me
On the corner of S. Main and W. Fourth Street

Cloud Boulevard

And I Am

And I told her
Matter of factly
That indeed I am
A poet of naked breasts
And that umber nipples
Centered in amber aureoles
To me are pupils
And Irises that serve
As windows to the soul

And I went on to say
Confident and self-assured
That I am too the bard
Of the bare thigh
That to me is nature revealed
Tan like the underside
Of sycamore leaves in fall
Softly wild and untouchable
As a sleeping doe

And I concluded by saying
That I am a lyric that can versify
The plump lushness of
A pale ass
In still-life form
Like so much fruit
As if it were a honeydew melon
Sliced in two and resting
On the kitchen table

Cloud Boulevard

Arabesque

1.

Each December night is a large block of black ice
That never quite seems to give up its grip
But lingers lazily, most persistently,
And imparts across the day
A dimness that never graduates beyond
The softness of a violet glow.

2.

I am daydreaming at the bus stop
Awaiting the arrival of a coach
That is running typically late.
Its arrival at the curb is announced by the squeal of brakes
And the hisses of hydraulics that swing open the door.
I awaken to climb the steps.

3.

I hear the low rumble of steam whistle
As a lake freighter negotiates a course
Through a narrow channel, and few seconds later,
There is a reply signal
Booming through the summer morning
A declarative always follows the interrogative.

4.

I am a shadow
Who inhabits the small dark places of a world
And moves through graphite days
And charcoal nights
Performing shadow tasks and going
About my shadow business.

5.

Change clangs into the coin box
And the rpms grow loud in the diesel
While someone seated in the back
Coughs loudly. I sway to the jolts and
Bounces as the driver pulls away
And into traffic heading downtown.

Cloud Boulevard

6.

Across Macarthur Bridge
There are green trees and grass
And the rising arches that span the river
Graceful they hover
Weightless between
The green water and blue sky.

7.

I watch for Harmonie Park,
A few trees and benches wedged between
The low gray buildings, and when I see it
I pull the red wire in the coach twice
To signal my stop and stand to
Make my way to the door.

8.

I hear the call of gulls
That fly stationary in the wind
And skim the waves with white wings.
I remember the smell of the river
And the sound of the water
On the rocks along the shore.

9.

Winter trees are frozen still
In iced moonlight
And I wonder if asleep as they are
They somehow dream of sunlight
On an afternoon in June'
And the touch of wind in the fullness of August foliage.

Cloud Boulevard

Co. Rd. 36A

Along a stretch of rural highway
The land rises and gently rolls.
Sheep graze on sepia hillsides,
Gathered together in dingy gray herds
Like clouds in overcast skies.

My thoughts beat me home, and
I hear wind chimes
Hanging from the front porch awning,
The voices mixed with in laughter
In the kitchen.

Corn stalks left standing in December
Spreads across fields like honey,
Where neglected barns lean
Precariously toward sunset, and
Dome-less silos rise into dark skies.

I feel the doorknob in my hand,
Where every journey begins and ends,
Far from a sienna and umber landscape,
And desolation of a December afternoon
Along an Indiana highway.

Cloud Boulevard

A Slow Season

In am stuck
In the middle of this is a reluctant season
Within its heart of slowness
Its self-centered sloth
In a holding back in bashful reserve
Where the sun never shines
And the clouds hide a shy blue sky
Over trees sleeping so soundly
In self-conscious reserve
They do not dream of buds
Indeed this season
I am caught in
Is the triumph of timidity

And I too celebrate it
In my holding back for my touch now
Is uncertain reserve and I am paused
In tentative indecision for a moment
An hour
A day
A collection of days
Until there is nothing left to touch
But the starkness and realization
Of all that is missing

Cloud Boulevard

Nativity Church

Addolorato

There is a Romanesque basilica
With a tall bell tower that rises
Above a neighborhood on
The near east side
It stands stately high above
The squalor and poverty below
Topped with bronze dome
And ornamental urns

Solid and stately and strong
I remember looking up at it often
As a child like some talisman
It protected me from all
Uncertainty and want and weakness
As I played in the shadows of
Wood frame houses in need of
Paint and repair

It reminded me always
Of a larger world
Outside the borders
Of Iroquois and Cadillac
Beyond the yellow sunrises
Above Pennsylvania Street and
Behind the swirling purple sunsets
Hanging over Gratiot Avenue

Cloud Boulevard

East Grand Boulevard

Lined with run-down and ram-shackled centers for assisted living
And aging mansion in various states of disrepair and dereliction
A city street in faded glory
Where old people sit on wide front porches
Talking together on summer afternoons in late August
Watching the traffic pass as they had in June
Until the sun sets across the street
Behind the building with a burned out roof
And beyond the elms in full foliage
Until they are taken in
Still talking in low voices
Soft as the sunset colors
That paints the purple sky in twilight
And fade slowly into silence
As darkness grows

Cloud Boulevard

Dialog

It was sometime ago,
Before my life became a short story
Written by Gogol,
That I was afraid of the dark and
Would often sleep with the light on
And the television playing some
Black and white movie starring
Spencer Tracy and Mickey Rooney
Into the early hours of the morning,
So that snip-its of the dialog
Would drift eerily into my dreams...
Somehow, I have become Freddie Bartholomew
And Spencer is speaking to me:
"Wha you tink a dat, leetle feesh?"

I have come to understand
That the only way to fight fear
Is to whole heartily embrace it,
To make it your friend.
Now, I love the darkness, relish its peace
And wrap myself in it. Yes, I wear it
Like a new Brooks Brothers suit.
I spend the evenings sitting in the house
With every light extinguished
And emanating only darkness.
When I sleep the television is off
And it is quiet except for the dialog
In my dreams, spoken in the little boy voice
Of Freddie Bartholomew:
"Manuel, please, please don't go!"

Cloud Boulevard

Lost On Sunset

I remember
Being lost on Sunset Boulevard
Gazing down smog shrouded streets
At the homeless pushing shopping carts
Filled with bulging plastic garbage bags
Moving slowly
Haunting and indistinct
Their forms vanish in the haze
Like apparitions
Seen for a moment in sidelong glance
Then disappear

I remember
Reading poetry in the evening
Under a tree hung with lanterns
My voice awash with the noise of traffic
Bad mufflers and clunking transmissions
The sounds of surf on the shore
That ebb and flow that makes
Every day of my past
Like so much flotsam and jetsam

I remember standing
Haunting and indistinct
Like an apparition
Seen for a moment in sidelong glance
Only to disappear
Lost in the noise
And neon magic
Of Hollywood nights

Cloud Boulevard

Habeas Corpus

Years from now when I am gone
And you sit at the kitchen table
With people who never knew me
Show them this so they will know

That I was touched and slightly
Giddy with the silly art of poetry
That to me was harmony and
Melody floating everywhere

They should know too that with
Eyes and nose and mouth and ears
And every organ that ties us to the world
That I love you and it grew and multiplied

Like fission in the nuclei of cells and
Was carried in corpuscles speeding
Through capillaries toward lips and
Fingertips and other body parts

That celebrate a passing touch

Cloud Boulevard

Midnight At The ATM Machine

It greets me by name
And asks quite to the point
Deposit or withdrawal
As I begin my starlight banking

To secure some cash
A collection of crisp twenties
That smell of ink
On new paper and

Dead presidents
Stare at me sternly in moonlight
Their images engraved
With serious rococo themes

New currency
Being bent or crinkled
Sounds like insects
In the night

And bills folded tight
Like mantis wings
Or the torso of a katydid
Bearing marks of the late baroque

Cloud Boulevard

Winter

For many minutes I sit in front of an empty page,
While my cursor blinks
A steady heartbeat on the screen.
And thinking that words are
The most inconsistent and shifting of things,
Whimsical like the dizzy roll of waves at sea,
Shiftless and substanceless as clouds
That stretch across an August sky.

These days are dark and
This is the winter of my words,
Written across the stark whiteness
Of a frozen field,
Where the text stands empty
Like a lone tree rising from a snow covered landscape
And each line that stretches across the page
Has the bareness of a winter branch.

Cloud Boulevard

All Night Party Store

The lights never go out
At the all-night party store
And pizza resolves nonstop
Behind a brightly lit display
Throughout the night and
Early hours of the morning
It continues to turn in
The first light of sunrise
That strikes the stacked
Bottles of zinfandel on a shelf
Setting each ablaze in peach
And pink and that gleams against
The mirror of the merlots
As morning pales green and red
Neon signs flashing in the
Front window where the lights
Dim in daytime but never go out

Cloud Boulevard

Gloria For Three Voices

1.
Oh, the road not taken,
Torments me still, and I grow to regret
The choices I've made
That brought me to this sorry place
And this sad time.

2.
Glory to you, Oh God,
From a sparrow fallen from the sky,
A fig tree that bears no fruit
In this dry season, a worker
Grumbling in the vineyard.

3.
All the Gospels somehow
Translate for me into a single imperative
A holy and sacrosanct admonition
Uttered from the mouth of God:
"Don't be an asshole."

4.
It is illusion that the forgone
Is somehow better than the chosen
Or some misguided poetic longing
That makes every course of action
Seem badly mistaken.

5.
Mercy me, Oh Lord,
A moneychanger in the Temple,
Selling to the devout
A simple sacrifice of two turtledoves
Or a few young pigeons.

Cloud Boulevard

6.

These days are prone to confusion
And I ponder every decision,
Weighing every choice,
So that free will is
A burden I cannot bear.

7.

And I know now
The hidden meaning of every parable,
It is all a mystery made clear to me,
A simple law, the divine fiat of:
“Don’t be a dumbfuck.”

8.

Wisdom is a condition of the heart,
That carries us straightway to God
And lifts up our most heartfelt prayers
With the feather-light swiftness
Of sparrow wings.

9.

Raise me up like your friend Lazarus,
Let me walk into a new sunlight,
Shielding my eyes with one hand
And tearing off all the wrappings of the tomb
With the other.

Cloud Boulevard

Muse Road

Flocks of geese
Gathering
Near the curb
Elegant
And quietly feeding

There are no
Picnickers
Only old men
Loitering
Around wooden tables

A canal runs
Parallel
Its water still
Unmoving
Like the road

Near the curb
Elegant
And quietly feeding
Flocks of geese
Gathering

Cloud Boulevard

Along The Clinton River

I walk through the woods
On a path along the river.
When the sky is overcast and
The river water just slightly
More deeply stained, somewhere
Between the color of strong tea
And weak coffee.

It is a time when the legion of
Inner voices fall silent,
And for a moment among the
Sycamores and oaks
That have lost most of their foliage,
I too stand naked, without
The distractions of pretense.

My footsteps fall into a pace
That is no more than a slow meander,
And sometime I stop to watch
The feather light and spiraled flight
Of autumn leaves as they fall
Or the swirls and whispering sighs of currents
That texture the river's surface.

Cloud Boulevard

Ode To Bermuda Street

It is an ordinary street that stretches out
Quite unremarkably like any other
Sunny and open on summer days
It seems to capture light
Fully bright and unobstructed by trees
In the last long afternoons of August

Where twilight colors in early evening
Paint the white siding of low frame homes
In sunsets cut by high voltage power lines
That divides the sky and span the horizon
Hanging over large dirt lots
Where construction equipment is parked

In an age of unheroic verse it seems fitting
Somehow to elevate and lift up this landscape
Of modest homes and weed grown yards
To lofty reaches that celebrate and mark
The golden light that falls so richly
On Bermuda Street in late August

Cloud Boulevard

A Study In Form

I have mastered the art of approach
The dance of improvisational movement
Around a subject
Like the low brick facades on Main Street
Articulated by second storey windows

The movement of muscle
Sinew and bone
An expression of torso and limbs
My body bent into a word
Moving in a phrase
My breath upon a line of verse
Of what is and why
Toward what could be and is

This is the art of pose and stance
Rhythm and tempo
For I have mastered the approach
And am a channel for burning forces
That bubble up in blood vessels and brain
In nerve endings and spine
Twisted in all the expressions of form
All the permutations of shape

Cloud Boulevard

On The Right Side of God

At the Second Baptist Church
Black angels in stained-glass windows
Guard the front entrance

And I think that God so loves diversity
That Cherubim of color
Wearing golden garb

Sing Gospel that makes the Saints
Slap their sacred knees
And I know that Seraphim sing the

Blues so plaintive and compelling that
Bare feet that bear the wounds of nails
Tap the holy floors of heaven

In perfect time with the rhythm
And every Saint and Martyr sways
On the right side of God

Cloud Boulevard

Cloud Boulevard

A Tribute To Hazelton

In Pennsylvania coal country,
Near the Pocono's,
Where far horizons rise to the sky,
I know that today the town of Hazelton
Is oddly still in the sunlight
Like a cat sitting on the window sill,
And Cloud Boulevard stretches greenly lush
With long lawns that lay before tall wood frame homes,
And it seems to me
That time advances with a lazy reluctance
On afternoons such as this in mid-May.

I have come to walk on Cloud Boulevard
And to remember my life here as a stranger,
A life lived
At what now seems a great distance away
From this coolness in the air
That I now breathe so deeply, and I stroll
Slowly to the East so that the late afternoon sun
Casts my long shadow on the sidewalk
And I pass down this street like a ghost,
Not so much as darkness, but rather,
More as an absence of light.

Cloud Boulevard

Downtown Indianapolis

Downtown Indianapolis is largely
Empty and uninspiring as a cornfield
In late November and I am here
As a witness to the wind rattling a reed
In the wilderness a trembling sound
That seems to find a way
To my ears alone

The parking lots are empty in evenings
Like Spring fields plowed with
Rows of furrows and I am here
As a testament to marble and bronze
Statues that stand still and mute
Like scarecrows in cool brightness
On April mornings

The government buildings are capped
Like domed silos that rise above
Asphalt and brick below and I am here
To document the dim dullness
And dark dumbness of a wind
That winds down Illinois Avenue
Lifting dust from the furrows
In a cornfield with lights

Cloud Boulevard

For Mildred Flynn

The wife now widow
Of many sailors
Laid to rest long ago

Who walked with me
Across summer afternoons
I was like a child with her

A boy who touched her hand
And followed wherever
She led me and I wonder

If she simply saw what I needed
Or was it I that saw what she
Most fervently wished for

In days like peacock feathers
And orange turbans
Where need meets want and

Sadness grasps melancholy
And leaves me now the sole holder
Of promises unkept

Cloud Boulevard

Postmodernist Suite

1.

I met my father
Walking down Russell Street,
Somewhere along the line of low storefronts
Between Gabriel Brothers Imports
And The Rocky Peanut Company.

2.

The gothic spires of St. Joseph's,
Green with weathered bronze,
Stand against the sunrise
That is a nimbus of glowing blue light
Handing over the far east side.

3.

In this old section of the city
Steam is exhausted through
Manhole covers in the street
That billow thick gray clouds
On winter mornings.

4.

He is wearing the same wrinkled pants
He always did, and he had not shaved in several days.
When I embrace him and hold him close
He smells of cigarettes and clothes
Worn for too many days.

5.

Amid the rooftop ornaments
And gothic stubble there is a lone cross
Bent slightly to the south,
That has leaned in that direction
For as long as I remember.

6.

It seems fitting that these desolate
And deserted streets should expel
Smoke in eerie fashion
As a warning to the fainthearted
And casual pedestrian

Cloud Boulevard

7.

The stones of each arch and buttress,
Blackened by soot, rise graceful
Above low red brick structures surrounding it
And seems to belong more to the skyline
Than to the landscape.

8.

I stand squarely on the iron grating as the steam envelopes me,
And transforms me, ghost-like,
Into a phantom of these streets,
An angry urban spirit that does not want to scare you,
But kick your ass if not beat you to death.

9.

I start to chide him
For never calling or stopping by,
And when I ask him:
"Where the hell have you been for so long?"
He smiles impishly and replies: *"Dead."*

Cloud Boulevard

Ode To Mohawk Avenue

On Mohawk Avenue oaks and elms grow tall
And shade the street in dim twilight
On the brightest afternoons of August
When sunlight burns white and hot
I stop for long whiles to watch the play
Of light and darkness in the topmost limbs
And on the asphalt of the road
Where the blacktop itself becomes like tree bark

The street is empty of people and cars
And is mostly silent and still except for
The wind rustling leaves high in the canopies
And animating the interplay of sunlight and shade
On the roofs of houses that line the street
And lay quite in the coolness like dogs
Sleeping in the shadows
In the waning days of summer

On Mohawk Avenue the oaks and elms
Grow tall and straight like classical columns
In a colonnade of mixed orders
Holding up the temple pediment of summer sky
And I must decide in each case
By the shape and girth of its trunk
If one tree is more Ionic than Doric
In the architecture of an August afternoon

Cloud Boulevard

My Own Scotland

She will call me Doo-glass
And sit under a tree and
Talk to me

As I fish for trout in the
River Clyde along a tree
Lined bank

She speaks from beneath
A straw hat with wide brim
Face hidden

I stand in the water casting
Into the sun's gilded surface
Again again

Her words carried on the
River sounds to me standing
In the current

The water cool and forceful
Against my calves and I
Question her

Beneath her straw hat
Her face enshadowed I ask
Her of

Heraclitus and if this is not
The same river from
Minutes ago

Am I a new man for standing
In this changed and different
River Clyde

She will call me Doo-glass
Lifting the brim of her hat to
Show her smile

Cloud Boulevard

Pen & Ink

There is a bronze bench on Main Street
Near North Fourth
Between two trees and shaded in shadows
Beneath a lushness of foliage

On Saturday mornings in mid-summer
A man sits on the bench with a book
Spread open across his lap and
Picks up a pen to write

He wears worn shoes without socks
Khaki shorts with an old t-shirt
And is unshaven as he sips coffee
From a cardboard cup and studies

The quality of light on the west side
And shapes drawn by shade
And shadow on the east as
He scratches an unshaved chin

The morning is without breeze and the
The trees along Main Street stand still
As if painted against the sky
Or sculpted in green stone

He looks down the center lane
That divides light and darkness
And writes across the pages
Spread open on his lap

And looks toward the sunlit façade
Of the bank across the street
The foliage on Corinthian capitals
Still and unmoving as the trees

Column rising slender to lift a pediment
And raise a cornice that forms a pattern
Of black and white against the watercolor
Wash that is the western sky

The man unshaven and wearing worn shoes
Puts down his pen

Cloud Boulevard

Eastern Market

This morning
We watched a flower vendor
Line up rows of potted tulips
Some opened and some still closed
The petals delicate pastels
In varying shades of yellow and orange
The neat lines of blossoms
Arranged by color
Like a Van Gogh landscape
Of tulip fields in Holland

We stop to admire calla lilies
Some yellow and some white
Set out in large pots on the pavement
I touch one with the delicate care of curator
Handling some rare or fragile artifact
And I recall a kneeling nude by Rivera
Her body surrounded by blossoms
And it seems to me now in recollection
That she was more the flower
A bud unfolding in the sun
Half opened and half closed

And I write this as a record
So that when today fades in memory
Into a foggy graininess of black and white
As images slip into the grayscale of time past
And the fragrance of flowers is swept away
In spring winds and forgotten
Read these words to remind you
That we walked today through peddler's stalls
Filled with all the colors of an painter's palette
And touched blossoms so fine and perfect
They must have been crafted not grown
In a studio not a garden

Cloud Boulevard

Like the Birds

For Terra

And I must tell you now
For you should know that
Memories return to me now
And pass through consciousness
Like flocks of starlings
That mass together in large numbers
And fly across the skies in late August
Patterned and syncopated
In choreographed formations
And sometimes too they come
Alone and solitary
Like a lone gold finch perched
Upon a farthest extremity
Of a pine branch
Held aloft in sacred benediction
In holy elevation
To celebrate a moment
And capture
As this poem for you
Feelings that fly aerial acrobatics
And sing unbounded joy

Cloud Boulevard

About Doug Tanoury



Doug Tanoury is primarily a poet of the Internet with the majority of his work never leaving electronic form. His verse can be read at electronic magazines and journals across the world. Collections of poetry by Doug Tanoury can be found at Funky Dog Publishing

<http://www.funkydogpublishing.com> and Athens Avenue

<http://mywebpages.comcast.net/dtanoury1/Athens/index.htm>

This and other ebook collections of poetry by Doug Tanoury can be read and downloaded at: <http://home.comcast.net/~dtanoury1/Tanoury.html>

Doug grew up in Detroit, Michigan and still lives in the area.

Doug Tanoury credits his 7th grade poetry anthology from Sister Debra's English class, *Reflections On A Gift Of Watermelon Pickle And Other Modern Verse*, (Stephen Dunning, Edward Lueders and Hugh Smith, (c) 1966 by Scott Foresman & Company) as exerting the greatest influence on his work. He still keeps a copy of it at his writing desk.