

River of Sand and Stone

[Jeff West in Memory, September 10, 2012]

Spectacular exposures of these rocks occur in the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River in northwestern Arizona, where they overlie the strongly deformed and contorted Vishn Schist, the angularity of which stands in bold contrast to the almost horizontal bedding of the Grand Canyon Series.
—Encyclopedia Britannica

Take the groover (and you must).

You shit in an old ammo can.
Cover, clamp it, and you carry it out
and down river with you. Left on your ass
are the grooves from sitting on the can.

That is a real name. The Stikine River.
It now has a name. Great River.
The Tlingit call it Shtax' Héen :
Cloudy River, or Bitter Waters.

Through the Grand Canyon he said,
“Don’t take your schist for granite.”
Not that anyone could when it’s in your boat
with you. One is dark black and smooth, the
other is rough and red. But some people
only see rock and can’t really get to the roll
of the water as it pulses under the raft and
kayak. In New York at the Peace Eye bookstore
it was Ed who sang “I’ve been swimming
in this river of shit more than 20 years and
I’m getting tired of it.”

It was the Sixties ride on the high tide
of reverie and pain. This is now.
Now it’s all that’s left.

Now it’s all about Jeff, the Superman of the Ocoee.
Vishnu, the Hindus say means “All-Pervading”
protector of the world and the one
who restores the moral order
of the universe. He is peaceful, merciful,
and compassionate. Yes, you were Jeff,
you who knew, who knew water as sacred.
Who knew the word sacred is the word scared.
And us as scarred. Scarred. Words
as scrambled as my feelings.

It our need now.
We want the real name for our pain
from you, to restore the moral order
of our universe. One verse
and it’s never enough. Your friend
mooned us as we set out down river.
We laughed. He yelled out
the greeting of farewell
that we could not then know
was a lie as I and there are
so many and we now try to

See You On The River.

