Implicit in every object of art, in every painting, poem, sculpture, movie, drawing, novel, is a frame – whether literal or figurative. An act of selection must occur in the production of art. Something is put in. Something, it follows, is left out. Hence art’s obsessive quality. The artist, more than anyone else perhaps, knows his obsessions and is aware of them as such. They are his family and his neighbors, his world. Equally important to art, through less often acknowledged, is that which lies without the frame, that which is the obverse of obsession – namely, repression. An artist’s repressions are his ghosts. He insists on their non-existence though he catches glimpses of them in the corners of his eyes and in the corners of his art. One cannot completely understand another (or one’s self) without acknowledging both the obsessive and the repressed. But who’s to say that this is ever realistically possible?

I have come to realize that this duality, that of obsession and repression, is my own obsession. For some reason I am condemned to live out my life with a morbid fascination for liminal spaces. Perhaps because I’m a Gemini. But my poetry is the result of dragging a piece of paper through the muck that is the overlap of the conscious and unconscious. My poetry is a doorway or doorjamb and I’m bracing myself within it. That is not to say that my poetry lacks its own world of the repressed. Indeed, the surrealists accomplished their unabashed excursions into the unconscious only at the expense of or in order to avoid something else. I am simply stating the primary obsession that is the foundation of my poetry and my manuscript.

The drama of the obsessive and the repressed is a personal one. Consequently, my poetry is personal, indeed, loosely confidential. However, my poetry is also political, as my personal drama is a manifestation of or is dictated by our cultural conditions. Western culture, itself, is involved is such a drama, perhaps more vicious and more critical than any personal struggle. This is the struggle of the obsessive and oppressive rational against the subversive and repressed irrational. Nietzsche conceptualizes these forces as Apollonian order and Dionysian chasms. Camille Paglia uses Apollonian order and chthonian nature. Regardless, this conflict seems to be an extremely significant socio-historical pattern – a relentless, devouring cycle from which humanity has yet to escape. Indeed, humanity has yet to popularly acknowledge it because it has been, for the most part, repressed. The western world is bound to this pendulum, swinging from excesses in order, resulting in totalitarianism and murder, to excess in chaos, resulting in decadence and self-destruction. The ideal of progress is a myth, a bedtime story that simply lulls and comforts, a quasi-religious placebo. At the root of all human efforts, from religion to science to capitalism, is the irrational desire to escape the entropic and nullifying forces of nature, the desire to escape the shackles of the body. There is no escape. Perhaps that is why I seek the liminal spaces, because the center of a spinning wheel is fixed and, at least relatively, stable.

My poetry, and consequently my manuscript, spring from this conflict, this tension. And indeed it is intended to be a poetry of tension – purposefully drawing the reader in while concurrently pushing him out, attracting and repulsing. By my
poetry has other, related focuses as well. It is a poetry of identity formation and exploration. It is a poetry of relationships (as these are critical to the formation of identity and constantly challenge it). It is also a rumination of art, artists, and the artistic process. But, in the end, these are all aspects of the desire to organize concepts of self and experience, to counter the entropic reality of existence.

What I have described above is the manuscript I am working on for my BPil thesis (at least 45-60 pages). This manuscript of poetry will also be supplemented by my own works of art, my paintings, drawings, photographs, and collages.