

# SWEAT-HOUSE RITUAL NO. 1

## *Omaha*

listen old man listen  
you rock listen  
old man listen  
listen didn't i teach all their children  
to follow me listen  
listen  
listen unmoving time-without-end listen  
you old man sitting there listen  
on the roads where all the winds come rushing  
at the heart of the winds where you're sitting listen  
old man listen  
listen there's short grasses growing all over you listen  
you're sitting there living inside them listen  
listen i mean you're sitting there covered with birdshit listen  
head's rimmed with soft feathers of birds listen  
old man listen  
you standing there next in command listen  
listen you water listen  
you water that keeps on flowing  
from time out of mind listen  
listen the children have fed off you  
no one's come on our secret  
the children go mad for your touch listen  
listen you standing like somebody's house listen  
just like somewhere to live listen  
you great animals listen  
listen you making a covering over us listen  
saying let the thoughts of those children live with me & let them love  
me listen  
listen you tent-frame listen  
you standing with back bent you over us  
stooping your shoulders you bending over us  
you really standing  
you saying thus shall my little ones speak of me  
you brushing the hair back from your forehead listen  
the hair of your head

the grass growing over you  
you with your hair turning white listen  
the hair growing over your head listen  
o you roads the children will be walking on listen  
all the ways they'll run to be safe listen  
they'll escape their shoulders bending with age where they walk  
walking where others have walked  
their hands shading their brows  
while they walk & are old listen  
because they're wanting to share in your strength listen  
the children want to be close by your side listen  
walking listen  
be very old & listen

— *English version by Jerome Rothenberg, from Alice Fletcher & Francis LaFlesche*