Each of the over
350 gates of The Gates Of
Paradise is an icon of our world, with idea,
picture, meter, prose, or melody all shaping each other. I
have been making words out of pictures and pictures out of words
for over sixty years. The Gates Of Paradise is a poem that exhibits some of


the many ways I’ve seen living and dead human beings struggling to find happiness
inside of themselves and outside of them. These gates are paradisiacals of people, and
animals, and objects, from dancing body parts to Las Vegas lounge singers, from Brooklyn
Dodger fans to cyborg Babbits, from nerve wracked saints to L.A. bottom feeder rabbits, from
lovely air heads to heads of state to heads of lettuce, from black holes to pear shaped planets, with
one often transforming into another as the poems proceed. The Gates Of Paradise are created in the
light of, yet unconstrained by, Shape Poems from Technopaegnia of the Greek Anthology, Arabic


Pictorial Calligraphy, Persian Garden Rugs, Chinese Phoenix Dragon Writing, Zenga, Hyginus,
Herbert, Apollinaire, Cocteau, Hollander, et al. In many of these gates, shape burdens as meter
might and counterpoints as meter may. Often the picture is the Schubert sunmelody, the
words the buried Verdi mosquitogun violins. Often the picture is the Reubens silverfish
flesh underpainting, the words the surface Rodin shoe polish. Yes. Shapes, words,
pictures, rhymes, rhythms, ideas, jokes, and yokes all at once—This poem is a

For human beings breath and change are the same: And they are different: The same is the gate.

deply complex work of art, ranging from intricate metaphysical
forms to regional dialects, to just plain old fashioned
crap. No dimension, or pretense, or any fad
of soul crushing human trainings
are left unillumined

My endeavor is to create
a light effect that goes down past
the walls of habitual prejudice, down to


the training broken buried Self, through the
scattering of ideas, images, and words, too quick
of sad or happy for the merciful dog training
to reject. My endeavor is to nourish the buried

real human inside so that if the buried Self
ever arises to take its place in the conscious
life, the unbound Self will be strong
enough to survive the vicissitudes

For human beings breath and change are the same: And they are different: The same is the gate.

of our daily life. Find your Self.
Be your Self. Live from
your Self.

— David Daniels
Berkeley, CA
1988 – 2000