

# Cobalt Blue

Writings from the papers of Sam Francis



I knew them that  
were all the root & core of the  
holy images of man past & present.  
For if I saw them from within  
in the images I held up to the  
light of my mind ~~the~~ here  
in the Japanese evening I was  
seeing them in a timesense  
that transcends myself.

one well one ocean one ~~ocean~~  
one ~~ocean~~ the one ocean rises  
in the one well. all seen by  
the child that could do nothing  
for itself.

Still infinity lies before my eyes.  
Two eyes have ~~of~~ I two eyes have I  
— one for Eternity. — one for the East

## Introduction

Sam Francis painted images with words as well as pigments. His writings, which took the form of aphorisms, poetry, dream memories, and prose, have been instrumental in the way his artistic outpourings have been viewed over the years. Evoking moods and emotional musings, they form the creative thread between his paintings and his thoughts about the soul, spirit, and art. It was Sam's fate to live an artist's life in all its complexities, mediating between divine inspiration and human existence. The straddling of these two realms often produced the friction that prompted Sam to create. Perhaps the guiding notion was the philosopher's stone, echoed in his choice of establishing a press named after Lapis Philosophorum. The Lapis Press allowed Sam, with his love of writing and books, to discover a way to marry the word with the visual.

Most days it was not unusual to see Sam walking around the Litho Shop with a book under his arm. We all laughed, thinking that he was gaining knowledge through osmosis, imagining that he never read these books cover to cover. But somehow William Blake, Heraclitus, Hölderin, Jung, Nietzsche, and Bashō made their way into studio life. Even Hermes, the trickster, was pervasive in this environment as communicator, igniting a need to share the crossroads of ideas from different traditions and cultures. These influences contributed to opening up the psyche, resulting in the exploration of an archetypal world. Sam's paintings and writings indicated this landscape of interiority, a cosmos within, beyond the beauty of color and gesture. At times it was a larger vision that could hold both the static and the fluid; at other times it became a stilled close-up of the microscopic within the human heart.

Throughout his writings, Sam used words that were associated with the elements and nature, linking the axiom of the *Emerald Tablet*:



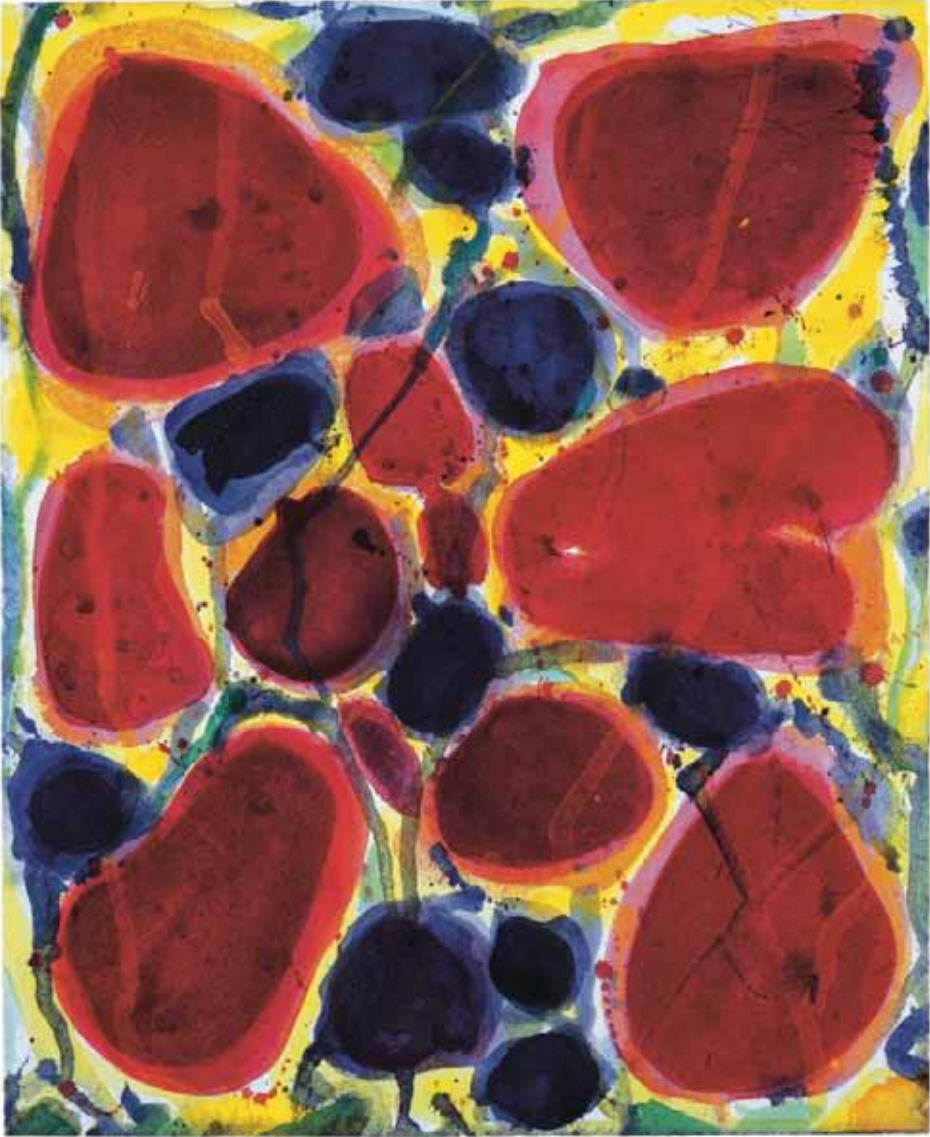




Father Worm  
Eros etched  
Fountain of  
Question to H  
Turba  
Shining Back  
Rope star  
Gold-grooved  
Red Sea  
slant white  
Blue Snaps  
Nine puffs  
Crane & Horse  
yellow dust d  
pounded to pieces  
Bright white  
Dark night wh  
4 and 11  
Bright Five  
snow sword a  
C-ne ocean c  
4 puffs  
not stick

*Yellow dust  
clear water*

Poetry and prose poetry











Pulsars Density

like eyes

Star pulsar  
like her eyes.  
spinning off  
a signal  
the magnetic knives  
off & on

William Blake's stellar  
body was as dense as  
pure matter.

Pulses

jets — green water

[..] — [..] — green  
water source







*What she is for speaks out loud  
What she says drops into silence*

She said to me  
I am in the morning clouds  
in the evening rain

I said  
an emerald table hanging in sky  
morning wind flying rain

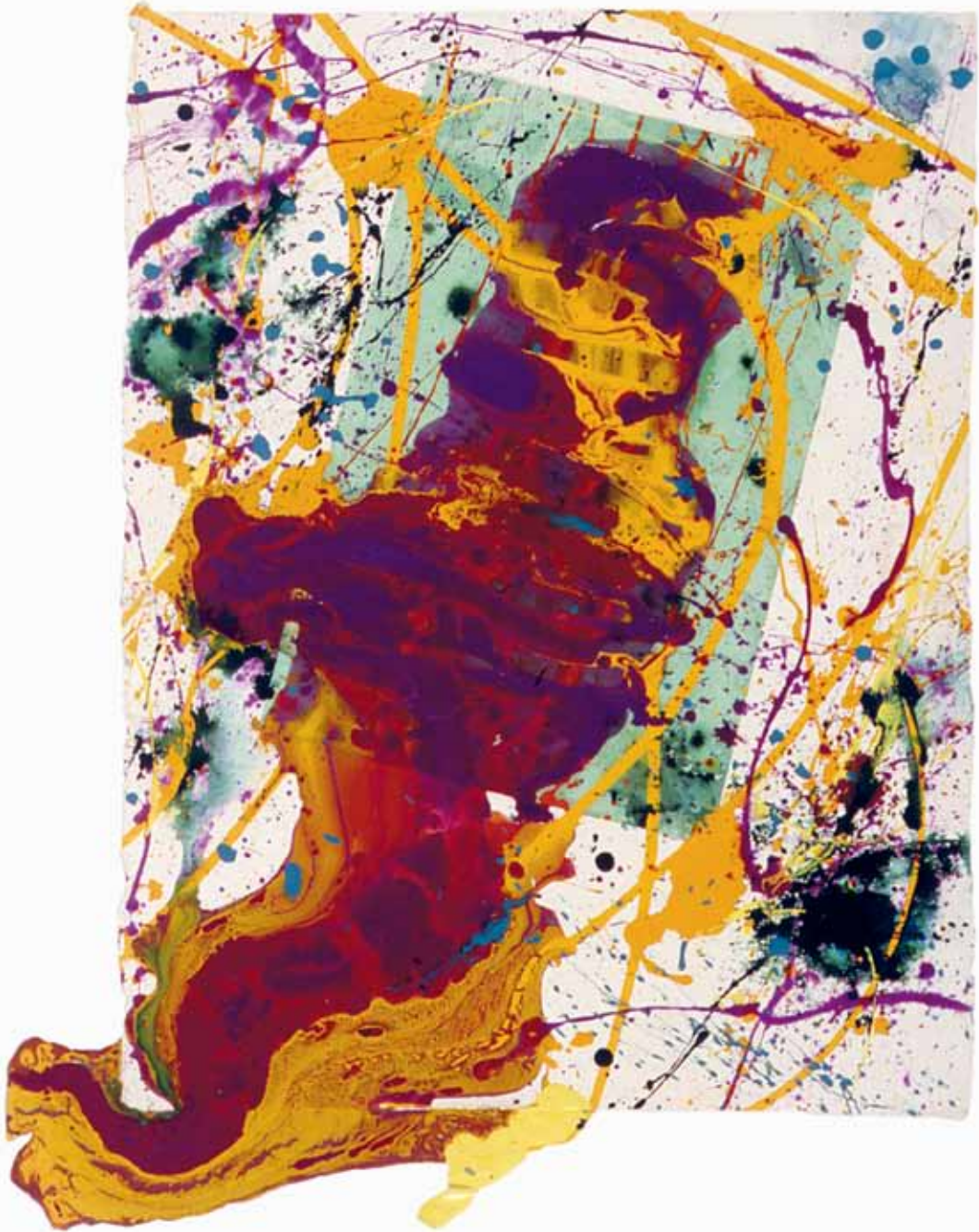
She said to me  
I am leaving behind  
my beauty for a thousand years

I said  
my soul is seeking her dream  
leaf by leaf drop by drop

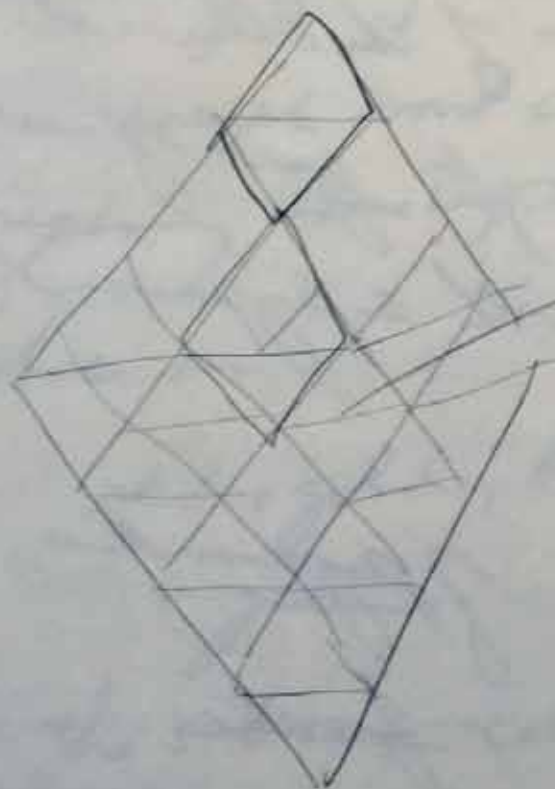
She said to me  
petal by petal  
dropping wet between the clouds

I said  
the blue sky  
stirs cold in the water





She shows me  
a double pyramid of  
a diamond of infinities



within each  
double pyramid  
are more double  
pyramids  
in each are orders  
of infinities  
moving into & around  
each other.

[ a circle cuts  
a bird cuts the air ]

the overall view is  
of one great infinity

one include all numbers  
as white includes all colors  
as black includes all infinities  
as eternity includes all ~~things~~