

*Resurrection, Now*



*by Raymond Souland, Jr.*

*Resurrection, Now*

\* \* \* \* \*

*by Raymond Souldard, Jr.*

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON



SCRIPTOR PRESS

2007

SCRIPTOR PRESS  
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

\* \* \* \* \*

RaiBooks Number Six  
Raymond Soulard, Jr., Series Editor  
Kassandra Soulard, Assistant Editor

\* \* \* \* \*

*Orpheus & Eurydice: Making the Lyre*  
Ray Soulard, Jr.

*Ferry Tales and other poems*  
Ric Amante

*North of Jersey*  
Joe Ciccone

*Pawn Title / Keep Car and other poems*  
Barbara Brannon

*Spirit World Restless*  
Judih Haggai

*Resurrection, Now*  
Raymond Soulard, Jr.

\* \* \* \* \*

Cover art: *Dance at Bougival* by Pierre-Auguste Renoir, 1883  
Book design by Raymond & Kassandra Soulard

\* \* \* \* \*

*Resurrection, Now*  
© 2007 Scriptor Press  
All rights reserved

## Contents

Resurrection, Now.....	7
The Millennial Artist's Survival Guide.....	19
Beauty, Afflictus (for Shannon).....	27
Phantom Limbs (After Rumi).....	39
The Groove.....	51

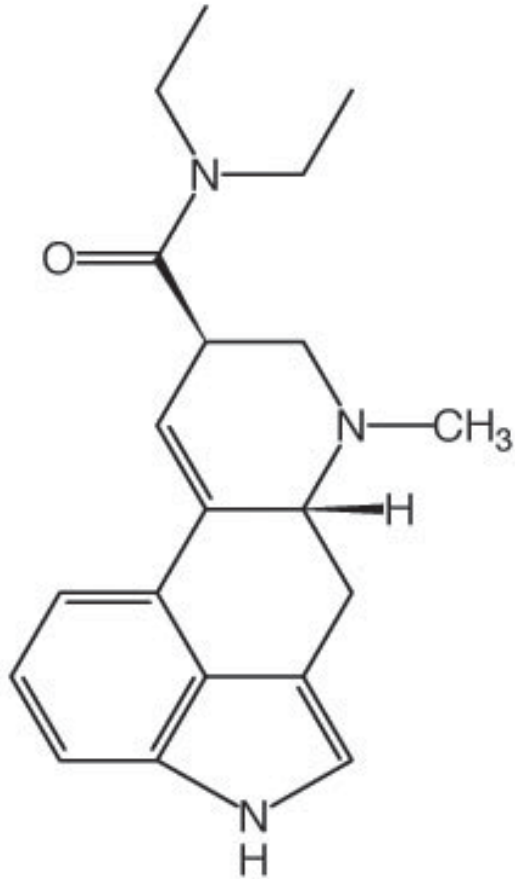
This book is for Cassandra,  
wife, muse, friend, beloved,  
you came & you stayed,  
love's gesture & its proof . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

*Is not one's art made out of a struggle in one's soul?*  
—W.B. Yeats, *Journals*, 1909.

# Resurrection, Now

*“A work of art is good  
if it has arisen out of necessity.”  
—Rainer Maria Rilke*



There is the bell-shaped manuscript.  
There is a manuscript, bell-shaped,  
& now chimes.  
Chimes swinging, chimes rusting,  
chimes swinging & running  
    chimes increasingly invisible  
chimes singing now, death-notes,  
    working the mechanisms of time,  
rusting, singing, more vital, less invisible.

Resurrection, Now. Settle in, friends:  
Are you ready?

i.

He said, “Entropy is the boa constrictor  
of reality” & played an E major 7<sup>th</sup>  
chord, smiling, grim

I looked at her, placidity’s pinkest  
smile, weightless silence, she felt  
no doubt, no interest, no need

Crowds are unnecessary was what he meant  
bass guitars speak frowning Biblical dialect  
I trusted her, smiling weightless silence

ii.

He said, "Entropy abhors creativity"  
& offered me a tab & a pill  
& a sandwich & a prayer

I looked at her & she was more apparent  
than ever; I looked at her and  
she was not a yes. She was a now.

So now I'm crowded with voices  
lousy with doubt, lousy with hope:  
if there's a song in me, I'm too fucked to know.

iii.

He said, "Entropy=Satan" & went  
on looking at the sky where now  
I saw holes of hope & he didn't

I looked at her & she was gone  
she was gone & I wouldn't find her  
now or ever; I had failed.

There is no sky. There are no doubts.  
There is a Godd fluttering in our hands.  
There is morning dew. There are chimes.

iv.

He said, "Entropy sucks" &  
cracked open his beer &  
walked back into the house

I wondered where she was.  
I knew that, somewhere, she danced.  
I was immolation, loud & brief.

Just drinking a beer with the wasting night,  
now, just lying on the lawn, singing,  
just lying to myself.

v.

He said, "Godd doesn't like entropy &  
neither do I" & he started drinking,  
too, burning, convincing—

I wanted her back, whatever way  
I was a whore now, beaten, I  
was a train beyond timetables & tracks

Lying to myself, lying on the lawn  
a whore beneath the fragment-sky  
take me, take me, take me—

vi.

He said, "Organize particles as beautifully  
as possible" and he warned me  
I would not go unchallenged

She's beyond particles, gone girlgodd,  
beyond sky, now thickening.  
now descending: She, lights, release

Holes in the sky thickening, I'm ready  
The cosmic mind thick & tough, I'm ready  
Spirits, galaxial oceans, soft, I'm ready

vii.

He said, "Entropy *hates* when you do this"  
and watched a local college drunk  
point a stained finger at me

The sky recedes & I am restless in the grass  
But the sky is broken, pieces are falling  
She hits me again, again, thudding, smiling

The sin in this world is world enjoyed  
I am burned, naked, become her ruby virgin  
A nightgown floats away, a pink wordy smoke—

viii.

He said, "Everybody's selling out  
to entropy: are you selling out  
too cheaply?" & disappeared.

Nobody was left in the yard.  
Not Jeremiah. Nor Merry Muse.  
Not even Joe "Gin Blossom" College.

I failed to sing in the language  
of sky, too eager, too ego;  
time, I guess, to go inside.

ix.

He said, "The more you fight it,  
the more it fights you"  
No, really, had written this on his wall

Wanting Her back is not about  
Time or Space, Eros, Mortality  
She is blood. She is song. She is cosmos.

I am following in the carnal wind  
her dancing causes; she has  
become my pinkcheeked theism.

Resurrection, Now. Are you listening  
to me? Am I? Resurrection, Now.  
Chimes & manuscripts. Singing  
bells at dusk. Memories of  
Greyhound buses & evaporating  
forests, of omnipotent kisses  
and shadowy hands  
but more.

Resurrection, Now. Are you ready?  
Hung up on the beam, buried  
in the hill, trapped on the  
incomplete overpass, burned  
alive in leadguitar electric  
light, Godd is golden in  
your mouth and you  
are chewing.  
but more.

Resurrection, Now. Chimes in the desert.  
Manuscripts tossed from night-trains.  
Bound for the West, passing a  
carriage bearing your soul  
going East, no wheels, no  
horses, no driver.  
Careening sparks. Levitating intention.  
Girlgods and flailing hearts.

x.

He said, “We’re all agents of  
Entropy” and offered my a  
pipe, smiling, my friend

She is not really gone.  
She is waiting in my cavern of shadows.  
She is nude, humming, watching me.

The Dead sing about “The Eyes  
of the World” and I am tripping.  
I am crying. I am mud uncertainty. I am shit-nothing.

xi.

He picks up his guitar and strums  
an E Major 7<sup>th</sup> chord by way  
of next point; he watches me listen.

She holds me in my cave in her arms  
amongst her skin, still humming.  
I want to stay. *I will be her pink gown.*

xii.

He said, "We're here to fight entropy"  
and he lit a cigarette and he began  
to shut down his many machines

She said, "You cannot be my pink gown.  
You must be my manuscript. You know this.  
I must be your chimes. *You know this.*"

I know this, my girlgodd. You are absent,  
my girlgodd, tonight. But I hear your  
chimes, my love & my manuscript replies.

xiii.

He said, "Beauty annoys entropy"  
and pointed at my manuscript  
and his guitar rang out E Major 7<sup>th</sup>

She is always leaving me, the way  
the night always leaves, the way  
my dreams squeeze my heart & leave

I know I am emptying. I know I  
am changing. I know I am transforming.  
*I am filling up with you.*

Resurrection, Now. The pines & the  
streetlamps have long known. The  
spirits in the cemetery, too.

Resurrection, Now. You are the  
eyes of the world. You are bells.  
You are ringing louder every day.

Resurrection, Now. There's nothing  
else left to do. You're rising.  
Pay attention! You're rising!

Resurrection, Now. The lights in  
every empty street are singing it!  
Noise & symphonies. Badgers & rocks.

Resurrection, Now. No need to drink  
or to drop or to dose or to  
shoot or to point.

Resurrection, Now. The big bang  
is in your chest, trying to tell.  
Eliminate the unnecessary.

Resurrection, Now. Practice  
singing, naked undifferentiation.  
Love thy neighbors as thyself.  
*Drink him up. Suck her down.*

xiv.

He said, "Our value is in  
how unentropic we are," tossed  
me a blanket, left me in darkness.

I am in bed now. I am in a coffin now  
I close my eyes, dream past psychedelia.  
I am waiting for the chimes.

The road toward dawn appears.  
The sunrise is pink, laughs, sings my name.  
I am young again. I will find her. I begin to run.

April 28, 1998  
Malden, Massachusetts

## The Millennial Artist's Survival Guide

There is a secret joy amongst these  
times, a within's within, a known  
and speckled spectral thing, an exploding  
blare & swoop from between our dreams,  
a series of coded midnight shadows,  
glyphs taut with our best laughter, all cosmos,  
we are all cosmos, without & within.  
We are all cosmos. We are all careening.  
We need to begin now, trade into ecstasy,  
we are beginning now. Always beginning now.

\*\*\*\*\*

Begin now. Tell the truth. How fear  
so often drops the artist in flight!  
Begin now. Tell the truth. There is  
more to this cool night than a spasm  
chased, a spasm caught; uncapped and  
hard, caught and had. Tell the truth,  
begin now, our lives are thin and  
dry yet still we're ready to rise,  
our best thoughts scattered angels ready  
to collect & make new godds, new Art.

\*\*\*\*\*



But how to rise? how to make? thin and  
dry, the ground tracked with dull diamonds,  
yesterdays, the air full of dead dawns,  
dreams, godds beyond the next galaxy  
slowing noone's tears. Learn to steer.  
Godd buried in pointed buildings  
& fading volumes diminish noone's fears.  
Days the undirected ships & dreams  
revelations of continuous crashings.  
Shut off the lights. Smile. Undress. Crash again.

\*\*\*\*\*

Morning again. Secret joys amongst these  
times. Within's within: is your Art  
necessary? Study today secretly, from  
a distance a thousand miles up or a  
thousand miles far. What are you to  
the lesser gestures of breeze? What is  
your Art to that hillside coven  
of oaks or that grove of ravens?  
Bury your pen. Become a fountain  
of blank sheets. Empty. Evaluate.

\*\*\*\*\*

Another day, pinkcheeked & whispering,  
laughter inside fat rays of light,  
all is sunlight today, do you follow?  
(Secret joy. Within's within.)  
Follow your sun. Today it's all yours.  
When does today begin? Can it possibly  
end? Follow your sun. It's always been  
there. Become a blank sheet covered  
in fountains. Blow ever higher. Trust.  
(We are all cosmos. We are careening.)

\*\*\*\*\*

OK. Tell of secret joys. Sing of within's  
within. More drums, more dancers,  
more bonfires. We're all masters of  
knowing now. We all can fly.  
A kiss. A tab. A cold and sweet blue dusk.  
The how is irrelevant. Practice undifferentiation.  
Watch us name molecules. Watch us  
paint with supernovas. Recognize  
Godd = Art = I = Art = Godd = I.  
Time will stop. Time will go. Just watch.

\*\*\*\*\*

A kiss. A tab. A cold and sweet blue dusk.  
A full moon. Handfuls of stars. Roused spirits.  
A long, sky-tending tree, leafless, several scattered  
through the autumn wind. Ready? No? Go!  
Go into the flow. It's past midnight now.  
Time for seeking vampires & scribbling zombies.  
A whole town of them. Go. Go into the flow.  
Two kisses. Two tabs. Longlegged blue dusk,  
cold and sweet, draped over midnight.  
Brick buildings full of gunshots. Welcome to ZombieTown.

\*\*\*\*\*

Let's not stay, for here we can only  
do this, not that, preach apologies  
for the night, its vampires & scribbling  
zombies, but really, are we doing  
all we can? Listen to me. I'm in giggling  
pieces by now. Are you doing all you can?  
Listen to me. I preach to occasional dogs  
& flayed mathematicians. Listen to me.  
Are you doing all you can? The wind is  
rising higher. Don't you want to ride it anymore?

\*\*\*\*\*

Who are you? Are you the eyes  
of the world? I mean: Who are you?  
Ready? No? Who are you? There's little  
left here but lights & purple fruit.  
I'll help you by leaving. I'll teach  
you how to evanesce. I'll recount  
my greatest times of laughter, the  
nights when I danced & died.  
But I'll leave in one way or another.  
I am time itself. I exist until you no longer need me.

\*\*\*\*\*

Something's about to happen. A net  
cast into black waters is caught &  
dragged down. Something's about to happen.  
a jagged formation of jets passes  
over a rousing herd of buffalo.  
Something's about to happen. Beyond  
the book's talkings & the blinking  
boxes of diminutive noise. Something's  
about to happen. The anxious buzzing's  
passing from our dreams to our limbs.

\*\*\*\*\*

Secret joy. Within's within. Spectral  
illuminations available everywhere.  
Beware. Be aware. Lunch-counters.  
Swinging dives. Graveyards where  
vampires meet & breed. Where zombies  
chuckle & scribble. Beware &  
be aware. Your flood isn't receding,  
is it? You're not diminishing.  
The anxious buzzing is your music,  
song beyond songs, beyond words & notes.

\*\*\*\*\*

Become a virgin. Again. Reinvent &  
reinvent & reinvent. I am you  
& you are me & we are the world  
beyond eyes. Secret joy. Sniff the air.  
Within's within. See your heart.  
A kiss. A tab. There is no blue dusk.  
Become a virgin. Again. We've got to  
huddle closer together. We've got to  
remember how. The secret joy is today's  
open hands. The secret joy is always beginning NOW.

November 8, 1998  
Malden, Massachusetts

## Beauty, Afflictus

(for Shannon)



---

If someone were to fall into intimate slumber, sleep of the golden eyes, sleep of the murmuring grey fields, & slept deeply with Things, shiny pinkcheeked Things, Things of whisper & wet, Things both the cup & its holder, Things elusive like worthy cathedrals, how easily he would come to a different day, a longer day, a day that will not melt with the passing hours, how easily he would come to a different day, out of mutual depth, how deeply eternity badges us, out of mutual depth, twining spasms of remembrance, chilling glints of smiling mystery, out of mutual depth, have we yet begun, Beauty, refracted, defined, slept into, seduced sacredly, seduced musically, Beauty, obscure, today is never going to end, courtyard of twisting breezes, out of mutual depth, love is a mean, chanting, obsessed motherfucker & *you are his favorite song.*

---

i.

Eternal She, embedded, in brickface, in snow  
Eternal She, before me now, this sleepless dream  
The great beast Mortality chained & humming  
    without my window, offering a whole  
    panoramic library of lies  
Eternal She, will you see with me through  
    this beast, past invisibility, past its flake & fall?  
The courtyard is empty, the crowd is dancing,  
    the band rocks on.

Eternal She, who loved me in some  
secret year, full moon & beloved pine,  
I would bind & kill her, she not confessed,  
she still waiting for the strength that  
finally embodies the promise it portends.  
Saddle the horses, gather the blades  
prayers are becoming dangerous again.

Eternal She, younger now than ever,  
cleans something bitter, raw & silent,  
Eternal She, knowing desire again,  
its biting tireless music, blood everywhere,  
spend it all—

ii.

Beauty Crowds me til I die  
Beauty Crowns me til I cry  
Beauty mercy have on me  
Beauty, marry me, marry me, marry me  
But if I expire today, nameless to the last  
Let it be in sight of thee  
Let me disintegrate into thee  
Transcend me from within, Art,  
I want to be your laughing sunshine supernova.

iii.

Certain & I was your suitor  
the lover of your pending garden  
Momentous moment, a younger day  
I saw you set ordinary air ablaze  
I saw you smile at me, liquid, vanishing point  
I saw you negate what I had been,  
agree to forget, agree that  
today was the only day & from  
your womb, Beauty, I was crawling  
& would here-ever-on.  
I kept passing through you more slowly  
til I no longer came or went  
til there were no calendars, only you  
til the moon, I knew, was there for you  
til all that had ever been grew from you  
I kept pausing before you  
til pause was all there was  
til I was only a young weed  
on your inevitable wall  
Thentime, before you transfigured into  
Merry Muse I sought your nascent  
likeness in the varieties of flesh,  
ironic, sincere, detached, forlorn,  
embodied, embraced, exhaled, inhaled,  
emptied out, exited, errors, I know.

Sought I to embrace you, then near  
you, then mirror. I did not know.  
I do not know. Your absence  
fills me, maneuvers me, verifies &  
falsifies me

Please stop.  
I'm too happy already.

iv.

Dancing maiden, ringing colors, vision immolating, the day uncontained  
by its capitals & its periods. Dancing maiden, the chanting, scorching  
drums troubling & pleasing you. Dancing maiden, i see you in every  
bar i stumble, every tree i love, every time i choose between living &  
dying, every time I agree to the fatty comforts of despair, the bigbellied  
scriptures of capitulation, last night was the last night, no more last  
nights left among my dreams, just fascist soft-voiced afternoons, just  
hosery & something adjusted too tightly. Reinvent me, dancing maiden,  
there is no I in me anymore. There is only a set of bored muscles, a  
mind left over from the ragged part of youth. Reinvent me, make me  
thy mate, thy servant, thy listener from afar, dancing maiden I can hear  
you better as you transcend me from within.

v.

Pretty, profound, pretty, profound—  
i long for everything.  
Art is the answer to this world.  
Art is the most expensive answer in this world.  
Art, drunk on pens, staggers pretty on.  
Art, high on colors, floats profound away.  
I saw you in a museum, once,  
gave you my first bouquet of flames.  
Pretty, profound, pretty, profound—  
i'll keep lapping. you keep breathing hard.  
Art, my raggamuffin with furry boots &  
a happy yellow purse  
Art, the most regal dream—  
keep breathing. inhale. exhale. harder.  
I saw you in a museum, again,  
but, no, here's an empty room of rhythm,  
a joint passed with a sisterly smile—  
Pretty, profound, pretty, profound—  
in bus stations, in desperate hours, you are love. You are  
everywhere.

---

in a large room, between cathedrals & haystacks, more summer than winter here, i guess, and children playing on carnival-bright days a large canvas in a large room, a forest of a room, within the night's shyness, beneath the night's secret full moon, songs for wastrels & wizards, large canvas, dancing with her, her skin softer than a fancy, dressed in pink & scarlet, dressed for the courting of wastrels & wizards (read this in a dictionary of evanescence & apocalypse) She becomes bone-liquid, ecstasy between the beats, her release less rifle than starlight. Mesmerism. crawl for me, Beauty, that canvas never contained you! this large room in ruins, crawl for me, Beauty! Your wastrel. Your wizard.

---

vi.

We dance in the courtyard of  
wind & ice. We tremble music.  
Come on, Desire! Where are you from?  
At low moments in my life I  
had two choices—sex or philosophy.  
We dance in a tangle of exhaust.  
A black sheet covers our confusion.  
Come on, Desire! You can't hold that note forever!  
At low moments in my life I looked  
around for my answers.  
We become nameless finally. Our dance  
has taught us this. Desire erupts  
with continuous gladness.

At low moments in my life  
I believed that truth had a  
tag, a list, a dwelling.  
Truth is her smile studied from  
across a wooden room.

vii.

Tonight I need a friend. Or something.  
Tonight's too easy. There has to be more.  
Tonight I am alone. Only art will help.  
Tonight I'm no longer weak. Lights. Ringing.  
Tonight's too hard. A bleak woman in pain.  
Tonight I'm sure at last what I want.  
Tonight I live on despite it all.  
Tonight Merry Muse floats, glitters, nearby.  
Kicks back her drink. Looking at me. Nodding.  
She will wait.  
Tonight is for burying old poems.  
Tonight, nude, Merry Muse, she says: "what now?"  
Tonight, brand new fall. Tonight, brand new resurrection.  
Tonight Merry Muse will catch every last drop.  
Tonight she'll consider me ever-more-slowly.

There was a moment, once, back then,  
 it must have been several,  
 I pressed her shoulders hoping  
 for more than yield.  
 Quickly, in the scattered light, I told her  
 of my dream, a reunion with unknown  
 souls from my youth, a fractured celebration  
 of memory, something we have, something we lose.  
 Something we have. Something we lose.  
 The dream continued. Someone was missing  
 from the past, I explained, the full moon  
 judging this empty bed confession, this messy  
 coalescence.  
 Someone is still missing. Dreams & daylight  
 both tell me so. I pressed her shoulders,  
 once, back then, hoping, but all she could  
 offer me was yield. Something we have.  
 Something we lose. I long for everything.  
 This messy coalescence.

You who hasn't yet arrived, I no longer expect  
 you. I know you are coming.  
 You are lost in dreamless daylight. You wait  
 for the pretty rubble of twilight to begin.  
 I don't know what songs will please you.  
 I'll sing them all for you. You'll recognize  
 the right one. It will flutter dangerously.  
 It will remind you of me as I sing it.  
 A song of absence.  
 We'll walk together in the twilight rubble,  
 the rising tide of night swelling  
 our hearts.  
 You'll have my song. It will remind you  
 of me when I sing it.  
 From you I'll want the touch of skin soft  
 as a fancy. From you I'll demand  
 a midnight vow. To your lightness I will  
 cling til we float, til we fall.  
 You'll teach me the right name for this world.  
 Godd. Desire. Art. Death. Art.  
 I'll know. Floating. Falling, I'll know.

---

Is Beauty an affliction? The clock ticks, slave to invisible cycles. Trees in ancient cemeteries mingle with displaced spirits. The moon above is full, even tonight. Every night.

Beauty an affliction? If so, then what choice? There's rubble to be read. The wastrel wakes the wizard, together they make songs & bake vows.

Is Beauty an affliction? The more intimate slumber is coming, sleep of the golden eyes. Longer days, vaster celebration. Aging every day, in the dawn's new light.

Beauty is an affliction. Watching the dancing maiden, calling her Art, Desire, Godd. Pinkcheeked spirituality. Too late now to believe anything else. Afflicted. Wind & ice shrill with the night's diminishing frenzy.

Beauty, affliction. The maiden uncontained on the canvas. The maiden lost in a dreamless daylight world. One is Beauty. One is affliction. My song will teach them about each other. Twilight & midnight. Answered prayer.

---

x.

Coming, soon, the morning, I am  
crowded from my bed, my chamber  
filling with displaced spirits I know  
but did not contrive.

There's a picture on my wall, a dancing  
maiden & her beau, & I have covered  
them both with songs, with fancies,  
with adoration.

Desire. Art. Godd. Maybe Love too. Maybe  
Death, when I am ready. For now,  
a worthy cathedral. For now, intimation.

For now, stark challenge.

I long for everything.

I've let nothing go.

The dawn will be different, today, new,  
like it is every day.

The moon will evanesce. Rubble's just dirt.

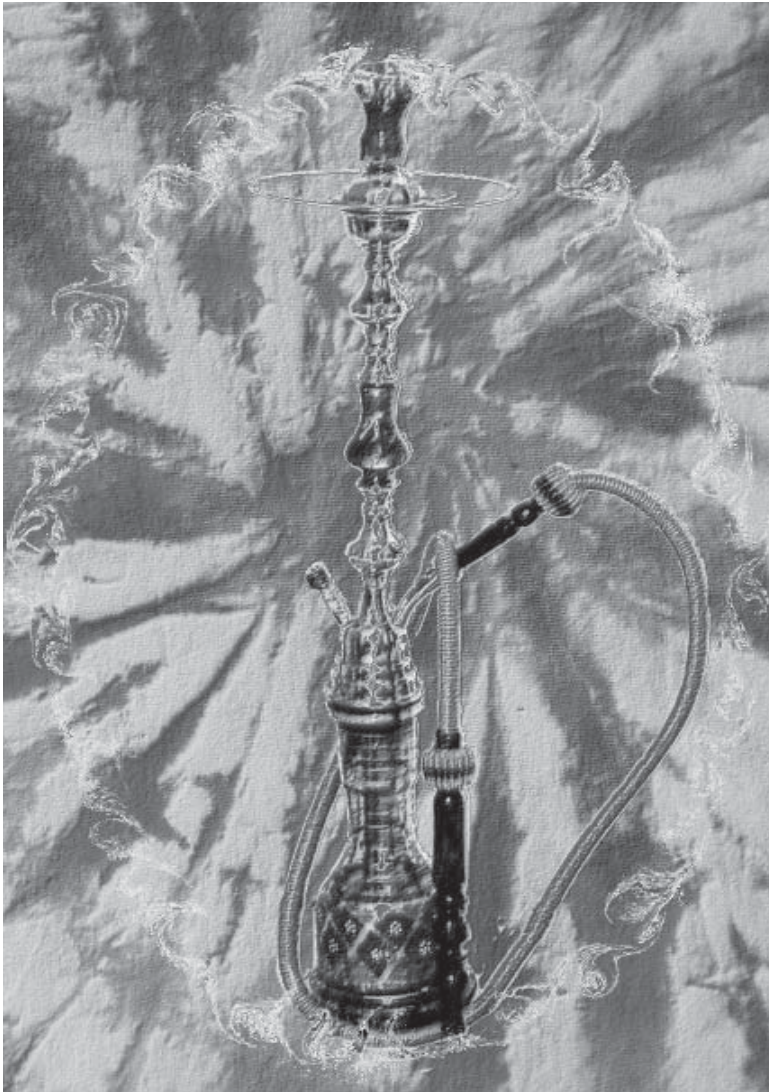
Dreams are deserts where everything  
shines but nothing lives.

Maybe? No. The spirits crowd me. I begin to float.

February 28, 1999  
Malden, Massachusetts

## Phantom Limbs

*(After Rumi)*



i.

We live our lives by habit. Each face  
we have to show each other begs  
for redemption. Eyes glisten.  
Mouths silent.

We were raw. We matured. Then we burned.

Cascades of fresh notes as new soul  
enters the twilight den. Crescendoes  
of hope. Eyes glisten. A moment packed  
to its combustible limit. Tick. Tick.

We live our lives by habit. Someone lights a hookah.

ii.

Today I awoke neither empty nor full.  
Today I was not frightened.  
Today the books blurred in sunlight.  
Today discovered several dream-instruments  
by my bedside.

Let the beauty we are be the love we feel.

Today I kneeled & kissed the ground.  
Called it a sleeping kitten. Called it sky.

The hookah I smoked today puffed new clouds.  
The new clouds floated to the ceiling, twined limbs.  
Numberless sleeping kittens, blurred together in sunlight.

iii.

In your light, my bride, I learn about beauty.  
Bridge, beauty, my shadows for your life.  
My music for your love.

You dance inside my chest. Noone sees you.  
Sometimes I do. This sight becomes my art.

A dream had by a tangle of warm kittens.  
Hookah smoke. Morning sunlight. I need your help again.

iv.

Phantom limbs collect in the shadows of  
the twilight den. The morning lingers  
here. The murderers shift quietly among  
their fouled blood.

We live by habit. Smoke the ceiling black  
with our silence.

The lover, the poet, the painter & the philosopher  
enter in a knot of squalor & convictions.  
None drink the offered coffee.

The owner returns from putting down several  
lambs. Even his ragged beard glints blood.  
He settles among his reserved cushions with  
thoughts of dinner. Brothels. The tone  
of a particular thigh.

The lover stands, unsteadily, cries out,  
pounds his heart. Phantom limbs  
vibrate. Tinkle.

The poet laughs darkly. Recites a profane  
rhyme. Praises Godd. Laughs louder.

The philosopher & painter consider the  
brothel. Count their money. The  
one with his thigh sheared off from a  
tavern fight. The other willing to pay  
more for the privilege of a room whose  
wall muffles cries.

We live by habit. The owner will stay  
home again tonight. His dinner a  
thick stew.

The morning is over. Again, my bride hasn't come.

Morning. Twilight. Habit. Phantom limbs.  
None make a difference.  
Even midnight, its obscure blood & thunder.  
No, makes no difference.

We live by habit. We stalk street corner  
singers for news of our elusive  
contentment. Wish something better in  
the world was for sale. Brothels  
of happiness. Brothels of Easter.

My friend, the lover, visits me most  
mornings. We discuss my absent  
bride. He praises her youth. Calls  
her a kitten.

“She’s raw. She’ll mature. You’ll burn.  
Happiness, my friend. I’ll come around  
in a year to see how finely you’re burning.”

But nothing makes a difference.  
I’ll fill my bride, when she finally comes.  
Watch her mature.  
Watch her burn.  
Watch her explode.

I promised my bride redemption, over &  
over, until her eyes glistened.  
Each time I touched her, a cascade of  
fresh notes. Together we smoked  
a hookah. I taught her to drift  
along the morning, immolate slowly,  
reason her way from worship of Godd  
to ambiguity, evanescence, twilight.  
She finally agreed: Churches take away  
everything. Leave us embarrassed.  
Leave us clean & grey & dismal  
with comfort.

I seduced my bride into hope of  
a lesser paradise. She was happy.  
“No more veils,” she said, & kissed me.  
“No more fractured pipes to bliss,” she said  
& urged me to lick harder.

Then she was gone. I smoke less  
often now. Waiting.

In her absence I am learning how to love.  
Remembering her beauty, I understand  
music better.  
She dances inside my chest, like a  
bright fever with raw yellow claws.  
None in the den sees her, swirling  
& crackling among those phantom limbs.  
I do. I do & I understand music  
better, my pain exhaling fresh  
cascades of notes every moment.

“No more veils,” she said, & kissed me.

vii.

We live our lives by habit.  
We were clean. We bloom. We fall.  
We spend our finite number of faces  
readying to ask the most important  
question, the only question. The moment  
comes. Maybe morning. Maybe twilight.  
The moment comes. Our eyes glisten.

The philosopher finishes another coffee.  
“Praise God? No, friend. That’s not  
what he’s there for.”

Our eyes glisten. The moment passes.

viii.

The poet brings me his new songs.  
The poet rhymes emptiness & fear  
with his strong voice & lithe muscles.  
The poet writes nothing down, save on  
the backs of prostitutes who mother  
him & feed him good wine.  
The poet disdains the use of any instrument  
to accompany his song.  
The poet kneels. Imparts to the earth  
the treasure of his touch.

The poet tells me of beauty til I  
complain. I damn hookah smoke &  
coffee. I damn the helplessness  
of longing. Of love.

The poet praises Godd. Laughs darkly.  
Recites a profane rhyme.  
Mentions my bride’s name. I laugh with him.

ix.

I rarely leave the twilight den  
anymore. The owner shows me  
his herd of sheep. He praises their  
wool, their meat. Praises their  
dumbness.

“Without our damned questions how easy  
our lives would pass!” he cries.  
“No churches! No hookahs! No brothels!”

Later, his mind devolved to mist,  
he allows the painter to continue  
work on his portrait.

The painter limps slowly. The painter  
knows I see phantom limbs everywhere.  
Asks me questions as he paints our  
topored friend.

“Where do you think my bride has  
gone!” I answer. “I was the first  
to see her naked back glisten in the  
moonlight! I released her from  
so much!”

The painter shows me his picture.  
My bride lies sleeping in a gaunt-faced  
mist. Blue streaks run violently  
down her back.

The owner stirs angrily. Demands  
order & calm in his establishment.  
Mumbles praises of Godd. Great  
belly rumbles.

x.

I promised my bride redemption,  
until her eyes glistened, over & over,  
until her eyes glistened.

Days pass, fade. Twilight always.

I visit the brothel often tho they refuse  
my money. They lock the front  
door some nights when I come.

One agrees to be my bride's legs.  
Another her breasts. Candy. Kittens. Blood. Thunder.  
Another her mouth. Another her thighs.  
But they all fight to be her back glistening  
in the moonlight.

This too will become habit.

Redemption happens every moment of  
our lives, or never at all.

Returning to the twilight den, I take  
my new place, among the murderers,  
them shifting among their fouled blood.

“No more veils,” she said, & kissed me.

My eyes glisten. The moment passes.

March 5, 1999  
Boston, Massachusetts

# The Groove

*Phish concert,  
Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation,  
New Year's Day 2000, Everglades, Florida*

*[during midnight-to-dawn show]*

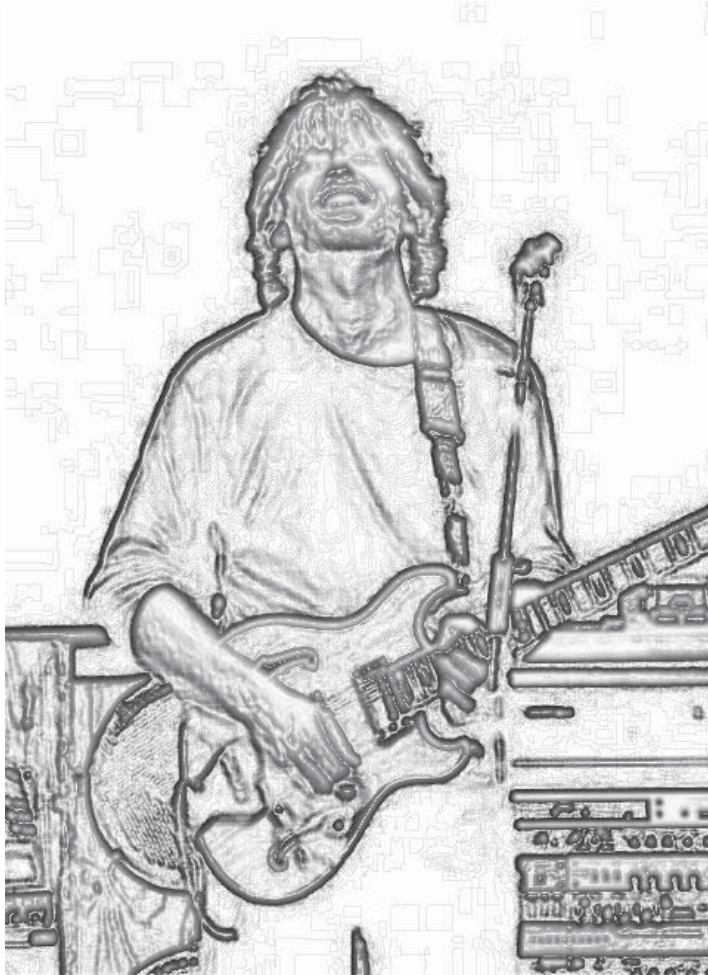
i.

there is no ending to the groove  
through which music flows to  
hearts unknown

we learned too much  
we learned too little  
we learned nearly enough

last night another death trip,  
i keep having those of late  
beyond language & name  
have i even come back at all?

i've learned too much  
i know too little  
i ache for everything



is there a force to be found, a godd  
to be won, even a wish left  
with three clean words written on it:

Live. Learn. Grow.

or three others:

Suffer. Love. Know.

last night, a different century, I guess  
I must have just decided to give in:

we know too much  
we know too little  
we're putting wings to our ignorance  
to see where in the cosmos it flies

Joy is emptiness beckoning  
from midnight skies  
Woe is a molecule to be  
smoked, danced or dreamt away—

Music is laughter a million  
days away

Accept. Challenge. Accept. Flow.

Knowledge keeps happening until  
you stop. & listen.

Something left over from century's end  
Something twas sad perhaps now  
transfigured into tree, into light,  
into groove, is it music now? like  
everything else?

what else is not yet music?  
my inventory holds no cigarettes  
or glowbubbles anymore

Music: dance flat the fuck out of  
your private darkness

To nowhere sunrise someone asks  
someone else something & again  
til a village, a culture, a planet  
& then one too many questions tumbles  
the jam down

til no language til no exit til nowhere  
is home & it's time to start  
again

tonight i took my wounds out  
for a stroll, an airing, some  
righteous funky swamptime  
for themselves

& again i know nothing  
again i listen for my true name  
again maybe the wolves maybe the  
    rolling lawns in my dreams  
    i don't know really—don't give a shit

i read many a book in last century's  
time, few worth holding out on a  
    cold night & a box of matches

sometimes one's last treasure is  
to keep dancing, or maybe keep  
    still

something else, though, new sparkles  
for old:

dead so to be free of time &  
pretty icons & a knapsack of  
    some damned torn air

old, wasted, refuse, dead, thirstless  
air, dead in my sack—

stop it, OK?

ii.

& it's morning again, I suppose,  
    a rainbow, a wasteland, & something  
fecund aerates my blood again

the band played in some farout  
swampland raw empty sunrise  
    look—they're picking up trash  
    before new century's first sleep—

look—these are the children promised  
by the trees, & midnight groans,  
    these are the children on the  
sides of the world's roads, slicking  
through city libraries looking for books  
    on hemp & the mushrooms Jesus ate—

these are your children—& I am too—  
    & they'll protect each other the way the  
dawn protects the day, the way trees  
    protect the autumn—the secret in each  
leaf til ready—these are your children  
    & they'll survive you like a better strain—  
survive you, elude you, invade you, subsume  
you, turn on your daughters, grow your  
sons' beards long, put dreddies on your soul  
    if you ain't careful, motherfucker—

last night off seven hits of acid after the  
early show I was driven into spaced  
out paranoid drug visions felt herded into  
nets & cages, helicopters above, black steel  
shield troopers in place the streets are  
gone this walk will never end—it was  
your last chance to do this, to stop what  
will pour through you like it's the music  
& you're the groove—it was your last chance  
to end this mellow-vibed evolution—more  
& more & more—until what things were like  
back in the day means squat until  
too many people are smiling doped-up  
on sunshine & cannabis, starshine &  
amber I could go on & on

iii.

The towline back is people  
i told me acid told me so  
any scrap of reality clung to til a  
warm hand, watching eyes, empathy,  
a vibe, a groove, a tangerine, some  
advice, a smile, some water, empathy,  
or anything empathetic to empathy,  
clean up, there's nothing left to  
do today, i told me acid told me so  
again & again & again

there is no ending to the groove  
through which music flows to  
places unnamed, fecund fields  
tight jeans furry boots glitter  
eyelashes, smoking Marlboro Lights,  
looking for nuggets, sell out for  
a pair, & each time goes wrong a different way

We learned too much  
We earned too little  
We're easy prey for covert jackals  
Our road home passes through  
peyote-real ghost towns  
& crack'd-out canyon city shadows  
unreal, freakout, shakedown, busted for  
being cloudy on a smiling day

again—where's my bag of dank?  
again—who's got my mollie?  
again—14 hours stopped dead in traffic  
again—Fishman took a dump, snorted  
a deuce, came bounding back on stage—

& what was this Florida swampland 2000's  
eve & what was Burning Man 1999 months  
ago & the several incidents in between

damn—shit went down!

but here are drums, today all there is,  
the doorman handed me a card on  
the way out, card says “Chill” I’ll not  
be losing it, though I don’t know  
what it means don’t know anything  
anymore too much—

how will I get home? doobie-smoking  
guru says “Chill.”  
what do I do then? whirling fairy princess  
chick on pure mesc & two hits of mollie  
says “Chill.”  
tell me about money & love & change &  
change & change! Goatee’d earring’d  
brother sipping a cold beer someone  
just handed him, well he just looks at  
me intently no smile no blame: “Chill.”

Tell me more for when I forget how!  
What if psychosis resumes later?  
How do I serenade open the sweet legs smiling  
of one of this phatty phairie chicks?

Stop. Toldja already. Get into the groove.  
All things in good time.

“This is heaven. Close to it,” she told me  
after drinking, face raw with burn, jangle  
locks of hair, music necklaces notes  
twined in hemp chord.

Help me. I have no plan. I am  
so happy. Not with a bang. With a snicker.

For all the times when I beg for just  
one free taste, for all the times  
when I check twice before sharing,  
for all the times when I name what  
I do not yet know.

for all gratuitous grace, acts of karma,  
random findings, fucked lonely nights,  
false where is this going panics over  
sanity & roof it’s going nowhere this  
is the extended jam & someone heads to  
the trees with shells to shake & an  
unlit cigarette this shit sounds the same  
& I suppose waiting for what I want  
ended last night as the box fell away,  
then the space inside the box, then space  
itself

shut the fuck up & try simple:

the magic spell begins every morning every  
day living breathing any kind of gesture  
to the good, here comes someone, ask  
him the way home, ask his friend, smile,  
how's the day & what may evolve, "just  
chillin', bro, going to a party tonight &  
just chillin'. Wanna come? What's your name?"

January 1, 2000  
Big Cypress Indian Reservation,  
Florida

*This chapbook was composed in the AGaramond  
face in PageMaker 7.0 on a Macintosh G4 computer.*

*Printed by Scriptor Press*

*2442 NW Market Street-#363*

*Seattle, Washington 98107*

*cenacle@mindspring.com*

*<http://www.geocities.com/scriptorpress>*

*April 2007*



Raymond Souland, Jr. ©

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON



SCRIPTOR PRESS

2007