

Resurrection, Now



by Raymond Souland, Jr.

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by Raymond Soulard, Jr.

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Resurrection, Now
Raymond Soulard, Jr.

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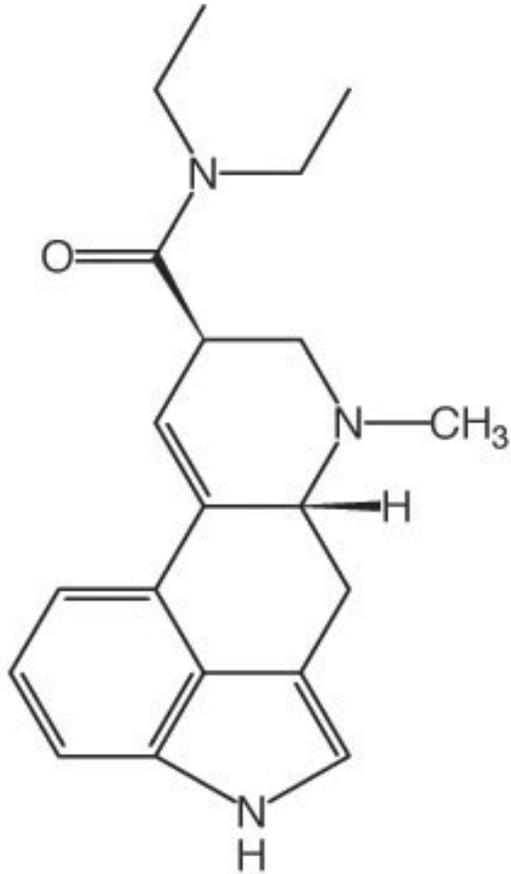
This book is for Kassandra,
wife, muse, friend, beloved,
you came & you stayed,
love's gesture & its proof . . .

* * * * *

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 7th
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 7th 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 7th

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.

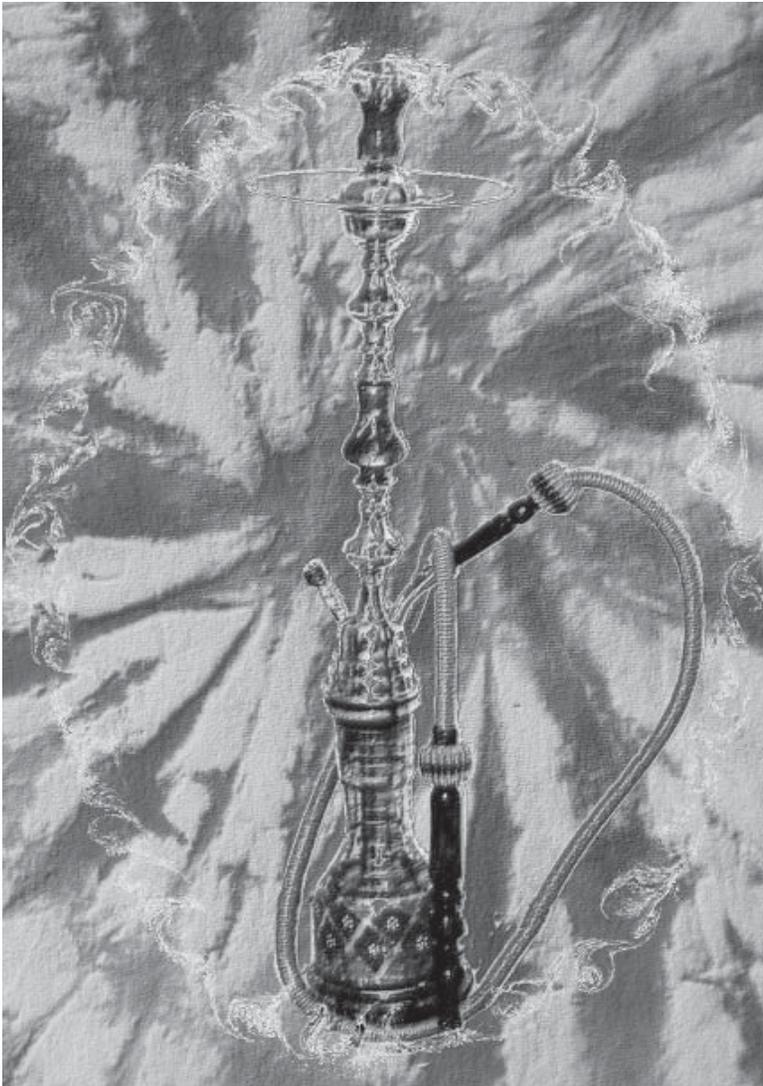
Dreams are deserts where everything
shines but nothing lives.

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

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