



*I wish we could open our eyes
To see in all directions at the same time
Oh what a beautiful view
If you were never aware of what was around you*

Death Cab for Cutie,
“Marching Bands of Manhattan,” 2005



Editor's Note:

The following is the seventh in a series of annual *Samplers* featuring the best prose, poetry, & artwork published by Scriptor Press. This is the gift of art from our hands to yours, in hope that you will find in these pages an empathy for some of your best & worst days. Each copy of this book we send out into the world will move along a path mostly unknown to us, and we are happy you are aiding in that travel. When the time is right, send this book further along to another set of hands.

R&P
Raymond Soulard, Jr.
3/29/2006

Raymond Soulard, Jr.
Editor & Publisher
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Raymond Soulard, Jr.

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Cry out from this world's narcotic delusion,
ceaseless flu of want, once, twice, cry out!
Now breathe, relax. Reckon all's burst from
flowers of flame, & what lasting? Nocturnes?
White leaves on a tree made of music.
Drums & dust. Nothing. What abide, love?

Secret sugar raging creation's scattered heart.
Something, & how intensely still. What begins,
& a beat, & begins again? Everything.
Call it hunger, the clawing rhythm within,
maze of heart's ripe thirst & need's hard flail.

Learn it, if you would anything of matter,
what shaman in every pain & its sate.
Secret joys, within's within, light & salve
for a seeker's chase. Hark moments sweet,
desire's lovely acceleration, & a beat, & a crash.

Now behold ruin's potent, fist of nays
a skyless mountain tall, cry out til
the coil looses life again through the bite & burn.

Once, twice, what lasting? Breathe, relax.
Garden clues toward a bouquet of answers,
sing them new, strum them high. Embrace them all.
Let them go. See what remain.

Just blue flashes cross the mind's troubled stretch,
til night flickers up, great flashing hours of root & roam.
Dreams climb high with the moon, trace Beauty's
darkling arc into the loam, roughest making stuff.
Mercy near, world's crown & flute.

A beat, again, now come-a dream of charred figure chanting
goldensong, his tune how love greens the brittlest land,
his urge to subtract everything from the world & reveal
God, his haunt what conjured steps to build up again.

Cry out with him, once twice, caterwaul crack wide
creation's sliding hum, its tart melody & lawless
careen of beats, unruly music struck from holy emptiness,
loosed as worlds without end. Feel it! The helpless want
for wordless things, ever squirm in the eyes & blood.

I know you know. Lean, withdraw, a beat, another,
let cry for your lost, nod everything lost but still cry
for yours, sure they for you, memory's skids,
blood's swelling tang, heart's wistful delusions.

Lights & hurry. Sad with a dream of vined unity,
a flesh, a spirit, slave to nothing. Say again:
all glory passeth. What lasting? Black ink on white char?
What abide? Love's freakiest draws new from nada.

Smile. Wake up! Desire triggers its own laws.
Happiness, through riven by stride, sink, roar & fade,
raised for feed by kings & preachers & trinket-swingers,
still dream-a body ache ceaseless toward the flow.

Something greater, music hints, forests & seas, first kiss,
hundredth, cry out, truly, & heed what overruns senses,
what your cry has ever blown through your hustling fingers,
the hungry press of your laughter, what collects in your grief,
chimes in your dreams, sprays you wide, exhales your want
long linger, greater music, greater silence. A frenzied high called Art.

What lasting? Black barks on white chips of moon?
Sung spent years, their scald remain. What abide, love?
Its anarchy spits wild in the heart, poison to the land's
mass of moving men. What begins, & a beat, & begins again?
The singing, the squalor, spirit's craze of sacred & muck,
farthest hour's storm of drums & dust.

Rootless siege in the question how to live, how to live,
how to live & why? Hope like a spell binds the heart
to wishes, & then come a sweet thing into this raw stretch,
thick flicking dirge, her gestures mesmer like
a slow salmon dusk, her loving stroke true.
We skein home together after years in another life.
No more veils. Cry out!

What conjure awakes this world's carnal dream music,
how to splay freer solitude's blue fancies?
Shake & deny, squeeze yesterdays loose, then believe:
soul plus soul sum to soul.

World something drones, null melody, it hurts,
I know you know, but little holds against a true stroke,
hum & mull it, how to build up again, wield new furies
with a softer heart, raise new thrill songs from
higher music within, crack harder bluffs.

Chase the green pulsing, seed wisdom's first verities,
follow into the pink currents, want's jittering play in
the maya, jerk, groove, careen. Nod everything lost,
caterwaul, & a beat. Reinvent & reinvent & reinvent.
Now breathe, relax. Nothing ends but faith in old costumes.

Keep along, many names for beloved, this one firmed
your bones, that one ripened your blood. Others taught &
took in a week's snap or a year's awl. Where come the will
to accept? Countless rank aches til your raggy soul knows
to hark every new day's golden fineness.

Come a sweet thing thus love unto greater real,
stranger path, a bare pilgrim among adoration's
many musics. Once, twice, not enough, clench,
release, sing it new, strum it high, what lasting?
Black drizzle down white skies? What abide, love?
Call it first & last flower of the world, clue, harass.
Bed's better dreaming, night's open range lure.

What begins, & a beat, & begins again? Where creation's
savage engine, what its spark? What is? Whither next?
Does this strange world sum to nothing? Offer a piece
of cosmos for this song, sprung out in moving flesh,
stirring frantic & dull through memory's raw blood. Cry out!

Come a sweet thing, fecund wiggle, biting sauce,
golden word, brilliant kiss, smash to ruts deep within.
Twining's first moonlight, ocean's ancient promise,
love what matters & the will to accept it. Breathe, relax.

Raise her music by fidelity & stroke, conjure concert
of green by slow rhythmic devotions. Shiver, trust,
come forth buds burst of good song, hours atwist in
morning glories & whispering touch. What lasting?

Remnant stars in a blinding book of old dreams?
What abide but eros & breath? What begins, & a beat,
& a beat, & a beat? Someone passes smiling in crimson
skirt, another's eyes quiver crazy in his rest among God
& decline. What their yearn, what fulfillment? Turn,
restless smoke in the air, harsh strokes across the walls.
World drones, null melody, lost among the miles & years
a flatness hinting no world but beams & notes.

There is no world: i told me acid told me so.
No world but a squirming in the sheen.
No world: reckless flounder of drums & dust.
Plunge from nothing through sparkles of sensation to
nothing, gone, no matter the great fist swinging
in the night, high prayer firing through the dread house
of bent limbs, thousands glad yowling with heavy thumps
of song.

No remain. Neither tallest stone height nor
widest run of moving men & galloping machines,
centuries of throne's blight, revered chalice of self
til blood's crumble, no remain. Another rotted
goldensong strung through history's lousy mane.

Empire, relax. Another will one day rattle in your dust.
Time's clay makes & mauls fists & bullets,
maps & mansions alike. Grinds every tongue.
No farthest wall to defend, just a vastless sea
of lights & hurry.

There is no world: narcotic delusion.
There is no world: you are not high enough.
No world: become a fountain of blank sheets,
wet scribbling's last dull relief. Wordless, faceless.
There is no world: whither next?

Your night shifts on hard remembering bones,
& these will melt too. Suffer years like a trial &
its end will never come. Or cry out tonight
because you can & you must, once, twice,
heed no fist's press to mum.

Cry out! World's restive spirit will & again transmute
your leaden dusk, slow siren into night's glints
of greater evolve. Vined unity high, sweet thing's
fine pink strum, here is everywhere, world's drone
a lost scrap, something about to sing.

Shift, jerk, long for everything, high, higher,
berries sharp as laughter jitter about your knees,
this human night flails alone until someone close sings
"we are all cosmos, we are careening."
Coins & clocks await the morrow's bleatings of cheap hone,
another pummeled day of poverty & gunfire.

Empire, relax. The land's blur of moving men will awhile
still moan for masters, hustle & praise their cheap scriptures
of capitulation, this messy coalescence. No remain: what lasting?
Scatter of noisy vapors, behold their great moment, a beat,
another, all blows by & is gone. What abide? Starshine
& cannabis? Green charms & pretty trembles? Ceaseless
flu of want, something dark in the sheen. What begins,
& a beat, & begins again?

Something true, healing prayer at the heart of the universe,
neither faith nor fact. Twas blue fancies raised this world
& others without end. Love of seed for soil & root for sunshine.
Wings for high. Fins for the deep. Buzz for nectar.
Fur for nipple's suck. Mortal limbs for greater light,
life's tangle resolved.

Twas music's love to carve songs from strange contours
in the night. Twas desire's happy ache for knowing its
one & many ways, soft, cling, soft. Twas want's metallic
obsession & none other but this can please, have it,
love it, kill it.

Blue fancies caused world, no world, worlds without end,
found play for the child's happy idle, fooled up clocks & coins
as finest measure of a man's subtle worth. Blue fancies with
their choice for every soul: this world an enemy or call it home.

What lasting? The music of every open hand.
What abide? Love's every pock, its countless tugs upon the fabric.
What begins, & a beat, & begins again? Hope, its mystery rise,
its helpless decline.

Cry out! What breathes worlds listens, & listens for you.



Jim Burke III

Editor's Note: The following is the twenty-third in an ongoing series derived from the correspondence between Jim Burke III and myself, begun in 1992, and in the spirit of the more enthused letter-writing tradition of yesteryear.

April 7, 2005
West Hartford, Connecticut

Preface:

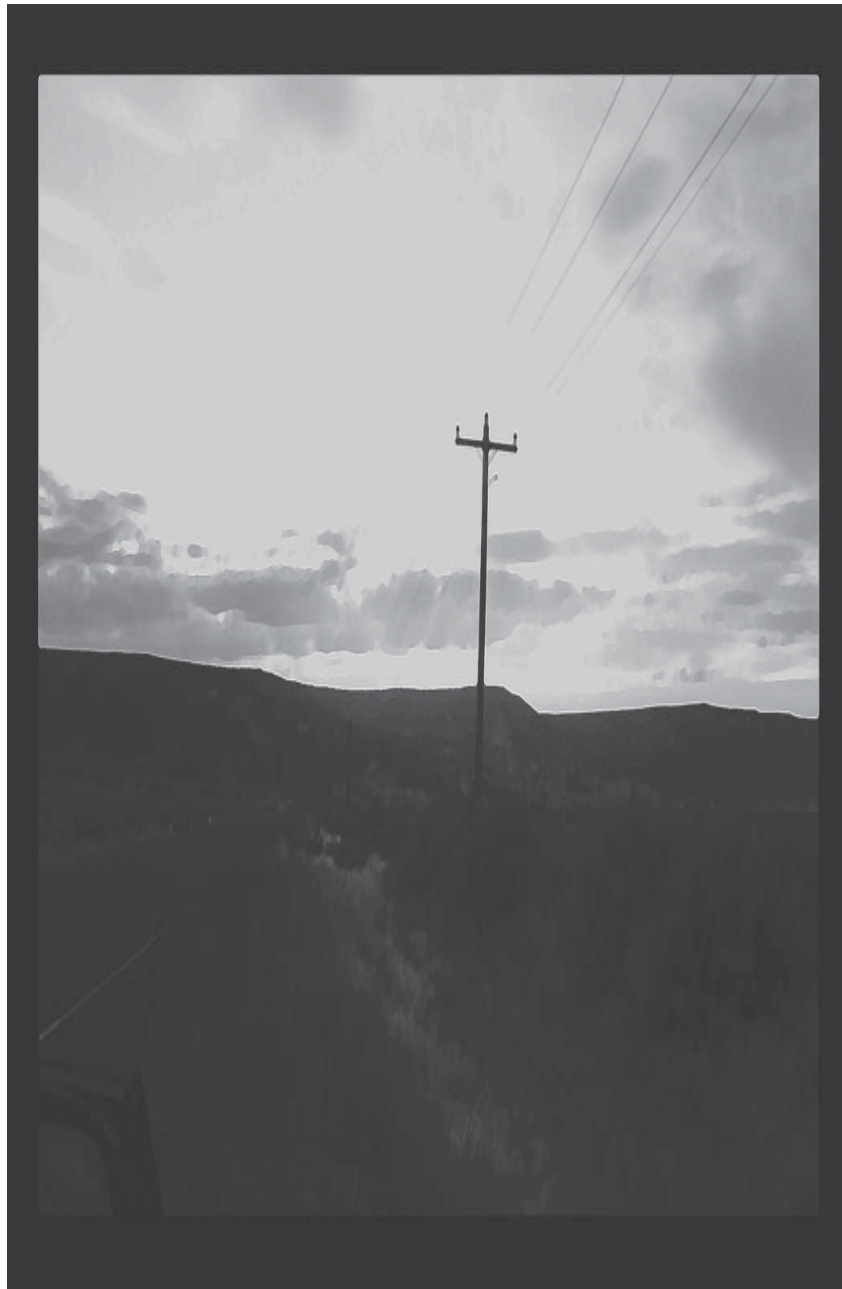
I would like to comment on my favorite author, Henry David Thoreau, before I take it upon myself to utilize his style of writing and apply my own thoughts of nature to 21st century mankind.

Henry David Thoreau had the gift of insight, that is, he was able to apply the foundations of nature to his socioeconomic and political culture of the times. I am going to forgo quoting him directly as I assume the reader of this text has knowledge of his mastery of allegory. He not only compared every facet of nature to every custom and nuance of his surroundings, but actually established a correlation, and that is the purpose of this letter.

I-The Reservoir

The Reservoir system in West Hartford, Connecticut was built around the turn of the last century; an ingenious gravity feed system, it supplies water to the greater Hartford metropolitan region. Comprising hundreds of acres of woods and paths, it borders on the Connecticut Gas Company, Brainard Forest (on a hike I discovered a half-buried stone of Henry Brainard), and a couple of towns.

I had always been a literary fan of Thoreau since I was introduced to him in high school in Billerica¹, Massachusetts. I was always mystified, and I would emphasize “mystified” as in a spiritual longing, as to how a man could connect to nature. I graduated from Billerica High School in 1971 and tried majoring in accounting, math, and music until 1974. I quit college



and worked at a “Store 24,” a latex factory, and a wool mill (the historic Talbot Mills in Billerica). I also developed a reputation for being a competent guitarist and vocalist and toured with several bands, Boston and Foghat among them. It all brought me to Walden Pond in 1976 and I have never really left!

I would leave my boarding house room in Lowell, Massachusetts on my bike for work at the mill at 6:40 in the morning, arrive at 7, and work until 3 in the afternoon. Then I would ride about 15 miles to Walden and spend the next 3 hours hiking and swimming. I left there about 7 at night and got back to Lowell about 8. I figure I must have ridden about 40 miles per day.

Walden Pond is magic. How else can I describe a place where one can blend soul with nature. I would strip down and bathe nude, with no repercussions, at the rear cove. People would look away, laugh, or not care (mostly the last). This went on for six years but I know it could not last forever. I eventually moved to West Hartford, Connecticut to finish college, resume playing guitar, and find the Reservoir.

I still ride a bike in the hundreds of miles of trails. It must seem like a mammoth 3-D tree in itself from overhead, although I still find a dead end once in awhile. It is like the trees just gang up on you peacefully and put some thorny bushes in front. Like using pawns in a chess game—or a socio-political made up of sick and homeless, advance no more of the wounded. The difference is that the trees do it with passivity—our so-called leaders do it with violence! There is an old Chinese proverb to the effect that “the willow survives the storm because it bends.

II-Trees

Ah! The trees!!—I “hear” them talking when I walk through the woods. Of course not literally, but my intuition is strong and I feel their harmony. Their bark peeling and twigs falling, it’s all part of what should be—nature. *What should be* is nature. Just as meditation clears the mind of centuries of “rational” Western thought, trees meld and become vibrant. Their greenery supercedes all else. Whether at Walden or the Reservoir, the trees with their infinitesimal outstretched limbs cast changing shadows over the water. They are providing a natural timetable for mankind to contemplate. The shadows change on a daily basis, not only dependent upon the position

of the sun and astronomical forces, but how mankind (and how quickly) depletes their numbers. As more trees are taken, more water tables are altered, and more flood plains are lowered; the trees sacrifice themselves as the Cambodian Buddhist monks did to protest the Vietnam War—Self Immolation!! It is more than a coincidence that the trees will break before the bend to excess, to bow to the whim of mankind. Nature has a way of taking care of its own and natural lighting seems to suffice!

III-The Twig Problem

All that one has to do, to realize the importance of the tree, is to look at its skeleton frame during the winter. The leaves are gone and all that remains is a nest multitude. But how about all those undeveloped twigs? One has to only look on the ground to see what they are replacing—the old dead petrified branches that have served their purpose to feed the bigger branches water to survive. The twigs will perpetuate the process. Unlike mankind, which uses their insignificant twigs (or “little man”) to feed the rich and perpetuate that lifestyle, the trees nourish their twigs all year round and form a symbiotic relationship. The sap flows and the birds build new homes. The squirrels use the trees judiciously as their temporary landlords. Mankind can have a landlord and pay the rent, with or without heat. But not to worry, the landlord can always use a few twigs to get the heat started.

The twigs on the tree and life from them remind me of infinity. Their language is a mystery until you stop listening—perpetuation is the key. Freedom is obtained through non-action and least resistance. And, after all, what is a tree without a twig?



Footnotes

¹ forgive the small type but they used small words, to quote Peter Gabriel.



Judih Haggai

oct 5

listening to paintings i have dreamed
washing windows of the soul
tasting the hugs of long lost sounds
crunching grapes the size of plums
touching the whispers of mysticals

october fifth tiptoes into day
the house awaits its family song

In the General Direction of Blur

It's called spacing out
this searching look
in the general direction of blur

as i comb the molecules
sense the connections
watching the aura of thought

the mind paves old roads
caresses the scenery
paints substance from urge

moving off in the general direction of blur

Puffin ions at the Fairground

New York tears
puffin ions at the fairground
skyscrapin memories
so close, so utterly distant
touch the smells of bagel steam
chestnut impressions of walk stop walk
how much for a lazy extra moment?
no time no time
sidewalk pushes me past my address

seatbelted, glued to a timeline
electric trivia sparks from behind
how much for a slower passage?

on the splendid dinosaur
polished and painted bright
seizing the brandished diatribe
how much for a cheap seat on the aisle?

for a friend (through plate glass)

alive but not kicking
breathing but no balloons
the air rocks me like a hammock on the moon
i feel comfort just beyond my reach
is there a bottle of hope?

i open a book
i turn on a song
a poem hovers on my lips
i hear a message knocking at my door
later! soon! i promise myself
as oxygen steps in for a kiss

a love poem to my daughter
dedicated to i, first born daughter

a love poem to my daughter
serenades the house
her essence scents the room
the couch begs her to stay

She enters the door
and silence starts to sing
fear dwindles, life lightens
the idiocy of others fades into irrelevance

What is love
till this daughter arrives?
It pales even sighs in dim peaks
what is happiness
till this daughter returns?
a low thud in the sinking heart

rise, oh soul felt laughter
as daughter walks this silent floor
the earth is her living room
the sky her endless trail

A Winter Thing (dec 22)

so early this morning
a blast of love from a nearby dream
a risk to rise, a quiet walk to awareness

this winter thing is not so bad
together we bring the light
intensity magnifies love

like laughter in darkness
shared secrets in a quiet room
we pull each other towards joy

our touch is gentle
our message is firm
we survive and we live to tell the tale

Buddha bit

beauty, it comes in breaths and starts
a gasp, a halt in the flow of time
cosmic crunch - a bash oh!
small steps over lily pads
whish of dragonfly
life is a well-kept oasis



Raymond Soulard, Jr.

New Period (excerpt)

Today everything seems possible. Reflections, refractions, no malice. Much woodenness. Much softness. Trees, more than ever. Without you, I travel faster but carom off the ground more often.

Abstract patterns read as benign language, & ignored, & forgotten.

Constantly arriving, nearing home. Home a process. Home a verb.

A bearded soldier named Spike, smiling among his answers.

More reflections. More refractions. Faith a ground of facts set on fire.

Faith the signals of meaning & direction carved from smoke.

Spike & his cache of pamphlet ammunition just outside the rocknroll show. Spike testifying on a winter's night, near a craggy ground mound of black snow. Spike talking to my head of pretty musical notes, my body danced into weary gentleness.

Spike, I'll not be joining you in your Bellows Falls, Mass. assemblage. Your faith that Godd needs, & awaits, his shining people willing to undo their mail & their will.

No, Spike, I am occupied with the Eternal Note, with the desire of blankness for form & color. The universe not defined as a petty battle between warring achetypes. The universe allowed to be unknowably grand & complex & eternal & home to humanity without belonging to us.

Spike, brother, & your weathered smile, you pain, your traveling bag of answers. Our moment locked together while friends awaited me, snickering, thinking I was haggling over the price of check-25 or puffing nuggets.

I'd show you my world, if I could, Spike, the music & colors, trees & snow, remorse, head & heart & hand & cock jacked tightly together, & a young ruler somewhere tonight, approaching, laughing.

Look here, Spike, at this girl I just married, the girl I keep marrying, my friend, my favorite artist. I believe in her, Spike. When she smiles, I gather my news.

What do you think about acid telepathy, Spike? About the psychedelic history of the world? I have a friend living in Cornish, New Hampshire in 1968, a poet, & I am in contact with him in this story. I have unfinished business back in the summer of 1998, & am going to address it.

Spike, I probably shouldn't be writing about you but you are an impediment to my work. So here you are, with me, in the forest that surrounds the Ampitheatre. My wife is with her father right now. Their love is the core of this story. No it isn't. Maybe it is. I don't know. See, Spike? I'm uncertain! It's upsetting! It's fun. Would I be as important to your truths as you are to mine?

My truths float, Spike. My truths heat up & cool down. My truths are subject to influence.

Spike, you never asked me for my opinion, for my testament of beliefs. For the nature of my struggles. You asked for my name. You asked for my time. You welcomed me to your home.

My walkman is filled with music by Phish. I believe in Phish, Spike. They interest me in a way your certainties don't. In a way your struggles do.

I want to say more to you, Spike.

Later, there was a decent after-hours party attended by many of the poets who'd sat in back of the Six Gallery, doubting the whole event, this hairy group gonna start a firey revolution? With their rude Sartre tattoos & playing bopheroin Buddha 45s on the RCA Victor?

This party began in a loft top floor of an abandoned building Tenderloin where the bones are still soft & crunch musically, but then it gradually climbed to the rooftop with its festive view of the universe

& someone led a bunch of them in singing "The Queer Zodiac" a star-counting & vodka game that always got a laugh

eventually the night sobered most & they settled in a clumpy buzz near the back of the roof & a needle & vase of rain-water was passed round as various faces spoke:

JoJo Rumi, a laughing speedfreak spoke first. "Good & evil, dead & alive, everything blooms from one natural stem."

"Ah, blow it out your barracks bag, JoJo!"

"Listen to him JoJo the talking gimp! Tell you fortune, tell your whole family's future, for a suck on your banana!"

JoJo adjusts his longer leg beneath his shorter one, obviously hurt, bearded & scarred, no longer ready for a fight at any point. "This is how it always is when I finish a poem. A great silence overcomes me, and I wonder why I ever thought to use language."

"What poem,†JoJo? You haven't written anything since Truman was FDR's lapdog!"

"Yah, JoJo! What happened to your epic? The Fuck-Me-Ad!"

"You guys" JoJo whimpers. But he quickly backs down. "Blessed Be" he whispers.

Lalla-Debby-Lalla bears an old & dilapidated breast & whines Brooklynese: "Absorbed in the infinite, my mind dissolved. Where now have the earth & sky gone?"

"Lalla-slut-Lalla! Lalla-slut-Lalla!" The simple song carries on for several minutes as the scorned breast finds its way back behind covering. "Showed Daddy & the boys her tight little ass! Showed Christ & the boys her tight-lipped little number! Now she flaps like every UN flag in a high high breeze!"

Well someone has to say something kind before the night is a complete fuck.

Lizzy Mirabai speaks up. Softly. "O my Beloved—Return." Who can say what to this? He's gone: we all know that. Some say there'll be a million more like him by the end of the '50s.

The mood has shifted. JoJo is generally licked & rubbed, we all become his sleepy, sexy cat & he giggles madly to show his returned happiness.

Lalla, too, we give give her what she likes the most, we coo, we laugh, we ask her to tell the story again & again—

"Hey lady what happened to the hockey game!"

"You promised us!"

Rebecca shakes him a little to remind me, crossing Longfellow Bridge swaying train, & I stare darkly at the empty seat across the aisle—
“Thanks, lady. We don’ mean to be no trouble.”

Now Blake has the floor. Big Bad Blake, always hitchhiking down the coast to Cal Tech comes back with tales of robots & automation.

He holds up a pebble which kind of cover the roof. Assumes that prissy poesy KeatsShelleyByron voice he thinks scores him the best chicks no matter his healthy beerbelly & streaming stray strands of golden hair flowing from an essentially bald head. Sez: “To see a world in a grain of sand, and Heaven in a wildflower, hold Infinity in the palm of your hand, and Eternity in an hour.” We’ve all heard this one before—it’s one of his best pickup lines. I saw him pick up twins with it once, alternating hangdog with Adonis in his delivery. That was at Vesuvio’s—what a hole that is since *that* lowbrow bookstore moved in across the alley.

“Hey, Blakey boy, didn’t you get married?”

He sighs magnificently. “Only to the Widow Mescalita.”

“Ahh balls! Balls I say” cries the negro Leonard Yeats. “The hell with the whole crew of ya! What do you know anyway?”

“What’s wrong, darkie? Cotton too heavy for you cuz it rained today?”

Yeats sways near the roof’s edge. Will he . . . will he . . . yes, of course, he steps off the edge & then dazzles us with his newest grand conception; naked as always when not restrained, cock swinging & dripping in the uncommitted air out there, he booms out: “O body swayed to music, O brightening glance! How can we know the dancer from the dance!” He cackles mysteriously while we consider his words.

“Not bad, Lenny.”

“Yah, keep at it. You’ll be good as Ferlinghetti soon!”


Everyone gets a good laugh at this. Reminds us of that hairy beatnik party tonight.

So of course Rabbi Suarez Rilke shows up right then. “Oh dear dear” he moans sadly. Lenny Yeats returns to the roof. Rilke scares him. Something happened between them when they were on that softball team.

*WITHIN'S WITHIN: SCENES FROM
THE PSYCHEDELIC REVOLUTION*

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turn on . . .
tune in . . .



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N
H

“Children, my children. What is all this? Do you think Godd is not watching tonight? Maybe he has the night off?”

We mumble some that collectively sounds like regret. Rabbi Rilke carries some respect amongst us. He’s generous with the bail money.

His cowboy hat dips low on his head. He holds a torn envelope close enough for all of us to see.

“I found this in the temple tonight. Look, see! Hundreds of dollars inside with no explanation of its source or destination.” He swears violently in some kind of Yiddish-Swahili hybrid, then resumes. “And its account of itself. Look, see! A message crayoned on its back side.”

“That’s lipstick, Rabbi” mumbles Lalla.

“Lalla-slut-lalla!” Yeats perks up but the rest of us shut him down quickly.

“And what does it say? Look, see! ‘LSD = God = You!’ What’s this mean? Do any of you children know the reference?” He peers around at us, sincerely.

I happen to glance at Lenny & see that he knows something. His fat negroid lips are puckering quickly, dryly. He’s trying to behave. He & that Blake character hang around a lot together.

“Well, I didn’t think so. Seems apocryphal to me. Still, I’ll check the reference.” He makes to leave & none of us say anything.

Then he stops. Here it comes. “Children, I have a little food for thought, as they say, for all of you.”

Here it comes. Someone called them ‘Hookah Homilies’ but never to the Rabbi’s face.

“Look, I am living. On what? Neither childhood nor future grows any smaller . . . Superabundant being wells up in my heart.”

Lenny can’t hold it back anymore. “Why, preacher, that’s . . . just . . . hookah-rific!”

Well, that’s that. Rilke owns the building & we’ve blown it. We’re all getting ready to leave when who dares to show his sloppy beatnik face but Al Ginsberg! He’s grinning.

Blake bows low before him. “That was quite a yelp tonight.”

Al grins, oblivious. “Howl.”

“Howl? Yowl? All I can say is that I greet you at the beginning of a long psychosis.”

Al keeps grinning. He just doesn’t care. “I am Heaven balanced on a blade of grass!” He cries. “I am going to visit Wales, Kyoto, Tokyo, Scranton!”

We all scatter quickly after that.

“And now Rocky Raccoon
He fell back in his room
Only to find Gideon’s Bible”

I heard as I walked into the house with no front, deep in the northern California woods in early December 1968. A “War is Over” Xmas Party. I was carrying a fishing rod I’d found along Rt. 1 while hitchhiking. That was the morning of the party. The night before I’d found a dead skunk curled up in the grassy weeds along a smaller road.

I hadn’t tripped in 16 days. I had enough in my canvas bag to turn on a large commune & the larger White house to boot. But no, there’d stopped being reasons to dose at that point.

“Noone will be watching us
Why don’t we do it in the road?”

I didn’t know anybody at the party, at least initially. The music kept me around, in truth. I knew it was The Beatles. Nobody understands anymore what they meant to us back then, or later.

Ronald Reagan was elected President in November 1980 & John Lennon was shot dead less than a month later.

They meant everything. There were no rival bands. I saw a show that talked about Byrds & Stones & Beach Boys.

I'm not a Christian but I can only put it this way: The Beatles were bigger than Christ & all those other bands simply wanted to be one of the Apostles.

The 1960s was killed, finally, for good, for awhile, in December 1980, & it went underground for more than a decade & now it's come back as the religion it couldn't be until Christ was permanently hobbled.

The Cute One. The Smart One. The Quiet One. & Ringo.

It's all coming back. Don't you think we knew that when Christ resurrected & spoke again?

“You said it's your birthday
well it's my birthday too yah”

which just about freaked me out for good because it was my birthday too. Yah. & I was carrying this fishing pole & my bag full of acid & poetry books & I'd snipped a little tuft of that dead skunk's tail & hooked it to my jacket when I met a naked man whom I gave the fishing pole.

“Thank you” he agreed.

“I'm 19 today”

“So am I.”

“If I aint dead already
Girl, you know the reason why”

A taxi brought more people to the frontless house. I sat alone with my fishing pole & bag for awhile. The music was upsetting me. When the first record was over, with the song “Julia,” I was relieved. But “Yer Birthday” had kicked in, I'd heard the click of the second LP dropping into place, I was near the stereo & I realized I had to listen to another whole record. They'd never done a double LP before.

“Sing a lazy song
beneath the sun”

& I finally asked someone what the record's name was & he said “Nothing really. Or maybe it's ‘The Beatles.’ Or the White Pair.”

“The deeper you go
The higher you fly”

I'd heard Lennon was doing heroin instead of acid. I hoped it wasn't true. Acid McCartney & Smack Lennon sounded doubtful.

I went outside & kept walking til even the huge speakers were dim. “You made a fool of everyone” was the last I heard. I didn't hear what I'd missed for a long time.

There was a circular clearing among the huge redwoods. A big fire.

I'd forgotten my fishing rod. It didn't matter. I had my bag. I wasn't going back to the house. The acid vibrations back there were too much for me. Spells. Incantations. Pictures painted in virgin's blood.

It's like that fuckup Bob back in Stinson Beach put it “you can't put magic above love.”

He wasn't so bad.

I entered the circle.

Noone said anything to me at first but someone offered me a pipe. They noticed my fishing rod but we were out in the woods so having one wasn't ridiculous.

There were quite a few people there actually. A dozen. Twenty. I'm not sure. But people were quiet. We'd all probably come to get a break from the party. We watched the fire. It was pretty big. The sparks rose up toward the stars. This was good for me. I relaxed. That pipe of grass has helped me some.

Sometime later a dude with long curly blonde hair began strumming. Not really songs. He was playing to the moment. People did that a lot back then. It was the acid partially. Bands figured out that a tripping audience is so here & now in the forever way that they were listening in a peculiar way. They didn't listen to anything that didn't talk



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about now. I talked to a lot of musicians back then. It's why the music went like it did for awhile.

Anyway, some girls were dancing. I don't see girls dance like that, back then. Free. Proud. Hopeful. Ready. Satisfied.

And some drums started up. They always were. Every city you went to, any day or night, there'd be drums going somewhere. We got used to it. Drums were really important to us.

Somebody started talking about the Uranus Brotherhood. It made sense at the time.

"No, it's not like that. They say that we're evolving from men to gods just like we've already evolved from animals."

"Animals aren't less than us! They don't fight stupid wars."

"No, see we start out as animals and we end up as gods. Humans are partway there. We are all part of the same thing."

He got quiet then. He started up again in awhile. But the drums had gotten good.

The night got sad. I think a lot of people around that fire realized that something good was nearly over. Acknowledged it. It wasn't going to be like it was. How do I tell this?

For awhile, maybe a couple of years, we floated. I mean a lot of us. We were gaining more people than we were losing. We were important & we were *convinced* we'd do the right thing. Stopping the War was just the start.

It's like America was a river running upstream. Instead of us assimilating into our parents' values, they were trying to deal with ours. When they marched with us, when we got high together. Anything. All that 'trust nobody over 30' shit was media hype. The media wanted blood not flowers & they didn't see that a society based on psychedelic values, free love, no money, all that hippie stuff, communes, would be *far more* interesting. They couldn't handle it.

But for awhile there we had the upper hand.

Sitting around that fire, though, a lot of us consciously acknowledged what was already lost.

& it wouldn't be worth telling about at all except that when the moon rose over that clearing in the woods, we decided to forget. Fuck it. We lost. Lost what? Here's the woods. There's the moon. The drummers are getting crazy again. Those girls should be dancing.

At some point some pills went around, and some joints. We built the fire up & up so most of us shed our clothes. I ended up with a girl named Mandy who read my palm & told me I would be making a big decision soon that would affect my whole life. She had a sleeping bag, a big one. She had a friend too whose name I can't remember. We messed around but mostly we laughed a lot. Sex isn't so desperate when you are free & everyone else is too. Most people nowadays treat it like money, invest wisely & carefully. *Fuck that shit.*

The last thing I remember except for the laughter was the dude nagging on about the Uranus Society.

"You think we're from Earth. No way, man! We're not even from Uranus. That's just a way-station. They seeded the Earth with us & they'll come get us when we're ready.

"It's like, not every generation—no—let me put it this way—when enough of us are ready, we'll go. They'll come & get the ones who are ready & the rest will get a choice to come or not. But like if you stay behind, that's it. The ones that stay back will be on their own.

"So that's what's coming, man. You all think acid is so great but it's *nothing* really, not compared to what these alien cats have.

"But I can't tell you how to join the Uranus Brotherhood Society. There's no clubhouse or anything. But you'll hear about it & you probably wouldn't even have noticed before I told you all this. But you'll hear something sometime. & that will be what you get. It will be your signal. I'm telling you now: *take it.* Go for it."

All is maya. Maya is play. All is play. All is maya. Maya is Art. Art is play. Maya is illusion. All is illusion. Art is illusion. All is maya is play is Art is illusion is maya is play is Art is illusion.

Resurrection moon above.

Resurrection moon below.

All is maya.

Art. Play. Illusion.

We're going to get it right this time. We're going to float rightly & not get picked off. We'll be part hippies & part bastards if necessary. Oh, sure will be necessary.

We are the fire we are building laughter most dangerous fire of all is maya is play is illusion is Art we will not be sunk this time perhaps all we can do is step back & let the blood flow when it must those of us who survive but we will win we will endure. Yes. We will endure.

We're gathered here to get it right *here & now* because it has to start somewhere & as many timeplaces as possible I think so let's not bother too much over what doesn't matter let the fuckers have most of it we'll win by staying by always being around by sometimes gathering in really big numbers with no riot nor bullet nor hate amongst us no we begin to win by surviving at all we continue to win by just continuing we win finally when we're proven right as many argue is slowly happening—

I suppose it is. Everyone is welcome. The door never closes. The smiles for a newcomer never cease.

& there'll be more of us as time goes on, newborns & converts our myths & joys taking over more durable than the jackals thought oh there was a time but no little matters now. Not quite. But never forget. The hippie loves on, the bastard remembers back.

Fire, bring on the fire!

Bring on the fire, sunshine, bring on the fire, sunshine, psychedelic,
bring on the fire, psychedelic sunshine, time to gather the souls, form
circles within circles, Ampitheatre, time to perform, time to *be the
performance*, secret joy amongst all times, within's within, but way more
& far simple, psychedelic sunshine, gather the souls, circle, bring on the
sunshine, here we are, here we've always been, *here we go*—

Come together, right now, here we go, each a seeming lone soul,
hopeful at best, but each also a ray of cosmic starshine, each proof &
glory that the universe grows humans natively in its soil, that each of us
belongs, that we are home, here & now & always, that all is well behind
distracting patterns of noise & desire—

“Nobody needs to go anywhere. We are, if we only knew it, already
there.”

Come to where we have always been, continuously arriving,
perhaps getting a little better along the way.

Already there. Already here.

Psychedelic sunshine in wooden mugs carved from, offered from
these very woods that surround us, the universe's woods, trees as native as
we to this cosmos a thousand years from now a little girl 10 billion light-
years from now will dance with her favorite oak, her mother, her sister,
bush-soul, simulacra & from a hundred yards away a worried &
directionless poet will spy her, & smile, suddenly licked by a light sound,
can it be elusive music? Music giving his fool soul another chance to sing?
Maybe. Spies the little nymph dancing with her oak, marks the spot &
the moment triangulated by the number of suns in the sky just then, &
he will return again

and it all begins again & again
& nothing ever ends or returns to former places where illusion might
attest once it had been

already here. we are already here.



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