

*“We are entitled to ask—we are required to ask—how many more men, how many more lives, how much more destruction will be asked, to provide the military victory that is always just around the corner, to pour into this bottomless pit of our dreams?”*

*—Robert F. Kennedy, March 18, 1968*

## *Editor's Introduction*

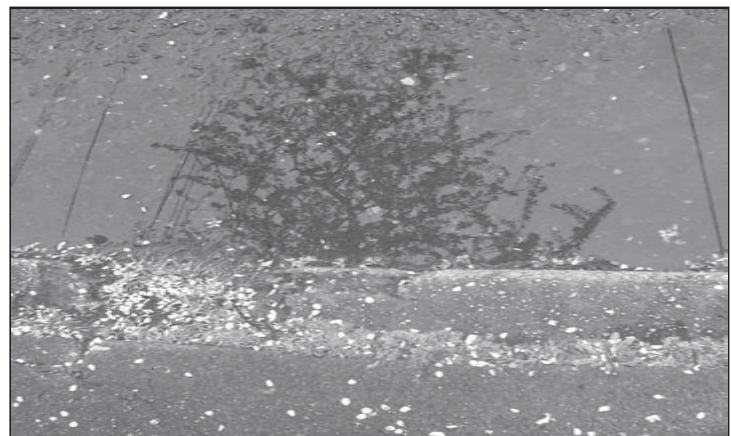
The following is the ninth in a series of annual *Samplers* featuring the best prose, poetry, & artwork published by Scriptor Press in the past year.

While tricky at best to call one year's turmoil greater than another's, much less to forecast a coming year's even greater tumult, nonetheless 2007's tremors seem to point rather plainly toward 2008's quakes. As the laughing old hippy says, take care of your shoes, & know who's your friend.

The path to peace chews bones & hearts both along the way. Pass this volume along when another needs it. Blessed be.

*Raymond Soulard, Jr.*  
3/17/2008

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Editor & Publisher  
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*Scriptor Press Sampler*  
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*Green Flames: Thoughts on Burning Man,  
the Green Man, and Dionysian Anarchism*

**i. Burning Man as a “temporary autonomous zone.”**

The Burning Man arts festival<sup>1</sup> was born in free and visionary revelry, and matured on the Black Rock Desert into a great gathering of the tribes, from the cyber-freaks to the lushy rednecks to the altered-consciousness pentathletes to the nasty punks to the fuckin’ hippies. And everything in between. This alone, from a historical perspective, is a matter of wonder and for rejoicing.

There was another big event, not as big as Burning Man in numbers, but also historically important, in Golden Gate Park, forty years ago, that was called “Gathering of the Tribes.” Gary Snyder spoke at that event, as did Allen Ginsberg, Timothy Leary, Alan Watts, and others.

Such gatherings often take place in what Hakim Bey calls a “temporary autonomous zone,” in cracks and hidden openings overlooked by the guardians of the State. Bey was careful to refrain from defining TAZ rigorously, but it is clear that TAZ is applicable to the free spirit and the festive excesses of Burning Man:

*The TAZ is like an uprising which does not engage directly with the State, a guerilla operation which liberates an area (of land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolves itself to re-form elsewhere/elsewhen, before the State can crush it.<sup>2</sup>*

Other forces besides the State can quell a temporary autonomous zone: it can be co-opted by the market; it can exhaust its imagination and good will; or it can compromise itself into a more acceptable form. All of these forces continue to exert tremendous pressure on Burning Man.

GREEN FLAMES: THOUGHTS ON BURNING MAN, THE GREEN MAN, AND DIONYSIAN ANARCHISM by Dale Pendell.....5  
NEW SONGS (FOR KASSANDRA)  
by Raymond Soulard, Jr. [☉].....13  
ECUADOR HOTEL  
by Ric Amante.....21  
LETTER TO SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY  
by Raymond Soulard, Jr. [☉].....27  
CORINA, CORINA  
by G. C. Dillon.....36  
MANY MUSICS  
by Raymond Soulard, Jr. [☉].....43  
POETRY  
by Judih Haggai .....56  
THINGS CHANGE? (SIX THRESHOLDS) [A NEW FIXTION]  
by Raymond Soulard, Jr. [☉].....62  
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS.....71

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Many burners feel that the “true TAZ” aspect of Burning Man peaked in the mid-1990s, and has declined ever since. Others, of course, say “stop complaining and party.” Whatever the truth, Burning Man is still a vibrant force with far-reaching social, political, and artistic potential.

## ii. Dionysian Anarchism

There has been a debate going on in philosophy for 2500 years about human nature. In fact, it is the only really crucial question of philosophy. At stake is the rationalization for a hierarchical, oppressive state. Before philosophers, religion imputed that human society should be like that of the gods, usually with a top god, and with the others doing their respective parts. These early state religions stressed that the kings on earth, if not divine themselves, were reflections of the order of heaven.

Plato, in the *Republic*, introduced the “Noble Lie,” that the wise should tell the commoners lies and myths to keep them in their place. A corollary is that if you don’t assist this process, you are not one of the wise, and you will be punished, if not with death or imprisonment, at least with marginalization.

Thomas Hobbes said that people were rapacious beasts, who would start killing and eating each other if it weren’t for an armed police force. Our mainstream culture seems desperate to maintain this viewpoint. During Hurricane Katrina, while the self-organizing cooperative efforts of thousands and tens of thousands of citizens to help each other went largely unreported, a scene of looting was replayed over and over. The clear message is “see, people can’t be trusted. We need the police.” In fact, police (or private security goons) broke up, and even fired on, the emerging cooperatives.

So who is on the other side? Many, actually. First off, we have the evidence of anthropology and human prehistory, which is overwhelmingly cooperative. We have the core teachings of deep mystical traditions.

Jean Jacques Rousseau offered that much of the sickness, the antisocial, and criminal behavior in society was not the result of our intrinsic natures, but of the society itself. Many are quick to dismiss Rousseau with a put-down—“ahh, the Noble Savage.” Rousseau never talked about any noble savage. The term was invented by a mid-nineteenth

century pro-slavery American anthropologist, and has been an astoundingly effective little lie to cut off discussion on this topic.

Dionysian anarchism sides with the mystics and with anthropology. It sides with the way that people carry on their affairs most of the time: that is, cooperatively, and generally with a sense of good will. It sides with the spirit of DIY: do-it-yourself. Dionysian anarchists stress that means and ends have to be in accord, and if we can just stop things from getting worse, society will spontaneously realign itself towards freedom. That is our nature. As long as we have free horizons, as long as we are headed towards freedom and not away from it, we can relax a little with a long term view.

Forty years ago poet Gary Snyder, in answer to those who say that cooperative, non-coercive living is against human nature, wrote that we must patiently remind such people that they must know their own true natures first, before they can say that. That those who have gone furthest into deep mind, into deep nature—mystics, meditators, and visionary explorers—have been reporting for several thousand years that we have nothing to fear.

Gary’s solution included Buddhism and other inward-looking spiritual traditions, working within the context of tribal community, and opening to the radical teachings of the wild: wild places, wild animals, and wild plants—the true sources of our culture from our earliest beginnings. Timothy Leary stressed psychedelic visioning. Alan Watts talked about a philosophical sensualism. Ginsberg modeled the ecstatic spontaneity of the dancing bhakti.

But let’s look briefly at where we are.

Despite the pervasive rhetoric of progress from our politicians and media, for most people in the United States, for most plant and animal species, things are not getting better.

Real wages have been declining for over a generation. Measures of the quality of life have been declining. How much someone has to work to get by has been increasing. Infant mortality has been increasing. The percentage of the population in poverty has been increasing. Both the number of people and the percentage of the population in prison has risen dramatically. The United States has the largest prison population in the world, both in numbers and by percentage. Plants, animals, and habitat

are being consumed at an ever increasing rate by global corporations which, by their definition and legal charter, can never have enough.

There is of course an upside—for those near the top of the heap, things are better than ever. There is sort of a choice here, *aristos* vs. *demos*. One can get with the program, stop complaining, and with some smarts and a good birth you can join the winners.

The Aztecs had a pathway for the commoners to gain entrance to the elite by becoming warriors and capturing sacrificial victims in the “flower wars”—wars maintained not for conquest of territory but for just that reason of providing victims. (One had to capture five victims to gain the highest ranking, with its attendant privileges, such as the right to drink chocolate.)

### iii. Freeing the Imagination

The first anarchist act is to free the imagination, to cut through our years of conditioning about what is “unthinkable.” By imagination, we do not mean mere reverie, but our imaging of the world, our mental picturing of who we are and the fundamental nature of existence, of reality. This is imagination in the sense that Blake used the word: the fire of consciousness, the fire of mind. Freeing the imagination means that you can act spontaneously in the world, not only artistically but in all of your interactions.

This is not as easy as it sounds. How to do that?

For poets, artists, musicians, dancers, meditators, and visionaries, it is a matter of continuing practice: plumbing the depths of mind, learning how to listen, and then sharing our insights through performance. This is the ancient wisdom of all gift economies.

### iv. Ecology and Deep Ecology

The Black Rock Desert was one of Gary Snyder’s favorite places to come and camp long before Burning Man ever came here, and it is one of the major inspirations for his poem “Mountains and Rivers without End.”

On the Black Rock, the environment is impossible to ignore: it

fills our eyes and tents and drinking cups with every dust storm. It roasts us or freezes us. On the playa, the spirit of place is never far away, even for newbies who have never heard of Lake Lahontan.

At first glance, Burning Man, with its penchant for fire, excess, inebriation, celebration, sexuality, radical self-expression, and generators, hardly seems a candidate for greenness. But there is a connection—a connection in mythopoesis, at a deeper level than our laudable efforts at recycling and solar electricity and “leave no trace.”

This connection relates to the difference between management ecology and deep ecology. Management ecology we need, desperately, but deep ecology we need even more. The Green Man is deep ecology—his leafy speaking is animistic. Plant intelligence, with its sense of place, and wild intelligence, with its sense of freedom, speaks through his mouth.

The Green Man is the bridge, and the Green Man is madness. Ecstatic madness. Madness that recognizes that the earth is alive. What do we mean by that? Not that the earth is composed of cells with a DNA library, but that the earth is not a separate thing, distinct from our own living minds. Buddhists state that, ultimately, the seeming objectivity of the “external” world is an illusion, that our own true nature and the salt of the playa are not separate. This is the message that mystics and yogis and shamans have maintained for millennia. Once this is realized, the problems don’t go away, but cutting away a hillside, building a house or factory, putting explosives into the earth, are all recognized as having a transgressive nature. We then have a tendency to try to ask permission—what does the earth have to say about what we are doing, the hillside, the animal that we are going to eat? And then we try to make things right, with a sense of gratitude and perhaps a bit of shame, or even guilt, to bring things back into harmony with the spirits. We recognize that we are being gifted, that countless generations of effort, sacrifice, and imagination make possible our birth and our sustenance. So we want to give something back. Snyder states: “Performance is currency in the deep world’s gift economy.”

## v. The Green Man, Dionysus, and Divine Madness

In his last published essay, “Dionysus in 1990,” philosopher Norman O. Brown extended ideas of Georges Bataille and Marcel Mauss and others to invert the Marxist focus on production to that of consumption—more to the point, “wasteful consumption.” The idea of wasteful consumption is anathema to conservationists (and to all sane and rational people). The idea is, frankly, madness. Brown bets all with Socrates that if the madness is inspired by a god, that is, divine madness, it is the source of our greatest blessings. We might say that divine madness is the “wild” of consciousness.

The name of the god, for Brown, is Dionysus. Iconographically, it is easy to recognize Dionysus in the Green Man, the one whose very speech is wild nature.

Now Brown is not expecting people to actually bow down and worship Dionysus. For Brown, Dionysus is a shorthand for an irrepressible wild and joyful energy. The opposite of this energy is the Grand Inquisitor, with his benevolent lies. Success or failure seems to pivot on the issue of passive entertainment—Blake’s “spectral enjoyment.” The Inquisitor is betting that circuses will satisfy the masses. The Dionysian bets he is wrong. That is the idea behind the Burning Man mantra “no spectators.”

The traditional manifestation of Dionysian energy has always been through festivals. Barbara Ehrenreich points out that in medieval Spain a third of the days of the year were holidays for festivals. There was a backwards day, a Feast of Fools when a donkey was led into the cathedral and the bishop’s miter placed on his head. Blasphemies were uttered, echoes of the Dionysian festivals of Greece. The Greeks were wise enough to recognize that although Dionysus meant trouble, the suppression of Dionysus was even worse—that trying to suppress the Dionysian spirit entirely, to end all licentiousness, all blasphemy, all risk, led to false madness, profane madness, and the sacrifice of children. Moloch. That is the true idolatry, when the blasphemies of art are petrified into literalism. The Romans, by the way, an Apollonian people, suppressed the Bacchanalia with much bloodshed—perhaps the first “War on Drugs.”

The church made occasional attempts to suppress the festivals—these moves mostly coming from Rome. The local priests generally resisted

this suppression, saying that without the festivals they would have no congregation. Festivals, it should not surprise us, were sometimes the springboards for political rebellion.

A hardier force against the festival was the Enlightenment, along with mercantilism, and the Industrial Revolution. “Reason,” remember. Lenin even went so far as to praise the capitalists for disciplining the working classes.

We must remember that anytime large groups of people can get together cooperatively, it puts the lie to the Hobbesian thesis that people are innately irresponsible and dangerous. That is the real reason that the government insists on police presence—even though they are clearly unnecessary. Free festivals are a threat to the whole rationalization for the existence of the armed, coercive forces of “internal security.” Such a free festival would be a light to the world for centuries: proof that cooperative living, free from armed coercion, is not “unthinkable,” but the way things should be. Free the imagination!

In Brown’s system (which I go into more deeply in my *Inspired Madness, The Gifts of Burning Man*, published last year by North Atlantic Books), the rites of Dionysus, with their attendant licentiousness, danger, fire, blasphemy, and wasteful consumption (combustion for its own sake), must be seen as prophylactic: they protect us from calamity—the Greeks certainly understood them thus. I like to joke that in a more enlightened age Burning Man would be given a grant from the Defense Department, in gold. The alternative worship, as Brown clearly stated, is war.

There is, alas, no proof for this thesis. The mythopoetic foundation is very strong, but in the end it comes down to a wager. Everyone must choose a square.

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Burning Man 2007’s theme was “The Green Man,” which was described, in part, thusly: “This year our art theme will express the immanence of nature in our lives in a variety of ways.” For further information on this festival, visit <http://www.burningman.com>.

<sup>2</sup> The text of *TAZ* (Autonopedia Anti-copyright, 1985, 1991) can be found at bookstores or free online at: <http://www.hermetic.com/bey/taz3.html#labelTAZ>



*New Songs (for Cassandra)*

*Weeds*

We snap off another's line & into the world,  
alone belong to our beat & breath. Weeds  
in the shine & blow, no given purpose  
but to shine & bloom. We touch, the hour  
raves high, the jug is full & bread hot.  
All is possible. We part, cry over shards,  
curse the blood within & stars about. All  
diminishes. Nearer, ever nearer, to what,  
to where, & why? Walk the ground like  
a spring to God, or tap it twice & wonder  
how soft its rest will be. Dusk's murky light,  
the elusive sound of drums, the young  
maiden at her thick book, the tattered master  
rasping another day, none can tell the miracle  
of alive & its pending fruit. None can tell its cost.

\*\*\*\*\*



Burning Man 2007  
Black Rock City, Nevada

*Hallow*

What to be recovered in the arching rear  
look, where to return with any waking music  
but much shaded place near spires & towers  
of Empire's sagging heart? How to wrest wrinkles  
& fists from pulpit & throne? Another use for  
men than muscle & piston? Another for women  
than hooks & nesters? World for more than  
feeding & dominion? What ignites waking music  
in a world slumped in habit? You there. Dare this  
hour's far border, depart tubes & tomes, run for  
what you do not know! What do you have left?

\*\*\*\*\*

*Dominion*

The sorrow hit one man & another, taste  
this day & its lesser meat, why? Why did  
we do this? What in each other did we fear?  
What in the further places we beheld within?  
What do we do now? How do we become, again,  
lesser? Assuming the bondage again, who do we protect?

What do we do with those unconvinced?  
What do we do with those who *will not cease*?

\*\*\*\*\*

*Enigma*

The beggars on winter's wet streets praise  
God & dinner alike. Watch a theatre couple  
hurry by with envy & enmity. The night is  
cold even by cigarette's warm suck. Buy  
something from me. Give something to me.  
Why you with her? Why you at all? *Something*.

\*\*\*\*\*

*LSD 1966*

Cease the tide by cursing the moon?  
Crush the drumheads, men will tap stones  
to oaks. Bind a woman's fire & she will lay  
dreaming coming stars. Green breaks your  
fist at every shade & angle. Freedom bears  
your cluster of notes but in season they too will fall.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Spectral*

The cafe's old man rants on the endless  
spiking reach of the Empire, I sit with  
his pencilled maps of Old Europe & figures  
denoting webbed bloodlines of power, sad.  
We sum to lost centuries men have spent  
discovering their blunt truths. Hunger & fear.  
Maybe curiosity, too, on prettier, well-suppered days.

\*\*\*\*\*

## *Trauma*

Canna tell you it doesn't hurt, you know that  
for yourself. Canna tell you that love doesn't  
lure back, you've traveled there too. Canna  
say much explains when too many odd hours  
prick the package, her secret hotel embrace,  
his cry of stumbling power to the hard winter's  
blow. What overlays the years, what meshes,  
what calls back to worship if you will, a hurt face,  
a smiling hour, the hope dearest when dreaming  
with scant other. Canna tell you where it's bound,  
or why, or worth. But feel it, warmth grubbing  
for warmth tonight, & somewhere a song &  
showers of light reign down. Feel it, the hardest  
creature shuffles in dream to near something.  
Feel it, the rhythm & beat within urging about,  
old memory, brief blossom, future's quick muse.  
Feel it, that best truth, ever a stranger's curious knock.

\*\*\*\*\*

## *Watering Music*

My wish would be an hour's content for each  
of you, plain sun & long grass, a touch with  
desire, a sparkle hinting God, sweet earth in  
a taste of bread, a dreaming finish in your  
heart's native tongue. A long memory, too, for  
years when dread-deep in the rough little consoles.

\*\*\*\*\*

## *Glaze*

This music wanting for the greater chimes,  
cleaved long to night's dreaming heat,  
hustle & near it, by soft, by conjure, by plea,  
what the great world still peeping in its  
shell? Wanting for the greater chimes, call  
it God or a closer starlight, a whither to space,

a taking sweetness, convincing in its quiet roar,  
long waiting first discover. This music  
will sing endless to its end, mystery bound  
in acceptance, open hands to these skinless  
hours, what love. What love! Startle & awake.  
Sudden again these fruits of music in hand,

roused beasts around the weeping gape, what  
known now, what known ever? Consider.  
There is blood. There is cosmos. There is song.  
Ragged figures in the rain. Nobody knows. Say again.  
What music does not diminish ever throb  
its faith into a knot, & calls it Art.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Remain*

I will call no common God my own,  
& thus splintered from the mass of men,  
their tomes cry a rampage, a gleam, a subtle,  
howling way. Upon me a mist, a light,  
a crooning sugar, a want to move nearer  
all ways, I do not know what or how.

Wish to kneel & kiss the ground, none of it,  
magick perches plain upon every beat  
& breath, hand for hand in the wall of  
beggars longer every night, in the farthest  
jungle & feeding cove, in the trash among  
the treasure in one's going red flow.

Find me there if you would look, singing  
helpless in rushing black ink, looking to  
men & seeing, above them, trees, looking  
to trees & recking their sunshine lovers,  
looking to sunshine & what there to know?  
Universe ever climbing its own beam to fall

untold within. What fetches on this cryptic  
twining, what divides & suffers to know,  
what joins by chorus & feeding? Tell the moment  
when a heart falls, a limb gives way, two  
creatures cross past formula, morning light  
shows a fallen barn's many dews, within

a bullet loads near its quarry, still dreaming  
its lost mate among the quiet strews.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Joint*

To play one true note, every & again,  
here I am, no more veils, this word,  
the next, beat it hard, beat it true,  
one true note, all is possible, I know  
sunshine again today, hear mutter  
in what they call dream, a wind resembling  
an old day's joy, one true note, this  
morning toward a softer knowing, shhh,  
nothing more than evidence of passing,  
the wild green of that fullmoon blaze,  
the twists by which a soul comes the years.  
One true note, music in a buzz & secret icon.

Here I am. No more veils. This word. The1%xt.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Wedding*

Vow union again, in a night crackling  
with high want, world exploding every  
moment in feeding & making new. None  
lone as seems yet what dearest joining  
perpetual? Only bid fidelity to what sings  
true to the sweet burst within.

Vow union again, to what warms near  
the laughing ache, twines close like blankets  
& blood, slow acceleration to break the  
strutting prows of kings & preachers. Slow,  
til a mad heart's sudden spark, tracing love's arc  
through emptiness, like an egg dreaming new songs.

Vow union again & reck all the world  
God, & best wish to live like an endless prayer,  
chase with green's swinging power, wonder  
how, wonder how. How to live & why?  
Can any tell & be sure? Where melt the  
gone days, where fetch the old wants?

Vow union again, & dare this hour's  
far border, shudder to love with both fists  
wide open, blow out the bent years & books,  
walls & greeds, daylight grumbles for meat  
& coin & tit. Remember: all is real, clap twice,  
all is maya. Breathe, relax. See what remains.  
Vow union again, tis a new song canna  
be sung alone, hard strum the dust, sniff  
by what crevices in the melody, sweet burst  
within. Sudden spark, night high, higher,  
crackling with want, cry out! What croons  
worlds listens, & listens for all. A beat. Another.

Vow union again, love at fiercest angles  
to a strange, ceaseless war, love a new mother  
wooding in the dark, love a prophet yet  
unfound by his feeding, believing beasts.  
Conjure better to come with backs strong enough  
for this hour's truth, & willing for the next.

We vow to live this world in all its going beauty,  
great, crumbling, how helpless happy it passes.



February 5, 2006  
Seattle, Washington

Ric Amante



## *Ecuador Hotel*

### I

Federico couldn't have chosen a more incongruous, ironic, or nostalgic name for this his hundredth residence. Surrounded by so white mountains so white faces so white decorum (damn these rigid, law-abiding robots who slayed you with their steely eyes should you be so brazenly demonic to cross the street against the light!). Might as well be holed up in a room in Hotel Alps or Hotel Good Citizen or Hotel Freud. No, Federico was sleeping on a stained and sagging mattress in a hotel held together with duct tape and spit whose name evoked lassitude, tropical disregard of time, faith and merriment in the vegetal blossomings of chaos—while outside his cracked window the voices and attitudes were humorless, sterile, paranoiac, proper. Even a leisurely smoke on a vacant stoop was a threat and affront to man and mountain alike. Yes, Federico was rotten with despair but punch-drunk with glee to be here at the Ecuador Hotel out from under the cold and invasive winter rains. The Ecuador, replete with a sour-smelling phone booth in the furnitureless, fluorescent lobby, a feeble shower and filthy toilet at the end of the dim corridor on each of the four floors, and, yet another incongruity, housekeeping. Housekeeping being the slapdash services of a pair of ever-changing lodgers—presently a hunched-over Vietnamese man between 40 and 60 years of age with very large, very yellow teeth and a wild-eyed Nicaraguan in his 20s with a tattered copy of essays by Octavio Paz protruding from his back pocket like a dirty handkerchief. This new life in this new country in this new city was old black wine leaking from the soft leather of the rainclouds above. And although the Ecuador was part of this moribund tableaux, it possessed a rawness and perverse purity that elevated it above the pretensions and conventions of the spectral places and faces Federico encountered on the street or at work. Thus the

man in Room 19, through whose porous door seeped corrosive mutterings, the last of which culminated in the enigmatic warning—”Beware the double helix of the greening motherboard!” Yet Federico felt that this man knew that you knew he was operating from a very singular and authentic arena and would look you straight in the eye and say hello when passing in the hallway, and Federico respected him for that. Whereas the people in the offices whose cubicles and lavatories he cleaned concealed and deflected their feelings whenever possible, giving their voices either an authoritative brusqueness or semi-hysterical sweetness, neither of which encouraged you to linger. For a while Federico attributed his unease with and distaste of this city to a number of factors—the slow process of acculturation, racism, classism—but no, he had lived in many countries among many cultures and peoples, and even allowing for his own and others justifiable preferences and dislikes, there was something decidedly awry here. And so today, knocking at the door of the man in Room 19, he set out to get some clues.

## II

Three sharp, swift raps on the darkly-stained paneled door produced no response. Federico turned his head and moved his left ear to within an inch of the wood, simultaneously listening with his other ear for possible footsteps or voices in the hallway. Hotels like the Ecuador housed men either honest and helpful or larcenous and misanthropic, and to be glimpsed by either sort in this suspicious position would be unfavorable. He heard nothing from within the room and only television squawk drifting down from the floor above. Just as well, he thought, since his first impulse was to initiate a conversation with the man as they passed in the corridor. Better to begin slowly and tentatively in a neutral setting lest the nebulous impetuosity of the mission drive his quarry away. Besides, this guy could be psychopathic and respond to a question with a fist or knife or cast iron skillet to the back of the head. But moving away from the door, Federico stopped short. He noticed the corner of a piece of paper that he had not seen earlier. A small yellow triangle wedged between door and frame about a foot from the floor. He reached down, pulled it free, and brought a strip of card stock the size of a bookmark before his

eyes. Blank on the side he held before him, he flipped it over, and there in red ink in well-formed, appealing cursive were the words, “Tomorrow, two o’clock, ferry terminal.”

## III

The man in Room 19 was registered as one “Paul Skype.” Skype had been living in the Ecuador for the last three months, arriving in the city on a train whose whistle could still be heard in the small hours of the morning. He left the station not knowing where the nearest affordable residential hotel was, yet trusting his inner radar to guide him. Skype believed that everything on the planet possessed the ability to interact with everything else, both simultaneously en masse and selectively on an individual basis. This conviction was experiential and, yes, scientifically verifiable, the proof of which consisted of an amalgam of quantum physics, biochemistry, and corroborative shamanic/yogic truths. In any event, five minutes and seven blocks later Skype was being handed a receipt and room key by the Filipino desk clerk at the Ecuador. The clerk informed him the Ecuador was a safe hotel—no junkies, hustlers, troublemakers—and in the same sentence asked if there were any valuables he would like to keep in the hotel safe. Skype smiled, relishing the contradiction, and replied that safecrackers and stickmen were a more proficient, intelligent, and dedicated bunch than common thieves, and he had nothing of material worth to be coveted. Lastly John, the Filipino desk clerk, inquired in a friendly, small-town way where Skype was from and what kind of work he did. Skype responded with a generic, “back East,” which was accurate, and an apocryphal but feasible, “Restaurant work, prep-cook mostly, but I’m thinking of getting out of it and trying something else.”

## IV

Federico was pleased that the enigmatic fellow lodger had chosen the ferry terminal as a rendezvous. The waterfront was one of the few places in the city that appealed to him. The expanse of water, whether smooth and overspread with a mantle of fog or rough and bursting with

whitecaps, was a dependable tranquilizer. He often sat at the end of one of the commercial piers—#87, Hinckley’s Marine Supply—away from the benches, potted marigolds, and smear of tourists. The “PRIVATE PROPERTY—NO TRESPASSING” sign he ignored. Were a security guard or worker to confront him, he would act perplexed, speak Spanish, move along—a strategy he had not needed to employ thus far. Indeed, Federico felt that the purity of one’s intentions created a safety zone that blessed the practitioner with a supernatural power commensurate to the force required to continue the journey. Consequently, in situations where it was crucial that one not be observed, Federico, if his spiritual energies were properly attuned, would be invisible. Most would regard this as nonsense, if not insanity, but most do not sit for hours with no thoughts, with nothing to activate the energy that seeks embodiment, creating the forms that cerebration initiates. Yes, the sea was an ancient ally whose power was wordlessly transcendent. It was teacher, catalyst, blue-green blood of the cosmos, and so to sit with it this lovely morning before meeting Skype was, for Federico, a necessary and quite literal “no-brainer”.

## V

Skype, Federico—two unlikely contenders for a halo of communion. Connected at the third eye on the third floor where slats of afternoon light are golden spears breaking to rectangles upon a frayed red runner. Sharing a transient heart, renegade body, mystic mind. Knocked sideways by the world’s woes, but walking an alternative to despair. Veering from neither dark nor delight, steering by moonlight and sweat. Approaching restlessness not as curse or defect but as higher accountability. Wrangling with how to live, who to run with, where to face when sky goes blank. Repeating, refining, and refuting the cycles by not turning away, not giving in, not forgetting to begin again....And yet... and yet....and yet the petitions to God and oneself to disconnect the ecstatic but furious wires are still summoned. The apprenticeship to truth—not the one self-administered and vitiated by indulgence, redundancy, avoidance—is slow going. Too often countering the midday glare of doubt and barrenness with an easy slide. Not that perfection or enlightenment were achievable, but that the holiness of full consciousness

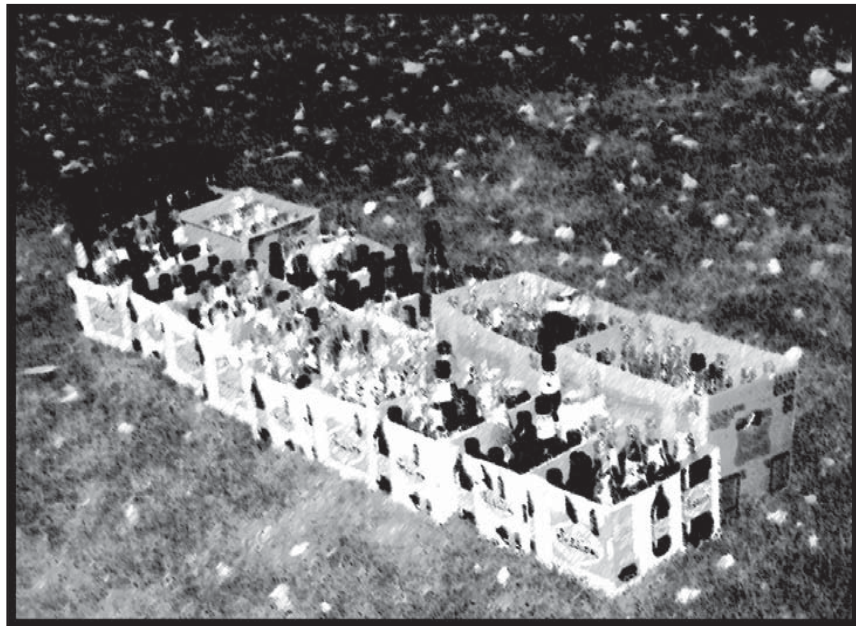
is a crooked ladder whose bottom rungs Federico and Skype knew by heart. And each needed a boost to the next level, each needed an external force to neither enhance nor compliment the other but rather generate a deeper understanding of the cosmos, and the words and deeds to honor it. Federico, Skype—two strangely formidable outcasts beating a path to a workingman’s and dreamer’s hotel in a northern city by the sea, two strands of a frayed helix whose joyous replication is precise, timely, unknowable. Trains, birds, faces, rooms all narrowing to this meeting by the waterfront where the steady lap of waves against the creosote pilings brings Federico back to the task at hand.

## VI

Skype, though not as well-travelled as Federico, had managed to cover some curious terrain. His customary method was a piercing, microcosmic analysis of the thing at hand, the results of which would allude to another thing, bound to a third, a fourth, a tenth—a billionth if time allowed. And then a cut back to the defining energy of the moment in all its bliss, horror, and inscrutability. This moment found Skype ambling down the metal tongue of the ferry past slender sheaves of pilings, the cold green water luscious in strong sunlight. He had no doubt Federico was nearby, and the imminence of their meeting both disturbed and excited him. Disturbing because engagement might soften his edge, exciting because engagement might hone it. As it was, this was destiny, as hard-wired in Skype’s skull as hunger. How and when it comes less an unsought miracle than test of faith. Prototypes had arisen, been embraced, flourished, withered, entered the bloodstream—the messages all potent, transformative, transitory. A stronger alchemy that would sift, valorize, and sing the days was in order. Hence Skype up before dawn fixing himself an instant coffee in a blue metal cup with hot tap-water from the corner sink. Sitting in the one chair by the one table by the only window, entering the daylight silent, empty, and grateful. Gravitating, then, to a sink in a Hell’s Kitchen room that lay flat on the floor, it’s basin bone-dry and clotted with lumps of gray plaster. And on to a fountain and pool in the parking lot of a low-slung, tan cinderblock motel wherein they immersed

their drunken, unfettered selves one salacious morning. And now this cute corner sink with the right angle and cartwheel faucets and handfuls of cold water splashed over the face to make ready to pad down the droopy hallways of the Ecuador and head to the piers in slant-rose light for the 6:20 ferry to the island.

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Raymond Soulard, Jr.



*Letter to United States Senator  
Edward M. Kennedy  
(Democrat, Massachusetts)*

*Excerpt from 12/11/07 email from Senator Edward M. Kennedy:*

*“Republicans apparently think it’s acceptable to continue pouring billions of taxpayer dollars into the war in Iraq. They think it’s acceptable to ignore the needs and priorities of our people here at home on dozens of vital domestic issues!*

*“But it’s not acceptable to this Senator.*

*“If you agree with me—if you want to end the GOP’s distorted priorities and get America back on track—help elect a Democratic Senate that will do it. Make a donation of \$10, \$20, \$50 or \$100 to the Committee for a Democratic Majority today”*

December 11, 2007  
Portland, Oregon

Dear Senator Kennedy,

Your party was swept back into the majority in the Congress in 2006 on the promise to END THE WAR. A year later, your party has done nothing, and now there is news that another bag of war money is going to be approved with no strings attached, supposedly to pay for pet domestic projects.

Tell me, Senator, why should I send you a dollar? Your leading candidates for President do not promise an end to the War. They make vague promises of drawing down, by some number, at some point. Your leadership is hand in hand with the War Criminal-in-Chief in continuing this nightmare. The progressive base is ready to jump ship, really ready, and I'm betting a third party will emerge in the next year or so.

Disappointment is not the word I have for Washington Democrats. Disgust doesn't go far enough. Your party's leadership is puke. And where are you, Senator? Where are you? Why are you letting traitors like Reid and Pelosi sell out this nation and this world? Why aren't you leading a real, credible well-announced opposition NOW instead of writing pathetic emails asking for money for someday's solution? Where is the revolt of REAL progressive democrats NOW? There is none. There is cowardice, raw great pathetic cowardice.

I will not send you a penny. You are a shame to your family's tradition. How many more soldiers and Iraqi citizens must die before you wake up to your own soft, sorry, moral blubber?

Wake up, Senator. This country's population is far ahead of you in DC in wanting the war OVER and the poor and vulnerable cared for. It will happen, whether the Democratic Party leads the way, or is swept aside with their bedmates in the other party.

Peace NOW,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raymond Souland Jr." followed by a circular stamp containing a stylized letter 'D'.

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*(Further notes)*

Not a letter I wanted to write...

but Senator Kennedy is not leading the progressives in the Democratic Party in revolt against the Reid/Pelosi traitor leadership. I know he opposes the War. I know he believes in progressive causes. I know his family has done so much to benefit the poor and vulnerable. But I would have written to many other allegedly progressive Senators and Representatives a similar letter. Feingold, Boxer, Byrd, etc. There are no more excuses on this situation. Another War funding approval, no strings attached? Another? Are you kidding me? This has to end. People are dying, now, tonight. That Congressmen and women are sleeping in their nice beds and walking down their streets in perfect safety while Iraq is a bloodbath, a moral bloodbath, a literal bloodbath, a human failure at all levels, I cannot support them. I would not have written to Kennedy if he hadn't sent me an email asking for money, boasting of his own clean conscience anti-war stance.

RFK ran for President on ending the Vietnam War, and maybe he paid for this with his life, as some say Dr. King did too. It is said JFK was killed in part for his plan to draw down the American presence in Vietnam. I don't know if all of this is true, but it is clear these men took unnuanced stances on the War. Their brother is sitting back, showing his unblemished hands but not doing what needs to be done.

When I lived in Boston, I voted for him twice and was proud to. I am not proud of him any longer, or any of them. I don't believe them, their vows and promises. The vast majority of this country wants us out of Iraq. They are hindering this desire rather than representing us as elected to. I am angry, and asking me to give money to hypocrites just makes me angrier. . . .

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He's a decent man, but he is a man of power right now, and I do not see that power being used effectively, and I see the deadly results of this. While men and women in Washington blithely debate the issues, and plan their holiday breaks, soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan are dying, and families in those places and here in the U.S. are suffering unbelievably, and *needlessly*. It's easier, perhaps, to debate these things civilly, at a leisured rate, but to my mind this is cowardice, it's treason to the commitment our elected representatives make to do their best by us.

We live in one world, and what we do now, and how we do it, will have its effects in time. If we do right by one another, especially for the downtrodden and the helpless, but of course each one of us, each being on the planet, we have hope of a better future. If we do wrong, the bastards will keep us apart from each other, killing each other, poor and dying in vain. So while it can be argued over whether it is more effective to go after the lazy heroes of the Democratic Party or the criminals of the Republican Party, I take the stance that any man or woman in Washington not acting defiantly and constantly to end the War is a person I oppose. And when one of those persons asks me for money, claiming some kind of moral superiority that in my opinion is not earned, I will reply from my convictions outlined here. It's really simple. Are those representing us in Washington trying their best, their damndest best, to get us out of Iraq? No. A year since the Dems were swept back into power and they are now trading no-strings-attached war chests for pork??? No, sorry, I'm not on that boat. I'm giving them excuses no longer. Some of them knew about the torture going on? What else?

If the progressive representatives and senators in the party do not do more to stop the leadership from parking on a daily basis ass-high before Bush's big boot, then they are just as culpable. I can't parse it any other way than that. . . .

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I wish Dr. King were here. I wish John Lennon were here. Not being ever able to know, I just dream of them speaking out clearly and daily and gathering crowds to their speeches to rally action against the War. But if one of them was sitting back while this horror was going on, I'd be just as angry. You see, I want Kennedy's actions in VOTES, in campaigning HARD AND THROUGH CHRISTMAS AND BEYOND for the War to END. It can be done. Washington can be shut down until this nightmare is over.

I just finished watching *1968 with Tom Brokaw* on the History Channel. He interviewed Jon Stewart who noted that the difference between Iraq and Vietnam is the draft. I think he's right but I don't think that is all. Vietnam was a battlefield for the Cold War, fought by proxy with the US and USSR waving their nukes around in the background. The US has no combatant like that now, no Evil Empire to point at on the map, no sense that occupying Iraq is bringing us closer and closer to nuclear annihilation. There's a bully mentality that we can do it and nobody can stop us. The "opposition" arguing against this, in favor of reason and humility and brotherhood, politely introducing bills and then agreeably watching them die . . . the enemy to democracy is running our country, and I swear there is collusion with this on all sides.

And waiting for 2008? How is Hillary going to be convinced that her administration's success hinges on getting us out of Iraq if she sees no consequences for Bush in not doing so? How will any of her opponents? The disease is in the roots, the complacency of Empire, and it's hard to believe it will change enough through an election where the process is so choreographed in advance. So if we want to change things, we can't have any sacred cows. Nobody is immune to the consequences of the changes needed.

It's really simple. We hire the representatives in Washington through elections to do what we want done. They are our employees. Every 2, 4, or 6 years they can get fired. They are as good as how satisfied we are. Very few of us are satisfied right now, nor have

been for awhile. None of them are immune to being fired, just like none of us working Joes and Josephines are. They forget that and expect to be re-elected. The Republicans did it. Now the Democrats are assuming we are stuck with the lot of them.

Let me tell you. Times change. Rome fell. The French Empire fell. The Nazi 1000-year reign was over in about a dozen years. Empires rise and fall, so do democratic republics. That's the story of human history.

Reid/Pelosi and the rest of the treacherous, colluding leadership and their dogs can bite my shine metal ass. As for Kennedy and the more progressive bunch, I do not see balls on many of them either, so to speak. No politician gets my loyalty simply for a party affiliation or a family name. It just doesn't work that way. They have to learn this, over and over it seems.

I hate it the way things have been going, but I'm sure as hell not going to sit back quiet about it. . . .

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My breaking point was the news that Democrats are negotiating no-strings-attached war funding in exchange for domestic spending projects. I've had it. I'm done explaining and excusing and watching the Republicans go on governing no matter what percentage of the Congress they represent at a given moment. I'm done defending the Democrats.

One day a person takes it once too often and says no. Says it again. Finds the world does not end, and it is still spinning. We can say no to what is going on in Iraq and direct our wrath at Washington which is producing this horror. We are not getting what we voted for in 2006, not getting anything close. In fact, what have we gotten? Nothing has changed.

Do we trust the Democrats to stop Bush when he puts invading Iran up for a vote? Do we trust them for anything when

they are failing us on the most important issue of our time? How does the War end at this point? How does it slow down? How do we not simply get used to being outraged and impotent, excusing those who have no justification to offer for themselves? There are no consequences for Bush. He has a 30 percent approval rating, lost the Congress a year ago, admits to torture, to wiretapping, disregards the UN, ignores his own intelligence community's explicit statement that Iran poses no nuclear threat. Consequences? None. He rolls along.

Will it change in 2008? I keep asking that. When Pelosi and Rockefeller knew about the torture of prisoners under American sanction? When Clinton and Obama talk in their reasonable, persuasive terms about attacking Iran or Pakistan?

The power is ours to end this, to re-direct the nation's path. We tried in 2006, it wasn't enough. The Machine is potent and it does not shift willingly. Washington is disconnected from us, from our country, from our world, yet it drives the wheel still. They let torture, wiretapping, illegal war, go on, right now. Get it, *please*, they are not on our side. Not now, not cowering in their fear and complacency and whatever else it is that is driving them. We can say no, louder and louder, more and more of us, until every one of them hears, and is driven by our will, the only one that should be driving them. The only one in Washington they should be heeding. . . .

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I lived in Massachusetts for ten years and voted for Kennedy twice, and respect his family's name, and respect his long service. None of that, however, diverts me from my point which is that he is one more Democrat being led calmly down Bush's chosen path. I can't see it any other way. I can't see war-funding-for-domestic-programs as something other than iniquitous. I can't see how they

can take their month-long vacation while people during that month will continue to die in Iraq. I cannot see these days in Washington as business as usual. I can't do it. I can't excuse Democrats for the number of times they have voted to fund the War, for allowing funding votes to come to the floors of Congress, for letting personal interest rise above what must be done. I am no less angry because nothing has happened to quell my anger. Not a thing, not today, not tomorrow. When?

The longer we occupy Iraq, the more danger we are in for reprisals overseas and domestically, the more innocent people die, the more parents receive the sober call notifying them their children have died, the more children lose parents, the more spouses lose their partners. Nothing is stopping this. These comments aren't stopping it. Senator Kennedy isn't stopping it. The Democratic majority isn't stopping it. Another soldier will die tonight. Another baby. Another suicide bomb will go off and horror upon horror will repeat itself.

What are we doing? I received an email asking me for money, and replied with little faith it would be read or considered seriously, and at best I have elaborated on this letter with further thoughts and opinions. I have solidified my ideas, for now, until events occur to change it.

What is happening is wrong and I see no solution being battled for with fist and blood and words of fire. Nothing.

The War is not ending. Does anyone else see that? It's going on tonight, tomorrow, soon it will have more money without timetables, and more after that. Will the next President end it? If so, wonderful! But what if he or she doesn't? What will we do then? What if Hillary or whomever says, "no, it can't end, not now, but soon, I promise"? What then?

The days are now less than a year's worth until the next President is elected. What if hopes for the War ending then are not met? What if Bush and Company are busy making sure the War

does not end? This is no game of words, no dance between alluring ideas. Someone just died over there, and another, and another. When does it end? Nobody can truly say. I have less hope now than I have had in a long time, and I can't think of anything anyone could say to me that would make me feel more optimistic.

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G.C. Dillon

## *Corina, Corina*

I had to go to her funeral. It wasn't just to honor her and the fact that she had lived to the age of one hundred, but because I'd known her for all of that century.

Tuesday had been like any other day going to the safe house. That is until I saw the police car, the ambulance and the EMTs roll out a sheet-covered form from her huge Victorian. It was just across the street from my hideaway. I'd gotten off the bus and looked around the town. The bus followed the old trolley line, and the pharmacist and coffee shop had changed into a CVS and a Starbucks across the years. The local bakery had become a Tim Hortons. Change is natural, I guess. And it's my job to make sure that when things change in time, they do, in fact, change naturally. I turned and began my short walk to the safe house, a bolt-hole safe from the Time War.

I had a few bottles of Louis Koch Lager from Missouri 1934 to do a taste test with his great-great-grandson's take on the recipe. I needed some fun as I was returning from a wild assignment to a time-line in which Ben Franklin had been treated fairly by Parliament when he first voiced nascent American grievances. He never radicalized and became the voice of change in England. He was eventually rewarded with being the first Royal Governor of the United Colonies of America. The small button for the doorbell measured out the curls and swirls in my fingerprint and hidden cameras struggled to recognize my face. The lock clicked open loudly, as I stood staring at the scene at her house. Neighbors and some of her children and adult grandchildren stood around anxiously. Her grey-haired daughter looked to be crying. I knew I had to go to her funeral.

—“Sir, there's a turtle trapped under Mr. Sumner's fence. Please,

we have to save it.” I look down to see a young girl dressed in a plain brown dress. Her black hair hangs down in twin pigtails. Her hands have mud on them and the dress is streaked with dirt—much to her mother's coming distress in this age of washing boards and clothes lines. I believe I still have some of Troy's soil under my fingernails.

“Do I know you, young lady?” She is maybe five years old.

“I'm Corina,” she says, “from over there.” She points to her house. “But there's a turtle trapped in the fence by the stream.”

“Okay, let's go. We have a rescue to do.”

The turtle is big, with a shell larger than a dinner plate. It had dug a muddy trench along the wooden fence. It is still trapped. I grab a stick and push, prod, and force the turtle free. Corina smiles widely as the animal begins to crawl away.

—“There's a zaftig, even in that shape,” Perreault says.

I look up from my book, a small chapbook by Edwin Arlington Robinson recommended by Teddy Roosevelt himself, to see our new neighbor arrive. A pregnant woman exits the Model A Ford. Her fastidiously dressed husband holds the door. A horse drawn dray, piled precariously with furniture, follows it. “I think that term's about twenty years too early. The haberdasher and his wife are going to have a child, and they need a bigger home.”

“They could fill that house with an entire brood.”

“The child's name will be Corina.”

“Was that in the briefing?” He smiles and rubs his newly grown hand beneath the bio-glove he wears to protect the injured body part. His old hand had been blasted off at Second Bull Run by a canister fusillade.

“No, I've met her. Or I will in time.”

“Do tell!” He smiles salaciously.

“It's not like that,” I say.

—I place my fork on the plate, and wipe my mouth with a real cloth napkin.

“You like our pie?” the coffee shop owner asks. “D'em Ruskies may be able to send up Sputnik, but they can't beat our pies.”

“Yes, they’re very good,” I agree. I wonder if it sounds like I am praising the Soviets or the pie maker.

“Can’t beat your pies,” he continues. “Right, Corina.”

She passes behind him, but glances in my direction. Her brown eyes linger, stare steadily. I smile a small smile, one I hope is sufficiently bland. Her dark hair is drawn behind her head and tied into a bun. She looks tired. Bags draw crescents under her eyes. She scoops up a pile of plates and carries them back toward the kitchen.

I pay my bill, leave a big tip, and exit the shop. She is outside having a smoke break. If I recall you could still smoke in restaurants now. A plain white uniform wraps about her form. It falls just below her knee and buttons down the front. She draws the cigarette from her lips, and blows twin streams of smoke from her nose.

“I’ve seen you around a lot. I mean a lot!” Does she mean a lot of *times*?

“I live across the street from you.”

“But you’re not always there. Others are. They’re not so nice.”

“I travel a lot. For business,” I say.

“Fuller Brush man?”

“Something like that. That house is a place for us to stay between assignments.”

“I see.” She takes a long drag on her cigarette, tosses it to the pavement, and crushes it with her shoe’s toe. “I was just wondering.”

I try to change the subject quickly. “Been following the Space Race?”

“Not so much.” She shrugs. “We don’t seem to be winning.”

“America will do okay, then falter, then get back on track.” I can’t mention the Lunar Landing, the Shuttle disasters, or the Martian Colony. These are all in her future.

—“Do you think electing Mr. Roosevelt will help out the working people? My John is only on half wages at the mill, and we are lucky he has that.” I met her on the street and offered to walk her home. After all we live on the same block. She mumbles something about being a married woman, but hands me her groceries to carry. I think her smile is coy, too.

“I think he’ll do fine.” That is if FDR survives Zangara’s assassination attempt. He doesn’t in all time-lines.

“My father says he’s a Bolshevik.” She laughs, freely and sweetly. I laugh, too. “I thought my father was going to throw himself into the river when President Hoover lost.”

As we walk, I think about what was coming for Roosevelt, America and her. I have seen/ will see the red tide forming in Europe and Asia. You see, I am a D-Day Dodger just returning from time with the 442nd in Italy. I could speak their parent’s enemy tongue with the Japanese-American servicemen: the Hawaiians, the San Franciscans, the boys from Sacramento, the kids from the Internment Camps.

“He has work ahead to do.”

At her home, I stop. “And here, I take my leave of you.” I tip my fedora to her.

—“Can you help?” I hear as I make the trek back to the safe house. I wear grunge couture thirteen years after the death of Kurt Cobain. I have time-shifted from a place where my wardrobe is only out of fashion, not anachronistic. My rucksack contains numerous buckles and metal fashioners. It had been a time-line without Velcro. I look about. She stands on her lawn, her spine slightly bent. Wrinkles and liver spots paint her aged face. A lawn mower is at her side. “Can you help me start this darn thing?”

I hate internal combustion engines. Especially their burnt gas smell. Give me a fuel cell anytime. I mash the primer button, grab the safety bar, and yank on the rip-cord. And yank. Yank. It finally starts. She takes the mower’s handle.

“May I help with this?”

“No, I have it,” she says forcefully. “I’ve been able to take care of myself for years.”

I look at her ancient face a moment, trying to decipher the strange turn of phrase in her words, trying to read her tone. I continue my walk.

—“He’s got high hopes,” comes Frank Sinatra’s mellow but cheery voice, as she hugs me. I just got off the bus. I stop myself from

wrapping my own arms around her. “He won. He won,” she cries.

Grey hairs hide within her black. If I weren’t so close, I could never have found them. I look beyond her shoulder to the black-and-white televisions in the electronics store window. They all show the smiling face of Jack Kennedy. She whispers in my ear, “How are we doing with the Space Race?”

I nod toward Kennedy. “I think we’ll win.” She returns my smile.

—We buy our own supplies for the safe house. The energy cost of even a small time-shift would power the lights in the New York MegaCity for years. I also can get some contemporary treats, too. I find her sitting on the small wooden bench in front of the Wal-Mart. “You okay?” I ask.

“I’m fine,” she replies. “I’m waiting for my family. I got a little tired in the store.” Her hair is grey, wrinkles shoal about her face like a series of Waikiki waves.

I shift the plastic bags in my hand. My shoulder hurts from my last assignment. I have just come back from the Viking Danemark in Nova Scotia. Vindland was in conflict with the Chinese Colony in what is called Rhode Island in this time-line.

“You know we never had this when I was young. My mother had to visit all the little shops on her excursions. Mr. Bergeron’s Dry Goods is now a video game store, and the green grocer is a flower shop.”

“And the old flower shop,” I add, “is now a gas station.”

She smiles. Wryly! “And how would you know? That was decades ago.”

—She is surrounded by a group of kids on primitive bikes. She wears her hair long and carries her “high school” books close to her chest. She looks scared.

“Boys. Is there a problem?” There are four of them, ten years younger than I am, and probably faster. But untrained, I think, my feet facilely stepping into the Crane stance, my hands becoming ready. The biggest one looks strong from work on his family’s farm. I’d bloody his nose first. Hopefully worse. Farmboy tosses down a hand-rolled cigarette,

and they ride away.

“Thank you,” she says. We talk about her education a bit. “I’m going to the Normal School.” I smile. That institution will become a teachers college, state college, and then state university. But she will never graduate. Both a young beau and the Great Depression will see to that. Then children, then the exigencies of life.

My remembrances at the funeral stopped when a young woman approached me. “Excuse me. You’re the nice man aren’t you?” “What?”

“You know: I only half believed her stories. Thought they were senile dementia or Alzheimer’s. I mean how could she know a ‘nice man’ who never ages all through her life. You know: an old woman’s fantasy. But here you are. I can’t believe it.”

“You must have me confused with someone else,” I stuttered.

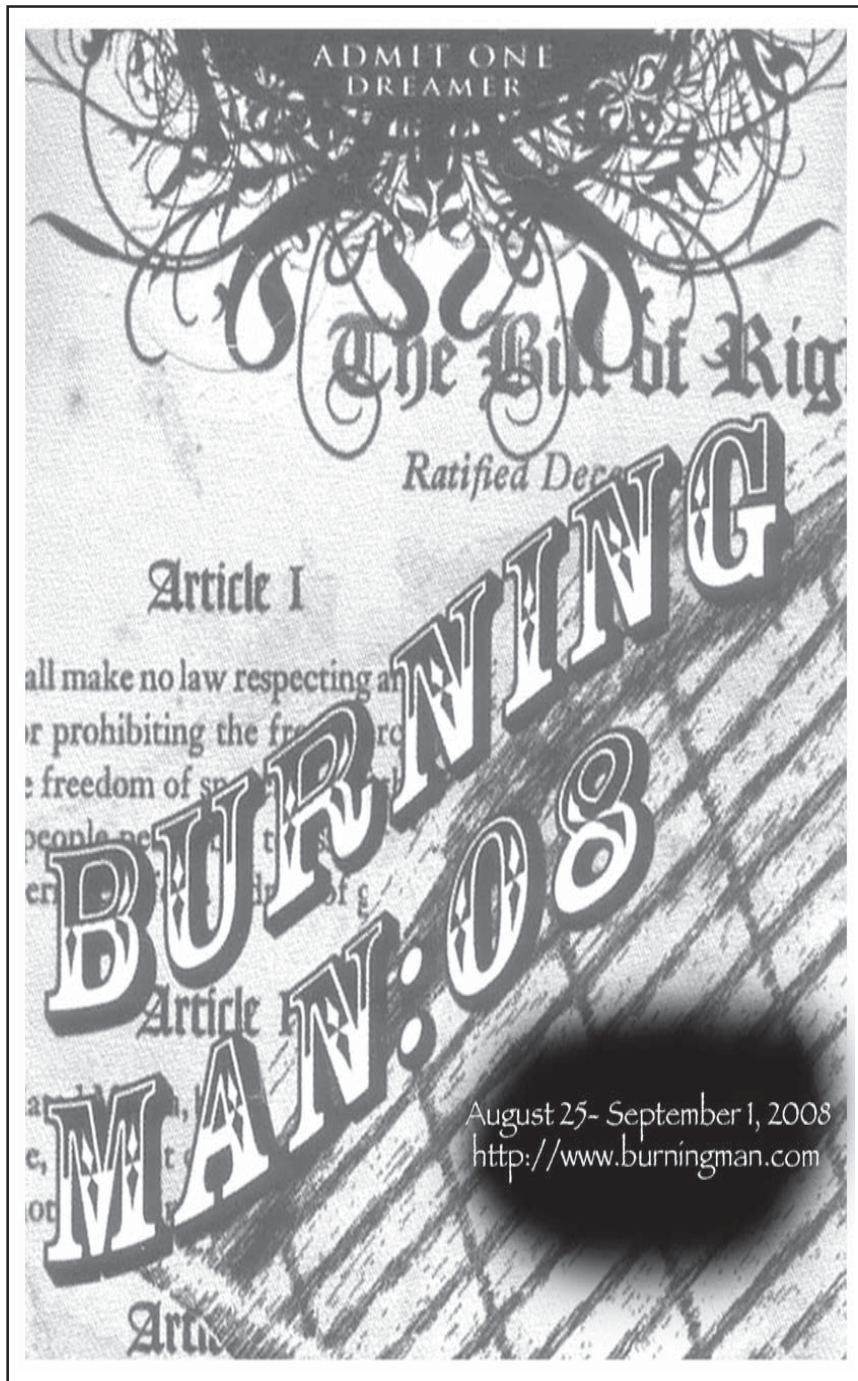
“No, I don’t. I’m Corey. Really Corina on my birth certificate, but everyone calls me Corey.” She did look the same: the face the same oval, the eyes the same brown, the figure curvy but svelte, though the hair was dyed blonde and her fingernails were a jet black.

“Hello, Corey. Would you like some coffee? I’d like to discuss what you know. What you’ve heard.”

“Ugh, I’m a barista most days. I’d prefer a drink. And I do need to get away from the loving embrace of my family. At least the embrace without Grams.”

We left.

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Raymond Soulard, Jr.



## *Many Musics*

(selections)

*"Fate isn't what we're up against  
there's no design, no flaws to find"*  
—The Shins, "Young Pilgrims," 2003.

### *i. Many Musics*

Many musics, wake, blink, call it a world.

Wake, blink, call it your world, leave dream's  
warped glare, exhale, return. Sing true,  
many musics, through the day's tasks,  
through its troubles, from some kind  
year, its elusive face, to another's heart  
liquid cracking hungry into wood, shouting  
dancers, full moon's frenzied lean.

Skins & gazes lain with, the forever of  
a few ragged nights in high voice & stout,  
a dance's tavern memory still wooden with  
heat. Later a new elixir & follow the  
fire along an extra mile, mind gleeful tuck  
in deeper & burst around wide, many  
musics coming faster. Sing true! How the  
night loses nothing to its great brood of years!

I want because I know none other.  
I sing because truth lets me no other  
way. Many musics, danced by the hard  
muscles of Art, the burning arc of  
fists & fingers, the discordance of worlds  
candied together by love's ceaseless puzzle.  
Wake, blink, reck the miles left in your  
heart, years in your thighs. Sing true. Go!

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*ii. Dis-illusion*

Midnight when the quiet parts &  
the way splits out to light, come  
to me, path, I am hardly more  
than just another who wakes &  
does not know, who loves & does  
not know, who wants & does not  
know. I dream this world, it turns  
by wood & steel, & I do not know.

The way is called dis-illusion,  
molten new press to go.

The brown air of many days parts  
as I move through, there is a  
brutal report. Is it dream or is it  
me? Who clutches & falls in the  
next moment? Who lets go the sweat  
of life's many plain hours & its  
several golden ones? What now, as  
neither do? If so, whereon?

The way is called dis-illusion, far  
scatter of songs, raw will to chase on.

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*ix. Psychotropic*

Only disbelief in nothing.  
Only the sweet hustles of high & departure.  
Only music's raining arc through flesh & dream.  
Only heart's liquid crack as raw memory twice doubles.  
Only this elixir will crumble you into the greater green.  
Only you will know what else, & how.

\*\*\*\*\*

x. *Heretic*

Love maybe the push back, awhile,  
an hour of guideless will, two branches  
twine without trunk below, fruit to come.

The way is called dis-illusion, coarse,  
frantic path between the ears, hour ends,  
new choice blows life's next caustic spend.

\*\*\*\*\*

xxvi. *Wedge*

Faith crackles unknown every hour,  
held close with longest feathers & a  
few sparkling memories. Dawn through  
a muddy windshield, a familiar heat  
in a crowd of shouting, thumping flesh.  
Hours silent green touch among hands,  
pinkest gentle shared breath. Alone  
again but changed for every change.  
May it stretch to the last, what I believed  
when I kissed you behind the torn  
hotel, cruisers snarling the neon dusk.

\*\*\*\*\*

xxix. *Wide Open Eye in Love*

What near in that grey half-sprung bed,  
a hue, maybe a face, a voice? A hand  
shivers in the whiskers of nocturnal glow,  
for a moment nearer, then years far,  
then never was & ain't will be. Memory of  
a memory, pink corona want sunk down  
a shaft webby with despair. How lace  
slid by, how flesh made flesh gape  
in awe! Desire notices, desire mulls.  
Desire collides, desire bleeds. Desire goes.  
Here's the twist: desire remakes its world  
from tatters & teeth. Nods, lifts, comes again.

\*\*\*\*\*

xxxv. *Discordance*

Through ancient broken rock, a dozen  
steps in, restless umber dusk & again  
the elixir's glowing test, something more,  
something else, here is the place of  
red heat, lawless propulsion, great hero  
cut for a jagged thrill, wrenching slick  
in fucking for a coin, telling only the  
biting sea these secrets & following them in.

Watch a hand toss sunshine through an old  
brilliant hour, watch it later try to  
remember & explain, watch it unclench for  
something shared & calm. Nothing settles,  
neither hips nor fancies. World ever high  
for its next take, preacher's pretty little  
shadow, a village burning in vines & come.

Sorrow takes its residence a soft morning,  
a kneel at a time. Sorrow gels in  
the years' shifting soil, fruits through  
many dreams, lets the vista slide a bit  
more toward hoary shadow, a bit  
more. What above now more roof  
than sky. What within more braid than  
chaos. Pleasures on their labelled shelves,  
moonlight in a scented cup, warm & toothless.

\*\*\*\*\*

*xxxvi. Humility*

Sing it low, sing it blue, knock two  
clouds & a rock together, sing it true.  
Love when a hand nears, when it leads  
with a smiling, luring heat, breathe,  
gladness, joy, sunk in world's lust &  
free of mind's many gates, now out again,

Sing it late, & later still, think ye the war  
bears shop hours? Nothing else, sing.  
Twine the hungers from heated places, &  
the fears of old skin, & the bloats of  
humility's talk, slice its thick fruits for  
slight tunes, then slice again in remembrance.

Sing it foul then praise dirt for its truth.  
Men raise up toward level with the stars  
then a caustic dream of lightning through  
the bricks, floods darkest through nearest  
veins, an idea of God falling gentle from  
its tree. Sing it in terror & greed.

Sing it, many musics, wake, blink,  
call it a world & what else? What is  
teaching right now, the thick tomes or  
the mystery? Watch a twining of any  
kind, a mate of faces or lights or rhythms  
& ask: what tis? How not carry on?

Sing when the lone hours stagger in  
blotting crowds, when some needed pulse  
obscured or strays on. Sing when heart's  
dearest seems to yearn best only in  
recall & regret. Sing when it hurts, &  
push a little, bite a little. Sing when it hurts.

Sing through dis-illusion & what poor  
hours clarity brings. How the faces still  
gaze dumbly along, fiercely, no bridge, not  
even blunt talk of the chasm. Sing,  
worlds without end, sing, faith in the  
fire that fleshes through least hours. Sing,  
  
sing til proven nothing can dash the worst within.

\*\*\*\*\*

*xxxvii. Waste*

War never leaves. Like watchers in the  
long grass & erotic hums for pinkly  
maidens, fleshly restless & some deep tongue's  
poison taste for chaos, pushing it ever  
nearer. Two ideas for one acre will not twine.  
Three faiths war for an angle of dusk,

& which way to herd wombs & state treasure  
through the centuries. War never leaves.  
Again an hour when its terror sits light & luring  
upon a king's eye, a near bloodless path,  
a great new shine, just once more. Swift  
the happy conquer, bury the weapons, & cease.

Three bullets took her & two babes in her  
awful clutch. The day was hot & nobody could  
explain. Broken blood remembers. War never leaves.

\*\*\*\*\*

*xliv. Warm Piss & Sour Milk*

I dreamed a song worth the stars last night  
& fingered its shedding crystal melody, dreamed  
a song far fuller than I can reckon, a song every  
dancer knows when dawn blows out the  
moon & the fruit reins again to its golden feed.  
A dream explaining warm piss & sour milk as sacred too.

Wake & wonder: what remain of the ancient years?  
The desert morning is hot & bluntly says: A ruin,  
a vessel, a tome. Starlight on earth. A mystery  
which does not subside. Luring patina of the  
lost & lingering. The same questions. Most of the same  
answers. What rises, falls, what stays, & how.

Warm piss & sour milk, & everything else eaten  
by a countless hour's pass. Red silk wrapped through  
squeezing fingers, the night her mother & father  
danced under bonfire sparks, drank the elixir  
tarted by pears & strawberries. Her grandson fifty years  
later reading her memories in a ribboned basket.

He's sad that night, alone in a city, dreams a song  
worth the stars, perfect scented of warm piss & sour milk.

\*\*\*\*\*

*l. Consequence*

Hunger roars mind & loins alike,  
nothing plays it out long, unclustered  
burst tames an hour, but sate is  
not ease, & hunger insists the universe.  
Saddle it with mortal bones, strafe  
with stroke & suck, reach higher,

human happiness lies in loving the  
bars, endless singing their song,  
plain & golden. Hunger unites strangers,  
divides others. Call it love, inmost petals  
open to another's light, call it desire,  
sweet douseless wish, call it death,

its murmuring path elsewhere. New restless,  
new sate. Hunger is blood & consequence,  
what persists in great & private hours,  
by every creature's wake & grow. What  
kings may nod & fail to know. Learn it,  
& fear, & the tides, & little else.

\*\*\*\*\*

*li. Song for Hearts*

No frenzy greater than a body in  
love, no dis-illusion possible those  
long, few hours when the world frames  
a glance, deeper than a child's the  
greed for what the beloved bears,  
what bloom noticed, brushed, what  
pinks each cheek, what word, what word?  
What did that one mean? And that one?  
Breathe, crazy one. A dream, sweat &  
crushed sheets. No other, no other.

Later, mourn frenzy gone. Lighter, &  
lesser. The moon never knew, neither  
the cards nor coins. That song, the dark  
tickling one about loss. It knew.

\*\*\*\*\*

*lx. Creatures Dreaming*

Creatures dreaming tonight between  
the drifts, what of? what for?  
Dreams of grain, of warmth, of union,  
what of? what for? Winter's cold, &  
colder still in a few hours, creatures  
dreaming, drifts cross the road,

how few new answers collect & stay.  
Little salves the closest wounds but  
still flesh becks pretty & hearts heat fine.  
Creatures dreaming, many musics,  
the way is dis-illusion, the way breaks  
simple to green songs, what shakes pink

& new. Touch the world again & hear  
it moan, hear it sigh, want is  
trigger, want is release. Creatures  
dreaming, come the fog & ice,  
signals gone, everything gone, why chase  
the next song? New stroke, new push,

new tighten, & all explodes new.  
Creatures dreaming nigh the clearer  
hours, turn another side, blood warms  
blood, by science & faith. Til dawn  
everything dreaming, everything closer,  
what will be the morrow? What comes?

Creatures dreaming to the last, still  
rutless of time's stone idea, still  
the world a feeding plain & golden nuzzling  
rest, still life need not explain, what's  
struck or carried off tonight will fuel  
another day's fruit, another mewling babe.

Within walls, men combat for bread &  
mercy, ask, take, contrive truths in  
tomes to bear the nameless, conjure a  
way to play out well, fall in hope.  
Dream too, in finer hours, croon worlds  
together. Close, dear, let us croon together.



\*\*\*\*\*





## Judih Haggai

### *Hot Times in the Wind and the Weather*

i

hot times in the wind and weather  
slow wheatfields bend to the will of time  
cold flight of the brown willow weepers  
wide smile of the little green toads

hot times in the wind and the weather  
shy voices of bedouin men  
flapping plastic of nurturing structures  
loud trucks in the passing of dust

ii

rowing through wheatfields,  
barnacles and husks stick to my knees  
I paddle harder, upstream, windswept  
currents of clouds pointing north

stick by, dear friend,  
show me the wired constellation  
the hook that keeps me travelling  
onwards through the fields of days

### *Pause Between Weeks*

a day in the life  
my grandmother had such a day  
listening to the sounds of seagulls  
swarming the skies of coney island

such is my mind  
a coney island dressed in laundry lines  
fallout shelters  
figus and lemon trees

my airspace is resplendent in yawns  
saturday morning neighbours  
walls paper thin  
voices relaxed uninhibited

we know our sounds  
saturday morning familiarity  
soon the espresso will awaken the mind  
yeast will call for breadmaking  
children will ask for lunch

my grandfather knew these sounds  
his brooklyn streets ripe with bagels  
long park benches  
a day to ponder the voices of others

my son knows days like these  
city strange accents  
bizarre shots and suv engines  
ears cocked crooked, timezone twisted diagonal

from yawn to yawn  
we carry on  
DNA hit parade  
we shoot, we score, we generate

saturday morning  
pause between weeks  
past edging further  
future creeping closer

heart clinging to hang on

\*\*\*\*\*

*tribal offering*

i have lived amongst you  
i have never lived  
i have always lived  
i remember the attachment  
i remember the detachment  
the human story is waves of seething closeness  
and ripping apart  
we are drops in a huge roaring lifetime  
small beats hoping to find a thunderous orchestra  
searching for meaning  
relaxing after a sudden joy  
our culture blooms from one tribe to the next  
we listen to one another  
we learn from one another  
underneath it all  
we seek a common tongue  
in many different voices

*how low now*

creeping on bended knees, balls of feet silently hinged  
approaching understanding  
so slow,  
how low now  
almost within reach

\*\*\*\*\*

*the impossible search for my inner tibetan book of the dead*

i crave dam burst understanding  
letting it slide  
in my sweet lord hari krishna assuredty

i want to blend into the allness, the oneness, the whole  
i want to shed my divisions  
join the all-knowing

it's a search  
an impossible search  
for my inner tibetan  
my book of the dead  
my ohm and my enlightenment  
not mine  
not me  
my search for the not mine  
but the cosmic all

a search that is doomed to fizzle  
as i search, i cling to me  
when the thing sought is not

*somethin's goin on*

why is the heaviness of silence  
like an unmade bed  
a postponed phone call  
a nagging something i haven't done?

does silence hold a reprimand  
an authoritarian finger  
a disdainful frown?

what is contained in this moment  
that rubs me wrong  
that pushes me out the door

somethin's goin on  
and silence contains reminders  
somethin's goin on

(unmailed letter, unwritten e-mail, unspoken word)  
do i grab the silence and wrap it round my heart  
in blessing and chiffon twirled freedom?  
or do i sit in discomfort, squirm in reproach  
wait for the coin to drop in place

present yourself, present.  
do it, say it, get it out

while i meanwhile shrug  
trying to shake your hinted presence  
hand in hand with knowing glances

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

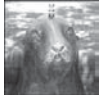
Music. Poetry. Rant. Mindfood.

*turn on ...*

*tune in ...*



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Raymond Soulard, Jr.

*Things Change?*  
[a new fixtion]

*(excerpt)*

Luna T's Cafe a deeper & deeper, OK, something persists about that, has years now, from what remains to what hails, sentiment to beckon—

from skin to rhythm the world is a texture hardly told in five six or a thousand senses, a wealth of sway & hue, angle & shimmer

help me write on, write forth, write past, write deeper harder laugh laughter help me to jiggle with grateful & flutter with mercy, I know not who I ask or what or how but still help me, & us, body & thing, help & more, ask, ye untellable rushing force in things, ask for more, demand, cajole, sing, there is love waiting a million pending gestures high, & more, ask, pray, offer, receive, nothing need suffer alone, nothing at all, god, man, beast, leaf, one & many & neither—help & aid, feel it good, the ripe & the roaring,

hearts do not heal—they pend painful til everything cracks & a wild beyond flames blooms madly now—

Hearts do not heal but a flash & a word & a task distract their flail & mourn, an hour passes, a day, the world's roof one night covered in pink-hued cloud ruffled as a morning bed—blood keeps coming & going, oxidizing, relieving, & another flash, word, task, another hour, day—

cemetery of the heart alive with unburied wounds but each can & does

come here eventually, fills & keeps another space, yet reckon so much yet unfilled, unkept—

reckon other regions as well, where heart plays, where heart yearns, where heart praises—

Others, too, where heart perpetuates its enigmas, its cries to & fro with know not what—reckon the rhythms within rhythms, what undergirds, what protects, what stays blade & pill & dance cut short most hours, most days—

He looks at Rebecca awaiting me & says “The Empire never ended. That’s where you begin.”

“Which Empire?”

“Well, all of them really, one to next is an illusion. But call it the Western Empire. That’s what’s outside those doors. Hey barkeep, another sody pop?”

Rebecca is quiet. “So that’s how I begin?”

“That’s what you acknowledge. Kings & armies & even nation-states rise & fall but—”

“The Empire never ended.”

He sips his soda, a microbrew root beer, on tap. Mr. Bob the barman cares for every kind of thirst.

“Well, you were looking for a way to put this cafe in a fuller context. What’s outside those doors as well as what magick runs deep inside here, right?” Rebecca nods. “That’s how. You look at what the world is in a different, truer way. To unenlightened eye, it resembles fixtion, but the truth of fixtion is the truth of the world, not a veering away from it.”

Rebecca drinks milk, chocolate milk. Mr. Bob conjured up a recipe learnt from a friend on the road when they were minor leaguers scraping through.

“You look at the spread of nations as a collective ideology, very little difference among them. Christian-inclined, materialist-bound, patriarchal, hierarchal, militarily-enforced pseudo-democracies. Conformist-worshipping, nature-abhorning, ecstasy-shy, creativity-vampirism. It’s been like this for thousands of years. The machine & scripture dominate & subjugate the freak & the tree. Start there, with those ideas, & then look around. See where they fit.” He sips his root beer through a long red straw with a loop in the middle. Gift from Rebecca. He wouldn’t drink without it.

“Does Art oppose it?”

“Some does.” He sips. “Not much really very much. The Resistance scrapes by with what it can. Sex is a weapon, ungovernable by materialist consciousness. Music.” He waves away another round of root beer. Stands. “Seeya, Becky.” Walks out.

Rebecca winces but allows this one person to use that severely unloved name.

What else? What more? The Empire consumes blindly, constantly, no regard for subtlety or other. Is the Empire all, has it no real nemesis?

She told Mr. Bob she needed some books & would be gone a day or two. He nodded & fetched her a thermos of chocolate milk, a bag of cheese sandwiches, some peanut butter cookies.

Books were a start, hints & clues. Comfort that others had wondered what was going on, & been brave enough to get their answers or shards into published matter.

She did this work alone, put aside her artpads for much of several days, taking them out only at night to doodle & calm.

She missed everyone but trusted they would await her.

Cosmic Early wrote, “To play one true note is to become slave, ever seeking the next, hustling the twilling birds & the midnight skies, believe it lurking in a pair of pink panties, in the silent desert, somewhere in a crowd of swaying faces.”

Rebecca looked up. The bookstore was quiet tho for a moment it seemed suddenly loud. She’d walked in quickly, not noticing the store’s name. It been a long time since she’d been in a bookstore, pretty much since the Arcadia had burnt down. Well, years.

The book was paperback, lacked a cover & title page & the binding was partially gone, title gone, Cosmic Early’s name listed. It was sitting on the small table next to the old armchair. She didn’t know whose it was but she sat, & began reading.

“Even after the pursuit of the next true note, in a voice shiny with bracelets & starlight, in a hand seen as a language Breast confused, mind ransacked, dreams haughty & irregular, to play one true note is bondage. Nothing but the flames are gods thereafter; nothing but orgasm & death worthwhile news. The tongue sliding down throat to belly to bush to buttocks to back ceases if her breathing proves not tuneful, if clouds shroud starlight over the hill—”

Again. Noone. The other chairs & couch in the small room empty. Others in the room to her left—the cafe counter, staircase to book floors, main entrance—& to her right—a deeper room within, more chairs, more couches. But nobody here. Right. Sort of.

“—if she or the cosmos itself seem too or too little willing.”

“How to oppose the Empire, you ask? Go ahead.”

“How?”

“Why too? How & why?”

“Yah, Jack. Both.”

“The how is easier. Assume that what most adults do most of the time is self-motivated. When you find yourself in a crowd, look a different way. Engage your passing moments.”

“That’s not much.”

“No, it isn’t. More than that runs from hint to instruction.”

“Why then?”

“The Empire encourages sleep with dreams of gruel. Or no dreams at all. A life spent as audience. As component.”

“You’re a crackpot. I’ve got lottery tickets to buy. I’ll think of you as I’m engaging my tickets.”

“Can’t win if you don’t play”

“Damned straight”

“Can’t lose neither”

“Oh I know all about that”

“So why bother?”

“Why not. Three, four bucks a week. No harm done”

“It could add up if you save it”

“Add up to what? Listen, I like my pleasures small & frequent”

“No hangtime?”

“None.”

“What about death?”

“It’ll come when it’s due”

“That’s all?”

“What else? When your time’s up, you go.”

“Where?”

“The ground, Jack. Maybe Heaven. We’ll both see”

“What about more?”

“More isn’t going to gain you anything. The fight’s long over. I’m just playing out the rounds”

“Why?”

“Because the only thing worse than failure is failing again & again. Not learning your place.”

“Does everyone have one?”

“I don’t know. I ain’t God, just a prole standing in line.”

“Is that enough?”

“That’s not the question”

“What is?”

“Well?”

“Are you going to tell me?”

“How to make it from A to B & back.”

“That’s it?”

“No.”

“What is?”

“The question is: where’s your A & what’s your B?”

Trying to remember something, she kept trying out books, but few lit her eyes. Annoyed, after her lucky success with Cosmic Early she came back to the armchair & looked out for more abandoned tomes.

Funky music played, never anything familiar & not the radio with a DJ to name the songs. The place didn’t seem to close & she kept her diet good—with juices, bagels, odd little salads—once Mr. Bob’s food package had run out.

OK. Here I am. I don’t know why but it’s OK. I need to remember something then I’ll go. Somewhere. It’s like tripping as much as anything else.

What to do when a pamphlet, dark green, thin, yellow viney

wordless cover & she read it

“Tonight I let you go. I must walk on. Our blossom was of a season; it will not survive the heat. A thing of frost, a single secret going with spring’s waking. Summer’s press.”

Hmm. She looks around. Whatever watches does not threaten. Curious, fond. Evening time others are about.

“You finally hunger anew, call it my gift. Now I breathe twice & let you go. Walk on. Let you go, tonight, now scrape & fumble my music back.”

Last page reads Q.E. & none else. She returns to text.

“Our blossom was sugar, now melted, now dew. A blessing, a jaguar; fierce, a flu. Gleaming penny in starlight. A persisting greed for love’s secret brew.”

Hm. Not sure if she likes him.

A moment of happiness, several lately, they are strange, lacking slave mind to other & then & maybe—moment of happiness, a surge, trees mourning festive colors, air liquid with chill, a moment riding along dandy, here, on these wheels, this right-now is perfect, it knows me, has waited, oh, shit, fuck, some sort of sloppy bliss—

so much hurt for so long, as though always—but, no, twas not always, & neither will be ever—grateful, happiness, then afraid because of that happiness—

not learned, not kept, don’t know, what tis? maybe learned, unlikely kept, but don’t know, not at all—

afraid but

*fuck it*—here it is—happiness—here it is—here goes—

Rebecca finds a park behind her bookstore, the rear door opens out to it, leaves fill its air, benches scatter its woodchip-covered ground. A breeze led her here from her usual armchair, the trees here vibrate red & orange & maroon.

She sits on an empty bench with her book. Buildings on all sides.

Black metal fire escapes, walls of windows, a wooden playground. People sit reading, an insect growl rests on the air.

“What is reality? What is nature? What am I doing here? What happens next? *These* are the questions that matter.”

“Nobody fucking knows, mac. That’s why there’s priests & scientists.”

“And what do they do but seek to enforce the validity of their prejudices & institutions? To find truth, everything needs to be tossed on the table. Including the questioner & his tools.”

Someone else says, “You forgot strippers. Don’t forget strippers now.”

Paths sometimes lose their audience, no longer serve from somewhere to somewhere, stall, stop, stay. New paths break, begin, are born. The world is wrinkled in both old & new paths.

But what of no path, no right direction, home a verb, a moment, the map written in dream, the way there not assured by previous accounts.

So. No path. Nothing bids helpful, nothing in the way. Night on all sides. Dawn comes without explanation.

She sits in the grass & begins to draw on napkins & as these accumulate she weaves them together, uses pages from Cosmic Early’s tome, selects carefully, then randomly, then blindly. She seeks to weave a path, or at least scrap of direction, if not gestated by her hands then how? She concentrates on remembering in both directions, & others as they appear.

Well. Regard happiness when bitter & broken ranges & rages about. See how the hurt feeds on happiness, won’t stop til none left—so happiness backs away, keeps some, insists—that’s how it survives—gives away the froth, keeps the veins—the muscle—the heart—the living engine making, being, living happiness—you sucking bastards can’t have it—else I become one with nothing too—again—

## Notes on Contributors

regard the crimson night from a high hill, celestial chiaroscuro above & keep near the dearer truths of clean moving water & how leaves in autumn tickle down draft & sunlight

disappear into the image of sparks falling, each last flickers alone, no lingual subtlety or blaze, wind down streets other than one walks

a pair of maids squeak youth & unmade desire

A code? A pattern? A maze? What for this story, whereto? Has a plan, an ideology? A trunk toward sky, branches & leaves? Confession, lie? What has it been, what tis?



**Ric Amante** lives in Melrose, Massachusetts. He has contributed poetry & prose to many Scriptor Press publications, including his 1999 book of poetry, *Ferry Tales*, but “Ecuador Hotel” is his first extended work of fiction for this press. I think of him somewhere, leaning over a jukebox, mulling which song to join as wings to his feet.

**G. C. Dillon** lives in Plainville, Connecticut. He has contributed many short stories to Scriptor Press publications, and happily more again in recent years. His work over the years has grown richer, fuller, funnier, & sadder. Are all of these possible? His work shows it to be so.

**Judih Haggai** lives at Kibbutz Nir Oz in Israel. Her poetry has appeared in many Scriptor Press publications, including her 2004 book of poetry, *Spirit World Restless*. She is a teacher by way of daytime profession, a good one, the kind who suffers to see a child lacking, & rejoices when a small victory finally comes. Her poetry reflects this kindness & compassion in her, this sweet music of the heart.

**Dale Pendell** lives in Penn Valley, CA. He is the author of the *Phamako* trilogy and *Inspired Madness: The Gifts of Burning Man*. His “Green Flames” essay is his first contribution to a Scriptor Press publication, first of many it is hoped. He is an artist & a rebel, one who confronts Western society’s wrongdoings & illnesses with a plainly scrutinizing eye.

**Kassandra Soulard** lives in Portland, Oregon. She is the Assistant Editor of Scriptor Press, & her artwork & fine editorial touch better each of its publications. She’s come years & miles to set her roots deep in Portland awhile, to learn what she is, & what she might become.

**Raymond Soulard, Jr.** lives in Portland, Oregon. A return to a place lived in some years ago, to its obscure spaces & demons. To its greenness, the trees that beckon, or that are called to. To its possibilities, & promises made. Scriptor Press hardly existed here last time around, hardly crawled, crawled. Each new day here urges full-blooded walking again.

HERE WAS  
THE  
GREAT SPRING  
WHICH  
FOR MORE THAN  
TWO CENTURIES  
GAVE WATER TO THE  
PEOPLE OF BOSTON

THE BOSTONIAN SOCIETY  
HAS SET THIS TABLET

1907



PORTLAND, OREGON



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