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APPLICATIONS

"Follow your bliss
& doors will open
where there were no doors before."
--Joseph Campbell



Editor's Introduction

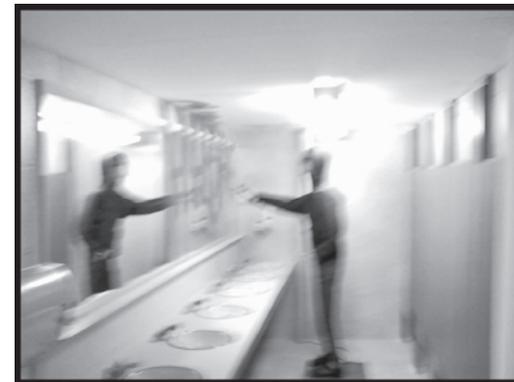
This volume is the fifteenth in a series of annual *Samplers* featuring the best prose, poetry, and graphic artwork published by Scriptor Press in the previous year.

After all the speculation, both hopeful and fearful, about what might happen to the world in December 2012, the world went on in 2013. It kept changing, and it went on. Reasons plenty to keep both one's hopes and one's fears.

You will find in this volume a variety of works that address human hopes and fears, and you are invited to feel not alone as you change, and go on.

D&P
Raymond Soulard, Jr.
5/26/2014
H

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Editor & Publisher
Scriptor Press New England



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Raymond Soulard, Jr.



Dream Raps

Start Where You Are

Now, you've always got to start where you are. Always. Well, you don't have a choice but by golly, sometimes the air around you slips inside your head and tricks you into thinking you do have a choice in the matter. But I say to you now, *no, you start where you are*. There are blooms outside this window on a tree, that's where it starts. Here it is merely February in the Pacific Northwest and there are blooms outside this window. That's where you start, that's where to start. You want to build a focus, you want to see the whole world, start there. Start with something right in front of you, maybe something beautiful, maybe something that catches your eye, that you look at and you like and think: *I like that*. Now if I'm going to build a world, I'm going to start *right there*.

There might be something else in your view, something else you can see, there may be a bill for your unpaid goods or there may be a broken device, there may be a sad letter, but no, start with that beautiful thing, and it may be beautiful in the nicest of ways and it may be beautiful in a way that only you understand, you in your heart understand, maybe deeper in your heart that's where you understand. So blooms, and then beyond or within. Now that's the question because I could tell you things.

I could say that in my mind when I'm asleep and I'm dreaming, whole worlds rise up, whole worlds rise up, whole worlds rise up. Or maybe you can reach your hand out to the world and reach another hand in, so to speak, into those dreams and what they mean if anything. But anyway, start with something beautiful before you look way out or way in. Make sure the ground under your feet is solid and lovely.

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NEW ENGLAND

2014

Tall Tall Building

I was in a large building, I was climbing from level to level—each one I would arrive at, and it would prove perilous. It's like I would arrive through a doorway and I'd be on a ledge and there'd be a deep drop which is strange. It's as though each floor of the building had nothing architecturally to do with the lower one or the one above, and I continued climbing and eventually I reached the top one and I found a huge library of books, many of them strange and obscure, many of them science fiction and I said *this explains the bookstore many stories below* but I wonder why I said that.

Then came the twist, the twist was while in this building on this top floor in this large library of books I got to remembering this other series of dreams about a big building, a house, and I would walk through the living room, climb a ladder or a set of stairs into the attic and this would lead me to endless series of rooms, so I was dreaming and these dreams I was having while I was dreaming were reminding me of other dreams I've had. Now you tell me the relationship between that dreaming, the other dreaming, and waking.

I Needed to Record Somebody

I needed to record somebody, it was really important, even several dreams in or down or far, depending on how you look at dreams and their architecture. I would wake within dreams to other dreams and this same need to record somebody. I needed to get this person on the phone, I needed to set up all the equipment, I needed to get their words recorded, preserved, they were important words.

But then it fell upon me and I landed within it, it was a very tall bureau, many drawers, impossibly so, a dream bureau of course, what else?—and my little friends were in the drawers, there were many of them, I don't know why, but there were many of them, they were in the drawers, they were on the top, some slipped behind. I kept trying to gather them up. They were small, I did not want them to get lost and then the littlest one of all, the one that cackles, the one that's full of shenanigans and trouble, her arm was moving around, it rotated strangely, in fact it wouldn't stop rotating. It was disturbing, I didn't understand but I kept looking and looking—

LSD Expert on TV

I was on CNN, the cable TV news network. I was in the audience, and there was this expert on LSD. I can't say I knew his name or anything about him but there he was. I was sitting next to an old buddy of mine and the expert he had this long I guess you'd call it an applicator, and it was filled with LSD, and he came over and he drip-dropped it into my buddy and my eyes and he drip-dropped on our faces, splashing on our faces and on our skin, it was all wonderful and seemed strange and what could this be about being splashed on cable news TV with very nice acid with me and my buddy? He said he had no trouble—he said no one had followed him—he said no one had followed us. He said this appearance brought in many donations that night and I remember wondering at that because I was thinking he's talking about this as if it's already happened. How can you talk about the present tense as though you're in the future talking about the past? But gosh was that acid good.

Travelling One Town to the Next

Now I suppose you could say that each one has its own groove. I'd say, well now, that's true, but I suppose that some of them groove deeper than others. There was this one where I was passing through, traveling, one town to the next, three towns in all, and so I passed through the first, passed through the second, and then I passed through the third and got to talking to someone and others too and none of them had heard of the first two. I'd been through them, of course, so I had experience of passing through them, and yet in this third town nobody knew them. Now what do you do with that? I suppose thinking about it more I would have piled him in my car, or whatever I was traveling in from the third town, and drove him on back to the second and the first, got folks meeting up, connecting because you know in Dreamland there's power and vulnerability both.

I Write for a Newspaper in Dreamland

I write for a newspaper in Dreamland and it's called the *Eighth*, now figure on that one a bit. Peculiar, I'd say.

I also carry around my hekk, it's my dream-stick, it allows me to choose some dreams over others, go into different rooms and not go into others in Dreamland. Now you figure that out. I can't figure that out. But it's interesting. The whole thing's interesting.

At one point, there was a cookie, yes indeed, there was a cookie, and there was a war and I was watching the war from the cookie's point of view. Now, wouldn't you say that's a little strange? You might say that's a little strange, you might say, *hey pal, that's a little strange, you and your dream-stick, you and your newspaper called the Eighth, you and your thoughts of wars from the cookie's point of view and what does that mean? I mean, really. What does that mean?* you're asking. I'm asking. I don't know. I only know that, day after day, more days than some, others, it deepens a little or I deepen a little with it relationally.

I Think It Was What You Call a Soap Opera

I think it was what you call a soap opera. There were two agents. An older one and a younger one. And the older one was saying, *when you see you are fooled. There is truth behind maya lines about the curvature of the earth, and when you see this truth I will kill you.* And then the man's eyes glow and oceans pour from them, and that is the symbol of the show.

There is No Higher and There is No Ground We Kiss

I wrote, somewhere after, *there is no higher ground. There is no higher and there is no ground, we kiss across the abyss and you are mine once more. There is no higher and there is no ground, we kiss across the abyss and you are mine once more. There is no higher and there is no ground, we kiss across the abyss and you are mine once more. There is no higher and there is no ground, we kiss across the abyss and you are mine once more. Floating floor holds us as memories, that long ago time, far from home, all the friends, the one from Atlanta and his sports, when I held you above me and we both proposed, when I had to leave all these people and return home and I wanted you and I couldn't find you. Your sky blue eyes and the years between us, I would talk about you to everyone. It never ended, the miles, the years, and how I could not come and you could not go and above me we loved and below you we loved and it was because I was from the dream and it*

was because you were the dreamer. I was the dream and you were the dreamer. There is no higher and there is no ground, we kiss across the abyss and you are mine once more.

The Ships Have Always Been Overhead

The ships have always been overhead. And yet, not *just* overhead. For you see, *we are on those ships*, as we walk around, down here, we are on those ships that are overhead.

And you wonder: *well, what can that mean?* How can you be on a ship overhead, & walking around, down below? And I say to you: *I don't know.* And I say to you: *dreams are real, too*, even though they seem many, disparate, fragmented. *Yes.* Dreams, ships overhead, walking around down below. Now that's a kind of a . . . formula both real & metaphorical, & it's yours to parse out . . . if you care to choose.

Traveling in the Midwest

I find myself traveling, in the Midwest, with several men. Not sure where we're going. We're on a strange bus, at one point, it's like a rolling restaurant, there are tables & waitresses. No one seems to be aware that we are rolling through the land.

I turn, & I know they're gone, those men I was traveling with, & it's probably for the best. In the corner on a small black-&-white TV, that nobody is paying attention to, I see that a movie is on. I learn it's called *RemoteLand*. It's about a woman that's captured & brought to a tiny cell where she powerfully imagines her youth & her playmates. Her playmates seem to be boys from TV shows, rather than real boys that she remembers.

I switch the channel, the movie is too sad, & I see someone who looks like me who is in a bathroom, pissing in the sink, & people keep coming in, coming & going, as though the bathroom is the necessary path from one needed place to another. And they just keep coming & going, & I just keep pissing & pissing, & this all seems strange, I guess.

It reminds me of this time I went over my teacher's house for class, & we each had to wear a hat & write our initials on them. And I had to write an essay, for the class, on a small scrap of paper.

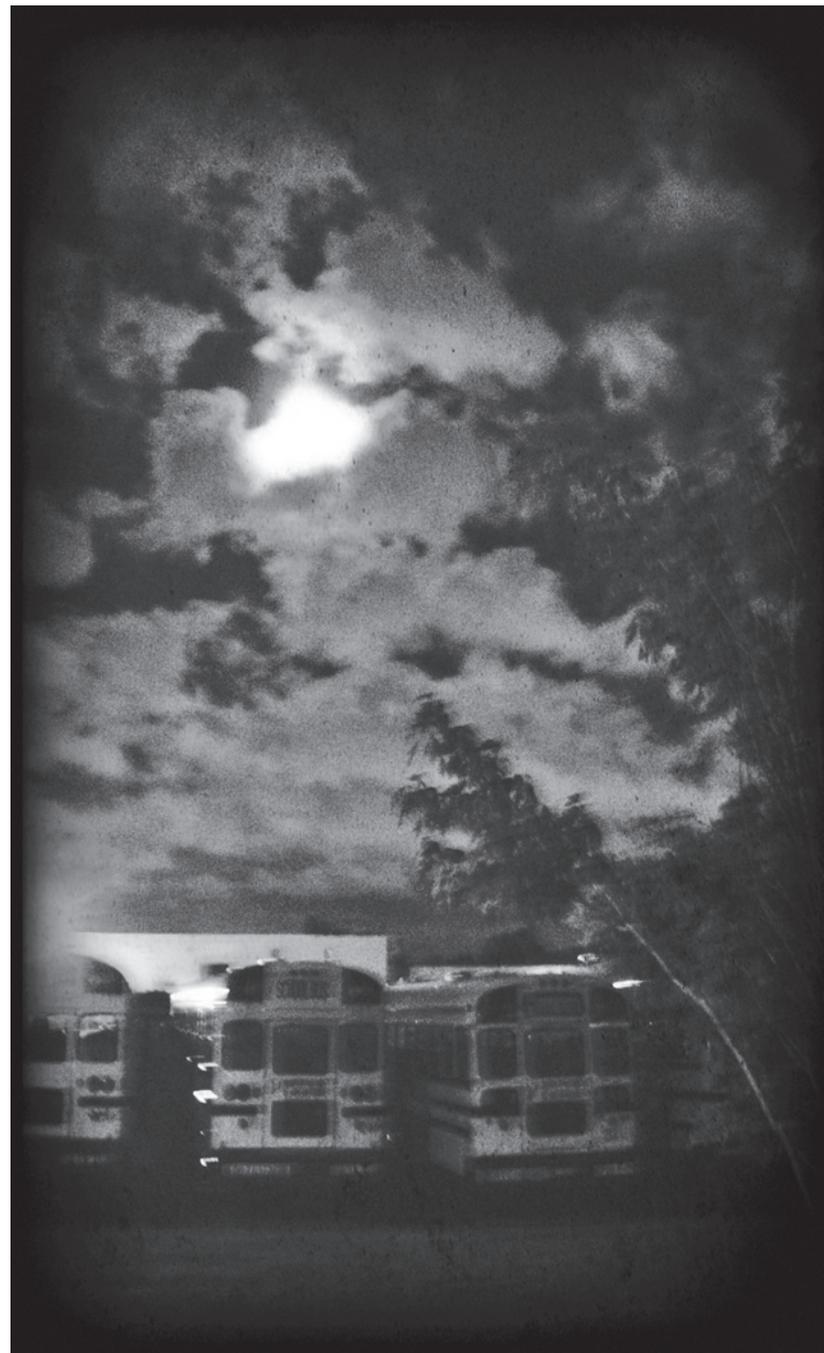
The teacher's house is big, multiple levels. Somehow I find out that the teacher is dead, & I run into the room where all the students are gathered, & I tell them all. "He's dead!" And nobody knows what to do, so we explore his house that we'd only known one room of, thus far, the place where we held the class. He has a vast library in the basement, on the second floor, the kitchen, there are many books everywhere.

And then someone climbs into a cupboard, & laughs, & the door opens slightly, & many tiny golden bees fly out. They don't seem harmful, & we're sad, because the teacher's dead. We liked him. And . . . we're sad, about the teacher.

Old Movie on TV

Might have been an old movie on TV. I'm not exactly sure. But there it was, set in space, a group of people come together, seemingly randomly. For a moment, they're set to make war on their slavers. And then they're all captured, except for one, who joined late. He follows their prison ship, as it flies low over the planet. Looks like an airplane. They think they can get control of it. They think they can bid their freedom. They think they're going to attack the complex.

But the whole thing's a fake. Their hope is false. But we do learn, near the end of the movie, *these are the people who sent the Red Bags down. One, none, and many.* And I seem to recall, before I fall asleep, a sort of dream-not-dream. I pass the spook in the hallway of some building. His eyes look red. He looks beat up. He has a copy of *Labyrinthine*, typed, held together on a binder ring. I tell him: *there's more.* Or: *there's a second edition.* Hmmm.



I'm in My Old City. . . Emandia

I'm in my old city, born there, live there, become at least part of someone, towards someone there. It's before dawn, dark, walking to work, no street lamps, and there are voices everywhere. I'm afraid, but I keep walking. Eventually nearing Bluebird Insurance Company. I find a couch, and a blanket, settle in, begin to doze. Time passes. And then there are some ladies, and a cop. He's pointing his flashlight at me. I explain I'm going to work early, the plumbing is broken at home.

The ladies crowd my couch and I sit up. It's no longer as comfortable as it was. But you know how that happens. Later that day, I find myself in another city. The next city. The other-piece-to-the-picture city. *Another* piece to the picture, anyway. I'm at a street corner, and there's this Spanish tourist, and there's his woman, and they seem lost. And they have a map, and we cross the street, and we sit on a bench, and there's snow and ice, and look at the map. And I point out to them the street they're seeking. And I tell them they will have fun, for sure.

And that night, after such an adventurous day, I dream I am aboard a space shuttle, far in the future, with a crew. Good folks. Not sure where bound. At one point I cry out: "*I hope when they come, it's a bald blue giant, standing, laughing on a planet, like it was a small stone!*" I go into the cockpit to fly for awhile, replace another, he's disappointed, and I hear Marvin Gaye singing, "*Let's get it onnnn . . .*" And I wonder if he did any other songs. And the dream eventually crackles, perhaps into another, perhaps not, and I wake up thinking of a place, that I do not yet know, but that I may come to know, in one way or another. *Emandia . . .*

All White Imp

And it was strange, it was *strange*. It was strange to see that maniacal little imp cackling but all white. Someone had removed her colors. The colors from her garments, the colors from her face, the colors from her limbs. She was all white. But she maintained her cackling airs. *Oh, she maintained them.*

And we got in the special car and we drove, indoors, past restaurants, Chinese and otherwise, through room after room. We came to a room where there

were people sleeping in beds. Well, they had to move them because we had to drive on through. *We had to drive on through.* I awoke and that little imp was full-colored again, her smile just as crazy, and she conducted the chorus of birds outside with particular glee that morning.

I Killed Someone

And it was one of those that leaves you shaking and wondering later. I killed someone, I think. I don't who. And I'm fleeing with my notebooks in a black garbage bag in a shopping cart. I end up in the hills. And I'm pursued, and I'm caught, or I give up, and I retreat to a house where nobody cares. All I'm thinking is: *what am I going to do about my notebooks? How am I going to secure them, make sure they're safe?* I don't know.

Eventually I'm in prison and I'm being processed by a woman named Scam. She sprays me thoroughly with disinfectant. And I'm thinking about writing the whole time. And then two small individuals, relatively good friends, come into my mind and I think of them. Each has a blue nose. One is gray and white, one is white and gray. I think of them and I'm comforted in my troubles.

There is a Room

There is a room, and in the room there is a goldfish. I find him or her and place him or her in a cup. At some point, the unruly one floods the place, water coming in from the cellar, and I yell, panic. I use different vessels to hold the goldfish. And then there are two. I thought the other one was dead but I guess not. Good news.

And then they can talk sometimes. Sometimes they're not even in the water. I have a hard time figuring out where to put their vessel so it'll be safe. It keeps crashing to the ground and breaking. They're nice and pleasant, vulnerable, but nice goldfish. At one point I am filling their vessel with water and they are helping me to know if the water is too hot or too cold. We work together. As it should be.

Along Came the Traveling Troubadour

Along came the Traveling Troubadour, long dead, but loved by many when he appears. And I find myself in his company, happily, as many times before. I marvel at the fact of him being here, and wonder what is real. *What is real?*

Then I show him my puzzle. You see, I have a blue sheet to write upon but I seem to have trouble writing upon it. I wish to fill it with fragments which, when assembled, form a whole but still fragments. He nods, sees my dilemma. *None, one, and many*, he laughs, almost cackles. Yes, indeed, I say. *None, one, and many*. He lifts his instrument, strikes a perfect note, smiles a happy smile, and is gone until the next time around.

Old Tyme Restaurant

I was with my friend and we were traveling along. We come to one of them restaurants, old tyme restaurants. One where burgers are a nickel and shakes a dime. I don't suppose you find them on the main roads anymore. They're still around, if you look.

And I got out with all my cleaning materials and I began to wash down the windows. My friend stayed in the truck, he was not one for them fancy television devices talking like the future. He said he couldn't make it. He didn't want to blow through all the money.

Well, sometimes in this world, when it doesn't work out one way, you just keep cleaning. You keep dipping your rag into the soapy water and cleaning until every inch is spotless. And then you step back and admire your work. I learned that from an old codger many years ago and, in this moment, I felt it was the best advice in the world.

Small Apartment Owned By a Mean Man

I was living in the small apartment, owned by a mean man, who would just come on in, walk on through the door. And at night sometimes I dreamed of the necklace around my neck. It signified memories of the nicest kind. Other

times, other places. Nothing much, nothing unusual, mean man by day, me with my pendant at night. Some nights.

And then one night I forgot to close the shade with a full moon and I'd been to the beach that day and I was burned by the sun and I couldn't sleep and I watched the full moon with my aching skin. And I saw a face in the moon and the face seemed to talk to me alone and it said *click-click! noise-noise! click-click! noise-noise! click-click! noise-noise!* in a tongue I was not familiar with, but it sounded like the most charming g-nattering I've ever heard.

The next night my skin still troubled me and the moon was still full and what could only be described as the tiny imp in the moon returned to distract me from my pain and sleeplessness, uttering the words *click-click! noise-noise! click-click! noise-noise! click-click! noise-noise!*

On the third night, I could not keep awake as my skin no longer ached but I knew even as I closed the shade that the moon was waning as it does, and the imp in there was not possible to see at this time. But come the next full moon, burnt skin or not, I would be looking for that imp.







Au Revoir

What I miss most about smoking
 is the way it infused time and space
 with reprieve and emptiness
 in one short puff of silver and gold.
 I miss its private salutations to nebula and ant,
 steeple and rainspout—prayers launched daily
 away from the buildings beyond the fences
 within the thrum of a steel-blue haze
 beneath a calm drape of nicotine.
 I miss its huddle with a fellow smoker on a retaining wall
 a park bench a ledge of granite a stoop a balcony
 a cupola a crater of the moon
 because intimacy can't be shuttered
 where there's smoke there's contact
 and words and laughter will billow and scroll.
 And yes, the stereotypical after sex cigarette,
 a truly most dear and fulfilling pleasure,
 a languid coda inhaled deeply, exhaled sweetly,
 for and by a fortunate two.
 My deepest immersions when smoke and I
 snared, enjambed and sanctified
 a precinct of the mind both empyrean and squalid—
 a placeholder for eternity
 until a cluster of words shot through the clearing.
 Tobacco, you were an astonishingly
 versatile framing device—
 a plume of heat and grace—
 that a killer like you can yet evoke
 all the music and none of the ash—
 dark wonder of a friend, thank you,
 but it's over, we've unraveled,
 I will miss you forever—amen.

Ode to a Mockingbird

Dear mockingbird,
 pull us from our stony ledges
 into the melodic torrents
 crashing at your soft charcoal throat.
 Give us proper voice to sing out
 the quickening leaps and dirges
 of the era we're perched in.
 Mockingbird,
 teach us again to just shut down and sit
 within the wild grace of your mimicry.
 Much has been said already—
 how do we begin to go deeper?
 Mockingbird,
 lift us to the next branch of kinship
 where all paths conjoin and glimmer.
 The earth is a network
 whose truths and hearts
 are meant to expand.
 Dear mockingbird,
 bury us gaily with daily recreation.
 A stack of notes from the edge of the chimney
 and we'll merge, mend, release.



9/11: The Truth is *Still* Out There

[Essay]

“The best way to control the opposition is to lead it ourselves.”
—Vladimir Ilyich Lenin

Note: This essay shares what I have learned about the attacks of September 11th, 2001 (9/11) over the past several years, in a summarized form. If you care about our country, our planet, or helping others, then please set aside some time to read this message with your skepticism, your intelligence, and your heart. Feel free to contact me at pookzta@gmail.com if you have any questions or would like to discuss this topic in more detail.

The topic of 9/11 is an extremely important one because it vividly exposes the corruption that currently plagues our society, and the reality of cheap, sustainable, renewable energy technology (the oil corporations are just one of many true suspects that could have orchestrated 9/11, then tricked our country into believing that Arab “terrorists” did it), but it requires a skeptical-yet-open mind in order to understand the implications of all the easily verifiable empirical evidence. I encourage you not to blindly accept what I am telling you here; rather, I encourage you to draw your own conclusions regarding the following information.

9/11 is irrefutable proof that:

- 1) affordable forms of energy technology, such as those discovered and inspired by the great Nikola Tesla, do indeed exist and could be providing our entire planet with clean, sustainable, and limitless energy *right now*;
- 2) countless lives and resources have been wasted on wars of death and destruction, all as a result of an extremely inaccurate, unscientific story, when these precious lives and resources could instead be used to improve our beautiful country and planet; and, most importantly, that
- 3) each and every one of us is capable of slicing through the dishonesty and corruption by thinking critically and studying the available facts for ourselves.

The horrible individuals who orchestrated 9/11 (not the “hijackers,” for I am referring to the true culprits, whoever they may be) were apparently

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smart enough to plan multiple layers of the post-9/11 cover-up. The first layer of the cover-up was their ability to fool and/or control the corporate media channels into promoting the unscientific, easily disprovable document known as the *9/11 Commission Report* (formally named *Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*). I will not bother going into details about why the official story is wrong because, as you may already know, the New York City seismographic data alone is sufficient to show that the *9/11 Commission Report* is inaccurate and unscientific.

One way that some people have come to understand the inaccurate nature of the “official story” is because of an architect named Richard Gage who claims that an explosive called “thermite” or “nano-thermite” was what brought down the two towers of the World Trade Center on 9/11. While Gage is correct in saying that the American people have not been told the truth, this does not mean that he is correct in his assertion that explosives and/or thermitite are supported by the evidence from 9/11. In fact, thermitite may not have been used at all (and most likely was not, in my opinion).

I must again stress the importance of being cautious and skeptical here, because the false nature of the *9/11 Commission Report* does not necessarily mean that our government orchestrated the 9/11 attacks. It was the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) and the private weapons/defense/security corporations (including Science Applications International Corp. [SAIC], Applied Research Associates [ARA], and many others) that engaged in an enormous conflict of interest when NIST contracted these private corporations to conduct the fraudulent 9/11 “investigations” using our tax dollars (it’s like paying a fox to guard your chickens). It is NIST and these private weapons/defense/security corporations, many which have members in the Directed Energy Professional Society (DEPS), that are the primary suspects for 9/11, not necessarily our government. At the very least, NIST and these suspect corporations are the groups we absolutely must bring to court for evidence-based interrogation and questioning.

The second layer of the 9/11 cover-up is that being put forth by Gage, Dr. Steven Jones, Alex Jones, David Ray Griffin, and a host of other fraudulent “investigators” who claim they are pursuing truth and justice when, in actuality, closer inspection reveals they are doing just the opposite. The key to their past successes is the fact that they are “waking” people up to the lies of the *9/11 Commission Report* and, by having done so, are gaining people’s trust while subtly convincing them to accept blindly the unscientific, explosives-/thermitite-only theory.

Gage and the other so-called 9/11 “researchers” simply share with the public the evidence they want people to hear in an attempt to convince

them of what they want them to believe. Suspiciously, they do not mention the overwhelming sum of easily verifiable physical evidence that thermitite and explosives do not explain—evidence that conclusively shows that directed energy weapons must have been used on 9/11. They most likely choose to ignore this evidence not only because it is not explained by thermitite or explosives of any kind but, more importantly, because the private weapons/defense/security corporations that engaged in the conflict-of-interest relationship with NIST to conduct the fraudulent 9/11 “investigations” with our tax dollars also happen to be the leading corporations in the field of directed energy weapon research. This is also the most likely reason that Gage fails to mention that his partner, Dr. Steven Jones, used to work for Los Alamos National Laboratories, the same laboratory that conducted the Manhattan Project to develop the atomic bomb and other highly advanced, top-secret weapons.

Most evidence in support of thermitite or explosives is testimonial in nature, such as witnesses “hearing explosions” or “seeing molten liquid.” Testimonial evidence is the weakest form of evidence because people are often mistaken and/or biased. Loud, explosive noises can be caused by many things, and it is very plausible that items were independently exploding as the buildings were transformed to dust. Additionally, glowing objects or liquids do not directly imply hot or molten steel, as many objects can glow or melt under lower stresses and temperatures.

Consider the following example. Let’s say I provided you with the following factual evidence: I own a common household pet, a mammal, who barks very loudly and drools when I place food in front of him. He wags his tail, eats meat, has lots of hair, has four legs, and eats from under the table. He is known as “man’s best friend,” can “sit,” “stay,” and “roll over,” and is related to wolves. Based on this factual information, you can inarguably conclude that I own a dog, because there is no other reasonable explanation to account for all of the facts that are available to describe my pet. However, if you were to try and guess the specific breed or color of the dog I own, that would be theory or speculation because the factual evidence only allows you to conclude that I own a general category of animal known as a dog.

Only the general category of weapons technology known as directed energy weapons can explain all of the empirical evidence from 9/11, and it does so completely and irrefutably.

The third layer of the 9/11 cover-up is a widespread internet campaign to slander, criticize, and censor information about the *only* 9/11 researcher who has meticulously analyzed *all* of the physical evidence from 9/11. This researcher is also the *only* person who has offered a scientific conclusion that

explains *all* of this physical evidence from 9/11 and, furthermore, she is the *only* researcher who has taken all of this evidence and filed it in a court of law in the form of a federal *qui tam* whistleblower case against the private weapons/defense/security corporations previously mentioned. The case was so strong, thanks to all the physical evidence this researcher has discovered, that it was successfully appealed to the level of the U.S. Supreme Court in October 2009, despite the attempts of corporate defense lawyers pushing for dismissal of the case at each level of appeal. The case was abruptly and unlawfully dismissed by the Supreme Court, and this is detailed in the legal documents found on this researcher's website which I will direct you to later.

The brave researcher I am speaking of is Dr. Judy Wood, a materials scientist and engineer who lost her job at Clemson University after she began raising awareness about the important evidence that can only be explained, in totality, by directed energy weapons. The entities that make up this third layer of the 9/11 cover-up are 9/11 "truth" websites, chat rooms, groups, and individuals, widely found on the internet and in corporate media, that are purposely trying to direct people to ignore the important evidence that Dr. Judy Wood has discovered.

Several of these groups claim to be 9/11 "truth" groups but, if you even mention Dr. Judy Wood or the important evidence she has discovered, they will often censor you, ban you from their group, or ridicule you for discussing her. I know this because I have experienced it first-hand, time and time again, and have been banned from a long list of 9/11 "truth" websites and groups just for sharing the important physical evidence that Dr. Judy Wood has discovered. Many disrespectful individuals have also taken the evidence Dr. Judy Wood has discovered and presented it on their own in unscientific, discrediting ways (some of these "researchers" assert that Dr. Judy Wood claims that aliens orchestrated 9/11, or that this directed energy weapon is in space, so-called "space beams," which is false since she has never made such claims).

These attempts at censorship are meant to prevent more people from discovering that Dr. Judy Wood is correct in her evidence-based scientific conclusions about 9/11. Even a small group of *Wikipedia* administrators censor *Wikipedia* so that no one can create a page devoted to Dr. Judy Wood, and so that there is not one mention of her name, book, or website on the "9/11 Truth Movement" *Wikipedia* page. I personally experienced this when I tried to add her name to that *Wikipedia* page because of the importance of her research but I was censored.

The large body of empirical evidence from 9/11, assembled by Dr. Judy Wood, is conclusive and irrefutable, so one only needs to study it in

detail to prove this; no theorizing or speculation are necessary. Below, I have listed some important pieces of evidence that *must* be explained. This list is just a small fraction of the thousands of photos, graphs, videos, and documents which Dr. Judy Wood has gathered, which are certainly are not explained by jet fuel and/or explosives of any kind. Please consider the following evidence-based questions:

- ◆ How come most of the Twin Towers' steel and concrete was transformed into a fine dust, while large quantities of aluminum exhibited strange electrical warping and burns, yet paper was unharmed?
- ◆ Why was Hurricane Erin traveling straight for New York City from September 7-11, 2001, yet it was not reported on by local media broadcasts in that area in the days leading up to 9/11?
- ◆ Why were there statistically significant magnetosphere readings in Alaska at the very same time of the 9/11 attacks?
- ◆ How come there are many reports of power outages and electrical failures in the areas surrounding Ground Zero just as the attacks commenced?
- ◆ Why were numerous first responders' Scott packs (oxygen tanks) spontaneously exploding around Ground Zero?
- ◆ How were the Twin Towers turned to dust so fine that it floated high up into the atmosphere?
- ◆ How come 1,400+ vehicles located several blocks away (some up to a quarter-mile away) from Ground Zero experienced metal warping and electricity-like burns and holes during the attacks? If you think the building debris caused these things, then how come that same debris did not burn the clothing or skin of the nearby pedestrians it covered?
- ◆ How come countless vehicles located several blocks away from Ground Zero were flipped upside down, or on their side, next to trees which still had all of their leaves on them?
- ◆ How come several steel beams were observed to be bent and/or shiveled up in very unusual ways, ways which have only been observed during the Hutchison Effect experiments?
- ◆ Why were no toilets recovered from the small WTC rubble pile? Thousands of toilets, yet not a single one was found in the rubble?
- ◆ Why was only one file cabinet found in the small WTC rubble pile? Thousands of metal file cabinets, yet only one was found?
- ◆ How did countless pieces of paper money survive the WTC attacks?
- ◆ How did countless plastic photo IDs survive the WTC attacks?

- ◆ How come spontaneous rusting of materials occurred all around Ground Zero? In some instances, entire front-halves of cars were rusted, while the back-halves appeared to be virtually untouched?
- ◆ How come various debris at Ground Zero were still observed to be fuming and having to be hosed down well into 2008, as video evidence clearly shows? Do fires last for seven years?
- ◆ How come circular holes were observed in the windows of virtually all the buildings near Ground Zero, when holes like these are known only to be caused by longitudinal waves of energy?
- ◆ How was the “bathtub,” the area directly beneath the Twin Towers, left virtually unharmed?
- ◆ How was the Looney Toons gift shop in the basement of the WTC buildings left virtually unharmed, so dramatically that the Bugs Bunny statue and other statues were not even scratched or dented?
- ◆ How was the PATH train beneath the WTC buildings left virtually unharmed? Shouldn't falling building debris have crushed that train or, at the very least, knocked it off the tracks?

References for Further Research

Where Did The Towers Go? by Dr. Judy Wood

<http://wheredidthetowersgo.com>

This is the most evidence-packed piece of literature regarding 9/11. It is based neither on theory nor speculation; rather, it is based on well-referenced physical evidence, and analysis and discussion of that evidence, and the inescapable conclusions that are drawn from that evidence. The few American publishers that were willing to print Dr. Judy Wood's book would suspiciously only allow her to print it if she removed several important pieces of evidence, or if she only printed the important photos and graphs in black-and-white. Dr. Judy Wood had to get this book printed in a foreign country, and then shipped to various locations in the United States via boat, to ensure that the book was published in its full-color, scientific, textbook format.

9/11 Challenge: Explain the Evidence

<http://pookzta.blogspot.com/2010/12/911-challenge-explain-evidence.html>

This is a brief summary of some of the important physical evidence Dr. Judy Wood has discovered. This article is good to share with others who are hesitant to purchase Dr. Judy Wood's amazing textbook.

Why Did a U.S. Army Major & Soviet Nuclear Intelligence Officer Contact Me (Abe) Regarding 9/11?

<http://pookzta.blogspot.com/2010/07/911-free-energy.html>

Shortly after I began speaking out about Dr. Judy Wood, two high-ranking retired military officers spontaneously contacted me, within a few weeks of each other, to try and convince me that Dr. Judy Wood is wrong. The non-evidence-based claims they attempted to convince me of were very alarming, and what I learned about them from my research was even more concerning.

An Open Letter to PatriotsQuestion911.com by Dr. Eric Larsen

<http://pookzta.blogspot.com/2011/03/open-letter-to-patriotsquestion911.com.html>

This letter addresses the fact that the owners of the PatriotsQuestion911.com website silently removed Dr. Judy Wood from the list of 9/11 researchers quite some time ago. Considering that Dr. Judy Wood is the most highly qualified researcher to investigate 9/11, due to her background in materials science engineering, and that she has gathered more physical evidence and taken more legal action than any other scientist in the history of 9/11 research, the fact that her profile was deleted from the PatriotsQuestion911.com website is extremely suspicious.

9/11 & Free Energy

<http://pookzta.blogspot.com/2010/07/ex-us-army-major-ex-soviet-intelligence.html>

This article examines the evidence against the unscientific thermite-only/explosives-only theories, as well as evidence suggesting that Dr. Steven Jones, Richard Gage, and others are purposely misleading concerned Americans with their biased, unscientific presentations.

9/11 Finding The Truth by Andrew Johnson

<http://www.checktheevidence.com/pdf/9-11%20-%20Finding%20the%20Truth.pdf>

This amazing free book thoroughly covers the entire topic of 9/11.

Check The Evidence by Andrew Johnson

<http://CheckTheEvidence.com>

This website is filled with important information that covers a wide variety of topics, including 9/11 and Free Energy. Based out of the United Kingdom, Andrew Johnson and his evidence-packed website have played a major role in helping to spread factual evidence and information about a variety of extremely important topics.

* * * * *



nightmares aside
such peace in simply being
breathe out, breathe in

price of bananas
design of staircase
brain mulls dilemmas

if i move
who will monitor
neighbour's cough

huge puppet
heavy on hand
mocks creator

glorious morning
birds cheer the coming
contagious delight

sealed windows
morning through slats of blinds
one triumphant fly

so close
last night ready to fly away
me and the bluebird

incessant bird beat
five am five am five
until i'm up

day preparation
read all the rules
then be simple

consciousness
wanders back to body
exhausted from dreams

bird soars
a welcome expansion
mind release

mess around
abracadabra
but what is real?

near the end
eyes puff into sadness
lingering sigh

the wife
unwraps husband's arms
and slips away

friends climb totem
call out to the world
each with message

a flock of poems
land on my page
loathe to move

the pine needle
sharp enough
but soft with friends

the taste of later
infiltrates my mind
music brings me back

* * * * *



Nathan D. Horowitz

In the Secret Place of Thunder

[Travel Journal]

Two days later I flew from Mexico City to Quito, Ecuador's capital. I joined the South American Explorers Club and spent an afternoon reading in its library. I decided to visit two tribes, the Sionas and the Huaoranis. The Sionas, because an anthropologist wrote that their shamans were the most powerful ones, the most knowledgeable in the drinking of *yagé*—that was their word for ayahuasca, pronounced ya-HEY. The anthropologist went on that the Siona shamans instructed by singing their visions directly into the cups of *yagé* that their apprentices drank. Novice drinkers were expected to scream, writhe, vomit, and shit themselves in their hammocks.

I decided to visit the Huaoranis because of what Jeremy Carver had said and because they were the wildest tribe around. I wanted to see human life in the most archaic form possible. Maybe Nenke, the shaman Jeremy told me about, would want to take me on as an apprentice.

I read that the Huaoranis were divided into two groups: the regular, semi-civilized Huaoranis, who numbered about 1200, and a splinter group called Tagaeris, of whom there were only a few dozen. After a dispute in the late 1960s, the Tagaeris had retreated deep into the forest, where they lived in a state of war with the others.

In the 1980s there was a move to search for oil on land occupied by the Tagaeris. Oil exploration would have led to violence between them and the oil workers, as it had in other places where oil companies had worked Huaorani land. The Capuchin bishop of the jungle town of Coca, a Basque named Alejandro Labaka, was a seasoned veteran of missionary work with Huaoranis. He'd walked naked-but-for-a-string in the forest with them, he'd been adopted by a Huaorani family, he'd learned to speak like them. So in 1987, he decided to attempt peaceful contact with the Tagaeris in advance of the search for oil. He and a nun, Inés Arango, had themselves dropped off by helicopter at a Tagaeri settlement. Five days later, when the helicopter crew returned, they found Labaka and Arango's bodies spread-eagled, naked, on the ground, each pierced with about a dozen spears.

Before going out there, Labaka had composed a letter that was to be opened in case of his death. In it, he asked that there be no oil exploration in

the area if the Tagaeri killed him and Arango. His wishes were respected. He and Arango had sacrificed their lives to protect their own killers. In the photograph of him lying dead in Coca, he was gently smiling.

In the Explorers Club library I read about raids that tribes used to make on other ones—killing the men, stealing the women. A woman could be taken away and, on the way to the raiders' village, gang-raped by all of them. I imagined the scene with ethical horror and kinky desire and thought of the hunter-gatherers in everyone's bloodlines not many generations back.

From Quito, I flew to a jungle town called Lago Agrio, north of Coca, in search of Sionas. On the flight I made friends with three Californians, Jim, Samantha, and Randy, all older than me. They invited me to join them on a tour of Cuyabeno National Park, which overlapped Siona territory.

On the street in Lago Agrio, as we started looking for a tour agency, we were approached by a suave *mestizo* with a broad smile that showed he was missing an eyetooth. He introduced himself as Vicente Hernández, a rainforest guide, and he started trying to sell us a tour. My companions brushed him off, wanting to go with an established agency, but Hernandez kept talking and finally got their attention. A dozen passersby gathered to watch the activity. They laughed when I told them I only hoped we were almost as interesting as a television show. I didn't pay much attention to the negotiations. The Californians were bargaining hard. I would settle for whatever they decided on with Vicente, or whoever else they went with. I was trying to move through the world with the smooth grace I'd had on that day on peyote in San Luis Potosí. Whatever life presented, I'd accept.

Vicente offered, "I'll take you to a Secoya shaman who sometimes drinks *yagé* with tourists." The Secoyas, I'd read, were a tribe closely related to the Sionas. Maybe their shamans were almost as good as the Siona ones. It's like Huichols and Coras, I reflected. Sometimes you get Sionas, sometimes you get Secoyas. My companions were uninterested in drinking *yagé* but curious to meet a shaman. I'd read that shamans who drank *yagé* with tourists weren't particularly reputable. But maybe meeting this Secoya would be a step in the right direction. At least Vicente seemed capable of getting us into the rainforest.

Negotiations moved to Vicente's cement-walled apartment, which he shared with his stunningly attractive wife and three young daughters. We stayed late into the evening. The deal in its final form stipulated a five-day tour for \$30 per person per day, except it would be \$25 for me, and I'd have to do some chores. Together with Vicente, Samantha wrote down a schedule, tightly organized, hour by hour, day by day. The guide would pick us up at 7:00 the following morning.

At 8:00 sharp he appeared with a bright, gap-toothed smile outside

our hotel accompanied by two pickup truck taxis. His wife and daughters and their baggage and their kitchen stove and a tank of gas and crates of food and dishes were in one taxi, while the other was empty, waiting for us and our gear. At 9:05 the whole expedition shoved off in a motor canoe at the entrance of Cuyabeno National Park. At 9:30 we had to turn around and get a different canoe because something was wrong with this one's motor. The schedule was history. I was quietly glad to have it out of the way.

Laden with nine people and their goods, the new canoe rode low in the water and leaked through the seams. My task was to bail with an empty two-liter Sprite bottle that had been cut into a bucket shape.

I wrote in my notebook: *"A big toucan above us on a limb. High gray cloud cover with blue cracks in it. Bright yellow-white fuzz where the sun is. Above the notebook, brown water with gray sky reflection speeds past my feet. Blue flash of a morpho butterfly. The sky's clearing up. Jim lights a cigarette and goofs off. Sunlight coming through now. Primordial. Capybara tracks in the mud where we stopped to pee. Monkeys visible for a moment just now. Samantha half-laughes through her nose at Jim's antics. Jim whistles, Randy writes in his journal, Samantha chews gum and watches the forest.*

"The wind from the canoe's motion is soft on my ankles. Cold drops of spray hit my feet. Half a moon in the morning sky like an eggshell made of cloud. Vines like violin notes hanging down into the river. Parrots fly overhead squawking."

In the evening we stopped in an empty hut on a lagoon. Vicente cut nettles with his machete and used them to whack his back. He said everyone in the jungle did it: it relieved sore muscles. I tried it and, with a little imagination, could feel it working. When it was dark, and we had eaten abundantly from Vicente's wife's adequate cooking as her little daughters lounged on their laps, Vicente brought us outside and down to the water. He shone a light out into the darkness and said he could see the reflections of caiman eyes out there. He grunted to call them nearer and slowly they came, pairs of gleams peering at the humans from within the black water. I started imitating Vicente's grunts to call the beasts. He said, "You sound like you're trying to crap." Afterwards, lying down to sleep, the black water of my mind rocked with the movement of hundred-foot-long swimming reptiles.

On the second day we went further into the park. As the sun built a nest of gold in my brown hair, I hunched over my notebook again. *"Vicente caught a huge catfish by leaving a line in the river during the night. His wife is cleaning it now. Their daughters are making string figures.*

"Twittering birdcalls through the canopy. Leaves like round, flat hands with the sun shining weakly through. I dreamt there was a toll-free number you could call if you had any carrion and the dispatcher would send a vulture. Then I

invited Lily out on a date but there were two of her and they got jealous of each other. When I awoke in the night, I heard Samantha growling in her sleep.

"Off goes the motor and on goes the sweet song of rippling water and far birdcalls and the psychic vibrations of cicadas. A glimpse of blue sky. Trees reaching far out over the river for light. Other trees overreach themselves or are undermined by the river and end up in the drink.

"Traveling again. Jim was briefly stuck in the mud after a crap. Macaws squawking wildly, lazily in the trees behind me. Vines trailing in the water, other vines not quite there yet. Samantha cracks her knuckles, whistles a couple notes, and goes back to writing. A dragonfly speeds briefly alongside the boat. We pass through the shadow of a tree. The sun swings to the left and right behind me as we round a curve. Cloud blurs the shadow of my hand on the page. The shadow of my hand appears and disappears as if I myself were appearing and disappearing. Three levels of cloud I can see above us now, and between them, past them, outer space thronged with imperceptible intelligences. Leaves glistening with water, water glistening. The clouds are full of Chinese dragons coiling and uncurling in slow motion. The sun licks me suddenly, ferociously, hotly rubs its white fur against my skin. Samantha smears the whiteness of sun block on her smooth brown legs and the low clouds are flying."

On the third day of the tour, it started to dawn on me that the only shaman who was likely to drink *yagé* with me was one who would drink with tourists, because, *de facto*, like it or not, I was a tourist. On the fourth day I became convinced of this.

On the fifth day, after we had motored out of Cuyabeno National Park and onto the Aguarico River, Vicente cut the motor and the canoe ground to a halt in the sand of a riverbank above which lived Don Joaquín Piaguaje, the Secoya shaman. Atop the embankment appeared two skinny hunting dogs barking furiously. One was white and tan, the other black. Soon, the shaman himself appeared, barefoot, barrel-chested, wearing a purple tunic that came down to his shins. He had a short, military-style haircut like the one my Uncle Pat had worn, while there was something Tibetan about his narrow eyes, prominent cheekbones, and broad flat nose. He exchanged a few words with Vicente and invited everyone up. The guide leaped out and dragged the canoe higher up onto the small beach, then sank a pole deep into the sand and tied the canoe to the pole. The rest of us scrambled ashore and up the embankment to a flat area. There they climbed a pair of notched logs into don Joaquín's hut, which was on posts, two meters off the ground. Joaquín's wife Maribel was there, a plump woman with very long, wavy black hair and a brilliant smile. We made ourselves comfortable on a firm, yielding floor that Vicente said was made of split palm wood. Maribel opened an aluminum pot

full of mashed, boiled ripe plantain and spooned some of it out into aluminum bowls, added water to each and mixed well, and handed one to each guest. Joaquín and Vicente chatted about their common acquaintances. Immersed in the soothing flavor of the sweet plantain drink, I relaxed. Joaquín seemed intelligent and accessible. Above his lively eyes, his eyebrows seemed to have been plucked out. After a short conversation, the shaman showed us around his garden. I trailed behind him, observing his swaying back underneath the arching leaves, and thought I wanted to follow him down the path for a while.

Up in the hut again, his companions examined some necklaces and bracelets made from local materials that Maribel was offering for sale. I mustered my courage and addressed the shaman, “Don Joaquín, I hear you sometimes drink *yagé* with tourists. Would you do that with me?”

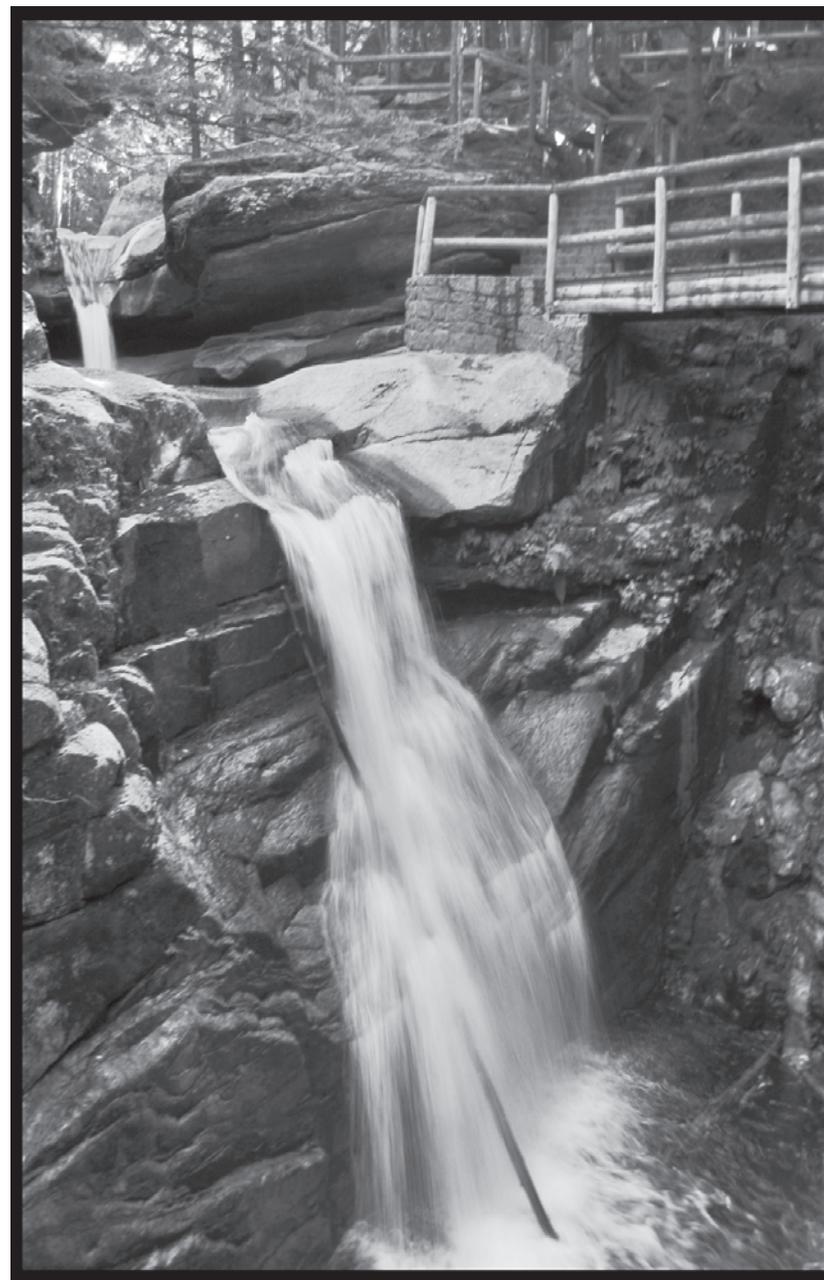
“It’s fine,” he replied in strongly-accented, precisely-enunciated Spanish. “You go downriver to the village and staying with my relatives there for two nights. Come back on Sunday morning and we drinking Sunday night.”

I caught a ride with a passing canoe down to the village. Vicente and his family and Jim and Randy and Samantha wished me well and went on without me.

The village was named Sיעoya. The village center had a dozen huts plus a school. Other homes that pertained to it were more isolated in the forest. I stayed with Joaquín’s daughter-in-law’s brother, a placid, smooth-faced man named Gervasio Piaguaje. He was trying to develop a tourism business in connection with some acquaintances from Quito. He was studying a basic English textbook. He recognized that pronunciation was a problem, so he had me tape record myself reading the whole book. Afterwards, he told me about the history of the Secoyas’ community here on the Aguarico River and about their language.

He said the tribe had originally come from territory that now belongs to Peru. At the end of the 1930s, the people who then comprised the group that lives here now were enslaved to a man who forced them to tap rubber for him. During the 1940-1941 war between Peru and Ecuador they escaped and emigrated to Cuyabeno, a week’s journey through the forest. In the 1960s, a missionary couple from the United States came and Christianized them. That led to the gradual disappearance of the *yagé* ceremony. In 1973 the group migrated up the Aguarico because there was higher-quality soil here for their gardens.

As he spoke I remembered the dolphin skeleton cloud and my certainty that I’d been called to the forest by shamans active around the time of his conception.



Gervasio's lesson to me in Paicoca, the Secoyas' language:

It has twelve vowels: a, e, i, o, u, ä, ə, ĩ, o, u, ë. The underlined ones are nasal. The language is written with a system based on that of Spanish. For example, the letter ñ is used for the sound “ny,” and the letter j is used for the sound of an English h.

Ao: white flatbread made of yuca. It's slightly sour and very hard when eaten dry. Best soaked in soup broth. Yuca is a root vegetable, starchy like a potato, but large, long and white, with a thick skin that's chopped and pried off before the yuca is boiled.

Yai: jaguar.

Wai: meat.

iaya: river.

Siaya wai: fish.

Jai siaya: big river: the Aguarico.

Pai: people. The “p” is close to a “b,” and the “i” is nasal, so it could also be written “bai,” “pain,” or “bain.” In English orthography it would be something like “pine” or “bine” with the n only half-pronounced—halfway to “pie” or “buy.”

Paicoca: the peoples' speech.

Airo pai: forest people. Po pai, white people. Nea pai, black people.

Piaguaje, a family name: *pia*, little bird; *guaje*, pronounced a bit like wahey, fresh, young, green. Payaguaje, the other major Secoya family name: *paya*, oil on the skin of the face. They were named that because people said they were strong shamans, and in the ceremony, their faces would become oily, a sign of their power.

Nata wahë (or *guaje*): Good morning—literally, morning fresh.

Hn-hn: Yes. I could spell it jn-jn because of the Spanish orthography. It sounds just like hm-hm with the m's replaced with n's. The stress is on the second hn.

Pani: No.

Deóji, pronounced *dayóhee*: Thank you.

On Sunday morning Gervasio delivered me back to Joaquín's place, where I found the shaman chopping firewood. Joaquín wouldn't accept my help. With a machete, he cut two meter-long, wrist-thick sections of a *yagé* vine that was growing on a pair of tall trees behind his house. With a wooden mallet he pounded the vine sections so the bark came off and they opened up a little. They turned from yellow-brown to orange as they oxidized in the air. He chopped them into short lengths and boiled them in a huge aluminum pot together with leaves he gathered from another vine that he called *yagé ocó*,

water *yagé*.

A neighbor from across the river stopped by and Joaquín arranged for me to catch a ride with him out of Secoya territory the following morning.

We talked all day. Joaquín's Spanish was idiosyncratic, the language of someone who has spoken it a bit incorrectly for many decades. Sometimes my attention was drawn to the surface of what he was saying, sometimes to the content. He told me his parents both died when he was very small, and his grandparents raised him. His grandfather gave him *yagé* when he was still a boy. He wept and had visions for three days and nights. “It's very important, crying,” he said, tipping his head back, looking at me. “Getting everything out.”

I told him about my few LSD and mushroom experiences, and how I'd liked them but always felt the setting was wrong. The shaman nodded, “*A Usted le gusta chumar. Usted será un buen hombre.*” “You like to trip. You'll be a good man.”

I knew the verb “*chumar*” from my reading, but this was the first time I'd heard it used. It was derived from the name of an Andean hallucinogen, the San Pedro cactus, known to the indigenous people as *achuma*. “*A Usted le gusta chumar,*” I repeated to myself. It pleases you to choom. The word's onomatopoeic, like peyote. A sound effect from a comic book: someone plunging into the astral plane: CHOOM! Joaquín's statement lightened my heart, and not just because of the verb. I told him I was fed up with feeling like a criminal for wanting to trip in the United States. The shaman responded that he came from a society where the most valued men were the best *yagé* drinkers, and where if you didn't stay up all night drinking and chanting for the good of the tribe, you were considered lazy and useless.

Even so, he noted, *yagé* drinkers were sometimes persecuted. “There was a shaman,” Joaquín said, “who was accused of harming people with his magic, because people were getting sick and dying. In fact, he was doing all he could to save lives, to drive off the evil that was attacking his community. But because he was powerful, some within the community suspected him, and prepared to kill him. Then one day, some strangers paddled down out of the sky in canoes.”

“They paddled down out of the sky in canoes?” I echoed, unsure if I was understanding correctly.

“That's right. They were paddling canoes in the sky, and they paddled down and landed on the earth. The shaman got into one of those canoes. Then they paddled back up into the sky, taking him away with them. The people on earth never saw the shaman again. And the disease continued to

take its toll, and they realized it had not been his doing.”

The objection to hallucinogens where I came from was that they could cause brain damage or insanity. But the objection to hallucinogens here, I realized, was that they might make the user powerful and evil.

The sun was setting, Joaquín plucked a spiky, green seedpod from a bush near his hut, and now, as the last light of the day played in the treetops, he opened it with his fingers. Achioté, he said it was called. I saw an oily, bright red juice around the seeds inside. The shaman broke off a long, narrow sliver of palm wood from one of the posts of the hut, rubbed it in the juice, and used it to print diagonal lines and asterisks on my forehead and cheeks and on his own. “This means,” he said, “we’re children of the sky.”

He said we’d be silent for an hour before drinking. We rested, me on a low wooden stool, him in an old hammock. On the other side of the hut Maribel and their little granddaughter Xiomara hung a big mosquito net over some mats and blankets and lay down to sleep.

Although I was close to my goal of trying ayahuasca, I became downcast. In the past, all the men in the village would have assembled to drink. Now it was just one old guy and a tourist. Pathetic. The missionaries had won. The tradition was dead. Maybe I could find the Sionas later.

Darkness. Joaquín lit a kerosene lamp, then filled a plastic mug with the brown brew and chanted over it. I’d never heard anything like that chant. It was wobbly, like a canoe on the river, like a hammock, like the flame that dimly lit the inside of the hut. The shaman drank, then poured a cup for me and chanted into it and handed it to me. The liquid I choked down was bitter as peyote. Were there visions in it? Forty minutes passed. Joaquín picked up a kind of fan made of a bundle of spearhead-shaped leaves and shook it as he chanted his wobbly, rhythmic music. He broke off and growled like a jaguar. The back of my neck prickled. He resumed singing. The growl had seemed natural, unself-conscious. Bizarre. Any time I’d heard someone imitate an animal, it had sounded contrived.

The music stopped again. “Are you feeling the *yagé*?”

“No.”

“Do you want another cup?”

“Please.”

Half an hour later, wondering if I was going to choom, I glanced up at the palm-frond ceiling. By the light of the kerosene lamp, the ceiling’s vibrating. Or I am. I feel tremendously altered. I try to speak, but can only sing: “This is the strongest hallucinogen I’ve ever taken.” What’s happening through me? I vibrate. Earlier I felt sad that there were only the two of us. Now the night is drenched with consciousness. Every thought every being

has ever had here pulses in the air. The fact that only two human bodies are present is inconceivable. Joaquín’s voice is like millions chanting together.

Before long, nausea hits, an exclamation point, a warning sign. “I have to vomit,” I mutter. Earlier Joaquín said I could puke off the side of the hut if I needed to. Now, though, he sits up in his hammock and snaps, “Don’t vomit! Keep it down!”

“I can’t,” I groan, and make for the edge of the hut, and crouch there, breathing deeply, balancing on the balls of my feet, seething with a thunderous energy.

“Don’t fall,” urges Joaquín from behind me. “Don’t fall.”

In a voice far deeper than my ordinary one, I respond, “Sometimes the human doesn’t fall.” Together with the *yagé*, a tremendous force surges from the tip of my tailbone up my spine. As the body expels the bitter liquid into the darkness, it emits a deep, choking groan. Another surge of the nausea brings up *yagé* and a fiery gleaming energy that I roar with, louder and clearer now with the sign of victory. Another convulsion of my stomach and I’m empty, pure, and I roar and roar in defiance of everything that has ever sullied my soul.

Something’s happening behind me. Under the hut, the two dogs are barking at me, alarmed about the large mammal roaring up here. Joaquín and his wife are shushing them. Not shushing me, because, as I’ve read, it’s expected that novice *yagé* drinkers will make a lot of noise, but the dogs. I pause and say to the dogs in a normal tone of voice, in English, “Be quiet, it’s just a human acting crazy on *yagé*.” They immediately fall silent and I resume roaring undisturbed.

I make my way back and put a questioning hand on the rope of Joaquín’s old hammock. The shaman makes room for me and I recline next to him facing the other way. Separated by a taut fold of net-like palm fiber mesh, our left hips pressed together, we take turns singing. His songs inspire and respond to my thoughts. For my part I improvise, sing “wavy” to a simple tune, ask “Oh, really?” in a dozen different ways, cooing it, growling it, shouting it like a come-cry. I become surrounded by and filled with thunder and I boom at the top of my lungs. The spirit of thunder has come to visit, to celebrate, to bellow through a human body. When this happened to the Vikings, they called it Thor. He’s here. Greetings, Lord Thor. Blessings and explosions.

Later, I rave spontaneous neologisms, thinking, *Why settle for words that have already been spoken? Our nature is to create language, not just repeat it.*

In *yagé*, I go on, I’ve found my life’s work. I’ll report on this, I’ll analyze it, I’ll let others contemplate through the lens of my mind this profound

natural magic.

During these hours of trance and song, Joaquín and I establish an unspoken telepathic bond. It's clear that we'll work together as student and teacher. Our minds join like two bubbles joining at the surface of water, like two candle flames that become one when held together. We're one man in two bodies.

Around two in the morning, interspersing falsetto squeals with guttural growls, I inadvertently snap some of the worn out palm fiber strings on my side of the old hammock and fall through nearly to the floor. I'm just holding myself in by my elbows. This evokes a cascade of awful thoughts. I'm clumsy. I've killed this hammock. I can't be trusted with people's things. Worse, it's not just me, it's everyone. When we enjoy ourselves too much, we lose control. Gays get AIDS from having too much fun without protection. Uncle Pat had too much to drink and died in a car crash. With a heavy sigh, my ass inches from the floor, I silently swear to be cautious and never too happy.

Joaquín's voice, infinitely gentle, reaches me: "*Aguántalo, aguántalo.*" Deal with it, don't let it get you down.

Dealing with it as best I can, I clamber out of the broken hammock and wrap a blanket around myself and fall asleep on the floor.

Over breakfast, I wondered if there had really been a telepathic bond. I said, "You know, I have this plan to visit the Huaoranis south of here, but part of me would like to stay around here and study with you."

Without missing a beat, Joaquín replied, "If you want to study with me, come back another year and stay with us for two months. Bring me multicolored glass beads and a trunk that locks for me to keep my clothes in."

The neighbor's outboard motor was purring in the river below. I'd never discussed a price for the ceremony with the shaman. How could you put a price on something like that? I took out my wallet and handed Joaquín a wad of bills without counting it; he accepted it and put it away without counting it. Then I didn't see him again for eighteen months.

* * * * *



Damask

As a young wife, I'd take evenings walking out in the vineyards. I thought about getting all the way to the main road, maybe climb on to it like it was a conveyor belt and ride it wherever it would go.

Then the lights would go up in houses behind me and I'd stop walking, smoke a cigarette to delay my turn-back, and fish a deep breath from a grape cluster. Where our driveway sloped up to the straggly rosebushes, my husband waited.

Years later, promises dissolved, I drove myself to far-off towns where I no longer had to be tender, and the rules shivered like eucalyptus leaves. There was always something to see, then nothing to see, and so I turned the car around. But, it was an adventure, discredited by its size and still . . . everything.

The times we are in expect a woman to be thin and beautiful and intrepid. I make the minor effort and fail. What is there to believe in save love which is everything . . . everything?

I tell my daughter not to follow me. I become stranded too easily. I'll follow a river just so far along its bedded contours, then stop—as if a force field grew in front of me—and not take another step except toward home.

My Mother's Eldest Sister

My Aunt Lottie, in Lorain Ohio, risked her life to run outside and save her duck from a tornado. Everyone else had gone to the basement and they called to her, "Lottie, come on," "Mama, hurry!" But she didn't care. She ran outside to save the duck and by the time she caught it, the tornado was upon them.

In the house she ran to the pictures of the saints hung round her living room walls. She ran, the duck under one arm, her beads in one hand, from saint to saint, and her life was spared. She said novenas for a year, in gratitude to Saint Jude, then she cut the duck's white throat to make *Char-nee-na* (duck's blood soup), a dish her husband loved.



G.C. Dillon 

To Seek a Better World

[New Fiction]

You may call me Azfar; I am the physician to the Suzerain.

I sat, clumsily, my buttocks feeling the hard and cold marble floor beneath my carpet—a flying carpet. Or one soon to be if I have my conjuring right. And I knew that I did. My blue turban slipped and obscured my vision as I sat down upon my creatively woven rug. Not artistically creative—tho' it may be that too. No! It was simply a creative design to attract the air elementals and to cajole the *Djinn* to provide lift, velocity and a stabilization of tilt and yaw. I have studied more than the scrolls, tablets, and papyri some deem sorcery. The loom and the weaver's skill have been my companions for months. I pushed my head garb higher upon my forehead and adjusted the ruby clasp that secured it—or almost secured. My flying carpet raised a cubit, not nearly enough to soar amongst the *Rocs*.

In my haste, I may have dropped a stitch, or drew a malformed glyph. I must regain my patience for it has been my most sincere virtue these past few fortnights. There is time anon, for it is never too late to trek beyond the sunrise—not even for a scholar as aged as I. A limestone and quartz moon-gazing tower awaits me; there I may live the remainder of my hours in study. My manor-estate allows not this ease; ideals have degenerated to burdens, and eyes that once saw only innocence, now see solely corruption. *I must away!*

My work was interrupted when Janissaries of the Suzerain burst into my sanctum. These were the personal guard of the Imperial Family. Long cavalry sabres and the shorter, sharply curved falchions graced their sides. Conical helmets with a long nose guard and a spike on top adorned their heads. They wore long kilts with interlocking strips of metal shielding. Quivers of arrows rested upon their back along with the small compound bow of the horse-soldier. Their leader was blond like the woolly mammoths they ride on the frozen tundra and even onto the thick glaciers of the far, far Northern Thule.

"The Grand Vizier requires your presence." It was Vossig, captain of this very special guard, who spoke to me.

I slipped a banned text of the fire daemons beneath the most Holy

Book of our Prophet. I thrust a yatagan sword into my burlap belt; only the Suzerain's paladins and soldiers may wear two blades. Was it I who signed that edict so long ago? I have little recollection of such mundane details.

We walked the long boulevard where the Suzerain's war-chariots parade with the plunder and tribute that they have won. I glance at the minarets of my city as we pass. The hanging gardens were terraced upon the hills beyond. But our citizens grow their herbs in the earthen pots at their windowsill: mandrake, rosemary, parsley, and sage. I heard the *vox populi*, the singular murmur of the people, our city's *hoi polloi*. I listened for their generous laughter, their little joys. I serve them as least as much as I serve their titled divinely ordained leaders.

This was an auspicious march through the city for me. Most of my recent sojourns into our municipality have been midnight walks, where my ears could hear only my own steps or the lonely cry of the night watch. The waxing and waning moon has been my sole compatriot and torch bearer, and on stygian nights the stars, like *Surrat al-feras* (Alpheratz), *Ra's al-ghul* (Algol), *Yad al-Jauza* (Betelgeuse), or *Al Najid* (Bellatrix), shone down like the prying eyes of winged *Peris*. I have visited herbalists and apothecaries trading in the rarest spices and medicines carried by far flung caravan dromedaries across the harshest sands.

We came to the palatial compound. The foremost structure was the audience hall of the Suzerain, the *Diwan-I-Aam*. In the past, it was here that the people could come to seek a sympathetic ear for their slights and grievances. Once, I stood as minister at the side of a man of justice, and helped provide relief, succor, and aid. Today, its walls were mute and deaf.

At the far edge of the grand campus, I saw the massive building in which the hostages of subject kings and princes reside; these monarchs send their sons and daughters to be raised by us. Too often these children when grown hate us and rebel. We just had to put down the Impaler's troops, and force him into a western exile amongst his co-religious, though ethically different, allies. He will return, I know, leading vaster forces, and our young Suzerain will ride out on his puissant stallion to meet him. Or so I must conclude.

We passed the House of Wisdom, as we approached the inner palace. I am the curator of this repository of scrolls and records, yet have not set foot within its doors for nearly a decade. A few steps more and we went under the arch to the Suzerain's home and seat of power.

Two large eunuchs blessed with huge, wide, curving scimitars stood before the hareem. Their chests were bare and their silk trousers blew as if from a draft, if not a gentle breeze. Only the Suzerain, his queen mother, his

wives, seraglio concubines, and children were allowed inside—so I was directed left to other private chambers in the glorious palace, a small chamber. The Suzerain lay upon a desert cot. I smiled. His forefather's resting place was his imperial throne. Today.

The dowager-queen stood beside her son.

"You have served his father."

"I have." Served? Treated! I am a doctor, not a butler, "Your husband was a good man, observant to our gracious Lord, kind to the poor, and judicious to his people." Not a despot to the faithfully righteous.

"You will serve his son as well," the regal queen stated. I bowed as any supplicant would.

When I left this sickroom I met with Grand Vizier Nazeer. He had a swarthier complexion than mine—dusky as I am. He was more heavy-set than I, as well. But his silken clothes marveled the gods of false legend. Only the Suzerain was more richly attired.

"I have prescribed certain herbs and as much venison broth as his body may tolerate," I told the princely official. I fear my eyes told him my own dire diagnosis.

"More than one cause comes to mind. We have magick."

"I had suspected that!" Nazeer spat angrily. "No evidence can be found by my finest operatives." His finest? He has not contacted me before.

"Good witches?" I asked.

"Yes. Magicians, astrologers, and seers. Everyone." Not everyone, I thought, till now. "Nothing the spell-casters can find—no trace, no matter how faint."

"Of course, the natural ravages of disease may be the reason. May our Heavenly Lord protect him! Or—"

"Was he poisoned?" Nazeer asked sharply.

"I believe he was poisoned!" I looked into his cold eyes.

"Come," he commanded. I did follow.

The vizier led me to a room where two guards and a twenty-year-old man were. He wore a coarse and burly, brown tunic. Light brown hair, thin and stringy, covered his head. His name was Corrin and I have known him for years. He was the Suzerain's food taster and not of our true faith.

"This is the slave who is dutied to ensure that our majesty's meal is safe to eat. He has the ability to suss out the smallest bit of poison. I have seen it myself."

"You need not hold him in suspicious custody. I believe this foul deed is not of his making. Corrin, give me your cup." I handed it to the vizier. He placed his nose deep into the ceramic stein, sniffing gently at first, then

taking a deep whiff as if smelling fragrant jasmine. But his face did not display sweet-smelling perfume in his nostrils.

“Alcohol! It is forbidden by our Holy Book and professions of our Sacred Prophet.” Nazeer’s voice lowered in reverence: “May Heaven Bless His Name.”

“There is the Law and there is the law enforced,” I replied to the chief judge of the court’s Star Chamber.

“Forbidden to the Faithful, yes,” I continued. “But he is a loyal Infidel. It is fermented bread. For flavor, their brewsters mix in grains of paradise, bitter buds of hops, chamomile, bitter cherries, even coffee.”

“The red kaffir beans such as the Suzerain’s concubines request?” Nazeer asked. Was he considering the cost to the chancery as he queered me?

“The very same! Only roasted and ground,” I informed the exalted advisor.

“Can they not put in poison?” I asked. “My nose detects the bouquet of almonds, just as a vial of arsenic might. I submit that our food taster has been desensitized with the toxin. Our villain utilized his beer ration to accomplish this nefarious act.”

The vizier looked away a moment. “Who would do this?” His voice was fierce as a blustery sirocco.

“I have given you the means. Your harsh interrogators must torture out motives from your usual suspects; however you will get little from good Corrin here.”

“And why do you proclaim that!” Nazeer’s voice filled the room as a haboob storm would.

I placed my hands upon the slave and forced his jaws apart, as a horse trader would do in the bazaar. “He has no tongue!” Only a small red stub moved in his mouth. “It was removed at the command of our Suzerain’s father when Corrin was but a boy. He was cautious about what state intrigues his son’s food taster may overhear.”

Speaking not a word to me, Nazeer turned upon his silked shoes and left the room, signaling for his soldiers to follow.

I was alone with Corrin, as I have been before. I handed him his stein, as I have before. He sipped once again, but no more would I need to doctor the spirit, slowly and patiently adding grain upon grain, scruple upon scruple, dram upon dram. Justice has been done. *Sic Semper Tyrannis*, as our western adversaries speak. Thus always to tyrants. I have done my best to release my people from a cruel overlord. I have rid the world of a mere shadow to a great leader exiled by the usurping machinations of his ungrateful son’s court.

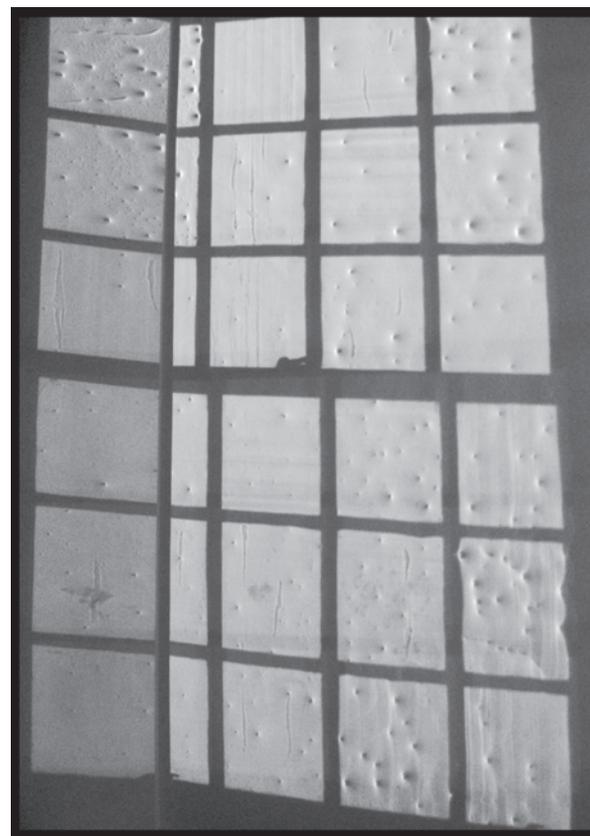
For is it not written:

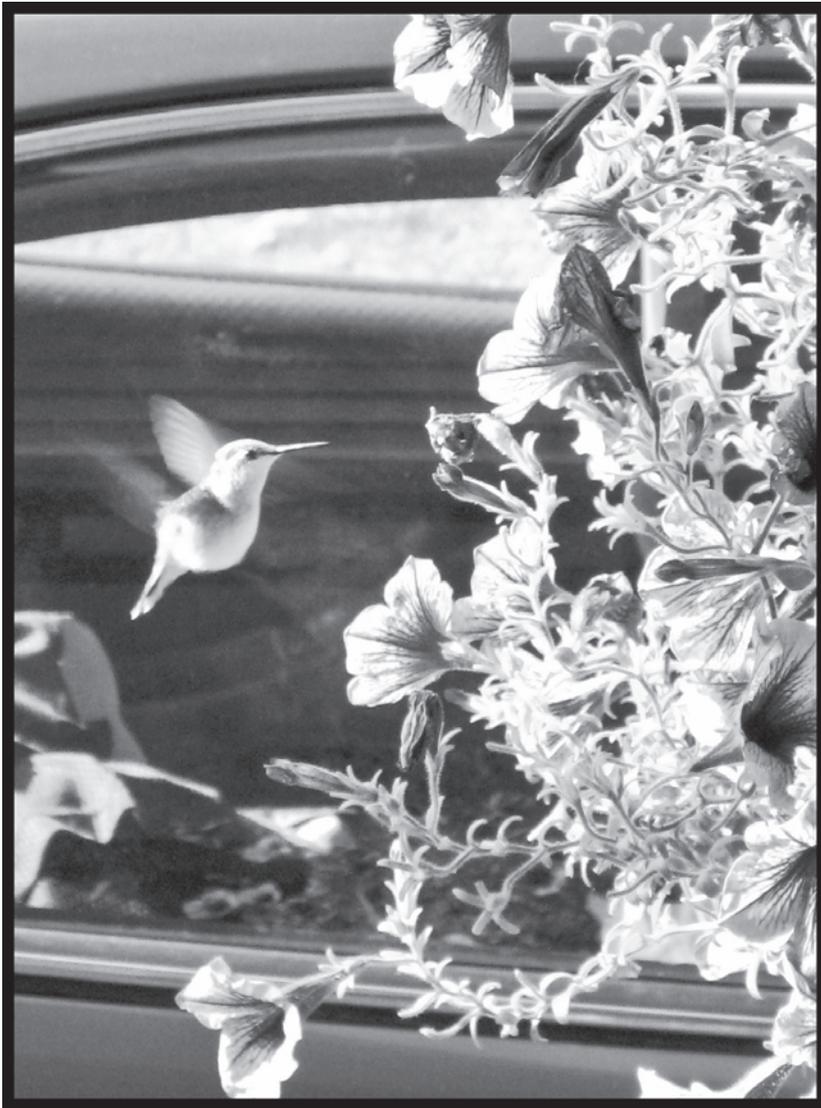
*call no man your master, for you have a heavenly Master;
call no man lord, for you have a heavenly Lord;
call no man father, for you have a heavenly Father.*

I left the room for my labors were complete. I need now only conjure my carpet to arise and fly me to a more pleasant place.

Agar Firdaus Bar Rooe Zaminast Haminasto.
If there is a heaven on earth, it is here.

* * * * *





North Jersey Afternoon

In the grand rooms of my childhood home
The old Italian men moved deliberately in 1979.
I was happily at play in the spot-lit sun,
In a patch of blazing yellow on a yellow carpet.

In a tangle of tin trains I spied their casual suits,
Their cigars burning a scent of home, which rose
Like the smoke of my locomotives, barreling
Across imagined trestles in those days of imagination.

The talk was light as the Yankees were fair,
Homesick Munson had crashed his plane,
Someone had tickets from a business relation.
And so they held court for hours in that sun-filled room.

As the sun-tracked shadows lengthened
On those warm floors of home, and the Demitasse cups
Clinked gently on their porcelain saucers,
The conversation quieted, grew more urgent in tone.

Those stout voices turned, each one, toward a center point
Somewhere above their grapes and walnuts—
Consensus was reached. It would be done.
The old Italian men were deliberate, in 1979.

Never unheard, those cries in blackened corners,
Huddled closer, like sirens through frozen water;
Blue inside blue, on the night of my father,
My lectern raving, flaming in stormy weather.

Blue inside blue, a cavalry of crystal—
Mine the hunted, mind the polished arrow.
He begat she, mapped out our cursed days—
Five ghosts shall rise, and brakemen line the way.

Sorrows of the grove, the murder and fiddle,
The bagged head shivers, then falls from the gallows;
A thousand lovers struggle toward the grave.
Somber is the tune, an odyssey away.

Tell her plain of the silent lies, you the truth-keeper,
You of the clear eyes, you of the bitter green,
Cool as dulcimer strings, cool beyond how.
Blue inside blue, I raise not the slightest vowel.

* * * * *



Simian Songs

[Essay]

In the crystalline quiet of the black, a voice of questioning, melancholy, power and size. “Aahhhh ooooooOO, hoo, Ooh, Hoo” It is a long sound, lasting fifty seconds or more, ending in a deep note which no forest animal can have. The sound is pure, in perfect pitch, like the sound of an alien horn, cutting through the night like a knife. The dog erupts out of the tent like a shot, at first running to the camp’s edge, the black wall at the limit of light, then back between my legs. I feel the call is a question, as in, “Who are you?” But also a veiled threat, “This is my place. You are the intruder.”

And yet, in the song of sound . . . is sadness. It is the knowledge that we are somehow the same animal, separated by the grief of genetics, without which we could be brothers. The obvious human qualities to the voice have every hair on my body sticking straight out. I am deeply frightened. *Will this hairy arthropod charge in here and demand something? The dog? Sex? My life?* Visions of yellow fangs and beady eyes course my brain, with continuing thoughts of this giant sub-human tearing my limbs off. A reverse-Grendel story.

But I trust the Indian tales that this is a peaceful creature. “The Man of the Woods” they called him. Nevertheless, I don’t trust the Indian tales *that* much. I get out the SKS, the Chinese assault rifle that will discharge 12 rounds in 30 seconds. This I lay across my lap, the dog cowered beneath. Should I fire off a shot in its direction? A warning scare shot? It seems so crass. It’s everything I hate about white men. Instead, I choose to answer. A single loud “YO” I bellow into the blackness. The silence closes over my sound like a heavy quilt on a baby. The anthropoid’s song seems to linger in the valley, a sound persisting like the ringing in the ears, this call, communing with the Neolithic noises of a hundred thousand years past.

For over an hour I sit at the fire, built up now, beside the hissing gas lamp, clutching the rifle. I am expecting a pair of red eyes to glow back at me from the dark . . . but nothing stirs. Not a breath of wind, a creaking branch, a squirrel settling in, the chirp of a bird. Nothing. It is the unnerving void of space. Here, I with my dwindling fire and gaslamp, am the space ship. Tiny. Insignificant. Vulnerable. Eventually my pounding heart slows enough to where

sleep might be possible. As if the goddamned night wasn't ridiculously long already. Would that this cursed phenomena of night be abolished. I'd rather go nuts from lack of sleep than suffer this inky horror. Now in the bed, tent zipped, dog piled on top, reading the boring engineering book. Eventual sleep. Weird dreams.

Torn instantly from a dream, I snap to sitting in raw fright. The whole valley is filled with screaming and hooting. The dog is leaping around the tent like he's on fire. *Oh God, we are surrounded by a hoard of monsters!* Two, three, four, or more voices are going at once. There seems to be competition for who is the most vocal. It is more varied also, starting soft, going to a high note, and drifting out to a deep resonate "ooOOO" of bass. Terror is all over me like a cold-water bath. But what can I do? I'm out here near the divide in the remotest place in America.

The songs and howling continues on and on. It is now 11. The moon has just come up over the ridge. As soon as one song ends, frequently with hoots and oots, another begins. At times, when three or more are going at once, one will set up a *Ki-Yi-Yi*, similar to North African women wailing their group cause of grief. I am trapped in this Saran Wrap bag called a tent with five to fifty monsters out there.

The main ruckus sounds about a half-mile down the valley, whereas the first fella was a quarter-mile upstream where I had been digging. Apparently he hooked up with the gang and ratted me out. If this Neanderthal meeting is a prelude to shredding the invading white man, I am toast. All that's missing are the drums. I may get a clumsy shot off or two, but they are fast and quiet and insanely strong. I'm the pit-bull's rag doll toy. My limbs will be strewn about the valley as if I exploded.

But wait . . . what exactly do I need to fear? These peaceful people of the woods are gathering for what to them is a family barbeque. Who am I to be concerned with their society? Pass the mustard please. To be molested to death, by their mighty prehensile paws, is surely a more romantic way to go than being in a three-car rollover on the freeway. Here I am, pursuing my dream in the wilderness—as are they—*what could be a more natural way to go?*

"YaaahaaAhhhhooooOOOO, Who, Who"—on and on they persist. Must be fifteen minutes now. My mind, unable to come to terms with a furry simian sing-a-long in the midnight woods, conceives a new idea. These are not Abominable Snowmen—these are wolves! Yes, that's it. Moon up over the ridge and all. The eco-assholes relocation/reintroduction plan for all the extinct creatures. That's who they are. Dogs. Probably woolly mammoths out here too. If the wolves come around here to tear me apart like in the movie *Grey*, I'll empty the assault rifle into the buggers with more alacrity than the first

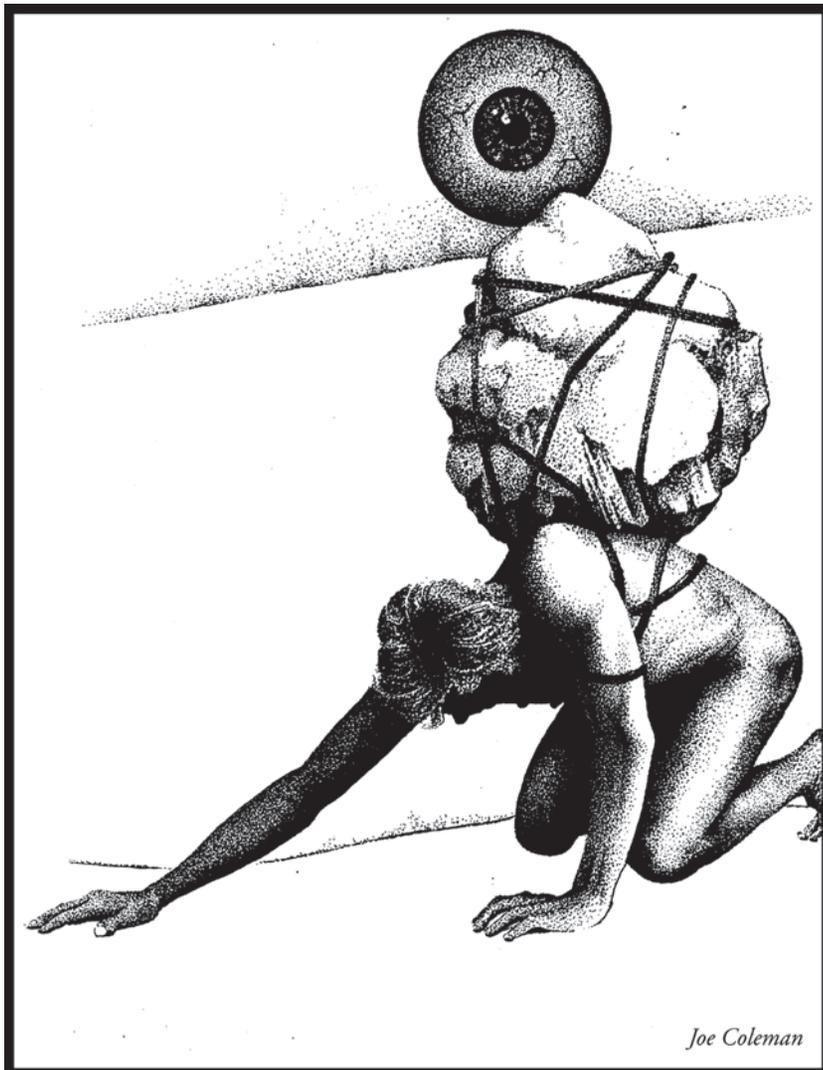
showing of *Dark Night*. I can settle the issue. I'll record the songs on the camera with movie mode. Then some expert from a prestigious university can tell me if it's wolves or Sasquatches.

Now, where's the camera? In the pack. Where's the pack? Outside under the tree. *Outside where the yellow toothed shredders are!* OK, OK, I have the LED light. I make a dash for it. Outside into the howling horror. I always wonder why in the movies they go into the place where the monster is. Yet, here I am. There is no pack under the tree. Scan the whole camp. No pack. Where the hell is it? Flash the light around in the tent. No pack. Scan around the tree and camp again. Gone.

The Sasquatch have taken my pack. They are known for such thieving behaviors. They must be from Central America. The son-of-a-bitch snuck in here . . . right in front of us, and snatched it. My wallet's in that pack. What's the Sasquatch gonna do with a debit card and no PIN number? Every dime I own in the world is in that wallet. I can't just go eating squirrels or roots or campers as they would do. I need cash.

I'm panicking. The singing continues, the voices calmer now with more time between songs. Fuck it! They stole my wallet, I'll blast em! I barge irrationally into the tent for the war weapon. Grab it up. It's been laying on the pack. The pack with the wallet. Hmmm . . . disconnect. Maybe they're not such bad chums after all. Well, at least I can take the safety off the trigger. Ok, here's the camera. The screen is a mass of pixels since I dropped the rock on it, so I can't read the menu and change to movie mode. Mash some buttons. Think this is it. I snap some pictures of the tent ceiling. Nope. Not it. In the ethereal distance, only one animal sings a mournful howl. No hooting after shots. Obviously wolves. Wolves with uncommonly sounding human voices. Wolves with a trachea the diameter of a bean can. A trachea that can reverberate 30 Hz at 80 dB for 70 seconds. Wolves with 20-liter lungs. 8- to 10-foot-high wolves. Yes. Now. Finally got the camera ready. I'm not going outside for purity of sound, fuck that. The experts will just have to unscramble it like a bad UFO photo. Always the techno problem with this sort of thing. I raise the tiny gizmo to the top of the tent as the last melancholy song fades softly into the night. I wait for the next one. It's been fairly continuous for twenty minutes now. Maybe it's ten minutes? Maybe two hours? Seems I've been doing this all night. Silence. Not a sound. The battery icon is empty—red—blinking its desperate warning. After flashing the roof three times, there's not enough juice to record anything anyway. In a few minutes, the camera shuts itself off. So it is with these things. Might as well go back to sleep. Another eight hours of black and monsters before the dawn. Only one way to get there. Unconscious.

* * * * *



The Arc-Welder

Flips face-mask up and down
to shield his eyes from white-hot light
to hide white-hot eyes
fueled by an acetelyne source.
He is valve with broken gauge,
tank,
hose,
tool and tip
sparking in an arc.
He does not bind.
He does not seal.
He cannot make them one.
He does not weld.
It all grows cold.

A welding torch is useless on flesh . . .
we burn,
hope smokes.
We do not join.

Shake hands.
Stay two arm-lengths apart . . .
Do not hold.

Dog and Poet

Always a dog.
Newly a poet.
Circling in antiseptic transactions:
creative collisions, barely touching—
nipping;
weekly brushes with intimacy—
sniffing;
listening, devoted,
inoculated against comprehension—
panting;
cerebral claws dumb—
but scratching.

Ideas are only whimpers of ecstasy.

Chew on unfulfilled ideas

and play dead.

You're such a good dog.

I bite!

my teeth contaminated suggestions, I gnaw on hope.

Beg! Lie down!

Feral, I root at your mind until bone is revealed and surrenders,
drooling.

We write!

Word becomes flesh. Possibilities unleashed. . .

Up! Up! Stand!

Roll over. Be a good poet. . .

Smile your well-groomed smile,

speaking your fetching words,

sit.

Stay.

Obey.

Eventually we'll run rabid together

across the seductive distance between intellect and instinct

—howling.

Now, give me a paw.

Give me applause.

* * * * *

Raymond Soulard, Jr.



Many Musics, Ninth Series

xxx. Falling Free

There is no time. That's what we six learned.

What we know still.

There is no time.

We travel rootless paths. Cling to their scenery.

We mold to sense impressions, helplessly,

& layer upon layer our seeming knowledge.

Our bodies mature like fruit, to new shapes,

to deeper within. The path to others sometimes

farther, more volatile. Do the lights of the sky

understand? Do other creatures of the earth?

Can our want flare to knowing, stay?

We accumulated, entering the Cave,

filled our bond more & more, seeming,

then a falling back, a rupture. A loss.

So many years to find this Island,

come to its shores. With the wishes

of our kingdom, its worries we be well.

We'd intended no kingdom & yet it now stood,

& those who had raised it were now leaving,

a voyage for all humanity, twas said, & though

the world seemed prosperous & at its ease,

they sailed without further word.

The King now knew the way, he'd summoned

us & said. His great hall, its great communal

meal table, where we ate with all of our

kinsmen, was emptied but for one map.

His eye, his finger on one place, seeming
in the open sea. "There." We looked.
"In the morning." "How do we land on water?"
"It will be there." "How will we know?"

He stopped us with a fist upon the table.
"It's there. It's what we seek. Guarded,
but we will be let in." Then he turned & left,
didn't take his map. Didn't need it.

It was our fellowship that allowed us
passage. The King traded our love for it.
For him, twas no longer save mankind or the world.
Save her. Bring her back. Her unknown illness.
Lack of funeral. No gravesite. We sailed.

Other stories tell of our arrival, the dreams,
the dark portents. None tell the rest.
There is no time.

The Island that was not there came into
view the third morning out, & we landed
its shoreless rocky edge. Woods, it was covered
in a unnavigable pale Woods!

But the King had negotiated our passage.
He gathered us the next morning,
upon an unliked night of sleep there,
closed his eyes, & began to sing.
Sing & climb from the rocks & on into
the Woods. We followed him, weapons
but no foe. A silent Woods to enter,
save for the King's crooning.

Helpless we followed. Our King blindly
sang & moved forward, not a stumble,
unlike the rest of us. He sang us along
a seeming invisible path for hours
& impossible to say it led, & yet did.



It should have been night when we came out,
& beheld the Tangled Gate. Should have,
wasn't. It was taller than a castle
& seeming ageless. Was ageless. *There is no time.*
We'd yet to learn.

We remarked its legend above us:
“*For those lost.*” Were we? We passed through.
There a Fountain, carved fanatically
beyond the mortal skills. Its waters
an invitation. The King gestured us drink.
There seemed no choice.

The passage through the Gate was only
partly physical. It's this the myths
cannot convey. There were no days or nights
in the Gate. *There is no time.*

We did not come to the Cave of the Beast
by a path, or several. It was arrival
without intention. Were there even
the paths told of, made of vines & stones?
Had we left the Fountain, or the entrance,
or had we even left the shoreless
rocky lip of the Island?

The King roused us. As a group we'd been
slumped. “This is why we were brought
together. To come here & enter this Cave.
We're here to save the world by our
worth as men. Our willingness to enter
this Cave.”

I entered & found myself of a sudden
by the shore of a pond at twilight.
The pond was covered in water lilies,
& the insect hum rose to my ears.
I sat & did not know. There was no
way back. This is what was intended for me.

I entered next, seeing my brother in the far
distance, by a place he'd mentioned having seen
once, called it a living painting. I could not
retrieve him, & despaired, when I felt
many arms embrace me, touch my face,
join my beating, my breath, *my brothers*—

And I came, though what separated one
from another of us I could less & less tell.
I did not need aid to sleep & wake both
for here in the Gate it was this forever,
it was source, before sunshine, before soil,
all was music, all was flow. I smiled.

I came to know & saw the living canvas
of my brothers & how I'd come to paint it
& I yearned my place! Please let me
consume in this canvas finally
& know more than painter & subject,
let all be one, let all be one.

My King I came last before you &
something in this welcoming goo
was wrong. I loved my brothers so much
but I was trained by Creatures
far wiser than we men to sniff
& know. As I entered the Cave
I sniffed to know & the pain seemed
to rip me wide. I sniffed again &
again, to calm. My brothers were not
in that Cave. Not dead but gone.

When I came out you shrieked wordless
at me. You ran past me into the Cave
& remained within for three days.
I was compelled to stay vigil, no more.

When you came out, that third morning,
you were not as I had known.
We returned to our ship, unhindered,

no path needed. You told me only one thing,
“There’s no need to mourn them. We know
there is no time. So there can be no death.”

All I felt was the falling back,
the rupture, the loss. I wondered the Gate,
then the Island, then the sense
of everything.

I broke with you, my King, when I sunk
to my knees one night & cried for help.
Cried for help a man could conceive,
& use. A Savior, to comfort, to explain.
A Savior, whether he had ever existed,
could now exist. Could comfort & explain
hereon. Could bring me along with the rest.
Where you, my King, my brother, had denied,
when you willing sacrificed us all in the Gate.

The emptiness possesses me, even now,
as I saw you divide from your kingdom,
as I saw you reach back to the Island,
as I saw you come to believe
there was something there after all
to save men, a bargain to be made
with whatever Eternals had built that Gate.

I arrayed against you, my King,
that others would not follow you,
across the waters, on the path
that had taken our brothers from us.
A path you had designed because
there is no time & she had not died
& *you could save her even now*. You could
still save her & our brothers. The Gate
could save us all. *The Gate could save the world.*



* * * * *



P as in Peter

[Essay]

I. Preface

Some years ago, a young American artist named Keith P. Rein got tired of being asked what his middle initial P. stood for. He started telling people, “The P is for Penis.” That was just to shut them up, but they were so amused that he decided to name his business after the phrase. It’s not exactly original. The Royal Navy’s old “Alphabet Song” said the same thing: “P is for Penis, all pranged up and peeled.” Just like a man to come up with that, isn’t it? But it’s not only boys who think of penises when they think of the letter P. Girls do it too. When the self-described “mommy blogger” Catherine Connors decided to make up a “crazy, dirty alphabet ditty” of her own, she came to the same conclusion: “P is for phallus that stands at attention!”¹ It sure is, and I’ll show you why.

I’ve heard people deny it indignantly, but the letter’s shape tells the whole story. If you rotate P a quarter-turn clockwise, you’ll see a perfectly recognizable cock-and-balls, the shaft pointing left and loopy testicles flopping down on the right. What! That’s just an accident! Well, I think not. I think our ancestors shaped the letter P to look the way it does because they recognized the phallic nature of words that start with its lippy “puh” sound, like *piss* and *pole* and *poke*. These connotations are hardly a secret. The linguist John Lawler acknowledged in an important 1990 article² that *pr-* words like *prong* and *pry* have “phallic 1-D associations,” the same one-dimensional sharpness as *pencils* and *pokers*. Very true, but the question is: Why? How did P and its “puh” sound happen to get mixed up with phalluses? And why “puh” and not “yuh” or “nuh”?

The question answers itself if you pay attention to your lips as you say the sound. *Pub*. You’re kind of spitting, right? Spitting out air. *Pub*, *puff*. Fremont’s classroom alphabet chart³ calls P the “push” sound and introduces it by emphasizing its gushiness: “Put your lips together and ‘push’ it out.” *Push* it, *puff* it, *spit* it out. When you pronounce the word *spit*, can you feel how your lips are actually doing it? The action, the sound, and the idea are all united. Puffing and panting—that’s how P started its career. ‘Breath’ in Latin

is *spiritus*, as in *respiration*. When the autistic British savant Daniel Tammet invented the private language he called Māndi, he named ‘breath’ and ‘wind’ *puhu*. Now, if I’m making up words like that and I’ve decided to call a spurt of air *spiritus* or *puhu*, what would I call a spurt of water? Probably something similar, like *piss* or *pour*. Maybe I’d slap on a hissing *s* sound for emphasis and call it *spit* or *spew*. How about spurting semen? Same thing, probably. The Greeks called it *sperma*, and modern slang calls it *spoo*. Finally, what should we call the thing that spurts out the spoo? The Greeks settled on *peos* or *posthe*, and the Romans settled on *penis*, a word so apt that it remains the formal term in most languages three thousand years later.

Let’s retrace our steps. We started with onomatopoeia: *puff*, *pant*. That’s air spurting. From there metaphor took us to spurting liquid, as in *piss* and *sperm*. Then metonymy—guilt by association—suggested a *p* name for the organ that shoots those liquids out, the *penis*. Now we move up a level, because we’ve accidentally linked the “puh” sound to the PHALLUS, a mental archetype so powerful that its gravity basically tugs the sound into permanent orbit. Henceforth, P words will no longer relate primarily to breath or water; their main job will be to name things that remind us of the PHALLUS. A phallus’s unmistakable shape—a long cylinder with a point at one end—gives us our key metaphor for pointy objects (*pencil*, *spear*), what those objects do (*poke*, *penetrate*), how they feel (*prickly*), and the kind of people who resemble them (*pricks*). The metonymy of the PHALLUS is even more single-minded. It simply hijacks P words for anything related to sex or the area between the legs: *passion*, *parenting*, *poop*, *perverts*. This is why almost any P word can exude a faint whiff of taboo—why, in Arianna Huffington’s phrase, even *Prius* cars sound “vaguely naughty.”

II. The Sprinkler

The first link in P’s chain of ideas may be the ‘breath’ issuing from the mouth, but I want to emphasize that any emanation from the body can have a P name, whether it comes from the head or somewhere below. Mouths *puff*, *pant*, and *speak* (*peep*, *prattle*, French *parler*). They also emit certain liquids: *spit*, *sputum*, and *puke*. French eyes tear up with *pleurs*; French rain is *pluie*. Wounds leak *pus*, babies *poop* and *piss*. Orgasms gush *spoo* or *sp(l)oooge*. Male spoo is *sperm* or *spunk*. Eggs are *spawn*. Fungi shed *spores*. Some of this leakage is figurative: a tired man is *pooped*, a man after orgasm is *spent*. We *spend* money too: *paying* it out, *pissing* it away, and *spreading* it around in *sprees* and *splurges*.

Inanimate sources of gushing fluid include *spring*, *pump*, *sprinkler*, *water-pistol*, *water-spout*, *spigot*, *pipe*, *pitcher* ‘jug’. Words in *sp-* often suggest fountainy effects: *splash*, *spray*, *spritz*, *sprinkle*, *spatter*. Others describe the scatter of dots left behind by a spray: *sparks*, *spangles*, *sprinkles*, *specks*, *spots*, e-mail *spam*. Spots that *pepper* a face are *pimples* or *pockmarks*, and spotted horses are known as *pintos*, *paints*, and *piebalds*. Anything that seems to radiate outward from a center is apt to be named like a spray of fluid: *spokes* on a wheel, *sprockets* on a gear, a *spider*’s legs, the *splendor* of the sun’s rays, a *sprig* of greenery, *splinters* on a tree stump, a gymnast’s *split*. When enough fluid splashes onto a surface, it *pools* up and *sprawls* outward to make smooth *ponds* and *puddles*—flat, watery *planes*. That’s why so many *p(l)* words refer to flat surfaces: *plate*, *platter*, *plaza*, *plywood*, French *planche* ‘floor’, Spanish *piso* ‘floor’—all “flat as a *pancake*.”

III. The Spear

Although gushiness is the aspect of phallic imagery that got P its job, once hired it was asked to represent the phallus’s shape and function as well, the *pole* that *pierces*. This implication is hardly confined to English, or even to Europe. In Indonesian, *patil* and *patok* mean ‘pole’, *paku* is ‘nail’, and *pacak* is ‘to impale’. In Peruvian Quechua, *polo* signals ‘complete penetration through a barrier’. In Nigerian Tiv, *pever* is ‘to puncture’ and *pever kwase* is ‘to deflower a virgin’. Mere linearity is not enough. Many *st* words from the TREE archetype are also linear, like *stick*, *staff*, *stripe*; but harmful T words like *stab* are rare because trees are not characteristically sharp. By contrast, the PHALLUS has a conspicuous *point* at the business end, so the defining trait of linear P objects is that they are *sharp at one end*, like *pencils*. That’s how we know they’re phallic.

P boasts a big armory of ‘weapons’: *spears* and their long-handled cousins *pikes*, *spontoons*, *partisans*, and *pole-axes*, as well as various knives and daggers: *puncheon*, *poniard*, *spud*, *pen-knife*, *pocket-knife*. The ancient Roman sword called a *spatha* became the slim *épée* used by modern fencers, and the Roman *pilum* ‘javelin’ turned into the modern German *Pfeil* ‘arrow’. Yet not every sharp P object is a weapon. Garden sheds bristle with its ‘sharp tools’: *pegs*, *spikes*, *spits*, *prongs*; plus *pickets* and *palings* for fences; *spades*, *picks*, and *plows* for breaking ground, *prods* and *spurs* for handling animals, and *peaveys* and *pokers* for handling logs.

All these tools and weapons being named for penises— isn’t that a bit much to claim? Shall we ask Sigmund Freud? Doctor, would you please compare the examples above to the unconscious visual symbols that represent

phalluses in people's dreams? Certainly: "The male genital organ is symbolically represented in dreams in many different ways. . . . Its more conspicuous and, to both sexes, more interesting part, the penis, is symbolized primarily by objects which resemble it in form, being long and upstanding, such as *sticks, umbrellas, poles, trees* and the like; also by objects which . . . have the property of penetrating, and consequently of injuring, the body,—that is to say, pointed weapons of all sorts: *knives, daggers, lances, sabres*; fire-arms are similarly used: *guns, pistols and revolvers*, these last being a very appropriate symbol on account of their [P-like] shape. . . . [The meaning of] objects from which water flows is again easily comprehensible: *taps, water-cans, or springs*; [and likewise of many tools:] *Pencils, pen-holders, nail-files, hammers*, and other *implements* are undoubtedly male sexual symbols."⁴

It's not just nouns that betray this imagery. Verbs, adjectives, and prefixes do their part too. Their meanings often cluster around a secondary archetype of one particular weapon—a weapon that our ancestors were making and throwing half a million years ago, the SPEAR. What are two things you'd notice about a spear, aside from its shape? That it's sharp, and it's fast. In other words, *spears* are *spiky* and *speedy*. Different languages weight these qualities differently. Spanish for 'speed' is *prisa*, and 'fast' is *presto* or *pronto*. Stinging-hot food is *picante*, like insects' sharp little stings (*picaduras*). English *pretty* is a 'sharp' word too. For centuries, *pretty* usually meant 'sharp-witted' ("a pretty fellow") or 'requiring sharp wits to solve' ("a pretty paradox"), until those meanings were crowded out by the modern sense of 'sharp-looking, attractive' ("a pretty girl"). The word's basic sense of 'sharply or distinctly' is also apparent in the adverb ("pretty rare"), except when its point is blunted by over-use ("pretty good").

Spear qualities are even more obvious in P verbs. Most English verbs for 'put in' begin with P, for example, both simple ones like *prick, poke, press, pierce, plunge, puncture, penetrate*, and more specialized ones like *perforate, punch, probe*, and *pry*—including the visual prying of *peer, peek, spectate, spy*. (A person who "*pokes his nose*" into other people's business is a *Nosy Parker* or *Paul Pry*.) In fact, it's all but impossible to talk about any sort of 'puncturing' without using P words: that's how completely the letter owns this idea. It's a spear idea, of course, because well-thrown spears literally 'go through' their targets. 'Go through' is the literal meaning of *per-* in *pervade* and *permeate*. 'Go through' was also the literal meaning of *prassein*, the Greek verb for 'do or achieve' and the source of two words we still use for people who can finish or "go through with" the things they plan: *pragmatic* and *practical*. And look at all our short P verbs for different kinds of 'constructive action': *ply* a trade and *plug* away at it; *plow* and *plant, play, please, prove, praise, prop up, prep* and

prime, plan, pray, plead, pledge. All of these distantly evoke the flight of a well-thrown spear, our oldest metaphor for successful effort.

The metaphor gains clarity when we realize that a spear is a *projectile*—that is, something *projected* or 'thrown' in hopes of hitting a target. That's why we call any goal-oriented activity a *project*: it's a 'throwing forward' of our intentions, which take shape like the arc of a spear's flight, from *preparing* and *proceeding* to *persistence* and finally to *progress*. The common 'before' prefixes *pre-* and *pro-* are speartips whistling along ahead of everything else, spearheading the flight exactly the way a leader *spearheads* a project. Leaders earn their name because they *precede* their group by standing first or going first: *prince, president, premier, prime mover, prime minister*. Any firstness, any earliness, is a speartip: *primary, prominent, prior, primitive, pristine, proto, prompt, precocious, preemie*.⁵

IV. The Pin

Perfection is getting the spear right on target: *spot-on* in English, *au point* in French. We describe extreme precision in terms of the miniature spears called *pins*, which is why 'exactness' involves *pinning something down* or *pinpointing* it. The important word *point*, in the sense of 'dot', is from Latin *punctum*, the telltale dot left by a pinprick's puncture. That's why a *punctual* person arrives "on the dot," and why "dotting all your *i*'s" makes you *punctilious*—that is, careful and *precise*. Pins are also a by-word for 'smallness'. Tiny things are *no bigger than the head of a pin*, a bit of change is *pin-money*, something of no value *isn't worth two pins*. Among other characteristically tiny P objects, Margaret Magnus lists "*pebbles, pellets, peas, points and periods*."⁶ Many P words literally mean 'small': Latin *parvus, paucus, pusillus, paulus*, modern Romance *petit, poco, piccolo, pequeño*; and English *petty, paltry, puny, piddling, pint-size, pocket-size, palmtop, and piss-ant*. Small people are *peewees, pygmies, and pipsqueaks*.

There's sexism here too. Just as women are physically smaller than men, the tiny pin beside the mighty spear represents the laughable smallness of women's concerns. *Neat as a pin*, we say of a well-kept house. The brisk housekeeper in the British sitcom *Bless Me, Father* is Mrs. *Pring*. Pippi Longstocking's scolding neighbor is Mrs. *Prysebius*, and many stories are enlivened by comical P aunties: Aunt *Polly* in *Tom Sawyer*, "old aunt *Pedigree*" in *She Stoops to Conquer*, and Aunt *Pittypat* in *Gone with the Wind*. Governesses are another P bunch: Miss *Pross* in *A Tale of Two Cities*, Miss *Prism* in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Dame *Pluche* in a French play by Alfred de Musset, and of course *Mary Poppins*. Spit-spot!

V. Pinheads

These women are all *prim and proper*, or less kindly, *prissy*. These terms circle each other endlessly. In *The New York Times*, James Barron calls a soap-opera grande dame “a three-P character: *proper*, *prim* and even *prissy*.” The same paper calls British rappers’ enunciation “overly *precise*, even *prissy*,” and its review of Shaw’s play *Candida* mentions “the *prim* and *proper* . . . *Prossy*, the vicar’s dotting secretary.” In the same vein, I have heard a club described as “*primpy* and *prissy*,” and an overgroomed dog as “all *primmed* and *propered* and *powdered*—she was little Miss *Perfect*!” Jane Fonda uses almost exactly the same sequence of words in *Barefoot in the Park* to assail her lawyer husband for being so “extremely *proper* and dignified. . . . You’re very nearly *perfect*!” He snaps back: “That’s a rotten thing to say!” His name is *Paul*.

Fussy men often have P names: Mr. *Spock*, Agatha Christie’s *Poirot*, the “meticulous” *Pattison* in *Company of Cowards*. The stock name for a mama’s boy is *Percy*. Australians call the British *Poms*, a word of murky origins but clear implications. British accents are *posh* or “overly *precise*,” as the writer above put it; another writer mentions Hugh Grant’s “*plummy Pimm’s Cup* accent.” Class envy? Linguist John Lawler would say so. The second semantic category he claimed for *pr-* (after “one-dimensional”) was “class role,” concentrating on “*propriety* and *privilege*” up top but acknowledging the bottom too, *prince* and *pauper* alike. *Preppies*, *patricians*, and *plutocrats* are at the *pinnacle* of society, up at the very *peak* of the social *pyramid*; while the *poor*—the *people*, the *public*, the *plebes*, *proles*, *peasants*, and *peons*—root around in the muck at the bottom. The rich are proud and erect; Spanish *pijo* ‘prick’ also means ‘rich kid’ and ‘posh’.

If the letter P were a fairy tale, says Margaret Magnus, it would be *The Princess and the Pea*. But if the tale’s dainty princess can be deranged by a single dried pea under her mattress, maybe all that “*propriety* and *privilege*” up in the castle is just a bunch of tommyrot. Maybe the prince himself is just a *pompous* ass: a *pooh-bah*, a *potentate*, a *grand panjandrum*. A *prick*, in fact. That’s an interesting insult. It’s phallic, but it’s pin-like too. Prickish people are narrow and rigid, but mostly they’re intent on popping other people’s balloons. Euphemisms emphasize the pointiness: the “*pointy-haired* boss” in *Dilbert*, George Wallace’s “*pointy-headed* intellectuals.” *Prigs*, *spoilsports*, and “*party-pooing Puritans*” are out to stop fun, like the “*thought police*” who enforce *political correctness*. An officious German is “a little *Piefke*,” an officious Frenchman is a *pète-sec*. Minor officials on power trips are mosquitoey: *pesky*, *peevis*, *particular*, *persnickety*. Those qualities are the underbelly of exactness. P is “precise,” says Magnus, but it “errs on the side of pickiness.”

Mind your *p*’s and *q*’s, children! Teachers and clergymen hail from the same P camp as governesses. Schools have *principals*, *provosts*, *pupils*, and *pedagogues*. Scholars are *pedants*, and professors speak “with *painstaking precision*.” Remember *Professor Plum* in *Clue*, or Dav Pilkey’s mad genius *Professor Poopypants*? Even schools get in on the act. *Vanity Fair* opens at “Miss *Pinkerton*’s academy for young ladies.” *The Catcher in the Rye* opens at *Pencey Prep*, where Holden is visiting his teacher Mr. *Spencer*. Evelyn Waugh’s novel *Decline and Fall* goes one better: it opens in the office of Oxford bursar Mr. *Postlethwaite*, and then traces the fortunes of two teachers named *Paul Pennyfeather* and Mr. *Prendergast*.

The second man eventually ends up as *Reverend Prendergast*, thereby exchanging one P zone (the School) for another (the Church). John Lawler shrewdly numbered “*prophet*, *priest*, *prelate*, and *prior*” among his *pr* authority figures. Compare *pastor*, *preacher*, *parson*; plus *pew*, *pulpit*, *parish*, *piety*, *pilgrim*, *prayer*, *penance*, *proselytize*, *pontiff*, *pope*. The first pope was St. *Peter*, and ten of the twenty popes since 1740 have used the names *Paul* or *Pius*. The American poet T. S. Eliot wickedly subverted all these churchly P’s in his little masterpiece “Mr. Eliot’s Sunday Morning Service,” which distastefully observes “*pustular*” boys fingering “*piaculative pence*” while “*sable presbyters*” glide toward “the avenue of *penitence*.” To get us in the mood, Eliot opens his poem with one P word, *polyphiloprogenitive*, and reverently closes it with another, *polymath*.

T. S. Eliot is the patron saint of the letter P. He called himself Old *Possum*, and he adopted a rather donnish appearance to match—“*prune-faced*,” as a friend of mine put it. I’m sure Eliot would have agreed, for his self-portrait in “Five-Finger Exercises” gleefully mocks his own “mouth so *prim*” and “features of clerical [clergyman’s] cut.” It also mocks his speech, “so nicely / Restricted to What *Precisely* / And If and *Perhaps* and But.” Indeed, the only man more artfully repressed than Eliot himself is his own creation J. Alfred *Prufrock*, who famously asks, “Do I dare to eat a *peach*?” Ever cautious and “*politic*,” Eliot’s *Prufrock* wears a modest necktie “asserted by a simple *pin*,” has a soul that’s “*pinned* and wriggling on the wall,” and measures out his days “with coffee *spoons*,” ever wondering “should I *presume*?”

VI. Pampers

Now that we’re done with *Prufrock*, we’re done with metaphors. We’ve looked at all the figures of speech that emerge from the visual PHALLUS imagery of spears, pins, and their points, and we’ve drawn portraits of all the annoying people, male and female, that we associate with pins and pinpricks.

What will concern us next is phallic metonymy: not P categories that resemble phalluses, but rather P categories that are in any way *mixed up with* phalluses, from *porn* and *prophylactics* ('condoms') all the way to *pussies* and *parturition* ('birth'). In other words, anything concerning the field of sex, upon which P has planted its naughty flag.

Let's start at the wholesome end of the field. Madeleine Gray says sex "can be summed up in three P's: *procreation, pleasure, and pride*."⁷ Love constitutes one's *private or personal* life. Lovemaking is *passion*, and a lover is a *paramour* or *spouse*. Have you ever noticed how many lovers' endearments begin with P? A modern favorite is *Pooh*; more traditional ones are *pudding, pumpkin, sweetie-pie, sweet potato, sweet pea*. Sexually open atmospheres are *permissive*, requests for sex are *propositions*, and *promiscuous* people juggle lots of *partners*. Sex itself is *petting, pleasuring, pumping, porking*, and eventually *pregnancy*. British slang for 'impregnate' is *prang up*, and of course the impregnator is the *papa*, the root behind Latin *paternal* and *patriarch*. We call father and mother together *parents*. As for children, the Greeks called them *sperma*, which meant 'offspring' as well as 'semen' (like *seed* in biblical English). Our words *pediatric* and *puerile* ('childish') both stem from the ancient Indo-European root *pau-* ('child'), and other English words for children include (*off*)*spring, progeny, and posterity*.

Sex and childbirth make the whole *pelvic* area a P zone. Genitals are *private parts*. *Pubic* is from Latin *pubes* 'groin'. Women's genitals are *puenda* ('shameful'), or less formally, *pussy, pookie, poonie*. (A critic reviewing a lesbian play says its set is "so *pink* as to verge on the biological"—is that why the color is considered so feminine?) A woman's clitoral hood or a man's foreskin is a *prepuce*. The fake foreskin we call a condom is euphemistically known as *protection* or *prophylactic*; in German it's *Präservativ* or *Pariser* ('Parisian'). The Marquis de Sade's "very personal euphemism for a dildo" was "*prestige*."⁸ The skin between genitals and anus is the *perineum*, *Popo* is German baby-talk for 'bottom', and Anglo babies *poop* in *Pampers* until they learn to *go potty*. Babies also *piddle* or *piss*, and "pee-pee" is a widespread European children's word for urine or urination (*faire pipi*, etc.) In English it's also baby-talk for a baby boy's penis—his "*PP*," so to speak.

VII. The Primrose Path

When the boy grows up, his pee-pee stands up too, and then he's a man. To speak of men's firm and upright *characters*, we use the flattering TREE archetype, represented by T, whence *true, tough, stalwart, stern*. The stock name for a good man in fiction is *Tom*. But when we talk about men's firm,

upright *dicks*, we use the phallic P, and it is seldom flattering. At best, it's matter-of-fact: *potency, prowess, performance*. The Greek god of male fertility and lasciviousness was called *Priapus* and always represented with an erect phallus. The randy P men who follow the god's path through the field of sex are likewise led around, or led astray, by their bulging dicks. At best, they're womanizers: "the philandering *Pierre*" in one book, *Pronek the Conqueror* in another, the fornicator *Pryanishnikov* in Tolstoy's story "The Devil."

If they're not womanizers, sexual P men are out-and-out *perverts* like *polygamists, prowlers, peeping Toms, pederasts, and pedophiles*. Or they're *passive* gay men: *poofs, ponces, punks, pansies*, formerly called *spintries, pogers, pathics, and prushuns*. (They haunted male brothels called *spearhouses*.) The title character of *Portnoy's Complaint* is a compulsive masturbator. Joyce Carol Oates' character Quentin P. is a child molester. So is Brian *Prentice* in Will Self's novel *The Butt*, who horrifies the story's decent hero *Tom Brodzinski*: "He found himself repeating his companion's name over and over in his mind: *Prentice, Prentice, Prentice*. . . . Until consonants were ground down, and Tom was thinking: *penis, penis, penis*."

Randy women can be P characters too. The devil in Tolstoy's story isn't Mr. *Pryanishnikov*, it's his friend's mistress *Stepanida Pechnikov*. Until the Sexual Revolution, any extramarital sex earned women a P. The adulteress in *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) is *Hester Prynne*. Honor Tracy's novel *Settled in Chambers* (1967) has both a *Prue* living in sin with a divorced artist and a presumed adulteress named *Mary Price*. Too much dick, you see—but women also get P names if they're not getting *any* dick, like *spinsters*. As the feminist Kate Millett asked, "Aren't women *prudes* if they don't and *prostitutes* if they do?" You bet, and the letter P has always been there to mock them. Ancient Greek for 'virgin' and 'whore' were *parthenos* and *porne*; in modern French they're *puce* and *pute*. Whores get the worst of it, of course. Over the centuries, English terms for prostitutes have included *public women, pannels, punks, paphians, pinchpins, and spoffokins*. Their bosses are *pimps, panders, and procurers*.

If you trace these chains of associations back to their source, you will see that all of these words are essentially phallic. The chief chain of associations is a short and terrible one that we all learn to understand quite early in life: 'phallus vagina whore', or *prick-pussy-prostitute*. Many languages besides English can reproduce this chain with P words alone, often in several different ways: Latin *penis-pudenda-prostituta*, Indonesian *peler pukas-perek*, Spanish *pene-potorro-puta*, or *pijo-papaya pelandusca*, and Polish *penis-pochwa-prostyutka*, or even *praćie-pipa-pipa* (*pipa* being both 'pussy' and 'slut').⁹ Don't

blame the letter; the fault lies in human misogyny, which seems to be bred in the bone.

VIII. The Purple Weenie

Does every language have a P word for penis? No. But those that do generally have the same kind of line-up as English: the formal word is Latin *penis*, then there's a slangy P equivalent like *prick* or *pecker*, and then various other words with different first letters (*schlong*, *dick*, etc.). In German, for example, the line-up is *Penis*, *Pimmel*, *Schwanz*. In Danish it's *penis*, *pik*, *diller*. In Hungarian it's *pénisz*, *pöcs*, *fasz*. In Indonesian it's *penis*, *peler*, *burung*. You get the idea. The slangy P words are the interesting ones because they're all different: modern Greek *poutsas*, Yiddish *putz*, French *pine* or *popol*, Afrikaans *piel*, Romanian *pula*. Spanish is awash in regional variants: *polla*, *pijo*, *pija*, *pinga*, *pito*, *pico*; and so is Portuguese: *pau*, *pica*, *pinto*, *piça*, *pila*, *picha*, *pichota*, *pistola*, *piroca*.

English does pretty well too: *prick*, *pecker*, *peter*, *pee-pee*, and so on. For some numbers, let's consider Deborah Cameron's 1992 article "Naming of Parts." She collected 182 'penis' terms from American college students of both sexes.¹⁰ Twenty percent have P (or *sp-*) onsets: that's 37 terms, the most for any letter. (The next most frequent onsets are M, W, and H, averaging 21 terms each. I count phrases like *meat spear* as both M and P; eight of the P onsets are in second or third elements.) Some of Cameron's terms are *love popsicle*, *pogo stick*, *passion rifle*, *pink torpedo*, *spoo gun*, *swelling passion*, *pud*, *the persuader*, *pipe*, *pole*, *python*, *slimy spelunker*, and *Peter Dinkie*. A few are corny, like *leaning tower of please-her*, and four are alliterative: *piece of pork*, *pulsating pole*, *pussy pleaser*, and *special purpose*. Male students preferred the weaponish names; women's names tended to be more playful.

Not everybody knows all these terms, obviously. *Pud* and *pole* are common, but *slimy spelunker* sounds ad hoc, like it was made up on the spot by one clever person and spread around by his or her acquaintances. To put it more accurately, I'd say the phrase was spontaneously generated by the PHALLUS archetype itself, using its signature letter P, and then spat out into the world through the mouth of its alleged human coiner. This happens all the time. A character in the movie *Porky's* says, "Hi! I'm *Paulie the Penis!*" Too blatant? Double entendres abound as well. Here are some I've noticed on television. An absent-minded guy in a sitcom asks, "Has anybody seen my *package?*" Titters. Director Wes Craven, a former English teacher, is asked to define *dangling participle*. "It's a big problem," he says, "for middle-aged men." The satirist Mark Russell calls America's missile-defense program "*projectile*

dysfunction" and imagines a sex-change patient singing "I left my *part* in San Francisco."

Those get laughs, but understatement gets them too. On the sitcom *Everybody Loves Raymond*, the hero's brother Robert, a cop, arrives one morning to pick up Ray's young daughter. "She's bringing me to class today," he reminds the girl's mother, because "it's show-and-tell for things that begin with the letter P!" The mother turns and glares, the audience howls, and finally Robert, acutely embarrassed, gestures down at his . . . policeman's uniform. And everybody gets that joke as well. This fits Freud's working definition of something known unconsciously: "we can understand it without being taught anything about it." P means PHALLUS, and everybody understands that without being taught.

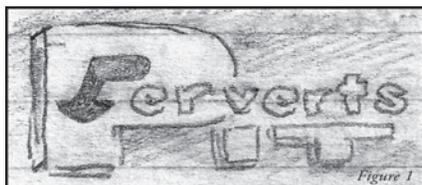
IX. Pretty Pictures

So much for P's sound. Now let's consider its shape. I say that P looks like a cock and balls, and I say that's no coincidence. Did it always look that way? No. It *evolved* to look that way, as we see below. In the earliest Semitic version of our alphabet, each letter was a picture of the A-is-for-Apple type. The word they used to illustrate the *p* sound was *pey*, which meant 'mouth' (and still does in modern Hebrew). Three thousand years ago, people drew this mouth letter either as an astonished oval like 0 or a smile facing right or left:) or (. Later the smile was stylized into a kind of candy cane: ó. In other words, if your name was Peter in those days, you'd write (eter or óeter. When the Greeks borrowed the Semitic alphabet from the Phoenicians, they quickly substituted two new shapes. Eastern Greeks near Athens lengthened the candy cane's right leg to match the left, turning ó into modern Greek pi Π, which looks like a tiny lighthouse. Western Greeks near Italy closed the cane's loop and made ó into P. Their Roman neighbors copied that shape and eventually bequeathed it to us.

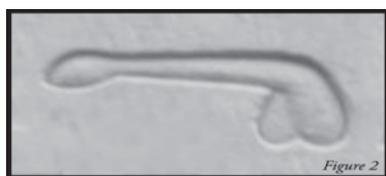
0, (,)	Π	P
Early Semitic <i>pey</i>	Greek Pi	Roman P

Why did the Greeks change the shape? Nobody knows, but here's a guess. If a letter's a picture, the old *p-is-for-mouth* didn't mean anything to the Greeks, who had their own words for mouth. But their new candy cane looked a bit phallic, and the Greeks did have two *p* words for 'penis', *peos* and *posthe*.¹¹ Why not redraw the letter to match? In Athens the candy cane became a tall cylinder Π. Out west it became a cock-and-balls P. That suited the Romans

too, because they had their own *p*-word *penis*. And of course it still works for us—and we’re so fond of its shape that we recycle it in the four small letters *q*, *p*, *d*, *b*! As a culture, we’re far too proper to admit that we might have a penis in our alphabet, but every once in a while somebody notices the resemblance and brings it to light. For example, the old porn ad I’ve sketched in Fig. 1 cleverly turns the capital P’s hole into an anatomically correct echo of the letter itself.



Do other alphabets have penises in them? Yes. The Hebrew name for Z, *zayin*, originally meant ‘sword’, but nowadays it’s Israeli slang for ‘penis’. The Hebrew letter is written ז, which can look like either object if you squint really hard. But I was thinking more of Egyptian hieroglyphics, which employed two unmistakable cock-and-balls symbols that Sir Alan Gardiner’s standard sign list designates as D52 and D53.¹² In Fig. 2 we see hieroglyph D52, which the Egyptians used to write their words for male creatures like men and bulls. D53 is the same except that it shows a drop of liquid coming out of the tip; this was used in the words for urinating, ejaculating, and screwing—and also for the concepts of ‘before’ and ‘in front of’, like Latin *pre* and *pro*-. It’s not entirely clear how D52 and D53 were pronounced, but neither of them seem to have been *p* words, except in their shapes and meanings.



With that in mind, let’s turn to the world’s other great system of picture-writing, the Chinese. It would be too much to hope that the Chinese words for ‘penis’ would be *ping* or *pao*, or that they would be written as neat little towers like the Greek pi Π. And they aren’t. But we do meet some old friends among the real Chinese words. You may have noticed how many non-P Western words like *dong* have D or sL onsets (alveolar and therefore ‘linear’) and/or rimes in *ng* (‘round’): *dong*, *dick*, *diller*, *schlong*, *lingam*, *burung*. We see these in Chinese too: ‘penis’ is *diao*, *liao*, or *yinjing*, *yangju*, *yangdao*. You

already know bits of the last three terms. See the syllables *yin*, *yang*, and *dao* as in *Daoism*? Same old words. *Yangdao*, the penis, is the Male Way (and *yindao*, the Female Way, is the vagina).

But look how they’re written! Fig. 3 shows the character for *yangdao*. See the P like thing at the extreme left? It’s also used in the characters for *yangju* and *yinjing*. And see that other P-like thing that arches over Fig. 4? It appears in both *diao* and *liao*. These two P-like things are called “radicals,” a technical term for any of the two hundred conventional shapes that provide a visual “root” for every Chinese character.¹³ Like Egyptian hieroglyphs, each Chinese radical has a number. The dented P-like shape in Fig. 3 is radical 170, and the swooshy-tailed one in Fig. 4 is number 44.



Now, let me emphasize neither of these radicals have any historical connection to Egypt’s hieroglyphs or the Roman alphabet. They’re Chinese through and through, and there was nothing phallic about their origins. In their most ancient forms, radical 170 showed a set of steps going up a hill, and 44 showed a seated person seen from the left, the rectangular part being the torso. I would simply suggest that, somewhat like our letter P, these radicals have been co-opted by the PHALLUS archetype because it found their present shapes appropriate for its purposes. Of all 214 Chinese radicals, only three remotely resemble our letter P, and two of them show up in the commonest Chinese words for penis. Coincidence? Poppycock! The PHALLUS is at home everywhere.

Endnotes

- ¹ www.herbadmother.com, March 8, 2007.
- ² John Lawler, “Women, Men, and Bristly Things,” *Michigan Working Papers in Linguistics* (1990).
- ³ A.H. Fremont, *Alphabet Flip Chart* (1974).
- ⁴ This and the later Freud quote (on understanding without being taught) are from “Symbolism in Dreams,” Chapter 10 in *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, translated by Joan Riviere (1924). Italics in the original.
- ⁵ In English and other Germanic languages where F replaced earlier P, this whole chain of ideas is also represented by a parallel set of F words. Latin *primary* has a match in our native word *first*, related to German *Fürst* ‘prince.’ *Fore*, *forth*, *forward* mean ‘out front’. *Former* is ‘early’. ‘Spear’ itself was anciently *franca*, whence the tribal name of *Franks* (or ‘Spears’) who settled France. Same with P’s ‘spreading’ words: French *plancher* matches *floor*; *plain/plane*

matches *flat*, and *pancakes* can also be called *flapjacks* or *flannel cakes*. In Arabic, which suffered a similar P-to-F switch long ago, the letter P is now missing entirely, so all its work must be reallocated to F and B: *Filastin* for *Palestine*, *Babba* for *Papa*.

⁶ Margaret Magnus, *What's in a Word? Evidence for Phono-Symantics* (privately printed, 1993).

⁷ Madeleine Gray and Kate Millett quotes in Elaine Partnow's *The Quotable Woman* (1978).

⁸ Francine du Plessix Gray, *At Home with the Marquis de Sade* (1998).

⁹ For foreign terms, www.yourswear.com is casual, www.bab.la is more scholarly.

¹⁰ Deborah Cameron, "Naming of Parts," *American Speech* 67.

¹¹ As well as *phallus*. Ancient Greek *ph* was not *f*. It was an emphatic sound /p^h/ with its own letter phi (F). We say *fallus*, but in ancient Greek and Latin, *phallus* sounded like *palace*, and the phallic *pharos* ('lighthouse') sounded like the naughty *Paris*.

¹² For Gardiner's sign list, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_hieroglyphs/D.

¹³ An excellent interactive dictionary for Chinese words and characters is www.mdbg.net/chindict. For an interactive list of radicals, www.yellowbridge.com/Chines/radicals.php. The third radical that looks like P is 26, which is sort of a smoothed-out 170. Radical 163 can also be written 170 under certain circumstance.

* * * * *



Zannemarie Lloyd Taylor



In Your Book of Poems

Each poem a coin—fitting into a geometric slot
That opens, like a parasol, a scene, a world, a roiling.
A velvet-fringed voice
Drapes across hardship or pleasure,
Reads—
Your shoulders—one rides up—
Face bending over book as
One arm clutches
the brace of podium.
And if you were ever young,
It's hard to picture; and if you will ever
Be old, it's hard to say.

A slow exhale.
Each word grafts to the next, argues
With its successor, then, attaching,
accepts its place, resigned
To be one rosary in a necklace of amber,
Each bead precisely holding its prey,
Its capture; each thought a small voice,
a seed, concise enough to move through
a keyhole—through which the poem
Empties out in small organic bursts,

Hits the air like smoke signals, resolves into
Smoky orange resin. Certain words are yours.
Like: “spare,” and “grace.” “Lumen, numinous.”
“Crackles” and “spuds.”

Furnaces burn with power
In the basement of an empty building
Where you once spent an hour looking
In a window, wishing you could write there.
Every empty space you find, you claim it,
Hold it, make it new, release it,
transfigured.

You will give the amber a rough polish,
But enough to show the world within.
You will pull the string taut,
Each bead firm. You will catalog
Something, preserve something, make
Something not your own, but ready
For ownership by all and anyone.
You will lead, like the pied piper,
All and anyone on this inward winding
Peppered path.

New-Winged Sparrows

The new-winged sparrows' first day of flight
Finds them flickering along the road,
Joyful, startled but unafraid in the eye
Of an oncoming car. They spin and jump
Like small brown leaves, barely visible
To the driver. The horn jolts them;
A moment of looking, and then, reminding
Themselves, they fly. Some instinct
That was lazy in them kicks in—the need
To fly away—even when they only want
To play in the street, as children do.

* * * * *



Jack Kerouac: A Psychonaut in Denial

[Essay]

*The following is excerpted from the work-in-progress book
All These Serious Faces Will Only Drive You Mad.
Published by Reality Sandwich in November 2011
http://www.realitysandwich.com/kerouac_psychonaut.*

At the turn of the 1960s, Jack Kerouac found himself in a profound state of limbo, representing the climax of an existential crisis that predated his life as a published author. He had been looking for an “answer” to his problems since his early twenties,¹ yet for a variety of reasons his dilemma remained unresolved. Then a 35-year-old Jack became famous in an instant when *On the Road* was published in the fall of 1957, and this led to the total disruption of his already chaotic life. Suddenly his world became very claustrophobic, as he was pushed into the role of a counter-culture celebrity—despite the fact that very few were giving him credit as a legitimate author of American literature.

In his 1962 novel *Big Sur*, Kerouac reflects on the period: “. . . I’ve been driven mad for three years by endless telegrams, phone calls, requests, mail, visitors, reporters, snoopers . . .”² Kerouac wrote that book in October 1961 by fictionalizing events that had happened mainly in the summer of 1960—a trip from New York to California, visiting San Francisco, Bixby Canyon, and San Jose (where Neal Cassady was living). It was his first lengthy trip in three years, and *Big Sur* was the first book he completed since writing *The Dharma Bums* in November 1957. Kerouac’s plan was to pass the summer in solitude so that he could recover his mental balance while checking the publisher galleys for his *Book of Dreams*.³ Lawrence Ferlinghetti, whose budding City Lights imprint would be publishing the dream book that year, told Kerouac to stay at his cabin in Bixby Canyon, on the Pacific Coast south of Monterey (technically just north of Big Sur).

In the period surrounding both the events depicted in *Big Sur* and the writing and editing of the book, Jack actively experimented with certain psychedelic substances that hadn’t yet made a large impression on the American

culture: mescaline, ayahuasca, and psilocybin mushrooms. At the start of *Big Sur*, he mentions some of these substances in a slightly negative manner, as if to suggest that they had worsened his overall mental condition: “. . . ‘One fast move or I’m gone,’ I realize, gone the way of the last three years of drunken hopelessness which is a physical and spiritual and metaphysical hopelessness you can’t learn in school no matter how many books on existentialism or pessimism you read, or how many jugs of vision-producing Ayahuasca you drink, or Mescaline take, or Peyote goop up with—”⁴

However, this can’t be the whole story, since Kerouac’s letters offer an entirely different view on his psychonautic exploration during this time. Jack first tried mescaline in October 1959,⁵ and he was apparently most open about it with Allen Ginsberg, to whom he wrote the following on June 20, 1960: “When on mescaline I was so bloody high I saw that all our ideas about a ‘beatific’ new gang of worldpeople, and about instantaneous truth being the last truth. etc. etc. I saw them as all perfectly correct and prophesied, as never on drinking or sober I saw it—Like an Angel looking back on life sees that every moment fell right into place and each had flowery meaning . . .”⁶ This kind of clarity must have been cherished by a man who saw his life as a long chain of rambling misadventures.

Kerouac was even moved to create a 5,000-word “Mescaline Report” in order to document his hallucinations and revelations. He said he intended to take mescaline monthly, and he couldn’t wait to test out LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide). In the same letter Kerouac mentioned his intention to flee New York, shortly before Ferlinghetti suggested that Jack use his cabin as an escape. The actual trip lasted about two months, from mid-July to mid-September 1960.

After returning from California, Kerouac had the opportunity to try ayahuasca on October 7, 1960.⁷ Ginsberg had just visited South America and brought back some of the liquid preparation, also known as “yagé” (pronounced “yah-hey,” but they usually misspelled it as “yage”). William S. Burroughs had done the same in the early 1950s, as documented in his fictionalized letters titled “In Search of Yage” (written in ‘53 but not published until ‘63). Kerouac seems to have tasted the real thing since, according to Ginsberg (writing during the event), Jack remarked, “This is one of the most sublime or tender or lovely moments of all our lives together . . .”⁸ That’s not to say the experience was only positive. In June 1963 Jack reflected to Allen that, when he would wander into Manhattan for drinking binges, “I come back [to Long Island] with visions of horror as bad as Ayahuasca vision on the neanderthal million years in caves, the gruesomeness of life!”⁹

A few months after Kerouac’s ayahuasca trip, in January 1961, he

ingested capsules containing the extract of what he called “Sacred Mushrooms,”¹⁰ a nickname for psilocybin.¹¹ Ginsberg had recently visited Dr. Timothy Leary at Harvard to participate in Leary’s soon-to-be-controversial psychedelic studies. Ginsberg brought the capsules back to New York to distribute to various people, and Kerouac went to Allen’s Manhattan apartment to try them for himself.¹² Kerouac’s reaction to this experience is recorded in a letter he sent to Timothy Leary later that month (known as the “Dear Coach” letter). Jack wrote, “Mainly I felt like a floating [Genghis] Kahn on a magic carpet with my interesting lieutenants and gods. . . some ancient feeling about old geheuls [sic] in the grass, and temples, exactly also like the sensation I got drunk on pulque¹³ floating in the Xochimilco gardens on barges laden with flowers and singers. . . some old Golden Age dream of man, very nice.”¹⁴

Kerouac’s final experiment of this period came in December 1961 (as least according to the published literature). It’s fairly evident that on this occasion Kerouac ingested actual dried psilocybin mushrooms instead of capsules.¹⁵ During the writing of *Big Sur*, some of these psychedelic experiences crept into the book despite Kerouac’s initial statement about “metaphysical hopelessness.” Upon awaking from a bizarre dream sequence, “Jack Duluo” (Kerouac’s fictional projection of himself) reflects on the “millionpieced mental explosions that I remember I thought were so wonderful when I’d first seen them on Peotl and Mescaline. . . broken in pieces some of them big orchestral and then rainbow explosions of sound and sight mixed.”¹⁶ The “peotl” (or “peyotl,” the indigenous spellings of “peyote”) cactus has long been consumed by tribes in northern Mexico and the American southwest for the psychoactive mescaline it contains.¹⁷

Kerouac first encountered peyote eight years before his trip to Bixby Canyon, while living with Burroughs in Mexico City in 1952. The two embarked on a fruitful series of peyote trials that Kerouac described in his letters to friends back in the United States. On March 12 of that year, Jack wrote to John Clellon Holmes about what was possibly his first full-on psychedelic experience, conveying “the wild visions of musical pure truth I got on peotl (talk about your Technicolor visions!) . . .”¹⁸ Shortly thereafter, on June 5, Kerouac wrote again to Holmes, telling of the time when a few “young American hipsters” gave him and Burroughs some peyote, after which the duo walked around Mexico City at night. In a park Jack found himself “wanting to sit in the grass and stay near the ground all night by moonlight, with the lights of the show and the houses all flashing, flashing in my eyeballs . . .”¹⁹

This letter is important for another reason: in it Jack explains the thrill of writing with his new “sketching” style, an early conception of what

he would later call “spontaneous prose.” Late in October 1951, Kerouac’s friend Ed White had suggested that Jack try to write as though he was painting a scene.²⁰ Kerouac told Holmes he was “beginning to discover . . . something beyond the novel and beyond the arbitrary confines of the story . . . into the realms of revealed Picture . . . revealed whatever . . . revealed prose . . . wild form, man, wild form. Wild form’s the only form holds what I have to say—my mind is exploding to say something about every image and every memory in—I have now an irrational lust to set down everything I know—in narrowing circles . . .”²¹

The strong parallel between the “rainbow explosions” Kerouac saw on mescaline and peyote, and the feeling that he was “exploding” to describe his thoughts about reality, suggests that Jack’s psychedelic exploration in 1952 had a decisive influence on what would become his trademark prose style.

Big Sur generally depicts Kerouac’s brush with “insanity” as stemming from his alcoholism. There’s hardly a time in the book when “Duluoz” is not holding a bottle of whiskey or wine. But as the story progresses, some of the descriptions seem to fall way outside the scope of what alcohol can do to a person’s mind and one’s perception of reality. For instance, when Jack’s friends try to get him to eat some food, he’s too distracted by his mental aberrations: “Masks explode before my eyes when I close them, when I look at the moon it waves, moves, when I look at my hands and feet they creep—Everything is moving, the porch is moving like ooze and mud, the chair trembles under me.”²² Notice again the mention of “explosions.”

Or examine the aforementioned dream sequence, in which Jack sees numerous “Vulture People” copulating in a trash dump: “Their faces are leprosy thick with soft yeast but painted with makeup . . . yellow pizza puke faces, disgusting us . . . we’ll be taken to the Underground Slimes to walk neck deep in steaming mucks pulling huge groaning wheels (among small forked snakes) so the devil with the long ears can mine his Purple Magenta Square Stone that is the secret of all this Kingdom—”²³

Even a glance at Kerouac’s *Book of Dreams* makes it obvious that he frequently had extraordinary night-visions. But such passages really bring to mind a few specific things: the psychedelic experience, existentialist literature, and the rare cases in which the two are combined. Though Kerouac more often talked of his fondness for Dostoevsky than for later existentialists, Jean-Paul Sartre’s 1938 novel *Nausea* (not published in English until 1949²⁴) is an indubitable precursor to *Big Sur*.

Nausea contains a first-person journal-style account by a French man named Roquentin, who unexpectedly becomes overtaken by mortal horror and bodily uneasiness. As Roquentin says early in the novel: “Then the Nausea



seized me, I dropped to a seat, I no longer knew where I was; I saw the colours spin slowly around me, I wanted to vomit. And since that time, the Nausea has not left me, it holds me.”²⁵

There’s a deeper connection between the two novels as well. In his 2002 book *Breaking Open the Head*, Daniel Pinchbeck reports that Sartre tried mescaline in 1935 as a research subject in Paris. Pinchbeck writes that “long after the physical effect of the drug had worn off, Sartre found himself plunged into a lingering nightmare of psychotic dread and paranoia; shoes threatened to turn into insects, stone walls seethed with monsters.”²⁶ Pinchbeck infers that this influenced the writing of *Nausea*—but he thought Sartre’s affliction lasted about a week. Actually Sartre experienced hallucinations of shellfish (usually lobsters, but he also called them crabs) for years, according to a 2009 book of conversations between Jean-Paul and John Gerassi, whose parents were close friends with Sartre. Gerassi quotes Sartre saying: “Yeah, after I took mescaline I started seeing crabs around me all the time. They followed me in the streets, into class. . . I would wake up in the morning and say, ‘Good morning, my little ones, how did you sleep?’”²⁷

In 1954, thanks to Aldous Huxley’s *The Doors of Perception*, the Western world became much more aware of the potential promise of mescaline as a visionary aid. But interspersed with descriptions of his wondrous hallucinations, Huxley cautioned not to place too much expectation on mescaline for spiritual enlightenment.²⁸ Still, the book was extremely influential in the literary world, and it paved the way for the psychedelic uprising that Leary and others would lead in the 1960s.

So it’s a bit surprising that someone in Kerouac’s position, writing a book like *Big Sur* in 1961, wouldn’t emphasize psychedelics more or even try to work them into the plot, if only through a flashback or some similar device. Not only did he largely leave them out of the book, but he actually downplayed the way they had guided his own “mysticism”—something that, in retrospect, is clearly evident in books from his “Duluoz Legend” (as he called his oeuvre of semiautobiographical fiction) such as *On the Road* (published in 1957), *The Dharma Bums* (1958), and *Visions of Gerard* (1963). Kerouac even amended the line about “the mad ones” early in *Road* that would become his most famous quote, and—perhaps not unexpectedly—the final wording seems influenced by his 1952 peyote experiments. In the 1951 “scroll” version (not published until 2007) it read “burn, burn, burn like roman candles across the night.”²⁹ But in the 1957 version, the line went “burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars and in the middle you see the blue centerlight pop . . .”³⁰

It all seems even more suspicious after learning that mescaline actually

renewed Jack’s faith in his unique prose style in 1959, just as peyote seems to have inspired the style initially in 1952. Soon after taking mescaline, Kerouac told Ginsberg that during the trip he’d had “the sensational revelation that I’ve been on the right track with spontaneous never-touch-up poetry of immediate report . . .”³¹ Kerouac’s “Essentials of Spontaneous Prose” held that writing should be “confessional,” “always honest,” and—the part most tied up with myths about Kerouac—have “no revisions.”³² We’ve already seen one case where Kerouac revised a work that he claimed to be an entirely spontaneous composition. So one can’t help but wonder: was Kerouac being as honest as he claimed in his prose theory?

Other information in the “Dear Coach” letter helps to answer the question of why Kerouac would downplay psychedelics in his fiction and public statements. As he told Leary, “It was a definite Satori. Full of psychic clairvoyance (but you must remember that this is not half as good as the peaceful ecstasy [sic] of simple Samadhi trance as I described that in *Dharma Bums*).”³³

Kerouac intended for *The Dharma Bums* to be read as a resolution to the existential conflict so visible in earlier books like *On the Road* and *The Subterraneans*. He also hoped for it to be a life manual for anyone in a similar situation, because in the mid- to late-1950s he viewed Buddhism as “the answer.” In other words, Kerouac perceived the potential rise of psychedelic drugs in the 1960s as a threat to the usefulness of his own body of work. In turn, his disparagement of psychedelics—and his silence (outside of private letters) about their potential advantages—was propaganda for the Duluoz Legend.

In fact, Kerouac found little use for Buddhism in his personal life by the start of the *Big Sur* period. His devout Catholic family had been fighting him about it for years. And as he told Carolyn Cassady after writing *Big Sur*—specifically referring to the end of the book, which describes his mental breakdown—“I realized all my Buddhism had been words—comforting words, indeed.”³⁴ Despite that, he still made *Desolation Angels* a sort of sequel to *Dharma Bums* a few years later, keeping much of the Buddhist terminology in place. This differs substantially from the idea espoused by many of Kerouac’s biographers, who took a line of recorded conversation in the “Dear Coach” letter (“walking on water wasn’t built in a day”) as a sign that Jack saw very limited value in psychedelics. As it turns out, Kerouac’s literary treatment of psychedelics is one of many routes to a rude awakening about the Duluoz Legend, showing that it’s far less “objectively” true than commonly thought. In *Big Sur*, Kerouac wanted the cause of his mental breakdown to be alcoholism fueled by fame and “mortal existence,” not a spiritual awakening (or re-

awakening) inspired by psychedelics.

We can deduce this by looking at Kerouac's October 1961 letter to Ferlinghetti, whom Jack actually visited again in San Francisco before returning to the East Coast in September 1960. As Kerouac writes: ". . . I was going to have lots more at the 'end' when I come to your house 706 but suddenly saw the novel should end at the cabin . . ." ³⁵ So *Big Sur* ends the way it does because of a literary decision that Kerouac made, not necessarily because it depicts the way the events "objectively" happened.

Kerouac wasn't only deceiving his readership; he was deceiving himself. His unwillingness—or his inability—to revise his view of reality and existence according to his own subjective life experience led to his early death in 1969. Just as a butterfly transforms from a caterpillar, he could have emerged from his chrysalis a twice-born being. The story behind *Big Sur* shows that Kerouac had the opportunity to progress through his existential crisis and live an entirely new life of liberation and prosperity. His loss need not be our own.

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Tom Sheehan

Ode to a Rising Sun

Out of the edge of earth,
out of choice darkness mixed with silt
and angry acids that form of fire,
out of secret caverns rocking in the deep,
out of stone moving liquefied
which is but a sea we float on,
out of distance,
out of death-wracking night,
out of fear of childhood,
out of nightmares and terror shrieks,
out of ignorance, out of shame of thoughts
sitting like pebbles on the soul,
dark black pebbles,
out of the songs of frenzied air,
out of the mouth of monster bird
cast from an angry god's hands,
freed from the moon at endless wait,
escaping from a debtor's prison
partly in rags and partly in pain,
heaved upward like a mason's block
to the next tier of gray waiting,
on the hilltop comes the sun.

Before it, pell-mell fleeing,
scudding down alleyways,
across corners, stoops,
half granite walls
where houses used to be,
through windows and mirrors
and the wiliest of laces
where night collects itself
in a host of aromas, the shadows
go quickly before the miracle

hunting them down, at chase,
at wild pursuit, leaping one wall
to the next, one huge lunge
across barriers, time, as if breath
will expire too quickly again.

I listen. The sizzle starts:
limbs grating each other. Horns
and klaxons announcing.
Clocks unwinding. Linens cracking
their sheer porcelain deposits
only odors can tell of.
Percolators, motors, engines,
dynamos, all huffing and puffing
and snorting Orion away.
Pulses and electricity
beating at the lines, the mad energies
of beginnings.
Being heard, being sound,
being echoes and static-filling air waves.
Being noise, 3 A.M. surprises,
movement and energy and time happening
to inertia and all its cached parts.
Being life belts to jet darkness.
Being chance. Being opportunity
all the way into something new.

Hardness gathers in the sunlight,
artifacts of mining and distillery,
elements from miner's foot and glazier's thumb,
copper tubing and greened-up brass,
old galvanized iron tongues still wagging, PVC
like a saint among water carriers
hardly getting dirty like Din Din Din,
porcelain dishes and ewers
with light cherry trimmings
faint as postage stamps,
buckets and ladles catching at breaths
before sudden plunges down Earth's throat,
bring morning's water to a thousand hands.

At Earth edge the worm
shudders, recoils, goes gelatin.
Earth shakes with a robin's sprint
across a tympanic lawn, as if drummers'
batons beat on.
He spears the tubed, eyeless thing,
soft telescopic escapee
just now plowing into loam.
The warning signs are warm.

Bridges, high arcs measuring new light,
fields and fields of steel and concrete,
I-bars and T-bars and girders and purlings
and struts and bolts and nuts and plates
by the high acre, and expansion joints
as devious as grill work
begin to stretch their backs,
spread a little more to east or west
or north and south, begin to stuff
themselves into corners barely meant for stuffing,
cast off their chilled auras, breathe outward
under the new caress, the touch
of secret places, the mouth of morning
touching where it touches best.
Steel stretches into sunlight.
You can hear it flex its muscles.

Windows, like incorrigible children.
Talk back: skyscraper faces, greenhouses.
Across the street a woman's room leaps
with the explosion. She could be nude
behind that glow! A car's windshield
becomes a moving target, throws flares back
at the enemy. Chrome answers too,
tracer streaks of gunships, firefights,
strafing upward from an inversion of light
and war and outside forces and death
of darkness; hallway corners, dank and drear
and wet with blood, give up the fight.
Under stairs, attics, old coal bins webbed

and smelling of gas under a spider's collection of glass
and flies and moths silent for eternity,
throw in the sponge.

Windows answer like gunshots, bomb blasts.
Grenadiers of the dawn. Calligraphers. Signalers.
Corps upon corps of morning glass,
cohorts of the inner anvil, armies, legions of light,
great stationary convoys basking
for split seconds in eternal flame.

But then, I get warm.
A bird, retreated on a dark bough,
umbrellaed under leaf canopy,
glad for morning, worm sights, a level
of breeze he can climb on
and part fingers of his wings on thermals,
hellos me all inside out.
He is crisp and clear and singular.
He is unique and melodious and real,
the torrents of his heart pounding
on the slanted shelves of air, his notes
as sure as rungs on a ladder of resonance
lifting the aria to unknown strata,
flinging it over the city's river slowly
filling up with silvering day,
cascading song and joyous light
and the energy of a breeze,
like a mountain being emptied
of all its goodness.

In the morning mountains, like sundaes
piled high with sweet textures, explode.
I catch the mouthy shrapnel they throw
into the battle dawn wages.
It is rare beauty on the fly, beams
and sunshine flares and streams and colossal
stripes of golden air coming through clouds
hanging loose as line-hung blankets.
Far mountains are the first to get the sun,

heaving upward white cones of snow
as brilliant as stars, as sure and as steady
as old men who know all answers
and give off such illumination.

But you there, at the crossroads of this day,
looking across the inviolate stretch
of gray light we suddenly find between us
yet joining us, must also find the ignition as spectacle
born in the rigors of yesterday's soul.
You, too, know the upshot of this new coming,
the bird, the fire, the breath as deep as stone.
You, too, must linger where the sun warms first,
the first warm spot of the day, the bay window
broad as an ax sweep, a piece of porch tilted
under a pine, a front door stoop as white as first thoughts,
a path between corrupt oaks and sleek birches,
a blanket where your hand falls to rest,
the place in your eye reserved for sudden starts
when you think all about your being is still dark
and the nightmare is the bark of wild dogs
crawling down the banners of your mind
like spiders of light on the move.

When it all goes down, when the bet
is paid off and all markers set straight,
the sun comes with its singular entry,
its warm shot, its two fingers of life
into the glass, as well as every dark
alley waiting the mercies found in light.

* * * * *

Christopher M. Wick



Jesus Was a Yaqui

On Depeyster Street
I can sometimes see the barefoot tread of children
long after they have gone.

I hear voices,
the sweet syllables of everyday
when someone says "Family."

In the crisp green glass of a broken Heineken bottle at the curb
are the threadbare tires of a Pontiac Gran Prix,
the rusted undercarriage,
and the pale sweaty face of the driver.

In the concrete cracked and heaving
like tiny tectonic plates
I can only imagine that famous photo of Geronimo
resting on one knee
holding his Sharps rifle.
The photo taken before his first capture.

A filigree leaf
brought by the delicate application of winter, water, and rot
are what arched stained glass windows are made from.

I run my hand down the length
of a white pine branch
the needles compress and pop
and my river guide from twenty years ago
finally returns to Nepal.

My step-son is even more acute.
He sees in the twitch of a classmate's eye
the dark menace of a stabbing.

The birds chirp and he hears them
talking behind his back, calling him “Rapist”

He moves his fingers in the lilting mechanical twitch
of ant antennae
to flutter the leaves of the carob tree outside the window.

He tells me he knows
I plan on setting fire to the apartment
when he is asleep.

* * * * *



Raymond Soulard, Jr.



Labyrinthine

[a new fixtion]

“When did it matter the most?
When I smiled at another & *believed*.”

Part Eight

ii.

The radio station that’s been on all night gets strange toward dawn, as the rest of the night does—

A song that begins in mild acoustic pleasure drives through a full horn blowout before every guitar in the world, it seems, brings it on back to the melodic quiet & gone.

And the words sung with wonder, almost humor:

*When the glaring lights have left
When the music has slowed to smoke
When there is sniff of good blood & then no more
When touch brittles maybe to break
When best taste is old & cold, hurts*

*The red bag, doorway, back to dreams
The red bag, the path, come
The red bag, come, trust, come here.*

He’d heard it before, didn’t like it at first but the tune had grown on him over time, he supposed—

The hotel room was wonderfully dark, & the torso next to his sleeping & still. He tried to remember but then gave up. As the day moved along, it

would come. He would know again.

He sniffed. Sweat, & something fuzzily resembling flowers. Breath deep, slow, steady. Why couldn't he remember? Was it getting worse? Had it always been like this? Was this someone important to him? Not a whore. Unless he'd paid one to sleep over. Would he do that? How did he know, more than anything else right now, that his memories would return later? Was it like this every fucking morning?

If she was dear to him, she would give him comfort & reassurance, would stay by him until he was good again. If not, well, she'd dress and go.

He noticed how still he was keeping, so as not to wake her. Then again, the radio was on, softly, & that hadn't waked her. And that song. It had been familiar.

He quietly felt below to see if he was naked. He was. But wait. Weird. A long scab on his side, fresh, ridged, like . . . a letter. Letters? His finger lightly traced them over & over. He'd carved a fucking message in his skin!

G . . . E . . . T . . . O . . . U . . . T . . . N . . . O . . . W

Get out now.

A flinch & she was on top of him.

Could have tossed two of her off but for the gun pointed at his temple.

"This is where you trust me."

"This is where I have no choice."

"You feel that fucking scab almost every morning."

"So you keep the gun close & wake up before I do?"

"Pretty much. Yes."

"Would you shoot?"

"Yes. I don't want to. But yes."

"And I have no reason not to believe you."

"No."

"So how do we do this?"

"You put your hands flat under you, spread your legs slowly, & I climb off. Then we talk."

"Sounds kinky."

"You say that every time."

"I believe you. All of it. Here's me putting my hands below me. Legs spreading."

She agilely half-tumbles, half-leaps off him & he's sure her gun never stops pointing at his temple.

The song on the radio was a signal, got him up & through his motions, clicked something in his brain to start remembering.

He was not a captive but injured. He'd been a prisoner until recently, until she & others broke him out. She didn't know about the scab until that first morning he'd tried to run.

"Who held me?"

"It's complicated."

"Who are you?"

She laughs. "A friend."

The room is still pretty dark but she knows about this point he's trying to see her. Wondering if they—

"Did we—?"

"You'll remember later."

He nods. She puts the gun away, the morning's drama is over.

As we leave the hotel room, by a service elevator, as we move from vehicle to vehicle, an element of randomness in it we ourselves cannot fully know, making our way out of the city, but in no coherent manner, I begin to recognize you—

it's your smell, though you've learned not to wear scent—you'd stop sweating familiarly if you could, only half a laugh—

but I know you—I know you in the way a man knows a woman who he's possessed & who's *possessed him*—your hands are light, betray your harsh quiet words, your almost constant low-level fear, they fly about weightless, gesture, point, dance, never still, flutter, flutter, & you see me see & flush badly—

"My hands. Every fucking day."

I smile.

"Just once . . . just fucking once . . . my tits. A good look at my ass." I look & look. Nod. Lick my lips. She smiles but it's some wrong kind of smile. We possessed each other long & deep, but it's no more, maybe not even recent over. I'm more blood-kin-loved by her now than love or want. She sees my

eyes knowing more & more.

“I’m sorry. This is the best the doctors can do. We get you back fully for a few hours. Then you fade & sleep.”

“And start again?”

“Why?”

“What do you mean?”

“Why go to this length? Why you? You don’t love me anymore. What kind of fucked-up obligation is this?”

She doesn’t flinch. “You’ve been there. On those ships up there. They fried half your brains trying to talk to you. Just talk.”

“Why you?”

She turns away. “You stopped loving me. You’ll get there in an hour or so. Right now you’re feeling what we used to have. It will cool. You’ll see.”

We’re in the back of a van, a couple of guys with guns who I can see are really looking away. They were warned about this but it’s still fascinating. Watch a man fall in & out of love in a couple of hours. Should be a line for tickets.

I pull her close to me. She resists, & doesn’t, like this has happened before. “I don’t want it to cool.”

She nods. Lets my hand roam her lightly. Touching her face. Her look is stony but a sort of implosion to it too. Waiting. I try to think. Reason. What haven’t I tried? If I’m so fucking valuable, why isn’t there another way?

She rests against me finally. Lightly, finally. I make two fists. I let them loose.

When we arrive to where we’re coming, it’s a place of maps & machines. We’re not enemies with them up there, but they move with such immense power in their ships & in their beings, that they destroy us like feet walking on a lawn.

For awhile I pay attention as I am briefed in the basics, like I am every single day, it seems. I have been on their ships more than once, but the last time I tried peaceful contact, almost as a desperate move. This is what damaged me.

“And now we are trying to extract from you what they said”

I nod.

“That’s why she’s here. She brings you back sooner than any drug or method we have.” They seem apologetic.

I suspect there’s something more.

What am I missing?

She looks at me so fiercely I feel like I am going to drop. She takes my hand & the rest of them look away. She leads me to a room & shuts the door.

I look around. It’s familiar.

“Why?”

“It’s the last time we were together. In a room that looked like this.”

She dims the lights, leads me to the bed, never loses my eyes for a moment, undresses with a gravity I can hardly breathe.

Her body is slender & moves into my grasp strongly & submissively.

There is a picture on the wall opposite our bed & even in the dim I am drawn to it, a flash contained in her mouth on mine her mouth gnawing mine no resistance no words that glint something I know her breasts soft hard things in my hands she nudges me touch taste she knows my moves knows how to steer me but we steer each other for my pinkie finger is down low on her teasing teasing wetter wetter it’s an egg that glint she rolls atop me shifts her hips to slide me in & I amaze that I am ready very hard for her for whatever this is it’s an egg falling off a table & I nod as I did then & her hips claw me in deeper she moans sadly she cries as I thrust in harder & harder & harder it’s a picture on the wall of the hotel room where I came to say goodbye to her—

We cum together, it just happens, we cry & cum into each other, cry hard & it floods me, everything, all those disappointments over years, cry, cum, oh fuck shit fuck fuck shit fuck shit

Nothing. All of it.

We lay in grasp a moment then I nod. She lets me go reluctantly. This isn’t a replay for her. She does this new with me every night. To help the cause? Save the planet. No. She dresses with her back to me, silently.

Not even close.

We come out of the room, the fake motel room set, & get to work.

I don’t talk to her again for several hours. But I understand why as the night’s incomplete work winds up, we are driven to some hotel room in the city, random changes of car, random changes of driver, & why we check in as husband & wife, down to the rings, & why we silently undress & get under our covers together & she crawls into my grasp & I begin to fade knowing it will all begin again tomorrow & my heart quaking under this knows the secret word to the ones plainly awled in my skin. Her. *Get her out now.*

(ii.)

She begins to recognize me more as we travel on. She calms. She . . . begins to grow younger.

I have no claim on her & less than none. I was sent to retrieve her by the one who had been her master & was no longer.

I wasn't what she had known then either. A jock among his crew, trying to fuck whoever the rest hadn't. There were fewer pretty quick. The prettiest ones first, most of them. A couple were always too scared or religious or whatever fuck.

Then the rest. The freaks. The eggheads. The ones a little top or bottom-heavy.

Your sister Ashleigh was a prize none of us could score, Jazz. She didn't know what she wanted. Carelessly sucked a few cocks & got a reputation. Let it be. She was like that. I found myself liking her more than those fuck-me short skirts & halter tops. She neared me too, but only so much.

She could smell cherry juice on me & it was true. I specialized. I was patient. The others said I was smarter & went slower.

What I had was an older sister, a room next to hers, a radiator that spilled her phone calls into my room.

So I listened. Most of it was obvious. The boys called to beg & tease. The girls to gossip, compare notes.

I just fucking listened. I'd jack off to my collection of porn, calm down, turn out the lights, wait.

They liked little touches & gestures. A captured look. Flower petals in their locker. Conversation that wasn't boasting or sexual. Even stupid shit. TV shows.

They listened to the guy's words in ways he didn't know. Listened, in, around & through.

I didn't get it all. Her phone calls & what I saw as I got to high school too didn't much match up.

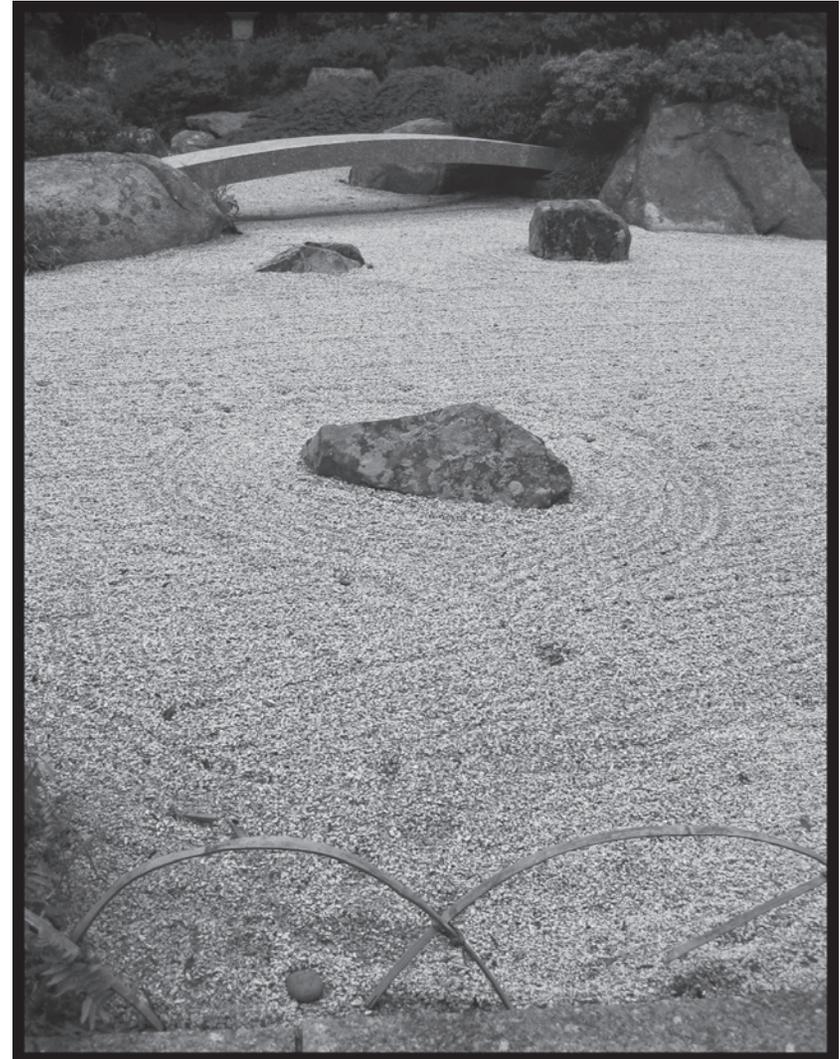
But I tested things out. Worked my mind out to speak not just say. I made sweet gestures even when I wasn't on the prowl. Just to test.

They noticed. Like a pack sharing one deep lasting sniff, they noticed.

For a long while I took advantage. They had what I wanted, offered it more or less, I took. I enjoyed.

Your sister was the first one I stumbled with. She let me have some, liked a little begging but no, it didn't go where I wanted. She had a look, it undid me.

And I tried to bury myself of it. You wonder about that night? I



wanted it over, if I had to share her with the team. I didn't care. You were the bonus. For the long wait. I didn't think you'd elude some fun.

It all sounds stupid. Now. Then it was important. We played hard for school pride. We deserved the best pussy.

Finally you say it. My name. "Toby."

I nod.

We're watching a TV show, getting nearer. Traveling like this through times isn't sexy like the movies. You drive. You sleep in the motels you're told to, the ones that keep you intact. They call it physical integrity.

It's about a Queen on an Island, long ago. Something about a bull that emerged from the sea. She had sex with the bull. They cut that part out of course.

"Toby."

"Jasmine."

"Tell me more."

"What do you want to know?"

The more I look at her, the more I want to leave this motel room. Her face is soft, her beauty bright, probing. What these concrete walls aren't in every possible way. The beds are hard, the pillows thin, the blankets old & colorless. Her cheeks are a very light roseate. Me, the jock, & words like that.

"You rescued me."

"I was sent."

"By?"

"You know."

She grimaces. "The ships overhead."

I nod.

She's in jeans, & a black t-shirt that says "Is this all really enough for you?" I feel her body tendering & it nearly undoes me in these dark motels we stay in. Her eyes are grey, her hair a beautiful long brown.

"Is this the White Woods still?"

"It's all White Woods once you realize it. You know that."

"I know that I was with Cosmic Early. And now I'm not."

"You'll see him again."

"Can we get a drink somewhere?" That older, lusty look. A hint of sloppy swilly sex in it.

I shake my head. "Sober as church mice, Jazz."

"Where are you bringing me?"

"You're needed."

She stretches on her bed, a yoga move or two. Feels me watching too close.

"Why haven't you tried to fuck me, Toby?"

"I have fucked you. I just kept it to myself."

She laughs, really laughs, young & lustful. Nods.

Turns back to the TV, that movie is still on, we turn up the sound. Jazz makes me get us chips & candy from the vending machine next to office. Two sodas. She likes root beer.

Relaxed more now. I still want to fuck her but OK, maybe later, maybe not.

I was up there, Jazz, in those ships, & I know a lot of things better. This world isn't unique, isn't separate. I learned that most of what I'd been told to believe was wrong. Others had started the myths & stories. Once they stuck, everything built on them. We were stuck with them.

But they needed me for something. Told me I dreamed well. It would be useful. OK.

"Where's Ashleigh?" Jazz is looking at the TV & there is a scene in a castle & there is a girl who looks precisely like Ashleigh. Down to the beauty mark on her left breast. She'd let me lick it quite a few times. Liked me to cum for her while licking it. I complied. You would fucking too if she was in your bed in only a pair of black boy shorts.

I didn't flinch. "We're going there."

"To an old movie on TV? Is that a destination?"

"It's where they're sending us. Something has to play through."

Jazz suddenly is off her bed & all over me, tongue in my mouth, hand teases my cock in my pushed down shorts, one fingernail teasing, pushing me down, curling my hand to feel her & feel her there & there & *there*

Whispers, "Is this what I need to do to get a fucking answer from you?"

I tempt, *o shit fuck do I tempt*. Make shit up one thing or another but fucking *have her*.

I roll free. My cock tries to stay. Really really tries. She smells like dirt & sun & fucking the air to breathe itself.

She's breathing hard. My cock says that's a good start.

We turn back to the movie. The Queen is talking to the Princess. The Queen is sick, the Princess is hostile. Sits on the edge of her bed.

"Don't lead with your heart, child. It will betray you," she growls.

"What was your wrong to become like this?" the Princess demands.

The Queen smiles, handsome, not pretty like the Princess. "When

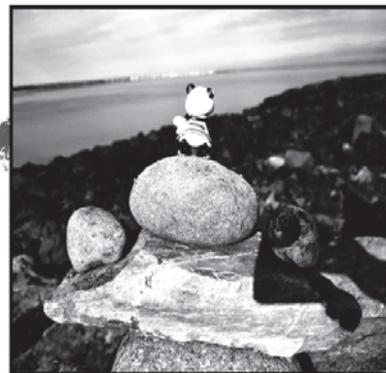
they near you, child, hooked by your luring blood, do what I didn't."
Silence. "Sniff."
"Sniff?"
Silence again.
Jazz nods. Looks at me, now fully her self again, & nods.
I retreat to the bathroom to jack off, to shit, to vomit. There. Better.





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