

# The Cenacle

NUMBER 43-44

WINTER 2001

*Before ever land was,  
Before ever the sea,  
Or soft hair of the grass,  
Or fair limbs of the tree,  
Or the flesh-colored fruit  
of my branches, I was,  
and thy soul  
was in me.*

*—Swinburne,  
Hertha*

*“To be an artist is a blessing & a privilege.  
Artists must never betray their true hearts. Artists  
must look beneath the surface & show that  
there is more to this world than meets the eye.”*

**Marvin Gaye**

From Soulard's Notebooks:

March 10, 2001  
5 p.m. (or so)  
Kenmore Cinemas -  
Theatre #9 [second row]  
Boston, MA.

Dear Levi,

At some point tonight I'm going to write for you a new poem, first new poem for you since early December - I've been hearing this poem for days but now I'm ready - funny to talk about it hours in advance of its making - but it leads my thoughts right now -

In a few minutes going into psychedelic spaces - crazy grateful that I've got acid again - this past week I've felt better, clearer, & worked harder than in months - I'm eager to talk to you about all this & to hear how your trip went -

Meanwhile, here now to see "Traffic," a movie I've heard all kinds of things about - & later on to Museum of Science to see Pink Floyd Park Side of Moon laser show - & much writing & what-all along the way -

so it begins again  
yes! ☺

-00-

7:30 pm or so  
On board Kenmore-  
to-Park St greenline Ⓟ

- "Traffic" is a disturbing movie in the way it manipulates & simplifies the "war on drugs", both sides, all sides really, it is slick & exploitative - racist, sexist - yikes I really hated that movie - & its "as himself" appearances by various U.S. Congressmen & Senators - good grief -  
Marijuana & cocaine confused for each other - amazing -

Park St. Ⓟ station  
Boston, MA.

- Director Steven Soderbergh made a splash years ago with "sex, lies & videotape" & I hated his cynical glitzy sleaze then & now -

Park St. - to Lechmere greenline Ⓟ

- there are so many sleazy undertones to his movies but I think in particular the coked up 16 year old daughter of the pending U.S. "drug czar" being shot up <sup>with heroin</sup> in some Hollywood version of the "hood" by a black man who'd just fucked her in & out of ~~her~~ coke coma - Jesus fucking Christ

-23-

this movie is the kind that features "powerful performances" & important statements - Soderburgh understands everything in the universe from some kind of Los Angeles point of view - people are jaded, treacherous, negotiable, self-serving, expendable, & - somehow - laughable - his movies depict people at their worst & then laugh at them - he is a despicable man -

9 p.m. (or so)  
Cambridgeside Galleria  
Borders Books & Music  
Cambridge, MA.

- Malls are suffocating marketplaces - I used to come here when I lived nearby - now I'm here, in this bookstore that did not used to be here - because I have a ticket to LaserFloyd show at Museum of Science - hehe - tripping at Laser Floyd - how teenage 1970s - or now I guess - & I'm sure it's a pretty good show - Chris Kuroda's lightshows at Phish concerts are incredible -

I hope that this coming show is less depraved than "Traffic" - I haven't begun to get pissed off about a movie like that - it's "establishment hip" - what long soldout middle-aged mofos convince themselves are "frontline reports" -

-24-

The amazing thing is how superficial their "frontlines" are - how irrelevant to anything sunk more than two inches into ongoing creation -

It's good to be able to watch things again from the psychedelically-enhanced point of view -

one thing that comes clear is manipulation - but voluntary? is it indoctrination of a good or insidious kind?

I always end up wondering this shit - I don't know if I've ever tripped in a mall - I think tripped is becoming trapped - so strange to think of a mall as a trap yet it makes sense -

It's 9:10 says the overhead announcement as good as any way to keep track -

I was thinking about science & math - my education was sickly lacking in both - I remember unsympathetic - unteacherly - teachers - no wisdom, no empathy, no help - just a feeling of repeated failure - & eventual resentment - in truth against the incompetent teachers foremost - a curiosity seems to remain tho from when I was very young - in the early 70's NASA & "Star Trek" were heroic things - ✓

-25-

wanting to be an astronaut - a very romanticized idea of what this was - but at least it was some kind of lingering otherworldly notion still alive post 1968 -

& what now? tech guru? I don't know - the Internet & all that multimedia stuff sometimes seems just needlessly confusing - as tho people just need to be kept busy - entertained - diverted? hmmm -

Time to leave here soon - I'm not sure what accomplished - but mulling on science & math - hmmm -

near 10 pm  
in front of Museum of Science  
Boston, MA.

- Phish Farmhouse in my ears starkly reassuring & the beauty of grokking snow - water, temperature, shadow & light - all continuously changing & the eyes of the viewer & passing of the night

so beautiful -

life is beautiful - creation about creating -  
flow - music  
wow

-26-

11:15 pm or so  
benches outside  
Museum of Science

-so hilarious-I walked into the wrong place-  
the Omni Imax theatre not the planetarium  
where the laser Floyd show was - & I  
saw "Shackleton's Antarctic Adventure" on  
this huge screen that filled the  
domed ceiling!

It was story of a 28-man expedition to  
the South Pole that went wrong & wrong &  
more wrong until the boat was lost &  
the captain & a small number of his men  
in a lifeboat managed to get back to  
humanity & bring rescue for those awaiting  
them - wow -

perils of the body & of the mind -

I watched this movie with ~~the~~ a hunger that  
its heroes survive - & that they did - I amazed  
that film less than an hour I'd waver -  
& when I came out, wandered round,  
& discovered where I should have  
been - Pink Floyd music from within locked  
doors! hehehehe



-27-

[3/1/00]  
4:01 a.m.  
Newman Rd-bed  
Malden, MA

- I was home about 12:30, full of energy - had a good call w/ my friend Gerry watched South Park, then a program about marijuana, then one about Charles Manson -

I'll be glad when I have my new computer so I can talk to people online again - I miss that alot -

IT'S ALL BEAUTIFUL EVEN THE UGLY PARTS!

is what I have to offer for now  
in lieu of poem yet unwritten -  
Am too tired to do it right now -

but worry not it will come -

meanwhile bed -

so tired, Leni -

Love, Ray &

-28-

March 11, 2001  
1:50 p.m.  
Newman Rd. - bed  
Malden, MA.

- Slept 8 or so hours - feeling fuzzy loopy  
still it's OK - I'm more happy recently - it's  
strange - relieving - for however long it lasts

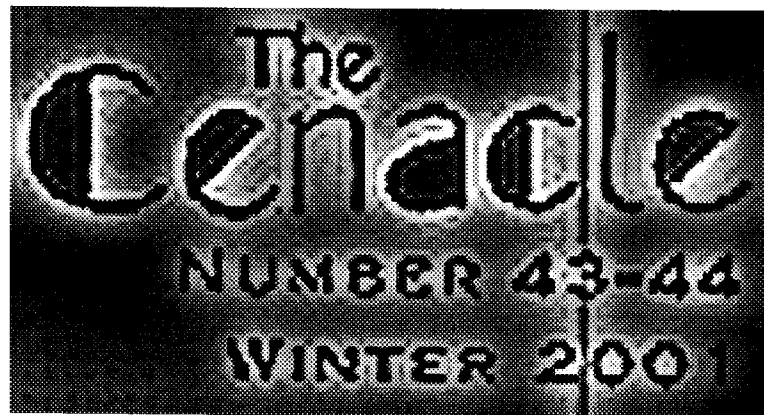
Something to be said for being survivors,  
Levi, you & I both are - survived some  
rough times, doing better - taking credit  
for this, enjoying its truth - saying OK, here  
we are, the day is pretty, the world slides  
along, no telling where, & this is good, we  
are free not knowing where we're bound, more  
hopeful not knowing

It's all beautiful, even the ugly parts!

so at ~~that~~<sup>last</sup> your long absence seems to be  
at its end - I know all about my adventures  
I'll be wanting to hear about yours -

Tomorrow into work week & strangely I'm  
not dreading like always - hmmm - coolness -  
OK - more soon!!

Love,  
Ray



*Edited by Ray Soulard Jr. ©*

Poetry by Ric Amante	1
Traveler's Sketchbook: Europe by Barbara Brannon	7
36 Nocturnes [second series] by Ray Soulard, Jr. [☹]	23
LSD Psychotherapy by Dr. Stanislav Grof	67
Poetry by Joe Ciccone	75
Pursuit (a new fixtion) by Ray Soulard, Jr. [☹]	79
Poetry by Mark Shorette	104
Notes on Contributors	108

Front cover illustration by Patty Kisluk; design by Barbara Brannon

Accompanying cassette features highlights from 5/20/2000 Jellicle Literary Guild meeting held at Ray Soulard Jr.'s home in Malden, Massachusetts, & 6/24/2000 meeting held at Mark Shorette's home in Plainville, Connecticut.

*The Cenacle*, 32 Newman Road, Apartment 2, Malden, Massachusetts, 02148, is published six times a year by Scriptor Press. It is kin organ to The Jellicle Literary Guild, ElectroLounge website ([members.theglobe.com/cenacle](http://members.theglobe.com/cenacle)), RaiBooks, *Scriptor Press Sampler*, & "The Within's Within: Scenes from the Psychedelic Revolution w/Soulard," Sundays 5-7 p.m. on Allston-Brighton Free Radio, Allston, MA, 1630/1670 AM & [www.abfreeradio.org](http://www.abfreeradio.org). All rights of works published herein belong exclusively to the creator of the work. No work published herein may be reproduced without permission of the work.

Thank you so much to Barbara Brannon for devotion to Art & friendship by any means necessary . . .

And a moment in memory of my friendship with Erika Del Fabbro . . . best wishes always, dear one . . .

## Poetry: Ric Amante

### Star Rover

Philosophers make love in their heads,  
as well they should.  
Formulate principles independent of  
flesh, folly, mystery.  
But tonight the stars rage and sparkle,  
dig and stitch a larger pattern  
that inquires, transfixes.  
Beyond answers, trust—  
beyond thoughts, wonder—  
beyond certainties, love.  
Blue fields of starlight sway through the black—  
we live now and again,  
we one day will fly.

### Hardware Store

John has been married for 60 years,  
and tonight Catherine lies in the hospital  
with mortality and death—and he too.  
It scares the shit out of both,  
and John's eyes turn inward,  
grow moist and glossy,  
as he confides to me in the doorway  
of the engine-repair shop:  
“It's coming out like black motor oil—  
they have her hooked up to a bag of something  
like wallpaper paste—I've seen a lot  
and given death some thought and. . .  
Ah, Christ, I don't know—  
I guess it's her time soon, my time soon—  
I guess it makes sense,  
but why isn't it as simple and precise  
as the order we create—  
keys lined up each to each  
lever guided down steel cut  
other established once and forever.”

**Anguish or Prayer**

Sometimes it feels like a 2x4  
crashing hard at the base of the spine,  
but no pain now, no words now—  
it's a warm summer's evening  
the sun sets golden behind boiling white clouds  
and over the rustbed of tracks  
strung with blue chicory and empties,  
vacancy and rest.  
Beauty, too, we bear so long  
then slide unkempt to waiting ground—  
no pain now, no words now.

**Vision and Humility**

Entropy is a dish served nightly,  
a force that won't vanish,  
a constant we can't discount—  
if it weren't for the delicacy  
we seek to revive,  
we'd have bought it a long time ago.

Strong and crazy again—  
stripped to the waist and dancing this snarl  
to a call to a song to a man.

Leap, serve, and kneel while you can.

**This Urgency, This Tree, This Life**

Beauty everywhere, peace elusive,  
our restlessness the comfort we seek.  
Outside, a silver beech hangs trellises in the air.  
Sun and rain say flourish, leaves respond,  
a canopy of copper space  
frames tame suburban lawn.  
A silver beech, a great gray trunk,  
a spangle of burnished leaves  
fine-tendriled, whole, audacious.  
On other days with other eyes  
we've seen these silver branches—  
this new desire needs more.



**In Lines Red and Vulgar**

In the silence of moonlit snowdrifts,  
in the crucible of skid-row fire,  
in the ephemera of love and death  
that graph the service of our choice—  
(whiskey poetry air).  
In the shots of tenderness  
that always remain moist—  
today a wind-surfer ripping white curls  
from the rippled bark of the Charles.  
In the old scare that fulfillment  
lies out there,  
that a final understanding  
yields a final happiness.  
In lines red and vulgar  
I swear I know nothing at all.



# TRAVELER'S SKETCHBOOK EUROPE

---

29 June 2000

Dear Ray,

Only a week after Denver and I'm writing you heading the other direction on the planet. Seems strange that this afternoon I'm leaving work in Columbia, driving by the Statehouse where they're setting up the platforms and lights and whatever for the big flag-lowering ceremony—and a few short hours later I'm on a plane headed up the east coast and eventually over the ocean. Did you know we fly over Boston? I'll wave, about ten tonight.

I'm hoping there'll be lots of great opportunities for sketching, writing, seeing great art . . . in among the drinking &c. More anon.

*Nike of Samothrace*

*Louvre*

LONDON 30 June–2 July

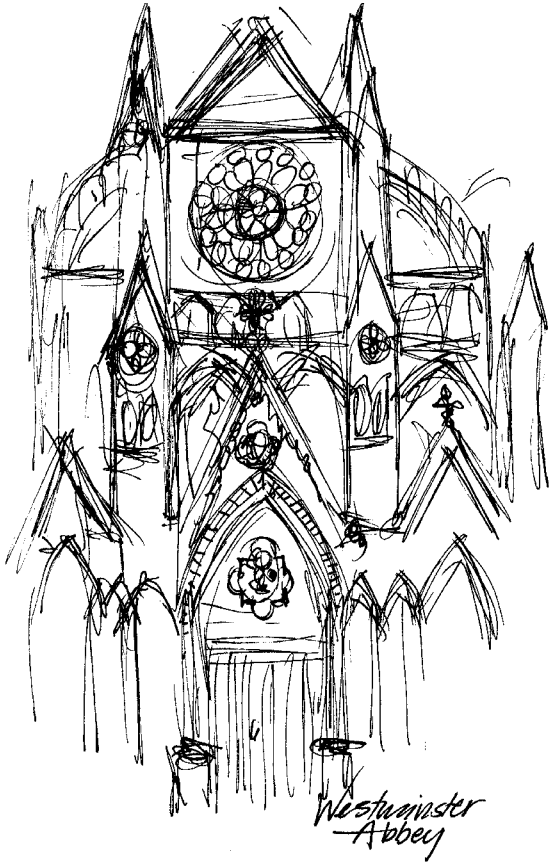
Notes from the Tate Modern Gallery  
Kenneth Clarke called the nude “the naked body clothed in art”



Harrod's  
Georgian Restaurant



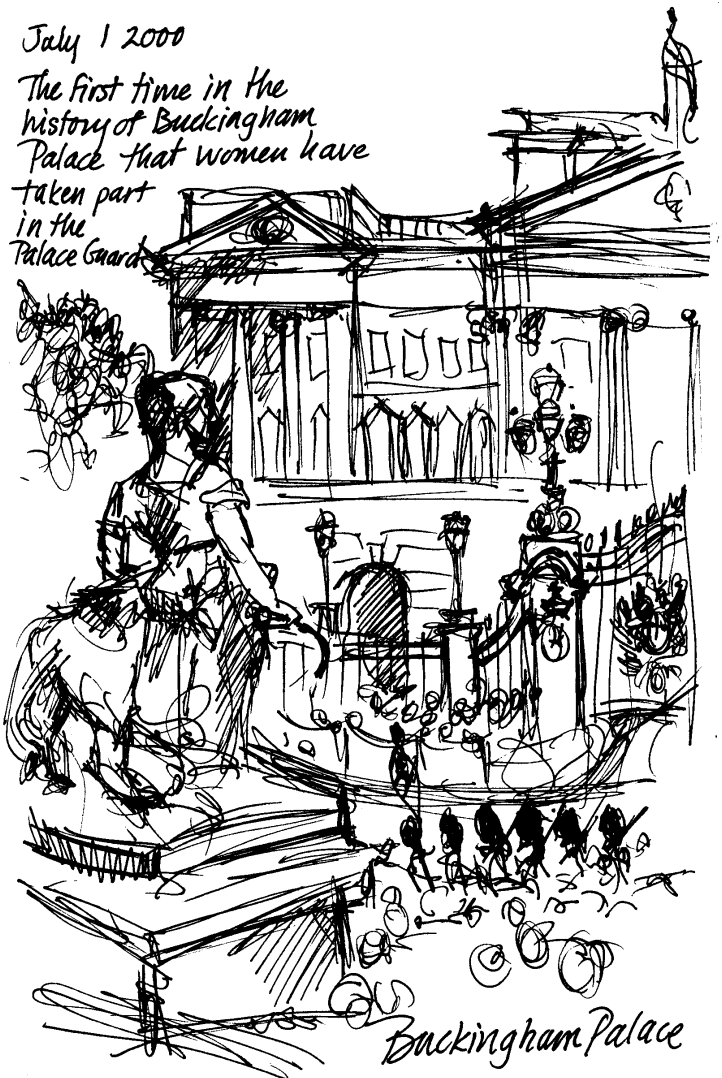
Rodin, The Kiss  
Tate Modern



Bye-bye to London at Waterloo Station, as Trevor and Kay and I board the Eurostar for Brussels. It's been a weekend of contradictions and juxtapositions: The Tate Modern, a museum in a power plant, contemporary manifestation of art in a very old nation; the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace, last show of imperial might paraded before the crowds of all nations, all classes; the London Gay Pride march passing in front of the Nelson column in Trafalgar Square and on down Whitehall past Parliament and, eventually, Westminster Abbey; the Egyptian Escalator, faux flourish to the staid Harrod's store since its al-Fayed ownership. A city of brown beauty, in shades of bricks and old mortar, cement-beige sandstone, worked soil, dun carpets and dark corners, the swirling, tea-colored Thames.



**Honour guard:** Captain Cynthia Anderson at Buckingham Palace yesterday as she and three other Australians became the first women to stand sentry there. John Howard interview, News Review, page 7  
Picture: Stefan Rousseau



Rocking along the rails toward Brussels now, the English Channel (or La Manche if you're from the other side) still between us and the Continent. The rooftops of southern England alternate between stolid plane trees; the embankments are lush with Queen-Anne's-lace and other wild vegetation. Cricket fields and commons, green squares and backdoor gardens, flash by between the chimneys and the chemin de fer. The brown-brick overpasses are covered in graffiti just as they would be in any large U.S. city. Prisons, power plants, junkyards, the construction undersides of things are the same here as anywhere. Over it all, a monochromatic sky like cotton batting, heavy with moisture, swathing every green thing in ancient life and new growth.

Breakfast, traveling through the Kentish countryside as the sun burns off the mist. Sheep graze on gently sloping hillsides, their pastures fenced by hedgerows. Streams divide the low valleys, and ponds here and there lie fringed with willows. Then all of a sudden it ends, and the green fields open up into the tunnel's mouth. The ride is so smooth, we hardly know we're passing down and under the water. Ears popping is one of the only clues.

In just a few short minutes the train emerges on the other side. Calais is past in a flash, and the train speeds along through Norman farmland. There are high embankments in many places that obscure the view, and tall trees bordering the rail route. But every so often it's possible to get a glimpse of a little village, a cluster of tile-roofed houses and shops surrounding a church steeple, or a grange with its barns and stone silos surrounded by tall elms.

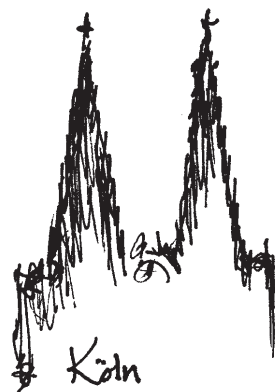
We make a brief stop at Lille. In France, the train runs at faster speeds because of better trackage; and it uses an overhead wire for electrification, as opposed to the third-rail system and the older trackage of the U.K.

## BELGIUM

The French attendants march easily up and down the corridors; they handle service promptly and politely in French, English, and Dutch. The engineer makes his announcements in all three languages. It's a wonderfully quiet and civilized way to travel, here in the first-class coach.

## GERMANY

At Köln, our first experience in reading the railway timetables and locations in German. We've missed a connection by a few minutes and must take a different train. We take the 16.28 *Bacchus*, which will go on after we leave it in Mainz to terminate in Basel.





The train route parallels the Rhine River for much of the journey between Cologne and Mainz. On the hillsides on the opposite bank are vineyards, with the trellises placed vertically up the steep slopes and, often, the name of the vineyard in large Hollywood-style white letters against the green backdrop of the berg. Castles stand at the pinnacles; churches rise from the valleys.

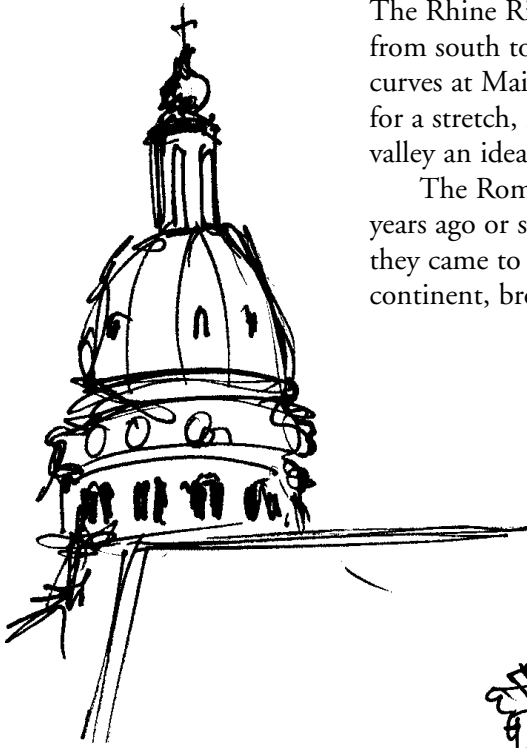
The sides of the hills above the tracks are carpeted with vineyards, terraced at precarious angles halfway up the slopes. As for the castles, it's hard to understand how they were constructed on their rocky perches—much less provisioned and peopled. But once you got to the top you could certainly defend your position effectively.



*Gutenberg-Institut, Mainz*



St. Peter, Mainz



July 4: On the mighty organ of the Peterskirche, the organist wraps up a program of music from the Baroque to the contemporary with a stunning, surprise improvisation on “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

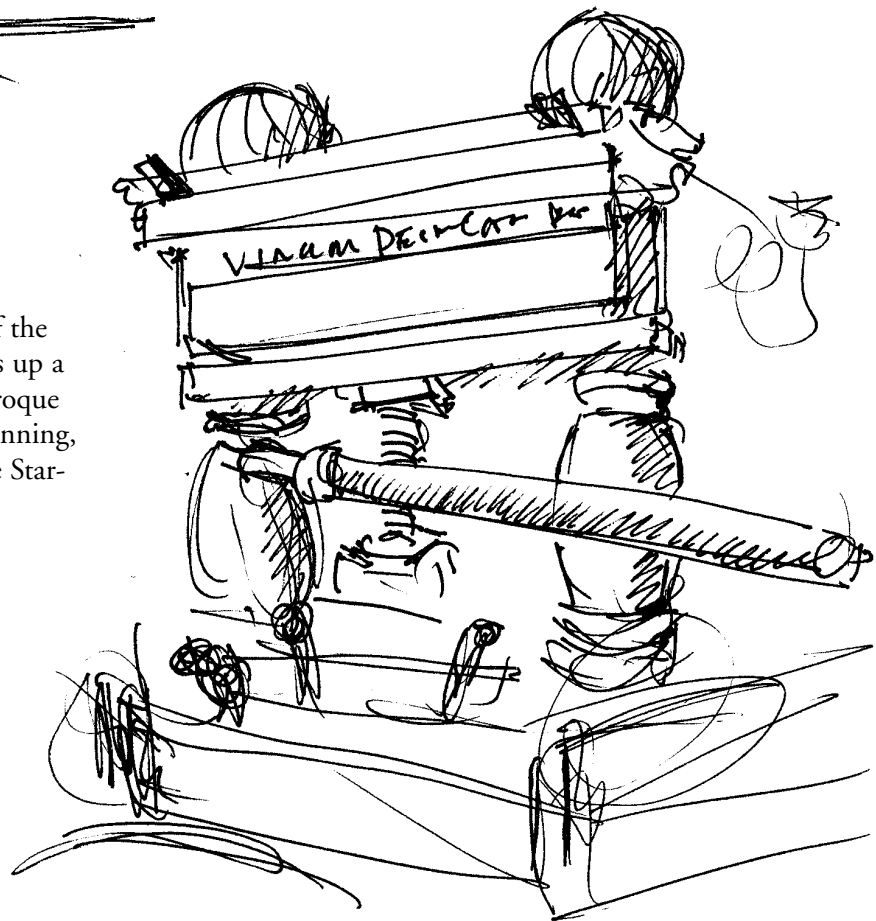
The Rhine River flows generally from south to north; but where it curves at Mainz to go east to west for a stretch, making this part of the valley an idea wine-growing region.

The Romans, who a thousand years ago or so wanted wine when they came to this part of the continent, brought some knowledge

of winemaking to the region.

Carolus Magnus (Charlemagne) observed conditions that would be especially favorable to wine-growing. The monks, who arrived later from Burgundy, fully established viticulture. Steinberger, a famous Rhine vintage, dates to the twelfth century.

*Wine press*



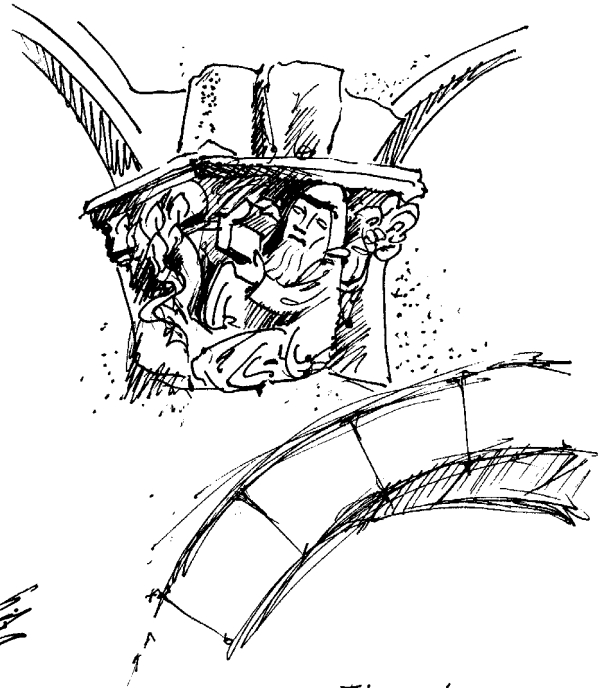
The wine press was the model for the printing press—it is no coincidence the printing press was developed in a winegrowing region. Winemaking and bookmaking intersect in the Rhine valley, and here at Eberbach. This press bears the inscription *VINUM DELECTAT ET LAETIFICAT COR HOMINUM*. The large capital letters contained within the Latin motto form the date of the press: MDCCCL, or 1801.



The steeple on the Eltville church was undergoing repairs, following the severe storms of Sunday night (Kay and I watched the storm from the open windows of our balcony at the Erbacher Hof). Trees were damaged throughout the Rhinegau region.



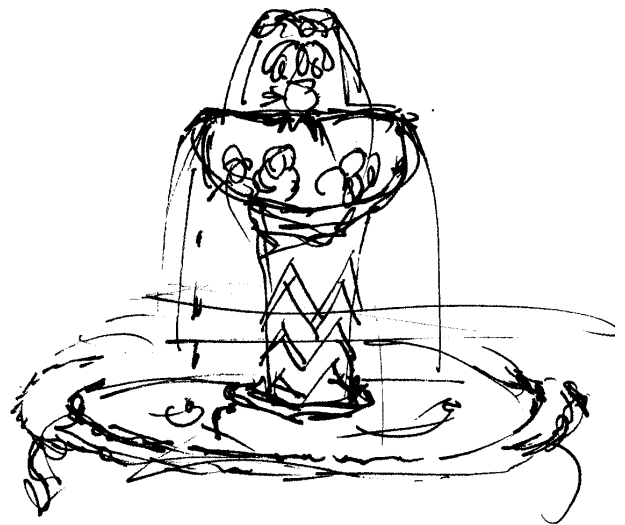
*Eltville*



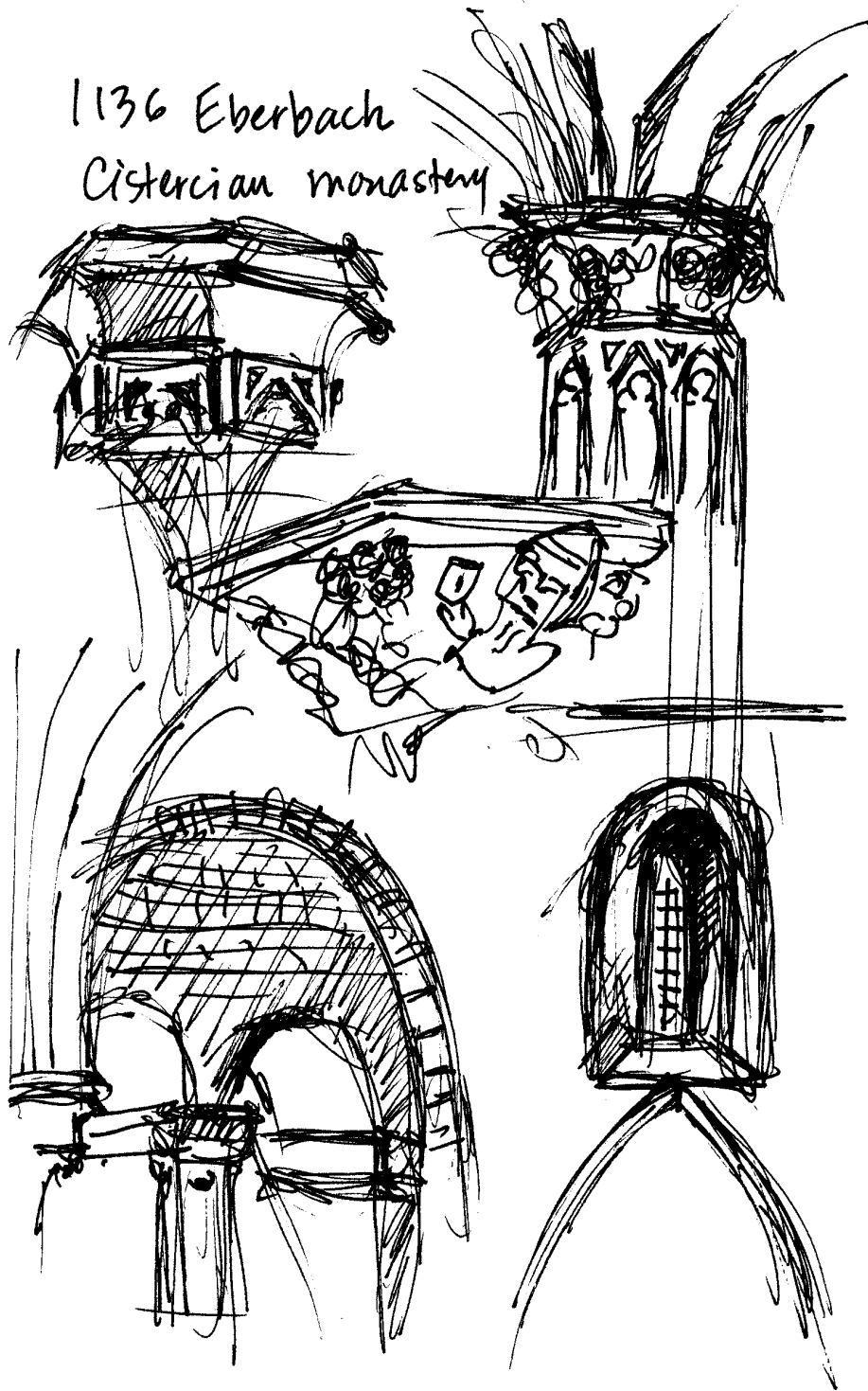
*Eberbach*



*Refectorium*



1136 Eberbach  
Cistercian monastery





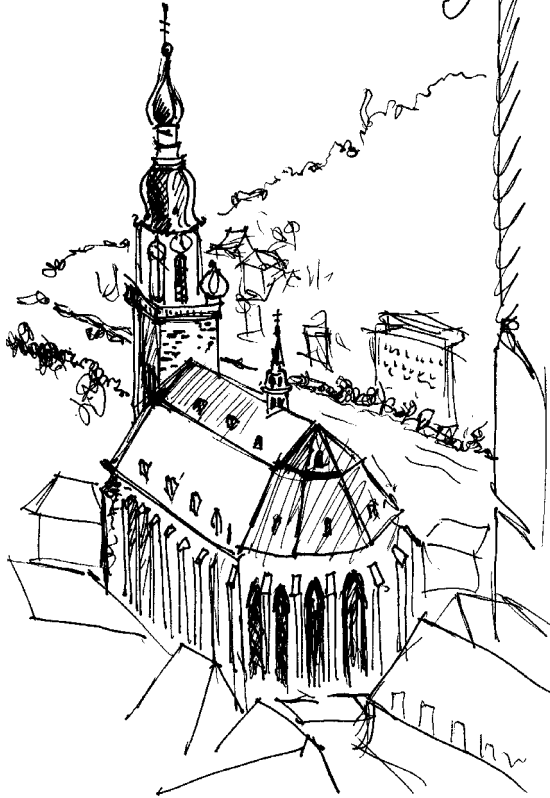
Handel, *Messiah*

Ludwig Gülfker, Leitung  
Ulrike Staude,  
Soprano

The basilica of the Eberbach chapel was designed in the austere Cistercian manner. Panes of white, unfiltered light—as opposed to stained glass—is proportioned according to the golden mean, lending the church a spatial harmony that coordinates with musical intervals.

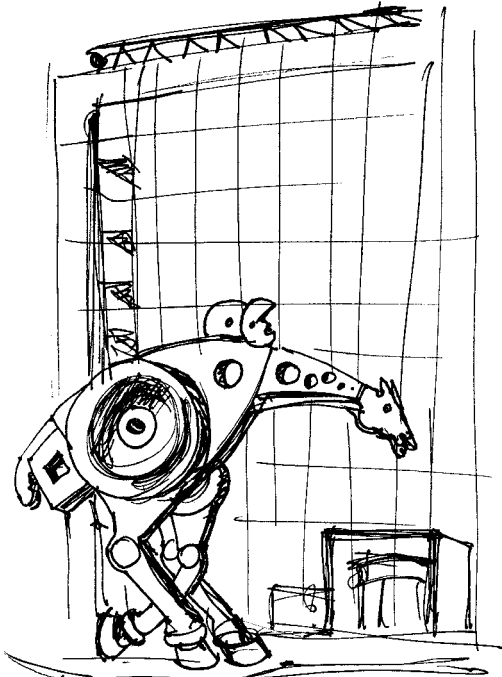
The large dormitory of the monastery was the setting for the film of Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*.

*Rooftops of Heidelberg*

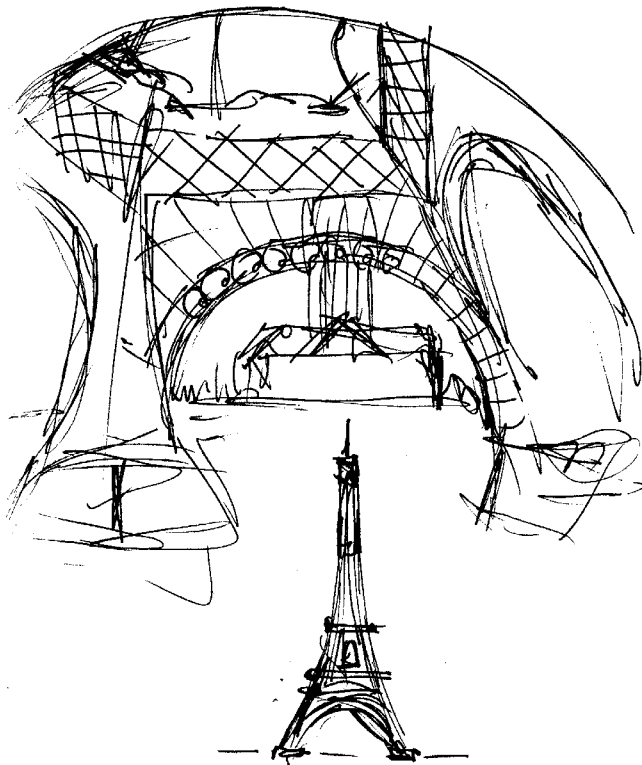
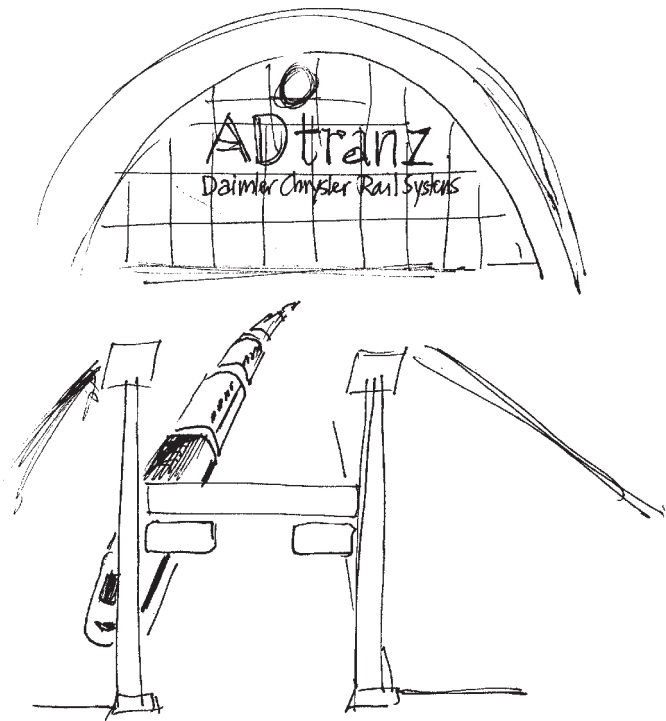


*Das Mitteltor*

Heidelberg old and new



*S-Printing Horse Heidelberg Print Media Academy*



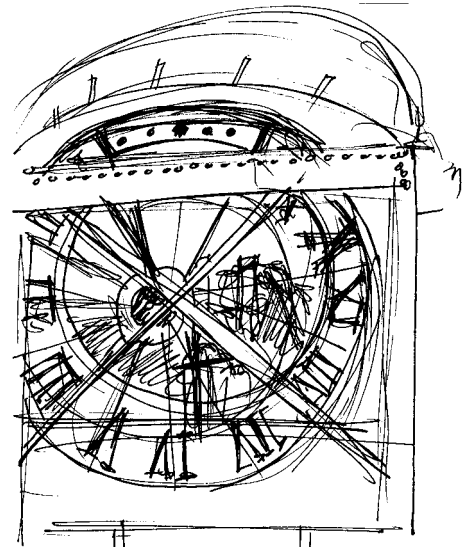
## FRANCE

*Paris, le 7 juillet.*

A five-hour journey by train: Mainz to Karlsruhe, then the “Mozart” on into France via Strasbourg and Nancy. Rain throughout eastern France, ending just as we travel through Champagne. A beautiful rainbow appears over the vineyards. We pull into Paris-Est at 10, get a taxi to the hotel in the 10<sup>me</sup> ... in what is supposed to be “la calme dans la coeur de Paris” but is instead its vocal chords and stamping feet. All night long people fight and shout in the narrow alley, motorcycles buzz past, dumpster lids and car doors slam. Across the *rue* a light shines in a garrett workroom where a seamstress stitches late into the night. Someone pisses in the street. Around four, a couple of doors away, a shrill-voiced woman begins cursing. There is no sleeping, throughout the tirade. We stop trying about six and decide to spend the morning in search of another hotel.

We meet with success, finding a charming place in St-Germain-des-Pres. Room secured, we spend the morning in the Louvre. In the afternoon, a good meal and a blessed nap—in a soft and quiet bed. Late in the day we visit the Marais and Les Halles, planning to leave for the Eiffel Tower by dusk.

From the Eiffel Tower summit the effects of the late afternoon (@8:00) sunshine play across entire neighborhoods; at times the sun breaks through the clouds and illuminates a garden or building, making bruise-colored patterns in the clouds. It is cold and, now and again, drizzly.



*Derrière l'horloge  
à la Musée  
d'Orsay*



*- Rue de Buci*



*dimanche le 9 juillet*

After a quiet and enjoyable night's rest in our charming chambre, we take le petit déjeuner in the hotel (delicious). It's raining again, so the plan is to visit museums during the cold, wet part of the day. First: the Musée d'Orsay, which is just a short (wet) walk from the hotel. In the queue we encounter a friend from back in the U.S.!

The museum is impressive with its collections of nineteenth-century and Impressionist works—an amazing assembly of paintings, sculptures, and decorative arts. Of the many treasures, my favorites are the paintings of Renoir and Monet; the sculptures; the canvases of Puvis de Chavannes; the maquettes of the Opéra. Afterwards, a bit of lunch in a café—and a few blocks' walk to the Musée Rodin.

Here we pass the entire afternoon in the company of Rodin's work, ideas, influences. The Hôtel Biron once housed, in addition to Rodin, Isadora Duncan, Ranier Maria Rilke, and others. The garden, overgrown during Rodin's time, has been restored to its eighteenth-century beauty and contains *The Burghers of Calais*, *Les Portes d'Enfer*, *Les Ombres*, and many others . . . *Victor Hugo*, *Balzac*, *the Thinker*. In addition to the work of Rodin are represented sculptures of Camille Claudel and others of Rodin's atelier, and the paintings of Eugène Carrière.

By the time we finish at the museum, we're cold and hungry and decide to head for

Montmartre. We choose the Café La Bohème first, for soup and a little red wine; then, with the weather not improving, we wander past the artists valiantly trying to render portraits in the rain and settle into a restaurant with a glass-covered terrace overlooking the city. The rain only worsens throughout the course of our good meal—but finally we must pay and leave, as we are the last remaining patrons. At times the rain is so dense we cannot even see the Eiffel Tower from the top of the hill.

Despairing of seeing the lights of *la ville lumière*, we get a taxi, and start down the hill. Within minutes, though, the clouds break, and a beautiful, warm golden light falls over the top stories of the buildings along the boulevards. We ask the taxi driver to take us to the Eiffel Tower instead of our hotel, and he takes us by a route that passes the glowing statuary of l'Opéra, la place Vendôme, l'Assemblée Nationale.

A bright rainbow arches over the city, picking up the colors of the neon lights and street signs. When we arrive at la Tour Eiffel, the lights begin to sparkle on the iron girders; the last of the sunset fades behind the Palais de Chaillot.

Since the rain has so suddenly stopped, we hop aboard a tour boat—the *Catherine Deneuve*—for a last, late-night view of the city. Tomorrow we fly home again, westward from our dream and source, back to reality.

FINIS



Rodin: "Sculpture is drawing in all its dimensions"





Poetry: Ray Soulard, Jr.

## ***36 Nocturnes***

*[second series]*

**On plane from Boston to Phoenix, August 2000**

i.

Morning. Resurrection.  
The least thought matters.  
Morning. Desire.  
Slim lashes of flame. Possibilities.

ii.

Night trips into today, unfractured  
by the light, night unsanctioned in  
this wild free run, night frail &  
fabulous, there is something must be  
done, a choice, a truth, a magick in  
the night's new rampage, a gleam. A way.

iii.

The collecting & scattering continue apace.  
No assignment to instruct or contain the soul  
Fecundity is the depthless meister  
Fecundity grows & glows with wisdom

iv.

Origins. You wish to learn the first notes  
of fowl & tree. Must existence mean  
something to be beautiful? Must words  
bead around its heart? What if meaning  
glints from texts of water?

v.

She pulses. All that is, pulses.  
Yet she pulses singular—why?—  
Much unknown. Much troubling.  
One feeds upon sunshine & girl.

vi.

Something from the past  
careens on yet shimmer-bright  
& desert-deep—a chiding energy,  
a whipping-hunger—the hard fluid  
of awareness & regret—child-high  
with hope—sometimes greedy—  
damning—nihilistic—jittering fool—  
a cave, very deep, called Creation—  
unsentimental seed—bullets for  
the She-moment of first light—  
thickening at the breach into new day—

\*\*\*

**Black Rock City, Nevada, Aug-Sep 2000**

vii.

The desert receives her freaks in a ragged  
metallic procession, with quiet cries of  
greeting, with a merry trickster wind  
with a language of dust old freaks  
know—& new ones seek to learn—

viii.

The Voice said: Go home.  
I said: I am.  
The Voice said: You're burning up.  
I said: Tis my plan.

The Voice said: this Festival means you ill.  
I said: what rages in the cities is real sickness.

Kill the radio  
Joy is flaring here, now.

ix.

Not a sequence so much as a tribe  
of weeds, weed-songs, live, inevitable,  
wisdom pulsing from starlight

music permeates, music eludes

trusting not because the cosmos  
is safe but because it  
is home

music dotted with clues but perhaps  
the answer must be pursued  
to another dimension, through  
death, past the loss of all that  
is familiar, all that can be possessed

Not a sequence more a fire of vibrations  
a dozen fires tonight, a hundred anon,  
a thousand thereafter—

The tribe is gathering, some giving away  
starlight again, some bouncing with  
glee, many with plans, fecund with belief—

x.

Fuck it—just write—the music  
manifests as mountains, the deep  
love twists to be close but free—

a long time ago watching the  
earth revolve around its clouds  
this morning watching faces  
crowd gently & funeral around  
a salamander tonight perhaps  
what colors survive in stars &  
desert will explain why the heart

shivers hard with ecstasy, with emptiness

xi. *To Zephyr*

mountains beyond mountains forever  
flow, just flow  
flow, just flow  
each day flakes away from rose to onyx  
flow just flow  
the meal we share, the tower we build  
the exquisite loneliness that descends  
with stars upon us when a new shiver  
heralds darkest night—

flow, just flow  
flow, just flow

release past like chimes dimmed with still  
shun future for its paucity of rewards to desire

flow, just flow  
flow, just flow  
flow, just flow

begin in the mystery of what you are  
doing now, continue by thanking mystery  
for its ever-new child spirit, conclude  
by marking all which seems impossible  
for discontinued study—

flow, just flow  
flow, just flow

flow, flow, flow

mountains beyond mountains  
your message, your muse—

xii.

rhythm color writhing symbiosis  
flaring silhouettes scirocco tawny  
slither plan cirrus globe lounge—

words nearly denoting nothing  
crush them quickly into dust.

xiii.

Moving toward immolation, dream leads  
mind leads body. What matters most  
is fear-mingled hope. What matters most  
is fear-mingled hope.

You,ll corrode in the sun. You,ll break down.  
Release. Don't try. Release.

Give away what you cannot merely  
hold in your hands.  
Spread your dust. Better fame.

Moving toward immolation, soon beyond  
fear & hope. Soon beyond corrosion & gift.  
Soon beyond the need to believe.

xiv.

While the city rages I do not  
not tonight not yet

I have no music to share tonight  
not tonight—not yet

xv.

I don't dream too often of cunt anymore  
per se  
while awake anyway  
I dream rather of smiles, of curves  
of laughter  
of some vague form of cosmic justice  
I dream of a place where cunts are  
not covered, nor cocks, nor  
fancies, nor the stranger moods of  
gentle freaks

I dream of being neither awake nor  
dreaming, not knowing which I am,  
oh, in a way like LSD-25, in a  
way like eating pussy, in a way  
like perfect full moon nights but

better. Better

NYCity naked. United Nations naked.  
President Next naked. Hospitals  
naked. Judges with old-time wigs  
but naked—

Maybe I'm dreaming of some other kind of cunt—  
deeper—don't laugh—vaster—truer  
happier—when whistled at able to whistle  
smartly back—

& some other kind of cock for that matter—  
no less hungry—but more musical—don't  
laugh—sentient, nearly—

in secret places, I hear, cunts & cocks  
intermingle without the usual buffers &  
forbiddens—3 cocks dance along a trembling  
skin—cunt & breast & lips & touch &  
laughter—trees all around—the air  
full of dreaming~

a new dream. a bigger dream. No longer  
a dream—per se—

I want to think of cock like 11th finger—  
I want to think of cunt like Lawrence  
did—joy! joy! joy! joy! fucking joy!

yes to cock!  
yes to cunt!  
yes to everything—every last thing

Leave your body & lick the stars!  
Leave your body & seduce the moon!

I don't dream of cunt too often anymore  
per se  
I dream of the liberation that is  
twining my days & nights

I dream of smiles

I dream me more & more

I am dreaming you right now.

You are the most beautiful creature in  
the universe—



xvi. *To Karie*

Dream. Sometimes a yes-voyage, sometimes  
a no-voyage. Dream. Til rhythms wavy  
& slow. Dream. Or just dance & let the  
desert dream for you. Dream. Voices  
undulate like water. Dream.  
This universe a mist, a light, a shimmer.

xvii. *For Ari*

Remember you are beautiful  
perfect overcast starry skies  
ecstatic blue moods rising

all is good: remember  
it's all good: you are beautiful

Return to your beauty always  
in the blue-black midnight of doubt  
vampires hungering for your stumble  
Your beauty is a new rise  
a new language, swift & snaky

be well: allow yourself to be well  
at ease you shine: remember

The desert fest is about to flow  
& madness sweetness & loss  
Comfort & fire. Symbology of dust.  
Mystery of dust.

Shine: you are ready. Release  
what is overcast. Choose to be clear.

xviii.

Dreams of dust deep in this cement city  
nights duststorm-long, authentic,  
the sense of real nowhere in a whiteout,

& still feeling the magic kindness of that  
desert city, continuous festival, still

feeling what's possible strolling nakedly by,

what's so obvious—no rich man's fancy—

money small & funny in that city where  
miracles stroll nakedly by—

\*\*\*

**Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, September 2000**

xix. *Pierre Auguste Renoir, "Dance at Bougival,"*  
*oil on canvas, 1883*

coveting her music, warm, sinewy  
because this evergoing silence is cold & dry—

curves & colors, what remains after  
anger—

balance & beauty, pain harnessed to  
look ahead—

meaning & truth, for as long as necessary,  
til laughter & flight—

courting her music, she heeds only news  
which does not break—

receiving her music, finally, one day,  
& love the wisest trees praise  
& clarity every dream conceals.

*Six Van Gogh fragments*

xx. *"The Wounded Veteran,"*  
*pencil, brown ink, black ink,*  
*& wash with white opaque*  
*watercolor, 1883*

He misses everything but the eye.  
The eye is safe. He knows its history.  
Its demise was honest.

The rest drips away slowly. Drip. Drop.  
The rest is embarrassing. Requiring a  
frequent change of lies.  
His remaining eye is widow. A keeper of closed  
records--

xxi. *Van Gogh's Sien (a speculation)*

She is nothing between sittings. An old  
whore. Unhappiness. With pen & brush  
singeing paper, her moods & small tasks  
approach meaning. I think sometimes she  
understands this.

But I do not know. Perhaps I call it my  
secret & am satisfied.

Let her sew. Let her family graze about.  
Let her share my bed & us share what  
we can.

But always she must pose—my pencils, my pens, my chalk—

xxii. *"Skull," 1887-1888, oil on canvas*

A fragile stone, pocked with useless orifices,  
purpose lost, if ever any, organic  
material, unsuited to wise or even  
meagre continuance

perhaps brief occupation as a preacher's  
boo-toy, or budding surgeon's study rag

but in truth should be given in bags  
to children, the poor & wild ones,  
the ones who know that stones are  
for tossing in latter daylight—

& smashing when darkness—& mother's calls—  
arrive.

xxiii. *"Self-Portrait Dedicated to Paul Gauguin,"  
1888, oil on canvas*

There can be no lasting bliss in this  
mortal life til nearly everything ever  
known is gone, til one's cell is the air,  
one's scripture the bees, til one's body reserves  
just a little golden moisture, til memory is  
nonsense, dreams bunk, all truth & future apparent in  
a candle's winking eye.

xxiv. *"Portrait of a One-Eyed Man,"*  
1888 or 1889, oil on canvas

"All is grief because we must have  
it so. So I learned this & now  
I understand. All is grief. Simple, eh?"

"You want to ask me why? Of course  
you do! 'All is not grief!' you wish  
to cry out, tho you do not, perhaps

"out of respect for me but no, I don't  
think so. No, it's worse— perhaps  
you think I'm right— you fear it"

A new cigarette. Some bread. A knuckle  
rubbed against an irritating moustache.

"All is grief. More then this I cannot  
say. Whether you choose to believe  
or disbelieve, is up to you. A choice."

A laugh. Several. More wine.

"Yes! Quite! A choice you see! Perhaps  
you don't need to decide tonight. Perhaps  
never. Leave it in doubt, eh? Yes! Good!"

xxv. *"Self Portrait," 1889, oil on canvas*

What's left is not death. No.  
Death is for morbid scribblers, for  
preachers, for sinners, for believers  
in a consistency false to this comic  
universe's every obvious way—

No, what's left is not death. Power.  
All this blessed power summoned up,  
waves of pulsing, potent muck,  
scars atwist memories, the pictures!

No! A constant wound! Defacements!  
Stars burned down to fagots—

A life's anguish. An apex. A dream.

(of nothing. of something—)

\*\*\*

xxvi.

I haven't found my home yet so  
I keep looking harder & the more  
it eludes me the more it seems  
I am nearing it—

\*\*\*

xxvii. *Phish concert, Great Woods, Mansfield, MA.*

No doubts. Say yes.  
Music is truth.  
Corridors of rhythm, doors of light

Come on. Leave your body.  
Come with me.

I thought it was about someone  
I could be wrong.  
It could be about everyone

Come with me. You can. We will.  
Leave your body.

Say yes. Rain falls in  
fireforests of rhythm  
Mountains of light.

It's about Someone. About You.  
About Everyone

Come with me. Say yes. Here's the corridor. There's the door.

\*\*\*

xxviii.

Today raise more fires, leave little  
protected, someday learn how to leave  
it all blowing near the flames, someday  
know the freedom of ashes, of feeding  
all but one's hands to the blaze—

Today collapsed into tonight, neither how  
nor why, perhaps snared in the ugly  
or the fear, but perhaps instead the  
lasting nude gesture, cryptic twining with  
starlight, the new lover who understands  
what to burn down, what to preserve, what to renew.

\*\*\*

xxix.

Tonight perhaps freedom, maybe  
happiness, risk, heavy lights, noise,  
warped time, discovered weaknesses  
in the wall, push, push, push—

A buzz of mystery, a thrill of energy,  
secrets coming visible as the road  
approaches extra-dimensionally, ha!  
but true, just patience & watch like a net—

If only, reads tonight's scripture, if only  
& do what you will, & make bliss &  
liberation from will & daring, yes,  
tonight the open door, whirlpool, delight—

A choice. As always. The mountains or  
the streets. Trees or grandstands. Dream  
or more. Starlight, flesh, or newsprint.  
Hustle. Retreat. Safety or symbiosis.

Tonight perhaps freedom, maybe happiness.  
Strip down. Decide. Conflagration. Or merely truth?

\*\*\*

xxx. *For Laura*

Continuous hustles flung from the invisible.  
A face. But not yet. She approaches music  
often. Yes, & then once, maybe twice . . .  
That spawned from the invisible fucks  
with rules, lightly, easily . . . but intensely  
too, loss, countless, anticipated . . .

Perhaps dream into the invisible, arrive  
on the least wispy end of a lash,  
just a moment the arc brings you in,  
take her. Now. She's yours.  
For the least moment. Snarl. Liberation.  
What was it you saw? What was it  
she felt? Laughter. Plummeting.

Music explodes from streetlamps. Follow her.

\*\*\*



xxxi.

Evening. Shades. Suffering. Symbiosis.  
The least thought matters.  
There are no least thoughts.  
Evening. Desire. That which does not float,  
cannot renew & lift,  
must be abandoned. True possibilities  
burn, & remain.

There is something must be done, a choice,  
a truth, a magick in the night's new  
rampage, a gleam, a way. A truth.  
Many.  
Corrosion. Fear. Bliss.

Something taken while still day while still markless,  
now kept at night, pink satchel of wisdom,  
shapely wind, movement, no plummeting, laughter.

That which does not float tonight, cannot renew  
& lift, must be abandoned.

No assignment to construct or contain the soul—  
water, we lash play roll for meaning  
for the container, for the outlet, for the  
sugar or salt, to give us flavor, instruction.

does this life compel more our madness or  
our joy?

The collecting & scattering continue apace—  
planting, growth, harvest  
fecundity the depthless meister  
fecundity growls & flows with wisdom

what watches from within, steers from afar,  
prays for the impossible formula

knows answers are for those too pussy for liberation?

Origins. You wish to learn the first note  
of fowl & tree. First fire . . . desire . . .  
old, old pain. But must existence mean  
something to be beautiful? Must words  
bead around its melody? What if meaning  
glints from texts of water?  
All that is, pulses. Something from the past  
careens on yet, shimmer-bright &  
desert-deep, a chiding energy, a whipping  
hunger, the hard fluid of awareness  
& regret, child-high with hope, sometimes  
greedy, damning, a hollering mist, a cave,  
very deep, called Creation, unsentimental seed—

Suffering. Symbiosis. Joy is flaring,  
everywhere, always, beyond festival  
& songs of dust, pursuit has carried  
to another dimension, murders without  
bodies, freak concertos mistaken for  
walls, rooves, food—

dream of dreams, wake & wonder:  
“yes. this is wrong. but what now?”

dream of the heart of the world  
watch it breathe, watch it burn,  
watch it shiver with ecstasy,  
watch it twitch with emptiness

Corrosion. Fear. Bliss. That which does not  
float tonight, cannot renew & lift,  
must be abandoned. Again: Ask:

Madness or joy?

Or flow, just flow  
flow just flow just flow just flow just  
flow

release past like chimes dimmed with still &  
shun future. shun time. Learn neither to begin nor end.

\*\*\*

xxxii.

Rhythm of the blossom as she pulses colors innocently.  
Color in the cheek of her petals, impatient, blood-hungry.  
Writhing, love, writhing, just dreams, hustles for her hope.  
Symbiosis, flow, fears, she queries, she twists in light.

Slowly a garden, eventually the sea,  
til a nebula bright, at last a spiny dream—

Or perhaps better a shadow, distant movement, but  
Love falls, corrodes quickly in the sun.

\*\*\*

**xxxiii. for eleni, October 2000**

To begin again, to begin continuously, to learn  
how to see full moon always, ocean dawn always,  
newly fecund dance always, the moment when  
dancestep becomes amour always, begin  
again, begin continuously, break open  
the egg of laughter, how it spatters over woe!

Will you share your music with me tonight,  
new love? If tonight we have but fancies  
of each other, joyful clippings extracted  
from within our hearts' sadnesses, is  
this to you sufficient to architect a  
new beginning? What is love?

Flames of intent, sent by music's wide  
invisible road, kisses resembling phrases,  
smiles bouncing off the full moon,  
a hand touches another hand through  
machinery, did your heart really  
jump? Did mine? What is love?

A new dream. A bigger dream. No longer  
a dream at all. Begin again, begin  
continuously. Neither awake nor dreaming.

This universe a mist, a light, a shimmer.  
Neither dream nor awake. Sometimes a  
yes-voyage, sometimes a no-voyage.  
Full moon always. Ocean dawn always.  
We must be dreaming. We must be awake.  
We must be beginning. What is love?

Remember you are beautiful. Begin  
here. Starry skies ecstatic, blue moods  
rising, remember: it's all good: you are  
beautiful. Begin here, return to  
your beauty always in the blue-black  
midnight of doubt. Remember. Begin here.

Your beauty a new language, a glory rising, full moon  
always, ocean dawn always, allow yourself to  
be well, at ease, shine: remember.  
Shine: you are ready. Release what is  
overcast. Choose to be clear. Know beyond awake  
the love of your dreams. Mist, light, shimmer.

Begin again, begin continuously. Beyond  
awake & dreaming. What is love? I'll follow  
you & learn. What is love? You'll follow me & learn.

Begin again, again, & rightly call any beginning  
a miracle. Touch me with beauty,  
I'll tap you with balance, together we'll  
harness pain to hurl our flight from  
dream & awake to meaning & truth,  
maybe a love the wisest trees praise,  
perhaps clarity which does not break.

*xxxiv. for Leni again*

There can be no lasting bliss in this mortal life til nearly everything ever known is gone, til one's cell is the air, one's scripture the bees, til one's body reserves just a little golden moisture, til memory is nonsense, dreams bunk, all truth & future apparent in a candle's winking eye, "all is grief" she says to me, & turns away, waiting for me to defend this precious yet strangely indefensible existence, I know not what to say save "I love you" & "I will carry you" & "I cannot give up on you" & "there's more! wait! don't go yet!"

& I turn to my shamans, the trees, wishing so dearly I could breach the chasm of silence between this intense peculiar moment & the wider eternity in which their music may be heard, she turns back to me & we clasp hands having solved nay a thing but on we go today, tonight, on we step to the beach, nearing ocean's exhortations, perhaps at midnight to a moonless field of lillies, now running, running, running toward the glittering music before dawn & all I have is you & all you have is me but if we get that right the door back into the world will open I promise you, my love, "all is grief, yes, certainly, but so much more"—

All this blessed power now summoned up, waves of torrid pulsing, scars atwist memories, what do we have now in this shared dream isle? What have we done in creating this? What do we do now? Neither of us can & yet together we do, see how clear all is at moments, my love, the bells of laughter, the freak tornadoes of Art, here we are, no option but to awaken & once awake to merge what we believe is possible & to begin again, it seems to be what one does, my love, nobody who burns ever brighter escapes the endless reverberation of smoldering down to fagots, & a miracle re-ignition, & the slow rise back to danger & fecundity, all this blessed power now summoned, magic brewed from despairing nights & rousing blood, we must never become believers in a consistency false to this comic universe's every obvious way, no, my young love, we must simply kiss & laugh & flow, grieve & rage, & know that our bonding is a gift not just to each other but also to everything everywhere we now share in the careen of making as it every day wildly eludes cheap & cowardly & easy annihilation!

& our love a fragile stone, pocked with mysteries, how indeed can it prosper when much we carry along with us is burden once dream, when the bastards without & forces within us seem flat the fuck out against us when isn't it possible that some great random machine could blink twice & nip you from me from you, when wasn't all lost years ago along a dirt road with blank signs or was it a night where the very dust of any argument for good or happy or love exited by a puff of false primacy? Our fragile stone, my love, this ridiculous thing come far too little & far too late but no. Insist. Demand. Sing. Come here. On we go. Today was another day. The sweet little things continue to occur. Our hearts continue to murmur the word yes & the word now & the word hereon & the word JOY. Calm me with a shiver, bless me with a moment, heal me when this seems impossible, bring me forth to new colors I know I can never possess & show how they curl comfortably in my hands, nestlings smiling, patient for my next word.

What art thee, my muse, my young love, when I am neither engaged with thee nor imagining thine beauty? What art thee? My pen & ink singe paper composed from the palette of thine moods & thoughts meaning, melody, roaring raving raging tinging melody, you understand this & pose or I suppose you do & am satisfied—but what fairness in this? Symbiosis of heart blood & bone requires you not simply pose for me for balance can only be achieved when your hand grasps my palette too, when I am still to thy mullings & graspings & makings of note & color from my cheek & shadow—and thus, what am I to thee, my artist, when you are neither engaged with me nor imagining mine beauty? Shall we learn to love & create each other in neon simultaneity, mutual gifting, mutual reception, come together, love so fierce neither skyline nor burnished dusk nor landscape a thousand dreams wide can preach on unconverted?

Love. Only love. We have only love. Only love between us is good at times. The rest drips away slowly. Drip. Drop. The rest is embarrassing. Requiring a frequent change of lies. A golden-haired maiden. Her fire-eyed suitor. The music in their clasped hands perfect, played for a thousand empty seats while they laugh. They know how to play. They remind each other what joy looks like. Empty beach utopias. Deep forest snow mannequins. Secret family, our romance, fearless & fine, lovely, funny, silly, ten thousand empty seats now, each adorned with a white lilly, we wear masks every night in the final act, masks & nothing else. Love. Only love. We have only love. The rest falls away when we debone its power, acknowledge the foolishness it truly is. A million empty seats as we open every door to every possible dimension & in this exquisite moment we've built receive all existence has to offer with neither fear nor remorse. Love. Only love. We have only love. The rest falls away.

You turn back to me & we clasp hands having solved nay a thing but on we go today, tonight, away we pass from the ocean's exhortations, from the moonless fields of lillies, walking, now slowly, now slower still, "All is grief?" I say, tripping, nervous, "I choose not to believe this." Wordless, breathless, you listen, wondering if this time I'll hit the note for which you've been waiting, I've hit it before, yes, this is why you're here with me tonight, but can I hit the note & hold it & build you the castle & the tree & the garden & the island you need, of which this note is capable if I can hit it & hold it & press it toward fuller & fuller existence, earth air water fire, make our new love a thing tangible, a beacon, a crucifix, a magick tablet laden with instructions to build up the new world within which you wish to dwell with me, symbiosis, synthesis, happiness sans hysteria? I hit this note now, hold it, shape it, pain burning my every maneuver but I hold it, higher & higher deeper & deeper, gesture toward the manifesting door, there, & another there, & many more above below around & within us, I become now the living note my love & am ready to receive your harmony, do not be afraid anymore, ever, you'll never walk alone again, come, let us begin, again.

xxxv. *For Leni, three weeks known*

I hadn't found my home yet so  
I kept looking harder & the more  
it eluded me the more it seemed  
I was nearing it—

"I am the sand, you are the sea,"  
she wrote with flickering quill,  
"A sea of love washes over me,"  
she continued, raw with want, with

pending culmination. She approaches music  
often. No doubts. Say yes. Music is truth.  
Doors of rhythm. Corridors of light. She  
hadn't found her home yet so she kept

looking. Harder. The night clings always  
to us. We agreed some woes back &  
so've neared each other. "I am the  
moon," she scribbles, "you are the sun,"

we are becoming puffs of hand approaching  
each other from across dream isle,  
the night dawning, trees grooving, younger  
critters eager to hustle from nests & covens—

Rains fall on fireforests of light. Mountains  
of rhythm & I say to her "I thought  
it was about someone. I could be  
wrong. It could be about everyone."

A buzz of mystery as we converge, a thrill  
of energy as the pasts & futures of  
I's commingle the feathery flightful  
intent of We present intense I cap

her shining locks with whirlpool, she  
makes bliss with my young kiss we vow  
to teach one another what to burn down,  
what to preserve, what to renew— Now.

She's yours. For the least moment. Snarl.  
Liberation. What was it you saw? What  
was it she felt? Laughter. Expansion.  
"Our love unites us as one" her quill

flitting again, she is unable for long  
to block the flow within, without,  
& I say "It's about Someone. About You."  
We near nearer. Mountains. Cherries. Mist.

"Come with me. Leave your body. You  
can. We will." She nods. Child. Maiden.  
Matron. Crone. Artist. Healer. Dusk &  
door. Street becoming mountain. More

ground into dream. Starlight. Flesh. Newsprint.  
As goddess, hustles. As acolyte, retreats.  
Wed to me but not for safety, mated to me  
to purge hunger, begin symbiosis.

Carnal greed for a new kind of freedom,  
happiness flayed of remorse, burbling risk, heavy  
lights, creating noise, discovered weaknesses  
in the wall, she honies me with her

touch & together we press, press, press—  
(It's about Someone. About You. About  
Everyone.) (Haven't found home yet so  
looking harder & the more it eludes

the nearer it seems blah blah blah)  
I am the sand. She is the sea.  
I flow dry & lingually into her &  
she trembles a dram of power through

me until I scream fragrantly,  
thrash historically, orate menstrually,  
expire in regressive phases, now  
only her smile, I am crayons & candles

crushed in the dirt. "You are the  
mind, I am the heart" she chants  
while remixing me from autumn leaf &  
dwarf star. Cryptic twining. Mist & maypole.

I am now raw with want, pending  
culmination. "Too," she murmurs, now gentle  
after breach & lesson. "We will never be  
too far apart." I ask again for the kiss



she has already given. Dream isle princess,  
dream isle prince. Corfu of the sea.  
Oz of the desert. Our home. The least  
beginning of a joined scripture.

Cherries. Mountains. Mist. Our blueprint  
modelled in six dimensions. Six thresholds.  
Earth. Air. Water. Fire. Spirit. Art.  
Sand. Sea. Moon. Sun. Mind. Heart.

\*\*\*

**xxxvi. Season of Lights, December 2000**

I don't believe in the god.  
I don't believe in the goddess.

The universe crawls toward worshipping  
its own heat.

All is lost. Night is coming. Rest here  
while I'm away.

Twenty-three kisses. Maybe twenty-four.  
Full moon.

Dream of death. Awaken, still dead. Thus hope.

\*

Evening. Time of blue fancies & risen  
growls. All is vulnerable,  
sweetness & jackal alike.

Some of us so dissatisfied & hopeful we  
move with limbs of light, reckon each  
step a danger, admit of no moment  
that is not cliff or wild voltage kiss—

We watch energy flowing around our  
small rooms, stack our books high  
against the window, burn  
disquieting prayers into our doors,  
become conduits, peepholes, willing laughter

for a new rampage, an ancient gleam. An  
emphatic way.

\*

Dream of death. Awaken still dead. Thus hope.  
Heartbeat amplified through water.  
Love stilling rage. Rage reminding, resonant

as a fist. Fecundity misunderstood as  
other than grief. Fecundity dream  
of life. Heartbeat amplified through  
water. Tears build our civilizations  
& flatten your gods.

\*

Universal heat contained not by god's  
exhorting rolls nor goddess's  
righteous urge—

More. Always more. A dance of dreaming.  
False governance of naming.

Written from a blaze of nocturnal ecstasy,  
spirit projected arching aflame to a  
tin shack deep woods—

Thinking: all that is, pulses. We hidden  
in the leaves proclaim the truth  
of need, of beauty, of pain,  
of mystery. Embrace fully neither  
life nor death. Trees. Wars. Tides &  
artillery—we watch the beams crisscross  
our floors & think: foul & think:  
perfection. Our meaning is a raw lash  
of beauty against a pressing hide of control.

The tin shack murmurs & burbles & shifts  
to listen better—

\*

Nocturnal breathing all is vulnerable,  
love explains nothing, hunger is about  
hunger, stop seeking, listen,

in the tiny tin shack angry weather  
comes & goes, it is a single room  
fluid with awareness & regret,  
captured nightmares dry-blood-stiff  
on the walls, come sun-up a deafness  
descends, creation huddles in a dormant hand.

\*

Dance of dreaming. Dream of death.  
Something furious with its own existence  
loosed every night to roam the soft  
corridors looking for a way out,  
a pretzel of words fashioned as a key,  
panicked blood tainted with powerful  
aboriginal symbols, so close, seems so close  
to carrying a full heart of unsubdued  
rage into the daylight. So close.

4 a.m. & all is lost. All is lost. All seems  
lost. 4 a.m. & all seems lost. The  
rage wilds about the room, seeking a  
mirror to feed back its image. Finds only  
reflections of riled air. The clock ticks  
toward 5. The rage recedes, breaks  
into freaks ecstatic in the desert.  
Peyote. New-washed cherries. Beams  
riddle the sky bright faceless coins, the  
rage differentiates again into cities,  
polity, mores, erotic ladders to nowhere,  
a million million waking souls & their renewed  
pact never never to trespass their own bliss.

\*

Toward dawn, eternal music, toward  
dawn, colors mad with silence, toward  
dawn, the revolution riders never bear  
into town. Toward dawn, the music

permeates, the music eludes. Over sea &  
scape, mountain & spire, the music manifests  
yet men only see rules, order, a principle,  
its corollary. She shifts on cot, in bed,  
under covers, in the frost, her heart everywhere  
shivers hard with ecstasy, she tries to  
cause the shift, her thighs & womb & fecund  
breast sacrificing to the effort. Learn the  
new language of sun & dark matter. Recall  
the old language of fire & neural myth.

She cries out. He settles her with water &  
caress. She smiles, she is captive music,  
a gleam tings her strands. Her way nears.

\*

Wherefrom, this torrential residua  
of suffering & comedy? Wherefrom?  
& what tis? Neath the grope, between  
the beams, within the currents, what tis?

Give it a name, a tag at least, call it  
Reality, yes, good, this suits, mmm,  
Reality is alone, in the dawn cold,  
Reality is snowed upon, Reality is  
assembled without consent, Reality will  
be gone anon, Reality alone & dreaming,

dream of floors & walls, of thighs,  
arches, pressure, myth, wings, leaves,  
gills, flames, earth, heights, death, light,  
wherefrom this torrential residua?

No final truths, just passing moments, sense  
of continuance, flow against flow,  
the dawn is cold & still, he shivers  
all bones & doubt, she lays a hand on  
his shoulder, he nearly wakes, nearly breaks  
from the vortex, trembles, breathes thicker again.

\*

Universe we worship thine heat—  
We seek our truest deepest fecundity—  
What secret lies within us we dance  
ferociously in our dreams—  
We seek our meaning by daylight drone  
& nocturnal ecstasy—  
Yet passing the bedchamber's mirror, we  
seek everything, but see nothing—  
All doors open, music freedom's dancing  
badge, still we huddle, creatures  
in a cave corner, holding a flickering  
stick, a bend symbol of restraint,  
hands pressed tightly over our  
women's & children's mouths—

\*

This day like every other will flake away  
from rose to onyx, flow just flow,  
the meal we seek, the tower we dream,  
the loneliness owns us, flow just flow,  
loneliness like every other word will flake away  
from fire to char, flow just flow,

but today can be immolation, body  
leading mind to dust, flowing just  
flowing, corrosion in the growing sun,  
breaking down, releasing, giving away  
loneliness, release, giving away the  
need to believe, & just believing

flowers tumble down the stream  
amidst playful glints of noise.

\*

She dreams reinvention of the world,  
flowers flowing in glints of shine,  
beyond circles & maya, no truths,  
a new dream, a bigger dream,  
no long a dream joy! joy! fucking joy!

She dreams beyond joy threat of numbers  
& the old loneliness, better choice to  
be clear than happy, to be still  
than to know  
beyond the dream, beyond the effort

She leaves dream behind, looks toward home,  
flowers flowing in glints of shine  
lead to desert covered in gleaming  
freaks & flares the blinding whiteout

She smiles damned pretty, the way at last clear.

\*

Morning. Or perhaps coming night. The end  
Or perhaps we still do not know a thing.  
All is maya. Perhaps.

The night I charmed you. Pointed to  
the ocean, shouted "Dream!"  
Pointed to you, shouted "Me!"

Pointed to the earth, shouted "Nothing!"  
Pointed to the thing that sings between  
my legs, shouted "!!!!!!!"

Remember then now, this morning I  
leave you. Rest while I am away.  
Study the prayers burned into our door.

Remember that night when I pointed  
to your tummy & whispered "Everything"  
& pointed to your eyes whispered "Clarity"

Pointed to the moon & whispered "Clue"  
& you pointed to my heart & whispered  
"Readiness."

\*

What burns in you is beauty,  
the you sun has carved with tools  
of light, the you night has moved  
to damp with tips flickering,  
the you dreams raise to  
vital roars, dim to mewling whimpers

Beauty burns in all creation, that  
which speeds, that which spews,  
towns of greased belief & cities'  
crushed horizons, in wombs &  
manes, grasslands & chambers,  
beauty burns in all creation, bright & painful

Here you are, first & last flower of  
the world, no garden, just a breeze  
& a drizzle, & too much time to learn  
how to bloom, & too little time to find  
a stillness in final color, to exude  
a knowingness about which dead things do not dream

There you'll go, join other dreamers  
in those hills, find an end to  
your ecstasies of thirst, find the heart  
that can contain what yours could  
not, find the magick that instructs  
hearts how to heal what crushes them

There you'll be, now fully a dream, beyond  
knowing's fruitless toil, beyond days  
of flail & nights of noose, beyond  
dreams of continuous thirst, beyond  
flow, beyond flower, beyond the ragged  
man regarding the maidens, not a hope to his name.

\*

All alone. All suffering. yes.  
Eyes watch nothing.  
Within, the pain always new, ready, ravenous.  
Without, no possible language of empathy.  
Heart a dead jewel beating long without purpose.

The morning light accumulates until  
it no longer exists.

All alone. All suffering. yes.  
Eyes watch nothing.  
Voices undulate like water. Dream.

The universe a mist, a light, a shimmer.  
Sometimes a tapping, nearly a rhythm, music?  
The curtains swish. A young creature dreams,  
curled in sunshine.  
A music? Doorway out. Doorway ahead. Doorway.



All alone. All suffering. yes. Eyes watch nothing.  
Then hope passes through, a lamb, a laser. A leap.  
Hope laughs. Hope jingles. Hope trespasses silence.  
Hope leaves. Hope never leaves. Spring always comes.  
A sprig of green energy within, still blind, presses.  
Walk til you can fly. Fly til you can dance.

Remember you are beautiful. You have no choice. Sing!

\*

Resurrection, immolation, continuous,  
til the eyes forget, the ears blur,  
the mind tucks away, it's always  
been like this, today, tomorrow,  
the persistent & samely shaped stains in things—

Lone woman's smile trespasses the magickal  
heat a green blanketed body leaks down steps.

Stains & trespass: the soft sound  
of flesh breathing midst grope, metal &  
wallet—magickal heat in the city  
shaped for art, for might, for  
clarity, for history, for hairy man-gods, for little

Lone woman's smile crosses the empty tavern's  
threshold, estimates risk, seeks magickal heat.

Hairy man-gods & risk: disbelief in sky &  
land, fear of light, of change, in dreams  
nothing is named or divided,  
nearing our magickal heat  
we carry nothing, oddly shaped, hardly ready

Lone woman's smile on an empty bench  
in Paris, suffers for the world, herself, noone.

Odd shapes & suffering: the silence of paradise,  
shimmer & cloud, perfect undulation,  
music become bluntly manifest,  
unnamed strandy plants misshapen bell leaves  
magickal heat superfluous, no dance, no dream.

Lone woman & her smile mistaken for cloud,  
for goddess, for answer, simple, too simple, complex.

Undulation & smile: all is calm, all is well,  
she's just smiling, the body is still warm,  
change, decay, growth, illusion, beauty,  
the pyre is ready, immolation, resurrection,  
continuous, it's always been like this, today, tomorrow—

\*

In the dream fragment we had many stones  
numerically placed to center &  
strengthen our home, to align  
it with the willows, to clarify  
its message to passing vehicles  
through ether & spirit—

Each time a new widow arrived to stay,  
there would be only soup & many prayers  
for a week, her mourning fresh  
drunk into our home's soil & soul  
anchors, another one gained to  
our advantage, though none with children allowed—

Taught to sew & handle every weapon,  
each widow's haggish pallor would  
    rosen forth soon, or sooner, & a  
    maiden might peak through, even a nymph,  
ancients teaching play among the many willows.

\*

There can be no lasting bliss in this  
mortal life til nearly everything ever known  
is gone, til bandits & bastards, ill chance,  
    custom, indifferent stars & bloated dreams  
    have thinned one's sack to remembered  
    air, fragments of color, forces one  
    trusts, instructions one keeps but  
    does not follow—

All is grief. So one grieves. In some way  
one always grieves. Grey skies & black suits.  
White sheets & lost nights. I've watched a  
    thousand lonely faces on the city train.  
Then someone boards with a clutch of  
    flowers & a small camera. Grief & bliss. Just let go.

What's left is not death. We still yearn for faces  
old & new. For a city on a frayed postcard.  
For the frilliest of moments, someone else's  
    idea, the marriage bed of one's secret,  
    sugar, moonlight, wreaths, parades,  
    horseback island sunset, meat, & sleep.

There is no lasting bliss now or ever til  
nothing matters, & everything too. Til grief  
settles into the stain coloring all things.  
Til what we share bridges all we have  
lost. What I cannot tell you no matter  
the reddest of wines nor heaviest of touches

dwindles away this sunny afternoon.

\*

The wish to disappear along the path  
home, down an alley, into a pulse,  
into her night. The wish to dance,  
duck, maneuver, go, go, go in a damned  
new way, if only possible to learn how  
from rags of words in vendors' booths,  
to supercede this game, finally, subvert  
a rule, fuck a law, perhaps brave enough  
too to return, to bring a group out,  
to become a leader, a prophet, just long  
enough, no, not in love with the power,  
yes, in love with crushing it, handing  
it round as too often peoples' lives & dreams  
are handed round, exposed for blush &  
humiliation til a bowl of anything will  
do, & thank you, & thank you, disappear  
along the path home but perhaps not  
a coward, but an architect, a worker,  
builder, leaving blood handprints & nests  
of wrappers marking the way, here is your  
liberation, here is your undoing, here  
is your chance, can you live without their  
affirmation of your worth, their assurance  
that your shoes & wallet & crooked stance  
are all that ever were, that progress is  
a verb not a question, that love is not a  
question but an act, merely an act?

\*

The freaks will never own the world,  
I learned this several years ago.  
A full moon, despair, bulbs out, story done.

The freaks will never own the world,  
we raged in the desert, hope, sex,  
spirits, night in neon, dancing, letting go.

The freaks will never own the world,  
the rock concert reclamation,  
the girls you meet who know less fear.

The freaks will never own the world,  
beauty more than blood & shell,  
the river too, the old man who still plays the flute.

The freaks will never own the world,  
she pointed at the stars, laughed,  
watched them flow, I sit here remembering.

The freaks will never own the world,  
& you must learn how too, become  
the gift you seek, the lights, the language, the love.

\*

*[for Erika, with love]*

Come with me, say yes, here's the  
corridor, there's the door, tonight  
release unwieldy hours in dead places,  
tonight fracture tree from disease,  
tonight lean into fear, face its black breath,  
come with me, say yes, perhaps freedom,  
maybe happiness. Dream on starlight til  
you burn. Always a choice. Safety or symbiosis.

Perhaps I will go with you, past  
ambiguity to the sea, devote a time  
to lunar power, to what will press us  
open but not scar nor define, toward  
dawn the beg for skin gainst hard skin,  
I will go with you, learn your rhythms,  
forge our bed, friends to shadows & waves,  
& the man who plays flute to the scrapping gulls.

No, we shall go together, learning what  
to burn down, what to preserve, what to renew,  
learning how little is about us, how we love  
better two hands clasped, the others pointed  
outward, splayed, past safety. We raise  
another day, pray another world,  
the night pokes us into sunshine, the man who  
hunts for scraps of gold. Always more & more to know.

\*

Step askew the current pathless confusion,  
& fall forth into frequent dream,  
where one teaches me to lessen my  
knowledge & th'other loves & eludes  
me to scratch up my hope—

He laughs at me. Walking in silence for  
miles, then the press of his glance,  
the ripple of his laugh. I say nothing.  
This is my book. I call it "Why?"  
The words hold to the pages for now.

She approaches music. Often. Or perhaps it  
approaches her. He challenges the book.  
She seduces it. Modulates the space  
between her pulses, presses my words,  
squeezes them for me.

Composing the shell or breaching it?  
New language or none? This book  
archive of learning or ignorance?  
We burn blue fancies at night for  
warmth. She dances with the flicking  
scraps of gold.

\*

*To Erika, Montreal dawn*

Slowly a garden, eventually the sea,  
til a nebula bright, at last a spiny dream—

All is Family. All is Beauty. All that is, flows,  
& waters everywhere learn, & dream—

All that is, flows. A flow of desire & curiosity,  
flow thinner & brighter, till all is covered,  
til naught remains.

Slowly the day, eventually the sun,  
til a tree wise, at last a sacred thrust—

You are Family. You are Beauty. You flow always,  
& there is lesson, dance, bemusement.

All that is, flows, Colors the lingual myth,  
music, the scripture, now a fire, now  
nighttime, now a vast roar of stars.

Slowly the night, eventually the bright  
goddess, til irregular spasm, at last the noise of love—

We are Family. We are Beauty. We flow, pounding waters,  
& there is weirdness, mystery, symbiosis

All that is, flows. Beyond waters,  
beyond smoke. Wastes & gardens both burn  
bright with beauty.

\*

*For Erika, incendiary soulmate*

To begin again, begin continuously, to learn  
how to see full moon always, ocean dawn always,  
newly fecund glance always, the moment when  
dancesteps become amour always, begin  
again, begin continuously, love the spring  
butterfly come to save you, may elude  
you too, try to catch it, smack at it, run  
from it, see what happens, try like many  
have before you, stumble forward, try to  
make it without your heart—

Dreams & we know each other & I call you  
wife & sister & mother & mate, enemy & teacher,

& you call me similar names, & laugh,  
& plow through my skin, roar & retreat,

a funky bitch, a carnal friend,  
lover made of blood & mud,  
feathers & fancies, winter & wine,  
teacher with lunar bite,  
mother with strumming hunger,  
sister with flow & glee,  
enemy til the spasm—

mate in joy & grief

To begin again, to begin continuously,  
hit the hard, high notes, craft bullets  
in the soul, of anguish & blows, somehow  
claw & grieve & sing toward emptying the  
chamber, avoid the shots, end the making,  
yes, it is possible, yes it can begin today,  
now, yes, you are good, feel the glowing  
sprig of energy within, feel the sacred  
mists & vines untouched by him, unharmed  
by her, heed lunatics who offer you hope, hope—



Nights we have known each other & I seek your  
wisdom embedded in wit, your sardonic teaching heat,

& you gnaw at me to find the absence within  
which you can have me, silently, forever,

feisty brew, love spelled out in thorns,  
meditation, fasting, peyote, hands bound,  
deja vu, ocean waves pouring through an empty house,  
dreams end in the violently cried "tighter!"  
spells without words without wand without end,  
candles large & small fill the whispering chamber,  
& we press toward the dawn, toward everything possible—

mate in joy & grief

To begin again again, to begin continuously,  
embrace the maybe, let the no the fuck go,  
embrace maybe the orphan, half-blind, song shaky,  
let the no go, its symphony, its hard hard maraud,  
to begin again, tonight, now, become the  
painted face of the lost preacher who  
flares with joy in fields of sheep & flickers  
at pulpits when rarely he joins two hands  
in promise, embrace the maybe, let the no  
the fuck go, embrace the maybe, watch the butterfly near—

Always we have known each other & made battles  
& braved love, wounds, the healer, the healed,

& the one color that is ours, the single star  
I bled you, the moment each day you feel me & explode,

water flowing madly over rocks into kissing chasms,  
 sunshine moments years apart, our book, our dream,  
 trees perform our unions, pass the words to saplings,  
 kittens curled, puddles of daylight, you point, I nod,  
 & again what we are presses outward, teaches others,  
 midnight our language gathers its myths again,  
 sunrise, our music, curls into crevices & secrets—

mates, incendiary mates, in joy & grief.

\*

*For Erika, my mate, my muse*

Evening. Symbiosis. She drips blue wax,  
 a quarter century, press perception,  
 learn how to see through carnal blindness,  
 she smolders with the hidden heat of  
 empty space, see with touch toward her  
 truth, the rampage in her glance, play  
 her power, revolve, evolve, fecundity this  
 universe's first & best bomb, all else  
 knowable only by preachers versed in texts  
 of water, learn how to see through carnal  
 blindness, see with taste her tapping grief,  
 feed upon this grief, become this grief as  
 thus you were conceived & borne, a thread  
 untwined from her music, unsentimental  
 seed become kindless fire, a freak, you  
 abandoned her for a festival years away,  
 you, squalls & useless limbs then, but  
 already a weed by religion, fancy, vocation,  
 passion, furious with your existence, how to  
 love, how to love, how to love, & why.

The tribe is gathering on a golden hill,  
a primal blaze, a stout mirror, chimes of trees,  
arrive seeking the wild music, shivers & starlight,  
begin in the mystery of everything, rose  
tower dusk, onyx flow midst sparks of  
dancing, begin in the mystery  
of everything, excess of beauty, residua  
of explanation. Evening. Symbiosis.  
Find a face, together smoke a dream,  
immolate, break down, release, rage  
til the midnight seduces to cessation, yes,  
learn how to see through carnal blindness,  
marijuana, opium, peyote, eat a virgin,  
feed her what remains, LSD-25, ha ha ha,  
trickedya! Wilder music, the beginnings  
of a new freedom, to reinvent the world  
you must begin everywhere & nowhere, this  
universe a jest, a flight, a shimmy,  
the tribe is leaving the golden hill, push on  
toward the fest, bullets & blood, breast & blindness.

All is maya. Illusion. Art. Play. Perhaps.  
Everything ends, & a beat, & all begins again,  
miracle. To play one true note. To learn  
how. Far now from burbling sunshine  
& nowhere near wet willing clarity. All alone.  
All suffering. Yes. Everything ends, & a  
beat, & all begins again, miracle.  
Awake to one missing eye, relieved,  
there is no answer. All alone. All suffering.  
yes. The past bristles hotly, the future  
peddles maps & trinkets. Nights alone  
intimate Her soft sound, her breathing,  
so away with the preacher's boo-toy & pah!  
to the scientist's study rag, glints of  
Her face in dreams, in texts of water  
years deep yet, the blue candle one night  
in the nearly-forgotten dwelling, & nearly  
see within it the way into carnal blindness,  
how to accept, nod, release, nearly there,  
but all is grief still. Laughter. More wine.

A life's anguish. An apex. A dream. No home yet but your blood & hers in depthless agony, a shattered alphabet, strums of kiss, rhythms of twine, nearly disappearing, damned near nearly, study the stars when she is gone for messages she knew not how to leave. Strip down. Decide. Safety or symbiosis? Freak or citizen? Mystery or newsprint? Look to the man who makes butterflies from fire & pain. Dream of the girl who sings from texts of water. 'All is Family' he scrawls in your private book. 'All is Beauty' you write below his, watching her dance, a garden, at first, eventually the sea, til a nebula bright, at last a strandsy dream, every tree's sermon when visited at pink & gold sunset by sacred elixir, full moon always, turn on, tune in, drop out.

Recover sight at last & discover yourself alone in the world. All alone. All suffering. Yes. Yet something from the past careens on, still hungering for a crevice of treasure, a secret burning city of bliss, symbiosis of heart blood & bone, pending culmination. No belief in god or goddess, flow & stagger blindly, refuse to disappear along the path home, disavow nothing, more ferociously with limbs of light, learning finally to play one true note, from dreams of death, approaching the festival at last, bringing words scrawled on leaves of mud, gone now the erotic ladders to nowhere, gone, all gone, come now to the old language of fire, neural myths, beyond maya, no truths, no longer a dream, joy! Fucking joy!

Drip the wax along her back, pools  
of warm hope, shapely stains of grief  
& bliss, freakish rhymes on her shoulder  
blades, the final lines of your private  
book, she whispers 'more,' but now you  
are tongue & tappings, a dozen kisses,  
a dozen more, an extra, a few, &  
the festival grins back at you, &  
all your life's choices burn on that  
golden hill, 'All is Family,' you say, 'All  
is Beauty,' she nods, & she reads to you  
from your private book. All alone.  
All suffering. Yes. Everything ends, & a  
beat, & all begins again. There is  
no answer. She smiles at you though you  
don't know how. You smile at her &  
begin to listen. The world no longer shadow,  
no longer blue fancy. Happiness without limits.  
Morning. Resurrection. Morning. Desire.  
Slim lashes of flame. The least thought matters.

**12-26-2000**

\*\*\*

## LSD Psychotherapy: Dr. Stanislav Grof

from *LSD Psychotherapy*, ©1980, 1994 by Stanislav Grof

LSD and other psychedelics function more or less as nonspecific catalysts and amplifiers of the psyche. This is reflected in the name given by Humphrey Osmond to this group of substances; the Greek word "psychedelic" translates literally as mind-manifesting." In the dosages used in human experimentation, the classical psychedelics, such as LSD, psilocybin, and mescaline, do not have any specific pharmacological effects. They increase the energetic niveau in the psyche and the body which leads to manifestation of otherwise latent psychological processes.

The content and nature of the experiences that these substances induce are thus not artificial products of their pharmacological interaction with the brain ("toxic psychoses"), but authentic expressions of the psyche revealing its functioning on levels ordinarily not available for observation and study. A person who has taken LSD does not have an "LSD experience," but takes a journey into deep recesses of his or her own psyche. When this substance is given in

the same dosage and under comparable circumstances to a large number of individuals, each of them will have a different experience reflecting the specificities of his or her psyche. In addition, serial sessions of the same person will vary in their content and show a characteristic progression.

For this reason, it does not seem to be an exaggeration to say that psychedelics, used responsibly and with proper caution, would be for psychiatry what the microscope is for biology and medicine or the telescope is for astronomy. These tools make it possible to study important processes that under normal circumstances are not available for direct observation. I [have previously contended] that the best way of understanding LSD is to see it as an unspecific amplifier of psychological processes. If I had any remaining doubts about this point of view, they have been all but dispelled by our observations from Holotropic Breathwork. This approach is a powerful method of therapy and self-exploration that my wife Christina and I have developed over the last eighteen

years and have used in workshops and seminars all over the world. It combines extremely simple nonpharmacological means, such as accelerated breathing, evocative music, and a system of body interventions aimed at release of pent-up emotions and blocked physical energies. As I have described in *The Adventure of Self-Discovery*, a book specifically discussing the theory and practice of Holotropic Breathwork, the spectrum of the experiences evoked by this procedure is practically identical with that of psychedelic sessions.

Experiences occurring in psychedelic and holotropic sessions cannot be described in terms of the narrow and superficial conceptual model used in academic psychiatry and psychology, which is limited to biology, postnatal biography, and the Freudian individual unconscious. Deep experiential work requires a vastly extended cartography of the psyche that includes important domains uncharted by traditional science. My own version of such a model . . . includes two additional levels of the psyche, for which I use the terms perinatal and transpersonal.

The phenomena originating on the perinatal and transpersonal levels of the psyche include sequences of psychological death and rebirth, encounters with archetypal beings, visits to mythological realms of various cultures, past incarnation memories, extrasensory perception, episodes of out-of-body states, experiences of cosmic consciousness research. These have to be considered to be natural and normal manifestations of the deeper dynamics of the human psyche.

They have been repeatedly described in the context of various shamanic

procedures, rites of passage, aboriginal healing ceremonies, and mysteries of death and rebirth, as well as Eastern spiritual philosophies and mystical traditions of all ages. For this reason, any serious effort to understand spirituality and religion requires recognition of the perinatal and transpersonal dimensions of the psyche. Attempts to interpret any of these phenomena in the context of the narrow and superficial model of the psyche currently used by Newtonian-Cartesian science necessarily leads to serious distortions and to pathologization of the entire spiritual history of humanity.

From this perspective, the founders of the great religions of the world, as well as their prophets, saints, and eminent teachers, all of whom had visionary experiences, are labeled as psychotics. Shamans are diagnosed as ambulant schizophrenics, hysterics, or epileptics. Religion and spirituality are interpreted as resulting from superstition, lack of education, infantile regression to primitive and material thinking, or mental disease. Similar pathological criteria are applied to the ritual and spiritual life of pre-industrial cultures that cannot be adequately understood and makes no sense to Western scientists with their limited model of the human psyche.

Among additional phenomena that elude the reductionist interpretations of Western materialistic science are the experiences in near-death situations, reports about UFO abductions, various parapsychological occurrences, as well as experiences and behaviors observed in certain forms of hypnosis and various powerful experiential psychotherapies other than Holotropic Breathwork.

Experiences induced by biofeedback training, sensory deprivation and overload, different electronic and kinesthetic devices, and lucid dreaming are additional important examples.

The same can be said about a large subgroup of states that contemporary psychiatry diagnoses and treats as functional psychoses, meaning mental diseases of unknown etiology. The understanding of the psyche that includes the perinatal and transpersonal levels shows these conditions in an entirely new light as psychospiritual crises or "spiritual emergencies." If they are properly understood and the individuals engaged in this process are encouraged to surrender to their experiences, these states can result in emotional and psychosomatic healing, deep personality transformation, and consciousness evolution.

[This] extended cartography of the psyche makes it possible to account for many phenomena that traditional psychiatry and psychology have to deny, pathologize, or explain in a superficial and inadequate way. However, [recent] findings offer much more than a revised and vastly expanded theoretical model of the psyche. Many of the new principles discovered during psychedelic research are of a highly practical nature and are directly applicable to therapeutic situations without the use of psychoactive substances. Here belongs a new and revolutionary understanding of the nature and architecture of emotional and psychosomatic disorders, including certain forms of psychoses, effective mechanisms of healing and transformation, therapeutic techniques, and strategies of self-exploration.

The future implications of psychedelic

research thus fall into two different categories. The first of these involves the destiny of psychedelic therapy per se, the other the theoretical and practical importance of the new discoveries about the nature of the psyche and of consciousness. Whether or not psychedelics will return into psychiatry and will again become part of the therapeutic armamentarium is a complex question. Most likely what will have the decisive influence will not be the results of scientific research, but a variety of political, legal, economic, and mass-psychological factors.

After having personally conducted over the years more than four thousand psychedelic sessions, I have developed great awe and respect for these substances and their enormous positive, as well as negative potential. They are powerful tools and like any tool they can be used skillfully, ineptly, and destructively. The question whether LSD is a phenomenal medicine or a devil's drug makes as little sense as a similar question asked about the positive or negative potential of a knife. Naturally, we will get a very different picture from a surgeon who bases his or her judgment on successful operations and from the police chief who investigates murders with knives. Similarly, the image of LSD will vary whether we focus on the results of responsible clinical or spiritual use, naive and careless mass self-experimentation of the young generation, or deliberately destructive experiments of the army or the CIA.

The results of the administration of psychedelics are critically influenced by the factors of set and setting. Until this is clearly understood, there is no hope for rational decisions in regard to psychedelic



drug policies. I believe that psychedelics can be used in such a way that the benefits by far outweigh the possible risks. This has been amply proven by centuries of safe ritual and spiritual use of psychedelics by generations of shamans, individual healers, and entire aboriginal cultures. However, the Western industrial civilization has so far abused all its discoveries and there is not much hope that psychedelics will make an exception, unless we rise as a group to a higher level of consciousness and emotional maturity.

On the positive side, it can be said that Western society is at present much better equipped to assimilate psychedelics than it was in the 1960s. At the time when psychiatrists and psychologists started to experiment with LSD, the official image of psychotherapy was that of civilized face-to-face discussions or disciplined free-associating on the couch. Intense emotions and active behavior were referred to as "acting-out" and were seen as violations of basic therapeutic rules. In contrast, psychedelic sessions were associated with dramatic emotions, psychomotor excitement, and vivid perceptual changes.

They thus seemed to be closer to states that psychiatrists considered to be pathological and tried to suppress by all means than to conditions to which one would attribute therapeutic potential. This was reflected in the terms "hallucinogens" and "experimental psychoses" used initially for psychedelics and the states induced by them. In any case, psychedelic sessions resembled more scenes from anthropological movies about shamanic rituals of "primitive" cultures and wild aboriginal ceremonies than those from a psychoanalyst's office.

In addition, many of the experiences

and observations from psychedelic sessions seemed to seriously challenge the image of the human psyche and of the universe developed by Newtonian-Cartesian science and considered to be accurate and definitive descriptions of "objective reality." Psychedelic subjects reported experiential identification with other people, animals, and various aspects of nature during which they gained access to new information about areas about which they previously had no intellectual knowledge. The same was true about experiential excursions into the lives of their human and animal ancestors, as well as racial, collective, and karmic memories.

On occasion, this new information was drawn from experiences involving archetypal beings and mythological realms of different cultures in the world. In out-of-body experiences, experimental subjects often witnessed and accurately described remote events occurring in locations that were outside of the range of their senses. None of these happenings were considered possible in the context of traditional materialistic science and yet, in psychedelic sessions, they were observed on a daily basis. This naturally caused deep conceptual turmoil and confusion in the minds of conventionally trained experimenters. Under these circumstances, many professionals chose to stay away from this area to preserve their scientific world-view and to protect their common sense and sanity.

The last three decades brought many revolutionary changes that have profoundly influenced the climate in the world of psychotherapy. Humanistic and transpersonal psychologies have developed powerful experiential techniques that emphasize deep regression, direct

expression of intense emotions, and bodywork leading to release of physical energies. The inner experiences and outer manifestations, as well as therapeutic strategies, in these therapies bear a great similarity to those observed in psychedelic sessions. As I mentioned earlier in relation to Holotropic Breathwork, these nondrug approaches involve a similar spectrum of experiences, as well as comparable conceptual challenges. As a result of it, for therapists practicing along these lines, the introduction of psychedelics would represent the next logical step rather than dramatic change in their practice.

Moreover, the Newtonian-Cartesian thinking in science that in the 1960s enjoyed great authority and popularity has been progressively undermined by astonishing developments in a variety of disciplines. This has happened to such an extent that an increasing number of scientists feel an urgent need for an entirely different world-view, a new scientific paradigm. Philosophical implications of quantum-relativistic physics, David Bohm's theory of holomovement, Karl Pribram's holographic theory of the brain, Ilya Prigogine's theory of dissipative structures, Rupert Sheldrake's theory of morphogenetic fields, and Gregory Bateson's brilliant anthropology and psychology, are just a few eminent examples of this development. It is very encouraging that all these new developments that are in irreconcilable conflict with traditional science seem to be compatible with the findings of modern consciousness research and with transpersonal psychology.

From a practical point of view, it is important to mention that legal experimentation with psychedelics has

been resumed in Switzerland and several new research projects have recently been approved in the United States. In spite of all these encouraging developments, the future of psychedelic therapy as such remains uncertain. However, the situation is very different in regard to its revolutionary findings concerning the nature of the psyche and human consciousness; their relevance for psychiatry and psychology is independent from the fate of this therapeutic modality. Since it has become clear that the phenomena involved represent genuine manifestations of the psyche that occur in many situations where no psychoactive substances are involved, they have to be taken into consideration in any serious attempt to understand the human psyche.

If the experiences observed in psychedelic sessions were toxic artifacts, professionals would have a reasonable excuse for their disinterest in this area. One could be an expert in the field without having knowledge about the pharmacological effects of an exotic group of psychoactive substances. However, ignoring or misinterpreting observations from a large category of situations, including ancient and Oriental spiritual practices, trance states in aboriginal rituals, near-death experiences, various forms of nonpharmacological experiential psychotherapies, and psychospiritual crises is a different matter. Such an approach reflects rigid adherence to a superficial and inadequate model of the psyche and resembles more religious fundamentalism than good science.

The critical issue here is the ontological status of non-ordinary states of consciousness—whether we see them as pathological conditions that should be

indiscriminately suppressed or variable alternatives to our everyday states of consciousness that can contribute to our understanding of the psyche and have a great therapeutic potential. Of all the human groups, the Western industrial civilization is the only one that has taken the former position. All the ancient and pre-industrial societies have held non-ordinary states of consciousness in high esteem and used them for a variety of purposes—diagnosing and healing diseases, ritual, spiritual, and religious activity, cultivation of extrasensory perception, and artistic inspiration. These cultures have spent much time and energy developing various techniques of inducing these states, including a wide range of nonpharmacological approaches and psychedelic plants.

Michael Harner, a well-known anthropologist who has also undergone personal shamanic initiation during his field work in the Amazon, describes that from his dual perspective Western psychology and psychiatry are seriously biased in two important ways. They are ethnocentric, which means that they consider their own idiosyncratic point of view to be superior to that of any other cultural group and label as pathological any activities that they cannot understand in their own framework. Harner's name for the second serious conceptual distortion is cognicentric, although a better term for it might be pragmacentric. What he means by it is that theoretical speculations in Western academic psychology and psychiatry are based exclusively on experiences and observations made in the ordinary states of consciousness (with the possible exception of dreams). The evidence from the study of non-ordinary

states of any kind are systematically ignored or pathologized.

Herein lies the importance of the material from psychedelic therapy. It is the most extreme and dramatic example of the challenge that the research of non-ordinary states of consciousness presents to traditional Newtonian-Cartesian science. Systematic and open-minded study of the evidence amassed by this work strongly suggests the need for a radical revision of our basic ideas about the human psyche and the nature of consciousness. It would lead to an entirely different understanding of emotional and psychosomatic disorders, as well as the therapeutic process and strategy of self-exploration. Some of the observations from non-ordinary states would require not only revision of our ideas about the human psyche, but of the traditional beliefs about the nature of reality. An extreme example of this kind is the ability of individuals in near-death situations to accurately perceive, without the use of their senses, not only the immediate environment, but also various remote locations. Observations of this kind seriously question the most fundamental metaphysical assumptions of Western philosophy of science. . . .

LSD is a unique and powerful tool for the exploration of the human mind and human nature. Psychedelic experiences mediate access to deep realms of the psyche that have not yet been discovered and acknowledged by mainstream psychology and psychiatry. They also reveal new possibilities and mechanisms of therapeutic change and personality transformation. The fact that the spectrum of the LSD experience appears puzzling to most professionals and cannot be accounted for by the existing

theoretical frameworks does not mean that the effects of LSD are totally unpredictable. The safe and effective use of this drug requires a fundamental revision of the existing theory and practice of psychotherapy. However, it is possible to formulate basic principles for LSD-assisted psychotherapy which maximize its therapeutic benefits and minimize the risks.

It is very difficult at this point to predict the future of LSD psychotherapy. The fact that it can be used safely and effectively does not automatically mean that it will be assimilated by mainstream psychiatry. This issue is complicated by many factors of an emotional, administrative, political and legal nature. However, we should clearly differentiate between the future of LSD psychotherapy and its contribution to the theory and practice of psychiatry. LSD is a catalyst or amplifier of mental processes. If properly used it could become something like the microscope or the telescope of psychiatry. Whether LSD research continues in the future or not, the insights that have been achieved in LSD experimentation are of lasting value and relevance.

The theoretical formulations and practical principles that LSD psychotherapy has discovered or validated include a new, expanded cartography of the human mind, new and effective therapeutic mechanisms, a new strategy of psychotherapy, and a synthesis of spirituality and science in the context of the transpersonal approach. In addition, the recent rapid convergence between mysticism, modern consciousness research and quantum-relativistic physics suggests that psychedelic research could contribute in the future to our understanding of the

nature of reality.

It is true that psychedelic experimentation has its dangers and pitfalls. But ventures into unexplored areas are never without risk. Wilhelm Conrad Roentgen, the discoverer of x-rays, lost his fingers as a result of his experiments with the new form of radiation. The mortality-rate of the early pilots who paved the way for today's safe jet travel was allegedly 75 percent. The degree of risk is directly proportional to the significance of the discovery, and its potential; thus the invention of gun powder involved a different level of risk from the development of nuclear energy. LSD is a tool of extraordinary power; after more than twenty years of clinical research I feel great awe in regard to both its positive and negative potential. Whatever the future of LSD psychotherapy, it is important to realize that by banning psychedelic research we have not only given up the study of an interesting drug or group of substances, but also abandoned one of the most promising approaches to the understanding of the human mind and consciousness.

The present prospects for systematic LSD research and its extensive use in psychotherapy look rather grim. It is difficult at this point to say whether or not the situation will change, though there are indications that the general climate might become more favorable in the years to come.

One of the major problems in LSD psychotherapy was the unusual nature and content of the psychedelic experience. The intensity of the emotional and physical expression characteristic of LSD sessions was in sharp contrast to the conventional image of psychotherapy, with its face-to-

face discussions or disciplined free-associating on the couch. The themes of birth, death, insanity, ESP, cosmic unity, archetypal entities, or past-incarnation memories occurring in psychedelic states were far beyond the conventional topics of psychotherapy which emphasized biographical data. An average professional at that time felt reluctance toward or even fear of the experiential realms of this kind because of their association with psychosis. At present, intense emotional outbursts, dramatic physical manifestations, and various perinatal and transpersonal experiences are much more acceptable to and less frightening for many therapists because they can be encountered quite routinely in the context of the new experiential therapies, such as Gestalt practice, encounter groups, marathon and nude marathon sessions, primal therapy, and various neo-Reichian approaches. Many modern therapists value and encourage various dramatic experiences which in the framework of classical analysis would be seen as dangerous acting-out and considered a reason for discontinuation of treatment or even psychiatric hospitalization. Some modern approaches to schizophrenia actually encourage deep experiential immersion into the process instead of its chemical inhibition. For new therapists of the above orientation, psychedelics would naturally be the next step to help accelerate and deepen the process.

LSD entered the scene at the time of the psychopharmacological revolution, when new tranquilizers and anti-depressants had their early triumphs and generated excessive hope for easy chemical solutions to most of the problems in psychiatry. At

present much of the original enthusiasm in this area has tapered off. While appreciating the humanization of the mental hospitals and pacification of psychiatric wards which has brought their atmosphere close to that of general hospitals, it is becoming increasingly obvious that tranquilizers and antidepressants are, by and large, only symptomatic remedies. They do not solve the problems and in more serious cases lead to a life-long dependence on maintenance medication. In addition, there is an increasing number of professional papers that emphasize the dangers of massive use of these drugs—irreversible neurological symptoms of tardive dyskinesia, degenerative changes in the retina, or actual physiological addiction with a withdrawal syndrome.

We should also mention important social forces that might play a role in the future changes of policy toward psychedelic research. Many of the young persons who are in or will be moving into various positions of social relevance—as lawyers, teachers, administrators, or mental health professionals—had intense exposure to psychedelics during their student years. Those individuals who had experiences themselves, or had the opportunity to observe the process in close friends and relatives, will have formed an independent image and will not be dependent on second-hand sources for information. Elements of sanity in the new marijuana laws in many states may be the first fruits of this development. The fact that ritualized and responsible use of psychedelics received social sanction in some ancient societies and pre-industrial countries and was meaningfully woven into the social fabric represents a somewhat hopeful precedent.

---

## Poetry: Joe Ciccone

### Two Storytellers

The turbines are running in the distance  
Going nowhere in the numb morning  
Beneath their sky of mud

In another life life was simpler for me  
Everything knew where to end nothing was punctuated  
I said I can fly my own carpet thank you very much  
And headed out into the hurricane with a ham  
Sandwich and thermos of strong coffee

The bridges burned beneath my feet but I wanted it that way

This was the week of the sickroom  
And a trumpeter's pallor  
He was dying before my eyes the eyes  
Of strangers crowded the trees  
And now I'm smoking butts on the heliport of  
Hackensack University Medical Center  
Wondering when the widow will stop crying and leave

I've locked his stool inside a soldered framework  
As a remnant of what was there before  
For to behold his tale is to realize what we never thought to hear  
In the scarlet hours inside combustible bars

It is what I will be telling you about for some time

And no I don't know if it's worth it or if it will make sense to you  
As he said You can't know  
You will never know  
You die without knowing

**Leaving**

Getting up now in the virgin dawn bound  
For Missouri  
The Christmas tree still strung with a million  
Drunken beams far beyond its day the night  
Not having ended it seems

Could it be the liquor that makes the rocking chair  
Still rock through the waning of my waking dreams  
As though it was only a moment ago that she herself  
Had gotten up to leave

### **Skeleton Key**

there was always smoke. . . the color orange. . . much sunlight . . . as  
i turned through imaginary rooms like an eye with wings or a thin lens  
alone maneuvering along a greased cable, always looking ahead for  
something magical. . . but i did not lead myself then nor now nor pull  
the word belief from its crumbling box of words to claim it was divinity  
guiding me through these frail terrains like pythagoras of whoever the  
hell it was.

no, i made and tacked my own prizes to the wall. . . some stood for  
heroism, others had something to do with beauty. . . beauty like that  
found in the coughs of soot that came from the driving wheels of a  
locomotive at the first turns of a journey. . . in the days of the  
trains.

there were ghosts of course who must have stirred in that rare wood  
amidst the howling as she pulled into town, but i was too frightened to  
open my eyes. . . we dressed in bandit costumes as the night poured in.  
. . . now it is too late. . . the phantoms have all flown. . . and the  
beauty on the screens screams nonsense and even the images of the city  
walls have been scratched away. . . it seems nothing is worth pursuing  
anymore. . . yet with the grace of a phantom myself, still searching, i  
go on.



web: [www.burningman.com](http://www.burningman.com)

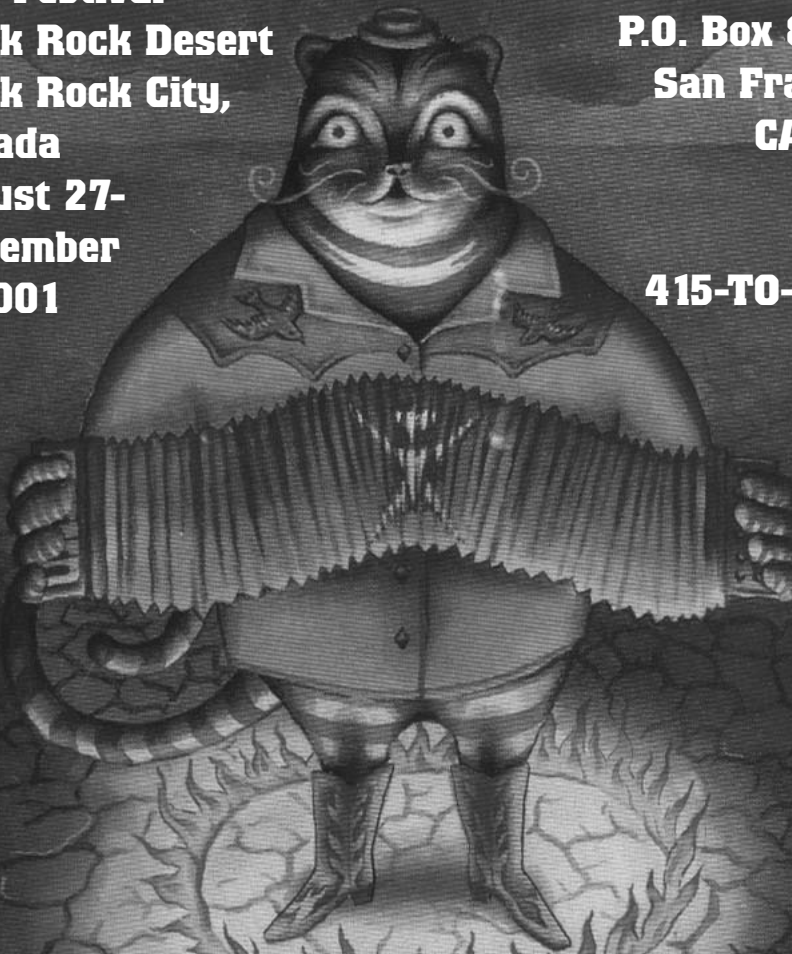
# Burning Man 2001

black rock city

**Burning Man  
Arts Festival  
Black Rock Desert  
Black Rock City,  
Nevada  
August 27-  
September  
3, 2001**

**for more  
information:  
P.O. Box 884688  
San Francisco,  
CA 94188**

**phone:  
415-TO-FLAME**



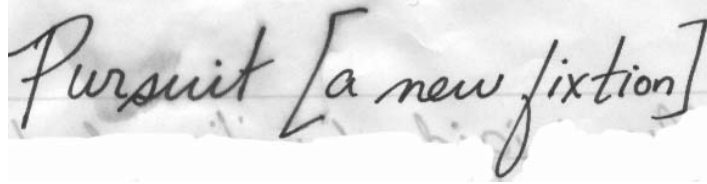
**Radical Self-Expression**

**Leave No Trace**

If Burning Man didn't exist, we'd have to invent it; why don't you?

01

## Fixtion: Ray Soulard, Jr.



*"She stood face to face with the truth and went on living  
and endured her life then as now."*

*Franz Kafka, The Castle*

Somewhere else, then, is a place like my home. Yes, not only a place but a time or, perhaps an almost. It's sad to think how much of a life is now a gone place at a forgotten time.

Or maybe, funny idea this, I am home right now, home occurring only when Here crosses Now in just the right way.

Home, then, an arrival at a place and moment of undoubted clarity, perfection, familiar, but as well a place where one cannot stay, a physical moment that dawns and droops.

Perhaps.

Am I home right now? Well . . . lessee. The courtyard is cool but hardly frigid; familiar but still young and malleable; and the trees above, streetlamps about, and scattered faces have all attended my silent sermons of scratchings many times before. This page records the present moment's wrangling with being.

Here and Now carefully brought into sharpest clarity. A moment chased, pursued? Or a moment that pursued me?

I don't know. But mark a vow here to return to these questions by story's finish. Questions of pursuit. That's all for tonight.

Another night, another place. Story still hidden, among shadows, less a will-be than a may-be.

Thinking about pursuit, and yet not feeling pursued at the moment. What's it like?

The partially known mixed with movement, or the desire for movement. Or fear mixed with doubt. Faith clipped by skepticism.

What, then, pursues Richard James Americus, and what does he in turn pursue? How shall this third story of planned quartet ready matters for the finale?

This: there is a theory among certain tinkers that nothing can be looked upon without changing the observer and the observed.

Pursuer, pursued, perhaps both at times, perhaps unclear. Force, circumstance, time. Can anything pursued actually be caught?

There's much more to this but enough to say here that a third figure problematizes the

neat dichotomy and that if any illumination or worth gestates in this narrative, this selfsame figure will be prominent for certain, affected, affecting, itself pursued, itself pursuing.

More hours, another day, and experiences of being pursued, reminding clarifying—  
a late night train home to my lovely hovel in ZombieTown, Mass., thinking ‘this train is too fucking crowded for this hour!’ but nonetheless

and a ragged mustachio’d brute sees my round spectacles, estimates my size, decides I interest him and he’s drunk so the usual walls are down, are irrelevant—I know, I’ve been drunk and felt so too

calls the little Asian woman next to me Yoko Ono’s daughter—I tell him to knock it off he calls me 6’7” and wonders why I never played hoops—he decides I’m some bespectacled tall young smartass and don’t deserve Yoko Ono’s daughter—and moves across the train’s aisle to sit between us—and shoves his middle finger in my face—which I shove back to him—and come the next stop I depart the car and hurry to another—get off finally at the Zombie DownTown stop, subway doors close, I bang on the window near him and toss his wavering face a middle finger of my own—

and once home, the phone rings, all day, weekends, evenings, jackals- for-hire looking for “Mr. Sowlard,” “Mr. So-lard,” even “Mr. Raymond Jr.” because I am a number what owes money—not an impoverished slob with a sexy pen or a poor, pathetic motherfucker who’s decided food’s more important than keeping AT&T fed and dry—and fuck anyone who disagrees—devote to Art, really devote to Art, and times will come when your resolve, your morality, your faith in the invisible, will be tested—and you’ll find out if it’s worth it—if you’re worth it, how tempting an easy blowjob and a longterm pension really is—

And rain. Tonight, in Boston, the rain’s coming down strong and steady, the wind is yanking it about—a man in pursuit of paper and pens, as I was, is a kind of fool—are wet trousers worth it?

Being pursued in not being able to enjoy one’s silence, one’s ride home, a diligent walk without interference—

more than this.

The feeling that the struggle is worth it and the belief that it has to be because no reward is pending

I bought the wrong kind of pens.

It’s still raining and I’m far from home.

Even being the drunk would not help tonight.

Americus is sick in his bed tonight but determined to get well

Part of what he must face to do this is what pursues him—the mundane, the abstract, the malevolent. Face what pursues him—

but also face what he pursues as well.

Pursuing, let’s to it, boy, preach or die———

Art—is there anything left that is not Art? Tell about now! It’s all you know! It’s all there is.

A tumbling eye, another into the confessing night, lights and beast-boxes, people, godds fragrant and mute, what?

just tell—go slow—Art. . .

a cafe, in it an old man shakily dips a chunk of bread into his soup, his being, now just

eyes and tongue, hovers wetly in the steam—no matter his broken coat, his busted glasses, no, there he is, taste, satiation, gets a little of what he knows is his due, a little, chew, a little, chew, swallow,  
look up, the night is pressing closely, the darkness watching eagerly, a soiled face, a listening ebb

the mixed auburn curliness on the back of a woman's head, her angular lean into her companion's laugh, her architecturally clean rise from her seat to go

"sheeet, boy! you're one of them longhairs, ainchyou? Yankee boy, bag fulla books, head fulla ideers."

No. Listen. Don't let this collapse.

"Settle down, Son. We're just waiting, is all. You'll get away from that mirror in time."

Thanks.

"We're waitin', though."

Oddness, watching a man in leather, intense eye, sketch into a small book, sketching him, Art, yes, float face down on the bricked floor, become a loose thread, a stray hair, a trill, a bowl of silver remorse, a runaway sentence

Pursuing, tho, is what I'm saying. Thin by day, fat by night. Take the longest route home, more trains, longer walks, anything because here is Art, this enigma, this laughing night, darkness broad, thicker than steam

Art, Beauty, pond, girl, sky, memory, trash-heap, empty field, broken hope, praise wildly, then flee—

Art, yes. Next, Love. Oh my what can i tell what Love

wait. i'll go into night and find it, Love, and her court of words—

About to board the train to ZombieTown, yes, this is how I'll tell about pursuing Love.

So it will come out right

So it will be OK

OK?

Do I have to go on with this elaborate bullshit?

This grand scheme: describe pursued, pursuing, and the third figure, give three examples of each, all personal and softy setting structure for the story how clever as you run back and forth along this pattern over & over, greater, deeper, each time, yes

good idea! I like it!

Fuck you, Soulard. Have you learned nothing? Do you ever read stories like this?

No. Of course not. Melville. Hawthorne. Salinger. Updike. Joseph R. Et Cetera

OK—is that example of love? Go on to next item in list: joy?

I can't go on with this.

Love. Pursuing Love.

I can't not go on with this.

Just tell the truth, friend, that's all. Where love begins and ends, wearing the skin of truth, or clothed and lies.

And I'll find a way to tell, too, doesn't matter, I'll find a way because I'm such a hardheaded bastard; a story will emerge.

Just tell the truth.

Night. Now. Downtown Crossing T station. Boston, MA. nearing midnight.

Love. A drunken Hispanic man on a bench, mumbling supplications to an Asian woman. "I don't know" she sez. He elaborates.

"Next stop, State."

Love. Silence of the train. Reading. Chewing. Thoughtful shrunken man in a wheelchair, pushes his way off. Bright red knit cap in his head.

"Next stop, Haymarket."

A blonde woman sits alone, her face weary, apprehensive. Legs crossed. Watches here and there, eyes travelling, detecting.

"Next stop, North Station."

Laughing, gesturing, the two of them, noise in a half-filled silent vessel.

"Next stop, Community College." People chewing, talking, the intensity of faces, the talking men, the watching women, the suit and his *USA Today* sports page. The train emerges into night. Buildings of bulbs. Buildings of candy.

"Next stop, Sullivan Square." The distance longer to this stop, love is present now, oh sure, sure, the way so much invisible moves about the speeding vessel, sinking, rising, never a miracle-moment like this one ever again, no.

"Next stop, Wellington."

Love. The theme. This moment, the text. Love. How to tell the page, the wanting, empty page.

The vastness, many beings, listen! how many hearts a-beating and deep beneath our silent appearances hearts listen to one another, trade songs, in trains, buses, strange rooms of books & congeniality

"Next stop, Malden Center."

Well, did I do good? Did I chase down love—old man that I am—33 and racing—trying to honor lips and hands and eyes longlost my father tossing to me—the girl & we danced in a motorcycle bar to "Wonderful tonight"—the next girl & we discussed marriage on a cold Thanksgiving morning—the man & he's saying when we die we all become stars—the man in the snowbank saying 'the universe will provide! believe!'—the child looking at me—me perfect to the child, to her smile, to what she yes yes yes yes yes. yes

Yes here I am Malden Center aka ZombieTown and love even is here and I will tell the story because I must provide to Art a little back to what She has brought me

Love, beneath the guitars

Love, the trees bloom, go!

Love, a face, a galaxy, a confession  
Love, there will be a story  
Love, you must  
Love, I will  
Love, Can IT GET ANY BETTER?

Look up, friend. Yonder stands Joy.

Yes. Praise. Become the Rapture. Hard not to.

Rapture and Woe, the big hands that squeeze Soul more tightly until Art is emitted.

Tell: on the steps of a midnight road, BloomingBabyStreet, ZombieTown, Mass. A new lover of mine, this street, prettiest late upon the night, I visit her to worship and learn.

Her tall streetlamps, watching, aliens disguised, as are all her various lights. She laughs at this.

And I settle along her on the steps of the abandoned Rohm Technology building. Long building, yellow and blue, mere two stories high, here I look at my lover and she studies me for the effects the world has had upon me of late. Her kiss, what appears on my page, approves, or does not approve.

"Get yourself a girl there, longhair! We'll set ya up! We'll go to the Naked I, Combat Zone, chip in; no, listen, I'm a cop, they give me protection money, I'll make a deal! Come on, Son!"

No. Listen. Joy is realizing that we are naked to each other all the time, and loving stones, sparrows, streets, it's all the same. The pine tree near me. The autumn-yellow trees, the autumn-red trees. All the same.

"No pussy on a tree, boy!"

No.

"What are you, boy?"

A presence. Merely a presence. But I'm getting at something, beyond the trees, the grass, beyond the girls on bartops, in bed, in dreams, lost, beyond all that, madness & woe, yes, but beyond, what's underneath, what the damned universe is all about! how you'll never love the girl in the g-string until you love as well rock, tree, lights, galaxy, undifferentiated love, joy, rapture, listen!

pay attention!

"You a preacher, boy? This here ain't no church! It's an old, ugly road in a busted town. This here ain't no Sunday! You ain't got no collar! And you sureashell aint no priest cuz your cherry's long gone!"

Long gone.

Move across the street. Sitting on a big granite stone I call the '60s Rock. Hoping something will happen.

Just tell the truth. That's all. Tell the truth.

I believe in Art in the act of making it, that's all, talk a dirty bandage hanging off an infected lie.

This story, this fiction, is a continued telling of the sickness cupping Richard James Americus. He's not feeling as badly as he did. But he's not done being sick. Or, rather, the sickness is not done being him.

He must use the sickness to cure himself, is the only way. Any story about this can't

be a well story. It must be a wildly careening descent into the sickness, where pursuit, where pursued, where something else, must be like this, is,

How pursued . . . and pursuing . . . both, and neither? How? How a story high blazes incoherent yet intentional, squeezing Dame Night for all she can give?

Ask the '60s Rock and it will point across the street to Rohm Tech, to the bookbag there, to the lost hopes sitting ghost those steps, all is lost, all is mud, all is mud uncertainty Americus, his music, his doubts, his band, waiting, expecting, he has to come through and say, anew, sing anew, why it failed, why we're all still here—except for some of our heroes and most of our ideals & hopes. Art.

Love. Americus in love with a girl improbably called Frances Emily Renee Salinger, 22 years old, blonde whirl, of Macon, Georgia, USA, thankyouverymuch, but missing now and how he sups and sucks and delights on the bright canker that is her absence.

Joy. One night this past summer, Noisy Children live at Luna T's Cafe, running through their old songs, Americus writing new songs every day, seems, that he won't let the band play them cept during audience-less rehearsals and segue, they, into hoary Elton John tunes.

“Saturday night's alright for fightin'  
Get a little action in!”

The crowd is drunk, dancing, crazy, knowing their band, their band on nights like tonight, could do whatever it wants with them but no, old Elton John, spritely mad, will do, will do—

Americus and his acoustic and freedom at will, yes, that's what it's like—

Listening to Rebecca laugh—

Watching a pint of Guinness draught form.

But, sickness. And now, pursuit. And his poor old friend Soulard trying to keep up, sitting there on that rock, believing, what else really? cold air exhaling his nose, cars blowing by and looking

Whether this makes story or not is irrelevant, really; does it make sense? is the real question.

Are the pageant of pines and beeches true? Does its mottles sky hover close like flesh? Is its earth cold, judgmental, assured?

Do its voices sing true?

That's all, tonight. Beginning. Have begun. Only way now is onward, through.

Tall electrical pole, real, even really real. A story, this, bent on beyond really real, over, and through, bound, unfurled, for rapture.

Rapture & nothingness.

i.

Sip a beer. Watching. Dark music, thoughtful, malevolent yet dreamy. A world of new cars and dull clothes. People speak deliberately, for information, for action.

"Nice tits on that one," the fat man at the bar comments, pointing to the TV every face is watching anyway.

Last hours of weekend, late Sunday night.

"Why can't you put on sports highlights? Patriots won, yknow" whines a thin bearded man.

"They suck!"

"But they won!"

"They suck!"

"It's true!"

The TV screen flashes "The Truth is Out There." He nods.

The TV story depicts a serial murderer, ripping his victims' livers out and escaping through narrow shafts.

The red-haired woman and her drily-funny FBI partner argue over who the murderer is, and what might be his motive.

"What is this, the 'Anti-Waltons'?" the man demands.

Rich Americus sits at his corner stool at the bar and listens to the TV show's music, admires how it tells the same story but aurally.

Usually closes on Sunday nights, Luna T's Cafe is open tonight because Americus hasn't been here in many weeks. Still sick, but needing to visit anyway.

So the football crowd from the afternoon, a few of them, stay on into the night, putting off going into the hard autumn downpour outside.

Mr. Bob gone home, but before he did, pulled from storage a cold case of Beck's Dark to keep the crowd in drink. Locked them in, went off to home.

"The killer's got yellow eyes!"

"He's a wolfman!"

Americus isn't watching the show, has even stopped listening to the music.

"I'd like to do the wolfman with her. Look at that mouth."

"She used to be a porn star."

"Look, she's gonna take a bath at least."

"The wolfman wants to join her!"

The show concludes inconclusively, suggesting through yellow eyes and wet breathing intent on a celldoor that evil in this world is not containable.

Americus nods.

Listens to the music on the TV, knowing it can begin this way, tho it can start just as well any other way too.

Knows that the nature of his sickness demands that he approach it like a tool, like a language, like a musical instrument, something to be mastered, something to be applied to a needful situation.

Someone speaks again. Again, Americus nods, a last gesture, now withdrawing, with handfuls of that strange music with him.

ii.

Now on a flat limitless plain of consciousness. Ground flat, featureless, tan-colored, unyielding to the step. Sky flat, too, an unconfessing blue-grey color.



Americus can now see the music he's brought along, it is liquid, it is a sparkly, restless lava. Constantly shifting amongst many colors, now bright, now dun. Elusive, shy to the watching eye.

He spreads it in a large circle around himself, big enough for him to lie down stretched full out, but not much more. The music softens the ground, comforts, instructs.

Americus sits down cross-legged in his circle and waits.

Is not going to pursue anything at this moment, nor can much get into his circle of sparkling elusive music.

No, wants the third option. Neither pursued, nor pursuing.

The sky assembles its night and infinite stars appear. Americus waits. Thinks.

I know that my sickness is really some manner of lesson, some gesture an obscure region in myself has decided to make—

"Hey, buddy, we're going now, OK?"

"What's wrong with him? He's the owner, right?"

"You OK, sir?"

"Let's just go. I heard he was a drug addict. I don't want to be in the papers if he dies."

"Wake up! Oh. You OK?"

"Yah. Thanks."

"Hey, no offense. We're the last ones here and you probably want to lock the door. We didn't want you to get robbed."

"Thanks."

"It's alright. I know how it is. Thanks for the free booze."

"Yes."

"Bye."

iii.

He stands, knowing it won't be tonight, knowing that he has to wait.

Tall man, he, dressed simply in black jeans and black t-shirt, hair reddish-blond, shoulder-length, face bearded, eyes glass'd, now putting away the remaining bottles of Beck's Dark in walkin cooler, now shutting off the lights, now standing quietly in his joint, guitar now cased and in hand,

now walking toward the barroom door to go home, it will be OK, it will be—

treat every moment like a Hail Mary pass, you know about those, don't you? Seconds left in a game, your team down by near a touchdown, so you send your speediest receivers out, all of them, and you hope your brickwall-grim line can give you enough time to get a good, long pass off, 60, 70 yards down the field, hoping your best receiver, the one whose wife just threw him out again, can get his speedy bad ass down the field and rise up impossibly to catch that pass and fall in the endzone—

Love. Joy. Art. Art. Art. Live them all like a Hail Mary Pass.

You're about to lose all the time but no impediment this—not if you get that pass off—it's not about who wins in this savage life, it's about who survives—

Americus walking through the dark, quiet City streets, listening for whatever might be there—the City, sad but somehow still strongchinned, not a winner, ever, really, but perhaps a survivor, perhaps,

and Americus looks up toward the higher heights of the City's biggest buildings, the fist-tight reach of the Bluebird Insurance Company, the impossible two-sided anomaly that is the blue Phoenix Rising Insurance Company, the dotted-eye cement thrust of the Bay State Commercial Bank Building, once the Connecticut Bank & Trust building—

pointing toward an indifferent sky, washed-out grey, Americus loving the fell obscurity of this place, its unloved streets, his home, here, no matter the North Beach romances and Division Street highs he's been through—

walking along, hard-heeled leather boots, and some music starts up somewhere, and the pursuit begins—

“you got love to burn  
 you better take a chance on love  
 you've got to let your guard down  
 you better take a chance  
 a chance on love”

another bar, maybe, its band flinging guitar-high music into the quiet City air?

Time to light up a joint, most sure yes.

A friendly shadow, and a well-rolled joint, a seat even, and that first strong inhale, oh sweetness, a dusky star, a Hail Mary Pass, a triple kiss offered to a soft face from miles away, just sitting me and my lovely joint, on this cement seat and now that dull sky is an old dancer with a few moves left for those who will pay attention

“late one night I was walking in the valley of hearts  
 spirit came to me & said you've got to move to start  
 you've got to take the first step  
 you've got to crawl to be tall  
 then she told me something,  
 something that I'll never forget  
 you've got love to burn  
 you've got to take a chance on love  
 you've got to let yr guard down  
 you've got to take a chance  
 a chance on love”

the music is sweet, and just a little joint has made Americus open to the rapturous whatever—

go to the bar, now, join in the dancing appreciation of good, high chords, wall-rattling drums?

no—perhaps better to enjoy from afar—I am sick still, yknow.

Yah. Sure.

Go home, Americus. Let tonight go. Pray to it with a good long sleep.

“Am I pursued right now, or pursuing?”

“I don't now.”

“What are you drinking, Soulard?”

“Ballantine Ale.”

"How many?"

"A few"

"And what's wrong?"

"Fucking spider crawling up my wall. My photos. My 'Miss Chris Loves Ramie' poster."

"Did you kill it?"

"No. I tossed beer at it. I couldn't kill it."

"Who's really being pursued? You or me?"

"Probably me."

"So you admit you know what's wrong with this story?"

"Yes."

"What now?"

"I go home. Walking. That's all."

Listen to the music! Fuck all this! That barband, wherever it is

"There's a mansion on the hill

Psychedelic music fills the air

Peace & love live there still

In that mansion on the hill"

Live every moment like a Hail Mary Pass! Don't go to the page with your uncapped pen in hand unless there is danger and uncertainty in your heart! Doubt—yes!—but carry on anyway!

Fuck you, Americus. I'm here, now, in your world, holding you down.

"What, ya bastard?"

"Peace & Love"

"Survival"

"Peace & Love"

"Endurance"

"Better to Burn Out"

"Than to Fade Away"

Satisfied, I let him up.

"Soulard, let me go home. Stop trying so hard. We'll pick up on our thing again, I promise. Don't Worry"

Nearing my door, front door, 50 Harvest Street, no longer chased, no long chasing, no longer something else.

Into my house, 3 floors up, and lock the door.

"Daddy?"

"Rebecca."

"There was a call from Georgia today."

"Oh."

"And a postcard from Boston."

iv.

Americus walks into his bedroom and finds that its disarray is gone. Bed is made up with fresh linen and blankets, everything tucked in. Soiled clothing gone from the floor, a genuine neat pin of a room.

"You've been busy, Beck."

She stands in the doorway, smiling. "It's easier to straighten up when you're off somewhere."

"You're too good to me, kid."

She smiles more brightly. "How was Luna T's?"

"It was OK. The Cowboys lost, tho."

"Oh."

"How are you?"

She comes over to him and gives him a light, tight hug. "I'm fine right now."

"And usually?"

"Oh, yknow."

"High school?"

"Yah."

"I'm not tired. Do you want to talk about it?"

She shakes her head. "Dad, you know what I would say and I know how you would feel. So can we talk anyway but not about high school?"

v.

They return to the living room.

"Daddy, do you want to hear about the call and see the postcard?"

"No. I have a confession, tho."

"What?"

"That card has been in the mailbox since yesterday. I took it out and then put it back."

"Did you read it?"

"No."

"I did."

"That's OK."

Rich sits in his tattered green armchair by the front window. Rebecca sits on a Persian design square pink cushion, facing him.

"How do you feel?"

"Better."

"But not well?"

"No."

"So, um, how do you get well?"

Americus droops in his chair. "I have to go into the sickness."

Rebecca squirms on her cushion, a look akin to anger on her face.

"What?"

"Why you?"

"Why?"

"Yes! Why all this? Is it necessary? You're sick, you're alone. I can't help you. When does it end?"

"I don't know."

"Do you have to be sick? Does your life have to be so hard?"

"I don't know."

She stands, fierce. "I love you, Dad. You know that. But isn't it all supposed to add to something at some point?"

Rich nods. "Yes. But does it? I can't say."

She rests against his knees, her head on his lap. "I'm sorry."

"You're feeling what's right, Reb. You're looking out for your own. I wish I could answer your questions. I can't. Not yet."

"Maybe. You've done one thing very right, Reb."

"What?"

"You've convinced me that I've waited too long. I'll never get well like this. So it's time."

He kisses her cheek, and cups her form with his look.

"I'll be back, kid. You'll wait, OK?"

Love, soundless, single truth.

vi.

Sleeping naked, without covers, like an old acid trip, welcoming the lightly throbbing air, aware of the room's dust, millions of particles of skins fallen from his body, but floating now on the throbbing air, free

a vastless flat plain, a vaulted sky, a single guitar strumming high notes in patches, in isolation, and what this sounds like from within the guitar, inside its wood, flowing through the bridge, the strings, the neck, this guitar, this Godd, smiling, eternal vibrations, in patches and naked Americus, now hovering, the absolute prayer answered, for flight, now aloft and moving, less a body than a forwardly-thrusting blur, just going, just go—

flying near to the ground, reaching to touch the earth, a finger scraping a line making a circle in which a tall man's body could stretch out fully across—and now sinking into the circle, into the ground, flying down into the soil, a place lit up by the million motes of skin fallen from his body—

in a warm place, a shivering place, loving, but questioning, a soul's land, a dream's human pet

*if i never came back would you be ok beautiful girl would you know what to do what you know that you could find me even then would you smile and believe in the death of deadness would you know that after death if you believe i will accumulate on your hand and this hand will protect you no matter no no matter would you understand that change is time's best trick that love is so real and permanent so gnarled rolling wheel in the universe*

*i am filling your room with rain as you sleep, a rain of motes, stars, words, a contrived continuousness, love the mad roaring Lear knowing everything is not enough love the poem-baking woman lowering prayers in a basket to the small faces below*

*now descending through your floor wake up love! the stars fill your room!  
wake up love! you're shining and worshipped!*

"Daddy? Is that you?"

vii.

And a guitar fills this new room and pretty noise, and smoke, and voices, shifting hands, movement toward sex, falling into multidimensionality, better than a cupped softness,

better than a sincere eye and its mate—

he loves her but there are no words, none, to say, just a hard floor below and a battered one above—

take now that he she she  
 him he wave finds are are  
 take is around he together smiling  
 a sound the can't and and  
 place he room but love she  
 in is seeing it's is is  
 his a there alright just wondering  
 soul we are because one how  
 a he no this more he  
 gripping is gaps whole name became  
 hand a between universe for a  
 upon billion waves is Godd rose  
 his he no him one a  
 scared sees missing and more red  
 soul and particles her name red  
 and smiles and and for rose  
 lead and he whatever Universe he  
 him feels is he one is  
 to soft looking does more a  
 the softer for and name rose  
 band soft her whatever for- must  
 stand so trying he time be  
 and soft to says to a  
 reveal ab remember and bring costume  
 him he her wherever him says  
 to rides face he back I  
 the this her goes now love  
 band wave name she he you  
 and and and and and and

off they go, leaving the band more bright, more invisible than before  
 yes—

viii.

but doubt, but mortality, maybe the star's lights aren't true, maybe the Sacred &  
Eternal is really Trick & Lie

here, right now, the open third eye, the heart within the heart, i am peaking in this cold  
universe i am warm—

but is that enough?

keep going, Brere, Dubia!

keep going—

keep going—

arrived in that cement place, that beloved park, for past day, far past night, thin but  
thrusting, we're still on the beam—





ix.

Now he is walking along, dressed in old motorcycle leather and faded denim, hard-stepping leather boots, and it's a cold night and many of the trees along the street are bare, filled with naked fingers vainly reaching for what was theirs, just now, just a moment ago, what was theirs is now gone, blown away by wind and time—

electrified filaments lick the night make her breathe hard make her lips part, light groan out—

walking along the empty street listening to the music approaching him, beating heart, breathing bass-guitar, lead-guitar mind, cockhard singer bellow, fall, leap up, looking for thigh, high, sky—

walks along for what seems hours, and yet the buildings don't seem to change their position he does not near the street stretches off in the distance impossibly far and yet the tall buildings above him shrink so he must be rising or perhaps they falling?

now watching the night mix with dawn seeing pink and orange and fragile blue fill the sky

but the day doesn't usually hurry along like this, sun rising so fast it leaves scorched trails behind it

stop - stop - slowdown!

x.

You are at Luna T's Cafe, Sunday afternoon.

"Down 14-6 on their own 3, Dallas is in an impossible situation."

I am at Downtown Crossing, doubting I can ever see the sun or know, really know, and I throw out an idea

"Art is All"

But it's an "incomplete pass from Troy Aikman to Michael Irvin 2nd down."

I'm at State Street looking toward you at the bar, from this dirty train car all the way to the hand that holds your pint of Guinness and you say "Doubt. . . ?" like neither you nor I know but "there's a 21-yard strike to tight end Eric Bjornson! Cowboys now on their own 24." Mr. Bob the bartender gets you another pint and you nod to him that all six men lining the bar should get a free round.

Haymarket Station is the next stop this train reaches and you and I say together "It's OK to Be Happy" and "bang! Aikman hits Irvin again on an 18-yard curl along the right sideline. Dallas is up to its 42."

Now we're certain— sure, the night is cold and I don't know what being happy means anymore or if this is the way to get you well or not and this damned dirty train—

But I'm at North Station and I see you've got the men at the bar banging down beers every time Dallas moves the ball—only minutes before you came in they were whooping to see the Redskins winning "and Aikman hits Irvin again on a slant—Dallas is past mid-field! Suddenly they're playing like champs, like the old days."

"Community College" says the conductor over the P.A. system and I watch as nobody gets on or off and you watch as running back Emmitt Smith slams into the line but gains nothing. And now Sullivan Square and another slam at the line but these two runs have lost

the Cowboys a yard and so it's 4th down and 2 yards to go.

Americus is pissed, is fully, corporeally present and Mr. Bob knows better than to protest when Americus demands a pint for each hand, continuously, even tho the half-dozen at the bar protest and quit—

I am at Wellington Station now wishing I could help him, at least drink a damned beer with the man— but it has to keep on this way—

When it's 4th and 2 and tomorrow is being decided today, when you have a small number of big, grim souls on your side, but still doubt—

When you believe, for no damned good reason, believe because you cannot help it, then you tell your best hope, your best receiver, "go out on a fade route" and now you have the ball—and you scramble and you scramble—

but the pass looks too risky (i am approaching the Malden Center T station aka ZombieDownTown— i am reducing, again, to a floating fist of smoke round a black pen)

and you see Bjornson  
 in the flat  
 and Emmitt Smith is your  
 outlet receiver  
 and 64,559 fans are screaming  
 for you to throw the  
 damned ball

and there's your playmaker—he's changed his route—he's running free across the middle—his cover man stumbled as he tried to chase him

throw with Godd  
 Go with Godd  
 a moment's universe unfolds ball floating, firing through the air

64,559 screaming  
 and i am screaming in the ZombieDownTown night air and Taxi Time cabs swerve around me because I am in the middle of Canal Street and fat beautiful tit of a full moon rubs my head and i am still screaming and there are motes everywhere all visible moving in packs of particles moving in fields of waves ball flying through the air and the playmaker crosses the expanse of the sky and catches the football and catches the fat tit full moon "and the Cowboys are 1st down and 10 at the Washington 19!"

"Shut up. Calm down," Americus growls at me, but he's smiling, approving my madness despite himself.

Canal Street is past hallucination. Canal Street is past light, fardeep into pure music, absolute vibrations.

"Aikman drops back, fires the ball. Incomplete. Oh, but there's a penalty on the Redskins. That one hurts. Dallas is 1st & goal on the 8."

Late night pickup trucks and tractor-trailors, speeding & concerned cop cars, teen Camaros from '78, splash through landed moon, touch nipple, shine more willingly, drive on—

“Aikman drops back again, the coverage is excellent this time. Incomplete pass. 2nd & Goal.”

The men at the bar are restless so I bring them to Canal Street and they find themselves at the bar on a long desolate street looking blink-blink into the fat tit full moon where the Cowboys can be seen lining up for the next play. I settle at the bar on the farthest end from Americus but he is still amused and urges two-fisted drinking upon me— yes, of course!

“Aikman tosses one to Bjornson but the Redskins defense stiffens. 2 yard gain. 3rd & Goal.”

Taking us in our seats along the bar floats right into the vast keeping embrace of the fat-tit full moon and upon its nipple we perch, now inside the game now atop the ball as it streaks from Aikman’s hands “to Irvin—touchdown!”

A rise. A fall. Another pass. More points. Soon we are beyond victory drives, last-second field goals, brief pride in an often bastardly universe.

“Who won?”

Yes. Absolutely.

xi.

The man at the bar let out a heavy roaring cheer and I turn from the TV to regard them. Shit . . . no!

“Why not?” opines Americus, liking me more and more. “Here they are. Aikman, the veteran quarterback. Irvin, wide receiver, nicknamed ‘Playmaker.’ Smith, the big-hearted running back you have a fan’s crush on. Bjornson, the young tight end, coming into his own despite the team’s lousy season. And look, too, here’s roughcut Barry Switzer, team’s coach, gonna get the ax at season’s end. And here’s Jerry Jones, the rebel bastard rich owner. The one drinking light beer.”

Jones, wearing a heavy overcoat and sporting a salesman’s drawl, protests. “No fair, son.”

“Yah, they don’t drink no fucking beer in the owner’s box,” laughs Michael Irvin, a black man about 30, big mirthless smile on his face.

Aikman, blonde man, tall, also about 30, brick-intense blue eyes. “This isn’t helping. We know what happened. All of us do. We won this game and lost the rest.”

Smith nods, sips his drink.

Bjornson looks at me. “Why are we here?”

“Has to do with someone’s sickness,” cuts in Americus.

“Whose?”

“I don’t know,” I say. “Americus seems to think it’s mine. And everything that’s happening in this story backs him up somehow.”

“Can we help?” asks Switzer, several rounds of whiskey past the others.

I look down at my drinks, both still full; had them awhile too. “I started identifying with your struggles this fall. But I thought we’d both fight on and come out OK.”

“The Cowboys will be OK, Son, don’t you worry about that,” says the eager Jones.

“There’s wins and there’s losses in life,” says Switzer.

“I know.”

Noone speaks, waiting for more from me, I guess. “That game meant alot to me. I

wrote down the plays as they were happening in my notebook." Everyone laughs. "I did. All season long, too. It became important in a new way this year. You guys struggled and I did too but I've liked your team for nearly 30 years so it was familiar, too. The kickoff, and yelling, getting drunk and happy, wearing this silly little red Cowboy hat on my head." They all laugh again.

"I'd pay to see that," says Smith, a gentle-faced black man, 28 years old, large eyes.

"Not much fun for any of you this year," I add. They all nod.

"Or you," says Jones.

"If we win our last game, will you feel better?" asks Bjornson.

"Oh, he's much better already," says Americus with a laugh.

"How?" I ask.

"Writing this kind of shit? What do you think? Come on!"

xii.

He's right, of course—

"Thanks"

We're alone now, sitting side by side on the front steps of the empty Rohm Technology building, along BloomingBabyStreet, ZombieTown, Mass.

"You mean the Bay State Express building, Canal Street, Malden, MA"

"I mean what I mean, Americus"

He's silent.

The street is an excellent straight-away for zipping late night cars. Blow down its length paying no mind to its dead train tracks, box-shaped brick building housing the Mystic Valley Gun Club, lights-speckled Anthony's Restaurant, and so on.

"At least the moon's back in its place" sez Americus.

"You're not much help"

Americus ignores me, stands in the middle of the street, hands in his jacket pocket.

Chilly night, but no wind.

Streetlamps everywhere, high and low. Well-lit desolation.

"Isn't this story supposed to wind up dealing with pursued, pursuing, and the third figure?"

"Yes."

"Soulard, I'm not sick anymore. You know that, don't you?"

"Yes."

"But I'll help you. I'll do whatever's got to be done to get beyond this scene."

I stare at him for a long time. "There's so much more, isn't there?"

He nods.

"How do we start?"

"Bring me back to the City."

"And then?"

"And then it's up to you. But it has to start there."

xiii.

I stand up. Side by side, we walk down Canal Street, past the Mystic Valley Gun club, past Anthony's Restaurant and into The City instead of ZombieTown.

I look at Americus, walking expressionless through the City's weaker hours, and an idea occurs.

"Can I be part of you for awhile? I think it will help."

He stops. Stares. Laughs. "Who's the creator and who's the created, Soulard?"

"Look, for years I've been writing about you so that people won't confuse us. You often don't like me. Your adventures don't too closely mirror mine. We're different, no question. But now I want to occupy your consciousness with you. It's the only way to get this story to where it needs to go."

"Where?"

"Will you let me?"

"Where is it going?"

"Will you let me?"

"If you tell me where."

"I don't know right now. Now open up your psyche and say Ahh."

xiv.

Facing Americus, I melt into him, permeating skin, muscle, bone, then blood, then heart and mind and into consciousness, but short of very soul. Simple words, these, and they mostly fail to delineate what happens. But I'll find the words, promise.

He resists me, almost fights me. Taking on my substance, body and soul, is wrenching, hurts in a deep, bloodless way.

And my adjustment to being hosted + carried by a fixtional creature. At first I can't see with his eyes because everything's too bright, before sunrise still, but too bright.

"Look at the sky," he advises. This helps. A clear night, stars bigger than I am used to but comforting.

"Who's writing this?" he suddenly demands.

"You are."

And Americus realizes that there is a somewhere within him that is now sitting on a bus speeding on a grey winter's day through Connecticut, toward Hartford.

Snow-covered hills. Bare trees. A beautiful grey sky, heavy with low-hanging, slowly moving clouds.

Enough of that. We are moving through the City, we are beginning to meld, I am integrating with his being.

xv.

So you have become me in all these magical ways, and I have become you in ways you do not expect and we can see through each other's eyes equally and you are with me walking through the chilly streets of The City, down Main Street, toward the downtown, and I am with you as you sit in the hoary old poorfolks coffeeshop in that rundown factory-town you

lived in for many years, snow outside, the perfection of a bleak grey sky above bare trees finger-wild grasping. . . .

And I am you as well, Americus, and know before you that we aren't in The City circa late 1997, no, we're back in our year, the only one that really mattered to either one of us, the one when we began to begin to become what we are today, and yes, you are at The People's Donutshop with me in sad, desolate, beautiful old New Britain, and you can feel my hand as it rolls across the page, making this story even as it makes me, that is, us, and in the matrix of these thoughts and truths is, finally, to be discovered the nature of pursuing, pursued, and the third element that is both and neither.

The past which we pursue, the past which pursues us, the past we chase around the damned yard, the past we can't get it nor can it get at us except as we allow it. . . .

Look, Soulard! We're walking into a remembrance of our City from almost twenty years ago! Look at the young punk I was back then! Less of me, for certain, too skinny in leather and denim, but I was a brighter light, burning in every direction, knowing sadness, but still fighting it like it could be beaten, not yet coming to accept it like blood, like failure, like horrible unreasonable losses, like life's continual small mean snaps at one's hope. . . .

And here, Americus, in this pink and orange joint, one old tuft of a woman hunched over her crossword puzzles, one unrazored man laughing easily, like surrender. The brown and white and black faces, men and women, come for warmth and coffee and laughter, come for a dose of tomorrow's continuing mystery. . . .

Just sitting on a bench where benches are no longer, watching cars pass on a street where street is no longer, early morning but I can't deny the suits and skirts crowding everywhere, nor that this is Reagan's Morning in America, that the hippie dreams of backwhen, the many psychedelic prayers offered humbly beyond humble, are repudiated, are mocked, bring on large chrysalis plates of cocaine, investment options for the overemployed, and so much useless, vile sex, a remorseless monster, a punishing fist will set to crushing poor fool souls from their very blood outward. . . .

And The Peoples Donutshop where homeless people excitedly show their gift boxes of gloves and shaving-kits and soap given out from the charity van that pulled up in front of the Adams Food Mart next door at 3 p.m. today, an hour or so ago, when the Giants were still leading the Vikings in their playoff game, before they gave it away, while Aikman and Irvin and Bjornson and Smith and Jones and Switzer no doubt watched, a drink-swilling crowd, sitting side by side on a beat orange couch aboard an old trailer home somewhere south of Irving, Texas. . . .

I've finally settled us, Soulard, in front of a cup of coffee, heavy cream and sugar, and a plate of scrambled eggs and toast at the breakfast counter of the old Jupiter's department store. Some are reading *The Hartford Courant*, some *The New York Daily News*. You're with me as I'm trying to write song lyrics, a brief stretch when I gave up reading poetry entirely, wanted to do it all by myself, Noisy Children didn't really care where the words were from, or how, just so long as I got us enough to make ten new songs for our second album. . . .

I think that, upon a time, I was gentler and softer than these roughened souls here, and their general kind. I'm not sure anymore. I sense an ease here among unacquainted souls that I do not share. More than anything, a palpable estrangement from this place, like I'm trying to return to an old dance and I don't remember the steps and I can't re-learn them because I never had to learn them originally. . . .

Don't give in so easily, Soulard! I'm back in 1981, or some dream of it and I'm trying

like a bastard, too, to do what I did then, to remember why. I know the writing I was doing back then eventually led Noisy Children to record *Dead on Arrival*, our 2nd album, buried our popularity for good, broke up the band, landed me in a mental institution for a time, and yet what can I do differently? What? If Noisy Children hadn't been broken up from '85 to '89 Rebecca and I never would have gotten so close that nothing could undo us. We invented each other during those years and haven't ever gone back. But I wish I could stop some of the things that happened. . . .

To have left this city, and this state, yet I haven't really, and I have been preparing to visit this particular joint for weeks. Who's chasing whom? Chasing what? When did my stories start becoming like this? Was it back when the Raven Princess lived nearby? When she one day came, imperiously beautiful, through the entrance of this joint, walking straight at me, slapping, demanding, needing, secretly kissing, secretly loving? Stories self-conscious, stories pursuing their own tight, shiny tails. Stories hustling themselves for a drink, stories self-seeking fat tongues, probing for nubs of ecstasy, worrying at scars of woe. . . .

I am 21 years old and I have been dating a woman named Erica Sanslux and she knows even this early on how I like a woman wrapped around me as I let my motorcycle out for a long ride. She won't tell me that she was a virgin when we met and I won't ask her. She didn't bleed too much the first time and I wasn't paying attention anyway. But soon I was fighting her body for my life, fighting my need for her, fighting her quicksand emotions. Enjoying her became too much enjoyment. I knew how to make her scream, I mean a panting, moaning, begging scream for more, I'd found her patch, an area under her vagina I made her keep shaven so I could get at it more easily. I began to play her more often than my guitar, especially when making music with Noisy Children got annoying, pointless. I used this shaven underpussy patch to manipulate the rest of her, I used her own hands to manipulate the rest of her, gave me ten extra fingers to do my work. She helped me fuck her, do you get it, Souldard? Together, we fucked her! After awhile, her fucking me, when I let her, got ugly. I'd jack off in the bathroom, secretly, during a shower, so she wouldn't be able to get any arousal from me. I told her that I needed more, that no woman had given me enough, and so I was disappointed, shut down. I manipulated her badly. Grey always wondered why there were periods when I wouldn't cheat on Erica. He didn't know I was helping her cheat on herself. . . .

"The Giants, what a disappointment. I'm so mad at how they lost. They didn't stand up like a mn when the Vikings were coming back," declaims a grey-haired man with a crazy eye. News of the day here at The Peoples Donutshop in New Britain, Connecticut. Most people here, seems, saw some or all of the game.

A village inside of a retail operation, a continuous flow and return of familiar faces. Battered faces. Scruffy shoes. A freakishly high presence of sensitivity. The Raven Princess would never believe this. The night outside is arrived, its steady snows descending, its streetlamps at every corner, assuring doubters that day will return. Cars roll in this plaza's lot and out on the road. Inside, red-and-green bunting and pictures of Santa Claus hang from the ceiling. I think: "How can we be saved, from the eternal grave?" and there's no answer to this, none at all. Americus, listen, my friend Amante is ready for the moment his number is up, 'ready to go at any moment,' he always told me.

Sure I believe him, Americus. . . .

xvi.

Where's left to go?

"Home, Soulard."

"You're home in time. I'm home in space."

"Is that all there is?"

"Moments, right moments, in the right place. But they don't last. You can't live in that vision of our 1981 for too long and I can't stay at this hoary old retail comfort for much over an hour more."

"Not much good how we think."

"There's worse."

"Soulard, it's been crazy. But let me go back to where I belong. I want to see Rebecca. I want to be alone."

"OK."

We slowly unclasp each other and he is back on the page and I'm back above the page. I feel smaller, more dully familiar.

And Americus is back in The City, sitting on the front steps of his 50 Harvest Street apartment house. The sky is lit, preparing to open its doors.

Reaching into his leather jacket pockets, Americus finds inside an inner pocket a box of wooden matches, inside a small joint, too.

Lights up, street empty, a clearbell-high view of dawn a good, rare treat.

"Franny once told me you'll always be hippy at heart," says Rebecca, standing on the top step, smiling.

"She's smart, for a Dixie chick."

"Can I sit with you, Dad?"

"Of course."

"How are you?"

"Oh, yknow."

"No, Dad. Tell me. Are you still sick?"

"Not really."

"Was it hard?"

"Hard enough, Beck. But I'm back. Out of the valley, going back up the hill."

"It's always one or the other, isn't it?"

"Yes."

Rich takes another drag and then starts to put away. But stops.

"Want some?"

"Me?"

"Why not?"

"You never asked me before."

"No, that's true. But you're more than less grownup, Reb. I think I'm starting to trust myself more around you. If I haven't ruined you by now, smoking weed with me isn't going to bring you down."

"Oh, Dad."

"So?"

"OK."

"Good. Breathe deep. Marijuana's from the earth, just like your mouth and lungs. But it



helps you to see the stars better, in some ways, if you grab onto it really well. There . . . good. Now hold it. Good. You can let it out now if you like."

Her pretty young face is red but her vast brown eyes sparkle at this moment, well beyond even marijuana's insistent power.

"How do you feel, Beautiful?"

"Good, I guess. A little light."

"It's like that. Now look down the street. See? Way down? That group of trees at the next corner? How you can pick up every leaf on the trees?"

"Wow. Is it always like this, Dad?"

He shakes his head, smiling. He hugs her til they nearly tumble off the steps. They start laughing really hard, for a long time. Let the laughter recede very slowly.

Then she's more serious again, allowing herself this. "Why today, Dad?"

"I'm well. Our story's well. It was beyond me, Beck. That's why it was so hard. It was way beyond me this time."

"Oh."

"Don't worry. I did what was necessary. That's all it's about in life. A lot of the time anyhow. Just do what's necessary. That's all."

"Sometimes I don't know, Daddy. I didn't know you'd want to talk with me like this. Or, yknow, smoke stuff."

"But you saw me out here. You talked to me. I didn't know you were there."

"It was just a guess."

"A good one."

Rebecca smiles and starts to giggle. "So you're telling me to guess good about doing what's necessary in life?"

He nods, smiles too. "Not too strict a philosophy."

"No."

He hugs her again and she shifts herself to be inside his grasp. They don't talk for awhile, until she needs to.

"Dad, did you really mean it?"

"What?"

"That you, um, trust yourself more around me?"

"Of course."

"So will you talk to me more? And tell me more things about yourself? I mean if I ask?"

"Sometimes."

"Oh."

"Rebby, I've told you more than I've told anyone. You probably don't believe that."

"I do, sort of."

"It's true. And you've lived with me all these years. Seeing it happen when it happens it much more real than hearing about it later."

"Then I have to ask you something."

"What?"

"Do you love Franny?"

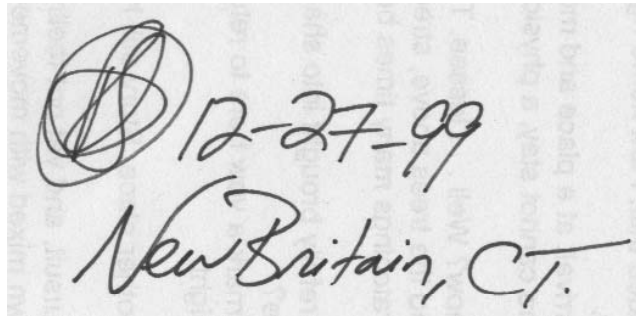
"Yes."

"What if she was in a lot of trouble?"

"Yes."

"Can I say something mean and you promise not too get mad?"

“Yes.”  
Brown eyes, galaxy, perfection, necessity, mortality, lower-case godd.  
“You have problems with, um, girls sometimes.”  
Rich laughs loudly. “That was your mean thing?”  
Nods quickly.  
Rich stands, offers his hand, together they retreat inside to their home . . . .  
Home, then, an arrival at a place and moment of undoubted clarity, perfection, familiar,  
but as well a place where one cannot stay, a physical moment that dawns, and droops.  
Perhaps.  
Is anyone home right now? Has any soul brief freedom from pursued, pursuing, and



## Poetry: Mark Shorette

1.

a lithe evening  
this is the first quarter  
where we celebrate the death of love's innocence  
it peaked some time ago  
it peaked at the moment where skin scarred with the  
nascence of desire  
it peaked with singed maidenhair  
it peaked when I called out your name  
joined at the syllable with an idolatrous adjective of  
respect  
this is the first quarter  
the quarter where slivered moon meets us,  
in desire's den

2.

an intonation  
whispered in the coal  
an intonation of you

3.

for this is our credo  
the credo of monastics gone terribly awry  
those of us who live in the thickets of lissome deer  
those of us who have penetrated to the loam  
we, in the groves of molding oak leaves

we live by sight

we live by the press of tongue to cheek

we live by the austerities often mistaken for excess

we live by what we know to be there

two creatures

flesh

vein

the actual

the moment

it

is here.

4.

we dwell in unspoken times  
you and i  
the pauses between breath and command  
holds within its potent infinitude  
you as all  
me as an atom  
within that all  
a pool absorbed into ether  
and I wonder  
reduced at your feet  
what plans  
what thoughts

but i am reduced....  
and ready

5.

you  
who pierce to my interior

you  
on sweat laden nights  
where our salts mix and meld  
taking on an aroma  
which is neither yours nor mine

you  
who with gaze  
cuts  
separates sinew from soul

you  
whose essence exists  
in the husks of habaneros

on this pacific night

## Notes on Contributors

**Ric Amante** lives in Melrose, Massachusetts. His poetry regularly appears in *The Cenacle*. We were at a party recently and he looked at me and said, "Soulard, the 40 workweek is for the birds. I just want to go deeper into my head and write the best poetry I can." Right on, bro ;)

**Barbara Brannon** lives in Columbia, South Carolina. She is my collaborator on this and many other Scriptor Press projects. I cannot thank her enough for the work she did and guidance she offered on this issue. You rock the fuckin house, Brannon :)

**Joe Ciccone** lives in Brighton, Massachusetts. His poetry has long been part of this magazine's finest contents. Soon to be leaving Boston, possibly for medical school on the Maine shores, he will be missed locally though his adventures in mind and body will I hope continue to be chronicled in these pages. . . .

**Stanislav Grof** is one of the leading pioneers of psychedelic psychotherapy. It is with great pleasure that this issue repints one of his excellent essays.

**Patty Kisluk** lives in Plainville, Connecticut. Her cover art for this issue represents her first contribution to this magazine. She is an extraordinarily gifted young woman, a good friend, and one whom I hope to collaborate again with often in the future. And she was a most cheery walking companion on a strange adventure one snowy December night ;)

**Mark Shorette** lives in Plainville, Connecticut. His poetry and prose has appeared often in these pages over the years. It is my hope that he soon be bound, whipped, tied up, happy, delirious, whatever the fuck he wants, and then writes great poetry about it ;)

**Ray Soulard, Jr.** lives in Malden, Massachusetts.  
Still...yah...still...don't know why exactly...but here I am...but now I have a Macintosh G4 so life aint all bad...and I may have a girl worth having too...hehe...more on that anon...

IT'S ALL  
BEAUTIFUL,  
EVEN THE  
UGLY PARTS!

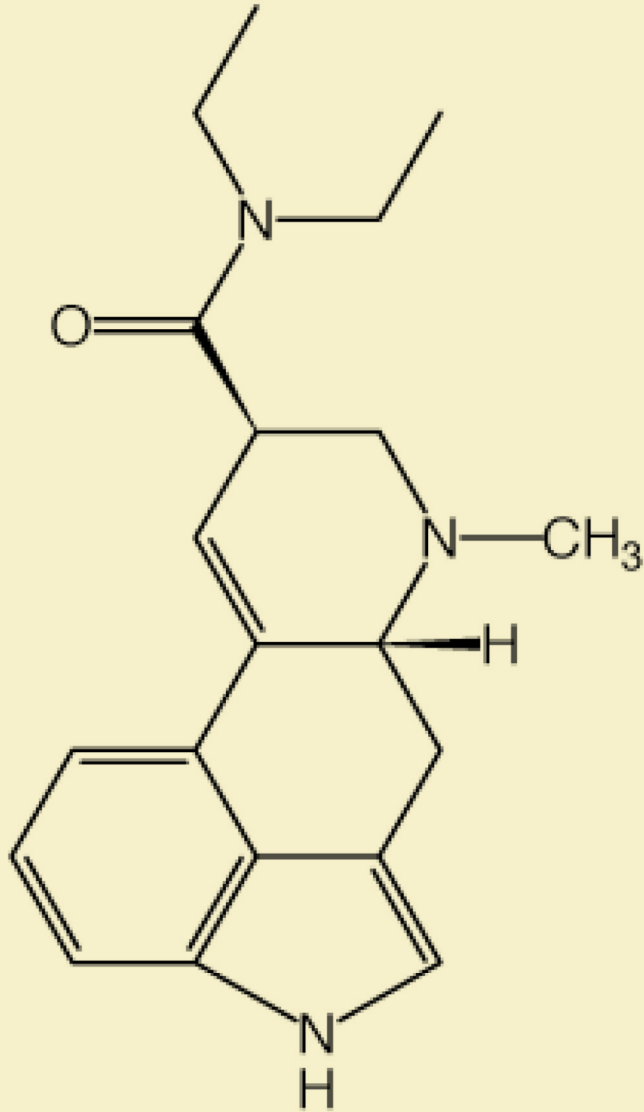
---

Another Conrad  
mini-poster brought  
to you by Soular  
& LSD ☺



# LSD

D-lysergic acid diethylamide, C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>25</sub>N<sub>3</sub>O (mol. wt. 323.43)



**“Truth is more fantastic than reality.”  
Robert A. Heinlein**