



# ashÉ!

JOURNAL OF EXPERIMENTAL SPIRITUALITY

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# ASHÉ

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VOLUME II, NUMBER 3  
Fall 2003  
©MMIII Ashé Journal

Ashé! is published quarterly, on the equinoxes and solstices.  
Each issue is distributed in HTML, PDF and print formats.

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The advertisement features a collection of spiritual and meditation-related items. At the top left is the book "The Buddhism of TIBET" by THE DALAI LAMA. Next to it is the book "awareness" by osho, which has a cover with a black and red circle. To the right is the book "PURE MEDITATION" by PEMA CHODRON, featuring a woman holding a lotus flower. In the center, the word "ASHÉ" is written in large, bold, black letters, with "Giftshoppe" written in a cursive font below it. Below the central text are three more items: a CD cover for "CYBERTAIBE DHARMA CAFE" with a Buddha face and sound waves, a CD cover for "Rhythms of the Goddess" featuring a woman in a crown, and a CD cover for "DEUTER BUDDHA NATURE" with a Buddha face. At the bottom of the advertisement is the website address "ashe.mechanicaldiva.com".

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### Dedication: The Ruth Moore Centennial

Ruth Moore (1903-1989) has long been considered the first voice of the “real Maine”—her novel, *The Weir*, preceding *The Beans of Egypt Maine* by almost fifty years. *The New York Times Review of Books* heralded her as “New England’s only answer to Faulkner.” Ruth described herself as, simply, “the eyes that watch from the underbrush.”

Ruth was born in 1903 on Gott’s Island, two miles off the Maine coast. The oldest of four children, she was descended from the island’s original 18<sup>th</sup> century settlers. Her parents ran the island’s post office, store and boarding house. Ruth graduated from New York State College for Teachers at Albany in 1925 and worked at various jobs in New York City, Washington, D.C. and California, including time at the Reader’s Digest and the NAACP.

While at the NAACP, she worked directly for both Mary White Ovington, one of the organization’s founders, and poet James Weldon Johnson, the association’s head and author of *God’s Trombones*. Ruth’s time with the NAACP included working as a special investigator in two murder cases. During the course of 1930, these investigations necessitated frequent trips through the south and ultimately resulted in the freeing of two falsely accused young African American boys.

In 1946 she returned to Bass Harbor with her lifelong companion, Eleanor Mayo, and lived there the rest of her life. Between 1943 until her death in 1989, she published 14 novels, 2 books of poetry and a collection of ballads. Her novels were translated into Dutch, Norwegian, German, Italian and Japanese. Her shorter fiction and poetry were published in *The New Yorker*, *Harper’s Bazaar* and numerous smaller publications. Ruth’s second book *Spoonhandle* was made into the Oscar nominated, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox film, “Deep Waters” (Henry King 1948). Currently Maine publisher Gary Lawless is republishing her books under the Blackberry Press imprint.



Eleanor Mayo



## Contributors

**Ron Adams** is known on the internet as Sunwolf, and his Magickal Name is Sabaechit. He is a member of Greater Thelema group and Nanda Zonule. His passion is teaching. A writer and a magician, artist, Ron's goal is to get certified as a Alchemical Hypnotherapist. He is revising his Occult School, The Revised Silver Star, Alchemy is definitely Ron's middle name. Email him at FraterSabaechit @greaterthelema.org.

**Edward Batchler, Jr.** is a Religions Fellow at Yale University.

**Douglas Grant** is currently publishing books, most recently *Stealing the Fire from Heaven* by Stephen Mace, which has been met with rave reviews and can be found on Douglas' internet retail store Dagon Productions: <http://www.dagonproductions.com>. Simultaneously running an art gallery bookstore Perihelion Arts in Phoenix, AZ. <http://www.perihelionarts.com> to continuous rave reviews.

**Trebor Healey's** poetry has appeared in more than 30 publications, including *The James White Review*, *Long Shot*, *The Chiron Review* and *Evergreen Chronicles*. His fiction has been featured online at *The Blithe House Quarterly*, *Ashé* and *The Lodestar Quarterly*, as well as in numerous literary reviews and more than a dozen anthologies. His first novel *Through It Came Bright Colors* was recently published. [www.treborhealey.com](http://www.treborhealey.com)

**Phil Hine** is a spiritual theorist noted for his ground-breaking work in the field of Chaos (Kaos) Magic. He is the author of several books including *Condensed Chaos* and *Prime Chaos* from New Falcon and *Pseudonomicon* from Dagon Productions. He is also the author of several e-books and numerous articles, many of which are available at his site: <http://www.philhine.org.uk>

**Miriam R. Sachs Martín** is hotter than flamin' hot cheetos, and wetter than the Lexington Reservoir. She loves to muck around in the place where poetry becomes intimacy and the word becomes song. She's a 5' \_" Cuban, Jewish dyke who loves East San José, where she lives, teaches ESL, produces FIERCE WORDS TENDER (Women's Open Mic @ Sisterspirit Bookstore, San Jose, [www.angelfire.com/de/fierceness](http://www.angelfire.com/de/fierceness)), and in every way worships things both feral and feline (purrrowrr!) Her work has been included



in the anthologies *Cliterature*, *Gynomite*, and *Latino Heretics* and the journals *Gertrude*, *A Nest of Vipers*, *Sinister Wisdom*, *Sisterspirit News*, among others. She'd love to hear from all and sundry at FierceMiri@aol.com.

**Mike McGinty** is a Clio Award-winning copywriter at a San Francisco advertising agency. His personal essays have appeared online at Gay.com, PlanetOut.com and Outsports.com, and in print in San Francisco Bride magazine, the Noe Valley Voice and American Magazine. He is currently working on a book about the three-week European vacation he took with his parents last spring.

**Mogg Morgan** is a respected occult publisher and owns Mandrake of Oxford. He is an author whose work includes: *The English Mahatma* (reviewed in issue I/1&2), *Sexual Magick* (under the name Katon Shual), *Tankhem* (reviewed in issue II/1) and the occult journal *Nuit-Isis*.

**Genesis P-Orridge** is best known as the creative force of the industrial music pioneering groups Throbbing Gristle and Psychic TV and as the founder and focal point of Thee Temple of Psychic Youth. He was a friend of both William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin. More recently he has begun work at breaking the boundary between the binarism that is "male" and "female." He has done this through his provocative and revolutionary artwork. He has also continued to use his body as a medium undergoing facial electrolysis and breast implants. His book *Painful but Fabulous: The Lives & Art of Genesis P-Orridge* has recently been published (see review this issue).

**Bruce Watkins** is a clinical psychologist in private practice in Westwood, California, for the last thirty-one years. He sees mostly high functioning GLBT adults, who have problems in relationships. He calls his brand of psychotherapy, person-centered psychoanalysis. He has also been an assistant professor at UCLA in the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences. Bruce was raised a Roman Catholic, with sixteen years of Catholic education, eight of which were with the Jesuits. Presently, he worships at Metropolitan Community Church in West Hollywood.

**Snoo Wilson** is the author of *I, Crowley* published by Mandrake of Oxford.



**Cover Artist...****Stevee Postman**

“I believe in the sacredness of the earth and its interconnectedness to spirit,” says Stevee Postman. “That is what my art is about. I like to blend technology with the organic in ways that communicate these mysteries through a kind of techno-paganism. My creative process is a sort of prayer for me, an offering.”

His images are created by taking initial photos with a 35mm camera; scanning the negatives to produce high-resolution digital source material; and mixing, layering, and transmogrifying with Photoshop wizardry. He works on a Mac, and each image takes 10 to 40 hours to complete.

Stevee’s **Cosmic Tribe Tarot** (see review in Ashé II/1) has sold over 13,000 copies. His images have also appeared on Grateful Dead drummer Mickey Hart’s CD *Superlingua*, Rob Brezny’s book *The Televisionary Oracle*, magazine covers for *Gnosis* and *Magical Blend*, event images for four years of Mind States conferences, and a calendar published by Soho Galleries.

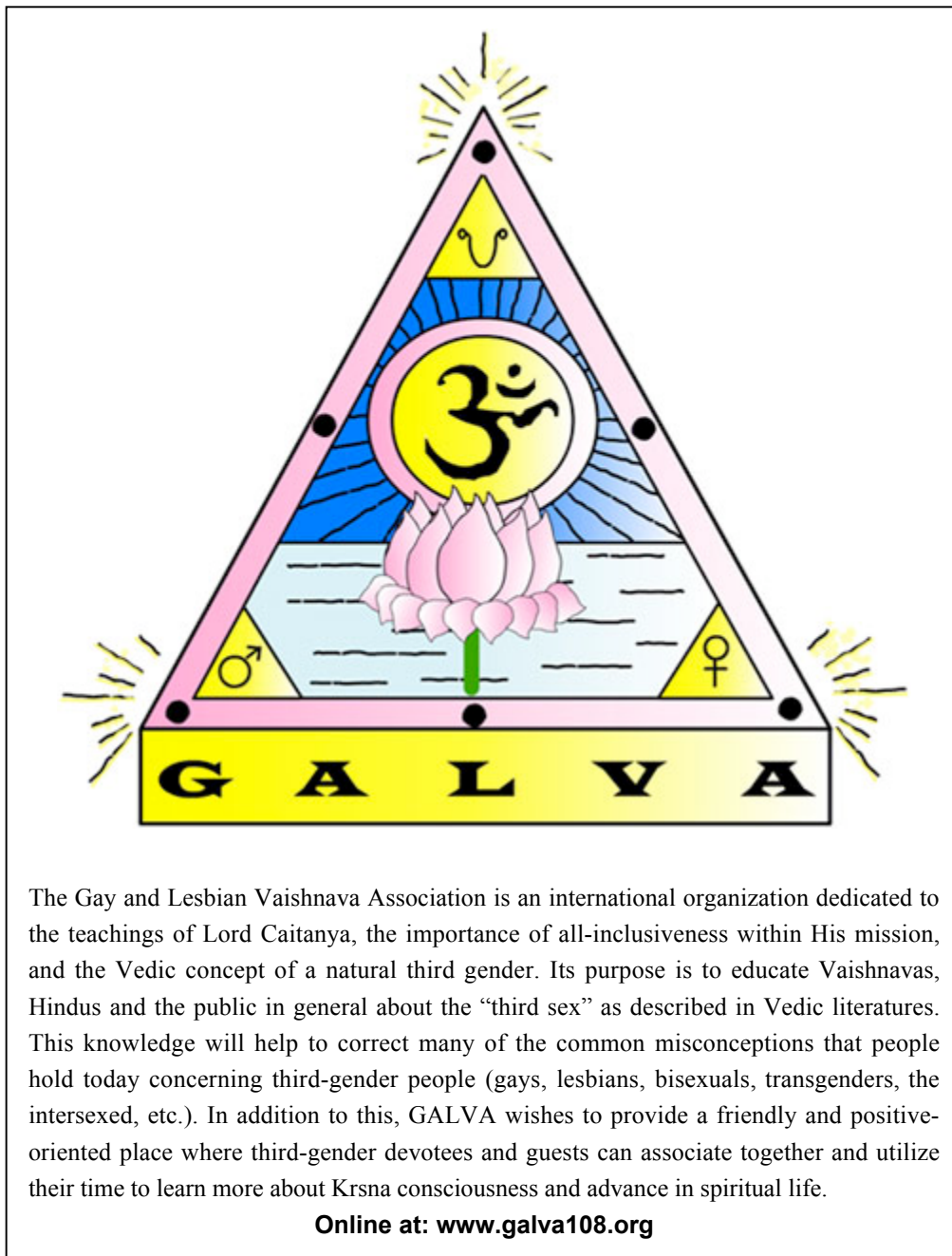
In the introduction to *The Cosmic Tribe Tarot*, Eric Ganter describes Postman’s images as “synthesized from a variety of cultural traditions... Stevee is less interested in the written strictures of a particular path, preferring to let the images, liberated from their cultural moorings, speak for themselves. In this way he draws on the treasure trove of the world’s images.”

Stevee Postman lives in Portland, Oregon.

His work can be seen on his website at: [www.stevee.com](http://www.stevee.com)







### From the Editor

At first glance, this issue may appear to be a departure from our previous offerings. William S. Burroughs has long been and continues to be, though somewhat softened by time, a controversial figure. His life and theories remain new and are still discovered by successive younger generations. To a large extent Burroughs is talked about but not discussed. He has become another larger than life pop icon—all be it one that retains the potential to be both edgy and disruptive.



Key quotes and his larger theoretical constructs are discussed in academic, literate and specialized circles. Few, however, actually peer beneath the hood and attempt to figure out the moving parts in his engine of genius. Even fewer have looked at his theories in a spiritual, or more appropriately a magical, context.

At the center of his work, especially from *The Wild Boys* forward, is a grappling with his reality of a magical universe populated by diverse gods and multiple zones beyond the control of the terrestrial material world.

Would it surprise one that Burroughs wrote often of drugs, control systems and communication? Probably not. Would it surprise the casual fan that he believed in a magical universe, felt affinity with the Egyptian notion of seven souls and was an initiated Chaos magician at the time of his death? Quite possibly.

Burroughs' later writing is infused with complex episodes and examinations of the magical universe, the importance of dream space, the travels of the soul after death and the power of magick. His characters conduct postmodern rituals from the wild boy tribes' unigenesis to his hard-boiled detective's occult investigative techniques.

Sometimes spiritual gnosis is a lambent flame warming the seeker with the careful time-honed glow of wisdom and sometimes spiritual metamorphosis is a blast furnace reducing the old to ash. Much of the work contained in this feature would fit the latter more than the former. Some may find portions of this material disturbing or offensive. There is currently a notion circulating in scientific research circles that high risk holds the potential for high gain. There are those who have reached the determination that the same holds true for experimental spirituality as well.

Prem, Sven



### About the Artist...

#### Toshi Nory

“I try to create and play with little cosmoses of color, that together form a recognizable image. It is not the image nor the accuracy of my way of drawing and painting that counts. It is through the colors and the meaning beyond the image itself that I express my view on the Cosmic Theatre, on the many manifestations and on the Mystery behind existence,” says artist Toshi



In 1980 Toshi became a disciple of the Indian Mystic Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh (later known as Osho). Since that day a well of creativity has kept on streaming to this day. He was given the name Dhyan Anutosho: “Total Contentment.” After a few years, Toshi was discovered by Gallery owner Danny Renders, at whose gallery he subsequently exhibited many times.

*I call myself a 'naive optimist,' a poet with colors, traveling from here to now. And yes, I regard the Universe as a big tapestry that keeps on growing, and I hope to add my own coloured thread. Searching for the real meaning of life has no use; you cannot find an answer. Life is one big creation and in we are in fact all artists...*

*I am a very impulsive painter, and rarely have a "plan" in my head about what I am gonna paint. Reading a book, listening to certain kinds of music, meeting someone who touches me both positively or negatively, deep meditation or a feeling of peace or turmoil, a sexual hint... these are all things that can make me paint. The painting process itself is what I want. If I think the result is good, then I am of course pleased, but to me that is not why I paint. The creation itself, the interaction with colors and the adventure of seeing something being born on paper or canvas.*





The main theme in almost all his work is his interest in esoteric philosophies, inspired by Eastern Masters in Rites, combined with erotic and Toshi's own symbolism that all leads to a new kind of painting called the Naive Optimism.

Toshi's work reflects his moods and emotional states. As he says himself, his paintings are a reflection of how he feels, how he thinks, lives and all the different stages his life has been through. "A poet with colors, traveling from here to there." To explore the Universe as a big tapestry, like a big pan of soup of which he himself is an ingredient and how he determines in a way how that soup will taste and how the tapestry will look.







David Byrne &amp; Baba Raul (OCM Archives)

### The Meaning of Ashé

*Baba Raul Canizares*

*In the beginning was Ashé. When Ashé began to think, Ashé became Olodumare. When Olodumare acted, He became Olofi, and it was Olofi who out of a part of himself created Obatalá.*

The concept of ashé is central to understanding right and wrong in Santería. Ashé—from the Yoruba *Asé*—is, like the Hindu term *dharma*, a dynamic and hard-to-define concept. While the word *ashé* has become part of the popular Cuban lexicon, meaning “luck” or “charisma,” its ontological meaning is much deeper, referring to a sense of order and balance in the universe. Ashé is the ultimate source of everything.

Santeros, or priests of Santería, view the universe—including God and the orishas—as being inhabited by codependent beings who have responsibilities to one another. These responsibilities, spelled out in such orally transmitted works as the oracle of Ifá, are all conducive to the attainment of order and balance. Imbalance (lack of ashé) is experienced by the individual as a dysfunctional emotional, physical, or economic





state. When a person experiences imbalance, he or she consults one of the oracles of Santeria to find out the cause of the imbalance and an appropriate remedy. This usually involves some sort of offering to the orishas or to ancestral spirits, as well as practical advice from the reader of the oracle—usually a santero or santera—on how to regain the lost balance.

Western bipolarities such as good and evil or God and Satan have little meaning in Santeria. For santeros, “evil” is a relative term; there are no absolutes. Evil, sin, and pain can all be defined as lack of ashé—imbalance. A “good” person by Western standards could conceivably fit Santeria’s definition of evil as one who causes imbalance. The following hypothetical case will demonstrate what I mean: A Roman Catholic priest in a small Latin American town cuts down a tree to which local santeros give offerings. The priest feels he is helping his neighbors by eliminating a temptation to practice idolatry, a mortal sin. The santeros, however, feel that the Catholic priest has caused a very serious imbalance. One santero consults an oracle, which indicates the Catholic priest will suffer the consequences of having caused this imbalance. That night, the priest suffers a heart attack and dies. Christians denounce the santeros as belonging to a satanic cult that used black magic to harm a saintly man.

From the Christian perspective, the Catholic priest could be defended for following the dictates of his faith. From the santeros’ perspective, however, the priest cut down a sacred entity and a repository of ashé; he thus committed an act of unprovoked aggression tantamount to murder. Santeros would view the priest’s death as indicative of his culpability. An argument from a Santeria perspective would be that the hypothetical priest’s problem was the faulty value system to which he subscribed—the “thou shalt nots” of the Judeo-Christian tradition. The rigid ethics of Western Christianity, a santero might argue, consist of an arbitrary set of rules imposed from the outside, rules that, because of their static nature, are irrelevant to specific situations. Santeros believe that a more realistic, naturalistic, and, yes, moral course of action is the one that is dictated by a person’s own ashé. Santeros believe that each person’s ashé internally inspires him or her to act harmoniously, in a manner congruent with the avoidance of imbalance. Imbalance is caused when a person has difficulty accessing his or her ashé. When they experience difficulties, believers try to learn how to regain access to their ashé. In these situations specialists such as babalaos are employed. Many times, a babalao, or member of the highest order of priest in Santeria, will contact a person’s *eledá*—personal orisha, or “guardian angel”—to ask him or her for help in restoring balance to the afflicted person.





sven davisson

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## Zimbu Xototl Time

*Phil Hine (paintings by Toshi)*



William S. Burroughs' 1969 novel *The Wild Boys* introduces several themes into the author's magical universe: the struggle to escape the mechanisms of social control; the search for transcendence of the biological trap of duality, and the narrator's ability to rewrite (and thereby destroy) his own past. *The Wild Boys*, subtitled "A book of the dead" has been described by some critics as a homosexual version of 'Peter Pan'. Set in an apocalyptic near-future, *The Wild Boys* contrasts the struggle between the remnants of civilization which exist in totalitarian enclaves and the wild boys - a revolutionary tribe of youths who exist in a utopian, instinctual state. The wild boys exist

outside of the conventions of civilization, free from the control mechanisms of religion, nation, family and 'normal' sexuality. A magical universe, where rigorous training in guerrilla tactics leads towards specialized biological mutations; where the total gratification of desire creates a magical technology of liberation.

The wild boys themselves live as a tribe - without leaders or hierarchy but with a shared group consciousness. Rather than being individual characters, they are a manifestation of all that is repressed in civilized society, in particular, the forces we know as Eros and Thanatos. In the novel, the wild boys periodically explode into orgies of wild, unstoppable violence or lust. Through the use of drugs and sex, the wild boys discover a magical technology of restoring the dead to life, and so free themselves from biological dependence on women, birth, and death. Lacking an individual sense of self, they can cross to and from the land of the dead and exist in a liminal state between the worlds. They are, within Burroughs' magical universe, a male-only version of the maenads, representing the chaotic power of instinctual desire when manifested in a living form. Also, they can be likened to the ancient Greek Pan, manifesting as the call to the wild, which reaches out to the susceptible. In *The Wild Boys*, the image of a smiling wild boy



becomes a hugely popular media icon which spreads the wild-boy virus across civilization, causing more and more youths to join the wild boys.

The wild boys are a utopian (perhaps dystopian) fantasy, but that is the whole point. As an articulation of Burroughs' need to escape the confines of modern culture, he has created a beachhead into an alternative dream. The wild boys present not only a homoerotic fantasy of immediate sexual gratification, but also the potentiality to be a space where new forms of 'otherness' might develop.

The theme of the wild boys has many echoes within modern culture. A possible source for their development may have been anthropological evidence of "wandering bands of male youths, surviving by petty theft. Scouted by the law, these bands would usually stay isolated, camping in forests and hiding from people." According to Walter L. Williams, author of *The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture* (Beacon Press, 1986), these all-male societies emerged in the Caribbean, on the fringes of Spanish-controlled territory. Another interesting source is described by Peter Lamborn Wilson, writing in the anthology *Choirs of the God: Revisioning Masculinity* (Mandala, 1991). Wilson describes a Nineteenth-Century Fijian youth-cult known as the Luve-ni-wai, or Children of the Water - the name referring to a faery-like folk who peopled the forests and waters, who wore their hair long in the traditional style and were said to be enchantingly handsome. "Boys claimed to have met these friendly sprites in the forest and to have learnt songs and dances from them." In order to join the movement, "a boy had to acquire his own personal guardian from among these forest creatures." What is even more interesting from the point of view of the wild boys is that as this movement grew, it became allied with a more politicized and anti-colonial pagan movement, the Tuka. The movement was eventually suppressed by the colonial authorities.

The wild boys also embody trends in modern culture that many find uncomfortable; in particular, the idea of youths escaping from social control and literally 'running riot', and anonymous sexuality. Anyone who has participated in the anonymous sex which takes place in the interstitial zones of cities - parks, alleyways, truck-stops, docklands, restrooms, etc., will recognize the group consciousness of the wild boys, where words are unnecessary and communication is based on eye contact, touch, smell; where desire is communal rather than private. Instincts and impulses are uncluttered by personalities. For Burroughs, the wild boys fucking in the ruins of civilization, represent a return to a primal state of being, what is referred to in Tantra as *Sahaja* - spontaneity - the 'natural' state of a human being who has achieved liberation from artificial limitations.





In his later works such as *Port of Saints*, *Cities of the Red Night*, and *The Place of Dead Roads* the wild boys continue their subversion by rewriting identity and history. In these works, Burroughs also returns to developing and articulating a magical technology based on sexuality in order to deconstruct social control mechanisms which prevent the evolution of the human artifact. In *Port of Saints*, the wild boys' mutation into specialized types - articulating particular magical powers or potencies is furthered:

*“Two karate boys. One fuck the other standing up. When he come let out KIAI shatter picture window and breaks a stack of bricks. ... The Shaman Boys do acts to make the enemy sneeze and laugh and hiccup. Two of them fuck standing up, begin to laugh and laugh, laughing out the spurts and the laugh jumps right inside you. ... The Seismic Boys fuck slow and heavy seventy tons to the square inch you can feel it build up under the earth's crust houses falling people running the boys scream and rumble and shake their hips as crevices open up in the ground. ... Two snake boys with receding foreheads and blue black eyes wearing fish-skin jock straps. ... The Siren Boys are white like a pearl shimmering softly with rippling lights.”*





Here, Burroughs is echoing the shamanic theme of gaining magical powers through identification with animals, and the wild boys are transformed from being an idealised 'tribe' of human youths to zoomorphic spirits. In *Port of Saints*, Burroughs also points out that in order to make contact with the wild boys, one must be able to achieve the appropriate state of mind:

*"Anyone who joins them must leave women behind. There is no vow. It is a state of mind you must have in order to make contact with the wild boys."*

This furthers the idea that the wild boys are something more than a tribe of humans, and from a magical perspective, the wild boys can be likened to the tantric Ganas - the wild hosts of chaotic, churning, demonic spirits who dwell in the cremation ground and who form the host of Shiva. The Ganas have been aptly described as "the hooligans of heaven." I have recently begun a series of magical experiments with the Ganas, in terms of them being hidden selves which, rather than being articulations of conscious desire (i.e. will) represent the unacknowledged, primal desire-forms latent in the psyche.

The general approach to acts of magical evocation (lit. 'to call forth') is that the practitioner predetermines the 'nature' of the entity to be evoked, and to varying degrees, it's appearance. The entity thus becomes a manifestation of a conscious desire, hence my description of such actions as 'desire-forms'. These desire-forms are then treated as distinct entities in order to effect some willed action, be it a specific result (i.e. meeting a suitable sexual partner) or assistance in the development of magical abilities (i.e. the development of prescience). In contrast to this, I propose that the wild boy theme offers the opportunity to take a different approach to evocation. Here, the wild boys can be viewed as a collection of spirits, and contact with them may (temporarily) manifest as the appearance or development of particular powers or siddhis (rather than creating individual 'zimbu' entities).

The preliminary phase of such a working would be to establish an astral/dream link with the liminal space inhabited by the wild boys. This could for example be based on one of the Burroughsian sequences from *The Wild Boys* or *Port of Saints*. Alternatively, one could use an appropriate wild-boy image in order to form an astral link. In entering the 'land' of the wild boys, the magician is echoing Burroughs' own attempts to write himself there - as does an anonymous (but presumably Burroughs) narrator in *The Wild Boys* and Audrey Carsons (an ur-character who represents a 'self' of Burroughs) in *Port of Saints*.

Rather than moving into this dreamscape with a pre-determined idea of what the particular wild boy one wishes to 'meet' should be like, the approach here is to let the



detail fill itself in, as it were. Indeed, the wide-eyed amazement of Audrey Carsons as he enters the camp of the wild boys as described in *Port of Saints* is a good model for the magician who wishes to form a relationship with the wild boys. Remember, there is no 'hierarchy' here. Whilst the wild boys of which Burroughs writes are concerned with the evolution of weapons and fighting technologies (reflecting his own interest in weapons), one might find that one's own associated wild boys have quite different concerns and purposes, and not what one might consciously expect them to be interested in.

In astral/dream excursions into wild boy territory, one should keep a record of all visions & other sensations which arise, and in particular, wild boy inspirations which break into one's waking life. I have found that, on successive visits into such spaces, different clusters of 'spirits' will hold the attention, if only fleetingly. I personally would resist the temptation to immediately 'bind' such desire-forms with sigils, names, and the like. With this kind of working, a different approach to dealing with spirits can be taken.

The wild boys exist in a world unmediated by the inner dialogue. This is particularly useful when we consider the development of prescience in its various forms, as this is very much the territory of instincts, intuitions, gut-feelings and dreams. Tuning into the telepathic gestalt of wild-boy consciousness may well facilitate the development of prescience. Also, Burroughs makes various references in his works to the effect that the wild boys use a picture-language (another recurring Burroughs interest).

Burrough's description of the wild boys' uninhibited sexuality is also interesting. Their sexuality is devoid of sentimentality & meaning; unhindered by either emotional values or a sense of transcendence.

*Zimbu Xolotl Time* is the wild boy festival where the different tribes gather to meet, exchange fighting techniques and indulge in communal orgies whereby zimbus are created. The festival has no fixed date or place - the boys converge there instinctively:

*"not know for sure until two weeks before time all boy stop fuck jack off he get there hot like fire"* Port of Saints

It would be too easy to make the 'conscious decision' to arrive in wild boy country at Zimbu Xolotl time on the first occasion. Rather, I feel, one should be 'drawn' there, until one has built up some degree of a gestalt with the wild boys, and instinctively 'knows' that the time is drawing near, and abstains from ejaculating accordingly (sexual stimulation without orgasm can actually enhance the ability to enter this type of liminal space). This is a deepening awareness of an impending magical time which exists apart from dates, clocks, calendars.

A variant on the wild boy scenario can be found in Storm Constantine's *Wraeththu* trilogy. The Wraeththu - androgynous beings mutated from human stock,



share some of the themes developed in *The Wild Boys*. They emerge from human society in breakdown and collapse, and form tribes which war against humans for possession of the landscape. They have magical powers which are directly related to their sexuality. Like the wild boys, the Wraeththu attract (and sometimes 'steal') human youths to them. The central character in the trilogy is Calanthe, a former homoerotically-inclined male who fled an intolerant human society and joined the Wraeththu. In the first novel of the trilogy, he subverts a beautiful human youth and takes him to a Wraeththu settlement, where he undergoes the ritual transmutation to become Wraeththu, and subsequently becomes Calanthe's lover. However, the Wraeththu are hermaphroditic, and as their culture develops, attain the ability to reproduce amongst themselves biologically. They are also fully self-conscious, though less plagued by self-doubt than humans. Constantine's Wraeththu are more civilized and less primal than Burrough's wild boys.

Like *The Wild Boys*, Constantine's *Wraeththu* trilogy has criticized on the grounds of displaying an apparent misogyny - women cannot become Wraeththu, and Wraeththu semen is poisonous to humans. The final volume of the trilogy reveals that whilst there is a parallel mutation - the Kamarg - into which women can be incepted, by doing so, they forfeit the ability to give birth in return for advanced psychic abilities. Moreover, whilst the Wraeththu possess an 'unearthly beauty' which partakes of both male and female characteristics, the Kamargian simply appear as women.

### References

**by William S. Burroughs...** *The Soft Machine* (1961), *The Wild Boys* (1969), *Port of Saints* (1973), *Cities of the Red Night* (1981), *The Place of Dead Roads* (1983).

**About William S. Burroughs...** *With William Burroughs: A Report from the Bunker*, V. Bockris, (Vermillion 1982); *Literary Outlaw*, Ted Morgan (Pimlico 1988); *El Hombre Invisible*, Barry Miles (Virgin 1992).

**The Wraeththu trilogy...** *The Enchantments of Flesh and Spirits*, *The Bewitchments of Love and Hate*, *The Fulfillments of Fate and Desire*.

**General...** *The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture*, Walter L. Williams (Beacon Press, 1986); *Choirs of the God: Revisioning Masculinity*, edited by John Matthews, (Mandala, 1991); "The Wraeththu Series and other grumbles," Alison Rowan, in *Bifrost* magazine, issue 28.



**PLAYBACK:****My Personal Experience of Chaos Magic with William S. Burroughs, Sr.***Cabell McLean***PART 1**

It was the summer of 1976, and after six long years of working my way through an undergraduate degree in a southern university, I knew I wouldn't make it through the additional year or two I needed to obtain my Master's degree down in the steamy south. I badly wanted a change of environment, and I thought the West would be the place to go. I finally decided on the University of Colorado at Boulder because they had a fairly good post graduate program. In addition, Naropa Institute, a local Buddhist retreat there, ran a School of Poetics that brought in many of the most gifted writers of the day to teach courses in creative writing. Among these was William S.

Burroughs, Sr., my personal all-time favorite Beat writer, who that year taught a course in screenwriting.

Naturally, I soon made the acquaintance of Bill, and we grew to like and respect each other to such a degree that by the end of the summer, I was invited to share rooms with him for the next year. During this time we developed a close personal relationship. That year he was working on the first of his famous *Red Night* Trilogy, *The Place of Dead Roads* (perhaps best described as a "science fiction cowboy story"). I was some small help with that effort, but most of my time was taken up learning directly from the master how to write, about his cut-up techniques, and doing various random/automatic writing experiments with him. These were without question the most exciting months of



my entire writing career, and opened new areas of interest for me that I have still not exhausted some twenty-five years later.

Socially, the scene was equally thrilling. I well remember the Fall and Christmas seasons that year, which were spent entertaining fans and celebrities who came to see the “Old Man.” Bill and I also traveled to New York City and I will never forget the constant stream of famous characters who regularly dropped by. I would prepare meals and entertainments in both Boulder and New York for these visitors, after which we would sit and drink until the small hours, while I listened in fascination to the many stories told by these now-historic figures.

Often our visitors would bring the most remarkable and bizarre gifts. I recall once we received priceless Civil War era cap and ball revolvers from an admirer who lived in the mountains outside Boulder. We actually used them in a bit of impromptu target practice on the man’s property during a visit there. Many guests would also bring various exotic drugs, as “Old Bill” had the reputation of being the junkie “godfather” for my generation. The most remarkable of these would have to have been a chunk of raw Thai black opium weighing about half a pound that we received from a fan who was a drug importer. He had never met Bill before, but treated him as a sort of godfather, deserving this gesture of respect.

Typically, Bill was quite nonchalant about this huge quantity of “O,” and he kept it casually in the very back of our freezer. Whenever he or I wanted some, we just chipped off a small one-gram hunk. We’d let it thaw until it was tacky enough to form a ball, then coat the ball with vegetable oil and swallow it. We enjoyed drinking Earl Grey tea afterward, which warmed the “O” further and helped to activate it. When we did this, we usually started feeling the effects within about 10-15 minutes.

Needless to say, at a gram or so per dose, this huge hunk of opium lasted us many months. Naturally, we kept it’s existence a strict secret within a very small circle of friends. Even so, it still managed to intrude upon our lives in an odd series of events that served to reveal a hidden force of what I can only call chaos magic, a force that Bill had described to me and others on numerous occasions, but one which I never thought I would witness first hand. That force was “PLAYBACK.”

## PART 2

During my time living with Bill in Colorado, I naturally made a number of other close friends from among the crowd at Naropa. One of these was a beautiful young woman named Poppy. When I first met her, Poppy was part of Gregory Corso’s entourage. Her





particular job was looking after Gregory's young son, and thereby hangs a tale. Apparently Gregory couldn't keep his hands off the boy's previous babysitters, so his wife (and I assume his several other girlfriends) decided to find someone who could keep him at arm's length successfully. Enter Poppy, who is supposed to be a "confirmed" lesbian, then living with another young lady. This fact, and Poppy's evident good natured disgust with Gregory's slovenly drunkenness, seemed to be enough to fend him off, and though he did continue trying, he never was successful with Poppy. Somehow this never pissed him off as it probably would have done with another woman. They managed to keep the peace between them, at least until I came along.

Poppy's dedication to Gregory was always a tenuous arrangement at best, and it finally started to deteriorate when Poppy left her previous girlfriend and became once more a free agent. For reasons I am still at a loss to explain, she started to take a serious interest in me, and not being a compete fool, I recognized my good fortune and reciprocated her attention. We became close friends and even occasional lovers, a fact that completely mystified the Naropa community. Quite a few people were spending an lot of time and effort trying to discover what was "really" going on between Bill, myself, and Poppy, and I have to admit to a bit of mischief when I let it be known that, I also had a boyfriend in Boulder and another in New York City! In fact, the Naropa gossips were driven to distraction by the strange relationships swirling around Bill, and we all had a lot of fun keeping them guessing. Ah, youth!

About twice or three times a week during that Winter and Spring, Poppy and I would spend the day together as a rule. For these outings, I would sometimes bring along a couple of grams of "O" already rolled into balls, oiled, and wrapped in foil. It was our habit to start the day at a small deli on the Boulder Mall. We would order two cups of Earl Grey tea, and before they would arrive, we'd open the tin foil wrapper and swallow our "O." We drank our tea until the drug started working, and then go on to the rest of our day. We made no secret of what we were doing, only taking the precaution of removing the tin foil when we left, just in case someone got inquisitive. The waiters all saw what we were doing, of course, but so many people there took nutritional supplements with breakfast that we never seemed to attract any interest. If things had remained that way, there never would have been any problem. But alas! This was not to be.

After several weeks, we began to feel so relaxed about this delightful morning ritual that we made a serious mistake: we began to stay longer and longer each time. Of course, this meant that we were slowly getting more and more intoxicated with the passage of time. "O" is like that. If you get up and move around, the effect wanes and



you seem fairly normal. However, if you sit in a nice warm place drinking tea, you can find yourself on the nod before you know it. In addition, we were only drinking tea, as “O” takes away your appetite, so we were occupying a table without providing much business, something sure to attract the attention of the owner. Of course, eventually the inevitable happened, and the next time we came in for tea, the owner pulled me aside for a little talk.

He went straight to the point. He knew we were getting high and he didn’t want it in his place. “I can’t have my customers subjected to this kind of thing,” he said. He wasn’t going to make a scene or call the cops (something I was deeply grateful for at the time!) but he would ask that I not come in today, and that I never bring drugs in here again. I could come back, but no drugs. I didn’t argue with him, again grateful that he wasn’t throwing us out entirely. He just didn’t want us to use his place to get high. I thought this was pretty realistic response, and generous, considering how the scene might have gone. I thanked him for his consideration and returned to Poppy, still standing at the door. I took her by the hand and told her I thought we should go elsewhere today.

We went to the mezzanine of the Boulderado Hotel, where the attitude toward drugs was considerably more enlightened and I knew we could take our opium in peace. Only when we were finally seated and had taken our doses and were drinking our tea did I explain what happened. I was somewhat amazed to find that she was totally pissed off about the incident. No amount of explaining would mollify her feelings. This was, of course, her nature; she was a fighter, and had come up hard in the street in Indianapolis, taken to the road at 14, the same age as I myself left home, and like myself she had fought all her short life for everything she had. But while I was simply glad to avoid trouble when it arose, she wasn’t about to let this or any other personal affront, pass without reply. However, I hoped that, with some time and a chance to talk things out, perhaps she would calm down. For that reason, I invited her back to my place later for dinner and drinks, telling her we could discuss the problem there with Bill. I felt sure that he would have a calming influence on her. Boy, was I wrong!

### PART 3

When we sat down to dinner and drinks that evening with Bill, I described what had happened in the deli that morning. I hoped that Bill, who had in the past always advised me to “take a broad general view of things,” would immediately see the futility and even injustice of any reprisal upon this shopkeeper, and would discourage Poppy from any reaction, if only to avoid trouble. Imagine my surprise, then, when he not only agreed



with Poppy that “something should be done,” but also had some suggestions for what that something should be! As I watched them gleefully plan retribution, I had visions of firebombs flying through plate glass storefront windows. But, of course, I should have known Bill had no such violence in mind. In fact, I now see that he was using the incident as a way to instruct us, in a relatively harmless way, in how to use a great and powerful tool. A clue came when I asked him what exactly he planned to use as a weapon. He answered, “You know, Cabell, sometimes the best weapon is *no weapon at all...*”

As Poppy and I pondered this cryptic statement, Bill described what he called “some early experiments” with a force called **PLAYBACK**. It seems that when Bill lived in London, he occasionally visited a certain bar there. Like the deli had done with us, this bar at first tolerated his presence for a time. But then a distinct change of attitude took place, and they started to treat him very shabbily. To strike back at their blatantly hateful attitude, he continued going to the bar for a few more days, enduring their abuse, while he tape recorded the sounds inside. Later, he would stand outside and film or photograph the premises from outside. Then he went back in and began to play the tape recordings at low or “subliminal” levels, and continued to take photographs on his way in and out of the place. This he did for several days. The effects were remarkable: accidents occurred, fights broke out, the place lost customers, the subsequent loss of income became irredeemable, and within a few weeks, the bar was permanently closed.

After Bill told us this story, I began to see where he was going. Poppy and I thought it would be great fun to try out the technique on the deli. But we did not want to close the place down! Only to try the method until we saw an effect, if any could be had, and then withdraw. Bill agreed this was the best course, and God bless him, I saw immediately that this was what he had intended all along: simply a way to educate us a bit in something he thought might be a valuable lesson for us.

The next day, after crawling out of bed and medicating ourselves for the brutal hangover we always had after drinking all night with Bill, Poppy and I still thought the idea was a good one. So we started thinking about exactly how we would proceed. By confining ourselves to only tape recordings and not including photography as part of the “assault,” we felt we could minimize any damage that might occur. Poppy also asked that Bill come along, and I was delighted to find him willing and even eager to do so. I must admit that I still had doubts that anything was really going to happen, so I was glad Bill would be there to insure that we did everything correctly. I needn’t have worried, though, as the procedure was simplicity itself.

We had waited a few days before we made our first sortie to the deli. In the interim, Poppy and I entered, had a meal at the counter nearest the kitchen, and made our



first recording of a little over one hour in length. The next day we came in for lunch and made another tape of about 45 minutes. During this last visit, I took the opportunity to speak to the owner again to reassure him that we would not be abusing his hospitality as we had done before. I felt it was important to normalize relations as best I could so that we would be guaranteed access when we attempted our experiment.

We now had sufficient tape time to start our initial run. We gathered up Bill that Sunday and went to the deli for breakfast about 10AM. We sat just about in the exact middle of the place, close to the kitchen and counter, and ordered coffee to start. Bill carried the small cassette tape player in his inside jacket pocket, and after we received the coffee and were deciding what to order, he turned on the first tape and began to play it at the very lowest volume. Over the next hour, he slowly raised the volume until we could just barely hear it, but only if we listened very hard. It blended admirably with the noise of the busy Sunday breakfast and brunch crowd. Even though the waiter came quite close to Bill on several occasions, he never seemed to detect the sound or differentiate it from the background noise of the place. I knew that Bill's utterly mid-western dead-pan composure naturally intimidated most people and would easily have served to deflect attention away from us should they have noticed anything, but they never did.

At first we didn't see anything unusual happening. We ate our meal, sipped our coffee, got refills and waited. Forty-five minutes passed and still nothing happened. I had just begun to think to myself that this playback stuff was pretty bogus when things finally started to happen. Initially, we heard a loud crash and the sound of broken crockery and a lot of loud voices arguing in a foreign language (Greek, as it turned out). Poppy was part Greek and could just make out the sense of the yelling: someone had dropped a full tray of food and drinks in the kitchen; apparently someone had come in the kitchen through the "out" door and smacked a waitress so hard she dropped everything. Loud arguments followed between the owner and the staff. We saw one of the waiters throw down his apron and stalk out with the owner following behind, yelling at him as he went down the street. Quite a scene, to say the least! I looked at Poppy and saw her eyes wide with surprise, just as mine were, I'm sure. This was all very dramatic and sudden, but more was to come.

The owner came back fuming, and started to scream at the waiters and waitresses, sending two of the girls running for the ladies room in tears. Then, the owner seemed to gain some small control and went to take care of the numerous customers now standing at the front and wishing to pay their bills and depart. Incredibly, within less than a minute, another violent argument broke out, this time between the owner and a customer.



Everyone in the place seemed to be going nuts! One of the waitresses was stopped by Poppy who asked her what was wrong, and all the poor girl could say was that the owner had suddenly gone crazy without the slightest warning. As she walked away with our check and payment (with a generous tip, to be sure!), Poppy and I looked over at Bill who was calmly smiling. He said, "I told you it would work! Now, aren't you glad we didn't take photos, too?"

I had to agree with him there! I could just imagine us crawling out of a glowing radioactive crater where the restaurant had once been, had we taken photos as well! Bill just chuckled to himself as we left. And at that point, the desire for revenge just no longer seemed important to either one of us. If anything, Poppy and I actually felt sorry for the poor schlemiel. And that's really what I think this lesson from Bill was all about: a sort of cautionary tale in which the lesson is: "be careful what you wish for!"

#### PART 4

**So What's Going On Here?** Well, I don't really know, but I suspect that a great deal of power is somehow unleashed by the act of recording negative events and their subsequent playback. Bill described the playback effect to me quite simply as "recording the target's own base shittiness, and then playing it back to him at subliminal levels." The effect is subtle but profound, cumulative with time, and tends to multiply or magnify the negative aspects of the target far beyond the target's ability to control. The shittier the target's acts are, the more pronounced the effect of playback upon the target. Unconscious effects are equally devastating and may last for some time. The primary feature of this method is that it is not immediately recognized as an attack, if it is recognized at all. Most of the time, the target isn't even aware he has been hit, and that's the best kind of weapon, isn't it? "No weapon at all..."

Photography appears to greatly heighten the effect when used in conjunction with sound recording/playback. Something about making the photographic record seems to emit a power all its own, and this has long been known and understood. We all have heard of the near-universal superstition that a photograph somehow "steals the soul?" In the modern age, there is without question a sinister aspect to photography. Simple examples follow: It is considered highly suspect for anyone to be photographing any military installation, whatever their reasons. Such an act inevitably brings the scrutiny of the police and security apparatus, especially these days. And, of course, the police themselves require anyone photographing the scene of a crime to have the proper credentials. The police seem to have a real fear and aversion to the free use of videotape



and photography, and, as we have seen many times on the news, they have good reason to feel this way! The Rodney King incident largely seems to me to be an example of how much power can be released by playback. There seems little question that something more than mere graphic recording is going on in the very act of photography. We all feel that power if we think about it deeply enough. Perhaps that power, then, is somehow focused by sound playback and possibly also by the ultimate intentions of the practitioner.


**Further Applications:** In terms of *bang for the buck*, there are few cheaper and more powerful means of response available to the common man. Obviously, playback can be used by anyone to disable even very complex systems of social control, if used intelligently. Recordings can be made first hand, if possible, or from the news media, or from any number of other sources. The potential is unlimited nowadays. Information is available everywhere. Even a very small group of people, working in unison, could make all sorts of change possible. Now, the reader must understand that I am certainly not so foolish as to recommend in a public forum that such a thing be done. I am merely informing you that the potential exists. The technology costs only the price of a tape recorder, a camera, and recording media, so the applications are just about universal. And playback leaves virtually no trace whatever, unless someone is expressly looking for such traces, and even then it is unlikely they will discover what happened, or believe it to be possible if they do discover it has happened. How could such an effect be prosecuted or legislated against? At present, it is not and could not be.

As a tool in the universal fight for the right to be left alone, the freedom to do as we please with our own bodies, and the effort to establish a world in which **M.O.B. [Mind (Your) Own Business]** is the primary watchword and way of life, it may well play some sort of role. All that is needed is the knowledge of how to achieve the effect, and this can easily be taught or described, just as I have described it here. If it is to play a role in the future, it will be a potential forever held, as it should be and must be, in the hands of the individual. As Bill would so delightfully put it: in the hands of the *Johnson men*, and NOT the *Shits* of this sorry sphere we called Earth. Playback is only one in a long list of such comforting tools available to those with truly open minds and imaginations, the usefulness and full extent of which have hardly been approached in the past. Remember this: If it can be recorded, it can be played back. We are limited only by our own imaginations.





**More Information:** Those wanting more information on this interesting phenomenon can find Bill's own description in the book *The Job* by **W. S. Burroughs, Sr. (Interviews with Daniel Odier)**, published in at least three editions in 1969, 1970, and 1974 by Grove Press. Other than that, there is **Konstantin Raudive's** *Voices From the Tapes*, and a few other seminal works exploring the fascinating effects of tape recording, but these are merely general guides in an area still largely unexplored by the scientific community. Perhaps this lack of scientific investigation will spur readers to research the subject for themselves and produce their own papers.



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## Magick and Photographs

*Douglas Grant*

The magical implications of photography first appeared with the introduction of modern man and his technology into the world of primitive man. To this day, when a camera is introduced into some primitive cultures, the natives immediately disperse for fear that their souls will be captured if they are photographed. This superstition within primitive cultures has roots in magical beliefs regarding shadows and reflections. Primitive man believed that his shadow or reflection contained a vital part of his being or soul.



In the early cultures of India, China, Arabia, Europe, Americas and Africa many people believed that if a person's shadow was struck, trampled upon, stabbed or detached from their person that they would be harmed or die. Many cultures believed that the reflection one would see in a pool of water or in a mirror was a shadow of the soul. This belief appears to be a possible origin of the superstition that breaking a mirror brings seven years of bad luck. Another belief, from ancient India and Greece, put forth that looking at one's reflection in the water would open one's self to the water spirits dragging their soul or reflection underwater to their ultimate death.

As with shadows and reflections, portraits or photographs were also believed to capture a portion of one's soul, leaving that person open to manipulation by the holder of the picture. The "evil eye of the box," as cameras have been referred to by some natives, still has many superstitious implications in today's society. Many people today have an innate aversion to having their photograph taken. This may be due to vanity or personal insecurity but I have a feeling that primitive instincts are at play here.

When taking a person's photograph you are capturing the person in one place in time, isolating it from the past and future. When others view the photograph, emotions



are evoked concerning the object's image. Whether the photograph presents a realistic view or not, a "reality tunnel" has been cast upon their psyche as to what the person may be or is like. A more modern example of this may be seen in the motion picture industry, where careers and riches are made on the basis of an actor's moving portraits. If you factor in the tendency of the world's mindless population to perceive the actor/actress' character as being an actual part of the actor/actress' real self or life, the potential for using photographic or film media as a means of magical manipulation becomes even more ripe for experimentation.

As a magician, my first thoughts on the relationship between photography and magick were enkindled after observing an artist's work with Polaroid pictures as well as work executed by William S. Burroughs in the early 1970's utilizing Polaroids and audio cassette tapes. Burroughs utilized Polaroid technology to cast a spell upon a coffee house that had wronged him. He theorized that by taking a Polaroid snapshot, the magician was taking the subject (be it person, place or thing) out of time and space. The person/place/thing was then more malleable to an act of sorceric enchantment. The Polaroid technique, rather than the typical avenue of taking a picture and having it developed opens more doors to manipulation, magically, as the subject can be affected as the image develops. The following is a simple outline to execute the techniques of Polaroid photography with magick.

- 1. Identify the target, e.g.: person, place or thing.
- 2. Prior to taking the Polaroid snapshot, create/construct a sigil imbedded with the intent of your desire. Put the sigil into graphic form.
- 3. Go to the place where the target is located and take the Polaroid snapshot.
- 4. Before the photo develops, draw your sigil on the photo with a dull pointed object such as a ballpoint pen cap. As the photo develops, your sigil will be imbedded into the object of your act of sorcery.
- 5. Charge the sigil photo in whatever manner works best for you.

As a magician, I have had many successes with this technique as well as utilizing a cigarette lighter or a match to effect the outcome of the photo. After taking a Polaroid snapshot, place a flame underneath an area or object you would like to have removed from a situation in a photo and overexpose it with the heat. As a sorcerous act of elimination the object is effectively removed from the photograph.

Though this technique may seem a bit simple for effective magick, it is my feeling that simple acts of sorcery work wonders. They are often overlooked due to the



techniques not being lofty enough for some of the more patronizing magicians. The trick for the magician is to overlook the ire of those strangled by their own intellect and utilize those techniques that have been tested and proven successful by reliable magicians.

Douglas Grant is a retired Section Head of the occult organization The International Pact of the Illuminates of Thanateros. Through a mutual interest in Hassan Ibn Sabbah, contact was made with William S. Burroughs. William expressed interest in the IOT and was subsequently initiated into the IOT, by myself and another Frater and Soror. William did not receive a honorary degree, he was put through an evening of ritual, that included a Retro Spell Casting Rite, a Invocation of Chaos, a Santeria Rite as well as the Neophyte Ritual inducting William into the IOT as a full member. Though it is not included in the list of items buried with William... James Grauerholz assured me that William was buried with his IOT Initiate ring.



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**BREAKING SEX!**

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*Lady Jaye Breyer P-Orridge*  
 3/23/03



(S/HE IS HER/E)

This is the final war, a jigsaw  
 A war to re-possess your SELF.  
 There is NO gender anymore  
 Only P-Androgeny is divine.  
 Sexuality is a force of nature that cannot  
 be contained. Get up.  
 Stand together in perfecting union,  
 Join and love equally the man and the  
 woman separated at b-earth inside you,  
 Their first cries for justice  
 ...PANDROGENY!  
 Re-united as one  
 Identity is your only possession,  
 as a being possessed  
 Re-possess your SELF,  
 Be possessed by YOUR self,  
 Any SELF, every SELF you ever  
 dreamed of,

Every SELF you were ever afraid of. GET UP!  
 Stop this war of limitations,  
 STOP IT!  
 Now YOU own yourself.  
 Your own YOU own.  
 Now it's YOU.  
 Stop being possessed by characters written by others.  
 Change your ID card cut it into the shape of a HEART.  
 Be heart felt.



Feel your heart,  
Your heart is your art.

Re build your SELF from the FOUND UP!

Identity is theft.  
(IDENTITY IS THEFT.)

NOTHING SHORT OF A TOTAL GENDER

These puppeteers of the NEW WAY ON,  
Download slave software into your brain  
Even as that wriggling , cocky, tyke breaches the cellular defences,  
Its resources stretched taught,  
Thinner than a condom on a monstrously seductive,  
Destructive cock.  
POP! POW! Snap! Suck!  
Snake of Eden rigid with victory  
Jissom of control victorious  
the arrows of sex penetrate egg central And, spiraling downwards, downs its load,  
The double bluff,  
Double helix story of those chosen to come before.  
Chosen, without choice,  
Not you. KNOT YOU!  
Knot this AND, this DNA,  
This STRAND, stran-dead,  
STRANDED  
Strand-DEAD on arrival,  
Slapped into shape by your DELIVERERS.  
A pre-recorded software,  
Worn down through ages with one purpose,  
To serve the rich, service their itch,  
Supply each demand.  
Obey each command.

(CHANGE THE WAY TO PERCEIVE AND CHANGE ALL MEMORY)





Struck dumb by its ELEGANCE says CRICK,  
 Elementary says Watson.  
 The double helix leaps from lab to life,  
 With YOU as the lab rat!  
 Whose elegance?  
 Whose elegance anyway?  
 Two spines, once twins, that go their separate ways after 49 days,  
 Yet... remain inseparably linked  
 The edit points, invisible.

AND/DNA there-in lies the problem and the lies begin.

In the beginning ALL were perfect. The first man was the first woman.  
 The first woman was the first man.  
 UNTIL the whispering began...  
 AND/DNA the first man became the first man  
 The first woman became the first woman  
 AND/DNA then all HELL let loose  
 AND/DNA we've been living (t)here ever SIN-ce  
 Know matter HOW sin-cerely...

(POSSESSION IS THE GREATER PART OF VALOUR)

You are vital.  
 You are vigorous. Get up.  
 Stop Hiding.

We are ultra-genetic terrorists.  
 One man is another man or woman.  
 EVERY MAN AND WOMAN IS A MAN AND WOMAN  
 There is a time and place for everything indecent.  
 Redesign yourself.  
 YOUR SELF.  
 End your social and sexual misery, taste the sweet electricity of PANDROGENY!



“This time around you can be anybody”

Put away your toys and focus.  
 WE ARE BUT ONE BITCH!  
 We declare war against all binary systems.

We support SELF-determination and liberation.  
 Total freedom for all possible and impossible identities  
 and sexualities.  
 DESTROY!  
 Destroy Gender.  
 Destroy the control of DNA and the expected.

Do you understand?  
 Here's the key.

You were in your mother's womb for forty-nine days an androgyne.  
 Who chose your gender?  
 GOD?  
 Society? Family?  
 Only by YOU ending this separation, Returning to that first pure state can real freedom  
 begin. When all are but one sex, one species.  
 This is not about becoming an Other,  
 This is about returning to a state of perfect union.

Masturbation is the highest form of magick  
 SO tap into the psychic network.

There is no free speech, ONLY an illusion of freedom.  
 Freedom of delusion ...

Perhaps GOD was breathless, allergic to cosmic dust.  
 Despite its three billion years HEAD start on us at this PERSON building, this character  
 building.  
 One KEY point is oft forgot. AND/DNA alone, on its OWN does NOTHING!!  
 NOTHING!



NOTHING!  
NO-THING!

It can't make eyes brown or green,  
or brains,  
or any other electrically charged "muscle" bulge!  
It can't sit up, or apply make-up,  
Or keep itself clean,  
Not even adjust a wig.  
PROTEINS do all that.

CREATIVITY is your anti-gender protein.  
Stripped of who YOU are, stripped of the creativity that IS character DNA/AND is  
helpless, speechless, dead on arrival again!

WITHOUT THE SCENE FORGET THE GENE

Society has always been an enemy of the desire to create,  
Of all possible creativity.  
What am I saying to you?  
Nature began as a deliberately chaotic force FOR change.  
Constant change.  
Evolution, evolving, unfolding.  
All those redundant species wither. Those embracing novelty leapfrog them to  
dominance...  
Maybe with a little inter-species cross (and loving) fertilisation along the way.  
Creativity is the most POWER-full energy in the Universe.

Why it's even endorsed by GOD in his book, Genesis, THE FIRST BOOK OF  
CREATION.

And its CREATION, that breathes LIFE into clay, And all we know, each weird and  
damaged last one of us, each child man woman lurking amongst you, raising their living  
voices to be heard outside, by others, by others BEING as they mill around in their biolo-  
illogical suits exploring mortality, sexuality, and linear time. It's all these marvellous  
characters constantly re-inventing you, that demand LIFE. All of them are vAlid, each



with their own agenda. Fulfilled, or frustrated according to the amount you listen to them and acknowledge them. They love to be alive. They have a right to be considered.

AND/DNA

REMAIN ALIVE!

Remain alive.

Never before has a generation, drowned in mortification, felt such a rage to live.

Needs satisfied by power in satisfaction of needs.

POWER satisfied by needs satiated by greeds.

Jolted, deafened by the racket of meaningless gestures we are built by parents, schools, corporations, pop media feedback loops, mimicking our idols, the fame whisperers, the para-medics of character. Culture, like a monstrous, relentless Cathedral Engine rolls us flat and colourless, grey as the granite gargoyles, the CEO of entertainment business. Forget not that once upon an androgenous time, CREATION was the act of DEITIES. A divine calling, with ART as its mirror in LIFE, an act of devotion leading us towards that wisdom that has no NAME, no gender. Don't speak to me of GOD and GODDESS. Words used by those in earthly control to render impotent and in conflict ANDROGENOUS PERFECTION, divine expression...FREEDOM to BE BEINGS!

Control those cathedrals of hell where adolescence repeats, shattering like bullets. Submission butchering youth's energy. Life cracks in every direction.

True needs discoverable by liberating ourselves from the constraints of dominant sexual stereotypes, genders, identities, roles that rock.

There will be revolution, there will be sex revolution with homosexual revolution.

Are you out is nothing.

To throw off the shackles of experience of true sexual freedom and physical love, free love! End gender. Break sex.

Smash your closet relationships.

Your closest friendships.



Cut your SELF up, break every pattern of behaviour,  
 Every taboo, every inhibition...  
 To see who you really are?  
 To see who's really there.  
 Free yourself from sex.  
 The more detached one is from a role, the easier it becomes to form.  
 IS IT YOU?  
 IS THIS CONSTRUCTED PERSON YOU?  
 DID YOU DESIGN YOUR SELF, YOUR CHARACTER?  
 WHOSE MOVIE IS THIS L-IF\_E YOU'RE IN?  
 WHO IS DIRECTING YOU?  
 THERE ARE MORE THAN ONE OF YOU, MAYBE HUNDREDS TO CHOOSE  
 FROM  
 They wound each other. Armed to the teeth, the enemy wants to fight on the terrain of  
 roles.  
 All roles alienate, are despicable. Behaviour conceals alien demands, permissible images  
 that glimmer through the logical screen.  
 Role over,  
 FIND YOUR "TWIN"  
 Roll over ROLE OVER, delusional time run out,  
 OUT YOUR SELF, build your DREAM CHARACTER  
 GENDER-LESS  
 GENDER – FREE  
 GENDER-QUEER  
 accept the magickal fuck,  
 NOTHING SHORT OF A TOTAL GENDER!  
 End a miserable corrupt existence.inherited conditioning from another species, maybe  
 another planet. Who fucking knows?  
 WHO FUCKING NO's!

Everyone is bisexual, is completely of natural sex.  
 The origin, the original, the PANDROGYNE  
 The PANDROGYNE the source of all possibles, the resolution of all conflict.  
 As above, so below. Even as I speak the Pope says, "GOD" is neither male nor female...  
 Dominant ideology neuters and controls us.



Unleash orgasmic energy in an era of primal release healing.

THEY GAVE ME DNA / AND TOLD ME THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO  
ABOUT IT.

ONLY ONE STORY, ONE MOVIE.

IN A WORLD DIVIDED IN TWO,

IN TOO A BINARY LANDSCAPE

DON QUIXOTE OF ANDROGENY

SEARCHING THE FRACTURED GARDEN FOR ALL THE PIECES OF THE  
JIGSAW PUZZLE

LOOKING AT THAT BIG PICTURE

LOOKING FOR YOUR OWN PICTURE

LOOK AT THAT PICTURE

LOOK AT THAT PICTURE IS IT PERSISTING?

THERE IS NO REASON ON EARTH WHY YOU SHOULD EVER RUN OUT OF  
PEOPLE TO BE,

TO BECOME,

TO BE WITH

BEING

BEING

PANDROGYNE

POSITIVE ANDROGENY

POWER ANDROGENY

POTENT ANDROGENY

PANDROGYNE

WILD

BEING

UNHOLY

CHOSEN ONE

UNIFIED

UNION

OF

BEING





BEING  
THE FIRST  
OF WHAT COMES NEXT  
NEXT  
NEW  
WAY ON  
OR  
OBLITERATION....



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*Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.*

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*Love is the law, love under will.*





“Lingam” Steve Postman

**Rev up your chain saw, Joan of Arc***Trebor Healey*

He was the ultimate badboy  
And he got me like Jesus  
I worshipped his darkness  
and I'm still testifyin today

He had black hair, black eyes  
he never shaved  
he was a junkie  
and a thief  
a runaway since 14  
His wrists were all torn up  
like razorblade runways  
takin' flight over the bruised outposts of his forearms  
mottled like molding bread  
He never stayed anywhere very long  
He got into trouble with his knifeblunt tongue  
he always told the truth  
when he revved up his chainsaw  
truth-sower

He felt he was stupid and fucked-up  
cuz he should be by now  
but he was clearer than the dharma  
and he psycho-stabbed the truth into people with a cake knife of  
clarity

He had a tattoo on his neck  
that looked like calligraphy  
like a blue knife had slashed  
away at his throat  
Like he'd asked some tattoo artist  
to slit him ear to ear



It made it hard to get a job cuz he hated hip cafes and clubs

He was an angry disrespectful bastard  
most of the time  
and he spoke the truth almost always  
He was a furious spinning wrathful deity of a dragon  
breathing harsh truth like fire  
he blistered my soul  
and I let myself burn  
I didn't want any of who I culturally was anyway  
He was a great tree surgeon of delusions  
and his voice was a chainsaw  
Chew me up baby  
I wanted a blood-letting

knife-cock chainsaw lover  
He called all my bluffs  
chopped me up like beef in a tacqueria  
trimmed me way back to the bone

Sometimes I wondered what I was doing in the bad neighborhood of his  
psyche  
And I'd think about all the nice boys I've met  
light and airy, everything's OK and I believe in happiness  
Nice bright sunny people  
with savings accounts and health insurance  
about as sharp as spoons  
Usually black as coal inside  
With big iron doors for ventricles  
and no trespassing signs posted along their pulmonary arteries  
relationships are their snake pits  
The kidneys where they keep you  
the infernal incinerator that keeps their happy light glowin  
lots of people die each year in their own excrement  
to keep them shining like chrome  
I didn't want any of who I culturally was anyway



He wasn't like that  
He looked like a blackhole  
he drew me in with his gravity  
He had no stop signs, no signals, no cops  
He scared the shit out of me  
but black holes are the lightest stars  
cuz their light never leaves em  
His heart was an inverted sun  
and once inside        there was no ozone between us  
A flashing prism of pain        igniting everything and everyone  
around us  
An internal combustion engine  
there was no danger when we burned  
we burned clean and blue  
He's got a full tank of gas  
And even if his 400 horses of power are crusted with anger and bile  
Inside that nasty grimy plastic shell  
there pumps the clean shiny well-oiled piston  
of a chainsaw motor  
Rev it up Joan of Arc  
I love to feel that chain move across my skin  
I love to feel your electricity arcing across  
my loneliness  
like a comet

He blinded me with the glare  
from his black obsidian eyes  
His heart was a lighthouse in the fogbound night of his body  
Blackness isn't evil  
Blackness is fear  
And I know avoiding it isn't virtue, it's loss  
So fuck that good and evil bullshit

Evil and cruelty are stupid graffiti tags  
America writes all over him



like he's the stinkin 22 Fillmore  
It's there way of claiming him  
stakin moral territory  
vandalizing him with their words and judgments  
Saying we're right  
and this reality is our territory  
your life included  
because we were here first  
pissing dogs, Conquistadores and Christians  
Half the pc blowjobs in this town  
hate themselves so much  
they turn into monkeygrinders for white trash opportunists from Hope,  
Arkansas faster than you can say  
Us and Them  
Rev up your fuckin chainsaw Joan  
Mow em down  
truth-sower

Yea he was my little Joan of Arc  
The kind of truth that just wont do  
visions and crazy voices  
that reek of upsetting everything and everybody  
Lots of cold stares  
from ladies in museums  
who didn't like him loving what they loved  
He reflected their glares back at them  
til their glasses fell off their noses  
and I knew it wasn't his evil they saw  
but their own  
He was a blessed canvas of truthpaint  
too goodlooking though for them to ever believe he was a mirror  
In a lot of ways he never had a chance  
and what irked me was people felt obligated  
to be consistent with his past  
so they never gave him one  
the blind, pessimistic bastards





He'd make a great museum piece someday  
and they could appreciate him like Van Gogh and Christ and  
everyone else who got treated like shit while they were alive  
pumping out beauty like gasoline  
and people spittin in their station john

His days were flames that licked  
his bloody gash of wounded faggot child gasoline  
He was a blessed menstruating vagina  
and he got treated with the same undeserved disrespect  
he was the boy raised by wolves

He ennobled heroin and suicide and badtempered tirades  
not because it was hipcity romantic which it is  
and lots of stupid people feed on that bullshit  
No, not that way  
He ennobled it because it was who he fucking was  
and he was Mary Magdalene  
No one had more integrity than his truth-fixed mind  
He shot it up like junk

He dignified the greasy streets of the mission  
like the Sisters of Charity  
I called him my little sister of Disparity  
He upset everything and everybody  
like Christ in the temple and the moneychangers  
sweet little saint of the street  
People didn't want his love  
they wanted other parts of him  
and he could see that clearer than Elijah in the fog  
and he'd tell them to fuck straight off  
and I admired him for it

Not because I hated their need to lie  
but because he was doin the same to me

throwin birdseed and life-giving firebrands  
We're like those pinecones that only open in the flames  
the fruit trees that need pruning  
And he was doin it for free  
Rev up your chainsaw Joan of Arc  
Burn all the forests down

He's all the anger I got locked up inside  
He's my sweet fire hydrant  
I'm an underground river unknown

When we come together  
there's sexmagic  
It wasn't just the same old tired queer thing  
of fucking like crazy 20x a week  
We willed changes with our bodies  
we were going somewhere together  
orgasm was just a fastfood joint on the highway  
and we weren't stoppin there  
We were both dead serious                      and speeding

People pulled off the side of the road when they saw him coming  
Everyone thought he was a demon  
little kids said he looked like Satan  
I know he's my blessed dark angel  
and I hate the way this world hates him  
and how he hates himself  
He hates being a man  
because his father's one  
and his father is one fucking bastard  
He used to make him strip as a little boy  
and he would tickle him while berating how  
sickly his body was  
how he should have been a girl  
Look at you! Look at you!                      echoes through the caverns of his  
loss



His father beat him nearly to death when he was two  
for falling onto the Christmas tree  
and then locked him in a room for 4 hours

He's ashamed to be a part of this warped culture  
that breaths through men like that  
a fucking college professor  
whose just a sperm donor  
as far as he's concerned  
With those sorry ass habits of resurrecting German myths  
around a solstice they have know fucking consciousness of  
The kid was winter man  
what could be darker  
He should've been deified in the dead of nightseason  
A blessed tuber  
a black ember  
He was just the black death to them  
He tried to push his father off the roof once  
and hasn't seen him since  
His grandfather sexually molested his sister  
who was the butchest dyke ever period  
and she had a chainsaw of her own  
She tried to cut his dick off with a pair of scissors  
when he was just a baby  
He still has scars

His mother was a Sicilian-American Class-A screaming bitch  
who used to just rip up their house  
broken windows, plates, speaking in tongues  
She was a middle-class tramp  
who went out to singles bars in East Buffalo between husbands  
She was disgusted with him being a flaming teen faggot  
And he told her once  
the reason she hated him being queer so much  
was because he was gettin more dick than she was  
It was the truest thing he ever said to her and one of the last



And he's got a 4-inch scar on his arm  
he got when she attacked him with a spatula  
to prove it

She threw him out like she threw out her four husbands  
and she called the police whenever his fourteen years of pain came  
around  
Ungrateful kid  
she always tells him she thought he was dead by now  
when he calls

And I half-fear the same when a few months go by  
without his wail and his cry  
without that fine revving sound

He broke apart our thing together  
like a hatchet in a melon  
clean and uncomplicated  
we're OK apart  
and I knew it would come  
but we had a form together  
that grows  
I miss him  
and I wake up in the middle of the night  
wondering about fire                      and Saint Joan



**Over the Hills and Far Away**  
**The One God Universe and Dreams of Space**

*Sven Davisson (paintings by Toshi)*



A critical analysis of control and control structures rests at the core of William S. Burroughs writing from *Naked Lunch* to the channeled voice of the cut-up experiments to the wondering thoughts captured in his final journals. Burroughs associates Control, (the capital his) with a process of imprinting objectives onto an unsuspecting general population. Burroughs artfully illustrated the ways in which culture and the media are utilized to produce a crisis of contradiction in the viewer that acts to reinforce a position of safety.

Within his work, Burroughs outlines the objectives he perceived underlying Control's plan and exposes the ways in which Control reinforces the

concept of the One God Universe (OGU) as a reality of contradiction that negates the dreaming subject. Burroughs argues that under the guise of the OGU, secular Control attempts to eradicate free thought by producing a world that is nonmagical, lacking both dreams and multiple gods. Burroughs theorizes that a universe predicated on a myth of multiple gods is necessary for one to dream. What is at stake in Control's attempts at maintaining a static OGU is a monopoly on Space, or immortality. Burroughs asserts that humanity is moving toward its own annihilation—both due to the implementation of the OGU and problems inherent in humanity itself as a species. Since Burroughs views the human condition as biologic dead end, the only choice humans have is to mutate or become extinct.

Burroughs argues Control masks itself behind the façade of the OGU, since, as he says, "all control systems claim to reflect the immutable laws of the universe." (Burroughs



1974, 43) The universe of the One God is a world of absolute control and “rationality.” The OGU is created in opposition to what Burroughs views as a magical universe consisting of many gods and a privileging of the dream space. Burroughs proposes that the objectives of the OGU are the destruction of the magical universe through the destruction of humans as a dreaming subject. Burroughs writes that the OGU “is controlled predictable, dead.”(Burroughs 1987, 59) For Burroughs, the OGU is a world of absolutes, where no one is allowed to be free to think for him/herself. Such a universe ensures its power through the destruction of critical communities, achieved by the processes of constructed contradiction and determined “safety.” In a system such as this, free or critical thoughts pose a substantial threat to the stability of the Control systems. Burroughs writes in *The Western Lands*:

So the One God, backed by secular power, is forced on the masses in the name of Islam, Christianity, the state, for all secular leaders want to be the One. To be intelligent or observant under such a blanket of oppression is to be ‘subversive.’(Burroughs 1987, 111)

The motivation behind the OGU, then, must be the eradication of intelligence and free thought. The immediate objectives of Control, as manifested under the guise of the OGU, are, for Burroughs, the destruction of magic, as characterized in a mythic component to human existence, and the cutting off of dream space. Through these secondary objectives, Control seeks to ensure its primary goal of maintaining a monopoly over Space, variously characterized in Burroughs’ work as immortality and evolution.

The world Burroughs presents in his writing is one filled with myth, magic and dream experience. The mythic components of Burroughs’ writing can be read as an expansion of his personal cosmology of a subversive magical universe within a world under the control of the One God. He states, “The most basic concept of my writing is a belief in the magical universe, a universe of many gods, often in conflict. The paradox of an all-powerful, all-seeing God who nonetheless allows suffering, evil and death, does not arise.”(Burroughs 1991, 266) Burroughs here is not merely resurrecting archaic forms of human religion—myths such as utopian matriarchies or primal androgyny. He is, instead, positing a cosmology, where mutation is a necessary corollary to existence that is in direct opposition to the OGU and the objectives of Control. If Control’s manipulative power rests on a world of contradiction, then the OGU is the only acceptable cosmology. A magical universe, as Burroughs discusses, is a world without contradictions, since all seemingly inherent contradictions can be ascribed to the





contendings of diverse gods, each with their own objectives and agendas. Burroughs perceives safety as an artificial construction on Control that cannot exist in a universe without a Supreme Being.

Burroughs, like his character Joe the Dead in *The Western Lands*, is engaged in a “desperate struggle” to alter the outcome of Control’s deployments. His fiction is an attempt to track down “the Venusian agents of a conspiracy with very definite M.O. and objectives,” i.e. Control. Joe understands these objectives to be the propagation of an “antimagical, authoritarian, dogmatic” universe. Control, therefore, is the “deadly enemy of those who are committed to the magical universe, spontaneous, unpredictable, alive.”(Burroughs 1987, 53)

Burroughs views dreams as one of the most important components of human existence. Free thought cannot exist without them and, therefore, Control attempts to destroy the dreaming self through the imposition of the OGU. Burroughs describes dreams as a “biologic necessity.”(Burroughs 1987, 181) Dreams are the only things that humans possess which are outside of the sphere of Control’s influence. Being spontaneous and unpredictable, they are contrary to its dogmatic objectives. When one is free to dream, Control’s power cannot be absolute:

These magical visions are totally devoid of ordinary human emotion and experience. There is no friendship, love, hostility, fear or hate. There are no rules, no series of steps by which one can see. Consequently such visions are the enemy of any dogmatic system.(Burroughs 1987, 241)

Dreams remove one from the conscious assumption of the forces that seek to define and confine one. Existing outside of Control’s direct conditioning, dreams can produce random constructions that have the potential to work to undermine Control’s influence over the reactive mind. Dogmatic paradigms must, therefore, alienate people’s connection to their dreams since as Burroughs argues:

Any dogma must postulate the way, certain steps that will lead to the salvation, which the dogma promises. The Christian Heaven or pearly gates and singing angels, the Moslem paradise of eternal whores and plenty of water, the Communists’ heaven of the worker state. Otherwise there is no place for the hierarchical structure that mediates between dogma and man, that dictates *the way*.(Burroughs 1987, 242)



Dreams provide a space where random options and alternatives can arise, and this possibility represents a threatening field of uncertainty for Control. In Burroughs' fiction, Control's very survival is based on its ability to establish and re-present *the way*. Thus a world with multiple ways of seeing is one where Control cannot long retain power.

The importance of the mythic, magical universe, as manifested in dreams and multiple deities, is central to Burroughs' work. As cited above, Burroughs regularly casts this as a basic premise underlying his theories. For Burroughs, humanity, dreams and the magical (multi-god) universe are fundamentally connected. In *The Western Lands*, he writes, "You need your dreams, they are a biologic necessity and your lifeline to space, that is, to the state of God. To be one of the Shining Ones. The inference is that Gods are a biologic necessity. They are an integral part of Man." (Burroughs 1987, 181) Control prevails when dreams are policed, since dreams allow one to project a future which is intrinsically different from one's present condition. Burroughs argues that the lack of dreams, or the alienation of the dreaming subject, works to contain one in a mode of stasis where future projection and creative thought are impossible. Control's ultimate objective, produced through the elimination of dreams, is the continuation of its monopoly on space.

Space is a central metaphor within Burroughs' work, which he uses as a signifier of all that is at stake in the resistance struggle against Control. Burroughs argues that in order to progress, humans must make the jump into space—a jump he sees as characterized by a movement outside of the confines of the body. Space for Burroughs, is a goal that requires a basic mutation of human life. He sees dreams as representing our connection to a fantasy of space. Control in its attempts to destroy human's capacity to dream through the construction of the OGU, is, then for Burroughs, manifesting Control's need to keep all thoughts of space, and thereby evolution, out of the minds of the populace.

Dreams on their deepest levels are projections of a future. Burroughs argues that "the function of dreams is to train the being for future conditions." Burroughs sees this "future condition" as space, or a future in space. "The human artifact is biologically designed for space travel," he writes. (Burroughs 1985, 136) Throughout Burroughs' work, he quotes his friend Brions Gysin's mantra, "We are here to go" along with his corollary phrase "Over the hills and far away." These maxims establish their opinion that a movement into space is necessary for human survival. Burroughs writes in the introduction to *The Place of Dead Roads*:



The only thing that could unite the planet is a unified space program [...] the earth becomes a space station and war is simply *out*, irrelevant, flatly insane in context of research centers, spaceports, and the exhilaration of working with people you like and respect toward an agreed-upon objective, an objective from which all workers will gain. Happiness is a byproduct of function. The planetary space station will give all participants an opportunity to function.(Burroughs 1983, iv)

Burroughs thus hypothesizes space, both the physical movement into space and the mutational step away from the body that he argues this implies, as the answer to human problems of happiness and survival. Indeed, he argues, it may well be the *only* answer possible.

For Burroughs, space provides a motivating force, a unifying goal, which is contradictory to the divisive objectives of Control. In his essay “Immortality,” he writes, “Space exploration is the only goal worth striving for.”(Burroughs 1985, 134) The exploration of space represents, in Burroughs’ opinion, a goal that has the potential of unifying people in a way that excludes the current divides that characterize society. In his last interview, Gysin suggested that “the future is fairly predictable from a historical point of view, and it all points toward ecological, military, political, psychic ruin.” Like Burroughs, he suggested that “from this planet, somebody, some people are going to try to escape.”(Gysin 1982, 115)

Burroughs sees that the fundamental human drive is for immortality and he proposes that space is the means of obtaining immortality. Burroughs began the writing he termed his mythology of the Space Age with the material that became *The Wild Boys* and *The Port of Saints*. In a 1972 interview with Robert Palmer in *Rolling Stone*, Burroughs stated, “The future of writing is to see how close you can come to making it happen.” (Palmer 1972, 53) Like his namesake William Seward Hall in *The Western Lands*, Burroughs is attempting in his fiction “to write his way out of death.” (Burroughs 1987, 3) This process is the attempt at creating a modern mythology suited for humanity at the brink of the mutational breaking point. Burroughs holds the theory that the process of writing actually creates something real. This is expressed in his use of the Arabic work “mekhtub,” meaning “it is written,” a word traditionally used to seal magical spells to insure their success. This word embodies Burroughs’ belief that writing has the power to create, alter or transform actual events.



Burroughs texts then work at two levels. As signified by the word “mektoub” as a magical seal, his work reflects his understanding of the process of writing where the act is itself an evocation of future events. On another level, his texts work themselves as frontal assault on present conditions. His words are as potent a weapon as those wielded by the wild boy tribes in the book of the same name. The work of creating a mythology for the space age, represents, for Burroughs, the actual attempt at creating a new reality. In this manner Burroughs sets himself in opposition to the forces of Control, that seek to keep careful check on any possible movement into space. Burroughs argues that Control does this through its program of dream destruction as presented in the OGU film. Control is therefore an absolute enemy, which stands in the way of the realization of free people. Burroughs writes, “You will know your enemies by those who attempt to block you path. Vampiric monopolists would keep you in time like their cattle.” (Burroughs 1985, 134) Control is a force that acts contrary to human evolution, blocking the means of moving beyond present human conditions.

Burroughs cites studies that have shown that a person deprived of REM, dream sleep, will eventually die as a result of the deprivation. (Burroughs 1985, 135) It follows then that the policies of Control, the destruction of dreams and magic, can be seen as nothing other than genocidal. The current situation which Burroughs terms “control madness” is the implementation of a policy of human extinction. In *The Western Lands* Burroughs compares his theory of Control to George Orwell’s image of Big Brother:

The program of the ruling elite in Orwell’s *1984* was: ‘A foot stamping on a human face forever!’ This is naïve and optimistic. No species could survive for even a generation under such a program. This is not a program of eternal, or even long-range dominance. It is clearly an *extermination program*. (Burroughs 1987, 59)

Burroughs is not optimistic about the outcome for humanity if we remain at our present stage of development. He views the world as a prison, one created by Control, for the purposes of its own preservation. Its means of survival, however, is like a cancer cell whose will to live ultimately results in the death of the host, humanity. Later in *The Western Lands*, Burroughs writes, “The door closes behind you, and you begin to know where you are. This planet is a Death Camp. . . the Second and Final Death.” (Burroughs 1987, 254) This second death is “soul death,” which begins with the destruction of humanity’s capacity to dream.



For Burroughs, however, this movement toward extinction is not simply a product of Control. It is also a situation that has been the logical outcome of factors endemic to the human condition since its inception. “Thoughtful citizens are asking themselves if the whole human race wasn’t a mistake from the starting gate,” Burroughs wonders. (Burroughs 1985, 124) Burroughs’ texts have often been attacked for being misogynistic. He himself stated in *The Job* that he felt that women “were a basic error, and the whole dualistic universe evolved from this error.” (Burroughs 1974, 116) In the decade following this problematic statement, Burroughs’ position on women softened—or, more appropriately, his position on humanity in general hardened. In “Women: A Biological Mistake?” Burroughs writes, “Women may well be a biological mistake; I said so in *The Job*. But so is almost everything else I see around here.” (Burroughs 1985 p.124)

Burroughs asserts that the causes of our extinction as a race have been with us since the beginning. He argues that the virus of our destruction has always been an endemic element of being human—“we are all tainted with viral origins.” In *Cities of the Red Night*, the virologist Dr. Peterson maintains that “the whole quality of human consciousness, as expressed in male and female, is basically a viral mechanism.”(Burroughs 1981, 25) Burroughs often writes that we carry our own death with us; Dr. Peterson further suggests that humans, as a species, carry their own extinction with them. This extinction is based on a world of humans trapped in a state of binary existence. Burroughs wonders if “the separation of the sexes” isn’t “an arbitrary device to perpetuate an unworkable arrangement.”(Burroughs 1985, 126) Burroughs theorist Robin Lydenberg writes that Burroughs sees “the only possible relationship between two sexes defined in binary opposition to each other is one of conflict.”(Lydenberg 1987, 162) For Burroughs this arena of perpetual conflict, enacted through and on the zone of the body, is one of the largest elements that stands between humanity and the potential to mutate into something with even half a chance of survival.

Burroughs suggests that these divisions have trapped humans in a state of neotany, arrested evolutionary development. He states that “I am advancing the theory that we were not designed to remain in our present state, any more than a tadpole is designed to remain a tadpole forever.” (Burroughs 1985, 125) Elsewhere he writes that “it is inconceivable that Homo sapiens could last another thousand years in present form.” (Burroughs 1987, 223) What he suggests is an evolutionary step away from binarism, which entails a movement out of the body itself. Dreams are the connection between humans and this mutational step, since they are, in Burroughs words, the “lifeline to space.” Burroughs views this movement to space a requiring a leap in evolution, since the body cannot exist in space.



In *The Place of Dead Roads*, Burroughs' spokesman Kim Carsons points out that the body's weight is inappropriate for space travel. (Burroughs 1983, 41) In his interview with Jorgen Ploog, Burroughs refers to studies that have shown that a body in weightless environment quickly loses its skeletal structure. He faults both modern immortality experiments and space exploration procedures for attempting to continue the body beyond its usefulness. Modern research meant to prolong life is centered on the replacement of body parts, which Burroughs sees as creating a world of tenuous immortality for the rich and rotting death for the poor. Those who can afford parts receive a new heart in a week, while "the poor wait in part lines for diseased genitals, cancerous lungs, a cirrhotic liver." (Burroughs 1985, 128) For Burroughs, immortality experiments along these lines are guaranteed to fail, since they don't address the problem of death itself. Instead they treat the symptoms of death as expressed in atrophy, cell death and decay. Death is a condition of having a body, as Gysin observes in *The Last Museum*, "When we are born, we start to die." (Gysin 1986, 181)

On the other hand, Burroughs sees that the modern space program is inherently flawed, since it is premised on the objective of carrying present human bodies into space. "The space program is simply an attempt to transport our insoluble temporal impasses somewhere else." (Burroughs 1985, 126) Burroughs likens modern space exploration to a fish attempting to bring an aquarium with him in his adjustment to land. "You need entirely too much," Kim argues. "To begin with there is the question of weight. A raw H.A. [human artifact] weighs around 170 pounds. This breathing, eating, excreting, sleeping, dreaming H.A. must have an entire environment essential to accommodate its awkward life processes encapsulated and transported with it." (Burroughs 1983) Burroughs believes that all these methods are destined to fail, as the body itself is a viral host and these solutions do not cure the human virus. He argues that ultimately "a problem cannot be solved in terms of itself. The human problem cannot be solved in human terms." (Burroughs 1987, 23)

Despite the pessimism above, Burroughs' position is not nihilistic. In *The Western Lands* he writes, "The human condition is hopeless once you submit to it by being born... *almost*. There is one chance in a million and that is still good biologic odds." (Burroughs 1987, 299) This "almost" is a very important almost for Burroughs, since it contains his hope that the present state of human affairs can be transcended or moved beyond. For Burroughs, the chance may be slim in human standards, but these standards, most importantly characterized by the relational construct of time, become entirely relative when one is discussing issues in biologic/evolutionary terms. Again in *The Western Lands*, he speaks of the Death Camp, that is Earth, as "the last game."



(Burroughs 1987, 254) Burroughs thus argues that humanity may be in the last stages of its own annihilation, but he does not see this process as completely inevitable.

Burroughs' texts are his attempts to create a new mythology formulated to assist humanity in thinking in the terms that will be required for its continuation. His writing is in a sense both a glimpse of hope and an austere warning of impending annihilation. In *The Western Lands*, he discusses a picture "of a balloon suddenly and unexpectedly soaring and some people still holding the ropes." Most of these people, he writes, "didn't have the survival IQ to *let go in time*." Seconds later it's too late—the distance to the ground having become too great. Burroughs points out that they did not heed the "basic survival lesson" of letting go "when your Guardian tells you to let go." He continues by posing a question to the reader:

Suppose you were holding one of those ropes? Would you have let go in time, which is, of course, at the first upward yank? I'll tell you something interesting. You would have a much better chance to let go in time now that you have read his paragraph than if you hadn't read it. Writing, if it is anything, is a word of warning... LET GO! (Burroughs 1987, 213)

The above quote demonstrates that Burroughs does hold out some hope for humanity. His fiction is an artful word of warning. His message: "Let Go!" Throughout his work, Burroughs tells his readers to let go of that which traps them, outmoded forms of human existence, and move into the as yet unknown.

The mutational escape Burroughs proposes is intrinsically connected to sex. "This is the space age," he writes in *The Wild Boys*, "And sex movies must express the longing to escape from flesh through sex. The way out is the way through." (Burroughs 1992, 82) For Burroughs, sex, male homosexual sex in particular, becomes the means of beginning the break with Control. While engaged in sexual acts, one of the wild boys envisions himself as a celestial body. "I see myself streaking across the sky line a star to leave the earth forever. What holds me back? It is the bargain by which I am here at all. The bargain is this body that holds me here." (Burroughs 1992, 102) Space is again depicted as requiring a move away from the body, a vision which begins in sexual machinations.

For Burroughs the body itself forms the greatest obstacle to human evolution. Burroughs' principle criticism of Egyptian immortality experiments is that they included a reliance on the corpse, the mummy, for one's survival in the afterlife. The human flesh



is regularly characterized as a prison within his writing. When asked if a person could be truly free in the modern world, he answered “that free men don’t exist on this planet at this time, because they don’t exist in human bodies, by the mere fact of being in a human body you’re controlled by all sorts of biologic and environmental necessities.” (Burroughs 1974, 37)



In Burroughs’ work, the moment of homosexual union represents the beginnings of a new imagining. In *The Place of Dead Roads*, he writes, “Sex forms the matrix of a dualistic and therefore solid and real universe. It is possible to resolve the dualistic conflict in a sex act, where dualism need not exist.” (Burroughs 1983, 172) Thus, male same-sex desire represents the means of reaching a state beyond binary existence—a state where biologic mutation is conceivable. It stands in direct opposition to the sexual and cultural imperatives enforced by Control. Simply put, it is ill-defined territory.

The sex in Burroughs’ fiction, especially as exhibited in *The Wild Boys* and *Port of Saints*, is the sex of young males—who are beginning the processes of sexual identity construction. When he speaks of the desire to “escape from flesh through sex” and the shift in “sex movies” that this entails, he follows with an example. Johnny and Mark are





wild boy agents who “become astronauts playing the part of American married idiots,” i.e. the traditional middle American, heterosexual, married couple. They remain thus until months after take-off, at which point they disconnect radio contact with Earth. At this point, Burroughs describes how “the sex scenes of their adolescence are seen as image dust in space through which they pass to other planets.” (Burroughs 1992, 82-3) This routine, as Burroughs called his fictional sequences, then shatters with the images of their sexual memories lifted from their 1920’s childhoods. “Lawn sprinklers,” “classrooms,” “frogs in 1920 roads” and “a naked boy hugging his knees sunlight in pubic hairs” are all resurrected in the explosion of space sexuality. Burroughs appears to view the personal sexual mememic landscape as a film written in early adolescence. This “sex film” then becomes in space, and his texts, a catalog of individual metaphor. Within his work, sex becomes the present-time invocation of these personal sexual encodings of history and memory.

This scene suddenly shifts from these loosely connected, isolated images to “a suburban room afternoon light bleakly clear.” (Burroughs 1992, 83) Mark says he heard that Johnny “got laid” and Johnny replies that it was a prostitute “down on Westminster Place.” He admits that since that encounter his crotch has itched. Mark orders Johnny to drop his pants and begins inspecting his genitals. During the process Johnny gets an erection: “Christ it is happening he can’t stop it.” The focus then shifts to fragments of solitary sexual conditions with “sad muscle magazines over the florist shop pants down green snakes under rusty iron in the vacant lot the old family soap opera look of yellow hair stirs in September.” (Burroughs 1992, 84-5) The story continues to shift with brief glimpses of past sexual relations and fantasies. “The film stops...” and shifts again—moves to Mexico City, London and St. Louis—until “the film stops in his eyes” at the point of orgasm:

A shooting star silence floats down on falling leaves and blood spit the  
smell of decay shredded to dust and memories pieces of legs and cocks  
and assholes drifting fragments in sunlight ass hairs spread on the bed  
dust of young hand fading flickering thighs and buttocks smell of  
young nights. (Burroughs 1992, 85)

Sex is a catharsis formed by “drifting fragments” of image and memory; each act is the product of all that has gone before. Burroughs presents homosexual intercourse as particulate matter in the light projection of Control’s film, the OGU. In the case of Johnny and Mark, “the sex scenes of their adolescence are seen as image dust in space



through which they pass.” (Burroughs 1992, 83) As dust in the light, it both obscures and refuses the image on screen thus breaking down Control’s monopoly on space.

In Burroughs’ novels sex between boys begins the process of space exploration, but in his theories humans are actually incapable of envisioning the full scope of the movement into space. In his essay “Immortality” Burroughs suggests, “Mutation involves changes that are literally unimaginable from the perspective of the future mutant.” (Burroughs 1985, 135) Elsewhere Burroughs compares the evolutionary step he projects for humans with the step made by fish onto land. As the great seas, which once covered much of the Earth, began to recede, certain fish developed rudimentary lungs. These they used to move over land from one body of water to another. At some point they lost the use of their gills and were forced to remain on land. In this way, in their search for water, they found land. Burroughs suggests that the human jump may be made in much the same way. “The astronaut is not looking for space; he is looking for more *time*—that is equating space with time... Like the walking fish, looking for more time we may find space instead, and then find there is no way back.” (Burroughs 1985, 126)

The changes required in Burroughs’ vision of an evolutionary shift are not conceivable to present humans. For Burroughs, space will involve taking “a step into the unknown, a step that no human being has ever taken before.” (Burroughs 1985, 135) Just as the fish could not envision a world of gravity, Burroughs argues, humans are unable to conceive of a life in weightlessness. Also like the fish who can never return to water, humans once in space will never be able to reverse the evolutionary process. “Evolution,” Burroughs points out, “would seem to be a one-way street.” (Burroughs 1985, 125)

In one of his last interviews, mythologist Joseph Campbell was asked, “Why should we care about myths? What do they have to do with life?” His reply stressed the importance of myth as a constitutive component for understanding daily experience. Campbell blamed the nihilism and lack of direction evidenced within modern society on the loss of myth. He spoke of myths, “stories,” as once providing ever-present interpretive paradigms with which to access experience. “When the story is in your mind,” he said, “then you see its relevance to something happening in your life.” (Campbell 1988, 4) For Campbell the lack of modern mythologies has created an environment where one has no choice but voice their lives as purposeless and random—a world without meaning or motivation. Burroughs continued importance is not as a erotic writer or literary experimenter, but as a creator of postmodern myths. Burroughs routines are most invigorating when they work as stories capable of providing paradigms that



make lived experience accessible and intelligible. Burroughs often spoke of his work as being the creation of a mythology—"a mythology for the space age."

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**Disrupt. Attack. Disappear.***Sven Davisson*

Over two hundred young people swarm the card section of the Harvard Coop—all seeking a card for Bill. Synchronized, they break into seemingly spontaneous applause.

“Flash Mobs,” as they are called, are cropping up across the country. This is the latest spin on the “smart mob” where activists utilize the wonders of our digital age to mobilize large numbers of protestors in lightning time.

Such mob actions first occurred in Manhattan early this summer. Since then they have spread to such far flung cities as Tokyo and Vienna. The first group flooded into Macy’s in Manhattan and surrounded a large oriental rug claiming that they all lived together and wanted to purchase a “love rug.”

Hundreds of people descended on Rome bookstore seeking books by imaginary authors.

In San Francisco roving packs stopped traffic by crossing a busy downtown street waving their arms and spinning in circles.

Rob Zazueta, twenty-eight year old founder of [www.FlockSmart.com](http://www.FlockSmart.com), says, “With smart mobs, these same tools that used to push up apart, are now bringing us back together.”

Analysts credit futurist Howard Rheingold and his book (2002) *Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution* with inspiring these modern mass happenings.

It may be, however, that the mythic recipient of the Harvard Coop card may hold a clue to the true inspiration...

“For revolution to effect basic changes in existing conditions three tactics are required: 1. Disrupt. 2. Attack. 3. Disappear. Look away. Ignore. Forget...”

“New concepts can only arise when one achieves a measure of disengagement from enemy conditions. On the other hand disengagement is difficult in a concentration camp is it not?... 1. Disrupt... Fifty young men record riot sound effects on portable tape recorders. They strap the recorders under gabardine topcoats. They hit the rush hour recorders full blast screams, police whistles, breaking glass, crunch of night sticks, tear gas flapping from their clothes... 2. Attack in subsequent confusion... 3. Retire to MOB. Learn Chinese... Disrupt again... Attack... Disappear. Look away. Ignore. Forget.”

**William S. Burroughs** in *The Job*





Photograph by Eleanor Mayo



## Working It Out

*Cordelia Elizabeth Grafton*

The interview drained Kierran. He was glad Ward was on valet duty; the old man would keep his distance. Further questions would put him on shaky ground, and he wanted to avoid that until he could clarify his thinking about Lars. The unaccustomed silence between them; the way Lars had acted at Rilan's funeral; the way his last visit went, just on the brink of word of Jollam's demise. His somewhat troubling responses to Rilan before Jollam's death. Yes, something was different with Lars. But that didn't necessarily mean guilt. He would do nothing to implicate Lars or to put Lars in any kind of jeopardy, in Trachil or in Kannin. He'd keep his doubts to himself. But he too wanted answers....

And Drustan would need a response in the morning. Though their meeting had been brief, he found he did not like the youngest Korda.

Kierran prepared for bed with his mind numbed. And then he lay still for what felt like hours, anxious but without thought. Finally, he allowed himself to picture Jollam lying sick in bed. If it was Lars who came in the night, would Jollam have struggled with him? In his sickness had he lost the tenacity for survival that he bore even a month prior? Rilan, his wounds from a straight blade. Would Lars have used a straight knife? He had never seen Lars use a straight blade, but he might, if he wanted to hide his identity.... Anyone had access to a straight knife. What was it he had said at their last encounter, when he had confronted Lars about his lying? "*Certain others I expected to be misled, but not you.*" He did not know what to make of it now, any more than he had then, but over speculation was no solution. So he stilled his mental chatter, focused on his breathing. Until a memory surfaced.

Kierran remembered his first adult meeting with Lars. It happened by accident when he had run away on a spring morning the first season after Leland had passed, when he was fourteen. He had run to the old South border road. Once a wide track, it was unused for nearly two decades, since an odd light had shined up in the sky over the South and a wind carrying sickness had blown up from that way. No one from the South had journeyed up since, and after seeing what oddities were borne that year, no one dared go down. But the road remained, the occasional tall oak still marking the route, the fields along the road abandoned, turning back to forest. A spot where Leland had taken him, alone, twice. Those days were long trips out and back spent enjoying each other's company. The first time Arturo was alive and keeping House for that glorious week



while father and younger son traveled together. Their second trip after Arturo had passed, the weather less pleasant and the trip shorter, but father insistent that they go. Both trips so unlike Leland's usual training forays that it seemed a good place to search for some understanding of all that had fallen into his lap. And so he made the trip alone, in memory of Leland, because it was spring and he was lonely. He left early for privacy, by the light of the moon, and he had no plans about hurrying back. He wanted to see the road again, to remember Leland being healthy and strong and nearby.

He climbed what his father said was the oldest oak, a broad-trunked monster of seventy-five feet. The oak had been an object lesson in individual characteristics within a species. Leland had counted it the epitome of oak, though a forested tree might have grown taller. The tree held Kierran in fascination for hours while he studied its contours, guessed at its adventures. Then he saw commotion on the road, a circle of bugs airborne, disturbed by the passage of something coming closer. Not knowing what to make of it, what sort of creature might be coming up from the South, he hid. The oak's young leaves wouldn't offer sufficient cover, so he settled in the bushes near the oak's base, pulled himself into a tight bundle covered by the thick growth around him. And he made himself as still as the soil, disappearing into the landscape, not quite in his body. Time distorted while he felt his awareness stretched to the tree branches above, the roots below.

He could hear the traveler approaching. The sounds of brush being pushed aside, a snap of a branch or the settling of leaves after being disturbed. He felt the ants around him and tried to think safe and small. But the traveler, as he drew level with Kierran, stopped. Kierran began breathing heavily. There was a gentle thud of a pack hitting the ground, and a noise of stretching. "This is as good a spot as any for a picnic," he said, "so you might as well join me. Don't let yourself get all cramped up down there."

Kierran recognized Lars' voice and scrambled up. Lars was the least expected and most probable of visitors in such a place. "What I wouldn't give for training like that," he said easily.

"If you had been less fearful, I wouldn't have seen you. Fear holds you into yourself. Otherwise you did well. Well enough for most people to miss you, but not for a hungry animal." He pulled some small sacks of nuts and fruits from his travel bag. "All training has its price. Which is maybe why you are here?"

Kierran nodded. "I wanted to see the sunrise."

Lars smiled. The simplicity and reticence that characterized his father also characterized the son. But Leland had grown into it in middle life from a natural ebullience. Kierran was more like his Uncle Nigel, quiet from the start. It was a good



trait in a Householder. “Yes, but the sun rises everywhere and that was hours ago. Not many people use this little track anymore.”

“I remember it from my father. He used to take me here once in a while.”

“It is good to remember the old things and keep them in the blood.” Lars was only some ten years older than Kierran, but he had been trained since very young to carry the mantle he wore and had assumed it from old Mathias only a few years ago. Mathias had looked ageless for the half generation Leland had told him of. Kierran remembered the old master also looking very gentle yet powerful. Lars had that same ageless quality despite his youth, the same sense of power. But Lars was not nearly as gentle. He tossed him a sack of nuts and fruits. “Break fast. You aren’t your father, but you will work out okay.”

Kierran shrugged. “I don’t want to just work out okay.”

Lars raised an eyebrow. “No? What do you want?”

He chewed on some fruit, took his time about answering, and he kept his reply both honest and guarded, schooling his face into nonchalance. “I want not to be so lonely and empty.”

Lars understood. “Some of that is your grief. It hasn’t been so long since you put Leland to rest. And you are still learning the ropes of your House.”

“I miss Arturo, too. Sometimes I still think he’s only late for dinner, or something. I forget.” He chewed some more. “But even before they were gone, I didn’t feel ordinary.”

“Do you want to be ordinary? You are too serious and you’ve already come too far. It’s consumed part of your personality. You can’t go back. Maybe if you walked north down this rut until you found a place where no one knew you, if you apprenticed yourself to some farmer or merchant, you could play at being normal. But it would still be play-acting, and you would never be satisfied.”

The response frustrated him. “I’m not here to walk north, or I would have already left. I don’t expect to have my burdens lifted. I don’t want that. I just wish.... I was a second son. I wish Arturo were doing my job now. I wish they were both still here.”

Lars sighed, pulled out the small harp he had inherited, began strumming randomly. “Yes, it’s like that. Be glad you had them as long as you did. I don’t know why they were taken away with you so young. I hope Nigel is a help.”

“Nigel is very capable. But he doesn’t like the work. He puts himself into it while working, but then he goes home and forgets about it. And he thinks *I* should make the decisions.”





“That’s good.” His hands continued to pass over the harp, sometimes sounding like random strings of notes, sometimes like quick phrases of songs following each other in such rapid succession that no one but the harpist could tell which songs they came from.

Lars hadn’t had a choice in his life either, Kierran realized. And he probably hadn’t had a father. He hesitated to ask, but the harping begged the question. He swallowed. “Did you have a family?”

Lars smiled a far away smile, further than the long road south. “No,” he said quietly, a no filled with all the space in the overgrown fields. “No, Kierran of Traehil, I did not have a family.” His hands damped the strings to silence. Kierran held his breath to see what would come. Lars’ gray eyes lightened, took on the colors of the fields and sky as he scanned the distance. Kierran felt on the border of a great precipice of Lars. Finally Lars glanced absently at his hands, as if seeing the harp for the first time, and put it away.

He looked at Kierran. Quiet, young, lonely Kierran. Kierran still making peace with his path. Images came to him of Kierran at home with Nigel helping him learn the House, Nigel pulling away back into his own house. Kierran in the yard watching his friends practice hunting skills and growing into an ordinary manhood, which he could not share. Kierran feeling the weight of his transition and his responsibilities. Kierran seeking an answer to an unspoken question on an old road which nobody ever used. Kierran before him, speaking to him now, lips pursing gently: “I’m sorry.”

Lars shook his head slightly. “No. It makes me who I am. And I think that you are perhaps the first person who has had any idea...” Lars opened his sack and began to eat.

They traveled together back to Traehil, talking little as they walked. The old farm road which led to the border road was choked and overgrown, so they walked single file, paying attention to their footing. Kierran admired Lars’ skill in picking out the cleanest path through scrub when the scrub became sporadically more dense. Kierran had tethered his horse beyond the thick of it, but she was too small to carry them both. Kierran preferred to walk and keep company; he supposed after her early wake-up his horse did, too. They stopped toward sundown in a little copse surrounded by the last of the eastern abandoned fields before the forestland, preparing a comfortable, sheltered sleeping area and a little fire. Kierran boiled up some bitter greens to supplement the dried fare which Lars provided from his pack. It was a short and simple dinner.



Lars harped lazily, tunes Kierran had and hadn't heard. Kierran listened until the direction of his thoughts pulled him away from the sound into an inner place where he couldn't hear the music. Lars damped the cords and broke the moment. "Something's gotten you absorbed."

Kierran bit his lip. "I was thinking about what you said, about me being too serious and having come too far." A slight nod from Lars encouraged him to continue. "But that can't be it, why I don't feel normal, because Arturo had the same training as me. He had more training than me, and he never felt that way."

"Arturo was different than you. He enjoyed people differently. For you, people take more effort but the meditation part comes easily. He was good with people but had a harder time with settling down for the deeper parts of the work."

"But he did it, and he never seemed to feel separated from other people."

"Your father was outgoing like Arturo, too, when he was younger. But as he grew older he matured into a kind of inner reserve and quietness. You are more like that, and like Nigel. Their father was also more that way. The work demands an isolation, or it extracts one."

Kierran thought back, pictures of Leland laughing with the working circle and over big dinners, pictures of Arturo rough-housing with his friends after training practices. He said doubtfully, "I don't think they were lonely."

Lars shrugged and began playing the harp again, aimlessly. "Don't forget the role of grief."

Kierran thought again how much heavier he had felt as the only resident of the Great House. Even breakfast could feel like a chore. And Leland *had* become quieter after Arturo passed, even if he still put on for the dinners. But there was still a liveliness that came over him when he talked with people which made him seem animated and kind. "You know what it is? It's that they were connected with people. Like, when we were little, Arturo had lots of blood-brothers. You know, where you swear to be friends as close as blood forever? I never did it, because it never felt right to me. But he had three or four."

Lars nodded, "I remember they carried his casket." He returned his gaze to the harp, which Kierran took as a sign to be quiet with his thoughts. The harp played on, dusk coloring into night. Finally Lars spoke, high-pitched, softly. "Is that what you want, Kierran? To have a blood brother?"

Kierran sat upright, startled by Lars' voice, surprised by the question, uncertain of his intent. For all that it sounded like a question, it also sounded like an offer. "I hadn't meant... I mean..." he swallowed nervously, "Yes. Yes, I would like that."



The harpist looked at him hard. “When we get older our vows have more meaning. It would have to be more than just a childhood scratch on the hand.”

Kierran nodded, his cheeks hot. “I guess it would be hard to respect a scratch.”

“You would have to let me cut you. To signify trust. And you cut me.”

The interior sense of Kierran’s which usually tolled a deep emptiness rang with a million shades of sound, except there was no noise in his ears but the rushing of his own blood, the sound of his breathing coming a little too fast, and Lars breathing close beside him. Lars’ pale gray eyes still fixed on him, waiting for his response. Kierran gasped, “You would really do this thing?”

“For you. If that’s what you want.”

“I want.” He swallowed again, hard, dug out his knife and handed it over.

Lars took it, kissed the hilt, and stuck the tip of the blade into the small flame left from the cooking fire. He cooled it with splashes of water which hissed when they met the metal. He half-knelt, half-squatted, making a vee of his legs. “Lean against me,” he said, “so you can relax.” Kierran sat facing outward, his left side contacting Lars’ chest. Lars adjusted his feet to brace himself and pulled at the lacing on Kierran’s shirt, loosening it enough to bare the right shoulder. “You’re sure?” Kierran nodded. “Good. Lean back and let go.” Kierran closed his eyes and willed himself to be as still inside as he was outside. Lars held him firmly with his left arm and reached around with his right, resting the blade on the skin, point facing in. He took a deep breath. “Kierran of Traehil, son of Leland, I make you my brother by this blood spilt willingly between us. May no ill will come between us, nor any more blood. May all heavens witness my oath and may I always keep my word.” The blade raised then lowered in a clean slice from back to front, over an inch long and an eighth of an inch deep. There was the shock at the slice, but no real pain. No blood flowed at first, but it began to bead on either side of the slice. Lars rubbed his finger with it and wiped it on his left palm. He wiped the knife against his leg, put it in Kierran’s lap, and covered the cut with his right hand. Kierran could feel intense heat radiating from Lars’ hand. He stayed quiet and motionless until Lars released him, letting the healing current do its work. Lars stood, got his pack and pulled out something dry and weedy. “Yarrow,” he said. “It will staunch what I couldn’t.” He tied up the cut with a long rag, smiling at Kierran. “You did well.”

Kierran flexed his shoulder gently. “It feels okay. But I should cut you left-handed so I don’t bother it.”

Lars nodded. He handed over his knife which Kierran guessed to be passed down like the harp from past masters. The hilt was a well-worn bone or ivory, and the blade



was oddly curved. Unlike a sickle, it was sharpened on the outer edge, like a miniature scimitar. “The blade is clean,” Lars said. “No need to fire it. Stick away.”

Kierran imitated the posture Lars had used, only settling Lars against him so that his left hand would be free. Lars bared his own shoulder, waiting. But the thought of sticking was harder than being cut. He looked at the funny blade in his hand, thought about cutting this man who answered to no earthly authority and who was declaring himself his friend. His nerves made focusing difficult, and he had to steady himself twice before he was sure his posture was solid. “Peregrine Lars, who belongs to no worldly authority, I make you my brother by this blood spilt willingly between us. May no ill will come between us, nor any more blood. May all heavens witness my oath and may I always keep my word.”

He raised the blade and cut, but his nerves, the shape of the blade, and using his left hand all made for a messy slice angled sideward, deeper, and further forward than he intended. Lars sucked in air. “Damn close to the clavicle. I’m okay, but...” he turned sideways to face Kierran, locking eyes with him, “it hurts.” Then Lars smiled. “Clean me up.”

“I’m sorry. It got away from me.” Kierran cut off a section of his shirt, wet it down and wiped Lars off, pressing against the cut until it stopped bleeding. When he was sure it had clotted, he looked up. Lars’ face had softened, looking boyish in the fire’s light.

Lars ran his right hand up Kierran’s arm, gently gripped his shoulder. “It’s okay. You were still in the after-effects, not in your logical mind,” he said kindly. “It’s worth it.”

When the memory ended, Kierran felt warm and relaxed, ready for sleep. Yes, he thought, Lars had used a straight knife at least once in the past. And that had been very good. Surely that had been good.



## The White Springs Café

*By Mogg Morgan*

In an instant, the White Springs Café was on the point of closure. What had I been doing all day—pushing the same fragment of cake around the plate—drinking yet another cup of tea—my back aching from the hardness of the garden seats in the lane outside—it was too damp in the old well house to sit there for more than an hour or two. There was little conversation—just before closing time a tall dark man and two beautiful girls walked up the lane towards the café entrance. I smiled knowingly at them—knowing they were part of the trip. They avoided my stare—perhaps it was too intense—the fixed gaze of the pseudo occultist.

Yesterday was a bad day—someone had stolen my passport as I sat meditating—I still couldn't work out how. How could it happen—years ago in India—my girlfriend had taken my money belt from me as I slept—just to show how easy it was.

Later in yet another Glastonbury café our paths crossed again—this time the tall man and his female friends were paying the bill, quietly discussing the craziness around them.

“Not everyone in Glastonbury is nice are they” I heard the tall one say.

“Why, what's happened?”

“Outside, on the pavement, one of the local winos just gave us a hard time. A big bloke—arms like a farmer—I was feeling lucky—you'd just given me the little Ganesha statue—I saw Lianne walk out of the shop and lean against the bench, so I walked over to talk to her but this drunken farmer arrived at precisely the same instant—arriving on a bicycle—he came from nowhere. As I tucked myself between him and Lianne he made some comment about her hair—it turned my stomach—the thought of this guy thinking that way—him so ugly, brutal and emotionally dead. I wanted to say something to turn the moment—I meant to try humor but it came out as a challenge “do you mean my hair?” “No, not your hair stupid” he said “his arm swatting the air in front of my face”—

I wanted to talk to them, to be with them, and tell them about how my passport had been stolen yesterday but how that wasn't gonna stop me—I was going to Amsterdam on Saturday—I'd had a knock back but I was still going. They looked at me



like I was just another drunken farmer. What do they know—are they on a quest—that has taken them half way across Europe and ends this weekend in Amsterdam—I don't think so.

Amsterdam—Ramesh says call by at the shop and maybe he can find work for me in his 'Empire'. The Empire is Ramesh's most successful enterprise to date. He sells magick mushroom growbags to the coffee shops. He's made so much money that he bought a house overlooking the temple of Sethos at Abydos. He plans a magick guest house with a pleasure dome open to the sky, but somehow protected from the night flying insects by an invisible metal screen. He plans to bribe officials and steal the Stele of Revealing from the Egyptian museum. (I haven't the heart to tell him, that as Egyptian artifacts go, its pretty banal). He spends so much time there that he needs trusted minions to look after the shop in Amsterdam. In no time at all I've the keys to the kingdom and a little room upstairs.

I'm stoned all day long but love the work.

I'm lonely.

I'm stoned so much of the time that I'm getting sloppy. This morning I found a whole jar of mushrooms that had gone bad—without thinking I peel the lid off and a fine must rises up and assaults my nostrils. Coughing madly I run cold water and bleach into the bottle and throw it down the sink. But since then my lungs have felt funny—I need to get out for a bit—but the other staff don't like me too much and I don't have company.

I walk the streets

A girl looks down at me from a large picture window—her room looks very cozy—overstuffed bed visible with the covers turned down—she's dark skinned—maybe mixed race—she looks—she looks big. She's wearing lace stockings the color of galaxy chocolate.

"Hey" she says "come inside"

I think to myself "Is this how it was for Aleister Crowley?"

There wasn't much formality, in broken English she asks me to give her money. I still have the shop takings in my pocket. Being still not very familiar with the currency I slowly fumble through the wad of notes. Impatient, she snatches them from me and expertly counts a few hundred out, she thrusts these in my direction and says 'that', then she adds a few hundred more, and again says 'that' and then a few hundred more and says again 'that'.



A wave of tiredness sweeps over me, stronger even than my lust “I just want to sit down”. My lungs are aching again, feels like I might be getting the “flu. As I sit down on the edge of the bed, flecks of light, the shape of teardrops swim around my head.

She stuffs the money in a draw and comes over to me “no, don’t lie down yet, take your jacket off” She yanks me to my feet and I give her my coat. “Now you wash yourself” she orders, making a sharp nod with her head at the wash basin. I unzip and pull it out, wondering, as I do so, whether its going to be big enough, why that should matter I’m not sure. I look in the mirror; my face looks puffy. I’d like to ask someone who knows me whether I look alright, I certainly don’t feel it. I stand at the sink not knowing what to do. She helps me, filling it with cool water and pressing a little blob of soap from the applicator, probably medicated, she begins to wash me. This gets some response but I groan “I’m not feeling well” She holds me up, still washing me, maybe thats what I should do, to get this over with, give into ‘that’, let myself come quickly in the bowl then maybe she’ll let me rest a little. She stops abruptly and passes me a towel. I scoop up the soapy water and wash my face, its coolness is merciful and my head clears.

“Come,” she barks, “come here!”

She ushers me to the edge of the bed again, and takes off my shoes, loosens my belt and expertly pulls my trousers and pants from me in a gliding movement. “Keep your shirt on if you like”

I hear the unmistakable sound of a condom packet being ripped open and she’s kneading my legs then stroking me, making me hard. I smell apples. Her mouth slides down over me, as, with ritual skill, she shrouds my erection with the condom, unrolling the last few centimeters with the help of her fingers.

“Magick”, something tells me “This is supposed to be magick, sexual magick. The reason I’m in Amsterdam in the first place.” I try to focus, what am I supposed to do. I hear the panic voice again “do a banishing, do a banishing.” I mumble the first few lines of the pentagram rite “atoh, malkuth...”

She pauses from her task of rubbery fellatio for a second and snaps “what, what is that you are saying”

The thought crosses my mind that she is Jewish. I try to go on as she shakes my rubbery cock back and forth as if trying to shake it back to life. With a look of resignation, she stops and pushes me back onto the bed, stage two, I think to myself.

Somewhere, out in the street, I hear a child screaming with rage, even the musick from the tape machine can’t blank it out. In English, I hear “What have I done, I don’t want to, I don’t want to go to bed!” over and over. My friend has taken her top off and her breasts hang down, the nipples dark from childbirth. I’m getting the full treatment



here, pink lipstick, false hair, the works. Miraculously I'm moving inside her the lines of my invocation bumping along with her thrusting

"Pan, Io Pan, come to me, with thorny secrets of alchemy, burn up my soul with secret fire, doctrine divine that I desire."

My eyes must have been closed, I open them and think I catch her throwing a sideways glance at the clock.

I think to myself, how on earth do I connect with this woman? I can't even feel her properly inside. In desperation she kisses me, thrusting her tongue deep into my mouth. Years ago at some party, a friend's sister I hardly knew, led me upstairs to her room and kissed me, her tongue finding the tiny tendon joining my lip to my gums, following it out again over the vertical line that joins one lip bow to another. It was a mystical experience then, the sensation passes over my face like a rash, closing my eyes and opening something in my brow. I rack my brain for the second part of the invocation:

"Come, sweet mentor for which I rant; the long awaited heavenly hierophant; Aleister on my body feast; sigil erect of the wondrous beast"

Too much going on in my head to come yet. My friend is beginning to look desperate. Maybe if I could touch her. I think of the first time I ever pushed my fingers inside a woman's body. It felt so pure and white. I was gentle and she was excited "come in the bedroom" she kept saying, over and over, but I didn't want to. I felt the bumps of her vertebrae and I was fascinated and horrified.

I don't know how I ended up in the closet. Maybe the fever was on me again and I slept for a little while. Despairing of ever getting rid of me, my friend must have dragged me off the bed and into the closet. My trousers, coat and wallet were nearby. For the next hour I lay there amongst the discarded clothes and bulk packs of contraceptives drifting in and out of consciousness, my sleep only interrupted by the slamming of the picture window as clients came and went, the low discussion in a foreign tongue, then the bed creaking away and the sounds of sex, men coming in low grunts—ah ah ahhh.. My lungs were definitely the source of the problem, they felt raw like as if I'd been chain smoking again. Little darting pains shot out across my chest

The door had slammed for about the sixth time when the closet door was wrenched open and she hissed "go, go now"—she helped me dress and almost threw me out through the screen door onto the cobbles. I was surrounded by a coach party on their way to see Anne Frank's house. They flowed around me as if I didn't exist. An image came into my head—I must find the dark man—but first I need a doctor.







It didn't take too long to find my mysterious, darkly clad friend. I was back in UK. My illness turned out to be more serious than I'd at first imagined. Cut and run I thought. I made for Schipol airport and caught the shuttle back and took a taxi from the airport to the School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. I was at death's door and they admitted me straight away. Turned out I picked up some disease more commonly known as farmer's lung. The doctor told me I'd done the right thing seeking serious medical attention. Much more of a delay and it might have proved fatal. As it was they admitted me for what turned out to be a two week stay. Towards the end I was pretty much healed and could go for short walks in the streets outside the hospital. I went to the famous little occult bookshop in Museum street and lurked there, browsing the books and earwiggling the conversations.

My ears pricked up when I heard the name Glastonbury. It came from a petite thirty—something lady. She was bemoaning the isolation of her Glastonbury home, she said she was bored and hardly saw anyone these days. The last time she's seen a friendly face was weeks ago when Rik and his 'shaktis' had come down to visit the Chalice well and Tor. I moved closer and from my vantage point in the stack glanced up for a better look. Pascale and the manager, whose name I gathered was Mathew, looked at each other awkwardly, as they noticed my obvious interest.

"Need any help" Mathew quizzed.

"No I'm OK," I paused then went on "well, actually there is something you can help me with. I'm sorry to eavesdrop but I heard you mention Glastonbury. I'm looking for someone I met briefly there but don't have his address."

"What's his name?" the woman Pascale asked

"Well, actually, I don't know. "

"Well what does he look like" she probed

I described him as best my fuddled brain could dredge up. "Very tall, dressed in black"

Pascale laughed "there's an awful lot in Glastonbury who fit that description."

"He had very long fair hair" I could see the smile broadened on her lips, enjoying the joke. In desperation I tried "I'm not doing very well."

Pascale's expression softened, "well how was his hair?"



A glint of hope. I remembered that it had been tied up in an unusual way, drawn upwards into a hank and tied with a grip so it cascaded from the crown of his head, like a Shikh, oriental like.”

Mathew and Pascale looked at each other and in unison said “Rik!” the name of the person they’d just been discussing.

They seemed pretty unphased by this major league synchronicity. They nodded sagely to each other “it is so often like that.” There was not much more to say after that—they gave me a box number for an address in Oxford and suggested I write care of the Hermetic Students, which had its Head Quarters there. I was beginning to get tired again and shuffled off back to my hospital ward.

Rik was not an easy person to get to see. It took several letters. My first went unanswered, so I sent another, this time with the return postage. I received back a little photocopied newsletter and a scribbled note saying “if I wanted to chat to Rik best ring after six o'clock and maybe he'd be around.” I did that and a soft Irish voice said “hello”—I recognized the voice, it was definitely him, now what should I say. There was a pause. “Are you still there, are you looking for information on the Hermetic Students? He went on helpfully. “Yes, I was,” He told me a few things and then asked me whereabouts I was living. I told him I was in London at the moment having just returned from abroad, and, I lied, was hoping to move to Oxford soon. “Are you a student?” “No, I mean yes, I hope to be in October.” “Well have a think about what I've told you, and if you do fetch up in Oxford please do get in touch. That was obviously the signal for the end of our conversation. I put the phone down.

A week later I was in Oxford on a day ticket. I thought I would say I'd been down for an interview and having just gotten through hoped I might be able to meet him for a chat. It was just after six o'clock. Rik sounded a bit out of it “sure”, he said, “come over”. He gave me the address, it would take about half an hour to get there.

The house was eccentric and smelt strange, incense, blocked drains, cats. Rik was making tea in the other room, all English meetings operate on the basis that one is dying of thirst. “Are you alone here?”

“I am now” came the reply from the kitchen.

“A recent thing”

“A recent thing” Rik repeated by way of reply.



I light my cigarette and accidentally drop the lighter down the side of the chair. Reaching down for it my hand comes up with a pair of dirty women's knickers. I think to myself, so things can't be so bad. Rik comes in carrying two cups of tea, and seeing the knickers, takes them from me without a word.

"Oh people come and go here—for many years I shared this house with a partner, but she's moved on now, found another life in London."

"Was she one of the women I saw you with in Glastonbury?"

"Glastonbury, who mentioned Glastonbury?"

"Sorry, we have met briefly before, I remembered when I saw you"

"Listen, what is this about?"

So I told him the whole slight story. Rik seemed to accept it, it seemed quite normal. Then he asked "do you know what I was doing before you phoned?"

No obviously not, although you sounded a bit out of it.

"Well that too, I was doing my early evening meditation. I was just thinking how nice it would be to have a chat with my Holy Guardian Angel—do you know that? Then you called. You're crazy," he went on, "I'm crazy, so why shouldn't I just talk to you about all the things on my mind, then maybe you can have a go, if you still want to."

"I'm game"

Rik sat down and began to roll a spliff, or as he called it a Jay.

He spoke falteringly until he had finished rolling and lit the white tube. "Without wanting to sound too melodramatic," he said, "I'm at a bit of a crossroads—maybe even the dark night of the soul. "

I laughed and said "women trouble?"

"Could be."

I don't know what it was but something made me say "you like the pretty ones, spend all your time fucking and doing magick but run out of things to talk to them about?"

As soon as I said it I wondered if I'd gone to far, but Rik smiled knowingly.

"Go on" I said.

Rik continued

"When I was your age I used to talk like that."

My age, I thought, he couldn't be much more than thirty-five and said so.

"Maybe a little bit more than that". I looked harder and thought I could see the deeply incised laughter lines, maybe he was, I never really knew Rik's age.

"I've always been a bit too serious," He said.

"You mean you're a softy?"



“Yes, that’s probably right—I’m a bit soft. I assume you’re familiar with the Book of the Law?”

“Of course” I replied

“This verse means something to me now—” “Let the Scarlet Woman beware! If pity and compassion and tenderness visit her heart; if she leave my work to toy with old sweetnesses; then shall my vengeance be known. I will slay me her child: I will alienate her heart: I will cast her out from men: as a shrinking and despised harlot shall she crawl through dusk wet streets and die cold and an—hungred.

“But let her raise herself in pride! Let her follow me in my way! Let her work the work of wickedness! Let her kill her heart! Let her be loud and adulterous! Let her be covered with jewels and rich garments, and let her be shameless before all men!”

“I guess that means you’ve been having a bad time?” I quipped, trying to lighten the mood

“You could say that” Rik replied, “although I am trying to draw out from my experiences, as an ordinary mortal, something of meaning, something universal, its hard sometimes, sometimes I feel very vengeful and wronged.”

“But” I interrupted, “Its the women who is advised by the holy book to “kill her heart”, I doubt if it says anywhere that the man must do the same”

“Its assumed,” Rik replied, “that men are already like that, certainly Crowley was when he inserted these words into the mouth of his first wife.”

“And you’re not like that?”

“I am like that but I’ve worked very hard to soften the edges to try to be more compassionate in my dealings with others, especially those I’ve fallen in love with. Let me try this story on you.”

“A Tibetan lama had retired to his cave retreat with a student. In Tibet a very high percentage of young men are Buddhist students, often with very little natural religious sentiment. This one had other ideas on his mind, namely separating his guru from some valuable in his possession. There was a fight and the student drew a knife and stabbed his guru. The student ran off leaving his guru bleeding and in agony. It was a very isolated spot and help was unlikely to be close to hand. The Lama meditated to kill the pain, meditation can act like a virtual anesthetic to those habituated to its practices. Several days passed and a messenger arrived from another monastery. The novice monk found the Lama, wrapped in his blood soaked robes seemingly asleep. He woke him and asked what had happened. Hearing the story the novice wanted to leave immediately for medical assistance. But the Lama would have none of it and made the messenger swear not to reveal anything of what had happened and to just leave him there.”



I said I thought that was “an odd response, what was the point.”

“The Lama did not want to involve the legal authorities, which would no doubt get his student into a lot of trouble, maybe even prison or worse. He did not want him to lose his life, as one day he thought he might return, regretting what he had done and return to the correct path.”

“Let me guess” I said, “You obviously identify with the lama, you’ve been stabbed in the back by a student you got too close but you don’t want to fuck her up good and proper.”

“You could put it like that.”

“Well what happened in the story?”

“Nothing, the Lama was left alone to cope with his wounds as best he could. When next someone visited the retreat they found his body, he’d bled to death.”

“Phew, there’s a moral there somewhere I suppose. Here’s a riddle for you—what has four that hang down, four that kick, a dirty one that hangs behind and two that lead?”

“I don’t know,” Rik said, “I’m not so good with riddles, is it traditional?”

“Who knows, maybe Viking, but the answer is simple, it’s a cow, a stupid cow.”

A look of displeasure came across Rik’s face, maybe I’d gone too far.

“Whatever else she is, she isn’t a stupid cow.” He replied curtly

The conversation stopped and there was an awkward pause that extended for several minutes as both of us searched for some new thread in the conversation, something to lead us out of this territory. With a final gesture Rik replaced the lid on his stash—box and asked me the time. It was an obvious signal for me to leave. I wondered whether I would see him again.



But I did see him again. One thing I soon learnt about Rik is that he never bore a grudge. You could tear his pet theories to shreds in front of his eyes and he would accept that. Maybe sometimes he would lose his temper—he was after all very emotional—but by the next time you met him all seemed to be forgotten. Or at least he was ready to pick up the argument where he thought it had left off, having in the meantime worried away at it and come up with a rejoinder to what you thought was checkmate. It was like one of those very slow games of chess, one move played every few days.



Next time we met I apologized for calling his lover a stupid cow. "Its OK," he said generously, "It gave me great pleasure to hear you say it."

I believed him, I could see that it wasn't really in his nature to say such things. I wondered if I should offer to curse his errant lover for him and maybe even fuck up her new boyfriend. Its what I would do. Maybe later.

"I know you think I'm just an old fool, pining for his young and vivacious lover"

"The thought had crossed my mind." I replied, wondering if we were going to get into another argument.

"Well the thought has crossed my mind too, many times."

He obviously wanted to talk about it so I thought I'd humor him. "OK," I said, "I'll listen to the whole story as long as I can exercise my right to be cynical. Its a deal?"

Rik said nothing, he looked as if he hadn't been listening, too busy searching under the ghadi for his stash. He found it and with an awkward stretch picked it up. He took the lid off and peered inside. Then he sniffed it and his face lit up.

"Its a deal?" I repeated

He looked up and said "Yes, yes its a deal, I was just preparing for a two spliff story."

Rik took a deep toke on the spliff. "You see," he said, "she was sent by God."

I almost laughed out loud, managing to stifle it but had to look down to avoid meeting his eyes. I looked up in a gingerly fashion, he was smiling. "Its OK," he said, "but maybe you could restrain your cynicism until I get into my stride. Allow me a few presuppositions just for the sake of setting out the dilemma?"

There was a pause during which Rik stared fixedly out of the window, obviously looking for a new tack. "OK," he started, "maybe I should say that at the time I felt as if she was sent by god. It was a function of the way I felt at the time. "

"OK, I said, "Before you go into that, tell me why you left Selena?"

He seemed taken aback, surprised that I knew all about his relationship with the famous spirit medium.

"You want me to talk about that?"

"Yes I do?"

"I never really left Selena, she's with me still. But I suppose in terms of the mundane record, everyone assumes I left her. I speak to her constantly, although I don't



know if she ever hears me.” There was a pause, Rik’s mood had darkened. The he started up again, “and anyway, who says I left Selena? I guess that’s the common perception but really she left me, although I often torture myself with the thought that I let her go too easily. It was a difficult time, relationships seem to work when there is a common purpose. After more than a decade together we were beginning to lose the thread. We’d even contemplated the idea of starting a family—that’s how desperate we were. I just thought of when I first hooked up with Selena, one night late in my living room, talking about love. She told me she was a virgin, and I felt a ghost walk across my grave, feeling with a certain inevitability that ours connection could never really last.”

“How so,” I interjected, “most men would relish the idea of a blank slate on which to impress their own personality.”

Rik took a draw on the joint, “well I guess I’m not most men, definitely not. However good our physical and spiritual relationship became, it would only serve to generate a desire for variety. I knew that because its how I felt myself when years earlier it had all been new and a great adventure to me.”

“But your partnership lasted ten years.”

“Yes I know, longer than I’d ever lived with a person before. There was a lot of variety in our life. But sooner or later the day dawned when Selena began to look elsewhere. I to be honest, I also wondered whether Selena would be my final relationship or whether Ananke, the great goddess of fate had something else in store for me. I got settled and thought, no maybe this is how it will be until the end—there was a grime determination about that. I think it led to a drying up of my real emotions.”

“Tell me,” he went on, “are you beginning to wonder what all this has to do with the life of a mystic?”

“The thought had crossed my mind” I replied

“Well humor me, we’ll get there in the end.” Rik started rolling yet another spliff. “I can’t pretend I really understand what was really going on in Selena’s mind, you’ll have to ask her. I’m not an idealist anymore, not in the philosophical sense, she has her own thoughts and motives, as do many other people, that’s something I have learnt, other minds do exist and it must all be worth it if not for that lesson alone.”

“Take that as read, but what did it look like to you?”

“It looked to me as if she was drawn away by the love of a mundane career, for wealth and material security. The money to live in a café culture. I to be sure, my life path was unlikely to make that a possibility. Shit no, she just wanted to have a good time in a way she couldn’t with me, before it was too late and she wasn’t young, pretty and charismatic anymore. People came into our life who represented that lifestyle much more



clearly—she was drawn to them. And also, as is natural, friends grow up and get responsibilities, you can't charge round for ever—or so they say—I'm still not sure about that yet."

"So she went off with someone else."

"Well as near as damn it—Selena was still very much in love with me but in spirit at least she was with someone else. And I too started having crushes on my friends and thought that if someone made the first move I might just take the easy way out."

"Why didn't you do something more active. Its sounds like an abdication of your will to wait for it to happen to you?"

"Yes I know, I'm not sure what part my will had to do in all this. I told myself I was letting go to fate—I would do nothing precipitate but let it happen to me. Besides, I wanted someone to fall in love with me."

Then the crunch came—Our social life then revolved around hanging out with other couples, it had become a habit. We'd spent most weekends just hanging, getting smashed and vagueing out to loud music."

"Sounds fun"

"Well, yes, it can be, but it can be a way of avoiding contact, a convenient way of blanking out conversation and structuring the time because we didn't have an awful lot left to say to each other. I used to think we'd been brought together for some purpose but we seldom did anything to further that."

"Sounds like you didn't really want to talk to them?"

"Maybe, if I'm honest I found myself with a couple of close friends, that Selena really liked but I couldn't really relate to that well."

"And you hoped that eventually Selena would come to the same conclusion?"

"Yes—I can admit it now, some of the boyfriends particularly, I found them hard work. Well, you can guess the rest." He finished abruptly, obviously bored with the conversation.

"Yes, I think I can." I replied

"Can you." he probed

"In the words of Pattie Smith." I said " "When you perfect lover becomes a perfect fool"."

"Yes, something like that. But come on, I've spoken lots, don't you have something you want to say?"

There was a silence whilst I went through the umpteen questions I'd thought about on the way here. Then I started "Can I tell you about a dream I had the other night?"

"If you wish."





It wasn't the most encouraging response but I started anyway.

"I was in some strange and yet familiar place, looking for a friend. Virtually everything I valued in the world was contained in one small briefcase. I put it down for a moment to look around and when I looked up it had gone."

Rik asked whether I ever found it again in the dream and I told him that I hadn't done in that dream but later in the night I had another similar dream in which I did find the case, but it was empty.

"I was worried, but, in the dream, I carried on searching for the woman friend I'd come there to see. I spent some time there trying to get to know her new friends and world. But I wasn't impressed, they seemed so light weight. She showed me a book by one of her new friends—it was meant to impress me but I was disappointed by the fact that she found it significant, it seemed beneath her somehow. I sensed hostility. Then I was in a conventional chase dream, being pursued ever upwards through the building, eluding capture and expulsion by her confederates. They threw darts at me but I alluded them, sometimes catching them and returning fire, sometimes I hit the mark. The chase grew more intense as I found the trapdoor that led to the roof of the building. It was so high up that the whole structure swayed violently in the wind. There were workmen there repairing the fabric of the building. I pleaded with them to leave me there, they were sympathetic and told me that I would soon get used to the way the building pitched about. Then I was alone, balancing on one leg on the end of a long flagpole, fighting the vertigo. All around me were hostile forces but I balanced, almost flying."

"At least then, " Rik began, "if you do meet a sticky end it won't be in some anonymous and squalid situation, it will be in the full glare of the sun. Its a good dream I think, troubled but shows you're have integrity. That's all I can say, all I can say for today too, immortality beckons"

"What?"

"I must get on and do some things."

So we parted.



The next time we met was at my initiation. In the meantime I'd had plenty of time to wonder why Rik had told me so much about his personal life. Phil, short for Philida, the woman Rik claimed to have been sent by god, showed me the way through the woods to the ritual circle—the others had gone ahead to prepare. I could see why Rik might have been quite smitten with her—although from the outside she looked a fairly typical blond



bimbet. She'd obviously worked hard on her winning personality, which aside from an annoying mannerism, was definitely winning. That mannerism, an extended ohhhh, that prefixed almost every other sentence. Maybe she was nervous but she was painfully reminiscent of a character called "Olive Oil" in the Popeye cartoons. Still, I wouldn't have kicked her out of my bed. As we followed the long winding path through the woods, I thought it would pass the time nicely to probe her a little. The conversation was awkward.

"So" I said, "you seem to be a long way from home?" Phil was American.

She stopped at a small wicket gate and held it open for me. A long wooded path opened out in front of us. "Isn't that what we do?" she said "the magi that is, travel the world in search of magical teachers?" Phil used the archaic expression "magi"—she obviously liked to identify with the ancient caste of magicians that had existed in the past, and whose blood, some still believed, flowed through the veins of modern pagans, it was a theory I already heard Rik expound several times.

"So you were a traveler?" I asked

"Yes, a full—on traveler. Only I was at the end of my journey, just the last few weeks before my ticket expired and I would have to return to Denver."

I'd done a fair amount of traveling myself and had often run into Americans, who seem to go absolutely everywhere. The pretty ones, like Phil, quickly got into the guts of a place by making "friends" with local bar owners and the like. I wondered if Phil had played this standard traveler's trick on Rik.

"Had you found what you wanted in your travels?"

"I found this," she paused, "in the end"

"How?"

"There was a ritual," she said, "I went along."

"Blew you away then."

"Not exactly, actually it was a pretty crap ritual, and freezing cold, it was February, Imbolc. It took hours for the thing to even start, the organizers first had to light a fire, thank god. I'd spoken to Rik on the telephone, he warned me the ritual was the first ever done by that group and that it might be a bit shambolic. In the end I'd agreed to give him a lift to the meadow, so he could escort me to the rite. Maybe he felt responsible for me, but he kept me company during all the faffing around and took me for a walk to the river, pointing out the constellations he knew, showing me how to find the northern direction from the Plough. Rik said something about the call of nature, and I walked back to the circle leaving him alone. But when I looked round I saw him standing, his arms outstretched, worshipping or drawing something down from the sky. I saw him shaking



wyrdly in that way I was later to learn the Vikings had done. Then he literally threw himself face down on the floor. I think that was the moment, so Rik says, at which I was summoned.”

“Summoned you?” I queried

“Well maybe it was a joke, but Rik always says that he summoned me up, maybe its a sex thing, he was having a bad time in his personal life at the time, I think he wanted a playmate, I know I did. He asked him demona to send him something.”

“Did you know that at the time?”

“I knew nothing about all this at the time, but.” Phil paused

“But” I prompted

“By the time I left the meadow that night, I was in love with him.”

We walked on in silence for a while.

I racked my brains for another conversational opener to break the impasse. “Have you been here ever since.”

“God no” she replied, “I went back to Denver pretty soon after that—days even.”

“But you came back?”

“I came back—had to really—something had changed in me—I’d become what Crowley called a scarlet woman—I needed to explore that further with the person who’d really opened me out.” Maybe I’d flinched when Phil had used that term scarlet women—a wicked expression passed across her face, she’d seen it too. “Hey” she said, “want to do something naughty?”

My mind drifted, I could see us sinking down together on the nearby patch of grass. There was nobody around and even if they had been, we didn’t care, we were shameless. The words of a song ran through my head “I dreamt I was making mad passionate love on the heath. Tearing off tights with my teeth....”

But I couldn’t see Phil’s body, only the body of that prostitute, back in Amsterdam.

In an instant I was back again, steady myself again the guard—rail of the footbridge. I wondered whether that was what they call a flashback.

Phil said “just kidding. Hey, are you alright—you looked funny?”

“Sure I’m alright, just went off on a whole little trip when you spoke. Did you sense that.”

“Ohhh,” Phil uttered her funny little mannerism again, “maybe I caste a glamour over you, I’ve been practicing.”

“Is that what Rik taught you?”



“I think it comes naturally to people like us.”

“Can I ask you a personal question.”

“You can ask.”

“When I spoke to Rik the other day he talked about his dilemma, but..”

Phil interrupted, “but he never got round to telling you what that was, he wandered off on some tangent.”

“Yes” I replied “that was it, do you know what the dilemma might be?”

“I think so, as it probably involves me. I guess the dilemma is between normal romantic love and the kind of more imaginative relationship, which, for a long time Rik and I had.”

“I’m not sure I’m following you.”

“Its like this,” Phil went on, “Rik and I connected for just a few days before I had to return to America. I really did have to return, even though Rik sometimes wonders whether he shouldn’t have asked me to stay then. But all through that year we had the most intense connections.” She paused and looked uncertain of whether to go on but then said “sometimes it was so full on, he’d appear to me in dreams, not like ordinary dreams, he tell me things I needed to know. Have you ever heard Rik drum?”

It seemed an odd question, I couldn’t see how it might be threaded with what she’d just said but I replied “sure, I heard him the other day, I really like the way he drums. What is that got to do with anything?”

“Its an example, just one example amongst many strange things that happened during our separation, that’s all, Rik says that his drumming really improved in the year I was away and that he’s stumbled on his own method of playing following instructions he got from me in a dream! Don’t you think that’s strange?”

“Everything we do is strange. But I think I’m starting to understand. So when you came back did you still inspire each other in the same way.”

Phil looked sad but went on “yes at first, yes, we burnt like flames but things soon got too down to earth, living together and all. That’s when I moved out and went back to my old boyfriend. I thought if I was going to have a boyfriend I may as well have someone who fulfils my social needs even if it can’t be as spiritual.”

“What is the difference.”

Phil paused, you won’t like this but I’m going to say it anyway—someone younger, better looking and above all better dressed than Rik. He just doesn’t care about these things, I respect that but sometimes I just want to be looked after.”

I grunted. “So what is the dilemma?”



“OK, last answer, else we’re be late for the ritual. The dilemma is on one side an active imaginal life full of creativity, to get that you cannot have what most people want, a happy normal relationship. Its the tension that provokes the god. Rik’s dilemma is probably wondering which he wants, a nice settled home life or a year of riding the Hermetic roller coaster. He called me up afterall, and how successful he was, who says you don’t get what you want? Maybe he’s wondering whether to have another go or maybe he’s had his little adventure and now its time to write it all up and go. Its a dilemma.”

It certainly was and I knew which I would choose.



## Believer

*Miriam R. Sachs Martin*

I tell her I want her to come with me to temple: temple, my bi-weekly shot in the arm of hope.

“It’s a literal transfusion,” I say, how I stumble in exhausted, fearful, empty – I open my veins - and the rabbi, the singing, the dancing, the “*od yavo shalom aleinu, od yavo shalom aleinu, od yavo shalom aleinu V'al kulam...*” all of this, I tell her, the giving of gratitude, the sending of healing thoughts, all of it fills me back up enough, finally, or at least the possibility of enough, right now. And that’s all I want, all I ever wanted, was for Right Now To Be Enough.

I tell her I want her to come with me to temple, because I laugh, and I cry, every time. I sing, “*Salaam, aleinu v'al kol ha-olam. Salaam, salaam.*” And occasionally I even join the happy dancing line of sweaty Jews practicing the religion of Right Now Can Be Enough.

And then I go downstairs and wash the dishes afterwards for the *Oneg*, my little service of thanks. And the hot soapy water seals the wounds; it is simple and sweet on my scars.

So: “I want you to come with me,” I say, and “I’ll go with you to Church, to Glide Memorial.” But then I remember that it’s in the morning, and honey, I don’t do mornings, so I laugh “If you can get me out of bed.”

“Oh, I’ll get you out of bed,” she replies. This sounds teasing and also promising so I lilt back “Yeah, how?”

“I’ll pick you up in my arms.” she says. “I’ll wrap you in blankets and take you out to the van; we’ll drive over the Bay Bridge and you’ll be wrapped up, snug. Once we get to Glide, I’ll open the door, pick you up, bring you -bundled- inside, and you’ll be warm and cozy and the music in there? It will wake you up.”

“You can pick me up?” I say, sweetly touched and a little split apart inside, yearning for that possibility of Enough.

“Oh yes,” she says.

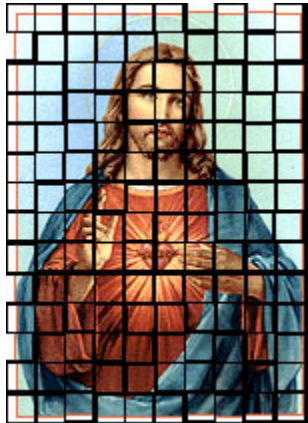
“Yes, I sure can.”



**EUCHARIST**

by Bruce Watkins, Ph.D.

“Take and eat; this is my body.”  
(Matthew 26:26)



Father Frank Bermel was reading an Anne Rice novel, *Tale of the Body Thief*. Lestat had traded bodies with a mortal, who had stolen Lestat’s powerful vampire body. The deal was to trade back after three days. But, the body thief had disappeared, and Lestat had no powers to find him. He sought out his mortal friend, David Talbot, to help him.

Frank mused. What was Lestat thinking? Didn’t he know that life is sometimes irreversible? Of course, he did. He had become a vampire—a man-eating monster—irreversibly. And, here, was his chance to turn back time, and try mortality again. Sure! I would’ve done the same thing. But, I am much more identified with his friend, David. I would love to have a friend like Lestat. That would be truly thrilling—a being, so different, so full of power, my friend. And, he would seek me out for help. That would be the best part.

But, that’s why I’m a priest! Jesus is Lestat, and He seeks me out for help with his mortal children. There’s an idea . . . maybe, for a sermon!

Glee tickled Frank’s tummy, and spread throughout his groin. He closed the book and checked his watch. 5:30. Haven’t had a customer for thirty minutes. Looks like Saturday afternoon Confession is closed.

Frank turned off the light on the table next to his chair, and left the little sitting room. As he was locking the door, he heard footsteps to his right. A lithe man with flaxen hair was approaching him.

“Am I too late for confession?”

“No. You’re just in time. You almost missed me.”

“I could come back another time.”

“No. Come in.”

The two men entered the little room. Frank pointed to the chair across from his.

“I hope you’ll be comfortable in that.”



The lithe man took the chair. "It's fine. Are we doing this face to face?"

"Would you prefer, I turn away?" Frank studied the man. He was athletic-looking, lean, muscular, strong. Frank guessed that he looked young for his age. The man was probably in his early forties.

The man brushed his hand through his flaxen hair, and studied the priest, finding him young, and cute. He noticed that energy exuded from his hazel eyes. He was wearing a sweat shirt, jeans, and running shoes. Well, I lucked out. I got the cute one. This should make the whole thing much more enjoyable. His Sunday sermons are very revolutionary. But, he's young and so innocent looking. Just like I was at that age. Boy, am I gonna shock him. Tighten your seat belts. It's gonna be a bumpy ride.

"No. Face to face will be fine. I am Len Hirsch." Len introduced himself, and extended his hand.

"Frank Bermel." The two men shook hands.

"I suppose I should start with a little background." Len offered.

"Anyway you like."

"OK. Here goes. First off, just like you, Frank, I am a Roman Catholic priest. I am with a small order, called, Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament. Mostly, we are a devotional order that does community service. We believe heavily in our devotion to the Eucharist. There was a time when we would devote ourselves nonstop to the adoration of the Eucharist, taking turns."

"Turns?"

"Right. Each of us signed up for one hour of lying face down on the floor in front of the Eucharist, twenty-four hours a day. When we were off, we combined chores around the house with community work. I'm a psychologist. I serviced an open-door, free clinic."

Len paused, and glanced at Frank. "I have been attending St. Finbar's for about seven months."

"Yes. I recognize you from Communion."

"I have enjoyed your sermons, Frank. I especially like the way you insist that God has made all of us the way we are. No matter what that may be, God intends us to be ourselves. Last week, you moved the whole thing into a daring corner."

Frank nodded.

"You told us we needed to reassess this whole 'sin thing'. Instead of looking at ourselves as sinners, we need to look at ourselves as uniquely created by God. Each unique nature needs to fulfill himself. Have I got the gist of it?"





“Pretty much. We need to discover how God created us. We need to stop looking at how the world wants to create us. We are created in God’s image. If we can discover how God created us, then we can become what God always wanted us to be.”

“Yeah! That’s the idea! I like that idea. Like I said, I’m a psychologist, as well as a priest. I use that in my therapy work. Rather than change a person, I try to get him to accept himself and embrace himself—really become himself. If he has a troubling part, you don’t excise it. You don’t cut off his broken arm. You try to heal it into its real nature, and integrate it into the whole person. So, then he can use that troubling part in his whole person.”

“That’s very interesting.” Frank responded. “That’s a psychological take on my spirituality. But, Len, you’re not here to discuss that. Are you?”

“No. I am on sabbatical from the priesthood. I needed time to sort out my sexuality and my vow of celibacy/chastity. Frank, I’m gay.”

“Oh, that sin!” Frank smiled.

“Is it?” Len asked.

“I’m not gay, Len. So, I wouldn’t know. Is it for you?”

“I don’t think so. At least, I’m beginning to think that way. When I first discovered this about me, I felt terrible. I felt like some kind of monster.

“I never had a clue. I knew there was something different about me. I thought it was my calling to the priesthood that made me less interested in girls. So, I laid the whole sexuality to rest. I entered seminary out of high school. I studied hard. I devoted myself to the Blessed Sacrament. I was sent on a teaching assignment at a Marianist elementary, junior high school.

“One day, I was headed for lunch, and decided to take a short cut through the gym, right through the shower room. There were a lotta boys, mostly prepubescent, showering after swimming. One of them was quite mature for his age. He had all of the necessary equipment—all in the right order.

“I was transfixed. You know, a little bit the way you see saints transfixed passionately on Christ. Like Francis of Assisi receiving the stigmata, I gaped. Electricity sizzled through my body. I forced myself to leave. Once outside, I pulled myself together, and simply admonished myself that maybe I shouldn’t go into the shower room anymore.”

“Funny how God visits a person,” Frank offered. “He knocked the apostle, Paul, off his horse on his way to Damascus to persecute the Christians. He knocked you over by showing you a naked boy on your way to lunch!”

“You think God showed me that boy?”



“Maybe, it was one of His angels. You know He’s pretty busy with the whole world.” Frank smirked.

“An angel showed me that boy?” Len asked, surprised.

“You could look at it that way.” Frank agreed. “That isn’t quite what I meant. I was thinking maybe, the naked boy was an angel.”

“He was! Oh, he was! If only you coulda seen him!” Len blushed. “But, I guess he wouldn’t’ve affected you the same way.”

“Probably not.” Frank agreed. “But, I do like naked bodies. They’re so pretty.”

“Pretty?”

“Yes!” Frank enthused. “The colors, the lines, the glow . . . very pretty!”

“Pretty.” Len stared.

Frank blushed, and stammered, “Ss . . . so you were saying . . .”

“It was terrible, at first. Avoiding the shower room didn’t help. I started noticing all men. I couldn’t stop noticing them. As much as I enjoyed looking, I was appalled. Eventually, I started fantasizing about them, and masturbating to the fantasies. I felt like I was colliding with these fantasies. I couldn’t believe what I wanted to do with these men—what I wanted them to do with me.

“Then, I realized it. I wasn’t colliding with anything. I was discovering me. These fantasies came from me. I liked these fantasies. And, Frank, these fantasies wouldn’t go away. In fact, I started to remember that I had had fantasies like these, all my life. I had just, somehow, forgotten.

“I felt like I had fallen into a deep ditch. I couldn’t get out of it. Then, I realized that I was that ditch. This whole realization was irreversible. I was going to be this man-hungry monster forever.

“So be it. I told myself. That is my cross to carry. Jesus will help me. I threw myself into my work. I studied. I read. I prayed. I threw myself into the Blessed Sacrament. And there it was!

“As I lay, face down on the floor, in front of the body of Jesus Christ—His body that he requested me to eat—you can’t begin to imagine. I mean to say, I had to lay there for an hour, every day, with my groin against the hard floor, feasting on Jesus.

“Very soon, I couldn’t even look at a crucifix. I had truly become a monster. Like some vampire who can’t look at the crucifix.” Len paused, and glanced at Frank, wondering. I don’t think he’s getting it. Here goes . . .

“You understand that Jesus is all but naked on that cross?”

“Yes.”

“He was a carpenter.” Len added.



“Right.”

“Physical labor had turned his body . . . pretty.”

“Oh.” Frank’s hazel eyes lit up. “Most crosses do show him in good shape.”

“Exactly. I had been in love with a very handsome Jesus. I had been feasting on his body, everyday. He and I were in very close communion. Jesus knew me better than anyone else. He was inside of me. I would talk to Him, always. Jesus was my lover!”

“As He is mine!” Frank told him.

“Yes, and NO!” Len disagreed. “I had been hiding my true homosexual nature from myself by acting it out with Jesus. I was in love with a man named, Jesus. Like I say, I was hiding my true nature from myself by acting it out with Jesus. This was a monstrosity. Blasphemy. Sacrilege.

“I started to run . . . from Jesus. I tried to avoid Him in my thoughts, and feelings. Problem was, I still loved Him. So, it was like Jonah. You know the story in the Bible, Frank?”

“Sure. God told Jonah to go to Nineveh, and preach His word there. Nineveh was Israel’s greatest enemy. So, Jonah got on a boat going in the opposite direction. Then, there was a storm, and the crew threw him overboard, after he had told them that he was running away from God. Then, the whale swallowed him, and belched him up three days later. And, he went to Nineveh. You can’t run away from God.”

“No! You can’t, especially when you love Him. And, I realized my love for Jesus was real. I loved Him, deeply. I might have been hiding from myself by loving Him; but my love for Him was real. I admired Him as a person. He understood earthly needs, and had come to peace over them; so He could interact with anyone with any need, lovingly, courageously. He was a real man!

“I loved Him. He was my ideal. So, I felt very betrayed by Him.”

“Betrayed? How so?” Frank asked.

“Betrayed because I was very close to Jesus. I talked to him, daily. He would answer me. Oh, don’t get me wrong. I didn’t hear voices. Although . . . I don’t discount those that do. But, I never did. Nonetheless, Jesus and I talked, daily.”

“His spirit was in your heart.” Frank offered.

Len jerked toward Frank, and whispered, “Exactly so! Then, you understand?”

“I do.”

The two priests stared silently at each other, in communion.

Len continued. “His presence was in my life. His spirit was in my spirit. I would watch for signs in things that would happen. I knew Jesus. I knew how He felt about everything, especially about me. Or so I thought. And so, when this homosexual beast



popped out, I felt betrayed. Why didn't You tell me about this gay stuff?! I talk to You everyday, and not a word about that? You must have known about it. You know everything. You know me better than I do! Why didn't you tell me? We were family."

"Did He answer?"

"Oh, yes. His way." Len paused, then added, "He has His way."

"Yes. He does." Frank agreed.

Len nodded. "You know, the thing about the priesthood is that it's all these men living together. If nothing else, the priesthood is a community. Some of them are better communities than others. Some of them are like families. But, family or not, the priesthood is all men living together.

"As much as I tried to hide my homosexuality from myself, I was up close next to men, all day, all night. And, these are men who are comfortable with being men. They enjoy the company of men. At least, that's how I saw it. I supposed they imagined themselves to be like the original twelve disciples of Christ. That original little group was thirteen men traveling from town to town—on foot. They would walk all day, and make camp at night. They ate together, bathed together, dreamed dreams together. They were a tiny community. They knew each other well. Together, they had a vision. They were a family—a family with dreams!

"I was part of those dreams, Frank—as much a part of them as any of them. There was this one fella, Rick Larsen. He was a farmer from Wisconsin. He had a farmer's body. It was a marvel. Just watching him carry his frame around would make my day. He and I were friends. We had become very close, before my realization. I mean, we were as close as I could be with people, at that time. Rick was wide open, ready to get close. I was timid, and distant.

"But, we were close. We would oftentimes meet each other in the countryside, alone. We would have the Eucharist there, just the two of us."

"Just the two of you?" Frank interrupted.

"Yes. I know. Most orders frown on two men going off alone."

Frank agreed. "The rule for us was, 'Never one, seldom two, always three.'"

"Rick scoffed at all of that. He always made our Eucharist picnics very intimate and very elaborate. I remember once, he was unpacking a piece of blue cloth.

"He smiled at me and told me, 'I have something very special for us, today, Len. I hope you find it special. My sister made it for me. Look.'

"He shook the material out and laid it on the grassy slope.

"It's a quilt!" I exclaimed. 'Beautiful colors. A patchwork. And the patches are all different kinds of fabrics, and patterns.'



‘That’s because,’ he explained, ‘my sister used old shirts that my brothers and I, and my Dad and Grampa wore when we worked the farm. And, she used pieces of dresses that she and my Mom and Gammy wore. See here,’ he pointed at a particular patch. ‘This pretty piece of blue and gold was one of my Mom’s dresses. It was one of my favorites. She always wore it during canning season. Everytime, I see it, I can taste her January peach pie.’

‘I studied the quilt and found pieces of burlap distributed throughout it. ‘What are these?’

‘Rick chuckled. He popped a cigarette into his mouth. I watched his hands cup his Bic lighter around the cigarette. Much to my chagrin, he smoked, like a chimney.

‘Please, sit down, Len.’

‘I did. I sat on his family’s quilt, on our beautiful grassy slope overlooking a walnut orchard. We sat cross-legged, facing each other, nudging our knees into each other. It was just like Rick. In one swift move, he had welcomed me into the intimacy of his family—on that pretty blue quilt

‘So, the burlap?’

‘Right,’ he said. ‘My Grampa usta smoke. He rolled his own cigarettes. These little pieces of burlap were the tiny pouches of tobacco that he carried on him every day of his life. My sister collected and saved some of them.’

‘So, we have your Grampa to blame for your addiction to nicotine.’

‘Rick placed a hand on my knee. ‘I have a report from our last Confession.’

‘Your work in the bakery—your problems with your boss, Brother Maurice. How’s it going?’

‘Well. It goes well. I used your idea—that he reminds me of my Dad. I told him that I couldn’t stand him criticizing me, constantly. I told him it reminded me of my Dad. All my life, I told him, my Dad has criticized me and kept me out—pushed me away. I told him stories from my childhood, from high school, from even now—how my Dad keeps me at bay with his criticisms.’

‘What did he do with that?’

‘Len, it was a miracle. That awful scowl that he always wears began to melt. He opened up to me. To me, Len! He told me he had the same kinda Dad—that somehow he had become just like his Dad—mean and critical. Len, we forgave each other. It was a fuckin’ miracle. And, all because of your idea. Len, you are so smart about people. How do you know that stuff?’

‘It was true, what Rick was telling me. I had inspired insight into people. And, this was before I had started studying psychology. A light would come on in my brain. It



was a gift, this light. Trouble was, this light was cold. It was in my head. It was a refrigerator light. You could see all the food. But, the food was all cold. Close the door, and what do you have? A big cold box. My light was dead. It was spiritually dead. I didn't have the warm flicker from the live fire of a lit candle. No. My light was cold. It was dead.

"Rick wasn't finished. He told me, 'You vex me so, Len. I must confess. I sometimes become enraged with you. I hammer and hammer at you. But, you are far away. So cold, so distant. I know you don't know you are. I know you aren't trying to be. But, sometimes, I get so angry at you, I wish you evil. Please, forgive me.'

"He was begging my forgiveness for *my* coldness. Immediately, a light went on in my head. It said, 'Just like your Dad.' But, I knew, as he pushed his knees into mine, that to say that would be so cold, so clinical, so hurting. Instead, I told him, 'You do touch me, Rick. Just today, your quilt, sharing your family touched me deeply.'

'Why didn't you show it?! I never would've known!'

'You're right, Rick. I am cold. I am distant. Please . . . forgive me.'

"He lit up, smiling joyfully. I do! I do forgive you! And so does Brother Maurice. Look what he's given us.' Rick withdrew a small loaf of bread from his picnic basket. A lamb was emblazoned on the top of it, in sesame seeds. Rick held the bread between us, and began the Eucharist:

*'While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.'*

"I watched Rick's hands break the loaf of bread. What can I tell you about his hands? Rick had the body of a man who had worked all his life with his hands. One is left wondering whether the hands were a manifestation of the body, or that the body grew out of the astonishing hands.

"I watched him break a small piece from the loaf. I opened my mouth, and he placed it on my tongue, telling me, 'Len, this is the body of Christ, broken for you.' He raised his eyes to heaven, and he prayed. 'Sweet Jesus, broken for us, I pray that you might break open my friend, Len, so that all might see his beauty, so that he might share his beauty.'

"I had brought the wine. It was a good one. California, Charles Krug Cabernet. I remember it well. I poured it into the small clay cup that I had fired in our seminary kiln.

*'Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.'*

"Like I said, the wine was good. We drank it all. The afternoon was warm and breezy. We shed our shirts and lay down on our backs on the quilt, next to each other. I



became drowsy, as I listened to Rick chatter on about an elementary school teacher from his childhood.

“As I drifted into sleep, I felt Rick’s hand push up against mine. His little finger tickled onto the back of my hand, and then his entire manly hand rested on mine. I jerked. I felt like a farm grown chicken, head under his beloved master’s foot, ax raised high. In that moment, not only does the chicken trust his master; but he also instantaneously discovers the purpose of his life.

“Under the velvet thrall of the Eucharist wine, I audaciously rolled my hand over, palm up. Rick entwined his fingers with mine, and his hand captured mine. This was the hand that he had used to bale hay on his farm. This was the hand that he used daily to minister to his body’s needs. This was the hand that had placed the Eucharist bread in my mouth. This was the very same hand that used his Bic lighter to light his cigarettes.

“And now, this wonderful hand lit the candle of my soul. And there we lay, holding hands, on his beautiful family quilt, reflecting the blue quilt of sky, shook out by God’s very own hand. Hot wax dripped into my body. I tumbled into fervent sleep.”

Frank studied Len, who was staring at the colors on the carpet cast by the setting sun through the window in the little sitting room. Len looked up, and told him, “Rick loved me. And, I began to despise him, after I realized I was this irreversible monster. The more I realized I was gay, the more I despised him. I started pushing him away. I did awful things to him. Terrible things. Once, we made plans for our countryside Eucharist, and I simply didn’t show up. When he inquired about it, I told him he should grow up, and stop acting like a little boy. I wasn’t his big brother.”

“How did he take that?” Frank asked.

“Not well. It made him cry. He told me I was his best friend in all his life. He wanted to know why I was turning away from him. I told him I had better things to do than waste time on silly friendships. He didn’t buy it, and he wouldn’t leave me alone.

“Finally, he got it out of me. I told him I was homosexual.” Len stopped.

Frank leaned forward.

Len cleared his throat. “It was then that I realized that Jesus still loved me. Jesus always loved me, even though I had always been gay. It didn’t matter to Him, at all. In fact, He enjoyed my relationship to Him, even though I was using it to hide from myself. In fact, He not only knew all of this; but He had created that defense in my heart. Using Him to hide from myself was His idea, all along. Like I said, I was hiding my true homosexual nature from myself by acting it out with my lover, Jesus. Using Him to hide from myself was His idea, all along!” Len looked at Frank for comprehension.

“Donchu see, Frank?” Len asked.



“See what?”

“I was mad at Jesus for my being gay. I was mad at Him because He would never accept me as this irreversible monster. That was all my own idea. That was my fantasy of Jesus; because it’s how I felt about myself. I could never accept myself for being gay. I hated that part of me. I hid from it by aligning myself with Jesus—who, I thought, could never accept that part of me, either.

“Jesus let me do that. In fact, I think it was His idea. And, as I got closer to Him, and fell in love with Him, He found the right time to reveal my nature to me.

“As I formed a relationship with Him—the real Him and not my fantasy of Him—He revealed myself to me. He sent me that boy/angel in the showers. As I formed a family with Him, He sent me all of those men in the priesthood community. He sent me Rick Larsen.” Len paused.

Frank leaned forward. “What happened when you told Rick about your being gay?”

Len smiled. “He told me he loved me. He told me he kinda knew for a long time that I was gay. He never brought it up because he thought I was too sensitive about it. He told me he was straight; but that he loved me.”

“How was that for you?”

“Not enough.” Len grinned. “I told him we couldn’t be friends anymore, because I felt too ashamed around him knowing that I was attracted to him. Everytime I saw him, I would be engulfed with sexual fantasies. I told him that.”

“What did he do with that?” Frank asked.

Len chuckled. “He hugged me, and rubbed me, and squeezed my butt. Then, he kissed me, and I mean kissed me. He put his tongue in my mouth. And, when he was done kissing me, he told me he loved me, and didn’t care about my fantasies. He told me I could fantasize all I wanted about him. I think his exact words were, ‘Go ahead, Len. Fuck me, in your mind. Jack off to fucking me. It won’t do you any good. It will never happen in reality. Consider me safe—inside your mind!’”

Frank sat back in his chair, and sighed. “Jesus loves you. Jesus created you. Jesus takes care of you. He knew you had to be in a relationship with Him and with other men to discover yourself. You couldn’t do it on your own. You needed the priesthood community.”

Silent tears fell from Len’s eyes. “I could never have done it on my own. I could never have accepted myself as gay on my own. I needed Jesus. I needed the community of the priesthood. I needed the Eucharist with Rick. I shudder to think of where I would be, today, without all of that.”





The two priests sat silently. Both of them thought about Len and Rick lying on the green grass, holding hands after the Eucharist. The quilt of the blue sky, shook out by the hand of God, fell on them and opened them up.

Eventually, Len spoke. "I have come to Confession, today, to talk about my sex life. I told you everything I needed to about my past, except for one last thing. I gradually have grown to like myself. I have always been interested in other people. But, before, it was as a priest doing God's will. Gradually, I have been able to come out of my shell, and to relate with others more intimately. I believe my relationship with Jesus has developed my interest in relating with others, especially one other very special person. I have left the priesthood, on sabbatical, to explore my need for a loving relationship with one other man.

"Lately, I have been having sex in a public toilet on the beach, near here." Len glanced at Frank. "I know what you're thinking. Toilet sex. What does that say about my self-concept?"

"I wasn't thinking that, Len. Actually, i was thinking that a public toilet is like a community toilet. But, your comment about self-concept is important."

"It is. But, not for today. Today, we need to look at that toilet in the same way we look at that filthy manger in the Christmas story. Jesus is present everywhere. He loves every one. I have been having sex with one particular man. I think I am in love with him."

"How long have you known him?"

"About a month."

"You sure this isn't just lust?"

"Oh, it is that. There is lotsa lust. I am dazzled by this man. You remember that boy/angel in the shower room?"

Frank nodded.

"He grew up! And, he meets me, early in the morning, to fuck me in that toilet." Len grinned, and then added, "Yes, that community toilet."

"Just sex?" Frank asked.

"Not for me. And, I feel many things from him. He is a very nice man. He likes me. I know he does. He treats me very kindly. But, he is very private. And that brings me to my visit to Confession, today."

"You have something to confess?"

"I think this man might be married."



## Two Hundredth Homosap

*Osho*

Two hundred enlightened people will be enough to raise the consciousness of humanity, at least fully to the superconscious level. And that's enough to prevent war, to prevent violence, to prevent all kinds of crimes, to prevent all kinds of prejudices--not that the whole humanity will become enlightened, but moving from conscious to superconscious is not a small change. It is of tremendous value, it is ten times more powerful than your conscious. If you can see only hundred feet, suddenly you can see thousand feet, suddenly your eyes have become a source of seeing things in their clarity, in their depth...

Because the world has become small, it is possible now to do what was not possible before. Buddha tried, he managed at least one dozen people to become enlightened, but they could affect only the consciousness of a small area of the world. It is as if you burn one candle in the room. You can burn ten candles in the room; the room will be a little more lighted, but the whole world will not be affected by it. The candles are needed around the whole world, and my sannyasins have to become torches, not just candles. And if we can create--and we can create--in every country now we have sannyasins; even in communist countries, we can manage. Two hundred is just the minimum number; more is possible. And these people, just by their very presence, will raise the whole conscious level of humanity, will give them clarity, vision, insight, and will make them capable of dropping all nonsense that they have been carrying up to now. Then the politicians cannot exploit them, neither the priests can exploit them. All their gullibility will disappear.

And these enlightened people having nothing to do, just their presence is a catalytic agent. Just as the sun rises and birds start singing and the flowers start opening and spreading their fragrance, whenever there is an enlightened being birds start singing, flowers start opening, and there is great fragrance released.

*The Last Testament, vol 4, Chapter 30*



### ***Through It Came Bright Colors* by Trebor Healey**

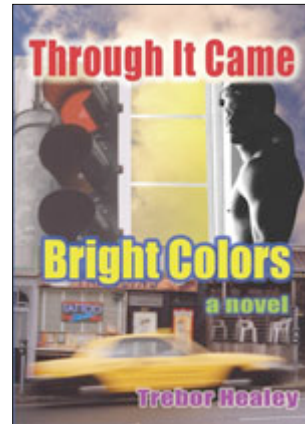
*Through It Came Bright Colors*, Trebor Healey's debut novel just released from Haworth Press, tells the story of 21-year-old Neill Cullane. Neill's world suddenly implodes when his younger brother is diagnosed with cancer. As his family scrambles to deal with and make sense of the tragedy, Neill precariously clings to his role as brother and caretaker, even as the issues that his brother's illness has brought to the surface threaten to overwhelm him.

But it isn't until he meets the enigmatic Vince Malone, himself a cancer patient, that Neill begins to finally face up to the urgency in his own life. Events conspire to bring the two young men together as Neill comes to realize that his brother's physical vulnerability has awakened him to his own physicality and sexuality.

Neill's subsequent secretive and tumultuous affair with the beautiful junkie/philosopher/thief, Vince, parallels the family's travails fighting Peter's recurring cancer as Neill struggles to find a way to break the news to his already devastated family. Paralyzed by shame, Neill is unable to act until Vince makes an irreversible sacrifice which allows Neill to finally understand that, far from wounding his family further, his revelation is a gift that can help his family rediscover its lost wholeness.

Mr. Healey, known in queer literary circles, for his inspired poetry and short fiction which have appeared in several well-received collections including *Queer Dharma* and *The Best Gay Erotica 2003*, Mr. Healey's stands apart from the crop of modern gay writers. The themes and characters he weaves into his texts are not the pabulum that mark so much of modern gay writing without going to the extreme of Dennis Cooper or Tim Barrus. His characters have an authenticity and realness that have more in common with Jean Genet than Gordan Merrick.

On 21 September, Mr. Healey launched a nationwide book tour with an event at the One Institute & Archives in Los Angeles. The tour runs through early December and includes appearances across the country from California to Arizona to Minnesota to New York to Florida to... full schedule is available at the author's website [www.treborhealey.com](http://www.treborhealey.com).



**Trebor Healey, author of *Through It Came Bright Colors***

*Interviewed by Mike McGinty*

Mike McGinty: You begin the book with a beautiful quote described as an Ojibwa Song: “Sometimes I go about pitying myself when all the time I am carried on great wings across the sky.” Who are the Ojibwa and how did you come across the quote?

Trebor Healey: The Ojibwa are a Native American tribe from the Minnesota and North Dakota area. I’ve been into Native American literature, spirituality, practices, etc. for awhile and I ran across the quote in a few places.

Mike McGinty: Why did you choose it to open your novel?

Trebor Healey: I thought it captured exactly how we often don’t trust the process of life and so we don’t really see what’s happening. My novel is about people in difficult situations who do trust, and people in difficult situations who don’t, as well as about people who learn to trust. Basically, the quote is a liberating kind of poem/idea and it reminds you to just chill and deal with what’s in front of you and trust it!

Mike McGinty: There’s another Native American reference in the early part of the novel, when something Paul says makes Neill think of Chief Joseph and his famous quote. Who was Chief Joseph?



Trebor Healey: Chief Joseph was the leader of the Nez Perce tribe in the Pacific Northwest. The Nez Perce were basically forced off their land and hounded by the U.S. Cavalry. Chief Joseph surrendered eventually, after a long game of cat and mouse through Idaho and nearly to Canada.

Mike McGinty: So what did Chief Joseph say that makes Neill think of him?

Trebor Healey: He made one of those great inspired speeches, which included the oft-quoted line I was referring to: "I will fight no more forever." Neill's relationship with his older brother Paul is problematic – they've been fighting for years, and it all suddenly seems pointless when their little brother, Peter, is diagnosed with cancer. Neill's process is very much about a series of surrenders to what is, versus what he wants his life to be or thinks it should be.

Mike McGinty: Your prose is obviously influenced by the fact that you're a poet. Was this something you consciously strove for, or did it come naturally?

Trebor Healey: It's just how I write. Fortunately, I've always been a narrative poet, more interested in lyricism and imagery that moves toward other imagery so that connections are being made that carry the story forward.

Mike McGinty: Alexander Chee's *Edinburgh* has this same poetic sensibility, and tackles a similarly tough subject of its own: the sexual abuse of children. Do you think such highly emotional topics - fraught with passion, loss and grief - lend themselves more easily to this kind of treatment?

Trebor Healey: I think poetry emerges out of trauma. Poetry is raw – the raw truth. This is the necessity of poetry. They don't have fiction workshops in housing projects and prisons, but they do have poetry workshops. It's how the heart speaks when it's really raw. For me, it's the best tool I have in writing fiction. It's like my hammer.

Mike McGinty: You mentioned how you like to make connections that carry the story forward. In the book, Neill finds a lot of similarities between his relationship with Vince and Peter's struggle with cancer. He even says that "the two situations were the same" on some level. Does Neill view his homosexuality as a cancer?



Trebor Healey: No, but I understand what you mean. There is a parallel here, at least in Neill's mind. Again, it's the traumatic dilemma of both situations. Neill feels hopeless, full of dread, "diagnosed" in a sense with being queer. At the outset of the story it's a curse for him, and then he finds Vince, who liberates him from that view as well as confirms it. Part of what the story is about is learning to see things for what they are versus the inaccurate metaphors we attach to things. But it's also about making use of



metaphor as a door to understanding. Metaphor is inexact, often a kind of broad sword, but metaphor is a process too and it can evolve along with a character. Good metaphors do.

Mike McGinty: Neill certainly evolves over the course of the book. He starts out as a suburban, middle-class guy who is innocent in many ways. He even describes himself as "a blank sheet of paper in need of a story." Enter Vince, a thief, a junkie, a bitter, angry survivor of child abuse and cancer. Did you struggle with making their relationship believable?

Trebor Healey: Not at all. Opposites attract. Neill is like most gay kids from the suburbs – his spirit has been slowly dying for years. Neill wants to learn to live for real and he comes from a world that doesn't trust life; that keeps it in check. Enter Vince with everything that's missing. He's the antidote to the suburbs.

Mike McGinty: The novel contains many references to religion and spirituality. One of the obvious ones is that you name Neill's brothers Peter and Paul. Why did you choose those names?

Trebor Healey: Well, it's my poetic connection to my Irish Catholic upbringing. I'm not a Christian now, but I love the story. It's a great story, full of great imagery. Saints Peter and Paul are really the fathers of the church, and they are very different archetypally. Peter is very human, full of doubt, stumbling even. Paul, on the other hand, is rigid,



evangelical, never doubts himself, a corruption of the original message—which is love, right? See the parallel in the brothers?

Mike McGinty: Vince introduces Neill to works like the Tibetan Book of the Dead and Jung's writings, and actually brings him on a visit to a Buddhist lama. What significance do these have?

Trebor Healey: Vince and Neill have been lied to by the world, like most gay people: the proscribed reality of the suburbs, Christianity, heterosexual hegemony, etc. They are two young men who are both very driven on a heart level, and they want to know what's going on. They want to find a way to live honestly in the world. The occult is always a good place to start, and it's probably the starting place of choice in San Francisco, if not most places nowadays where there are alternative communities. Wisdom exists for the most part outside of the mainstream.

Mike McGinty: There is a feeling of profound gratitude which comes through in the book's title and goes a lot deeper than "looking on the bright side of things." Neill was able to see the gifts in all the pain of what he went through. What does it take, in your opinion, for a person to be able to turn that corner and get to that place, instead of wallowing in misery?

Trebor Healey: Necessity, plain and simple. When you have no choice and cannot afford to wallow, you turn the corner. We are all stronger than we know. And all of us have incredible courage in reserve that we only discover when things go badly wrong. And so many things we perceive as 'bad' or 'tragic' in our lives often end up the things that make us real human beings. Support from others is essential I think too. Gratitude comes from love, and love comes from community.

Mike McGinty: A book like this could easily devolve into a tedious chronicle of doomed young love with a treacly disease-of-the-week TV movie feel to it. But none of it comes across that way. How did you avoid that booby trap?

Trebor Healey: Black humor. When my brother was ill, we used to watch those movies – Brian's Song and Something for Joey, all those – to take the edge off. Humor is a lot more powerful than sentimentality, I can tell you. But it's worth pointing out that there is something there in those films as well. Life is sometimes treacly. Hanging out with your



mother in a hospital while your brother moans in pain? It's like a cheap shot. We were brutally honest and we'd joke about how cliché things sometimes felt. I guess this is what TV culture does to one. In writing about it, I just tried to stay honest with myself and respectful of the feelings and the real situation. You've got to try to lift it up, over and over, when you write about this kind of thing. You can't let it fall into that comfortable, treacly Lazy Boy chair.

Mike McGinty: You avoid that nicely by including not one, but three coming-out scenes. But in each one, Neill expects a much worse reaction than he gets. In fact, he admits that "I'd underestimated them all." Do you think this is typical of gay people who come out?

Trebor Healey: No, I don't. I've heard horror stories, as have we all. Neill is a lucky boy. He's also a very cautious guy, so he tends to prepare for the worst. He's wounded and he's learned not to trust the world. I think gay people are wise not to expect much, and to be very wary – look at our political and religious culture. But I do think we often underestimate straight folks—or, I should say, the culture at large. The majority, which unfortunately is a silent majority for the most part, do not despise us. If we don't underestimate them, maybe they won't underestimate us.

Mike McGinty: The book deals with sibling rivalry, surviving cancer, first love, and a young person's struggle to find his identity. These are universal themes, but by presenting them in the context of homosexuality and coming out, do you think that makes your novel a "gay novel" or you a "gay writer?"

Trebor Healey: Oh that. Let me quote Jesus, whom I'm not in the habit of quoting: "It is you who say it." I'm kidding in a way. I don't really care. It's the reality of publishing and the reading public and this identity politics-focused culture. I'm happy to be called gay, homo, fag, queer. I'll thank you for calling me that. The gay community saved my life and has responded to my writing and supported me and I wouldn't be here without all of those great folks. I love queers, and am proud in any way I am associated with them. Sure, I want everyone to read my book and I hope they do, and I hope people don't limit themselves to their sexual orientation when choosing books to read. I certainly don't, nor do most readers I know.

Mike McGinty: So what are you choosing to read these days?





Trebor Healey: I've been reading a lot of short stories: Mary Gaitskill, Barry Lopez and Sherman Alexie really stand out. I'm reading a lot of contemporary writers too: David McConnell's *Firebrat*, Marshall Moore's *The Concrete Sky*, and Juliet Sarkessian's *Trio Sonata*.

Mike McGinty: What about books and authors that have influenced your work?

Trebor Healey: When I was in high school and college, I was super into Hemingway, Faulkner, Fitzgerald – I had to read everything they wrote. I did my senior thesis on Melville and read all his books, too. Then I discovered Jack Kerouac and Genet, Camus, Celine, Gide, Pablo Neruda, Rilke and Rumi. Later I got into Lawrence Durrell, Jeanette Winterson, Chekhov's short stories and Louise Erdrich and Lois Ann Yamanaka. The most important book of the last 10 years for me is Tom Spanbauer's *The Man Who Fell in Love With the Moon*. I was awestruck at this man's voice. It's with me forever.

Mike McGinty: And now your own book can be with others forever. What's next for you?

Trebor Healey: Well, I'm off to tour this book in October and November. I'm giving up my job and apartment, so who knows? I'm working on a new book – a road novel about a sort of drug-addled Huck Finn who finds his Jim in a Native American medicine man while he's riding his bike cross-country with his lover's ashes tied to the handlebars. I moved to LA to write *Through It Came Bright Colors*. LA has been good to me. Now I need a new city for a new book.

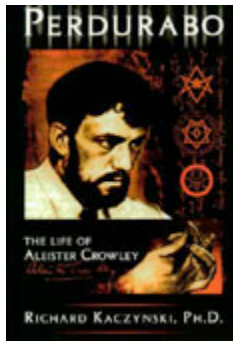


## Reviews

**Perdurabo The Life of Aleister Crowley**, by Richard Kaczynski, Ph.D.

(New Falcon Publications, 2002, \$19.95)

Reviewed by Ron Adams



Interesting book by Mr. Kaczynski, who got to go through old Crowley diaries and OTO papers, to write this one. Guess with all their legal problems, OTO is at least giving its blessing for Kaczynski's book. Seems Kaczynski used both the good stuff and the dirt on the old man. And what a book! Did you know what happened before Aleister Crowley was born? I didn't until Richard laid it all out. The book is full of these little surprises.

Richard shares some interesting facts about Aleister Crowley's life that I don't believe have seen the light of day until now. Do any of you know what happened to his folks, heck the whole town that they lived in, 3 days before Uncle Al was born (forced his mom's to go into early labor too)? In fact something similar happened when AC died.

Did Crowley ever sacrifice a goat with his Scarlet woman? You can find out what are the rumors or fact and which are the false ones, from this book.

What about all that nasty publicity Aleister Crowley got from the press? Why none other than rumors from angry, ex-members of Thelema. Seems Crowley was his own worst enemy, he pissed a lot of people off with his control drama.

Aleister Crowley's genius comes through though. He really knows his stuff, as his occult books and the Equinox have shown everyone already. Not many can rival Crowley knowledge and literary flare, and ability when it comes to magick.

There were a couple of times that Thelema began to flower, only to be shot in the foot by Crowley's short-sightedness. Its a wonder it ever became what it is today. Before you start to say I am dissing Crowley, before I read this book, I would have defended Crowley to anyone. Makes me wonder about the motive for this book coming out at this present time almost at the 100th year anniversary of the writing of the Book of the Law?

Though it clearly shows that Crowley started many New Age endeavors, that later people like Joseph Campbell, Wilhelm Reich, Carl Jung and Timothy Leary would go on



to develop. Crowley inspired many people from many fields, even actors and actresses and politicians. And all the great lives of artists and scientists that Crowley touched, like Austin Osman Spare, Dion Fortune, August Rodin, William Somerset Maugham, Evangeline Adams, Allan Bennett, Jack Parsons, Kenneth Grant, to name just a few.

Aleister Crowley's dedication to Thelema was slow in getting started, but then became all he did, and he did it at the expense of many other things. Almost blindly.

There are some interesting things in this book that you won't find anywhere else. I had hoped it would be a clear psychological look at Aleister Crowley, and the potential was there, but it suddenly turns into another 'lets bring Aleister Crowley, the man, down another notch'. It just ends up becoming another Tattler Enquirer piece of writing in some chapters. From reading these parts, it doesn't seem any different than other scandalous books about A.C. Uncle Al seems to lack any social graces and couldn't form meaningful relationship because he really didn't try. He was too busy performing sex magick all the time, impregnating women who then have miscarriages or give birth to girls.

"To worship me take wine and strange drugs whereof I will tell my prophet, and be drunk thereof! They shall not harm ye at all. It is a lie, this folly against self. The exposure of innocence is a lie." *Liber Al vel Legis*.

Most of his intimate women end up becoming alcoholics, so one wonders why *The Book of the Law* tells us that drugs and alcohol won't hurt us. Crowley seems to be more concerned with creating a male offspring to succeed him than spreading the Law of Thelema (isn't this old Aeon stuff?). Did he ever have a son? Find out in the book! And all of Crowley's male friends, like Victor Neuberg, Charles Stanfield Jones, Norman Mudd, and Israeli Regardie seem to become bitter enemies in the end, except for Regardie, who changed his mind about Crowley at the end.

It is a shame, but it appears to me that Norman Mudd might have been right, when he argued with Crowley about him not fulfilling his role as the Beast in the Book of the Law. Seems Crowley wasted a lot of time trying to marry rich widowers or getting his publishing friends hitched to them. Well you might agree or disagree. This book is a roller-coaster ride of ups and downs of the Aleister Crowley story, and how he manages to endure to the end. I think I felt every feeling possible, even pride and pity for what Aleister had to live through. I must say that by the time I finished reading the book, I felt much better about Crowley again. Very interesting approach in writing this book, it doesn't hold any punches in making Crowley look great or horrible, or was that Crowley who made himself look that way? At any rate, no one could ever confuse him with a Saint.



Aleister Crowley had a very complex life. Some things that Richard doesn't point out directly, about his possible work as a spy for America and England show a different side to Crowley's work altogether. And there are hints why Crowley ticked off the establishment, to say the least, in unknowingly revealing the Secret Bavarian Illuminati plans. Yes, this book has passion, tragedy, triumph, disgust, hate, stupidity, bad manners and even comedy! This was the man suppose to bring about the Law of Thelema? Seems to me, after reading this book, that Crowley really believed in "I can do whatever the hell I want to, because the gods are on my side." Though he did win me over again as the Master in the end, when he finally started to get it right, and step out of reacting to the Old Aeon energies flowing around and start engaging in the New Aeon energies. Crafty old man, AC was.

Even though my review here sounds disheartening, up and down, confusing, all over the board, I think that the book is still worth reading. It does dispel old myths, like where Aleister Crowley died and where he was not buried. It dispels these old myths, only to bring up new ones. Leave no stone unturned.

Want to read about the time he served mescal punch, to the press? Crowley had really weird dealings with the Masons and many occult lodges. He even dedicated a few pages to all the Masonic degrees bestowed on him. AC felt it a big joke. In fact the revival of wicca, through Gardener, was inspired by Crowley and Thelema, not the other way around. Though I am sure this is open for debate by many Wiccan and thelemites.

I can only shake my head and wonder what happened to the appeal Crowley once had. Maybe the work that he left behind is excellent, and like most guru's and messiah's, the man reeks of bad taste and personal problems. This version of Crowley shows the man, in modern psychological terms, as very 'Toxic'. Though it does show how terrible it might be to be like Moses, one foot in the promisedland and one foot in Egypt.

I would really like to see an open-minded book done on Aleister Crowley's psychological state. I think that would be more revealing. What I find ironic, is that Crowley usually put off anyone who got close enough to him, the women went off the deep end, and the men just got angry and walked away.

The most unusual story is the relationship with Frater Achad, Crowley's once and infamous Magickal Childe, as prophesied in *The Book of the Law*. Achad succeeded in helping Crowley get the American OTO going and even lent his vote for Crowley to head the OHO office (which failed at first). Liber 31 and Achad's later work with the Revised Egyptian Qabala seems to be more in line with what the Secret Chiefs were trying to get at when they uttered:



“My prophet is a fool with his one, one, one; are not they the Ox, and none by the Book? Abrogate are all rituals, all ordeals, all words and signs.”

“Behold! the rituals of the old time are black. Let the evil ones be cast away; let the good ones be purged by the prophet! Then shall this Knowledge go aright.” *Liber Al vel Legis*

The later work with the NAEQ, New Aeon English Qabala is very interesting, but this is another review. Breaking with Tradition, old Aeonic energies, seems to be one way to really get to know yourself separate from a product of culture and society. Crowley wrote Achad off as being insane, because of his writings. I guess it is true, you can't teach an old dog new tricks. Yet, even though he wrote Achad off he still corresponded with him, was polite in public, and gave him a nicely bound autographed print of Liber AL in those later years. So believe it or not, Crowley might have set the stage for Thelemic ethics, probably from his mistakes with his friends. His best relationship turned out to be right before his death, and that was with Lady Frieda Harris and we have the beautiful Thoth deck to show for that, though Ms. Harris also commented how the old man tried ever her angelic patience. She had a hard time keeping the old Coot away from the Gallery openings; which would have sabotaged their efforts to raise money to print the deck. And I guess, despite some rare Thoth deck editions, they had to wait until the technology was available for the beauty and wisdom of the Thoth deck to be revealed in the Sixties.

I still recommend that you read Kaczynski's book, if not just for the factoids and time line information, it really helped put the historical Crowley where he belongs and doesn't waste time on his morality and being evil, like other books. It just makes him look like a selfish jerk. But it makes him out to be the only one who could have handled it all, and endured to the end. I think maybe this is because of his adventurer and explorer energies. The man Crowley went from a millionaire without a purpose, dabbling in magick, to being poverty stricken but spiritually brilliant and empowering. Go figure. There will never be another Perdurabo. Makes me want to read the “Confessions” again.



**Gay Witchcraft: Empowering the Tribe**, Christopher Penczak  
(Red Wheel/Weiser, 2003, \$19.95)



Christopher Penczak's *Gay Witchcraft* stands alongside Gerald Gardner's *High Magic's Aid* and Starhawk's *Spiral Dance* as a landmark book in the modern literature of the Craft. The book Mr. Penczak has provided is not simply a collection of pro-gay essays on history or the connections between witchcraft and gay culture/politics. Instead he has produced a thorough introduction for the gay practitioner that possesses a richness that arises from the author's obvious understanding of his subject. Original b/w photographs nicely accent the beginning of each chapter. Mr. Penczak includes numerous spells, meditations and short rituals uniquely suited for the gay practitioner. In addition he provides informative and helpful introductions to each piece. He includes rites of passage, gay handfasting ritual, This is not a light book aimed at the teenage dabbler. It is rather a work for one genuinely interested in learning more about the practices of modern witchcraft and includes material across the spectrum of gay life and age. Penczak includes practices to ease with coming out and honoring the ancestors of our gay tribe. He also does not shy away from crediting Aleister Crowley as being one of the pioneers of gay-positive magick. He ends the book by saying it is only a beginning and what an auspicious beginning it is!

**The Diloggun**, Ocha'ni Lele  
(Destiny Books, 2003, \$39.95)  
Reviewed by Edward Batchelor, Jr.

B. Stuart Myers is an initiate in La Regla de Ocha, commonly called Santeria. In 2000, he wrote "The Secrets of Afro-Cuban Divination", (also published by Destiny Books), an introduction to the Diloggun, one of its principal divinatory systems. In addition to a description of its "modus operandi", it also contained: chapters on the meaning and message of Oddus 1 through 12; their proverbs; their prohibitions; lists of the Orisha who "speak" through them; and the Ebozes, (or remedies), mandated by the configurations. Although his original intention was to produce a larger work covering the whole field, space constraints prevented him from doing so at that time. Fortunately, because of its

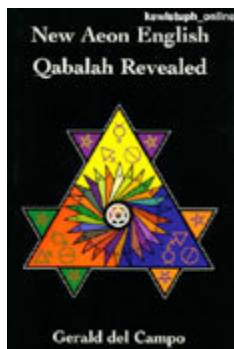


favorable reception, the Publisher commissioned this new work which contains not only full lists of the proverbs associated with the configurations, and an excellent brief history of the Religion, but also greatly expanded chapters on the Oddus. In my opinion, Stuart Myers is to be congratulated and commended for producing this strikingly beautiful volume, which, together with a sequel on the Patakis associated with the Oddus, will be the “vade mecum” for initiated diviners, and serious students for generations to come.

**New Aeon English Qabalah Revealed**, Gerald del Campo

(Luxor Press, 2002, \$12.95)

Reviewed by Ron Adams



This is an interesting book, if one is looking for magickal alternatives. Based on Frater Achad’s work with Liber 31, and evolved by an English chap Jim Lees discovery of the cipher in 1976, that created a new numerology system called the New Aeon English Qabala; this all started with Charles Stanfield Jones simple little comment in 1918:

“Then I noticed another very important thing. I was wondering why A and L should be chosen, or rather why L the 12th letter of the Hebrew Alphabet should follow A, the first.”

Well, Aleister Crowley was impressed enough with Frater Achad’s 1918 Liber 31 to call Achad his magickal son, as prophesied in the Book of the Law, and to rename Liber vel Legis to Liber AL vel Legis, and even after Crowley and Achad’s breakup Crowley never changed the name back to the original.

It turns out Achad never knew how close he was, since in Lees cypher it turns out A does follow L as the second letter in the New Aeon English Qabala. But one really ought to get the book and learn about all these details. The number 11 is the real key.

When I first got the book, I noticed how thin it was. Nice cover, less than 69 pages, I was wondering if I got ripped off, as many of us find happening in the realm of magickal books these days. As I began to read the introduction I felt a little better, and by time I finished the book I was writing my own NAEQ ritual. Very useful in different methods of squares and sigils, and a small NAEQ dictionary, plus the Book of the Law broken down into each word and phrase with the NAEQ correspondences.



Just to whet your whistle, to convince you to read the book, I will go ahead and reveal this (shades of Center Of Pestilence); you know how most of us Thelemites sign our letters and emails with 93,93/93? What does that add up to?

279. And the phrase that it relates to is “Love is the Law Love under Will”. Guess what the NAEQ total is for that phrase is?

There is another more impressive correspondence though that comes directly from *The Book of the Law* (that isn’t mentioned at all in this review).

I truly feel that this book is an opening, from my own personal view on these two verses from *Liber AL vel Legis*:

“Behold! the rituals of the old time are black. Let the evil ones be cast away; let the good ones be purged by the prophet!” (NAEQ total 1333)

“Abrogate are all rituals, all ordeals, all words and signs.” (NAEQ total 408)

Get the book. Count well the numbers.

93,93/93

### **Goose of Hermogenes**, Ithell Colquhoun

(Published by Peter Owen 1961, 2003, £9.95)

Reviewed by Snoo Wilson in *Mandrake Speaks*

The *Goose of Hermogenes* is an extraordinary book whose nameless and bejewelled narrator undergoes adventures on her alchemical uncle’s island, where in defiance of her uncle’s unlovely assistant, The Anchorite, she tries to discover the parameters of her uncle’s world, while hanging onto her jewellery collection. During this quest she experiences a number of bizarre visions and is involved in a drugged, erotically charged incident with an armless naked statue of a faun; or possibly, her uncle. However the ill effects of this encounter leave no mark, and she regains the mainland, where her father’s ghost appears to her, both naked and dead.

The story has been composed (the author helpfully points out) using the objects and spatial vocabulary of Hieronymous Bosch as well as being inspired by the woodcuts of numerous ancient magical grimoires which illustrate searches for the Philosopher’s Stone. The chapters are divided into the recognised alchemical stages of transformation, from Calcination on. When we get to Libation, Colquhoun opens the chapter with a terse, challenging quote from the alchemist Erineus Philalethes, ( known commonly as Eugenius, and studied by Newton) ‘In the wood of wonder her fountain sings’. Opaque, in this context, to the point of obscenity, but perhaps that’s the point; your imagination





needs to bring on the Annie Sprinkle Sisterhood to animate the stiff, awkward transitions in the woodcuts. However, some of the descriptions have a gripping hallucogenic clarity;

‘ Further away I noticed a goddess sitting cross-legged with her back to a cliff, the water at its base circling her loins. A passing giant smudged away half her clavicles; her right breast detached itself, slithered down her torso, its tubular nipple pointing towards the lake, flopped in and melted. In its place appeared a great eye, lustrous as an owl’s but clear-coloured like a bubble, surrounded with a foamy-white cornea. Her left breast remained some time, clinging to the surface of her ribs and shrinking gradually. It was finally washed away by a brief storm of thunderly rain-drops; and the eye was put out by a flash of summer-lightning as if it had been pricked by a pin.’

Reading the above, I had the same feeling of queasy recognition as the opening chapters of Georges Bataille’s repellent but compelling surreal narrative, *Story of The Eye*.

A painter of distinction whose galleries are listed in the reprint, Ithell Colquhoun was a woman of private means, and the earlier writer of a fey travel book on Ireland, also published by Peter Owen. She had married a suspect art-historian Italian and was banished from the infant British surrealist movement in 1941. She was the subject of an unsuccessful seduction by Aleister Crowley, the egg-bald and sharp-fanged dragueur of Fitzrovia. Crowley, a fellow- asthmatic was invariably, seemingly, smitten with love regarding lady painters in touch with Other Worlds. The Tarot (or, Taro, as Colquhoun calls it) would also have made a fascinating subject for her talents.

Part gothic fantasy, part emblematic progress through a dream world where we are never sure we have a complete key to the meaning, we see the workings of a perceptive and curious painterly eye exploring elegantly and participating in a formal experiment, where goddesses deconstruct themselves in streams and where menacing vampiric uncles obtain the surrender of the family jewels, only to inexplicably give them up again.

The reissue is prefaced by an introduction where the publisher confesses to his anxieties about first bringing out the book in the sixties.

‘It was short, which at the time was problematic as bookshops did not like books of only a hundred pages or so.’ The Goose of Hermogenes is one name for the elixir that produces the fabled Philosopher’s Stone at the end of the Great Work. Even at the modern golden-goose price of £9.95, my new copy of the book has already lost a number of pages from the hundred or so in its spine. As Philalethes must have taught, any small carelessness can wreck a hermetic spell. And I now do see that the White Feathers do not cleave to the Bird but Disperse, irritatingly, all over the untidy study that is my very own Alchemic Laboratory. All is Flux.



**The Necronomicon Files**, Daniel Harms and John Wisdom Gonce III

(Red Wheel/Weiser, 2003, \$26.95)

Reviewed by T. Emery Heath



The image of the sorcerer with his tome of forgotten wisdom is a powerful archetype in Western culture. Even the great magus Aleister Crowley at the twilight of his life continued to “cherish the hope and expectation that—any minute now—someone would discover the magic book, hoary with age,” which would provide him the ultimate magical secrets. (letter from Shri Mahendranath to Shri Kapilnath) As proliferating as this icon is, those that have attempted to capitalize on it have been equally ubiquitous. As far back as the 14<sup>th</sup> century the erstwhile wizardly writer found it good marketing to ascribe authorship to an illustrious personage. This practice was so common in fact that the texts ascribed to king Solomon comprise a large a significant “family” among the classical grimoires.

This tradition of erroneous accreditation has continued into our modern time. The most captivating and provocative of these modern “arcana” is the dread Necronomicon that has risen out from H.P. Lovecraft’s fiction to comprise a modern family of hoax grimoires. The most famous of these is, of course, the Simon edition first published by the mysterious Magickal Childe shoppe and later in a mass paper edition from Avon. The latter edition, continuously in print for over twenty years, is so common that it is often the first occult book many aspiring magicians come across. Other contenders to the Necronomicon moniker have been connected to important figures such as the well-known science fiction writer L. Sprague de Camp and *The Occult* author Colin Wilson.

Harms and Gonce have plunged into this realm of battling Necronomicons with a thoroughness and attention to scholarship which is as surprising for its depth as it is commendable for its breadth. What has obviously been a labor of love for the authors, pursuing their quest for connections with a meticulous preoccupation, has not translated into obsession within their text. The authors also do not shy away from pondering the larger philosophical questions, such as the origins of this human need to find a tome of ultimate power and infernal wisdom. The authors’ understanding of the occult comes through in the detailed analysis of the Necronomicon(s) *vis a vis* modern magical trends.



This background gives rise to a volume that is detailed rather than dismissive of the important occult impulses at work in the drive for creating *The Necronomicon*.

Lovecraft himself, of course, capitalized on this very impulse in his fiction weaving in the few tantalizing mentions of the Necronomicon within his short stories. Building on the verisimilitude of his writing, Lovecraft helped set the groundwork for future hoaxes by penning his own Necronomicon history.

*Necronomicon Files* provides an authoritative collection of material relating to Lovecraft's creation, the possible sources, the occult connections, the continued prevalence and, what the authors call the "plague of Necronomicons." The authors track down numerous Necronomicon rumors and provide detailed analysis of each of the various Necronomicons that have appeared since Lovecraft's time. The most time is devoted to the Simon/Magickal Childe edition, for obvious reasons. The origins that Gonce has pieced together for the Simonicon, as it is sometimes humorously called, are both fascinating and amusing.

In addition to the background on Lovecraft and the examination of the Necronomicon editions, *Files* also provides chapters examining pop cultural references to Lovecraft's book. There are chapters on both the Necronomicon in film "Unspeakable Cuts" and on TV "The Call of the Cathode-Ray Tube." These serve to round out the collection of material to make this a comprehensive work that is well-rounded and entertaining.

Daniel Harms writes in his introduction that the goal of the work is to provide a "crash course in all aspects of the *Necronomicon*." They have certainly achieved this goal and then some.

**Threskia: traditions of the Greek mysteries**, Evangelos Rigakis

(Mandrake Press, \_13.99)



None but the Gods I hear call my name, beckoning, beseeching me to free them from the aeons of their perpetual silence. Not but my blood drives me to the well of my roots in this incarnation I come to know. Oh the delight, the ecstasy of Daemona raising my head to the call of my fore-fathers. Oh but the pain of the burden placed upon my mortal shoulders, a delight few have enjoyed and I am Atlas rising. Hear me ! for I am Pan dancing in the luscious green forest of Arcadia, laughing and playing my syrinx for the world to hear. Accept this gemmed elixir as my



gift, for I am Bacchus, the little horned child-god. Join us in our mystery with sacred orgy, the delights and raptures of the Gods are once again upon us. We sing the mysteries plain, into the day of brilliant light and into the night of delight. I am Hermes and with my message I resurrect the dead of ancient times, and clear the sands of Chronos from the ruins and the crypt appear in full view. I am nothing more than an Ancient Greek living in your modern day, answering to the call, for the day of silence is over and the time of joyous laughter upon us. Hail my Brethren, come, join this dance and partake in the delights of Ancient Greece.

Evangelos Rigakis is a Greek-Canadian born in Ottawa Canada and schooled in fine arts and psychology. For the past 27 years he has been studying and followed many different spiritual paths. Since 1987 he has lived in Greece studying and researching the ancient Greek traditions. Working at ancient sites and with archaeologists led him to the discovery of 'Thelema' in the ancient Greek traditions. if you want one go to: Mandrake of Oxford ([www.mandrake.uk.net](http://www.mandrake.uk.net)).

### **Painful but Fabulous: The Lives & Art of Genesis P-Orridge**

(Softskull Press, 2002, \$19.95)



This book is a superb showcase of Genesis P-Orridge and his art. The book includes texts by Douglas Rushkoff, Julie Wilson, Richard Metzger, Negala, Paul Cecil, Carol Tessitore and Genesis himself. These are spaced around and among a powerful and diverse assortment of images of his artwork, installations and many incarnations using the topography of his appearance and physicality as the ultimate medium. The book is chaotic, the arrangement of images seeming more random than systematic, but how else would one effectively present such a revolutionizing force? The book does contain images that are both difficult and disturbing. Even for one who has followed Genesis's experimentations and provocations over the years, seeing such a dense collection of the past few decades is at the least jarring. And I would be disappointed if it were anything less.



**Swami, PDG et moine hindou**, Swami Pranavananda Brahmendra Avadhuta  
(Editions Delville, 2003, EUR 18.00)



Swami Pranavananda (see article in Ashé 2.1) has written a book now available in the French language. The title translates to “Swami, CEO and Hindu Monk.” At age 25 Christian Fabre went to India on business. Now twenty years later, he is head of the largest sourcing company in Southern India, which provides work for more than 60,000 people in 23 factories. While in India he also discovered spirituality. He has since given all his possessions to his associates and founded an *ashrama*. Uniquely, he has done so without giving up directing his company. He now splits his time between that of the professional, making strategic business decisions, and that of the guru meditating and providing spiritual guidance. Swamiji’s tone is simple and direct, his testimony reflecting absolute sincerity. An English translation will follow. Available from [www.amazon.fr](http://www.amazon.fr)

#### **Journal for the Academic Study of Magic**

(Mandrake of Oxford, UK £13.99, airmail \$30, 200pp)



The Journal for the Academic Study of Magic (JSM), a multidisciplinary, peer-reviewed print publication, is seeking submissions for its second annual edition, to be published in Spring 2004. Scholarly articles of up to 8000 words, written in English, plus shorter book reviews (up to 800 words) and the like are welcomed. We aim to cover all areas of magic, witchcraft, paganism etc; all geographical regions and all historical periods, and we encourage articles from postgraduates, tenured academics and freelance writers alike, using an academic style.

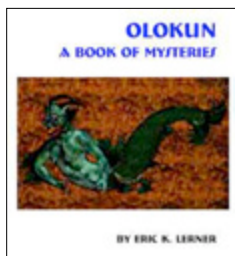
Issue One includes: Beyond Attribution: The Importance of Barrett’s Magus/Alison Butler, Shadow over Philistia: A review of the Cult of Dagon/John C. Day, A History of Otherness: Tarot and Playing Cards from Early Modern Europe/Joyce Goggin, Opposites Attract: magical identity and social uncertainty/Dave Green , ‘Memories of a sorcerer’: notes on Gilles Deleuze-Felix Guattari, Austin Osman Spare and Anomalous Sorceries./Matt Lee, Le Streghe Son Tornate: The Reappearance of



Streghe in Italian American Queer Writings/Ilaria Serra, Controlling Chance, and Creating Chance: Magical Thinking in Religious Pilgrimage/Deana Weibel.

Issue One of the journal, published by Mandrake of Oxford can be ordered from the website [www.sasm.co.uk](http://www.sasm.co.uk) via a secure credit card server, or from any good bookshop quoting the references ISBN 1869928 679 and ISSN 1479-0750.

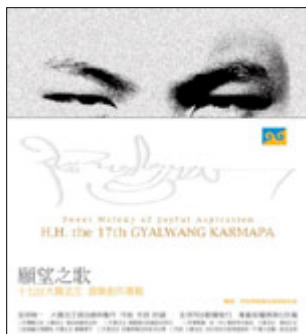
**Olokun: A Book of Mysteries**, Eric K. Lerner  
(Graphic-Novels.com, e-book, 2003, \$3.95)



Three men are taken aboard a mysterious craft and endowed with mysterious abilities. They are released into Earth's turbulent future to face a deadly prophesy. Are they here to stop it or fulfill it? An artfully crafted tale of mystery and magic written by extremely talented Santeria initiate. Mr. Lerner has a gift for using language in captivating and innovative ways that are both magical and Joycean. Available as an economic e-book, there's

no reason not to check out this offering.

**Sweet Melody of Joyful Aspiration CD**, H.H. the 17<sup>th</sup> Gyalwang Karmapa  
(Wind Records, 2002, \$17.98)



This album the first recordings available of the 17<sup>th</sup> Karmapa, the incarnate head of the Kagyu or “Black Hat” school of Tibetan Buddhism. The disc showcases the young Karmapa as composer, lyricist, vocalist and producer. This is richly textured album surprising for its quality and depth. Sounds blend across the soundscape of the recording that add dimensions beyond traditional Tibetan chanting. The first track Affirmation begins with the sound of waves and then moves into soft but determined flute music and drumming followed by chanting. The title track blends strings, percussion and vocals to frame the chanting composed by the Karmapa. This is much more than a collection of Tibetan chants. This CD brings the sound of Tibetan chanting and musical verse into a new sphere that easily holds its own among the best of world fusion.



**Collected Opinions**

*Ruth Moore*

**1**

Mankind is like the fat cow  
Stuffed with corn and clover,  
That gives a good bucket of milk  
And then kicks it over.



**notes**

“What is Ashé?” excerpted from *Cuban Santería: Walking With the Night*, Destiny Books, pp. 5-6. ©Orisha Consciousness Movement.

Mike McGinty’s interview with Trebor Healey first appeared in Velvet Mafia [[www.velvetmafia.com](http://www.velvetmafia.com)].

“Collected Opinions” by Ruth Moore from *The Tired Apple Tree* published by Blackberry Books.

