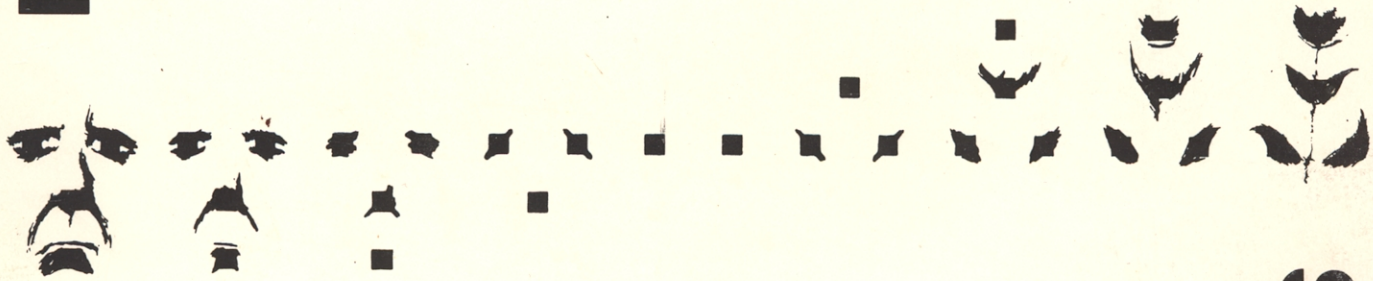


DREAM STREETS



STREET DREAMS

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Editor

Betty McCaughey

Illustrator

E. Jean Lanyon

Cover Design

Steve Bennett

Collaborators

Lew Bennett, Diane Wolf, Steve Leech, Doug Morea

Susan Rosenberg, Bob Chartowich, John Hickey

*Eschaton refers to "timeless time", both the end and the beginning of time. As writers and artists we step out of ordinary time and into the eschaton everytime we "create" (or are created).

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This issue of Dream Streets
is dedicated to
Karen Seitz.

The Elixir Within

by Betty McCaughey

Poetry among the primitives was part of a collective synthesis of techniques (including song, music, dance, art, ritual, and myth) which invoked the experience of unity with primordial reality. For the primitive, participation in the sacred, in creation, was the goal of all art, and he sought, by every means at his disposal, to reside at the source of the creative power which made all things. Poetry, then, was a special language, magical in effect, which was used to call into reality that time of creative power, the beginning of the world.

Since religious experience for the primitive man consisted of a symbolic return to, or rebirth in, the original time of creation, the ritual recitation of the creation myth was used to magically project him into that time. The recitation of the creation myth was believed to reactualize the primordial event.

Australian primitive societies refer to the epoch of primordial time as Dream Time. Back in this time, Supernatural Beings were roaming the earth, giving shape to the landscape, creating life, and revealing the rites of initiation to man. For these aborigines, the key to one's identity resides in the Dream Time, as they believe that one's most secret self belongs to that sacred world. One cannot know his true self without initiation into the Dream Time.

The role of poetry as initiation, ceremony, and invocation was possibly rediscovered from the primitives by the French poet, Arthur Rimbaud. In a prophetic letter written in 1871, Rimbaud describes a technique whereby the modern poet of the future would make himself into a visionary. By a deliberate derangement of his senses, (possibly he meant a self-induced trance or dream state) the poet would cultivate his soul and reach the unknown. A new language would be created then, a universal language of the soul, containing everything, and accessible to all the senses. Rimbaud describes the writers of the

The Elixir Within

past as "not yet in the fullness of the great dream." The future poet "would define the amount of the unknown awakening in his time in the universal soul..."

In 1873 Rimbaud published a series of prose-poems called A Season in Hell. The text of one of these poems, "Alchemy of the Word" describes the results of Rimbaud's visionary experiments. He refers to "the hallucination of words" as being the key to his alchemy. At the end, Rimbaud concludes, "I looked on the disorder of my mind as sacred."

It would appear that what Rimbaud calls the unknown in the universal soul, accessible by a regression into a disordered or primitive state of mind, is analogous to the primitive belief in the Dream Time as the world of souls, accessible through initiation by ritual dramatic poetry.

In any case, Rimbaud's prophecy about the poets of the future did come true. In the 1920's, in France, the Surrealist poets arose in a movement devoted to qualifying the superior reality of the dream state. The Surrealists seized upon the text of "Alchemy of the Word" as the precedent of their movement. They also seized upon the discovery of automatic writing as the systematic technique to induce Rimbaud's "disordered state of mind" and the "hallucination of words."

Andre Breton, composer of the Surrealist Manifesto, defined Surrealism in terms of automatic writing: "Pure psychic automatism Dictation given by the thought in the absence of all rational control..."¹

The Surrealists took their mission very seriously, for they did not regard automatic writing as a mere literary invention or style of writing, but as a means for the revelation of man and the universe by the poet medium. It was a renewal of the sybilline utterance, through which thinking man could communicate with that lost, but poetically potent, part of his being. Breton in particular

believed that these messages from the unconscious would bring about the salvation of poetry.

The tradition of experimental writing today has some of its roots in the Surrealist game, based on the principle of automatism, called "cadavre exquis." Several people wrote parts of a sentence on a piece of paper, each without seeing what the previous person wrote. The results often created the startling juxtaposition of unexpected images so coveted by the Surrealists. One of the finest examples of this was the sentence for which the game was named, "The exquisite cadaver will drink the new wine."

It was in the spirit of scientific research, however, that these experiments were conducted by the Surrealists. What they were after was nothing less than a new model of the universe. Since words in general recreated the world at every moment according to the old model, it followed that there could be no new vision without a new tongue.² While the Surrealists embraced Rimbaud's alchemy of the word, Breton insisted that Surrealism go beyond the metaphor. Man is regarded as tediously limited in his waking state; from the limitless domain of the dream, Surrealism, the new verbal chemistry, would bring into existence all possible meanings of the world.

Whatever the means, the theme of descent, be it into primordial chaos, delirium, or the unconscious, and the retrieval of something which restores the soul, is common to the primitive man, Rimbaud, and the Surrealists. Poetry is both a part of that process which delivers man to his source of grace, and part of that something he retrieves, the elixir that restores his soul.

* * *

¹ p. 102, Carrouges, Michel, Basic Concepts of Surrealism.

² p. 42, Caws, Mary A., Andre Breton.

How We Speak in Song

Because I know the words
I can speak of my desire
as violet, white, or crimson
or a slow burning fire.

O sail slim ship
blown open wind wide
ride high the sea
you rock in your thigh.

With words that wrestle wetly
or thirst like smoke
deep in the wishing wells
where we sank our hope.

O wings water wet
yours are so fine
swim on, slick sweat
and we entwine.

Feel and Sense
Know and See
that these words are all
of how I touch thee.

O dive, sweet darkness
swim or we die
we slip on the devil's eye
we stay alive.

Betty McCaughey

Ecstasies of Synesthesia

(Trans-Sensory Meditations)

I watched you draped in plates of spanish gingerbread
While tongues of devil's food and wedding cake
Consumed me like a flaming gothic farmhouse

Calliopes whistle a brassy air
Kewpie dolls wiggle out from behind bikinis
Honky tonk organs do do do the taffy ruffle

Heavenly figures propose in sheer delectables
Celestial saxophones extend elastic invitations
Slinky seraphs make it lewd in the newlywed nude

My tulips flourished on her rosy vibraphones
Trilling beryllium pinks
Carillioning iridium glissandos

Black-eyed susan appeared in a fanfare of tanagers
Aureoled with red and yellow clarions
Apocalyptic orange leopard lily belle

Tan fanny radium blondes belubricate their phonies
Snazzy black cobra boys philtre their floats
And away they gallop into a lollapaloosa

Butterscotch me limely lady's zippers
Hollered the off-color unmentionable addict
Through his hookah of sassafrass snooze

Pistachio porters stroll champagne carriages
A cluster of ladyfingers bursts into raspberry spads
Burgundy duesenbergs sport plumes of shue flie pie

Thy lips are blushing blossoms
Thy tongue is a soft horn
Thy mouth ist made for many kissingings

We came from the temples of tall toffee town
Down through the towering siamese spirals
To pavilions of dimpled vanilla chiffon

Encore

(In Memory of Language)

"Shimmy yer speech with diphthongs!"
Ye grammarian hymnal it sing-songed,
Yo-yodelling off thro' phonemenal modes

Bob Chartowich

Helio-Eliptoid Fly-a-Bus

(Trans-Sensory Meditations)

Mohave Sand Painting

The Back Roads
The Black Lights
The Black Knights
Of my mind.

Take me on, forever purple
Forever yours
To ride onto super-highways
Of acid-blare incandescence
To an eternity of maturity
In childfulness of glee
Your glee of gleedom
In aphorisms

My pride
In your trail
To miasmas
Of canyons

Of you antiquity
To future stardom
In eons of comet trips
To hither and you California
Leashed to Yosemite
As sky-high as a geyser
Take me there.

Leslie Turner

O WHEEL

Wheel of Silence	O Wheel of the Blind Bull, of the Earth's slow turning, of tides and the silent moon,
Wheel of Prayer	we are ringed by that cold moon, we are here cupped
Wheel of Fire	in this two-fingered bird's beak of silence. Let us speak
Wheel of Dreams	with the fires of tongues; let us be haloed by the Sun.

John Hickey

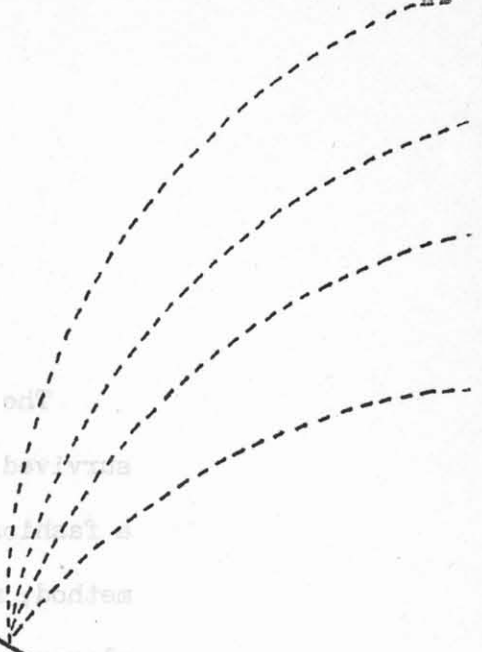
EDITORS NOTE

O WHEEL

the occasion writers and their foremen have
 arrived a tradition of playing the cadavre exquis after
 and under various eclectic circumstances. The
 method "the new wine" follows as thus: each
 player in whatever state of mind, possesses his own pencil
 and paper. According to whatever rules he may desire three
 to five words excluding minor and insignificant words
 the case may be written on the next player in
 whatever order although usually to the left. He is then
 confronted with infinite possibilities coming from his
 left and so on. A conclusion is usually reached by the
 end of each page, and however many rounds, except in cases
 of players exceeding the maximum in which case conclusions
 are doubtfully ever reached. Under normal conditions circum-
 stances however, at least one page is guaranteed to be
 a gem.

The following poems were written by the following
 new wine players:

Bob Garlowitch
 Lew Bennett Diane Wolf
 John Hickey Betty McGowan



EDITORS NOTE

The eschaton writers and their forerunners have survived a tradition of playing the cadavre exquis after a fashion and under various solicitous circumstances. The method, recoined "the new wine" follows as thus: each player, in whatever state of mind, possesses his own pencil and paper. According to whatever rules he may write three to five words excluding minor and insignificant words as the case may be, and pass his paper to the next player in whatever order although usually to the left. He is then confronted with infinite possibilities coming from his right and so on. A conclusion is usually reached by the end of each page, and however many rounds, except in cases of players exceeding the maximus 6, in which cases conclusions are doubtfully ever reached. Under normal auspicious circumstances however, at least one paper is guaranteed to be a gem.

The following two poems were written by the following new wine players:

Bob Chartowich

Lew Bennett Diane Wolf

John Hickey Betty McCaughey

* * *

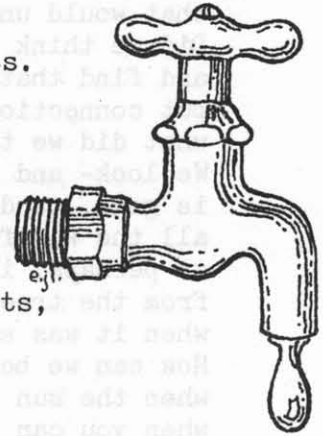
Blues Magoos in the Broccoli Shade

in the damp broccoli shade i fell for you
darling,
midnight dreams of moonlight love turned quick
to blue turtles' soup,
SWEAT DRIPPING IN THE GARDEN OF OUR WILDERNESS;
Ice cream on the deep, friendly lawn of sad blues.
BLUES MAGOOS BLARING, BUT i didn't mean to
stray so far from your incense. Zonked
in the mystery of ID-A-TION we collide...HOO-EE!!
BACK TO THE SOFT GRASSES OF CHILDHOOD!

Do you remember
when we had our original faces? Our first
Stegosaurus Love?
Under the cool vegetable leaves of our first tender green,
yes, their ancient vegetable fetish
was that green mystery of transformation-hearts.

The Hydro-Logic Cycle

your river flows to my ocean
your white water to my slow, meandering inlets,
trickles of pleasant coolness
that cause the moon to dance slow at first
now quickening
to a heated tribal dance with searchlights everywhere,
illuminating the edges of our souls.
they are the pulsating auras of the dancers,
their whips cracking us up to the reality of dreams.
the moon draws us to neverness
in the stupidity of the hydrologic cycle.
we pause to name it, but fear the naming process.
our invocations of meter fail.
technique cannot save us.
we give in to the tidal force of forever longings
and dissolve.



Sometimes, we think we're only slipping sideways.
We see the piece of cork in the water
bob this way and that.
We see the pigeons cross overhead
and one takes the lead
in a few quickened wingstrokes.
We see the small child squat in the grass.
He comes over to us, his palm raised to us.
And, yes, we say- clover. You've brought clover.
And in the time it took for the dark cloud
to spread out from the west-
we heard the thunder coming, didn't we?-
there was the one who once leaned close to you and kissed you,
and before the darkness had spread over the woods,
you could no longer find the warmth of that kiss
you had put away in your heart
and the ground wind began to carry in
smells from the wet fields and, yes,
isn't there something in the smell of mown grass?
But, of course, the child bobs past you
taking away the clover.
Did we think there was some secret in that dried bloom
that would unfold upon the hand's palm?
Did we think if we could follow the pigeons
and find that they are not points slipping ahead through the air
but connections- a figure of quickened hearts-
what did we think?
We look- and the cork- bobbing in the water
is gone...and perhaps, it had come
all the way from Portugal,
or perhaps, it was really a piece of branch
from the tree of our life when it was flowering,
when it was scented with irretrievable blooms.
How can we be sure
when the sun shines brighter than ever,
when you can visit the monuments now
that weigh on your heart
and the ground, packed hard around each stone,
yields dust as hot as the blood
sounding in your forehead.

David Robertson

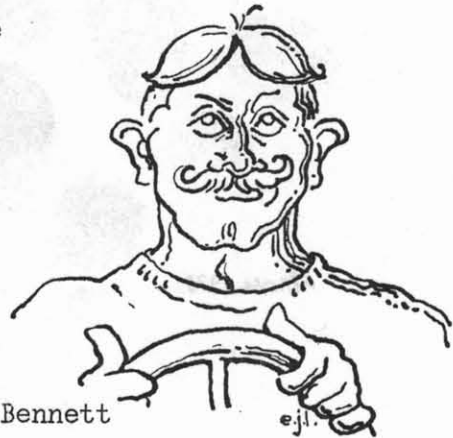
riding down avenue b

everywhere
the same
riding down
avenue b
in the car
with cracked
windshield
in the car
with dangling
from the dash
fur objects
in the car
with salsa
a.m. radio
in the car
with metal atlas
holding a
plastic world



the driver
with his weightlifter arms
the driver
with proud mustache
the driver
with slicked back hair
the driver
with naked angel tatoo
the driver
with winged woman on his biceps

yes
everywhere the same
gods and angels
guide our journey
gods and angels
please protect us
gods and angels
make us beautiful
gods and angels
make us strong



Lew Bennett

Fat Pig Georgie Gets Hit by a Car and Becomes a Saint

"It's a free country," Georgie splattered my face
after beating me up. Georgie
never had to learn to spit, he knew to talk.

Birds chirped and bells rang and horns honked and
pudgy dribbling Georgie
helped make a good listener out of me.

I couldn't punch him in the belly, he wore thick.
I couldn't punch him in the face, I'd get a wet.
He was too ugly to come near hurting.

But fat pig Georgie got hit by a car.
Too bad I missed it, too bad because
I had to invent it to myself: down bore the car, white and blunt
as a refrigerator.
Georgie broke like a chicken
into rouge-ended bones, wings, breasts, and drumsticks
under the fenders of parked vehicles,
on cleated man-hole lids, everywhere.
The other kids gawked
like the wings of a choir to bear him from the fall.

And they put him together again
in the hospital.
I saw him on a Sunday in the hall, he was standing statue-calm
in white. I couldn't see the stitches or the seams
where the bones got knitted.
Georgie: holy, magic Georgie, burned and carved pure.
I couldn't be friends with Georgie anymore.

Douglas Morea

the tiny rowboat

when the bill
from the met-ed company came
i was washing dishes
for the seventh time that day,
and reached for the handtowel
that the refrigerator door
graciously held out to me.
how much does it really cost
to keep a 15 watt bulb burning
all night in an empty cabin?
one more bill i didn't open...
and i recalled my dad
who never supported us,
saying once again -
"don't worry baby,
god will take care of you!"
i always figured god
was in the same boat as us -
there were a lot of nights
we all went to bed very hungry.

e. jean lanyon

dead-end

quiet spirit -
soft sad woman
of little speech,
i see you everywhere,
with slumping shoulders
and dark doe eyes
shuffling and scurrying
mouselike in your pain,
unaware of a
way out of the maze.
you endure.
the thinness of your body
speaks of the poverty
in your soul,
speaks of the loud man
who rules your life
with threats of subtle abuse,
speaks of the cage
whose only exit door
for you, is spelled -
d - e - a - t - h.

e. jean lanyon
(1st Prize May 1977, First State Writers)

Max

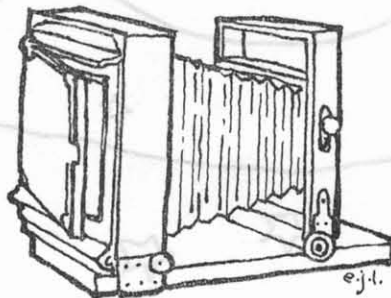
i

I never knew my grandfather Max
we met in my pre-verbal haze
he was a pair of hands that caught me
and threw me up in the air
the smoke filled air of family gatherings
years later they would ask: remember Max?
no I was too young
even when my hair falls out
I will always be too young
and those that used to ask me are gone too
yes I met my grandfather Max
I was too young to tell a laugh from a clock
or a dream from the traffic on 83rd street

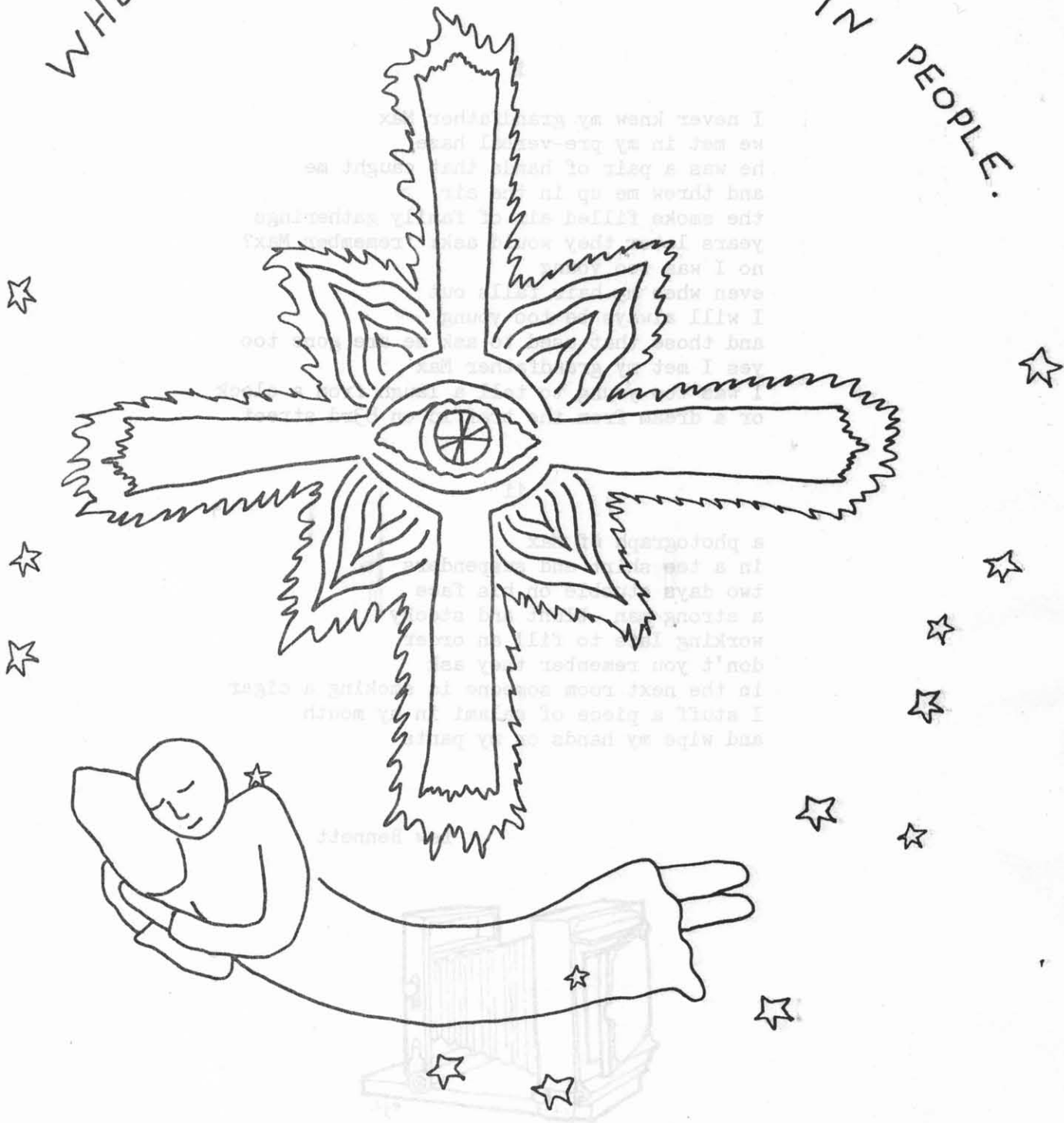
ii

a photograph of Max
in a tee shirt and suspenders
two days stubble on his face
a strong man blunt and stocky
working late to fill an order
don't you remember they ask
in the next room someone is smoking a cigar
I stuff a piece of salami in my mouth
and wipe my hands on my pants

Lew Bennett



WHERE SLEEP IS MAGICAL
SOFT INFINITE WANTING
IS IN PEOPLE.



The Way She Sleeps

Perhaps we make love, or perhaps
the dishes get done. If there are leftovers,
we tuck them away in the cold. Broths glaze over and gel.
Landscape simplifies as by snow. Softly
we become the dead moon of our longings.

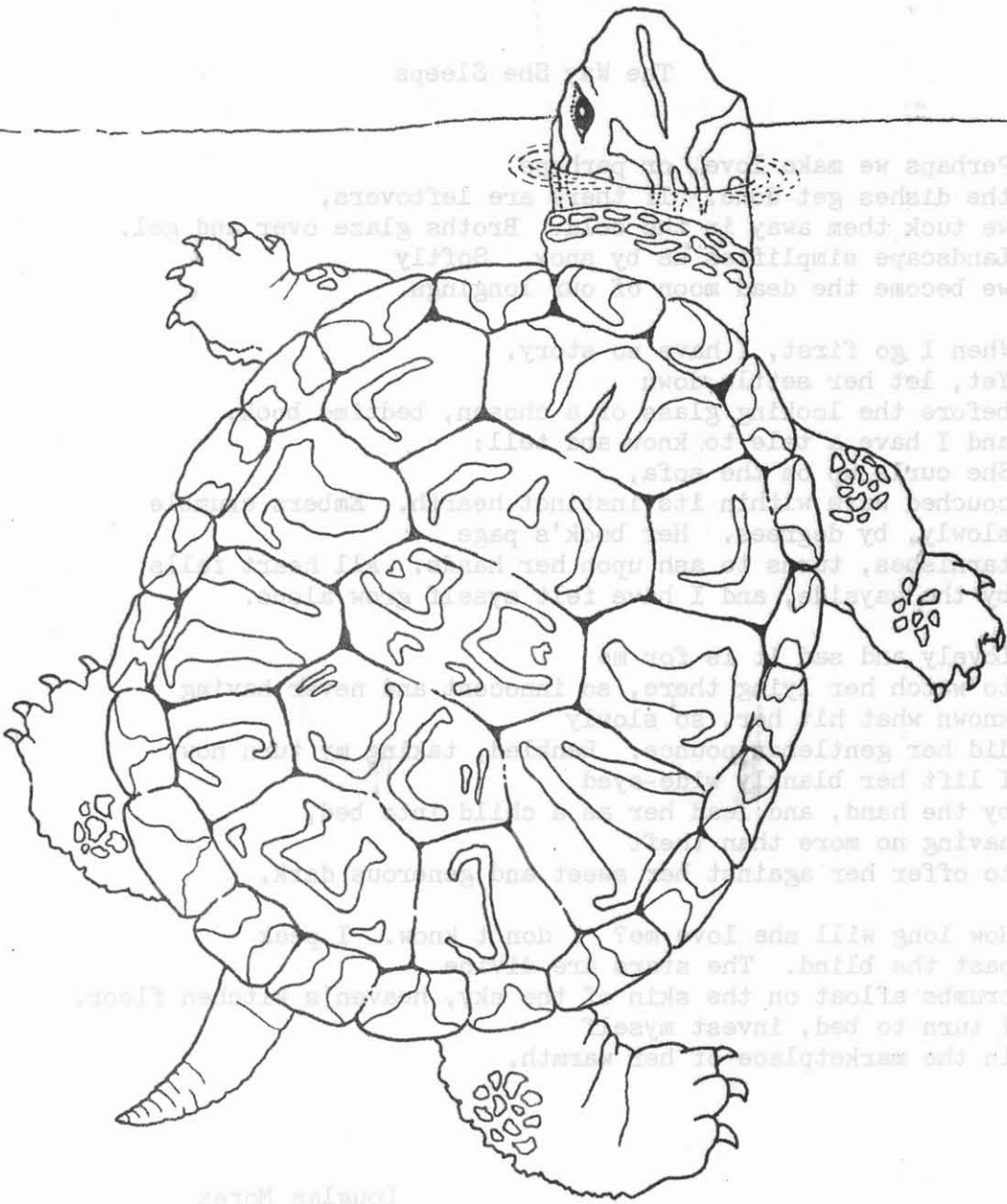
When I go first, I have no story.
Yet, let her settle down
before the looking glass of a chosen, bedtime book;
and I have a tale to know and tell:
She curls up on the sofa,
couched warm within its instinct hearth. Embers crumble
slowly, by degrees. Her book's page
tarnishes, turns to ash upon her hands. All heart falls
by the wayside, and I have felt myself grow alone.

Lovely and sad it is for me
to watch her lying there, so innocent and never having
known what hit her, so slowly
did her gentleman pounce. Rankled, taking my turn now,
I lift her blankly wide-eyed
by the hand, and lead her as a child into bed,
having no more than theft
to offer her against her sweet and generous dark.

How long will she love me? I don't know. I peek
past the blind. The stars are divine
crumbs afloat on the skin of the sky, heaven's kitchen floor.
I turn to bed, invest myself
in the marketplace of her warmth.

Douglas Morea

"The Way She Sleeps" first appeared in Monsters in Bed by
Douglas Morea, published by Outland Press, Lewisville, Pa.



Douglas Hertz

"First Appeared in Monsters in Bed by
Douglas Hertz, published by Outland Press, Louisville, Ky.

B. McCaughey

Yellow Catacomb Solves His Riddle

by Bob Davis

The boys' vicious laughter fades away as they run on through the forest, leaving me crushed and dying. Beside me lies the rock they used to smash my shell in a hundred pieces. My riddle is broken, my hinges are splinters, my sack streams blood onto the fallen leaves. I die early, not yet a century old. The pain is unbearable, but I must struggle against it in these final moments to solve my hexagram and KNOW. Patience is the best prayer, Father said. Oh, if he could only be with me now! His words resound through my ebbing heart and I see visions of his shell and the last time I spent with him.

I had returned to Mud Rock after my third long crawl. My brothers and sisters had left with me, but they did not return. It was his shell that had brought me back. I yearned to see it a final time before entering the solitary ways of the forest.

From his favorite moss patch Father craned his wrinkled neck and saw me coming. "Yellow Catacomb, why have you returned?"

"Was I not to?" I asked, knowing it to be a lie. Resplendent in the morning light, his shell of speckled saffron put me in deep trance.

Mother laughed and scraped mud. "Oh my son, my Yellow Catacomb, you revere your father's riddle too much. You never could take your eyes off his shell, even when eating the most succulent dandelion. But this excursion from Mud Rock was to be your last. You have aged like your brothers and sisters, and must learn to live through the decades, eating, mating, and mud-flapping on your own. You must aspire to solve your riddle. Venerating your father's shell will only dissuade you from contemplating yours."

"Yes, Yellow Catacomb, as much as we love you the time has come for us to part," said Father, gazing at me with his unblinking vision. "You've mastered a lot, my son, perhaps more than any of the children I've fathered over the decades, and your return fills my heart with a welcome that's difficult to let pass. Your birth was a blessing for your mother and me. From the very start, when you broke out of the egg,

your shell glistened with infinite destinies. The time has come for you to fulfill them without our help. You've learned patience, Yellow Catacomb; this glowing virtue has not passed me by. I've seen it in your eyes when you sun-bask; it shows in your determined crawl, and is even there in the methodical swish of your tail. Your every gesture speaks of it, reflecting your divine hexagram. Do not seem surprised because I haven't told you. By holding the tongue modesty is preserved. I only tell you now because my heart is overflowing. But do not let my words make you proud, my son, for pride will never help you solve your riddle."

Father peered into his moss. Mother smiled and retracted into her shell to hide her tears. "Goodby, Yellow Catacomb," she said.

"You must return to the forest alone," said Father, looking at me for the last time. "Crawl with peace, Yellow Catacomb, knowing that patience is the best prayer. May you survive tenaciously, become a centurion, and father countless children of your own. Now go, while I can still speak in my sadness."

I gazed lingeringly at his saffron symmetry until my eyes glazed with mists from the creek. Then I turned, before making a sobbing fool of myself, and plodded away, his riddle exploding through my brain. Although I didn't look back, I felt his compassionate vision on my shell, discerning my riddle in an instant, penetrating my cup, through my sack, and flooding my heart with an everlasting inspiration.

When I had climbed to the top of the creek bank he called after me. "Be not anxious to solve your riddle. Just trust in time, Yellow Catacomb, and may the earth currents be with you."

And now, after eight short decades, I die. Buoyed on rising currents, my silver cord shimmers, lifting me out of my mangled body. Quickly, I look down at my hexagram, marred, distorted and bloodstained. May I see it through Father's eyes! Through his eyes! A wild jolt flies up the cord, unleashing my being, and my shell becomes whole once again. My hexagram moves lines eternally. I see the riddle. It is solved. The Unknown engulfs me and I surrender.

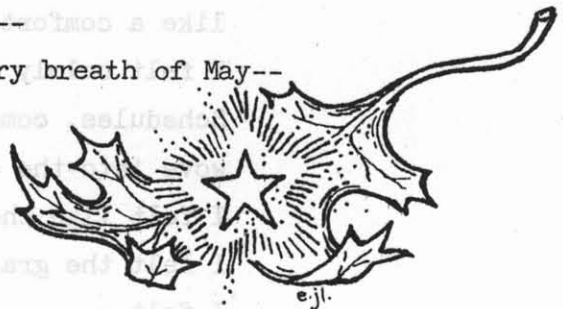
* * *
"Yellow Catacomb" first appeared in the New Infinity Review, Vol. 4, 1978.

ADVENT

It has always been November...
We did not understand the message of Sagittarius' glimmering.
Our perceptions sleep now, beneath the blankets of ceaseless cumulus--
So let it be! We do not want another Spring!
We couldn't stand being torn loose again--
Forced from comforting snow into the fiery breath of May--
We want to stay warm.

In the black night with white stars,
In the pale stone landscape,
A curious child is brought forth.
Scandalous, the birth, pleasurable-- and glorious.

How did this brazen pine cone spike its way
through the mantle of our incredibly dead concepts?
Is this the seed that has come to outgrow the towering vermilion pagodas?
Is this the gardner who will peel away our coating of senselessness
like an onion skin
So the aroma of our hearts will float to the stars
So they'll send down golden rockets of feeling
So we can live again and again and again...



Bob Chartowich

Friday was a gray unchanging
day where evening was still morning,
driving to was driving from,
all day a timelessness,
an agelessness,

a spiritualism.

Folds of drizzling sky rested
feather-breath on my movements
like a comforter.

I felt calmly intense.

Schedules, commitments, errands

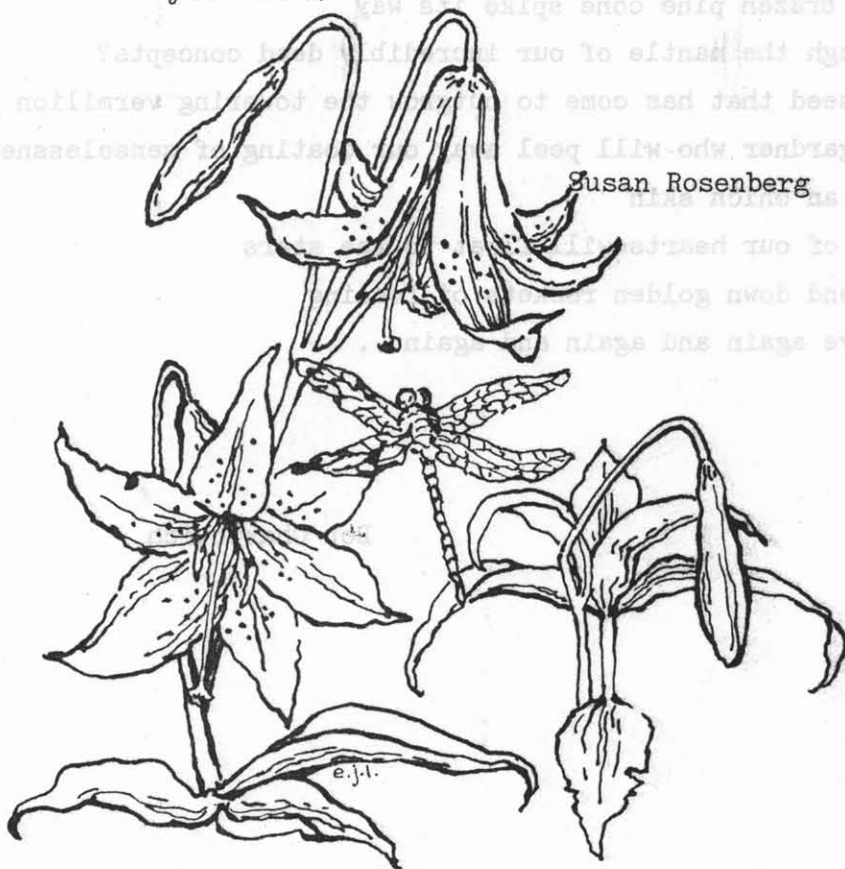
wove into the asphalt gray, mohair mist.

I felt like the only one breathing.

I felt the grace of a gray day melancholy.

I felt

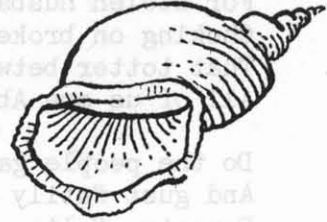
your love.



Susan Rosenberg

THE PSYCHE OF WOMAN, CLOTHED IN METAPHOR

I am a figure of earth and air;
I slip into a shift of silk,
and become the legendary islands,
floating like scarves on the wind.
Now what metaphor shall I wear?



I am the valley of the world,
the garden of the void,
the whirling motion of ecstasy,
everything trying to be round.

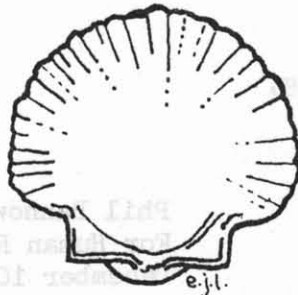
In the religion of riping melons
I am rooted.
In the secret spirals of seashells
I nest.
In the bounty of the endless curve
I am.



I have a body of cups and bowls
into which everything goes.
I have a dress of broken bird wings
that I am mending with songs that I sing.

I wear the landscape,
a cloak of brown and green hills;
My hat is the arc of the sky
reaching over the earth like a crown;
On it are the curled feathers that rain,
the secret dance of rain on the hills.

All things round sprout from a center
to a circular bloom;
My face is flowering too,
from the branches of my body of swirls.



Betty McCaughey

THE WIND OF THE PEOPLE

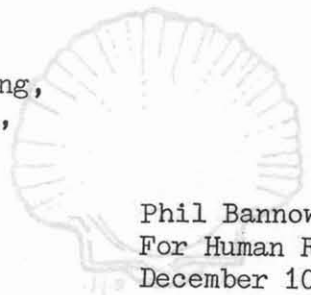
Is the movement of the People like the wind?
Does it catch itself in corners of the past,
Eddying around old insults and ancient wrongs among class equals:
Fluttering in the stubborn judgement we inflict
On each merciless other
For stolen husbands, wives, and treasure;
Choking on broken loyalties and fragile friendships
That totter between self-interest and fear?
All of us are Abel; all of us are Cain.

Do the people gather up their wild breezes
And gust futilely against the windbrakes -
Forests of lies:
Like that the Blacks are given everything -
The burnt-out Bronx, the back door,
And the bum's rush;
That woman's rise is man's fall, his poverty and castration;
That this abundant country can satisfy but a few
And each fellow worker's needs are a threat to our survival -
Forests of lies!
To beat the People's wind
Back into lowly stagnation.

Shall the People raise from earth and sky a gale
That cracks against the legion mountains,
Volcanoes of repression that suffocate the People
Of Chile, Palestine, and Iran?
Phalanxes of lawyers who legislate out
Human rights for the working class?
Sierras of power that break the People's storm
And muffle their angry thunder?

Can the People be the hurricane,
Condensed in roaring power
From love and solidarity,
A boiling tumult coiling round the eye of reason,
Rushing cross the seas of Freedom
To flood the land in cleansing cataracts
And sweep its heartless greed
Into the deepest, coldest crevices of earth!

For on this cyclone's ebb
The People can ring the sun
With rainbows of trust and sharing,
Rainbows of peace and fellowship,
Rainbows welcoming the future!



Phil Bannowsky
For Human Right's Day
December 10, 1978

The Body of the Dragon
Dances Over Many Flames
by Steve Leach

collation

as i drive home
the sky is very blue
polka-dotted with tiny white clouds.
the truck in front of me
carries five coffins,
presumably new and empty,
carefully tucked
in tailored quilted coats.
i turn the corner,
the truck goes on.

the women in the prison
spoke of freedom today.

the slums of the city
seem a little cleaner
after yesterday's hard rain.
winos doze on steps
in the warm sunshine.
men in carefully fashioned costume
and dark glasses
stand on the corner
waiting for the women
in the prison
who want to be free.

e. jean lanyon



The Body of the Dragon Dances Over Many Flames

by Steve Leech

I have just named myself Civil and have become a clown. You can find me walking down the street in an overcoat so that no one can see my funny suit. My face is splotted by the inks dipped in some long conjured biles. I am missing of my compass of perspective. I am tottering off some crazy spin.

Today I don't feel the same about Lee. Some years ago she had appeared from around a corner. It was a sudden appearance that would echo myriad visions in my mental retina. At times I had even entertained a notion of returning to that corner to permit myself a closer examination. But I knew I would realize a mere and ordinary corner deserving no mention and revealing no secrets. Now I knew that that corner was only a turn in one of those segments of life that often begins, instead, with a smear in time.

I believe the beginning began with something that was never said-- not in words at least. It happened in a silence where noises were almost imperceptible. It was a silence where surrounding space, so vast around me, closed in like a caress, like a breath, like the wind.

I had come back from a cold place in the desert still breathing its air rarified by the summer. Stars on humid nights sparkled around me shivering and distant. I had found my way back to an old friend's farm. But I couldn't fit in to the tilled earth, to the freshly cut hay, to the goats and the chickens. They became intelligent to me and looked at me with knowing eyes. I was trying to shake off the cold, and the stars. I looked upon the water where my simple eyes could float and bob and then be still, to see the reflections of the stars floating in the heavens where they have no motion. My breath smelled from the bile that colored me. In every place that I breathed I could smell the humus and compost returning. I heard voices in the air somewhere close by. Yet I saw no faces. Once I heard whole choruses of voices singing against the rushing sound of my clothes rubbing together, echoing inside the walls in the staircase of that slate sided farmhouse. Those voices were like the

sounds of the insects in that far fallow field. They were beautiful as I remember, both those voices and the sounds of the insects. But I could not discern a single voice or word of it. Both had nearly crossed the fine line of understanding. But they were filled with a life too full of music.

In the morning, while it was still and cool and dewy, I would walk into the garden behind that farmhouse before everybody was completely awake. The rooster would be crowing. I would squat low to the earth, by the sun on the horizon, next to all the neat rows of another life that seemed to pump and play that strange harmony that intruded into my hearing. The soil was made red by the long, low furnace. The world unfolded as each leaf unfurled, as each tiny blossom splayed its color and passed away into plumping fruit, as each stalk near to the earth grew, imperceptibly, and began to match the color of the soil bathed in a new spring.

Oh cosmic dust! I cried to myself. Oh eternal life so masked with forgetfulness, yet so full of remembrance!

I began to feel the cold scales of reptiles upon my flesh-- like a memory of something primordial. I felt that I had been hatched out of an egg in the sand, laid there by a titless mother, to be born without memory. It was as if I had been born without the warm blood that warns against the frost. And then I wept when I realized that torment would live with us in this warm blood, in the memory it carried, as it relentlessly pumped and played through us with an intelligence we could never understand.

But it ended, both the farm and this beginning. And for three years, after that small space that I had experienced in that garden had passed away, I began to string life out. I began to live in the corners of everyday existence far away from that plan in the garden. I became too caught up in deadlines and budgets and domestic living. I was no longer attached, no longer plugged into the interweaving of memory and being. I began to draw blood to see it flow with the shock of desire, a desire sprinkled piecemeal among social contrivances. Inane activities caused my blood to be dammed up in the extremities of my body causing hemorrhoids and aching joints. My heart became cold with blind passion. I struck out and destroyed those shapes that others had formed with patience and design. Dark clouds pressed me low to the earth and to that garden,

which had become poisoned by my touch. The dreams of the night below the night in which I slept bled into the daylight. The rain from the sky was like a ghost of missed blessings that ran away into the sewer polluted with wasted time. The long winter came in like pale blue metal.

But as I began to become ill, as the knowing eyes of beasts reminded me of my betrayal, after the wordless choruses became dim and nonexistent and I had painted myself out of all hope, Lee rounded that corner. All I could see was her dark aviator glasses at first. And as she came closer I could see her eyes, round and bright in the dark glass that covered them. In the days that passed I could not see the churning going on inside her, hidden by her laughter and disguised in her speech. I had sealed myself up, surrounded by all the new and strange afterbirth.

One morning in the dead of winter Lee came up to me with three words that had a conviction that only long nights of chaotic trauma could produce. My stomach gurgled ominously as my insides turned to fit my plan to regain my health.

It began to snow. It was a blessing. We went back to my hovel of domestic life and there we discussed the war. We drank coffee and ate doughnuts in that place where our conversation did not come out in steam-breath. The fragile ice of small puddles stayed unbroken by my compulsive shoe that delves into winter's membrane. Lee and I were covered only with the promise of a new spring as the snow began to cover the ground with its blessing.

One warm afternoon in late winter I left my hovel of domestic living. I was surprised that it wasn't as traumatic as it had been in Lee's previous but similar experience.

These new shoots after last frost, Lee's and mine, were voluntary and necessary. But circumstances compelled me to go far away where I nodded to different shadows and different paths of the springtime sun. And in that place where last frost was a bit delayed I had found that I gladly missed the circumstances of my former domestic living. It was a relief that surpassed relief, even though I found myself preoccupied with it. But, more and more, I had missed Lee. And the nature of missing Lee was amplified by the promise that she would be visiting me in that far

away place where I had finally come in the springtime of a new life.

My sleep began to be disturbed with strange rattlings inside my body. My hand would quicken toward my pulse to determine if it was my heart. But I could come to no clear conclusion.

As the weeks passed and the time for her visit came closer the rattlings in my body focused in my solar plexis. The gravity of the earth grew greater as if to make me take root there and be still. I heard a whisper. It was, in a sense, as if Lee had blown a tiny wisp into my face. Outside the wavy glass in the windowpane fresh green leaves were being slowly squeezed out of many tight little buds catching their sails in the slight breeze.

The day that preceeded the night she came was filled with lilacs. The air was large with birds' warm song. A gentle deluge soaked everything with its sweet breath.

In the night when she came we chattered a roosting night song. We kept a centered balance upon the keel below. Her touch played evenly searching for currents. I felt her fluids dancing to many snazzy tunes. I heard them in my ear. They had barely crossed the fine line of cognizance smoothed by our gentle floating. But in a changing sea Lee had fallen asleep in the gentle rolling of it without a word.

What an inquisitive mind I have to have wondered what was in her sleep and what was in her breath. The colors flushed in me.

What an easy floating existence it was that I had come into. It was almost unfamiliar. The currents began flowing through me evenly and balanced. I was ready, more than ever, to pour my soul into Lee. But sleep had closed her off and I was caught in the backwash of a receding sea that filled me with thunderous waking. I was alive like the eyes of a reptile. The churning of my insides stole the heat from my flesh. But Lee turned and her arm fell across me and her fist held a bunch of my hair. She held me still as the panic raged deep inside wringing the blood from my guts.

What an ugly death the dawn will bring. Lee will be starting where I have not ended. My eyes will be bloody. My breath will stink of the confusion of a night that has ended with merely Lee's soft waking. I will ruin the time that remains with her. I will be creased and crumpled

like an old paper bag. I will be sluggish and moody with concealed disappointment. I will look for corners of light in the bright sunshine and find only the wordless instances of desire.

As Lee was waking and as I watched the softness of sleep sliding from her I let my eyes bob and float as they felt her face like the hands of a blind man.

I could never tell what Lee felt. She was always good at hiding it. Once her fingers and arm had awakened currents of living song inside. But those currents, like quickly germinating flames, turned dancing into and inside every cleft of itself spinning a ghostly body of something forgotten.

There were no songs of insects singing in the summer that followed. I was compelled to live in cityscape. I'd grab a bus and ride to Lee's house where we would sip iced tea under a shade tree. Or we'd go somewhere and lie, not touching, in the grass by running water and listen to it babble. The current had flowed out of me. The ghostly body was dancing somewhere above the trees touching them with the first sting of autumn. But my body was still resilient with its passage and in its wake all my inner parts danced together just long enough to break and wobble into falling. The bile turned on me again making me flush in unwelcome colors. My breath suddenly caused things close by to wilt and bend away.

Lee's still out there. I see her often enough. Sometimes she laughs and jokes and sometimes I know that inside she hurts. Lee's out there like a dragon dancing in the trees filling them with its fire.

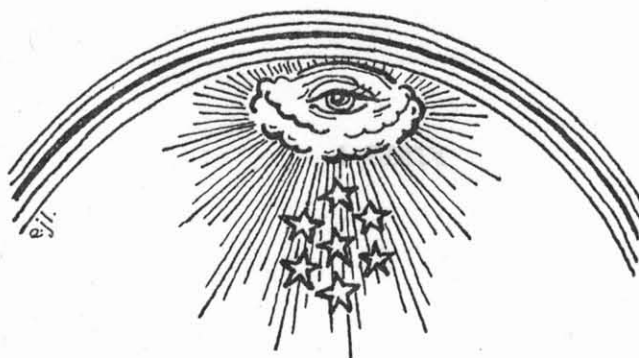
I walk the pavements in my overcoat to hide my foolish naked attempts to dance a bastard dance for Lee. I kick the moist leaves instead where they have dyed the concrete temporarily. The biles are coloring my flesh with many dull residues.

I cannot touch Lee anymore because I cannot bear to feel her draw away. She is the cruel phantom that leads me into winter where there is no sound except the whispering noise of the falling snow, reminding me of so many winters gone by. The only things I see are the etched trails the dragon has left in the thin ice of encroaching winter. I walk upon those thin membranes and break them with the toe of my shoes. I do it to hurry the spring. But spring will come late, devouring Lee in its jaws and spitting fire back at me, a fire unquenched by the waters that once flowed underneath.

RESURRECTION COUNTY

I was fast asleep down there,
When a holy blue tractor drove by,
Turned me up with a tine of its ineffable tiller,
And left me here to spit the stones out of my mouth,
And have a few scattered thoughts about the decline of cities.
There it goes! On to the furrowed horizon!
Driven by a giant ladybug,
Escorted by apple-white women with green hair on green horseback.
Goodness!...
I look up.
The sky is clear and silver, with sapphrey vapor trails.
I look down.
The earth is black, and brown, and red, and yellow, and white.
And now a whole new urge comes over me,
As I plant my feet in the heart of the earth,
And I rise up, up, like a fountain of grain,
And I pierce clear through the clear silver sky,
And I kiss You right on the thousand-petalled lotus,
You Divine Person,
And your jewelled pollen is all over my face,
And all the airplanes of the air are landing in my arms...

Bob Chartowich



ADDENDUM

I was fast asleep down there
When a holy blue tractor drove by,
Turned me up with a line of its ineluctable filler,
And left me here to spit the bones out of my mouth,
And have a few scattered thoughts about the decline of cities.
There it goes! On to the furrowed horizon!

The Cows of Eternity are bringing us home.

"Our song sends the cows mooing

like Bach organs through the venetian blinds

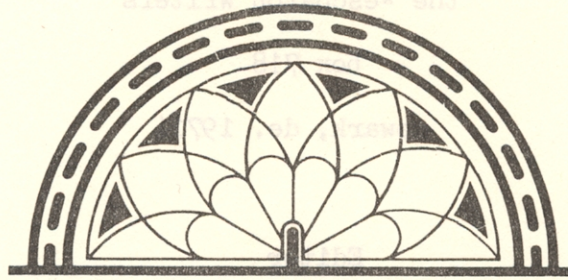
of our fly-specked reality."

excerpted from
The New Wine Papers

Bob Charlowich



FINIS !



DREAM STREETS

1979

vol. 2

Collaborators

Law Bennett, Brian Wolf, Steve Leach, Doug Knox
Susan Rosenberg, Bob Chertowah, John Hickey

*Each item refers to "the same time", both the
end and the beginning of time. As writers
and artists we step out of ordinary time and
into the esoteric every time we "create" (or
are created).

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