

REVEAL DIGITAL

IO Magazine

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JSTOR

To magazine

Ravi Books

#1

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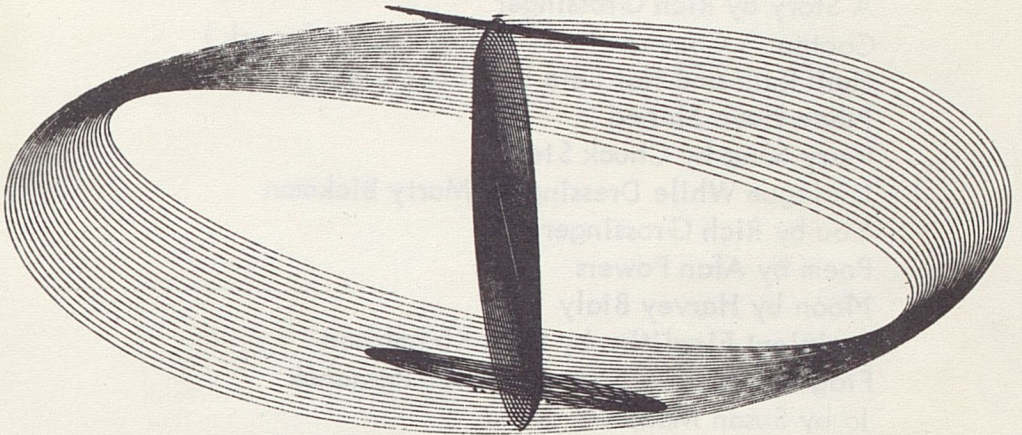
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NOTES

Io was put together by the members and friends of Phi Alpha Psi Society. Since the sense of the word society here is one of open work, the next issue is open to full participation. We give special thanks for help on this to: Rich Grossinger, Nels Richardson, Marty Bickman, Randy Gingiss, and Lindy Hough. In the near future all the contributors to Io (within range) will be at a Phi Psi Coffee Hour for discussion of the work in part or as a whole. The next issue will appear in the fall --- Phi Psi Society.



Tarka

(A Dedication-Introduction-Speech)

"On the hill we know there is a fire, but
nothing of its logs."

Some circumstances of it as they stood: Oct. 31, 1964. A pit in a glen. 35 people. 15 slabs of painted plywood (orange, red, blue, green, yellow, black, white). 20 slides from Astronomy and Biology and Geology Depts. A screen. Slide projector from Boston. Two R.R. poles. Gourds. High priestess (cursory painting). Ten torches, five long candles, two altar candles. An amplifier and speaker. 2 records of Japanese music, a book of Winnebago myths.

Why are we out here? I think a few minor things ought to be made clear at once. This is not a party, nor is it a ceremony. It is not even a real ritual. You are here for no logical reason and would be somewhere else except for that fact that you are here. Nothing is planned, nothing predetermined. True, there are things to do, but they are as random and undefined as the loose dirt around you. Let it be said merely that we are here - and here to do something which we are not yet certain of and probably will not accomplish; we are here to begin that which each of us has somehow already begun, which each of us will have to finish alone. This is merely a meeting in the midst of time, in the midst of life, an hour or two set aside from all the other hours, a time beyond a world that much resembles a cold and richly-painted hell, its thicket of senseless fruits and spires, its circus horse that will never really stop nor has ever really started. All so as not to awake forty years from now, discovering that you have given your life to him.

Now I want especially to warn you that nothing will happen if you are waiting for it to happen. Sitting here on this somewhat sacred earth you will remain a position in space, a carefully-sublimated piece of protoplasm anchored transiently to a spot of dirt in a tiny Massachusetts town beneath a waxing moon and the well-charted universe, surrounded by a few species of trees: the distant lights of rooms will distract just enough. Expect the same if you fear and dislike the occurrence of ghosts. You will merely spend a strange evening in an unlikely place listening to unusual things. But the truth remains: That everything around you is trembling in its orbit, crackling to break free and become itself.

In a way I think we are here because we could be nowhere else. I believe that this group in particular - simply because it was we who in the end came - is fated to carry on this collective dance with a friendly angel, each of us an integral part of the energy that will be released by our dreaming voices and received by our cells.

Yes, we came for many reasons: to be with a friend, to prepare formulas, myths, hymns, to see a spirit of this eve. On Halloween not too many years ago, perhaps you wore masks, dressed in bones, trusted the darkened streets in hope of spearmint leaves or candy corns, chocolate spoons, sketched in warm colors, sang to Mr. Squirrel burying his acorns, cut orange triangles for flame to become. Came the troll, dragging his steaming truck of chestnuts up from the underworld: you were tiny then, there were no cities you had to found, the wind was shapeless, the sun the sun, the moon its moon, Mars drifting, the star becoming pentagrams. And then the words arrived, reproducing, self-deriving, angry at someone they had never met.

It happens that a world exists and you want something of it because suddenly you came - and words for it all and poems for the rest - and you go on day after day without standing up and protesting, without screaming out for that only inalienable right that supersedes all other inalienable rights, the words pretending to make all men equal in the only way in which they are not equal because they cannot stand being unequal in the one way and yet cannot stand the equality they have. Each of us has said or thought once the argument of the following: "There is something more in me than a Freudian existential beast. I am spooked by strange and beautiful visions that have no release, that have no friend in the world, that are more secret than pornography. By these bright cultural colors they are only teased; by this kaleidoscopic jig of faces and names and hopes and words, they are only loosed in chaos."

It is a belief that we are something more rather than something less, that we are being robbed of that something more, that belief, if any, that should make us listen more closely tonight. Not that we will find it, certainly not in one casual eve among friends as hardly in one casual life among warmongers. We are merely to be reminded that it is still there, to be stirred again with the haunted fairy tales of a childhood that once seemed filled with a secret and a majesty that the world never became. Black puddles in the night do stem downward into the nowhere world; there is a nowhere world; there always was a world behind the images that drool from nature, drooling a second time in search of the nowhere puddle; dark mountain streams do carry black gold and silver foam and this is an equal and complementary reality to their dirt and delta-rot, their clays and silts in suspension and H₂O with a dousing of NaCl; this is their myth. Those stars are both a question and an answer, far beyond what we can measure and telescope and see. We are here to look once more at the universe that is, that was before people somehow sewed neat its soul, legended away its energy, measured its guts, and pronounced consistent chants upon its wild winds - all wrong, all false, security and hopeless hopes.

We have named the mountains, charted the diseases, counted the layers of the atmosphere, taken the census, put flowers of the hills on the tombs, holidayed the presidents, read and dewey-decimalized the poems, invited the relatives to each of the bigger affairs. When we have lived by all these minor rituals, how can we awake in the morning and remember the sun that is the source of light and heat, the moon that is the source of thought and direction, the stars that are where we shall go on another night - or our children? In the words of Theorem Fifteen: EVERY FORCE IN THE UNIVERSE IS CAPABLE OF BEING TRANSFORMED INTO ANY OTHER KIND OF FORCE BY USING SUITABLE MEANS. THERE IS THUS AN INEXHAUSTIBLE SUPPLY OF ANY PARTICULAR KIND OF FORCE THAT WE MAY NEED." Day by six days we progress across the mindless weeks.

But there is a source - for which the sun is a symbol. What bothers us are the forces that pretend to know something they don't. What bothers us about the too-blue Sunoco sign or the over-ripe can of red paint is that they are filled with energy but sourceless. Like rhetorical tricks of the critics we know, they lead our thoughts, our eyes nowhere, our heart to stop. There are lights but they are wrong. They are as bright and sparky as anything lit before our eyes, yet sourceless and directionless, lacking identity, lacking any sense of the strange ghosts that fill each of our daily existences.

And there is a source, a great pull of mind-stuff, resting in electric calm out in the bends of the universe, the stars, Orion, Sirius, Vega, Alpha Centauri, cutting loose forces that fill the forces within us. Think of it as the atom if you prefer, tiny and potential. Think of it as Andromeda, a garden somewhere in another dimension. But there is a source and everything that moves moves with an antenna toward that source, everything that dies is sent back to that common field. The hope is that you sense these things, that you no longer hide behind the names so as not to know the things. That is what robs you of your share in the infinite. If you are too fascinated by the carnival colors and never look at the half-moon, its dagger, overhead, something falls, something is short-circuited, you are hooked onto a cycle you cannot break, and your life, your world is half.

We are not out here to raise the spooks that be, only to recognize them. Recognition is love; recognition is prayer. Prayer is love and love can be prayer. Sex becomes recognition with prayer. You are out here to recognize the energy that builds your identity and the identity of all things around you. It will appear as ghostlike only if you do not understand that that is what it is. It is all history added up and then spilt for chaos again. It is the knowledge, with hope and love, that we are left here randomly by someone who didn't have the time of day to tell us where the hunt was or what to do, the knowledge - and happily so - that those who were here before us arrived in the same state and know no more. But there is one thing - and that is you; you, another infinite permutation of the energy sent out to play with the world. The relevance is only you - but then again everything; the connections you make are yours - and everybody's; the identity you eventually find is a truth of the universe. You are the stuff the stars are made of; all is not bleak existentialism; there is a temple, a sanctuary that includes adventure. There is a second self in you like an eagle locked in the belly of a pigeon - and it is incredible if you have not noticed him kicking to be free, to be off and back to the sky.

This would be the end of the speech except that I want to give you some sense of our history too. In truth, we are all like the earth goddess Demeter, searching for the lost Persephone; she is held captive beneath the earth; our fields; they will not flower. Man has failed where he has not realized that it takes evil as well as good to drag the soul up from the depths, that it takes the black temple as well as the white one, the dead baby on the cover of the "National Enquirer" as well as the infinitely more terrible white star that can consume into dust and energy a thousand such sacks of lifeless bones. It takes killing Christ to set free the Holy Ghost; it takes the rise of the Nazis and two World Wars to make men realize that their Twentieth Century sanctuary, built on the holiest of economic schemes, blessed by the most enlightened of all sciences, ruled by the most Utopian of all political systems, the freest and most experimental arts, is stuffed to the core with equal quantities of rottenness, of destruction, of perversion. And every black-eyed susan he has worshipped has grown an ugly weed he has tried to cut away, not realizing that it is the balance between the two and the tension formed by the balance that weights and sashes the scale, and the scale holds up the earth on its giant back.

Time is giving us no respite. Next stop is the stars and beyond, the incredible alien truths of Neptune, Pluto, Alpha Centauri, farther and farther to the never-to-come end (our own ends make up for that curse of eternity). We are going somewhere, perhaps to hunt for new images, perhaps to spread our seed as numerous as the sands of the deserts (such was promised), perhaps back to where we came from, perhaps moving only from molecule to molecule, all within the hand of a baby belonging to some fat universe where each grain of sand on the gargantuan sulphur beach is another universe. But we are off with no more choice in it than the salmon who spawn upstream. And soon enough we too will be gone and others will take command, expecting from us a Bible and a Holy Grail, and still we may write a chapter of one, and still they may say our prayers before a burning Orion Sinai, and still they may quiz them as forgotten Easter Island gods. But they will stand though we will never have a chance to add up why or where we went except that billions are already buried under this huge earth and we never stop to add or make connections. And then someone being clocked off within us now will procede to a place where we and those who begot us will met when they come. This is our chance to be immortal, the stars overhead our legacy, our eternal to-be. We are stopping tonight to acknowledge these facts, to pause in the middle of a noisy nowhere and reflect on the everywhere all about us, to dance for a second the dance we are dancing every second anyway.

RICH GROSSINGER

bin you thinking you would like it too?
we will ride our lives like that wonderful dilapidated
tractor on the ranch
people don't do that much anymore
you and me - maybe we could spend an afternoon
scraping off the insides of oreos with our teeth
and washing down tractor life with milk
but I don't know
what do you say we take a rain check
I got so many books to read yet.

DONA WHEELER

August came
and September
through the grass
her
blondness was
unapproachable in
the sand boxes
I
remember her because
she had a sandy
name

CHUCK STEIN

But
She is here, the warmth:
she who lights the black
and warms the cold
she who is life and flesh,
movement out of frozen ether,
flux and flesh from stone
She is because she was,
and was because something began
out of the cold everywhere and
out of the black,
a star
She is,
and now with her,
and in the fire,
I am,
warmed from the cold
because there is a fire,
and we are warm in it,
a sun

ALAN POWERS

The Separation of the Sexes

In plants under culture
and placed under new conditions of life,
sometimes the male organs
sometimes the female organs
become more or less impotent;
now, if we suppose this to occur
in ever so slight a degree
under nature,
then, as pollen is already carried
regularly
from flower to flower
and as a more complete separation of the sexes
would be advantageous
on the principle
of the division
of labor,
individuals with this tendency more and more increased,
would be continually favored or selected,
until at last a complete
separation of the sexes
might be affected.

CHARLES DARWIN
as to Nels Richardson

The Zen Master

The toad leaps and flops.
The toad breeds in spring.
The toad catches its food.
In winter the toad does not seek
poetry
to evoke summer:
it hibernates.
The toad flops.
Whether on Broadway or in the Annandale woods
it flops.
The toad does not think about its origin or its destiny.
The toad does not know
it has
a warty back different from the warty back of any other
toad.
Look at the toad:
it is very serious about things;
it is about to laugh.

RICHARD CLARK

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News

Outside the snow drifts up,
Sky hesitates, whiteness falls.

Children, playing an ancient game,
Stand, wait in the street while voices call,
Then turn nigger to the prodding clubs
And march at a near run: two miles,
Close ranks. Daffodils bloom in the yards;
The weather is warm and air sparkles
In the Alabama sun.

Above is expected,
Through the blue sky, the spill
And scream of jets turning north:
The jungle is nervous, burnt fields
Still smoke for retreating men,
And bodies are pulled from the rubble
Of beds and walls, blasted at night.
About Saigon the usual
Silence is kept, but above, planes
Are expected.

Cloudy sky, cool
Air, Low over New England,
And by dawn, snow probable.

TOM PARSON

SUNDAY BREAKFAST

Oh! plu-pip! We shouldn't be in there, she said
You undermine, her said
We should act to desist, not to kill, she said
So suggest something, her said
To talk and talk, she said
We're not in a bargaining position so
can't talk, her said
Damn the position, she said you don't bar-
gain lives you let them live
You don't want to stop communism, elle broke in
I do, she said
We'd lose face, elle dit
They are masks, she said
You don't care about the country, her said
Yes I do, she said
You don't understand it, elle dit
Stand under, support, no I guess not, she said
Look! The stars dropped into the jonquils last night!

LINDY HOUGH

In answer to a description of Amherst and Smith,
their social systems, etc., Ray Bradbury sent a
letter from which this is an excerpt:

.....The Holiday season seemed to be a good time to write you again. I have
your letter of last June here and I was fascinated to read it again and see re-
flected in it the attitude of many students I met over this last weekend at an
UCLA Colloquium in the mountains outside of L. A.

That's about all I have to say except to advise you to do as you damn please,
follow your heart and guts, and kick anyone out of the way who doesn't believe
in your personal dream. You have one life to live. You can live it as a loving,
decent, and good person, and work creatively, but if people oppose you they are
not friends and the sooner you leave them behind the better. Find other friends
who yammer and yell about the same exciting stuffs that excite you.

Nuff said. I believe what I write, yes. And try to live it. Is it easy? Some-
times, yes. On occasion, no. But the effort is made, anyway, and the final
result is great for I find I am proud, justifiably proud, of my work. It is mine.
Nobody else did it. Nobody else could have thought of it. I can only wish
the same result for you in the New Year and the Years to come. MERRY
CHRISTMAS!

RAY BRADBURY

SONG

Her face
between my hands
is a soft round place

I follow to
in stars

and map it where
it wanders

simply to return

at once

without her

and in her arms

CHUCK STEIN



good morning

the spring sun
slicing pine needles, finding
old ponds

dazzling fenders, catching
mica, (a coin), two suns
three suns (four suns)

birds black dots
glass smudging silver, heating
both sides of the leaf

the spring sun
buttering french toast, bathing
in milk

turning night creams
into gases, growing
fat front pages on the sidewalk

counting dust, photographing
fences, hitching rides
on the colors of cars

tasting buttercups, haunting
stop signs, studying
high advertisements

the spring sun
running beside lindy, disguised
as a tall dancer

RICHARD GROSSINGER

Sunday morning

Light yellows the walls
Butters the tables and chairs,
While bacon grease spits in my ears.
Silence cleans the halls,
Sweeping sound under the rug.
Outside the sky is too bright
And takes two inches from my height.

I woke up crawling from bed, a bug,
Leaving the dream that I was a man
To be dispersed by my electric fan.

PEG LEE

ESSO MEANS:

E conomy
S peed
S ervice
O ysters

Your Esso Dealer nearest by is Jim Milar;
He is on Route Nine east of Valentine.
More specifically, across the street from
The abandoned red trailer. Good Service
Makes the extra half mile worth driving.
(P.S., this Esso Station has orange soda
instead of oysters).

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THE DEATH OF THE MYNAH BIRD

The bird was dead
so peter and frank and i picked it up
little and stiff
covered the cage sold with it for \$19.98
put it in a puzzle or par
chesi box
borrowed a spade a shovel
went out into the snow
like we used to do with fatso the gold fish in
central park in aluminum foil
frank held back the bush
peter dug ice and dirt i held the spade
people walked by how did it happen they said
we don't know we said
it was a male it had yellow neck feathers
oh they said and thought of irony
the box we covered with dirt
peter let off the firecracker in a pumpkin
put a sign on the door "Flowers Accepted"
we cleaned off the spade went inside forgot the shovel
watched television two moose and a martian mouse
i slept ate cookies
we will get a new one for more money
somebody stole the sign from the door
lets buy some comic books we thought
after eating magic mushrooms
let me lie here forever
warm in the blue coldness of the room
and the twinkling bridge is your friend
so i will watch it when you go
im smiling round and smooth
no not forever
but until it gets light
no
no pot i said

WENDY BITTER

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circular yellow
circular green
circular blue
circular violet
circular red
circular orange, they
are puddles of hue
falling in
a grey sun
crawling out in
the worlds beasts

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each other
in ping/pong light until
crash! they
set into
one
behind their red glow on
red sands



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LINE SONG

That yellow lady, sitting over there
on green bench, watching the children
play at running through the hoses:

she wants the line simple.
Not the bumpy curve traced lovingly
against the mocha horizon

of grape piled on grape
the outs and ins of the pears
heaped high on the clustered pineapples

nor the figs dates plums stacked
robustly in massively effusive words;
that for others. For this lady

line fine, lean, a dancer's leg
and breath propelling, whipping the turn,
on a plate a single bone

alone, sliced clean, white, taut,
strong. No meandering -
that lady rises, walks on.

LINDY HOUGH

funny
youre beautiful you said
your eyes are closed i said
then your eyes moved under your eyelids when you slept
i want to see to where you are looking
came the darklight
i said to it i thought you only came when
when what? it said
sorry i said
anytime it said settling down on my head
off please i want to sleep
he'll know i said
who? it said
him i said
no answer
but you
knew
later loving i saw twisted white moons
wow i said
really you said
lets have some ralston
i'm asleep
all right you said

W ENDY BITTER

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TEN

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greenhouse
young plants
go on tables
dinner
lunch
breakfast

earth is rich flowers are colors are trees are and are

GROSSINGER'S

292 - 5000

Grossinger, New York

ANOTHER ANIMAL

Having lost what he had held but never gained,
having seen her trudge through crackling falling leaves
into the city where they both could go (but now separately)
to drop trying to see the stars for need of being,
having lost her a day ago

he wrote a letter. Mailed it to her, then
forgot it. He took up with the stars again,
She came back although the leaves remained
dead on the ground. Inevitable, still chained

to some glimpsed dream floating within the frame,
she listened again when he straddled a chair, the same
themes obsessing him: how the stars picnic, spectrums
from the salty planet, and Yeat's Orion. Her eardrums,

stretching thin to catch also something about the letter,
felt the vibrance of the meteor he had polished better
than gleaming. Holding the meteor in his hands he forgot
her presence and lack of it. Her mind walked (as it ought

to have done in the beginning) up the stairs, out the door
into the peopled night. It loped to a sub-conscious x-roar
of his words impetus but not accompaniment still babbling
there in the basement. Once in blackness, traveling

alone and slowly, she hid from stars (they are not extinguishable)
in the considerable substance of people.

LINDY HOUGH

hey max gimme an almond delight
this icecream life is frosted
but i will not yield oh boy o man o thing
i cant smile in their faces for years that dry up
and i cant talk so loud that my head rolls off
lost it

do you know where?
(NORTE AMERICA ES UN CONTINENTE)
because you should, you know alot about
(LA CULTURA DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS NO ES PRIMITIVA)
what nobody laughs at

they told me to stick my Tigris above the Euphrates
this is no land for honeycolored cats
and love isnt here
he is with all the lions
the crown of 42nd Street
he has the whole zoo
write to me
shout it out with an oom-pah-pah
live your life merrily, merrily
for that is the way college is

WENDY BITTER



BRIEF NOTES ON OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Richard Clark is a professor of biology at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York. Harvey Bialy is a student there. Professor Clark is responsible for a new and strange theory of evolution while Harvey, who read at Amherst earlier this year, is having a long poem published in the spring.

Dona Wheeler once went to Smith while Peg Lee and Wendy Bitter still go there. John Wolpaw occasionally goes there. Last year Dona did a long series of poems of which the one printed was a member. Peg's poem and Wendy's poems were selected from shorter series. John is doing research in ESP.

Chuck Stein is a retired alchemist; James Polachek is a student of Chinese at Harvard. Chuck's first book will be released by Columbia University Press this spring. It is entitled On Reading Basil Valentine. Nan Freeman once described the sound of beans in their pods blown by the upper wind of the tree as the coldest noise in the world. Nan and Anne McCarthy are students of art at Smith College.

Lindy Hough is a dancer; Mary Bickman is currently studying South Seas astronomy. Both have done several short stories this year as well as their poems. Lindy is a student at Smith, Marty at Amherst.

Susan Mohl is an astronomer who loves galaxies and satellites; Alan Powers collects driftwood and lives by the sea. Al is a student at Amherst, Sue at Mount Holyoke.

Nelson Richardson has done a series of translations from Cocteau, and Rich Grossinger is presently at work on a novel called The Cloud. Tom Parson is a student in English 42. All three are students at Amherst. Shelia Hartman, now at Doan College in Crete, Nebraska, spent last year in Denmark. Ray Bradbury, of course, is the author of many books ranging from the carefree sadness of Dandelion Wine to the terrifying eeriness of Fahrenheit 451. Charles Darwin is a biologist.

The pamphlet was printed by the Organomic Functionalists, 7 Magdala Road, Nottingham, England.



MINE SHAFT

I threw all my rocks down the well
and they sunk quickly.
The water that lizards skittered into
was too shallow for them to fall far.
I heard the sound as a gum-ball dropping to the floor
No resonance there. No
depth, nothing to throw more rocks into
with any hope.

Mine dumps are high and the shafts are deep.
The water in them sinks quickly into the earth,
pulled by earth fingerlings to quench
an insatiable thirst started when a profiteer
drew gold like blood.

We have too much invested in this shallow water.
Kiss-kin, slit wrist, scraped sandled toe.
I yell for you, sitting down there in the water
and continually, again begetting again, blink
sun-dazzled and blinded when you do not answer
back. In some well where the water is deep you
are sitting, finger nails limpid and wax in ears
drifting out onto the surface of the oiled
waters. If it is not this one it may be the next.

Shifting my weight and the bag of rocks to my
other shoulder, I waddle up the littered
rock-strewn mountain to look for you
in another shaft.

LINDY HOUGH

When the increase of mass at high velocity was first noticed, people could have set it aside as a special class of events within a special physics. By now we would have two unrelated sciences, one (the classical) applying to almost every event, the other (unnamed) dealing with that small pack of renegade events. What did evolve, however, was a new physics combining both in that the latter were seen as special instances of the former. Is this way in which we have hidden psi?

Clairvoyance can see the movements of another world; telepathy can communicate without the five senses; telekinesis can change solid reality without matter; apparitions are travellers. These are psi, are supernatural because they do not observe space and time and matter, do not tune to the limitations those constants place on action and knowledge. As the notions of time, space, matter, and energy became space-time and matter-energy in the new physics, our ideas of the space-time and matter-energy according to which we live require change to cover both the conventional and the psi events. Psi phenomena are no more than special cases of natural ones. They have their own clock.

After all, it is only by our time that precognition is precognition; but our clock time may not be our real time, as human beings in a vast and careful universe. It is presumptuous, even without considerations of psi, to assume simply that the time of clocks and the sun is the time in which men run. There is perhaps another time, embodying in its tick the most ancient of magic and the orthodox of modern science.

(From Research by John Wolpaw)

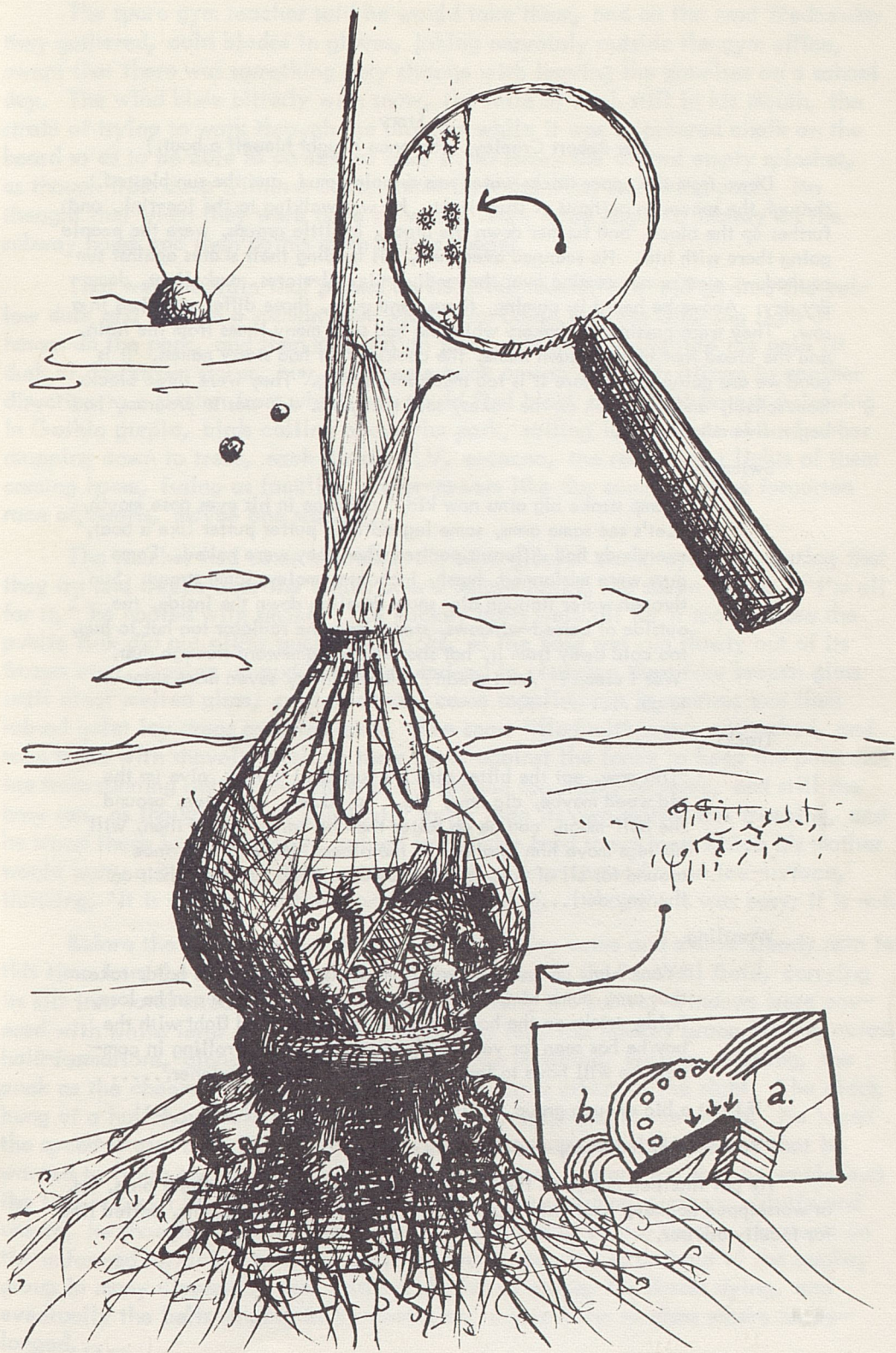
Oscilloscope in Huntington Park

On every other rung, the parachutes of fog hang. Thin ladders bend with the steps of workmen ascending to pick glass, encysted candies from a leaf suspended, midstructure, like a vatic tongue. The shoes of the workers the polished bodies of ants.

Leaf

Strong and summerdurable, the stem reveals a mechanical boon of bearings and musculations at the chiasm of the foot, where natural precision instruments detect the winter breezes and the North magnetic pole which floats over the snows of Arctica. Lead pearls create all day, under collapsing parachutes, rackets on the crusts of sand. The light of the sun's distraction. Memories of the dark canals and waterways of Leningrad.

NELS RICHARDSON



A Story
(for Robert Creeley, who once bought himself a boat.)

Down from the upper tracks water was dripping mud, and the sun blasted through the spaces in patterns of stray light. He was walking to the ice-rink, and further up the block, and further down the block, in little groups, were the people going there with him. He scanned over them, all holding their skates against sun or shadow, over or not coming over the medium-size el-stores, dark-light, damp-dry day. Above he heard it: coming, there, and gone, three different noises in a row. They were passing the bakery which he had seen many times from the train, and the bread that had a golden name, the cookies that had starry names. 'It is good we are going now before it is too much into spring.' They were three blocks from school, and the clock on the bakery said that phys. ed. was in progress, had begun five minutes ago.

Swimming:

"Jump stroke big arms now kid," chlorine in his eyes nose mouth,
"Let's see some arms, some leg motion, putter putter like a boat,"
everybody had different penises when they were naked. Some
guys were misformed, harsh, inchoate, moley; some strong. Sun
through water through air, snow drooling down the inside, the
outside of barred-windows, steam from the radiator too hot to hug,
too cold away from it, hot shower and homeward through dust.
'Was I clean?' 'Am I clean?' 145th Street, seven more stops
to go.....

Track:

"Dig now, eat the bitter air, it's supposed to hurt, give up the
old weed maybe, dig now, dig," up, down, up, down, around
the half-moon, can he go faster than he can go faster than, will
his legs move him to ahead of the other, "Walk it off, once
around for all of you, grab a shower or else, checking hair on
the way out...."

Wrestling:

"Yank him, up and over you rinkydinks, let's see the hold, take
that arm, dump him," sweat, how can he win, how can he lose,
holds, tricks on the body, he will stay there and fight with the
boy he has seen for years without touching, now rolling in com-
bat, he will have to lose, for to be declared the winner.....

"If I get a big enough group, will you let us go ice-skating?"

"You need at least ten, and a faculty adviser."

He got fourteen names on the list, people who either hated winter phys. ed.
or worshipped hockey, neat list, typed between homework assignments, dotted line
for faculty adviser.

The spare gym teacher said he would take them, and on the next Wednesday they gathered, cold blades in gloves, joking nervously outside the gym office, aware that there was something very strange with leaving the premises on a school day. The wind blew bitterly with snow, the taste of math still in his mouth, the strain of trying to work through the problem while it was in colored chalk on the board so as to be able to do similar ones in his room; the distant empty splashes, as though from deep within a cave, came from the misty swimming pool. He thought that when they were done he would learn three pages of history on the subway home and then do his math before supper.

That was the train that passed on its lifted tracks; it would go into the yellow dark and then to a station from which you could find the dimming light of homes on the park, and then to a station from which you could find the pale lit dusk of downtown stores, buy, and come back among later schoolboys in another direction to a station from which you could find black apartment houses swimming in Gothic purple, birds calling above the park, sailing into swarms of each other dropping down to trees, each distant T.V. antenna, the red-orange lights of them coming home, fusing as families, water-towers like the courts of some forgotten race of dwarfs, maybe one star.....

The teacher had come bounding out with gleeful manic eyes, suggesting that they try and freeze over the tennis courts before hiking the seven blocks. "I'm all for it," he hooted with smoke. The hockey buffs were all for it too because the public rink did not allow pucks and sticks, so the hose was run slowly out of its frozen coat, ripping up puddles it had lodged in, leaving them like broken glass until clear melted glass, cold as crystal came toppling out in sputters and then rained quiet icy drops over the snow. The snow filled with water and caked, and soon those with shovels, pushing their loads against the fence to keep the potential ice from running out, found the winter's ground too heavy to move, and still the hose ran, as though to melt constantly faster than its own matter was freezing, and he stood there in frozen shoes, ruined into white hard streakiness which his mother would hurry out the back door, watching igloos form instead of an ice-surface, thinking, 'It is not easy in this world to go skating. I thought it was easy; it is not.'

Before the week was out a grey December day came and a slow steady rain fell this time from the sky, landing as unnoticed water on the football field, carrying its silt into total streams until on the next morning the subway windows were covered with white ferns and the field was cloudy ice, the hockey group skating across half-formattons, along bridges, into hard mud, laughing, yelling, kicking, the puck as the cheers of early morning spectators drew others to the sight. The clock hung at a half-hour before school and time still belonged to the world. He laced the speed-skates onto himself down by his locker, aware in a headache that he wanted to finish the last chapter of the English book, aware too that he would hurt the fine razor of his blades if he tried them on the unshaven surface. Stuffy and unsure, he thought only of the act and only wanted to be out there. He stood on the unformed surface, unable to build up speed, passing in and out of the hockey group in many diagonals, sad, without rhythm or grace, his skates dying, and eventually the bells ringing in his confusion, carried him to class where he belonged.....

"One more block," called out a guy who had chased the puck that morning.

"Great," he called back, staring at gum balls, red and black licorice, but-ton candy, plastic amulets. They were going to a skating rink, but also somewhere else, as one enters a train knowing that it will take him somewhere but also knowing that he must live within the train until he gets there. . . .

At lunch he had strode out with careful guards over the blades, had ripped them in crossing the sidewalk, steel scraping tonelessly until he reached the ice. He had put out a foot, another, and went cracking down through glaze into mud. He had walked on it, like a man wearing one stilt and one ballet slipper in a bog, aware that the whole world and God, too, must be looking on his incapacity, but no one appeared, and he satisfied himself then that on the distant roof-tops, with binoculars, they had looked down and had held parties, not believing.

"This was a crackpot idea," said the gym teacher. "Get on your gym suits and lift weights. You guys have goofed off long enough." He knew that it would come to that: that they weren't supposed to go ice-skating and so they would be allowed to try until they proved to themselves and the powers-that-be why they were not allowed to go, and then when found wandering in the deepest nonunder-standing and humility, they would be seized back before they did themselves bodily or spiritual harm.

He had journeyed through the hallways during lunch-hour, finally to locate a teacher who wanted to take them. Quickly he gave him the new list, the English teacher signed on the dotted line, and he ran around telling everyone before the next afternoon.

They gathered as before, those who didn't know others now recognizing the different faces of companions in this strange compulsive folly, everyone assuming that everyone else was there for different reasons than they. Above them the air was grey and it was beginning to snow, and faraway the radio station that was their city said that blizzards would come and schools would be closed. They were dispatched early by a note on blue and white mimeo paper, breaking again into separate directions. From the train that day he watched the rink, looking up from his book to see in the white wind one white man, slowly packing like a fox around the rink. . . .

The last block. March was threatening in February, and some expressed the fear that too much sun, aimed directly down from above, would ruin the ice. He tried not to think about it, listening instead to the voice of the English teacher telling about the last time he had skated, friendly, anecdotal drone. People passed them, ladies with black covering, men in tan jackets, poorer men in rough fabrics, little round boys navy blue with round caps, children who pushed tricycles, the sound of heehaw music in the air as far off the ferris wheel turned and turned and turned, many colors blurring against the day that was blue and white, the sun yellow, and they were going ice-skating at last. He would be fast; he would whiz around, singing old songs, breathing the old rhythms.

"Sorry, sir. It's been rented by those girls; you know, that school up the hill there." Eyes winked and the boys pleaded with the teacher to speak to the administration and get permission for them to co-rent it.

"No, I don't think you should be allowed to do that," he said.

"This is the last week of skating anyway," said the attendant, throwing out a hand to show that half the ice was being resurfaced for the tennis season. Girls, so many in different colored clothes like flags of different nations and emblems of different tribes, skated there - had, in fact, all winter.

RICH GROSSINGER

COCTEAU'S COMRADE

A marble fist it was/ bare/ made of snow
Splattering starlight deeply in the heart
Spattering light on the cost of the conqueror --
The shadowy winner/ unarmed/ unwilling to depart

Who stands there crazed but hanging on
Keeping the lonely outpost of his doom
Bare legs under the mistletoe/ holly/ gold nuts
Lightsplattered like a blackboard in a classroom

And so the school sky often drops
These fists that make dry lips run red and bright
These blasts of marble/ hard/ cold balls of snow
Wounding the soul with the beauty of their flight.

Trans. Nels Richardson

Hard rain and hat sale.
Patterns, pattering, patter of
the problem: too many cars
on the road. road
too small.
too many folks
got cars
are parked'
they make the road
small
too many folks
move in the rain. there are
too many folks.

eat
the pigeons
out of the trees -
feed the pigeons.
rats breed.
it rains too often.
all the laws are bad.

CHUCK STEIN

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NONE HAVE SINNED

It is possible now to reverse the judgement of the man Jesus and the judgement of all the prophets and sages of human history. It is possible now to lift the burden of guilt entirely from the shoulders of stricken humanity.

None have sinned, not one. No one is to blame for any of the atrocities of the past 6000 years, nor for any that are to come. There was no sin in Sodom and Gommorah. The flames came down from a comet. It was nobody's fault that the flood came down. The water came from a comet, not a god.

It was a comet, not a person, not a hand, not an eagle, not a snake, not a demon, not a holy father, not a holy mother, not a witch, not a cat, not a wolf, not a ghost, not a vampire, not a dragon, not a sword, not a bull, not a cross, not an angel, not a phantom, not any of these things.

It was a blind, unthinking and unhearing comet. It was sent by no one. It intended no evil and no good. It had no intentions at all relevant to the human species. It listened to no prayers and accepted no sacrifices. It made no promises and chose no special people. Those who were destroyed were destroyed by chance alone. Those who were spared were spared by chance alone.

The priests, the temples, the worship, the sacrifices, the offerings, the processions, the prayers, the confessions, the hossanahs, the hallelujahs, the praises, the hymns, the anthems. . .

All a mistake. It was a comet, not a god.

From a Pamphlet Handed Out in Greenwich Village
(See Notes.)

FERRY SONG

huge white sea gull -
the globule of air
which holds her up
almost visible under
her wide wing-spread, she rises over
riding the mist, now is

black
coming towards us
against the bright
drops

for a fish -

the boat
she is in the wake of
going on -

the stream of gulls
she is hovering in
going on

CHUCK STEIN

DIALOGUE WHILE DRESSING

Mirror, mirror, on the wall
Who is me today?
I must be a pirate-king
If I must be anything.

Mirror, mirror, tell me all
What I should today.
I should take a sea-sail trip,
I should rob a Spanish ship.

Mirror, who is me today?
Mirror, what I should today?
A little boy who lost a tooth,
A little boy, and that's the truth.

Then I should gum up Karen's hair,
And I should look for signs to tear,
And I should stick my tongue at you
For telling me what isn't true.

MARTIN BICKMAN

You

Do you listen
To the burning of the stars ?

I am the burning of the stars:
Listen to me.

Do you smell
The coloring of the grain ?

I color the grain:
Watch me.

Do you taste
The green rain ? the yellow rain ?

I taste it:
May I taste your taste of it ?

Do you see
Birds ? Clouds ? Moons ?

I see them through eyes of mine:
May I see them through eyes of yours ?

Do you search
For the silent sandy people ?

I lead them:
Follow me

Do you hear
Sometimes a distant lonely whisper ?

I hold one promise:
It is there.

Do you long
For the horizon ?

I am a boat:
My arms are oars.

Do you want
The rainbow flock ?

I am one of its sheep:
Want me!

RICH GROSSINGER

But

Now, the warmth.
Beyond, the cold
that froze the lands
and froze the lakes

Here, the trees,
The wood
to burn to sparks and smoke
to embers, red from heat,
to ashes, flakes and dusts
from flames
rising airy and immaterial
drafts and motions, fire
upwards out of felled trees

Beyond, the cold
and coldest, the night
the dark
with dots of sparks,
of stars
the black, the cave
with glints of light -
but far, and far away -
the frozen still black gas
invisible in between

Here, though,
Now the warmth.
Just now all cold, beyond:
beyond the warmth
beyond the smallest realm
(but just beyond,
for I will be outside warmth,
the cold inside,
stiff with the cold

ALAN POWERS

MOON

IT is dark
the blood flows
it is hidden in
darkness

Rahu less body
tries to eat the sun

It is dark
its body is
the bones of Kama
the right hand of
Kama has

16 digits
for ambrosia or semen

Rahu sexless
once/lunar month
tries to eat the
sun is defeated

the priests of Shiva
work magic
each month
turning the tide
Rahu is

stopped.

15 cups of
mind substance
white
like milk

HARVEY BIALY

the Moon is the chalice of

semen

the Moon is the mind of

cosmic man

- Rig Veda

INCIPIENT FINALITIES

I

The perfunctory rungs, the first for instance,
consist in the lifting of a landing to the next
Landscape of understanding;

"in Paradise ecstasy is
normal"

(Thomas Merton)

--As at dawn tomorrow, when the trees will deliquesce
and the library's four walls rise
and join their corners, bracketing
strange merchandise,
intelligible sculptures in material disguises--

Or the second and third
which, as a foot is set
upon a shore, cement not yet with yet
in a comical tour through the shadows of the word--

via the spiral staircase of the law--
a vertical suicide--like Christ's ASCENSION--
to a sixth level (Classics and Religion)
where, looking back, one sees what Dante saw.

II

At the top of every stair
is another. Which ascended
initiates a journey almost ended.

NELS RICHARDSON

Fragment of Confucius

The Male The Female
face each other in front of the temple
the position is proper, and the angles
give perfect intersection.
Each marvels at the name of the other,
reciting it without understanding.

JAMES POLACHEK

Theme for Io

the earth is a round ball in space
the moon is a ball

smaller
perspective rolls it through a hemisphere
of this sphere

the clouds are loose

but
the trees are attached

underneath
formations are mostly igneous
but

there is a mantle of sediment
some stones change

and
are called metamorphic
birds are born
and deal with the spaces between trees
the moon has craters

but
because of the rain cycle
earth's craters fill with water
a certain wearing down introduces mineral salts and
all in all

under the ocean is quite strange
contains a certain complexity of existence
upon occasion we are allowed colored pictures of colored fish
they are often red and yellow as much as paint
and

we are surprised
they are beautiful
but we tend to discard them
there is also man
there is also woman

but
they seem to confuse
each other with each other
jupiter is the largest sphere
in our system

we hardly know it
nor io
lesser

its by
certain laws of nature
our satellite
aside from the cans)
is a woman
called the moon

RICH GROSSINGER

