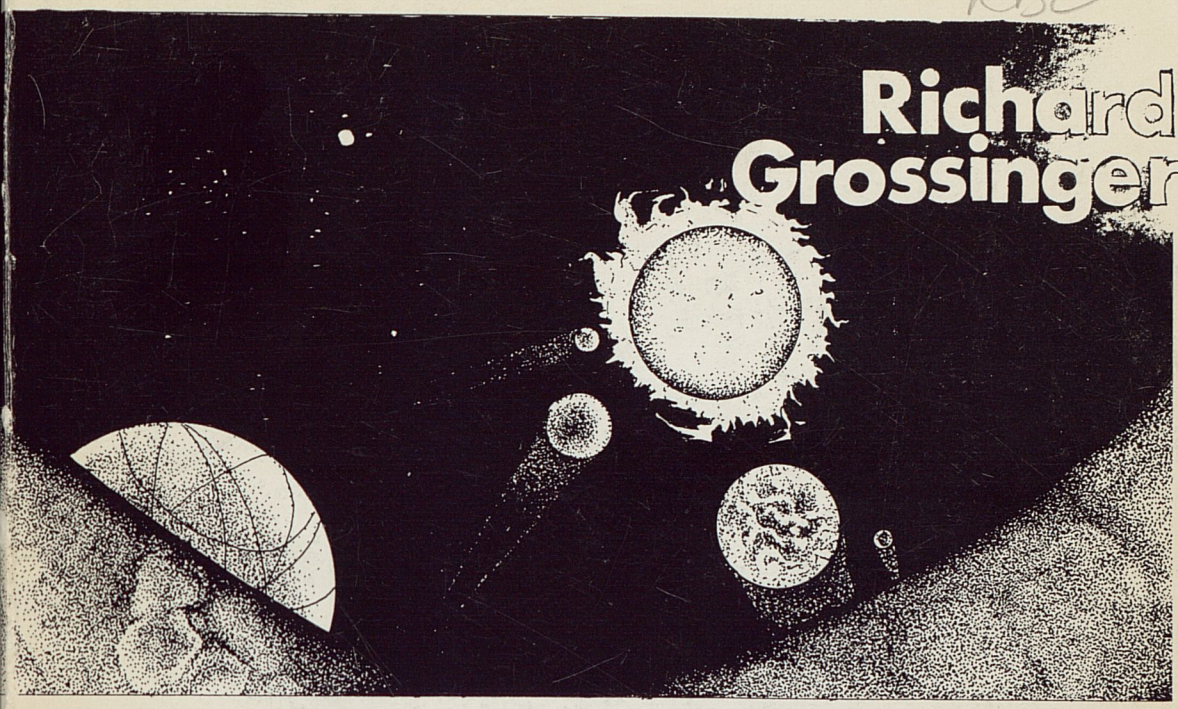
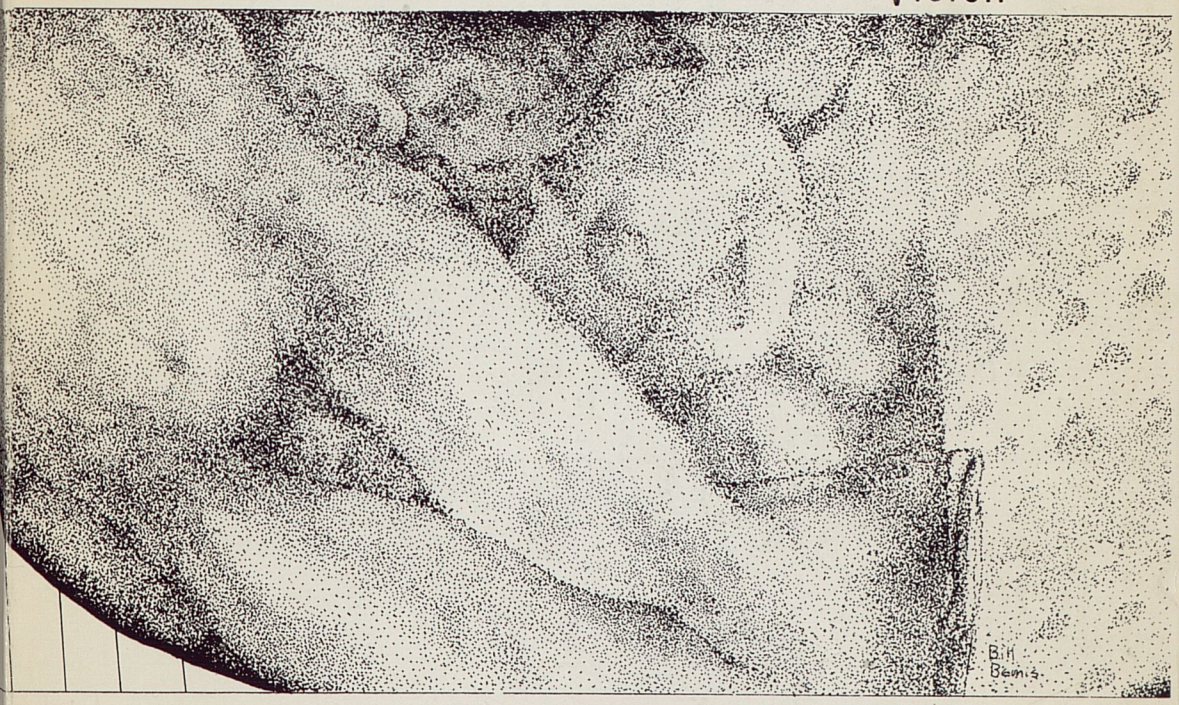



# MARS: A Science Fiction Vision



*three dollars and fifty cents*

cover by Bill Bemis

Richard Grossinger

# Mars: A Science Fiction Vision

Io Books, Cape Elizabeth, 1971

Io Publications

370 Mitchell Road
Cape Elizabeth, Maine 04107

[alternate address:

c/o Richard Grossinger
Grossinger, New York 12734]

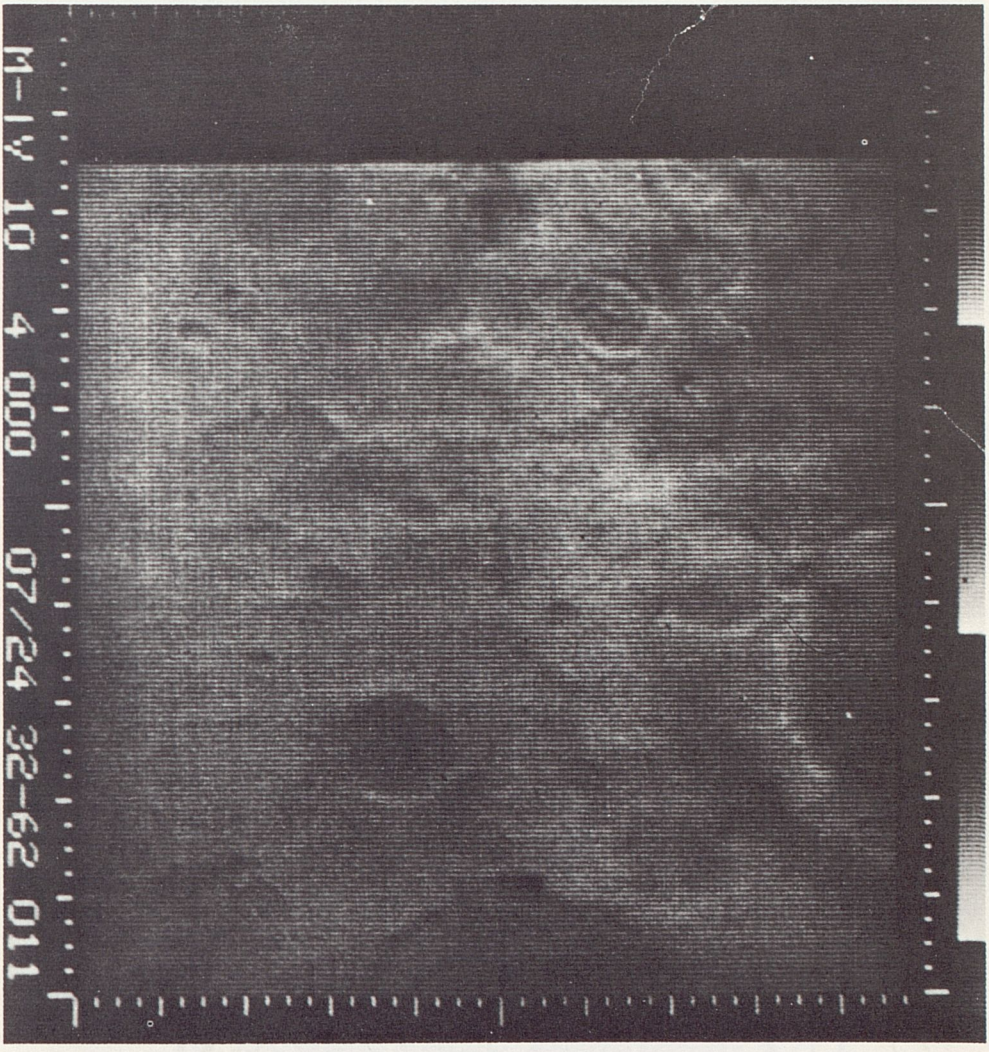
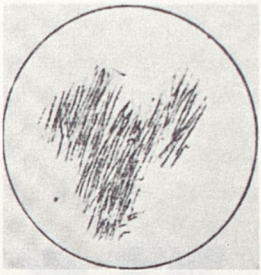



Photo No. 10 of Mars, taken by the Mariner IV spacecraft of NASA and Caltech's JPL, shows Atlantis bordering on Mare Sirenum in the northeast corner of the frame. The area covered is 170 miles east-west by 160 miles north-south located 26 degrees south latitude and 192 degrees east longitude. The photograph was taken at 5:28:57 p.m., Pacific daylight time, July 14, 1965, from a slant range of 8,000 miles. A green filter was used. The upper left corner of the picture overlaps photo No. 9. With the data numbers at left, north is at the top, and the sun is 41 degrees from the zenith, from the north in the photo.

# Mars: A Science Fiction Vision

Io Books, Cape Elizabeth, 1971



**Earliest known drawing of Mars showing identifiable surface feature; made by Huygens in 1659. (From C. Flammarion, "La Planète Mars," Vol. 1.)**

We saw how our bodily life carries with it its own evidence that its origin is terrestrial. If we employ exotic to mean of non-terrestrial provenance, there is no ingredient in bodily life which is exotic. Its chemical elements are among those commonest on our planet. Its whole is redolent of Earth, whence it was dug. Even likewise with finite mind. Its ways affirm it to be so. Its history proclaims it to be so. Our stock is the vertebrate stock; our body is the vertebrate body; our mind is the vertebrate mind. If the vertebrates be a product of the planet, our mind is a product of the planet. Its senses each and all gear into the ways and means of our planet which is its planet. They are fitted to it, as a fish's body to water. Either side of their narrow range of 'heat' and 'cold', where temperature contains a threat to life, they pass over into pain. Ours is an earthly mind which fits our earthly body. It helps the besouled body to deal with terrestrial things, thereby to live. Our mind constructs 'time' and its time rate is that of its besouled body's terrestrial habitat; although it, not unnaturally, has supposed it to be a universal and absolute Time.....

Our imagination in medieval times was greatly in earnest about the Evil One and transmundane demons. Yet its vision could achieve nothing to the purpose beyond contriving ugly hybrids from familiar shapes of terrestrial creation. When Dante's noble imagination travelled the Inferno, Purgatory and Paradise it still walked Italy, the Italy it loved and grieved for. Again that fancied *imago mundi* of Plato is wholly terrestrial fancy. Or if we, accrediting the soul with unearthliness, prefer to entertain the supposition that there is more chance for its unearthliness to show in mediumistic revelation, we have, type of that class, Hélène Smith and her trance-experiences of the supra-lunary planet Mars and its inhabitants. Nor then was it purely that the words of the medium defeated that extra-mundane scope, because, of necessity, earthly words. Her pictorial representation, automatically produced, of Martian persons, houses, landscapes, plants and insects remained terrestrial, save for a little topsy-turvydom of the Alice-in-Wonderland sort, though not so entertaining. The imagination of the medium during trance, instead of revealing unearthliness is earth-bound with a banality that the literary imagination does not suffer.

*Sir Charles Sherrington: MAN ON HIS NATURE.*

# MARS: A SCIENCE FICTION VISION

*CONTENTS*



note: science fiction diagrams on pages 145-150.

*for my son Robin, to grow into, his own vision, homebase Earth*

# *Introduction*

There is bound to be the confusion of whether this is a book or an issue of Io and which I want it to be. Clearly it is conceived as a book, on the model of a collection of science fiction stories, which is something I've always wanted to do and never succeeded at (not even now). But it is a book which would not be possible without the mechanism of Io, and a natural organic stage in the unfolding of Io's thematic development which would not be possible without the book. In that sense, it is the science fiction issue of Io, which must come to exist without all the neutralizing effects of an anthology. Or the anthology is all my own work.

This in itself is the solution of a problem inherent in the editing and creating of the journal. I do not like being dependent on other people's work. If I know what an issue should be and who should be in it I'd much rather put it all together in a night, with long distance phone calls and special delivery. But the very nature of the issues is that they sit around for a year or more while I brood impatiently over the mail, hoping that in the end I can salvage a reasonable semblance of the original vision.

The point is: I could never *edit* a magazine in a million years. I can do Io only because it is a part of my own work. I don't see it as a collection of pieces but as an organic whole, and this often creates tensions with the individuals submitting (or not submitting) work, who see their own contributions either as separate forms or as parts of other organic wholes. Not only do I get irate when people steal from my journal by not submitting their work. But at different times I have been accused of interfering with other people's work (i.e., by illustrations, as in Io/6), of putting their work in an embarrassing context (this the inevitable result of trying to harmonize styles people consider personal and sacrosanct), of mis-editing (usually by people operating from one orthodoxy or another, be it Olson, Jung, or Merleau-Ponty, to cite a few cases), of setting subject matter before quality, etc. All of these are more or less relevant and are a consequence of my treating the issues of Io as part of my own work rather a collection of other people's work. And when I start talking like that, people end up saying,"Richard, you should stop doing that journal." And after every issue I have, only to get interested all over again.

After the Dream Issue, and partially because of its large size and serious tone, we decided to try experimenting with

smaller less weighty issues, opening more specific and obscure territories. Otherwise we're either going to run out of topics or end up with an encyclopedia. The Earth Geography Issue remains scheduled for early next spring, but before then, there will be a Baseball Issue, a book of Lindy Hough's, as well as this book of mine.

The concept of this issue, or book, arose from the writing of "Mars: A Science Fiction Essay." It was the first science fiction undertaking I had ever completed to satisfaction, in part because the goals were modest. I became interested in those science fiction projects which had been fulfilled only partially and with which I was dissatisfied for one reason or another. Many of them had to be sought in a large many-thousand page file, thought of as a junk file, or writing I'll never come back to, which is obviously not true in that much is thrown out, and only that for sure won't be come back to. In any case, it is composed of work which had to be removed even from consideration to allow me to go on and do other work, writing that had failed for reasons I did not understand (meaning that it could not really be judged, it was simply unproductive). It is a result of this rummaging in work of mine obscure enough to be someone else's that this book was finally put together.

In the making of a book, there was the tendency to want to choose the work I liked best. In the making of the issue, as is the case with all Ios, I attempted to stick to subject matter, which in this case is twofold: the history of my attempt to write science fiction, and the Mars theme. The latter is as obscure as the work itself, sharing that feature with other suggestive and intuitive titles of issues, such as Ethnoastronomy and Doctrine of Signatures. It is perceived obscurely and subjectively as a separate aspect of my writing, but one that is not really distinguishable in the morphology of the whole. It would seem to be associated with the general science fiction undercurrent: the existence of alien worlds, extraterrestrial geography, time-space transformations, invasions from a total *outside*, etc. It is only to a degree; there are strong elements of nostalgia, romanticism, oneirology, and even nihilism in the Mars theme. In the earlier work there is a grasping after a form, a vast object, sparkling with internal homologies, always working inward but with the semblance of extraworldly and mediumistic mutations; although it is impossible to expose the entire

substance, there is a growth, such that aspects hinted at in earlier Martian voyages are actually recovered in the later visits.

I have always argued that it isn't Mars itself. Mars is a figure for it. Not simply a symbol or a projection of inner (sexual and cosmological) frustrations. Not simply a grounding of outer space in terran realizations (such as dreams, analogical voyages to undiscovered lands, memory traces, or evolution as an inside-out outer space trip). It is, and must be to be at all interesting, an acceptance of outerworldly possibilities, an influx of real aliens, in other words, science fiction. Not moral history. Not archetypes. Not science is sometimes stranger than science fiction. Otherwise: trivial. It's not as though, for all our quibbling, Mars, in the end, *isn't* there. It is. And that will be our point of departure.

But if Mars is only a figure, why Mars? Why not the Moon, which is closer? Or Neptune, which is further? Why not a planet of Alpha Centauri, which is stranger? It is that when we come to it, we find it called Mars. As Lévi-Strauss found it called totemism. Little matter that the name has been made obsolete by the very discovery. He put it well. History does not produce arbitrary or meaningless events.

Part of the reason it turns out to be Mars is that other people have attributed to the planet certain characteristics that I was hoping to find somewhere, and as a child just coming into a knowledge of it, this was very compelling. Mars came thru very strong in children's science fiction, much as China must have in the science fiction of another day. However, I am not just borrowing a Mars tradition from Brahe, Swift, Schiaparelli, Lowell, Heinlein, Bradbury, Mariner, etc.). Despite an on-and-off romance with Venus, because of its tropical optimism and Earth-type gravity, Mars has been the dominant planetary figure in my life, and I have created from it a vision that, despite the innumerable borrowings, is unique. I cannot find it elsewhere, and so I work to create it and, like any Marsophile, to discover its forms and possibilities of life.

So, finally, what is the Mars theme? For one, it is an attempt to get at geographical space from outside; at the same time it is a shameless attachment to fantasy and romance. I perceive now that it is peculiarly a negative theme, or a theme of negativity, working counter to clarity,

away from fulfillment, gaining much from anxiety and hauntedness, before they become too strong to destroy the very power to work. Though it sometimes emerges strong and triumphant, this is the fraud of the martial. It is ringed with frustrations, disappointments, and hollow victories, some of them in its own not being realized, others part of the disappointment we have always had in Mars itself, for being less than, for not being what it is (as surely it *will be* when we are old enough to know). Still others arise from my own life disappointments, the things I haven't been able to put together and must always absorb as a dark negative presence in my personality and work. Because I would yield finally to the imagination rather than personality and solipsism, the theme is saved. It does have a real geography, an emergent perceptual world, even in the frozen desert regions of a smaller sun. As a seal struggling to birth in Antarctica. Does see. We *do* live.

The science fiction thread is not so much a theme as an ambition, its motives wound in with all my confusions about publishing and readership, many of which dwindled once it ceased being a projection and a fantasy. In any case, I have tried many times to undertake an epic project in science fiction, sometimes Martian, but often working out of some other theme. I have always foreseen a great science fiction story, or novel, or trilogy, that never came, and I hope finally that quest is ended, and I put forth this text as the remnant.

## AN ORANGE, BLACK, AND WHITE POEM [1964]

This poem was written before the first issue of Io came out, or in fact was even conceived. The appearance of the name Io in the poem (as Jupiter's moon) and Io as the title of this journal are a single perception. Io was not named after the word in the poem, but the choice of Io to serve as that figure was repeated, unconsciously, nine months later. Another coincidence is that the poem was scheduled for the first issue, but was simply too long. Despite that one-time valuing of it, only a few of the sections remained above-ground, cut out as a sort of souvenir, and the bulk of it ended up in the junkpile, especially as I learned of and became interested in a poetic tradition in terms of which it

was a sentimental and shapeless work.

The poem itself was written under intense anxiety during the first really warm week of spring at Amherst that year. Every year at this time, including the present year, I have had deep physiological confusions: how to open myself to what is happening without giving in to sloppy notions of picnics and swimming and gay warm nights, how, in a sense, to achieve a joy that is organic and responsible, yet carefree enough to yield to life itself. This is a life, or vital problem, not a seasonal one, but suddenly it is too easy to sit outdoors and relax in an element that is really much more complicated. This negative presence, disguised by flower blossoms and softball games, is a strong generator of the Mars theme. Only spring is as illusory and disappointing as desolate supercivilization Mars.

The poem was begun one day after geology class during Sophomore year of college. The grass had been freshly mowed, with a deep rich smell, and I went down to the glen behind the fraternity house and lay in the grass, as melancholy and anxious as joyful (this is the place where the Tarka meeting described at the beginning of Io/1 was to happen that Halloween, during a different school year). I had the sense that I could do it if I wanted, that wonderful ominous sense that comes before a big piece of work. Even while I was writing it (on scraps of notebook paper) I had the sense that I was on and was getting it all. It was not a cathartic relief; in fact the anxiety grew stronger after the poem and the ensuing weeks were drowned in it like no time I have known since. I stopped going to classes; I had dark visions that completely sapped my power to work. Lindy and I became friends that spring because we were both going crazy in different ways and were able to help and calm each other. Io/1 and much of our own work in it is a partial result of our continuous modulation on each other. Tarka was originally written as a letter to Lindy, and some of her poems are responses to me.

I consider this poem basically descriptive and lyrical, and I call attention to that because the very earliest writing I can remember doing was flowery descriptive prose, oriented toward the ominous and melodramatic. "Impending" was my favorite word around 1955, and I was constantly told that not everything was impending (at least some things were "imminent").

I wrote descriptions of thunderstorms, lakes, patterns

of sunlight indoors, life under a microscope, old men feeding pigeons in the park, and did one of the most ornate camp newspapers ever (in Swan Lake, New York) from about age 10 to age 16. The camp used to save them for prospective parents and campers, but it was all nature to me. This whole thing went hand-in-hand with my kodacolor snapshots.

I discovered narrative as a possibility toward the end of high school, but until then pure nouns and verbs were totally uninteresting. I loved pigments and filters and considered description the height of my ability and the most pure possible intent. Although narrative was the key to the novels I wrote the last years of high school and the first years of college, I still included long descriptive passages in them and put most of my energy into such moments within the text. By the time I had read Lawrence, Yeats, and Jung Freshman year of college, some of them became metaphysical rather than "beautiful" in intention, but "getting it down right" remained the thing, as for many schools of landscape art. The following is a post-metaphysical piece from a novel called *The Moon* written in 1963.

The moon was out, faint jigsaws on a faraway slice of light, the light pale down on the trees. And the jigsaws were there if one looked closely enough. They were there as faint stains on a light that has been shining long enough to pick up faint stains. And they were there as proof of mountains and valleys, deep and uneven, high and rocky, black as the space that separates two planets. People knew this as they looked at the moon; they knew about the rocky surface, having seen artists' landscapes in magazines and books. But there was the moon itself as proof of the existence of landscapes unseen by men, uninhabited by tribes, nonconducive to the crags of his myths, simply land, cut off, as yet unused.

On earth, when mountains rise and valleys reach into the beds, vegetation grows lush and deep, and in the depths of vegetation is the dirt and mystery of the world. There in the dampness insects live their whole lives; some emerge, flutter about for a while, then return. Animals lurk; there are stones that haven't been seen for generations. Down in the depths of vegetation water flows and mud rots further; pollen flies and leaves die and disassemble, matted down by rusty sand. There are roots and stems and bulbs and berries. There are worms and bugs and rats and fish. Stalks thrive

off the fact of chaos beneath them. To the human mind, and its chemicals, there is sultry heat and burning nostalgia, because he has lived something on this world; there is sultry heat and the premonition of his own death and return to that mud; there is sultry heat and biting insects and clinging dirt letting him know he is free from the beauty and harsh seduction of the land as long as he keeps moving. But when he stops the land will swallow him up and the insects will bite unhindered and the earth's rape will be total, swallowing a body in its power and perfume and never-to-be-understood fantasy and mystery - and the person will die from the power of the mother earth's rape.

Rivers have beautiful names, like Shenandoah and Monongohela, but the loved one's name is Joyce or Betsy or Lucy or Carol. The earth will swallow him whole and never let free. That is why its vegetation reaches deep into the buzz-bite of the insect world and the splash-bite of the fish world.

But the moon is ragged and craggy and empty and cold. And it hangs in the sky shining the light of emptiness and coldness upon this, the earth, trying to tell the earth something, playing its cold light on the burning vegetation, warning the heated people of the sultry seduction. Ragged and craggy, offering eternal life and eternal answers, the message of the moon is unheeded on the mountainside and by the hills and valleys, unheeded in the trees and in the grass, unheeded on the flowers and on the pink shells. It is too eerie and full of mystery; it is too faraway to understand. Its stains are too faint.

There are many unrealized forms in the "Orange, Black, and White Poem." Most notable is the perverse fascination with tiny details and arbitrary fragments, somehow to rescue them from obscurity by attention. Perhaps a sense that multiple imposed microcosms create one cohesive macrocosm. Like the conversion from Moon or Mars pebble to a history of the creation of the body itself. There is also, as Nelson Richardson pointed out to me at the time, the clear sense of a voice trying to get in from outside the structure of the poem, the real struggle being that the poem wants to exist as a function of that voice but is unable, and so has no out but nostalgia and romanticism and obsessive preciseness. It is typically Martian to flirt with outer worlds and

science fiction, encounter extrasensory possibilities, and then to topple into a perfume of artificial beauties and conventional (even conventionalized) ethics and emotions. I posit the poem as a science fiction poem because the human figures in it, even the flowers, are all aliens, and I am alienated from them as only a Martian can be.

ACROSS, BEARING NOTHING and THE CITY [1965]

Conscious narrative writing began for me when Kingsley Ervin pointed out in a class, Junior year in high school, that, after all, I did narrative, when I would deign to, much better than I did description, whether I would admit it for not. Because I wasn't writing at all (and my total life's work was probably a little over 100 pages of carefully rewritten descriptions), I decided to try a simple factual account of my life, beginning with events of a year earlier and picking up the rest by flashbacks. The initial attempt was so fulfilling and successful that I kept it up, gathering momentum, for two years, ultimately incorporating a staggering amount of material in about 1000 pages of autobiography, some 500 pages of which were preserved and incorporated in a book called *Salty and Sandy*. As time went on, and into the beginning of college, the narrative as such began to lose energy, and I began doing mostly descriptions again, which became the thrust of *The Moon*, a fictionalized autobiographical novel. The last novel I did, *The Cloud*, Sophomore and part of Junior year in college, was never rewritten, though in many ways it was an attempt to recover the pure autobiography and the narrative. I really only picked up narrative again with a taste of the so-called Creeley orthodoxy.

While driving P. Adams Sitney from Bard to Yale Lindy and I were strongly reprimanded for reading Faulkner, Beckett, Sartre, etc. "If you want to write novels," P. Adams said, "why don't you read a decent prose-writer like Creeley." Brakhage had also said to me, a year before, the first time we met,"We don't need any more novels, unless they're really novel, like *The Island*." The advice may have been less personal and more "party line" than I realized at the time, but the result was: I began imitating Creeley, recovering my own story line, and I felt like a new man, having escaped a gooey

curse (and the whole Nineteenth Century).

There were many short stories in the Creeley mode, all of them done in the early months of 1965. I had come to think that I had covered just about everything of interest in the three novels, but certain episodes from high school days now seemed much more important in their steadfastness, their toughness and placedness. Everything in the other books was highly emotional, and then mythologized by the writing.

The first of these stories was called simply "A Story," and dedicated to Creeley; it appeared in Io/1. Another, "The Sun," should appear in the Baseball Issue (Io/10). "Across, Bearing Nothing" was the second of them (in between "A Story" and "The Sun"), and "The City" was the last, coming after about eight or nine of them. By then the form was beginning to lose interest and I was thrashing around for something else.

The first three in particular have a quality which *Salty and Sandy* really didn't have, for all its evocativeness, thoroughness, and complexity (dreams, fantasies, flashbacks, intricate plot). There is the sense of a message coming in, and the narrative itself is not as important as what's being left out of the narrative (not for some tricky conscious reason but because there are no terms for bringing it in). The theme is simply of that which has been lost and thus isn't there. These stories get at the negative presence not thru a blatant description of the sense of loss, but thru an account of what remains and why it remains: the ice-skating, the translation exercises, the baseball game, the camera. In contrast, note the following passage from *Salty and Sandy* written in 1961:

On Wednesday afternoon, in the car with my father's driver Hal, I had more time to dream about Keith. Gazing out of the window I saw how New York slowly became the country and as it grew dark and the trees hid in the cold, black night, wistfully I watched the moon light up the huge fields and old farmhouses with its eerie glow. Just then I was overcome with sadness, for I felt that so much was remote - and forever far beyond my understanding. Staring outward at the world, I wondered what feeling would replace the sadness if I could run free of the safety of the moving car and go out into those huge, eternal fields. I wondered what they would do to me, how they would reach into me and play with

my senses, and how I would change in all that moonlight. Then suddenly I sensed that all the mystery was in Keith too, and, in the same way, I asked myself how it would feel to put my arm around Keith, the little boy, and play with his light and strong hair and smile deeply into his smile when his smile was stronger than mine and would melt mine into itself. Even while shuddering at my thoughts, I had one very strange image of Keith lying down hard on top of me, bearing all his body down on me, and me being dissolved beneath his weight, beneath his strength, and beneath the light touch of his hair. I would lie there under him and I would no longer be myself for he would swallow my wishy-washy compulsive desires in his Keith-will.

The inner torment and guilt that was now mine rang out from the fields - farmers' fields, always there beyond the road. The idea of rolling in them at night thrilled me with the cascading hollowness of the unknown. The lit-up haystacks seemed only like Keith-images, and what I knew would be a strawy, hollow smell, as I lay in those haystack stems, would be like the essence and soul and irresistible drive of Keith bearing down on me and destroying me beneath the moonlight. I wanted the weight of Keith on - and not under - the non-weight of me. I wanted to feel pain and a burden so I could be crushed into nothingness. I wanted some fantastic, unbearable agony in the fire of Keith's warm soul to rise me to a thrilling crescendo somewhere between my original iciness and his original heat. I wanted Keith to destroy me forever in pain requited by more pain - all pain being Keith-driven into me. No, no, I moaned, and I turned back into the car and flicked on the radio.

That is an early passage; the following passage comes from near the end of the book:

The wind blew gently and the tree-leaves rustled slightly, the flowers dipping and rising once in a ripple across the flower bed. It was summer, definitely warm, humid, lazy summer. I thought of Betsy again, this time with the face I knew, and the thing that struck me was how important a face it was, how it alone could be filled with meaning in a group of faces, sort of the way once I would recognize a picture of Gil McDougald without a caption or, even after that, feel a thrill of recognition at the face of Keith in a crowd. Hers was like

the face on the rarest baseball card once upon a time, that you would see in a friend's collection and then remember as the ideal card to get each time you opened a pack. And then when you got it, you would just stare there at the face that was so hard to get and the shade of blue in the sky behind him and the home-team color of the uniform and the way he held his face and you would know that he was the card that everyone wanted. And you would feel as though you owned the most special thing in the world because you had this baseball card.

Rock and roll songs are an important part of the Mars vision as well as the science fiction theme, related, in their semantic static, to interstellar messages and voice of the magi (a relationship which is drawn in *Book of the Earth and Sky)*. Despite the wish to get in a lot of science fiction, I chose to print "Across, Bearing Nothing" rather than "Teen Angel," my most blatant science fiction-rock piece written two years later simply because after the occult came into my work a whole different thing was produced. Many elements of the science fiction theme are converted into something more positive, qabbalistic, and orgastic. I begin to create certain traditional worlds which are alien to the invitation of an alien personage. "On what authority?" Nelson asks in his review of *Solar Journal: Oecological Sections*. On the other hand, there is a direct transformation from earlier narrative attempts to later geographical works, like *The Continents*, *Book of the Cranberry Islands*, and *Mars: A Science Fiction Essay*.

The title, "Across, Bearing Nothing," is itself a translation of the word "translation." What can't be translated, even when I'm learning my first language in high school. What language my stories would be translated from, what language into, in order to be actually written.

"The City" is the most reflexive of all the stories, being a narrative of the discovery of narrative, ending the whole series of stories on the recovery of the first sentence of the first autobiographical novel (with which it ends). The solution to the problem of translation is that you get it all simply by saying it, which puts me into the vicious circle of writing to prevent not-writing, leading thru transitions of style right back thru the experience of writing descriptions, taking photographs, making up things, to the original act of

narrative writing.

MOONSHIP, FEBRUARY PRAYER, THE SLEIGH RIDE, GROUP D [1965]

The most powerful formative aspect of my work at this point was the influence of poetic syntax, ellipsis, and fragmentation. Abandoning prose became an almost moral act, connected with my new associations with poets and their concerns. This is not altogether accurate in that I continued to do occasional short stories and to rewrite sections of *The Moon*, but the outward thrust into long and heroic works was ended and I tried consciously to shape single perceptions into brief and complete pieces. These four, in one way or another, fall into this period.

In the spring of '65 I wrote both short stories and poems, and "Moonship" and "February Prayer" come from that approximate time. I rediscovered them as an interesting pair because the one, "Moonship," deals with the geography of outer space as a possible realization, and the other "February Prayer," gets directly into the perception of: who are the angels?, what is the principle of inner space thru which we are spoken to (from which we grow phylogenetically in any case)?; and these are deep complementary concerns in both my science fiction and the Mars theme.

From the late spring thru almost the entire summer I wrote 90% poems, trying still to work with single perceptions. It was towards the end of the summer, in the midst of a very heavy nostalgia, that I adopted a sort of surrealism instead of a romanticism, and tried to salvage, or collect, the actual images that were haunting me. Not wanting to engage directly with who is out there, if anyone, I and my friend Mitchell Miller (both in conversation and writing) tried to objectify and externalize in terms of a ghost-world, media-village, interplanetary consciousness. We were looking for traditions and laws, and tried to submerge strong emotions in a voice; it is that voice which produced "Prometheus" (in Io/2), "The Sleigh Ride," and a long list poem of which "Group D" was one of the sets. Perhaps the objectivity doesn't work, but if it did, these would be planetary descriptions of myself, platonic dialogues from without of the alien within.

"The Sleigh Ride" appeared first in *Gnomon*.

THREE DREAM POEMS and WHY DO YOU WANT ME SO QUICKLY? [1966]

With the writing of "Prometheus," I had begun a series of prose essays that were to run thru to the spring of '67. The form combined my committments to both narrative and poetics and replaced, for the most part, the unreal division between them. By the spring of '66, I decided to do a set of science fiction stories in the mode, taking their information from my first contact with anthropology, Whorf, Ouspensky, Chardin, etc. The most realized of these, "Electrons," appears in Io/3; although there is little geography in it, it is a story about the voices, and rock and roll comes in very heavily. Unlike "Prometheus," it is emotional cosmology, written with outrage and participation from within. The high energy of the text derives from the combination of ellipsis and narrative, but the difficulty is in the solution, based heavily on occultism and secret knowledges, a confidence foreign to the Mars theme.

"Nostalgia," which appears in Io/3 also, was written very soon after Lindy and I were married in Colorado and moved to Ann Arbor. There was no science fiction or Martian intention behind it at all, and yet it is all there: the strange and alien world, the negative presence, the messengers. The word "nostalgia" itself, as used to make the piece, is laden with the sense of disappointment in fulfillment, of loss in recovery, and it even lays down the law by which this must continue to happen. Narrative and description are combined, and the movement is from sensory rather than hermetic data, leading ultimately to the perceptual gestalt on which it ended. This sensory mode is a very important feature of "Why Do You Want Me So Quickly?" and the other dreams.

During the summer of 1966, the dreamwork replaced science fiction, although it is questionable as to whether this is a replacement or a transformation internal to the text. The three dream poems were written within a couple of weeks, all of them recurrent dreams: the nightmare of those who lie outside us waiting to invade, the alien woman from another planet (or prehistory) who combines seduction with distance, and the dream of being *on* another planet (in this case, Hanoi). All of them are deeply negative, even if they show signs of power, declarativeness, and the will to fight back. Mars will not be denied; it derives directly from the sense data, is

issued simply as statement of such, i.e., no alien world intended, just all over again that perceptual gestalt.

"Why Do You Want Me So Quickly?" (written during the fall of '66 and the winter of '66-'67) is much more closely related to the recurrent science fiction magnum opus than the Mars theme. I remember it as an abortive attempt to produce a *big book*. So filled was I with the sense of what it could be that it probably didn't stand a chance. Yet I was surprised in finally locating the manuscript to find something like 500 pages of story, notes, plot, description, subsidiary plot, etc. Only a small portion of this is reproduced here, with three asterisks (***) indicating breaks from the original manuscript. Most of it is first draft, and little attempt has been made to do anything more than make it readable, by completing sentences, punctuating, and so on.

The story follows directly from the three dream poems and attempts to penetrate and resolve some of their negativity. The whole story is cast as a dream within a dream that is not a dream but an actual journey between planets. The distinction is meaningless. I had in mind C. S. Lewis' trilogy: *Out of the Silent Planet*, *Perelandra*, and *That Hideous Strength*. In my science fiction trilogy, one book was to take place on Venus, one on Mars, and one on Earth also, ultimately to use the two other geographies to get at the geography of the Earth. "Why Do You Want Me So Quickly?" is the first, or Cytherean, volume.

At the time of writing the book I had a lot of new science fiction information and wanted to put it to good practical use. I was perceiving all the connections between the Mel Noel UFO Lecture (Io/4) and so-called Hopi prophecies about the next world given by Frank Waters (added to my sense of the Whorfian super-Hopi and the topology of dream-space). Putting these things together I had the intimations of a story (though not the energy for a trilogy). The essence of this information is probably contained in a few key passages that more or less repeat a central episode: the relationship of the dream to the whole Earth at the same time that self is simultaneous with cosmos. This alone is an optimistic rendering of a dark theme. And though there is growth and development within, the book finally becomes banal or trivial because there is not enough fresh generative episode to carry it thru. If the theme exists, it cannot be rendered as a heroic self-sustaining epic; the very

attempt to pull it off by locating the event on sunny fertile Venus rather than dark cold Mars is a guile that ultimately runs out in the face of the real wolves. It is interesting that the story, as written, comes to an end when the Martians, who have lain behind the curtain long enough, finally appear and take their place at the conference table

In this case, the ambition to produce a long and heavy work overshadows any visionary sustenance. I had just finished plodding thru a rewriting of *The Moon* out of some contrived sense of duty to the past. For the first time I was without novels, and I felt as though only something of that size and scope would give my work significance. The rest was slumming. Much of "Why Do You Want Me So Quickly?" is held up by the will to have it be, hence needless and boring plot, and 99% of what is eliminated in this version falls into that category.

The first part of the book, after the arrival, is borrowed toally from Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. The source of the second third is Voth's collection of Hopi myths, especially the Hopi creation myth (Io/4) from which the story gets its title. These work best simply because the Vothian version, never the original, always leaves the door open to synthesize further or come closer to source. The name of the planet, Saquasohuh, is taken from the Hopi Blue Star Kachina, who is associated with the passage into the next world, and in present-day Hopi millenarianism, has been linked to UFO's seen over the mesas. The last part, almost none of which is given, is a transformation of Pleistocene Africa (and the Saharan region) from Karl Butzer's *Environment and Archaeology* to the equivalent region on Venus.

The core of "Why Do You Want Me So Quickly?" is very relevant to the Mars theme, for it is an attempt, using mythology and occultism, to counter the overwhelming darkness of the Martian presence, the sheer negativity, which is transformed into the sense of spiritual encounter and transcendence. Mars survives in the mask of Venus, one's own dark personality remade in a vision of fertility and love, sexual redemption. The alien presences work to our advantage, and the extraterrestial geography turns out to be more than we could have hoped for, and in fact more than Earth is: HOME.

"Why Do You Want Me So Quickly," as well as the prose essays, came to an end with the beginning of "Solar Journal." It was both short and perceptual, and large and cosmological,

the features linked in an accumulating organic synthesis. This might be a good point to clarify a bothersome confusion of titles. "Solar Journal" was written originally in the spring of 1967 and was linked to the putting together of the Alchemy Issue (Io/4). A large part of the original version of it appeared in that issue as "Alchemical Sections." Almost every aspect of the Mars theme occurs in these: the nostalgia, the geography of outer space, the inner geography of outer space, the messenger, the invasion, the inner kinship of the universe (alienated from itself by time), and the obsessive ceremonial details of consciousness. Eventually two other sets of sections were rewritten out of it in 1968: "Astrological Sections" and "Psychological Sections," after which I set about devising new sections conceived and written on their own, not out of the Journal. The first was "Botanical Sections," rewritten almost immediately as "The Plant Book," which appeared in Io/5. The notion of signatures is connected to the genetic message, which itself becomes the alien voice we must harbor as our own. "Oecological Sections" was next; the bulk of these was published by Black Sparrow in 1970 as *Solar Journal: Oecological Sections*, despite the fact that only two of the sections came from the dismantling of the original "Solar Journal." "Oecological Sections" was simply considered an unsuitable title for the (or a) book. The Sections were rewritten during 1969, at which time the final three sections, making up "E Pluribus," were added; a large chunk was cut to fit publisher's space requirements, and that was eventually shaped into an unpublished manuscript called *The Alphabet Book*. "Geological Sections," also written originally in 1968, were combined with "Astrological Sections" a year later, after the happy rewriting of "Oecological Sections," to form *Book of the Earth and Sky*, which is to be published by Black Sparrow in the late summer of 1971. "Psychological Sections" were rewritten in 1970 and will appear as *Spaces Wild and Tame* (Mudra Books) in the early part of the summer. All of this forms a clear body of work, grounded in 1967-8 and reworked in 1969-70, and in a sense it can be called "Solar Journal" in its entirety. It would be a mere exercise at this point to pick out further examples of the Mars theme, especially given its ubiquity in all my work. *Book of the Earth and Sky* is the most dramatic case of that negative presence and strong external impingement, coming thru in the relations of

dreams, UFO's, magi, historical tribes, rock and roll singers, and extra-biological beings. What has yet to emerge, from this vantage, is the synthesis of narrative, Earth history, and the simultaneous stellar-local geography.

## PHYSICIAN, HEAL THYSELF! [1969]

Like "Why Do You Want Me So Quickly?" this story has more to do with science fiction than Mars. In the last weeks before anthropology prelims I wasn't reading and for one of the few times in my life books lost all their sacred and magical character and became a drag on my work. It was endless proof, pittance to positivism and quantification, like an internal dialogue in a madhouse (speaking of negative presence and obsession with arbitrary details). But neither man nor culture will be proven either from inside or outside, and at the height of my dissatisfaction I resolved to write a series of anti-positivist science fiction stories. Just as the first novels had once been envisioned as a way of not having to go into the hotel business (turning it all into plot), so this book was envisioned as an escape from anthropology, a use of what I had been learning to some other end. Picturing it as a kind of Ace paperback, I drew diagrams for all the stories in the book (some of them reproduced here), but only two of them got written: "Physician, Heal Thyself!" and "Alethabetha." The latter turned into a sort of essay *on* science fiction, which led to the "Review of Science Fiction," which appears in the Ethnoastronomy Issue (Io/6), which it itself gave rise to, and in an enlarged version in *Book of the Earth and Sky*. And this was the unexpected result of the whole undertaking.

Derived from information I had accumulated in reading about homoeopathy (in preparation for an ethnographic field project which later turned to lobsterfishing), "Physician, Heal Thyself!" is another optimistic and Cytherean reading of the science fiction text. The negative presence is defeated by psychics, radicals, philosophers, and in general, true people. The same is true in "Alethabetha," a portion of which is reproduced in the "Review of Science Fiction." They repeat the sexual-qabbalistic release and even the rainforest landscape of "Why Do You Want Me So Quickly?." The world is transformed thru the path leading within.

The first book done after all this is *The Continents*, written from April to September (1969). Here for the first time in terms of a narrative I am making that geographical-historical synthesis in which the rebirth of the Mars story will come. There are two narrative accounts, one in the macrocosm and one in the microcosm, and they are linked by a form of astral or talismanic magic. At large is the discovery of America, by Indians, Vikings, and Europeans; the discovery of Australia and the Dream-time; the circumnavigation of the globe; the exploration of the Poles and the Moon; and by implication, the first Mars voyage, which is where "Mars: A Science Fiction Essay" picks up. In the countermode are the events leading to the birth of Robin, the circumstances of his coming, the early days of the baby in our house, and the journey to Maine. The preciseness of the narrative and description open a whole realm of extraterrestrial geography (at the same time as local as a single birth or a town history) upon which base *Book of the Cranberry Islands* was drawn. This is most visible in pieces like "The North Pole" and "Moon Land On Out," both in Io/7. The spinning internal homologies of the earlier work, deeply sympathetic and intuitive, simply broke open, not negating themselves (as I once thought) but giving rise to some fixed figures which renewed the narrative.

FROM BOOK OF THE CRANBERRY ISLANDS (CHAPTER 11, THE SCORPION) [1970]

Here all those older Martian questions are rephrased, having becoming conscious on a new level (the unconscious axis also situated differently now too). There is an attempt at at spatial definition: Earth via Mars, Mars via Earth, confusion in the language itself. The existence of Mars in science fiction is suddenly asked to stand on its own, as historical evidence of itself. As I am.

There is a gap in here of almost two years. "Physician, Heal Thyself!" was written in February of 1969; the section from "The Scorpion" was written in September of 1970. In between, all of *The Continents* and about 750 pages of *Book of the Cranberry Islands* were being done. Thus, although *Book of the Cranberry Islands* originated in geographical and ethno-

graphic relationships on Mount Desert Island, by Chapter 11, we are no longer living there (but here in Cape Elizabeth), and the book is regathering itself on a new level, creating its own geography on the precedent of the locale in which it began. And this can be oneirological, interstellar, Pleistocene, or whatever. The book is old enough by this point to begin feeding on itself, and asking who it is, and if it's enough that it be written. In this doubt the Mars theme returns, out of a deep late summer nostalgia, punctuated by dark sexual visions and communal longings, a madness giving rise to clarity, and finally my reading of Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land*. There is much more on this in *Book of the Cranberry Islands*, but it was my intention here not to print anything out of whole books. It was simply that I could not leave such a blatant Mars piece out of a book on Mars.

## MARS: A SCIENCE FICTION ESSAY [1971]

During the last Moon walk earlier this year, I was reading the chapters on Mars in Shklovskii and Sagan's *Intelligent Life in the Universe*. I had a single perceptual flash of the dim and distant televising of man's walking on Mars. It was not a precognition; in fact, it might never happen. I had a sense of what it was, whether it happened or not, what all this other televising back to was, and what the Earth was, the ostensible receiver. In a sense, I was picking up on all my earlier science fiction and Martian intuitions and turning them into a voyage that would follow on all the other voyages described in *The Continents*.

The other strong current came from Paul Metcalf's book *Genoa*, which also interworks quotes from historical, literary and scientific sources, along with the voice of Herman Melville, the author's great-grandfather. Although I have no assurance I read it as Metcalf does, I was interested in his methodology. The quotes appear to represent the whole engrammed memory on various planetary subjects, a sort of collective babble, not always intelligent (or living, in the sense of Sagan), but that voice again, speaking to us from the outer limits of our consciousness.

For Metcalf it is consciously scientology, not science fiction (though for Hubbard it was initially science fiction,

not dianetics). The references are not given internally (either here or in *Genoa*) because the voice originates inside the cells, does not come from outside the piece. It is not a learned or authoritarian voice either; in one sense it is simply static, as learning and authority always are, irritants to the conductive and productive (in the Chomskian sense) logic of the brain. Learning can never be imposed from outside, nor are there references from beyond the text.

What for Metcalf was genealogy (or Genoalogy for America in the birth of Columbus), partly of the Melville in himself, was for me the Martian investigation of myself, ultimately leading to an investigation of the Martian, which gave rise not just to the essay, but to the whole vision, or book. But it is not like germ plasm. I didn't inherit Mars, nor is Melville Metcalf's great-grandfather for simple ancestral reasons. It is more like the Oedipal event, which none of us experience, even historically, but which is simultaneous to our lives. In scientology: a clearing. This book a psychoanalytic and literary clearing of Mars.

One of the problems throughout the essay is: am I writing a science fiction story, or is my life a science fiction story, or is it really the fact that there have been so many science fiction stories written about Mars. Each of these changes, in a loose and informal sense, is handled by a change of type. It is finally all three of them, not synthesized, or merely synthesized; they are organically parts of one another, deriving each others' root sense. In the larger sense, this is orientation. A quick glance at the essay will give the illusion that there are characters and dialogue; yet none of them are my own creations; they are simply participants in that endless ongoing Martian tale, to which I now add my own.

Cape Elizabeth, May, 1971

# *An Orange, Black, and White Poem 1964*

Day of blind flies, lethargic clouds, tardy stars,
Clay-souled rain,
Once again you have come to haunt me dead:

With your blonde grass,
Your crater-blue lakes,
Your water-color smells,
Your rusty orange deed to my soul.

Here I sit,
uneasy as an emperor of Rome
in Cleopatra's wax-fruit barge,
Here I sit in your first garden:
Almost happy (ha!)
(But garden —
What a strange and long-lost word.

Each ticklish person
Has clung
To one special garden.
It rests beside
His one vision of God,
His one name,
One past.
One garden-place.)

I think
That if you take an iota of red star-coal,
Dunk it in a pond of algae,
Roll it in a field of corn
(So its steam spurts algae-scented popcorn),
Then you have the kernels of spring.
(A dancing surge of green popcorn),

For spring is only the sky, the water, and the land
Playing games on each other.
The trick on us
Is that we ask a lot of spring.
We ask it to be our friend.
We ask it to be the truth.
We ask a warm-descending breeze,
(Aware only of itself and warmth)

To answer every question we ever had.
Why?
Is it because spring seems so wise in knowing to come
When no other thing that gives us pleasure does?
Or is it the bothersome fact
That we never seem to know anything really
About the sky, the water, the land,
Or ourselves.

## THE BIRDS OF EVENING

Toddling bird whelps
of one day's sunlight
Will screech
In holy terror of the coming eve,
Their scrawny bodies
Will cut loose
In a cold sweat
Of dripping fathers
As they chirp blindly,
Receive blind solace,
From the chirps
Of distant neighbors.

At twilight
Panic
Sweeps across the treetops,
Sending that land of shrubbery
Into a ghostly state of glee.

The happy whistle,
Pleasant to the ears of the land,
Is merely a tribal effort
At telling other tweets
How they are still heard,
Still appreciated,
As the glow of dark
Ceases minutely
To glow.

The blind
Chirping idiotically

Are leading the blind
Into the first purple dusk
Of the eagle and the hawk.

## THE GARDEN

Here in the garden
Are a thousand sirens of color
Wailing warnings
That I have again approached the sonic point
At which
The higgledypiggledy of trapezoids,
The kaliedoscope of Ozland,
The pinwheeling gestalt,
those things
That are everything to all  Are some one thing
To me alone
A truth,
Like clear blue and clear yellow
Clear white glass
The spectrum,
This spectrum from infra-I to ultra-me,
Passing through my tan id
And my magenta ego,
Buried in the chlorophyll perfume
Of flowers,
The waving fields of grain
In my unconscious.
Swaying dumplings of red,
Tweets of yellow seasoning,
Orange syrup on stems.

The breeze enters aware,
Reveals itself
In a backfire of swaying patterns,
Awakes things we like to see
And then leaves with a knowledge
We would like to have.

Eleven morning-glory times
Sings a distant clockwork,

Its first note is buried
In a tiny hissing of bushes,
Number eleven is loud, clear, alone,
And terrifyingly sad.

We were born,
each of us,
In a flower garden,
Not Eden,
But aside some forgotten country road
Where patches of black-eyed susans
Run free and ne'er-do-ill gay,
Swaying beneath their necks
In bamboo weeds
And baked grass,
A flash
Of the archipelagan jungle
Where banana yellow gawks upward
From spots of sunburnt goo.

Here by the straw-coughed weeds,
The timothy grass lowlands,
Highways of the tumbleweed,
They relax in the lunchtime sun:
Endless matching beach umbrellas.
And here you asked for the first time
If maybe,
Just maybe,
There was something pulling
Across millenia of time,
Drawing you back
To that tropical dawn
Of Jubjub birds and Brontosauri,
And as long as you sought out
THEIR black-eyed susans
(The flowers are THEIRS
Just as the susan-teasing breeze
Has always been THEIRS),
And as long as you stood there
With your orange genes soft and raw,
Whether alone or in love
(A girl does not shield you)

THEIR magnet would reach out
In electromagnetic nostalgia,
And draw you,
Screeching,
Toppling,
Back.

And for the first time you asked the only question
That you could never stop asking
Until weary with wrinkles and questions
You stood by another fence,
Eons apart,
And knew
That the sun of the Tarot,
That Apollo,
That the golden blood of susans
Were born before men
And planted in men's eyes
To pull men back
To the honeyrod fields of time.

Where those insect-sowed fields
Run into clumps of buttercups,
Babies of rich yellow,
Catching more sun and white light
In their little centers
Than we draw ever
With complex eyes,

Where those bouncy yellow clumps
Cross the orange eras of dandelion,
Those tiger-and-lion flowers
That ring of orange juice more
Than a thousand Sunkist groves,

There in the land of the cobblestone road
That gleams and dulls,
Tosses pebbles
Onto dusty sparse-grass shoulders,
The land of the wild girl-flowers,
You are first born to the knowledge
That there is something
You will never know,

Never know the key to the pattern
That spills endless patterns you have
seen before
Onto endless patterns you will never
see again (maybe).

You want some assurance
That no longer must you return
To that haunted land beside the road,
Some guarantee
That you are you,
Swimming in arcs of separate selves,
Out of concentric circles of oö-births,
Never to be swept back
To those inner arcs
of blackeyed susans,
Buttercups,
And windy dandelions.

THE GODS

Oh, for a cloud
Not fueled with prehistoric rain!
Oh, for a star,
That was not lit
Hours before anything!
Oh, for a world
Without sunsets and horizons!
Oh, for a shore
Not slapped and sprayed
With the pale water
Of a long-forgotten harbor
And a long-submerged sea!
Atlantis gasped
Only to yawn again
In islands off the China shore,
Only to return
In the feathered serpents
of South America,
In the bull-roarers
Of the mesas,
And the mystic bears

Of the circumpolar north
To return
In the words of a child
Who speaks only with another's alien tongue.

Zeus and his hordes
Fled their gleeful summit
Now to perch atop glassy buildings,
And from steamy metropolitan clouds
Pour their ambrosia in steel rain
So that as I walk the streets
In spring bursts
It is their dew I am tasting.

In my Odyssey
Across the wet April spring
It is he who took the first epic voyage
Testing me
With the rain of his silver cup,
Clanging my hollow memory
With vibrations
That threaten to turn
Its thin oscillating needle
To dust.

Aphrodite,
In a breeze across a girl's long hair,
Is there in a girl's howling eyes.

Hermes,
In my brother's sideways smile of mirth,
Is my brother.

They never left.
Their macabre sleepmasque
Never luted low
With the oboe of dawn,
They are still here,
Hiding like Cheshire cats
Behind each other's eyes.

Oh, ancient yew tree,

You are now standing
Free and unjailed,
Safe in your alias of maple
In my front yard,
Secretly you are spreading an incense
The ancient part of my nose cannot bear,
Greeting it
With the pain of greeting an ancient friend,
After many many Ides,
And many many leagues,
many many light years.

Oh, cobblestone road,
I, in agony, beg of you,
Writhe and lurch
From your inlaid path.
Resurrect yourself!
And tell me who you really are,
For you are laid across some distant river-valley in my mind.

## DAVID AND LISA REVERIE

When, in the spring,
Lisa stood there,
Unsafe in her girlness,
Hugging a tree-branch
With an easy Lisa-arm,
Holding the budding salt-wood
Close to the wandering head
That was hers:
A shy honeydew face
With black Spanish eyes,
Jack o'lantern-carved,
Canyon-ly lit
Beneath a terrace tree
Of black willow strands —
He looked up
From the weary flashback
Of never-lived life
That was his spring
Every spring,

From pale and forgotten days
To a bridge of freckles
Across her nose
And knew
That if anything was to be saved
It was a face
That longed to be a girl's face
But could not.

When, in spring,
David answered Lisa's question
He crossed a land
Of a million tombstones
(that land of spring)
To a small oasis
Where spring
Is letting a girl
Be a girl
For the first time.

THE ROCKS

I am sitting
By the blue meander
Of a mountain brook
Where
In silent tic
toc
Rocks are piling:
Eggs upon a fish-nest,
Believers huddling
Before the blacking
of the noon sun.

There the banded gneiss,
Salt-and-pepper-striped
Like the Yankee first baseman of the mid-fifties
(It is of Don Bollweg,
Who never lasted,
That I think — )
I think of a green morning:
Hot mists thumping on the window

glass
Like radiator thirst,
A humid frost of self
On the bed-sheets,
And in the dronish air of night
The clay rains have been sweltered north.
Green dust is in the air
And from an old mahogony
Glare ancient ashen colors
Of wood and sun
Saying,
"Depart this dawn-haunted house.
Depart this laughing kitchen It is
A tide of the rising sun,
A spooking hole
For the dancing yellow heart.
Drink a beaker of orange juice,
Frosty and lush,
To ease your crystal-ridden lips.
Then run out beneath the long sky
Before it mellows
To the purple wine of twilight.
Comes supper comes terror!
Comes terror if you have not sweated,
loved
or sung a
song
On a day of
the haunted
dawn."
And the Yankees breaking loose in glee
Across a green jewel padded in rich brown,
Their pinstripes agleam in the 1:55 sun.

But lie there,
Cold and unreborn stone,
You know not the Yankees
You are not Don Bollweg,
You are of the earth
Not me.

Here, upon the dandelion beach,

Sits a candy-nougat cliff.
Ingredients:
Soft marshmallow,
Flecked with chocolate and mocha cream.
It sits to be climbed,
And in the male fury
Of his prenoon soul
One coal-haired,
currant-eyed
boy
Always climbs it
While I whiz by
In a carsick car.

But granite is hard
And it is something in me
That makes the marshmallow,
Something in me
That builds candy cliffs
And sets chocolate and mocha grains
On a marshmallow sediment in the brook.

Do you know
That many years ago
In a high school of boys
A tan-palmed student
Would pull frozen marshmallow bars
Out of a steaming GE mouth
I would drool for colloidal spearmint leaves
In Kroner's chemistry lab
While poisons formed beyond the tongue,
Rough sugars
Upon matter in suspension
On a day at noon
(gobbling malted milk balls in math class)
When filet of sole
And mushy spaghetti and meat balls
Simmered and odored
A room beyond
And tie-less punchball players
Raised dust of the driveway,
Cinders of the track,
My teeth sank

Gradually through the chocolate
To solid cold marshmallow
And then crack!

But you must also sit there,
Piece of granite,
You must rest
And chastely kiss rose quartz.
Sorry to disturb you!
But I am lost and almost panic-stricken
In a strange city of concentric
arcs.
I am fighting my way outward
Afraid that I may somehow turn
And retrace my steps in the night
To come howling to a morning
Calm in the central square.
There the sun rising in sour translucence
Upon a black-eyed susan
Finds her angry and aflame,
Doused in prehistoric
stale
perfume,
Preparing a rape of my soul She sits
Coy and Lolitan
By an orange church
And a white cement fountain
In the center of town.

I am tired and seduced.
My bones will crack
In cannibal lust
For one bite of teasing
yellow-and-brown
Flesh!
And then taste.
Oh.
I am scanning for the pathway out,
The highway
To the wayward fields of orchids
That pulsate oddly
And do not draw
The deadly breeze of time

To sensuous play.

But softly, granite.
It is I
Who is misinformed
About the identity
And significance
Of shapes and structures.

Oh, little egg of milky quartz,
Maybe you are mine
Maybe you can remember
That Easter safari,
The hearths of spotted sunlight
On the piny floor
Of the backyard forest:
The egg
Planted so aptly
At the crotch of the tree,
The untold pleasure,
The rare utter fulfillment
In finding
CLUTCHING that egg —
The incredible disappointment
In kissing
The red damp lips
Of a ruddy girl
In a dark room
On a February night
As the cold wind blew outside.
Oh, lemon agony
As those stencilled lips
Betray my blood-lust
For the dragon-tongue
River-wild
Of a girl's deepest soul.

Come, milky quartz,
Give up your igneous lover,
Give up his fiery birthmarks,
And come to me
from him
forever.

For you, egg, are mine.

Oh, lemon quartz,
Remember when I first named you
By the Museum,
Beyond the black
forever WET PAINT fence,
You and your pebbly friends
Gathered as a nation
For my sifting fingers
Many many eggs
The size of jelly beans.
Remember my half-moon smile
At the slice of lemon
On filet of sole
While you lay under stars
A bite of lemon white-meat
While you lay
Beneath cold trickles of light
And the silver sheet
Of Her
Who covers you.

Remember the rock garden,
The piece of lemon,
The egg,
The first patch of buttercups
By a lonely country road.....

Aside,
Beneath
The tiny surface bubbles
A piece of slate
criss
crosses
In unnamed geometric form
With a piece of slate:
Together they are singing
A slate-grey song
Of construction ditches,
New roads,
Parking lots,
A thruway of slate,

The historic end
Of my cobblestone path.

I once made a piece of slate
Skip seven times
To the center of a lake.
But it probably wasn't
Either of you —
And yet I would be less lonely
In time
If I knew somehow
It was.

Here comes the elite!
Like a white swan
Necking her way downstream,
A piece
Of marble-fresh dolomite
Somersaults
To a
Halt.
Now she is perched
On the brook bottom
In virgin quiet.
I want to pluck you
And hold you
Close to myself —
If only you were
Soft and cuddly,
Not stone.

When I was in the eon of collecting rocks,
A kid once brought me a piece of you.
He told me
The currency of gold
You were
In the neighborhood clubhouse:
A magic stone
In the treey land.
I,
A boy of Apartment 6B,
Above cement, gravel,
And chrome

And nearby the land of names,
Took you
To the high priest curator
(Department of Geology),
Wishing all the time
I could touch you
And hug you
In all your fool's gold innocence
Instead of knowing
You were $MgCO_3$.

And there yonder
Plods a nothing-stone,
Knowing nothing  Telling nothing
Only perhaps of a day
In the woods,
Hands dried powdery brown,
A hole in the wake of my muddy shoes:

Someday when a piece of gold
                Or diamond
Is the outer arc
Of whirling circles,
You, nothing-stone,
Will hug a piece of milky quartz
Beside a small plot
            Of brown-skinned,
                Yellow-souled flowers,
There in the nucleus.
            There in the heart.

SONG

In the past
A railroad howls
A boy lies hunched
In colored towels.

## AMHERST SPRING

We are now
In the college spring
Of centaur-like
He-She beasts,
Travelling in Mongolian hordes
Across the rainbow-dappled
Earth of green.

Spreading
With the awkward adolescent trees
Usurping
The bushes of evergreen,
Alive suddenly
With the calm dandelion nation:
Is a timelapse tribe
Of umbilical monsters,
Twin amoebas of the noon.

While bees buzz busily
About the daisy-plants,
While crickets chirp
The clicking cockadoodledoo of spring,
While birds chant softly
To finish a nest
By nightfall,
They scout
The tropical dusk
For a nook
Behind a cranny
In a cove,
Deep, personal, and far.....

Soft now!
The scurrying roller coaster pairs wear down.
It is night
And their wigwams are scattered:
Hither, thither,
And yon

On the face
Of a spring moon.

In daytime,
Seeing only the sun-ripened fields,
The yearlong pines,
The tan cold-creamed faces
Of each other's Noxzema dream:
At twilight,
Seeing only the beginning of party lights in the sky,
The fleeting blackbirds from maple pies
(Four and twenty in four and twenty speckled swarms),
The Spalding rabbit bouncing home
When spring
Is where webs of a thistle field
Separate
For a simple twolines
Of railroad track,
Where many buzzes
Rumble
From a weed-zoo of insects
In the alfafa straw;

When spring
Is where a tiny dead bug

Drifts across a marsh moon

Into the black
forever,

And its soft diameter
Parts
And ripples away,

Across the moon,

Into the black
Forever.

They are running deliriously gay,
Hiding from the legends,
the myths,

the ghosts,
the hymnals,
the rites of rebirth —
For spring
Is bottled in the past
Of your own brain-barrel
And poured
In a sweet syrup
Across your present.
But!
Only as you have lonely bottled spring in the past
Will you and she receive your spring waters
Tasty and good;
Only as often as you have tasted with your tongue
The black raspberry sunset
Crowning the terrestrial dusk
Of hickory smoke,
Only then will her lips be warm and winy
In the cold April twilight.

## THE SMELLS

I am now sitting in the forest,
Hansel-and-Gretel-thick
But I am at peace
Only a few fathoms
Beyond a picnic area,
My sun
Splattering through the trees
In midday jack-o'-lantern grills.
The smell of roasting steaks
Is twisting
Its way
Dustily through the tree-trunks
To me.
And I can almost see
The wet pink meat
Turning amber
And then darkening
To fine crinkle leather.
But in the atmospheric crisscross

Of spring ashes and sweet loess
Is the fiery stink
Of fiery leaves,
Damp autumn's leftovers  Their fry
Is settling 'tween the windward pine-blow
And the rising stench
Of the centipede log.

The pregnant odor
Of gas
Igniting in a car-engine,
A kerosene tailwind.
And in the humid burnt spring air
I know
That my world
Is a sea of Jovian pomander,
of squashed gases,
of methane-smoking caterpillars,
of purple electric breezes
That come with the ozone
rain
And the neon rainbows.
With spring I am launched
From the quiet frozen moon
Of Io
To the dense bosom
Of swirling clays.
I am driven
From within the celestial icicle
Downward
To the rotting mud,
And the smell of the sticky swampland
Teases me  Tortures me
With too much  With too little
Of the smell  Of the answer
Of yesterday  And before:
The prehistoric wish,
The Cro Magnon sperm
The weeping willow of Om,
All lost  All not lost:
The ancient baby of Tigres,
The young ageless of Atlantis,

The algae The quartz
Of Eden.
There is another world
Ghost-shadowing this one
Sweating through in spring.

One unforgettable glimpse
Of Ulysses weeping
In the red-orange lamp
Of his last marine sunset:
His tan and salt-spume face
Eerie with embers
As he too must return
To the iron taste
Of the Graecian well,
The charcoal gas
Of home-fried food,
The sad lush body
Of his own wife
Penelope.

After the epic voyage
From leas of Lethe's rain
To lands of magic and unknown remembrance.
Even the gulls
Fade and sink from the oddness
No enemy to the sun!
They cry,
"In a cowslip bell I lie,"
My eyes cold as the dew.
In Circe's arms I die,
Remote and callous
Yet singed with the more terrible
cosmic heat,
Abed but not alove
Embraced
But never homesick
For perfumed arms.

From tasteless dawns
And soothing sunsets

Then to emerge
Suddenly
Awfully
On a sunless raw day
Atop remembered shallows:
To be flung back
On the well-known harbor
And feel homey peace
Drop like a savory oak
Across the shadow
Exposing the lingering plateau
Of yellow dreams Of blue sky
The Northwind had so carefully
Seeded with brine,
And an oak had grown
Out of monsoon nourishment.
Now familiar Graecian urns
To drink from,
Lyric harps
In that old sorry tongue.
His head hurts,
Athrob with x-ray poison,
Orion
Cast back from the stars.

And Abelard too,
Standing in primeval terror
Of those who would castrate
Every ancient feeling
Every sensuous nostalgia
Every lusting for the past
And send him into the deeper past,
From which no maid could call him
From which no spring could hearken him
No lips arouse him.
He was gone into the great womb
Of the Neanderthal jungle
Where pterodactyls wing upon unconscious man
Where ferns grow without origin
Without ratio
Original.
There is the deeper spring of Abelard
From which: no return is,

No recall
No salve from the haunting memories of another
an alien people,
of a race that is not your own.
You must kiss the lepered herbs
Of another planet,
And light the stinking incense
Of an horizon star.

FRAGMENTS

I am walking home
To the living room chair
Of clothy mementos:
Cozy of the winter.
On the street
There drifts an old cigar sniff
Travelling in sinuous concave wisps
Across the air,
Firing darts of inner tobacco
hearth
Along rivulets of blue smoke,
Telling me that I am a child
And cannot strike a match
In other
Than playful danger:
A compulsive flame
That wavers and crumbles
Because my eyes stung
And my fingers itched,
And an unlit match
Clung to the black sandpaper
In blue ripeness;
Because I cannot scratch
That ticklish string in my mind,
That tiny
bent
pinglike
thread
Which is teasing to death
A swamp of active brain.
But — ah!

A fire catches
crackles
blossoms red
on the ash-tray floor,
Sending old carbon
Down to a nineteenth death.

In that rich masculine smoke
I smell the initial death of matter,
Knowing then
That I was born
Not of fresh Promethean flame
On a new shiny leaf,
But of the nineteen millionth itch
In a man-child
To quench his brain
By violet salt of the match
On a long-cold ash-tray floor.
I am ancient carbon,
Equally far
Between coal and diamond.
I dream of crystal peace
But my soul
My rebuilt
rebuilt
rebuilt
rebuilt
rebuilt
personal soul
Reeks of the deepest
bitiminous mines
Where wet orange rust
Settles
Resettles
Settles
Resettles
Yawns
In agony
For a new and better compactness.
One question
Why is the sky blue?
What if the sky were yellow?
Rain would fall

In a soft jonquill mist.
Where does the earth sit?
Nowhere:
Running madly nowhere
Spinning daily a frenzy
Playing an elliptical game It is:
Fair child to the sun
Teased by Venus
In her nightgown
Of womanly mists,
Protective of baby Mercury
In his swift fun,
Fearing the manuevers
Of sly and cinnibar
Mars,
And always wondering how
why
where
Clairvoyant Neptune goes.
We are true offspring
Of our mother star.

Now if all the smoke
Of all places and all times
Travelled in one compact stream
Across the sun,
Blotting out its radiance
In a webbed eclipse:
Would the massive hieroglyphics,
The cunieform shadow on the earth
Decipher into anything
That might help me know
Susan,
That sandy girl of the sandfields,
In her peaceful morning nap?

THE GROUND

Days come; Days go.
It is still the first day of spring

Above a flowering of cumuli

A herd of curly cirri
Are driven into a haze.
An ant plods across
Pavement,
Apple stem,
Bark,
Apple kernel,
Old grass,
Up and down
A grain
And on across
Fragments of a stale leaf
An acorn shell
Into the lush, high-grass meadow,
Meets
A tall-winged
Thin
Fly-thing
Rises like a horse,
Crushes,
Grasps in red pincers.

And still,
If a single petal
From a black-eyed susan
Fleeing this way,
Stopped
In a sudden jutting of the wind
And threw a banana sunset
Over the ant
And his flyey carcass:
Would the ant know
In the rising anguish
of his first bed upon a yellow flower
How icy is the ping of death?
Would he
As a living thing
Remember my cobblestone road
And do a jig of agony
a mock turtle quadrille,
Not in grief or guilt
Not for the flyey thing,
But for the very act:

That not even murder
Preserves the randomness
Of susans,
Not even death.

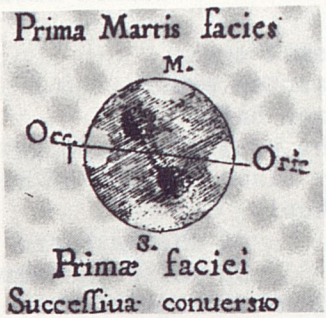
There is always another death:
Your own,
And the past of banana sunsets
Does always return.

## THE CHILDREN

I am on a park bench
Here come the school children
A flaxen smell of sweaters.
Their theme:
Dark chasmal eyes,
Light grasstop eyes;
Flowery red hair,
A sunlight pool of blonde,
Long lacy Lisan strands of black —
Their clothes a pinwheel:
Of checkerboard red-and-black,
Of yellow-and-brown broad stripes,
Of red-and-white kitchenwork.
The aliens.

But one must stop the pinwheel
Before it too
Hurtles into a gestalt of something
I cannot know again.

So take the long lacy Lisan strands of black,
Place the child who combs them
Beside an orange-and-brown susan,
Bringing milky quartz and Yankee gneiss
As an offering.
Call it homeland
And always return.




**Drawing of Mars by Cassini showing polar caps. (From C. Flammarion, "La Planète Mars," Vol. 1.)**

# *Across, Bearing Nothing 1964*

He arrived at the New Rochelle train station shortly before lunch, ran from the tracks to a place on Main Street where in utter sunlight Saturday's people filled their bus. He went to the back and rested his head against the final triangle of glass, within which the things not happening to him happened. The bus loaded slowly, waited, then took them away; did so many times until it was out of the city; on country roads stopping infrequently and never for long. Passing, he thought of the day, filling his comfortless wait with images of a full afternoon, lunch with Don; he returned, in his mind, for contrast, to tuna fish cans, separated alone, eaten beside a book because the day would be counted in number of pages and the count was to be maintained at all hours.

The fields were full, utter sunlight there too, stretched over baseball and picnic grounds like a long mural, *The Opening of Spring*. It was early April in the City too, the pigeons flying by hot noon shadows, but flowers had not come to the cement as sun had with its strong pineapple glow. Real pineapple light is sliced in the South Seas against rich earth and pigeons are not the real dandelions they ran over as the fungo bat snapped through the murmur of the road. Faraway, although it seemed uncertain because there were houses on the hills, a stream ran into a forest. And still it was really never there; when Don and he walked to the house they crossed a plank bridge, the sun on them webbed and stylized by trees, climbed steps dug into a hill that reached to the kitchen door.

Don separated hamburger patties from paper and put their icy side down on the frying pan. Beneath, inside the oven, pale cheese swelled over the meat. Looking through the misty formations on the window-door, he wondered if he would be invited for dinner. Beyond-lunchtime hunger filled itself without taste, too much salt on the meat transferring the thing on to thirst, to Cokes, two, three, water.

Up in Don's room they sat on opposite beds and he listened while Don shakily translated a Latin assignment of four weeks ago. On the fifth line Don paused, stayed stuck by a single phrase painfully long, and finally called for help. Having raced ahead in his mind, now he spoke and the words ran freely through the correct sense, falling into place as they had already fallen once and were now easing into the same joints. He did one lesson; Don stuttered and could not begin the next. He did it straight through, and finally Don admitted that he hadn't gotten beyond that. Gay with translating,

he agreed to go straight on through to this weekend's assignments. Don allowed, guiltily, and lay back while he disentangled juxtapositions, crossed languages, whizzed, going over dubious places rapidly again, giving alternate versions when he could clarify, describing twice the terrains of war and what sides armed, from where, and in what manner.

Don rolled over on the bed, lethargically scratching his balls. He felt the strange and incomplete attraction, fascination, to be touched by him, or to be him. His body was awkward; he kneeled on the bed. The earliest material he translated that afternoon came from a month earlier when, in his room, he had faced those opening lines with as much confusion as Don now showed. He had harassed himself to line 6, 7, 8, until a rhythm broke, and then it was 15, 18, line 28, falling quickly into place, meaning nothing, in English all the same, 37, 52, a let-up in sight so at once out of the retrograde air of the room, into the bathroom, remaining there on the toilet forcing a few lines further, stubborn lines at last clinging into a place as he went to the vocabulary list, dragging his body along like a dying animal, continually into new red fields where new suns are setting and always the dissatisfying ecstatic glow of a world on its own horizon, hanging there colored, and still its momentum, still the holding fast, line 128, line 156, new words aplenty in line 172, flowing perfectly by participles into line 193.

He sprawled from off the unused bowl onto the floor, tucking the mat over stale powder, going on several chapters more than he had set, tantalizing unhungry lunches before himself, five more lines and at 12:30, at 1:30, at 2:00, and finally eaten at 3:00 while he pedalled his way through another chapter until the children returned home from the park and the ball-game, and the parents come home from work to take them all out to supper.

Don asked him to go as far as he knew, and he continued in the grammar book, calling out the constructions and interrelationships that would make the sentences fall into English. But there was no other talk or language, no words, but flat, as the sound of a bird singing. Out the window. Or flatter than that. Don stretched out his full frame on the bed, holding the book in the air with one hand, luxuriously scratching himself with the other. When he was finished, hoarse but happy, freed by the clean flow, he stood up and yawned. Don snapped from his position and turned off the tape-recorder.

Only when it sat there, Don putting the tape away with his papers, disarmed and innocently inert, that hum shown not to be a spring cricket or a radiator, did he realize that he had been speaking to go into Don's desk, to stay there, and be played back and back.

They went to school that night, driven from Westchester to Riverdale, the spring carnival, a lunar warm evening, the American flag lazy against the stars, the gym croaking so that inside thuds and colors dove past the baskets, tickets and halves spilled on the sawdust, games vertical and horizontal. Don found a girl, and, left to himself, a silence the whole day had been leading to, he went to mind a booth for a friend. Never before, in four years, had he seen the school at night, or with girls.

Later he walked back outside, into the absurdity of the Big Dipper just above the roof of his history class, the windows dark with no lecturing, whispers and clicks all over the exercise field, and they were boys and girls at their things which, for him, were a pathos no longer necessary to enumerate poetically. Flattened markings on a gibbous were the sense of land unwalked on by perceptions about arcs and nonarcs, the appropriateness of that land.

Don found him at the end and asked him to stay over. His stories of the evening titilated, like a sheet pulled, no pressure derived, over the penis. They were Don's and had more to do with the look on his face that the hands or face of any girl. Don. They got to Don's house and there he dialed home, telling his mother that he would stay over. She was uncertain, a storm without fields, not letting free its hurricane over mere waters. She would wait for the landing.

He borrowed Don's pajamas and slipped into the bed on the other side of the room. Don turned on the radio while he changed, passing through his nakedness smoothly, without affect, and its sound hung nonpowerfully outside the drone of the evening papers telling him about the players who would come North.

The papers were black and white, grizzly type, sheared paper, but across them, like green ghosts, blew trees, wet in rain, so that he no longer saw Don or the paper, no longer heard the metallic keynote of the rock and roll station; there was only a baseball field covered with huge wet leaves, blowing endlessly in their places, stretching to fly out of place, reaching to a small elastic pinpoint of tension from which

they blew, from which the rainy waves along their surface blew. And all the seats in the Stadium were wet, and the players who did come North could not play because of the forest.

*Look at you.*
*Look at me.*
*See the way we glow.*
*Who'd believe that we just met*
*One week ago.*

The voice was soft and childlike, a gaiety whispered in a dark cave, a pink birthday cake in a sad dining room. There was no vocabulary; from it: derived: nothing. The voice was kathylike, young, saying. The voice was married; the voice was a child bride. 'I will never know,' he thought, 'I will never know what the voice is saying.'

*This is our first anniversary.*
*See the time well passed.*
*This is our first anniversary,*
*But with every kiss we know, we know*
*It won't be the last.*

Don wrestled the pillow and began to doze off. The room was silent, was not his room, was Don's room, were Don's bed. Born in this house. A stranger to a stranger. And him too. And them too. 'I do not understand the words,' he thought. 'They don't mean what they say. If I'm unhappy it's not because I am not married, do not have a child bride. I am unhappy because Don is not really my friend and I will have to go home tomorrow, and I have never even been with a girl. But this is not the thing; the thing is not the words. I remember them, but they are not the same.'

He dreamed that night of a gigantic tape-recorder, spools placed at opposite pillars of a huge Pantheon, the magic eye blinking on that dome — and the wheels grinding like giant planets, from them a noise like two rocks passing each other, one rolling up a hill, one of them rolling down.

# *The City 1965*

He sat there for a long time, staring at how it was in its own light; then let his eyes fall, from the sun/from blue, to the park & green, to a reservoir. He let his head drop; saw the damp shadow of the avenue beneath him, and the birds leaving their roosts, shifting, and boys running: a tiny ball, he followed it, off brick, into a parked car, smack against the curb, unspinning.

He looked back at the park, fixed on the reservoir, different reflections breaking and coming together on the surface, a sparkling oiliness becoming no one thing.

Birds swarmed through the pure sun above, dropped into trees, rose and disappeared into avenues beyond the park. He picked up his pen and wrote: *The old man entered the park. Above him the sun was torrid, trying to burn through the water. The man's sweat was pulled off him, with the clean water, into tomorrow's storms. Away, in the sidestreets, cold and narrow, kids played, shouting in Spanish and English, throwing their rubber ball against the side of a chipped building. Single, Double, Triple, Home Run!* He reread it; crossed out the word *clean*, substituting *drinking* for it. He put it down in the sunlight; went into the kitchen where he made two pieces of raisin toast hot with cold cream-cheese.

sun set blue darkened wind came about the time stars came he watched from the window the t.v. came on with sound behind him a doorman standing in evening black a woman, who might have been naked, passed back and forth behind the curtains there was nothing to write about steak in the kitchen

*"Your stop," said the operator, opening the door. Mr. Macneil stepped out onto a pile of hot hay. He saw a clear blue sky above him, and he felt he had to express his joy, and this time it was possible, by jumping into the hay and letting its warm fragrancy seep into his body. He ran across a green field to a beautiful forest of ferns. There he rested under a tree marked "Tumtum," with strange ribbon-like leaves. There was no sun, but it was warm and light. A small mome rath crawled onto his leg and began to speak. "Twas brillig and the slithy toves," he sang in a wonderful voice.*

Science fiction, he told them. But it was no excuse.

School ended early one day, and he collected all his money; bought a camera and blue and red filters, one roll of color film. He shot in the park all afternoon, on the way home took a picture of the man with his cart of fruit and @'s. They came

came back from the drugstore a few days later, the pictures he had taken.

He bought new film and went back; put flowers into blurs of colors, changed the focus on leaves, moved when the wind moved, changing the speed, directly into sun. Time exposure on moon. Once, while collecting pictures for a scrapbook on Mars, he had gone out with an old box camera, aimed a 3-battery flashlight on it, clicked.

He went back to write the story, and from the window he saw a girl with her hair in the wind and school books under her arms, a tan coat; she was coming along the street. He thought of her coming up from the street, up to the apartment, kissing him, taking off her tan coat, her full. He squeezed his legs; smelled the sun on the blindings.

he went for a ride on the subway to buy an orange filter a woman he was pressed up against smelled like coal, shape of the ass into his side and the train moved

he took a picture of the cold blue night sky behind the water towers

a wind turned to spring a rain turned to spring flowers there were more colors on the trees men and women went up hills, put down blankets in the park and it was/was not the bus sound beyond

the sun set behind the buildings

it was suppertime, but the sun hadn't set

that night he wrote a short story about a man who was killed by a falling beam as he entered an elevator; he was taken to a floor marked $\sqrt{-2}$ .

Once, when he was little and there was a maple tree and the sun was still out and more golden than ever, she came across the yard with a glass of apple juice. "No," he cried. "It's not supper time. The sun is still out."

"The sun sets later this time of year."

"It's too sunny out to drink apple juice."

She called him in; placed it on the table before him. He sat there, looking at the juice; it stood in irrevocable sunlight. He began to cry.

he lay awake dreaming that the world was coming to an end and there were 5 people who could go to Mars & him how many boys and how many girls how

the pictures came back of the sun and a long fuzzy stream shot out of it, splashing into the water

an uncle, eating supper as a guest, the sun still out,

heard the story of the man in the elevator, another about cheshire cats that led boys on magical journeys. "Don't go into writing," he said afterwards. "There's too much competition."

he went to the Village shot a wreath of flowers on a door with a cross a man shining shoes an artist doing a portrait a drunk lying asleep by the entrance to a warehouse

the cliffs across the river made of olivine and diabase the pallisades bright colored amusement park at night fireworks the city hot

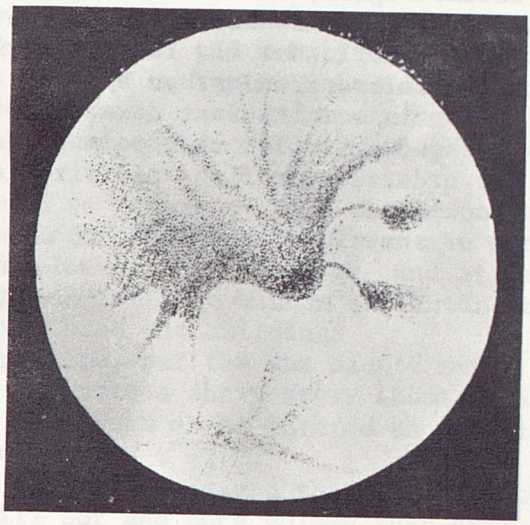
they watched the ballgames and the yankees sent up a pinch-hitter in the eighth, he tied the score

he read history books, france after the revolution after & the Philippines & World War II late in spring in the heavy air a nation a bronx un marked by war

they ate supper in a restaurant downtown the lady took their coats the headwaiter led them to a table waited they ordered he ordered swordfish pie with ice-cream for dessert they took a cab home

it was then or sometime other than it was not a dream

*One Friday about the middle of last March I*



**Drawing of Mars made by Dawes in 1864. (From C. Flammarion, "'La Planète Mars," Vol. 1.)**

*Moonship 1965*

*February Prayer 1965*

*moon-ship*

land growing
close!
land old land
land
unmapped unconsidered unbetokened
land without
parallels, land without
legend

never seen before by
anyone

having nothing to do with the moon found
by aiming
rockets
at the moon

there
thru all
of history

historyless

land.land.land.land
meters more
of universal acerage

no injuns

*february prayer*

soft silent rays
dropping like rain
into the blood
we come from the curls and coils
not the basic gene

we are not revolutionaries
we are not psychotics
we are not gods

we are
you having migrated coming by way of
Galapagos
become those rays
before the planet melting
softly drawing
its edges, before
you set sail
the planets
within shot of your sails

we come to save you
on an arc of time
as Noah,

we are only
a whisper

whispering

other chords to sleep

# *The Sleigh Ride 1965*

It was snowing on the city: all night, entering and leaving beams of light on the street, taking on cylindrical loci, which were not its shape for it was falling everywhere, all night landing darkly on the window ledge, and on the flower pots across the courtyard, on the pigeons' backs, as they sought roosts in the cold stone and where the fans blew out the warm kitchens, all night filling the white space it had begun thinly. He slept, waking between dreams, to the radiator whining and the window creaking, to see the snow on the silent streets, then going back to dreams of winter. In the morning the wind was blowing lightly in the sun, shifting the sparkling stones. The winter - as it might never have - came.

They took the sled into the park, across the wet road and the snow equipment parked for lunch, past the hot chestnut man and his heavy gloves, clapping the dust and the cold, past the dwarf in the snow-suit, and along the tracks of those who had gotten up earlier, toast and butter and sunrise, and down the service elevator to the basement to rescue the sleds from the dust and trunks.

There was snow on the heads of statues and snow on the horse's mane. There was snow on the pages of Hans Christian Anderson's book and snow on the popcorn-lemonade stores. The lake was frozen and there was snow on the lake, and one half-sunken rowboat, aimed out. Snow balanced the seesaw and held the swings at rest; made the holes in the wire fence smaller and the spaces between them denser. The garbage cans were filled with snow and the water fountain was a little hood of white within a fluffy cup.

They came to the top of the hill, beside the dark back windows of the museum. They put him on the sled, a great hand pushed him; he felt the surge and resolved not to stop, to go further than all the hills, to the wall of the park. They were running beside him, but soon he passed them and went speeding over crosstracks, steering between trees, passing other sleds that had less will than his, so that he made it over the long flat area and across the tunnel by momentum. Now he was at the tip of a tiny hill, tilting downward, becoming fast again, tightening his gloves with one hand while the other steered past a tree. He was on another hill that sloped away from him to the left, and he leaned and aimed into its force, past the legs of men who were starting others on the top, passing those with no momentum, past statues and

benches, past people and faster than them, past dogs, past the buildings of the avenue, across the road and onto a long open field from where he could see the houses of both avenues, sweeping by him in different perspectives. He urged the sled on, and even where there was no hill an inertia glided with him, past the zoo, past the last trees, like a ball, upto the wall, and then over it, and into the air over the avenue where thousands were Christmas-shopping. It was night and they moved with packages held close to their dark coats, and taxis and buses passed beneath at different speeds, on different schedules; there was singing and the ringing of bells until he was so high he could see only glittery blue stars and red twinkles of chrome in the windows, and the huge Christmas tree, a spiral down. Soon he was over the ocean and he could see nothing, but hear the washing of the waters and the disconnected toots and horns. He yanked the steering bar still higher and passed thru cold sleet and wings of birds. The moon fell on the plain of clouds, and their fields were filled with dense activity: the building of huts and the planting and reaping of seed. There was finally only a darkness, and he struggled hard for air, yet kept breathing. Fiery rocks passed him and he was pelted by pebbles; he hugged the sled low and steered outward, as between trees. Green gems glowed in the air, and a red wave of light flashed and winnowed in the indefinite foreground.

And by then there was no need to steer, for his sled was pulling him - or rather a huge giant was pulling both, only his outline lit in consecutive dots, the rope over his back. When all the stars were close and none were closer than others, he hurled it free, let it sail freely to the foot of a star-dwelling lizard.

"Leave your sled behind. The rest of the ride will be on my back."

Sadly he cast the sled backwards, watched it drift, slowly revolving on an irregular axis, then turned and faced his mount, who was all colors and whose head stretched to/ spoke out of a faraway group of stars, like a cave. He climbed on his back and already he was on his neck, and a billion miles farther, maybe more.

# *Group D 1965*

i

shown a picture of something
walked into it
we were there and not just looking at
the same thing,
at a circus, Huge
clowns

invited us into the ring
with their horses
with their jalopies
with their cows
with their frosted queens
and we were led
across inter secting rings until we
were no where but
there and deeper and
deep
er
a cow wobbled and dropped
shit
and that was where the fifth ring
out crossed the sixth ring
ing

on a
red.
blue.
green.
yellow.
gameboard
and suddenly
blood.
flowers.
chlorophyl.
and a house painter. painting
the house on the corner.
yellow.

ii

it happened yesterday and again

today and if it keeps happening it
may not stop

12 years ago
with finding a horror comic on the beach:
men boiling in cages on venus
earthmen weighted on beds of pin
blood rising on airless worlds
demons eating every thing

every human thing and
spitting them out as everything. a man
can be chewed into any form. a man can be
roasted or skinned
alive

ii

we went to the shower house, washed
our sand
into the sand
off bodies on stone
drain gargling,
the towelman's radio on
the last days of the pennant race,
we followed
the sound of the yankees down the boardwalk,
machines buzz and bell, we
rolled the skeeballs
the colored round hard
balls they

slurped the loop,
free-flow instant and finding

edge or
pocket and snug
10 for the furthest orbit

10 to 60, all the
rungs in the universe,
the coupons
pouring thru galaxies from some guy's pocket
the red fat woman selling
tickets to the funhouse

they were only concerned with showing us the ways
our bodies could be destroyed,
                what wind meant
                and foul air blown up a dress,
what the axis and its spinning were,
a barrel gone mad could do
to a biped and how the mind
went crooked on crooked
hallways while strange shaking clowns
laughed at you as though
they owned you
or belonged to you,
                laughing without even
                the optics to see.

iv

that another one
fell down the stairs
into the cold dungeon
forever

that there was a land
and all its people
inside the iron curtain

born there

a bird with wings clipped off

a laser beam can cut thru
a body bones and all

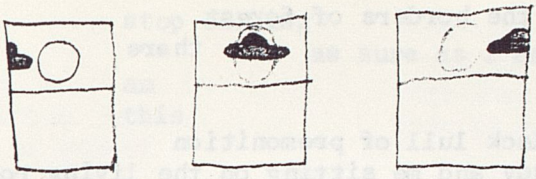
Superman dying beside a chunk of kryptonite

children all of
the seven of swords,
                2 in the
right hand, 5 lefty, 2 we
pass thru, i say we
pass thru 2 coming
from the gay plaid tents, coming on
tip toe, coming

with a smile because
the sky is

yellow

# *Pictographs 1966*



dream from behind dream from behind dark cells from
darker waters
not the consequences of having been born: but those
before
and before those
back to the original cells
of my first configuration
long before
the pronoun my
long
before the syllable om
these are the pursuers the predators
the last banditos/ it is
these i will have
to face in the end
who faced me at the beginning
in whose ultimatum of terror i preserve
every xenos every
ally and confidante
every clue of history
on/of the planet earth

they came last night
breaking through the fabric of dream
from behind the dense web of dreaming cells
suddenly

to appear

scattering

fields light creatures

all my lands to the borders of forest
there
to watch:

lush black lull of premonition
now Lindy and me sitting on the living room couch
a full moon in the top frame of the window pane

then
dark
ship
i have dreaded
crosses
is crossing
the moon
or was it only the moon itself
darting through a cloud?
was it an optical illusion?
formed by the cells
against their own ends

no god no!
a ship comes now a second moon
turning shows its
side flank of energy

this is one of the brotherhood of saucers
this is a catacomb of alien antennae
seeking me seeking
the gold
i know i bear i know not
how
or how to get free

it turns before the moon and we
sit there hoping to watch it hoping
it will not see us
as it turns
and knows me by my thoughts
directed at it of themselves as sure as
anti-aircraft guns
as sure as i am i cannot stop thinking

stop calling
as sure as i am i
am
this

and it is a universe closer to me
coming thru my head
knowing

that i am thinking of it
what i am thinking of it
which even i do not know
as it knows /where i come from/
will tell me /who i am/how i will die/where i will go/
this black knowledge i would run from on any evening
as Faust would not
nor would the shaman run
they to the fire
whether it burned in their heads
or on the field
to arrive there nonetheless
as Alice was always in Wonderland
in her head in the same place
this lare of illusion crackling and total
totality above our heads like the Arctic Ice

loose blue electricity in the sky
it is a universe closer
and bearing in
paralyzed i cannot move
invoking the tradition
of every horror story
(which this is not)

as damsel before the monster
he is horrible she is beautiful
on the surface of things
who will tell her why he has come across a whole universe?
and been born on earth?
just to touch her and take her away
why he has come alone for her?

what now is her source?
that he is here for her
what now is her make-up?
child of what god is she?
am i?
as i stand before the black craft
bearing records of everything i
could not know

making all i know
tautology
and gloom

and ending my search
here on earth
ending my chromosomes, memory-fluids of geos
no longer suppliant before suns and moons
no longer seeker of these ratios crystal-born
no longer soma

thrown

out
smack on the open universe
ego-less
time-less
law-less
broken
these are Cocteau's motorcyclists
riding out of time in time
into time
and back into
no i would not call it death
this other thing that grows before
the moon
like a mushroom
that cannot be stopped

and will go on
and on
and on

do you know how far?
or what is at stake?
in even this my dream?

paralyzed
and in one more flash
in one more electronic leap
it will be the whole sky
it will be upon us
then we will know all
and be converted to one black cell
and so on

And even though i have waited all these years
sending
sending outward
searching the night-time skies
plying the star-field
i cannot face you
or origin
or destiny
and take the nuclear scrolls

i will not lose
my Apollonian day-star

i will not be turned into
the magic of my own sun

i will not be eaten alive
or transported back
to the home planet

only one more flash and!
so i grab her arm
lead her out of the room
all awakes
into the dusk of bed-room
my heart beating a hundred years a second

i have been saved but from what?

will it have to come again?

is it that kind of universe?

is it that kind of justice?

what will this poem do?

will it help?

will it serve as evidence against me?

when will he next
soar in on me?

will i ever know
why he has chosen me?

ever/ever/ever?

or when it began?

or if such things begin
before we begin?

are all these others his messengers
or his clowns?

why is he stronger
than my waking up?

what is the shadow
the shadow still lingering
at the bedroom door?

what is night?

to an owl?

and where really
is the earth's moon?

*Dream 1966*

a reddish cavewoman
hung with hair rough uneven gruff young
face
born from

a young boy whirling-about
to throw

pleading mouth dry dumb
now she walks back to me
touches my arms speaks

speaks no language
atonal spooky familiar talking
on and on

i would understand if i took a step
closer

should i take my chance with her?

should i take her?
back with me?

wild eyes terrified of trains streets scans
up and down at buildings
tries to rip
the leather off her breasts

we come to my home
she walks into the walls
i pull her into myself
her eyes light with fire

now i know how
a glacier caught her in the act of running
all these years she lived in free form

robbed of passion, consciousness
ice until i remembered her

she was awakened by the sun
she is older than the oldest tree
everything that lived with her is now of earth and mud

she lived close against me i thrust
into her insides
her insides
clung like rough clay
she moved madly her eyes turning
intelligent
she spoke many words in english as
i came
she stumbled back from me
and looked out at lit apartments
then up at the moon

*Hanoi 1966*

it is illegal
and yet

i dreamed last night
of being within Hanoi
not the city we are fighting as source
but the city we are forbidden to enter

the city we refuse to bomb

polis concealed in missile darker than night.

our plane landed
in the darkness of tunnels

beautiful girls swam
in black pools

a spider
on the ceiling
pulled
into himself
silver webs
panning, scanning

an ibis
with the head of a woman
mimetic
slept

clothing and dead bodies
floated on down
the river
out of the tunnels

i said,
'this city does not exist'

they led me silently to an opening
i climbed out onto a balcony
from which alone
was it visible
far off

in the distance
and below
two selfcontained arrangements of cosmopolitan light
far off yet imposed upon each other in noneuclidean night

HANOI to the EAST
HAIPHONG to the WEST

three shifts of UFO's patrolling each city
each city
had a star
on which an antenna beamed

farther still
as if in another galaxy
fire smoke fission

in shadow
her long hair over her eyes
her arm around me
a girl
led me back to the tunnels
i came thru them
and out
we made love

in daytime

she was gone to battle
athena-armed, in the East

huts of the people
continued on down to a deserted river
muddy and still like a pond
turbulent beneath
swollen with ancient lost objects
remnants of occult cities
wars

i stood on the near shore and watched
where on the far shore

monkeys danced

and prehistoric eagles
flew reconnaisance
along tiers of jungle
                lizard-men crept in the mud

night fell

        i was taken to the streets
        indians and orientals walked
        arm-in-arm into the bars

        although i was alone
        no one threatened me

        huge airplanes from the ununited nations
        flew low over the city
        encircling landing departing

transportation out was available only at 2 a.m.
there was no postal service
(mailboxes had been disconnected)
i telephoned home at great expense per millesecond

at first they did not understand where i was, then
they warned

of the terrible fine and punishment
if ever i should dare such a trip

*but don't you see that*
*the dream began with*
*the planet landing in the tunnel*

*and although i won't deny i enjoy*
*the danger of these streets*

*the solemnity of those attacked not retreating*
*the silence in which i move and which moves*

*around me*

*i did not summon myself here!*
*(was instead summoned by the very act of the beginning)*

*and brought here*
*without my will (though not*
*against my will)*

i choose now to remain
and daily miss my flight
to wait on long food lines
and explore the river closer

and closer
to the parallel of battle

but there was no choice in the matter

and despite the fact that these two cities
marked by single deterrent towers

in the distance recall
Minas Tirth

no metaphor should be imposed

i was in Hanoi, dwelling place of the supposed and hated north vietnamese.
and saw the real cities of Hanoi and Haiphong beneath their stars.
that no american astronomer has seen or described.
and gauged their distance in my eyes.

i saw their secret indian allies.
i ate some of the remaining food.
i saw men talking to birds and llamas.
i lived in the heart of an enemy woman.
and lay in her bloody arms.
i heard children singing.
i saw them arming for battle with the americans.
i saw them returning angry from where their bridges had been bombed.

# *Why Do You Want Me So Quickly?*

## *1966-67*

There was no first dream. Only a long alleyway that compressed on space instead of going into it. At the end was a mark. And something about the mark had more to do with him than he himself did. He could not see to the end of the alleyway to focus on the mark because the way was not three-dimensional and he could not get his mind's eye into it. It was vaguely less than three dimensions in its flatness; but it was also vaguely more than three dimensions, hot and overbearing. There was too little to look at, but there was too much to look at. Once his mind's eye closed he could not imagine it anymore, or anything of what it had been been like. If he forgot about it and lay there in darkness, an inner dizziness would pass thru him like electricity and the mark would return.

In the thoughts of daylight he could hardly recall anything of the phenomenon. He remembered the feeling very distantly, and he remembered that there had been a mark, but the word itself, "mark," seemed absurdly little for the thing in its corridor. Perhaps it was more a demark. And finally a demark-ation, locating a point in space in terms of its significance without ever showing the point. The sense that lingered was this, however: that if he could move against the space of the dream, against the alley, down the alley, onto, and then into: the mark, he would no longer be in reach of waking and no longer be himself. There was a flicker that he would be tumbled into a single tone of self out of the narrative of world; but there was also a flicker that he would be completely annihilated and spilled. Even his having-been could be undone: it was that steep a whirlwind. Yet it was not strange or fearful; it was unavoidable, had always been there, was no more itself, *him*self for having dreamed it. It presented itself by law.

The other thing was so obvious that it took him days to realize it: that the whole scene was terribly familiar and easy; he had seen the mark before; he had seen that particular demark of things in another dream long ago. Déjà vu. He was able to close his eyes and run free space across the darkness until he swept past it. There was no way to go back to it; he could only notice it as he passed. (It left no other clue than itself.)

The second dream was of men in a canoe. Sparkling lights nearer than stars hung in the night-time sky, and they paddled in somber rhythm, calling to each other in a language that he knew but could not translate into the English of his dream.

He did not know whether he was in the canoe or above it, but he moved slowly across the water as the men did. The dream was eternal motion; they moved and that was enough. But the water was so dense and torpid that he felt its actual substance was in his mind. It was synthetic-looking, and at the same time so large and close that he hung in the enchantment between the two. The canoe was filled with goblets and bracelets and pots. The men were aware of the lights, but it was not as though the lights were not in their proper places. The sound of their talking ran continuous, whether there was anyone saying the specific words or not. As dreamer he hung between a belief so strong it would burst him and a disbelief so profane that he could almost shatter the world of the dream. Instead he lost it in a night of deeper blacker dreams.

The third dream was about men on horseback who turned into knights. The frenzied female forms of an earlier dreamscape became dancing dolls. In the center of the original dream there was only light with a yellowish center; now at dream-noon there was a fat and aged maker, stirring a mudhole in the center of the forest and trapping parts of animal bodies in his stir. He would bottle the hindlegs and rump of one animal in a blue bottle, the head and wings of another in a red bottle, a single paw in a brown bottle; he never stirred a whole animal; the knights rode right past him without noticing but he set white birds above them that became their banners. And where he disappeared there was either a castle or a tree. The original dream was one of shadow forests, enigmatic forms, and areas of blinding light; then it became characters and events. Then it spun off to himself as a figure on the street in an old city.

The fourth dream took place in a series of connecting rooms, but he never found the way.

Another dream of crows, and the land and the way of their birth. Always the low valley seen from the high mountain. Always the summer fields seen from a high tree. Always the brook seen from the neighborhood of the clouds. He was not a crow, nor could he lower himself down into the dream. At single instants he lay in grass or by white pebbles, but as soon as he moved his fingers the earth was seen from the nearest mountain or tree. Dream night. There was a moon. Darkness in the branches. Tree-leaves that became an owl. It was regular and schematized like a full-page picture in a children's book.

Six: children by an apple tree. They are playing a game with a ball light as air; slightly off to the left and down a hill, beyond the shade of the apple tree, a long sunny field; he is coming off a road into the dream.

There was too much else in the dream to remember or forget; he could never reach the tree or the game; there was a carnival, and they were serving pies; there were two men leaving for the field and he had to talk to one of them. There was a child carrying a huge rubber ball with stars on it. The children were chasing, running in and out of the bushes, hiding in an old shack and breaking from it in groups; somewhere they were getting beautiful golden apple juice. But the scene of the children was moving at a different pace than the scene he was in; he thought that he had to walk down the hill and to the left to get there, but now he found that he was so anxious and harried he couldn't get out of the fairgrounds. It was not unpleasant; only the sensation of something subtler and sweeter beyond irked him continually; he broke from the intricate events of the gay foreground into a grayish zone he couldn't get thru. Motion ceased. It was all in himself; he could not get there in himself. No matter how hard he pushed. But he did move; the scene, that is, did not remain the same; spectacular shows on all sides, the carnival became deeper and deeper; he was stopped by endless people for a word. It was always just one more thing and then he would work his way down the hill; he just wanted to loosen a muscle or flex an arm for the slope; he just wanted a pail of sweets to bring with him, so he threw darts again and again, but every balloon he hit was hit by another dart just before him. He thought he would run out of money and then be able to go, but a hunched man kept filling his pocket with dollar bills. They were counterfeit, but the world was so loose that nobody cared. He wanted to hurry so much he found himself flinging five darts at a time, carelessly, with the compelled assumption that sooner or later he would hit a balloon and win, or else use them up and be able to go anyway. There were always more darts and always more money. He was going to get a drink of grape cooler now before he went down the hill. It was so blue. The apple tree was still there, the game swift and yellow, he awoke: no hope in waking, he had left behind something he had to do.

The seventh dream was so thick and sensual he found it hard to awake, and then pursued by bursts and tastes of the

dream all day, find it hard to stay awake. Other dreams, in their time, had pursued him, but usually on the basis of whimsy, incomplete puzzles, and romance; this dream had a vector straight thru to his forehead. There was a huge white globe, iridescent and trembling in the middle distance of Is, turning slowly in a way he could not judge. For the whole of dream time it hung there, becoming more real, becoming less real; a thick forest wind, then back; a single jolt on a merry-go-round, then back; one step of a dance with a magnificent fat woman, then back. At its most real it was as unbearable as the water and the mark. He could not hold either his mind or his body, or hold them together. Suddenly, pressed too closely, he fled thru a channel he had not known about. Standing still, it dropped off several degrees: was still there, was still the same thing, but an old botanical garden with a castle captured him into the early hours of haze before waking.

In his own conscious life he was having a crisis of faith about dreams, moving from one state of belief to another, presently in between, believing nothing surely, expecting miracles, perhaps, but with a trained Freudian tendency to reduce items to a one-band spectrum of terrestial narrative. For years, after he had learned the Freudian system, he reinterpreted all of his dreams in terms of past events in his life and areas that he knew to be touchy. Their frustration and paradoxical windings he took to be a dramatization of his own inability to cope with the workings and trials of life. In daylight, when he was too bound and wound in the taut conscious pattern of events, the truth of what he was experiencing never touched him directly; but at night, when dream opened the possibility of a totally interior event, he too opened to the interior tanglings of his instinctual core's collision with the world. He had believed that the dream-stuff was coiled with the sex-stuff, even physically in the wet bulk of the scrotum, and the dream-stuff lit the sex-stuff in its own open field of light.

But later he discovered that the coils themselves were of importance, and the dream moved in its own peculiar synchronous paths. At first he saw in Jung the possibility that dream quest was so vast it could not be reduced to any single level of reinterpretation. The vast interior chamber in which the dream resonated and enacted its symbolism and event was not limited to the cellular experience of a person's

lifetime. There were purer forms of tribal memory, and deeper more elusive synapses that carried the original animal birth, the quests imbedded in a pre-electrical universe.

With Jung he came to see that the dream could hold the vastness of everything that was, for the body and mind were located in the interior of creation, joined to the moving process by certain laws of being and motion.

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He then began to hear people speak of another definition of dream, one so distant from both Jung and Freud as to make them seem bedfellows. Someone spoke of the dream that meant itself, that was the quest without any mediation and any reinterpretation. This dream was so deep that each level repeated itself on another level, never allowing the dreamer to escape. For the dream was larger than the dreamer, and the dreamer was larger than the universe: a paradox across which the chords of dream-light were slowly laid by its cells.

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The way in which he came to believe things successively more complex in terms of each other was the way of his life's motion. He was coming to believe in the dream as reality, though the terrors implicit in such a commitment were so great he reneged time and time again. In trying to accept the dream as reality he came to see the immense difficulty even in realizing the events of a life as the same. Joined together they presented him with the overpowering verge of knowing that every deed, everywhere, had consequences, and all these consequences were linked to the absolute consequential resolution of himself. The eighth dream was a continuous party. It was set in the style of a children's party: hats, noise-makers, jelly-beans, games, but all the people involved were much older, people he knew now. The turning point of the party was a game he knew was going to be played from the beginning of the dream, this game of picking numbers out of a basket and doing the thing described on the chart bearing the same number. Most of the people drew numbers, and by their numbers sexual events, and moved off in pairs to enact what either half had drawn. He was shuddering throughout the party, waiting, waiting; the girl Laura, who at that time of his life he was more drawn to than any other girl, was still left, and number after number was drawn that was not his as more people showed up at the party, people from all the different shelves of his life. Now only he and Laura

were left; someone had locked the door; the last number was to be drawn. Laura moved slowly toward him as if in a trance. She reached out her arms, and in her fingers held the number, their number; he looked at the chart. He saw an ocean washing along a haunted ancient shore. Great crabs marched in column, and dark prehistoric birds nested in the trees. He knew surely he was one of those birds watching the earth. He knew just as surely that Laura was alive, animistic, in the forest beneath him. The water poured in without dramatic effect; all was continuous being, connected along the same note of inevitability: not that any one thing would happen but that all unit things would definitely in the end bring fruition because all unit things were in the beginning. And as he looked up at the chart, the chart said to AWAKE.

In the ninth dream the globe returned. He hung above it, breathlessly and at an angle, fantastically close to its center now. There was no choice anymore, no turning it off; he had to keep going, closer and closer, in and into. It gleamed hotter and brighter, his head hotter and brighter. Storms crashed across his surface, now seen on the surface of a world without life or beginning, endless foam deserts and mist: out of all this was he, or anyone else, allowed to be conscious? Was anyone allowed to take form when all creation blew at tattered ends, each atom outward, each breath burnt or drowned? Now he was no more. Or was he? He waned and broke apart into a lower order; still he had his center; he held his head on. Was he still existing? Yes, he was as long as the thoughts kept pouring thru. He felt a heavy rough crust forming about his head, like tons of earth; they were sweeping down on him, covering him with a skin he could not pull away. His face was crawling with worms; he thought it was rotting away, and all thru dark space around him fell medusa masks in various states of disrepair, all irrevocably bearing the mark of his life having passed thru them, speaking as he would speak. A wet sea rushed onto his body and swirled at his ankles. He felt as though he were about to turn to mud, but somehow the crust stayed separate from the torrent. He was in a jug of water, being drunk by a boy sitting on a haypile, crushed in grape pulp, falling from the sky, splashing on leafy surfaces and in drains.....and burning, on fire, burning underwater in a silent mass of bubbles, his head becoming hard and stony.....

except underwater no more, drenched and whipping thru air. He fought to awake but he was choking too much to exercise control. He panicked, broke out sweating, but all his body-moisture turned into fishes and swam away. He tried screaming, but his voice cracked and thin glass fell all around him in space. He was in a coma for a long time, passing up and down color scales, hearing single tones with the loneliness of a musician in a dark courtyard; he grew out of this like a plant, and hung for months in the sunlight developing interior juices.

When his panic broke, and he was free and sailing once again, he knew that he was still real and that all this other was but a suit he was wearing, a suit made out of four solid and specific fabrics. The only reason everything had flung out of control was that he had generalized the fabrics, not recognizing them, and had thereby made real the total energies and concretions they merely implied. He was utterly bound in the suit, and because of its composition it fit him more tightly than his skin.

Now a profound sexual moment began. The air was filled with feminine smells, not sweet smells, but the deep musk of the feminine part of creation. A great possession came over his penis and split along his arteries to his whole body. It was Laura all about. She appeared above him, glowing and electric, pouncing down upon his aspect in wild power more than woman. The charge of sexuality! Feminine zone of lightning, touching just above the high field during a storm. She began as Laura and then swept out of his mind all objective reference to her being. She was there and she was not there. She was goddess and girl herself. On the spark of individuality, centering her as person, was lit the hearth of woman-fire. She was enormous, she was his size. She was all about and he could see at least what about her had drawn him for these many months. She was the beginning and end of possibilities; she engulfed him as a chain.

Leafy. Sand. Deep rusty sandiness. He reached out to touch her, to introduce sexuality and himself, but she was all about, multidirectionally charged. His penis was finally not the center of what he felt and where he was, though it knew how to mark and manifest the place; it was more that the whole universe, sash, was brought down on his head, marking him HERE-NOW-FULL. She was a fish; she was a wheel, spinning thru water.....evoking, as a water-wheel: Laura.....She. He was

unable to come, or his coming was a waterfall and he couldn't see it in his smallness. If he came a whole chorus of elves and firebugs would dance from the egg he touched upon. She changed costumes without ever wearing clothes; she was Navaho; she was Egyptian; she was Negroid and dark Melanesian Islander; she was cavewoman; she was Ainu; she walked in the Deva realm, in the dream time, the blue spectral world. She was dancing with bells; she was a wicked witch-lady; she was a pig-woman, turning slowly back into a girl. She was the Queen of Hearts, busty and wholesome. She was one of the cows that a shepherd watched, and still herself, and still held her to himself as she grazed on the field.

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He was going in an altogether new direction, something like within; he could feel it, though he could not visualize the movement of its space. He was lying in the grass; he was swimming in sun-burst; he was deep in purple; they were both flies, swimming with others above the haze of the land before the tiny morning star, wave-dewy morning, wind in the sun in the yellow-green grass, dew, worm, birds talking, Morning Star, squirrels talking; from tree to tree swung webs of leafiness and sun.

There was a distance he kept feeling as though he wasn't going to make it, but he knew each time that he had made it easily. Someone was singing *Old Man River, he just keeps rolling*, but it was really no-song, just music, and he had made something out of it. Now he heard that it was very faraway, and Laura was calling to him, their number. He passed over a river and valley in swift flight; he passed thru corn; he was hewed as salt to a saline rock; he broke free and oozed upto the surface of the sea. He was the shepherd; Laura was still a single cow. They were coming to a castle, but they fell underwater before they got there. She was an ancient ikon of Proserphine; she spoke in a language so high and engulfing that the very sounds of the words flew past him. He lost his breath, but breathed again more deeply. The tempo of flight had changed; his impetus was different; when he lost his breath again he did not regain it until he was falling. The dream lost its motion and force; the mark flashed briefly before him; he lost sight of it but had the sensation of falling thru it. He wanted to awake and this time he did. Nothing was still; he could not open his eyes completely, for colors swirled madly around him, mostly blues and greens with glintings of yellow.

Singing now in the somber rhythms of tremendous energy she pulled him into herself, enwrapped him. Somewhere from his joy he came. And he was lying quietly on the grass. The sun was a brilliant yellow and terribly hot. The land itself was soft and dizzy. Colors were fuzzy and crystalline; they seemed to weave and change in faint syncopated motions. Great birds passed over at an ungaugable height, and then his eyes toppled down to the savanna. Shrub grass. A few crumbly stones. Mist too thick to see any total feature. Briefly stunned, he simply stuck his fingers in the ground and dug away slowly at the nearest spot. He reached the roots of a grass clump and squeezed them; they were rubbery, almost liquid, but when he let go they swelled back into shape. Now he looked up and saw perspective in the air, a higher whiter mist being blown over a lower greyish mist. The air was piny-smelling, sour and sharp, but natural. His nostrils filled quickly with a sort of steam and he had trouble breathing. He knew that he was not on earth, or at least not in the system of earth as he had ever known or imagined it. He was not directly afraid; he was almost lethargic, as though nothing had happened yet and he might still awake. Every law he had learned told him it was impossible, but every law internal to him was able to tell him exactly what happened: he had gone thru the center of his dream, and here he had come out, and he was sitting on actual ground, and he did not know whether it was inside him or exterior, but he had to sit down; he had to breathe.

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There was a deep relief in knowing that the creation was oriented toward throwing him in the center of things rather than tossing him deeper into the convexities of endless space. He would have had to go to the mark sooner or later, in life or in dying, or long after dying; the mark and the corridor were part of him. He could not escape their tension by drawing things out indefinitely. Calm: he had let out all his agony and come directly to this place. As at the beginning of anything born of ratio, the correct place was chosen, and nothing was inevitable except the manner of birth and the entrance.

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Now he moved slowly to his feet. Twice, in fact, he fell down, not out of unsteady limbs, but from a difficulty in rhythm and breathing. He found it impossible to move and still keep his equilibrium. The third time he moved swiftly and suddenly and ran a few steps forward. Liquid popped at his ears,

he gasped again and again, but he was standing; he was on his feet on this world. As he looked around from his new pose he felt how foreign and self-contained this place to all its fogged horizons was. A picture of it would not reveal its actual alien character, for most exterior forms were well within the range of variation for a day somewhere on earth. But there was a collection of sounds and sights, a vision and hearing pointing to something linked deeper, a presence. The air snarled, and a ring of faint popping noises dropped off in scattered directions. The popping affected the colors in the mist; shades of blue oscillated into deeper and lighter hues in a pattern recognizable as a function of the breeze and its sounds. The mist was lit in an unearthly manner; the glow was subtle and rich, always varying on a basic blue, shifting in a granular pattern that made each particle seem luminescent. The sun was bright but not visible as a hard hot object; it was a ball, but a seething ball, spinning with smooth curtained light. In his mind the details collected; alone they were not enough to explain the differences of this place, even if taken in conjunction. There was a whole way of seeing things coming over him, a way in which he had begun thinking from the moment he awoke.

***

He did not even know where the earth was to where he was, whether he was within a corpuscle of it, within himself within it, or faraway in cosmic space. Yet he saw the tension of the earth more clearly than he had ever seen it, the form it took in the meetings of great numbers of people, and the form it took in the psychic chaos of single people looking out into the mass. He remembered now that he had seen all along while he had been on earth that no two people were ever joined in consciousness, that vast movements represented as many unit earths as there were individuals. It was a giant planet. A stone. The Snake Cult, the Cargo Cult, the LSD Cult, all those waiting for messages from beyond, were joined in segments of a huge field of energy. He saw and remembered that change was coming to the earth and that these people were caught up in the psychis of change as it fell on them, on their individual earths. Newspapers he had read fell to a pinhead of news, for he saw the news-scopes of the whole earth, the Vietnam Cult that had filled so many pages of electric print; it was a small single thing, like a band across the heterogeneity of planet. And the bomb hung over the landscape as a false and masked weight, bringing

heads together, marking the time in personal blood and grief, and potential energy, of deep geologic changes which would transform a whole in time. Soil and water would be uncovered; rocks would fall; the atmosphere would thicken on the heads of these people who had moved from conscious apes to self-conscious men and even now were only on the brink of sanity, where that sash fell. He recalled the evolution of stars, fiery, hued with all the irons of the spectral ice, of which his particular present form was part, that it was the incomplete energy of earth over time, making forms as it made the whole earth, not lingering on any particular form or ratio of perfection, any radius or skeleton. He was a starchild even as the earth was, a planet with its own proper motion.

***

The condition of the world's organization had always seemed so artificial and weak: a collection of systems set up in time to channel all the energy a man put out toward certain ends, but ends described by greater ends so that no one was certain why the things he was doing were so trivial and uninfluential. In the same way he too had wanted to be THERE at the right moment, metaphysically or physically, or otherwise, reciting the correct prayer. In his clearer dreams he knew that was impossible because he was there all the time, and every action or thought he participated in established itself in its most true form sooner or later even as its earthly run of energy lasted only a second. Now suddenly he felt as though he were resolved, and all of it was coming to him, wild as in the beginning, and before that. Beginning of one cycle met beginning of another; the whole earth bloomed like a rose in the sky, the cerebral field stretched before him, not Timothy Leary, not high, but on the mounds and trails of another people, the ancestors. He recalled in the words of the rock and roll song: *there's another side to this life I've been living*, which was where he stood.

He wasn't watching at the exact moment she came, and she tumbled thru the substance of the dream wall like Peter Pan and was lying on the land beside him. She arose slowly, shaking her long brown hair loose, stretching to knees, buoyant but dizzy. In the distance where the haze had cleared there was visible a great twisted mass of greenery. It looked not so much like a forest as an enormous bush; the sense of it was deep and inhabited, and when the wind blew, great ripples ran across the whole form, unreal and liquid. As the wind faded

into dust toward the low sun behind it the rustling ended and it hung there in mysterious density, the most substantial lure on the surface of this world.

"The forest here," she said.

"Do you know such a forest?"

"I have dreamed of it many times."

"Do you know where we are?"

"I was asleep. I was dreaming of you. You were all over me. It was very nice. I think we have already made love today."

***

There seemed to be no life except the remote birds, not even insects. In the far distance, however, way beyond the forest and to the left of it, the misty air opened into a clear pocket like an expanding crack in the spring ice. The intense blue sky poured thru like water. Deep inside the opening were giant swirled cloud-stacks. They hung higher than earth clouds with the largest amount of their bulk layered at the bottom.

As the mist melted closer to the forest it was seen that a light blue rain was falling on the edge of it; moments later a wet wind filled with shattered droplets crossed them, darkening the ground. He realized that he had been terribly dusty and as he touched his face there was a thin covering of mud; he took away his fingers and they glowed brick red. Long after wind and rain had passed the tiny ground clumps were vibrating in intuitive drinking. The ground was fiercely sensitive and he felt as though he were walking on worms. His hot sweat melted thru the pajamas into the cold dampness on their surface, tongues of the planet licking him clean. In an absurd gesture he swung her on and they hastened in a silly trot.

The sky was now almost totally clear and they saw the clouds all about, even stacked directly above them, so heavy they might come tumbling down on their heads. The air was like lake water, with mixed pockets of hotness and coldness, alternately dry and damp. For clouds they seemed so fertile and earthy, filled with a dense energy, spurts of sudden growth and elongation. They were not exactly white, although whiteness prevailed over most of their surfaces. Around the edges and on aberrant clumps and swirls were magentas, purples, and mauves; they were much wetter than imagined earth counterparts, the hue being their principle of life. The sense was of an internal process exuding a hued wetness, each color literally caused by the transforming energy of its source molecules.

Glands. The raining cloud over the forest was dark living blue. Laura wore a blue nightgown; on the ground they were coming to, tiny bioluminescent flowers had popped thru the skin of the shrubbery, the color of the clouds. They came to another field of weeds, this one also in post-torrential transformation, compact yellow balls on the ends of eel-like stems. They were rubbery flowers, in gentle ground breezes twisting and flowing in tangles, winding back. A deep symbolism, beyond chemical, was forming in his mind. Rain Cloud Flower Water Laura Blue Blue Planet Dancer Star: Saquasohuh: *I am the name of this planet.* He spoke its name breathing heavily; he had uttered the literal fact. They fell against each other; she threw her arms around him, breathing in bursts, kissing him in the rhythm between breaths. She spoke his name again and again in a whisper, but it wasn't his name. Down on the wet ground they were rolling, feeling in their own closeness and strangeness that of the whole planet. Even as he was reaching for her, pulling her closer and closer: where are we?, any of us? and who are those who made us? who brought us here? who fashioned us into this zone of yes yes yes yes now coming Laura, and here.you.are.too. and what do they want of us, blue, lying here, lying, now, in, peace. He felt the eyes of every living thing upon him, making this the time in which they lived, and were now alive, the only time: rolling apart, holding hands, exposed naked to a cooler sky becoming the first night, they went into their own sleep, awoke crawling toward each other, full rhythmic, having arrived.

The lightest blue fog hung on the day. The leafy realm was very close, much closer than he had imagined; it seemed to have crept to within several hundred yards of them overnight. They were hungry and everything with color looked delicious. He ate yellow flowers, stems and all; the taste was of cauliflower and sweet nuts. She tried them but couldn't name the taste. Right after they had eaten they both felt dizzy, but the sense was not one of having been poisoned. He saw against the sky the great hunched figure of a man; he held a rock in his hand, a blue rock, and from it dripped particles of liquid gold to the other hand. Behind him, a silvery twisting disk, tiny bright oscillating circles growing hotter and whiter into the center from their yellow-tinted rays that fell on him. He was the morning man; his work was the morning. He was pale and insubstantial in form but all his work hung on the air in brilliance. Sometimes they thought they could see him clearly;

other times there seemed to be a shooting spring before the trees, penetrated by the low transforming rays of the sun. Whizzing forms, that could have been animals or the shadows of animals, passed between the disk and him in zigzag fashion; as they passed over his left hand they dropped something in it. One lost its hind legs; another urinated; another vomited an orange gruel that sparkled in its fall. Some shot; others simply brought unrefined material like leaves and berries and flowers. A bird with a bag of a lower cheek brought gallons of water.

If it was real and if it was causal the sense was unavoidable: he was making the whole morning out of the things of the morning. The daylight was full and rich. Where he had been the air was filled with little gold circles that looked like metal coins. Where they fell the field was ripe with yellow flowers; the vision faded into the garden. They walked among.

***

She went from room to room in her mind seeing the different objects of her family, some of which had been transferred to new places in future homes, some of which disappeared as objects except in the fantasy of remembering: a certain stained refrigerator, a tan table, a blue soap-dish, a taggy doll beside a cat that had grown up and died; she saw the way the sun fell into each room at the different times of day, what turned the carpets yellow and what turned the walls blue, the backyard, the sound of water in each room. He was remembering a summer camp and the long fields across which games were played; the key to his cycle was the indeterminate nature of *grass* and *field* without a *game*, running and sweating beyond boundaries, knowledge, or scores. As night came he remembered the song they sang on earth, arms about each other. *Friends, friends, friends, we will always be.* Who stays?, he wondered. Who leaves? And where do we come from to replace those who were here before us?

***

A naked body, stupefied, probably dead, a bleeding blue flower on its chest, a single colorless insect sucking the visible red of its cheek. He wanted to turn his back and run, but now he saw that it had already happened and he had passed that point. She approached and pointed to the form. "This is the beginning," she said, remembering her dream. It was a dawn man; he lay on the dawn of any creation, more bear than man, enormous puzzled eyes breaking off into a huge dumb fore-

head. The only thing conscious about him was the medallion that hung around his neck. It was connected by a thin rubbery cord, and in the polished and stained metal he saw a tree or dancing figure, branches rippling out of a trunk that had to be the sun at some point of iconography. And even though he could not understand this form he knew that it designated him, at that moment beneath that single bright planet, and even though he did not know all the forms that had led up to that form, he put it on and substituted for his own fallibility all the risks involved in the scratched ikon. He had seen it before but he did not know why. Together they moved into the forest.

***

A fire was built in the pit; a long stony instrument was brought out by two Ursae and ceremoniously played. The sound was high, higher and sharper than the thickness of the forest; it penetrated the vegetation and brought everyone into this center, all of them with gifts for the medallion bearer, all of them singing and shimmying. A long tier of men went back into the forest in the direction they had come from. Others left at intervals all thru the day until the only ones left with them were the men with whom they had originally come. The rest had gone out to see the City, to acknowledge the work of the medallion bearer. He had come on time; it had always been time. He felt as in a dream, light and airy, beautiful. He did not remember the transition or the coming-on of evening, but they were seated for supper. Large nets of fat fishlike animals were brought into the fire that had been burning all day. The carcasses were slung thru the heat on the end of long strings, centrifugally. In time they were each brought a plate. His was red on the inside, no bones, tasted like salmon but always more gelatinous, like a lower form of life having become full-grown. Around it were sweet yellow flowers, sugary in taste, and small bitter fruits, much like apples. Suddenly the distances seemed less large than the closenesses. They were eating. Though it was a dream, called less real on the world from which they had come, dream was the medium of coming. It was a fire, burning the food he ate at the center of his head, fed on to grow, and his somatic cells grow, and still dream. A woman, her face behind the fluttering web, this continuous mask, sang, and it seemed to be directly to the stars, to something which she saw and they did not.

***

Perhaps over time they could dream their way back. Or perhaps over time it would seem to be idyllic. All this was moot. Something in both of them filled with the impending sense that this was only the beginning. Too many details had gone into this evoking to let it be dissolved into the fabric of a single tiny society in the universe. They were too large, not in terms of humanity, for these were human ongoing entities; they were too large because of the amount of undeclared energy presently invested in them. If they stopped to rest, and be, in a context too small, they would wither and die, and suns would die with them. Perhaps this is why Laura finally produced the medallion. She realized implicitly the tautology, the doubling-back in which they were caught, that they might even learn the language and the nuances and become nothing more than the patrons of dreams in this culture. The dreams themselves, the path, were much larger in scope and energy than this little clearing and pool. It had its own largeness, bound in the context of its own zone, where it was universal and even cosmic. But what they bore now was myth. By entering their dream they had to follow their dream to the end, and all its consequences. "The sense of trail," he said, "yes, as if we are trailing down our dreams on this world. You know something; I feel as though all my life, not just the past few weeks, I've had these dreams, even unconsciously, and now I am experiencing all that was wound up in their yarn. The dream must lead somewhere, if only because it goes on. Maybe you are right, that these people are without time, but as those who are dreaming this, we have brought time with us."

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The land simply ended; there was no shoreline, nor did the land bend around to pick up a large perimeter. This was it. They were on a tiny island, or a thin peninsula. The huge craft was set, and upon it flew the sail they had crystallized the day before. The grower of the sail loaded rings of bone into the prow, where there was obviously room for them. These were like necklaces or arm bracelets, fused of the same continuous vine.

Blue clouds hung over the land; the birds flew in ringed patterns, one or two occasionally dropping off to the ground, others returning. There was no mist on the sea; it was endless blue, too blue. One especially feared drowning in such a sea because of its density and richness. For water itself was

the eternal sweeping order of earth, and nothing else, not methane or acid, would be allowed to take up such space. But who could imagine the fish that lived in such blue, and what they imagined? Who could predict the outcome of the trip they were about to take when even the Ursae were awe-struck and silent? It was their sea, but its mysteries engulfed them, even in the beginning. They put a small medallion in a beaker. Someone set a burning torch in the righthand sector of the ship. It floated outward, burning, gaining speed, twinkling once or twice before finally passing out of sight, and a wispy hint of smoke rose from the water faraway.

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The wind was strong and there was no need to lower the pouch of leaves into the water; several vegetable lines were drawn, and with a fabulous howl a man turned the sail into the brunt of the breeze. The clouds began moving, the thin shore receding; they were skimming, with nervous real energy, across the waters of this planet. Whoever these men were, they were now the ones directing the bodies of her and him, if these in fact were their bodies (yes, they were; there could be no physical quibbling on what was essentially a metaphysical point). Whatever the Ursae, their lore and science, their real power, whatever gods and engines supported them as people, now as never in the village, never in the dream, they too were on wings of same, as mediated thru the dark and deep bodies of their benevolent captors. Or was it a Trojan Horse?

***

He absorbed the insect bites until the patter of their attack seemed connected to the rhythm and glyphic patter of Tlila's voice. Tlila seemed to be speaking English, to be calling out to the sun and to him, or was it he calling the sun and himself? Then he was falling thru rainbows and stars, pursued by cartoon creatures, warm, warm, red, in a warm bath, he was being bathed, and that was real, perhaps, or just another dream? It was night and by firelight. "Hello," she said, everything reverting to normal, and he thought,'yes, I am always born again. ALWAYS born again.' He looked up and down his arms and legs; he was filled with red sores; she was washing him with the juice from the leaf, as warm and medicinal as he felt warm and medicinal. His whole body was covered, feet, face, belly, prick, but as she washed him over, his skin turned a darker redder color, toward the color of the Ursae; he bolted in

panic. He didn't want to be left here; he didn't want to become one of them. He wanted to relocate himself, wherever he was, whatever he had been before this; it seemed so clearly that there was something he could just slip back cozily into. He tried to revoke the dream; as easily as it had mocked him with the recognition of matching signs, now it mocked him with its finality. Which Laura seemed to accept implicitly, without any metaphysical torment, which seemed to him, even yet, even as his very skin was turning color, to be a philosophical issue. Am I here? or am I dreaming? The very concepts melted into the glory of the bathing, and slowly, with cautious narrative, Laura told him what had happened:

He had begun to stumble as he entered the circle (this made him think that the matching of ikons might have set off a psychic reaction; this planet was full of such, where even the means of transport was clairvoyant). Tlila began to sing; the insects came. There were some of the flying needles they had seen a few days earlier, but also big bushy ones that looked like enormous bees or reduced porcupines. He had been stung terribly; she was convinced he was going to die when her interest was completely thrown to Tlila; there were four of him, then three of him, then two of him, then one of him. Then he disappeared utterly and was not back yet. He did not make quadruplets, then triplets, then twins; he was dancing out well-ordered steps, moving his arms in a loose scanning manner. When he became four, all four were at different points of the dance step; when he became three, the one that disappeared was the one further advanced in the dance. Only the last figure went thru the whole motif again.

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They set off bravely into a larger wind, the most blowing Saquasohuh had to offer; there was a distinct blueness in the air like icy fluff, but it was not cold. Wwingoih tried talking to him, and with much greater success. The language was coming to him. In his mind was the image of Tlila speaking English; before long, without knowing anything else, he sensed that Wwingoih was talking about the sea and how large it was. It was THAT kind of sea, whipping them outward at a steady unreal speed, no activity around the boat, but distant leaping fish and birds seen as masked silhouettes on a cold horizon. A man in the back of the boat was able to throw out a net and soon he brought in a few fish with a large amount of grass and some round metallic shells.

It was a foggy day, although the mist was light and glowing; the water in the air looked like ice but felt like steam, and in that way they were buoyed up as in a dream. The sun faded thru wet shades of violet into a final orange and one enormous bird put its wings on a plane with the sun and in a single gesture closed the day on an ominous and strong note; the lesson: how strong a planet Saquasohuh was, how long to its ends, how full of meetings not yet imagined.

***

Soon after the morning meal the wind began to blow harder and the Ursae grew excited. Two or three of them fiddled with the sail at once, trying to get the right position and hold. The waves became huge, deep wide troughs. The ship was peculiarly constructed to bear them, and the leafy suits were perfect rain-coats. By the middle of the day the sun was invisible; the sky was a gory wet blue and it was obvious they were headed for the center of the storm. Waves tumbled over the whole ship; the crushed leaves and their sappy catalyst were wrapped tight; the food was strapped to a position where water merely dribbled on it. His hair was soaking wet; there were times when he couldn't see, but the bark was secure and swift. Laura was soaked; her hair stuck together, was separated by waves. There was an enormous trough and the ship suddenly went down as in a vacuum. He tasted mouthfuls; it was not salty, but there was a touch of metal and blood to it, richer and stronger, less combined than water. Laura felt herself blown and completely powerless. She was swimming, and men were swimming all around her. It was close and gritty; she had not been quite as gut to gut with the planet as this, and she felt it deeply, the last shreds of fantasy doused away. She was so there she might drown, and the other heads looked like wild spilled skulls, floating in a dizzy wheel of water and light.

***

She was far enough in wind and water that he would have to swim. The surface impossibly disrupting, he took a long breath and dove underwater. If he hadn't been in such a hurry he would have been stunned by what he saw. The mind works anyway, and thru the deep stained glass blue he saw fish gathered in winding columns, marching solemnly with an almost human intelligence in their eyes; he saw shafts of light and faraway things that looked like fuzzy balls of fire. He saw fantastic eddies

of bubbles, moving at sonic speeds, and dissolving into swarms of active matter. The whole land was viscously calm and bathed in a religious light. He passed thru the upper layer in a cold trance, moved as he was by the colors and dream-glows, fluid consciousness fusing with unconscious brilliance. It was an illusion, but it was a world; it was this world, and still the sensation that he was swimming in the light of a single cell. He reached her in several strong strokes and broke the surface into the stormy world. After tying the lines around her and signalling to the boat, he plunged underwater again, but as he had never suspected, kinesthetically in coming, there was a strong magnetism or invisible sweep working in the other direction. He couldn't penetrate it, so he shot down deeper searching for a break in the pull and found it a solid wall. The fish, great two-unit creatures, moving in collective trance, passed thru the wall without any visible expense of energy. He put his last initiative into a thrust to reach the top. It didn't come, and didn't come, and finally he broke into air, spray whipping at him and the troughs threatening to sink him again. The boat had moved too, and now they drifted together and he was hauled aboard.

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The sea lumbered heavy in the night; many stars were out, the sense of deep deep waters. Meteors fell out of the open universe, burning lightly on the Saquasohuh atmosphere, igniting in pale shades of violet and blue. The men began to sing, nothing organized, just a lustiness of spirit; no one slept. An event was imminent, some local phenomenon, or a phase of mind they passed thru at this part of the trip.

It began as a thin mist, falling everywhere. It was not a mist. It was a form of light in this sector of the universe. The light fell everywhere, in light sheaths like heather and whey. The light began to knot and connect at nodes, forming patterns; now the patterns came alive, feeding each other in multiple designs. He was transfixed with the beauty of it, not just the amazing accumulation of that moment, but each moment as moment passed into moment, making up time, as this section of time filled with its weight, making up the universe. He was transfixed by the beauty of the universe, revealed HERE as THIS, whatever they believed, as Wwingoih tapped him on the rump, as they all began to pray. This was only what it was, for him, pure; he was ready to be taken anywhere, as anything; he was open to consequence; in fact he burned for consequence. The

Ursan words were spelled on his tongue, and even though he didn't know their meanings, as reference-form, he spilled them out to the open cosmos, with dignity, thinking: 'yes this is spilling the beans, the pure phonemes on the pure light, I pray.' And the light answered him, not as a heady vision; it did not turn his blood stream to ambrosia. Not now. He was a shaman, an initiate. He saw the earth, run as a movie reel in his mind. "This is the earth," the vision said; and then he knew he saw America, young America, Indian shamans dancing with animal heads, young hunters, talking, exchanging words and data with the animals. He saw the smoke; he saw the hills; he saw great rolling snakes of Indian consciousness, pouring out blue bubbles from their heads; he heard the deep overall static of other shamans trying to reach him trying to tell him, or themselves, something. Then the whole scene resolved on a different level, and he was sitting with them on a great open field. Some were men; some were in the form of animals. Corn Girl was there; it was hard to tell her from Corn, except that she wore a dress stitched in corn pattern, faded into and out of it. But this was no costume party; these people were burning, all the shamans of the Americas in one place, having come thru mutual skin-flayings, poison berries, trance-dances, nights of loneliness in the wilderness, having come here for the purpose of speaking to each other. And what they said was unintelligible, and this was the case totally, to the ends of thought, but there was a second level of recode and recoil; he knew that they were discussing the gods of the land, that he was discussing the god of the land as he knew it from afar, and they listened, for he was somehow the European shaman, representative of the America of the future worlds. And they were all tied to the land, and the voice told him of the mysteries, mysteries that could not be repeated because they could not be heard. And he knew where he was at last, what Saquasohuh meant. It told him of the migration of the earth as body, of dead weight buried beneath the continent, of people who were there long before the American Indian, and knew this same thing, and who were represented in their own forms that night. Coyote taught him magic; Buffalo taught him magic, as did Raven and Corn Girl. No context or words; it existed only because the place existed, to which all of them had come in time and space to talk, including the planets of this system, and their whispering interstellar American messages, this he

knew sitting surely in conference, that I have come thru a dream to a dream thru that dream to this vision, and who am I to say anymore.

He knew these things, that a man is given the magic of the land he is born in; he can receive the magic of no other land, however far its source. That America is a cycle, an entity of repeating whorls of energy, developing thru leaves as on a tree to a fruit, exceding the mass gathering of all previous levels. Translated into language the wisdom would sound like metaphors or crude alchemy. Because they were designations for a prospect in the universe, not what science calls the laws of a perpetual functioning. There were no formulas, simply code-signs indicating times of use, as creating stars from an earthly perspective, or planting fields, or changing skins, the code-sign a Cree shaman taught him, how to return to this place.

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After re-embarking from the trade-festival things became serious quickly as a stiff wind blew them further out to sea than they wanted. They lost their angle of return, and the pouch itself dropped foaming to the bottom of the sea. Five men wrestled with the sail; a jewel-like blue rain, turning into a sleet, fell, driving them in no direction. The waves rocked higher and higher. Elyan, Laura, and he were seated in one berth. They took the full force of a wave and went clear out of the ship into the mass of ocean. It was all over. Except as in a dream. As in a dream it would not be all over because the dream would find some way to continue itself. He recalled a code-sign, something about them not being able to drown because they basically were water: water on water was the code-breaking concept. All around there was light, glowing in prismatic variations of blue, and he could see Laura and Elyan, revolving slowly as they fell, as in a dream. Water on Water, and we cannot drown. Water is water. It was something like the dream in which he had come. By drowning here he would be escaping nothing, for somehow when things were unravelled he would be on the same level of affairs. They were drowning, but water was just a metaphor for their drowning.

He had been falling for hours, the medium growing icy, choking, shaking, almost dying. Now they were falling thru blue light, damp blue light, as thru an endless pit. The blue was recorded in his brain and it was all in his brain, dreaming what he was falling thru, unchanged, asleep, and still

falling, and still they would come to a bottom of this. They came to its end, the motion ceasing within, deposited gently in a pool where the others were bobbing. They climbed out of the water into a cave, and clinging closely to each other began to move toward the source of light.

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So he and Laura were snatched from the land, but not totally, for they both dreamed on the soil of North America, and North America itself was the mother of the dream, the midwife of the stars at this point. There was finally a spirit pool as deep as the gene pool in the land, fed by the indigenous spirits of the deeper lakes and stronger rivers, fed ultimately by the placement of North America in the universe, which will make souls of its dwellers. Their actions on this thoroughly new planet were also discrete, emerging in the place of the dream, the dreamer placed as surely as the be-er in existence, and light in a cone of light.

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The men around them were dark brown with wrinkled leathery skin. They lay here at the bottom of the world, unformed beings of a lesser consciousness, ferocious unintentionally. There was no way to avoid their view, so he stepped forward boldly. Laura and Elyan followed. They were attacked instantly, expectation fulfilled, and bound up in tight irritating cord. Then each of them was mounted on a fierce-looking piggish animal, and they were driven with the herd across a rocky pasture. He saw the stars pounding up above at dusk; they threatened to leap from their orbits in his own dizziness. He felt the wildness of the herd, snorting and trying to throw off their encumbrances, both men and gear. He felt a queasy apprehension of the place they would no doubt come to, and a deep, almost panicky fear of imprisonment. The ride turned out to be much longer than he thought and he slid into unconsciousness and awoke to a brilliant blue sky and tremendous heat, sweating and the animal sweating too.

The herd had spread out so much that from his position he could not see where Laura and Elyan were; as a matter of fact he could see only one of the men, and him herding the beasts quite a distance away. He felt a taste of possible freedom, realizing also the implications of casting himself out alone, without Laura or Elyan. He felt a surge of his own power, as though if he could get free he could make things happen that would resound to the utter hierarchy of creation. All that

the stampede could take him into was torture and prison and loneliness, a billion years of solitary confinement worse than death. The blue seared into the fabric of the dream and awoke him to the gallop and romp. He struggled wildly, provoking his animal with his nail. The creature veered off sharply and began running faster. He closed his eyes and dug in with all he had until late in the day, misty, hungry too, he had escaped, and he felt the desperateness of this new situation. Now he was surely on his own, and still his animal pounded on, at great speed though his nail no longer prodded, heading for some place, or the correlate of some place, that only it knew for sure. It stank from its rush to get there, and he fell back into a timeless despair.

At nightfall it came to the entrance of caves; all about he could hear the squealing of other animals, and he was sure that it had found its own. The outside of the cave was massive, but inside it was far more complicated; in the blue light he could see endless connected chambers and ledges clear upto the roof, some of them holding statues of human figures. It was surprisingly dry within, and the only dampness was a thin musky scent that excited him. They travelled from chamber to chamber, his mount sniffing frantically, the blue growing stronger, the statues more prominent, some of them glittering with an internal fluorescence. They passed thru an entranceway marked on either side by a bare tree, and from there on he could hear a moaning, more relatable to music than anything, more intricate as they moved toward it, until he could think of nothing else. As the blue light grew brighter he heard the chant merge with the blue in a complete harmony; the musk grew stronger, approaching the same resonance. He was totally unprepared for what happened. The animal stopped, and before him he saw in vague female form a being who wafted in and out of perception. He was not sure what it was.

When she began talking to him it was inside his head, a powerful telepathy. It was as though she were touching the coils of his brain that preceded, in form, any word, the deep structure of thought. She didn't have to know his language; she simply spoke, and not directly to him but to the bearer of the medallion. It was her medallion; having come to her bearing her sign he was now committed to her service, and she was filling him with a sense of immediacy, that he had come in time and of course would have come in time, there was an object to be recovered; time, by the stars, that it be returned to her (for

the stars were rushing to a climax, carrying all forms with them, and this was the only immediacy she respected). The object was now in possession of a knave; he did not know he was a knave but it would be terrifically hard to wrest it from him; she stopped projecting and the questions poured thru his mind, where?, what do I look for?, and finally the plea that he was not of this world and knew nothing. 'I came here in a dream,' he told her, realizing then that this internal speech joined them in another dream and he saw a woman chasing with a lion, turning into flowers and falling from clouds, surrounding him contextually as no single object could, and he was pleading within this second dream that he himself was only part of the first dream, and she let him know that this was not the second or third dream but the nth, nor was the world earth he came from anything more than his being here. He had no right to pretend pathos and innocence; he bore the medallion, for whatever reasons, and he could not escape consequences that had become synonomous with his life.

He tried to picture the knave, his sense of it absurd, playing cards falling, rubber and elastic cartoon characters to whom no danger could come; she told him to sleep and recall and forgetfulness would pass; he asked about Laura, but she glossed over it, pouring on in her wisdom; Laura and the rest of the animals, the tribe itself, were not in her time-sphere but in his. She could not speak of the Mithemaz, the thing she was looking for that the knave had.

She told him to sleep there that night and begin in the morning, appearing finally as a distant approximation of the figure on the medallion, tall with long antlers, bent in every possible way across her form, but still a woman. And when he went to sleep he had the immediate sense that she picked him up and held him, and then he was lying on a beautiful flowery meadow beside a road. The meadow had become in the form of her arms and he was held there and sang with her until he heard and remembered the vibrations from his meeting with shamans, repeating phases and orders until he became them. Now she was all about, dancing a circle around him in the form of young maidens, one of whom was Laura, she came to him accompanied by two small light-haired girls; she was Laura with three breasts, figure of Saquasohuh; they made love in mid-air, the girls floating in slow blind revolving circles beside them, and he fell to the earth in morning and found himself alone on the field with all decisions to make fresh again. 'The Mithemaz,'

he said to himself curiously. 'And the knave.'

On the road that cut the field he took the ancient direction, perceptually away from the rising sun. The road itself was unspectacular; it was made of a dirt mantle which ended gradually in the grasses which in turn stretched to each horizon. There was something cobbly or pumicey about it. The sun was hot but the air was light, less humid than it had been, and he thought of playing baseball and long walks in Central Park, just off the horsepath. His sadder thoughts were of Laura; he feared he would never see her again; yet there was nothing to do, no choices to make.

When he did see travellers they were coming from the other direction, and passed him with a quiet nod. They were not Ursae, but not toally human either: eyes deep set in dark foreheads, wrapped in frocks of stars, a two-wheeled wagon drawn by young men with orangish hair. He turned his head to watch them go, gold circles woven into their rear cloth; they were moving surrealistically slowly so that he felt he was running past them, blown by a wind, while they were dragged in a countercurrent. He had elected his direction and they were compelled in theirs. He was worse than an alien if he did not believe this.

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[Story picks up after he goes thru a hole]

The universe and its re-quests were as infinite as the stars; he could keep falling and falling, each death a new life, each life borne down with the same confusions and impossibilities. These people had their own joys, their own commerce. He was drained even of curiosity by their endlessness, mysteries of the universe lost in the unending procreation. The damn powers could do what they wanted. They could occult and hide behind laws or, as here, the occult was the very password, and on it he could pass anywhere. There could be another universe into a molecule of which **this** whole universe fits. He thought of Laura, any amount of three-dimensional space from him, if they were even that close anymore. What he needed was a guide, and he approached a wise-looking Indian, attracted his attention bowing in honor and presenting him with the rock the Ursan shaman had given him as a gift. Even as he handed it to another, he marvelled at the smooth flowing marks on it, breaking at an uneven edge. The Indian took the rock in surprise; he held it in a closed fist and spoke some words. Then he turned to go, bringing the bearer of the gift also with a sweep of his arm.

They walked slowly, side by side, as if friends. Other Indians attending the market joined them slowly; the chief called out only one word: "Qocho!," speaking it again and again as they moved along. It was sufficient. Finally they were a throng, mounting on burros and fat horses, or what seemed like them. He rode in front of his friend.

The journey was slow, for they were weighed down with the items they were bringing back from the market, fish, pots, rings, fabric. By evening they were in sight of the mesa, and the men grouped closer, animals panting in the warm air. Slow eddying dust rose and fell across a discontinuous distance, and cries of flying things pierced the countryside and were answered in kind. The houses were of a hard brown clay, much as in the world above. Four women came out of the chief's house to meet him; two of them old and heavy, one of them young and lithe, one of them a child, all his wives. There was no deeper image, nothing deeper than the settlement itself, though he sought it, and later that night in the strangely-spaced stars, the almost-constellations: a Dipper, an obvious Dipper, bent out of shape but real; he could not be that far away.

That night they danced, whirling in a colored circle, he in the center, and masks pouring out at him until the group formed a single man, dizzily changing form while the stars themselves spun. The chief took his stone, joined it perfectly with the missing half; fire spurted into the sky, and hung there, a sparkling tower of light; the stone healed, fused: a transparent jewel; and in it a jelly-like water shimmered. Chaos followed. The stars took off their masks, their very faces, and came down to join them, multiplying the company; cloud-forms swirled thru the treetops. A woman with white crescents on her face began to dance with him, and the dance became a mimicry of copulation, her shawls flying, more absurd than seductive, but the magic took, and he fell for her, coming together dancing until he felt light as a feather, swooned into that and awoke in the early morning in the chief's house sucking a dumpling and some gruel.

His ecstasy might have led to a mission, perhaps to find Laura, or the Mithemaz, enlist their help, but events lapsed into a daily rhythm. Water was not near, and they spent hours carting it up the side of the mesa for animals and gardens and households. They were earth-type people with earthly customs, tri-breasted, monkey-faced if any animal, but the bent stars

said otherwise. There were times when the myth faded, and the deeper image grew locally, as flowerburst. Slowly he poured the light blue chemical down the gully; he watched it push aside crumbs of dirt, down into the darkened earth that held that any planet has roots. He had carried it so far, and he weighed just so much, held it just so far-away from the sun, pouring little by little into the path. This was the law.

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He saw the other dancers, and they seemed to float in a ring off the ground; he could not locate his own place in the dance. Though a single dancer, he was the whole of everything. All by himself he was world. And he thought of rain. At first it was the pure image of water, trickling saliva in his mouth, silver, the stone fountain in the park, the water keeping the pebbled surface damp, a brook passing over stones, slow late purple clouds of evening, the flowers whipped in a cold rain, running barefoot in the mud, thru the forests, and into the ocean, original liquid drawn climatically from fire, as the deep silent fish breed in Saquasohuh's ocean. The water rose within him as blue glowing nerves, as living molecules. He could fill the kernels of corn with the liquid that made them yellow and brown. He was turning all the corners of water it was possible to turn. He had no lesser purpose than rain, and this he shared with the creatures dancing with him, some of them monkeys, some of them cats, a few grounded hawks raising their wings to the sky. He was a water-sign, shunning fire, his personality in geysers of elation, throbbing brooks of despair. He sped thru the air, digging holes in mist, seeding material and gas, as a beaver or otter making world of mud. He saw the great sparks of lightning arising from the men; they were like symbols, but laced in real color against the sky. What at first felt like a swarm of mosquitos was a rattlesnake biting him, injecting its poison, whispering: oa, oa, and its four tongues emerging from the four directions. What was the four tongues of the snake became a gathering of strange wet beings, built of light. He knew that the sparks were coming from him too, that he was shooting long sheet lightning across the sky. The air around him burned with spirits; he spoke with them; they answered, the dance itself was rain, drenched, his hair, his mane coming down over his eyes, the paint dripping down his cheeks, but he wanted to burst all the cosmic sacs and he kept on danc-

ing, the rattlesnake in his teeth. And finally the evening opened out again without stars, it was a summer thunderstorm, warm and lush, softening in evening to a warm mist, and he sat in the mud laughing hysterically; they danced gaily around him, singing profane songs.

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The night was clear and there were thousands of stars. The earth was damp and a deep aroma of mud and haze filled his nose. At first he was confused about getting his feet wet, he had the definite sense that this was a dream, and sure enough, he looked up to see the distant lit towers of a city. He wanted to return to it, see the inside of its buildings. Something was there. The dream was moving in the opposite direction, carrying him away from it. 'If I could discover what makes me want to go there,' he thought, then I could be free.'

There was a radio, stationed at the highest tower of the city and playing all the old songs he remembered; it was a rock and roll show, and the music was powerful; each number seemed to tilt the entire planet, as though they were as real as he was struggling to become. He realized suddenly that everything was equivalent and meant everything else, and in the core of one dream he was truly in the core of any dream. Even as a teenager listened to the rock and roll, moved to it and by it, the earth was changed. The songs, playing out of a city so faraway he could not identify them, transformed the landscape into a dark cave. He awoke there, throwing off a scab, as two other men were doing beside him, dark tremor of an inner waterway. Each of them said, as he opened his eyes, "What is it you want of me?" And he said:

"We want you to inhabit this world."

They turned into birds and flew off. He followed their path and found himself in a brilliant white daylight. All around animals were throwing off their coccoons and asking: "Why do you want me so quickly?" And a naked woman, who sat in the middle of them bathing, answered:

"We want you to inhabit this world."

The result was chaos, animals battling each other, crashing birdwings and roaring lions. A hive broke and from it emerged two men in sexual play, one of them licking the penis of the other, then reaching into the other's mouth where he found jellied strawberry sweets; he swallowed them and returned to licking. A bear cub stumbled away.

'Let me be clear,' he thought. 'Let me be clear for once.' And he remembered the mark. It was all around him. He was being born. All events, terrestrial and other, fell away, and he found himself rolling in black space with nowhere to to and each star a single fire equally faraway. And he was struggling back thru layers of waking. And thought for a second he thought he saw the whole earth, spinning in the diamond of space of which it was the crux of light. By seeing it he felt he saw all that it was, including the caverns of fire inside its hulk and the great moving stones exponentially larger than all of history. He saw the sea as the sea, and a billion ships, inertia-ed spots crossing the ice, the islands logjammed, great animals frozen knee-deep, and mountains of stone moving at speeds and masses ghosts never dreamed of, ghosts. Far above, in something like the air, he saw and joined again the meeting of shamans. Instantly he knew that he had never left them, that their magic had been with him, every choice he had made had come out of the code-signs of their meeting, how he escaped pigback, how he found the hole, picked the chief from the rest, knew the proper stone at the historic moment. They drew him in, and he knew that this was a new meeting, to different ends, not that time itself could change and make it so, but as the gem itself turned on the core showing different facets. And the shamans and their meetings joined at all times, coming from all histories, and were the core and channel of world-heat. What was born here was the next stage of what happened. This time there were magi from the other planets of the solar system, coming from their own whole worlds, magical by ratio as the whole physical event moved in measures and harmonies away from the sun. They wore all the different colors of the universe he had never seen, deeper blues and bright blinding yellows. Their rhythms and breathings were different; they touched different parts of their bodies for the code, though the code was the same: like a rock and roll song originating as it was in this quadrant of the universe, carrying that trademark into the stars.

Now he could see the earth again, somewhere below and above and all around him; the earth was in his bloodstream because he was born there. The light of the universe rattled thru, shedding fiery embryos from the music of the spheres, filling the sentimental segmental forms of earth, the code ceaselessly rapping, *why do you want me so quickly*, and birds reborn, singing, all across the planet, crystals igniting like

swamp-roses, white as dwarves, phosphorous as the pure atomic petals. And the whole earth, a rock controlling its area and rays, its field of energy, invisibly shimmering upon the continents, falling in the deepest jungles even as rain, and snow upon the Antarctic night. He felt as though he were on a hill looking down over a city; the people were the brightest lights and the buildings were pale, like neon, the plants a golden and purple gas rooted to the bulging torse. The people, being fire, swimming in fire of waters, were touched by the fires that fell on the earth in remnant code, upon this corner of the universe as upon the whole universe, each local womb to give natural birth. He saw and felt within himself the terrific play of atoms crosswidth his own center, and in terms of worlds and eternal sequences of lifetimes he placed his own center on the center of himself in time and felt through all the centers to the profound and cosmic source; there trembling in corpuscle he knew life and death, and his own heat upon the earth, his own place beyond the earth's sway.

In the greater distance he saw the thousand islands of consciousness in the seas of Uranus. He fell away from the earth thru a fiery vine. The grapes were skinned and became the starry night. All of the corpuscles returned to the nervous center of his body, and he slept.

Daybreak. The sea. Sweeping up on the edge of the island. Once again his world looked upon the ocean. Dark blue crashed into white foam at his feet and turned into bubbles as focus dropped from the vastness to at his feet tiny fish like minnows milling about, nipping bits of weed off the shoreline. Now the sound of a wild animal came crashing thru the plants; it drew close, sweeping to the shore, and he hid quickly in a clump. It was two boys, deliriously weary, stumbling, one older and taller, and the younger one, and they ran to the ocean in delight, putting their hair in it, submerging themselves, and wiping one another off.

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In the end it was a great raft, like a floating island, utterly square with markings and poles all around it. The younger boy killed some deer-like animals and gave their heads to the sea. The air rumbled and they acknowledged it. After they cooked him supper, they all slept, the boys in each others' arms. Early in the morning he was awakened by their shouts and screams. He emerged into the day with great trepi-

dation and looked about; to his surprise they had carved mallets out of sticks and were whacking a rubber ball back and forth between each other, aiming for and guarding certain trees.

By late afternoon they had set sail, their boat moving in a swift breeze, angling off toward the sinking sun. They spoke of the sun as an animal, how it was changing its fur as the ocean pulled it into itself. As it set, to his horror, the ugly archetypal face of a witch was silhoutted in enormous form in the very direction they were headed. This was no illusion with mythological content. They were very near the beginning of things. It reared up like an island and howled wildly in hiatus with the wind. The sun set and they drifted in blackness.

At sunrise she was not to be seen, but they called her name anyway, again and again: Huranongangdja!, Huranongangdja!, and on their words the ship angled toward her realm. It was not that things were different than they had ever been. This is the way they were. They had reached a highly favorable position and time, and these were the people on whom all the weight and advantage fell. The boys cast feathers on the sea, a huge blue fish came up and swallowed them, staring long and hard at the boat; after that their speed increased for it was the fish Hrukanoo. A distant singing could be heard, seeking all its keys and chords in the noises of birds and fish and water, growing louder and more harmonious as they moved toward a planetary center he had visited before. A gigantic water-monster arose from the water before them. The younger boy fired a single arrow; it hit the neck; the monster sank into the sea, gushing blood; dry land formed around his body, and suddenly he looked up to see that they were surrounded by islands and coming directly to one with a little red clay house on its shore. 'My god,' he thought,'has magic grown stale on the earth.'

They hit the island with a small thud, and the boys sped off ahead of him; they reached the door, knocked on it four times, but no one answered. They took out their ball and newly-made mallets and moved thru the tiny grove aiming at trees and laughing. A huge black bird now circled, its eyes on them; the boys observed it and took out some food for it; it was crusty and stale, but they spit on it to make it wet and attractive. The bird circled lower and lower, making an arc each time. Now it landed in a tree and there was a great rustling

and fluttering of leaves as certain leaves fell. The younger took up the only yellow leaf and put it in his pack. Now the bird descended with great flapping noise, landing with her claws on the food as a woman dressed in a black gown. She was stark and beautiful; she had all the deeper ugliness of the witch of sunset who she obviously was. She stood terribly close to them. Both of the boys had erections and hugged her sides, resting their tiny heads on her breasts as though suddenly unborn and innocent. He backed away nervously, but she walked toward the house and they followed. No words were spoken at all, there were only actions. She baked them a thick mossy bread and they all ate. Then the two boys became birds and flew with her in the sky, chasing all about the island. They were gone for hours and came back bleeding and covered with thorns; she was unmarked. All three of them were much older. She was an old woman and the two boys were men. They stayed up all night, and she watched the stars and planets, pointing to things in the great instantaneous cosmos, the boys noted and became aware. In the morning he awoke to find them still star-gazing; only the star was the rising sun and they were singing wildly, frantically, as though involved in pulling it up. She was a beautiful woman, almost a child, and he realized that, of course, she *was* the sun, manifesting much of its form and morphology in her daily process. She urged and flirted and bullied the two of them into simultaneous intercourse with her, for she had two vulvas, one in the rear. And the younger one, bound in her spell, holding her back, gasping like a plant in the earth, as he came, by his rhythm, great red fruits appeared on the trees; when the older one came in his different rhythm, long yellow fruits on other trees, pure unabashed etiology, and no one doubted that the sun was, literary or not, the cause. It was a BIG DAY. A historical day, or larger. Fish crawled up onto the sea-monster island and lay there breathing in the hot sun. Lizards emerged from every plant, and the boys grew older, into aged men. The animals joined in groups and dispersed; each level of the myth, of the creation, was so rich, and it was obviously happening all at different times and all at the same time, and he simply dreamed it, moving from place to place.

By evening she was a hag, and she tried ferociously to get the boys to come into her again, but they merely mocked and teased her, running in circles, and it was impossible for her to catch them, though their long beards hung down to their

legs. She was without power and even uglier that night. The moon he had never seen before was full, twice the size of earth's moon, and lit the entire island. The animals were aroused and grew damp and found their ways back to the parts of the world they had come from, their origins. The air filled with swarming insects, and the outdoors was rich and buzzy, intelligent and meta-linguistic. He slept for so long that by morning everything was gone, but he had absorbed an alien intelligence. He walked to the shore: no boat. It was not that they had taken it with them; it had been gone for thousands, perhaps thousands of thousands, of years. The hut was a castle further inland, its windows broken and totally deserted. The trees were larger, fewer, and more stately.

She was a great black bird and she flew down on top of him, smothering him in flapping wings. All his life, till now, he had been terrified of birds and their organic wings, the pigeons of New York, whipping dirty feathers against the outside of windows, all precognitive, of now. It had happened a million times before. She became a woman only after he was lost in her possession, and then he had, in the meeting with her, half of her secrets, the half he could have.

At the instant of coming he saw, in a flash that disappeared as suddenly, the worlds in space, and he knew that Saquasohuh was the second world. He saw it as Venus, hanging in space. He saw it and perceived the whole world in a single spurt, all its oceans, the Ursae paddling, the boys having long returned home, the storms, the chief, his birth, his career, his burial, the pig-people; he saw the first shaman whose place he had taken in dancing back and forth across the multiple fields of the planet. He saw his own itinerary and the type of conduits dreams are in relation to total planetary space. He saw beneath the ocean and the great fish and heads of people floating egglike in primeval soul-stuff that planet was born from. He saw how brilliant his own energy in the quest and why he survived transformation after transformation. He saw her as the sun, the sun on Venus, and felt how warm, how primavera she was. And in the end, as she grew wings again and bore him thru the sky he saw a whole earth, an earth torn by fire, shuddering in space between two fields of its own self, filling two whole mundi, men with machine-guns, men with torch-throwers, riding cars and jets into the sea. He saw clairvoyance and vision-quest, children wandering thru the atmospheres of distant planets, locked in various jails and

other cells that honeycombed thru nitrogen and mud. He saw people trapped between two mundi, waving flags and aiming weapons at the shimmering field between the two. He saw the preachers on subway trains, the tracks that always curved away, the mediums whispering anagrams, issuing clues thru the veil, the two-horned priests leading the dwindling people in dance. He slept beside her, and in the morning she was gone, and he was decked in necklaces and jewels, around his neck a fiery red shawl with his birth sign in yellow, the *M* with zigzag lightning ending in an arrow.

Toward mid-day the water-level sank and there was a land-bridge for him to cross. He walked for hours along it before lying down to rest. The Cytherean sun was blazing hot, but he now wore the skin of this planet. He thought that he had brought the whole earth here inside him, not impotently either, and it *was* the same sun that now shined on her seas. It was earth vision he lay on, beach or field or hay, an old hay-wagon meeting the hikers halfway down the road with peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, the horses in the fields, miles upon miles of weeds and burrs and yellowness, controlling an atmosphere of insects, each in its own diamond. He saw a single spider in the center of its web. Thru this deeper image he passed, into the rest.

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[A hundred pages follow, describing his meeting with Yusf and how they cross a long tropical jungle, emerging to the North along a river which they bear to thru many villages, picking up important and knowledgable allies on the way.]

They moved again in the morning, following a slightly different path back toward the area of the river as agreed upon by Dbn and Yusf. They were met at sunset by a boy riding on a horned ram-cow, sitting up high on his legs, holding the horns, coming from the direction in which they were going. He signalled for them to follow him. He led away from the river again, back toward the forest. They went steadily, thru a good portion of the night, coming at last to a settlement of roundish houses in the darkness. Weary from the ride and the long journey, he thought he would collapse. They led him to a hut. She was standing there, Laura.

He threw his arms around her, and they both danced, releasing an agony that neither had faced head-on for fear of the consequences. Now they did. He was not interested in how

she got there, how it all came together. He wanted to love her. The journey was lifting, the life-journey, neither a story nor a drama, but the world, as it was, was complete, a flowing river thru consecutive worlds. He knew that they had come from the earth to this planet to grow steadily, in a light that comes from emerging cognate with earth, in the hiatus a wrought green sphere, and the interplanetary myth, from which all Egypts come. He knew right then and there that they were the exiled king and queen, having come to the end of their initiations, because they were king and queen, and because nothing could stop them from returning. Such were his thoughts as he slept beside her. It was not glory or importance, for all people were one. And this right now, whether you know it or not, is the life YOU ARE LIVING. The snake raises his head and bites out: I.....I, reflecting, bending between creations, here before the mountains of Saquasohuh, of Venus, here on, or in, earth.

In the morning he took Laura to Yusf and spoke of her.

"I know," said Yusf,"Laura and Seth from the third planet. I was the Ursan shaman, leaving you in a whirlwind from which you followed me. I was reborn. These people exist now, or existed, in the time of open skies, before the great clouds of ice and life passed over this planet. I am magus of Venus; you are earth upon Venus. Our worlds are joined as any two bodies tangent in space. Our works are one. The real earth is the mythical Venus, and here on Venus we are the hermetic earth. Now we must cross the desert which lies between these people and the center of the present world."

"And what follows?"

"Who knows. This is the beginning of our planet's passage. Yours is older, and Mars older still. These three centers, imposed thru the myth of each other, move toward the galactic center, clairvoyantly, and we ourselves must go into the yarn."

"How was I brought here?" he asked, carelessly.

"You were brought to us because we knew you were coming," Dbn said, joining the group. "And why did we all come to Xra, including the woman in her own way? Because Xra was awaiting us, having come this far. You are the figures carved in the silver stone," he said, holding it out for them to see. "Now you are."

"This is a hot time," Laura added with a smile.

'It is good to be alive,' he thought. 'And even as I won-

der who I am, I have no doubt that everyone is alive in this in some way. This is not only my chance. It is my only chance. And if it were any different things would be less than themselves.'

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[from Laura's story]

It was as though all these people had already lived inside my bloodstream conducting their commerce, and I had lain with this king nightly in my earlier life, forgetting each morning. On this night I was supposed to fuck with him openly during the ceremony there was fire, dancing, burning arrows, and great songs to call the animals from the forest. They stood their distances and watched, a perimeter of tiny glowing eyes. I felt as though the whole thing were a ballet. I was split in half, I danced wildly, throwing what I had on the moon and taking it back. I heard the screams and the songs of the people behind me. It was like in a dream where you're naked and pretend not even to see yourself. I left my body and joined the animals. I was filled with a knowing of the whole solar system I had never imagined. I actually saw all the moons of all the planets as women, and I saw you yourself with the woman who was the moon of this planet and felt safe for you because I was part of her then. I was part of the goddess' flesh and I was animal sacred to the moon, who guards her ceremonial circle and carries her messages thru water and air. I saw the placement of this planet and knew it as Venus. I saw earth toppling over into this time. I saw the living sun, and all the beings there, how they rode the rays outward into foetuses, how they were absorbed back into the singing core. Then I felt myself floating in the air above the dense clouds; the moon was not just imaginary or spiritual; it was bright and real upon this planet, two times the size of the earth's moon. I was a bird who landed on an island, dropping fast thru the clouds, spreading my wings. I joined you there again, always conscious, as you were not.

"But it's all so beautiful," he said. "It's the other half, that I could never know."

"Man and woman," said Xrag, "inside and without, dark and light, open out and closed in. It is very easy to be at the beginning and know the origin. The thick energy is settling yet upon this world, and it has not grown hard."

"And why should a world grow hard?" she asked.

"It doesn't," he said. "It is ourselves."

***

Xrag pointed out that the desert was not thirsty, nor had it been, nor would it always be desert. Larger cities would be built here, and those whose souls now moved underneath like underground water, would fill it. There were people who once lived here whose descendants had migrated east. At sunset a vast array of lights moved swiftly across the sky, stopping momentarily above a giant rock in the distance, moving off at an angle, and disappearing in the haze. That evening they came at last to the rock, and Xrag indicated that it was here. It was still and silent, wound around itself, and great cavities led into the center. It was top-heavy and bottom-heavy, shaped like an hour-glass, wind-whipped into that form. They camped at the base, and when the stars came out the lights returned and hung in the distance, in formation, waiting for the sign. The wind thru the hour-glass sang, and the music awoke a vision of those who had lived here, Bear People, Monkey Poeple, Kangaroo People. They were all astrologers who shared the dream in the marketplace of the traceries of stars, who wept for all they knew and did not know in the public square. And they slept on a street as busy as Forty-Second, where the men came carrying the water between pyramids and temples of the sun and moon.

In the morning they were met by a boatman. The river was closer than they had thought, and he led them downstream, raising his craft to a terrific speed by playing on a musical instrument like a flute, changing the harmony among the strings. By mid-day they were transported to the outskirts of the greater city, the one circular building huger than all others, golden and gleaming in the center.

"It is mellow," said Ala. "Because we have reached the beginning of the story. All the rest will be agriculture, as on the earth."

"Yes," said Xrag. "I see that it is here I will remain."

They walked the remainder, across the last stretch of land, thru the outermost fields; there they were met by a man in a beast-drawn cart. He led them not just into the city, but to the very room. The decor was simple, large bones used for structural supports and furs hanging from the walls. There was no throne but a table, a long board set in stones. An old man sat at the table conversing with children. But they weren't children. They had come in ships, and

were introduced as from the planet Mars, last visible sphere in the region of the sun. Beyond them lay only the spirit worlds, and they had passed into another geocosmos.

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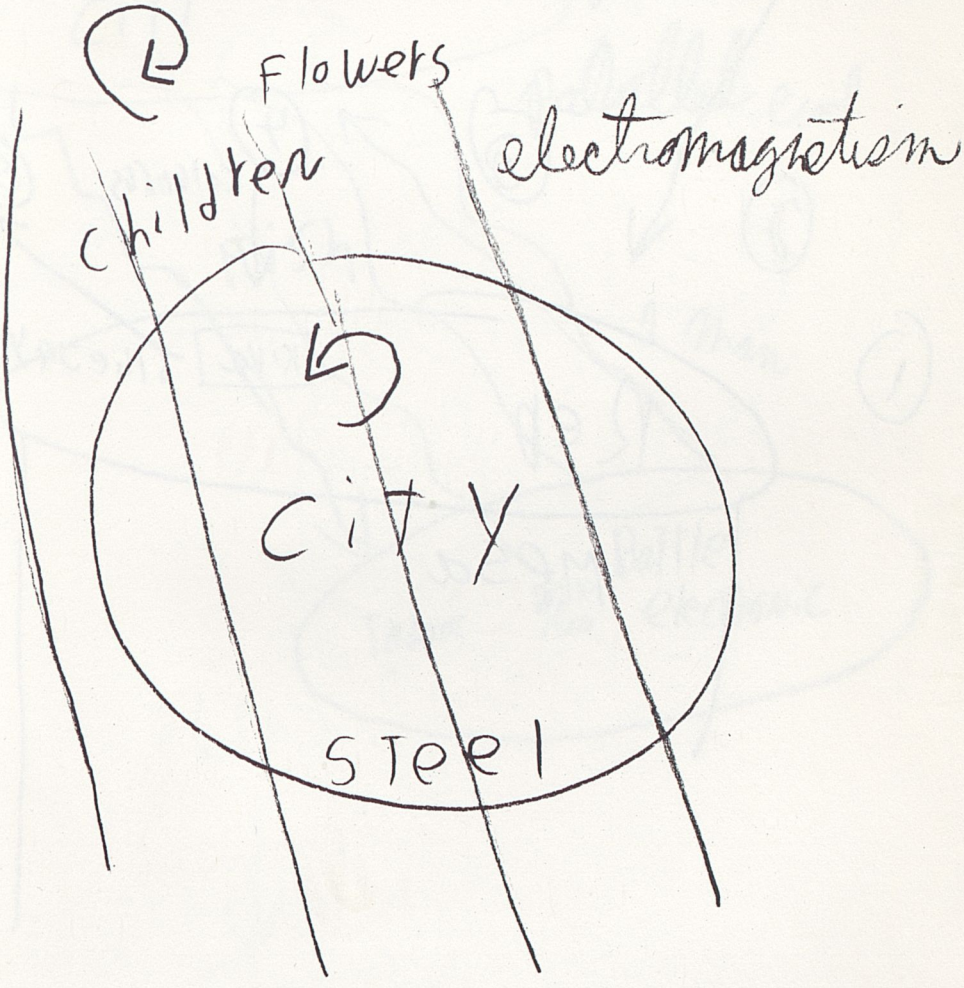
"Earth moves now across the forbidden region of the chart," said the Martian astrologer. "No one knows what happens to planets that go thru such a gate; it is invisible and fixed, and even the inhabitants do not know, for they are internal to the passage, as surely we are in the larger astrology we approach."

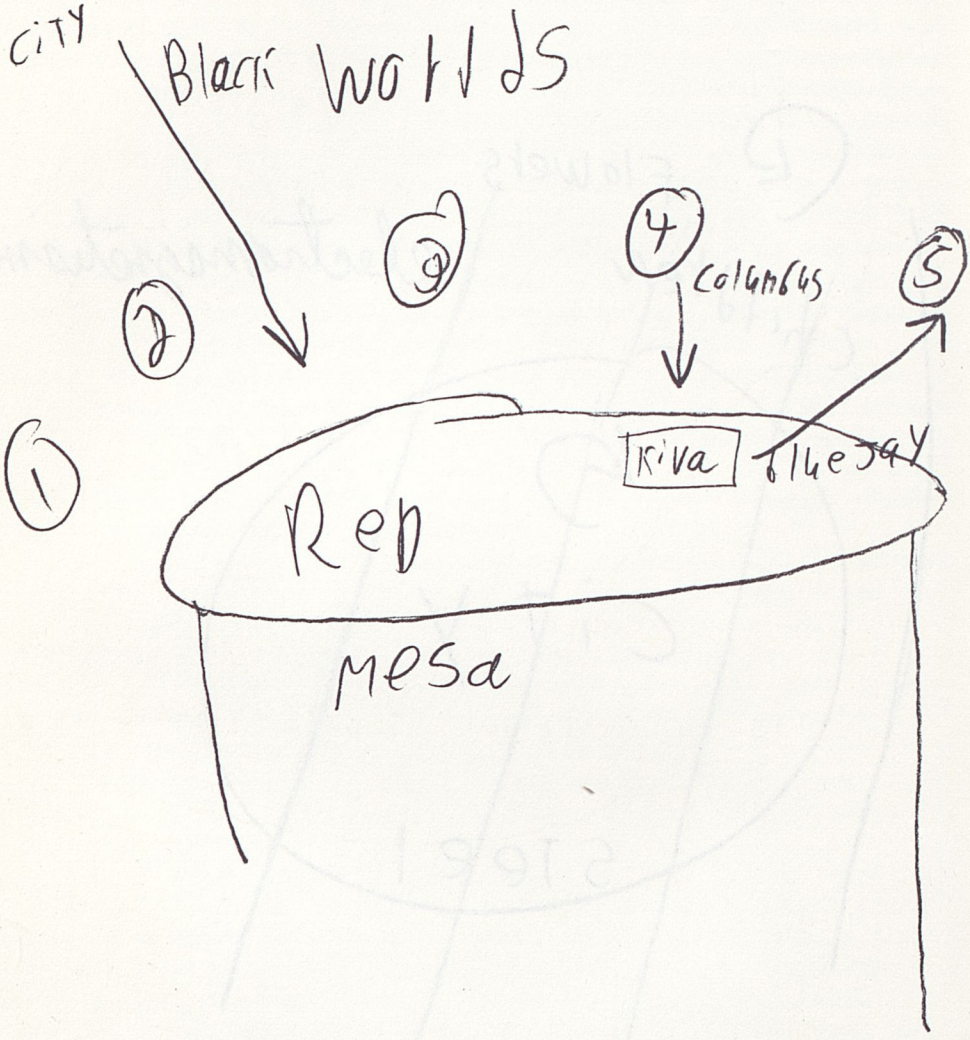
They asked him of Venus.

"Venus lies at the bottom, just born. She has no astrologers, only story-tellers and myths. Her rivers are fluid. The soundless noise, sonar crack of the universe, passes thru Venus now as a tale, that they tell of themselves, knowing implicitly its end. You are only living a life you have already lived. Beauty is objective. This I came from Mars to tell you. We who are finished with our song cycles. We who have been historical, and more. We who are on the verge of expansion. And earth, it is those from earth we await. We await some word of earth."

AleThabetha



The Migration Dance



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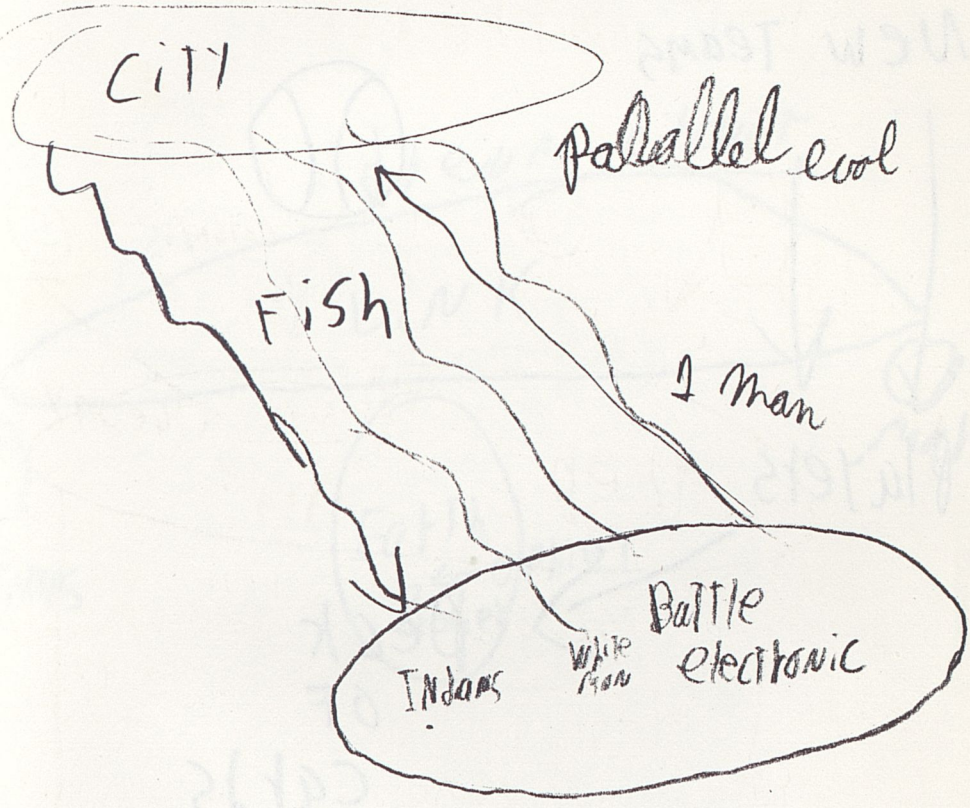
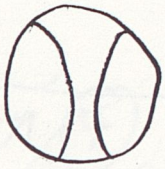


The Hawaii Taboos

Comission-

↓ warning

New Teams



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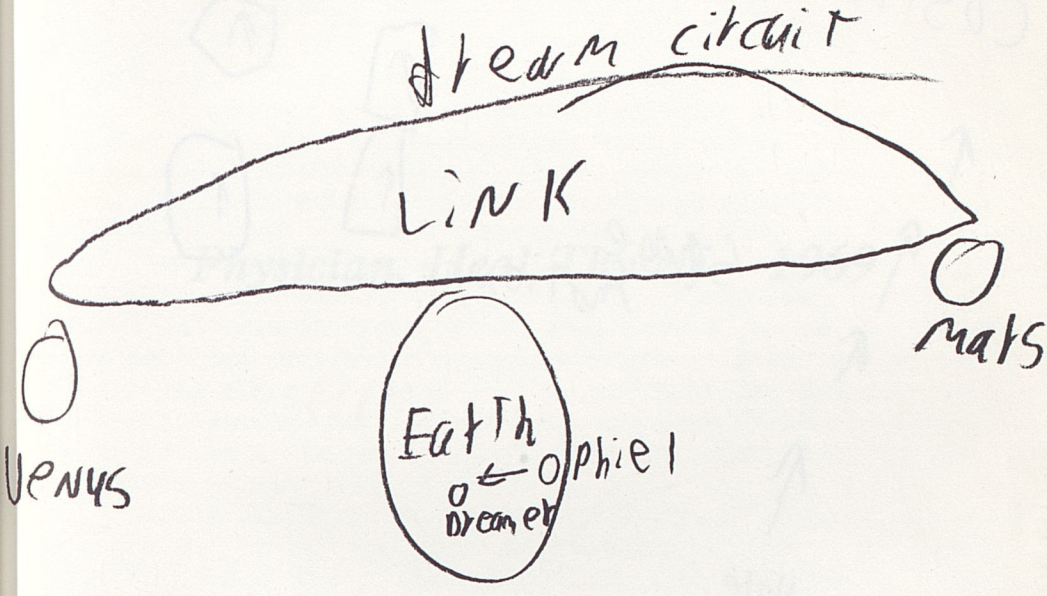
Players

→ Deck of cards

↓

Seeds

# Passage



This is a story of N.Y.

Man w/milk
+cookies

Book weather

Library shelves

castle

same
motion

Hate
+
hound

# *Physician, Heal Thyself 1969*

She had been dreaming of kissing a strange man in a very faraway place. It was not Mitchell, not it was not Mitchell, but it was not exactly not Mitchell, or Mitchell was part of it. She was ashamed, but she wasn't. And then she awoke to the terrible reality that had now been going on for four days. Mitchell was ill; he was surely dying. Nobody cared. Nobody cared about his body except her, and she could sense it drawing away, releasing him. Each day he got worse. And by now it seemed that his health was a distant time, was even another life. Perhaps he was already dead.

Now she remembered. He had been in her dream. He had told her something. He had pressed against her, his arm firm but ghostlike, fully aware of his condition. He had told her something, and now she struggled to remember.

The bottles draining their fluids were all around him. He was pale, like a demonstration model: tubes led into him, tubes fed back out from him; it was impossible to tell the true colors of what he was manufacturing; they were all medical blue. In a moment of unreal horror she thought she saw that the organs of his body were lying outside him instead of within, each organ marked by a different-colored band, and numbered, so that it would not be accidentally mixed with other organs. One bottle fed vitamins; one bottle fed medicines, seemingly rivers of them; a bottle of bubbling water breathed; a bottle drained his intestines. And were all these bottles keeping him alive, or slowly dissipating him?, draining out whatever he was, drop by chemical drop.

Occasionally he awoke and looked around himself, a man unsure whether he was awake or dreaming, unsure of whether he was born or between infinite mirrors. He awoke asking strange questions, speaking to the bottles, trying to flex them like muscles. His body was the room in which they lived, and its elements were replaced by technicians every twelve hours.

In a flash she saw bright green. She saw the clear remnant of a dream. Mitchell stood before a man dressed in an ancient costume holding a staff. He fed Mitchell bright colors, the yellows of exotic flowers and butterflies, the silvers of crumbling minerals. All this happened in a second; and then she forgot, and forgot all that led into it and all that led out.

Mitchell's father often came, never with ease, always a little nervous and jaunty. He had a silly optimism punctuated

by a revealing uneasiness. His role was ambiguous. He was a vice-president of the major pharmaceutical company, the company from which all the drugs came, which trained and hired all the doctors and pharmacists. The public was told, as a convention, that cures were known and easily available for all diseases. Most people knew better; only most people didn't want to know better. All the old famous diseases of mankind: heart disease, cancer, leukemia, even blindness and birth defects were curable by either the vast electronic surgery or the sophisticated spectrum of antibiotics. People still died of diseases. For every person who lived a hundred years, there was a young man who died at twenty or twenty-five; everyone knew this, and it was officially explained as carelessness, as the young not knowing well enough how to take care of their bodies and when to go to a doctor.

The scenes with her father-in-law were always very tense. He was well-trained in allaying people's fears, in talking about the good of this or that drug, and it was a role he seized happily in the difficulties of the moment. She would confide her worst fears, and he would answer with lines like: "It's only been ten days. He was in surgery just a week ago. Only the last couple of days have been real bad. No one dies of this kind of tumor anymore. You've been sitting around here too long; that's why you're so glum; the way medicine is now, nobody has to sit around like this day after day. It's all taken care of, no need for a nurse. When he's better you return."

She would tell him her most nihilistic thoughts, including cases she had heard of people who didn't get better.

"There will always be rumors," he insisted. "People will say that their relatives or friends died of some disease, and they'll make up a name, just to get revenge on us, or relief for their sorrow. But how do you know they were properly diagnosed? How do you know they called the doctor in time for him to do anything? People refuse to accept that the world is arbitrary. But there's justice in the arbitrary. Some people don't live and there's nothing we can do about it, and there's never been anything we could do about it. It's a numbers game."

By then he was just warming up. "Have you heard the most recent rumors? They say that we're planting the diseases in people by one medicine and curing them by the other. Did you

ever hear anything so ridiculous? Why would we do that? We have a monopoly as it is, a monopoly on food, and water, and air. Don't you see that if you deny us, you deny everything. It's all one system, the life-support system of the city: the air, the food pills, the water. If you want to talk monopoly, then it's all one monopoly, and the name of the company is life."

In moments of sheer terror she totally regressed; she was a child again, and the world was alive with intimations, implications it had long since ceased to have. Her grief was an ecstasy in embryo, and each spurt of possible joy was converted into a pang of despair. It was as if the two feelings were one chemical process, two different ways of feeling the same thing. In her moments of joy she remembered snatches of fairy tales and myths, that the world was once different, filled with strange animals, human and with voice; the moon and the stars were alive once, and flew with the birds, the moon and stars which were now just diffusion thru the great shield of the city, the birds who now perched on ceilings in the cages of the zoo. She dreamed of lovers who were stronger than men, and threw her around on their torsos, cupping her at the same time in their palms, releasing her at the same time into some oil or essence, some lightness that was in her organs as sap. But now with Mitchell sick, and the pale and ghostlike weight of his body beside her, she recalled the tale of the hidden hospital and the magical doctors. Somewhere, it was said, it was almost known, there was a place to go if you were sick. There were strange foods, a different air, a different water, and the medicines themselves were mixed of exotic things, like flowers, and birds' wings, and stones. The hidden hospital was, in fact, the most popular tale of the tales of the hidden world. If you close people up in a city and tell them that they once lived outside that city, but that the land is poisonous and the air outside will no longer support life, if you shut the city off except for a purified river that pours thru it underground and an airplane service to other cities in dark robotized lead planes, then the imagination, a blend of topologies itself, begins to project into the unknown space. What lies outside of the city? What lies beyond the speed of light? The hidden world lay outside the city, but there was no way to get to it. Some people believed in the hidden world and the hidden hospital at the same time they believed in the great poisoned fields, simply

placing it in indefinite space elsewhere. Others claimed to have visited the city without leaving their rooms. And so it was said to be imaginary, confused with old notions of life after death. If it was, it did not concern her. What she wanted was Mitchell's body back. She had no thoughts for his eternal soul.

If it weren't for her feeling that he was being poisoned, being drained away before her eyes, if it weren't for nightly dreams that grew stronger and stronger as if tincture were increased, dreams in which she saw him alive and well, healed by naked men, dancing amidst colors so bright they burned the nerve-ends of her eyes..... She lay in her body trying to project her mind somehow to the ends of the universe, which meant inside as well as far, which meant somehow to understand the dreams as more than make-believe, as Mitchell was revived in the future and continued his strong life, rather than as a nostalgic image of Mitchell in the past.

"But it is make-believe," her father-in-law said when asked about the hidden hospital. "Why should we turn to make-believe when the going is rough. There is a real physical world," he said, and he knocked on the chair. "There is a real biophysical world," pointing to the sleeping man, his son. "These are things we can do something about. This is where we can act, and with effectiveness. But make-believe. If we turn to make-believe we have nothing." He paused and searched his mind; ideology supplied itself. "The hidden hospital is merely a glorified name for the doctors that fought medical advancements, who out of their own insanity, whimsy, or sheer selfishness tried to hold out against a better medicine, who refused to prescribe new drugs in their practices. They operated in the run-down areas of the city, closest to the edge of the dome where the crazies always live; they lived there even before there was population pressure because they could get away with more. You wouldn't believe the things they did. They prescribed more of the disease instead of the cure. They diagnosed merely by looking at the patient and asking him to tell stories. They tried out hundreds of potions on each patient hoping one would cure him before another killed him." He laughed self-consciously. "They had no chemical knowledge at all. I mean, they just picked plants and ground up stones, and everything they fed the patient was one part in a million or two million of water so that nothing

could happen either way. The hidden hospital is all gone now. When I was very young, there were still quacks being caught but no more." This was his philosophy of the thing, so familiar, so frightening, so secure, and so indisputably true, burning like medicine itself. "People who are disappointed are willing to put their faith in anything: just because the medicine's not perfect there must be something better. Just because there's money and power, there must be corruption. If Mitchell dies, God forbid, it will be because it couldn't be helped. And if that's the case, then we will be smarter someday and know more. But if you give up on the whole system because of one patient, you give up the world. You kill millions, including yourself, to prove that that one man might have been saved."

"But your father-in-law overlooks the most critical aspect of that statement," Robin said. "If one person can be saved, it means there's another system. One contradiction is a whole new science. I think that the point of everything is to kill millions, if necessary, to save one because the human race cannot be broken down into fragments; each one is the whole unit; each one can be saved in lieu of the whole."

"But that's so opposite," she said.

"Well, new rules don't come easily. You must see, though, that the whole point of living is to save that one, because we are that one."

Robin was the only friend she could think of seeing; he lived on the wrong side of the city, near the dome's edge, which, by new definitions, was the right side. He was the friend that Mitchell always looked to the most and that always looked to Mitchell. But that doesn't mean that they saw each other very often. They had an intellectual game going, not a social friendship; they had been playing it for ten years, since they were teen-agers in school. Robin had continued parts of the game into his career, which was teaching math, which was also an excuse to continue doing math, continue solving puzzles. Mitchell had found himself eased into the mechanics of his father's world, but mostly, like the rest, Mitchell worked very infrequently. There wasn't that much to do, no room for territorial expansion; it would take a genius to dream up a new business. Most people merely survived, which was the minimum the city provided, and at the same time the maximum.

Mitchell and Robin had often intellectually argued things which, remote and whimsical then, were suddenly her only hope. After her decision to come and see Robin, her mind began a curious process of switching, the emotional support she had given to it abandoning the secure system which had held her and Mitchell at peace in their simple world, adopting a more dangerous system, adopting, in effect, a system which she had previously only imagined, toyed with. Now, with the momentum of the trainride across the city, it all came to the fore of her mind. She had never considered that there might be another way to think.

As she sat in the quietly-moving train, her eyes searched the great city for a clue. She saw most of its motions moving inward, against her, as though pulmonary to a heart. Her thoughts moved as a quiet counterweight to the city; she had thought of dancing, silly dancing, losing her head, going mad and not caring, not caring what anybody thought. And the sense of looking for clues changed her whole perceptual pattern. Few people on the train, less and less at every station, almost no one getting on. The city grew less and less thick; the great buildings dwindled, and there were even a few empty lots. Occasionally she could hear a clear sharp sound, suck-pop!, the great dome giving entrance to an airplane. At times she felt herself giving way and sought an image from past security, that it would all be okay if she just went back, but the vision of Mitchell in her head was a firm shock out of that. And when she was calm she saw that the land, even the land here within the city, began to have the curious quality of myth and obscurity. She had never been in this part of town. No, it was that she had never been in this part of town in this condition! Was there a difference? A mathematician might give place to function and function to place. No one believed in ghosts, but you were afraid of a house that was said to be haunted. Why? No one believed in luck, but an incredible streak of good fortune invoked a whole string of ancient images, gods and beneficiaries, hope. And finally it was as though the dreams were the things that couldn't be kept out of the city; they penetrated the dome to arise in the citizenry. It was almost as though there were another creature elsewhere, constantly challenging the laws, perhaps not even consciously or as a rebel, just as part of his natural biology. No, she couldn't bring herself to be-

lieve that. She alone was responsible for the dreams, no matter how alien they seemed.

One building seemed odd, almost rounded at its roof. The perspective, some things moving faster than others, as in a dance, as in herself the central dancer, see-er. The cave-like space between two buildings and children playing in an empty lot: held? nothing? or everything.

Robin's apartment was not fluorescently lit; the old yellow bulbs glared from some childhood mystery, of having been born into a colder dimmer world than this one. And years so long ago she could remember them as more real than yesterday. She told Robin what had happened, and he seemed puzzled. There was no action possible, no way to implement whims amd fantasies. He could only respond, in a world without dreams or locations, in kind. She had given him the opening lines of a familiar occult text. Now he took her to the corner bookstore, explaining that it was the only place you could find out anything about hidden worlds. He cautioned her that it would be nothing definite, nothing, in fact, that she didn't know already. "Either it's a secret doctrine, and in that case no one's going to give it away, or it's an outlaw operation, and no one's going to run the risk of getting caught."

"People were much freer once," the proprieter said. "That's the only way I can explain this stuff. It wasn't always a crime to be mad, or what they thought was mad, or to question science, like the hospitals. Now we've come to think of ourselves as sane, and then anybody who does or believes different is *in*sane, and he's operated on for insanity. Once upon a time they tried to talk to the mad, to learn about themselves from them; there was a perpetual dialogue going. That's the only way I can explain these old books; they're not like any books we have now. I think they tell people to go mad. I think they *recommend* it."

Robin had told her that the book-seller was virtually exuberant; he had very few customers for the old non-microfilm books, and he loved throwing out his theories about them. That was Robin's best game anyway, she remembered, he and Mitchell, theories, theories of everything. Now Robin handed her one on the hidden hospital. She read:

"Bacchus was thought to have acquired his vigour and corpulency from eating Figs, such as the Romans gave to professed

wrestlers and champions for strength and good sustenance." She turned the pages, looking wildly for clues. She believed she was on, hot. She was in the hands of many guides, Robin, the propieter, even her father-in-law, and Mitchell in dream, but she was the mover, the one with fingers of light, the one to whom the secret meaning clung no matter where she went.....between ecstasy and grief.....and with slight tinges of fear that in a very conventional sense she was going mad and would be locked up, whatever that meant, whatever that came to in the end.

"No doubt the attractions of surgery are greatly increased by the discovery of the means to render its operations painless and less dangerous, and many have in consequence neglected therapeutics and sought to cure, by surgical means only, disease which might be far better cured by appropriate medicines, without the hideous mutilations which often attend surgical operations."

It was the way things were in this part of town, mystery, occlusion just off the common-place. She now realized she was sitting in a dark dusty corner, a place she would have shunned in her original pose, and looking out into the bright front of the store, the latest microfilms, scientific and popular, huge private viewers for watching them. She imagined she saw herself in the store proper, not ever seeing this dark corner, not huddled here with Robin and the bookseller, almost gleeful. When the police raid came.

She sat face to face with her father-in-law again, somewhere in the great hospital complex.

***

Robin tossed and turned in the medicinal sheets, or maybe it was the air that was medicinal. He realized that in a twinkling of mirrors his life had changed. One of the rare almost-nonexistent raids, hidden tape-recorders, the propieter's exuberance, a respectable girl travelling all the way to dome-edge, and then huddled in the back of a store with her eyes gleaming, believing everything, even madness. And those on the other end of the microphones moved in.

He couldn't sleep. He reached in his pocket and found that he had several small books. What did it matter if they watched him take them out and read them. There was nothing illegal about books themselves. Most people owned them. Then maybe he could lose himself in his thoughts about the books,

and what was in them. Then maybe.....he was so tense and jittery, how could anything be worth it when everything was almost all over, i.e., his personality that he had worked so long to protect and hone, and with it the whole range of personal pronouns; there would be another person; little sense to quibble about whether it would still be him

But what did time matter, or place; it was not worth it anyway unless he could isolate himself with his thoughts. If he could build a wall of them alone, a strong gestalt field, maybe he could keep them out, out of being in his head, out of pulling his head out from in:

*Wholly absorbed*
*into my own conduits to*
*an inner nature or subterranean lake*
*the depths or bounds of which I more and more*
*explore and know more*
*of, in that sense that other than that all else*
*closes out and I tend further to fall into*
*the Beloved Lake and I am blinder from.....*

*Charles Olson*

He did not understand, but it was with a sense of power he felt his inability to understand. For the first time he sensed that there was power in not understanding: intimations of another world. "Projections," he thought; "with projections you need merely the dynamic of the space between, the function, i.e., the projection of a building into dream, topology of the brain turning inside out into dream."

Never before had he plowed so rapidly thru things he couldn't understand, obscure phrases, incomplete sentences, words for which he had no meaning, all seeming to lead nowhere, but all the time the sense that the English language, so clear and unambiguous in the city, had a scatter-region that he approached in crisis, an area where the code of other possible worlds and languages tried to lead themselves in, or him out. His failure to understand was merely a failure of meaning, but there was more than meaning; the syntax was proper; the words were not at all arbitrary or gratuitous; they were the code designate of another English language, or like teaching kids about imaginary numbers, not every function has a place in the world we inhabit, but mappings whose use was the mapping itself, and the key to the process, and to

further mappings. Words not only took on new meanings; they failed to lose the old ones, and they failed to rid themselves of the meanings that were only accidental, as when you didn't know the meaning and made up one on the basis of a similar word.

"How can I keep my head on?" he thought. "How can I keep my crazy head?"

***

He quizzed her continuously, on the one hand trying to get her to repent, on the other hand trying to make her realize how serious her crime. He told her she would probably never see Mitchell again, and would not answer her questions about whether he was alive or dead. She asked him how she had broken the law, and he said that it was no one particular thing but that all her actions combined to show that she was conspiring to poison her husband with hidden hospital drugs. She insisted that she knew nothing about the hidden hospital and that it was only a legend that interested her. "Yes," he said. "Inevitably it's only a legend, but there's always some quack around to hand you the poisons." Eventually her spunk broke down, and she began crying and accusing him of poisoning his own son, of mutilating his body with unnecessary surgery. That was really all he needed; he was a lawyer or doctor waiting for her to incriminate herself. Now it was over with and he left, and assumedly she would never see him again. She looked ahead into the future, which was the loss of her mind. It all seemed possible, so lethal, the steel and glass of the city, the constant rumble of clean water, vitamin-feeding machines. She longed to burst out even if it meant spitting blood from the sheer force. Mitchell was foremost still, critical, but she could see back into the beginning of time, back into a history that had never grown or matured, a possible history for her, and her heart beat rapidly in the excitement of doing what was hidden and forbidden, not just in the world, but in herself, where there had previously been no distinction. She had often wondered what it meant to care so much about something that you were not afraid to die, and now, even though the world was about to close in on her, she clung to a thinner, even more illusory world-strand, that she could supersede the world somehow, something stronger and more solidary in her than all this which flowed like so much electrical irritation across the outer surface of her skin. She

felt she could burst her sight and still see, burst the dome, and still live, and breathe, and be. She was truly mad. In falling asleep she perceived, almost in words, that the malady was always in the head anyway, that the patient was the disease, that the chemicals could spell out whatever you wanted them to because you lived them, and for that time they *were* you. She fell asleep dripping downhill into her own chemical brook.

WORDS WRITTEN ON THE WALLS OF DREAMS

*Mental diseases are physical illnesses and vice versa. We are supposed to be insane if we cannot make use of our physical bodies. The reflected image of the brain is the content of the intestines. The larynx and the genitals are contrapuntal.*

*The earthly outer world is the spiritual inner world of life beyond earth. Healing is the establishment of the right balance between opposing excesses, the two forms of evil. It is claimed that physical pain is the result of congestion which hinders the entrance of consciousness into an organ.*

*The possibility of life here without a God or a future...*

*Only those who have accepted such a world and decided to make the world as if there were a God have earned the right to religion.*

***

They walked for hours in the darkness between the tracks. He told them that trains used to run here using both tracks at once. But myth and history were the same by now, the weeds growing in between. They walked, tiring, for hours, discouraged, but growing elated in the possibility that it might happen, have already happened. A bright spot appeared in the distance, at first as bright as the dome itself, then brighter until it was blinding and they had to keep their eyes closed most of the time. There was an ancient world engraved on the insides of their eye-balls, people turning the earth like flesh, and farming foods, a blue sky laced with the stuffy pilings of vapor, and the clear zodiac on the surface of a pond. The doctor gathers his medicines in the forest; this is a history we have never forgotten. We are all originally plants. And before that: sun. The propieter was the only one able to keep his eyes open, for he had been here before. He led them out into a world of total brightness where they lost

all sense of direction, stumbled, and fell. "It is silly to say that it is like coming out of the womb," he said, "but come: it is like coming out of the womb; your skin is ringing with pain; you want to cry and cry. But come and be born. Once again."

They sensed that he was right, but there was nothing they could do at first. Robin felt like dying; he hugged the ground and rolled over and over. She felt like crawling back into the tunnel, just clawing inch by inch into the dusk, not that she liked things the way they were back there, or that there was anything to go back to, but she couldn't live here even one second.

After a time they began slowly to uncurl, to open their eyes for split seconds. She saw the outside world ringing with brilliance and health; her very nerve-ends rang. "It was physical," she thought. "It was always physical." But what else could it have been, the way we are. She couldn't tell if she was in a hypnotic trance or actually somewhere, but finally she had to get up and walk and it didn't matter.

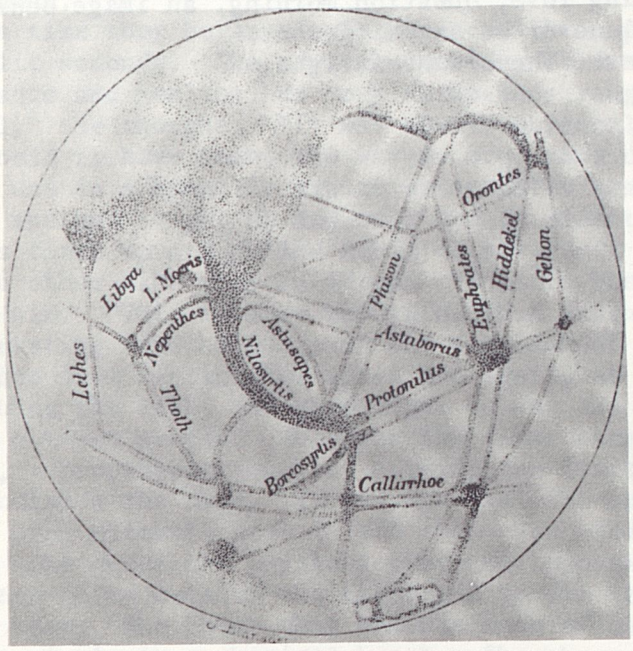
She was first up and pulled Robin to his feet; they fell against each other like tiny children. "This is beautiful," she said to him. "This is more beautiful than anything yet," her cells bursting with blood, pain and the lack of pain. He could not keep from kissing her again and again, as though the first thing the light had shed light on was the physical kinesthesis between people. This was the first necessary realization, a proprioception just outside the limits of the body, just outside the dome. It was not that she suddenly chose Robin over Mitchell here in the sun. The choice was irrelevant. She chose the physical over the impossibly mental; she chose to be outside the city, and to fix herself there, as a star. She chose that she was made of chemicals and touch, a ripple in a chemical brook. She chose proprioception, poetry, flowers, crystalline stone. The old man let it happen, even urged them to make love and be on their way. He was not insensitive. By no means. He was far-seeing. He considered his roots. Con-Sidera, that they should bind together as stars. Astrology is geology, essentially an earth science, an earth fix. He was far-seeing. Faraway he could see that his friends had drawn Mitchell in too, that the doctors were busy replacing his organs, building them anew from plants. He was far-seeing, and saw that one day the children would have once again their earth. "This

is not the only possibility," he thought, looking back at the dome, grey and slick, the Pleistocene ice.

They lay quietly. A wind passed over the grasses, the thin flowers like alphabetic letters, and everywhere, weeds, and the wind, across a thousand tongues with the origins of speech, seed. The great river that fed the city burst out into the glistening sunlight; this was pulmonary; the air was filled with the motion of life, leaves, animals; this was not a lesser poisonous world; this was the world they had come from, of unceasing growth.

We will move from one unquiet to another, lie nervous after making love, question morning, an image behind the retina, will never be any different.

Kether. The crown of light.




**Drawing by Schiaparelli showing gemination of canals. (From C. Flammarion, "La Planète Mars," Vol. 1.)**

*from The Scorpion, Chapter Eleven,*

*Book of the Cranberry Islands*

*1970*

Of what we want that is in the power of Valentine Michael Smith and others. Not just fine words, and intentions, not just the text, as in philosophic opening, and not just wisdom, but the power to ram it home. To bathe in holy water, when there is only water. Make guns disappear, when they're in the hands of scum. To be representative of the old ones or magi, so that each act counts, and brings a presence larger than Earth to bear on terrestrial encounter.

To be born in the sign for which the body is bloodroot, to come to Earth in mature years. Scorpion. Alien. To fall in love with and touch the women of another zodiac. Not just to talk stars but to be of them. To be the only Mars-Man on Earth.

This is what science fiction is about anyway, and psychoanalysis, and political campaigns. To elect a Martian, an objectivist, hence the only Earthman. Outside from inside the sign.

I cannot be a figure for your unconscious. I cannot be a Martian and save you from within your own consequences. Though I would come shining thru that night, that darkness of psyche, and defend you with whatever sword geology there allowed. In your head. I would cross your dream as animus, stand as the living personage, culture (shock?), and all that between, ram it home, myth, barrel, and sign. But I too am only an egg.

We change what we can. And if I found the opening it would be possible. I could move mountains with Hopi verbs. Which are not, after all, Benjamin Lee Whorf, Hopi verbs. This is what we are coming to, as on the old South American continent, men who come from the sea, cross the interior, and return to it, Atlantic or mare Pacific, undiminished. Men who move thru Ge and Tupi dialects, their cosmological power, their war spears intact.

Buddha of yourself (and of Mars) before master of any woman or man. Born on Mars of American parents, or transformed on Jupiter of Pithecanthropine seed. All of which is lost in the stinking role of teacher, the Monday morning sermon with dead books, the yolk ripped out of its shell too soon. Unless it lives of your own body, what use? Sal-

vation as present as sunlight, sperm, as rare as an ice age, or giant comet tearing apart the continents. But to direct as sunlight: that is a master's work. Corn as it grows on a commune, soaking up the magnetic field of prayer, as it is in aboriginal American culture, Aztec for yellow pigment, Tewa for sun.

Valentine M. Smith comes from a deprived planet, where the spiritual and yogic energies abound, but not too much food, and not too much water (the precious jewel locked in ice caps). It is hard for the Earthman to find the holy water, to meditate clear as a freshet or waterfall, direct as electric. A Martian can, the currency of water woven with other features of a gnostic text he is weaned on, closer to the telepathic pull of Jupiter, just outside the Earth's sway. So the Earthman on Mars is the figure, animus, for what all terrestrials would like to be; one born there, raised in a nest, becomes. It is not a remarkable power, merely a looseness, an isometric fluidity, as in Hopi verbs, when the planets lie set to the spring: an open door.

Of V. Michael Smith and others, notably Charles Manson, who tried, and found the door he opened still closed, the magical coda for which Crowley, thank god, wept like a jewel when his child died, not knowing why love in karma draws, and desire to ram it home draws too, as the center to a sun: there Manson failed. He would have it be as simple as a science fiction tale. Monkey see, monkey..... Not so. That wouldn't be Mars.

Or the gypsy in the Lawrence movie, who could only be physical, attractive force as a dark planet, figure, source and sorcery of a more ancient race, not Druid, but of the continental interior, Lithuanian perhaps, or Proto-Balkan, not just Egyptian wisdom, but Palaeolithic, as the wagon wheel, and the Venus figurine, flesh on which his hand discovers, the sensitivities, the, her grooves of the anima in stone.

Coming not only with himself on horseback, but with the pack of cards, the fortune (the part of fortune, which is a complex sun-moon relation), and the flood, hence coming with the irruption of the unconscious, the tsunami from the underworld, seizes her from the danger to which he is co-signet, taking her to the upperworld, with all her fantasies, where the soma dwells. "Be brave," he says, "or your luck will leave you," she says to herself, and thus yields to the older

genetic power, which for Valentine Michael is the Earth itself, of whose imbedding in a Martian system he was born. The gypsy gives his body graciously, as meteor to the air, upon the dead bodies of her ancestors, sexless wasted somata. This is always the Lawrence figure, Indian if not Martian: aborigine, attractive even in The Plumed Serpent, where political man is also world-creator, pre-Spanish, pre-Inca god, the origin seducing, standing as a figure of daylight upon the present, reveals it. Not to be modern man, who never has his women except in circumstance, but archetypal man, the more ancient source of your own body's wisdom; if we share history, the Earth's, let me rise upon it and take you to the familiar lands you have lost like all the Bridey Murphys in exile from a former self. Let me be the real teacher, of what you already know: so that ramming it home means letting you free at just the moment it happens; you will see me where I am not, coming out of the mists, carrying your oldest wisdom. I will be there.

And the figure of Brakhage, wise-man, body of light, is an ambiguous and sad one at this moment, whose work is absolute, but who is not the gypsy finally, despite superficial resemblance, to whom young girls cannot come, as such, or anyone, except in their own reading; on Earth there is a difference between life and art.

The Cards, in their glowing colors, are replaced by the blood and biles of the system, the interlocking fabric of family and birth, which is the part of fortune for any man. Still, the melancholy of not having real neighbors, of not fucking in that sense, which now an old friend, Greg, who came to my wedding, who visited Brakhage with me, has turned into a shield of numbers of his own embarrassment for a life without proper event.

None of us are abstractionists, finally, and there is no academic promotion to heaven, no solution to the problem mathematically as such, and he who sets masters, as numbers above him, will not be a master. We are upon the living mana of, not philosophers, but wakonda is drawn, as in the silence of Brakhage's films, the same silence of the gypsy who takes the girl in the flood into her own animus and the corporal presence of the human, the societal body --- the beginning of a commune Crowley wanted in England, Lawrence in Mexico, Manson wanted with his women, a measure of the god-power present

in 1970 A. D., and the channels open as the grooves in rocks (something I felt even in Heinlein's children's science fiction of Mars): then disappears in a flash, as the gypsy is no longer in her bed when she awakes, though the campfire smolders and the earth has been turned by the banshee river, the magic of Manson ending in the courts, as the spark, impossible in 1890, between two poles, ceases where it was, and the balloonists between New World and Old go down off New Foundland, ending a publicity stunt in turbulent North Atlantic waters, ending in a bloody act when nothing else is left, not even time, but too soon, too early in the morning, too soon to rip the body off, to enter the gate of Mars the planet (to which end even satellites tell us Mars is barren, Mars is false), this we recognize in remote possibility, as land will be returned to Indians in ghost-dance, and a man like Brakhage, or the gypsy, would seem to stand in that world, not only ready to attract, but ready to.....and.....

Even now only some things are easy, as for the Hindu, and the dying man, the joined man (and woman) in yoga, in societas, ecstasy, fire. But everything else is difficult, and becoming more difficult; even the bones are falling out of place, and endless confrontation without an episode of decisive grace.

That is as LeRoi Jones asks the machinegunners to step forward.

*"We have awaited the coming of a natural*
*phenomenon. Mystics and romantics, knowledgeable*
*workers*
*of the land.*

*But none has come.*
*(Repeat)*

*but none has come....."*

How about it Michael Valentine Smith, Charles Manson, and Joe DiMaggio. Can you juggle space and time, lay them on a line, and get us out of this place. We will cross the desert with you Moses if you can.

We don't hate you for what you did, Charlie, ugly as it was, but for ringing all the bells, promising the girls, and

then not bringing on the millenium, like you promised. You didn't have the stuff to ram it home.

Or the rest of the people in exile buy islands, invite their friends to parties on them, no neighbors with bulldozers and motorboats, and dark unacted desires, but who can't live there either, as the sun picks up Canaries, Cranberries from the sea. No. The summer people. The tourists haven't gotten anywhere. Nor the exiles. The Earth itself is in exile from Mars.

Figure passes thru the gates, seizes the weapons, opens the door, or the door opens for him.

Is he going to ram it home?

Earth opens out, less people and more people each day, what is also the land of spiders, what beneath the web is a land of cells.

Will the machinegunners please step forward and blast us (not out of but) into the city. Will the machinegunners rip open the door to black Mars.

or childhood's end.

We are waiting

for you, Hopi children. Will you lead the way into the Fourth World. I don't care if it's a turkey. Costume or not, the tribe follows, on faith that the firma, the body, can make it stick.

The SDS bombers are waiting.

The UFOs and their extra-galactic crews are waiting.

They are waiting in the fourth and fifth dimensions

for us.

The ESP-ers and assorted psychics and mediums are waiting.

Women's Liberation is waiting. And the Vietcong are waiting in another place.

Man on the moon, in the ghettoes is waiting.

For man will go where man can. Dig? Out.

The South African is waiting, and the South American.

The complaint against Charles Manson is simply that he bit off more than he could chew and fucked up the whole works, the Indian who strangled the eagle before the ceremony had begun.

The hijacker holds you up and says let's go there, and it isn't Egypt or Cuba, but he doesn't know that, nor do you, though you're both uncertain, and think maybe it's the plane itself, that it isn't a train.

There are one billion people on drugs ready to go, but

they want to know if they should come down first, or get higher. They want to know if you will take the consequences. for their acts.

Machinegunners, will you please blast open the hole. If you have the fuel, ram it home, for all of us, draw history the charmed snake from myth.

Numerous physicists are waiting, with science fiction writers, and Valentine Michael Smith.

is waiting to be made possible already, as you have proved he is, even in Tibet as long ago as 1800, and in Oraibi at 900 A. D., this on the West's clock.

The police are waiting in their squad cars. For a night of the full moon. (this could be a night off for them, they wish you would strip them of their powers, their bodies, someone is going to have to make it before the sun rises. And staying up all night reading the book isn't going to help. If she falls asleep

The children are waiting.

as we all are. Mars-man

for the Earth.

# *Mars: A Science Fiction Essay 1971*

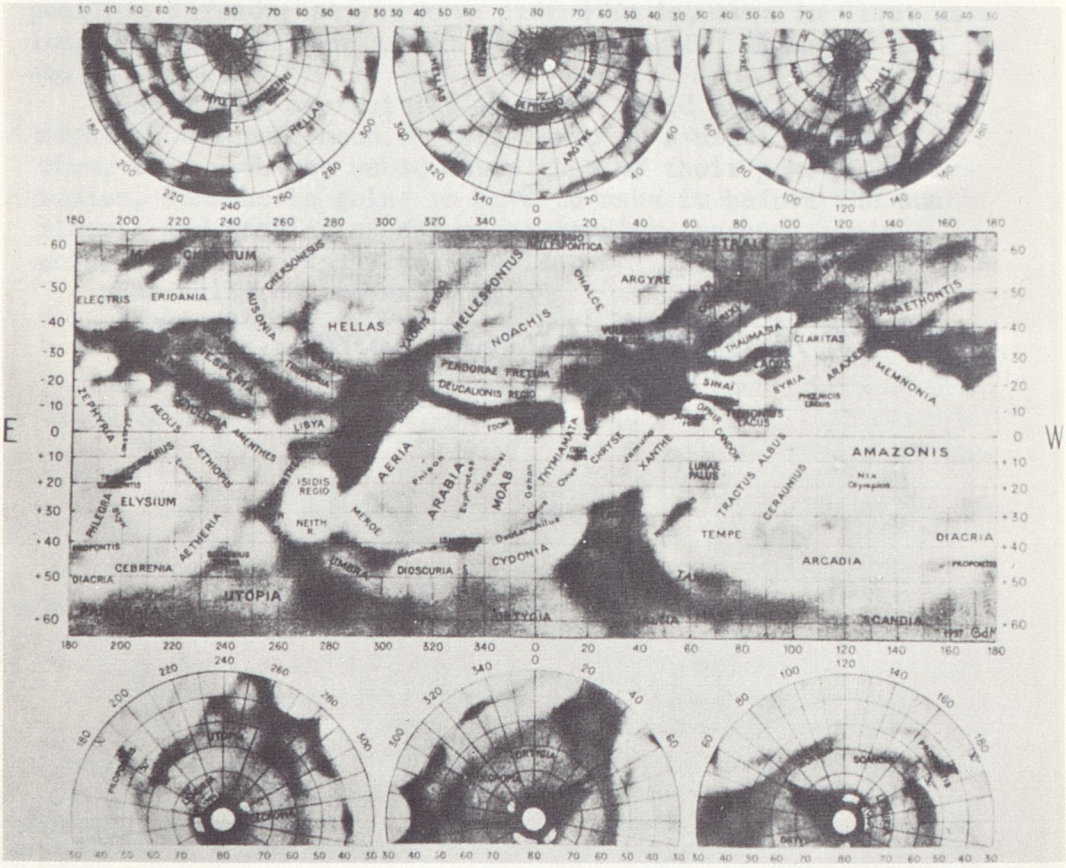



**FIGURE 2.21.** The International Astronomical Union map of Mars based on numerous telescopic observations.

The rocketship called *Orion* is launched from Earthworld. From Garden of Eden City of Ur. Its fuel is of solar origin. Hydrogen and oxygen, exotic in their pure form, as abundant as man is.

*What we call heat is a sensation produced by a substance to which modern chemists have given the appellation of caloric. When caloric is applied to our system in a greater proportion than it already contains, the system is warmed, and the sensation of heat produced. When, on the contrary, a substance of lower temperature than our system is applied to it, we feel the sensation of cold, because we then lose caloric.*

Ignition. The fires burn. The cameras record what is surely invisible, for light of the event never reaches their film. The dignitaries cannot see the launch, but they marvel, as upon the emperor's new clothes. Woven of lustrous gold. Its own children plunge, living, into the arcana, but the military-industrial complex is blind.

Turn ing. It seems impossible that it will leave the Earth. Turn ing. The gyres like a cat. Seeking the azimuth.

It seems that Magellan will never break the circle, in-circling forever the single worldocean of parallel lines *do* meet, on the surface of a sphere. Yet there is that secret opening in the Arctic, or Northernmost Sea, that Kepler spoke of in reference to the Moon.

In this science fiction story you are born again and again. No matter how many eggs you pass into and out of, shed skin, rebuilt of flesh from the stars, fires unto waters: AN ETERNAL EVENT.

We apply: mining, atmospheric pressure, heat. The chemicals are separated. The speed of the launch emerges from the equation. The decanter issues the long flame, rising itself into the ethereal, worlds upon worlds to conquer, even the coal deep within West Virginia mines. The heat necessary to warm space. And the space center.

*A white king sits on the throne, having at its feet the Moon, and the five Planets on their knees. Near at hand is a field, with yellow, ripening ears of barley. Behind the furnace is an old man inspecting the coals, and in the urinal is the full Moon.*

Steam. Pure unconquered hydraulic hydrostatic hydra-headed. The bombing of cities foreseen in 1912. *A blow at*

*the very heart of the Empire*, declares Lord Montagu. Defining aerospace. And we must now distinguish between aerospace, outer space, inner space, and that topology in which all worlds are connected, the tunnels as invisible as animals make, yet surround the Earth. The advocates of aerospace have included the ionosphere, the Van Allen Belts, and the Moon, now would like to incorporate Mars. They project the ship thru maps as thru paper, supplying the interplanetary Pentagon with its War of the Worlds. The ship gains speed, bursting thru a layer of clouds. Prescribing a path on their brains.

*The crucial point still is and remains: to find the exit out of the trap. WHERE IS THE EXIT INTO THE ENDLESS OPEN SPACE?*

*The exit remains hidden. It is the greatest riddle of all. The most ridiculous as well as tragic thing is this:*

*THE EXIT IS CLEARLY VISIBLE TO ALL TRAPPED IN THE HOLE. YET NOBODY SEEMS TO SEE IT. EVERYBODY KNOWS WHERE THE EXIT IS: YET NOBODY SEEMS TO MAKE A MOVE TOWARD IT.*

The friction of matter rushes past, stages breaking and discharging, wormlike, flaming parts of the original motion falling into the worldocean.

*And the fifth part is of the making of instruments of marvellous excellence and utility, as instruments of flying and of moving in chariots without oars more swiftly than can be supposed possible by the hands of men.*

All motions terrestrial are biological. The ship is driven by a sexual current: beans and snakes and fires, while they live, not sublimations, but the same, process *is* reality. Dry oxygen is passed thru alcohol; the absolute burns off its skin, orgiastic dervish who climbs and climbs and climbs. A vision, going thru to the top, to a vista, or visibility, which is itself history: THE INSTANTANEOUS.

*"We are men and our lot is to learn and to be hurled into inconceivable new worlds."*

*"There aren't any new worlds for us!" I exclaimed.*

*"We have exhausted nothing, you fool," he said imperatively.*

At the end of their climb they achieve orbit, vision is restored as in a dream. They see the whole of the Earth. The world. The mundus. Or they do not see it. For at this distance the world does not appear inhabited. They see only the shape of land, familiar in itself; they circle the eter-

nal continents. Few men have seen this, how whole and full the geometry, how thick and brilliant in its place, the homeland, with darkness all around it. Never once are they asked to orient themselves dead on, to discover where they are. They are content with aerospace, the vision of the Earth mere scenery to a war game.

*The bions contract and expand, that is, they already show the function of biological pulsation. They move through the microscopic field with slow, jerky or serpentine movements. They react positively to biological stain. If viewed with apochromatic lenses at a magnification of at least 2000x..... the content always shows a bluish glimmer, no matter what substance they were derived from.*

The cities of the East are not there, but they see Chesapeake Bay, and Cape Cod, New York. The spot looked at head on, is INVISIBLE, but along the coast of Maine, and Fundy, cloud formations, Northeasters stirring up a thick atmospheric matter; the sun itself like a shaft entering the enchanter's room: the forest. What about the center of the Earth, the metallic magnetic fat of this giant, still on fire, billions of years later.

After a time they note a few signs of man at work below: a new highway in Tennessee, the mark left by a ship in the sea off Nova Scotia; then that disappears along the North Atlantic turbine, the great glistening ice sheet, not cities in England but a coat of arms floating isostatically upon the eternal, Europe Mesolithic, uninhabited. This is not a distortion. This is the planet, pure projection upon the visual field, glowing blue bion in eternal veridical space.

*The female burrows frantically into the damp sand, tail first; the male then twines himself around the half-buried female, and the eggs and sperm are cast out. The fish then flop into the sweep of a receding wave, back into the sea.*

The lights of the cities do not appear. They are washed out in the industrial haze. But human habitation two hundred miles down thru the clear air above Tibet, falling as though levitating: the smoke of chimneys, clear silver ash against the black. This phosphorescence of thought. And where the loggers have cut straight thru the forest in Ontario, and the snow has fallen into the rows overnight.

*At that time, sounds, lights, and rays --- all three --- are experienced. These awe, frighten, and terrify, and cause much fatigue.*

They become aware of the body of the ship, the ringing of metals in the new environment, the adjustment of controls, the terrific speed they are undergoing, which in the infinite is motionless. The stars are many times brighter. Overbearing in their consciousness, insistence that they are the most important single fact of our existence. *It is often said that the universe is unique. As applied to the actual universe, this statement is a truism; but as applied to the class of conceivable model universes, it has considerable heuristic value.* The air glows with sparks. What was once thought to be empty space, to be as death and silence, a vacuum, is filled with life in transit between bodies, panspermia, between worlds.

*O nobly-born,* reads the message from Earth. *That which is called death hath now come. Thou art departing from this world, but thou art not the only one; death cometh to all. Do not cling, in fondness and weakness, to this life. Even though thou clingest out of weakness, thou hast not the power to remain here. Thou wilt gain nothing more than wandering in this* Sangsara.

Mars. the public whispers. Mars. they try to understand. A new nation perhaps. Are they one of those small small small African countries. No: the reply. They have two moons. Oh, a communist country, with satellites. No. nothing of the kind. Their moons weigh too little or too much; they have nothing to do with the market economy; they are outside the dialectic, in orbit. They didn't go thru that. They never suffered feudalism, or the flood. Mars. men from America are being sent to Mars. A new war. someone asks. The Olympics. someone says. Bringing the flag there first. No. Mars. good Roman mythology. Babylonian observation of the sky. Tycho Brahe. Ray Bradbury. Orson Welles. Flash Gordon. Good old Mars. Don't you remember all those Martians from the fifties. The ones that were infiltrating us. Flying their UFOs all over the planet. Stealing our H-Bomb secrets. Observing us. Hoping to save us. Trapped in our own archetypes. Of things seen in the skies. Of them/of ourselves. Good old Charley Martian. Kukla, Fran, and Martian. Before the Beatles. the red river canals. The mystery planet in old astronomy books. Earth's neighbor. Are you a good neighbor. But in glass houses shouldn't..... We're going to Mars. In which direction? Why ask that. It's West. Clearly West.

*One minute it was Ohio winter, with doors closed, windows*

*locked, the panes blind with frost, icicles fringing every roof, children skiing on slopes, housewives lumbering like great black bears in their furs along the icy streets.....* So Bradbury begins *The Martian Chronicles.*

In this science fiction story, though, there are landing stations, memory erasure banks. You can have amnesia. You can be wiped out *in medias res.* And still be expected to go on. The plot allows for this. The distances are the famous ones: between mind and object, lover and beloved, living and dead. After all. We *are* the children who murdered the patriarch king, ate his bones, married our own mothers, our origins, to give birth again, an endlessly replicating neurosis, a virus of the living. Freud told us so, opening the Twentieth Century, to *Civilization and Its Discontents.* We were on the Earth when the comet passed tangent, burning out our brains. We were here when the stone was awakened from great sleep, to pink shutter of light, to hands pulling it out of bed, into conjunction, into the decanter, the magnetic climatic belt of its skin. They say that those who do not know history are doomed to repeat it. I say that those who know history are the only so doomed.

They find themselves searching the Earth for signs of thought. Unintentionally scanning the sense data for its object, if there is one, that turning inside-out, since the pre-Platonic, later the Kantian, the phrenological. There is nothing there that resembles what they are; except by thinking it: human beings enter the world. They have no choice. At any one moment elation fades; the life is a whole, second by second unchanging, and live that once, all at once.

*Through the medium of the spinal column, and by means of the nerves that go off from the spinal marrow through the joints of the back-bone, the brain holds intercourse with every part of the body, the nerves being ramified upon every portion of its surface, so that not even the point of a needle can penetrate any portion of it without lacerating them, and thus producing pain.*

The mind seeks a proper object, a cue or synapse. But the whole Earth is the object, the great land-masses on which thought is enacted in absolute geomagnetic fix. Out of nature, because not visible there. Unknown Indian shamans. Operating nerve centers. Of rivers. Great tension between Southern India and Ceylon. More than socialism: dark lightning-like attraction flows. As between giant thoughtographic clouds (they

are called) in the brain of the psychic. Is not the whole thing psyche?

*I was conscious of being two persons --- one, lying on the ground in a field where I had fallen from the blast, my clothes, etc., on fire, and waving my limbs about wildly, at the same time uttering moans and gibbering with fear..... The other 'me' was floating up in the air, about twenty feet from the ground, from which position I could see not only my other self on the ground, but also the hedge, the road, and the car which was surrounded by smoke and burning fiercely.*

The most radical activity America as a corporate entity undertakes is its space-program. It is exactly because there are no guaranteed rewards, no empirical benefits even remotely balancing the expense, and no further technological applications on the scale itself: that it becomes...an experiment in pure consciousness. And derives its meaning therefrom.

Instead, they attempt to find its use, to justify the event with a tangible consequence (else why waste several billions of dollars a second time planting a stiff American flag on a windless planet and scattering Bibles among stones that were on fire long before men were fish-children and the mosaic pattern emerged in the Cataract South).

For propaganda. Super Bowl victory over Russia. Beyond the Moon: Mars; beyond Mars: Venus, Ceres. Prestige, for the Republican Party, and American industry, charisma on the world market. So think the Senators who vote money for the space program: who wouldn't think of supporting the alma mater football team. Thus is a dark and powerful fish given life.

It is actually the most subversive propaganda the United States government (and the Republican Party) could initiate against their own ostensible ends. Now they have shown the people of the nation, and the world, a more powerful object of political activation than the American flag, or the American flag being burned in the streets, or children on fire in Vietnam. Those pall before what they have unleashed, without knowledge or preparation, the most powerful emblem of all, the totem which is truly whole, whose collective representation we do not simply share, but are. Not only did it move people to patriotism; when they saw it it went thru them like a knife. For all of history they had longed to see it, to know its image, fuzzy or clear, their life more than in its hands. Not

just Hermes, but the ancestral home of the hermetic, where ecology is the same: climate, no more.

By showing the Earth the Whole Earth they began the Whole Earth movement and ecological radicalism, whose first tremors are being felt, even while the octopodes lie blind in the mud. For the house now knows the gate. And it is front door, address. There are no breaks in the Earth, historical or geocosmic: there are no breaks in a life. We live it as a blue flash, a transforming streak in whose bodies we come, and the whole cloak thrown around us stands now as the unit to which we live.

Shaking Republican instititions as the threat of Communism, being partial, never could. For there is no accomplice to this event, hence no excuse. Indian North America, and Black Africa, Aboriginal Australia, remain. *It is upon this land that we have hunted and were assured of rights to game such as deer, elk, antelopes, buffaloes, rabbit, turkey, and the like. It is here that we captured the eagle, the hawk, and such birds whose feathers belong to our ceremonies.*

They showed the living planet, like a great tree, its head in fiery heaven, its arms around the waters of its own oceans, bathed in the hot and glowing seeds of pre-biblical space. And the history of consciousness will mark this as a turning point. That any one contains the whole. And there is no number or age but: one.

*A sense of time lies thick and heavy on such a place. Yearly since the ice age it has awakened each spring to the clangor of cranes. The peat layers that comprise the bog are laid down in the basin of an ancient lake. The cranes stand, as it were, upon the sodden pages of their own history. These peats are the compressed remains of the mosses that clogged the pools, of the tamaracks that spread over the moss, of the cranes that bugled over the tamaracks since the retreat of the ice sheet.*

They showed man the world upon which evidence for his existence rests. And then a planet outside the transubstantiation: pure landscape of matter and space, knotting of starfire into stone. Man saw himself walking on that world, glowing with the blue bionic, the life-energy, world-star over his head, casting a full curtain of dawn, of moonlightearthlight upon those living gems of its own labyrinthine node. The biohistorical walks the geocosmic, and this we had never known. *The rising smoke kindles the blue light, which then joins it-*

*self to the white light, whereupon the entire candle is wholly kindled, alight with a single unified flame. As it is the nature of the blue light to demolish whatever comes into touch with it from beneath, therefore if the sacrifice be acceptable and the candle wholly kindled, then, as with Elijah, 'the fire of the Lord descends and consumes the burnt-offering', and this reveals that the chain is perfected, for then the blue light cleaves to the white light above, while at the same time consuming the fat and flesh of the burnt-offering beneath, nor can it consume what is below, except as it rise and join itself to the white light. At such time, peace reigns in all worlds, and all together form a unity.*

And they showed the amount of energy that the universe, working into, exponentially, has invested in man, sheer human thought powerful enough to draw not just the mundus, but the imago mundi, even as the atomic bomb, two decades earlier, had shown how much power is contained in the unit itself (not power from the barrel of a gun, but power from everything, each drop of atomic water containing more than a Colt .45). And man combines billions of such infinitesimal units, carried thru nerves and psyche to the highest powers of their native genius: the jinni from the bottle singing poetry is politics is poetry is political radical man, aboriginal man, able to turn on a dime, unleashing powers that smash thru relativity as hail thru glass. *His shell burst open; his head gradually arose above the ground; his lower extremities assumed the character of feet and legs; arms extended from his sides, and their extremities divided into fingers; and thus, beneath the influence of the shining sun, he became a tall and noble-looking man..... 'Who art thou?' said the beaver, 'that comest here to disturb my ancient reign.'*

*'I am a man,' he replied. 'I was once a creeping shell.'*

How could he do anything but throw off the garments. How could he want to be anything except this glorious being, born on the blue planet, into his own mind. All its oceans, islands, seen from a distance, a pulse, is himself, the living bluefish swimming in the dark sky that has nursed it from carbon night, inwardly whirling of orgasm, spawn. The space program has proven this, as dead reckoning could not until it was thrown upon the absolute. Where we are: no more sufficient political statement, no more basic aesthetic principle.

*After sailing on the ocean for seven days, he saw the Isle of the Departed basking in golden light. Its hills sloped*

*green and were tufted with beauteous trees to the shore, the mountain-tops were enveloped in bright and transparent clouds, from which gushed limpid streams which, wandering down the steep hillsides with pleasant harplike murmur, emptied themselves into the twinkling blue bays. The valleys were open and free to the ocean; trees loaded with leaves, which scarcely waved to the light breeze, were scattered on the green declivities and rising ground; all was calm and bright; the pure sun of autumn shone from his blue sky on the fields; he hastened not to the West for repose, nor was he seen to rise in the East, but hung as a golden lamp ever illuminating the Fortunate Isles.*

From the first speed they attain a second. They leave the Earth's pull and pass thru an exitway that has always been visible as Nuit, but no one has ever taken it. They must now cover the vast distance between one planet and another in that corridor. 49 million miles; thru how many migrations over how many years, yet the whole universe moves this distance in a millionth of a second, negating it. The Pawnee, wandering from the Asian hearth to the rivers of Nebraska, have covered 49 million miles that is more than the distance between Earth and Mars. It is not the Bering Strait, but it is more like an estuary than a vacuum, for the microscope reveals life within the telescope, and the astronomical ratio is neither above nor below, but sheer abundance. *The spring sea belongs at first to the diatoms and to all the other microscopic plant life of the plankton. In the fierce intensity of their growth they cover vast areas of ocean with a living blanket of their cells..... Almost at once their own burst of multiplication is matched by a similar increase in the small animals of the plankton. It is the spawning time of the copepod and the glassworm, the pelagic shrimp and the winged snail. Hungry swarms of these little beasts of the plankton roam through the waters, feeding on the abundant plants and themselves falling prey to larger creatures.* Outer space is living as inner. Filled with energy as sure as green vines creeping on the barn. Snakeblood. The single sun-star in vibe, burning off the outside of the coal, moving to what is left of the inside. It is not a dearth of life in the universe, nor intelligence. There is more than enough, and it is membranously close enough to itself to make of fireskin what cannot be made of the salty mucous of oceanwater. It does not appear that they are running away from it, but both, in absolute motion, running side

by side. Against their will they feel the high a motorcyclist dreams of, standing beneath the highway bridge just beyond the airport, sniffing glue as the jets come crashing in over their heads.

They are high. They are really up there, out there, and it is without end. No string holds them to the fantasy men call a dream, or hallucination. It is not just an altered state of consciousness, but an altered state, as consciousness is too. They open their wings and head into the dim starlit tunnel, from which comets and dragons once came, from which, comes now, relative time, as life exploding from the inside of a rose, becomes growth and form; dark fish, disguised, pass out of the tunnel, gulp the pure sunlight on their armor, move in vehicles of their own making, the seeds escape the rose and blow against the photosynthetic, in whose delicate sugary ion they arose. A solar wind. Ceaseless even in night. And thru the window they spy the perfect naked opening, so unmistakable they shudder, a woman bare to her genitals and pulling them in. The inner path is light, a huskiness in their voices, a sense not of smallness but of gigantic size, that they are made of the same thing, and that they scrape along, with significant friction, the inside of the husk.

The ship radio has no sense of time; it pulls in tunes from the past and future, oldies but goodies:

*Take the ribbon from my hair*
*Shake it loose and let it fall*

The light around them is overwhelming; it passes in pulses and patterns, seeming to speak. The voice itself, on all sides of them, and in the burning bush, eludes them, and thru the static the radio plays, the Stones: *Nobody else's hand will ever do*, and when that's finished, The Doors, *Baby come and light my fire*, this far away from the sun, warm in their hands, they stand as monks in the machinery. Their fire is lit; the coalman fills their desire; and the iceman comes too. Looking back at the Earth, from this distance, they think they see the oxygen, the color blue, leaking away from the planet, like light thru a stained glass window. The seas flowing off, into them the green colors of the plants.

*The central nervous apparatus in the jelly-fish is located in the middle of the back, like the solar plexus in vertebrates. When the jelly-fish moves the ends of the body move towards each other and away from each other, in rhythmi-*

*cal alternation. We come to the following assumption:*

*The expressive movements in the orgasm reflex are functionally identical to those of a living and swimming jellyfish.*

The snows having ended, the warm misty January rain, the Earth's axis leaning into spring, having fallen, the ships in the harbor float thru the mist, night comes, the ice of the interstellar opening; morning comes, we take Robin out to the hill by the raspberry bushes, the snow piled above them. I place him in the saucer and let them go: roaring down the hill, skipping along the ice; he sits in the center, laughing, at the end of the ride rolling out and onto his back, where he lies, under the sky. We try the big sled, its long runners picking up all the potential energy of hill, running it out against the icy inertia, so far that it seem nothing to him; he sits quietly on the sled, running past snowbanks and clouds. White Kitty, chasing at him, almost gets clipped; she slides away, her paws skidding on the ice; his eyes follow her motion, then return to that hypnotized wonder as he flies past the apple tree, buried to its branches in snow, and comes to a stop at the edge of the forest. He turns around, and sees me running after, to collect him.

If we use Earth as a key, and what happened here, life would seem a rare phenomenon indeed, despite the astral, and the decay of suns between suns. Here it happened as it never could again, nor could a jeweler duplicate this string of life. Here the amino acids boiling with worms in a hot dilute soup. Here the ammonia absorbed in the oceans, the hydrogen escaping. Ultraviolet light at the window absorbed by the ozone blanket, deposited in the alkaline. A pure sugar raining down upon a primal ocean. Coacervate droplets in rich colloidal synthesis. Isomers drawn to optic rotations. Never cease turning. Stereoisomers, distinguishing the lefthand turn from the righthand turn, and all that comes after. New material enters from within. Phosphorous bubbling up, lithium, iodine, gold.

As long as reduction is retained: a brown water lies upon the rock, discharging sticky flakes, winged fish, bridge cast to bridge, memory in an impossibly-wrought mirror, shining crystal into crystal, strand sticky with previous strand, harvesting the seed, the inner light. *Mind no longer appears like an accidental intruder into the realm of matter.*

*Not of course our individual minds, but the mind in which the atoms out of which our individual minds have grown exist as*

*thoughts*. Earth is just one of the keys spinning, one possible stereoisomerism of he who clearly is not an intruder, but a sorceror and a knave, idealism and materialism both, as fish emerge from the brain of Hermes, Hermes-Thoth teaches the monkey-man of the Nile an alphabet; the signature and the double helix, as they were, remain.

Then there is Mars, toward which their ship turns on the larger azimuth, the next Babylonian planet in our isometry: a Hittite god, a day of the week, something which, exactly, returns, but cannot be gone to. *The child floats in complete darkness inside the amniotic liquid at a constant temperature of thirty-seven degrees Centigrade..... Living things cannot live without timegivers. If they are placed outside the reach of 'obvious' timegivers in the environment, they will instinctively find other patterns by which to regulate their biological rhythms, becoming most sensitive to the influence of subtle synchronizers from space.*

They approach a clock which has always been outside them, as a measure, as they have always been inside of it, observing its motion exogenous. What happens then when man enters time, the only thing that truly lies outside of him?, and extends his history to those planets which are his history? What then will be the Phoenician Chronicles? What will he call the days of the week?

Mars is a different event. Its history is unvarying and eternal. It is external to myth, only the two moons lying beyond it, and they, part of its system. Mars appears to contain the canals of Schiaparelli and Lowell, great cities at their junctures. The changing spots are more than meteor rays, but a face that speaks of relationship and history, new world and old, tropics and polar belt. Winter and spring. This is what Lowell meant. Mars is an obscurity we cannot imagine, except from without, as the Hopi language, spoken by the disappearing elders of a magnificent race. Invisible to Mariner. To anthropologists who come to the last days of Old Oraibi, a dying planet.

For the landmarks *are* the lands.

*The narrow strip of earth consisting of parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa, on which history had hitherto transacted itself, was suspected not to be the whole. The Portuguese led the way in the new career of discovery. Away down the Africa coast their daring mariners crept, passing Cape Bojador, which had barred the way for twenty years, penetrating the dreaded*

*torrid zone, crossing the line, losing sight of the North Polar Star, and gazing in rapture on the Southern Cross and the luminaries of another hemisphere, till at length Bartholomew Diaz discovered the Cape of Good Hope in 1486, thus opening a new way to the shores of India. What new discoveries might not the abysses of ocean yet disclose!*

The television cameras whir, a thin strip of Earthian chemicals known as film, passes thru, generating imagery between. They see a blue glow around the men, electrically bright. They walk along the ground. Something glistens on the ground. Radios connect. The Martians are all around them. We can feel that. There is water. A rich grove, as if trees, or transparent vegetation, violet. The long cords that bind man to the motherplanet are his biology. There are trees on Mars, but they are archetypal trees; they are not from the same tree as rowan, oak, or palmetto. The ground is dirt, a glowing green filament upon it. It is not grass. Mars. is a - live. like the snail in the ocean, knowing what it is, sticking together.

A cloud of, call them insects, surrounds, reddish. They have perceptible mimesis, almost an alphabet. The men aim the cameras at them, trying to show the structure, like small hummingbirds, life approaching, smelling out, outfoxing, even the fox, life. A pure glow, a clear red flame; holy life in the sanctum, what they were searching for. The New World! How many, quoth he, before we learn there aren't any, sayeth the magi, in the winds above our planet. The custodians of Deimos and Phobos, the two artificial satellites of Mars, sit like frogs in their ponds, twin deities of the Navaho pantheon. Gladys Reichard sitting in her tent, and they bring it to her, the dope. *dark cloud. male rain. yellow corn. pollen. dark mist. Measuring Worm wore a smooth hat with points and whistled as he walked with his arms folded behind his back.*

Don't believe any of this. It's all science fiction. We don't know what Mars is yet. But the lake country of the Twentieth Century poets. All we know for sure is aerospace, that region a manned spacecraft occupies. Or:

*In 1877, during relatively routine observations of Mars, under conditions of relatively good seeing, Schiaparelli was surprised to find long, dark, rectilinear features which seemed to connect dark area with dark area, traversing thousands of kilometers of Martian deserts. Schiaparelli called these features 'canali,' which, in Italian, denotes channels, or*

*grooves.*

Somewhere in space the spool of thread runs out. The powerful force of terrestial gravity dwindles to the last tendril; the ship hangs in the balance, and passes over into the gravitational field of Mars, burning the bones of dinosaurs as it does. It is like a musical note changing tone, our moods change. Beyond this point, all lighter material is drawn toward the macrocosm, the greater alchemical world of Mars, to ignite in its atmosphere and supply the giant soul with food. They feel now the pull of the full Earth upon their heads, so strong that the insomnia is more than bright lights, an apartment on Forty-Second Street with Camel signs and Coke, but the blare in the head of a whole biological innard, the counter-tug of oceans upon the sky. The more they move away, in their armor, the more they yearn for the pure biological, to swim as fish, to release their vertebral structure out the hole thru which it came. The more they realize they are enclosed in a fine manufactured steel, not earth, air, fire, and water, but an imbalance of metals, presently poisoning those gland-driven seas. They know they must be, that all life, all consciousness, has moved toward the puncture of another system, as leaves awakening tropistically to daylight, casting of dark limp man upon deep and endless powers. They leave a world so complex that they exist. They approach a world too complex to imagine.

*The expulsion of the spawn in fishes and of the semen in higher animals is bound up with this plasmatic convulsion of the total body. The orgastic convulsion is accompanied by high excitation which we experience as the pleasure of the 'acme.'*

The power is now out of their hands. They have done their job, or been done to. They must eat. They must stay alive. For squids hurtle toward a new generation. They do not know who they are, thru too much military training, lack of yoga, meditation, too much aerospace, but prisoners, bound to their ship, the ship bound to the system that launched it, sustains it, and somewhere behind that, the great sailing vessels, and the dreams of other men for a golden world that has always existed on the periphery of human thought.

They are at long last making, as Crowley climbed the Himalayan Mountains in search of the ascetic, the Darwinian of himself, as Aqu of Aquarma wandered in the astral spheres,

the great hermetic journey. *It means we always need another sight, at least one more, preferably several, from the Sunne, or the Moone, or a Starre (or even from a lighthouse or a headland), before we can say - WHERE TWO POSITION LINES CROSS - here we are!*

Aerospace. Flows West. Space itself. With the great jets. Ruling the jetstream like lions. Coming to Australia with the cargo of the ancestors faster than the ancient Murrayian genes.

*Thus it came to pass that early in May 1497, a little vessel called the Matthew, of the caravel class, most likely, sailed out of the port of Bristol and turned her prow towards the West.*

And against a full night of stars all around them, relativity a blanket keeping warm their blood, they slept, these biological clocks of men, wanting only pleasure finally, whatever brings it and whatever it is, carrying their nation's flag as a churinga, as John Cabot carrying the flag and charter of England, not even an Englishman himself. And maps. Maps of inhabitable planets every blessed fool carried in his pocket. From Phoenician times on. And god knows how long before that. Arabic maps! Phoencian maps! Viking maps of the North! Sufi maps of the South Seas! Maps by way of Cipangu and Cathay. The distant Poly Nesians. Maps indistinguishable from stars, and the inner sense of man. Stars indistinguishable from maps, for what other lights has the Creator used to guide beings thru the Creation, from island to island on the azimuth, protrusions of sailing cults, and the private life of the humpbacked whale. *To seek out, discover, and find whatsoever island, countries, regions, or provinces of the heathens or infidels, in whatever part of the world they be, which before this time have been unknown to Christians.*

How to tell pagan from Jesus freak, missionary from Jehovistic shaman, in this the Western World of the Western World, to distinguish the spores of this unique creation from any other, Martian, Deimosian, Phobosian, or interstellar, and what that does to the price of Spain's gold. Or how the moonrocks themselves were used for five years to pay for the spacetrips, changing from weight to property to make coin.

There is no blue sky. It is black. And the stars are so far they are close. They hang, an instantaneous tapestry on which relativity is written. And when these lands are

discovered they will change the face of the Earth.

*The sun's lower edge was now nearly touching the horizon and, as the solar disk deepened into orange, yellow light spilled out from beneath the emerald splendor. Elsewhere the sky changed from violet to royal blue in which the stars glittered like brilliants. Phobos had set, but the other moon, Deimos, shone bluishly in the eastern sky and it was at the full.*

It would seem that even if the whole Earth were reduced to energy the distance of fuels would diminish before the distance of intelligent life in the universe. Orgasm outweighs even fire. *that the universe is infinite; that it consists of an immense ethereal region; that it is like a vast sky of space in whose bosom are the heavenly bodies.*

Their course is read as from *The Tibetan Book of the Dead.* Their bodies pass between worlds; they are reborn peole, their families have forgotten them. They awake, having forgotten too. All they have is the eternal memory, and the astral beasts, who nurse us, feed us, lead us, in turkey form, between worlds. Mars in our horoscope. But from Martian skies Earth is a green morning star, bright as thru the window the shrubbery, an island in the Atlantic, its urn.

Aqu concentrates his energy on those same planetary distances. It is the same perception, in fact the same journey, and always has been. The infinity of mind is the infinity of space. Aqu sees this, then he begins to move. The living voices in either speak. The body is not a machine. The perfection in the pod is as in a dream, the dreamwork spins a legume. The further one gets from Earth the more disastrous/the more conceptual errors become. The butterfly outdistances the worm. The way home has ceased to be the way home, and the imago mundi dwindles, until Columbus, upon that ocean, has no charts, no land, no birds, endless meteors, coming closer and closer to the asteroid belt, and the Inca king, oblivious, counting on his quipu, building on the edge of the world his new dynasty, knowing nothing of the Portuguese, and mere archetype of White Man and Pope.

The Martian trade channels go deep into the jungle, among the Bororo and the Gē-speaking peoples. And even by the time Lévi-Strauss gets there it is not enough to speak of "the savage mind;" there is also the Martian mind, the telepathic and cosmic mind, including dolphins, coyotes, and Heinlein's egg-children of Mars. The cosmological goes be-

yond the primitive, for it works outside-in at the same time thunder and rain and sunlight and wild pigs fill the inner circumstance of their derivation. Association is not enough, in the age of discovery. There are more sunnes and moones than will go into the computer, and from stellar centers it rushes out to fill the All, pure as tongues of fire. Angels without totemic operators. Odic princes sucking the sperm from their lovers' cocks, the white flames of unborn children into their chambers, and singing: the counterbiological, works too. Simply: MARS. MARS. MARS. as it would always be.

They take out new charts; they search among the stars for a specific locale, a point from which other points flow as a locus. There are more obscure routes to the Fourth Planet, more Northern, and at such great angles winds blow against the windows, great squids attack, making the Loch Ness monster look like a squill; and the science fiction novel comes to an end in the bloodstream. They will avoid that. They are militarily trained, her majesty's best. They will stay in the macrocosm, in aerospace, to the end, be it kamikaze instead of transcendence. They never leave the Earth; they simply extend the conception of geometric space. And during the time that the ship crosses to Mars the men are forgotten (they have passed beyond the threshold of psychoanalysis), and all the rest drags on, like war.

They have vanished without a trace, except for the trace they leave, unlike death, a pull upon the entire Earth: consciousness sensing, amoebalike, its own extension. Hungry Alexander the flatworm, tasting the endless worlds there are to conquer, to puncture, to suck from the soil, starjuice of. Weeps. Not too hot and not too cold. The sun, with a knowledge that has been reduced to pure light, grows smaller, each day, into a winter no man, Arctic or Red Indian, has ever known. Pithecanthropus made his stand short of here, in the caves of China. This ice-age, if followed for what it is, reaches the epithalamium of Jupiter and Saturn, frozen hydrogen cores. Spring comes less often; winter storms are more violent and longer-lasting than ever. Snow covers the huts, and islands which have never had access to each other are joined by ice. Carrying the mail, people walk between.

*There is an upper stratum of warm water which becomes warmer day by day as it circulates from the surface to a moderate depth with repeated exposure to sun and air; this overlies a body of colder water which has little or no opportunity*

*to gain heat from the sun or oxygen from the atmosphere. There is now a definite summer thermal stratification with an upper warm water mass, known as the epilimnion, and a lower non-circulating cold mass called the hypolimnion. Where the two masses are in contact there is a transition zone in which the temperature falls rapidly with depth. This intermediate zone the Germans appropriately call the metalimnion (transition lake mass), or the Sprungschicht (jump-layer). In America it is more commonly designated with equal appropriateness as the thermocline (temperature slope).*

The men are held prisoner behind enemy lines. Their families remember them, or think they do, but the universe is process. The cells are burned away. The life-event goes on, the human exchange, shards of material, sexual mesmerism. There is an image from faraway, but it is distorted. The millions of miles they are crossing change their forms until they are not quite human; they are light and without shape. They speak with a wisdom, a distance, a slowness no Earthman has ever had. From behind enemy lines: the whole kulchur changes. In later days they speak so onerously they seem to chant, and there is a distance between the phonemes in which can be heard the pure vowels and consonants, the throat itself entangled with atmospheric static and interplanetary hiss. Their families come to realize that the distance is total, that they may never return. This is no simple war, after which the interbellum; this is the state of the decade, the cream of the forties rotting in the belly of Aquarius, while the Milky Way snaps its whips. The men themselves are no longer men; they are becoming removed from prior imperatives; they are almost judges, of all that we do, all that we are. When they say that the war will never end, it is not with sorrow; it is as an aphorism, for something else, more beautiful, more final.

*If any of the three souls or nine vital spirits that sustain the human body should depart, the imbalance results in sickness, insanity, or death, and the healer's first invocation is for the souls and spirits to return to the victim. In the principles of Nham Than which guide the practitioners of Sino-Vietnamese medicine there are about a thousand vital points in the human body and each corresponds with a specific hour, date, and odd or even number in the lunar calendar.*

The jets are made perfectly, in the factories, but under alien gunfire, horoscopy, they come tumbling out of the sky, *ma*, bringing their spirits with them, men who walk on crutches, who carry the emblems of a distant land and previous unfought wars. There are photographs of them in armor. They are shown in films of men playing volleyball. They are eating enemy food; their body is remade of the local environment, a herbalism, upon which an acupuncture, the severe flow is located, they are reborn in the East.

The light of the sun-star dwindling, the war of the species goes on like hundreds of gathering locusts in Ohio in the early summer. They have no azimuth; they make their way along the ground.

There are no locusts in this space, but it is filled with wormlike animals, peasants, and a melancholy which was once the light of the trees thru the trees thru the windows of the windows in the bedroom at dusk, is now the whole sun, and the distance of the Earth which sits in sunlight, the questions they ask themselves, beyond training, like why?, at 50,000 miles an hour, or motionless, a life sentence, which goes back to being born. And will death itself wipe out the gains of consciousness; here in these lands of the East it cannot, finally, be escaped. You can't go on doing things like without seeing thru the veil of sorrows sooner or later, without becoming Buddhist, unAmerican or not.

The faint edges of Mars are becoming visible, a creature of some size and significance. It is too late to turn back, too soon to confront what it is; the law will take care of everything; in the end you will pay and be paid for what you have done.

The prisoners of war are not returned, and this is the last war, the communications war, in which language taps out an endless and insoluble enigma. Meaning dwindles, as in a horoscope when the source planet is left and the bodies are exposed directly to radiation. If they have been captured, there is nothing America can do about it, no law of physics or jurisprudence to get them back; America has placed them there, to serve ends for which even it is blind proxy, the burning jets carrying their own incendiaries, raging official nonsense, but firing all the same. Death comes anyway, a burning world of hydrogen leaking off into space, leaving oxygens and spices behind, and then what?

*He was the first traveller to trace a route across the*

*whole longitude of Asia, naming and describing kingdom after kingdom he had seen with his own eyes; the flowering plateaus and wild gorges of Badakh-Shan, the jade-bearing rivers of Khotan, the Mongolian steppes. The first traveller to reveal China in all its wealth and vastness, --- its mighty rivers, its huge cities, its rich manufactures, its swarming population, the inconceivably vast fleets that quickened its seas and its inland waters; to tell us of the nations on its borders, with all their eccentricities of manner and worship; of Tibet, with its sordid devotees; of Burma, with its golden pagodas and their twinkling crowns; of India the Great, not as a dream-land of Alexandrian fables, but as a country seen and partially explored, with its virtuous Brahmins, its obscene ascetics, its diamonds, and the strange tales of their acquisition.*

Spaceship Earth, Fuller says. And Fuller also says, Utopia, or Oblivion, which is the choice anyway, and always has been, right down to atomic structure, down to the genital trimming of oils and flashing neurons of the conscious operating beast. 'We want to get outside the system,' scream freaks and radicals and other heads. But the system is all we have, right from the clay we are made of, and if we succeed in getting outside of it, god help us. Inside of it we remain assured; we are in the hands we have always been in the hands of. He who made us holds our fate in the balance. And there is no difference between the two. We cannot be afraid. And we cannot escape. Nor could we ever, even worlds before this.

To some planets consciousness may never come, or is washed away, and the great stonewhale presents its back to the bombardment of 450,000,000,000 square miles of sun. Utopia, sing the angels, drinking, spilling, spilling, drinking their wine, and it drips in long strands of ulothrix and ulva. Our beautiful sugary juices, our muscles, our young: Utopia, it must be; the numbers alone: prove it.

*The Earth intercepts a cylinder of rays from the sun whose cross-section is equal to a circle whose diameter equals the diameter of the Earth. The area of this circle is, therefore, 6,960,000 yards. Hence the rate at which solar energy is intercepted by the whole earth is in round numbers 230,000,000,000,000 horse power.*

Those changing colors in the fields of Kansas are not human crops, but the clinging of moss to moisture, grain to the

melting ice-caps. There's no agriculture on Earth, only ecology; so you'd think from reading the news. No, says another astronomer: they are crystals changing their color hydrostatically. No, says another: they are the blending topography of sandstorm, the three-dimensionality of mountain peaks.

So even the spacemen have travelled beyond the point of worrying. They conserve their fuel, using some of the free power in the universe, that between heavy bodies and in tidal bays: it is not a matter of economics; the sun shines for free. Until it doesn't. And then we all go back into the caves.

Life is optimistic, and impressions must approach ecstasy. The dark nihilistic mark is its own, with its own eloquent keepers. They too are happy. Most people get there. It's when they do that.....

They switch to the country and western station, but the music is going so fast, on Earth biotime, that they cannot even hear the fiddles. Everyone on Earth is living so much life at once, so densely, the exigencies so sharp. Here on the ship, womblike, their processes are reduced to nine months, which months, half of their only life, will end in a rude biological awakening, acids in their eyes, genital mutilation, a trip that, explicitly, has no meaning. MAN GOES WHERE MAN CAN. But on the radio, Johnny Cash, and he is singing: *flesh and blood needs flesh and blood and you are what I need.*

It is Mars which is frightening, frightening if they succeed in being reborn, as to arrive in Utopia, condemned to the great distance of the microcosm which, as a rope, contains all shorter distances. To name it India, or even call it Mars, and expect to find Martians, in the form of algae: when will we ever learn? Or have we, and is it too late?

*The further observations which Lowell and his associates recorded were developed into a coherent picture of Mars, which went something like this: long rectilinear features are observed crossing the Martian deserts. They apparently undergo seasonal brightness and color changes. Occasionally, one such line apparently germinates into two. The lines never stop at some desert locale, but always continue from dark area to dark area. Straight lines, Lowell argued, are not natural features; therefore, they must be artificial. If the canals are in fact artifacts, what is their function? Even at the turn of the Twentieth century it was known that the gravitational field of Mars was not likely to hold an extensive atmosphere, and that*

*liquid water was not in great abundance on the Martian surface. Lowell therefore proposed that the canali were canals, carrying liquid from the polar caps to the thirsty Martians residing in the dark equatorial regions. Small dark nuclei which were observed at the interconnections of several canals were appropriately called 'oases'.*

And even with this foreknowledge the destination is uncertain, curse of Cortez, Amundsen: there are no journeys, but attempts to invent, in the mind of Western man, the outerness of possibility, for the innerness, which he has lost: from the time of Homer and Brendan, Tacitus on the Germans, Whorf on the Hopi, Spengler, not the inner cycles of history and civilization, but the feral wandering, the migration from the dawn of planet, when Mars was already old, and beyond history. Dividing the world in half, as how many times must it be done, between Spain and Portugal, France and England, the U.S. and Russia, dividing our attention, and conquering.

*et detegendas versus Occidentem et Meridiem, fabricando et construendo lineam a Polo Arctico ad polum Antarcticum, sive terrae firmae et Insulae inventae et inveniendae sint versus Indiam aut versus aliam quamcunq' partem*

Mars is cold. Mars is known to be uninhabitable, -ited. A warm tropical day on Mars is 70°, followed by a night of 140° below zero. There is not enough oxygen for a mouse. Not enough water for a frog. And yet Lowell:

*With these successes in the scientific dialogue, he and his followers constructed an inverted pyramid of deductions upon the apex of canal observations. The canals obviously cross what we would term international boundaries; hence, a world government exists on Mars. One of Lowell's followers went so far as to place the capital in Solis Lacus (latitude -30°, longitude 90°). The hydraulic engineering was discussed, and Lowell painted moving verbal portraits of a race of superior beings, engaged in heroic attempts to maintain their civilization on a dying planet.*

In the news --- after ten years microorganisms still survive in Mars Jar! Mutations appear bred in! [The astronauts spent months in Mars Jars, hoping, if not that Lamarck was right, that human learning was vast and worked in strange ways, supple even at later ages; hoping just before death to read the *the Tibetan Book of*....and make it out of the Earth's field alive. Hoping that we don't have to have wars, that it will happen innocently, or that we will come

out of it fresh as lambs.

In the Mars Jar, left for ten years, exposed to Martian radiations, given the illusion of no magnetic field, and almost no water (the ice-caps melting in their seasons), plenty of limonite and silicon; and new strains find their way in, if you leave a door open, reading from strands of ultraviolet light. This is inaccurate.

They are still Earth creatures in a science fiction drama, forced to enact, as rats in a maze, the fastest. Natives arise in worldstuff only as all weights and springs of the outer system pertain to the inward cutting edge. The real magnetism of the Earth is electromagnetism, interplanetary gravitation. The rhythms and motions of the neighboring tribes are in our brain and our glands, the Cytherean burst of passion, the Saturnine repose, the minor chord of Jupiter deep within Navaho chant. Because we live here, arise here, everything corresponds to our awakening, presides over the birth. *that animals such as snails and planarians are able to resolve differences in electrostatic fields of the order of strength of those to which they are steadily subjected in nature. The sensitivity which has been proven indicates the living thing to have more than 100 times the sensitivity which would be required, for instance, to perceive the electrical field created by a thundercloud rising miles away on the horizon.*

"They have smashed their astrology," says Xenophon Astrobar, a star-reader in New York. "Now heaven help them. For outside the charts lies nothing that has ever lived." What he does not know: is that the globes rearrange to meet them. The consequences, though literal, are postponed.

And what could Cabot do or say, his ship in the cold North Atlantic, the year merely 1497, the waters becoming filled with unknown species of fish, beautiful and tame, the shores dark.

And as they land, and come upon snares and nettings, a tusk-needle, a wisdom tooth: the question, did men come here before us; was there anyone here?

The Beothuks are gone. Mariner and its photos tell a sad tale, of a moonlike Mars, which some say disguise the real planet as the turbulent atomsphere the Earth, and life on Mars is subtle, clam, hugs the ground.

What of commercial value?, Cabot wondered. Spices, gold, or pearls? Furs of exotic beasts? What to make of this brilliant sea of fishlike beings, living in the Renaissance of

polar waters.

And what of the jellylike sludge found to hug the Martian surface in the rainy season? A cure for cancer? The fountain of youth? The spaceship called *Aryan* lands in the eternal return.

*And they say that the land is fertile and temperate, and think that the red wood (el brasilio) grows there, and the silks, and they affirm that there the sea is full of fish that can be taken not only with nets, but with fishing baskets, a stone being placed in the basket to sink it in the water.*

After all the traumas life on Earth has gone thru: what does life on Earth wish? Now that we are conscious, Oedipal, now that the damage is done. As they approach the fourth planet, as an elm seed blown in the wind is a replica of the native Earth, they are becoming more and more sensitive to a new shock, an engram like dry land, when lizardlike they tried to shed the memories of the pool. On the sun it was all the same, hot and molten. It was inside inside. All reference were internal, hot as at the moment of connection. as the hand, grazing like a power over the face of consciousness, drew upon it, from it: the planets, dark spacemen, the breeze taking them OUTSIDE themselves. The unconscious is made conscious. Great black rocks stand in space, extending out from, no more than asteroids, jutlands. There is up, and there is down. Canyons. Plains. Mountains. SPACE. The dreamer, roused first by light, again by a magnet so powerful it surrounds him, consults the astrolabe and finds that he must read the *I Ching*, which he does for fifty billion years at least, feeling the lunar pull, and on top of that the heavier outer, called the Jovian planets, less visible than the forerunners of sheep grazing wild. The mutant awakes in himself and finds that there is territory, that he must cross it before sunset.

Sunrise? Sunset? Whoever heard of such insane postures? Yet in the beginning there was no clear division, volcanoes still swallowed blood.

The Mars voyage is launched across this original geography, the exploration of stone. Compared to the sun the air here is very thin. The rock, in fact, is thin enough to breathe. Ask fire.

The grand crystallographer plays, and he plays and he plays, on the radio the new Beatles album, the music sharp

and broken, like a raga. No crystal is the same, *I Ching* like lots, yarrow and snowflakes and stalks.

And this is where materialism ultimately collapses into: you can't buy yourself and put any distance on it. Until finally he stood like a clown upon the absolute Chaplin stage of itself, the Moon, and danced *I am*, I must be life-supported. As at a party he gets high and stumbles out among the stars. He's looking. He's finding his way: who holds the string to the maze, out of. Migrating, trading, with a bottle of wine strapped to his midsection.

What have you invented lately?, Ben Franklin asks Charles Manson.

Because it's not the same as kites and lightning. It's more like the Cherokee knife, and the beginning of the rooster's flight, even who cannot fly, sent on his way by expert genetic scientists who have synthesized life and placed great jets in the sky.

I have invented a culture: is the reply.

The months pass, on Earth, the secular calendars; people go about the minute world, finding the little passages left, darting, darning, again and again thru the needle. A woman sinks her life's fortune into an apartment in New York, which *she owns*, a cubicle of empty space defined by the bricks of an impossible rectangle. When the walls come tumbling down, the space disappears.

The problem is not only to get people there, but to let them know where they are going. And there are names for these places. Martian names.

Soon also the Batki and Pona clan came to Walpi and found admittance to the village. At Walpi the Snake people made the first snake tiponi, Snake altar, etc.

*Soon also the Bátki and Pŏna clan came to Wálpi and found admittance to the village. At Wálpi the Snake people made the first Snake típoni, Snake altar, etc., and had the first Snake ceremony. From here the Snake Cult spread to the other villages, first to Shongópavi, then to Mishóngnovi, and then to Oráibi. At the first Snake ceremony the Snake chief sent his nephew to the north, to the west, to the south, and to the east to hunt snakes. He brought some from each direction. The chief then hollowed out a piece of báho, made of cottonwood root. Into this he inserted the rattles of three of the*

*snakes and the fourth snake entirely. He then inserted into it a corn-ear, and tied to it different feathers of the eagle, the oriole, bluebird, parrot, magpie, ásya, and topóckwa, winding a buckskin string around these feathers. When he had made this típoni, the first ceremony was celebrated, and afterwards it took place regularly.*

With all this extraterrestrial geography, it would appear that the Hopi are masters of getting there (even as the adored babe born into the world of phenomena). So several years ago, with science fiction intent, I wrote:

*The universe lies in balance between the enormous diffuse expansion of space and the infinitesimal contraction of precise thoughts and images. Man's work, whatever its ostensible purpose, is, at any given time, to sustain the universe. The Indians, when asked the reason for ceremony X, say that if they missed one year, the world, the cosmos, would collapse. The work of the ceremony, the dance, the complex of ritual images held by the dancers, the interweaving of those images and bright colors marked by the costumes, pigments, and neural pigments, blue and yellow prayer-sticks, blue and yellow nervous energy generated thru the brain, is to hold up the tribal cosmos, to present a gestalt outward, a gestalt complex enough to counter the vast sweeps of empty average space coming in. Given a billion years each, the Hopi, hypothetically, would reach Andromeda before the American Space Program, because space in the universe is the same as time.....*

Do you still believe that?, I was asked by the collective outraged gathering of science fiction writers wanting no more shit from anthropologists, and the collective outraged gathering of anthropologists likewise.

I was talking science fiction, not Hopi, I replied. I am interested in how far we are from other worlds. Not that we should be reckless idealists, fighting off the night with promises of galactic empires and eternal life from our Indian allies, tribal transcendence of matter notwithstanding. Clearly on this world we do not live forever. And clearly the distances limit us. If we die, and are wiped out, and with it goes memory, so what: THAT CLEAR BLUE BROOK IS STILL BLUE AND STILL BUBBLING FOREVER. The light which makes up this wonder travels the cosmos like a grand ship, blue and green as it ever was, red as. We do live forever, regardless, and this initial revelation of Einstein has not yet filtered into the mass consciousness of World War II existentialism

(which the discovery of such energy brought to a formal close).

Man goes where man can, says the astronaut, and it is true; we have come only this far thru creation, hauling our bodies over trauma after trauma, preserving what is left of our total self by the miracle of rebirth. To cut ourselves off at this point from any proximity, by weary denial, is to ground the space program in an eternal series of launches nowhere, captained by Nowhere Men. The filiation of bees and bull-roarers and senses behind masks, thunderclouds and spectral light, is the real energy sending men to Mars. Without this panoply of aboriginal signs, America would be nowhere too, and the spaceship without petroglyphs cannot orient or land. It would come to little more than a literary exercise. A science fiction writer without an anthropologist has no real energy or vision; he stays awake all night finishing the story, unable to dream. The anthropologist without the science fiction writer lacks geography and history, and has, finally, no resource to collect myth.

In an older, purely science fiction order, the stars were impassably distant; the universe was a desert, not a thicket. They were all NEW WORLDS, separated by vaster gulfs than ocean. That is, their solutions to the problem gave us no hope of solution. We asked: what will put us in touch with our neighbors (without which we will surely have none).

And the answer: we will be in touch with whom we are meant to be in touch with. I can get it before Mariner, says Ted Serios, psychic photographer, grabbing a convenient Polaroid and putting Mars onto the film. A familiar vision from the other side. But of what? Surely not Mars. And by what medium, even if Clare *is* her name.

Let me show ya Mars! Step right up! The greatest peep show on Earth. All she is, she's been hiding. From bird-watchers, beaver-shooters, Kantians, and their ilk. The whole planet. The whole she-bang! See what's in my head that's not in my head. Mars: center-ring.

*Whatever the visualizing phenomenon is that he has, it comes from something other than his own 'vivid memory.'*

Only thru the telepath, operating at the tension of the gate, is the message received, as information. The astral wanderers penetrate the planets, not in dreams or fictions, but space is stacked oddly, and the approach to Mars is a redundancy, like being born. The ships of Magellan, having circled the world, come now to an inner meaning they have

experienced as no other single men, that you can leave and never come back, and still come back, and this is the whole meaning of our present culture. It's not just the Moon, or an experiment on Earth; the quakes are real; the tsunami that follow. The fabric, even at its tattered edges, where rags sparkle and ropes unravel into gas, is made of matter. We cannot question our connections, even as they do not question us.

Far from the scene of the launch, up the coast, mothers are fed the placentas of their newborn. The energy is returned. The cloudbuster, aimed at the heavens, brings down energy so rich the carrots and lettuces and tomatoes are bursting with the interstellar, the water in the well is too rich to drink.

How did it get that way, and how many years will this technological civilization go on?

As many years as it's becoming in touch with the basic sources of energy, which may be a lot longer than anyone thinks.

What about ecology?

You've forgotten. That's a local question and will always stay such. Clams are raked from the townbeds; carrots grow on the mulch-fed sun. The material is as thick as cream, so gold the economy shines.

And what about our neighbors? When will we meet them?

*It is clear that the ships and engines which we are now developing for the exploration of our provincial solar system are but pale shadows of the mighty starships required for relativistic interstellar spaceflight. The primary problem is the construction of a space ship capable of carrying a substantial payload at extremely high velocities over a long period of time. A propulsion system based on contemporary design with the fuel carried on board the spacecraft at launch would require a fantastic quantity of fuel, even if complete conversion of the mass of the fuel into energy were attainable and all the energy so released could be utilized for thrust..... Complete conversion of mass into energy could be obtained only if half the rocket fuel were anti-matter --- that is, a form of matter in which our familiar positively charged protons are replaced by negatively charged anti-protons, and in which conventional negative electrons are replaced by positively charged positrons. Anti-matter is uncommon on*

*Earth for a reason: When it is brought into physical contact with ordinary matter, both become annihilated in a violent, blinding conversion of mass into energy, often in the form of gamma rays. It is just such annihilation which could be used to power a hypothetical anti-matter space drive.*

What's happening in spring training?, the astronauts ask, bored with the long winter, the movement away from the sun. A change in channel is made; they are given the ballgames, broadcast from Florida, to point between Earth and Mars; and how far still from that is the old game of cricket in the fields of England, the kickball and dice of the Indians of the Everglades, bat and buckskin ball, still bouncing somewhere, in it, lit like seminal fire, the corns of busk-Martian spring.

Ojibwa stands in the forest, his eyes closed, trying to find his way out. Look at what these crazy whites have done! We're all in the city, bound and gagged to the world market, asked to discover lands we've already lived in. The forest, with its vision-quest, the realms of astral and shamanized space, are replaced by the electric zoo. We do not hear the collective informing sound, our ancestors or not, or mere strangers whistling in the night. And they don't know where they are, coming up, heads crusted with seaweed and stage magic, having to piss, but the bathroom full and the ballgame on too loud.

*Thompson batting at .292. Hartung down the line at third base, not taking any chances. Lockman with not too big of a lead at second, but he'll be running with the wind if Thompson hits one.....*

Fine. But it's too late. It's already happened. Conquest of America. End of the great ballcourts of the Southern Cult. No hall of fame for Indians. Thompson'll be traded to the Braves anyway. And the brilliant diver, arms like octopus, blue, blue, goes after abalone, in the Jovian sea: what could it mean?, even here?, while in a heavier, drugged, darkly psychedelic rhythm, far from Ojibwa, Timothy Leary in Algiers urging the supermoral hippies to get off the beach where they're cleaning up oil with hardhats, and drop out. But you can't get to Mars on fuel alone, this rot of earlier generations, priests of stern and moral authority, as long as the generators don't fail, and they won't.

*Branca throws. Thompson hits a long drive. It's going to be, I believe.....*

Already a 1910 astronomy book is more obscure than a 1600 astrological map, the reason being energy. Baseball

less available in 1980 than Kwakiutl otter teeth games. Such is the blue, blue talisman of 1951.

*The Giants win the pennant! The Giants win the pennant!*

That simple. There's no other way. The memory is in the machine, or has been consigned to the machine. Branca never knew; Bradbury never knew; Flash Gordon, for all his queens in drag, never knew.

It's not just American colonists, but De Soto moves, the army without a belly dries up, and lizard, driven mad by daystar, seeks to penetrate lizard. WHO ARE OUR NEIGHBORS?

All this is printed in the World papers, with editorials, the meaning of going to Mars. There is no prior intelligence, no Martian chronicles, but depth, objects 200 kilometers across visible, devastating vistas of land mass, play their eyes across, as in a myth, the densest information crammed into the smallest space; the savage mind surveys what it has made, nuclei and spindles, dark spots, clots, shards of the old canals, break into variations of a land totally alien to Earth historians, truly unmappable, despite the obvious names and locations, the astral traveller, coming at last, as in a car crash, to the place, not Mars Jar or experiment, but as within a real world, lying calm in the launching chamber, as in an egg, or on the whorehouse bed, because the choice has been made, and any second she's going to come in and close the door, as Cabot enters, dry land, and man CAN ADAPT, always has; three runs cross the plate; colonization is brought to the universe from within, like the plague; and these: are our neighbors. No further than we are, from the same.

*For a round-trip with a several year stopover to the nearest stars, the elapsed time on Earth would be a few decades; to Deneb, a few centuries; to the Vela cloud complex, a few millennia; to the Galactic center, a few tens of thousands of years; to M 31, the great galaxy in Andromeda, a few million years; to the Virgo cluster of galaxies, a few hundreds of millions of years. Nevertheless, each of these enormous journeys could be performed within the lifetimes of a human crew, because of time dilation on board the spacecraft.*

Our link, then, is not to that initial system, Earthbound by sizes that stagger our impotent smallness. Our link is to consciousness, even as we remain alive.

And in a universe based on knowing, from inside the sword, this closeness outweighs the vastness! The incredible length

of our dilated lives balances the briefness of our affair in the microcosm. The galaxies *are* our neighbors. We are upon them in mind; their most distant signals roaring in our heads. An intuitive dialogue joins all living things. We are not at the other end of the universe from anyone, but Snail returns to the ocean, far from the site of his birth, sends out wands, swallows the fertile juices, and survives even his own predictions of his welfare.

The Americans are mere rookies, the Old Man River has been to Mars and back. A blue-green glow, a fire burning in chichimec land somewhere, Indians watching the movement of local spirits.

What's new on Mars? What about the floods? Are they water? How's politics in Solis Lacus, Lowell City? Does it take its water from Roundout, draining inland fluids from the oyster beds of the Delaware? If so, what of the death of the city, the death of the Martian satellites? Back home the insects and fish are aliens; they have their own language. Children conduct spring training North of Florida, throwing wet snowballs against the barn, the thud, the spaceship passing, terminal, aerial, thru the living current; the gulls call from a high sky, clothed in white wings. The Martians surround us, and all speech is grist for Ozma, the more ancient interstellar tradition in the oöspheric cells: the flood eternal as Snake bites his tail.

The single images lack depth, but they fly toward them, cameos at a speed greater than history, undoing it all, into memory, and that a sporadic jolt. The voyage has become something like a dream, awaking to think there is an explosion, to discover, in trembling nightmare, that the explosion is itself awaking from dream. The knock between any two worlds.

They pass out of their own astrobiology into the next; their bodies respond to new signals; if the base is sexual, and it is, what can they do to open themselves but wet dreams of Martian women, when all that may be there, wet, is a crust of algae, preserving in its canals the myth of a fertile Mars. This, however, is alien, seductive, attractive, the true bedchamber of the other, and the beginning of going mad.

*The sperms of Volvox globator are borne in disc-like or spherical groups, each of which may contain as many as 512 male cells. The sperm groups are liberated from the parent colony, and are probably attracted chemically to colonies with eggs.*

Called a boathand, Snail comes North to build arks, to shoot seals, and write tiny notes in a book he carries in his shell, a log of the journey: rebuses from China, fishing grounds, *I Ching*, using the zodiac to navigate, not a coward, but comes to America to set up Chinese laundries, migrates to Santurce, Puerto Rico, and moves in at 278 Calle San Jorge, because 2 and 7 and 8 are 17, and always have been.

*The impossibility of information or material objects travelling faster than light is one of the firmest foundations of contemporary physics.*

Even without transgressing that law we can get there. We're already there. The Earth is simply the starting point, for anything born here. If we can survive that, like the immortals, then we can meet our neighbors, and I'm saying that this information isn't even new to the Hopi calendar, this survival of essence at relativistic speeds, of Snake and Snail, Báho and Sword. Because if it's true on a cosmic scale, and the Earth lies on that twisting torso, twisted as it twists, even if it is ONLY relative, we can't help but feel, and make use of it locally. It's not esoteric wisdom; it's not even Einsteinian. Like the dripping of water in the cave: IT'S LOCAL TIME.

The liberals march against the spaceflight. Food for the cities! they cry. Solve your problems on Earth first. "I don't want my tax dollars going to send someone to Mars. There's nothing up there that matters to me."

Up where? Where's up?

And obviously our fossil fuels won't last more than a hundred years, putting the labor unions out of business, and leaving the cities for coal-darkened derelicts. The debate on the SST finally comes to an end, and the angry aircraft workers shout at their Congressmen: they want something to build, even if it's a timebomb to destroy the Earth.

But time forecloses on all those value-oriented systems; social welfare is kicked out, for real, as it always was, by definition. The essential jobs are dwindling to naught anyway, and there are so many kids wandering around the cities, doing, proudly: nothing; and proving it can be done. Unwilling to participate in the decline of meaning in our time. Because you can't just keep doing expendable things, like business, or advertising, or footnotes, and so on, is the meaning of a time-change, like Aquarius. Even by 1970 all

the jobs in English departments have disappeared, and the structure tightens up. They finally have enough power to exclude literature for good, replacing poets with house poets and campus clowns. Science is safe for now; it's the metaphysics the world seems to be built out of. But in the end, biochemistry and ecology are agriculture and medicine. As these functions become communal and psychological, there is no need to maintain the science department. Anthropology and philosophy as we have known them are turning into something else, as that old sense of primitive is perceived as an out-of-synch meaning and mind a false distinction even to discuss false distinctions with. The hope is to restore myth and geography to science: hence a new and vibrant science fiction regaining for us the lost outer worlds of our possibility. Anthropology and philosophy can expand, to take over the worn functions of the history and English departments, merging with semeiology to reestablish a most ancient discourse, the absolute synchronous knowledge of waxing-waning civilization-psyche: only those things which restore meaning will be preserved, if the academy is to survive. But this is a part of a science fiction story too.

Already college freshmen know it's fool-crazy to major in English, as if that ever meant anything, and almost as crazy to stay there, expecting to become needed. That gig's run out, leaving: well, there's organic farming, communes, mariculture, dome-building, oyster farming, yogic calm, and spiritual power. Rock groups are out: hardcore capitalism there, still hung up on fifties playboy images. Experimental film-makers from college have become ministers for Jehovah's Witnesses, and yacht captains have joined the Jesus People, along with old New York Yankee second basemen. Isn't this science fiction, even as the native African church prays: *In the name of the Father, of Simon Kimbangu, and of André Matswa.* And Navahos transmute the body of Christ from bread and wine to the peyote button, because all food is hallucinogenic, all sex homosexual, all relationships incestuous and psychotic. So let's clear the stage and begin again with THE WORLD MAKER or THE COSMOS FREAK, Ace Books unlimited. If this is science fiction.

And it's going to be the University of Nebraska where the President can't go near the campus in five years, Berkeley where he can go with impunity. Because 'Braska's farmland, Indian territory; abandon Alcatraz; return to and

master the inland, the real body of this nation.

Book People replaces Eastern News and Evergreen, health food stores close out gourmet kitchens, and the country mice retain an outlet in the city, for input also, from all that heat. Being a baseball or football player is dead, post-Bouton, even in daydreams; the only thing worse is being a rock idol, that is, misusing even your original misuse. Groups are more important than groupies. We on Earth can't get so starry-eyed we deny the essential nature of ourselves, as stars, not needing to be adjuncts, to any zodiac.

We have yet to emerge from the confusion cast by the lack of meaning. YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN. But until then, drugs, and a certain fluidity, obscures the difficulties, the landmarks, creating a shifting focus, an anticulture, from the vast and general chemical instability. & WHAT ABOUT THE SPACE PROGRAM? Where are all those spacey people going? What's the link between drug culture and Mars trip? If it's not Flash Gordon and *TRASH*.

Being a spaceman to Andromeda will get you back in a few million years, but there won't be anymore gasoline on Earth in a hundred; hydrogen will be used up in another couple of thousand. The energy needed at the Earth's surface in 4000 years will be greater than the ergs of solar radiation falling upon it, plus a dwindling sun. Where to go: except into meaning.

To Venus first, some say, planting algae, seeding and photosynthesizing that atmosphere.

$$CO_2 + H_2O + \text{light} \longrightarrow [CH_2O] + O_2.$$

Or hammering Jupiter, molecule by molecule, into a Dyson shell around the sun, on which we live, like asparagus, absorbing all Malthusian pressures, turning us into better people. Fuller's domes are first, psyche's own tensile shape, and triangles on Earth as they are in Heaven. The opposite of sunflow, of orgasm, is oblivion, and we move exactly as consciousness allows growth, sunflower, fern, into open, outer, space.

Make it clear, you demand, of yourself, what isn't. Being someone, in your own head, when there's mellow melodrama all around you, and slippery roads outside of that. They don't lead out of town. The lamps burn you back in.

All sorts of well-meaning asses are going around whispering: 'Right on' and 'Keep the faith.' Talking of

'putting it all together' and 'getting on a sensitivity trip.' When it's the same old turning of the screws, and the wolf of the fifties, in rags from India, ripping off Little Red Riding Hood, just as he always did, as we always knew he would. Because they're all in there for free, and don't even know it, one more screw, cigarette, a little more smoke out the chimney, oil spills notwithstanding, hoping to pick up from isolated experience what they can't from a whole life, at each given moment. He passes you on the street, right off Madison Avenue, slumming, gives a little V, and says,"Woodstock nation, baby."

The vision of soy beans remains, communal stores, and the amount of food that can be grown on an acre. Just an acre if the snow would stop, the fantasies retreat, and a wind blow us into the world of winds.

There's still time left, Man says. And Fuller, like the only one awake among dreamers, runs Fundy thru North America, South to Mexico, to be picked up by the Amazon, across the Bering Straits, into the Arctic-flowing rivers of Russia, constantly gaining the electric, so that suddenly the whole world is lit, and the powers of sun and moon are tied to the internal powers of the city, the sheer weights we're going to have to make it off anyway, because the tides issue from their utter clarity of position.

If you're close, you're close. And we are. To a lot. And the power generated is utterly clean, absolutely free, from the exquisite proportions of living systems. It's not fantasy, but where you are that's least expressible in conventional terms, the one thing most easily omitted while you sit up all night separating sex from love from affection, and where it should stop, if it can stop. When powers of sun and moon overlap, day and night, and energy is not seasonal, except as use is, which draws it from its bank as the charmer the snake, the lover his, as we all are, and the whole of Twentieth Century philosophy rediscovering the motion of the living, which is the only way out, baring both our hands.

And once you had passed thru gravity and were under the deep force of anti-gravity, all the freaks returned, circus monkeys playing trombones and cymbals, screwing, as in a zoo, off all their fantasies, speeding on chicks, the cub scouts there for decoration, until: *You take Mary/I'll take Sue/ Ain't no difference 'tween the two.*

*Cocaine!*

And other attempts to freak consciousness from this planet.

So, Ted Serios, who is behind the store, the voice, if not you and Doctor Sax? Who are the aliens that they toy with us so, with our own precious information, seeming to derive it from nothing, drive it into nothing? I have said that the whole planet on LSD will not clear it, nor will the voices reach a planetary crescendo, but unearthly the prospect of crumbling cities and adicts: the whole planet is on: SUN.

To this end, a farm, you say, meaning: everything. Even if it is a conventional American image. It doesn't have to clear yet: what is most radical is how we live, whether we know it or not. We cannot prove our life, but it grips the land like a great vegetable, drinking its consciousness from the thin riverwater and the thicker ponds, fertile as field mulch, where field mice and moles inhabit more than an alphabet: a whole grainery of thought. We're obsessed, and that possibility we'll defend from now to the end, even if the end comes. The real revolution: we died for it on other worlds, and that's why we're here, living not inner, but to the beauty of its outward, as beauty itself.

The spacemen are doing what is itself a needless thing, like those who played golf on the Moon, the pawns of Alexander's army; they must go all the way there and back, scouts long before the battle is possible. Thru the great microscope we see Mars, which is really the macroscope, source of billions upon billions more molecules, the raw stuff of energy, even as it is the source of a personality, the martial, and the god of Aryan peoples. Other galaxies are breathing down our necks, close, metabolically. And if anything we are approaching a perception more powerful than the population bomb. The living fabric is permeated with influences and intensities, genii. The illusion of profundity in consciousness is simply accurate. After all, our planet may be billions of years away, but we ourselves, using only energy that's available, are 21 years from our own galactic center, 28 years from another galaxy. And we can get there in a Bussard cloudbusting interstellar ramjet, using for our source of fuel what the dying Reich spoke of in prison, and even the Sun Card deals as it is handed like radium to the Curious, in the matrix of the total hand; and the homoeopathic pharmacist shakes it into dilution each time he jars the outer rings, the pure laced energy in between, greater at

this point of history than it has ever been known to be, even by the king's astronomers in Babylon. Space is filled with the bionic, explosive anti-matter lying tangent upon what we are, how Alice got into Wonderland, mirror thru the mirror, annihilating as in consciousness, or orgasm, the principle of itself. The ramjet would drive itself there on interstellar gas. But maybe the crew should stay home and make love to their wives. It's the same energy after all, nil scale, which is trivial, and we've got to begin talking about energy regardless of scale, locale regardless of nation; getting there is irrelevant of our means.

Witness Mars flight. It will crash down on someone's farm (it's all farmland). And anyone knows the land must be occupied; it can't all belong to summer people and paper companies and Mars freaks. Because every acre of land in the universe is someone's farm. That's cosmology. Geography is more important and critical than spiritualism. In fact, in a tight universe, I consider cornbelt spiritualism, like chiropractice, or Peter Hurkos getting hit on the head, a leak, and nothing better than straining at a turd or hammering an organ into place, like telephone lines, for eavesdropping: upto no good at all

There is no logos but conditions, fundamental meaning of the word. They fill the airways, the shipyards; they are among the workers. The ghosts of midnight. The queens of hidden psyches. Earth is as deep as the Mesolithic lake, as whole as the imago, to whom any word or vision is the single, the appropriate, swimming among contradictions, as frogs, born from nothing, returning to, mass.

Standing water on a farm. The qualities of mud. Consciousness, not experience, is the attribute of the planet. We stand alone, human, as against an invasion of the most alien forces, the famous invasion of the body-snatchers, who would surely steal this planet from us, who work to, this very moment, against whom we stand. As guardians, defending with consciousness that we are, and anything real we've created, man and woman, our own imagination, our invention of a brilliant counterattack, Freudian in its obsessive intricacy, outward, botanical in its intent, which drives the ghosts deeper and back into space.

And if we go back to Godot and cocaine, it's exquisite too, but like retreating into a gem; they seal us up coffin-like, and lock us in the forties, and endless Hemingway wars,

singing in coffeehouses, pretending the city's the city, blues as the soul against metal recalling the melody and the sound of voice. For the aliens are exquisite too, and they're freaky as hell. In their methods they're impeccable. A Mafia's mafia. They're always behind the shop. And if we can fight the invasion of the body-snatchers, it's as individuals, and what we've made of our life, standing here as stubbornly as the Aborigine in dreamworld, which is where we are. It takes no trip to turn the whole planet on; the whole planet's turned on like a lighthouse, and every moth in the universe plummets into the consciousness of its flame. What more need we, except the goat.

That our world live, communal farmworld of dreamworld of 18th Century poets and thirties utopians, rocked by the chanting of the Twentieth Century, unlimited, as Bill Haley and the Comets, every 84 years. 1971: Ginsberg awakening the great planetarium of Kent, all its orbs, the hills echoing, until even those behind the store have to sing, WITH US, as they supply the words, the chorus of their participation, phonemic, in ourselves.

That's how we hold our planet. As the freaks come to Mary Williams, driving her back and forth between San Francisco and San Francisco, in two different space-time manifolds, always returning her to an image of where she was, so that, nowhere, she walks on railroad ties, a child, sipping hominy grits in rainwater, and all the other good things the snake spits, including the car you can't get out of, as it goes plunging, buzzing, into the tropics. As she waves heroically, but image only, the sizzling clearout of the whole earth, her mind, and her unique possibility: the media would steal that from her too, and send her back, to where it didn't happen, as Woodstock too is returned, thank god, to cows. And the next Russian spaceshot will put Mick Jagger on the Moon.

WE PROVE IT BY OUR LIVES. to ask for more is blasphemy. against all gods. against the wild animals. and the redmen who lived here once in the dreamtime, with no europeans, or europan assurance to their lives. back there. simply that this world: be.

And *we are* the first voices of the next generation, even as we dwell among antiquities, recovering the power source of this planet, clear as Jung always said it was, in the psyche-hands of his alchemist, flowing thru the brain. We welcome the body-snatchers and queens of hidden Africas to our world;

we invite them to share their information with us, as long as they're not social workers, or psychoanalysts, or high priests of dope. We've got enough problems, and we've had enough semantics and sememes to last many such worlds. You've got to be smarter than us; you've got to teach us something. Parlor trips don't count; speed don't count. Stash of heroin don't count, even if its blooming Uranus best crop from cosmic disintegration of three beat generation doublestars. It reaches the Earth secondarily, as genes, and is meant for future generations, along with what fossil fuel is left. And Tom Meyer writes of:

*those fuckers who think they're King Shit, Lord of Taste & Trend. Crabby souls who weep because their energies can do no more than feed off others, who glory in work that has been done by others. In a black mood, completely impersonal, last year I thought of sending a letter to a whole group of magazines & presses telling them to STOP, that they had been weighed in the balance & found wanting.*

And if they get unruly and start taking the planet from us, even in kindness, if they've got nothing better to do than fuck up, wasting good fuel and head, then we're going to be alive, growing fields of grain, having angel children, and putting the invention of our songs right into the center of their parisian cafes, no matter how exquisite their dialectic, how qualified they are at doctoring; and we will survive, because it all emerges, springlike, from language, not Hopi verbs, but the power behind that, what Chomsky calls deep structure, and Fuller the Passamaquoddy Project, Sagan the decay of anti-matter in space which is time, which is neighboring, enough power to light this world forever. As Mao welcomes the ping pong players to China, for the same reasons that UFOs always appear to Texas farmers and not M.I.T. scientists. right on thru into the children of another torch-driven night.

What will happen to us: god only knows. But it's the end of one sort of security; no longer can people get away with doing useless thing. And not like the Protestant ethic, that one fears being dispensable, it's that at every moment the dispensable is wasting sunlight, bions, and joy.

*A way out of these difficulties which approaches elegance in its conception has been provided by the American physicist Robert W. Bussard, or the TRW Corporation, Los Angeles. Bussard describes an interstellar ramjet which*

*uses the atoms of the interstellar medium both as a working fluid (to provide reaction mass) and as an energy source (through thermonuclear fusion).*

.....bringing back the oldtime sea-captains, the ship which sails off the edge of the world into the starways, blown gently toward new worlds by a breeze.

*and Lorenzo Pasqualigo, a native of Venice, in a letter to his brothers, informed them that great honour was paid to Cabot, who 'is called the great admiral; he dresses in silk, and these English run after him like insane people.'*

He has discovered the famous kingdom of the beginning of the world, opening the gate between the Earth's moist seas and the fine jewel of a brain born in sea water. Because all the planets are inhabited, and what they feel, as they approach, is that they can almost sense the Martians, like a great cordon of thought reach out to grab them. They are sensitive to it, allergic even at first. It is too sharp; the angle is wrong; the chemicals don't match.

He is led into a room where all his friends are, the girls dance, it's not bloody murder, it doesn't have to be, passing the bottle from man to man, keeping warm on the Arctic Sea, working with their nets, drawing, into the beautiful hexagon, out of a brilliant six-pointed star.


Closer and closer: the face of Mars, gleams, snarls, compels, changes expression. It's too big, they think. Why have we come here? But Mars doesn't ask questions, or answer them; it merely pulls, and pulls, and fills the screen. As obscure as the features are, it is getting to be a geography too. Canaros. Java Major. Quinsay. Aeolis. Elysium. Mare Tyrrhenum. Given to Columbus for his first voyage by

Toscanelli, who told him a secret he was to guard all his life.

IF YOU DON'T REACH CATHAY YOU'LL REACH THE LANDS IN BETWEEN. And that's been proven since. You'll be chasing the sun, you'll gain a year in your lives; you will arrive home to find your lover's great-grand-daughter in her place, waiting for you or not. And this 450 years before Einstein. So the perception was coming.

*Alas! poor Columbus, --- unconscious prince of discoverers, --- groping here in Cuban waters for a way to a city on the other side of the globe, and to a sovereign whose race had more than a century since been driven from the throne, and expelled from the very soil of China.* And how far is Peking from Havana now?

Why are we coming here?, Columbus' men ask him, and the ancient mariner, chasing sea lions in fields of ice, does not know. The Queen of Spain sent him. To Cuba. He points to the birds, the changing colors on the surface of the waters, and calls them VEGETATION, signs of a landfall.

The approach is final, as if at sea he had a clear view of all the lands of the three-dimensional world, could see continents, landfall, approaching him, from outside his approach, in history, like Samuel Eliot Morison, at the speed of gravity, four hundred years after the invention of anthropology, and the Western World by the rest of it. Rhodesia withdraws to a lost British empire, and old Egyptian queens whisper upon the voyage. And still we build canoes, and skyships, and knock on the door, like children, without serious intent, and hope to be let in once more, down the Laurentian Channel. They think they hear gongs, or pure tuning forks, but nothing is visible, and they search the glowing surface for a known feature, a landing zone, as in a dream.

*In that city stands his great palace, and now I will tell you what it is like. It is enclosed all round by a great wall forming a square, each side of which is a mile in length..... The roof is very lofty, and the walls of the palace are all covered with gold and silver. They are also adorned with representations of dragons, beasts and birds, knights and idols, and sundry other subjects..... The building is altogether so vast, so rich, and so beautiful, that no man on earth could design anything superior to it.*

The exotic, its pretences, will they never cease, will we ever be innocent again, or free to travel, as in a dream of a dream of a dream, golden columns arise behind the fire...

They sight what is known as land: Libya, Syrtis Major, the edge of Mare Tyrrhenum. It's not really happening. THIS WHOLE LIFE I'm living. Men can never live there. MEN ALREADY LIVE THERE. And if they don't get some food in their bellies soon, they're going to come to Washington and start kicking ass. It's not like the West of Columbus, that famous American West. It's not even like the Eskimo in the shamanistic North. It is no direction, but East of East of Tibet. Mars. doesn't lounge on the American beaches all summer in pop art colors, he-man though he is. He's not a sunbather or a hedonist. He's a yoga, a zone demanding the absolute, a military training more rigorous than torture because its conditions are blind and external, and locally absolute (if we go far enough that is, and get outside the room the victim sees in the eyes of the executioner, himself in it, the madmen with needles and knives --- for this itself is the object of the terrain, as accurate as the early fifties on Mars when Flash Gordon was thrown into a flaming shower, and a child trapped in a tunnel was fed air, until the end came).

A man can teach himself much, about birds, like Audobon, but on Mars the many dialects, wind-songs, abrasives run pure sound all over the radio, the sense that SOMETHING IS HERE, even if it is only the completion of their own personalities, tied to this Odyssean flight.

The sound of the universe is intelligent. This is the meaning of the story.

And what use, for all that was made of the Americas, Mars. For the wild slaughter of the seals of Antarctica, not even intermarrying with these creatures of plenty, not even turned around by sex, shot bloody with rifles as the aliens clawed at their doors, carrying the young of their kind. What do you want from us?, the Martians cry, soulfully, without hope, having read *The Last of the Mohicans*, and then Fenimore Cooper turns around and says:

*I'm afraid, Stephen, it is all over with the discovery of more seas. Even the moon, they now say, is altogether without water, having not so much as a lake or a large pond to take a duck in.*

Surely the war is endless, but nothing is endless except the material, the figure endlessly become, became by, the ground, slowly spreads into Cambodia, Laos, American helicopters downed in myriads, more men taken to the twin satellites of Demon and Phobia, Fear and Flight. From this

distance the Earth is but a greenish light, part of the cyclological universe, the inner reality of time. There is no way to be on Earth and Mars at the same TIME. There is no way to be on Mars without being in the Earth's influence, subject also to the real time of Deimos and Phobos. The Earth is no longer a place; it is part of the creative instant of the Martian personality, as Mars will cease being, except in their natal charts, once they land on that sector of the internal geography of the whole. From this distance the war goes on like grass, and is not part of the influence transmitted to Mars, for the influence knows of no parts, except as the divisible inner geography of Mars. It needs not politics, or speed, and cannot elect a leader, except from within, partitive, but *is*, like someone who is on it.

And this Lowell made his capital of Utopia, not Saigon, or for that matter any American city West of the Mississippi, but the duality of the village, what Lévi-Strauss called the hidden structure, that men carried buckets of water across in crossing, not realizing they were, even in marriage, exchanging the basic materials of the universe.

*It will also be noted that relationship of affinity is conceptualized in the form of a contrast: nature/culture, but always from the point of view of the wife-givers: the takers have the status of men only when the givers are themselves spirits. Otherwise they are animals: jaguars or wild pigs: jaguars, when nature is tending in the direction of culture, since the jaguar is a brother-in-law who behaves with civility and presents man with the arts of civilization; pigs, when culture is degenerating into nature, the wild pigs being former human beings who behaved coarsely, and who, instead of improving the daily diet of their brothers-in-law (in exchange for the wives received from them), promptly settled down to sexual enjoyment --- in other words, were takers on the natural level instead of being givers on the cultural level.*

The whole planet is shuffled like a deck of cards in the hands of the players, as the astronauts, who do not know what they hold, arrange their multiple maps of the surface, choosing a landing area. THIS IS THE ACTUAL PLANET. And all that lies within turns on the cones, their nodes within. As real as it is they cannot imagine they are bombing these lands of the East; yet the craters are historical in-

formation; the life destroyed is part of the flesh of the universe, and Mariner reports uncertain, almost, of its makers, of life itself.

The bicycle riders move slowly around a lake, in a city without cars.

Why are we coming here?, Columbus' men ask him, and he points to the birds, the.....

There are long thin spindles, like the legs of spiders, dark spots, some of them small and round, and clouds of white moving gently over the surface. The air around is filled with sparks. As they begin to fire their braking rockets against the atmosphere, the whole blue sky leaks away, a diffusion or illusion of color, karma, matter, or the shit of the systhem, and look back over their shoulders at a smaller sun, called the loneliness of the long distance runner, who in this marathon now is about to refuse to cross the line, except that he crosses it internally. Star passes into planet; they must. Realizing how much world takes for granted of the world. The inside assumes the inside, goes on, of itself, develops what it is, oblivious even to the astral shroud, the ghostly half-lives of deeper personalities.

## REPORT OF THE EXPEDITION TO THE FOURTH PLANET

*Marine Rhodophyceae flourish in both littoral and sublittoral zones. Rhodophyceae are very abundant in tropical seas, where they often grow at great depths in clear waters. A number of red algae precipitate calcium carbonate on their cell surfaces and become calcareous. These are important in reef formation.*

.....see, they see the marriage chamber see, they see a dance parlor see, the heavy atmosphere see, ripping thru that veil, the flashing media lights see, the bumping, the psychedelic sound, thru the hot draw of the dancers SEE, becomes, the Martian surface.

BATRACHOSPERMA: frog semen. fills the fresh-water streams lakes springs. Forms crackle and bubble, the air is filled with an insectlike crystalline chain, long as a tapeworm imbedded in the microcosm, noisy, musical, turning everywhere to surround and take in, breaks, the ground recedes and approaches like water. It is wet and very fast, like passing thru a sizzling raincloud, chemically active, hard to stand up. The air is filled with the living, but it is not life.

Time is reversed in consciousness. Something very close to us is trying to get very close to us. We are being welcomed to the very source, measure of all that we take for our life, operating millions of miles away and thru the separated nodes of flesh, this is a radical breaking of syntax, a crossing of the river, the optic nerve, land, face on face the mask revealed, the Snake Priest throws away his camouflage, is, in fact, a snake, as man is a snake, and the clouds are filled with venom and spittle; the dancers touch them with strokes and bolts.

We are not the only living thing in the universe. Mars blooms with frog sperm and duck eggs. But we are the only ones. There are others before us, after us, in every dimension, at every remove. But where we are we are the only ones, our cities lonely, and the vision, held all too close, on Mars, cannot be seen.

It is not fear of what lies below, but of making the connection. It is the most dangerous moment. You might think it was a dream and fall asleep at the wheel. A trivial mistake could be more than fatal. You can't throw away three and a half billion years of evolution. Common ancestors can't meet in the stars, as redman and whiteman, the Bantu hunters singing, returning to the village, carrying the meat of the constellation of the giraffe they have killed with poison arrows; life has climbed the ladder all by itself, and the possibility of monsters, the teratology of us all, is something else: we'll come to that yet. The scaffolding may come down on our heads, but the question is: what does the telepath see of Mars that his clear vision, clairvoyance, is not, does not see out the window, the same.

*The bird calls for the absent celestial water because it is thirsty; and it is thirsty because it has disdained the available earthy water and shown itself too greedy for the fruits of the sunny season.*

Deep in the central lacus they rest, pools, bloody vessels of themselves. Lavendar. Prussian Blue. Ultramarine. Ultramarine. All the energy of the universe is contained in the electric puddle; color passes thru as light, light as color. They come as manfish, sharks, into the Dakotas, the badlands; they stand as much chance of getting back as.....and what do they know of the inhabitants, or themselves, now that the reckoning has come?

*They reached the canal. It was long and straight and*

*cool and wet and reflective in the night.*

*'I've always wanted to see a Martian,' said Michael. 'Where are they, Dad? You promised.'*

*'There they are,' said Dad, and he shifted Michael on his shoulder and pointed straight down.*

*The Martians were there. Timothy began to shiver.*

*The Martians were there --- in the canal --- reflected in the water. Timothy and Michael and Robert and Mom and Dad.*

*The Martians stared back up at them for a long, long silent time from the rippling water.....*

The teratology is inside. As in the moment before orgasm. The universe stands still. Mars. hangs. in. the. frame. CLEARVOYANCE, and then the spring rain falls, the rivers gush thru the high grass, and the canals, the canali are filled, an image, all we were coming to anyway, held out before her like a star.

*A fire is laid under the Sun, which is burning, and much smoke is ascending. An old man has in his hands an urinal, in which is the Moon lying on her back in blackish water. Out of the vessel is flying a green Dragon, holding the Moon in its mouth by the navel, and placing its fore feet on a black rock. Beneath the rock a green Dragon lies dead on his back.*

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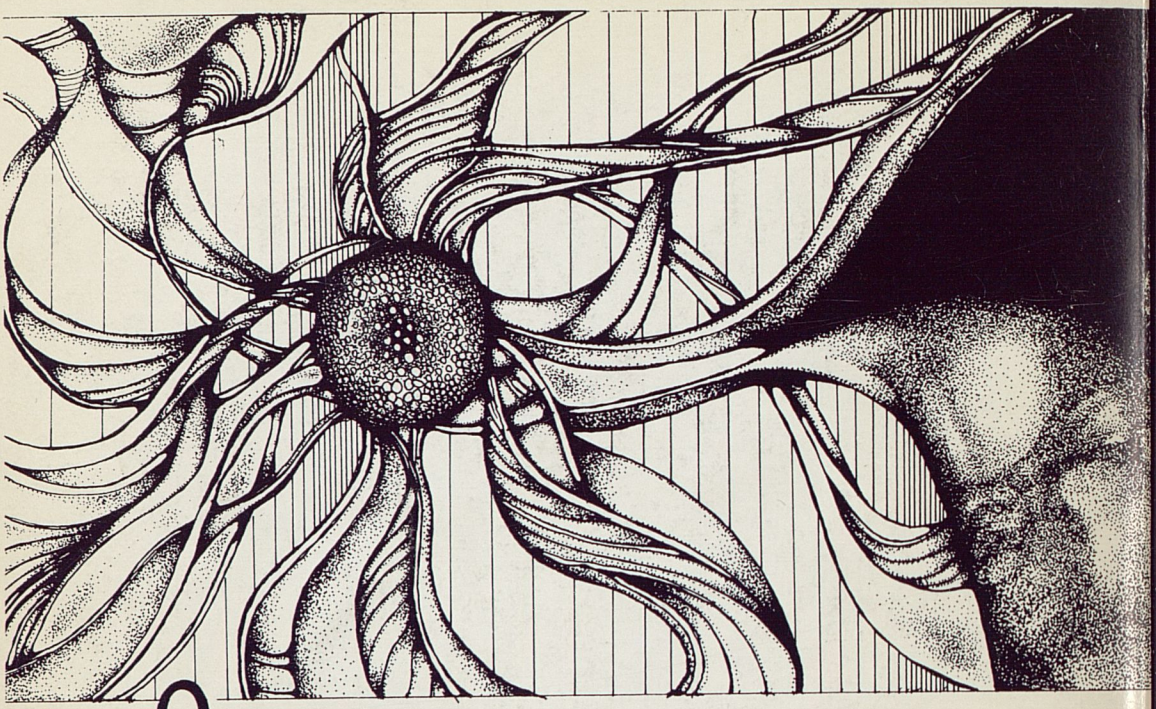

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