

Mar 20/51 Forrest Bess  
1701 Ave 8.  
Bay City Tex

Dear Raymond:

I am not entirely convinced that dianetics is a psychological hoax. I have tried an experiment down here. I purchased some ten copies of the book and sent them out to friends of mine. Two people to date have read the book (two months have elapsed) all others jumped about in the book. The two ~~has~~ who read the book received a terrific charge. The others still do not get the complete picture. It is noticeable that if a person does not read the book that there can be no successful pretending on their part. The usual response to the book is that it is too "deep". One woman even remarking that she supplemented the reading with the patter of the psychologists in the daily news, thereby proving that she had not read the book.

I think perhaps it may be said that those who have had some disorder at one time or another tend to compare the characteristics of their disorders with the comparison of the dramatization of the engram. Or else a manic has been restimulated, as in my case, which causes them to believe that here is basic science which will eliminate engrams.

First, in regards to the engram—from personal experience I believe that it is a recording at cellular level.

Second—I give the unconscious (reactive) mind credit for possibly being a moron but also for containing much more than Mr. Hubbard ever dreamed of. I feel that what he has to say is good as far as it goes. That experiments should be conducted by others and his theory proven. Yet I feel that the key to riddence of the enigma in which we find ourselves will come from that mind. The idea is better expressed something like only as a child will one enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Spiritual is a good word—belief in is a good expression. For years I have prayed my private prayers but in an analysis I have often asked what do I actually want from my God if it is not more and more wisdom which is the summation of thinking plus experience based upon awareness. Then should I ask for more awareness, which might be expressed as ever increasing perception?

I find many intellectuals discrediting dianetics as science fiction. Perhaps it is but the effort on the part of the man to bring about reasoning is remarkable and certianlly he does not discredit the spiritual.

Art to me is the search for the truth. For Picasso it is the fight against brutality. If one finds the reason for the brutality will it not dissappear? I agree that survival is the one big force in existence. I find that the Spirit of God is the attempt to understand nature (which we do not).

The mind is limitless in its scope. Sri Aurobindo presents that beautifully. The rooting out of evil, the ability to understand what is happening to the individual in his growth the removal of ignorance by becoming more and more aware and less blinded by our immediate emotions, will bring about the complete existence and meaning of truth.

If I understand myself as a species in nature perhaps I will better understand others.

I think the key to the visions is "Seek and Ye shall find". I have always been interested in an early novel I read, I believe that it was written by H.G. Wells. I have forgotten the name but it had something to do with a man driving down the road and driving right into another dimension—a much higher existence than our own. Do you remember the name of it?

Sincerely  
Forrest Bess

My dear Raymond,

at long last I have found the clue to my work! Jacobie "The Psychology of Jung"!

I am integrating the work now and have found much reason behind the work. I am doing this of course by painting the negative. I will keep you informed from time to time as <sup>to</sup> the meanings.

Best wishes for a Happy New Year

Sincerely  
Jonest Bess

Answer  
Summer 57

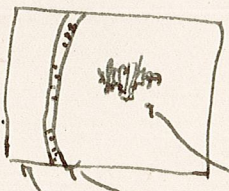
FORREST BESS  
1701 AVE. E  
BAY CITY, TEXAS

Dear Raymond:

I hope you don't mind a quick answer to your letter. Letters stimulate a train of thought so I follow the desire to answer quickly. Understand of course that this does not mean a quick reply to my letter.

Speaking of prophecy - there was a recent article in Life magazine showing a drawing of the atomic bomb. In 1945 I painted "Prophecy" a small canvas showing two such bombs and a red wane. Here's the point - I am not and have not been consciously interested in this bomb business nor in political or social movements - however it is interesting to me that the drawing of the bomb is the same figure I painted in 1945. (It's at Parsons now)

Other canvases of interest - remember the large one of the "mind crystal"? of Hubbard's terminology.



There is a great similarity  
file clubs  
somatic strips  
ugly faces depicting superman banks.

Naturally I am conscious of reading into the work some meanings.

Another canvas "That is the Key to the Riddle" depicts a burning candle with a white spot above it being

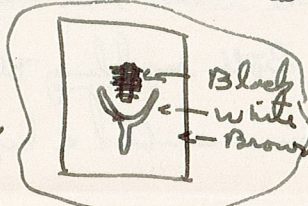
FORREST BESS

1701 AVE. E

BAY CITY, TEXAS

more to the unconscious mind than he mentions and from this mind I feel that prophecy can be utilized.

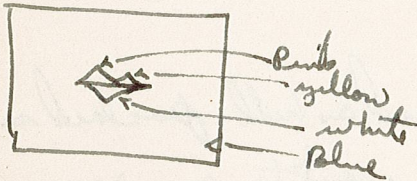
I firmly believe that there is a "meaning" to my work which I do not understand. Recently there ~~was~~ a peculiar symbol



ces to its

which I have absolutely no idea meaning - yet I am sure that

someday I shall know. A new canvas called Freedom interested me very much.



Here is ~~another~~ an interesting point too. Twice the vision was similar to a colored motion picture in that it was not the flash vision but a prolonged moving view. For example I was moving along quickly on a road in mountainous terrain - vegetation in all coloring. The second time was at night - sense of flying over the Carolinas towards New York. The same night there was a huge dome with mosaic tile floor beneath in blue and white tile.

I think I told you that I have experimented in trying to "hold" the vision, that is, to be able to see it a little longer. The effort produces a distortion - twisting of the forms - relaxing the effort to "hold" - the vision regains its true shape - becomes brilliant again and then disappears quickly. But it is amazing how the conscious effort on my part will bring forth visions only blankness - however

over

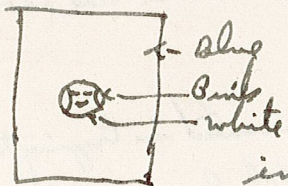
I can completely relax or even be too tired to sketch them - and there are many.

One other point I am interested in is this - the night before I awoke crying I was in a hotel in Tampa. I had gone up to my room - written a few letters - took my shower - went to bed and I immediately fell through the bed into a room with two preposterous animals. One a black fuzzy horse with red eyes the other a hippo with eyes almost closed. Both nodding their heads. The background to this resembled a hippo's skin but stunk!



I immediately dressed - scared as hell - packed my bags and went to the Base (McDill) went to my room and told my room-mate I thought I was sick. He went to the clinic and brought back sedatives but while he was gone the room became yellow and of tunnel shape - at the end of the tunnel was a huge multi-colored bug - which to me was either the gene of Insanity or Creation. Or both.

After taking the phenob. a vision of a soft planned ball floated down and touched my lips - called "Little Puff Ball of Love" in a brilliant blue background.



I feel the need to paint these three canvases into a form of ~~trip~~ three panel canvas. I think it may give some clue as to how fantasies are entered into - and this one truly was one - frightening.

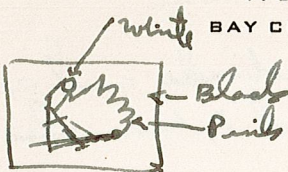
I stayed in the Army reserves but I've got to get out of being called back in somehow. My work means a great

FORREST BESS

1701 AVE. E

BAY CITY, TEXAS

steamed or  
burned out.



a very interesting thing happened to me in the Army about 1944. I worked on a problem in camouflage for 90 days. It was my idea and I had officers, men, and equipment and did the job as I wanted to do it. It was beautiful. I compiled it in two volumes - was called in "patted" on the back - told it was advanced post war development and told to rest - take an insignificant job teaching engineering. I lost my troops (allies). One morning I woke up crying - "my heart was broken - I am so sorry" were words which I repeated over and over - bringing my hand up to my mouth as I cried. The crying (lasting about 2 minutes) would stop short - I felt a peculiar pain - I sniffled for four or five minutes then would cry again.

I had no explanation for it so I went immediately to the Base mental Clinic for a check-up. The major there advised me to see what would happen the next day. Well - the next day I woke up yawning and I could not stop yawning - all day. Plus - there was an intense desire to commit suicide. I even tried to buy a pistol in Tampa but couldn't find one at a fair buy price.

The third day I was back to normal.

This whole incident convinces me (I have no other explanation) that Hubbard comes very close to an analysis (good one) of mental aberrations. Frankly however I think that there is much

deal to me and I firmly believe it will be my undoing if I do  
have to go back.

I have heard of Sri Aurobindo and admire him very  
much. Alfie Zaggi and I talked of him - also Bill Pochever at  
Woodstock.

I have shows in Houston and Dallas but naturally  
expect no one to like the work. Its simplicity brings on the  
adjective naive which may or may not be the case - time  
will tell.

I can't help but be optimistic in my prophecy that all  
values will within 8 years undergo such a change so great  
that those existing today will be nonexistent then. Time  
will tell.

Best regards  
Forest

DATE 10 Sept. 1947

DATA SHEET

CONCERNING AN INDIVIDUAL WORK OF MODERN RELIGIOUS ART:

(meaning art with some of these qualities: unconventional, synthetic, expressionistic, metaphysical, mystical, transcendental, dynamic, concerned with man's destiny and relation to the cosmos).

(Send to Dr. R. F. Piper, Syracuse University, Syracuse 10, N. Y. Sincere thanks to you.)

- 1. Name of Artist (please print) . FORREST . BESS . . . . .
- 2. Year of birth . . 1911 . . . . . 3. Nationality . NORTH . AMERICAN
- 4. Permanent mail address . . 1701 AVE E . BAY CITY, TEXAS . . .
- 5. Title of work . GOLDEN DEATH . . . . . 6. Year finished . 1947 .
- 7. Exact medium used (as: painting in oil, water color, serigraph, lithograph, sculpture in marble, etc.) . OIL - GILT . ON . PLYWOOD .
- 8. Size . . 8x10 . . . . .
- 9. Present owner and address . BETTY PARSONS - 15 E. 57TH N.Y.C.

(Use back of sheet if necessary in answering the following questions:)

- 10. Books and magazines (with dates) containing accounts of your work:  
TEXAS PAINTERS - BY JERRY BYWATERS - DMFA - DALLAS - TO BE PUBLISHED
- 11. Under what conditions would you grant me permission to use a reproduction of this work in a comprehensive, illustrated book on modern religious art?  
*obtain permission from owner.  
no other requirements.*
- 12. A frank, clear statement of the mood, sentiment, idea, or vision which you experienced, developed or expressed in this work, and perhaps indicate its occasion?  
*an exact copy - to the best of my ability - of a four conscious scene.*
- 13. What do you regard as your distinctive or characteristic technical manner, method or achievement?  
*Nothing - except my desire to reproduce in paint what I see by "looking into the back of my eyelids".*
- 14. Would you write a compact statement of your philosophical and religious background, view, or outlook?  
*Religious background Episcopal - philosophical view that the mind has created existence.*
- 15. Name and address of one artist (or more) who is producing significant works of the kind described above:

Bess

DATE 10 Sept. 1947

DATA SHEET

CONCERNING AN INDIVIDUAL WORK OF MODERN RELIGIOUS ART:

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(Send to Dr. R. F. Piper, Syracuse University, Syracuse 10, N. Y. Sincere thanks to you.)

- 1. Name of Artist (please print) .F.O.R.R.E.S.T. .B.E.S.S. . . . . .
- 2. Year of birth .1911. . . . . 3. Nationality .NORTH AMERICAN
- 4. Permanent mail address .1701 AVE. E. BAY CITY, TEXAS. . .
- 5. Title of work .P.R.E.M.O.N.I.T.I.O.N. . . . . 6. Year finished 1946
- 7. Exact medium used (as: painting in oil, water color, serigraph, lithograph, sculpture in marble, etc.) . . .O.I.L.O.N. C.A.N.V.A.S. . . .
- 8. Size . . 14 X 16 . . . . .
- 9. Present owner and address MRS. MRS. SYDNEY .BERKOWITZ: 112 W. RIDGEWOOD SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

(Use back of sheet if necessary in answering the following questions:)

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TEXAS PAINTERS - BY JERRY BYWATERS - DMEA - DALLAS - TO BE PUBLISHED

11. Under what conditions would you grant me permission to use a reproduction of this work in a comprehensive, illustrated book on modern religious art?  
obtain permission from owner  
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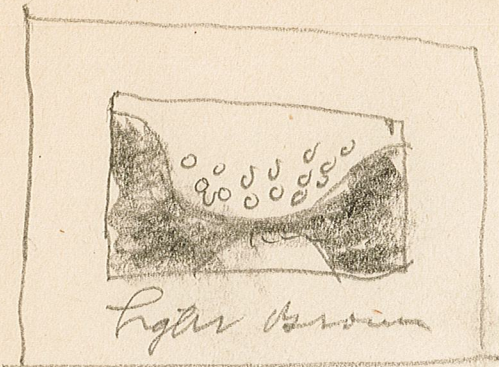
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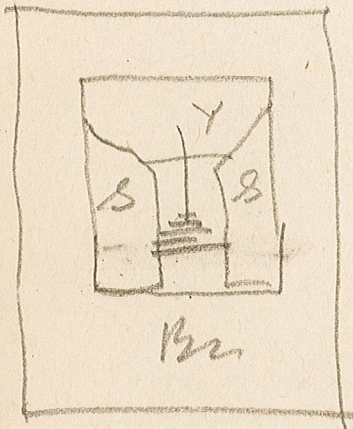
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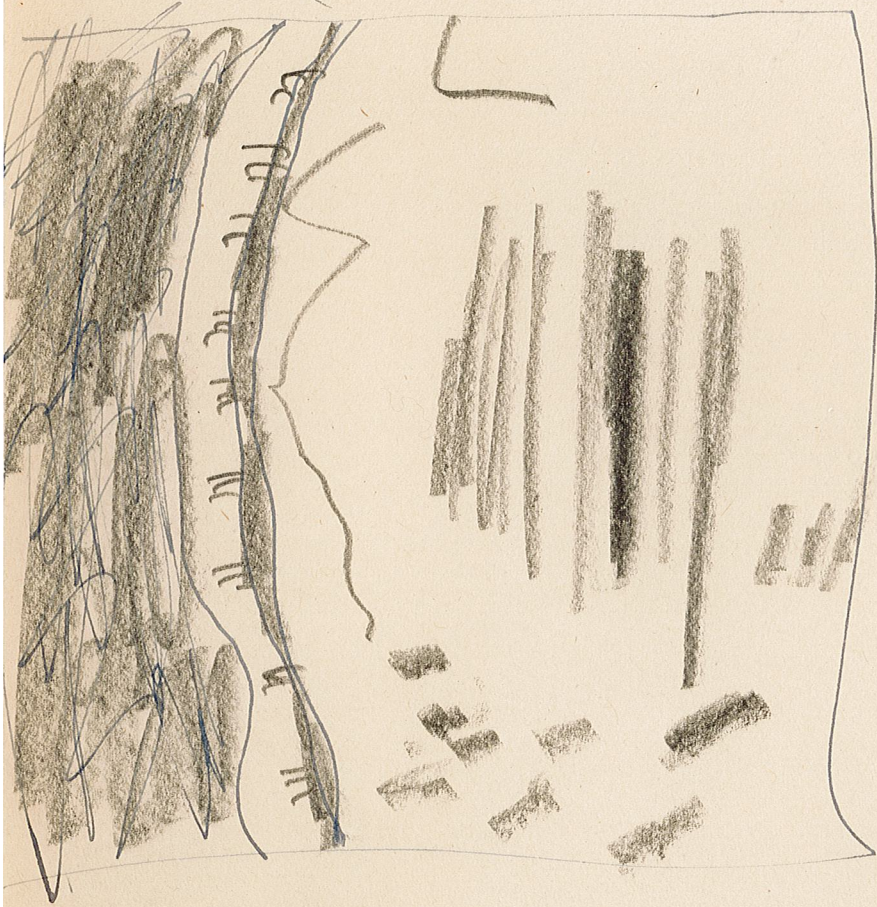


Crowded Mind



The Penetrator

Sketch of  
Mind Crystal by  
Forest Bass  
(returned photo)



oil on canvas  
& Qty as Betty Parson  
Gallery  
15857 N. Myc.

Bass

Forrest ~~Best~~ <sup>BESS</sup>

Drawing of Kodachromes  
returned Sept 5/47

Preparation: Have photo  
vaguely sketched for  
copy of reg. in chow (28)  
cloudlike  
3 1/2 x 10 1/2

oil on canvas 14x16 - 1946 -  
Property of Sidney Berkowitz  
San Antonio, Texas,

~~Best~~



1701 Avenue E,  
Bay City, Texas  
about Aug 31/47

Dear Dr. Piper,

Please excuse my delay in answering but I have been out on Matagorda bay for the last month fishing and painting and have received no mail in that period of time.

First - I should like to explain to you my situation in the field of painting. I am not desirous of becoming a great painter as I once hoped to be - I am interested now solely in the investigation of myself for myself. Frankly - I do not consider myself a creator of art - I do not consider my work my own product as the average artist feels about his painting. My job is to copy exactly - truthfully - those - I call them visions - things that happen to me.

I go to bed - close my eyes and "look into the back of my eyelids" and there I find my vision. I interpret or rather copy it exactly in oil on canvas. I have experimentally in three dimensional plastics trying to better copy them but I do not like the medium.

The best explanation of my work that I can find is in Jung's "modern man in search of a soul" in the chapter

(over)

entitled "Psychology and Literature".

There are two women who understand my work. One - Betty Parsons at the Parsons Gallery - 15 East 57<sup>th</sup> St. N.Y.C. has several of my canvases - one especially that I should like for you to see. It is called a "Mind Crystal". I am sorry that I do not have a Kodachrome of it.

Frankly sir, I am not interested in metaphysics - nor am I interested in art as a development of technique. I do not know or care whether I am an artist or not. I feel that I am a conduit to a tremendous source of some kind.

I plan on staying on the bay (Matagorda Bay) for the winter with my father who is a commercial fisherman. I have lots of time to myself which I need.

I will have a group of canvases at the Willard Gallery - 32 East 57<sup>th</sup> St. <sup>N.Y.C.</sup> the last of September. I may have a show there and if I do not I can have a show at Betty Parsons. In the meantime you may desire to write to Parsons. She explains my work as "the third eye" and classifies me as an "abstract primitive". I classify myself as a visionary painter.

If you care to write use the Bay City address.

Sincerely,  
Forest Bess

Bess

Nov. 22, 1947

Mr. Forest Bess,

1701 Avenue E

East Bay City, Texas.

Dear Mr. Bess:

Greetings to you! I hope you are fine in every way. I am happy, but overwhelmed with students (320) and writing that has to be done.

I appreciate your full letter; please accept my petition for forgiveness for delaying to slong in reply. It came during my stay in NYCity, and then came the deluge here. But I am amazed at the number of artists doing philosophical art now. I have photos from about 170 already. It is encouraging.

I was intensely interested in your comments on Klee and on various works in NYCity. I am especially delighted to have your enthusiastic approval of Ryder and Blake. I have found a young Armenian who may be the successor of Blake, Nalbandian, just finished an exhibit at Arthur Newton Gallerieis; has a series of eight on NEGATIVE JUDGMENT which are tremendous.

One of my friends here, Frederick Haucke, said the other night, tha art is not self-expression but self-exploration, and urged all students in lirberal colleges to be required to take painting to discover themselves.

Your way of life there must be conducive to many new ideas for works of art, not so? Do you keep a sketch book handy when you catch a glimpse of some new form or idea?

It is always good to hear from you. I'll be working on this job about two years yet, and who knows what unexpected delights you will yet produce and add to those already done?

With deep appreciation of every kndness, I am,

Sincerely yours,

R.F.Piper

Page 2 to Mr. Forrest Bess, in reply to his letter

I have studied the kodachromes and your letter with intense interest. I approve your initiative in having the kodachromes made. The most important for my purposes is GOLDEN DEATH, and I shall try to see it at Betty Parsons'. Would you help me to interpret it by filling out a DATA SHEET? What are the forms or figures within the blue area, and the central eye? I take the cloudlike background of the blue mass to be suggestive of the sky, and that the upward-pointing lines suggest a kind of jet projection of the soul into space, and the solid enclosure of brown is to insulate the scene from the rest of the world? What is wrong with my interpretation? Please read out of it all you can, will you?

The kodachrome of PREMONITION is a little masterpiece. The effect is more stirring than from the photograph, which, I see, must be viewed at a considerable distance. Is there a blue haze in the gray background?

The only other one that might be relevant is the Earl Ludgin Coll. work. It has no name, I'd be glad to have your suggestions about its meaning or occasion. Thanks immensely for letting me see these reproductions. I'll consider getting a photo of GOLDEN DEATH after I see the original.

You are fortunate that you are able to see the eyelid visions definitely enough to reproduce. I would recommend the study of metaphysics for your own development. I gave a course in metaphysics this past summer. I read the following yesterday in one of the final exams: "In closing I should like briefly to tell you what a wonderful course this has been. It has been the most stimulating thing I have yet encountered in my college work." One of the two textbooks was by G. A. Wilson, RECKONING WITH LIFE, Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn. Our research established the fact that the world and life is an evolution, and therefore we have reason to look forward to higher levels of attainment. In wrestling with the problem of evil we decided that the conditions of growth are strenuous, and each of us has to work hard to gain the necessary arts and discipline to unfold his potentialities. It is against this background that I would argue against your indifference to metaphysics as cutting yourself off from further sharpening. Metaphysics is the rational endeavor to gain a deep, synthetic, and comprehensive theory of the real and the good. It recognizes all methods of knowing, of which your direct intuition is one. But if there are powers or persons who are projecting these visions onto your consciousness, is it not likely that they are interested in your attaining the fullest, clearest truth, and also the highest possible artistic or technical skill of expression so that you may be a free "conduit" for them, as free as possible? We defined freedom in this course thus: Freedom is the mastery of the conditions necessary to realize one's legitimate wishes in this kind of world. And the yogins and others have worked out powerful methods of increasing one's sensitive to spiritual entities. But I must stop. I should be getting ready for my vacation trip to N.Y. City, early tomorrow morning. Would like to hear from you again, and always ardent wishes for your total wellbeing, including a lot more visions. Gratefully and cordially yours,



↑ CAREY      C BLACK

PREMONITION  
14x16  
OIL ON CANVAS  
by Forrest Bess

owned by  
Mr & Mrs. Sidney Berkowitz  
San Antonio, Texas



HAL SWIGGETT  
727 COTTONWOOD AVE.  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

*Ken  
✓ 179  
5/2/58  
✓*

*Don't Bess*

*Bess*

*22*