

Consuming Fire



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strive to force this journey to a predetermined end, are as much my enemies as the current institutions of domination that impose so many barriers to this journey. So, indeed, like all utopian dreamers, I am a great negator - I seek to destroy every barrier to the marvelous journey of a free existence.



CONSUMING FIRE

Are there those who are truly content with their lives? Show them to me. Let me drink in their foolishness. Certainly, they must be mad. If life has a purpose (and, yes, I know it does not!), it must be to burn—to consume itself in the passions and adventures offered by the world. For whether you consume yourself or not, in the end you are consumed by life—you die to feed further life. What good then to conserve your life, your energy, your natural wealth? Such conservation merely guarantees you never truly live. Like the misers in the stories, you survive like a pauper with a mattress full of riches. Fortunately, very few people are this pathetic. Most enjoy a little, dare a little—but with care. They gamble, but they hedge their bets—after all, what about tomorrow? Tomorrow when we may be dead... Moderation—this is the key in most people’s minds—but the key to what? To mediocrity, of course—that middle course that takes us nowhere that isn’t colorless... Grey, drab lives in ticky-tacky suburbs with even lawns. What fire is left merely smolders, but never flares. Nonetheless, it consumes, and those who lived such careful lives are gone just like the carefree daredevil who risked all. But such smoldering fires consume without beauty, without poetry and with very little light or heat.

No one denies the difficulty of a life of risk. But isn’t such difficulty precisely what gives life its spark, its joy? But we have been taught so well to fear. Who has no fear? Those who claim they have no fear are liars, fearing in particular that they will be exposed as cowards.

The things that keep us from what we desire: fear of love and of its lack, fear of cops and prison, fear of poverty, fear of loss of reputation, fear of solitude, fear

of the unknown... On and on, the abstract, and sometimes concrete, fears get in our way. Yet for those of courage, fear can be a spice - a sabor picante adding to the wonder of an adventure. Doesn't it tone the wits to have to get what one desires at a risk, to have to evade the upholders of the present mediocrity? This is why the hero and the outlaw are so often the same: those who will not let the rules apply to them. And, yes, the poets as well, those whose burning passions explode out in words of flame hurled defiantly at the world of mediocrity.

At times, the intrusions of this world into one's life seems overwhelming... The cloak of Hercules soaked in burning, sticking poison smothering vitality with an agonizing pain. The hours tick away, the days pass emptily, one's memory is a desolate wasteland reflecting the sameness of each day... Dreams fade; desires lose their fire and flow without life through the narrow channels defined by fifteen seconds of flashing light and noisy jingles from the television or the parade of billboards passed along the highway. This is the existence offered to us by the present society, by the community of capital in which all are one because each is nothing, where passionate love and hatred are smothered by the resentful and disrespectful tolerance required to maintain social peace, a tolerance that brings with it the continual daily round of humiliations that guarantee the enduring insignificance of each individual even to herself.

The clear-headed individual who wants the fullness of life that he knows must be possible recognizes the need for total and destructive transformation of the present world and so of herself (in whom so much of this world exists). She furthermore realizes that this revolution is not something that will drop from the sky into his lap. In fact, to sit around and wait for history to grant one "the revolution" is to continue to act, think and speak within the logic of the present mediocrity, the logic of capital which reduces each of us to a cipher. Such a revolution,

*beyond the world of drawers.
For hours we danced within
midnight flowers licking the petals
of our skin which was the paper
of a manifesto of lust
that spread its seed throughout
the continent of daydreams
and found the land of silver-backed
gorillas laughing at the amber fluid
of a lovely dreamer of symptomatic
beams,
and the days flourished through the vibrancy
of beer and love.
One day we would find our dream
and it would not be an Eden
but a voyage to unknown places.*

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*It is a delightful paradox that utopian **dreamers** are so often accused by utopian **schemers** of only being negative - always criticizing but never making positive proposals. Such accusations have been flung at anarchists, surrealists, libertarian communists and so many others. Yet when these vibrant dreamers choose to become schemers, their schemes always seem to fall short of the critique offered by their dreams. This is no accident. When one rejects all hierarchy, all domination, all representation, then one cannot present a completed vision of the world that one desires. Rather it would be a world that transform in every moment with the desires, needs and aspirations of those who live in this world freely interacting coming together in love or common interest, separating when conflict of desires moves them in different directions. It would be no paradise, but a constant, adventurous journey without end full of loves and hatreds, joys and sorrows, real conflicts as well as joyful intercourse of all sorts. And those who strive to impose their schemes of a perfect world, a paradise, who*

Here is the difference between utopias: Those of dreams glimmer in the moments that spark revolt, that move us toward insurrection. Those of schemes are never seen in the present except in the form of holocausts and genocides, the holy wars of true believers, because schemes must rid themselves of the unpredictable. Dreams, on the contrary, depend on the unpredictable, thus on the **passion** of love, the erotic spark of lust. It is not by chance that revolt is a lover seen backwards through a cup of (mushroom?) tea.

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Dark shining eyes
like an octopus dreaming
caress the cavity of my mind,
plunging into caverns
where the flowers of desire
glow in iridescent midnight blue
like the thorax of a tree frog
whose marvelous tongue
engorges the flattening flies of
the midnight sun.
Once again the dances find
a universe within the spreading thorax
of a hummingbird
who sings of dreams
that scamper past the limited
utopias of those who accept
the measurement of rulers.
I have clothed myself
in vaginal splendor
in those times when insurrection
spread its aphrodisiac face
across the horizon
and the wombats found their pleasure
in a cup of minstrel wine
left by the eyeless girl
whose lovely dreams went far

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should it ever come, could only reproduce the present world, perhaps in a more egalitarian form, but who wants to be equal to zero?

The recognition that one cannot continue as a cipher and the consequent decision to act destructively against the present social order, to attack it with all of one's being, begins the process of the total transformation of the individual, for, as it is put into practice, this decision draws out what is unique in each of us, our singularity, and thus draws us out from the herd of ciphers and into the world of self-creation.



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INTO WHAT STRANGE CHASM

In a social landscape already atomized by the roles and relationships imposed on us, what of the rebel who wills to be able to focus enough to create his or her own life and attack the institutions of society intelligently and with force? A dissipation of force is all too easy when one practices general conviviality. If one wishes to accomplish anything significant, undifferentiated friendliness is an obstacle, a way to get nowhere.

It is the agony of those impassioned by living that they desire to share their lives with others, to find companions with whom to share what they create and what they love, to bridge the chasm this society creates between individuals. Often this means wasting years trying to find the few with whom one can truly share friendship, those few whose life projects can intertwine with ones own for a while. But even when this chasm closes, when one finds a friend or two, it is only for a while, then the rift begins to open, the pain, the tearing of one's heart, the knowledge that one is once again alone, crying across the chasm, hearing only the echo, distorted by distance into something that one never said or desired. It seems that some avoid this agony... They learn how to compromise, to desire something easier. The projects of survival and of the group grant them a continent of contentment. I do not understand these people. Do I envy them? At moments, until I remember the level of life with which they have contented themselves...

Still, I want the companionship, the feeling that I can share projects - particularly projects of defiance. To defy society alone is frightening and limited, a sad affair... Yet better sadly alive than a breathing corpse.

now our language diminishes and it often seems that even our thoughts are not our own.

*The masters of this world tell us that we cannot go back. And they are right as far as they go. We cannot go back. The world has changed too much and we have changed too much. But though we can't go back, this does not mean we must go forward. If the path we are on can only lead to a drab and lifeless horror and if the passage back is blocked, then we must go **elsewhere**, the elsewhere of the unknown that is insurrection, the utopian dream. If Columbus helped to forge a path that meant misery for nearly all of humanity, then we must diverge absolutely from all known paths, to enter into the marvelous of wild, uncharted desires.*

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"I am in love with a dream, and the moisture between my thighs is utopia." So spoke the dark eyes of a woman whose beauty was a mist that drew me into its marvelous obscurity. Her earlobes sang of insurrections exploding through her nipples caressed by silken fingers and the wings of butterflies.

The poetry of true utopia rests within the heart of desire. It is at war with the schemes that would define every moment of life. The bureaucrat's vision of paradise where everything is perfect and nothing is human, where love is forgotten and dreams are ignored, this is the enemy of poetry.

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Where are the fiery-eyed utopians, those whose passions have no patience, those whose hearts burn so hot that their eyes flash flames of madness, the madness of utopia and love that has not divorced itself from lust? It has been far too long since I danced naked on a wild, barren hilltop that rises from a singing forest with other wild dreamers, leaping to kiss the moon.

exploration. So as everything closes down around us, we cannot follow suit, letting our dreams drown in the misery of realism, pragmatism and utility. Now, more than ever, we need to grasp all the marvelous force of impossible dreams expressed in the fiercest of insurgent principles, in the refusal of compromise, with the fullness of our passion and our reason. Not out of a desire for purity (which is always an illusion), but from the realization that dreams of freedom can only be realized in freedom, that dreams of a life lived fully **as our own** can only be realized by living our struggle here and now **as our own** without any willing compromise with the institutions of domination. Disaster surrounds us, but our lives must not be defined by it. In its midst we must continue to dream and to grasp our dreams, transforming them into our reasons for revolt.

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It is clear that we are living in a world moving further and further into horror and misery. Sometimes in the name of great ideals, more often nowadays quite blatantly in the name of naked power, the rulers of this world pursue policies that homogenize and impoverish existence, spreading disaster everywhere. But this is not really so new. Didn't Columbus begin to spread this process (already well under way in Europe) when he brought a religion that gloried in death and an economy with an insatiable appetite, eating everything in its path to produce shit, to a world already thriving with human life, as well as that of plants and animals unknown in Europe? Thus, a process euphemistically called colonialism, more accurately described as genocide, began to spread throughout the world, slaughtering and enslaving people everywhere, kidnapping black Africans to enslave them in the Americas, all after having dispossessed the peasants of Europe, forcing them into destitution and survival by any means necessary. This process of dispossession has advanced to the point that

WAKE UP !

It is not infrequent in certain anarchist circles to hear the call to act on one's instincts. But since so few people actually think about what they do, couldn't it be argued that most people are acting on their instincts? Maybe - assuming that we have instincts at all - our greatest instinct is to do what comes easiest, what involves the least challenge, thus, in the present society, to conform. However, what the advocates of instinct are actually calling for is for individuals to discover their desires and act on them. But this is also too passive. Every society creates within individuals the desires - and the mode of desiring - appropriate to that society. If one merely discovers one's desires, they may well just be those created within the person by social training, not their own desires. Thus, the anarchist who speaks of his freedom to fulfill his desire for Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream as if such a desire is anything other than conformity to commodity consumption. We who desire the destruction of this society and the creation of new ways of interacting have to take conscious, willful action, not passively follow anything. We must become the creators of our desires - willfully creating them outside the mold of commodity consumption. In this light as well, the limits of automatism as an insurgent way of life becomes evident. One need only observe the automatons on the expressways, in the offices and factories, and at the malls with their glazed expressions to see that automatism is not sufficient as long as this society exists. It too readily creates the banality of habit, the repetition of patterns. This is not to reject the potential of objective chance (nor the use of automatism as one tool among many), but to recognize the necessity of seizing it with one's full consciousness which is able to grasp with spontaneous intelligence the moment and the method for acting in the moment. We have been sleep-walkers for far too long... Let's wake up to the joy of adventurous, insurgent living.

ZIPOLITE: The Music of the Ocean

The polyphony of the ocean is a sound that rarely becomes tedious. Though it could neither be called melodious or harmonious and its rhythms are far from steady, it is one of the most musical of sounds. One hundred feet away, its roar soothes and gently lulls one to sleep... But some people just don't understand... They come to the ocean and immediately impose their noise upon the night. They start the fire whose flames so clearly leap and dance to the same beautifully erratic rhythm to which the ocean sings... Then... the drums. I do not hate drums. Played well, with taste and a feel for the environment - at least when in a setting shared with such wild beings as sea and flame - they can be a beautiful expression of human creativity. But the odious beat of the drum machine... of technology... of the factory... destroys the joy of a place like this.

Last night, the first drummer was drumming just this sort of rhythm - lacking all grace, all complexity, any evidence of love for the ocean. One immerses oneself in one's love - one's drumming would be part of the music of the ocean if one were playing with love for it.

Later, the drumming was technically better - it had grace... it had complexity - but it still raped the music of the ocean rather than making love to it. As such, it was not soothing. It could not help the ocean put me to sleep. I finally had to ask these senseless hippies to tone down. I can't deny that they did so with grace. Finally, a bit clumsily, they began to caress the ocean and her music, not to intrude on it... and I was able to doze.

It could be so much more interesting, so much more beautiful, if those who were to play music in a setting with wild sound would spend a while listening to the wild sound, the non-human music, so that they could improvise around these sounds, not try to drown them out or dominate them - it's much better to seduce these sounds and make them part of one's music. Not that we should always try to play along with whatever sound is

DREAMING IN THE FACE OF DISASTER: Thoughts on Utopia

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A world of disaster... this is all that capital offers, all that it has ever really offered, but now it can't even hide this behind the apparent abundance of goods. The world falls apart as it becomes one huge poisonous supermarket. Desperation abounds in its many guises. The loss of values, of principles, a desperation that is willing to take any action, and so mostly acts in ways that reinforce the current order of things. The apocalyptic visions of collapse, the dreams of the hopeless, replace revolutionary desire. If joy can't ever be ours, if wonder and the festival of revolt are beyond our reach, at least we can imagine the collapse of our misery, the fall of the horror, even if it must take us down with it (all but the elect few who will somehow survive in its poisonous ruins). So the "dream" of some is nothing more than the belief that this sad, impoverished vision is the only possibility, because the other possibilities that they imagine, variations on the continuation of the present desolate survival, seem so much worse.

But isn't the worst aspect of our current desolation precisely the impoverishment of imagination, the death of every utopian dream that is not a program, a scheme, i.e., a conception of how to continue the present existence? Certainly, at this point, our hatred of the present reality requires the strength of dreams, of desire, of the utopian **journey** that is the opposite of every utopian program, of the utopian experiment that rejects all schemes. Capital can only provide the final answer, the final solution. But final solutions only bring death. Life is continual questioning, experimentation,

course, some kind of chestnut, but for me it was the eye of the night - the eye through which one sees the world of dreams.

As I wandered home, my mind remained in the state of reverie this exercise provoked. I continued to see the night everywhere in the cracks of the day.



around, even in a wild setting... But drums, in particular, can be very dominating, very demanding, and so require more careful playing. I do not mean more planned, but a more gentle improvisation... a real care for the music and the sounds surrounding it. Music, possibly more than any other creative endeavor, does not exist alone. It is part of the sensual environment. It can dominate that environment or it can dance with it, play with it, seduce it - become a part of it. We are mostly used to music that dominates: amplified music, recorded music, digital music... But even in these highly technologized modes there are varying degrees to which it dominates. And I am most offended not when it dominates the environment, but when it dominates me. If I hate raves in the woods or bad drumming by the sea, it is because they intrude on my enjoyment, forcing me to listen whether I want to or not.



THE BESTIAL BEAUTY OF LOVE

(The following text was written when I was madly in love with someone who did not feel the same way toward me. It is an expression of my feelings at the time and should be read as such.)

When one is in love, a fiery storm rages within, a storm of intense desire that is a form of madness. This vast, expansive passion is belittled in this society. What is called "romantic love" (a misnomer and an abuse of the term "romantic" if this term can also be applied to one such as Byron) is sentimentalized pablum for mediocre saps. It lacks the intensity and cruelty that give true passionate love its edge.

Since the cruelty of this passion is a loving cruelty, it doesn't want to hurt simply for the sake of hurting. Rather it is cruel in its determination to fulfill itself if that is at all possible. Thus, just as this love is not sentimentally romantic, this cruelty is not Sadean. Sade portrayed a cruelty that was sexual and aimed at the realization of desire, but this desire and, thus, this cruelty were loveless. While some of the characters in Sade's novels were portrayed as unique individuals, they did not treat their victims as such or seem particularly interested in knowing any other person as such in any deep, intense way. They are portrayed as wanting only two things from others: first and foremost, sexual gratification, and secondarily, material gain which makes the pursuit of the former easier. The idea that the Other may also be an entire individual who one may wish to encounter and enjoy in her fullness is lacking in Sade. The closest Sade comes to this is friendships of mutual self-interest between individuals who recognize the same sort of cruel, loveless sexuality in each other and realize that they can help each other fulfill these desires. It is interesting to note that this ultra-egoist, loveless sexuality ends up at times becoming a quasi-communist sexuality (though only within the circle of those who share this form of sexuality - those outside this circle

Greece. I had no place to turn, so I had no choice but to turn the power of dream upon my would-be assassins. With a simple wave of the hand, I transformed them into harmless and delightful yellow butterflies. Today, as I sought the night, one of them returned to me in the bright noon sun to remind me of the dream of that night more than 35 years ago.

Looking ahead, I saw a particularly dark area. I walked toward it. It was a small grove of oak and cherry trees. The oak seems to me to hold the night to a greater extent than many other trees. The shade here is darker and that is what attracted me. As I approached the grove, I noticed that the shadows of the oak leaves were particularly dark, looking black and sharply outlined from a distance. As I approached they maintained an intense darkness, though it lightened somewhat to a dark grey, but the sharpness disappeared as the apparent boundary between dark and light changed into a gradation. Still one is left to wonder if this capacity to hold the night throughout the day is an aspect of the mystery of the oak that has led some cultures to consider it as particularly magical.

I left the grove, guessing that it might be nearing one. Passing under another grove of trees, a spot of intense blackness on the ground strikes my eyes. I approach to find a muddied magazine called Outlook. I know nothing of this magazine and it was too muddy to open and investigate, but the cover was black with what appeared to be a multi-colored comet (blue, indigo, purple, dark lavender and green) shooting through this midnight sky. A few steps later I found a pair of reading glasses missing one earpiece. What outlook might they offer? What colorful comets flying through the night? Who had brought them here on what adventures? I took them with me. Shortly I came upon a fallen yellow ginkgo leaf that immediately became for me the second yellow butterfly of my dream. Right next to it I found an eye of the night, the eyeball a dark, dark brown - nearly black - and the iris and pupil a light grey, nearly white. It was, of

and notches in the trees drew me in. Some were shallow and as I approached, the midnight that I saw from a distance slowly lightened to a pre-dawn grey, revealing but not dispelling the mysteries within. Others, in their depth, retained the black of midnight, the pitch-black that enshrouds the unknown. Who knows what strange eyes may gleam their phosphorescent light from the depths of these dark caverns of night? I was moved by this adventure to leave the well-paved paths, and though it hadn't rained for days, at times I found my footsteps sinking into dark, softer soil. Here too the night was drawing me into its mystery, the soft indistinct boundary between the black soil and the daylight sky.

I wandered into the midst of a grove of trees with wide spreading branches creating a dusky atmosphere through which the daylight filtered. In the haziness of shadows, the darkness that fades into the light rather than separating itself abruptly, one can see as well the haziness of the distinction between night and day - and also perhaps between reason and passion which for revolutionaries must become one. Nearby a pair of dense, low bushes create a deeper night, not quite black, but a darkness difficult to penetrate, a place that one can imagine is full of the beasts of dreams.

And yet my encounter with such a beast itself showed the haziness of these distinctions. I wandered into a large patch of brilliant daylight and even found a bit of night there. A yellow butterfly flew up from the grass and flitted in its dreamy dance with air and sun and life. And what is there of night in this? Here I find one of my own nights, a night from my childhood in which I dreamed. In this dream, I found myself being chased by two men who sought to kill me. One was an old man in a wheel chair - in this chair he could move with great speed and I knew he was very rich and powerful. The other was his aide, a tall long-legged man who could run like the wind. Finally, they had me cornered in a coliseum that was underground and yet open to the sun. It was like one of the building of an acropolis in ancient

can only be its victims) as in the Sodality in Juliette or in Madame de Sainte-Ange's advice to Eugenie to fuck anyone who wishes to fuck her regardless of who they are.

The egoism of passionate love is a different sort of egoism. It desires the Other as a total being, as a singular individual. While such desire certainly cannot fit well into capitalist society, it also cannot be communized, because its basis is in individuals as unique beings. Its cruelty refuses to damage the beloved because it wants to have the beloved in her entirety, not just a part of the beloved. This is no less cruel than Sadean lust - possibly it is more so - because such passion wants to consume the loved one completely and to be consumed by her. But this cruelty does not dehumanize like that of Sadean lust (the victims in Sade's novels are never presented as human individuals), but rather is the determination to fully take the uniqueness of the Other into oneself...

My own present passion shows another aspect of the cruelty of passionate love. I don't see how I can fulfill this passion, how I can bring it to completion. Yet I so desire this intensity, this fiery storm that can be more beautiful and frightening than the most intense of psychedelic experiences, that I am willing, in fact, determined to put myself through whatever is necessary to keep this passion alive. Thus, I am cruel to myself due to passionate love.

Some will fear the association of love with cruelty just as some fear the association of play with violence. But passionate sexual love differs from friendship because it is based in difference and a poetic form of conflictuality. Friendship arises out of a recognition of similarities, of mutual interests. Of course, friends also enjoy each other's uniqueness, the differences between them, but this is not the basis of friendship. In love, on the other hand, it is precisely the difference that fascinates, this unique other that is what one is not. This is why this passion takes on the form of a desire to ingest, to

OLD NIGHT EQUINOX

(September 23, 2002)

consume the other and to be consumed by her. It is a desire to increase the wealth of one's being. But, at the same time, each tries to keep himself or herself distinct from the other. And each desires that the other maintain their distinctness as well... So the lover is his own adversary as well as that of the beloved. It is this conflict inherent in passionate love - this conflict within and between lovers - that is the source of its unique form of joy and pleasure.

When a lover loses himself in the other, this conflict ends. The love loses its passion and becomes mainly a habit of comfort and laziness. This is very different from the situation in which lovers also become friends (or friends become lovers). In this latter situation, a new dimension is brought into play. The passionate enjoyment of difference, of otherness, dances with the more reasonable enjoyment of mutual interests, shared projects, the pleasures of lives shared; a dialectic of intensity and ease, fiery passion and tenderness. All of the cruelty is still there, but blended with camaraderie.

To deny the cruelty is to reject the passion, the intensity of being in love. The act of physical love itself reflects this cruelty and the conflict that is its basis. Making love resembles wrestling or grappling. The more passionate it is, the more violent it becomes. Grabbing, pinching, scratching, biting all come into play in the physical attempt to ingest the other. But compare this to sex as portrayed in pornography: bodies barely touch except to the extent necessary for genital-orifice contact. This isn't about passion; it is simply about getting one's rocks off - the other is just a means of masturbating. In Sade, there is passionate cruelty, but it is loveless. If the other is a victim, he is simply raped and tortured to death - no conflict, just total domination. If the other is a peer, then each in turn submits himself to the other's whims, but still without the conflict, the wonder, the storm, of love. Sadean cruelty and passion are thus so self-interested, in a contractive and solipsistic way that they express

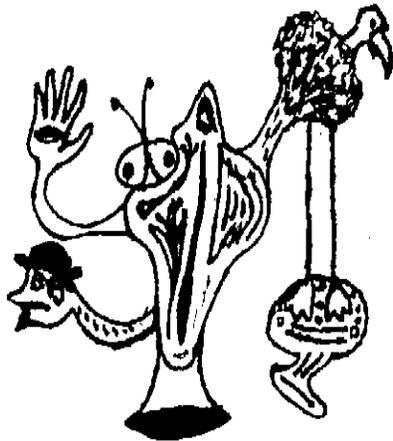
...darkness has its magic. It opens gates of the imagination that would otherwise remain closed... At times, I feel that the deadening of imagination in modern society is due in part to the violent destruction of the night by artificial lights. For in the dark, the stark definition of all things breaks down, the rigid lines, the stiff separations disappear - anarchy breaks forth, the opening of all possibilities - the marvelous appears in the world ...

At noon, I left the dusky coffee house to go in search of the night. Not having a watch or other measured timepiece, I cannot give precise times hereafter. In fact, the "time" of this exercise was as measureless for me as the time of dreams - and this may be the first opening of my day to the night, bringing the passionate time of dreams into this search. But even before I began my search, I was sitting in the coffeehouse, the dusky atmosphere of which blended day and night. The level of light is not unlike that to which I would read late at night as a child, a low watt bulb squeezing light through a narrow crack in my closet door. This to prevent my parents from knowing that I read late into the night. When my mother found out, she scolded me telling me I would go blind. Yet it is this same half-light, which leaves colors, shapes and boundaries somewhat indistinct, that seems to permeate most coffee houses where so many choose to write.

I left the dusk of this coffee house to begin my search for the night and found myself in the brilliance of the noon sun. I headed toward Tower Grove park and was greeted by a bed of flowers in which I found every shade of night-blue from the gentle indigos that begin to spread as the sun sets to the deepest midnight blues that draw the eyes in, inducing a dreamlike state. I wandered further into the park where the blackness found in holes

fashion - to get the few coins I need... Wouldn't this encourage greater daring and self-reliance? When I know I have nothing to lose - and everything to enjoy - what a grand invitation to daring, to excess, to squandering! And to that grandest of squandered existences - insurgent living!

I have always been something of a dreamer, but - as difficult as it can be - I do try to keep at least one foot on the ground as I stride across the land... Not in the sense of being a realist - realism means accepting and striving to live within the present reality. (Besides, by insisting on keeping both feet squarely on the ground, realists have lost the ability to walk, let alone stride.) No, I try to create ways to live as I desire here and now - I try, but too often with a half-hearted courage, a lack of audacity that holds me back, that leaves me with one foot mired in the swamp of mere survival. And that, my friends, is dangerous indeed, a quicksand that can draw one in so suddenly and frightfully that one only realizes it when it's almost too late - when the fluid sands are flowing up one's sinuses, choking the last spark of life from one's smothering self.



themselves in only the coldest, most calculated manner. As monstrous as Sadean lust may be, its violence cannot compare to that of passionate love. Sadean lust may destroy the passive, the weak and the self-sacrificial, but it does not destroy civilizations, devour galaxies or turn minds into flaming tornadoes of desire. Sade writes of the civilized expression of animal lust. The cold calculation is the civilized aspect; the cruel wantonness is the animal aspect. Sade is right to point out that human beings are animals and that, therefore, our sexuality is animal sexuality. But it is equally important to recognize that we are not essentially instinctual animals. Our relationships and interactions are not genetically determined. This is what makes all of the bizarre sexual permutations described by Sade, as well as the various forms that fill the pages of pornography magazines possible. It is also what makes the explosive battle of passionate love possible and even desirable. We can go beyond simply getting our rocks off and also beyond the cruelty of Sadean lust; we can learn to desire the utter unapproachable difference, the untouchable uniqueness, of another with such intensity and passion that we will strive to touch this uniqueness, to take this other into ourself and to penetrate ourself into this other. This desire is what I feel as passionate, erotic love. It is a madness, a wildness that puts one on the edge. And it is a joy without which life would not be worth living.

It is in terms of the conflictual nature of passionate love that the pleasure found in unrequited love can best be understood. When love is not (or cannot be) mutual, the conflict between the lover and the beloved is at a peak which may, for the lover, add more fuel to the fire than mutual passion would. One is confronted with the impossible, with what cannot be, and this is precisely what one wants. A kind of madness prevails, an inner conflict which tears the lover to shreds, but which the lover would not give up at any price. To be contented, happy, satisfied... but without the passion, the intensity,

the conflict... without the beloved... This the lover could not tolerate, because a mind and heart so inflamed would find the mediocrity of feeling brought on by quenching the flame unbearable. Better the anguished joy of loving this marvelous Other.

When I speak of difference as the basis of passionate love, I want to be clear that I am not talking about gender. It is true that the one I love is a woman and this plays a part in my attraction, but it is not the cause of my passionate love for her. After all, I am not attracted to all, or even most, women (and I have been attracted to certain men). If the difference I have been talking about were that shallow, I would fall in love with categories, not individuals. The difference of which I speak is the singularity of the beloved, what she is that no one else could be. This is impossible to describe in words - only poetic language can begin to flirt with an understanding of this difference, just as only poetic language can come close to expressing the actual feelings of this marvelous passion, this beautiful adversarial relationship we know as love. The poetic use of language has a uselessness about it that is comparable to the uselessness of love. One cannot write contracts poetically just as one cannot contract to be in love. This is why marriage and other formalizations of love are absurd. What they try to formalize cannot be formalized, because it is a passion, a storm that strikes suddenly and may end just as suddenly. It is true that one's conscious will can affect one's passions and even, to some extent, direct them, but it cannot fully control them, and unpredictability remains a part of the marvel of passionate love. In the intensity of desire found in passionate love, the fire of human wildness burns brightly.

can take steps toward the destruction of work. Combined with sabotage, it can be quite satisfying. But for those who have escaped jobs, active enjoyment is essential to the attack against the world of work.

This is where I have too often failed. I have let worries about survival keep me from the full active enjoyment of life, an enjoyment full of risks and possible discomforts. But in the present world, comfort and security are among the worst enemies of life lived to the full. The number of people sucked into the work and pay world for the sake of comfort and security - people who theoretically oppose that world - is huge. I have known too many who say they want to destroy the world of work, but choose to marry, settle down, hold a steady job, get a house with a mortgage, live on credit... And on a practical level, their attitude toward those who refuse to succumb to this enslaving security is affected by these choices.

Recently, I have considered going off on my wanderings and going as my desire moved me without considering my income, putting my needs on a more immediate basis. Such a decision would still leave me months of guaranteed income. But the thought of the end of that income would no longer be a worry goading me to time my adventures in terms of paperwork necessary to keep this income. Rather it would be an encouragement to explore other methods of meeting my needs and creating my pleasures - methods that would, at the same time, extend the duration of my income and help me to learn methods for living without it once again. It may be that I would occasionally find myself forced to resort to a temporary job... but even that would be more within my power than the whims of a government bureaucracy and its constant demands for the same information over and over again.

To be a tramp wandering the face of the earth - mostly free of work; occasionally stomping grapes here, picking broccoli there, helping to build something in another place - or better, thieving and thriving in a more outlaw

most of a life rather than a full life. Better, indeed, than the undead existence accepted by so many - but just as clearly not enough.

There is no doubt, "Never work!" is a principle worth living by, but not in a moralistic sense whereby one condemns anyone who ever holds a job even for a moment, even when it is only a temporary means to fund a life of adventure and joyful battle against the society of work and pay. In the United States, it seems, the refusal of work is all too often reduced to mere avoidance of having a job. The reverse side of "Never work!" - "Live life to the full!" - seems to be forgotten. In this latter cry is the implication of the creation of projects and interactions, of the adventures and pleasures that are life, and through which the things we desire for the enjoyment of life can be created without work. This goes far beyond the mere avoidance of work which all too often seems to mean nothing more than collecting one's food stamps, going to charity feeds, dumpster diving, sucking cheap malt liquor and smoking dope - an existence which, in itself, can be pretty squalid and, on the large scale, continues to support the work machine. Only if the time gained by these means is turned toward the creation of projects aimed at the destruction of work and the society which depends on it and the exploration of ways of living based on the desire for fullness of life as opposed to survival does work avoidance become part of a revolutionary practice. The dole and charities make it easy to forget this.

Laziness is a beautiful thing. The indolent being is lovely and sensual, calling one to lie back and easily caress, to pass the day lying in a field of wildflowers in a gentle embrace as the summer breeze rustles over the skin evoking quiet laughter and the whispers of passion. But as beautiful as this is, there is much more to life - feasts, dances, games, adventures - and all that goes into making them. Those still trapped in the throes of a job should certainly be encouraged to be indolent - as well as sticky fingered - for this is the way that workers

WAITING IN ORLY TO FLY

*The night is young and will be long. This strange world of waiting...
waiting to be transported...
transported back to...*

When one feels unsettled, when one's firm decisions, one's willful resolve, seem on the verge of disintegration in the fog of precarious affinities...

...but the dream, this is the realm of the night, especially a night such as this—in an unreal reality, a monstrous, barren landscape of commerce and transport, lit palely yet glaringly with fluorescence—after a day in transit and a night of restless half-sleep. But there is no place here for sleep and reverie replaces dreams, but not pleasant reverie, green and flickering, the sun dancing through wind blown leaves, but the dark reverie that has wrestled with my wish to sleep for nights. I am not a peaceful man, a man content and willing to accept the will of the gods. No, I am a man at war—with the world and with society, indeed, but also with myself and those I love the most. Such a monstrosity, a nightmare. Yet apparently so calm...

Where is our failing? In the fear of conflict, of disorder. In the desire to keep our lives calm and orderly, peaceful and easy. We claim that we want to wreak havoc on society, on every authority, all rule; we claim that we want the upheaval of revolution, of anarchy. Yet we fear the entry of these wild forces into our own lives; we seek the easy way out, the way of diplomacy and tact, of suppression and self-censoring. Our own passions and desires scare the fucking shit out of us. We wish that we could achieve the shallowness of those who are content with Ben and Jerry's ice cream, the Simpsons and their own mediocre relationships: a tepid "love" partnership, friendships based on the

camaraderie of mutual humiliation and disrespectful tolerance and the daily encounters of no substance that create our banal survival. And we do lower ourselves to this level in practise in our daily lives. It is safer, easier...

But inside we still burn and in our burning suffer in anguish. We become morose and irritable, depressed and prone to rages. In drunken fits, the passions that we've bound up in straight-jackets in order to maintain our own "peace" break out from this imprisonment, deformed and monstrous. And in the morning, we find ourselves apologizing and picking up the pieces of the ruins we have left in the wake of these monstrous passions. And the passions are locked down once more to further deform. We regret these little disorders, these little upheavals, yet claim to want the great upheavals. Do we really know what we want? Do we really have any clarity, any concept of projectuality as an immersion into life as a self-creative storm? Can those who fear and apologize for small upheavals destroy the present social order; can they destroy the totality of that which keeps the fullness of our lives as a wondrous chaos that we create for ourselves from us?



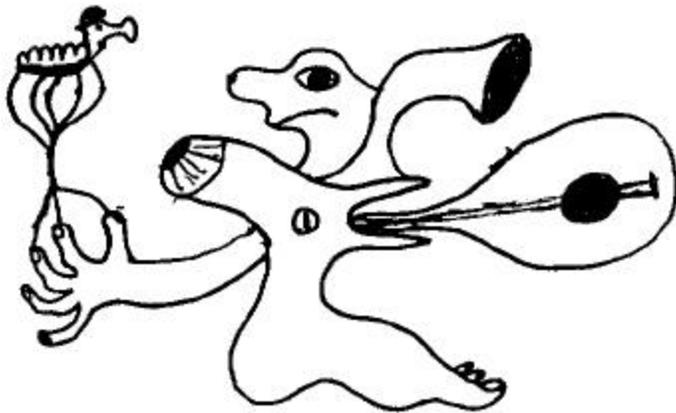
MOST OF A LIFE

It is true enough that in the forty-odd years that I have been alive, I have lived more than most people in advanced capitalist societies have. Some would say I should take pride - or at least solace - in this. I have certainly refused the roles intended for me, avoided work studiously and played game and enjoyed beauties, pleasures and adventures that many others haven't dared to know. But what does this really mean when I have not lived nearly as intensely, fully or beautifully as I imagine and desire?

More so than the fact the being on the dole is dependence on the state (I am not a moralist - in the present society, who is not to some extent dependent on the capital - and so, at least indirectly, on the state?) or even that it tends to make one lazy, what bothers me about this choice is that it is another hedged bet - something that one does to guarantee survival, precisely in the way that survival exists in this society - as something separate from and opposed to life. It is easy enough, of course, to avoid falling into the trap thus laid by the dole, even while collecting it, but only if one is fully aware of the trap, if one has clarity about the nature of survival. Unfortunately, I have only been slowly developing such a clarity, and my growing awareness has sprung from mistakes that I have made, times when I have chosen survival over life without realizing it and have found the result to be dissatisfaction - and at times disorientation.

It is easy to blame the present social context for the lacks in one's life. Certainly, the horrifying, alienated world of capitalism, industrialism, the state does immiserate existence. This is why the truly living must stand in heroic defiance against it. But I have realized that a great deal of my dissatisfaction stems from my own lack of courage - from too often backing away from the most daring of my desires - from having lived only

bureaucratic mediation. This explains how religion is an opiate: it makes us oblivious to the anguish of our suppressed uniqueness and creativity, allowing us to forget the damage without curing it. It numbs us to the point where we accept the damage and its cause, civilization in its totality. One can see how certain forms of atheism—its stalinist and maoist forms as well as the 19th century rationalist forms touted by the American Atheist followers of Madelyn Murray O'Hare—can be religions. Atheism only avoids religiosity by having an existential as opposed to a dogmatic basis—that is as a willful decision to refuse god rather than a belief in no god. And the willful refusal of god has its basis precisely in the decision to extract ourselves from the infinite—that is the mass—and to live to the full the singularity of our being, drawing the universe into ourselves as our own and, thus, creating the marvelous in all its poetic beauty...the decision to pull ourselves from the sea so that we may come to know and love it with the fullness of our own unique being as only those who refuse to drown can.



MAD CREATORS

We bury ourselves in the petty, the details, the business end of everything. Is this necessary? No doubt, but it is not the essence of life, of action in this world... Busyness, the myriad of projects without projectuality: the magazines, the pamphlets, the papers...without the willful creation of life and interactions with passion and intensity—this is not life. But willful creation is dangerous; the passions surge beyond that which one had expected; they become monstrous and mad, drunk with themselves or with a beloved. I have quite intentionally developed attractions into passions, wanting intensity and fire in particular relationships. But this can grow far beyond one's expectations...to the maddest of mad loves, to an obsession that devours much of one's mind. When this happens it is not possible for one's other projects to be untouched by this passion. How could anyone imagine that the more mundane projects could go on without facing such a tempest and dealing with it? Are real lives so easily compartmentalized? It does not work this way—not among those who are seeking to be the creators of their own lives. Here life becomes a unity, each facet a reflection of the creator in conjunction with those with whom she chooses to create. This is not an easy way by any means. But then those who want ease don't choose to be revolutionaries. They choose to keep their passions reined in, well domesticated, mere sentiments defined for them by Hallmark cards and family albums.

DROWNING

Drowning...

A death in which one is completely overcome by a natural force too great for one to fight...

But what deaths do not involve such a force?

I think drowning has its special significance because the force surrounds the victim, encompasses her, ingests and plays with him. Particularly in the sea, it is as if infinity has swallowed the one who has drowned, has taken him in and turned her into a part of itself. While there are similarities to death by fire, which also consumes its victims, fire lacks the apparent infinity of the sea, and the victim has freedom of motion limited only by her own fear, at least until asphyxiation causes him to lose consciousness. But one who drowns finds himself to be the plaything of the sea, forced to partake in its fluidity of motion. Certainly the drowning one will struggle against the power of the sea. But to what avail? Her motions are conformed to the desires of the sea; his struggles merely lead to exhaustion and limpid acceptance. The motions, the currents, the fluid tidal dance possess one's body and take it where they will. I imagine one's mind is also slowly possessed by the aqueous dream and slowly drifts along toward inevitable oblivion. Who does not imagine the drowning victim dreamy-eyed and languid? Do not forget that we are mostly water. Doesn't it make sense then that such a death would seem, in our imaginations, to simply be a return to our source? Maybe this is why we attribute calm and peace to the last moments of one who drowns. I have heard people speak of this as if it were a known established truth, even a scientific fact. But of course, no one knows. The drowned do not return to tell the tale of their last moments. So such a "truth" must be

understood poetically, as a reflection of our view of the sea and of our own unperceived fluidity.

We are strange creatures. We desire...we need...to separate ourselves from the infinity, to find our own uniqueness and color all the infinite worlds with it, in this way making them our own. But such a task is daunting. And more so as social constructs developed by those in power in their attempts to dominate this process channel our endeavors into mere reproduction of this social system which drains the infinity of color and of its infinitude, leaving us with lifeless matter and lifeless lives.

Then the appeal of losing ourselves once more in the infinite, of drowning ourselves, comes to the fore - the appeal of religion. Surely by this time, the absurdity of religion has been exposed a million times over, both practically and through intellectual argument. Yet in these desolate and dreamless times, its appeal is on the rise. The anguish of living as a unique individual without the possibility of creating the universe in one's own image, of coloring the infinite marvelous from which one has extracted oneself, with a beauty that enhances the world and one's own life, makes oblivion attractive. And the oblivion offered by religion, drowning in the waters of baptism, is far less frightening to most people than the absolute and final oblivion of suicide. But those who choose the oblivion of religion are not merely cowards, but traitors to themselves and to all who strive for self-realization, because religion-however soft and malleable its form (even in the guise of spirituality, that insidious thief which steals the marvelous from the physical world and encrusts it with belief, destroying its fluid and convulsive beauty)-is part of the social system that stole our creativity from us to construct the monstrous, gray nightmare that surrounds, this mad civilization that replaces creativity with production, free activity with work, vibrant living interactions with technological and