



HOLLOW AIR

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L' IDÉE DU DÉLUGE

*Oh! les pierres précieuses qui se cachaiient,—les fleurs
qui regardaient déjà.*

I finished reading Hydiat's *Blind Owl* and ingested eight capsules of peyote. August, 1964, I awaited what *Time* claimed would be the strangest experience of my life. My patience wavered, so I took another eight caps, lit up a joint, and drank a beer. Then I walked to the corner druggist and signed for two bottles of codeine cough syrup, knocking them off at the end of the alleyway. A door slammed.

Streaks of purple light, raw as butchered beef, flood in on a high tide of effulgent hallucination as one solitary child stands upon the brink of knowing the Meaning of the Universe, partially seeing—furry clouds modulating in confusing colors—the essence as if always known, what does *essence* mean?—the primary substance emerging in eclamptic convulsions, granted by Divine Sophia *a priori* understanding, a fateful step into the opaque transparency of contradiction, where

each generation is relative to absolute birth, an aftermath of rhythm and sound contrasting with shades of fuming gray, curling, covering, uncovering the piano of Armageddon.

I lean against the alley wall. Currents of mist form and play in and out between the fence slats—a child's first sight of unrecognizable twinkles of bronze light, a partial appearance in one dusty corner of desolate shapes of undulating turmoil, fluctuating figments of remorse and fear, a paraphrase of past captured, held in wonder, accepted as the fragrant blossom of fragmented eternal fruition—an epiphany of my mortal nature draped in flowing lavender—but as I look closer, my clothes are wrinkled, my hands are wrinkled, and as this synapse fires, an abundance of wrinkled lines become saturated in green and then drip from gashes in my fingertips.

I reach the street, the sidewalk snaking, parking meters drooping like sunflowers, people moving in ectoplasmic quivers—can they see the ecstasy and nightmare of tremulous trepidation on my face? —the street a sulfurous plane of carrion, the sky is yellow, and at my feet an abyss of weird delight and grizzly horror, butterflies of gas and putrid phantoms nourished on tortured prayers.

My heart twists like a bucking bronco, ice-blue

blood in my nerves, animal blood cursed and
coursing, translucent blood trapped in a fiery
alchemical casement, even this alchemy
converting each moment to the next, fashions
freeways in my heart.

I decide I need a haircut and enter a barbershop
and emerge with a new style of haircut, very punk
for this time, the barber not pleased about his
work, but I can't stop jabbering, and I keep craning
my neck to see around the corner in the double
mirror reflection, my life in seaward ruin lies,
retreads bare, a mummy cloth stuffed in my
bloodclot soul, breaking full tilt to the moon.

I sit in the Mediterranean Café drinking double
espressos, listening to ethereal angel voices drift
over, then to the Garden Spot for a pack of
Gualoises, stop by Mario's for a plate of rice and
beans, decide to take in *Battleship Potemkin* at the
Cinema Guild, but when Mother Russia comes
down the Steps of Odessa, I freak-out and head
down Dwight Way to the Steppenwolf where I can
drink and blaspheme in peace—*Abandon All Hope
Ye Who Enter Here* and below that, another sign—
For Madmen Only!

A table of Hell's Angels are deep in their cups with
Mahler's *Songs of a Wayfarer* accompanying their

animated movements, strobed by candles in the deepening shadows—Scorpio, Scorpio rising, I feel gladness linked to madness.

I sit at a small table by the wall down range from the boisterous boys with their furious guise, and the wood grains form hieroglyphs, characters moving in rhythms syncopated to my breathing, waves of color, flowers whispering I am a special guest in this sad dream—knowing when the moth flew out of my eye, the Dead would teach me to dance.

A heavenly biker named Michael joins me, and I am trying to concentrate on what he's saying, but his words come out like we are in slow motion—something about efficient work starts from idle not from toil, or perhaps his motorcycle is idling and he wants me to pay the toll, so I project myself frame by frame through the flames onto an accelerating explosion of leather and chrome. Oh, God, I will keep on until I reach your blessed Paradise!

BALLAD OF MYSTERY & DEATH

Singing arias. She's singing an aria, while we're dancing a waltz to a Brahms string quartet. A busty contralto in a long blue dress. Her mouth quivers. She sees humor in the antics of my trying

to entertain her. The moon is a flower. The day is a song. She is under the watchful eye of a cherubic, blushing tenor. She agrees to drive me home, and the tenor tags along. I live in a converted coalbin in a large Victorian on Blake Street. Moon moves into fragments. Visitation comes—wordless, shapeless.

We light a candle and some incense. I proffer my hashish pipe, brimful, and after the pipe returns, I exhale in bliss. It is sweet, the taste of the tree, children running, guns clicking, the shaking of my head. It seems to me these children would like to be alone, so while they are talking, I go out the door and down the hall of fading portraits, my face in the mirror above a broken vase.

Something shadowy follows me—a dark bird with large wings. I spin quickly and jump out of my black sportcoat. I'm crossing the Avenue, and the Circus is in full swing. A red MG waits for the light, the driver and navigator dressed up like mummies. I feel weightless, floating outside myself. I grab a passing church steeple, and a priest in a cassock calls me down, but I ascend into the night. There is a cemetery in the mind. Tombstoned, we find it. I sit in the foyer of an apartment building waiting for a friend to return. I decide to make an offering of my naked body. I

take off my clothes and sit in the Padmasana lotus seat with the fixed intent of attaining the Ego-death of "I" through my embodiment of the creative energy of the cosmos, the energy of love. I expect a yab-yum goddess to appear.

A heavy blow to my back. Probably the door to the foyer. I hear, "Hold it, or I'll shoot!" I streak up the stairs to hide on the roof, but another cop has come up the back stairs. I'm an angel. I can fly. I walk to the window and climb up on the sill. The window is open, the pavement two flights below. The cop's face is ashen, and his hand with the gun is shaking. I scream, "Eli Eli Lama Sabathana," as loud as I can and fall on my back on the floor, keeping my eyes closed. Soon, there is the cooing voice and soft hand of my Beloved. I look—no, it's her roommate. The cops lift me by the arms and dump me in the backseat of their cruiser. They collect my clothes, and I dress as we drive to the station, stopping once to cajole a streetwalker.

I'm stripped and given blue coveralls to wear, while the cops paw over my motley black suit for drugs. "Hey, kid, looky here." A rookie exams something in his hand. Two seeds of marijuana—one for analysis, one for evidence. Note there are three classes of asocial behavior—criminal, insane, and criminally insane. This combination

can lead to my conviction as criminally insane.

I'm put in a cell after being booked for indecent exposure and possession of the killerweed.

Relieved to be out of handcuffs, I find a copy of the Gideon Bible and begin to read, first to myself, then softly to the shadows, then loudly to the drunks in the next cell, who begin to moan and cry out, "Yea, right on." "Stop it, no, no, stop it." "That will be enough, Mac, knock it off."

My Christ-complex recedes to that of John the Baptist. "Be purified in the holy toilet water of jail, you sinners!" I dunk my head in a toilet bowl full of turds and pull the lever just as the guards enter, grab me by the ankles and drag me to a padded cell to bounce about until I'm weakened by bruises and abrasions.

Early the next morning, I'm led back to my cell where I find the Bible, torn in the struggle across this verse in Isaiah:

We cried out because of oppression when thy chastening was upon us. Like a woman with child, as she draws near to give birth, as she writhes and cries out in her pangs, so were we in thy presence, O Lord; we were with child, we writhed in pain, but we gave birth only to wind; no deliverance did we achieve...

I keep the Bible hidden away. My plan is to heave

it at the judge when I appear in court, but when the time comes, and my lawyer asks me routine questions, I reply with babblings about Cervantes being imprisoned in the Castle of Chillon for not paying his taxes and Henry David Thoreau claiming "One man in the right is a majority of one."

When I am ushered into the courtroom, it is as though I walk through a revolving mirror, and I am pleaded insane at the suggestion of a consulting psychiatrist. I am transferred to Herrick Hospital in Berkeley, and after ten days observation, talking in tongues to the Queen of Hearts and her minions, I am taken to D Tank in the Alameda County Jail.

After an asshole inspection and delicing, I am introduced to my cell mate, Homer Gideon. Homer spends his time drawing on photos of Blacks in the newspaper with colored pencils. Homer hips me that my behavior will bring the bull down on my neck. I'm trying to organize a sit-in. When it comes time for head count, I refuse to stand up, engrossed in my reading of *Job*. A blow to the solar plexis and a dazed bumpbumpbump down the alley to The Hole. I find myself in a 4 X 5 foot room with a steel door, a 60-watt light bulb behind a grate, a vent, and a hole in which to

relieve myself.

On the second night I am given a plastic mat, and it is like I'm floating in an elevator-cloud, hearing creaks, booms, and cackles from those that operate the celestial machine that transports me to my morning cup of diluted coffee. I imagine I am the statue of David being transported in the hold of an ocean liner from one museum to another.

On the third day, I'm offered release if I will shave, but I flip the guard the finger and go without dinner. My cell is opened by a trustee, who tells me no harm will come to me if I will only shave off "that ridiculous red beard."

Cautiously, I enter a cell, and an inmate named Pluto hands me an electric razor, smiles, and motions me to sit down. Then he sits down very close to me, and my hand wraps around the cord of the razor, which I attempt to swing like a bolo, but the razor falls to the floor. Pluto laughs and says I'm free to go, so I climb out of the corner of his cell and go back to The Hole.

When I next see the guard, he says Monday is my day in court and I had best get a haircut or the judge will give me a stiffer sentence. Adjacent to The Hole is the barber. I sit in the chair, and just as the guy is about to cut my hair, mail is delivered. He stops to read a letter, and to my surprise, tears

come into his eyes. Apparently his mother died and his wife is asking for a divorce. I say it is all right, he needn't cut my hair, but he insists, and these are tense moments while he converts a scraggly Mohawk into Mr. Organizationman.

It appearing to the Court on this day the above named defendant appeared to answer a charge of violating the Health and Safety Code. It appearing a doubt arose as to the sanity of the said defendant, the judge dismissed criminal proceedings and certified the above named to be committed and confined as an insane person until such time as he shall become sane. Done in open court.

SEASON IN PURGATORY

"Do you see any visions? Do you hear any voices?" From D Tank in the Alameda County Jail to D Ward at Napa State Mental Facility. Here, I'm being interviewed by the admitting psychiatrist. His recommendation is, "Just take these pills at pill call and be good for ninety days." Stelazine and something to knock out the side effects.

Napa State contains painted landscape walls. I'm to be a hermit on one of these furry mountains with fabulous beasts for companions. I muse on the darkening wall. Friends write letters; family visits; doctors change; books from the Red Cross;

even permission to freshen things up. Marionettes leave their cells to scrub and mop and scrape sperm, spit, shit, piss, blood and vomit from the halls and walls, ceiling-crack-crevice-hole-spot-place.

This is an extravagant society, elastic in its tolerance. We plant periwinkles and sit beneath shade trees manufactured by Dame Kindness' computer, while behind the walls there is lobotomy, shock treatment, psychotropic drugs, straight jackets, hydrotherapy, and pingpong.

September 10th, 4:30 p.m. Richard is the name of the Mongoloid idiot in the chair next to me. He is a classic case of bad manners at the table, stuffing oranges and bananas, peel and pulp, into his maw with delicate, aquiline hands that have a bluish hue. After his meal he goes back to rocking in a stationary chair in the dayroom. He looks out the window or at the TV. He varies this routine by hitting himself with his fists. Then, the orderlies outfit him with a football helmet and shoulder pads, and if he begins his "bear dance" and tries to spar with anyone, he is put in his cell. We are warned that his bite is poisonous. Richard was here when I arrived, and he was there when I left. Is he my *douleganger*?

Bob arrived in a Rolls Royce and is undergoing

his sixth series of shock treatments. A Seventh Day Adventist, he's convinced he is Jesus-The-Word-Incarnate-Daddyoson&HolyO. His mission is to make Richard talk. X-rays reveal gaps in Richard's brain, but Bob doesn't believe this matters. My last glimpse of Bob is of him standing in his cell with his hands outstretched, the front of his skull red and swollen from blasts of electrical shock, crucified in the midst of his misery.

Smitty has been transferred from San Quentin because he is stir crazy. His most prized possession is a blanket made of stitched-together *Bull Durham* bags. This is a gift for his daughter. "If I can just get my hands on her," he hisses. D Ward will be his permanent home. Spirits in his heart want vengeance.

Lewis is huge. He is unconscious when they wheel him into his cell. Upon regaining consciousness, he breaks the straps holding him to the bed, breaks off the bolts holding the bed to the floor, crunches the bedframe into a ball, and smashes the bed into the door. Four orderlies enter his room with needle guns, and after a bit of scuffling, all is again quiet. Later, he comes through the barred doors and begins crawling along the path, nuzzling the flowers like a tame housecat. Every day there's a new pattern in the tapestry.

Wayne, a logger, who's taken one too many rides down the high lead, is setting choker in the backwoods of his mind. The theory with shock treatment is that a patient gets better or he gets worse. But Wayne's condition remains unchanged. Tiiiiiiiiimmmmmber.

Mike is undergoing a series of brain scans. He shot his wife and daughter with a .22 and then put three slugs into his right temple. The bumps are still there. One, two, three. The women were lucky to receive only superficial wounds. And so, the family survives, and they visit and seem concerned about Mike's condition. Trephined by his own hand, Mike shimmers in a hell of his own making.

Peter is a cocksman. Tall and dark with curly hair, he plays jazz on his tenor sax. After a couple of days on D Ward, he's transferred to an open ward, but he soon returns, having been busted for doing the two-backed beast in the women's head. He blows out his anger through his horn. The orderlies take away his sax and put him in solitary until he quiets down. One afternoon, his parents visit. I sit at a table near the toilet, and Peter enters from the garden. "Do you want to see me make a break?" He enters the john, and when the doctor and his parents walk down the hall, Peter is out the door and over the wall. I continue with my game

of solitary Scrabble. E1S1C3A1P3E1S1. Eleven points—a cosmic number. He's not detected AWOL until suppertime. By then he'd test-driven a used car and driven it to Oakland and wrecked it and been busted. Wild energy. Let that dog bark!

Tom has cut his wrists. We find we have a mutual acquaintance, and this breaks the ice. Confused and disorientated, he stares into my copy of Pound's *Cantos* and I into his copy of Daniel Moore who

sing(s) like a clear— visionary.
The Silent Yes that doesn't fall
a writhing bleeding warrior from our lips

but flutters
poised on their curved edges,
a dry / precise drum-tap!

"Listen to the sweetness of this *Dawn Vision*, Tom."

NO-PLACE

Marie-Claire, a nurse, interested in the philosophy of Alan Watts and a par Scrabble player, is an angel of mercy on the night shift. I've had a toothache for a couple of days, and I go to the dentist, who drills the tooth. When the Novocain wears off, I'm in severe pain, and I start climbing the walls. An orderly on the day shift doesn't want

a scene and shoots me full of Sparine, a muscle relaxant, and straps me in my bed. I can't move my lips to moan, let alone my limbs. When Marie-Claire comes on her shift, she checks my chart. By then, I can tell her my tooth is killing me, but she says she can't give me anything for the pain—just something to knock me out. Energy follows consciousness. Where am I? At the end of the asylum ward in my cell in this bed by the wall imagining Marie-Clair's breast, her features composed as an organ—a tit with a blue eye, a kind, calm nurse for me to suck, to succor me. I begin to drift down an impassive river with no one to guide me. Everyone has been shot by yelping Redskins.

My neighbor, René is masturbating, and his semen will mutiny and fail to enter orbit. Dejected in his personal pleasure, he'll wait with soaked lap and ride the Purgatorial assembly line.

Space is either space or nothing (*ie.* not space, or something) but not both space and nothing. That which neither *either/or* nor *both/and* expresses must be expressed both within and/or out of whatever context to be true as *trueandfalse*, to be true as *trueorfalse*, and to be true as both *both/and* and *either/or*. In other words, Is is *is* and Not is *not*. Masturbation is the highest art form.

Further conception of space as a concept of place
—"I have come to thy sweet thigh," said the
anacromystic lover. I lust after the ubiquitous
space-time hole." As a manic-depressive-non-
decisive, I'm hip to having it both ways to be one
way—my way.

It is the same in that it changes
the same changes
the same is one
that it
is two
too.

Let us create an Arcadia of sensuality
beyond all thermometers and let the rigor
of the climate annihilate our inhibitions.

Cock in cunt on nose in bum on toe
in mouth on tongue in ear, my hand
speeds to your prize.

The rapids of our flesh gleam
as the red meteors of your lips suck
my fiery shaft.

There, on the bed in the crux—
blood in the tears of the time
spent.

Newton holds the concept of matter to consist of units of matter without void (*plenum*) between which there is void or empty space. Isaac is a geek atomist.

Aristotle argues that place is an attribute of body, not as matter, but as its boundary—a vessel, a container. He says, "If a body has another body outside it and containing it, it is in place, and if not, not." Let me enter your body. Put me in my place. I want to fuck on the moon with a harvest Earth rising above your buttocks.

Augustine holds *Earth* (cf. "The Earth was void and empty.") to mean formless matter and because formless—void, empty, invisible, and shapeless. Matter is Place. He feels the weight of angels dancing on the head of his prick.

Space considered as receptacle is Matter devoid of Form, not the matter of three-dimensional bodies. It is this third-person omnipotent/Holy-I-Ghost kind of Space the Jesuits carried to Canada.

1626. C. Lalemant, one who *seeks only the glory of God and the salvation of souls* in a place which is a *promising field ...for the Gospel*.

1634. P. Le Jeune, who sees *the benefits to be expected for the glory of God from all these... places....*

1649. P. Ragueneau writes that the society is

all of one heart, one soul, one spirit...there is not one who does not seriously attend to his soul's salvation...so the soul can become the receptacle of holiness.

Says René, "The same extension which constitutes the nature of a body constitutes the nature of space."

5'2"/eyes bright blue/35-22-35

5'6"/legs amour/36-24-37

6'3"/relativity/42-30-44

He's got shoulders, and she's got hips.

He's got pecs, and she's got tits.

These are differential equations.

Are you there Marie-Claire, or are you still in the æther?