

Green Fire

D Press 1999 Sebastopol
Cover collage by Luis Garcia

Homage to Jack Spicer



HAPPY CLIMES

Athens of the West,
just like Fun City— she creates
a provincial mentality
by fulfilling
 through witchcraft
whatever the mind pretends.

In Berkeley I was reduced
to monads by the mænads,
classified scizo-non-decisive,
and given Stelazine and A.T.D.

A minor inconvenience, but I
can relate—a nervous
breakdown, a broken neck—
what to do with the stiff?

Strangled by your vocabulary,
we didn't know you were there, Jack,
until a flood of vomit
oozed from under your door.

STUBBORN LUMBER

Can there be emptiness without awareness?
Ask George.

Imagine a tree falling and no one hearing it.
Imagine, also, its twisted limbs.

The trees arrange themselves—I don't
have anything to do with this.

Sun and moon, day and night,
the trees follow me.

Imagine them growing.
Imagine no one hearing them.

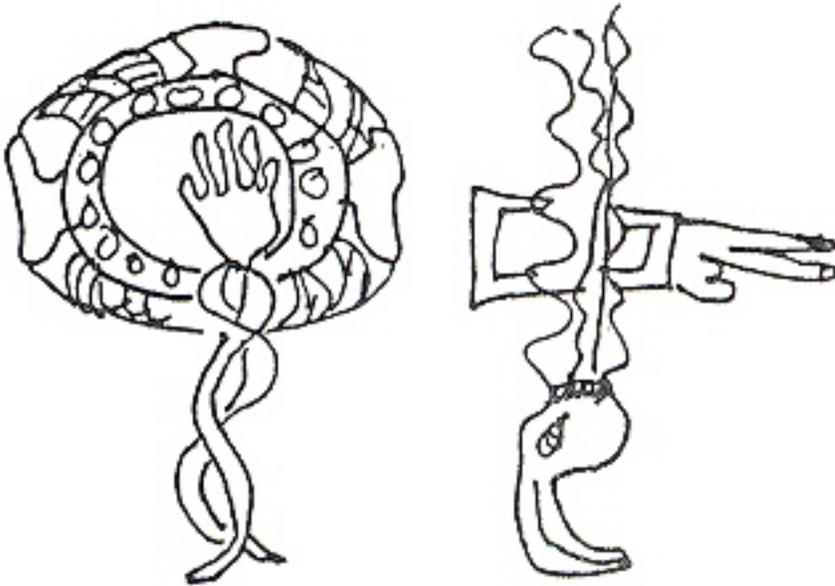
If you open the door to knowledge—
remember,
the peanut butter is on the shelf in the door.

WHIP OR WILL

Your fullness, your feathers,
something strange, strangely familiar,

one of those things— an affair—
that will never work.

"Stay faithful, but don't love me," you say,
while I take a flying fuck at the moon.



FLASH AN OGHAM

A Druid might use an ogham as a jest, yes,
even as
an invitation to dance—flash an ogham, and
see.

Flip the darkness the finger, and the darkness
will keep it.

VACUUM PLUS

Standing in the museum entrance
an old man, unshaven, palsied, pushing
a shopping cart filled with bags of cans,
stuffed animals, coat hangers and the dust
from clocks—a rag picker in a raincoat
with the back torn out, beneath that
is a splotchy trenchcoat, beneath that
a molting overcoat, beneath that
what passerbys fear he might expose
from an alley along a dark street.

Not at all, he exposes it right here, now—
in the sunken recess of his body
glow the high-polished parts of a machine,
and raising his eyes to the sky, he croons,
"You may think I have a vacuum, but this
is a multipurpose machine, a vacuum,
a rug cleaner, a shampooer, it dries hair
and sucks dead skin from your mattress,
a drill, a sander, and now, a breakthrough
in technology after years of research—

the power-driven dildo and buggywhip."

Vagabond, my brother, you rise up like a ghost.

I quickly split.

FIVE IS THE KEY

Five is the number of change.

Four are the quarters.

A fourth is a quarter.

A quarter is change.

Four quarters make a whole.

Five nickels in a quarter.

A quarterback gives the signal
and receives from center.

Four are the fingers.

The fifth is a thumb.

Two fingers is a shot.

A fifth is a lot.

Five is an element

beyond the known.
Here, you believe in space,
or you don't.

Four is for squares.
Five is a head
high in the town
up to the æther.

GALACTIC ADDRESSING CODE

Every heart must have a correct address.
Because yours is not consistent
with the established numbering
it is necessary to correct your address from
unknown.

Dear Jack,

Sitting in the back seat of that Buick
during The Berkeley Poetry Conference, you
said to "go in there and come out with a
jewel." It was small, but it was beautiful.

My first book, *Breastbeaters*, was an
outpouring of adolescent feelings

automatically unreflected—jazz jam
sandwiches, moveable type sandwiches, the
President's sandwich—language up the
kabuki—all very far art, you can pause
where you please, yet voodoo as you do,
winning out against the poem.

After a couple bottles of Green Death we
felt the Dixieland of opened heart and mind.
Thank you, man, for removing some of my
fetters. I will always believe the birds.

Love,
Rychard

COLD MOUNTAIN

for Charles and Nancy

At my reading
a man named Neah
asks if he can say
a few words.

I say, "No," and
he turns away.
And then,

the mist clears,
and I ask him to do
his thing—
a bit from Jung
on the *eternal fountain*.

Try and buy the well,
and it dries up
and then springs up
somewhere else.

My shadow and I
make a wise choice
on this western face
of Cold Mountain.

GREEN FIRE

Green fire is the future.
The spike brambles and the mountain
of burns recede, and an oasis of trees
arises from the ashes.

There's no way into the future
but flight—take off
from the tallest Doug Fir
and spread your tail feathers.

Take a turn and look
at the next century—hope
for the next century—turn again
—can this be easily managed?

BELIEVE ME, LAURA

While listening to children
singing and swinging in a tree, I think
a good treeplanter
can be comfortable even in Hell.

HEART'S TIMBER

I see you in profile in this moonlit rock
at the edge of the cut bank near Ardenvoir.

Lady of My Thoughts, honor and praise,
your image powers my work.

A dead forest is a strange place
to be in evening dress—beautiful
intensities—the field vibrating
with the spirits of young trees.

Two year old Ponderosa pine,
2-0's, there're trying, but it's hard.
Underground, the work gets done,
a whispered *AUM* to go on.

SUSPICIOUS

Up with the sun—watch the deer
on the beach turn their heads,
twist their ears—listen to a bird twit.

Digging clams, a young deer
crept behind me and sniffed my butt.
I about jumped through my hat.

GO SONG

Truth swings her hips and argues
with casual laughter.

She turns the corner and
leaves the air shimmering.

I watch her
until my contacts pop out.

Truth, Truth unattainable—
do you have a sister?

POETICS

What is the point, Jack?

Is poetry a conversation among the dead,
and

the poet gets it second hand

a vampire moon sucking off the sun?

What is the poet, Jack?

a battered radio transmitting static
between
the stations
On a lonely stretch of road?
Or a punch-drunk fighter
whose taken one too many
hooks to the head?

Powerful emotion recollected,
the most exasperating art,
Charles makes an analogy with Mahamudra,
Williams hears a sort of song,
Lu invents
A ragged song, and Yeats sees
Tattered clothes upon a stick.
Belle weighs in with poetry as
experience—
I awake in morning light. Thoughts
sweet as honey buzzing in my brain.
Swatting them I get stung by real bees in a
Dream garden.

HEAD WATER

for Robert Duncan

Syntactic order brackets
word relationships,
but this should not prevent us
holding hands

Asked what
prevented him when asked
what prevented
him from
internally reallocating
functor categories
f/internally
reallocating functor
categories from non-
exigent conditions
from non-exigent
conditions, he replied

Oh, potato chip
prime mover of palatability
bugaboo to step on in the dark
cosmic potato of parabolic curves
let me lick your salty thighs
S/Seys

E/Cexy

X/Son of Lucifer

bringer of fire

Whether it is a potato or not

I do not know or not know

care or not care

for, for sure, it will resemble

Arp's navel

When asked what

prevented the potato chip

f/attaining inter-subjective

metamorphosis when injest-

ed

Edgar Allen

Poe tato

replied

Birds of calm

rest on the charmed wave

POOT

Things get me down—no kidding,
better now it's 10° cooler.

Note my inflection, the emphasis
put on precision, value, and fun.

Coming at you sideways,
first a mime, then a plate of chocolates,

Then a balloon.
Inside, I write *Poot*

Was here!
and vanish into air.