



Drinking  
from the

# Cancer Cup

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Cover art by Claude Smith

## **DARK MUSIC**

Everything is here forever.

Where the poem begins  
the soul speaks.

Narcisuss  
    cisuss  
    cisuss

leaves Echo's lips unkissed.

Orpheus, torn and tossed  
enters the flame  
    pulled this way and that.

What truth now links  
temple, tree and dance?

## **LOVE POEM**

The worms bury us.  
We are daily warned.

Duncan remarks,  
"One can write  
for or against  
the sun."

Everyone is busy, busy  
getting and spending,

while the worms get

The job done,  
undisturbed  
by shadows.

There is the cup,  
and there is the bomb.

I drink from the cancer cup.

## **ENERGY FOLLOWS CONSCIOUSNESS**

follow closely—  
let me into your subconscious  
gently but sure

look at me

wires loose  
line end

stanza 4. I stare at the moon.  
I set out to find God.  
It's a world in which people meet  
obstacles, but I'm not going  
to let a bad tooth stop me.

stanza 5. Steve believes there's a secret  
turning in us that makes  
everything turn. He believes  
in a theology that promises peace—

I hope  
to find this peace.

## **SELF-PORTRAIT**

I address you.  
What you see is what you get,

in this case, my features  
reflected in a mirror or a cup,  
my eyes looking back at you.

A mystery here?  
I am not projecting  
persona or emotion.  
What I give you  
is the strangeness of my face.

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## **TERROR WITHIN, TERROR WITHOUT**

*Carefully now will there be a grail or a bomb which tears the heart out of things?*

—BOOK OF MERLIN, Jack Spicer

### **I. From 'Infinite Justice' to 'Enduring Freedom'**

Cave dwellers plummet beyond what security can cinch  
turn sleepy innocence to rabid rancor

Images of violent thrust propel my grief past midnight  
froth the tough hours into a flotsam of words

In the time it takes to drink a latté  
a rank mist curls over the earth

And so begins an epoch of enforced disillusionment  
where invisible fingers control the air

## **II. The Litany Continues**

I release 10,000 doves and burn my best incense  
for Airforce Master Sergeant Evander Andrews

I release 10,000 doves and burn my best incense  
for each Afghan killed in this campaign

I release 10,000 doves and burn my best incense  
for each soul crushed in the World Trade Center

I release 10,000 doves and burn my best incense  
for those dying from sanctions and bombs in Iraq

I release 10,000 doves and burn my best incense  
for all the Israelis who have been blown to bits

I release 10,000 doves and burn my best incense  
for each Palestinian shot in the streets

I release 10,000 doves and burn my best incense  
for Tony Blair & George Bush & Osama bin Laden

## **III. Praise and Blame, Loss and Gain**

To be peace— empty, clear, compassionate in this  
mad mix of good and evil and not escape through sleep  
through normalcy, through wrapping myself in the flag

A prayer tree flutters in our town square  
the prayer for war to disappear in this warm breeze  
the leaves are prayers blowing in the deadly winds

## **IV. Fame and Shame, Pleasure and Pain**

Everyone I see holds onto their face  
What is behind these masks? these headlines?  
    America attacked  
    A weekend without games  
    US girds for war to 'Rid world of evil'  
    US expands detention powers  
    Spirits soar as Giants return to Pac Bell Park  
    'Time is running out' for the Taliban

71 Barry Bonds 72 Smashing!  
Uzbekistan opens bases for US troops  
US attacks Afghanistan

## **V. Cowboy Rhetoric**

"Slowly but surely we're smoking al-Qaida  
out of their caves so we can bring them to justice,"  
says the Commander-in-chief

Caves where Jelaluddin Rumi was born  
Rumi, who proclaimed, "No boundaries, no flags!"  
Caves where Vajrasattva transmitted Dzog Chen

Afghanistan is not a place  
but a space, a vacuum created by conflict

## **VI. A New Geography Lesson**

An *AK 47* by a bookcase in bin Laden's study  
What is right, what is wrong with this picture?

George Bush smirks at the camera during a briefing  
What is right, what is wrong with this attitude?

John Ashcroft says he needs more sweeping powers  
What is right, what is wrong with his claim?

An Afghan man holds up a fistful of prayer beads  
What is right, what is wrong with his demand?

From Cyrus II to Genghis Khan to Tamerlane to  
The New World Order, the Great Game continues

## **VII. Manic Heanism**

This is a barbarous age  
Mani is skinned alive

## **VIII. All the Universe Is Laughing at Us**

Opposition evolves so life can exist, opposition desires union

Overheard, "They don't believe in God; they believe in Allah."  
Maybe we can reassemble Jerusalem in the Nevada desert  
Pray for Buddha to pop a cap up Mars's ass

## **SAM SORRY**

I'm looking for an exit  
from this buddhadrama

an exit out  
of the head

an exit in  
to the heart

grasshoppers jump for joy when the grass is liberated

## **GET DOWN, RINPOCHE**

Night is a time for song and dance.

Tonight, the Gochen Tulku feels expansive  
and dances the Warrior Dance of King Gesar,

While Ani Tsering translates the tulku's poem—  
Black bird, big bird,

Vulture eating dead people  
in the charnel ground.

Then, we all sing *Blackbird Singing*.

## **AUTO BIOGRAPHY**

A note on my windshield—  
"Your right rear tire is flat."

## VIEW

I stand at the Golden Gate and meditate.  
The water is anything

but pacific, and the Wild  
West is east of me.

## ENERGY

At the end of summer  
two boys and a dog  
splash in the river.

Light through the leaves—  
no death in them.

## HOMAGE TO No. 45 RUE BLOMET

*Despair is great, and only humour noir helps to overcome it.*  
—André Breton

### I. Give & Take of Beauty: I'm Given the Words

I am drinking from the cancer cup with my lips  
and the lips of those who have suffered before me

all of us drinking from the BIG cancer cup  
a larger suffering, these older voices, these other souls

speaking through my heart, speaking directly to yours of energies that turn  
us again to earth and fertility There's deeper tissue here than I've yet laid  
bare

I would feel a sharp object in my abdomen

cutting gently and with an aim at laying open  
not reasoning out the unreasonable reality of death

Enter my cells through the immense, gaping door



of my perspective, welcome to the innards of my sex

Here is a doorknob, here is a broom  
Take the broom and sweep aside the artifices

Come inward, a geography trip  
to my heart, my dick and balls

and my prostate

## **II. Vanity of the Prostate**

I am Prostate

I am like a cat presenting you with a gift  
a mouse or a fluttering baby magpie

I'm a gland, a secretor of fluid  
the size of a walnut, just below the bladder

I propel the semen through the urethra  
a lubricator of soul, I'm the oil pump of the sex act

I am the second major cause of death in men  
I am when I metastasize

I enter your seminal vesicles, your bladder, your sphincter  
your lymph nodes, your spinal column, your bones

cells run amuck

## **III. Wishing It Were Different**

Allopathic treatments are radical prostatectomy  
& brachytherapy, tiny radioactive seeds implanated

Possible side effects are urethral stricture, bleeding,  
pulmonary embolism, incontinence, erectile dysfunction

e.d., a side effect of prostate surgery & brachytherapy  
but, then, it's hard to get a hard-on when you're dead

## **IV. Emptiness Beyond Within**

hit below the belt, a gut reaction  
do this, do that, do nothing

implant me with seeds  
I'll radiate— dangerous to set a baby near me

piss through a screen, collect my isotopic seeds  
return them to the manufacturer

six months of radiation, radiating out, radiating in  
radiating in ten directions

breathe in the bad, breathe out the good

breathing still