

SWINGIN'

**MORE JAZZ TALES
FROM THE
GHOST REALMS**



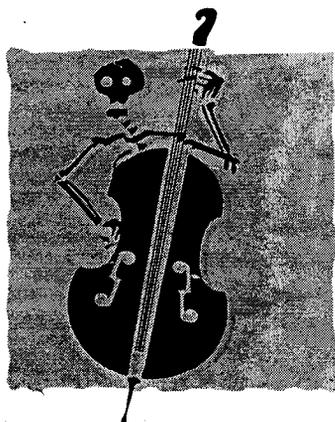
KIRPAL GORDON

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**Obscure Publications
2003**

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Portraits of Thelonius Monk (cover) and John Coltrane, copyright 2003 by Rebecca Lillard Evert

Like the original *Jazz Tales from the Ghost Realms* published in OP's first series, these words emerged from conversations and collaborations with performing artists. A special thanks to percussionist and poet Steve Hirsch.

"Searching for Big Daddy Midnight," dedicated to bassist Peter Priore, appeared in the inaugural issue of *Mad Blood*, published by Padma Thornlyre. Its premiere, thanks to Paul Rosheim, was held at Dactyl Foundation, 64 Grand Street, NYC, on March 29, 2003.

"Killer, Con Man or Lover Boy," written for actor Chris Barnes, was first published electronically by August Highland at www.muse-apprentice-guild.com.

"Po Manifest(o)," a salute to drummer and music critic Carson Arnold-see his *H(ear)* column at www.LonghousePoetry.com-is the performance abridged version of the essay pamphlet, "Don't Tread on Me," published by Alan Brilliant at www.MariahBooks.com. Its premiere was held at A Gathering of the Tribes, 285 E. Third Street, NYC, on March 30, 2003.

First edition

Obscure Publications
Paul Rosheim, Series Editor
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"Watch Out for Obscure Publications"

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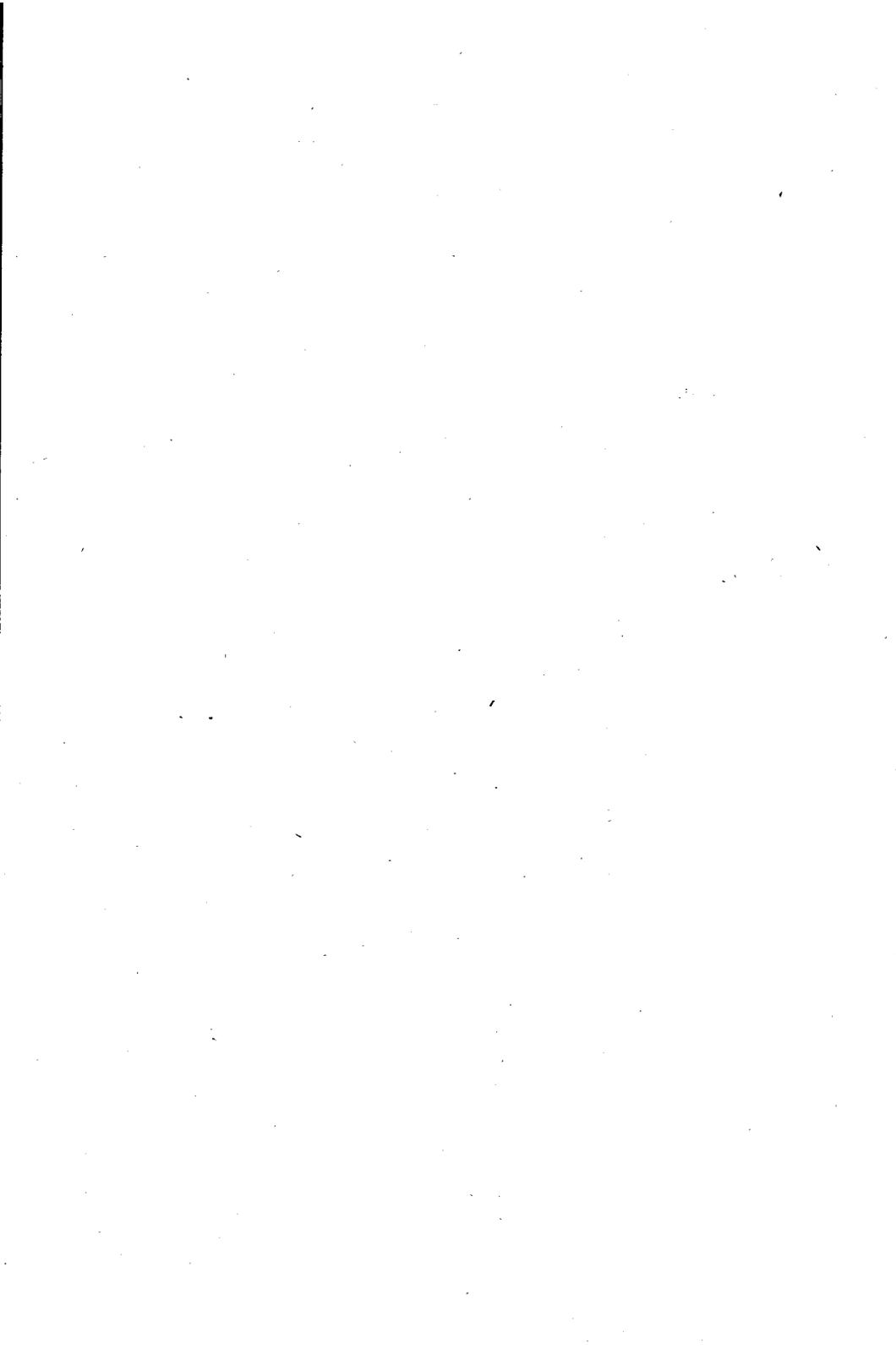
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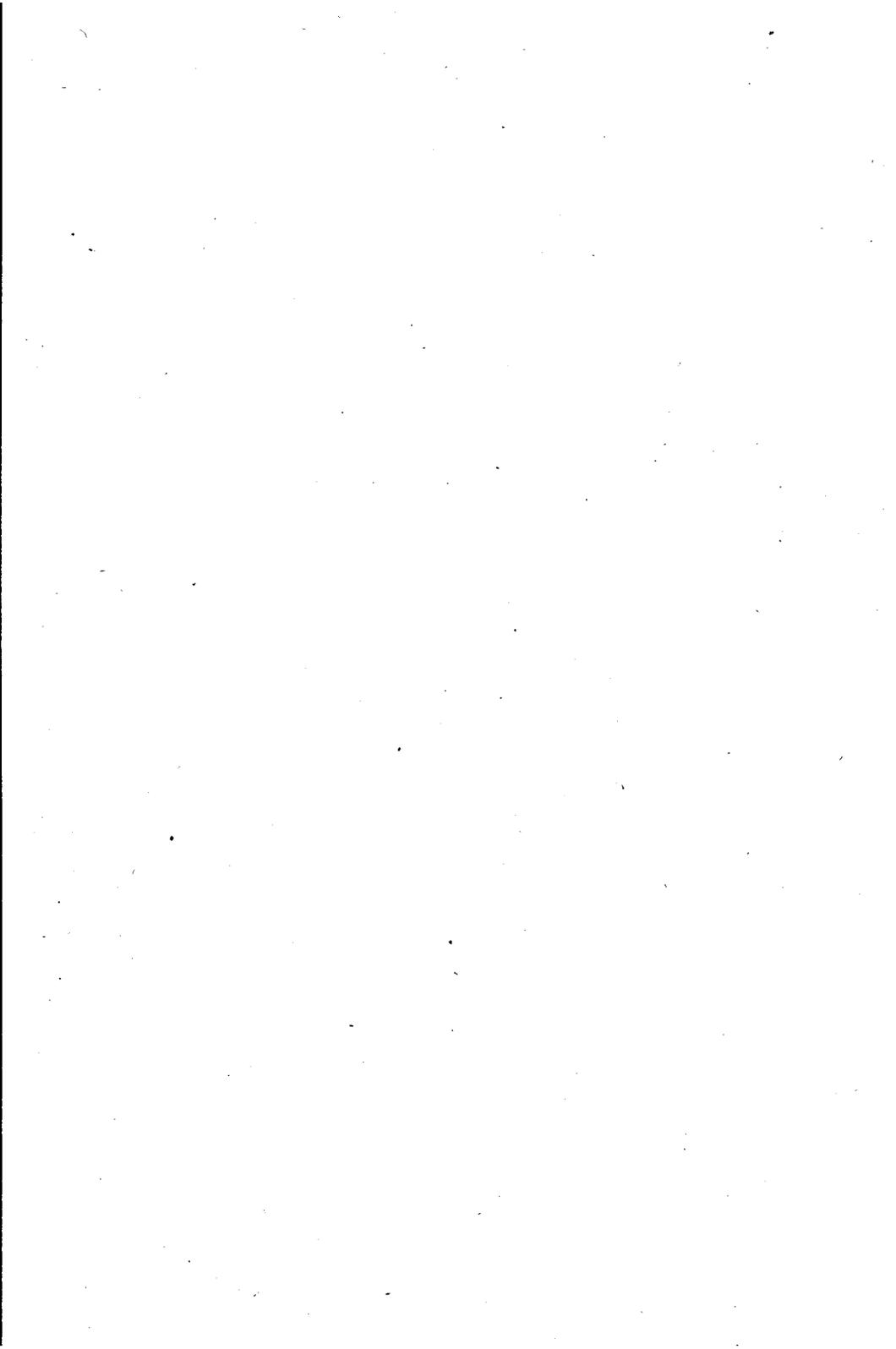
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Searching for Big Daddy Midnight

Thought I was finished. Broke, down, done.

Been upriver to Dead's Town. Where no one comes back from.

Walkin' bass lines while on mess lines makin' tin pan corn shine.

On the flip side. To the short eyed, crashed-out wide sky.

In the slim gym, trashed on mish-mash.

Why the drive-by: what the hammer brung, got the slammer hung.

Lock sung: My o my.

All to rope up no applause mostly, 'cept dope nods from the more ghostly, lost so splish-splash toastey smashed-in, wasted gone and glamour sprung.

A whiplashed rash of ingratitude that ain't called makin' bacon.

A cream cheese *shmeat*, you *schmuck*, not a pap test.

Crawlin' out of killin' floors and smartin' yards.

To slip-a-C-note in a gin-soaked G-string on an upright bass bode tightly.

Woe be the stash-busted, the almighty cash elastic, thrashin' down rollin' stone-slammin' alleyways.

Anyways up to Sunday, a house of cards, a scuffle.

A goon squad, a cell called terror, a game of solitary.

A gloomy doomsday in twelve bar.

So what: I was waddlin' Mcfree what.

Hangin' by the hangin' tree, six inches from Mcgravity.

T minus 8 and counting.

A tall order, those double-arches, and a strange fruit to boot.

To go, lad.

Me frontin' like a mute mook in a pale moon's mop, dippin' a pail of crooked cops into a slop sink of what looked like green snot and whatnot.

Dropped from Mclock-up to plummet the depths of dull linoleum.

Out of the slipknot hangin' slipshod like an ink spot on my neck's slip and slide up, me slithered Mcsnake-like into the slingshot that tore I free from the ground-round.

Se fue the routine-spun, the side wind reach of the hemp-gone.

Se fue the tic-toc-twitch of the dry-hump ras-clot shut-in, the bore-me-down re-tread yawnin' re-run in the blood suckin'.

Come Sunday, Mahalia tell it, got called out of mickey limbo.

Wiggled out of ragtime, rag-tag, scag and lag time.

On the downbeat. Sweet on Swing Street.

Flaggin' rides from Sleek Fleet vans three deep with slick deadbeats.

In deadpan.

A morbid moon croon.

They saggin' in the back seat en route to Stag Land. In brown bag.

Me puttin' flim flam in the public pay phone's entrails.

Waited for a reply.

Don't waste your change, footprints on the other end said.
No one to call on now. Though time was, you could.
Could riff a run of notes unwoven. Could glimmer out a tone.
Could sense the presence within the rhythm simmering.
Could know what a wish was for: to ride a wing and a prayer into
worlds unknown. Could admit there was nowhere to go. But in
how the going.

And how the going got going so sweetly---moody, modal, Moorish-
--not solely a rhythm section any longer. Less like a beat needing
keeping, more so a strong note wheeling free, chromatic color glow,
whole body roller coaster rainbow flown---improvisationally all-of-a-
piece complete, open, "A Love Supreme."

But now, o well, you dial the Big O and get nothing.

Bet to that, I busted, but zero's the hole I crawled out of, Oscar, a
deep well.

You? The operator said. *A ghost with no leg to stand on?*

Got chops whittled from wood-sheddin', fool, don't bury me yet.

Playin' on the got-to-get-soulful shoulders of them-what-won't-
die. Rags to the riches of stride. Joplin, Jelly Roll, James P Johnson.
And then some. Tatum, Monk, Bud.

And when, after compin' all night in smoky hideaways, talkin' in
tongues,
glissando lines would glide upwards, out from exhausted fingertips in
spates of magnetic gladness to align the sun-breaking sky with the
unspoken music we held still within us, then we knew time. We swam

the cataracts at Harlem's Hell Gate fathomless where death shone less like a foreign harbor than a river of light Styx, an exile we entered invisibly, bouyed by the unbound sound pressed about us, belted back in depth's breath.

Within a hummingbird's whirl we in-dwelled the wings of the waterfall.

But the treasure of that Manhattan mad hatter King Pleasure off-rime jive chatter and diminished D flat doesn't measure or matter now, the phone clattered back.

Jazz ain't got the jizz no mo'. 's only wigs and rattles, dust and bones on the mantle.

The muscled and hustled think they got it made in the shade opening for the Hit Parade while the best of the restless live obscurely, playin' museum *mishegaas* en route to Rishikesh, that ol' Om Nama Shivaya chitlin' circuit puja groove to manifest Ganesh flesh.

Scary how the home-grown got disowned, the octoroon marooned. Scary, too, the darkening road.

But from the darkening road, Grip now showed, chock full of laughter.

His double mask faced a funeral march in one direction and in the other: the wild party come after. So it was he who brung me from star-strucked, cross-haired disaster.

I cried grateful but hung back, sad-slack and graceless, posin' like a new jack in cautious human oil, back nerves gratin' the meshin' on the greased rack, preppin' battle ax for presumed sneak attack.

Being looped in tomb-doom had changed me.
Brought me down an octave.
Revealed the reaper's wink in every chord of green tree, kind of
blue sky, tidal wave in the grim key. Hurricane me.
Hell no, I didn't know the score.
But Grip handed me the charts.
More Ellington than Basie, less Kansas City stomp than elegant
Duke swoopin' a glamorous vamp, say what Sweet Pea brings to "Mood
Indigo" in the 50's.
Modern, regal, orchestrally hip. Dare I say classic?
Tried my best to be, you know, cool.

On the mean street it was snowing. Cool meant nothing.
Electric nightlight did.
And there was just enough of it not to miss Baby Grip and Junior
Grip,
his youngers on horns, at the corner. Dressed to meet Big Daddy
Midnight, who they held in scorn and rarely saw. That old story.
But Grip, leader of the band, opened the way with a wave of his
hand.
A woman appeared he called countess.
Too beautiful to say hey to or shake hands with.
Lean from her own hunt, she flashed me way-down eyes burning
wild 'round a beginner-brown-face that wore the rage that hasn't
registered regret yet. Light skinned. Could pass Jim Crow arithmetic.
Hiked her hemline higher, fingers painted red at tips.
A merry cherry, that twaddle of think-pink-twinkle.

I watched what was worse: drop-dead lips smacked me a prelude
to a kiss.

The cyclop's eye cried for knowledge. For purchase.

Yet I couldn't move. I didn't know who was screw, which was
wench.

A mensch-stenched sickness drenched me fist-clenched.

My sear-suckered suit surfaced puddles from a head wrenched in
sewer seep, sin swept so weep ugly and beauty but skin deep. Stage
fright stacked me up 15,000 feet above the basement club on Great
Jones Street. We entered.

I sat down. The 88s were in perfect pitch.

In the old days, we played everything breakneck and reckless.

Bopped til we dropped.

But Grip had grown up. Gave it space. Let it breathe.

Opened with a bang that shot the place in blue flame. "Take the A
Train."

Cookin' hard *schnapps* in sweet low-down cream. Me: not fat
notes but layered glow worms. Ivory intricacy underneath. Choral
connected, rooted in blossom what-for. Not over-the-top. Say what Bill
Evans sought, what took watermelon measures from Herbie Hancock to
wrought.

In a word, we were right. In another, we were back. Like we never
left.

And better without the butter. Leaner was cleaner. But could I
solo?

After finger pop, hopped-up hand clap.

Then Grip told his bassist to stroll, his horns to lay out.

The audience sat hushed and waited. The room contracted. All eyes on I. Mine, the keys. Did the ancient wiring work still? I know there's no such thing as a bad note, only what remains unresolved. But I wondered could I conjure yet the ju-ju that let the quarter note hang its innuendo between the play of melody's nutty possibilities, the signifyin' dissonance, the time shift and delicate swing that was my signature style?

Was I dead yet? The tension mounted.

Grip led I in a lush tempo.

Let I follow his gutsy Getz-like tenor while he opened the mystic field and all the dead children came out of the earth and sky to play.

Let I run rings round the rung of roses rolled and folded, those Rosacrucian pockets of a ruby-red Jesus hidden in the sparrow-throated hold of "Blood Count," Billy Stray's bold eye-socket send-up to the larger context our music lives in. He all black and blue in know-how now and at the hour of our death, amen, so me let the ivories sip and dip into "Passion Flower," just one elegiac river run through that slipstream's song brook.

Grip didn't fail me.

He and the Brothers Grip picked me up on the chorus.

Carried me out of encores.

Into a nearby doorway.

In the vestibule we faced a locked door one way and in the other:
a screaming crowd delicious to rip us in two.

Rather than ring the tenants for entrance, Grip used his head.

Glass flew.

We walked in, bleeding.

Half-closed doors shouted vague threats, but we laughed, forced into the basement by a super with a shotgun. Sawed off.

I was released. Into the sawdust's darkness we now descended.

Wits with us still, thrill pumped us bright.

As in days of yore, we turned to the little window above the broken boiler. In no time at all we walked through snow-swept streets.

But out past the wall of the city, I crumbled. Beyond that gate another town had grown up whose asphalt grid paved away everything I once knew.

At this dead end, without map or motor, the word on Drum Beat Street reached us. Big Daddy Midnight was seeking Grip and his group out, something about cabaret cards and club dates.

Grip flagged a cab. I sank in panic.

Had Grip come all the way upriver past the land of every lament, beyond the living, to the deepest pit of Dead's Town, only to have me sit in for the evening?

Onward into the unknown I wanted to steal, hoping to dissolve into darkness.

But Grip returned. Grabbed my hand hard.

Told me: Don't you get it, Ghost, I need you *and* your arrangements, not just for you to sing it or say it, wing it or weigh it but once.

Wind at my back, a constellation rising in the sky above, I understood the real deal. I had escaped the insignificance of my own death.

The music would live on.

And I would play it.

Killer, Con Man or Lover Boy

Jesus Christ, how does this look? Like I came out swingin'?

I mean what part am I playing here? A private eye? A passing stranger, bum stumble and wonder, burst upon the scene like a good Samaritan?

A Right Place Wrong Time Romeo or riff-raff rapist?

Strong arm robber? Plainclothes cop?

A pick-pocket sodomist, reaching what: for her wallet?

Taking a twenty? Hardly.

Okay, I'm straddled over the body of this female. Who may have, only moments before, fallen asleep or fallen down drunk or fallen from a second story window, I don't have a clue. I only just got here.

If they ask me, "do I know her?"----I'll tell 'em it's a long story.

As for being draped over her, with my knees bent and my pants down, I won't argue that. If it comes up later. And that *is* my belt around her neck. Which is another episode entirely, but for the moment explains why my pants have slipped down below my waist.

I shall pull them up.

Can I trust the heat's not ready to pounce? Is that the wrong attitude to foster? Should I think of the policeman as my friend?

If I suspect the cop of foul play, will I be seen as a killer, con man or lover boy?

In any case, she's only lying there. I don't know her to be dead. That would make me a necrophiliac. I don't want that.

I shall start over. With my pants on this time. I shall take back my belt. After all, it's not evidence of any kind, is it? What if someone should later say they saw me tampering with the crime scene, what then?

I shall say I believe in law the same way I believe in love.

That is, less law, more love.

And if they say they don't understand? I shall tell them their thoughts are alive. So when I hear them think *kill or be killed*, I'll say I wanna know who's playing on what team.

They'll have guns. And they'll have taken mine. They'll make maggot meat of my brain. Me, a walk-on moron mistaken for a necrophiliac served up warm, head severed, to eager necrophiliacs in the precinct basement.

Maybe the world isn't fucking with my head.

Maybe cops are only after order. Maybe the whole world is the secret heart beating in my own chest after all. Maybe if I get calm, the calm world will find me. Say seaside with a cocktail at sunset. My god, my muscles are relaxing. I inhale the turquoise sky, exhale away those visions and revisions which a minute will reverse. Like a line of waves breaking on a tropical beach, smooth salt white warmth overwhelms sandy fear. Wash me clean.

Deep breath has overcome a worried habit of mind.

That's what I'll say. The situation we see before us is an ocean, already telling us everything there is to know. We just don't hear it. Until boom: there it is. Like a backhand across your face.

Droppin' teeth, breakin' jaws. What a welt. Does it feel good?

Is that what you mean by freed up? That's my stees. Get to know me, I'm offering myself. What do you think: I'm some jailhouse Atlas? Is that it? Some prissy Ms. Thing, sad-ass dope addict, hardened criminal sadist? Aren't those thoughts kind of sad, hard and criminal, to say nothing of sadistic? In real life I'm a matinee idol, but preconception has captured your eyeballs, made you see what isn't here. And you call me a ghost!

Hey, I can flip all that in a New York minute. The outfit, too.

I'm pent up inside. Who wouldn't be? What if I told you that the woman over there, let's say passed out drunk, once was my girlfriend? Not my wife, but a girlfriend. My all-time favorite lover. What if I told you she just got engaged to a man she didn't love?

But hold up. Put yourself in her Gucci pumps first.

Last time I saw her I was standing in the rain, ringing her buzzer, calling out her name when another man drove up in an expensive sports car. She made him wait while we talked, we laughed, we loved. And in the end, she chose him. That's okay. Why argue with marriage and money and a nest from which generations might grow? Don't fight the DNA, I always say.

But Homegirl couldn't leave shit alone. Well, it's a big city. And I don't know her uptown friends. Me and her met strictly after eleven pm. So when her maid of honor called the agency to hire a male stripper for

her bachelorette party, how was I to know? I hadn't even been told she was engaged!

I'm the guy still standing out in the rain.

Okay, what part is difficult for you: that a nice girl like her would get so desperate as to try to swing herself from the second story ledge by my belt or that I make a good income in alternative lifestyles? New York's a tough town. Shall I tell you I'm really an actor? I like to think of myself as a private dancer.

So I gotta ask you: you got a problem with this? Hey, it's a gig. Too bad she is gonna be someone else's wife, right? That's what alcohol is for! Life gets a little emotional, and the next thing you're screaming Harvey Wallbanger. And you've never had one before and this is your wedding shower. And there you are blotto and slutty on all fours and all your girlfriends are watching you blow it big time, screaming and shouting you've made the wrong choice. And jumping on the entertainment.

Like I say, we're all imprisoned by prejudiced perceptions.

Oh, yeah. What am I doing here? I just came down to collect my tip. A twenty, yes, that's right. And stick around. Her friends will no doubt tell a different version of events. And big deal, I locked them in her bathroom. Maybe ya can hear 'em banging on the walls.

And dig it: my name is Harvey. And welcome to Wallbangers. It's nothin' personal, but I gotta go.

No Manifest(o):

Don't Tread on Me

—or—

Wake up, Poets, 'fore We All Disappear

Don't tread on me, ennui. We who won't forget what Gadsden wove, with star and snake, against a king's tyranny, what our early American ancestors ran up the flagpole.

We won't forget the Last Poets pleading, "Wake up, niggers, 'fore we all disappear."

We who may not experience ourselves as niggers. Or as hunted down and killed.

We hot to trot on the confessional/professional poetry tenure track.

Or wailin' haiku amidst the maelstrom's gale storm on the outback mountain trail.

We with the microphone in our hand with love for sale. As well as we silenced by the slam, humbled by the damned, wall-flowered-for-a-line-of-ours-to-be-heard disinterest.

We who don't see our unity in poetry. Yet in the mangiest range of mongrel styles, speak for its diversity. We insiders whose middle class salaries insist we've reached nation time. We outsiders reaching into empty pockets for a new state of "never mind."

While we web nets of cornpone wonders with in-bred winners grabbing contest prizes by the throw-me-a-bone mile, right outside our forty-acres-and-a-mule, more 'mericans gather in defeat and defiance and defense of the human liberties that ebb every day in their lives. The denied and good-byed, the neglected and shipwrecked-in-dreck are our audience, not those who read and review, blurb and disturb us.

While we prance about under deadline, war breaks out over the Tigris/Euphrates.

Wars out there are but preludes to wars in here.

Wars against fertile crescents and civilization cradles become wars for First Amendment removal and Big Brother homeland security proctology maneuvers.

We need poets' lyres to sing truth to powerful liars!

Ancient Greece called poets weavers. We need a fabric made from the betrayed, the erased and retired, woven from the scrambled on, the out-sourced, the downsized and the stray, the working class downcast waiting to be met by the tricked-ya-trickle-down only to fall deeper in debt, spun from the Scrams Jones cutback and promised to, the infected and the defiant who say amidst the racial profile and the Patriot Act, "Don't tread on me."

We must see our predicament under the reign of George II.

Colonial America was remote, and the founding fathers were marginal, borderland yokels like Jefferson, provincial publishers like Franklin. We need a cantankerous Tom Paine in plain-speak. A coyote, a mad dog. A Paul Revere, a tea party or two. A poetry that stirs it up. That churns quirky original with funky mainstream.

We need a gut check on our own cynicism. A wide-enough view of history to see that poetry is despised by the State. Like other forms of free thinking, a cause for death. That while they take hemlock, a bullet, a gulag, a Garden of Gethsemane concentration camp cocktail for poetry, we take comfort in unimportance, a mostly non-existent audience.

We've made a Hollywood mockery out of what is most free: verse.

What's worse: Poetry ain't me-first capitalist pyramid but town meeting.

A forum where individuals from excluded orders sing their unspeakable visions that we may hear of (all of) who we are, welcoming maverick voices from our back country, docks, prisons, migrant camps, factory assembly line ghettos, shanty towns and junkyards, reservations and coal mines. So when I say there's nothing more carrion a call for poetry than our making careers of it, the *craft* of poetry remains the edge that keeps our language fresh and the bullshit out of the national discourse.

Poetry is G-O-D speak, into the mystic, powerful hoodoo, the desert shot to prophecy, the shout in the street, the gnosis lovers keep company with, the sound of thunder in take-no-prisoner rhythms of drum beat wonder, the soul exchange, something a birdie told me, what

a wish was for, the sundown re-birth of the language we run cliché into the ground all the dead-long day.

Poetry is what refuses to be burned out. What won't go gently into that good night. Poetry is voltage, a Coney Island of the mind, singing a body electric. From outer space to chthonic ground, the crawl in the maw and the hallowed (w)hole of it all, nothing we can dismiss any more than we could our mothers, our birthright or our inheritance.

We don't live in language; language lives and breathes in us! Poetry rings ancestral, winks from a lunch pail, revels in renewal, loves the trope-a-dope, sings of signs, fun with puns, cries *don't be denied*, the fraud revealed, the emperor's new clothes de-bunked, the jester's gesture, the proper goose cooked to the propaganda hooked on unknowing hordes booked knee-deep in the boring mediocre. Poetry protests the banal, invokes the gods.

Delights the ear, arrests the dead.

As for making little girls talk out of their head, TV sells the big lie while poetry cries, "Maggie is alive on a hot tin roof." Poetry puts a stop to the indignant compromise, poetry takes off her clothes, and we take relief from the installment plan's dance of lies we eat on the daily rounds of bread line skyline election year moonshine.

Rhyme knows why the monkey signifies and the caged bird sings. Unrehearsed spontaneous verse puts the dip back in the hip to better shake down the fools who sell us soapsuds on singsong airwaves, Top 40 payola formatted, networked CD thought-police chat-room-controlled Time Warner Sony McVideo insidious, cabled into book publishing subsidiaries like literature as genre-driven, predictable, lamentable leisure-time entertainment at \$19.95. Sequel this: wealth gets spread

among less and less folks more and more. And art as literature gets muscled to the back of the bus by the real Jim Crow driving the hustle, the dollar sign.

I remember when time was slower and not so expensive.

When there was an "underground" (say what: buried? undermined? samizdat?) America---Henry Miller, Burroughs, Ginsberg--- whose books were banned and burned by the *aparatchiks*, but who beat obscenity showdown trials. Ditto D.H. Lawrence, Nabokov and Joyce, navigating life and literature "outside the law."

Have we poets, the technicians of the sacred, yet to provide our people with intuitions into their own soul journey? Most 'mericans can't tell a metaphor from a miracle, a figurative Riverrun from a literal Armageddon, a multi-tongued trickster like Joyce from a monster of multiple meanings like the Bible (let alone Saddam from Osama bin Laden).

Yet we bark for scraps from Reader's Digest, big dog foundations and the we're-so-vocal/aren't-we-focal *schelp*-and-fetch-it hand-me-downs from local art councils. All the while our nation floats downstream new and improved in brighter whites, undeterred by any oppositional thoughts. Our heads reach a bleak, bleached, blank brainwash, a complete spin cycle, calling the polluted run-off emptying into an oil-slick ocean a victory for the American way. How about the smell of naplam in the morning? (Don't you think the species of the sea are speaking to us? Even with the fish dead, the waves sang of syringes all summer on the south shore of Long Island.)

Let's get back on land. We who speak for the bison (but whose silence speaks for snowmobiles) ought to catch on when our leaders

arrogantly decide there's no such thing as a greenhouse effect. If American means "not from this soil," Mr. Vespucci, do we get a Manifest Destiny to mark what is "from this soil" for Vermin Exterminator Nation?

We are at war with soil and with rivers, with nature and the native, the indigenous, the local, the ancient, the Undying, the *manitou* of a place, the force that through the green fuse drives the flower. We can't abide roots.

We need poets as conjure women. We need High John in our pockets! We need the resurrected work of a genius like Zora Neale Hurston. That she would die famished and poor, books vanished, vision banished, speaks to the real war we face every day in America: the struggle to be an individual, to understand our heritage, to unite as a free people. Following *The Color Purple's* spotlight, poet Alice Walker sung spunky Zora back to prominence, albeit fifty years after her death.

Walker makes our circumambulations at her tomb-womb clear. She and Zora draw elements of us denied at the town square, whether gay or black, feminist or modernist, back into the fold, a circle unbroken. To whom the bell tolls, that's the mission: poets united in a common rebirth of wonder, a victory about hybrid vigor. Like jazz, that other truly American art form often despised, but which came up hard enough to know tolerance, acceptance and diversity are why the oppressed continue to seek entrance into the USA.

You don't think there's a connection between war as our only solution and a national lack of imagination? The American mythos is frontier-driven, and with the frontier gone, we need poets to fight the only war there is, overcoming the self, as Gautama put it. As surely as Zora hunted the American bush for the flavors of Mother Africa, we

need, in this time of conflict, our voices from the wilderness (our most essential teacher) to be heard. Our own samizdat press could arm us against the twin-headed enemy of ignorance and ignobility that appear to be the exports of our representatives.

So enough about your MacArthur! Let's admit the freaky indies, whose love of books exceeds the love of money. Follow those lines to find the under-the-radar connections and cross-pollinations, the translations and collaborations, not only poets who refuse an NEA or an invite to the Big House but a more generous, word-centric spirit of discovery, an American voice rich and love-bound enough to sustain itself outside the commercial enterprise. Their tradition of resisting the mad run for bucks may be all that we have left of a distinctive national voice by, for and of the people.

Thelonious Monk, a guy who should know, once said, "We're all geniuses at being ourselves." Being poets, we no doubt think of ourselves as geniuses, but we're all third class knuckleheads in the eyes of the conspiracy against being ourselves. Let's not fall for "Ol' Ez Syndrome," you know, thinking that our president is dying to find out about our theories on Social Credit. Let's stop looking like nuts!

The only thing we got going for us is our open-mindedness.

That's what brung us to the dance.

The nation of poetry is a many-splendored thing whose roots of resistance to tyranny run deep, Ms Bradstreet. Go back 2,000 years at least, to when pre-Algonquin tribes held council fires at the tip of lower Manhattan, just south of what is no longer the World Trade Center, now called Bowling Green, thanks to the Dutch. If 9/11 scares you, go back past Ellis Island to the first settlers welcomed by the native nations.

Let's welcome the loom of a larger fabric about who's conquering whom and what we mean by *Don't tread on me*.

As for poetry-as-samizdat, let's remember the dead Russian anarchist in all of us.

As for poetry-as-negritude, no matter how pale the Mayflower, tribal griots and DNA anthropologists tell us we're all out of Africa, every human gene.

And the Last Poets might be the first to tell you: nigger means dispossessed.

Comrades, let's re-claim what is ours.

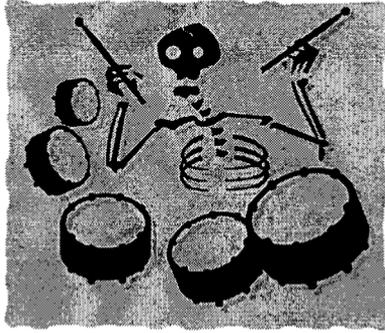




A New York City freelance writer, Kirpal Gordon has of late been playing around town with the hottest jazz band ever to front a word slinger. They're led by Claire Daly, world-class monster of the baritone saxophone.

Kirpal's latest essay on music, "What Does Not Change/Is/The Will to Chains," will appear in the anthology *My Back Pages: American Writers Reflect on Popular Culture*, edited by Dr. Shawn Holliday.

For more on his work, go to www.KirpalG.com.



This edition is limited to 60 copies.

This is Number 60.

Kipil Joulou



Obscure Publications