

ELEGY FOR NEAL CASSADY

10 Feb 1968 5-5:30 AM

OK Neal

aethereal Spirit

bright as moving air
blue as city dawn
happy as light released by the Day
over the city's new buildings—

Maya's Giant bricks rise rebuilt
in Lower East Side
windows shine in milky smog
Appearance unnecessary now.

Peter sleeps alone next room, sad.
Are you reincarnate? Can ya hear me talkin?
If anyone had strength to hear the invisible,
And drive thru Maya Wall
you had it—

What're you now, Spirit?
That were spirit in body—

The body's cremate

by Railroad track
San Miguel Allende Desert
outside town,
Spirit become spirit,
or robot reduced to Ashes.

Tender Spirit, thank you for touching me with tender hands
When you were young, in a beautiful body,
Such a pure touch it was Hope beyond Maya-meat,
What you are now,

Impersonal, tender—
you showed me your muscle/warmth/over twenty years ago
when I lay trembling at your breast
put your arm around my neck,
— we stood together in a bare room on 103'd St.
Listening to a wooden Radio,

with our eyes closed

Eternal redness of Shabda

lamped in our brains
at Illinois Jacquet's Saxophone Shuddering,
prophetic Honk of Louis Jordan,
Honeydrippers, Open the Door Richard
To Christ's Apocalypse—

The buildings're insubstantial—

That's my New York Vision
outside eastern apartment offices
where telephone rang last night
and stranger's friendly Denver Voice
asked me, had I heard the news from the West?

Some gathering Bust, Eugene, Oregon or Hollywood Impends
I had premonition.

"No" I said — "been away all week,"

"you haven't heard the News from the West,
Neal Cassady is dead—"
Peter's dove-voice'd Oh! on the other line, listening.

Your picture stares cheerful, tearful, strain'd,

a candle burns,
green stick incense by household gods.
Military Tyranny overtakes Universities, your Prophecy
approaching its kindest sense brings us
Down
to the Great Year's awakening.

Kesey's in Oregon writing novel language

family farm alone.

Hadja no more to do? Was your work all done?

Had ya seen your first son?
Why'dja leave us all here?
Has the battle been won?

I'm a phantom skeleton with teeth, skull

resting on a pillow
calling your spirit
god echo consciousness, murmuring
sadly to myself.

Lament in dawnlight's not needed,

the world is released
desire fulfilled, your history over,
story told, Karma's resolved,
prayers completed
vision manifest, new consciousness fulfilled,
spirit returned in a circle,
world left standing empty, buses roaring through streets—
garbage scattered on pavements galore—
Grandeur solidified, phantom-familiar fate
returned to Auto-dawn,
your destiny fallen on RR track

My body breathes easy,

I lie alone, living
After friendship fades from flesh forms—
heavy happiness hangs in heart,
I could talk to you forever,
The pleasure inexhaustible,
discourse of spirit to spirit,
O Spirit.

Sir spirit, forgive me my sins,
Sir spirit give me your blessing again,
Sir Spirit forgive my phantom body's demands
Sir Spirit thanks for your kindness past,
Sir Spirit in Heaven, What difference was yr mortal form,
What further this great show of Space?
Speedy passions generations of
Questions? agonic Texas Nightrides?
psychedelic bus hejira-jazz,
Green auto poetries, inspired roads?
Sad, Jack Lowell saw the phantom most—
lonelier than all, except your noble Self.
Sir Spirit, an' I drift alone:
Oh deep sigh.

~ALLEN GINSBERG
(1956-1997)

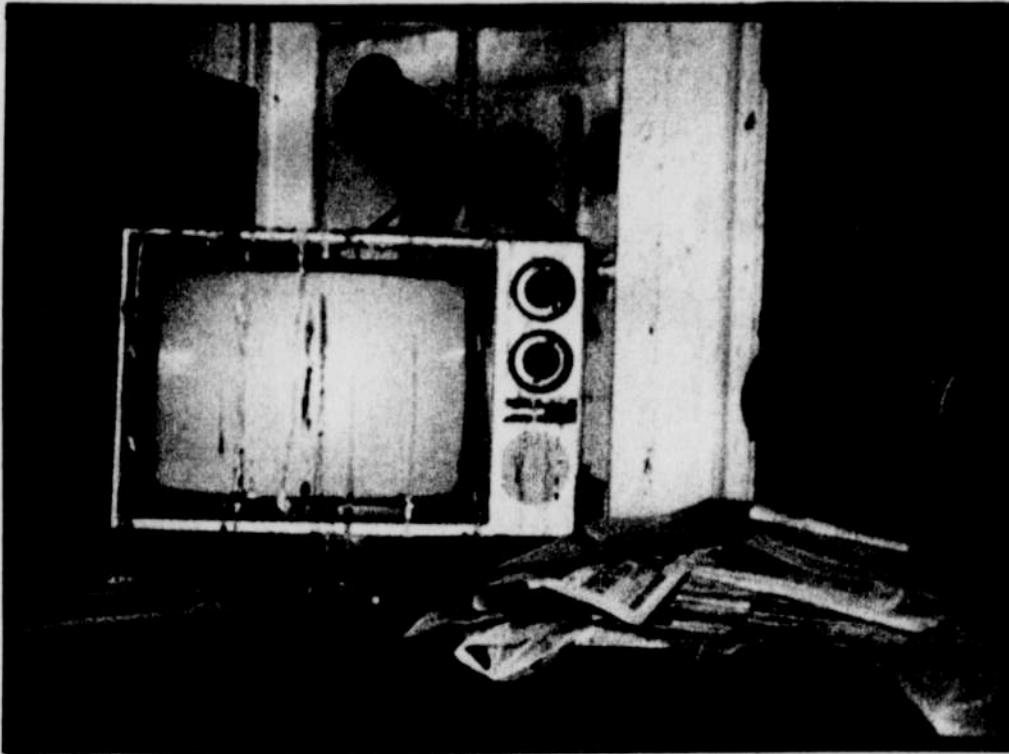


PHOTO BY JPB

CROW

My lovely Crow, I know
You are not really mine at all.
I could no more own the wind.

Yet there's possession in a sense.
I am your human dad.
You are my avian child.

Last Spring you were a
Scrawny, blue-eyed little thing
In a box, yelling for food;
Ravenous beak so wide
We could barely see the rest of you.

We offered food and safety,
Promised freedom,
Knowing you would go.

Then, in Fall, full-feathered,
Blacker than the darkest velvet
Night, with rainbow color sheen
And shiny, patent-leather shoes,
Your eyes turned black as well.

Your voice this winter day
Called me out to holler "Crow!"
And you soared to my hand,
Straight as you fly, from the
Tallest tree a quarter-mile away.

My breath caught in my chest
As you bent your head and cooed
A sound no crow ever made before:
(least not for me)

Your display of trust my cue
To pet the softness of your neck.

You wild free Crow,
You, my babe, your gift,
The present of your presence.

Big, full-grown Crow, my son...
Or daughter? Shadow of a shadow.
Silhouette...Lenore?

Beloved, magic Crow,
You've changed my way
Of seeing crows Forevermore.

You open unto me
as does this
virgin yellow rose
of spring...
inviting
this honey bee
to become nourished
by the nectar,
sweet.
A honey bee
swallowed up,
taken in
aching for
this sticky treat.

You open unto me
a beautiful woman
legs spread wide
as the seas,
inviting
me to become taken in
by the raging waves,
the juices
pouring
from the sanctuary
between your legs.

My fingers,
tongue,
fist
swallowed by the aching.
The deep ache
that began
years ago,
satisfied only now.

I take your face
spreading my desire
through you
with my tongue,
raging
as the seas.
An ache,
a deep ache
that began
years ago...
My mouth
wet,
sticky
that of a honey bee...
needing.

~TARA HURLBURT

TREE FROGS SLEEP

On the year's darkest night,
the tree frogs sleep,
Only Venus and far-off suns
show in the black above the earth.
What wind there was has died.
No traffic runs the roads.
Barn owls hoot in the trees
then resume their silent hunt.
Out on the pond a mallard drake startles awake.
It quacks and splashing, flaps into flight,
circles once, twice then lands,
and tucking head under wing
settles back into dream.
And all things rest again in quiet silence.

Even in daylight the tree frogs
have ceased their creaking croaks.
Their insect prey is dead or dormant so
they have left the trees, door ways, window sills
to sleep,
squeezed under rotting stacks of boards,
scrunched into spaces between logs
in the wood pile.
Their bright green backs
have become muddy, dark.
Legs drawn close to bellies,
eyes dark in the dark behind their lids
they sleep
and wait out winter.

When the year has circled on to Spring
they will awake
and return to the pond
where their mothers laid them.
There they will remember
the song:
males singing it,
females heeding its call.
We might name it *Frog Love Song*
or *Spring Joy*,
but they have no words
only each hypnotic two-beat song
lapping over another
until the incessant singing
swims out of the mothering water,
leaps loud and louder
toward the stars
and overwhelms the silence.

~JIM DOTT

LIVING HOUSE

entrance or exit?
both doors of this house
have been nailed open,
the windowpanes removed,
the glass crushed to iridescent webs
then ground back down to sand.

this house listens as it watches,
it forbids interruption
it's long, silver hands of silence
are filled with music
jaywalking swarms of words
hold no interest,
they keep away, they find shelter
in the heads of magpies.

this house is made more of air
than wood.

to live in it is to face the world willingly,
as staunchly as a tree's natural patience
rooted from hard storms to sweet springs
never desperate to cloak
or conduct the business of the forest
for the benefit of the forest.

water, wind, and mind
were conceived to wander always, and to create—
this is their breath, their blood.

against this, protection plants itself
like any other myth

too smooth, too tempting,
too difficult to really live without.

no lock ever swallowed by a key here.

the mistrals stride through the bone-frame
and swirl out,

go further inside, and each aperture
is strung with incensed cords

rolling like vine tendrils,
lyrics of myrrh penciled along thresholds.

freedom both inside and without
and a world of xeroxing prisons.

this house has fire escapes
fashioned only for dreams

to ascend like flames,
fearless of heights,

able to survive the burn,
melt steel,

and, in the end,
alchemize a true jewel.

~JUANITA HUEBNER

PAPER WORLDS

yesterday before I gave my love a rose
she lives in a paper world all green and bright you see
in green paper worlds no heights of love are reached
down in the street we'd follow and we'd meet
we would cross the brink of gold
but no love could she sow
and i would never reap her honey
in the mist of paper money

~BARRY LUBOVISKI