

*Sumthn'fo'th'head*

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Had there been a machine running in his head, recording his dreams as he drifted to sleep, the following, in crude transcription, is what would have been seen as the images that appeared in his mind as it wound down after having just taken three chapters of a book about the '60s (a book which Elliot Fremont-Smith of *The New York Times* not only called "the best book on the Hippies" but also "the essential book.")

Mix with those chapters the nightcap joint smoked just before 'lights out' and you have the framework for an unusual film/tape/video. A film/tape/video that could be recorded and employed at social work seminars and Freudian laboratories, or pirated underground as video literature.

A film/tape/video, however, that can never exist. Not until machines are implanted in our heads, recording our thoughts as we melt into our underselves.

But had there been such a machine in his head, that night, recording his dreams as he drifted to sleep, this is about how it would have been:

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*An electric guitar...strings breaking the heavy silence of a dream...amplified vibrations rising like a steel cloud from some depth unseen, and all the sounds whirl around and bring a mild light to the darkness, a soft light – blue, as if emanating from beneath frozen crystal turquoise waters – a soft blue light that illuminates pages of a book coming nearer, lines clearer as they grow toward...and around, and the sound getting louder, lines bigger with letters looming large and leaping forward, toward...something, just black and white arrangement of characters all mixed up and prone to multiple interpretations, but the lines grow larger still and begin to twang with the mystic, mesmerizing circus of strings melting all around until a letter swells from a line and SWALLOWS YOU...YES, YOU! Pulling you through the page, paper fiber tearing around you, peeling your flesh from your soul and shooting it into a void.....*

*A little voice in your mind peeps, “The ‘60s, eh? So this is it? I don’t really remember. I was pretty young, and that was so long ago. Hippies and drugs and day-glow demonstrations...all threatening to change America’s stoic social order so short in establishing...so slow to die.”*

Suddenly, our dreamer awakens with the little voice still peeping in his mind, wondering what the little voice is peeping about and wishing to go back to sleep. He rests his head against his pillow and, mind clearer, drifts slowly toward sleep, wanting nothing more to do with the Sixties and cursing himself for smoking that joint.

But the ‘60s stay on his mind. How disgusting, he thinks. All that filth on those bodies at Woodstock. His grandfather screaming about what “those people” did to Haight-Ashbury. It was “their fault” that what happened in Watts and Detroit and D.C. happened. And Chicago! Christ Almighty!

He wonders if anything like that could happen now, in the '80s. In Milwaukee.

Probably not, he figures.

But as he falls off the woken world and re-enters briefly a soft splash of sleep, his mind bops wild through his reincarnation-ridden memory – which is to say, history.

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*Flames flap up in violent eruptions burning holes toward the soul which now feels no pain, searing like a quasar through millenniums of civilization back to days before civilization even was. Exploding through all moments ever and back again zillions of times per microsecond, each time self-multiplying through nuclear fission at such a rate as scientific notation would fail to express.*

*POW! ZOWIE! ZING!*

*Running over wars and plagues and religious crusades, shooting through flags and borders and all royal orders that tie and define, colonize or oppress, this soul we ride through this dream we see rushes toward the present – or what it seems to be – and crashes through the crystal hymen of ‘Orwell’s Year’ with blitzkrieg swiftness and shattering implications, for even our dreams are filled with fire from the future.*

*A little voice in our mind peeps, “So, this is 1984, eh? No problem. Don’t look like no Apocalypse or nuthin’. No Oceania. Huh, I wonder what the next fad-year will be? 2001, probably.”*

Again suddenly, our dreamer awakens with the little voice still peeping in his mind, once more wondering what the little voice is peeping about and wishing to go back to sleep.

But he can't. He rises to read. He wants to read something...big, but quick. He is rent with nervous energy and driven curiosity as he rips through pamphlets and dust. *Civil Disobedience* and *Common Sense* Thoreau themselves into him with Paine as he shudders under the weight of their import, but they fly aside, revolting. In desperation he grabs a book (once banned here) by an author named Miller and thrusts his face into it, pushing these words into his head:

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“Side by side with the human race there runs another race of beings, the inhuman ones, the race of artists who, goaded by known impulses, take the lifeless mass of humanity and by the fever and ferment with which they imbue it turn the soggy dough into bread and the bread into wine and the wine into song. Out of the dead compost and the inert slag they breed a song that contaminates. I see this other race of individuals ransacking the universe, turning everything upside down, their feet always moving in blood and tears, their hands always empty, always clutching and grasping for the beyond, for the God out of reach: slaying everything within reach to quiet the monster that gnaws at their vitals. I see that when they tear their hair with the effort to comprehend, to seize this unattainable, I see that when they bellow like crazed bears and rip and gore, I see that this is right, that there is no other path to pursue.

A man who belongs to this race must stand up on the high place with gibberish in his mouth and rip out his entrails. It is right and just, because he must! And anything that falls short of

this frightening spectacle, anything less shuddering, less terrifying, less mad, less intoxicating, is not art. The rest is counterfeit. The rest is human. The rest belongs to life and lifelessness.”

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“No!” he screams as he throws down the book. “Not me! Not meeeee!” And with that he hurls himself through the window of his third floor bedroom and breaks into space, holding himself there for an endless moment and screaming “AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAARGH!” all the way to the street – splat! – where he explodes and splashes over asphalt, buildings, people (waking some, disturbing others) and is absorbed into the very air we breathe tap and exhale all across the Earthface.

Had there been a machine running in his head as he went to bed, recording his dreams as he drifted to sleep...we may have had the necessary information to determine why he couldn't fly. The invaluable 'black boxes' that supposedly survive the crash and lay whole in tattered debris of disintegrated jets don't find themselves in human remains.

A little voice in my mind peeps, “So where are they, huh?”