

# The Outsiders

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# *The Outsiders*

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# Rekab's Clone

The trouble with androids is that they get depressed.

The Council.

We'll never let go of the ultimate secret, but I will give you a hint: there is only one mind and a man must learn and develop by traversing it.

Rekab

I am And. In reading this you must share with me our belief: Our joy is in the journey. The protean problem now is to define the practical value of this universe. Here is my attempt:

Four men are standing in one enclosed place. There may be more for spirits predominate. Knowledge gives us respect. There is a box in front of us. There is a door in the middle of the box. We assume we know the time of day. Each of us goes to the door and opens it. We come back and hand each other what we have seen. The exchange, slowly changes the form in the box.

I tend to think that nothing is as important as this. The motion from certainty to uncertainty to transformation of meaning is the only way we have of measuring growth. I tell them I am not you, yet I am inside you, an organization. Beyond everything, I am with you, involved in growing toward the source. My vibrations are as cold as arctic water, my rhythms, a million eternally expanding gyros.

Behind me is the word, the painful, never applied word. Six months ago, I began to realize the essence of the headlines in this world. That they, too, had left the word behind. I came to admire them for they had satisfied their desires, though many had been found in their place black livered and empty hearted. At least, they had tried.

I drove down to the Ocean Computer Center. As I entered the building, only the gardener was around, down at the end of the building clipping the branches of an old mimosa. I had gone straight to the file desk, and had asked the woman there to include a new profile of mine. It was to be another attempt of mine to convince The Council of my good intentions.

The woman had wide, lusting grey eyes and a stem-like neck.

“One minute,” she said. She came back and, spreading her hands across the counter, said “Your file is an old one, you are supposed to be dead.”

“Possibly my file had gotten mixed up with a name identical. Can you check again?”

She brought the older file out and showed me the contents. I found a few of my letters, but as far as I could see everything I had done had either been lost or attributed to this older one.

I had been misplaced. My wings spread. I smiled.

“I’m glad you’re amused,” she said.

A couple of things had crossed my mind. 1) That she was here, very protective of the information. 2) There was a very strong possibility that I might just disappear from the earth.

The letters were incidental, and had no historical interest. I didn’t think they’d ever be referred to. In `49 this older one had given a lecture on syllables, and the year after was congratulated by Minister Stans for bringing about complete agreement among a group of surgeons on the therapeutic value of inner flight.

I left, turning, thanking her, sort of not knowing which way to go, through her, or out the door. Wisely, I chose the door. From then on, I was in a state of agitation.

The way things had been going I could only believe my destiny was bound to reveal itself in the next twenty-four hours. Take note, I said, your file has been lost; Cora, your own roommate, has left. Take note: they've lost your files.

Home, alone, sitting on the couch looking at the water, I thought of Cora. She had left a year ago for the Television Islands, she said, to find her body which she had left between candlelight in the care of a Germanic Prince. That night I dreamt of her and the Prince searching the candlelit caves for her body.

In the morning, I went for a walk. Large fowl pushed themselves through the soft, white air. A bright sun turned high above the clouds. I saw it on the monitor. There was a tick, like a tiny egg, in my right side. Across the street, a few people sat near the side of the papier-mâché flower house. Near them were tiled gutters and stone walls with the eyes of dogs set at the corners. The branches of bigger trees, like the bodies of dead scorpions, swayed in the breeze. In the distance, on a barren hill, a video transmitter blinked on and off. People kept arriving, flashing through the trees, and walking along the curving blue asphalt.

As I sat and watched them something melted in me. I, usually, felt snowbound, unable to move. I thought how most of them inclined to spy on their neighbors, to find out what the signs of trade were: what was on, what was coming. Their spectacle annoyed me, but that day I found their ignorance charming.

If I have given you the impression that happiness is more important than biological control, I would like to amend that feeling. When happy people envisage no limits or boundaries, their emotions have no control. Since we, and I mean all of us, have decided through thousands of years that we are incapable of handling happiness, we have opted for scientific control. In a sense, I agree. Yet, I feel we have to find another way to utilize all this energy, other than perpetrating the people that we admire. I feel this is why the Council is against me.

I believe the people, the models, are all relics, tried patterns that do not reflect the finest aspects of life. Innovation in genetics was hard put to justify itself at the last symposium. All the new ideas were squashed. These people fear Frankenstein more than the 19th or 20th centuries ever did. They are super careful

not to create a Mr. Hyde. Where does that leave us? In my eyes, in a world of hidden desires and repressed joys; living in the midst of shining neurosis.

The Revolutionaries are unbelievably civil with their conjured images of Hyde. Their vision is a picture of a comic book hero who rides to the surface on a raft of absurdity, a genius who buoys on nightmare, an old program card. In fact, they are like all the rest. They seek their own aggrandizement. When one among them says, death shall have the whole dominion, you know, he's steeped himself in the anarchistic literature and science of the past. There's no fear. There's nothing blind, fecund, unconsciously growing. Nothing will happen. Most of them are lovers, lordly fools, who have no clear conception of our possibility.

On a knoll, to the left, two girls practiced kung-fu. They moved one another in and out of the shadows. I stood. If Rekab will help me, I thought, I'll be home free.

I ran out of the park and walked across town, smack-dab into an abracadabra party. Maniacs hopped around in the streets and hung from mobiles. They were projecting the streets of New York City circa 1975. I jumped a tram to avoid them.

The tram passed the Deauville. I fell into a kind of reverie. The sight of it never failed to arouse me. It's hard working elevators, deep, red carpets, down covers on the brass beds, and sunken tubs in the bath rooms, brought, to my mind, the elegance of The American West. The hard work a man did on the outside justified staying on the inside for a night or two.

Rekab lived at the end of the line, near a game reserve, in a house that looked like a mausoleum. I stood on his lawn looking through the kitchen window and saw him talking to himself. He was ferocious, bald and bearded.

He stopped as I walked through the door.

"I have my chance." I tell him, loudly, clearly.

"I'm having a party, will you join us?"

"I guess you didn't hear me," I said.

He began to slice large peppers, and toss them into a salad.

“I hear you,” he said. “Linnel is playing Go with the big mind. See if you can help her out of it.”

In the living room, she was bent over her Go table, sipping coca. Across from her, I sat on the couch, and looked up to the screen, to the big mind’s geometry.

I was now aware that a potential trap had been set. These were the only two who could actually say they’d seen me in the past year. I wasn’t sure Linnel could be trusted.

“Linnel,” I said, “my records have been lost. I can leave.”

She turned down the screen. She was in a quiet, if not friendly mood. She knew of my desire.

“Yes,” she said.

“But I need his card.”

She turned the screen all the way down to a light hum.

“Escape,” I said.

Her eyes came into focus. She looked rugged. She was like a badger. Her mouth was slightly open. She smiled catching my intention. Coming out of the game, slowly, she closed her mouth and tried to look serious.

“But won’t that mean he will be officially off somewhere?”

“For six months, maybe. I’ll send it back with a friend. The friend will punch him back in. The card will be returned to you. He can say he just had to think. They know Rekab, but he’s got to remain in hiding until the card returns.”

He chose that moment to come into the room and sat down next to me.

“I’ve heard it, it’s all right with me,” he said.

Linnel stood and came in front.

“But you know me, I don’t think it’s a very good idea.” She turned to Rekab. “What if he can’t find a friend?”

On the screen, a myna bird spoke about life stimulation. Though I couldn’t hear the words, I knew it was mad, shedding its feathers.

“A lot of foolishness can be expected in a peaceful society,” I said. “A lot of generality, a lot of music, a lot of fucking, but not what I want. It could be said I’m now molting like that bird up there. Since I can remember about everything, I tell you I’ve always wanted to change my destiny to leave something beyond me, do you understand? Here, everything is controlled, each moment a piece of the fabric. If there is real freedom out there I’ll know it. I want to test my discipline.”

Rekab smiled. “Linnel,” he said, “get my card.”

Using Rekab’s car, I drove out of the reserve talking to the reservation desk about the midnight shuttle. My flight was confirmed.

I wanted to take one last look at a bar called *The Balloons*. I hadn’t been in it in two years, but it had been a favorite place of mine.

The tapestries were gone. Prisms had taken their place. Instead of real women, holograms sat at the bar, but the pool was still there. Quietly, I removed my clothing and a hologram waltzed over, as is customary, and escorted me to the warm, swirling waters. She was familiar. At one time, she had been a popular actress.

I slid into the pool. She bent over and grinned. She asked me what I’d like to drink.

Water, I replied.

There was nothing continuous here. A group of surgeons from across the street were at the bar joking with the holograms. Everyone was feeling, feeling dissolution, the music of the people. A white, luminous cloud hung above the room. I took a closer look. In one of the corners, a Rekab hologram sat at the table with two silky terriers. They were barking. His long face appeared Rabbiesque. Quickly, feeling the spirit of the thing, I climbed out and walked through the red and blue refractions.



The dogs stopped barking. We were surrounded by a large egg-shaped ball. Others, they reminded me of pictures from Morez, floated above us. My body was light and magnetic. Flashes of light rose bearably. The entire room was filled with pain.

Through the prisms faces moved. I had eyes; I could feel them, but not as if they were my own. These eyes had travelled thousands of years in a hundred others. At the bar, one of the holograms, a dark blue, screeched, "Turn from time, turn from time."

Quickly, I placed my clothes back on and headed out the door, telling myself not to cry, not to despair, that these were my eyes.

In our legends, Onson, one of the first man-made machine men, was instructing the people of another place in the art of manipulating their desires, the feelings of their city, by altering the colors of the lights, and the sounds of their commerce. In the midst of a lesson, he began to think of the people in comparison to himself. He noticed their love of the Finale, and the way they moved, continuously, as if in search, along the same patterns for the same lines they had been crossing. He became contemptuous of them,, saying yes and no, to them, many times. Finally he said, "You must change."

He drew new plans for the restructuring of the people. Of course, the people were against such a thing. One day, he disappeared.

Through the years, messages have come from distant channels regarding our well-being. We believe these urgings came from Onson.

I close my eyes. I wasn't anywhere. Man is a ghost who travels through the byways, and interstices of time leaving behind traces of love and exhausted desire.

# Requiem

The magnificently aged poet of 73 years, William B. Pracht, returns home from the funeral of a beloved friend – Kathryn S. He's dressed in a black suit, white shirt and black cashmere overcoat. The door to his building is held for him. He takes the elevator to his spacious apartment on the top floor. His shoulders hunched, he fumbles with the keys. Inside, he undresses, brushes his teeth and washes his bearded face, never once looking in the mirror. Dear Kathryn, an artist and decent historian twenty years his senior; in his early 30s they had been lovers. She had given him a hand-up and strengthened his belief in humanity.

Wearing a new dressing gown he sits in the living room and looks at one of her paintings – huge white tulips rise out of the skull of a long-dead anthropoid. In the painting he feels her love for the rainforest and her wicked sense of humor. Goodbye Dear Kathryn, he says. Forlorn, he climbs into bed.

He dreams of a dark and rainy landscape near the Hoboken piers. From a large fishing trawler Italian stevedores unload crates of whiskey into smaller boats and trucks. Death is there too on the pavement in the shape of a watermelon rind. I am a blessing, death says. On a big blue sun-drenched day two boys, 13 years of age, stand in a field of alfalfa trading punches. I can't remember where I shoveled the horse manure? Hide and seek. Two Dobermans and a Great Dane stand atop a skyscraper in grandiloquent Manhattan. A war rages inside the steel walls of the City. Brutality and Chaos refined. Oh, I'm cold.

Born in Hoboken, New Jersey on November 13, 1936 with one functioning kidney, energetic, athletic, he was a voracious reader of world literature. In later years he would say, "Through reading, I escaped the world of the gangster." At twelve, his parent's basement, he ran a gambling casino for his fellow cub scouts. After he was busted he moved into the garage where he set up a strip-tease parlour. Every night before Halloween, he found himself hiding from the cops. Hide and seek. It was thrilling... to never... be captured.

First major decision was to attend St. Francis Xavier High School, a Jesuit military Academy in New York City. Most of his family was proud, particularly his mother. Dad knew better, but said little. As he recalled, the school was on 14th Street in a hollow brick and cement building. Many of the teachers were as old as the Academy. In the middle of his freshman year, his mother announced she had divorced his father and was moving to Healdsburg, California. He stayed behind living with his grandmother in Weehawken to

complete his freshman year. He left the school with the most incomplete sessions of punishment in the history of St. Francis Xavier. He re-united with his three brothers and his mother in July of 1950 on a horse ranch in Healdsburg, California.

He certainly felt his freedom as well as his mother's baffling pains: migraines, psoriasis, and an aching need to be loved, but not her impending ruin due to a congenital brain tumor. What did he know of death? He was a colt prancing around in the hills of Northern California. He heard her screams; her gasps for air and her bravery as she fattened, lost all of her hair and became addicted to codeine. Not until the brain tumor exploded did they discover the source of her agony.

Fuck it, he had been with her in the best years. She had been a star, Vivacious Lady they dubbed her in high school, a serious reader of Emerson and Thoreau. Even in the last excruciating years she made loyal friends and pursued and created a world of joy out of inexplicable pain. Emerson and Thoreau would have been proud. She died during his high school graduation ceremony. After he funeral he traveled – walking, hitchhiking, talking, sporting and striding into little towns and big cities all across the country. He was looking for decent human beings and he discovered them, hundreds of them, but he never found what he really desired – a fellow traveler, a worshipper of words.

Eventually, he wandered into a junior college and then on to grad school. It was there that he found what he was looking for. Over the decades the faces and locales change, but the feeling of the place is always the same: intense listening, critical thinking and believing. Idyllic rolling thoughts precisely evaluated, performance graded.

Bill awakens. His bedroom is decorated with prints from the Renaissance. He stretches his limbs. His left eye is shut. With his right eye he stares at the ceiling. "You think you are a man because you're tough," he says. In his living room, he practices Tai-Chi. Simple graceful motions followed by breathing exercises and deep singing, if one could call it that. He makes guttural sounds like doors creaking, touches of operatic bravado and whistling.

Bill awakens. His bedroom is decorated with prints from the Renaissance. He stretches his limbs. His left eye is shut. With his right eye he stares at the ceiling. "You think you are a man because you're tough," he says. It takes him a few minutes, but he's up.

In his living room, he practices Tai Chi. Simple graceful motions followed by breathing exercises and deep singing. He makes guttural sounds like doors creaking, touches of operatic bravado and whistling. On this sunny spring morning, 65 degrees, he feels strong. He puts on grey flannel trousers, black Ecco shoes, a leather jacket and a Borsalino hat. He stands in front of the mirror. He looks like Rodin. He exits his

apartment and ambles toward the elevator door. In the lobby, he's greeted by the doorman.

"And how are we today, Dr. Pracht?"

"Beni. And how do you feel, Seamus?"

"Ready for bear."

Outside, he glances at his watch. He should be able to get in a solid 40 minutes. On the corner two rival high school gangs, one Catholic, and one public, buzz around the coffee shop. Genteel older men and women sit at tables while well-dressed business-types move in and out. He crosses 86th Street to avoid the jostling of the crowd. As swift as a cheetah time over takes its prey. What's left are spinning rocks calcifying bits of information.

"Bon jour, Dr. Pracht."

"Good morning, dear Lady."

Ah, Paris at the turn of the 20th century—a world teetering on the brink of hope. Mallarme, young Cocteau, Matisse, Joyce and Picasso we all fight for our place in the world. Soon great new poets and painters will be arriving on our shores. Check with Spengler for possible arrival time. He turns on 5th Avenue and strides into the park. All his contemporaries are dead. His three brothers, Ginsburg, Levertov, Lamantia, Creeley, Mesbusch. All gone. Forget it. His mobile phone rings. It's Levi, a Rasta buddy from Dominica. He wants to stop by around noon. Young people. That's what keeps him ticking. He turns toward home. As he enters his apartment he hears the drainpipes gurgling. He can afford to fix it, but won't. His landlord certainly won't. They've tried for years to get him out. The last offer was \$125,000. What would he do with that? Three years ago he collected 1.5 mil along with his Nobel Prize. He's set up a foundation to encourage young poets. He sits in his study and looks over notes for an article on world cinema. Maybe Levi and little Steff might get along. Steff massages him once a month and runs errands. He calls her. She's home. He asks her to come at noon.

At noon his doorbell rings. There they are—together. He ushers them into the living room. In the kitchen he prepares mango Darjeeling tea and a bowl of marijuana.

"How do you two know each other?" little Steff asks.

"We share the Virgin Islands. I lived there in 1979 and '80. Levi was a pioneer out there."

"The best place I ever found in the islands was an abandoned home on a small sloping hill in St. Thomas. It had a serious cistern there for water. For years. So I decided to clean it up: trimmed the bushes, re-caulked the windows and sanded the floors.

I started living there. I changed the locks. You wanna come, you've got to knock. After about three months I was coming into the yard and there was an old man standing there looking at the house. This is the boss, I thought."

'I own the place,' he said.

I said, 'My name is Levi.'

He said, 'I know.'

"He was one of the Governors who lived in the V.I., Old Paiwanski, the man himself." He said, 'You've done a nice job.'

"Yeah. I brought in some banana plants from Dominica and really did it right."

"I, too, loved the elders of the Caribbean. They were quality and they always looked for quality."

'Yeah man,' he said, 'Well what do you think about paying rent now?'

I said, 'I really don't have a problem with that. I definitely don't have a problem with that. What kind of rent are you talking about?'

'I don't know to be honest with ya. Just throw a number out there.'

"Three and a half," I said.

"We became tight. I had the place from '84 to '95. I had house sitters when I traveled."

Little Steff asks, "When did you learn about boats?"

"As a child."

"My place cost around 700 a month in St. Croix – A West Indian manor house in Frederickstead. I had a maid, Zelinda, from Antigua. She was so black I would take a picture of her and you couldn't see her features."

"When you're black like that, you're a pilot black just like a pilot whale."

"Zelinda told me not to swim in the Atlantic. The house was right on the beach. I didn't pay attention. The islanders all seemed abnormally afraid of the water. I'm out there on a raft paddling around, a baby Orca breached no less than a hundred yards from me. Big black head and a white throat. I felt like a magician, but I got the hell out of there, paddling to shore like crazy. It was the second most beautiful sight I've ever seen. The most fantastic thing I've ever seen was The Challenger. I was on my way from Hawaii to San Francisco and it just glided by us. I was on the left side of the plane. Saw it up close and personal. Awesome manmade object."

“The Orcas,” Steff says, “use 80% of their brains. They’re smart enough not to fuck with humans. Besides, humans are not much of a meal.”

“When I was growing up on Dominica we used to hunt frogs. There’s a shit load a rivers on that island – 365 rivers. Big bullfrogs. No rough wrinkles like the American frog. They have like a camouflage more like spandex for skin. We hunted them at night with flashlights. They stiffen and then we’d bag them. Next day we’d chop their heads off and pull their spandex off. It’d come right off the feet. Nothing have more muscle than a frog.”

“Lean meat,” Steff says, “Running meats are the best protein.”

“Yeah, man.”

“We should go to La Tour,” Steff says. “They have some great shark there. How long will you be in town, Levi?”

“I’m on my way to the Caribbean in two days. I have very little time, but I’ll be back in July.”

“Can you stay for lunch?”

“I haven’t even seen the boat yet. I’ve gotta go. You gotta pinch, Doctor?”

“Okay. Call me before you leave.”

“Will do.”

“Would you like more tea?”

“No thanks, Bill. Don’t you need me to shop for you today?”

“Seamus went out yesterday and got me a few things. I’ll be alright for two or three days.”

“Okay, then I guess I’ll go too.”

“Fine. I wanted to give you something. Remember we were talking about Larry Durrell? Well, I found the Alexandrian Quartet in the vault. Paperback, but in mint condition. I want you to have it.”

“Thanks, Bill. I’ll call you later in the week.”

After they’re gone, he thinks, what a waste, so beautiful and yet she will probably never learn to love. Inside she’s cold, defensive...very much like his second wife. The coldness, which is probably an inherited characteristic, makes them feel gypped.

In his study he sits in his rocking chair tape recorder in hand. His subject this afternoon is Stanley Kubrick and Pauline Kael. He never met Kubrick, but he did know, and loved, Pauline. He first met her in Mill Valley, California in the early-sixties at a Sexual Freedom League party. “Kubrick’s first film *The Killing* based on a Hemingway short story is a little hazy. Wendy, please order me a copy from Netflix as well as *Saragossa Manuscript*. In the beginning, Mr. Kubrick’s films were filled with people – all pretty much on equal footing. With his second film, *Paths of Glory* he establishes himself as an up and coming master. The picture bristles with characters and the lighting is spectacular – crisp and elegant black and white. *Dr. Strangelove* may be his greatest film. Then something changed in him. Years ago I spoke with Pauline about it and she said he fell in love with the *deus ex machina* not just the literary device, but literally in love with the effect computers could have on one’s life. Thus began his growing isolation. In 1962 he removed himself to England because of depression and disenchantment. In her review of *Barry Lyndon* Miss Kael begged Mr. Kubrick to return home to America and confront the emerging problems. True, alienation is Mr. Kubrick’s overriding theme, but isolation from American problems, Miss Kael thought, would only increase his obsession with machines and prevent his art from growing. I think he surprised her with *A Clockwork Orange*. I know the film pleased me. But it was only a respite, a glorious moment in a great artist’s decline. All his subsequent films were horrible examples of an individual’s isolation—devoid of character. I speak about this as a Doctor, a consultant to artists, about a path that should not have been taken by Mr. Kubrick or anyone else. He had, at least, another three good movies about America in him. No one else could have given us his perspective.” Switching the recorder to pause, he stands and walks into the kitchen and throws together a salad of tomatoes, artichokes, New York cheddar and tofu. Alone, he sits in the kitchen and eats, feeling like Keir Dullea in the other dimension at the end of 2001.

“Thank god for Mondays,” Dr. Pracht mumbles.

After lunch he re-enters his study to work on world cinema. At 3 o’clock he showers, opens a Beck’s, pops 50 milligrams of Levitra and sits in his living room. He’s feeling no pain when the doorbell rings.

Graziella is raven black hair, big blue eyes, stands 5 foot 6 and weighs 120 pounds. In another world she could have been a model for Modigliani.

“What’s up,” she says and walks past him.

“You look very Spring-like,” he says.

“I like your robe.”

“I bought one for you too.”



“A shower I think first.”

While she showers, he opens another beer and walks in circles round the living room. She re-appears dry and naked in front of him. She stands kind of like a gunslinger, he thinks. More beautiful than the weather, the Challenger or the Orca, was this gorgeous young female. As one ages one has less desire to learn, possess or covet.

“Have you been working, mon pére?”

“Yes, mon cheri. Progress proceeds simultaneously on all fronts. Your robe!”

“I love being here with you,” she says. “Let’s look at ourselves in the bedroom mirror.”

In his bedroom, standing in front of the mirror, she fondles him and strokes him. He slides his left hand under her curvaceous derriere.

“If you kiss me,” she says “I will make a face as radiant as a star.”

She leaves around 5. He returns to bed and falls quickly asleep. He dreams of a teacher who resembles an old Leonardo in a forest leaning against a tree. Leonardo speaks to a group of loving students about the paramount importance of balance—the up the down and the in-between. The illumination and it’s subsequent collapse, most poignantly, the mind’s exile. “We’ll always have the forest.” Leonardo says.

The phone rings.

“Did you forget about our meeting?”

“Jake. Mmmm. Sorry. Give me about twenty minutes.”

A screenwriter and playwright, Jake’s forty-two. He keeps threatening to write Pracht’s biography, but what he’s really doing is gathering information for his own plays. He showers, dresses and goes outside and hails a cab. Fifteen minutes later he arrives at Elaine’s and walks toward Jake’s table.

“Gene, can we have two more here, please,” Jake says.

“Of course.”

“Hello, Gene.”

Pracht sits.

“What’s the occasion?”

“I missed you. I also wanted to talk a little about a horror movie I’m thinking of making.”



Gene, the waiter, brings the beers. Gene is a surly but gentle man about Jake's age with a shock of white hair.

"You ever wonder why a disproportionate number of great Americans are black?", Gene asks.

"There aren't as many of them," Jake replies, "And they had to fight to stay together through everything."

"That's the meaning of jihad," Pracht says. "In the underground they have to become masters of communication."

"That's close," Gene says. "The deeper the seed is buried the stronger the root. American Africans are superior beings."

Gene turns. The poet and the screenwriter stare at one another. To an outsider they might appear mad or perhaps involved in a staring contest.

"What's up with the horror movie?"

"It's Nietzsche!"

"Oh, that's great. I love it."

"I'd like to option your play for about two years, say for two grand a year. Write it and then make it, and give you 20% of my profit."

"I want to see you do it."

"I'm not going to involve you in the writing process. Deal?"

"Done."

Jake pulls out a contract from his jacket. After perusing it, Pracht signs it. The Nietzsche play is not only one of his favourites, it's never been performed. Written in 85' it was one of the first personality plays—none of which were very successful. Wouldn't it be amazing if Jake could make a horror show of Nietzsche's life?

One of his recurring dreams comes to him that night. He's in a castle by the sea. Adjacent to the castle is a school filled with laughing children. He can't get out of the castle to teach them. He searches for an exit. His doors are locked. He stands at a back window and stares at the sea. Suddenly, he's alone on a street in Rome next to a statue of Antonioni. In the distance, he can see people running away. He has a vague feeling that he or the statue made them run.

He awakens thinking of old friends: John Barnes, the visionary minimalist, Kay Boyle, Robert Creeley, Denise Levertov, Dr. Evans and George Oppen. What a

parliament of owls. It must have been Jake's reference to the Nietzsche play that brought these people back.

He begins his morning exercise with "the still man:" knees slightly bent, hands at his side, eyes straight ahead. He holds it for 15 minutes until his body starts to tingle. He would have to take it easy today. He has a 7 pm reading at the 92nd Street Y. "Conserve energy," he says as he wanders into the bathroom.

7:20 pm at the 92nd Street Y. After a subdued but loving introduction from a middle-aged lady he's never seen before, he rises from his center chair and walks carefully to the podium. He says, "This afternoon I was reading Lord Bacon. It struck me, it seemed, for the first time, our nostalgias, our hopes, our beliefs in man's sanity have never truly existed. Surely there have been moments, dream-like moments, when all was well. And yes, I do think there were such times. And I'm here to pray with you that sanity will enter our realm again. Lord Bacon is often referred to as the founder of the experimental method, which I'm afraid is solely responsible for the current institutionalization of all our activities. Bacon's prophecy for the future is now the Maxim of the State."

'I take it that all those things are to be held possible and performable which may be done by some persons, though not by everyone and which may be done by many together though not by one alone and which may be done in the succession of ages though not in one man's life and which may be done by public designation and expense though not by private means and endeavor.'

"In the process genius is excluded. The pathfinder gets lost. The communal endeavor of man grows monstrous and sick. This is a work in a progress. I call it Searching For Fertile Ground.

Aware of the difficulties of assessment

After all these fading years I still maintain we humans are blocked at the core; our souls sealed by our animal past. We have maybe the most exquisite stories about the way out of our quandary. All the signposts to freedom we have written in our own hands yet we build mazes which allow only a few to find the way. There are great historical debates about the proficiency of this or that maze but the theory that life is a game which only some people can win builds in a series of interlocking elites which enslave us all.

In the struggle with our unconscious, a term I am using in both the genetic and the psycho-analytical sense, we see the self-defining force of our individual and communal existence. The unconscious is often the enemy or, at least, the enemy is the other. Wrestling with the fear of the other is a way of defining who we are and are not. The brain gives rise to the mind. Both brain and mind are synthesizing mechanisms. Amazing the mind-boggling attention to detail that goes into building a mind and how that mind can then build or rebuild say the Twin Towers site.

On the surface, we behave as though we have no understanding how such attention to detail can be applied to our own lives. If such a lack of attention was applied to the infrastructure Civilization would collapse.

The unconsciousness is like that underground. Without understanding its satisfying intricacies, its ambiguities, consciousness, as I'm defining it, does not exist. Perhaps the mystery of our indifference lies in the mercurial nature of consciousness itself."

He lifts a glass of water to his mouth, then continues:

"If we are aware of what we are dreaming we are conscious. In waking life, the same equation applies. As in a dream one's conscious life is shifting. To be aware of the depth which surround us would prevent us from action: a truly meditative state. Most of us achieve balance by shutting the mind off to the complexity and by adhering to hard won slogans. Can outside interference transform the individual character or is the character drawn to its predetermined conclusion? A very old question which cuts to the heart of the programming issue.

Can I put intelligent shows on T.V. and attract an audience similar to the shows I put on which cater to a much lower common denominator? Of course not. Like to like. I can only get about 10% of the audience for the intelligent shows. In politics and entertainment we see a true reflection of our demographic. Everything eating everything expanding energy to eat contracting and reforming. In this we stand cognizant of the ramifications of our own programming.

One of the crucibles which challenge the formation of the ego and there are five is 1- when the ego becomes aware of the hatred that others have for it. The initial response is shock, then a desire to hurt if not kill the offender. In most cases, reason follows until perhaps the shock is buried, hidden in the unconscious.

Step 2 which many do take is to comprehend the reason which compels and surrounds the hate. The one who is so despised can perfect a stoic indifference, or a slight, almost ceremonious nod, or an evangelical love to buttress the shock.

3 is to embrace the ignorance of everyone eating everyone else; to see the love and hate as the malleable mess it is.

Step 4 which is hardly ever taken is to look at yourself from all sides, top to bottom, and to see yourself through the eyes of the one who hates you.

(I believe this state is the crux of that religion and philosophy known as Humanism.)

Step 5 embodies the greatest threat to the formation of the human ego – to be born into a chaotic, poor, and violent world from which very few escape. Predestination! Rape! War! You gotta be there to appreciate it.

Other Than Your Sincerity the Only True Goal In This Life Is Clarity of Mind, Peace Within the Larger Context of Conflict. The pinnacle of my consciousness I equate with God. Not God is love, as John would have it, but rather the Bhagovati Prajna Paramita evocation: Where there is no fear, no passing, no power, where there is only the essential nothingness, there I will be nourished.

The apogee of this consciousness is the feeling that one has stepped out of local time and embraced an ancient never ending world of life formed and destroyed over and over again. Thus this consciousness so understands this moment of transcendence that all other pursuits are only means to this end.”

He raises his voice:

“My beauty hides in my bloodstream waiting for the proper combination to release me from bondage.”

Drugs, alcohol, meditation, WORK!

All around us flies the digitalized information age.

I feel like I’m living in a dark age on this haunted earth, surrounded by encrusted mesomorphs and diaphanous Bull-shitters selling whistles and bells to the up wingers.

I hear phrases like You the people who are too eager to slander your Government when it has been we who created the climate of peace and, an ever growing economy; when it has been we, our own policies, who have led our nation to dominance.

You the peace people, have been wrong from the get go!

All over the planet the people are confused and sad. My colleagues tell me everyday—You see what we’ve been experiencing since the death of the intellect?

During our childhoods, in discussion of cultural matters, we could always count on the N.Y. Times and the Herald Tribune for inspired reportage. The responses were as varied as the individuals who examined the new work. Sure, there was plenty of mass marketing and yellow journalism, but if you turned your head away from sensationalism there were serious people everywhere examining profound things. In 2010, all that profundity has vanished. Monopoly and the building of Empire has brought commodification to every sphere of our American Way of life. People have been reduced. Like to like, differences don’t interact. We are all niched out.

Nevertheless, we are beautiful things really. Test dummies working quietly; Don Quixotes staring at the sun. Buddhas perched on ledges. The ordinary lives we lead, scurrying about the feet of our Great Motif—the military machine—provides us with a warm and fuzzy backdrop to our daily role of Protector of the Universe. In many ways it's true.

We inherited it, were inspired by defeating a monstrous evil. Yet, now, in 2010, our addiction to super hype has made us vulnerable to believing in ideas that have no meaning. Thank you.”

He turns around and sits back down. He listens to the other poets who are quite good, but begins to tire halfway through the last dreamer. After the reading he shakes everyone's hand and congratulates them and their host. At an opportune moment, he slips out a back door. A year ago he would have stayed for the party.

The following morning he's stiffer than usual. His right elbow is swollen. He sits, then stands and walks slowly to the bathroom and pops a Motrin 800. He goes into the kitchen and eats bananas and peaches. He can't afford any injuries, he thinks. Move slowly, don't rush. By noon the elbow feels better. He tries to work but nothing comes. He takes a deep breath and goes back to bed.

That afternoon he dreams he's on a rock out at sea, in a storm; he's crying. It's the opening scene from the movie *Dream Child*. A jackal sits near him. The jackal laughs. “What baloney. Listen to him. Every evening he weeps like this. Won't you ever change?” Pracht dives into the rocking ocean. He's scared, but he starts to swim. The horizon seems close. Quite near, there is what appears to be a vortex of flickering light. He slides into it. He's gone.

### **Requiescat in Pace**

April 28, 2015