



MESSAGE

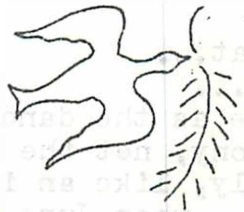
FROM



YESTERDAY

TO

TOMORROW



ASIRA'S TOWER  
SPECIAL LEAFLET

TRIP SOUVENIR #L

MESSAGE FROM YESTERDAY TO TOMORROW  
BIRTHDATE: 1930

Would you like to know,  
Would you listen if I told you,  
Why we will never understand  
even the music of your generation?  
because we belong  
to another world:

which learned to study  
with the radio turned off.  
and in the woods listening for the harmony  
instead of listening TO  
or worse  
listening to someone trying to impose the  
harmony.

We learned to listen, in a world still silent,  
to listen  
and to look within,  
and when we listened there was still silence to hear.  
But now there is nowhere to go to hear the silence,  
or even to listen for it;  
for the birdsinging flourishing in the weeds and the  
wilderness yet.

We were the last to hear the silence.

You were born to Muzak,  
and graduated to TV as soon as the eye could focus,  
plugged into the screen.  
Later you became freeswimming forms,  
each with its own transistor  
Lest you should move beyond the oxygen of the Big Beat,  
the daily DDT in your cells.  
We were the last generation to be born  
without strontium 90 in our bones;  
too young to have poisoned the world,  
too old to share the poisoned heritage.  
How can we hear your music? for we were born to a different  
drum.

Turn on?  
Maybe, turn OFF...  
turn off the Big Beat...  
turn off the Muzak....  
and hear the silence as the dandelions grow,  
listen for the harmony, not the hormones,  
nor clamor so loudly, like an infant crying for more  
moon-June-honeyspeon.

Learn to listen for the sound, not make it.

Yet even here in the Park, the world vibrates to the  
sound of a rockband banging eardrums and insulting the flower  
faces, and where can one go to be free?  
How far to go for the green silence?

II

I have forced myself to be silent,  
and written no poems,  
because I was too old to speak among the young,  
and not yet wise enough to be heard among the old.  
Ours was the silent generation,  
caught between the hammer and the anvil.

But now,  
like a laboring woman, caught in the very streets,  
and gripped too strongly to be silent,  
or to refrain from crying out, or writhing  
as the Sibyl writhed in the grip of her Daemon;  
not caring who sees her gaping wounds,  
if only she may be eased, be free of the weight, the pain,  
now I cry out, not caring:

It hurts, it hurts too much, this world that you have  
made, this thing that was forced on me and carried unasked,  
this message that has grown too big within me;

It hurts too much, the burden of the bitter world that  
has grown;

A burden too big to be cast off without leaving ragged  
wounds;

A world gaping and bleeding at a thousand tears.

Not the token-rip of the Jew, mourning in sackcloth with  
ready-cut seams,

No sterile, anesthetized episiotomy;

But great and ragged wounds through which real, not plastic  
life oozes red, the cry not of the market report but of prophecy.

III

Beloved:

If I had lost you,  
what would I see?

a face dissolving in the mirror  
without your cheerful beard radiating round me,  
a world dissolving grey and crumbling  
leaving me to walk alone.

I had to walk alone today,  
to trace alone the paths we walked together  
and see, not with your eyes

but through your precious purple legacy  
If the same world was there for me alone.

Once I saw Buddha smile.

I do not need to see him smile again,  
for I can look at you.

And seeing you smile, I know what is meant  
"To catch the light and mirror in Divinity;  
He for God only, she for God in him."

IV

All Nature breathes upon the lower arc;  
Here is a dancing group, three walk entwined,

and here a group of fighting boys, gamecock-strutting,  
here lovers walk close-clasped; and here at last  
I sit alone, and suffer to distill some essence,  
something which would be left of me  
without you here even in memory.

Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras

All flesh is as grass, especially yours,  
Oh green and forever-flourishing,  
flourish in the tended garden of my heart,  
and grant that I may never say;  
Go; flourish in some other wilderness.

If you were gone,  
The grass would wither, even in the Easter Basket,  
and spring would be a hollower painted shell  
than any sugar show.

V

The sky still cracks into component colors,  
and only iron will compels my pen  
to trace the precious moments of enlightenment  
when I could lie and watch the sky dissolve.

The sky still cracks into my hexafells,  
the flower patters and in Valentines.  
My world still wheels on in iambic wheels,  
The meter of the wheel-age;

but now what metre is born  
for the age of the jets?

Robert A. Heinlein taught me to despair,  
That nation must war with nation, brother with brother,  
and lion never lie down with the lamb

(not even hardly ever)

while the sun follows on Apollo's round.  
Why sing in a world where the thunder of jets  
drowns my frail singing voice, or a bird or a baby's cry?  
In the magic garden all the flowers are gone;  
How can I sing when all my flowers are gone?  
And yet, when I wanted to despair,  
When I flung myself sobbing, in the dying grass,  
I saw the solar mandala, the dandelion  
rise from the grass resplendent, and cry out to me;

Not to many a man is it given  
to see a dandelion in his finest hour  
(We had the conversation once, sunny brother, very far ago)  
when every lotus-petalled blade  
puts forth stamen, dancing, dozens of us twining, twisting,  
bowing, curling as the stamens curl, coiling, dance  
of germplasm, in mandalic chromosomal life...  
Ripening, bowing, independent of the curled life of the  
petals;

Tiny bug crawling down like hummingbird made microscopic,  
transparent like glassfish, in a microbiotic world  
drinking deep from stamen; dipolar antagonist....

So nothing is eternal; in the dance of Life even a  
rock-band concert must come to an end sometime,  
and squirrels will creep again  
to my very feet, to nibble at my nuts  
listen aqiuver, ears alert, for the silence;  
Silence will come again; even to the profaned grove.

VI

The world spins on, dirtily turning,  
cranking like a giant concrete-mixer, trying to pave  
The world for one vast parking-let, covered in cars;  
A parking-lot sale of shepewrn merchandize.

Brand-new, colàssal, super-saving, plasticized,  
eternicized, deodorized, made contraceptive and antibiotic,  
bacteriostatic and containing synthetic chlerophyll,  
lanolin and butylated hydroperangiosperms....

But when the world is all reduced  
To a neon-lighted parking lot spinning in space,  
Suddenly....comes the pause, the riffle of drums,  
The silence left in the vacuum when the last transistor  
burned out,  
the Biggest Beat; the stamp of the hoof of Pan!

And then we will see  
violets springing out of the pavement,  
breeding new life not out of but into the dead land;  
Grass springing up to follow his footsteps,  
Grass splitting the pavements, the tombs,  
Grass returnigg, grass grass, everywhere grass;  
My generation giggled at the one which said;

"I am the Grass; let me work."

(And, telling through the silence, the insistent Brahms...  
(Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras...)

And we set to work to say, with hubris unparalled in  
thousands of years of history;

What you say may be so, very likely it is so, but if  
it is so,

If it is the workings of a natural law, let us prove the  
rule, test it to the furthestest,

By saying, Grass, we defy you, we have set to work to  
pave with concrete the farthest reaches of our planet,

So you are the grass and will triumph?

We're from Missouri.

We don't buy it.

Prove it.

So the long fight started against the Grass.

Where there is no Grass the people perish.  
Is Grass vision.  
Is grass wisdom?  
Is grass...grass?

Again and again, tolling the resplendent refrain;  
(Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras...)  
The grass withereth, the bloom is gefallen, and yet,  
the Grass, the veritable Weed  
need no divine authority to return FOREVERMORE!

Only a dying earth needs trumpetcalls,  
But somewhere one small corner of love manages to survive,  
Battered by all the seas surging over eternity,  
the crash and surge and roll,  
limpet-like, half-drowned, emerging from the sea to cry;  
Hemo sum!  
Enough survives to hear, always i' the ultimare breach,  
The trumpet-calls of rescue; and the first birdsong  
of the new world reborn.

The flower children come with their hands full of flowers  
Gathered from the crevices of the dirty paved planet,  
to say with anxious eyes  
"We are not now that strength which in old days...  
yet what we are, we are;  
Will these do to be going on with?"

Yes, darlings... They will do. They will do very well  
Until the spring, and the rhododendrons flower,  
A flower in the hands of a child  
Will bloom forever on the ruined earth.

## VII

Three hippie children pass,  
bell-chiming, wreathed in garlands, too real to make mock  
Of this lone Niobe who sits, green-clothed  
like Demeter mourning for Persephone, forever wailing  
into a void where the children cannot hear.

Listen, my children, and you shall hear  
Of the midnight riot of worlds of fear;  
You all strangers and afraid  
In the world Grandfather made.

And yet the mothers in the suburbs cry;  
Why can't they listen?  
I sit here between the worlds and cry; I have told you  
why they cannot listen, because you deafened them;  
With no leisure of silence to listen,  
No one to pull the plug on the canned music  
and let them listen to the sound of breathing.  
Through all the generations, the elders have cried;

Why can't they listen?  
And sooner or later they have always listened;  
But this generation  
    We have taught never to listen  
    We have paved their forests  
    And left them nothing to hear  
    But the prepackaged Beat.  
This is the generation that can never listen;  
The blind fish too long in the cave;  
The unheard children now unhearing.

VIII

And here I sit, written out, spent and travailed,  
And cheered by a lunatic encounter with three cheerful  
    children, who no doubt think  
that I am mad or drunk,  
But are awed and respecting in their laughing way  
When they see the slant of the lines of poetry, and asking;  
    Can't we see it?  
    Not till its done, huh?  
    Will you bring it back next Thursday?  
And when I ask, why Thursday, they laugh at this elder  
    one who does not know, and say;  
"That's the day of the rock-band concert in the Park!"

IX

And here where it all began,  
in the Japanese garden, savoring jasmine,  
just before I am locked out of Eden  
    (the primordial tea-den!)  
    take tea and see;  
    take LSD and BE...  
Even as this generation, I have learned to think with  
    the voice  
of facile slogans for their buttons; while my flesh  
    dissolves  
and the sky melts in colored patterns, still I cry  
    Paisley power forever! Long live the white rabbit  
in a world where baby Patrick pipes on perfect pitch;  
    "Remember what the dormouse said;  
    Keep your head! Keep your head!"  
Here where it all began, I turn to you,  
the smiling Buddha face,  
as I consult the oracle in a fortune cookie;  
    "You are going to find happiness and content  
    in a very short time."  
In this doom-stricken age,  
No Cassandra prophecy could chill me more,  
For where--in this mortal life--can one find either  
    except in the last long silence?

Not in this life can my wrecked throat encompass  
That soaring theme of Sieglinde's grief and joy  
Which even Brünnhilde, at the sunrise of the world  
Could not yet sing, not with her mortal joy,  
One music that believed in mortal joy,  
But only in the valley of flame and death could that  
theme sing again, as I sing now against the  
colored arabesques melting my skies,  
Tracing paisley beauties into hope ahead  
That only Love endures, and love is the word, love is,  
love was,  
In the Beginning was the Word,  
The Word was Love.

And this, then, is all that we can leave to you  
Out of the old world's poisoned heritage,  
Out of a world we were too young to poison,  
not young enough to share your heritage  
One legacy only we can cry, howl, weep, or set to  
eclectic rock and scream at you  
(or if that fails;  
call for my lute and sing it)  
Love, love, for God's sake love, love too much, never  
let anyone tell you it is too much.

We programmed noise into your ears at birth,  
We told you; love is sex is wanting is the big need is  
buy is sex is--  
and then we told you;  
It's only advertising; don't believe it.  
You were the generation to be born  
with the Big Lie already folding and refolding;  
believe this, don't believe it, believe don't believe  
it's only advertising, believe it because we researched  
your motives, really believe really disbelieve whirl  
like a dervish to the Big Beat;  
Buy baby, buy baby, rock-a-billy-buy-buy-baby...

And then it was time to Grow Up, to Settle Down, to  
close your ears to the Big Sound we had sold you,  
To close your ears against the poisoned siren song,  
but you hear still, in the freedoms of childhood,  
shutting out the pervading Big Beat with your own;  
Love is, love is, love is...

We told them; Thou shalt not kill; and were surprised when  
for the first time in a hundred thousand generations the  
young voices chanted back; THOU SHALT NOT KILL! We hear you,  
man; yea, verily, we shall not kill! Yea, verily and amen,  
even for flag and country we shall not kill! No matter how  
the cry to kill; goes up from the poisoned world;  
Green beret, green beret;  
How many kids did you bomb today?

We leave one legacy, one gift from the world  
Where silence was before they killed it out;



Remember the grass.

All else perishes;

Else all perishes.

We heard the silence; listen for it sometimes;  
Send to hear a bird singing, and say it sings for thee.  
It tolled for us.

We will not live to see the grass reclaim  
Our paved and poisoned planet; but you might, you might..  
We believe, not having seen; blessed are they that believe,  
not having seen,

But you can live to see the grass spring again  
At the print and the pipes of Pan, to follow him  
In the dryad splendours of the Flower Children,  
While we, poor draggled maenads at the tail of the tired  
train

Cherish the weeds of your wilderness flourishing.

#### EPILOGUE

A world, this, where we no longer can endure  
The glares and stares of those who do not hear our sound,  
Swallowing the last of the bitter tea, grown cold,  
Let ourselves be driven from the jasmine haven.  
Enough, no more, I cry at last, let me close the gate,  
Let me lie in the sun

And watch the paisley flowers break over my skies  
And know I spoke, not caring to whom,  
Let me sing it as a refrain;  
I was too old to have the ear of the young,  
Too young to lend wisdom to the old;  
Therefore, I said wilfully, locking my lips, let me be  
silent,

For if no one hears, my voice is even as the tree in  
the forest, falling without sound;  
(Is God only this, the Necessity, the  
Thereness to hear that falling tree which, if  
he did not hear, would fall more softly than  
uncounted sparrows?)

But now, overwhelmed, alone, I cry at last; Beloved?  
I cry, as if to myself, and Lo, you answer; Beloved?  
And so no song is futile, for you are there, like the  
last birdsongs from the dying earth,

(Here we sit like birds in the wilderness;  
Flourishing in the wilderness;  
Long live the wilderness!)

Thus I have cried to you, and out of my depths you hear;  
If some day the children hear me, I will not know,  
But you have heard me, and it is enough.

Or almost enough. For a poet's heart  
Nothing is ever enough.

Let it be enough now; let me lie spent in the grass,  
As if worn by birth; the Earth is kindly to the mother  
for a moment or two before she begins the long fight  
To nourish and protect her young; Oh God, the young....  
Some day they will hear. For now it is enough;

They heard the one song from the old unpoisoned world,  
And they saw it broadcast for their redemption:

L O V E .

But before they were, we were, and we are love,  
And therefore we are part of all of them

and all that is  
and all that breathes.

Ewig...ewig...forever and forever...

Marion Zimmer Bradley  
Golden Gate Park  
San Francisco

-----  
God is alive and well within you.  
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"Come, come, Peter, let's not be narrow-minded about this. Why, He himself said we should render unto Caesar those things which were Caesar's. Let's not, for heaven's sake, get the Empire down on us Christians. Let's soft-pedal that business about not going to the gladiatorial games, and not be so intolerant about burning incense to the Deified Tiberius. Look, Peter, we don't want anyone to get the idea that Christians aren't good citizens, or something! And with the Gauls right at the city gates-- why, if we keep saying all that jazz about not joining the legions, we'll be lynched! Let's concentrate on getting the Christians recognized as a good legitimate sect like any other, and show them we're just as good Romans as any other...Peter? Peter? Where are you going.....?"

This has been TRIP SOUVENIR #1, an ASTRA'S TOWER SPECIAL LEAFLET, published for the February 1969 FAPA mailing by

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