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ROOTDRINKER / A SHIP OF SMALL WINDOWS



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FALL: TREES

— Heaven blazing into the head:

the trees:
the sun seems poorer now
as they stand to the light.

the shade varies. most trees moulder
in their hues and fall away;
a few catch fire and run
through the woods tearing at their hair,
victims to the rich sleep of winter,
major instances of sleep.

presumptions amid the colors
get us into dreams, messages
against the night, fall nights
that go up in smoke. omens
of the air never quite expected
call surrender.
what's to be done?
we are not ready.

the roots crawl
deeper into clay — roots
of trees gone into a dream
aloft like Great Ladies in History.
no yearning will break
open the world.

the trees move,
thick and uncertain,
burn at intervals in the dark.

James Price

MOVING THE MICROCOSM A HAND-FULL AT A TIME

"This little canton, I mean this System of our Sun."
Locke

I leave the house lights on and walk down the wooden steps and across the front yard, pass the maple tree and its tire swing and out on to the asphalt of Post Road. The day's fading light is evenly filled with dancing electric sparks, which pleases me as I continue moving down past the deep shadows of overhanging trees to where a small bridge makes passage for Grannis Brook and I can leave the highway and enter into milkweed and tall summer grass.

Arriving here now sitting crosslegged on top of one of the concrete pillars that one of the town kids told me is all that's left of Cray's Mill. Don't know, don't believe it, but what are these large solid objects doing in this overgrown field? Clustering hums of crickets pass in sonic waves, on the wind, and through my wavering attention that for this moment focuses on a tree frog's deeper pitched call. Attention to specifics. There is another hum, through the power lines strung high overhead. Do you mean you can call anyplace in the world, just by picking up the phone?

Victims of their own weight, the pillars sink into the soft earth. The north corner is fallen towards the west. Ghosts attached to abandoned handiworks being worn away by indifferent time. All these substances are fluid and dissolve into one another and so seem to disappear. Let me come back on that. Our distinctions are arbitrary and function best when the barriers are perceived as expedient groupings not as final forms. This essay, now beginning, has been written with this in mind.

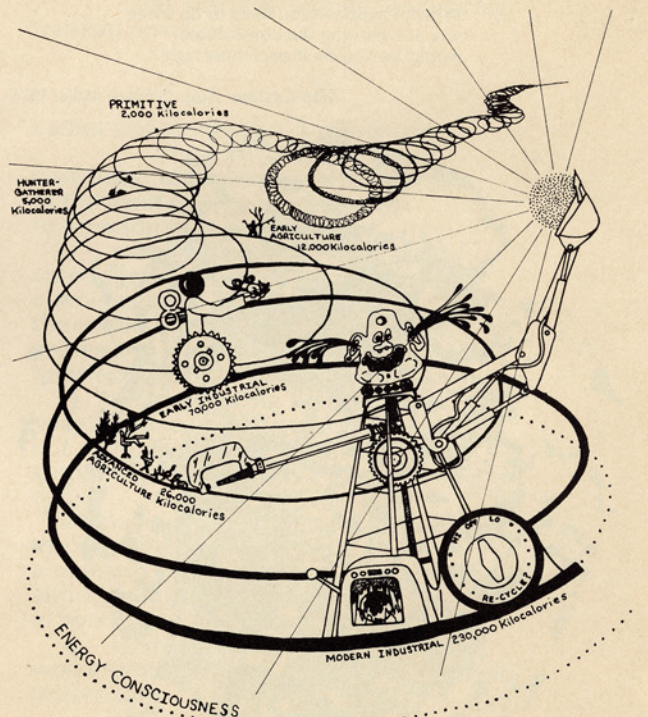
The suicide of the human race is a real possibility. We live in critical and dangerous times and yet I can't really say the problem is one of knowledge. Somewhere at sometime, I'm sure you've gotten the sense that the actions that are supporting our culture are at the same time destroying the balances of adjustment that our living planet has continually attempted to make in response to the large scale restructuring of its interrelated systems in service towards feeding, clothing, and appeasing mankind. Any conscious individual who realizes the consequences of the current man-world relationship and chooses to ignore the responsibility of seeking change, both within himself and within modern material culture, is in effect choosing the consciousness of cancerous growth over that of humankind.

My choice is for change. I don't eat right. I don't live right. I'm not spreading as much well-being and healing energy as I could be, as I should be. And I'm angry at self-confession as justification! Paying attention to the effects of your actions and lifestyle on the physical, social, and moral environment and working towards improving those relationships is a meaningful task. Artists lead disciplined lives.

"My life's the poem I would have writ,
If I could have both lived and uttered it."

-Thoreau

It is here that each revolutionary writer, each revolution, begins and ends: with what you and I do.



The daily per capita energy consumption at various stages of cultural evolution in Kilocalories per person per day modified after Cook 1971 — "The Flow of Energy in an Industrial Society" Scientific American, Sept. pp. 83-91.
Credit: Graphic by Brian Slopey.

There's a science fiction story, that I heard about, that takes place in some future time and in this time the world economy is set up in such a way that in order for it to keep functioning and operating smoothly the poor people are given unlimited funds and forced to spend and consume huge quantities of manufactured material and goods so that the rich people can escape and live lives of sparse zen-like simplicity.

I was talking with Ron Newsome about the concepts behind *Rootdrinker*, and if you ever get a chance to check out his house at Birdsfoot Farm you ought to because it's a work of art the way it includes so many different angles and yet still fits together tight and neatly, and after I related my little parable, he remarked, "Yeah, but of course, cause we're the only people who have enough time to really be involved in our lives and what could be more important that that — to have the time to spend with just living."

Leaning back and looking up at the stars. This isn't reaching what I'm after to say. Poor or rich, how stupid these distinctions are!

All beings, whether weak or strong—omitting none—in high, middle, or low realms of existence, small or great, visible or invisible, near or far away, born or to be born—may all beings be happy and at their ease!

Still, right, having to ignore the black lines of the four wires strung directly overhead. This is really where modern art started to promote total acceptance because otherwise, if your consciousness self-limits itself away from anything made by man, such as the black lines disturbing the naked sky, and focuses on what is left of undisturbed nature, it ignores the actual ugliness of landscape and lifestyle that lack of placement with intent creates. I reject such passive acceptance. The commercial sprawl that is eating away the natural beauty is a mindless creature and much of our close packed society seems to have been created to facilitate the practices of running and trying to get away from any responsibility towards the state we're in, the feeling of hopelessly observing that creature's growth. What could be more absurd, I ask you, then building roads to get into the wilderness, when every road passing into the remaining acres of woods removes that much more of what was wild. There is a broad analogy here, if the solution oriented thinking of our evolutionary designers could learn only one thing, and you and I on this also, it would be that in order to aid others in finding the beauty so many of us spend our lives searching for; any new system requires the conscious abandonment of some of the roads we already have, not the building of new ones. Some of the old ways may be smooth and well kept but when examined closely it becomes rather obvious that they don't lead anywhere.

You must sharpen more than the metal
I tell myself, your wits as well,
the axe has no options,
think the next time before you swing.
the future is prepared and already
fits, but each of us falters and misses,
because of unsteady hands.

Correction, correct for that.
Which I suppose you have to do while
you are learning the control that
would let you do it each time right.

Alan Casline Aug. 9/Crary Mills/1975



●
It's the question
of how
and with whom to

as binary planets
circle the sun, a part

being, the answer for the whole.

●
What's brought to mouth's the heart

where, most suffused with blood,
the soul

compounds, the reason,
strength's another's life combined.

●
Apple pomum poto I
drink ap p'hala
the fruit of water

areus
dare auris
aura

as in the promise
rainbow

●
Become as we are
a fester on the face of her with fission
the sky's blue
diffused

ozone
no ozone ultra violet to
the phi of life
no zoetrope

●
Death's a metaphor
that breath's the power to possess.
One's possibilities.

●
Finding the point's refinement
generating from itself implication's
part's defining pattern's of

●
Given omissions
the problems we presently contract
between men ununited with is

●
HOW IS IT
HI THERE