

For what shall it profit a man, if he shall



gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

Death to the World
7777 Martinelli Rd., Forestville, CA 95436

DEATH TO THE WORLD

The Last True Rebellion



Issue

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DEATH TO THE WORLD

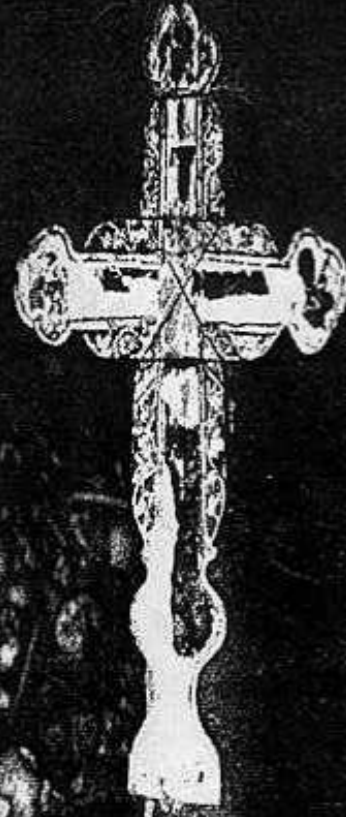
is a zine to inspire Truth-seeking and soul searching amidst the modern age of nihilism and despair, promoting the ancient principles of the last true rebellion: to be dead to this world and alive to the otherworld. Correspondence is encouraged and articles for submission are welcomed. Each article printed herein is true to life and has been written out of pain of heart for love of truth.

DEATH TO THE WORLD

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What do we mean by: DEATH TO THE WORLD

"The world is the general name for all the passions. When we wish to call the passions by a common name, we call them the world. But when we wish to distinguish them by their special names, we call them passions. The passions are the following: love of riches, desire for possessions, bodily pleasure from which comes sexual passion, love of honor which gives rise to envy, lust for power, arrogance and pride of position, the craving to adorn oneself with luxurious clothes and vain ornaments, the itch for human glory which is a source of rancor and resentment, and physical fear. Where these passions cease to be active, there the world is dead.... Someone has said of the saints that while alive they were dead; for though living in the flesh, they did not live for the flesh. See for which of these passions you are alive. Then you will know how far you are alive to the world, and how far you are dead to it."

St. Isaac of Syria (6th century)

SUICIDE

THE LAST GENOCIDE

Only one chance. Even the longest life is so short, in the face of the eternity which spreads out behind it and before it, and which we will never understand in this life but will experience someday, whether we choose to or not. No matter how long we live, when we look back on this life, it will all seem so short, as if one day.

Only one chance. There are so many things which we have not experienced, which we could experience. Only one chance to learn what real love is, for the first time. And we have never learned, if we are not ready to sacrifice ourselves for it--and more than that, to die for it a hundred times. After we die, we can never again make that sacrifice, can never again taste the sweetness of that pain.

Only one chance. Only one chance to find out that the philosophy, mindset and religion of the 1990's are not the *only* ones. And that perhaps there were better ones in the past, in other places. And that it's not true what we've been taught--about how what is more modern is better. Only one chance to no longer be a slave to times and fashions, of the modern counterculture as well as the culture. Especially when both the culture and the counterculture have failed us.

Only one chance to be alive. Only one chance to show courage. Only one chance to change things, and to change course. Only one chance to rise above the state of irresolution and passivity and doubt into which we've been placed by television and other electronic media stimulation. Only one chance to live virtuously.

Only one chance to go to the mountains and watch the evening sun filtering through the trees. Only one chance to sit on a cliff over the ocean and wonder why you're here. Only one chance to see the stars. Only one chance to hear a heart beat.

Only one chance to be free. True freedom comes not from taking life, but from giving it.

Suicide is the *only* unforgivable crime, because it is the only crime after which you cannot ask forgiveness. After that, you enter a future life in which there are *no more chances*. And *that*, if you have not taken the one chance you've been given, is true hell.

Suicide takes the lives of 6,000 of the young generation in the U.S. each year. This phenomenon is something unheard of in the history of the world. Why should this be, if the world is truly becoming a better place? Suicide is the last Genocide.

--Monk Damascene

IC XC
NI KA

a mystic reflection

Fathers and teachers, I ponder "What is hell?" I maintain that it is the suffering of being unable to love. Once in infinite existence, immeasurable in time and space, a spiritual creature was given on his coming to earth, the power of saying, "I am and I love." Once, only once, there was given him a moment of active *living* love and for that was earthly life given him, and with it times and seasons. And that happy creature rejected the priceless gift, prized it and loved it not, scorned it and remained callous. Such a one, having left the earth, sees Abraham's bosom and talks with Abraham as we are told in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, and beholds heaven and can go up to the Lord. But that is just his torment, to rise up to the Lord without ever having loved, to be brought close to those who have loved when he has despised their love. For he sees clearly and says to himself, "Now I have understanding and though I now thirst to love, there will be nothing great, no sacrifice in my love, for my earthly life is over, and Abraham will not come even with a drop of living water (that is the gift of earthly, active life) to cool the fiery thirst of spiritual love which burns in me now, though I despised it on earth; there is no more life for me and will be no more time! Even though I would gladly give my life for others, it can never be, for that life is passed which can be sacrificed for love, and now there is a gulf fixed between that life and this existence."

They talk of hell fire in the material sense. I don't go into that mystery and I shun it. But I think if there were fire in material sense, they would be glad of it, for, I imagine, that in material agony, their still greater spiritual agony would be forgotten for a moment. Moreover, that spiritual agony cannot be taken from them, for that suffering is not external but within them. And if it could be taken from them, I think it would be bitterer still for the unhappy creatures. For even if the righteous in Paradise forgave them, beholding their torments, and called them up to heaven in their infinite love, they would only multiply their torments, for they would arouse in them still more keenly a flaming thirst for responsive, active and grateful love which is now impossible. In the timidity of my heart I imagine, however, that the very recognition of this impossibility would serve at last to console them. For accepting the love of the righteous together with the impossibility of repaying it, by

this submissiveness and the effect of this humility, they will attain at last, as it were, to a certain semblance of that active love which they scorned in life, to something like its outward expression . . . I am sorry, friends and brothers, that I cannot express this clearly. But woe to those who have slain themselves on earth, woe to the suicides! I believe that there can be none more miserable than they. They tell us that it is a sin to pray for them and outwardly the Church, as it were, renounces them, but in my secret heart I believe that we may pray even for them. Love can never be an offence to Christ. For such as those I have prayed inwardly all my life, I confess it, fathers and teachers, and even now I pray for them every day.

Oh, there are some who remain proud and fierce even in hell, in spite of their certain knowledge and contemplation of the absolute truth; there are some fearful ones who have given themselves over to Satan and his proud spirit entirely. For such, hell is voluntary and ever consuming; they are tortured by their own choice. For they have cursed themselves, cursing God and life. They live upon their vindictive pride like a starving man in the desert sucking blood out of his own body. But they are never satisfied, and they refuse forgiveness, they curse God Who calls them. They cannot behold the living God without hatred, and they cry out that the God of life should be annihilated, that God should destroy Himself and His own creation. And they will burn in the fire of their own wrath for ever and yearn for death and annihilation. But they will not attain to death. . . .

--Fyodor Dostoyevsky



Overdose

ΕΥ
ΦΡΑΙ
Μ

part one: Monk Ephriam

In the year of 1425 a monk was taken captive and tortured to death in his monastery in Greece for being a Christian. He was slowly tortured to death over a period of a year. After each episode his wounds were allowed to heal, and then he was subjected to new and worse punishments. Finally they fully executed him. He was hung upside down from a tree in his monastery grounds and run through with a pole which had been sharpened to a point and set on fire. All traces of his life and martyrdom were forgotten until this century where he appeared to the abbess of a convent and told her of his life and sufferings. He also revealed the spot where his bones were buried which never decomposed. They dug up the bones for the glory God.

part two: the addict and the Saint

Some years later an American teenager in the midwest was grappling with his own life. He was heavily using drugs (cocaine and heroin) and was quickly sliding to destruction. He had neither a stable family life nor a religious upbringing and though still young was in serious trouble.

One night an ugly old man appeared to him and said, "I am your friend, I want to make an appointment with you to meet me." He directed him to get into his car and drive as quickly as he could down a certain road which had a hairpin turn at the end with a sheer cliff at the bend. The young man did as he was told, got into his car and drove as fast as he could down the road. Loosing his nerve at the last minute he managed to slam on his brakes and barely made the turn. He arrived home shaken.

Two nights later, the old man appeared again and said with anger and indignation, "I am very disappointed that you didn't meet me. Get into your car again and drive as fast as you can and this time don't put on the brakes." The young man felt strangely compelled to do this. Once again he got into his car, drove as fast as he could and this time didn't stop but drove at high speed off the cliff. The car was demolished but, surprisingly he escaped with only cuts and bruises, and with a concussion.

Overdose



A few weeks after he was out of the hospital, the ugly man appeared to him once again and said, "I am furious with you for not keeping our appointment. Tonight without fail you will meet me! Put a double dose of the drug in your needle." Again the boy felt compelled to do this, and after injecting himself went into a coma from the overdose. He was taken to the hospital where doctors told his family that he probably wouldn't live. And if by chance he did live he would only be semi-conscious-vegetative state. There was almost no chance of recovery. In two weeks, however, the

young man did awake, fully conscious. He told those around him that he had seen a man which looked like some sort of a radiant monk. He came to him and said, "I have been praying for you...God has given you another chance. You will live, but you must correct your life. You are to go to Greece so as to visit the resting place of my bones, giving thanks to God for your salvation. My name is Ephriam."

GIVE BLOOD, RECEIVE THE SPIRIT

The car had spun crazily out of control
and the street lamp smashed it to pieces.
Two bodies flew out of the VW bug,
only to hit the cement street.

One of those bodies was mine.

At the age of sixteen, I couldn't care less
for anything besides my friends, and the
best parttime to cover up the raw feeling
of anguish and despair.

I was angry at the world.

My soul longed for something I could die for,
something that would make my heart thrill-
eternally.

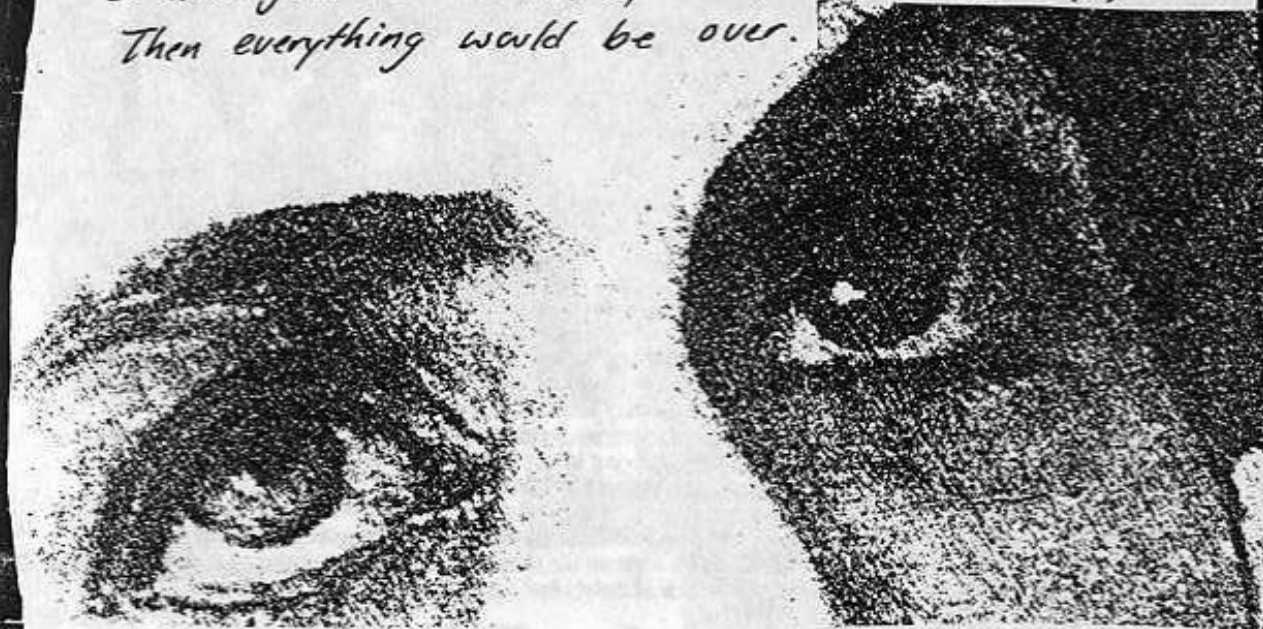
Organized religion? An establishment by
hypocrites in order to satiate the masses?

No way.

In my own way, I asked God in my heart,
I begged Him, to show me what to do.

I often wondered what it would be like
to die.

I could just take a knife, and push it through my flesh.
Then everything would be over.



My mind has blocked out what happened
that near fatal day.

When I was supposed to die.

I woke up after surgery six hours later,
to find out that I had had a thirty percent
chance of living after the car wreck.

Through a fog, I heard someone say,
"You've lost all your hair under the knife,
but you've just been baptized an

Orthodox Christian.

That was God's answer.

-Nakusha Vasquez 9

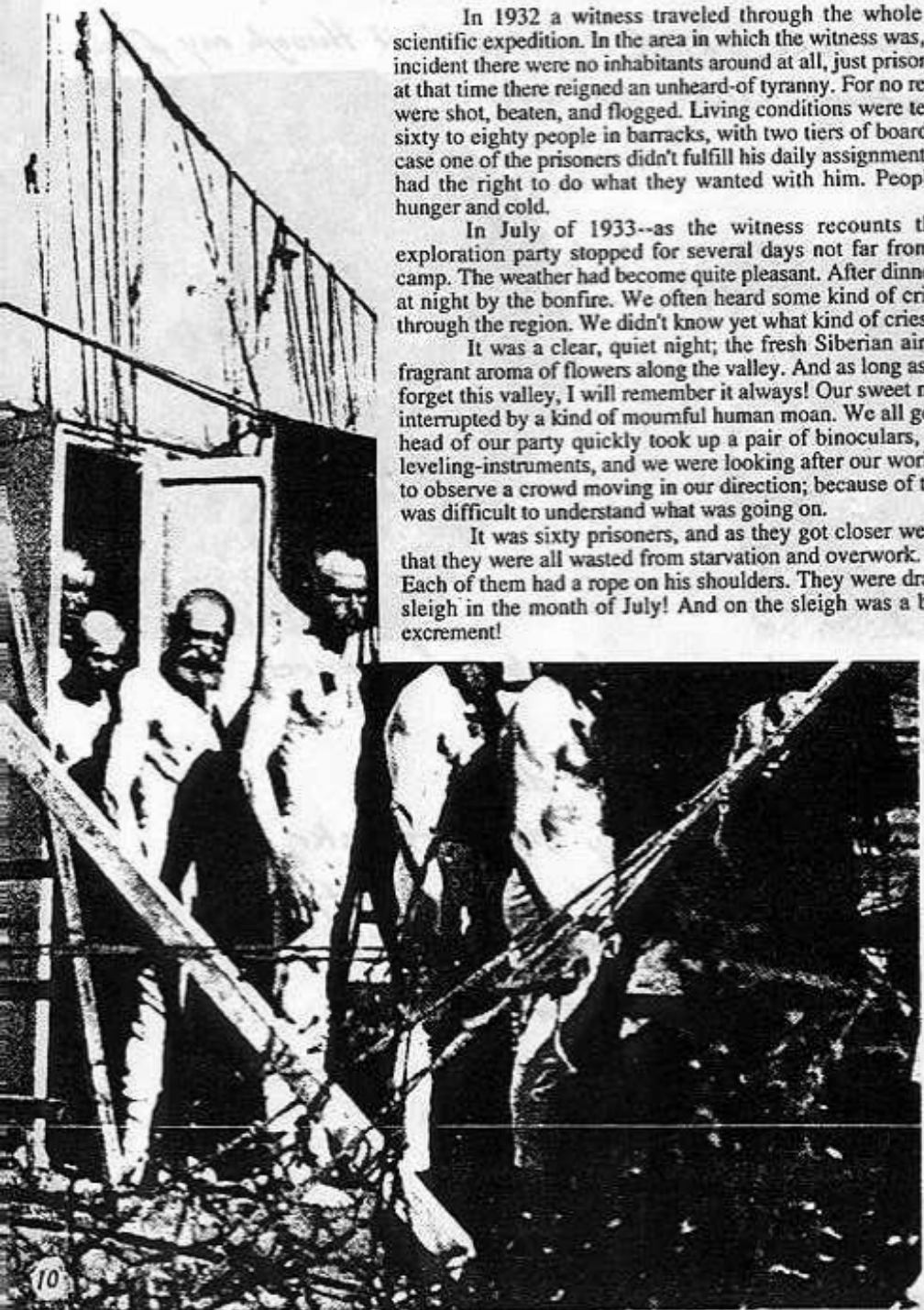
TAKING YOUR LAST BREATH

In 1932 a witness traveled through the whole of Siberia on a scientific expedition. In the area in which the witness was, at the time of the incident there were no inhabitants around at all, just prisoners. In the camps at that time there reigned an unheard-of tyranny. For no reason at all people were shot, beaten, and flogged. Living conditions were terrible; there were sixty to eighty people in barracks, with two tiers of boards for sleeping. In case one of the prisoners didn't fulfill his daily assignment, the camp guards had the right to do what they wanted with him. People were dying of hunger and cold.

In July of 1933--as the witness recounts the incident--our exploration party stopped for several days not far from a concentration camp. The weather had become quite pleasant. After dinner we sat until late at night by the bonfire. We often heard some kind of cries, which echoed through the region. We didn't know yet what kind of cries these were.

It was a clear, quiet night; the fresh Siberian air was giving off a fragrant aroma of flowers along the valley. And as long as I live I will never forget this valley, I will remember it always! Our sweet morning sleep was interrupted by a kind of mournful human moan. We all got up quickly. The head of our party quickly took up a pair of binoculars, others set up two leveling-instruments, and we were looking after our work, when we began to observe a crowd moving in our direction; because of the undergrowth it was difficult to understand what was going on.

It was sixty prisoners, and as they got closer we could clearly see that they were all wasted from starvation and overwork. What did we see? Each of them had a rope on his shoulders. They were dragging a sleigh - a sleigh in the month of July! And on the sleigh was a barrel with human excrement!



The guards who accompanied them apparently did not know that there was a scientific expedition on the territory of the concentration camp. We heard the precise words of the guards' commands: "lie down and don't move." One of the guards ran back to the camp; apparently they considered us as suspicious. One of our party somehow quickly determined the situation of the prisoners and said: "We've prolonged their lives a few minutes." At first we didn't understand these words. In perhaps 15 or 20 minutes we were surrounded by a platoon of camp guards, who approached holding rifles battle-ready, as if they were about to attack with bayonets. The platoon commander and the political commissar came up to us and asked us for our documents. After verifying the documents they explained to us that these sixty men had been sentenced to be shot as an element foreign to Soviet power.

Already a ditch had been prepared for these sixty. The political commissar asked us to go into our tents, which we did. The sixty martyrs were priests. In the quiet July morning the weak voices of many of the priests were clearly audible. One of the executioners asked the priests standing by the ditch, one by one: "You're taking your last breath; tell us, is there a God or not?" The reply of the holy martyrs was firm and confident: "Yes, there is a God!"

The first shot rang out. Sitting in the tents, our hearts pounded. ...A second shot rang out, a third, and more. The priests were lead up one by one, to the ditch; the executioners standing by the ditch asked each priest -- Is there a God? The answer was the same: Yes there is a God! We are living witnesses, we saw with our own eyes and heard with our own ears how people before their death confessed their faith in God.



IF THINE EYE BE SINGLE



A man meek and humble in soul, who wishes to serve God and remain faithful to Him, will retain his meekness and humility even in the midst of persecution; his simplicity will neither betray God nor require him to Disfigure and contort his soul with slavish man pleasing or servile submission to evil. A typical modern man on the other hand, with his complexes and neuroses, his desire not to offend the enemies of God, his fear of being considered intolerant, his compulsive need for self-affirmation, such a man would be far more inclined to enter into compromise with falsehood, in mind if not in heart. It is in regard to the former man that the Saviour, in the sermon of the Mount, said, 'If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light'. Such a vessel is capable of confessing God no matter how hopeless the harvest may seem. In fact such a soul, being single or simple [that is, uncompounded with unrighteousness] cannot do otherwise, having long since resolved to serve God rather than the world.

-- Monk Gerasim



XENIA the VISIONARY

Xenia lived in Russia in seventeen hundreds and lived a comfortable life. She was married to an imperial colonel whose name was Andrei and apparently they were well off. She was still young and in good health when he died suddenly one night at a drinking party. The unexpected death of her beloved husband completely shattered her whole world. She was twenty-six years old and childless. The distraught widow looked around herself, at all her possessions, at her pointless little world and suddenly began to realize the vanity and transitoriness of all earthly joys and treasures. She came to realize that there is true value only in heavenly treasures. To the utter amazement of her friends and relatives, Xenia began to give away all that she possessed. Her money and personal belongings she gave to the poor and she gave away her house to a friend. Finally her relatives decided that she had taken complete leave of her senses and considered her mentally unbalanced.

Having realized that there can be no true happiness on earth and that worldly possessions are only a hindrance to the attaining of true joy in God she suddenly vanished for eight years. It was at this time that Xenia was called to the highest feat of spiritual perfection, that of "Foolishness for Christ's sake". This is state of appearing to this world as totally crazy when in fact the sanity of the person is just beyond this world. There is, in the "fool" a total understanding of life and death, good and evil, love and hate. There is complete reconciliation with God while the world says it's madness.

Xenia returned to her home town, dressed in her dead husband's old uniforms and thereafter would only respond to her late husband's name. Until her death people called her Andrei. It was as if she had hoped in some way to take upon herself the burden of the horrible state of his drunken soul at his death. Sorrowing for his sins and her own she began to wander the streets of the poorest area of the city. Where ever she went people would persecute and laugh at her and on some occasions throw mud and rocks at her. With complete meekness, however, she kept before her the image of God who suffered without a murmur, heard all accusations, bore all persecutions, and suffered terrible torture and crucifixion. Because of God's example she bore all hardships with silence saying, God forgive them for they don't know what they do.

Those who felt sorry for her would give her some spare change or some clothes but she, in her selfless love for mankind would turn around and give all the gifts away leaving nothing for her self.

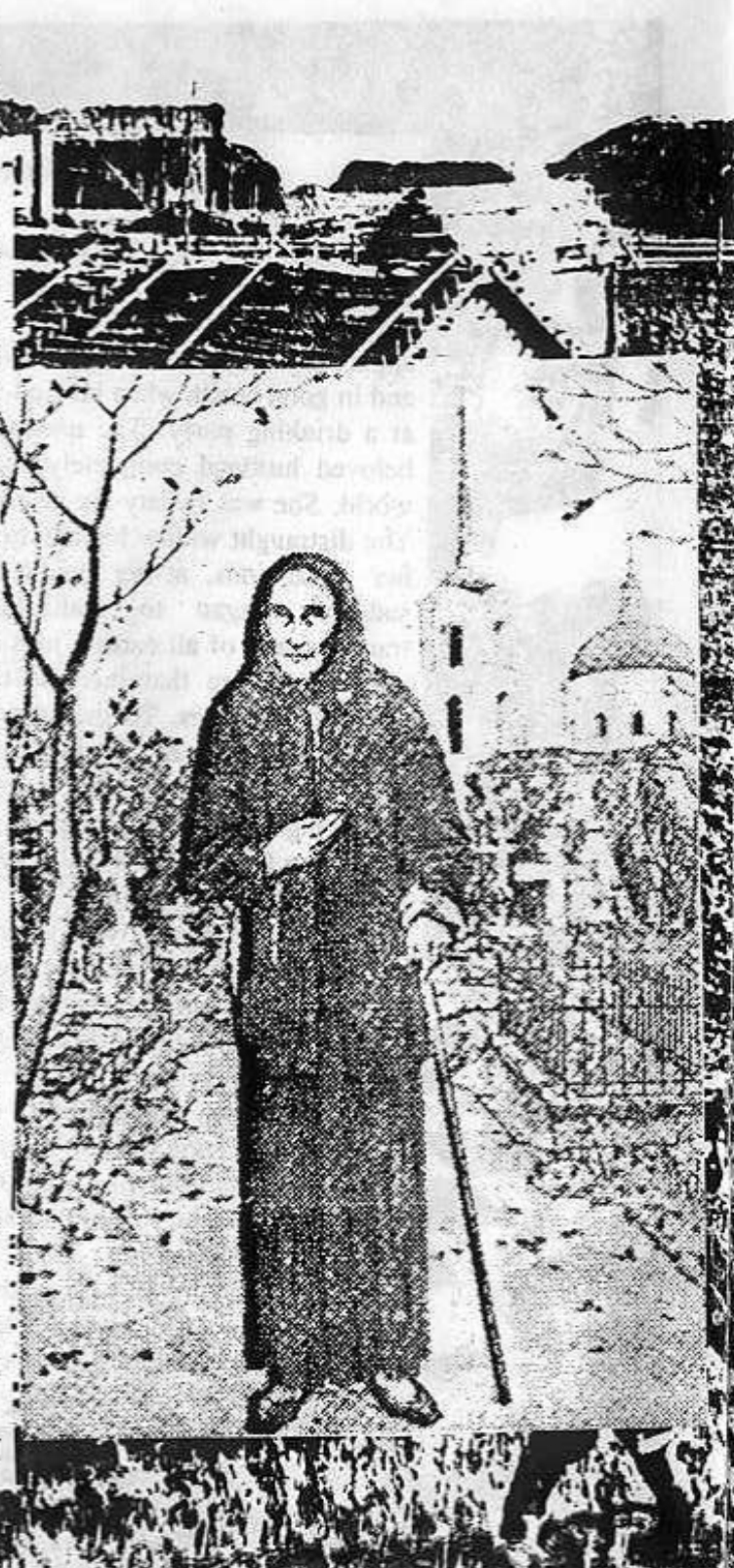
Through prayer and suffering Xenia was reconciled with God; thus God was in her and she was in God. For her uncompromising love she was revealed as visionary and had the gift of seeing the future. Sometimes she would hint at the approaching illness or death of someone in order that they might repair themselves for their fate.

On one occasion Xenia was seen to be weeping both day and night. When someone asked her why she was weeping she only replied, "There is blood! There is blood! There is a river of blood there!" And she began to weep all the more. In the days following there was a bloody murder and her tears bore witness of it before it happened.

For a long time no one knew where Xenia spent her nights. One night the local police followed her and discovered that the elderly woman spent her nights in an open field, praying in all season and all kinds of weather.

Xenia truly bore that faith in which all things are possible. While still living in her body, her soul always soared above this world, dwelling in a living, direct communion with God.

Thus, we could say that the foolishness of God is wiser than men.



My hour has struck

I SHALL GO, FORGETTING FATHER + MOTHER.

I SHALL RINSE MY SHIRT WHITE

IN THE WATERS OF FOOLISHNESS FOR CHRIST.

I'LL VENTURE OUT INTO THE BACKROADS
AND DARK ALLEYS OF MY SEDUCED LAND.

I SHALL GO IN A WORN OUT ROBE

AND PUT MY HAT RIGHT DOWN TO MY BROWS.

MY FEET WILL BE IN THICK BRIERS

MY FACE AND HANDS IN SWEAT AND DIRT.

EACH PASSER-BY WILL SHUN ME,

AS IF AFRAID TO CATCH MY DISEASE.

AND I SHALL BE CHASED OUT FROM EVERYWHERE

AND EVERYWHERE I WILL BE LIKE A SCARECROW

AND TO DELUDED HUMAN BEINGS, IN FOOLISHNESS,

WILL VENTURE TO SAY SOMETHING TO THEM.

BUT UNLISTENING PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY, WILL DISMISS ME

PRESERVING EXTERNAL CALMNESS

AND SOMEHOW, MATTER-OF-FACTLY, WILL STONE ME.

BUT GETTING UP, I WILL CONTINUE MY INTERRUPTED PATH
ALONG TOWNS AND CITIES.

AND WITH HUMAN SCORN FROM ALL SIDES

THEY WILL PRESSURE ME SO THAT I WILL NOT BE ABLE TO BREATHE.

BUT AT NIGHT, WHEN THE BLIZZARD BLOWS,
HIDING IN THE DRY GRASES,

I WILL BE TIRED IN THE FIELDS AND GROVES,
SEEKING WHERE I COULD REST MY HEAD.

AND I WILL BE LIKE A MADMAN, TREMBLING

STICKING MY FINGERS-TO WARM THEM- IN MY 'MOUTH.

AND THAT WHICH PEOPLE HAVE NOT CRUCIFIED
DECEMBER FROST WILL FINISH THE JOB.

AND WHEN MY SOUL WILL PART FROM THE BODY
THIS BOREDOM WILL DISAPPEAR FOREVER.

AND I SHALL GO TO CHRIST IN A WHITE SHIRT
WHICH I SO DILIGENTLY RINSED. — FR. ROMAN



SOUND and the SOUL Death or Life

In a world of agony, and in these times which are worthy of much weeping and lamentation, we delight in the sounds of suffering.

"By the waters of Babylon we say down and we wept when we remembered Zion. We hung our harps upon the willow trees in the midst thereof. For they that carried us away captive demanded of us a song; our tormentors demanded of us a song saying: Sing us one of the songs of Zion." Psalm 137

We are held captive, but we sing a different song--not a song of Zion but a song of death, a song that glorifies violence, sex, hate, pride, and a death that kills both body and soul. Our world is a prisoner of these sounds. For some there is no escape, because some make the endless mistake of suicide.

This generation--the Nihil Generation--is a victim of these sounds which kill. These songs are sung in all walks of life, in all social groups. The vices they depict are accepted by all, for all cry out this violent cry: a cry that to many in this generation, the suicide generation, scream all the way to the grave. They say that it's O.K. because the younger generation is just releasing their frustration and anger. They say that it's a phase of rebellion that the youth inevitably experience. And so the world continues to support this mass genocide, as the youth continue to kill themselves off. This must stop. These sounds must not echo. This song must not be played.

In order to grapple with the sounds of our times we must better know our own soul. We need to find the door into which all this negative energy enters, and we must slam that door shut. To be a true watchman and to guard the treasure inside the flesh (the soul), we must slam the doors of the senses to all evil. Through our senses--sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch--enter into the soul all impressions on the mind, both good and bad. In our times the order of things has become inverted: instead of seeking God within, the heart seeks for pleasures without and is content with them. We tend to feed the senses mostly with perversion and evil so as to please ourselves, and thus we abandon our love for other people. Since we must use our senses we need to guard them carefully and gently, exposing them as best we can to good. To beauty.

In these times there are no lovers of Truth who are willing to fight for Truth and war against their own fallen nature. There are none left to stand up against a world that delights in violence and destruction of the soul. And those who desire to stand for Truth inevitably must experience a Death to this World and an awakening to the other--to Heaven. And we may ask ourselves: What happened to Heaven? Who sings those songs?

The sounds of our times are sounds which have made their way up from the abyss of hell; they make our lives a living hell, and thus we prepare our souls for a hell after death. Since life is the preparation for death, we must prepare our souls by means of beauty--for it is beauty that awaits us beyond the grave. And we may ask ourselves: Who sings the songs of God in a strange land? We must.

new Justin Moly

A Meeting With Suffering

Simeon had waited a lifetime for God to come to him as a child in the flesh, as was promised to him decades before. And when that moment occurred he cried unto God, "Now let Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word for my eyes have seen Thy salvation..." At that moment he had the pleasure of meeting the Child that was to bear the suffering of the world. It was on this day two thousand years later when we remember Simeon receiving into his aged and frail hands this Child, I also had the pleasure of receiving into my arms the long awaited suffering that would chisel my hard heart of stone.

As I crossed the threshold of the door I didn't know at all what to expect. My father had tried to describe to me this woman that we were to meet but all he could say is that her suffering is beyond words. There we stood in her living room waiting to meet her and my father looked at me with strong and careful eyes and told me that the reason that he brought me there was so I would always remember to pray for her.

From out of one of the rooms and under a sun filled skylight and over a creaky wood floor she appeared. She was about sixty and had a scarf covering her mouth and gray hair with only her deep sunken painful eyes exposed. She told me that she couldn't eat because her mouth was all broken up and the pain was too great. Her skin was broken and bleeding in many places and her whole body was stiff from feeling so much pain for so long. She could never sit down because the pain would increase to unbearable degrees so she would constantly be on her feet. She also couldn't stand in one place for the pain would increase. She could rarely sleep or lie down at all for that matter for the pain would again be unbearable. Thus, she was to spend the rest of her painful life walking circles in her house, constantly falling from dizzy spells.

Through a trembling English voice she spoke only of her anguish saying always, "I'm frightened for fear of the pain. You have to help me. I am trapped and There is no way out. I can't escape..." As we conversed I would walk her around the house in circles. I would try to talk about things other than pain and suffering in hopes to get her off the subject but it was to no avail. Then one day I brought up a subject that caught her attention. I asked her if she liked classical music and joy entered her eyes as she said that when she was in Paris she used to play the violin. I asked her if she liked Mozart, Handel, and Bach. When I said Bach she light up and said that his music was her favorite, especially the piece called "Ich Habe Genug" (I have had enough).

Later on when I was back in the monastery I was inspired to listen to that song. The piece of music is inspired by the life of Simeon, and his receiving the Christ Child into his arms and cried to God that he is now ready to die. An angel told him decades before that he would live to be an old man so as to see the Child- God, taking upon Himself human flesh and only then would he be able to die. The words are as follows:



"I have had enough. I have seen the hope of the faithful in my yearning arms... If the Lord would only deliver me from the chains of my human form; If only the time for my departure were here, with joy I would say to the world, "I have had enough." Slumber now weary eyes-close softly and peacefully. World, I stay here no longer. I have renounced thee that my spirit may thrive. Here all is misery, but there I shall behold sweet peace, perfect repose... My God! When wilt Thou call me in peace to join Thee. To lie in the cool earth and rest there in Thee? With joy I greet my death."

I couldn't for the life of me forget her anguish and thought for a short moment that the world hinged on her pain. Her life was pain and her reason for living was only pain. That was her only interest in life. The words of the Child, the God Who took human form settled in my mind: "How long must I suffer you..."

I realized that through her she was losing sight of life. She has treasured the hurt so long that she had lost sight of the other world: Heaven. The soul may now be confined in dying flesh but the higher aspect of man must rise above the body for the flesh will rot but the soul will live on.

"Remembrance of God is pain of heart endured in the spirit of devotion; but he who forgets God becomes self indulgent and thus insensitive"

--Saint Mark the Ascetic +5th century

By. Justin Martyr



PAIN

The face of every soul is lined with pain
For this is the fallen plea
To cry out as a choir the refrain
How long must I suffer thee?

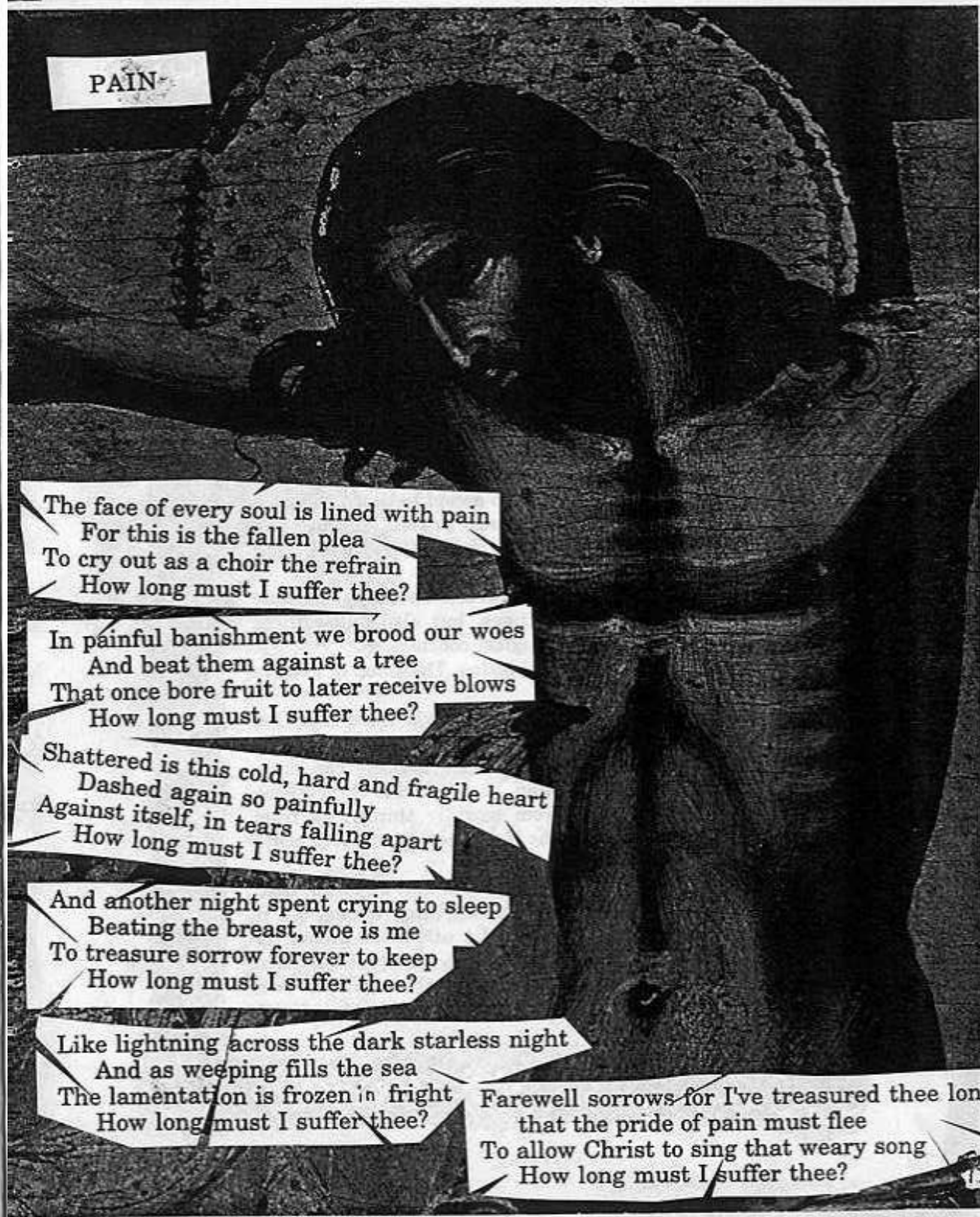
In painful banishment we brood our woes
And beat them against a tree
That once bore fruit to later receive blows
How long must I suffer thee?

Shattered is this cold, hard and fragile heart
Dashed again so painfully
Against itself, in tears falling apart
How long must I suffer thee?

And another night spent crying to sleep
Beating the breast, woe is me
To treasure sorrow forever to keep
How long must I suffer thee?

Like lightning across the dark starless night
And as weeping fills the sea
The lamentation is frozen in fright
How long must I suffer thee?

Farewell sorrows for I've treasured thee long
that the pride of pain must flee
To allow Christ to sing that weary song
How long must I suffer thee?



Lovers of Truth

If you love truth, love silence. This will make you illumined in God like the sun and will deliver you from the illusions of ignorance. Silence unites you to God himself. -- St. John Climacus +6th century

How difficult this is - to love ones enemies - oh, how difficult! One must devote one's entire life to learning this... But in such a love a man comes to resemble the crucified God. -- Hieromonk Gabriel

This is the surrender....To accept to be cut to pieces and yet every piece belongs to God. You are free then. -- Mother Theresa, still living

Everybody who loves Truth must not only take note of the signs of the times, but also follow these observations to their logical conclusions. -- Archbishop Theophan of Poltava

Whoever wants to hate the world must love God with the innermost depths of his soul, and acquire a constant memory of Him, for nothing can more strongly urge a man to renounce everything gladly and turn from worldly things, as from dung -- St. Simeon the New Theologian +10th cent.

Sound reason not only demands that we do not heed those who did or thought anything wrong, but it requires that the lover of truth must choose, in every way, to do and say what is right, even when threatened with death, rather than love his own life. -- St. Justin the Martyr +160 AD

COMMON SUFFERING

Readers' Contributions

Dear God,

I'm confused. My Dad told me there's no such thing as you and my Mom says she is not sure. She doesn't like to talk about it. Even my sister who used to believe in you, doesn't anymore. She thinks that if there were a God life wouldn't hurt so much. I still believe in you but sometimes I forget. I'm sorry. I talked to my uncle. He believes in you but it seems like he never does the things you would do.

Things are getting more confusing. I think that you have left me because I don't remember you anymore. I don't believe in you because that's what they tell me to do - God is gone.

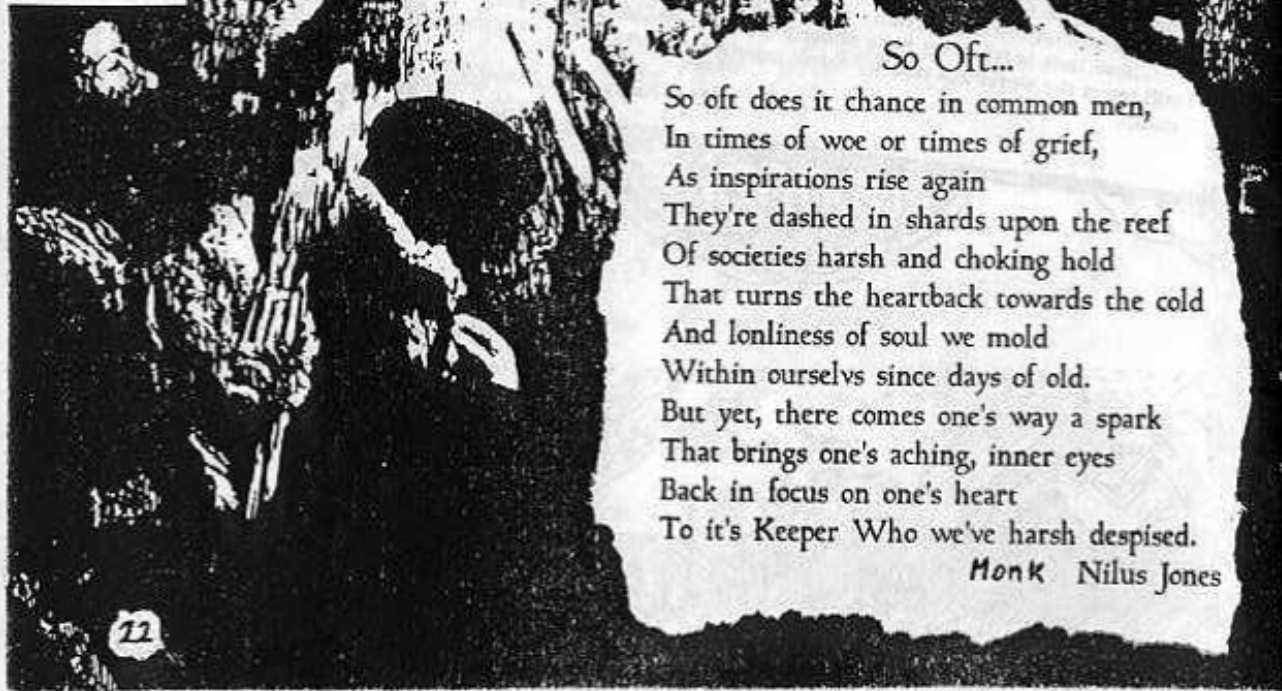
When we are young we know God, but as we grow up we are taught to let him go. We no longer swing high on the swings and grab the sky, because God isn't there anymore - because there are other things on this earth that draw us back: We look back and wonder what that was, and only in confusion do we go on. We reject the world and it's stupidity. Finally, in the pit of delusion and despair, we give ourselves another chance to ask for God, and in our pain (if it be true pain) we will have enough strength to call on him - and he will hearken...

...and that is what we have chosen: We have chosen God again. We still reject the world but now we stand together, not letting the world eat us up.

--Mary Knecht, Wildwood CA

The Spirit

The wind will carry my sorrow
And dry my streaked face.
So at the dawn I arise
And looking into the sky
I wait for another breath
To bring me to the heights
To remind me why and how
I bow my head low in shame.
-- Martyrius Kope



So Oft...

So oft does it chance in common men,
In times of woe or times of grief,
As inspirations rise again
They're dashed in shards upon the reef
Of societies harsh and choking hold
That turns the heartback towards the cold
And loneliness of soul we mold
Within ourselves since days of old.
But yet, there comes one's way a spark
That brings one's aching, inner eyes
Back in focus on one's heart
To it's Keeper Who we've harsh despised.

Monk Nilus Jones

PEELING AWAY THE PAIN

A picture of the peeling of an onion came to mind. I realized that as I peel the thin, delicate, top layer of skin off, strong odor begins to seep out from within the core. Tears slowly come forth from my eyes when the layers are stripped away. My hands bear the burning scent of oil for some time to come; but the core is sweet and worth the shedding of tears.

When I came to God, I had thick layers of wounds encased around my heart. Each hurtful situation experienced over the years formed a layer adding to the wall surrounding my soul. Finally I cried out to God and allowed the Holy Spirit to enter my heart. He began helping me to trust my loving saviour. I learned to cast my cares upon Jesus Christ instead of holding them inside.

Praying about my past helps to release the layers of pain acquired. At first I want to withdrawal, stop the suffering, and suppress the tears from flowing. The stench of my past holds me back from allowing another burden to be lifted. Physical as well as emotional wounds are evident. "I hate crying like this," I tell myself. Loving God reminds me that He created my tears; they are a source of cleansing, washing, and healing in my life.

—Leslie Winberry, Redding CA





NEVER KNEEL



"Once upon an average morn, an average boy was born for the second time. Prone upon the altar there, he whispered up a prayer he kept hid inside. The vision came, he saw the odds, a hundred little gods on a gilded wheel. These will vie to take your place, but Father by Your grace I will never kneel."
-Steve Taylor

I, unfortunately, did kneel. I was raised in a very average "Brady bunch" family. Mom had me and my sister, and Dad had my older brother and sister. I was very excited to have a new father (my biological father died when I was 3, of an alcohol related heart attack) and a new brother and sister. We did not live happily ever after. My brother, feeling jealous and angry at the separation of his family and having to come and live with a new family took it upon himself to punish everyone else for this. He proceeded to torment my existence in every way he could. I was emotionally and physically abused by him until I was 13 years old. I had developed into a deathly insecure adolescent. I lived in my own fantasies and other realities that I had created. He couldn't hurt me there. I went to church every Sunday and most Wednesdays. I sang and listened but heard nothing, even there I was in my own reality. It was about this time that I had left the geek scene and entered the punk scene. Punk where the only people who ever treated me with respect and didn't run me down. I went from polo shirts to a blue mohawk and combat boots. This was 1986 in a rural cow town in Oregon. I was then tormented by everyone in town. My brother had been replaced. Because of my individuality I was shot, stabbed, and beaten. One day a friend of mine invited me to a party of sorts. This party consisted of some of my friends from school and two older ladies. It was described to me as friends sitting around and talking, drinking soda, eating chips and playing games.

The two older women were witches and the party was a gathering of a coven. I was then initiated into the practice of Wicca. If you don't know, Wicca is an ancient feminine



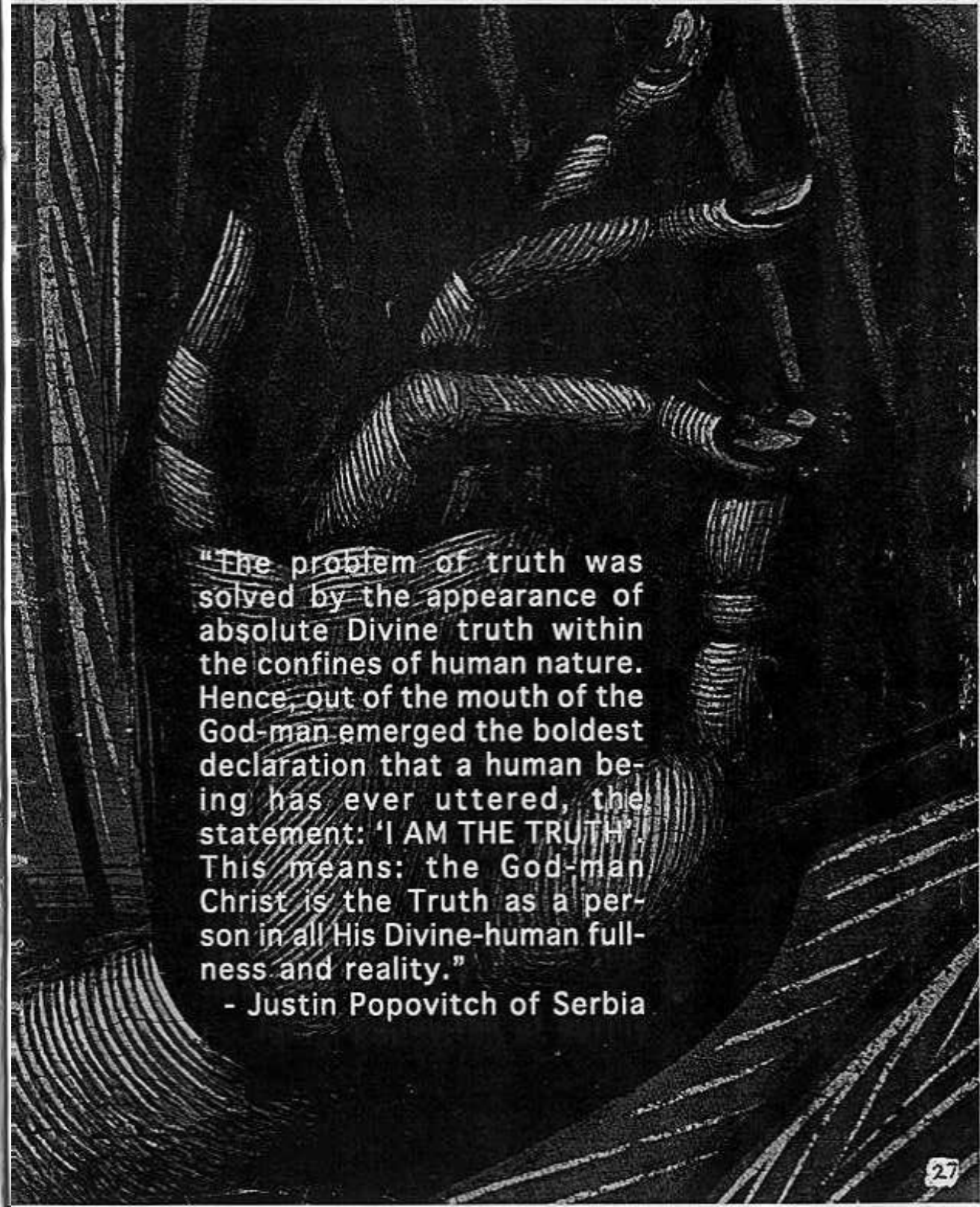
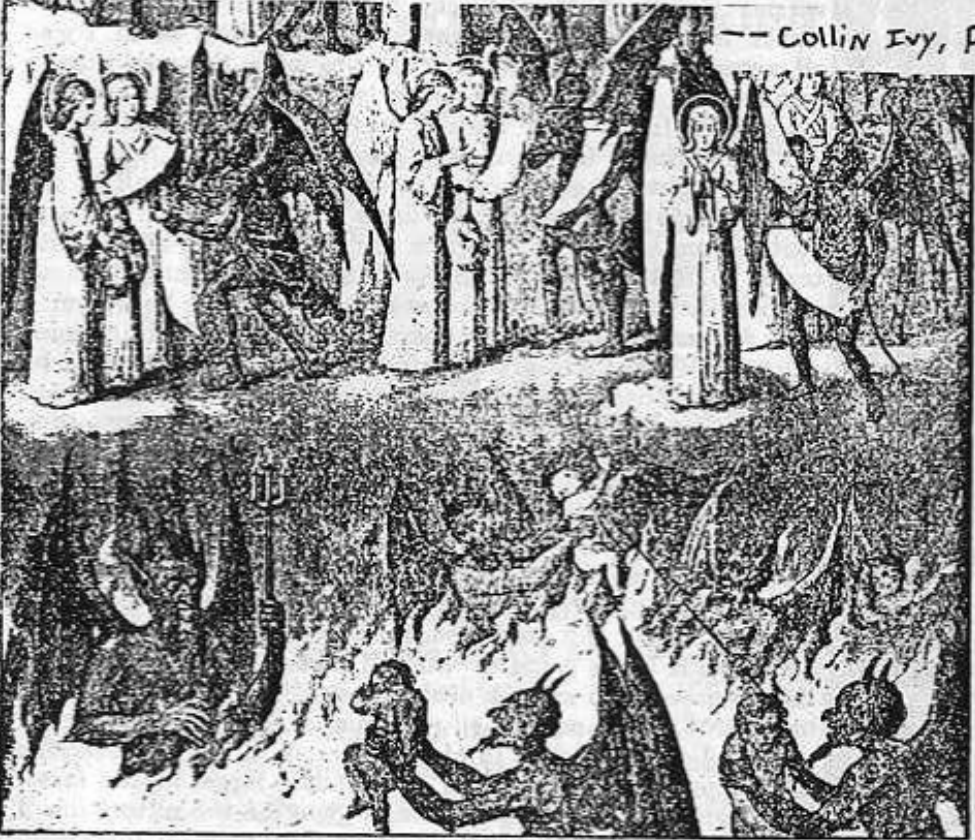
dominated form of druidical magic. That is why I was called a witch and not a warlock. I progressed rather rapidly and became a practicing witch. My mind sank into a strange sort of delirium and dementia. It was obvious to me that insanity was the ultimate experience. If you die, it's all over. If you go insane, you pass through death without dying. This was my philosophy. I strove hard for it day and night. My practice of witchcraft took me to many new places, mostly through astral travel. It was a natural expansion of my fantasy world. I was all powerful and everything looked up to me in this world that I had created. The feeling of power is what keeps you going in witchcraft. In the real world I was nothing, in witchcraft I was something. I felt invincible. I was wrong.

One night I woke up due to a rather strong call of my bladder. This was one of those times when you lay in bed and switch from looking at the clock and then looking at the door trying to decide if you can make it until the morning without wetting the bed. I decided to get up and go to the bathroom. I then realized that my entire body was paralyzed from the neck down. In Wicca there are no drugs or alcohol. If you would be found using these things you would be expelled from the coven. I knew that I had nothing in my system that could cause this. The only explanation I could come at was something spiritual was attacking me. I left my body and suspended myself above it. I then went into shock. Sitting all around me and holding me down were about 15 demons laughing hysterically. One turned and looked at me and spoke. It said I was the biggest ***** idiot it had met in a long time. It said that I was taught what was right but went the wrong way, and now I was so deep into it I was going to hell and there was no way out. He then proceeded to make a deal with me. Two of them came to my astral body and turned me around. When I was turned around I found myself in Hell. There is no way to describe what I saw, felt, and smelled. I will never forget it. The faces. They returned me to my room and gave me the ultimatum. I can kill myself and become like them and torment instead of being tormented or die and go to hell anyway. I chose suicide.



Just before they let me return to my body, I said under my breath, "Jesus, if you're there, help." There was a great flash of light and they were gone. I sat up and began to curse God. Why did he let me go through these things. I cursed him for about an hour while I cleaned up the vomit my body expelled during the experience. It was then I, for the first time, heard the voice of God. He said only one simple phrase that stopped me in my tracks. "All I wanted you to do was ask."

-- Collin Ivy, Portland OR



"The problem of truth was solved by the appearance of absolute Divine truth within the confines of human nature. Hence, out of the mouth of the God-man emerged the boldest declaration that a human being has ever uttered, the statement: 'I AM THE TRUTH'. This means: the God-man Christ is the Truth as a person in all His Divine-human fullness and reality."

- Justin Popovitch of Serbia