

## **We Were the Love Generation**

*All you need is love*  
- John Lennon

We were the love generation in that century  
of war and atrocities our lives spent chasing our tails  
from bedroom trade deals to boardgame currencies  
of cultural and intellectual capital  
antique mating rituals in modern undress

driven out of the cities — out of our minds, with luck,  
afraid they too had been made, had, by the killing machine —  
not knowing if we'd gone mad or were the few still sane  
in an insane bankrupt out-of-date defunct civilization  
unsure where how or if to draw lines

between fascination imagination and hallucination  
or how to conceive a reality unadulterated  
by such stuff as the mindsets and memes we were born into,  
cookie cutter refills for entry level positions  
accessory to the crimes that sickened us *ab ovo*

Impelled by sex-crazed genes to perpetuate our kind  
in a shrinking already-overpopulated world,  
exercise our lunatic notions of liberty  
within the maze of dead ends and vicious spirals  
prescribed by nature and enlightened self-interest

refugees from free-market evolution  
trying to find a way out from in under,  
to get behind the sense of loss at the outset —  
the skipped first beat — the zero constitutive of the sequence  
but still empty — the heart's desire to overcome

the problem blind monads have communicating,  
the slim chance of recognizing who or what  
besides reproductions of our own alienation  
(cunning configurations of puritan prohibitions)  
we keep bumping into on our shortcuts toward death

Starting with Auschwitz and the Bomb, everything everywhere  
all at once too fast to keep up with,

*always already* the catchy phrase of those in the know,  
no substance verbal, nominal or fundamental,  
no eternal truth, abstract ideal or recourse

no stability or solidity, just flux:  
a confluence of embodied perceptions and perspectives,  
matter not immaterial but a matter of time,  
a physical, biotic, social and psychoactive  
global reality show in frontline terrain

metaphysics and physics, cosmos as well as chaos,  
cellular autonomy and spontaneous  
generations requiring maps both geometric  
and topological, a luminous ethic  
adequate to both information and imagination

War incorporated in us: innocence lost  
at an early age down on our knees, eyes closed,  
hands clasped at the back of our necks, holding our breath,  
unable not to see nightmare mutants  
taking over the plutonium forever earth,

street smart before puberty about things  
then still nameless to us — racism,  
sexism, ecocide, genocide,  
gross national products, fundamentalist  
religion in bed with fundamentalist economics

ladders of knives in each others' backs legs spread  
face to the wall hearts on our sleeves stars in our eyes  
individualist egos on the one hand utter  
schizophrenia on the other — dog eat dog  
business class anarchy in a race to the bottom

A civilization so fundamentally sick  
with self-hatred and afterdeath-wish idealizations  
preached by perverted religion that for centuries  
nations have slaughtered each other in the name of their gods,  
applied their technical genius to environmental mayhem,

brainwashed their children to internalize the insane belief  
that the greatest pleasure our short lives offer —  
the ecstatic sharing of our mortal bodies and minds,

the mutual satisfaction of our sexual needs —  
is a crime except in the cause of conjugal procreation,

shame and guilt passed on generation after generation  
for feeling what human beings feel when not morphed  
into Artificial Intelligence cyborgs  
a- and bi- and polysexual but absent  
the lifeblood of heart to heart connectivity

Running naked from the killing fields, bombed-out dreams,  
deflated passions and domestic abuses left us  
by age after age of progress, one pyramid scheme  
after another built on scooped-out hearts of the captives,  
before crumbling from the waste of natural resources,

looking for a place outside the solitary confinement  
of atomistic society in thrall to a mythic  
autonomous some say eternal known unknown,  
a verdant fruitful place copacetic with the vision  
looping behind our newly opened eyes:

a body politic of compassionate consciousness,  
an unselfish sense of self as loving, caring,  
a symbiotic process and integral synergy  
inhabited like our bodies and minds, flesh and blood  
by multitudes of indispensable fellow travelers

a postwar postclimate-catastrophe  
civil society built on dedication to  
individual liberty and diversity  
in the broad sense, diversity in political, social,  
psychological and biological respects,

admitting the fractal, local, contingent and circumstantial  
into the equation, the felt along with the merely conceived,  
to transform the abstraction-riddled techno-feudalism  
ascendant since the Industrial Revolution; to balance  
that dominant calculating ambition for the optimum,

that greed, gluttony and lust for maximum production,  
with less linear, more ecological  
ways of understanding and living our lives,  
a just and peaceful governance of the biosphere,

claiming not all we can but what's good enough

No, love isn't all we need: necessary  
but insufficient because no matter how much we love,  
shit happens. We need all the help we can get:  
Eros handing Hermes' caduceus to Amor,  
desire's impossible dreams brought to sweet fruition,

from infantile preverbal body language  
to infinite empathetic intimacies,  
from bonds of friendship, family, fellow-feeling  
and all the other varieties of social love  
to visions of boundless benevolence granted by love divine

so self-identity, selfhood, self-esteem,  
unselfish self-love may better withstand both  
relentless algorithmic anonymity  
and ego's own self-destructive Self/Other  
dialectic of alienation and hyperinflation

Knowing as if by instinct to try to keep tight rein  
on the military and constabulary, to update their orders  
so they stand at temple door and civic gate  
as guardian demons, occult presences to avert  
sadism, war and blood sacrifice

Knowing as if by genetic compulsion to try to keep  
pulpitry and bigotry far removed  
from affairs of state and heart, yet believing  
governments should be consecrated to our own  
in-group's principles and tenets of faith

Knowing despite ourselves, in our guts and spine,  
the need to counter *prejudice hate injustice and greed*  
with *beauty grace compassion and love*, core values  
having nothing to do with theft exploitation  
competition ownership or power games

But like infants who don't know how to control themselves,  
we delight in doing what we do just because we can,  
extracting, consuming, manipulating, commodifying  
whatever we find, excreting our waste where and whenever

the urge takes us, fouling our nest with our own defecation —

greenhouse gases, micro- and macroplastics, toxic  
scum in our air, water, food and bodily fluids,  
environmental mayhem in the name of ungodly profit  
buying into *bigger is better* and *the more the merrier*,  
waging the real world war, the war against the Earth,

our real estate, never for sale but forever ripped off:  
every civilization in history literally  
eating itself out of existence, unwilling to admit  
that endless growth is the way of the cancer cell,  
that the good life is not something to have but to do;

that information isn't knowledge, knowledge isn't understanding;  
that in times of plenty or scarcity, come hell or high water,  
self-restraint is seldom inappropriate;  
that onself is a multiplicity of selves,  
a swarm of intransitive verbs looking for personal nouns,

identity a community recognition award;  
that we exist only in each other's existence,  
solipsism literally unthinkable;  
that every life is a cosmos every death a cosmic loss  
every consciousness a treasure house, a thesaurus;

that our essential obligation is not to ourselves  
but to this relationship we've let go to hell —  
soil smothered waters poisoned air choked  
family ties and animal spirits broken —  
this mortal world this home we share with each other.