

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
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 defunct social experiment
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,
to 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

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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 psychotic demographic of people who believe
their technical intellect in itself and at large is
the only valid measure of human reality,
the single ligature underpinning the world
in all its bio-geophysical-psychological-

moral-ethical-spiritual inclusion,
the right choice, they say, always and only the well-reasoned one,
which leads to monomaniacal sterility:

production and reproduction, getting and getting more
by most cost-effective means the goal of life

who condemn as invalid when not insane or evil
non-intellectual values — instincts feelings emotions
the heart's passions love's knowledge the organism's
commonsense understanding — those necessary complements
to reason that got us through the past few million years

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 vicious belief
that the greatest pleasure our short lives offer —
the ecstatic sharing of our mortal bodies and minds —
when not done according to authorized rules
for the purpose of conjugal procreation, is a crime,

shame and guilt passed on generation after generation
for feeling what human beings feel when not packaged
to fit mass-marketing categories,
a-, bi- and poly-sexual but absent
the lifeblood of heart to heart connectivity

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Running naked from the killing fields, bombed-out dreams,
deflated passions and domestic abuses left to us
by age after age of progress, one pyramid scheme
after another built on scooped-out hearts of the captives,
before it all crumbles down from the waste of lives and goods

looking for a place outside the solitary confinement
of individual autonomy (in thrall
to a mythic some say eternal known unknown
that acts a lot like us), looking for a verdant place,
a sight a vision for sore eyes newly opened

coming at long last to see our need to be more
than single separate persons whose selfish desires pursued
in all good faith we knew would never redound

by magical digitations of an invisible hand
to the happy ever after benefit of all

Seeing that our long strange trip of self-interest
deadends in the entropy of social atrophy —
well-wrought mannikins and rugged individuals
each looking out for itself and for the main chance —
chaos theory brought home as heart failure

hoping to find some united way or actions set in motion
by planetary sympathies or at least words
to help our lonely crowd evolve a community,
a fellowship instead of the mass of dissociated
egos we worked so hard to reduce ourselves to,

a civil society built on liberty,
diversity and equality by rule of law,
unity not uniformity, each
person their own persons co-existing by common
assent to the right of all to live and let live

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

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 left-brain calculating ambition for the optimum

(our greed, gluttony and lust for maximum production)
with less linear less binary more right-brain ways
to understand and live our interdependent lives,
a just and peaceful biocentric commonwealth,
claiming not all we can but what's good enough.

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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 hyperventilation

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 ourselves,
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 bloodbaths 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 oneself is a multiplicity, 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.