

Revolutionary Letters

Diane di Prima

dedicated to Bob Dylan

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Revolutionary Letter #1

I have just realized that the stakes are myself
I have no other
ransom money, nothing to break or barter but my life
my spirit measured out, in bits, spread over
the roulette table, I recoup what I can
nothing else to shove under the nose of the *maitre de jeu*
nothing to thrust out the window, no white flag
this flesh all I have to offer, to make the play with
this immediate head, what it comes up with, my move
as we slither over this go board, stepping always
(we hope) between the lines

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Revolutionary Letter #2

The value of an individual life a credo they taught us
to instil fear, and inaction, 'you only live once'
a fog in our eyes, we are
endless as the sea, not separate, we die
a million times a day, we are born
a million times, each breath life and death:
get up, put on your shoes, get
started, someone will finish

Tribe

an organism, one flesh, breathing joy as the stars
breathe destiny down on us, get
going, join hands, see to business, thousands of sons
will see to it when you fall, you will grow
a thousand times in the bellies of your sisters

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Revolutionary Letter #3

store water; make a point of filling your bathtub
at the first news of trouble: they turned off the water
in the 4th ward for a whole day during the Newark riots;
or better yet make a habit
of keeping the tub clean and full when not in use
change this once a day, it should be good enough
for washing, flushing toilets when necessary
and cooking, in a pinch, but it's a good idea
to keep some bottled water handy too
get a couple of five gallon jugs and keep them full
for cooking

store food – dry stuff like rice and beans stores best
goes farthest. SALT VERY IMPORTANT: it's health and energy
healing too, keep a couple pounds
sea salt around, and, because we're spoiled, some tins
tuna, etc. to keep up morale – keep up the sense
of 'balanced diet' 'protein intake' remember
the stores may be closed for quite some time, the trucks
may not enter your section of the city for weeks, you can cool it indefinitely

with 20 lb brown rice

20 lb whole wheat flour

10 lb cornmeal

10 lb good beans – kidney or soy

5 lb sea salt

2 qts good oil

dried fruit and nuts

add nutrients and a sense of luxury

to this diet, a squash or coconut

in a cool place in your pad will keep six months.

remember we are all used to eating less
than the 'average American' and take it easy
before we
ever notice we're hungry the rest of the folk will be starving
used as they are to meat and fresh milk daily
and help will arrive, until the day no help arrives
and then you're on your own.

hoard matches, we aren't good
at rubbing sticks together any more
a tinder box is useful, if you can work it
don't count on gas stove, gas heater
electric light
keep hibachi and charcoal, CHARCOAL STARTER a help
kerosene lamp and candles, learn to keep warm
with breathing
remember the blessed American habit of bundling

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Revolutionary Letter #4

Left to themselves people

grow their hair.

Left to themselves they

take off their shoe's.

Left to themselves they make love

sleep easily

share blankets, dope & children

they are not lazy or afraid

they plant seeds, they smile, they

speak to one another. The word

coming into its own: touch of love;

on the brain, the ear.

We return with the sea, the tides

we return as often as leaves, as numerous

as grass, gentle, insistent, we remember

the way,

our babes toddle barefoot thru the cities of the universe.

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Revolutionary Letter #5

at some point
you may be called upon
to keep going for several days without sleep:
keep some ups around, to be
clearheaded, avoid 'comedown' as much as possible,
take vitamin B along with amphetamines, try
powdered guarana root, available
at herb drugstores, it is an up
used by Peruvian mountainfolk, tastes
like mocha (bitter) can be put in tea
will clear your head, increase oxygen supply
keep you going past amphetamine wooziness

at some point
you may have to crash, under tension, keep some downs
on hand, you may have to cool out
sickness, or freak-out, or sorrow, keep some downs
on hand, I don't mean
tranquillizers, ye olde fashioned SLEEPING PILL
(sleep heals heads, heals souls) chloryll hydrate
(Mickey Finn) one of the best, but
nembutal, etc. OK in a pinch, remember
no liquor with barbiturates

at some point
you will need painkillers, darvon
is glorified shit, stash some codeine & remember
it's about five times more effective
if taken with aspirin

ups, downs & painkillers are

the essence: antibiotics
for extreme infections, any good
wide-spectrum one will do, avoid penicillin
too many allergies, speaking of which
cortisone is good for really bad attacks
(someone who freaks out asthma-style, or with hives)

USE ALL THESE AS LITTLE

as possible, side effects multifarious
and they cloud the brain
tend to weaken the body and obscure
judgment

ginseng tea, ginger compresses, sea salt,
prayer and love
are better healers, easier come by, save the others
for life and death trips, you will know
when you see one

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Revolutionary Note #6

avoid the folk

who find Bonnie and Clyde too violent

who see the blood but not the energy form

they love us and want us to practice birth control

they love us and want the Hindus to kill their cows

they love us and have a colorless tasteless powder

which is the perfect synthetic food . . .

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Revolutionary Letter #7

there are those who can tell you
how to make molotov cocktails, flamethrowers,
bombs whatever
you might be needing
find them and learn, define
your aim clearly, choose your ammo
with that in mind

it is not a good idea to tote a gun
or knife
unless you are proficient in its use
all swords are two-edged, can be used against you
by anyone who can get 'em away from you

it is
possible even on the east coast
to find an isolated place for target practice
success
will depend mostly on your state of mind:
meditate, pray, make love, be prepared
at any time, to die

but don't get uptight: the guns
will not win this one, they are
an incidental part of the action
which we better damn well be good at,
what will win
is mantras, the sustenance we give each other,
the energy we plug into
 (the fact that we touch
 share food)

the buddha nature
of everyone, friend and foe, like a million earthworms
tunnelling under this structure
till it falls

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Revolutionary Letter #8

Everytime you pick the spot for a be-in
a demonstration, a march, a rally, you are choosing the ground
for a potential battle.

You are still calling these shots.

Pick your terrain with that in mind.

Remember the old gang rules:

stick to your neighborhood, don't let them lure you

to Central Park everytime, I would hate

to stumble bloody out of that park to find help:

Central Park West, or Fifth Avenue, which would you
choose?

go to love-ins

with incense, flowers, food, and a plastic bag

with a damp cloth in it, for tear gas, wear no jewelry

wear clothes you can move in easily, wear no glasses

contact lenses

earrings for pierced ears are especially hazardous

try to be clear

in front, what you will do if it comes

to trouble

if you're going to try to split stay out of the center

don't stampede or panic others

don't waver between active and passive resistance

know your limitations, bear contempt

neither for yourself, nor any of your brothers

NO ONE WAY WORKS, it will take all of us

shoving at the thing from all sides

to bring it down.

Revolutionary Letter #9

advocating

the overthrow of government is a crime

overthrowing it is something else

altogether, it is sometimes called

revolution

but don't kid yourself: government

is not where it's at: it's only

a good place to start:

1. kill head of Dow Chemical
2. destroy plant
3. MAKE IT UNPROFITABLE FOR THEM

to build again

i.e., destroy the concept of money

as we know it, get rid of interest,

savings, inheritance

(Pound's money, as dated coupons that come in the mail

to everyone, and are void in 30 days

is still a good idea)

or, let's start with no money at all and invent it

if we need it

or, mimeograph it and everyone

print as much as they want

and see what happens

declare a moratorium on debt

the Continental Congress did

'on all debts public and private'

& no one 'owns' the land

it can be held

for use, no man holding more

than he can work, himself and family working

let no one work for another

except for love, and what you make above your needs be given to the tribe

a Common-Wealth

None of us knows the answers, think about

these things.

The day will come when we have to know

the answers.

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Revolutionary Letter #10

These are transitional years and the dues
will be heavy.

Change is quick but revolution
will take A while.

America has not even begun as yet.

This continent is seed.

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Revolutionary Letter #11

drove across
San Joaquin Valley
with Kirby Doyle
grooving
getting free Digger meat
for Free City Convention
grooving
behind talk of Kirby's family
been here a long time
grooving
friendship renewed, neat pickup truck, we stopped
at a gas station
man uptight at the
sight of us, sight of Kirby's hair, his friendly
loose face, my hair, our dress
man surly, uptight, we drove
away brought down
(across fields of insecticide and migrant workers)
and
'Man' I said
'that cat
so uptight, what's he
so uptight about, it's not
your hair, not really, it's just
what the TV tells him about hippies
got him scared, what he reads in
his magazines
got him scared, we got to
come out from behind the image
sit down with him, if he
sat down to a beer with you he'd find

a helluva lot more to say than he'll find
with the man who makes your image
he's got nothing in common
with the men who run his mind, who tell him
what to think of us'

SMASH THE MEDIA, I said,
AND BURN THE SCHOOLS
so people can meet, can sit
and talk to each other, warm and close
no TV image flickering
between them.

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Revolutionary Letter #12

the vortex of creation is the vortex of destruction

the vortex of artistic creation is the vortex of self destruction

the vortex of political creation is the vortex of flesh destruction

flesh is in the fire, it curls and terribly warps

fat is in the fire, it drips and sizzling sings

bones are in the fire

they crack tellingly in

subtle hieroglyphs of oracle

charcoal singed

the smell of your burning hair

for every revolutionary must at last will his own destruction

rooted as he is in the past he sets out to destroy

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Revolutionary Letter #13

now let me tell you
what is a Brahmasastra
Brahmasastra, hindu weapon of war
near as I can make out
a flying wedge of mind energy
hurled at the foe by god or hero
or many heroes
hurled at a problem or enemy
cracking it

Brahmasastra can be made
by any or all
can be made by all of us
straight or tripping, thinking together
like: all of us stop the war
at nine o'clock tomorrow, each take one soldier
see him clearly, love him, take the gun
out of his hand, lead him to a quiet spot
sit him down, sit with him as he takes a joint
of viet cong grass from his pocket . . .

Brahmasastra can be made
by all of us, tripping together
winter solstice
at home, or in park, or wandering
sitting with friends
blinds closed, or on porch, no be-in
no need
to gather publicly
just gather spirit, see the forest growing
put back the big trees
put back the buffalo

the grasslands of the midwest with their herds
of elk and deer
put fish in clean Great Lakes
desire that all surface water on the planet
be clean again. Kneel down and drink
from whatever brook or lake you conjure up.

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Revolutionary Letter #14

are you prepared
to hide someone in your home indefinitely
say, two to six weeks, you going out
for food, etc., so he never
hits the street, to keep your friends away
coolly, so they ask no questions, to nurse
him, or her, as necessary, to know
'first aid' and healing (not to freak out
at the sight of torn or half-cooked flesh)
to pass him on at the right time to the next
station, to cross the Canadian border, with a child
so that the three of you
look like one family, no questions asked,
or fewer, to stash letters, guns, or bombs
forget about them
till they are called for, to KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT
not to 'trust'
even your truelove, that is,
lay no more knowledge on him than he needs
to do his part of it, a kindness
we all must extend to each other in this game

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Revolutionary Letter #15

When you seize Columbia, when you
seize Paris, take
the media, tell the people what you're doing
what you're up to and why and how you mean
to do it, how they can help, keep the news
coming, steady, you have 70 years
of media conditioning to combat, it is a wall
you must get through, somehow, to reach
the instinctive man, who is struggling like a plant
for light, for air

when you seize a town, a campus, get hold of the power
stations, the water, the transportation,
forget to negotiate, forget how
to negotiate, don't wait for De Gaulle or Kirk
to abdicate, they won't, you are not
'demonstrating' you are fighting
a war, fight to win, don't wait for Johnson or
Humphrey or Rockefeller, to agree to your terms
take what you need, 'it's free
because it's yours'

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Revolutionary Letter #16

we are eating up the planet, the New York Times
takes a forest, every Sunday, Los Angeles
draws its water from the Sacramento Valley
the rivers of British Columbia are ours
on lease for 99 years

every large factory is an infringement
of our god-given right to light and air
to clean and flowing rivers stocked with fish
to the very possibility of life
for our children's children, we will have to
look carefully, i.e., do we really want/
need
electricity and at what cost in natural resource
human resource
do we need cars, when petroleum
pumped from the earth poisons the land around
for 100 years, pumped from the car
poisons the hard-pressed cities, or try this
statistic, the USA
has 5% of the world's people uses over
50% of the world's goods, our garbage
holds matter for survival for uncounted
'underdeveloped' nations

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Revolutionary Letter #17

we will all feel the pinch
there will not be
a Cadillac and a 40,000 dollar home
for everyone
simply
the planet will not bear it

What there will be is enough
food, enough
of the 'necessities', luxuries
will have to go by the board

even the poorest of us
will have to give up something
to live free

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Revolutionary Letter #18

let's talk about splitting, splitting is an art
frequently called upon in revolution
retreat, says the I Ching, must not be confused
with flight, and furthermore, frequently, it furthers
ONE TO HAVE SOMEWHERE TO GO

i.e., know in advance
the persons/place you can go to,
means to get there
keep money (cash) in house for travelling
an extra set of i.d., Robert Williams
was warned by his own TV set when the Man
was coming for him,
he had his loot at home, his wife and kids
all crossed the country with him, into CANADA
and on to CUBA

it's a good idea
to have good, working transportation 'wheels', one friend
has two weeks stashed in his VW bus
food, water, matches, clothing, blankets, gas, he can go
at least that long, before he hits a town, can leave
at any time
something to think about . . .

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Revolutionary Letter #19

(for The Poor People's Campaign)

if what you want is jobs
for everyone, you are still the enemy,
you have not thought thru, clearly
what that means

if what you want is housing,
industry

(G.E. on the Navaho
reservation)

a car for everyone, garage, refrigerator,
TV, more plumbing, scientific
freeways, you are still
the enemy, you have chosen
to sacrifice the planet for a few years of some
science fiction Utopia, if what you want

still is, or can be, schools
where all our kids are pushed into one shape, are taught
it's better to be 'American' than black
or Indian, or Jap, or PR, where Dick
and Jane become and are the dream, do you
look like Dick's father, don't you think your kid
secretly wishes you did

if what you want
is clinics where the AMA
can feed you pills to keep you weak, or sterile
shoot germs into your kids, while Merck & Co
grows richer
if you want

free psychiatric help for everyone
so that the shrinks
pimps for this decadence, can make
it flower for us, if you want
if you still want a piece
a small piece of suburbia, green lawn
laid down by the square foot
color TV, whose radiant energy
kills brain cells, whose subliminal ads
brainwash your children, have taken over
your dreams

degrees from universities which are nothing
more than slum landlords, festering sinks
of lies, so you too can go forth
and lie to others on some greeny campus

THEN YOU ARE STILL
THE ENEMY, you are selling
yourself short, remember
you can have what you ask for, ask for
everything

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Revolutionary Letter #20

(for Huey Newton)

I will not rest
till men walk free & fearless on the earth
each doing in the manner of his blood
& tribe, peaceful in the free air

till all can seek, unhindered
the shape of their thought
no black cloud fear or guilt
between them & the sun, no babies burning
young men locked away, no paper world
to come between flesh & flesh in human
encounter

till the young women
come into their own, honored & fearless
birthing strong sons
loving & dancing

till the young men can at last
lose some of their sternness, return
to young men's thoughts, till laughter
bounces off our hills & fills
our plains

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Revolutionary Letter #21

Can you
own land, can you
own house, own rights
to other's labor, (stocks, or factories
or money, loaned at interest)
what about
the yield of same, crops, autos
airplanes dropping bombs, can you
own real estate, so others
pay you rent? to whom
does the water belong, to whom
will the air belong, as it gets rarer?
the american indians say that a man
can own no more than he can carry away
on his horse.

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Revolutionary Letter #22

what do you want

your kids to learn, do you care

if they know factoring, chemical formulae, theory

of numbers, equations, philosophy, semantics

symbolic logic, latin, history, socalled, which is

merely history of mind of western man, least interesting

of numberless manifestations on this planet?

do you care

if he learns to eat off the woods, to set

a broken arm, to mend

his own clothes, cook simple food, deliver

a calf or baby? if there are cars should he not

be able to keep his running?

how will he learn these things, will he learn them

cut off in a plaster box, encased

in a larger cement box called 'school' dealing with paper

from morning till night, grinding no clay or mortar, no

pigment, setting no seedlings in black earth

come spring, how will he

know to trap a rabbit, build a raft,

to navigate by stars, or find safe ground

to sleep on? what is he doing all his learning years

inside, as if the planet were no more than a vehicle

for carrying our plastic constructs around the sun

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Revolutionary Letter #23

A lack of faith is simply a lack of courage
one who says 'I wish I could believe that' means simply that he
is coward, is pleased
to be spectator, on this scene where there are no spectators
where all hands not actually working are working against
as they lie idle, folded in lap, or holding up newspapers
full of lies, or wrapped around steering wheel, on one more
pleasure trip

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Revolutionary Letter #24

Have you thought about the American aborigines
who will inhabit
this continent? Cave dwellers, tent people, tree dwellers, will your
great-grandchildren be among them? Will they sell
artifacts – abalone or wool – to the affluent
highly civilized Africans
who come here in the summer, will they wear
buckskin, or cotton, loincloth, run down
deer, catch fish barehanded, build teepees, hogans, remember
to use the wheel, to write, to speak, or simply drum & pipe, smiling, will your
great-grandchildren be among them?

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Revolutionary Letter #25

Know every way

out of your house, where it goes, every alley

on the block, which back yards connect, which walls

are scalable, which bushes

will hold a man.

Construct at least one man-sized hiding place

in your walls, know for sure which neighbors

will let you sneak in the back door & saunter out the front

while the man is parked in your driveway, or tearing

your pad apart, which neighbors won't be home, which cellar doors

are open – whom you can summon in your neighborhood

to do your errands, check the block, set up

a getaway while you sit tight inside & your house

is watched . . .

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Revolutionary Letter #26

'DOES THE END

JUSTIFY THE MEANS?' this is

process, there is no end, there are only

means, each one

had better justify itself.

To whom?

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Revolutionary Letter #27

How much
can we afford to lose, before we win, can we
cut hair, or give up drugs, take
job, join Minute Men, marry, wear their clothes,
play bingo, what
can we stomach, how soon
does it leave its mark, can we
living straight in a straight part of town still see
our people, can we live
if we don't see our people? 'It is better
to lose & win, than win & be
defeated' sd Gertrude Stein, which wd you
choose?

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Revolutionary Letter #28

O my brothers

busted for pot, for looting, for loving

young beautiful brothers & sisters, for holding out hope

in both hands to the Man, enraging him

O my brothers, freaking out this moment

 this beautiful summer evening

in all the cages of America

while the sun goes down on this fabled & holy land:

know that we have this land, we are filling its crevices

its caves and forests, its coastlines and holy places

with our mating flesh, with the fierce play of our children

 our numbers increasing

we are approaching your cells, to cut you loose

to march triumphant with you, crying out

to Maitreya, across the Pacific

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Revolutionary Letter #29

beware of those
who say we are the beautiful losers
who stand in their long hair and wait to be punished
who weep on beaches for our isolation

we are not alone: we have brothers in all the hills
we have sisters in the jungles and in the ozarks
we even have brothers on the frozen tundra
they sit by their fires, they sing, they gather arms
they multiply: they will reclaim the earth

nowhere we can go but they are waiting for us
no exile where we will not hear welcome home
'goodmorning sister, let me work with you
goodmorning brother, let me
fight by your side'

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Revolutionary Letter #30

(To Those Who Sold the Revolution Summer of '68)

remember to wear a hat, if you have a hat
and stick your hair inside it, if it's long hair
or don't, wear shoes if it's snowing and you have shoes
remember they buy out all the leaders, be a leader
if you want to be bought out, but remember to
tell the truth, just before they buy you, tell the truth
loud, and the kids will hear you, not hear your money
as it falls on the liquorstore counter, day after day
not hear your dreams of nightmare betrayal and torture
not hear your mercedes, they'll hear the truth you spoke
they'll believe you and honor you after you die, brought down
by that cia bullet you can't avoid just by taking their money
they'll believe you and DO WHAT YOU SAY
NOT WHAT YOU DO

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Revolutionary Letter #31

(for LeRoi, at long last)

not all the works of Mozart worth one human life
not all the brocaded of the Potala palace
better we should wear homespun, than some in orlon
some in Thailand silk
the children of Bengal weave gold thread in silk saris
six years old, eight years old, for export, they don't sing
the singers are for export, Folkways records
better we should all have homemade flutes
and practice excruciatingly upon them, one hundred years
till we learn to
make our own music

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Revolutionary Letter #32

not western civilization, but civilization itself
is the disease which is eating us
not the last five thousand years, but the last twenty thousand
are the cancer
not modern cities, but the city, not
capitalism, but ism, art, religion, once they are
separate enough to be seen and named, named art named
religion, once they are not
simply the daily acts of life which bring the rain, bring bread, heal, bring
the herds close enough to hunt, birth the children
simply the acts of song, the acts of power, now lost
to us these many years, not killing a few white men will bring
back power, not killing all the white men, but killing
the white man in each of us, killing the desire
for brocade, for gold, for champagne brandy, which sends
people out of the sun and out of their lives to create
COMMODITY for our pleasure, what claim
do we have, can we make, on another's time, another's
life blood, show me
a city which does not consume the air and water
for miles around it, mohenjo-daro was a blot
on the village culture of India, the cities of Egypt sucked
the life of millions, show me
an artifact of city which has the power
as flesh has power, as spirit of man
has power

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Revolutionary Letter #33

how far back
are we willing to go? that seems to be
the question, the more we give up
the more we will be blessed, the more
we give up, the further back we go, can we
make it under the sky again, in moving tribes
that settle, build, move on and build again
owning only what we carry, do we need
the village, division of labor, a friendly potlatch
a couple of times a year, or must it be
merely a 'cybernetic civilization'
which may or may not save the water, but will not
show us our root, or our original face, return
us to the source, how far
(forward is back) are we willing to go
after all?

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Revolutionary Letter #34

hey man let's make a revolution, let's give
every man a thunderbird
color TV, a refrigerator, free
antibiotics, let's build
apartments with a separate bedroom for every child
inflatable plastic sofas, vitamin pills
with all our daily requirements that come in the mail
free gas & electric & telephone &
no rent, why not?

hey man, let's make a revolution, let's
turn off the power, turn on the
stars at night, put metal
back in the earth, or at least not take it out
anymore, make lots of guitars and flutes, teach the chicks
how to heal with herbs, let's learn
to live with each other in a smaller space, and build
hogans, and domes and teepees all over the place
BLOW UP THE PETROLEUM LINES, make the cars
into flower pots or sculptures or live
in the bigger ones, why not?

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Revolutionary Letter #35

rise up, my
brothers, do not
bow your heads any longer, or pray
except to the spirit you waken, the
spirit you bring to birth, it
never was on earth, rise up, do not
droop, smoking hash or opium, dreaming sweetness, perhaps
there will be time for that, on the long beaches
lying in love with the few of us who are left, but now
the earth cries out for aid, our brothers
and sisters set aside their childhoods, prepare
to fight, what choice have we but join them, in their hands
rests the survival of the very planet, the health
of the solar system, for we are one
with the stars and the spirit we forge
they wait for, Christ, Buddha, Krishna
Paracelsus, had but a taste, we must reclaim
the planet, re-occupy
this ground
the peace we seek was never seen before, the earth
BELONGS, at last, TO THE LIVING

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Revolutionary Letter #36

who is the we, who is
the they in this thing, did
we or they kill the Indians, not me
my people brought here, cheap labor to exploit
a continent for them, did we
or they exploit it? do you
admit complicity, say 'we
have to get out of Vietnam, we really should
stop poisoning the water, etc.' look closer, look again,
secede, declare your independence, don't accept
a share of the guilt *they* want to lay on *us*
MAN IS INNOCENT & BEAUTIFUL & born
to perfect bliss they envy, heavy deeds
make heavy hearts and to *them*
life is suffering, stand clear.

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Revolutionary Letter #37

GEOGRAPHY, U.S.A.

the east edge is
megapolis, is
Washington, D.C., spread out
800 miles, ecology
totally fucked up, even
the brothers there do not completely believe
that they can win; the west edge
is languorous w/wealth, there venison
is brought down from the hills & figs & wine
from abandoned orchards, the sisters
raise their bastard young on welfare checks & rotten
sprayed vegetables, talk 'free', talk end of money, for them
the war is over, all the wars; the middle
is hardly heard from yet, it is
stirring, stretching muscles, bare bones of continent, eternal
progression of young barbarians
huge boiling meat-fed hordes who can't be taught
there's anything to lose, angelic

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Revolutionary Letter #38

NOT PEOPLE'S PARK

PEOPLE'S PLANET, CAN THEY

FENCE THAT ONE IN, BULLDOZE IT

4 A.M.?

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Revolutionary Letter #39

let me tell you, brothers, that on May 30th I went to one of our
life festivals
dropped acid in Tompkins Square Park with my
brothers & sisters
danced in the sun, till the stars
came out & the pigs
drove around us in a circle, where we stood
touching each other & loving, then I
went home & made love like a flower, like two flowers opening
to each other, we were
the jewel in the lotus, next morning still high wandered uptown
to Natural History Museum & there
in a room of Peruvian fauna, birds
of paradise I saw as a past, like the dinosaurs
saw birds pass from the earth &
flowers, most trees & small creatures:
chipmunks & rabbits & squirrels & delicate wildflowers
saw the earth bare & smooth, austere plastic & efficient
men feeding hydroponically, working like ants
thought flatly, without regret (I have unlearned
regret)

‘WHAT BEAUTIFUL CREATURES
USED TO LIVE ON THE EARTH’

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Revolutionary Letter #40

if the power of the word is anything, America, your oil fields burning
your cities in ruins, smouldering, pillaged by children
your cars broken down, at a standstill, choking the roads
your citizens standing beside them, bewildered, or choosing
a packload of objects (what they can carry away) if the
power of the word lives, America, your power lines down
eagle-eyed lines of electric, of telephone, towers
of radio transmission
toppled & rankling in the fields, setting the hay ablaze
your newspapers useless, your populace illiterate
wiping their asses with them, IF THE WORD HAS POWER YOU SHALL NOT STAND
AMERICA, the wilderness is spreading from the parks you have fenced it into, already
desert blows through Las Vegas, the sea licks its chops
at the oily edges of Los Angeles,
the camels are breeding, the bears, the elk are increasing
so are the indians and the very poor
do you stir in your sleep, America, do you dream of your power
pastel colored oil tanks from sea to shining sea?
sleep well, America, we stand by your bedside,
the word has power, the chant is going up

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Revolutionary Letter #41

Revolution: a turning, as the earth
turns, among planets, as the sun
turns round some (darker) star, the galaxy
describes a yin-yang spiral in the aether, we turn
from dark to light, turn
faces of pain & fear, the dawn
awash among them

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Revolutionary Letter #42

what is this

'overpopulation' problem, have you
looked at it, clearly, do you know

ten times as much land needed if we eat
hamburger, instead of grain; we can
all fit, not hungry, if we minimize
our needs, RIP OFF LARGE, EMPTY RANCHES, make the food
nutritious: chemical fertilizers
have to go, nitrates
poison the water; large scale machine farming
has to go, the soil
is blowing away (300 years
to make one inch of topsoil), do you know

40% of the women of Puerto Rico
already sterilized, transistor radios
the 'sterilization bonus' in India; all propaganda
aimed at the 'non-white' and 'poor white' populations

something like 90% of the land of USA
belongs to 5% of the population:
how can they hold on
when the hordes of the infants of the very poor
grow up, grow strong

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Revolutionary Letter #43

'I dreamed of a world without the sick and the fat'

—Yevtushenko

the map: first goal is health

strong bodies make strong spirit, Venceremos Brigade

coming back from Cuba discover they know how to breathe

they can get up with the sun; first thing:

to zap the sugar habit, get rid of meat

& heavy drugs, to eat no chemicals, no processed food

first step:

to find out what health feels like: even keel

tireless energy pouring steady through

then, prana (vital energy) moving smooth

thru all yr flesh: next goal release

sex force — strong flesh becomes bright flesh

anger becomes 'Buddha's anger' a steady roar

righteous, behind yr action, not spasmodic, threatens

no self-destruction; loose touch on

brothers & sisters, loose force (& contain it)

Holy Power

to build up, or pull down

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Revolutionary Letter #44

(for my sisters)

As we know that blood
is birth, agony
breaks open doors, as we
can bend, graciously, beneath burdens, undermine
like rain, or earthworms, as our cries
yield to the cries of the newborn, as we hear
the plea in the voices around us, not words
of passion or cunning, discount
anger or pride, grow strong
in our own strength, women's alchemy, quick arms
to pull down walls, we liberate
out of our knowledge, labor, sucking babes, we
liberate, and nourish, as the earth

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Revolutionary Letter #45

And it seems to me the struggle has to be waged
on a number of different levels:

they have computers to cast the I Ching for them
but we have yarrow stalks
and the stars
it is a battle of energies, of force-fields, what the newspapers
call a battle of ideas

to take hold of the magic any way we can
and use it in total faith
to seek help in realms we have been taught to think of
as 'mythological'
to contact ALL LEVELS of one's own being
& loose the forces therein
always seeking in this to remain psychically inconspicuous
on the not so unlikely chance
that those we have thought of as 'instigators'
are just the front men for a gang of black magicians
based 'somewhere else' in space
to whom the WHOLE of earth is a colony to exploit
(the 'Nova Mob' not so far out as you think)

Best not to place bodies in the line of fire
but to seek other means: study the Sioux
learn not to fuck up as they did – another ghost dance
started on Haight Street in 1967
We ain't seen the end of it yet

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Revolutionary Letter #46

And as you learn the magic, learn to believe it
Don't be 'surprised' when it works, you undercut
your power.

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Revolutionary Letter #47

TO BE FREE we've got to be free of
any idea of freedom.

Today the State Dept lifted the ban on
travel to China; and closed
Merritt College.

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Revolutionary Letter #48

Be careful.

With what relief do we fall back
on the tale, so often told in revolutions
that now we must
organize, obey the rules, so that later
we can be free. It is the point
at which the revolution stops. To be carried forward
later & in another country, this is
the pattern, but we can
break the pattern

learn now we see
with all our skin, smell with our eyes too
sense & sex are boundless & the call
is to be boundless in them, make the joy
now, that we want, no shape
for space & time now but the shapes we will

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Revolutionary Letter #49

Machinery: extended hands of man
doing man's work. Diverted rivers
washing my clothes, diverted fire
dancing in wires, making light;
and heat. To see it thus is to see it, even
diverted rivers must resume their course, and fire
consume, whatever name you call it.

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Revolutionary Letter #50

As soon as we submit
to a system based on causality, linear time
we submit, again, to the old values, plunge again
into slavery. Be strong. We have the right to make
the universe we dream. No need to fear "science" grovelling
apology for things as they are, ALL POWER
TO JOY, which will remake the world.

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Revolutionary Letter #51

Don't give up the eleven o'clock news for
Chairman Mao, don't switch
from one "programming" to another
hang loose, Mao was young
fifty years ago, & in China.

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Revolutionary Letter #52

SAN FRANCISCO NOTE

I think I'll stay on this
earthquake fault near this
still-active volcano in this
armed fortress facing a
dying ocean &
covered w/dirt

while the
streets burn up & the
rocks fly & pepper gas
lays us out

cause
that's where my friends are,
you bastards, not that
you know what that means

Ain't gonna cop to it, ain't gonna
be scared no more, we all
know the same songs, mushrooms, butterflies we all
have the same babies, dig it
the woods are big.

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Revolutionary Letter #53

HOW TO BECOME A WALKING ALCHEMICAL EXPERIMENT

eat *mercury* (in wheat & fish)

breathe *sulphur* fumes (everywhere)

take plenty of (macrobiotic) *salt*

& cook the mixture in the heat

of an atomic explosion

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Revolutionary Letter #54

It takes courage to say no

No to canned corn & instant
mashed potatoes. No to rice krispies.
No to special K. No to margarine
mono & di-glycerides, NSDA
for coloring, causing cancer. No to
white bread, bleached w/nerve gas (wonder
bread). No to everything fried
in hardened oil w/silicates. No to
once-so-delicious salami, now red
w/sodium nitrate.

No to processed cheeses. No
no again to irradiated bacon, pink
phosphorescent ham, dead plastic
pasteurized milk. No to chocolate pudding
like grandma never made. No thanx
to coca-cola. No to freshness preserves,
dough conditioners, no
potassium sorbate, no
aluminum silicate, NO
BHA, BHT, NO
di-ethyl-propyl-glycerate.

No more ice cream? not w/embalming fluid.
Goodbye potato chips, peanut butter, jelly, jolly
white sugar! No more DES
all-American steaks or hamburgers either!
Goodbye, frozen fish! (dipped & coated w/
aureomycin) Fried eggs over easy w/

hormones, penicillin & speed.

Goodbye, frozen fish! (dipped & coated w/

Carnation Instant Breakfast, Nestle's Quik.

Fritos, goodbye! your labels are very confusing.

All I can say

is what my daughter age six once said to me:

"if I can't pronounce it

maybe I shouldn't eat it."

or, Dick Gregory

coming out of a 20-day fast:

"the people of America are controlled

by the food they eat"

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Revolutionary Letter #55

All thru Amerika

all I see & find is

Indian America

the forms & shapes of

Great-Turtle-Island

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Revolutionary Letter #56

The forms proliferate.

As we spin (further) from the light
our bodies sprout new madnesses
congenital pale disease, like new plants
on the edge of (radioactive) craters
we sprout new richness of design
baroque apologies for Kaliyuga
till Kether calls us home
hauls in the galaxies like some
big fish.

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Revolutionary Letter #57

NOTES TOWARD AN AMERICAN HISTORY

Over & over I've look for
the picture in the cloth: man
standing idle & tall against
horizon: "savage" landscape
we stare, poverty-struck
at New England pewter in
farmhouse window: quote
Adams, Jefferson, hew
map of the sacred meadow

this was the
land we were promised,
wasnt it? is Fresno
new Jerusalem? where
is Dallas? how wd Olson/
Pound/Tom Paine explain
Petaluma. Over & over Kirby Doyle
mad
tells tale of his grandfather walking out
of the desert
his wife & two sons waiting in a wagon
(he had the mule)
& the boats
in Gloucester, Newfoundland & Greece
(the same)
the wood
carved in Alaska & New Guinea . . .
Over & over we seek that savage man
sufficient & generous; we find

Rockefeller, Nixon;

sad letters of Jefferson

mourning the ravaging of moundbuilders' land

requesting his daughter not to neglect her French.

We; over & over; seeking line & form

gold-leaf as in Sienna

"outline" as Blake

we sit on shifting ground

at the edge of this ocean

"as far from Europe as you can get"

& watch the hills flicker like dreamskin

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Revolutionary Letter #58

What we need to know is laws of time & space
they never dream of. Seek out
the ancient texts: alchemy
homeopathy, secret charts
of early Rosicrucians (Giordanisti).
Grok synchronicity Jung barely
scratched the surface of.

LOOK TO THE "HERESIES" of EUROPE FOR BLOODROOTS
(remnants of pre-colonized pre-Roman Europe):
Insistent, hopeful resurgence of *communards*
free love & joy; "in god all things are common"
secret celebration of ancient season feasts & moons.
Rewrite the calendar.

Head-on war is the mistake we make
time after time
There *is* a way around it, way to outflank
technology, short circuit
"energy crisis": retreat & silence
cunning
courage & love

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Revolutionary Letter #59

Look to the cities, see how "urban renewal"
tears out the slums from the heart of town
forces expendable poor to the edges, to some
remote & indefensible piece of ground:
Hunters Point, Lower East Side, Columbia Point
out of sight, out of mind, & when bread riots come
(conjured by cutting welfare, raising prices)
the man wont hesitate to raze those ghettos
& few will see, & fewer will object.

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Revolutionary Letter #60

First Observable Effects of So-Called "Energy Crisis" (Fall 1973)

1. off-shore drilling renewed, Santa Barbara & elsewhere
we can expect
new off-shore wells to be opened
regardless of consequences
2. price of crude oil shoots sky-high, making
the extraction of shale oil feasible (profitable)
which shale oil territory has been prepared
for exploitation by forcing beef prices up, advocating
beef boycotts, forcing
smaller ranches toward bankruptcy
3. Peabody Coal plans to occupy Cheyenne land
on legal grounds they are "incapable"
of exploiting its "natural resource", i.e.
don't wait to extract minerals at the cost
of all else
4. grim austerity consciousness
empty shelves & stiff upper lip
& plenty of hoarding, reminiscent
of early 40's, conditioned reflex
right psychological climate for WW III
5. of course, police & military will have enough gas
& how will you like
to be stationary populace in the grip
of a mobile army?

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Revolutionary Letter #61

Take a good look
at history (the American myth)
check sell out
of revolution by the founding fathers
“Constitution written by a bunch of gangsters
to exploit a continent” is what

Charles Olson told me.

Check Shay’s rebellion, Aaron Burr, Nathan Hale.

Who wrote the history books where you
went to school?

Check Civil War: maybe industrial north
needed cheap labor, South had it, how many
sincere “movement” people

writers & radicals played
into their hands?

Check Haymarket trial: it broke the back
of strong Wobblie movement: how many jailed, fined,
killed to stop that one? What’s happening to us
has happened a few times before

let’s change the script

What did it take to stop the Freedom Riders

What have we actually changed?

month I was born

they were killing onion pickers in Ohio

Month that I write this, nearly 40 years later

they’re killing UFW’s in the state

I’m trying somehow to live in. LET’S REWRITE
the history books.

History repeats itself

only if we let it.

Revolutionary Letter #62

check Science: whose interest does it serve?

whose need to perpetrate

mechanical dead (exploitable) universe

instead of living cosmos?

whose dream those hierarchies: planets & stars

blindly obeying fixed laws, as they desire

us, too, to stay in place

whose interest to postulate

man's recent blind "descent" from "unthinking" animals

our pitiable geocentric isolation:

lone voice in the stars

what point in this cosmology but to drain

hope of contact or change

/oppressing us w/"reason"

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Revolutionary Letter #63

Free Julian Beck

Free Timothy Leary

Free seven million starving in Pakistan

Free all political prisoners

Free Angela Davis

Free Soledad brothers

Free Martin Sobel

Free Sacco & Vanzetti

Free Big Bill Hayward

Free Sitting Bull

Free Crazy Horse

Free all political prisoners

Free Billy the Kid

Free Jesse James

Free all political prisoners

Free Nathan Hale

Free Joan of Arc

Free Galileo & Bruno & Eckhart

Free Jesus Christ

Free Socrates

Free all political prisoners

Free all political prisoners

All prisoners are political prisoners

Every pot smoker a political prisoner

Every holdup man a political prisoner

Every forger a political prisoner

Every angry kid who smashed a window a political prisoner

Every whore, pimp, murderer, a political prisoner

Every pederast, dealer, drunk driver, burglar

poacher, striker, strike breaker, rapist

Polar bear at San Francisco zoo, political prisoner

Ancient wise turtle at Detroit Aquarium, political prisoner
Flamingoes dying in Phoenix tourist park, political prisoners
Otters in Tucson Desert Museum, political prisoners
Elk in Wyoming grazing behind barbed wire, political prisoners
Prairie dogs poisoned in New Mexico, war casualties
(Mass grave of Wyoming bald eagles, a battlefield)
Every kid in school a political prisoner
Every lawyer in his cubicle a political prisoner
Every doctor brainwashed by AMA a political prisoner
Every housewife a political prisoner
Every teacher lying thru sad teeth a political prisoner
Every Indian on reservation a political prisoner
Every black man a political prisoner
Every faggot hiding in bar a political prisoner
Every junkie shooting up in John a political prisoner
Every woman a political prisoner
Every woman a political prisoner
You are political prisoner locked in tense body
You are political prisoner locked in stiff mind
You are political prisoner locked to your parents
You are political prisoner locked to your past
Free yourself
Free yourself
I am political prisoner locked in anger habit
I am political prisoner locked in greed habit
I am political prisoner locked in fear habit
I am political prisoner locked in dull senses
I am political prisoner locked in numb flesh
Free me
Free me
Help to free me
Free yourself
Help to free me
Free yourself

Help to free me
Free Barry Goldwater
Help to free me
Free Governor Wallace
Free President Nixon
Free J Edgar Hoover
Free them
Free yourself
Free them
Free yourself
Free yourself
Free yourself
Free them
Free yourself
Help to free me
Free us
DANCE

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