

All
Watched
Over
By

Machines
Of
Loving
Grace



Richard Brautigan

Communication Company

ALL WATCHED OVER

BY MACHINES

OF LOVING GRACE

by Richard Brautigan
Richard Brautigan
" " *[Handwritten signature]*

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\$the communication company\$
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Bill Brock lived with us for a while
on Pine Street. He took the photograph
in the basement. It was a beautiful
day in San Francisco.

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All Watched over by Machines of Loving Grace

I like to think (and
the sooner the better!)
of a cybernetic meadow
where mammals and computers
live together in mutually
programming harmony
like pure water
touching clear sky.

I like to think
(right now, please!)
of a cybernetic forest
filled with pines and electronics
where deer stroll peacefully
past computers
as if they were flowers
with spinning blossoms.

I like to think
(it has to be!)
of a cybernetic ecology
where we are free of our labors
and joined back to nature,
returned to our mammal
brothers and sisters,
and all watched over
by machines of loving grace.

→ The Beautiful Poem

I go to bed in Los Angeles thinking
about you.

Pissing a few moments ago
I looked down at my penis
affectionately.

Knowing it has been inside
you twice today makes me
feel beautiful.

3 a.m.
January 15, 1967

→ Karma Repair Kit: Items 1-4

1. Get enough food to eat,
and eat it.
2. Find a place to sleep where it is quiet,
and sleep there.
3. Reduce intellectual and emotional noise
until you arrive at the silence of yourself,
and listen to it.
- 4.

→ November 3

I'm sitting in a cafe,
drinking a Coke.

A fly is sleeping
on a paper napkin.

I have to wake him up,
so I can wipe my glasses.

There's a pretty girl
I want to look at.

Flowers for those You Love

Butcher, baker, candlestick maker,
anybody can get VD,
including those you love.

Please see a doctor
if you think you've got it.

You'll feel better afterwards
and so will those you love.

Comets

There are comets
that flash through
our mouths wearing
the grace
of oceans and galaxies.

God knows,
we try to do the best
we can.

There are comets
connected to chemicals
that telescope
down our tongues
to burn out against
the air.

I know
we do.

There are comets
that laugh at us
from behind our teeth
wearing the clothes
of fish and birds.

We try.

Star Hole

I sit here
on the perfect end
of a star,

watching light
pour itself toward
me.

The light pours
itself through
a small hole
in the sky.

I'm not very happy,
but I can see
how things are
faraway.

San Francisco

This poem was found written on a paper bag
by Richard Brautigan in a laundromat in
San Francisco. The author is unknown.

By accident, you put
Your money in my
Machine (#4)
By accident, I put
My money in another
Machine (#6)
On purpose, I put
Your clothes in the
Empty machine full
Of water and no
Clothes

It was lonely.

It's Raining in Love

I don't know what it is,
but I distrust myself
when I start to like a girl
a lot.

It makes me nervous.
I don't say the right things
or perhaps I start
to examine,
evaluate,
compute
what I am saying.

If I say, "Do you think it's going to rain?"
and she says, "I don't know,"
I start thinking: Does she really like me?

In other words
I get a little creepy.

A friend of mine once said,
"It's twenty times better to be friends
with someone
than it is to be in love with them."

I think he's right and besides,
it's raining somewhere, programming flowers
and keeping snails happy.
That's all taken care of.

brought back well

BUT if a girl likes me a lot
and starts getting real nervous
and suddenly begins asking me funny questions
and looks sad if I give the wrong answers
and she says things like,
"Do you think it's going to rain?"
and I say, "It beats me,"
and she says, "Oh,"
and looks a little sad
at the clear blue California sky,
I think: Thank God, it's you, baby, this time
instead of me.

Hey! This Is What It's All About

For Jeff Sheppard

No publication
No money
No star
No fuck

A friend came over to the house
a few days ago and read one of my poems.
He came back today and asked to read the
same poem over again. After he finished
reading it, he said, "It makes me want
to write poetry."

I Lie Here in a Strange Girl's Apartment

I lie here in a strange girl's apartment.
She has poison oak, a bad sunburn
and is unhappy.
She moves about the place
like distant gestures of solemn glass.

She opens and closes things.
She turns the water on,
and she turns the water off.

All the sounds she makes are faraway.
They could be in a different city.
It is dusk and people are staring
out the windows of that city.
Their eyes are filled with the sounds
of what she is doing.

December 30

Our Beautiful West Coast Thing

We are a coast people
There is nothing but ocean out beyond us.

--Jack Spicer

At 1:03 in the morning a fart
smells like a marriage between
an avocado and a fish head.

I have to get out of bed
to write this down without
my glasses on.

I sit here dreaming
long thoughts of California

at the end of a November day
below a cloudy twilight
near the Pacific

listening to The Mamas and The Papas
THEY'RE GREAT

singing a song about breaking
somebody's heart and digging it!

I think I'll get up
and dance around the room.

Here I go!

(left two) tall before I end

Widow's Lament

old woman in the snow
she borrowed some matches and gathered all around
the village square.

old woman used the old
village square to get
old woman to go to the village square to make
old woman's house
old woman used the old
village square to make
old woman's house

It's not quite cold enough
to go borrow some firewood
from the neighbors.

go see if I can't
borrow some firewood from
the neighbors.

(log I began)

loves

I changed her bedroom:
raised the ceiling four feet,
removed all of her things
(and the clutter of her life)
painted the walls white,
placed a fantastic calm
in the room,
a silence that almost had a scent,
put her in a low brass bed
with white satin covers,
and I stood there in the doorway
watching her sleep, curled up,
with her face turned away
from me.

Hollywood

W.H.P.

January 26, 1967
at 3:15 in the afternoon

Sitting here in Los Angeles
parked on a rundown residential
back street,
staring up at the word
HOLLYWOOD
written on some lonely mountains,
I'm listening very carefully
to rock and roll radio
(Lovin' Spoonful)
(Jefferson Airplane)
while people are slowly
putting out their garbage cans.

Hey, Bacon!

The moon like:
mischievous bacon
crisps its desire

(while)

I harbor myself
toward two eggs
over easy.

a Mid-February Sky Dance

Dance toward me, please, as
if you were a star
with light-years piled
on top of your hair,
smiling,

and I will dance toward you
as if I were darkness
with bats piled like a hat
on top of my head.

After Halloween Slump

My magic is down.
My spells mope around
the house like sick old dogs
with bloodshot eyes
watering cold wet noses.

My charms are in a pile
in the corner like the
dirty shirts of a summer fatman.

One of my potions died
last night in the pot.
It looks like a cracked
Egyptian tablecloth.

Albion Breakfast

For Susan

Last night (here) a long pretty girl
asked me to write a poem about Albion,
so she could put it in a black folder
that has albion printed nicely
in white on the cover.

I said yes. She's at the store now
getting something for breakfast.
I'll surprise her with this poem
when she gets back.

It's Going Down

Magic is the color of the thing you wear
with a dragon for a button
and a lion for a lamp
with a carrot for a collar
and a salmon for a zipper.

Hey! You're turning me on: baby
That's the way it's going down.

WOW!

Your Catfish Friend

If I were to live my life
in catfish forms
in scaffolds of skin and whiskers
at the bottom of a pond
and you were to come by
one evening
when the moon was shining
down into my dark home
and stand there at the edge
of my affection
and think, "It's beautiful
here by this pond. I wish
somebody loved me,"
I'd love you and be your catfish
friend and drive such lonely
thoughts from your mind
and suddenly you would be
at peace
and ask yourself, "I wonder
if there are any catfish
in this pond? It seems like
a perfect place for them."

My Nose Is Growing Old

Yup.
A long lazy September look
in the mirror
says it's true:

I'm 31
and my nose is growing
old.

It starts about 1/2
an inch
below the bridge
and strolls geriatrically
down
for another inch or so:
stopping.

Fortunately, the rest
of the nose is comparatively
young.

I wonder if girls
will want me with an
old nose.

I can hear them now
the heartless bitches:

"He's cute
but his nose
is old."

At the California Institute of Technology

December 24

I don't care how God-damn smart
these guys are: I'm bored.

It's been raining like hell all day long
and there's nothing to do.

Written January 24, 1967
while poet-in-residence
at the California Institute
of Technology.

She's mending the rain with her hair.
She's turning the darkness on.
Glue / switch!
That's all I have to report.

Nine Things

It's night

and a numbered beauty
lapses at the wind,

chortles with the
branches of a tree,

giggles,

plays shadow dance
with a dead kite,

cajoles affection
from falling leaves,

and knows four
other things.

One is the color
of your hair.

Milk for the Duck

ZAP!
unlaid / 20 days

my sexual image
isn't worth a shit.

If I were dead
I couldn't attract
a female fly.

Let's Voyage into the New American House

There are doors
that want to be free
from their hinges to
fly with perfect clouds.

There are windows
that want to be
released from their
frames to run with
the deer through
back country meadows.

There are walls
that want to prowl
with the mountains
through the early
morning dusk.

There are floors
that want to digest
their furniture into
flowers and trees.

There are roofs
that want to travel
gracefully with
the stars through
circles of darkness.

Richard Brautigan was born in 1935. He lives in San Francisco. He has published three books of poetry: The Galilee Hitch-Hiker, Lay the Marble Tea, and The Octopus Frontier. He has written four novels: Trout Fishing in America, A Confederate General from Big Sur, In Watermelon Sugar, and The Abortion.

His novel A Confederate General from Big Sur has been translated into Italian and part of Trout Fishing in America was published this year in England by Penguin Books in The New Writing in the USA.