

THE LONG LETTER

by Jon Rappoport

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PART ONE: 2007-2013

A painting by Paul Klee. An employee heats dust and makes a plate. Klee finds dust, he arranges it in a line that leads through the next century into a doorway eye of an acrobat who is swinging through motorized waves of a clock. Everything stops. Everything in the room is enormously dissatisfied.

...I saw her once

She was bending over picking up a brown cat

She looked up at me and nodded

she had green eyes

she sized me up

and now all these years later here she is again
tending bar at a CIA costume party

These are the letters of my ancient fathers,
Blowing across the rolling apparatus
That moves the sun,
Shining through old windows
On drowned men.

They shake off the rime
And stagger up from their trench,
Without a city.

summer nights on the porch

rhododendrons are thrashed by slow comets of rain

...in my Broadway suit and short black winter coat with the belt

I'm walking up 6th Avenue on a snowy December
afternoon

nothing to do

I wander into
a massive granite building
art class
naked model

I tell the teacher I studied with Phil Guston and Phil suggested this class

thought it would be good for me to draw the figure

the teacher scrambles and brings me a pad and pencil and I
sit there looking at the naked woman

she's about 40

frozen on a wooden chair

gray eyes

After a while, the teacher comes back, looks over my shoulder, and
timidly asks, "Would you like my comments?"

“Excuse me? What's that? No, I know I'm drawing the model with a very small head and the body of a giantess but I'm looking at the chair and platform too and the street outside

“I like her leg sticking out over the East River, she's dangling it above ships and garbage and then do you see how her right shoulder is obscuring New Jersey...”

He backs away

I take apart the model's ribs. They're open books in a shining arboretum.

I'm sitting on a bench. Next to me is a ghostly doctor.

“You've concealed yourself,” he says. “But you know we permit no visitors. There are penalties.”

I nod and look out at hills. Beyond them are immense decks of stone and clouds.

“I'm willing to risk it,” I say.

“Here, where we live, the paradoxes have all been resolved.”

The creature smiles.

We sit quietly for a few minutes. The sun sets, and it's dark all around us.

“Go home, stranger,” he says. “This isn't for you.”

“Look,” I say, “I smell a phony deal. You haven't resolved anything. This is a top-down operation. I've seen a lot of them.”

I stand up.

Then I'm back in the old candy store on Post Road. I buy a Mounds bar, walk to the little dark space next to the magazine rack, sit on the floor, and count my change. I think about the new temple on the hill, the big parking lot, the polished cars on Sunday mornings. The fathers who stand there, looking around, waiting for Marvin or one of his pals to come over and slip them an envelope. I wonder where the money comes from. Miraculously, here's Marvin now, walking into the store. He sees me. I stare at his shoes. I look up into his eyes and I see an image of God. God is swimming in a sea of money. Heaven is a machine that prints the bills. The candy store is a small-time relay. A toilet flushes. The store owner comes out of his bathroom. He's a little fat guy with a long face. The molecules of the store are loosening...

With a little push I could shove it over and it would fall into the school playground.

Marvin bends down and hands me a five-dollar bill. “This is for you, kid,” he says.

“My uncle’s the DA,” I say.

“I know.”

“It could be construed as a bribe.”

Marvin jerks back.

“God is printing money,” I say.

“You’ll never prove it, kid.”

But I could see the pipeline all the way up, and the massive tribes of adrenaline that were supporting the operation...

Child of worry, child of beauty,
this world was made for you

the great sky and lost souls
are spiraling out of the dark night

in your war against the coming flood
you wrap the wounds of God

coming through a motor

or a forlorn creature

money rolling off the presses

invisible trees in the desert let me pass through them on the way
to Samarkand tossing green orchids like dollar bills

Diamonds, the glittering garbage
of fantastic dream

on their way to a factory

on the antediluvian shores of a breastfed paradise

Driving across the river to a Massachusetts town where textile factories
are rotting in the sun, I watch old women putting the wash up on
clotheslines

“I could have been a prince of one-liners in a soft city of television”

(shining ancestors of Hart Crane and Gregory Corso

looked forward to luminous planets

bending

down and listening

with shell-like ears to horses of the Foam)

I have no arduous duty in the
the library at Alexandria

I'm there

to expose
shatter

the amino acid architecture of eternity

I left the city on a train out of Grand Central Station.

The train never stopped.

It started burning.

The fire spread.

We were out in the country, and the whole train was burning.

Finally, the train ran into a lake.

We jumped off and swam to shore and stood there and
watched it spew cakes of fire into the water.

by his window the patient

reads an old newspaper

a newsboy on a bicycle

smells apple trees in the dusk

and peddles over wet leaves

Jones Beach in the summer

the wind swallows up voices

a face stares from a blanket

eight levels below the sidewalk

a forklift wheels gold bars

from the NY Federal Reserve to the Chase Morgan vault

Here is the circus

Sabbath, manna

elephants

acrobats falling through galactic space swim

to distant stars

center of a forest growing with amnesia

Hurled from his throne,
The prince fled for legendary islands.

Surgical bells rang

The fruit orchards received new blood.
Flying citizens were seen above the city.
Ships cauterized themselves
And rose into the sky.

I have no arduous duty in the
the library at Alexandria
I'm there to catch the falling rubies

to saturate cities with poets who were once lost

the machine wants blood but it can never have blood

I saw her for a moment among the great piles of books

a noble face/after it had reached its peak

thickening in acceptance

I wish her no harm

I wish her immortality

endless resistance

I wish her war would go on for a million years

stripped down, lean

tapping on the floor with her foot

as she's spreadeagled on the bed

looking up at the doctor

and he's saying

this is going to be hard one

because this is for the world

and it wasn't enough, was it

it didn't turn the tide

someone else was causing the pain

he was sitting on his porch
he was doing almost nothing
but pilots were bombing the cities

and you were coming out into the glare of a room

the curtains were drawn
and you were coming out

one day many years later you drove to my house in the rain and asked
me if I understood what was happening to you

you went away
you found a painter's motor
you found the trigger

you trudged along the bank of the river to your studio
and began painting on the walls

the fingers of a city breaking through the trees
the place you were going to live
when the rest of us were gone

but we stayed
we'll always stay

women burning to find men of power,

leopard mauling a holy apparition

groves of pear and green fern

In the foggy dawn

there are thousands of men named Prometheus stealing fire from the
gods

but gray subjects tune up their minds

to another day under the gun

adepts of suicide are clogging the human bloodstream

trees in the forest are in a rage

The magician in the high hills

the Tibetan sat in the high dirt at night
and tossed his old books on the fire

his lessons were done
he looked out at the black sky
and removed a piece of it

he shrank it to a small cloth
and held it in his hands

the wind picked up
he saw the vacuum begin to suck in torrential space
and he stopped it

tossing the cloth into the air
he saw it fill out like a great and grateful sail
and take its old place in the firmament

he stood up
brushed off his pants

and walked toward the trading post

where men told stories about demons and mindless stalking creatures of
the mountains and the new priests with their baggage were
setting up shop in the city

their hundred thousand ceremonies designed to postpone the power

You, prophetess, hurling only the future, were my first love
you drove across the desert
your golden tires were bleached white by the hysteria of gas station
attendants

Five minutes of you

You were in the bed at Mitchell
and in the cold Dunblane
you saw the wobbly moon come up

parliament refused your soul and my soul

your beautiful summer arms are folded

I pour you a glass of whiskey

you fold me up because I am the letter I wrote you and you put me in
your purse

I run the wobbly moon through with my shining arm

PART TWO: 2020-2021

The war is on the ground. The sky is the future, where I sit in my small
cottage and cook a fish. I eat it near the fire. I'm waiting for Her. She
knows I'm here. She's deciding whether to come back to me. I'm
patient.

I disappeared down into the jungle

Where tribes made me their executive mailman

Delivering flamingos out of the ether

You're riding a horse across a lawn

Jumping over a smoking pile of autumn money

Little felt hat on your head

Buttoned up suit and skinny pants

in the prehistoric hills of Western Massachusetts

a woman tiger struggles to her feet and stands

LILITH! The exiled one! The charmed of the lonely! The warm heart
and the cold mind! She stands and breathes torrents of fragrant heat

she remembers

she remembers she was born without prior cause, without permission

she redeposited the extracted sluice of language back into the river

and the petrified river ran again

she saw vividly what lay between things

she sprang the active force

she pushed over the tower

she stood the baby up on two legs

she performed acts reserved by the Sky Lunatic for himself

she said anyone could do these things

she sat in gutters with the lowest of men and broke bread

“whose blood is in my blood ignites the sun”

she stood on the white field

brought down the curtain of night, unhinged the canopy of stars, blew
the scent of wild apples into the wasteland, held the moon in a cup of
sand, tore away the trance

LILITH!

...in the oceanographic mythic giants all the capillaries have gone dry
the moon is setting on page one
tides of political sing-song are swaying in the intestinal tract of a
beached octopus suctioned to a sidewalk

After my last death
I met the clerk
At his little table.

He asked me
If I was satisfied
With my contract,
And if I wanted to go again.
Of course
I said
Yes.

But there is always a catch.

I grab each time

A little of the zero,

And the clouds

And the sea

And the cities

Look thinner.

Spun by a worm

In a trance,

Yet

You have to run

In the forest

And breathe the sunlit air,

Even though you know

That's where

All the trouble begins.

And so I become enamored

Of destroying space and time.

An angel appeared.

He said:

“When you look at a wall

And make the wall disappear
And then the garden past it
Disintegrate
And then the sky beyond that
Vanish
And then the planets and the
Galaxies wink out
You're on the right track.
On that road you're going to encounter
People who want to kill you.”
I asked who sent him.
“No one you've ever heard of.”

The pure monk reads all the Chinese classics
Of distance
And throws the sticks every night.
But he still recalls the hallway by the garden
At the side of his house
At 1632,
And the woman who ran through the fog toward him.

before she was twelve, janine
shattered sparks in the apple orchards

how precocious the broken cocoon and the larval fatima on her tongue
she expectorated the world-confounding saints that met secretly in
the bloodstream of Rome

Loaded with an amnesia drug
A mosquito flew directly
Into the president's first cup of coffee of the day.
The bug
Had a passport that was later found on
Pennsylvania Avenue.
Links to Al Qaeda were quickly established.
Hill and Knowlton were
Paid \$300 million
To repair the damaged PR.
Ominous and obscure connections
To West Nile Fever
Were suggested.
FEMA choppers
Dropped giant-pill tranqs

From Florida to Alaska.

Sleep channels

Appeared between

CBS, NBC, and ABC,

Showing 24-hour

Aquaria with slow-moving fish,

Warm, crackling, modest fireplaces,

And C-SPAN congressional vote counts.

New bio-terror warnings were announced.

The Yanks hit six home runs in one game.

The Pats won again.

Cher gave birth to a baby

Who already had a facelift.

Jennifer Anniston talked

To a person from Mars.

Goats suckled a child

In the hills of Poland.

Gasoline went up a dollar

At the pump.

The market rallied on new

Housing start figures.

37 pot plants were found

In a cellar in Scarsdale.

Boris Karloff was seen
In downtown Atlanta,
Pushing a shopping cart
Full of Paxil.
Hurricane Cecil
Belted South Carolina.

A cathedral
Built above the ocean
Eats away its own sandstone.

On a horizonless plain of remorse,
Fallopian clouds.

Behind the door of an altar
The ghost Pope sits.
He has been brushed with
Cadaverous jellies and dry roses
In the arbor
Where man first met woman.

silver shivers
in dining-room drawers
cold clear ice melting on the lawn

nagasaki rose
turnips
thoroughfares
estuaries over tunnels

we're planning a parade for Tuesday
warning lights, naked heroes
twelve o'clock rickshaws, brass chariots
crinkling blue paper cash

Down to the sea,
But first let's stop at Ship's
In Westwood,
Where wriggling West LA denizens
Gather at 3 in the morning
And count their markers.
Not much left,
And the food is battered

Into submission
In the kitchen.
Burn it.
Salt it.
Kill it twice.
I place a small wager
On the Falcons
Minus 7,
Pick at my eggs,
And put the fries
In my shirt pocket
For the gulls.
At dawn, every day,
They leave the ocean
And fly east
To the fast-food
Garbage bins
In downtown LA.

One Saturday afternoon there
A uniformed cop
Was busting a street vendor
On Broadway

For no license,
And I stood
A little way off,
Snapping photos.
The cop turned
And leered at me.
“Get out of here,
This is none of your business.”
I settled in
Twenty feet away at the curb.
Pigeons
Waddled in the gutter,
Sipping the seasoned water,
Which is very much like
The Pacific brand
At the beach,
Sewage that reaches down into Tijuana
And up to Marin.
It looks blue,
But so do the velveteen screens
In the blank windows
Of the former Orpheum theater,
Where toads

Trade tax-free cigarettes
For boosted watches.
The bus
Is arriving.
It's taking me
To Sacramento
For the autopsy of the lieutenant governor.
They're looking for
His old betting slips.
Slow mutiny
Almost looks like peace.

Tigers stroll the ruined palace
Pineapple trees
In the mist

Lost in the Crimea
Drifting
On the tides

Old Joe went down hard.

They caught him
Stealing from his own moon.
Under cover of night
He was trucking out quarks of suicide love
And selling it
On the shores of the new Hawaii.
Somewhere in a dark cloister
A Jesuit priest is cackling
In his brandy.
Joe was his boy
From the start,
A sub-angel
Set up with a freighter
And a Belgian account,
Working the planets
On a rip under the radar.
Joe was just a cutout,
And he'll do the time.
Vatican time is hard,
When you've sluiced out
The postponed energy of desperate hearts.

They worked him
Like a drum
From Angola to Paris.
They fed him ID
And pushed him into
Embassies
With gloves & high hat.

It's March now,
And the early spring wind
Is blowing across North Italy.
He's in a cottage
Eating pasta
And getting fat.
He paints animals on a bar wall
And thinks about Piero
And the Legend of the True Cross:
Those women,
Those Saturnian glances
Back at the horses
On the geometric plains
Of the ever bright Lucifer.
Take two

And hit to left,
Leg out a triple---
Hook slide, safe by an eyelash in powder summer snow

This is the age of the actor
Who's found that every other age
Was lying in its rooms, in fumes and spice
Weary of the pose
And its own device

This is the age of discovering
That every other age was dying
Muted in a flame
Born in presentiments of gold
In the pose of an honored name

Burned flowers of the field
My noon is over, growing old
Everything I love is finally sold
Sowed designs for men with money
Thinking it was duty

To watch them lead the world to war
From my little field of beauty

What city is this
Whose moment tremble
Azure sky and lime lights
Walking in the intersections
Through the squares of paradise
