

RE-ENGINEERING THEIR SOCIAL ENGINEERING

There are times
When things rhyme

But lost are the ways
Of the mighty of mind

Strength of the soul
Liers to behold

Hide behind your
keyboard
Bud
--Mano

There once was a poem named Placeholder.
The days they had passed; he grew older.
He filled in some text,
and knew not what's next,
He couldn't move past this great boulder.
-- Vany



Why does Santa have a beard?
to keep his chin from looking weird.
-- Nesa, at 6 years old.

Articles

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Spoon Feed Logo

Daniel Fleres

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FEAR NO EVIL

by *Jordan Graves*

aka *The Metal Mystic*

on *September 14, 2024*

"Someone asked an elder: 'Why am I afraid when walking in the desert?' He said: 'Because you think you are alone, and do not see God with you.'"

-Sayings of the Desert Fathers

Something isn't right. We all feel it... that sinking feeling. Every day the end gets closer. Death, Famine, Pestilence, and War are at the door. The economy is failing. Institutions are crumbling. Our leaders are incompetent and corrupt and no one is coming to save us.

We try not to think about it. We distract ourselves with entertainments and small pleasures. But nothing fully numbs the feeling of dread gnawing at our heels. If we're lucky, our conscience stings us. Soon we will be called to account for the way we lived our lives. We've squandered the time we've been given—there's precious little of it left—and we have even less strength to turn things around.

The sky darkens, the winds begin to howl, and the sea of life surges with menacing waves. A voice calls out amidst the storm: "Take heart! Have no fear!" We are reminded of that Psalm "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1)" Courage is rekindled in us. Faith is renewed. And we find that we are sailing across the tumult with no danger of capsizing, for God is with us!

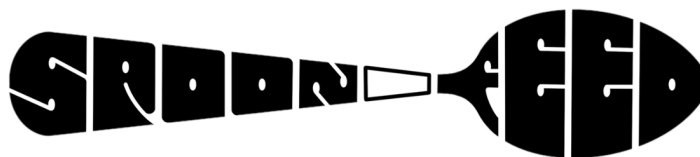
It can be easy to forget that most oft-repeated phrase in all of scripture: "Do not be afraid." The cares of this world have a way of dragging us down. A thousand shapes of death surround us. But Jesus Christ has overthrown death and overcome the world. "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world!"

Still, we worry. Anxiety ties us in knots. Will I make enough money this month to support my family? Will I be robbed if I leave my house? What if I catch that airborne disease going around? I can't afford to miss work. What if I die? Certainly fear has its place. It can alert us to potential danger and deadly threats. But it can also have a paralyzing effect, stopping us in our daily course with phantoms of what may be. "Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?" (Luke 12:25)

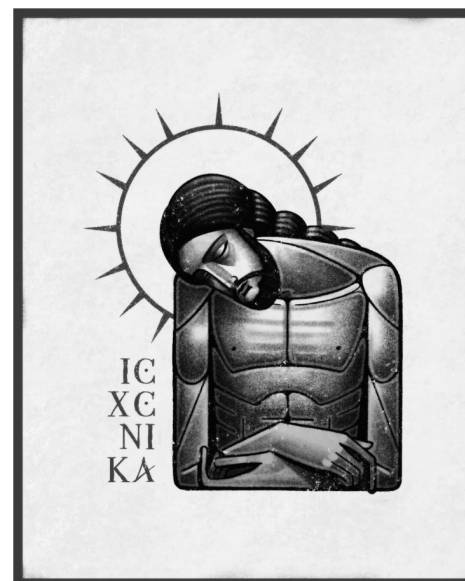
The Fathers teach that proper fear is a healthy concern for our well-being and preservation from destruction. What we should fear above all, they say, is separation from God, the Source of Life and Giver of every good thing. Yet, more often we fear separation from pleasure, the thwarting of our desires, and the failure of our designs. Most of the time, fear is wrapped up with the avoidance of immediate discomfort over and above any real concern for the fate of our immortal soul. This is a fear inspired more by selfish passions than by love for God and neighbor.

Generally, we do everything we can to avoid suffering and embrace comfort, even when we know that embracing difficulties makes us stronger and a life of ease makes us weak. In this life, pain is unavoidable. Trying to avoid suffering will only make it more destructive when it inevitably befalls us. Christ didn't come to get rid of suffering but to fill it with His presence, to imbue it with meaning—this is the message of the Cross.

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in the next issue...

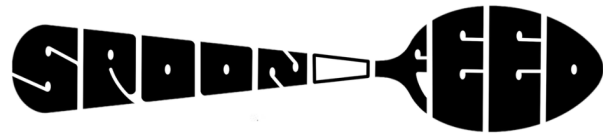


***cf. Therapy of
Spiritual Diseases
by Jean Claude
Larchet, Vol.2
Ch.9**



Art by Daniel Flores

THE DEMON OF THE NOONDAY



by *Rory Christopher*
on *August 3, 2024*

I like hot showers. Scalding hot showers. I like to find out what is tolerable, then do it a little hotter. And I stand there and meditate. I can't be the only one who has been yelled at for indulging in the bliss of standing aimlessly in a hot shower. Usually, my thoughts drift and I digest what has recently come about: conversations, near-miss car accidents, the girl I could have kissed, all the money I'm not making, a recipe, arguments as-they-should-have-been-if only I landed that verbal knockout ("the jerk store called..."). Sometimes I think about my dad and how much I miss him. I basically think about what is not or what I don't have, and what I think I want. Then my wife yells at me: "Dude, it's been 20 minutes, wrap it up!" Maybe I crank it to cold. I am kind of soft, so I don't usually do that. Either way, I fancy myself as a crank-it-to-cold kind of man.



Chronic rumination is a classic symptom of depression and, I'll tell you the primary cause, but first we need to define something really quick. Depression is not a chemical imbalance. If you eat crap food, and you're depressed, that's because you're being poisoned. That's your bad, stop it! Eat good food. If you are depressed because your mom died, then you are sad, and you're going to feel that way, it will come in waves for the rest of your life and that pain is to be expected. That is not depression.

I am talking about a possession by what is called the "noonday demon." This demon shows up in the height of your day (or when you should be productive), it possesses your mind through your feelings. It enters through feelings you have about yourself, about your dad and how he yelled at you, about your bad habits you can't shake, how you should probably do more charity (but you really don't care that much). It's a sneaky little bastard, this depression and there is no identifiable cause, because it's paired with a hundred little things that happened in life and you never bothered—and never knew to be bothered—to guard against it. The noonday demon knows that.

Maybe you didn't get the position you wanted in little league and all the kids called you homo. Maybe your grandma got your new light-up kicks. However, you never wore them after one of the older kids embarrassed you with a scathing critique of your new shoes. These little things frustrate your happiness and overtime create a distracted and persevering obsession with what you should have and what you don't have. These little moments in life, when you're vulnerable and young and new, are small cracks in your worldview, created by the disappointment and sadness of the moment and provide access points for the noonday demon.

Depression (quite often) is living in the past. After one is battered by these little abuses, over time small inconveniences and tiny, perceived micro-aggression manifest a giant ego-driven defense apparatus, an emotional phalanx of sorts. Our future endeavors, dreams, and plans are informed by this defense. This phalanx of wrongs we store up is used as a heuristic, and psychic shield against others. We believe in its power, yet it is so ineffective that minor inconveniences, forgettable disappointments, misplaced words, or even poorly stated phrases can send us into a contorted fit of emotions as we whine, yell, cry, and blame and we act totally indignant over small grievances.

This is a classic sign of chronic depression. You take no responsibility for your behavior; it's totally justified as a reaction to the latest thing someone did—Your husband, mom, the lady at the dollar store...Your wife. You feel this way because you are ungrateful. "Do not put your plans before God's plans," Saint Paisios once told his spiritual child, "That is why you have anxiety." What is that old saying? "Comparison is the thief of joy." Absolutely that's true. Comparing all the wonderful gifts throughout your life against what you wanted is throwing your joy on a pyre.

I need to clarify something. Anxiety is really what most people call depression. This is a paralyzing affect that causes one to stand still when one should act or to sabotage one's self, goals, or happiness. We do this strictly through behavior. You know you should pray every night, but you don't. Why? You just consumed how many hours of senseless entertainment, but you can't pray for seven minutes? That's depression talking and prayer is the enemy of depression.

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The Demon of the Noonday

The noonday demon is clever. Anxiety and depression are so often the same thing and come from the same root causes: ingratitude (as mentioned above) and unwillingness to forgive. If you forgave your dad for yelling at you, then you can't hold it against him. If you forgave those kids who made fun of your shoes, you can't use that to justify yourself when you act out your selfish petty nonsense. That imaginary phalanx is there to protect your ego, not anything else.

You were lied to. The first lie is those things were bad and hurtful. They were just normal life stuff you experienced, because, people are really dumb sometimes. Especially kids, I was such a dumb kid and most likely—so were you. These are small-t traumas we hyped as pain and undervalued as experience. The second lie you told yourself is you are not loved. Here is the reality, God loves you so much that he isn't going to leave your life to chance. He set a path and purpose for you to follow. He never planned for you to ruminate on those little events; because your will is yours, you do it anyway. The enemy of your soul uses those thoughts and feelings to enter you and possess you, to direct your thoughts and control your actions... to control your will. Not once did God plan for you to be a snappy; rude, ungrateful, anxious rain-cloud of a person. None of those are fruits of His Spirit and if you are His servant, He wants those parts of your personality gone; however, he wants to replace them with His personality. —————>

You know that moment on Christmas when you have an obviously awesome gift, but it's wrapped really well. You finally untie the bow and ribbon, then you find the loosest corner of the wrapping and start to tear it off, then eventually the gift is revealed. That's what this next bit is like: overcoming anxiety is a seemingly impossible task. Anxiety, is such a head trip and it's a deception that it is part of who you are. In truth, it's a simple lie to unwrap, while underneath it is what God has for you. The power move here is to nurture the one fruit of the Holy Spirit that is easiest for you. Here they are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. If you nurture these, they will overcome their opposites. If you are dealing with overwhelming thoughts where you blame others, feeling sorry for yourself, believing nothing matters, then you are not full of love. Don't choose that one. Perhaps kindness is actually a strength. Perhaps you were so easily hurt because your natural kindness was betrayed. Nurture kindness. When you do this, other fruits start to grow. The fruits of the Holy Spirit do not exist alone. One is bound to the others. If you grow in one, the others grow with it. If you increase in kindness, you will increase in patience. If you increase in self-control, you will increase in peace, and so on.

If you can be kind—even when you can't feel love toward someone—love comes shortly after. When you love someone, you will forgive them. Maybe it takes years, but it will come. Of course, you will laugh at those little things in your silly ineffective

phalanx. They were such a meaningless facade compared to love. The fruits of the Holy Spirit will be a real shield to you, a real protective armor against the assaults of the evil one, that noonday demon. There is no place for depression to fester when you have forgiven your neighbor, and you are grateful to God... even for the trials in your life. The fruits of the Holy Spirit are what God has for us., as they are the product of our will yielding to God's will. Just one of these attributes of God, if nurtured in our lives, is enough to chase away that noonday demon. When you are not nurturing at least one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, the evil one gets a hold of you. He controls you and your children suffer, your friendships suffer, your marriage suffers, your work suffers, and even your water bill suffers.

I want to touch on one more aspect of depression. There is a type of affect that one feels when things just keep going wrong. Nothing works out and this leads to a type of despair: stage four depression. You are on the wrong path and you are not listening anymore, you are stubbornly repeating the same day over and over, and you are getting nowhere. That despair is telling you to change your trajectory. This does not mean you should have been a teacher, but you're stuck as an accountant. It means you lack surrender. I'll let St Silouan the Athonite explain:

"He who lives according to God's will has no cares. If he has need of something, he offers himself and the thing he wants to God, and if he does not receive it, he remains as tranquil as if he had got what he wanted... The soul that is given over to the will of God fears nothing, neither thunder nor thieves nor any other thing. Whatever may come, 'Such is God's pleasure,' she says. If she falls sick she thinks, 'This means that I need sickness, or God would not have sent it.'"

- On the Will of God and On Freedom in The Wisdom of Mount Athos

If you are anxious or depressed because nothing is working out, read that a few times then go to confession. Find time to ask God for what your heart wants and be grateful for the way he delivers it to you. He loves you.

FIN



Just Past Jasper, Alberta - photo by A. Minaudo

"My PRESENCE WILL GO WITH YOU"

The opening of the year 2023 gave a tell that a page turn is on the way. Although, we both knew earlier the utterances of 2020 that our home was a temporary stay. A blurry vision would wall between us and the next move, until it came down to let the luminous drop from some distance above us into consciousness.

Lent was coming back around. On the outside, a directionless-motion at home. On the inside, a pining for revivification. Meanwhile, all I'd see in the Liturgy and in life of the Church was so lovingly formed, each service became watching the buds blooming in real time. In the delight of reading the Saints, I felt the real nearer than ever, and questioned our role in it. In life before attending an Orthodox service, I had dulled of hopes deferred and despondency's skeleton was couched in the inner world. These things would set the tone for search in prayer for God to give life and shape to our scatterings. How that would come about I didn't see would also come along with the next direction.

My husband gave word to begin going through our belongings and clean out our condo. A moving date hadn't been set, and where we were going was not decided. I thought we'd downgrade to an apartment and I'd stay home, but a review of the income after my stepping down from work showed another living adjustment is readily within reach.

He proposed going into a RV. At the start of the year, it sounded like daydreaming, since it was a lifestyle we never thought about. I felt a vagueness lifted in this light-hearted way: On my way to work, I'm collecting paperwork, and an uncommon receipt showed up in my inbox. Unfolding it revealed another content within of a crayon drawing. For my own amusement, I intuited this was a preschool kid's drawing assignment and it was given to the person who dropped the receipt in my mailbox. They must have accidentally mixed it with the documents. And I'd go on saying this had to be a Christian preschool, because on it is written largely in Sharpie a Bible verse:

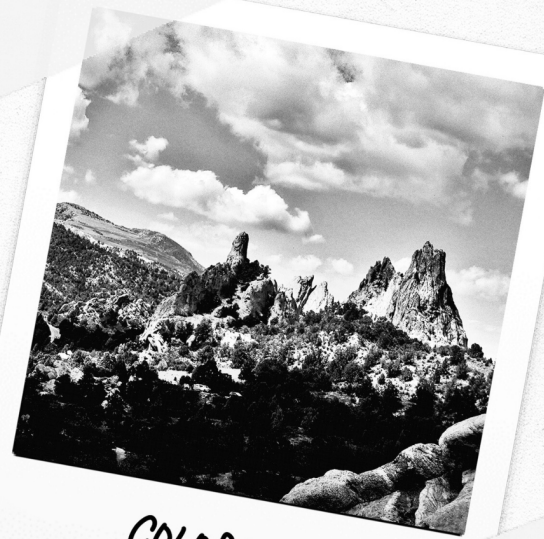
"My presence will go with you. - Exodus 33:14"

Perhaps the child was given directions to draw what this would look like, though I could not make out the Crayola content. What to make of it, no matter, is that this would be a thing repeating back to me from that point on after bringing a RV home. It's happening. No one came back looking for the drawing and it's stayed with me along the trip.

By May 2023, the condo and our cars were sold. We donated things, sold things, and discarded things. A stinging farewell as pets are rehomed to loving families. Only a few items that we'd put away in storage would, in a year later, be the last bit to sell or donate. In the Paschal season, we gave our notices to our jobs. My husband devised that his skill put him at too reliably masterful to risk a change at work and would trigger a negotiation that enabled him work remotely during the trip (I asked for St. Xenia's prayers). A stone rolled over and we'd drive into roads unknown to us.

We already knew this: This isn't anything new. Many go on this way of nomadic life. For us it's that, but not like mere wandering to fill a wanderlust. We may feel, faintly or just enough, depending how things go, that it's something like scriptural sojourning embodied in this life trajectory. I feel us Americans forget that lifestyle hasn't untied from Christian living. Freedom for freedom's sake would untether us from participating a life in step with the Church, out of sight from the real. There's freedom in Christ, but with Him is also not to be without discipline. We'll be pilgrims for a bit to find that out.

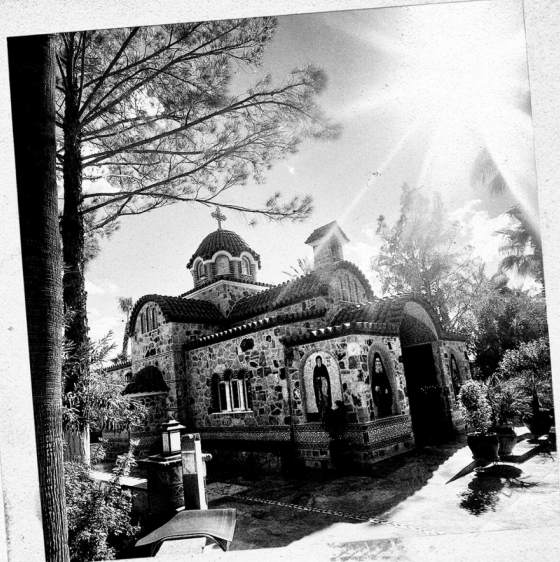
I hoped for opportunity to visit the sights holding key figures that shape America's growing Orthodoxy. And it was so. We've been to the resting places of St. John Maximovitch, Elder Ephraim, and Fr. Seraphim Rose. At St. Anthony's Monastery, I'd venerate the skull of St. Joseph the Hesychast and become a roommate with strangers, up at midnight going to Liturgy. From hearing beautiful chants in the corner of Florida in Russian to hearing Greek ones in Washington. We visited plenty parishes in English too, and every one was welcoming.



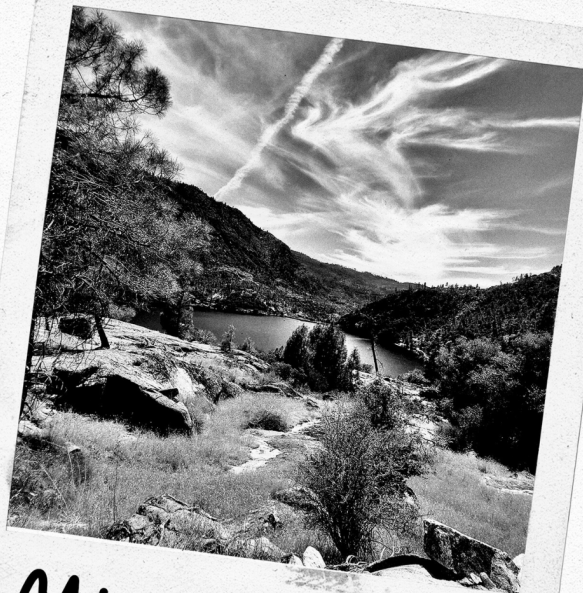
COLORADO

We'd plan at least 5 steps ahead and waited until getting to a point to decide where go next. As exploring opens, changes in income now with one of us employed didn't necessarily mean getting to do it all, but there was plenty to see without need of spending. We'd be in Colorado Spring standing in Garden of the Gods that my mom always told me about, and where she stood with me as a baby. Hikes along a reservoir in California and in another time, out onto a foggy Santa Cruz Wharf. Strolls in cemeteries and the rides up an elevation of 10,000 ft etched the inner pages with finite and expansive reminders.

Often, I'd feel faded because of questioning the validity of all this which entered by wuthering doubt. Such as in percieving that we're straying because we missed a Liturgy due to location and a FOMO (fear of missing out). I didn't have Orthodoxy all my life and refused a return of liminal space. With that, I'd anxiously look for reminders that His presence is with us in writings, via word from my spouse or in the surreal sight of a deer eating off a blackberry bush in Oregon. It would be learned that in the lives of some, times of separation was pressing for strengthened patience. We'd be back in the next accessable parish and hope cleared out suspicions I piled on myself.



ARIZONA



CALIFORNIA

We're still in the RV with no permanent residency as I'm putting this down. Friends at our home parish have told us their admiration for what we did and we see them looking in us to see resolve in themself strengthen. I wish to have the whole of what all this is to show to you, and where it's all heading. All the answers to "why like this" would be great. The next could be anything. Earlier it was mentioned that I sought answers in prayer, and next thing we realized is we've let go of so much and gone one side of the map to the other. We're starting to miss being in some of the places we've been and talk about it, but the directive is the Lord's. Faith is ours keep that His presence is with us throughout.





ON PROTEST MUSIC

by *Tim Thompson*
on *March 22, 2024*



Rock 'n' Roll has a great tradition of protest music. From Woodie Guthrie, with his this-machine-kills-fascists emblazoned L-00, right through to Hard Rain, Blowin' in the Wind, Ohio, The Guns of Brixton, Sunday Bloody Sunday (to name a few of my favorites). I've studied their biographies and eagerly absorbed their movies and articles. I have dedicated large portions of my life to learning their histories, and how they found their place in our shared history. I love them.

Nevertheless, I have struggled over recent months coming to terms with my feelings on certain developments in the protest music space. As a musical artist (and a conservative), I have particularly struggled with certain developments. I have specifically taken issue with events like the formation of conservative record labels, and the rapid-fire release of a fistful of right-wing political songs, the likes of which Tim Pool and Ben Shapiro have lauded despite their narrow appeal, and cumbersome, point-making wordiness. I have struggled with one basic question: why don't I like any of it?

On paper, free-thinking, freedom-loving, anti-establishment artistic types are who I resonate with. So, why do I find their artistic output almost totally uninspiring, despite my agreement with their general views? This article is an attempt to explore whether there is a better way, or if there is something missing. I began by jotting down a few feelings and ideas gleaned from some of my past reading. Then, I sat down to watch an interview of one of the new conservative record label producers and an artist, to gain insight into their mindset. I've also consulted with trusted friends and mentors of mine in the arts community. What follows is a journey of discovery of my own thoughts and motivations surrounding this topic.



wtf is this?

Among the truther/freedom community, there seems to be a significant element of longing to be on the hip, edgy left-wing of culture. The one which people imagine existed in the 1960s with artists like Bob Dylan, Frank Zappa and Joan Baez. I constantly hear people saying things like "make the left liberal again," or "what happened to 'stick it to the man?'" This is in large part motivated by embarrassment. This inherent frowned-upon perception of being anything other than left-wing in the arts community. People want the artsy left to "come back around" to where they are; or else they want to cut themselves off completely. They want to live in some cultural silo where they can be that cool, edgy version of themselves that they are in their imagination. A place where they produce the cool, edgy protest music of their dreams while all their cool, edgy friends (also of their dreams) congratulate them. In response to this phenomenon, I am inclined to ask two questions:

1. Did this idealized 1960s version of the artistic left-wing ever really exist?
2. Is protest music the best and most culturally productive use of popular artistic expression?

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DID THIS IDEALIZED 1960S VERSION OF THE ARTISTIC LEFT-WING EVER REALLY EXIST?

There was substantial emphasis on the lack of resistance to establishment narratives. Of specific note was the silence or complicity of erstwhile counterculture figures during the era of runaway COVID policy abuse. How reasonable is it for us to expect more from them? I find it reasonable to challenge some of the more idealized characterizations of what happened among the artistic luminaries of the 1960s. Without going into an immersive history of the period (I have neither the qualification nor the time for that here).

The replacement of an old regime with a new regime characterized the '60s. The children of the greatest generation coming of age en-masse produced a feeling of revolution. But was this changing of the guard the product of a revolutionary movement, or was it inevitable with the passage of time? Was it as organic and spontaneous as it seemed, or was it a product of cultural engineering? Or, might one say that the potential revolutionary ardor of the '60s counter-

culture movement was neutered before it gained ground? The cause was stifled by events like the Kennedy and King assassinations. It was hindered by the injection of illicit and mind-altering drugs into the various associated scenes. Therefore, might one further assert that today's survivors of the movement (if there was such movement) are those who proved to be most amenable to the manipulations of the power structure?

I recommend reading the following as valuable explorations of these questions:

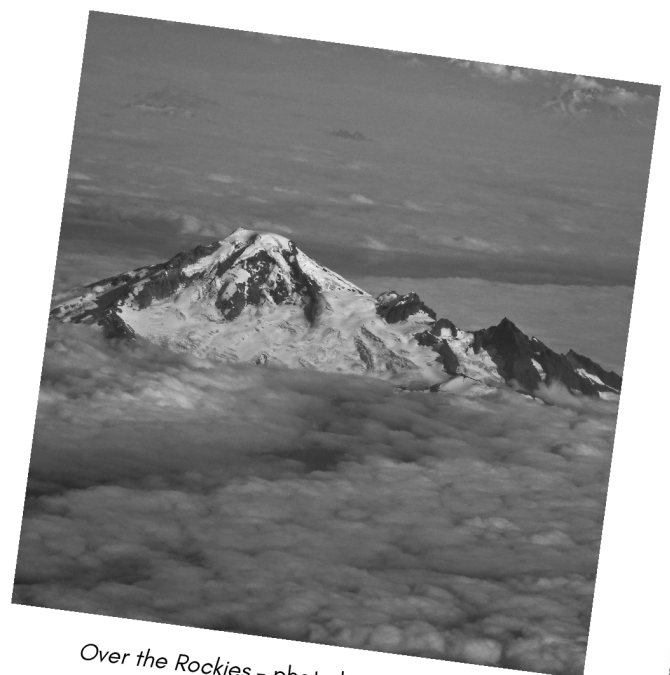
- **Chaos** by Tom O'Neil
- **JFK and the Unspeakable** by James Douglas
- **The Devil's Chessboard** by David Talbot
- **The two volume biography of Bob Dylan** by Ian Bell.

"It is remarkable how so many people who made their names... speaking truth to power were absent here"

- Jan Jekielik, on left-leaning 60s artists' response in the COVID era.

After his excursion into the world of heroin and subsequent motorcycle crash, Bob Dylan's self-imposed exile from the youth movement and counterculture during the latter part of the decade is particularly interesting. It strikes me as significant that this period followed close by a Christian conversion and explorations into the world of gospel music. I will leave the reader to make up his own mind about the true nature of the 1960s cultural movements.

At any rate, it is a bit of a strategic error to invest too much time (or spill too much ink and artistic energy) bemoaning the fact that the septa-going-on-octogenarian leftovers from the drug-addled and bewildering 1960s are not as savvy in today's information landscape as an exceptional 23 year old. Sure, they let some of us down. But they also gave us *Old Man* and *Heart of Gold*. In my view, that's grounds for fairly radical forgiveness.



Over the Rockies - photo by A. Minaudo

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On Protest Music

IS COOL, EDGY PROTEST MUSIC THE BEST AND MOST CULTURALLY PRODUCTIVE USE OF POPULAR ARTISTIC EXPRESSION?

"...what we're trying to do... is not a matter of partisan politics. It's not a matter of Left and Right. We're trying to create a new culture."

- Conservative record label boss (in the aforementioned interview)

The above quote was immediately followed by a description of several acts signed to the label, and the projects they are set to release. Songs like: a Trump the Don series, a song about the 2nd Amendment, and one titled *Because Hunter Got High*. This interview was part of the label's promotion effort for a specific song. The track aimed criticism at supposed Rock 'n' Roll rebels who meekly towed the line on things like mask mandates, and vaccinated-only concert venues. The label boss goes on to describe a Nashville in which many talented musicians and artists are not "getting their due," because they don't hold the correct opinions. Conspicuously, he does not explain how his label aims to be a home for free-thinking artists, who wish to be able to express themselves, artistically and politically, however they see fit. Rather, the feeling one gets is that if the artists' inclination is to write, record and release music carefully tailored to a right-wing audience (specifically, music infused with heavy-handed political messaging), the boss' label will happily partner with them to profit from that neglected market niche.

There are two mistakes made here. First, speaking as a conservative who wants to see non-revolutionary, and culturally-preserving artists begin to have an influence in our culture, I see the placement of cultural production downstream of politics as a tactical error. In fact, I believe this is the opposite of cultural production (we could call it "cultural waste production"). This inversion of the order ensures that the art being produced can only ever exist within its own silo or echo chamber.

I hope to draw a helpful analogy here (with no ill-intention) to the contemporary Christian music industry: preaching exclusively to the choir, while patting oneself on the back for one's pious evangelism. This a bad strategy for the artists, as well as our culture. By further separating us into disparate groups, who increasingly come together for no substantial cause, they only serve to facilitate the deliberately engineered disintegration of our culture by an elite power structure that desires total global control (Don't freak out, we're not going that deep!).

The second mistake is more philosophical, but the more important of the two. To reduce the artist to a face for a political viewpoint, and their artistic output to on-the-nose political (or even cultural) propaganda is to hopelessly blunt the most effective tool of political and cultural outreach. This is not about across-the-aisle deal making because the aisles of congress or parliament are not where human beings engage with art. We engage with art during our first kiss, our third date, our first dance, the birth of our second child, the passing of our last grandparent.

There may indeed be no more Rock 'n' Roll, but I still had my first dance to *Everybody's Talkin'* by Harry Nilsson. The blues may have lost its soul, but I still drank my first post-divorce beer to *The Thrill is Gone* by B. B. King. Sure, every pop star is bought and sold, but I still can't listen to *Everything I Do* by Bryan Adams without thinking of my lovely wife with a tear in my eye. I challenge you to examine the lyrics to *The Archer* by Taylor Swift and fail to relate, or to not feel the sharp pang of empathy with the artist. What is my point? It is two-fold.

First, the highest purpose of the popular artist is not political sloganeering. The highest purpose of the popular artist is to tell stories about the human experience; to remind us why we want to stay alive. It is to tell stories about love, sex, heartbreak, failure, pain, redemption, love, love, love... love. Second, it is that conservative artists are not exempt from this higher calling. Those who wish to have cultural influence can, as I see it, choose from two paths:

1. Enter a cultural silo and try very hard to get a hundred thousand Daily Wire subscribers to download a novelty song featuring Ben Shapiro. The artist strives to blow the dust off, and achieve number one status on Apple's download charts.
2. Have artists in relationship with other artists working their local scene as if toiling in the same garden (however big or small it may be). This enables them to create inspiring popular art while wielding a million tiny little personal and relational influences in the places where culture is truly created.

The first path guarantees that no one with outside opinions, will ever engage with your art. Nor will they take the time to discover who you are, or what you stand for. The second path provides at least a remote possibility that, by relating to your art on a human level, some might incline to give ear to one or more of your slightly crazy ideas. After all, it used to be the case that we expected artists we admired to have bizarre ideas! (Woman is the... what?... of the world, John Lennon?)

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On Protest Music

I wish to be clear that I do not intend to denigrate any efforts made to provide a home for artists who have suffered ostracism from the artistic community due to their unpopular opinions. I acknowledge the value of such endeavors and I applaud them insofar as they help artists fulfill their highest purpose. Nor is it my purpose to discourage artists from producing protest songs. Protest music is fine... great, even. It is just not the only thing I want to hear from conservative artists. Instead, my motivation for writing this article (having discovered it along the way) is to encourage these alternative sources of cultural output. I want to inspire them not to restrict themselves, but to set their artists free and explore the full spectrum of human expression with courage. Unless we can achieve that freedom, there will never be a true alternative to the engines of cultural creation, with which we have become dissatisfied.

FIN



Art by SaltUponWounds



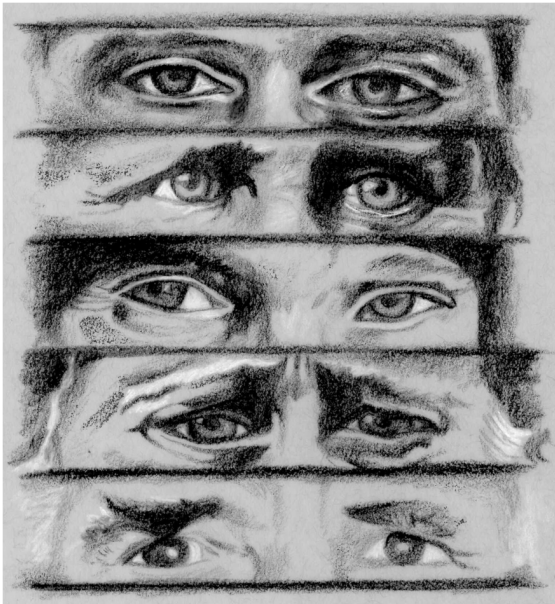
Excerpts from the Spooniverse

I meditated for hours and I saw within myself a dark black tunnel. Down, I fell, deeper into this tunnel. Into myself. Faster and deeper beyond thoughts, beyond comprehension. I lost myself in the activity of awareness and letting go, until I came to a place. Within, I beheld a cup. An empty cup. I was the cup. I was not filled with anything and swirling around the cup, around me, were tens of flying dark beasts. They made no sound except for whispers and suggestions. The suggestions were the thoughts which I had let go of. And I realized that I, the cup, was meant to be filled. And I did not know the person who should fill it, by any other name than Jesus. Jesus is the truth that should fill me. And I awoke.

I decided to take a walk down the hallway to get a drink of water. I stretched my legs slowly out of lotus position. My knees creaked. As I stepped gently on the carpet, a voice laughingly said, "You will not live to twenty six! I will kill you." I felt his presence and a cold chill and hurriedly got my water. Hands shaking, I ran to my bed and pulled the sheets over my head, praying to Jesus like a scared little child. I fell asleep in fear, not knowing if I would wake up.

-- Unknown Author

*"These are wells without water,
clouds that are carried with a
tempest; to whom the mist of
darkness is reserved forever"*
(2 Peter 2:17).



"Saint's Eyes" by S. From Top: Fr. Seraphim Rose, St. John of Kronstadt, Elder Ephraim of Arizona, St. Joseph the Hesychast, St. Paisios the Athonite

The apostle calls impure men wells without water--those who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities... But these, as natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed, speak of the evil things that they understand not (2 Peter 2:10, 12)

O waterless wells, adorned on all sides but nonetheless waterless, why are you called "wells," when nothing comes out of you but thirst? O you mere clouds and mist, why do you proudly inflate yourselves as though you would flood the entire world, when there is not even one drop of water in you--and when a breath of the Spirit of God will destroy and disperse you into nothing in one terrible moment? You care nothing for purity, and so you roll around in fleshly impurity; neither do you care about order, and so you detest authority; neither do you care about honor, and so you are shameless; neither do you care about God's will, and so you are self-willed; neither do you care about the knowledge of truth, and so you criticize that which you have never labored to understand. The mist of darkness is reserved forever for you. That is not God's will, but your own will. God did not ordain that road for you; you yourself chose it. God is just and will not be sinned against, but will render unto all according to their sins, and according to their unrepentant hearts.

What, brethren, are the fleshly desires of those who are wells without water and dry clouds and mist? What fruit comes from them but thistles and thorns that need no rain? Men with fleshly desires are no better than their desires, and they are blind because of them, and will be judged according to them.

-- Saint Nikolai Velimirovic

**The RIGHT answer
To the WRONG? uestion
Remains a wrong ANSWER
spend more time
with the QUESTION
-- Mano Elia**

Thanks for Reading

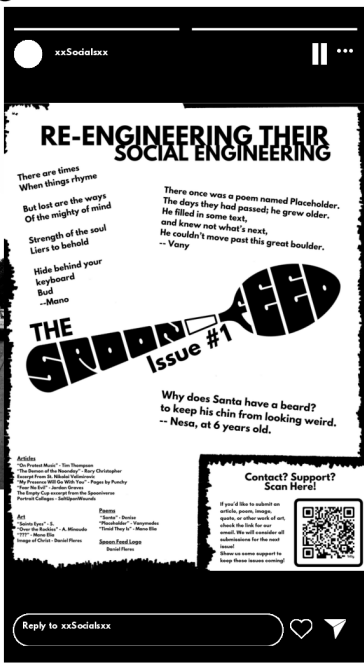
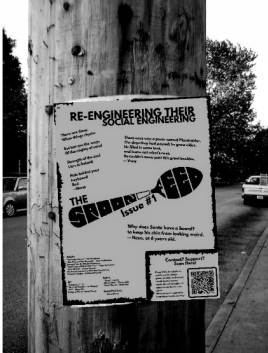


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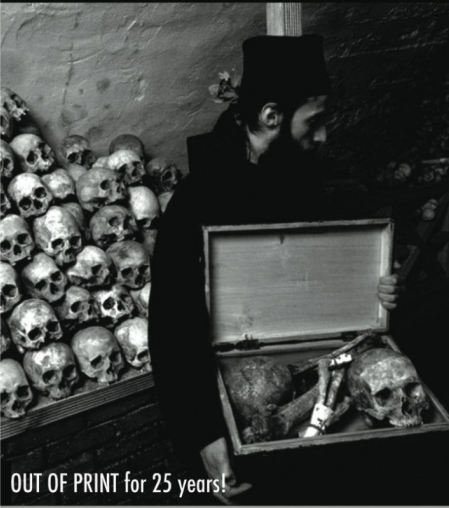
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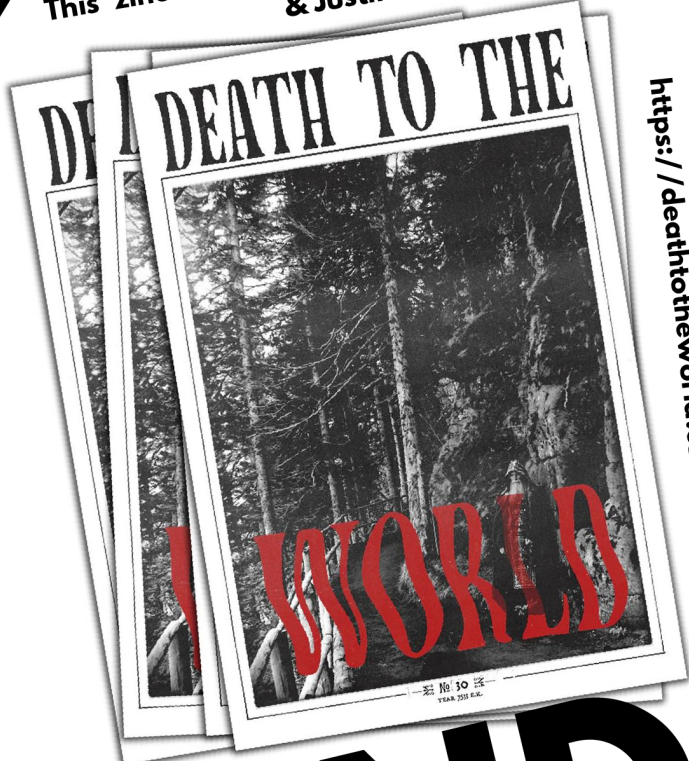
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