



# SUB/con

by Jonathan RUSSELL

# SUBcon

sundry words by Jonathan Russell

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## Spring Cleaning

The porch light  
in her head  
has gone out. No  
welcome for him  
anymore.

He shifts...  
tosses and turns  
on cardboard boxes  
that once held the  
future, but  
no more.

She sees him  
in the gutter  
through the bay windows  
of her mind,  
unrecognized  
as the man she  
once held  
between her thighs.

Her great revenge  
against the  
bum who dared to  
change.

“The flat bench and the keys”

Jenny had heard the Music of the Spheres  
With her fingers, she could coax it  
    from ivory and wire and wood  
Never had she seen It or tasted It or felt It  
It just shimmered  
    spinning gossamer webs around her  
For a bit, she could forget the hell  
    that her head had made of her life  
For a bit, she could not be Jenny  
    and not hate herself when she was

So I was thinking of getting my hair cut...

Then last night, God came to me in a dream

Not just any ordinary God, mind you

Not some Old Testament Jehovah

Or even the New Testament Christ

No! I'm talking of the American

Evangelical Revisionist God!!!

You know, the one who Smites the wicked  
and needs Loads of cash...

And I went down on my knees, in humble servitude

And I said, "Lord..."

Because you can't call Him "God,"

not to His face...

And I said, "Lord, why do You grace me,

your humblest servant, with your August Presence?"

"Son," He said...,

although, He didn't mean *that* Son

I don't think I'm Jesus, for chrissakes

"Son," He said, "why would you want to cut your hair?"

"What?" I asked, so a-feared

"Son," He began again, "when I made you,

I made you a Hippy-freak"

"Now I've given every human the ability to think freely,

to think for himself. And I like that I did that

for you folks, but," God continued, "sometimes

that means you make bad decisions, and that's

okay, too, sometimes.

"But, son, in you I created a Hippy-freak, and long hair

or no, that's what you'll always be."

Saying nothing, I looked at the Lord with

trembling awe in mine eyes

"Remember," God concluded, "you can change your spots,

but you can't change who you really are.

Now I'm off to visit David Crosby."

And in a puff of blue God-smoke, He was gone and I awoke

So now I'm thinking of bleaching it...

## War on Drags

Turning on the local news shows (if you still watch television) is often an exercise in frustration. With the increase in crime and school drop-out rates, it would seem like we're losing the multi-billion dollar effort known as the "War on Drugs." Far be it for me to just say no to such an awesome undertaking by our government, having our best interest at heart to be sure, but I'm pretty sure that the whole thing is a waste of time and money. America's drug policy should learn from Madison Avenue. What we need is a better ad campaign.

Listen: To our nation's youth, the word "drug" is just so confusing. We start off teaching kids that drugs are bad. They cause loss of control, loss of life, and even, heavens forbid, loss of desirability. But when we become ill, drugs help. Drugs are good. It's all very confusing to have to determine, when in adolescence, just what drug is good and which drug is evil, especially when the evil drugs tend to make the user feel just so darn good. It becomes even more confusing when the whims of a fickle society change so quickly. Why only thirty years ago, not only did it seem inevitable that pot would become legal, but cigarettes were considered fashionable. What is a child to think when his father, just before taking his evening dose of Valium, scolds the boy for sneaking a toke while his mother takes another swig of her gin and tonic?

Of course, the answer is easier than the government wants you to think. After all, many people make money by keeping the legal stuff legal and the illegal, well, illegal. Not only would many third-world dictatorships fall in our sister countries to the south, leaving them open for the still-alive-but-badly-bruised communist hordes, should certain drugs become legal, but think of all the wardens and guards in the empty jails all across the country. Who would they have left to incarcerate? There just aren't that many murderers and rapists in this country to support the penal system. On the other side, every time the FDA delays the appropriation of a new drug for over-the-counter consumption, hard-working scientists go home sullen and angry. So what if the drug causes unnatural hair-growth in lab animals? The American public needs a new antacid that can double as a miracle cure for male-pattern underarm baldness. Business is business, and the government makes money off of the confusion of the drug wars.

Still, I believe that the American people deserve choice. I propose a new campaign for drugs. First off, change the name. Let's call the evil drugs, like cocaine, heroin, and nicotine, "drags." No one likes a drag, and kids will be immediately be turned off by the totally square designation. The good drugs, such as aspirin, Ritalin, and nicotine, we'll call "digs," allowing even the most unhip geek in the high school a chance to do something cool every time he uses his inhaler. There might still be a problem with recreational drugs; American society just can't decide what its opinion is on things like alcohol. But alcohol has its own advertising campaign, so I'll let the professionals work that.

Once the names change, and children learn that a drag-addict is bad, but a dig-popper is wise and healthy, I think the rest will fall into place. We can certainly trust the medical profession and the government to sort out what's a drag and what's a dig. Until that time, I'll be fine with my Prozac, trying not to drool on my keyboard.

## Little White Lies

Has anyone else seen the new commercial “Beef—The Other Dung-Colored Meat”? Seems to me that red meat is getting a bad rap lately. I can’t imagine why, though. Just because eating a burger is slightly less dangerous than chain smoking doesn’t mean Americans should give up a good thing. That’s why I really, truly respect the blatant lies put forth by the Pork Council. They have these nice pretty commercials of upper middle class people on the go cooking up pork because it is all sorts of safe now that they’ve classified it as the “other white-meat.”

Personally, I enjoy the commercial that has the medieval food taster sitting down to the scrumptious pork dinner fit for the king. The taster puts a bit of pork in his mouth and begins to retch, then keels over, and everyone runs out of the dining hall. Of course, the taster was just joking—turns out, he wanted all the pork to himself. Then just before the scene fades, the taster gets trichinosis from the poorly cooked meat and keels over again. Well, okay, they usually don’t show that last part—too brutal for the children.

I think it is important to realize two things about this ad campaign: First, the “color” of meat has very little to do with its real color. If it did, we’d have categories of blue, grey and mauve meat, not terribly appetizing. And second, people will believe anything that advertisers tell them. Try this: ask one of your co-workers if pork is white meat. Unless you work with a chef, your fellow employee will say, “Of course!” And he’ll be wrong. Explain the situation, and see how adamant he is about something he knows absolutely nothing about. Suddenly, he’s on the Pork Council’s payroll.

What determines the color of meat? The rule is simple: If it is a mammal, the meat is red. Everything else can be white meat, sea gull, snake, shark, or slug..., but not pork. Remember, pigs are mammals, too.

So why does the Pork Council perpetuate this lie, and why does America need a Pork Council in any case? Ah, well, I assume that has to do with dollars. Back in the 80’s, pork farmers and the investors in pork futures began to lose money as people started listening to the health community. I guess the AMA had better ads, back then. For some reason, a lot of us decided that fatty, cholesterol-laden pork products just weren’t fit for consumption, anymore. The farmers and futurists formed a Pork Council to set everything right. And this they did by lying to you and me.

I’d prefer to say that we either eat the stuff because we like the flavor, or we don’t eat it because we’re wary of the health risks, but, really, most people eat pork because it’s ubiquitous. As one of their commercials states, “It is the most widely eaten meat in the world.” Nevermind that 3 out of the 5 major religions ban it outright. Pork is here to stay; I just hope I can say the same thing about the pigs.



## Song XI

O my Little Child  
O my Little Girl  
Welcome to the world that is created  
For Your laughter and Your joy  
And upon us is this season  
Of Falsehoods and Temptations  
And upon Your very head  
Lies the responsibility for these crimes

O my Little Child  
O my Beautiful Dream  
Can conflict be far behind?  
Innocence and understanding  
Biology and Freedom (what choice?)  
But should none of this ring True  
Pledge no allegiance to the past  
Give no credence to the future

O my Little Child  
Oh my Love and Desire  
Despondent for reasons ancestral  
You may decide not to feel  
Shut down, build masks, play pretend  
And let the blame overtake You  
And end the world that is created  
For Your laughter and Your joy

October — and the Sound of It

and I cannot fight this wind  
    Our bond breaks  
I am gone  
separated from the branch  
and spiraling down beneath the sky  
the world rushes up towards me  
and twisting and turning through the breeze  
I'm sure that this is the end  
but then I land  
    Alone  
    Soon to be gathered up  
and placed within the safety of numbers

This is my fall  
    My Autumn  
This is my October

remember laughing with me  
    About the silly things  
    That some considered important  
remember holding my hand  
    Watching the fire burn in my heart  
    And the dying light within my eyes  
this is what Fate meant  
    For what I let happen  
I did not fight that wind

That was my fall  
    My Autumn  
That was my October

    What causes the Earth to rumble  
        is often  
            the stillness  
                of nothing...

## Song XVI

hey, man, what is this life  
dreams don't last forever  
and you're never the same thing twice

watch ribbons in young girls hair  
listen boys playing on mud soaked ground  
sun sun sun breeze birds fly into heaven  
what is this life

old man talk your years  
this park bench won't hold us here 'til doomsday  
talk your years into my head  
tell me 'bout these wars you fought  
learn me lessons old man

rook to knight 4 good one old man  
I should have seen it coming  
smell that air old timer  
life is grand today I tell you  
green green green blue sky bright and clear  
smell that air old timer

what is this life, ma'am  
husband gone left alone  
feed the pigeons smile read best seller  
happy and gay as ever 'cause this what you've got  
park life is your life ma'am

wisdom is child lips  
wrinkles around eyes  
butterfly on finger  
what is this life

death can take me any day  
life is a bit more precious that way  
what is this life

## Thin

Thin the Line of fire  
Ever losing control  
I cannot seem to make this last  
My passion equals zero

Thin the Moment of truth  
Realize who's to blame  
What's done is done is dumb  
Hallow'd be thy shame

Thin is the art of the deal  
Thin is the edge of the knife  
Thin is a bastard's appeal  
Thin is a way of life

Thin the Eyes of the world  
Azure under ozone  
Follow accepted behavior  
Deny what is unknown

Thin the Soul of man  
Cancer deep within  
Turn me off—Tune me out  
Better dead than thin

## Song XVIII

For Pthelo

You know I've tried to follow You  
My God, You know I have  
and every threat You posed to me  
I tried to shrug it off  
and every day You gave to me  
I tried to make things better  
and every trial You convicted me  
My God, You know I've tried

What cancer have You given me?  
My God, it must be fatal  
and every threat You posed to me  
I tried to make me well  
and every day You gave to me  
I tried to make it better  
and every trial You sentenced me  
My God, this ends with death

I've wasted my life away, my God  
channeling dirt and reaping shit  
I'm taking my life away from You, my God  
and I'm walking a different path

I looked into my heart, today  
My God, I thought it empty  
and every threat You pose to me  
I'll learn to forgive You  
and every day that You give to me  
I'll make my life better  
and every trial You strengthen me  
My God, I swear I'll overcome

I'd wasted my past away, my God  
channeling dirt and reaping shit  
I've taken control of my life today, my God  
and I'm leaving You behind

## Song XIII

thanks to KVjr

yes, yes, yes:

A man is judged by his work  
the very stuff he leaves behind  
for future generation to pick  
and poke  
and dismantle

Soon after a man's death  
his work is held in a kind light  
... softens the edges  
... smooths the wrinkles

A decade or so later  
The critics are able to tell  
the man was not everything  
the last ten years have made him

Once a century passes  
Truth, being less fickle,  
finds it right amongst opinion  
and should the man's work  
still be fresh and held in high regard  
Something can be said for that man

... although the man is still dead

But, lo, and behold:  
A woman's work is never done  
Can she never die?  
Does the child from her womb  
make her a product of her offspring?

... or have I confused cause and effect again  
My apologies...  
And death still ends it  
whether man or woman  
So in life we should be judged  
and reap the benefit then  
else this world will continually be  
A bunch of people  
paying homage to the dead

yes, yes, yes:

Return to life  
Each day be its own reward  
and being Human not such a bad thing  
Let us Sing  
..., Dance  
..., Laugh  
..., Teach  
Forgetting never that children are mirrors  
and should one surprise us  
with sadness or anger  
look first to its idols  
... its teachers

And here in my thirteenth song  
I've spelled out my wishes  
..., hopes  
..., fears  
Romantic, I am  
for I believe in *your* soul  
and your light be unwavering

May we learn then  
that death just ends it  
Much more can be done while in life  
letting the spirit infuse your meat  
without which  
meat would just rot  
and spirit would disappear

## Song X

of colors and waves  
flow through what becomes  
my universe and myself  
can never understand the  
tide and ebb and flow  
with the mind  
a powerful tool  
filled with secrets  
dark passages  
that the self never knows about

earth is food for us  
sun is food for earth

the moist soil that grows  
the tree that bears  
the fruit which falls and feeds  
the child who learns  
the ways of life  
learns the ways of death

hidden in this cycle is joy  
rapture of the hues that burst in bright heat  
in the back of my mind  
ecstasy of the beat that drums in deep rhythm  
in the center of my heart  
joy of the color  
joy of the beat  
I am vibration with everything  
I am nothing at all  
joy of the universe  
enter through the mind  
understands the complexity  
involved in the singularity  
of the beginning of a universe  
that has no beginning and no end  
although time ends  
and begins  
and I end  
and I begin  
enter the time complex universe not ending  
begin the mind singular involved not understand-  
ing

it's okay  
just relax

there is nothing ugly in the universe  
there is nothing wrong with your mind  
do not let fear stop you dead  
before you've learned how to die

in hot blasts of crimson and gold  
throbbing deep within the light  
it cheats oblivion by dying  
flames tear it to pieces  
ashes are scattered by the wind  
no fear; it has cheated oblivion  
death snuffs out the pyre

souls converge to meet and talk  
while the flesh remains alone  
so wrapped tight in material  
to keep the others out  
but spirits know another way and  
gather before their keepers  
should the men open their hearts  
but just to see them

cold and silent is the blackened nest  
empty but for the ashes  
and the soul that takes form again  
cheating oblivion  
soul becomes material  
meat warms the spirit  
rising from death  
again  
the cycle

of colors and waves  
of sounds and sights  
of experience for nothing else  
but the experience itself  
we see what we make  
of our childhood dreams and fears  
and do these dreams protect us  
from the darkest of the fears  
of emptiness and infinity  
of cold and death and nothing  
or do these fears eclipse  
the brightest of those dreams

## Song VIII

Gathering up the sticks and shards  
After a storm  
The boy looks towards the horizon  
With moist eyes  
He remembers the tale told  
Some time ago  
Of the flames and the rising  
From the Ashes  
Glorious it would be to rise  
From the Ashes  
To leave that pain he found  
Some time ago  
And so the boy dreams  
With moist eyes  
And gathers up the sticks and shards  
After a storm  
Ready to burn himself again



## Song IX

Should I ever find peace  
And with the Universe  
I am One  
I'd still be alone, without you

What has been ended  
In my mind, put at rest  
Cannot escape the blood  
Echoing through my heart

How can I be so foolish  
Wishing to ignore the barriers  
The walls too slippery to climb  
Cliffs too treacherous to tread  
Still, I map out destinations  
That intertwine with your travels  
I analyze  
I poke; I prod  
I try to make it fit

But something is missing  
In all of this  
And I wonder if you think of these  
What might and could have been  
I wonder if there is a chance  
To kiss your lips again

Then we talk and talk and talk of things  
That matter so little to us  
And, yet, when you need  
I will call  
To talk and talk and talk

Why is your life so hard  
So lonely; so dead  
I comfort you with piece of mind  
That I really wish I had  
Do you know how I feel  
You know how I am  
But then you may not realize  
The depth of the emptiness inside

And maybe these are rantings  
Words written in despair  
I should learn to accept what little time was ours  
And take it as that  
But still, I am alone with that peace  
And I still love you

## Song VI

for Joseph and Spiro

Hunt, eat and fuck  
(Hunt, eat and fuck)  
Ritual for Survival  
Must not break the line

Gods of Beasts  
Goddess of the Hearth  
Bequeath unto us  
    so we do not break the line

Ritual of Ten Thousand  
(Cannot break the line)

Feel, think, exist  
(Feel and think of the self)  
I think; therefore I am perfect  
Keep the focus on me

Homes and national borders  
Single Identities under  
    the banners of Truth  
Keep the focus on me

Rituals of five billion  
(Focus on me)

Be, unite and enrich  
(Together, at last)  
Experience the whole  
Realization of the One

Past the animal — spirit  
Past the self — conscience  
Into the rhythm —  $\infty$ /one  
A part of it in all — rave

Ritual of the new  
(The realization of it all)

## Song XV

I have often thought  
blue was the color of skies and blood  
silence was the sound of night and beginning  
bitter was the taste of tea and victory

I have often thought  
I knew wrong from left  
death from taxes  
restless from old

I have often failed  
to achieve my potential  
I must sweat  
toil  
burden

I have often given up  
out  
in

I have often failed

Kill None—

Universal  
Microscopic  
Can't relate to flesh  
Flesh is not forever

## When I Joins K

i am a political prisoner  
They will hold me here until my death  
Their policies make no sense  
i beg Them for mercy  
i beg Them for forgiveness  
and there is mercy  
and there is forgiveness  
but Their laws are stifling  
and i end up breaking their laws again  
and i end up saying something disagreeable  
and i end up believing in other truths  
the judgment of the Court is upon me once again  
and They will hold me here until my death

## Time Piece(s)

### Now

look back cannot	Stuck
forward later	In
maybe thinking	The
reach back pull forth	Now

once I used to	Stuck
know what to do	In
useless knowledge	The
fading reason	Now

someday you'll see	Stuck
never complete	In
made up stories	The
tied to liquid	Now

### The Cult of the New

I like	I buy	I make	I think	I am
things	class	squat	not	just
in small	with small	for small	of small	a small
little	little	little	little	little
nuggets	plastic	houses	issues	human
soft and	wrapped and	sleep and	war and	death and
easy	ready	idle	crises	life
to chew	to show	to dream	to end	to waste

### Who I am

I am a writer... in a world full of poets  
    Troubadours with voices more meaningful than mine  
I am an artist... in a world full of painters  
    Surrealists and neo-abstractors with bright and colorful pallets  
I am a singer... in a world full of rock stars  
    Accomplished soloists the very gods kneel down to hear  
I am a person... in a world full of cameras  
    Images of perfection that reduce my humanity  
I am...

### Red Light, Green Light

no  
longer in  
the arms of sleep  
I rise and catch the 8:15  
make it to work and try to think  
of ways to increase my pay maybe I'll ask  
my boss to consider the quality of work I submit  
maybe the old man'll just keel over and drop dead and  
we'll all finally get some peace surely if the staff all got together  
our demands would finally be met lunch  
time now  
not much work done  
hopefully no one will notice  
STOP

go  
back to work  
try to concentrate  
on these forms until five  
no such thing as overtime here  
so I'm ready to leave by 4:45 hoping  
to catch the express back home quite packed  
rubbing shoulders with business suits that all look  
like me  
STOP

throw  
my briefcase  
in to my car like it?  
brand new sports v8 turbo  
my wife says it's a second childhood  
as I speed along at eighty miles in residential  
areas swerving from dogs and kids and home is up  
just ahead eat dinner watch the news and get ready for  
bed I'll do it again tomorrow  
and for eternity  
good night  
STOP

(except for weekends; they're all mine)

## Song V

Listen:

UGLY MAN sit down and ponders  
JUST WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?  
he'll get no answer  
ugly world keep slowly spinning  
ugly life, keep on living  
no reason

BEAUTIFUL MAN look at reflection  
JUST WHAT COULD COMPARE?  
there is no truth  
beauty is art is nothing  
beauty keep UGLY MAN living  
no reason

GREY Clouds obscure  
white Sun OBSCURE  
black NIGHT forever

LIVING MAN say each and every day  
JUST WHAT ELSE IS THERE?  
life is what he make it  
living is ugly sometimes  
living keeps beauty keeps world  
NO REASON?

why not?

Time is...

time  
is not  
a Butterfly taking wing  
Alight—alighting  
upon the petals of  
Daffodils  
Sweet aroma  
drifting through gardens  
where Sunlight  
cascades in ribbons  
of warmth on  
the tongue Sticking out  
between pursed  
lips of A child catching  
soapy bubbles  
tasting their bitter End  
from the  
wand held by mother  
She  
whispers the bubbles  
to life  
as child dances through  
bright Beams  
chasing, never  
Catching  
a Monarch  
alight  
on  
a daffodil  
is not  
Time



## Song XVII

Ever cheerful, we sell out the left  
Ever cheerful, we give up our right  
and hand a loaded gun to our enemy

Ever diligent, we rip apart the pack  
Ever diligent, we emasculate our pride  
and kill the creative spark within us

Ever wholesome, we wallow in the filth  
Ever wholesome, we celebrate our swine  
and point the accusing finger at ghosts

Ever brilliant, we prosecute the image  
Ever brilliant, we sacrifice our ideals  
and deny the ugly truth of our actions

— *meanwhile*  
closing time and you realize  
you've left it all behind  
your words your logic your mind  
you wonder briefly  
if it isn't too late  
to save yourself this fate  
I've been there, too, my friend  
and I can assure you  
you can't  
—

Ever elusive, we may win the battle  
Ever elusive, we sometimes reach our goals  
but forget the noble purpose of our quest

## Casual Causality

Casual causality

I am a casualty

Does casual cause

Cause a casual calamity?

## Falling Off at Sea Level

Against the medium  
no fortune; no future  
You struggle for something  
you'll never achieve

No, wait, it's the balance  
of sub-urban, sub-human  
Your life can get no worse  
when there's no way to improve

Your drive-thru heart  
your convenience store brain  
Weak-willed and loathing  
your shopping mall soul

Whatever you do  
it won't come to much  
Nothing begets nothing  
and that's the most you've ever had

## Song XX

I got problems  
    ah, shit, you know how it is  
same crap as you  
We're better off than some  
    I guess  
    seems this lady with makeup  
and purse got caught on  
the wrong side of a junkie  
    I guess  
no  
    father kids all alone  
ah, shit, you know how it is  
some crap you hear  
    I got problems  
with fate that'll hand out  
winning numbers to the inept  
    or just plain  
I guess  
lucky stiffs strike it rich  
    a fate that'd kill mothers  
    ah, shit, I got problems you know  
how it is  
my beer is flat  
    my feet are flat  
    my wife is fat  
problems, ah, shit it is  
    you know how I got  
no  
    father mother alone I guess  
    Holy Father release this  
ah, shit  
mortal coil

