

APOCALYPSE

AND BEHOLD

I saw an Angel
 (all his cells were electronic eyes)
and I heard a supersonic voice
saying: Open up thy typewriter and type
 and I beheld a silver projectile in flight
 which went from Europe to America in twenty minutes
and the name of the projectile was the H-Bomb
 (and hell flew with it)
 and I saw a kind of flying saucer fall from heaven
And the seismographs plotted a shock like an earthquake
and all the artificial planets fell to earth
 and the President of the National Radiation Council
 the Director of the Atomic Energy Commission
 the Secretary of Defense
 were all deep in their sheltering caves
and the first Angel set off the warning siren
 and from the heavens rained Strontium 90
 Caesium 137
 Carbon 14
and the second Angel set off the warning siren
and all eardrums for 300 miles were shattered
by the sound of the explosion
all retinas which saw the flash of the explosion
were seared throughout those same 300 miles
 the heat at ground zero was like that of the sun
and steel and iron and glass and concrete were burnt up
 and sucked into the sides to fall as radioactive rain
and there was loosed a hurricane wind the force of Hurricane Flora
and three million cars and trucks flew up into the skies
and crashed into buildings bursting
 like Molotov cocktails
and the third Angel set off the warning siren
and I beheld a mushroom cloud above New York
 and a mushroom cloud above Moscow
 and a mushroom cloud above London
 and a mushroom cloud above Peking

fearful and terrible beyond all measure
and like a bear or an eagle or a lion with the wings of aircraft
many propellers numerous antennae eyes of radar
its brain a computer programmed to give the Number of the Beast
roaring through hosts of microphones

and it gave orders unto men
and all men went in fear of the Machine
Likewise I saw the aircraft in my vision
aircraft faster than sound bearing 50-megaton bombs
and no man guided them but the Machine alone
and they flew toward every city of the earth
each one precisely on target

And the Angel said: Canst thou see where Columbus Circle was?

Or the place where the United Nations Building stood?

And where Columbus Circle was

I saw a hole which could contain a 50-story building
and where the United Nations Building stood
I saw only a great grey cliff covered with moss and duck shit
with wave-swept rocks beyond it and sea gulls crying
And in the heavens I beheld a mighty light

like a million-megaton explosion
and I heard a voice saying unto me: Switch on thy radio
and I did switch it on and heard: BABYLON IS FALLEN

BABYLON THE GREAT IS

FALLEN

and all transmitters in the world gave the same news
And the Angel gave me a check drawn on the National City Bank
and said unto me: Go thou cash this check
but no bank would for all the banks were bankrupt
Skyscrapers were as though they had never been
A million simultaneous fires yet not one firefighter
nor a phone to summon an ambulance nor were there any ambulances
nor was there enough plasma in all the world

to help the injured of a single city

And I heard another voice from heaven saying:

Go forth from her my people

Lest ye be contaminated by the Radiation

lest ye be smitten by the Microbes
 by the Anthrax Bomb
 by the Cholera Bomb
 by the Diphtheria Bomb
 by the Tularemia Bomb
 They will behold the great disaster on TV
 for the Bomb is fallen on great Babylon
 and they will weep and wail for the Beloved City
 pilots will look down from their planes afraid to approach
 the ocean liners will stay anchored far away
 for fear lest the atomic leprosy should fall on them
 On every waveband there was a voice heard saying:
 ALLELUIA
 And the Angel carried me away into the wilderness
 and the wilderness blossomed with laboratories
 and there the Devil carried out his atomic tests
 and I beheld the Great Whore riding on the Beast
 (the Beast was a technological Beast all slogan-bedecked)
 and the Whore came clutching all manner of checks and bonds
 and shares and commercial documents
 her harlot's voice sang drunkenly as in a night club
 in her left hand she bore a cup of blood
 and she was drunk with the blood of all those tortured
 all those purged all those condemned by military courts
 all those sent to the wall
 and of whoever had resisted upon earth
 with all the martyrs of Jesus
 and she laughed with her gold teeth
 the lipstick on her lips was blood
 and the Angel said unto me: the heads which thou dost see on
 the Beast are dictators,
 and their horns are revolutionary leaders who are not dictators yet
 but they will be later
 and these shall make war against the Lamb
 and the Lamb shall overcome them
 And he said unto me: The nations of the world are split into 2 blocks
 (Gog and Magog)

yet the 2 blocks are in truth but the one
(which is against the Lamb)
and fire will fall from heaven to consume them both
And in the Earth's biology I saw a new Evolution
It was as though a New Planet had appeared in space
For death and hell were cast into the sea of nuclear fire
and neither were there peoples as before
but I saw rather a new species freshly evolved
a species not made up of individuals
but rather one sole organism
made up of men in place of cells
and all biologists were mightily amazed
But men were free and in their union were one Person—
not a Machine—
and the sociologists were equally astounded
Such men as had no part in this new species
were but as fossils
The Organism enclosed the whole roundness of the planet
round as a cell (but planetary in dimensions)
and the Cell was garlanded as a Bride awaiting the Bridegroom
and the Earth rejoiced
(as when, dividing, the first cell was wedded)
And there was a New Canticle
and all other inhabited planets heard the Earth singing
and it was a love-song

[R. P.-M.]