



# RFD

WINTER 1974-75 • 50¢



RFD is a magazine for country faggots to  
Break down their isolation and fulfill their  
needs for

R.F.D. is a magazine for country faggots so  
they can share their lives.

~~isolation, = special needs not met by  
regulator~~

RFD is for

RFD is the expression of rural faggots in  
~~the need to~~ come into contact with other  
faggot men to speak to their pleasure joys  
and sorrows they share

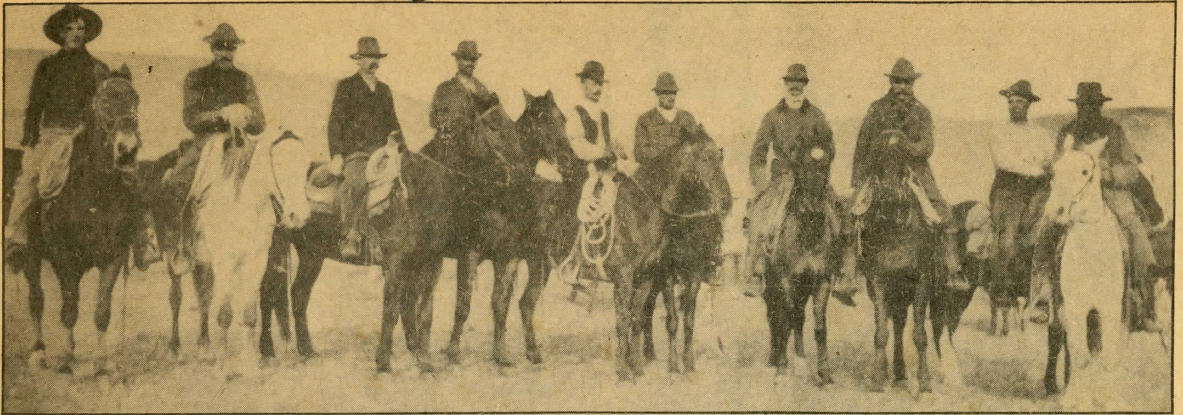
RFD is the expression of country faggot men  
to share their work, pleasure, joys and  
sorrow with other rural fairies ~~whoever~~  
~~where ever they live what ever their situation~~

RFD is an expression of country men to share  
their faggot dreams and fairy delights

RFD is the Fairy Dreams and faggot delights  
of country men



# RFD • Winter Solstice 1974



## RECKLESS FRUIT DELIGHT

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Olaf: 4, 21, 32  
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36, 40, back cover

RFD is published four times a  
year by RFD, P.O. Box 161,  
Grinnell, Iowa 50112 and is  
printed by the Iowa City Women's  
Press, 116½ East Benton St.,  
Iowa City, Iowa 52240.

### Contents

|    |                             |                     |        |
|----|-----------------------------|---------------------|--------|
| 2  | Letters                     | country faggots     |        |
| 5  | Elwha                       | Faygele             | Wash.  |
| 6  | Poem                        | Thomas Rygh         | Wisc.  |
| 7  | Short Story                 | John Blankenbeckler | Mass.  |
| 8  | Orchard                     | Carl                | Ore.   |
| 11 | More from MEN               | here and there      |        |
| 12 | Northwest Men's Gathering   |                     |        |
|    | fuzzies                     | Richard             | Ore.   |
|    | notes                       | Alder               | Wash.  |
|    | notes                       | Billie              | Ore.   |
| 13 | Poem                        | Bill McNutt         | Ore.   |
| 14 | Living on the North Pacific | Brent               | B.C.   |
| 17 | Forest Folk                 | Olaf                | Wisc.  |
| 22 | Poems                       | Terry Bedley        | Calif. |
| 23 | Solstice Supplement         | Allan               | Ore.   |
| 24 | Coloring page               |                     |        |
| 26 | Wreath instructions         |                     |        |
| 26 | Carols                      |                     |        |
| 28 | Dance: Brighton Camp        |                     |        |
| 30 | When We are Snowed In       | Billie              | Ore.   |
| 33 | Towards a Gay Tarot         | Carl                | Ore.   |
| 38 | Poems                       | Gavin               | N.C.   |
| 39 | Gay Men and Children        | Richard             | Ore.   |
| 40 | Poem                        | Gavin               | N.C.   |
| 41 | Road to Malcom              | Stewart             | Iowa   |
| 47 | Poems                       | Brent               | B.C.   |
| 48 | Country Lover               | Gregg               | Ariz.  |
|    | Inside Back Cover           | George              | Ore.   |

We hurried with canning the applesauce and cutting the wood. The truck was loaded with boxes of walnuts and pears, bedding, books, chairs, a table, glue, rulers and paper. And then we wobbled down the driveway looking like Dust Bowl refugees. Off to Eugene to put together the winter RFD. From Wolf Creek, Olympia, Portland, Port Angeles, Junction City and Horton. For over a week, half a dozen faggots buzzed around the little office down by the old train station. As the magazine grew, we squatted in friendly kitchens and slept on various floors. Some of us got right speedy, some of us slowed down, but mostly it was good working together. Then by ones and twos, folks hitched back to their farms, and now two are left. One is sitting here writing; the other has gone for a walk, crying. We are tired and need to get back to the country. Across the street a young man ambles along the tracks with a tripod and a camera, looking. I wish I were home, wandering with a camera, finding pictures for the next RFD.





# ORCHARD

Growing trees, especially fruit trees, has always had an aura of healthy benevolence for me. Maybe it's elementary school Arbor Day rituals; I would get excited by deserts being turned into productive land through green belts; towns that have fruit trees along streets seem warm and welcoming. Fruit trees as an economic activity strike me as less tied into private property than most agriculture: the harvest is so long after the initial planting that the greedy might choose soybeans or cotton or tobacco. Fruit country, in my mind (despite California fruit agribusiness), is traditionally attached to Jeffersonian yeomanry, hill country people who neither employ nor are employed. And the natural process itself never ceases to amaze me: a large perfectly shaped pear growing out of a tiny bud and flower, with so little tampering from man. Plant it, feed it occasionally, a little pruning, and then annually the fruit just appears. . . .

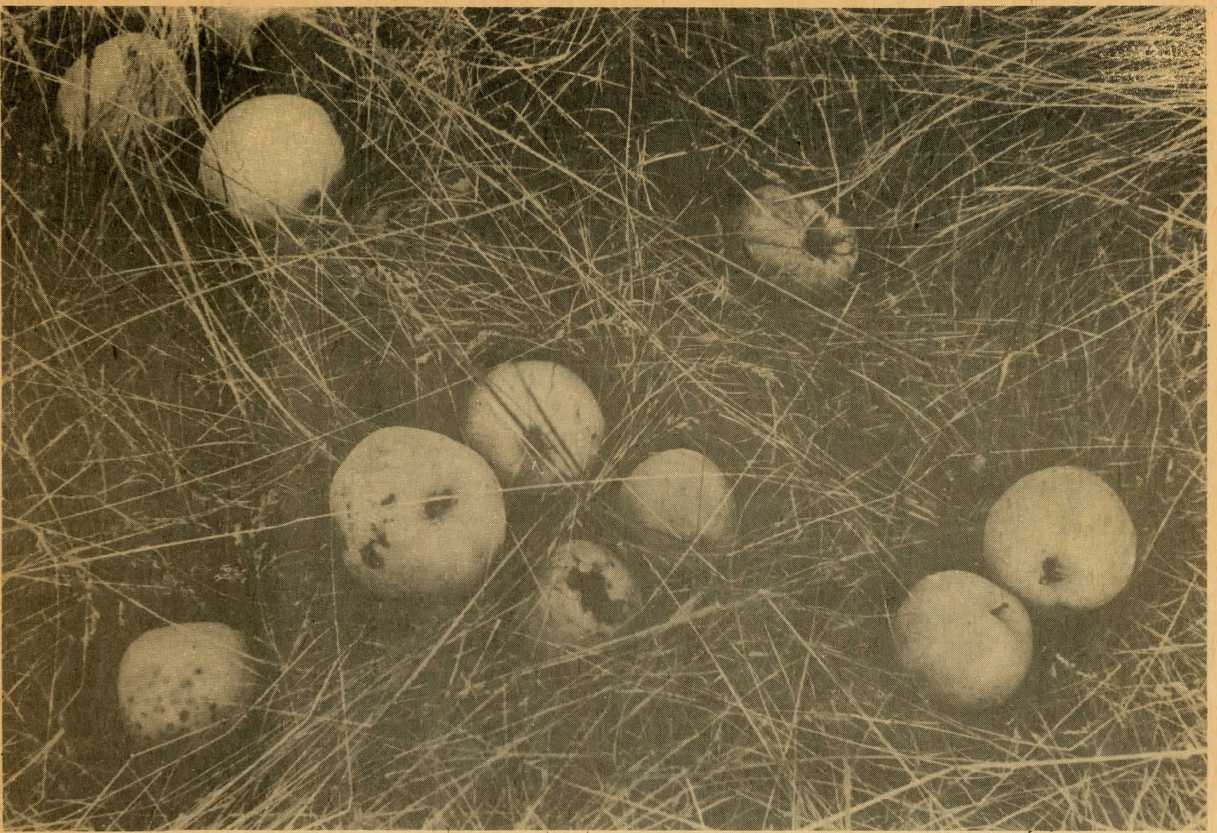
So when we bought land, an old farm in the hills of Southern Oregon, the first thing I did was prune the old orchard, approximately 40 fruit and nut trees. They were in terrible condition

and I didn't know much, but after a bit of reading and much hesitation, I waded in. It turned out to be a very exciting experience. Now four years later, the old trees are back in good shape, and I continue to enjoy the pruning ritual each winter. (In our mild winters, any time during the dormant season is ok to prune). Apparently most fruit trees are to some extent man-made creatures. Some trees (black walnuts, wild cherries) are in a relatively natural state: others have been cross-bred so that without constant care they rapidly lose their fruit bearing capacity. These heavily bred varieties need the most pruning; English walnuts and most cherries need least. "It is as foolish to prune a cherry as it is not to prune a peach".

A neglected tree also gives clues to how to prune: the parts which should have been pruned will die first. I enjoy having a sense of why to prune or not prune, rather than just following the book.

Soon after I moved to the land, I decided to start a new orchard. It might be a way to subsist in the future--enough to trade or sell, as





well as to eat and put up. Trees survive in the rather poor clay soil we have. And once they are established, they survive without irrigation--a real plus in our drought ridden summer months. In fruit growing country nearby I heard of a nursery which sold saplings at \$1 each-- a come-on deal, and they only carry varieties which are left over from the warehouse after orchardists take what they want. But all local varieties; and a good selection. After more work than I had bargained for in digging 100 big holes, I planted a selection of varieties which grow well in our region: prunes, plums, peaches, cherries, apples, filberts. I also tried a few apricots, which are marginal in our area (they are thriving better than many others--but whether they'll bear often is as yet unknown). I found it's best not to assume that friends will help; but many did, and that made me feel very good.

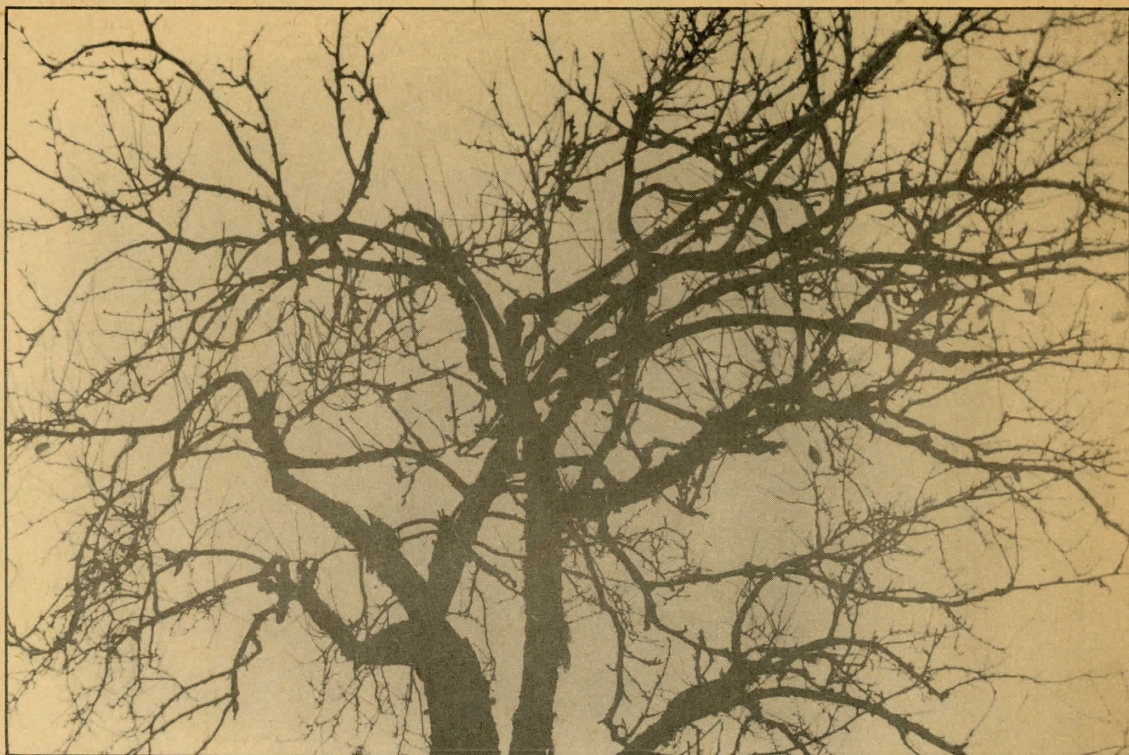
In the subsequent three years I have extended the size of the orchard, and gone through a regular cycle of the seasons. Spring is excitement of new planting, and seeing the dormant twigs finally put out new leaves and blossoms; summer increasing despair at my impotence in defending the young trees against attack; relief when the fall rains relieve me from the tiresome irrigating; and winter, rest and recovery-- and after a month or two, renewed enthusiasm replacing the trees that perished.

The first year the deer quickly pruned the new

trees prematurely. But after the rains ended, I fashioned little burlap bags of bloodmeal to repel them. I have found this works well, although neighbors with fewer trees and more deer despair of anything short of a cyclone fence.

This crisis had barely subsided when I noticed many of the small cherry and apple trees with wilted leaves. It took some weeks to find the culprit: a worm like borer, about 1/2" to 3/4" long. It bores in through the bark and sucks away at the cambium (the layer of live functioning tissue which conducts sap). The bark then died, becoming soft and saw-dust-like; and when the borers completely girdle the tree, it dies. Nearly half the new trees had died by fall. The local organic expert suggested digging them out with a sharp pointed tool: that works fine for big trees, but the borers stayed far ahead of me, and with tiny trunks they could kill a tree before I noticed. I even was tempted by the county agent's chemical solution: but the borers were indifferent to modern science's best. Finally, that winter, some neighbors found an article about the borer, which suggested physically obstructing their egg laying part of their cycle (worm-fly-egg). So the following spring we wrapped the trunks from ground level to first branch with a few layers of newspaper. We bought a bundle of a recent issue of the local paper, and as we wrapped each tree the same headline came up repeatedly: "WOMEN WEeping, MEN IN DAZE ". Not





the best of omens. But the only trees that were attacked by the borers the second year were where the newspaper hadn't covered the tree properly. Success!

But that season, our unchallenged pest-champion appeared--the grasshopper. The seven plagues of Egypt took on a vivid new meaning, as I watched the grasshoppers cluster on the trees, first stripping the greenery and then the bark. Turkeys, someone suggested... but the turkey farmer said that it would take a lot of turkeys to save the now-numbering 160 trees. Apparently a turkey will chase the same grasshopper until it catches the insect--which may be quite a while! The county agent was contemptuous of our choice not to spray 17 times a year, as they suggest. "Hire an airplane and spray"--disregarding the notion that an airplane rental would cost more than the total outlay for trees and irrigation pipe. Finally, we covered each tree with nylon net from the fabric store--a relatively time consuming job; but the \$40 or so saved most of the trees, and the distortions in their growth were minor.

With renewed enthusiasm, I replaced the dozen or so casualties of the second summer during the next winter, and added more, filling out the 3-acre field. This year we lost only a few trees -- but the growth was negligible, as our water supply faltered in mid-summer, and the grasshoppers ate through the netting. It is not clear whether the damage from the grasshoppers is permanent. Current ideas about the grasshopper problem include disking the field in the spring to kill the eggs, next fall planting a new cover crop which won't host the grasshoppers

so easily. But the problem at moment seems awesome. (possible solutions are welcome!)

Now that the basic planting is done, I look forward to time to fertilize them better. Last year most of the trees got a mulch of rotting goatshit-hay a few inches thick and a diameter of about 6 feet. If this mulch were thicker, the trees would have more strength to withstand attacks, and would also need less water during the summer.

A continuing problem with both the old and new peach trees is leaf curl-- a fungus which severely distorts the first set of leaves and often the new fruit. The chemical solution is a dangerous one; an organic solution -- miscible oil spray twice during the winter--didn't work last year. Another mystery to solve sometime soon.

And harvest? The old trees provided plenty the last 2 years to eat and fill 200 or more quarts for the winter. Plus a few pears, plums, apples from the new trees this year. Hopefully a few more next and within a few years, enough to trade or sell, if all goes well. And on a less material plane, the satisfaction that goes with nurturing an entity for years, feeling burdened with the responsibility but choosing to continue. And restoring some beauty and value to land which has been raped by logging and mining for so long. While I hope that this land will be my home for a long time, whoever is near those trees will enjoy them, as I enjoy the fruit trees that someone else planted two generations ago.

Carl





In the first issue of RFD, we reprinted a letter from the editorial staff of Mother Earth News (MEN) informing us that they won't carry any ads from or about gay people. A few things have come our way about the folks at Mother since then:

From Oklahoma: "I too regret MEN does not want our business... the one redeeming factor of MEN is that it has gathered together all in one place, all the things we would be better off without. Since they are into prejudiced little old ladies in tennis shoes, and love is what we are all about, let's blow their minds and love them, instead of responding in kind."

From Milligan, Nebraska, a brother relates: "they declined to run an ad of mine (completely tasteful--I said I preferred "people who are gay and/or who don't feel gayness is too bad an aberration" about a year ago, or rather which is probably worse, the ad just never appeared, and I never heard from them to the effect that my notice was perverted or anything. (But they kept my 50¢. Boo.)

And for two years a gay man in Florida has been trying to reverse MEN's anti-gay editorial policies. In July '72 he asked MEN to run an ad that ran "Gay brothers and Sisters who are interested in beginning preparations toward the organization of a rural based gay people's commune, please drop Southern Gay Liberator a line..."

David Zavortin, Associated Editor of MEN, wrote back: "Sorry to have to write with such disheartening news. Although we are in sympathy, it's editorial policy to delete any sexual reference that just might offend 'little old ladies in Peoria'.... Hope you understand our reasoning."

Joel from Florida replies: "While your memo might not offend 'little old ladies' it certainly offended me.... what I am trying to say is that this is the twentieth century... I don't understand your reasoning at all and am resubmitting the ad to be run in your 'Contact' section."

Another Associate Editor, Ken Hodges, got to reply for MEN this time: "The points you make are all well taken and understood... and much more than that. Believe me, the folks here... are open minded to an exceptional degree and if there's any prejudice here against homosexuals I don't know about it. The subject is almost never mentioned and the couple of times it has been since I've been here... there's been nothing but compassionate attempts to understand.... in order to do the most good for the most people, we

must change bad outlooks by gentle upliftment, not pounding with a club... we're not trying to OVERwhelm, we're trying to UNDERwhelm the bastards. I sincerely believe that your cause will be helped in the long run if we don't run your ad at this time. We're for freedom and it IS going to happen... but in its own time"

"Joel, I hope you don't dislike us now... We're really on your side, you know."

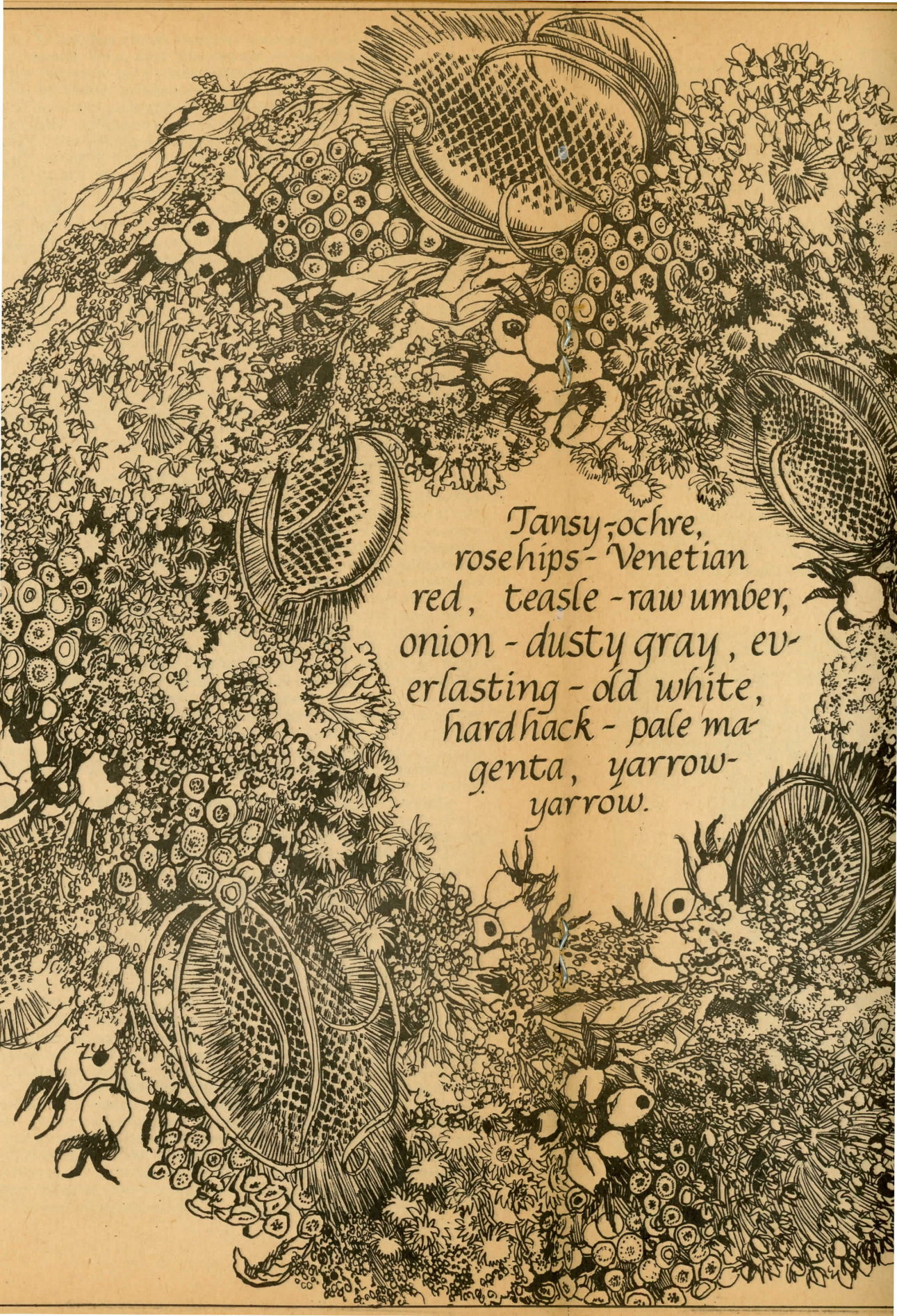


Joel's last reply: "Hopefully, the day will come when the MEN decision not to print gay oriented materials will be rescinded. That will be the day when people come before profits and not profits before human needs."

*Indigo Sunset  
Moonlit Byway  
Frogs Croak*

*Terry Bedley*





Tansy-ochre,  
rosehips-Venetian  
red, teasle-raw umber,  
onion-dusty gray, ev-  
erlasting-old white,  
hardhack-pale ma-  
genta, yarrow-  
yarrow.



# How to make a wreath...

Wherever you live there will be seed pods, dried flowers, cones, leaves and grasses for making wreaths. Some plants dry themselves; others need to be picked when blooming and hung by the stems in a warm, dry, shady place. Barns and attics serve well. Goldenrod, hardhack, tansy, yarrow, and such, (generally, late summer bloomers with compact clusters of very small flowers) do well dried this way. If you're really ambitious, many garden annuals can be dried. Some by hanging, others in sand. Every small town library has books on techniques for drying flowers.

It works well to have a complement of fairly pliant, amorphous materials such as goldenrod, Joe Pye weed, rabbit tobacco, and stiffer, less compromising stuff --- yarrow, teasels, sumac, mullein, etc. Also, you will need two coathangers, a roll of masking tape, corrugated cardboard, glue and string.

FIRST bend the coathanger wire into a ring. Most generally, I make it about 12-16" across.

NEXT all the dried things get attached. Working with one small bunch at a time, wrap the stems with tape and then tape the bunch to the wire. Try to regulate the length and size of the material you use, so the final shape is fairly uniform. I work in the same direction all the way around, completely filling in as I go. This prevents going back later

to fill up holes which is awkward with such brittle stuff. As you work you'll get a feel for how your ingredients behave: some insist on always facing the same direction, especially the larger stiff ones like okra, teasels, and spiky hardhack. Others can be attached so as to round out, such as yarrow and tansy: yet others, such as everlasting and goldenrod, accomodate whatever nook needs stuffing.

As you work around to the last few inches, the going gets a little more delicate. But persevere. It's satisfying when the ring is unbroken, without beginning or end.

FINALLY, it's a good idea to back your wreath with cardboard. Set the wreath down on a large enough piece of cardboard so you can outline the whole thing with a pencil. Then, keeping track of where the wreath is positioned, cut out the ring of cardboard. Attaching the cardboard requires a little care. First I cut slits (six or so is fine) into the cardboard around the inside hole. Work a piece of string into each and set the wreath flat with strings accessible. Next, with a hook made of coathanger, work the string through the wreath to the other side and tie the string ends together. Once each string is tied, the wreath is finished. It will be a thing of beauty to hang over the fireplace or on a door as a symbol of the circling year --- summer's flowers and autumn's fruit, glowing in the pale light of winter.

Like all the other hymns collected in the "shaped-note" hymnals of the Great Awakening in the 19th Century, Sherburne is set down with the melody in the tenor part. But traditionally, both high and low voices sing the soprano, alto, and tenor lines, so they weave together inextricably. We're usually right free with pitching the hymns we sing-- you'll probably want to take this as low as the bass can get so the soprano and tenor can hit their high notes comfortably.

## SHERBURNE

1. While shep-herds watch'd their flocks by night all seat-ed on the ground, The an-gels of the  
 2. All glo-ry be to God on high And to the earth be-peace. Good will henceforth from

1. While shep-herds watch'd their flocks by night all seat-ed on the ground, the an-gels of the  
 2. All glo-ry be to God on high And to the earth be-peace. Good will henceforth from heav'n to men be-gin and

Lord came down and glo-ry shone a-round And glo-ry shone a-round, The an-gels of the Lord came down and glo-ry shone a-round.  
 heav'n to men be-gin and ne-ver cease, be-gin and ne-ver cease, Good will henceforth from heav'n to men be-gin and ne-ver cease.

glo-ry shone a-round and glo-ry shone a-round, the an-gels of the Lord came down and glo-ry shone a-round.  
 and ne-ver cease be-gin and ne-ver cease. Good will henceforth from heav'n to men be-gin and ne-ver cease.

shone a-round, and glo-ry shone a-round, the an-gels of the Lord came down and glo-ry shone a-round.  
 ne-ver cease be-gin and ne-ver cease. Good will henceforth from heav'n to men be-gin and ne-ver cease.

shone a-round and glo-ry shone a-round, and ne-ver cease, be-gin and ne-ver cease, The an-gels of the Lord came down and glo-ry shone a-round.  
 and ne-ver cease.





# WATTS' CAROL

This lullaby is from the mountains of Tennessee.



1. Hush my babe, lie still and slumber, Holy angels guard thy bed.



Heavenly blessings without number Gently falling on thy head.

2. Sleep my babe; thy food and raiment, House and home, thy friends provide.  
All without thy care and payment, All thy wants are well supplied.

3. Soft and easy is thy cradle. Coarse and hard did Jesus lay,  
When his birthplace was a stable And his softest bed was hay.

4. Lo, he slumbers in his manger, Where the hornèd oxen fed.  
Peace, my darling, here's no danger. Here's no oxen near thy bed.





# BRIGHTON CAMP

*A turning dance for the turning year*

Handwritten musical score for "Brighton Camp" in G major, 2/4 time. The score consists of ten staves of music. The notation includes various chords and repeat signs:

- Staff 1: G, (G#), tr.
- Staff 2: D7, G, Emi tr., C, Ami7, D7
- Staff 3: G, C, D7, G, Emi
- Staff 4: D7, G, Emi tr., C, Ami, D7, 3
- Staff 5: 1st G, 2nd D.C., 3rd (Finé)
- Staff 6: S.C, G7, C, G7 tr., C, G7
- Staff 7: C, G7, C, G7 tr., C
- Staff 8: C, tr., F, G7
- Staff 9: C, F, Ami tr., Dmi, Ami, Dmi, G7, 1st C
- Staff 10: 2nd D.S., 3rd D.C., 1st Finé

(ALL REPEATS USED THROUGHOUT)



Here are the music and instructions for one of the simplest English dances we do quite often. It's very easy, all you need to know how to do is skip.

The music comes in three phrases, so the dance also comes in three parts. Before the music begins, everyone should find someone else to dance with. Line up one couple behind the next, all facing 'up' (toward the top of the hall). Standing next to your partner, give your right hand to your partner's right hand, and your left to your partner's left. This is called 'promenade hold'.

### I

During the first eight bars of music -- the first phrase -- the top couple (the one at the head of the line) skips around in a big oval, beginning by veering off to the left, down to the bottom of the line, and back up to the top. Everyone else follows at the same time, and everyone ends up where they began. The top couple keeps hands joined and they face each other (your hands should still be crossed). Everyone else separates from partners and falls back to form a big 'avenue' down the center -- like a Virginia Reel set.

### II

During the second phrase of music, the top couple continues to skip, and turn each other clockwise as they slowly wind their way down to the foot of the 'avenue', swinging as they travel down the middle of the set.

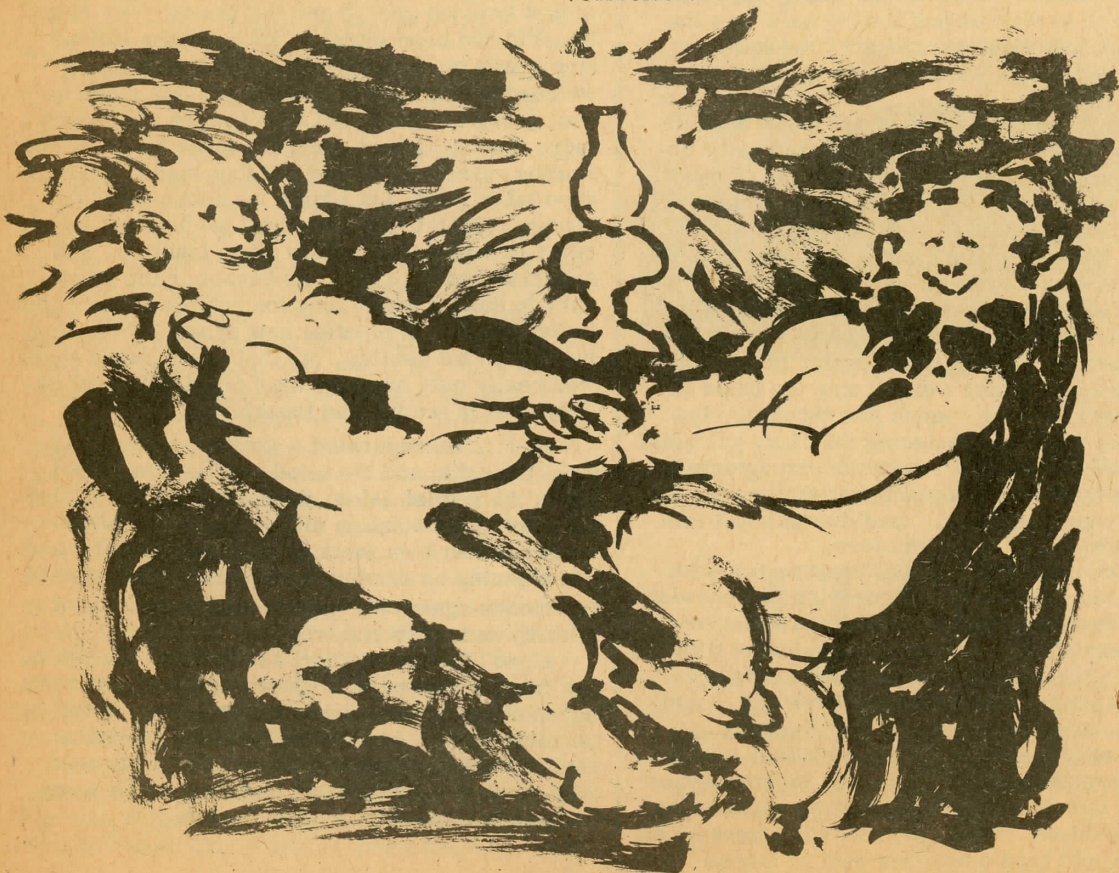
### III

Then when the third phrase of music begins, all couples swing in place. Begin by joining hands crossed -- right hand to right hand, left to left -- skipping clockwise as you face your partner.

That's the end of the dance, once through. It continues, this time with a new top couple leading everyone around, swinging down the middle, and then swinging in place. And so forth until the musician or the dancers get tired, or until everyone has had a chance to lead the line.

Dancing has become a sort of universal language for us. Every time it's a different crowd -- folks up from the city on a visit, friends from along the creek on the other side of town, neighbors from up the hill, leave-takers and home-comers, people you don't have much to say to and people you have too much to say to, young, old, mostly in between, from around three feet high to over six, etc., etc. Needless to say, antiquated notions about men on one side, women on the other have been junked at our place. Sometimes when we take our dancing to the outside world eyebrows rise and a few reactionaries can't understand, but especially beginners get into dancing wherever and with whomever.

And it almost always happens, somehow. Laughing and clapping and radiating generally. This dance here is especially joyful-making. There's many more where it comes from, which will be gladly supplied upon request. And if you live anywhere near the paths we travel, we'll deliver them ourselves.

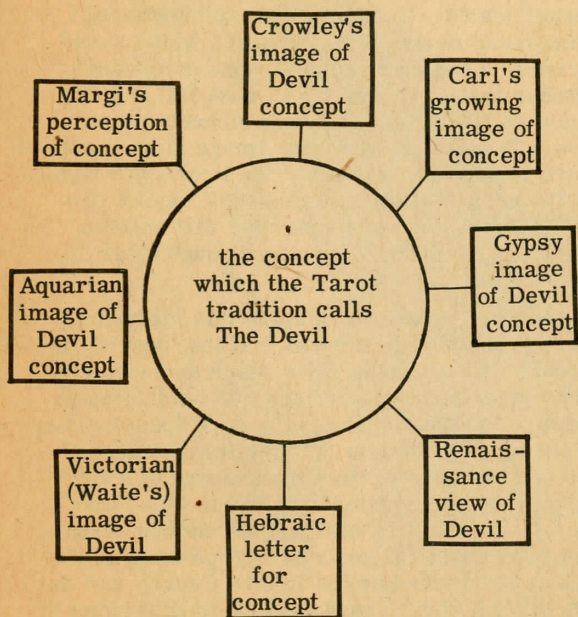







During the last year I have been exploring the Tarot. The studying and sharing has brought me a great deal of satisfaction and has had profound effects on the ways I think. The images on the cards are symbols for ways of dividing up experience. The history of the cards and symbols particularly intrigues me; a history of accumulated experiences of many civilizations; a metaphor for what is common to humans. The cards come to have a life of their own, transcending what meanings the designer or author or reader might have in mind.

The largest single obstacle in this pursuit was the apparent sexism of the cards, and implicit in this, anti-homosexuality. A few things occurred during those first months which helped me overcome them. First, I came to understand that the cards are only one person's view of a certain "truth" or concept. Margi--the woman who initially sparked my interest in the cards--explained it this way:



In the above illustration, there is an assumption, a belief, that there is a "truth": culture after culture, person after person, come up with

images of this "truth" which have some continuity, some commonality. What particular image the designer of a set of cards comes up with is a function of her/his own experiences. The Hebrews assigned a concept (e.g. the Devil) to a particular letter (  ), which conjures up that concept. The Victorians, naturally, are not going to see any more of that concept than their vision allows.

Crowley's designs reflect his consciousness. And since homosexuality has been taboo for so long, any gay imagery has either been disguised or purged from the cards. Margi once noted that my 'avenue' to understanding the concepts of the Tarot is my homosexuality, as that is such a large part of my consciousness: and she respected how I saw the cards in that light, as it increased her own understanding.

From that point on, I stopped being upset or offended by the nearly-universal 'straight' sexual politics of the cards. What was previously obstacle now began to be a quest. What kind of Tarot images would we have had homosexuality not been taboo? What would a gay tarot be like? a women's tarot? what of my history is written down here, and perhaps nowhere else? what light does this system shed on my growth as a faggot?

While all of these questions are unanswered, I have found material to sustain my interest. For the first time I am excited about history in terms of sexuality. The cards reflect some pre-patriarchal orders: the symbols are often ancient, and they contain strong images of female, animal and androgynous figures. It seems that homosexual rituals and priesthoods existed; many heresies, whose knowledge was threatening to the patriarchy of Rome, were intimately tied up with homosexuality.

And reciprocally, my experience as a homosexual have helped me make sense of the imagery and systems of the tarot. For example: twenty-two of the cards form a series, which traditionally has signified the path toward knowledge or wisdom. To pass through these twenty-two states of mind, so thought the Hebrews and Egyptians, was to make the journey to enlightenment (wisdom, initiation, consciousness, peace, or what have you). The gypsies tell a story of the





'initiate' as he proceeds along the path. We note two things: the 'initiate' is a he, and that he is straight. We also notice that dualities of every kind are represented in heterosexual terms: the initiator, or active element, is invariably male; the receiver, or passive element, is female. The concept of 'other' is illustrated by a heterosexual couple of lovers. The High Priestess card, roughly speaking, is the 'feminine' counterpart of the Magician; the Empress, the Emperor. A man and a woman are chained to the pedestal of the Devil.

So while the gypsy story of the journey of the initiate is exciting and enlightening, it is not our story. Not mine, and not ours as faggots. The 'Stations of the Cross', the crises and visions which we share, certainly must be reflected in this progression toward wisdom. Coming out, for instance, must certainly be at the very beginning of the journey. The gypsy tale relates of the Fool "hoping to gamble on the chance that he may not be forced to lead the austere life of an Initiate. . . He hopes to be assured of all the blessings of the spiritual life of a true philosopher, without paying the price, that of a life well lived". Translated into gay terms, I have hesitated, hoping that I could 'pass' as straight, and still be homosexual; hoping, among other things, that I could avoid jeopardizing privilege and acceptability.

The gypsy tale goes on: "the earnest seeker beholds the Hidden Temple and may be put off by

its air of vulgar trickery, failing to perceive that beneath the crudeness of its rites and symbols and the fallibility of its adherents, a true and profound wisdom is preserved." It is a good description of my feelings when I first confronted 'gay life'; and I have come to accept a true and profound wisdom preserved in the institutions of homosexuality. Thus the Magus card becomes for me, imbued with the strong emotions of coming out: the decision to pursue actively a path of truth.

So throughout the major arcana (the name for the mysteries embodied in the first 22 cards). My 'Empress' takes on the image of a pre-patriarchal order; my Emperor, sadder but wiser, instructs us on how not to use masculine potency (war, power, oppression), and how to redirect that energy into constructive forms (love, cooperation). My Lovers card has come to represent the changes that occur when a man becomes intensely involved in the life of another man: the end of the domination of the ego, the idea that "I alone control my universe". With wisdom, the initiate survives this terrifying experience of loss of control, loss of power, the loss of narcissistic fantasy about the 'man on the white horse'. For me that crisis still is extremely vivid. It marks the point after which I could grow in ways that were not tied up to egotism and male-centered power.

These translations are not 'prescriptive': it isn't a story about how people 'should' grow. For one thing, the order of this path is variable: one person will be more acquainted with some cards than others. Also, experiencing one particular state is not an all-or-nothing event: I expect to return to any of the concepts again and again, on deeper levels. The Empress, for instance: I conceive of her as those qualities which would thrive in a non-hierarchical, non-male-dominated culture. Glimmers of what that culture would be like exist-- but experiences in my future will make the Empress image more manifest, more lucid. The growth of the image will parallel the growth of my consciousness and of that new culture. And someone else will acquire other images of the Empress through other experiences.

Another notion which made this viewpoint more acceptable to me was that the 'occult', the 'arcane' did not mean veils which someone else, some priesthood or another, was holding up to obscure the truth. The veils -- of hocus-pocus, of obscure symbolism, of fanciful metaphors -- are only there to protect the keepers of knowledge; they are not impediments to those who want to know. It is said that as various sexual-religious heretical sects of Europe were about to be extinguished by the Roman Church and the Inquisition, they turned over their knowledge to the Gypsies, who inscribed this knowledge on the cards. The public image of the cards came to be fortune-telling and chicanery, perhaps a bit strange but not something which Rome perceived



as a threat. Privately the Gypsies maintained the tradition of the tarot: rebellion and heresy against patriarchy.

So -- if we choose to see it this way-- our attempts to imagine and create a new order are important and real; but those who would harm that vision are not aware of our work: "just a bunch of freaks tripping out on weird things." So the casting of revolutionary concepts in the form of the Tarot is only 'arcane' (secret) or 'occult' (concealed) to those who do not share the vision.

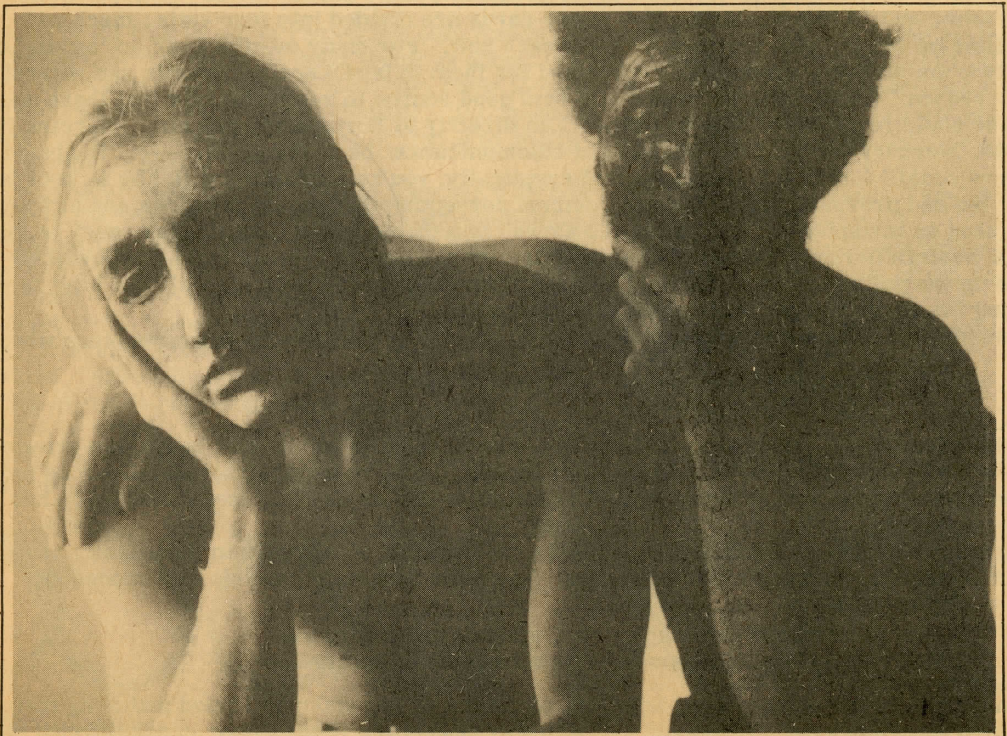
I have an incomplete sense of many of the cards. Of the cards further along the path of initiation, the DEVIL card seems most heavily laden with male homosexual history and meaning. The Devil is the 'hidden face of Osiris, the true face of the Dark sun'. Homosexuality has always been cast as work of the Devil, the inverse of God's sanctioned heterosexuality. Bachus, Dionysius, Pan. "The Initiate and the Master are now mysteriously to become one entity . . . behold him whom we call Pan. . . seated upon the high Altar with a torch of fire between his horns, a beneficent power to those who love him, striker of panic, dread and even death into those that hate him. Pan was a god before all Gods came forth and is beyond all Gods". This verbal imagery is reinforced in one deck's portrayal of the devil: a Pan figure (goat-man), with a well-developed body, his arms surrounding a confused young man (the Fool) seductively. Perhaps only after a seeker of the truth had discovered the

implications of non-heirarchical sexual relationships could he continue (or she? it is not clear to be whether this card and explanation are part of the 'men's mysteries', or whether a woman's initiation would include these events at this stage: only women know this.)

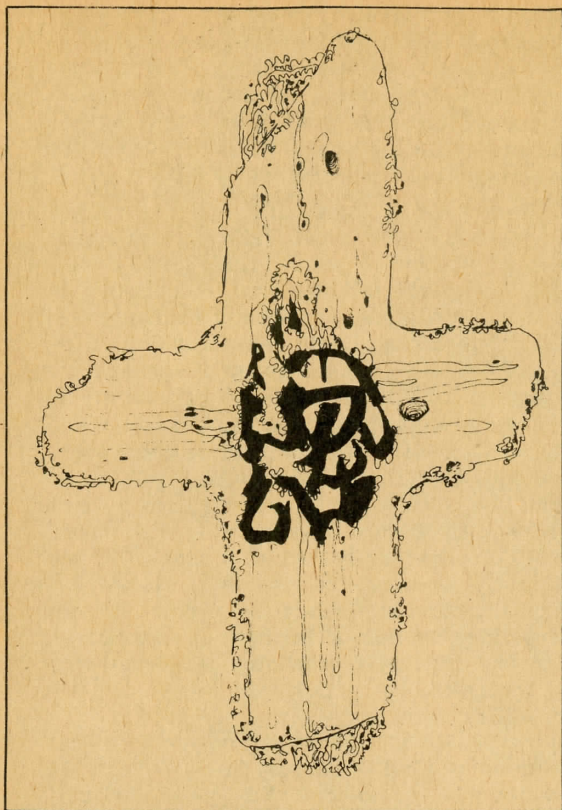
The concept of 'men's and women's mysteries' came up last winter in our Tarot circle, which consisted of about 15 people, including 3 or 4 men, all gay. We were talking about 'ritual sex', the idea that sexual acts, stripped of romantic or emotional meaning, might come to signify the sense of oneness among a group of seekers.\* One woman said that it would be difficult for her to conceive of that in a group of both men and women. Immediately I was excited about a group of gay men studying and searching together. This notion: of a 'men's circle' and a women's circle, appears in Crowley's Devil card: at the bottom are two circles (two halves of a sphere?), one containing four men, the other four women, both groups arranged in a dance like circle. It seems appropriate that this illustration of separatism comes in a card which connotes knowledge stemming from sex.

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\*There is historical precedent for this: among at least some Knights Templars, initiation into the order was accompanied by a ritualized set of sexual acts. Beyond the initiation ceremony, Templars took a vow to consent to sexual acts any time a brother requested, and assumed the privilege of requesting that of any brother.







## The Minor Arcana

The complete Tarot deck as we know it today consists of 78 cards: the 22 'Trumps' of the Major Arcana, and 56 minor cards. The minor cards are divided into four suits, much as common playing cards, with fourteen cards in each suit. For many months I had no 'handle' on these cards: the divinatory meanings prescribed for them in books seemed sterile and without rhyme or reason. I asked Margi what would be a good source to read: she said that there was nothing she could recommend, but why didn't I go directly to Hermes and ask him. Hermes (♄: also Thoth, Mercury) is the god (symbol?) of communication: he is the messenger. Confused, I asked how could I find him? Margi replied cryptically: you're acquainted with him in your love-making. We had previously shared some common perception that sexual positions and attitudes could be seen as metaphors. "As below, so above" is a theme which runs through much of the history of western heresy. (Many of Charlie Shively's articles in various issues of FAGRAG elaborate on the political and social implications of lovemaking and sexual acts). So I set to work correlating the cards and my ideas about my lovemaking.

For some while I have conceived of sexuality in terms of four states: my experience when

I act to please myself  
You act to please me

I act to please you  
you act to please yourself

These motivating forces, are concepts that I have had to come to terms with in my own growing sexual awareness and satisfaction. As with any model, it can be too abstract and divorced from real situations. But for me, dividing sexual experiences and modes into these categories has been productive and useful.

The fourness of this model coincides with the constant use of fourness in the minor cards: four suits, four face cards, the four elements. The suits generally express four modes of expression or experience:

energy - wands  
pleasure - cups

invoked force - swords  
contentment - pentacles

Conceiving of the kind of energy I put into various modes of lovemaking, I tried matching them with the characterizations above. I began to evolve a way of relating to the minor cards through my own sexual experiences.



my experience when: mood of suit suit name correlated element

|                     |               |           |       |
|---------------------|---------------|-----------|-------|
| I please me         | energy        | wands     | fire  |
| you please me       | pleasure      | cups      | water |
| I please you        | invoked force | swords    | air   |
| you please yourself | contentment   | pentacles | earth |

From there, I have tried to make sense of the four suits using the sexual metaphor. The abstractness of the minor cards leaves a great amount of room for intuition and hypothesizing. One tradition sees the numbered cards (ace through ten) as related sequentially (and dialectically):

Ace is the unmanifested impulse, the root of the power: e.g. fireness (or sexually, the experience of pleasing oneself). The two of the suit is its opposite, its first manifestation. The three is the tension between the thesis and antithesis; and four is the manifestation of that tension in a new realm -- the synthesis, which immediately becomes the new thesis:

|     |   |   |   |
|-----|---|---|---|
| Ace | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4   | 5 | 6 | 7 |

The second sequence: four indicates completion, stability; immediately its opposite, strife, enters the picture; the union produces complete balance (6); but when moved to a new plane, this balance itself is upset, only valor keeping it from complete disarray.

|   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|----|
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|----|

In the third go round, imbalance is redressed, reaching a synthesis, but this time, by the time we have reached card nine, we are far from the unmaterialized origin -- a very low form of materialization. And the ten of the suit indicates the dissolution of that energy away from the formative world and reorganizing into a new unmaterialized mode: the next suit.

The following is a monologue of consciousness of someone experiencing the wand suit:

- ACE - wow, it feels good to please myself;
- 2 - I like to fuck;
- 3 - oh... is there a person connected to this ass?
- 4 - things are pretty solid: I like to fuck, he likes to be fucked;
- 5 - and he said, "why are you always on top?";
- 6 - ok, today I fuck you, tomorrow you fuck me;
- 7 - something is wrong with all this fucking; orgasm, yes, but with a lot of effort;
- 8 - and its all over with so soon;
- 9 - wow, we've sure learned a lot, though;
- 10 - yeah, but if we don't move on, it would be real oppressive.

The point of all this is not to remember that Wands equals fucking, or remembering anything at all. This is only one model of what wands is about; one which helps me at the moment to develop other more lucid ones. I may look back upon these thoughts as an early state of consciousness, long displaced by notions less particularized. But trying to uncover a homosexual cosmology through the cards is a constant process of trying to relate my/our own experiences with the collective images from the past.

I am anxious to develop these notions together with other gay men-- and women. I also have listed some of the written sources which have been helpful to me in evolving this much:

The Painted Caravan - Basil Rakoszi, the Hague, 1954, This out of print book describes the gypsy story of initiation for the major trumps; the illustrations are less sexist than most; and there are clues to the history of sexual heresies.

The Tarot of the Bohemians, Papus, new paperback by Wilshire Book Co, N. Hollywood Ca 1973 (orig. in French 1889); a full development of the numerology and the Tetragrammaton.

The Tarot, Alfred Douglas, paper Penguin 1974: a concise and comprehensive intellectual presentation of the Tarot tradition.

The Book of Thoth, Crowley, Alestair, paper Level 1974

Various allusions to homosexual rituals and priesthoods in readings on Egyptology, the Templars, Sects and Rituals -- wander through the stacks of any big library.

