

Revolutionary Letters

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Diane di Prima

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dedicated to Bob Dylan

PUBLISHER'S NOTE:

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Revolutionary Letters has been out of print for many years, and we wanted to bring it back.

Look for an expanded edition, rumored to come out soon from Last Gasp Press of SF.

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #1

I have just realized that the stakes are myself
I have no other
ransom money, nothing to break or barter but my life
my spirit measured out, in bits, spread over
the roulette table, I recoup what I can
nothing else to shove under the nose of the maitre de jeu
nothing to thrust out the window, no white flag
this flesh all I have to offer, to make the play with
this immediate head, what it comes up with, my move
as we slither over this go board, stepping always
(we hope) between the lines

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #2

The value of an individual life a credo they taught us
to instil fear, and inaction, 'you only live once'
a fog in our eyes, we are
endless as the sea, not separate, we die
a million times a day, we are born
a million times, each breath life and death:
get up, put on your shoes, get
started, someone will finish
//
Tribe
an organism, one flesh, breathing joy as the stars
breathe destiny down on us, get
going, join hands, see to business, thousands of sons
will see to it when you fall, you will grow
a thousand times in the bellies of your sisters

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #3

store water; make a point of filling your bathtub
at the first news of trouble: they turned off the water
in the 4th ward for a whole day during the Newark riots;
or better yet make a habit
of keeping the tub clean and full when not in use
change this once a day, it should be good enough
for washing, flushing toilets when necessary
and cooking, in a pinch, but it's a good idea
to keep some bottled water handy too
get a couple of five gallon jugs and keep them full
for cooking

//

store food — dry stuff like rice and beans stores best
goes farthest. SALT VERY IMPORTANT: it's health and energy
healing too, keep a couple pounds
sea salt around, and, because we're spoiled, some tins
tuna, etc. to keep up morale — keep up the sense
of 'balanced diet' 'protein intake' remember
the stores may be closed for quite some time, the trucks
may not enter your section of the city for weeks, you can cool it indefinitely

//

with 20 lb brown rice
20 lb whole wheat flour
10 lb cornmeal
10 lb good beans — kidney or soy
5 lb sea salt
2 qts good oil
dried fruit and nuts
add nutrients and a sense of luxury
to this diet, a squash or coconut
in a cool place in your pad will keep six months.

//

remember we are all used to eating less
than the 'average American' and take it easy
before we
ever notice we're hungry the rest of the folk will be starving
used as they are to meat and fresh milk daily
and help will arrive, until the day no help arrives
and then you're on your own.

//

hoard matches, we aren't good
at rubbing sticks together any more
a tinder box is useful, if you can work it

don't count on gas stove, gas heater
electric light
keep hibachi and charcoal, CHARCOAL STARTER a help
kerosene lamp and candles, learn to keep warm
with breathing
remember the blessed American habit of bundling

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #4

Left to themselves people
grow their hair.
Left to themselves they
take off their shoe's.
Left to themselves they make love
sleep easily
share blankets, dope & children
they are not lazy or afraid
they plant seeds, they smile, they
speak to one another. The word
coming into its own: touch of love;
on the brain, the ear.

//

We return with the sea, the tides
we return as often as leaves, as numerous
as grass, gentle, insistent, we remember
the way,
our babes toddle barefoot thru the cities of the universe.

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #5

at some point
you may be called upon
to keep going for several days without sleep:
keep some ups around, to be
clearheaded, avoid 'comedown' as much as possible,
take vitamin B along with amphetamines, try
powdered guarana root, available
at herb drugstores, it is an up
used by Peruvian mountainfolk, tastes
like mocha (bitter) can be put in tea
will clear your head, increase oxygen supply
keep you going past amphetamine wooziness

//

at some point

you may have to crash, under tension, keep some downs
on' hand, you may have to cool out
sickness, or freak-out, or sorrow, keep some downs
on hand, I don't mean
tranquillizers, ye olde fashioned SLEEPING PILL
(sleep heals heads, heals souls) chloryll hydrate
(Mickey Finn) one of the best, but
nembutal, etc. OK in a pinch, remember
no liquor with barbiturates

//

at some point
you will need painkillers, darvon
is glorified shit, stash some codeine & remember
it's about five times more effective
if taken with aspirin

//

ups, downs & painkillers are
the essence: antibiotics
for extreme infections, any good
wide-spectrum one will do, avoid penicillin
too many allergies, speaking of which
cortisone is good for really bad attacks
(someone who freaks out asthma-style, or with hives)

//

USE ALL THESE AS LITTLE
as possible, side effects multifarious
and they cloud the brain
tend to weaken the body and obscure
judgment

//

ginseng tea, ginger compresses, sea salt,
prayer and love
are better healers, easier come by, save the others
for life and death trips, you will know
when you see one

REVOLUTIONARY NOTE #6

avoid the folk
who find Bonnie and Clyde too violent
who see the blood but not the energy form
they love us and want us to practice birth control
they love us and want the Hindus to kill their cows
they love us and have a colorless tasteless powder

which is the perfect synthetic food...

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #7

there are those who can tell you
how to make molotov cocktails, flamethrowers,
bombs whatever
you might be needing
find them and learn, define
your aim clearly, choose your ammo
with that in mind

//

it is not a good idea to tote a gun
or knife
unless you are proficient in its use
all swords are two-edged, can be used against you
by anyone who can get 'em away from you

//

it is
possible even on the east coast
to find an isolated place for target practice
success
will depend mostly on your state of mind:
meditate, pray, make love, be prepared
at any time, to die

//

but don't get uptight: the guns
will not win this one, they are
an incidental part of the action
which we better damn well be good at,
what will win
is mantras, the sustenance we give each other,
the energy we plug into
(the fact that we touch
share food)
the buddha nature
of everyone, friend and foe, like a million earthworms
tunnelling under this structure
till it falls

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #8

Everytime you pick the spot for a be-in
a demonstration, a march, a rally, you are choosing the ground

for a potential battle.
You are still calling these shots.
Pick your terrain with that in mind.
Remember the old gang rules:
stick to your neighborhood, don't let them lure you
to Central Park everytime, I would hate
to stumble bloody out of that park to find help:
Central Park West, or Fifth Avenue, which would you
choose?

//

go to love-ins
with incense, flowers, food, and a plastic bag
with a damp cloth in it, for tear gas, wear no jewelry
wear clothes you can move in easily, wear no glasses
contact lenses
earrings for pierced ears are especially hazardous

//

try to be clear
in front, what you will do if it comes
to trouble
if you're going to try to split stay out of the center
don't stampede or panic others
don't waver between active and passive resistance
know your limitations, bear contempt
neither for yourself, nor any of your brothers

//

NO ONE WAY WORKS, it will take all of us
shoving at the thing from all sides
to bring it down.

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #9

advocating
the overthrow of government is a crime
overthrowing it is something else
altogether, it is sometimes called
revolution
but don't kid yourself: government
is not where it's at: it's only
a good place to start:
1. kill head of Dow Chemical
2. destroy plant
3. MAKE IT UNPROFITABLE FOR THEM to build again.
i.e., destroy the concept of money

as we know it, get rid of interest,
savings, inheritance
(Pound's money, as dated coupons that come in the mail
to everyone, and are void in 30 days
is still a good idea)
or, let's start with no money at all and invent it
if we need it
or, mimeograph it and everyone
print as much as they want
and see what happens
//
declare a moratorium on debt
the Continental Congress did
'on all debts public and private'
& no one 'owns' the land
it can be held
for use, no man holding more
than he can work, himself and family working
//
let no one work for another
except for love, and what you make above your needs be given to the tribe
a Common-Wealth
//
None of us knows the answers, think about
these things.
The day will come when we have to know
the answers.

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #10

These are transitional years and the dues
will be heavy.
Change is quick but revolution
will take A while.
America has not even begun as yet.
This continent is seed.

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #11

drove across
San Joaquin Valley
with Kirby Doyle
grooving
getting free Digger meat

for Free City Convention
grooving
behind talk of Kirby's family
been here a long time
grooving
friendship renewed, neat pickup truck, we stopped
at a gas station
man uptight at the
sight of us, sight of Kirby's hair, his friendly
loose face, my hair, our dress
man surly, uptight, we drove
away brought down
(across fields of insecticide and migrant workers)
and
'Man' I said
'that cat
so uptight, what's he
so uptight about, it's not
your hair, not really, it's just
what the TV tells him about hippies
got him scared, what he reads in
his magazines
got him scared, we got to
come out from behind the image
sit down with him, if he
sat down to a beer with you he'd find
a helluva lot more to say than he'll find
with the man who makes your image
he's got nothing in common
with the men who run his mind, who tell him
what to think of us'
//
SMASH THE MEDIA, I said,
AND BURN THE SCHOOLS
so people can meet, can sit
and talk to each other, warm and close
no TV image flickering
between them.

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #12

the vortex of creation is the vortex of destruction
the vortex of artistic creation is the vortex of self destruction
the vortex of political creation is the vortex of flesh destruction

flesh is in the fire, it curls and terribly warps
fat is in the fire, it drips and sizzling sings
bones are in the fire
they crack tellingly in
subtle hieroglyphs of oracle
charcoal singed
the smell of your burning hair
for every revolutionary must at last will his own destruction
rooted as he is in the past he sets out to destroy

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #13

now let me tell you
what is a Brahmasastra
Brahmasastra, hindu weapon of war
near as I can make out
a flying wedge of mind energy
hurled at the foe by god or hero
or many heroes
hurled at a problem or enemy
cracking it
//
Brahmasastra can be made
by any or all
can be made by all of us
straight or tripping, thinking together
like: all of us stop the war
at nine o'clock tomorrow, each take one soldier
see him clearly, love him, take the gun
out of his hand, lead him to a quiet spot
sit him down, sit with him as he takes a joint
of viet cong grass from his pocket...
Brahmasastra can be made
by all of us, tripping together
winter solstice
at home, or in park, or wandering
sitting with friends
blinds closed, or on porch, no be-in
no need
to gather publicly
just gather spirit, see the forest growing
put back the big trees
put back the buffalo
the grasslands of the midwest with their herds of elk and deer

put fish in clean Great Lakes
desire that all surface water on the planet
be clean again. Kneel down and drink
from whatever brook or lake you conjure up.

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #14

are you prepared
to hide someone in your home indefinitely
say, two to six weeks, you going out
for food, etc., so he never.
hits the street, to keep your friends away
coolly, so they ask no questions, to nurse
him, or her, as necessary, to know
'first aid' and healing (not to freak out
at the sight of torn or half-cooked flesh)
to pass him on at the right time to the next
station, to cross the Canadian border, with a child
so that the three of you
look like one family, no questions asked,
or fewer, to stash letters, guns, or bombs
forget about them
till they are called for, to KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT
not to 'trust'
even your truelove, that is,
lay no more knowledge on him than he needs
to do his part of it, a kindness
we all must extend to each other in this game

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #15

When you seize Columbia, when you
seize Paris, take
the media, tell the people what you're doing
what you're up to and why and how you mean
to do it, how they can help, keep the news
coming, steady, you have 70 years
of media conditioning to combat, it is a wall
you must get through, somehow, to reach
the instinctive man, who is struggling like a plant
for light, for air
//
when you seize a town, a campus, get hold of the power
stations, the water, the transportation,

forget to negotiate, forget how
to negotiate, don't wait for De Gaulle or Kirk
to abdicate, they won't, you are not
'demonstrating' you are fighting
a war, fight to win, don't wait for Johnson or
Humphrey or Rockefeller, to agree to your terms
take what you need, 'it's free
because it's yours'

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #16

we are eating up the planet, the New York Times
takes a forest, every Sunday, Los Angeles
draws its water from the Sacramento Valley
the rivers of British Columbia are ours
on lease for 99 years

//

every large factory is an infringement
of our god-given right to light and air
to clean and flowing rivers stocked with fish
to the very possibility of life
for our children's children, we will have to
look carefully, i.e., do we really want/
need
electricity and at what cost in natural resource
human resource
do we need cars, when petroleum
pumped from the earth poisons the land around
for 100 years, pumped from the car
poisons the hard-pressed cities, or try this
statistic, the USA
has 5% of the world's people uses over
50% of the world's goods, our garbage
holds matter for survival for uncounted
'underdeveloped' nations

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #17

we will all feel the pinch
there will not be
a Cadillac and a 40,000 dollar home
for everyone
simply
the planet will not bear it

//

What there will be is enough
food, enough
of the 'necessities', luxuries
will have to go by the board

//

even the poorest of us
will have to give up something
to live free

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #18

let's talk about splitting, splitting is an art
frequently called upon in revolution
retreat, says the I Ching, must not be confused
with flight, and furthermore, frequently, it furthers
ONE TO HAVE SOMEWHERE TO GO

//

i.e., know in advance
the persons/place you can go to,
means to get there
keep money (cash) in house for travelling
an extra set of i.d., Robert Williams
was warned by his own TV set when the Man
was coming for him,
he had his loot at home, his wife and kids
all crossed the country with him, into CANADA
and on to CUBA

//

it's a good idea
to have good, working transportation 'wheels', one friend
has two weeks stashed in his VW bus
food, water, matches, clothing, blankets, gas, he can go
at least that long, before he hits a town, can leave
at any time
something to think about...

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #19

(for The Poor People's Campaign)
if what you want is jobs
for everyone, you are still the enemy,
you have not thought thru, clearly
what that means

//

if what you want is housing,
industry (G.E. on the Navaho reservation)
a car for everyone, garage, refrigerator,
TV, more plumbing, scientific
freeways, you are still
the enemy, you have chosen
to sacrifice the planet for a few years of some
science fiction Utopia, if what you want

//

still is, or can be, schools
where all our kids are pushed into one shape, are taught
it's better to be 'American' than black
or Indian, or Jap, or PR, where Dick
and Jane become and are the dream, do you
look like Dick's father, don't you think your kid
secretly wishes you did

//

if what you want
is clinics where the AMA
can feed you pills to keep you weak, or sterile
shoot germs into your kids, while Mercke & Co
grows richer
if you want
free psychiatric help for everyone
so that the shrinks
pimps for this decadence, can make
it flower for us, if you want
if you still want a piece
a small piece of suburbia, green lawn
laid down by the square foot
color TV, whose radiant energy
kills brain cells, whose subliminal ads
brainwash your children, have taken over
your dreams

//

degrees from universities which are nothing
more than slum landlords, festering sinks
of lies, so you too can go forth
and lie to others on some greeny campus

//

THEN YOU ARE STILL
THE ENEMY, you are selling
yourself short, remember
you can have what you ask for, ask for

everything

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #20

(for Huey Newton)

I will not rest
till men walk free & fearless on the earth
each doing in the manner of his blood
& tribe, peaceful in the free air

//

till all can seek, unhindered
the shape of their thought
no black cloud fear or guilt
between them & the sun, no babies burning
young men locked away, no paper world
to come between flesh & flesh in human
encounter

//

till the young women
come into their own, honored & fearless
birthing strong sons
loving & dancing

//

till the young men can at last
lose some of their sternness, return
to young men's thoughts, till laughter
bounces off our hills & fills
our plains

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #21

Can you
own land, can you
own house, own rights
to other's labor, (stocks, or factories
or money, loaned at interest)
what about
the yield of same, crops, autos
airplanes dropping bombs, can you
own real estate, so others
pay you rent? to whom
does the water belong, to whom
will the air belong, as it gets rarer?
the american indians say that a man

can own no more than he can carry away
on his horse.

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #22

what do you want
your kids to learn, do you care
if they know factoring, chemical formulae, theory
of numbers, equations, philosophy, semantics
symbolic logic, latin, history, socalled, which is
merely history of mind of western man, least interesting
of numberless manifestations on this planet?

//

do you care
if he learns to eat off the woods, to set
a broken arm, to mend
his own clothes, cook simple food, deliver
a calf or baby? if there are cars should he not
be able to keep his running?
how will he learn these things, will he learn them
cut off in a plaster box, encased
in a larger cement box called 'school' dealing with paper
from morning till night, grinding no clay or mortar, no
pigment, setting no seedlings in black earth
come spring, how will he
know to trap a rabbit, build a raft,
to navigate by stars, or find safe ground
to sleep on? what is he doing all his learning years
inside, as if the planet were no more than a vehicle
for carrying our plastic constructs around the sun

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #23

A lack of faith is simply a lack of courage
one who says 'I wish I could believe that' means simply that he
is coward, is pleased
to be spectator, on this scene where there are no spectators
where all hands not actually working are working against
as they lie idle, folded in lap, or holding up newspapers
full of lies, or wrapped around steering wheel, on one more
pleasure trip

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #24

Have you thought about the American aborigines
who will inhabit
this continent? Cave dwellers, tent people, tree dwellers, will your
great-grandchildren be among them? Will they sell
artifacts—abalone or wool—to the affluent
highly civilized Africans
who come here in the summer, will they wear
buckskin, or cotton, loincloth, run down
deer, catch fish barehanded, build teepees, hogans, remember
to use the wheel, to write, to speak, or simply drum & pipe,
smiling, will your great-grandchildren be among them?

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #25

Know every way
out of your house, where it goes, every alley
on the block, which back yards connect, which walls
are scalable, which bushes
will hold a man.
Construct at least one man-sized hiding place
in your walls, know for sure which neighbors
will let you sneak in the back door & saunter out the front
while the man is parked in your driveway, or tearing
your pad apart, which neighbors won't be home, which cellar doors
are open—whom you can summon in your neighborhood
to do your errands, check the block, set up
a getaway while you sit tight inside & your house
is watched...

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #26

'DOES THE END
JUSTIFY THE MEANS?' this is
process, there is no end, there are only
means, each one
had better justify itself.
To whom?

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #27

How much
can we afford to lose, before we win, can we

cut hair, or give up drugs, take
job, join Minute'Men, marry, wear their clothes,
play bingo, what
can we stomach, how soon
does it leave its mark, can we
living straight in a straight part of town still see
our people, can we live
if we don't see our people? 'It is better
to lose & win, than win & be
defeated' sd Gertrude Stein, which wd you
choose?

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #28

O my brothers
busted for pot, for looting, for loving
young beautiful brothers & sisters, for holding out hope
in both hands to the Man, enraging him
O my brothers, freaking out this moment this beautiful summer evening
in all the cages of America
while the sun goes down on this fabled & holy land:
//
know that we have this land, we are filling its crevices
its caves and forests, its coastlines and holy places
with our mating flesh, with the fierce play of our children our numbers increasing
we are approaching your cells, to cut you loose
to march triumphant with you, crying out
to Maitreya, across the Pacific

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #29

beware of those
who say we are the beautiful losers
who stand in their long hair and wait to be punished
who weep on beaches for our isolation
//
we are not alone: we have brothers in all the hills
we have sisters in the jungles and in the ozarks
we even have brothers on the frozen tundra
they sit by their fires, they sing, they gather arms
they multiply: they will reclaim the earth
//
nowhere we can go but they are waiting for us
no exile where we will not hear welcome home

'goodmorning sister, let me work with you
goodmorning brother, let me
fight by your side'

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #30

(To Those Who Sold the Revolution Summer of '68)
remember to wear a hat, if you have a hat
and stick your hair inside it, if it's long hair
or don't, wear shoes if it's snowing and you have shoes
remember they buy out all the leaders, be a leader
if you want to be bought out, but remember to
tell the truth, just before they buy you, tell the truth
loud, and the kids will hear you, not hear your money
as it falls on the liquorstore counter, day after day
not hear your dreams of nightmare betrayal and torture
not hear your mercedes, they'll hear the truth you spoke
they'll believe you and honor you after you die, brought down
by that cia bullet you can't avoid just by taking their money
they'll believe you and DO WHAT YOU SAY
NOT WHAT YOU DO

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #31

(for LeRoi, at long last)
not all the works of Mozart worth one human life
not all the brocaded of the Potala palace
better we should wear homespun, than some in orlon
some in Thailand silk
the children of Bengal weave gold thread in silk saris
six years old, eight years old, for export, they don't sing
the singers are for export, Folkways records
better we should all have homemade flutes
and practice excruciatingly upon them, one hundred years
till we learn to
make our own music

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #32

not western civilization, but civilization itself
is the disease which is eating us
not the last five thousand years, but the last twenty thousand
are the cancer
not modern cities, but the city, not

capitalism, but ism, art, religion, once they are
separate enough to be seen and named, named art named
religion, once they are not
simply the daily acts of life which bring the rain, bring bread, heal, bring
the herds close enough to hunt, birth the children
simply the acts of song, the acts of power, now lost
to us these many years, not killing a few white men will bring
back power, not killing all the white men, but killing
the white man in each of us, killing the desire
for brocade, for gold, for champagne brandy, which sends
people out of the sun and out of their lives to create
COMMODITY for our pleasure, what claim
do we have, can we make, on another's time, another's
life blood, show me
a city which does not consume the air and water
for miles around it, mohenjo-daro was a blot
on the village culture of India, the cities of Egypt sucked
the life of millions, show me
an artifact of city which has the power
as flesh has power, as spirit of man
has power

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #33

how far back
are we willing to go?"that seems to be
the question, the more we give up
the more we will be blessed, the more
we give up, the further back we go, can we
make it under the sky again, in moving tribes
that settle, build, move on and build again
owning only what we carry, do we need
the village, division of labor, a friendly potlatch
a couple of times a year, or must it be
merely a 'cybernetic civilization'
which may or may not save the water, but will not
show us our root, or our original face, return
us to the source, how far
(forward is back) are we willing to go
after all?

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #34

hey man let's make a revolution, let's give

every man a thunderbird
color TV, a refrigerator, free
antibiotics, let's build
apartments with a separate bedroom for every child
inflatable plastic sofas, vitamin pills
with all our daily requirements that come in the mail
free gas & electric & telephone &
no rent, why not?

//

hey man, let's make a revolution, let's
turn off the power, turn on the
stars at night, put metal
back in the earth, or at least not take it out
anymore, make lots of guitars and flutes, teach the chicks
how to heal with herbs, let's learn
to live with each other in a smaller space, and build
hogans, and domes and teepees all over the place
BLOW UP THE PETROLEUM LINES, make the cars
into flower pots or sculptures or live
in the bigger ones, why not?

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #35

rise up, my
brothers, do not
bow your heads any longer, or pray
except to the spirit you waken, the
spirit you bring to birth, it
never was on earth, rise up, do not
droop, smoking hash or opium, dreaming sweetness, perhaps
there will be time for that, on the long beaches
lying in love with the few of us who are left, but now
the earth cries out for aid, our brothers
and sisters set aside their childhoods, prepare
to fight, what choice have we but join them, in their hands
rests the survival of the very planet, the health
of the solar system, for we are one
with the stars and the spirit we forge
they wait for, Christ, Buddha, Krishna
Paracelsus, had but a taste, we must reclaim
the planet, re-occupy
this ground
the peace we seek was never seen before, the earth
BELONGS, at last, TO THE LIVING

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #36

who is the we, who is
the they in this thing, did
we or they kill the Indians, not me
my people brought here, cheap labor to exploit
a continent for them, did we
or they exploit it? do you
admit complicity, say 'we
have to get out of Vietnam, we really should
stop poisoning the water, etc.' look closer, look again,
secede, declare your independence, don't accept
a share of the guilt they want to lay on us
MAN IS INNOCENT & BEAUTIFUL & born
to perfect bliss they envy, heavy deeds
make heavy hearts and to them
life is suffering, stand clear.

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #37

GEOGRAPHY, U.S.A.
the east edge is
megalopolis, is
Washington, D.C., spread out
800 miles, ecology
totally fucked up, even
the brothers there do not completely believe
that they can win; the west edge
is languorous w/wealth, there venison
is brought down from the hills & figs & wine
from abandoned orchards, the sisters
raise their bastard young on welfare checks & rotten
sprayed vegetables, talk 'free', talk end of money, for them
the war is over, all the wars; the middle
is hardly heard from yet, it is
stirring, stretching muscles, bare bones of continent, eternal'
progression of young barbarians
huge boiling meat-fed hordes who can't be taught
there's anything to lose, angelic herds whose unholy yell
is gonna shake us all

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #38

NOT PEOPLE'S PARK

PEOPLE'S PLANET, CAN THEY
FENCE THAT ONE IN, BULLDOZE IT
4 A.M.?

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #39

let me tell you, brothers, that on May 30th I went to one of our
life festivals
dropped acid in Tompkins Square Park with my
brothers & sisters
danced in the sun, till the stars
came out & the pigs
drove around us in a circle, where we stood
touching each other & loving, then I
went home & made love like a flower, like two flowers opening
to each other, we were
the jewel in the lotus, next morning still high wandered uptown
to Natural History Museum & there
in a room of Peruvian fauna, birds
of paradise I saw as a past, like the dinosaurs
saw birds pass from the earth &
flowers, most trees & small creatures:
chipmunks & rabbits & squirrels & delicate wildflowers
saw the earth bare & smooth, austerely plastic & efficient
men feeding hydroponically, working like ants
thought flatly, without regret (I have unlearned
regret)
'WHAT BEAUTIFUL CREATURES
USED TO LIVE ON THE EARTH'

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #40

if the power of the word is anything, America, your oil fields
burning
your cities in ruins, smouldering, pillaged by children
your cars broken down, at a standstill, choking the roads
your citizens standing beside them, bewildered, or choosing
a packload of objects (what they can carry away) if the
power of the word lives, America, your power lines down
eagle-eyed lines of electric, of telephone, towers
of radio transmission
toppled & rankling in the fields, setting the hay ablaze
your newspapers useless, your populace illiterate
wiping their asses with them,

IF THE WORD HAS POWER YOU SHALL NOT STAND
AMERICA, the wilderness is spreading from the parks
you have fenced it into, already
desert blows through Las Vegas, the sea licks its chops
at the oily edges of Los Angeles,
the camels are breeding, the bears, the elk are increasing
so are the indians and the very poor
do you stir in your sleep, America, do you dream of your power
pastel colored oil tanks from sea to shining sea?
sleep well, America, we stand by your bedside,
the word has power, the chant is going up

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #41

Revolution: a turning, as the earth
turns, among planets, as the sun
turns round some (darker) star, the galaxy
describes a yin-yang spiral in the aether, we turn
from dark to light, turn
faces of pain & fear, the dawn
awash among them

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #42

what is this
'overpopulation' problem, have you
looked at it, clearly, do you know
//
ten times as much land needed if we eat
hamburger, instead of grain; we can
all fit, not hungry, if we minimize
our needs, RIP OFF LARGE, EMPTY RANCHES, make the food
nutritious: chemical fertilizers
have to go, nitrates
poison the water; large scale machine farming
has to go, the soil
is blowing away (300 years
to make one inch of topsoil), do you know
//
40% of the women of Puerto Rico
already sterilized, transistor radios
the 'sterilization bonus' in India; all propaganda
aimed at the 'non-white' and 'poor white' populations
//

something like 90% of the land of USA
belongs to 5% of the population:
how can they hold on
when the hordes of the infants of the very poor
grow up, grow strong

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #43

'I dreamed of a world without the sick and the fat'
– Yevtushenko
the map: first goal is health
strong bodies make strong spirit, Venceremos Brigade
coming back from Cuba discover they know how to breathe
they can get up with the sun; first thing:
to zap the sugar habit, get rid of meat
& heavy drugs, to eat no chemicals, no processed food
first step:
to find out what health feels like: even keel
tireless energy pouring steady through
//
then, prana (vital energy) moving smooth
thru all yr flesh: next goal release
sex force–strong flesh becomes bright flesh
anger becomes 'Buddha's anger' a steady roar
righteous, behind yr action, not spasmodic, threatens
no self-destruction; loose touch on
brothers & sisters, loose force (& contain it)
Holy Power
to build up, or pull down

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #44

(for my sisters)
As we know that blood
is birth, agony
breaks open doors, as we
can bend, graciously, beneath burdens, undermine
like rain, or earthworms, as our cries
yield to the cries of the newborn, as we hear
the plea in the voices around us, not words
of passion or cunning, discount
anger or pride, grow strong
in our own strength, women's alchemy, quick arms
to pull down walls, we liberate

out of our knowledge, labor, sucking babes, we
liberate, and nourish, as the earth

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #45

And it seems to me the struggle has to be waged
on a number of different levels:
//
they have computers to cast the I Ching for them
but we have yarrow stalks
and the stars
it is a battle of energies, of force-fields, what the newspapers
call a battle of ideas
//
to take hold of the magic any way we can
and use it in total faith
to seek help in realms we have been taught to think of
as 'mythological'
to contact ALL LEVELS of one's own being
& loose the forces therein
always seeking in this to remain psychically inconspicuous
on the not so unlikely chance
that those we have thought of as 'instigators'
are just the front men for a gang of black magicians
based 'somewhere else' in space
to whom the WHOLE of earth is a colony to exploit
(the 'Nova Mob' not so far out as you think)
//
Best not to place bodies in the line of fire
but to seek other means: study the Sioux
learn not to fuck up as they did—another ghost dance
started on Haight Street in 1967
We ain't seen the end of it yet

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #46

And as you learn the magic, learn to believe it
Don't be 'surprised' when it works, you undercut
your power.

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #47

TO BE FREE we've got to be free
of any idea of freedom.

Today the State Dept lifted the ban on
travel to China; and closed
Merritt College.

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #48

Be careful.
With what relief do we fall back
on the tale, so often told in revolutions
that now we must
organize, obey the rules, so that later
we can be free. It is the point
at which the revolution stops. To be carried forward
later & in another country, this is
the pattern, but we can
break the pattern
//
learn now we see
with all our skin, smell with our eyes too
sense & sex are boundless & the call
is to be boundless in them, make the joy
now, that we want, no shape
for space & time now but the shapes we will

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #49

Machinery: extended hands of man
doing man's work. Diverted rivers
washing my clothes, diverted fire
dancing in wires, making light;
and heat. To see it thus is to see it, even
diverted rivers must resume their course, and fire
consume, whatever name you call it.

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #50

As soon as we submit
to a system based on causality, linear time
we submit, again, to the old values, plunge again
into slavery. Be strong. We have the right to make
the universe we dream. No need to fear "science" grovelling
apology for things as they are, ALL POWER
TO JOY. which will remake the world.

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #51

Don't give up the eleven o'clock news for
Chairman Mao, don't switch
from one "programming" to another
hang loose, Mao was young
fifty years ago, & in China.

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #52

SAN FRANCISCO NOTE

I think I'll stay on this
earthquake fault near this
still-active volcano in this
armed fortress facing a
dying ocean &
covered w/dirt
while the
streets burn up & the
rocks fly & pepper gas
lays us out
cause
that's where my friends are,
you bastards, not that
you know what that means
//
Ain't gonna cop to it, ain't gonna
be scared no more, we all
know the same songs, mushrooms, butterflies
we all
have the same babies, dig it
the woods are big.

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #53

HOW TO BECOME A WALKING ALCHEMICAL EXPERIMENT

eat mercury (in wheat & fish)
breathe sulphur fumes (everywhere)
take plenty of (macrobiotic) salt
& cook the mixture in the heat
of an atomic explosion

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #54

It takes courage to say no

//

No to canned corn & instant
mashed potatoes. No to rice krispies.
No to special K. No to margarine
mono & di-glycerides, NSDA
for coloring, causing cancer. No to
white bread, bleached w/nerve gas (wonder
bread). No to everything fried
in hardened oil w/silicates. No to
once-so-delicious salami, now red
w/sodium nitrate.

//

No to processed cheeses. No
no again to irradiated bacon, pink
phosphorescent ham, dead plastic
pasteurized milk. No to chocolate pudding
like grandma never made. No thanx
to coca-cola. No to freshness preserves,
dough conditioners, no
potassium sorbate, no
aluminum silicate, NO
BHA, BHT, NO
di-ethyl-propyl-glycerate.

//

No more ice cream? not w/embalming fluid.
Goodbye potato chips, peanut butter, jelly, jolly
white sugar! No more DES
all-American steaks or hamburgers either!
Goodbye, frozen fish! (dipped & coated w/
aureomycin) Fried eggs over easy w/
hormones, penicillin & speed.
Goodbye, frozen fish! (dipped & coated w/
Carnation Instant Breakfast, Nestle's Quik.
Fritos, goodbye! your labels are very confusing.

//

All I can say
is what my daughter age six once said to me:
"if I can't pronounce it
maybe I shouldn't eat it."
or, Dick Gregory
coming out of a 20-day fast:
"the people of America are controlled

by the food they eat”

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #55

All thru Amerika
all I see & find is
Indian America
the forms & shapes of
Great-Turtle-Island

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #56

The forms proliferate.
As we spin (further) from the light
our bodies sprout new madnesses
congenital pale disease, like new plants
on the edge of (radioactive) craters
we sprout new richness of design
baroque apologies for Kaliyuga
till Kether calls us home
hauls in the galaxies like some
big fish.

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #57

NOTES TOWARD AN AMERICAN HISTORY

Over & over I've look for
the picture in the cloth: man
standing idle & tall against
horizon: "savage" landscape
we stare, poverty-struck
at New England pewter in
farmhouse window: quote
Adams, Jefferson, hew
map of the sacred meadow
//
this was the
land we were promised,
wasnt it? is Fresno
new Jerusalem? where
is Dallas? how wd Olson/
Pound/Tom Paine explain
Petaluma. Over & over Kirby Doyle
mad

tells tale of his grandfather walking out
of the desert
his wife & two sons waiting in a wagon
(he had the mule)
& the boats
in Gloucester, Newfoundland & Greece
(the same)
the wood
carved in Alaska & New Guinea...
Over & over we seek that savage man
sufficient & generous; we find
Rockefeller, Nixon;
sad letters of Jefferson
mourning the ravaging of moundbuilders' land
requesting his daughter not to neglect her French.
We; over & over; seeking line & form
gold-leaf as in Sienna
"outline" as Blake
we sit on shifting ground
at the edge of this ocean
"as far from Europe as you can get"
& watch the hills flicker like dreamskin

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #58

What we need to know is laws of time & space
they never dream of. Seek out
the ancient texts: alchemy
homeopathy, secret charts
of early Rosicrucians (Giordanisti).
Grok synchronicity Jung barely
scratched the surface of.
LOOK TO THE "HERESIES" of EUROPE FOR
BLOODROOT
(remnants of pre-colonized pre-Roman Europe):
Insistent, hopeful resurgence of communards
free love & joy; "in god all things are common"
secret celebration of ancient season feasts & moons.
Rewrite the calendar.
//
Head-on war is the mistake we make
time after time
There is a way around it, way to outflank
technology, short circuit

“energy crisis”: retreat & silence
cunning
courage & love

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #59

Look to the cities, see how “urban renewal”
tears out the slums from the heart of town
forces expendable poor to the edges, to some
remote & indefensible piece of ground:
Hunters Point, Lower East Side, Columbia Point
out of sight, out of mind, & when bread riots come
(conjured by cutting welfare, raising prices)
the man wont hesitate to raze those ghettos
& few will see, & fewer will object.

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #60

First Observable Effects of So-Called “Energy Crisis” (Fall 1973)

1. off-shore drilling renewed, Santa Barbara & elsewhere
we can expect
new off-shore wells to be opened
regardless of consequences
2. price of crude oil shoots sky-high, making
the extraction of shale oil feasible (profitable)
which shale oil territory has been prepared
for exploitation by forcing beef prices up, advocating
beef boycotts, forcing
smaller ranches toward bankruptcy
3. Peabody Coal plans to occupy Cheyenne land
on legal grounds they are “incapable”
of exploiting its “natural resource”, i.e.
dont wait to extract minerals at the cost
of all else
4. grim austerity consciousness
empty shelves & stiff upper lip
& plenty of hoarding, reminiscent
of early 40’s, conditioned reflex
right psychological climate for WW III
5. of course, police & military will have enough gas
& how will you like
to be stationary populace in the grip
of a mobile army?

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #61

Take a good look
at history (the American myth)
check sell out
of revolution by the founding fathers
“Constitution written by a bunch of gangsters
to exploit a continent” is what
Charles Olson told me.
Check Shay’s rebellion, Aaron Burr, Nathan Hale.
Who wrote the history books where you
went to school?
Check Civil War: maybe industrial north
needed cheap labor, South had it, how many
sincere “movement” people
writers & radicals played
into their hands?
Check Haymarket trial: it broke the back
of strong Wobblie movement: how many jailed, fined,
killed to stop that one? What’s happening to us
has happened a few times before
let’s change the script
//
What did it take to stop the Freedom Riders
What have we actually changed?
month I was born
they were killing onion pickers in Ohio
Month that I write this, nearly 40 years later
they’re killing UFW’s in the state
I’m trying somehow to live in. LET’S REWRITE
the history books.
History repeats itself
only if we let it.

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #62

check Science: whose interest does it serve?
whose need to perpetrate
mechanical dead (exploitable) universe
instead of living cosmos?
//
whose dream those hierarchies: planets & stars
blindly obeying fixed laws, as they desire
us, too, to stay in place

whose interest to postulate
man's recent blind "descent" from "unthinking" animals
our pitiable geocentric isolation:
lone voice in the stars
//
what point in this cosmology but to drain
hope of contact or change
/oppressing us w/"reason"

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #63

Free Julian Beck
Free Timothy Leary
Free seven million starving in Pakistan
Free all political prisoners
Free Angela Davis
Free Soledad brothers
Free Martin Sobel. ...'
Free Sacco & Vanzetti
Free Big Bill Hayward
Free Sitting Bull
Free Crazy Horse
Free all political prisoners
Free Billy the Kid
Free Jesse James
Free all political prisoners
Free Nathan Hale
Free Joan of Arc
Free Galileo & Bruno & Eckhart
Free Jesus Christ:
Free Socrates
Free all political prisoners
Free all political prisoners
All prisoners are political prisoners
Every pot smoker a political prisoner
Every holdup man a political prisoner
Every forger a political prisoner
Every angry kid who smashed a window a political prisoner
Every whore, pimp, murderer, a political prisoner
Every pederast, dealer, drunk driver, burglar
poacher, striker, strike breaker, rapist
Polar bear at San Francisco zoo, political prisoner
Ancient wise turtle at Detroit Aquarium, political prisoner
Flamingoes dying in Phoenix tourist park, political prisoners

Otters in Tucson Desert Museum, political prisoners
Elk in Wyoming grazing behind barbed wire, political prisoners
Prairie dogs poisoned in New Mexico, war casualties
(Mass grave of Wyoming bald eagles, a battlefield)
Every kid in school a political prisoner
Every lawyer in his cubicle a political prisoner
Every doctor brainwashed by AMA a political prisoner
Every housewife a political prisoner
Every teacher lying thru sad teeth a political prisoner
Every Indian on reservation a political prisoner
Every black man a political prisoner
Every faggot hiding in bar a political prisoner
Every junkie shooting up in John a political prisoner
Every woman a political prisoner
Every woman a political prisoner
You are political prisoner locked in tense body
You are political prisoner locked in stiff mind
You are political prisoner locked to your parents
You are political prisoner locked to your past
Free yourself
Free yourself
I am political prisoner locked in anger habit
I am political prisoner locked in greed habit
I am political prisoner locked in fear habit
I am political prisoner locked in dull senses
I am political prisoner locked in numb flesh
Free me
Free me
Help to free me
Free yourself
Help to free me
Free yourself
Help to free me
Free Barry Goldwater
Help to free me
Free Governor Wallace
Free President Nixon.
Free J Edgar Hoover
Free them;
Free yourself
Free them
Free yourself
Free yourself
Free them
Free yourself

Help to free me
Free us
DANCE
May 1968-Dec 1971.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Diane di Prima was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1934, a second generation American of Italian descent. Her maternal grandfather, Domenico Mallozzi, was an active anarchist, and associate of Carlo Tresca and Emma Goldman. She began writing at the age of seven, and committed herself to a life as a poet at the age of fourteen. For the past thirty-four years she has lived in northern California, raising five children. In the late '60s she took part in the political activities of the Diggers and is widely considered the most important woman writer of the Beat movement.

ddiprima@earthlink.net

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