



## Jack Spicer Magic Workshop Questionnaire Poem (After Lisa Jarnot)

Jack Spicer was not a Cascadian, but maybe was Cascadian in his heart. His Collected Lectures WERE delivered in Vancouver, BC, and that city may have been the heart & brain of Cascadia poetry at the time. His questionnaire is reprinted in *my vocabulary did this to me: The Collected Poetry of Jack Spicer* & he

was teacher to many, including George Stanley, who talks about it in the interview Barry McKinnon did with him. It's in the *Original Mind* basket of Cascadian Zen Volume I. You should read it before you attempt any of this. (I'll wait...)

What a time, eh? The questionnaire:

### "POETRY AS MAGIC" WORKSHOP

This questionnaire is in no sense designed to indicate whether you can write poetry. Since the workshop is limited to 15 people, I must have some guide as to which of you would most benefit from a workshop of this particular content. Some of the questions will seem bizarre or pointless, but it would be useful if you would answer all of them as precisely as possible.

A list of those selected will be posted on Thursday, February 21, on the main bulletin board of the Library and at the Poetry Center, S. F. State College, Juniper 4-2300, Ext. 251.

#### I. POLITICS

1. What is your favorite political song?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. If you had a chance to eliminate three political figures in the world, which would you choose?

1.

\_\_\_\_\_

2.

\_\_\_\_\_

3.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What political group, slogan, or idea in the world today has the most to do with Magic?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_. With Poetry? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Who were the Lovestoneites?



## II. RELIGION

1. Which one of these figures had or represented religious views nearest to your own religious views? Which furthest? Jesus, Emperor Julian, Diogenes, Buddha, Confucius, Marcus Aurelius, Lao Tse, Socrates, Dionysus, Apollo, Hermes Trismegistus, Li Po, Heraclitus, Epicurus, Apollonius of Tyana, Simon Magus, Zoroaster, Mohammed, the White Goddess, Cicero.

Nearest \_\_\_\_\_ . Furthest \_\_\_\_\_ .

2. Classify this set of figures in the same way. Calvin, Kierkegaard, Suzuki, Schweitzer, Marx, Russell, St. Thomas Aquinas, Luther, St. Augustine, Santayana, the Mad Bomber, Marquis de Sade, Yeats, Gandhi, William James, Hitler, C.S. Lewis, Proust.

Nearest \_\_\_\_\_ . Furthest \_\_\_\_\_ .

3. What is your favorite book of the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_ .

## III. HISTORY

1. Give the approximate date of the following people or events:

Plato \_\_\_\_\_ Buddha \_\_\_\_\_ The Battle of Waterloo \_\_\_\_\_ Dante \_\_\_\_\_

The invention of printing \_\_\_\_\_ Nero \_\_\_\_\_ Chaucer \_\_\_\_\_

The unification of Italy \_\_\_\_\_ Joan of Arc \_\_\_\_\_

2. Write a paragraph about how the fall of Rome affected modern poetry.



#### IV. POETRY

1. If you were editing a magazine and had an unlimited budget, which poets would you first ask for contributions?

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#### V. PERSONAL

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ Married or unmarried: \_\_\_\_\_

2. What animal do you most resemble? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What insect do you most resemble? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What star do you most resemble? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What card of the ordinary playing-card deck (or Tarot deck) represents the absolute of your desires? \_\_\_\_\_

the absolute of your fears? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Write the funniest joke that you know.



## VI. PRACTICE

ANSWER EITHER OR BOTH QUESTION 1 AND 2

1. In any of the three following poems fill in each of the blanks with any number of words you wish (including none) attempting to make a complete and satisfactory poem. Do not alter any of the existing words or punctuation or increase the number of lines.

2. Invent a dream in which you appear as a poet.

I

With the gums gone . . . . .  
are . . . . . And though the nose is . . . . . nothing,  
the eye . . . . .

And now the . . . . .  
Of the radiator . . . . . floor  
is . . . . ., the even row of it  
fit to raise  
. . . . . children.

You will count . . . . .  
You will stay in the midst of them,  
You will know . . . . ., you will hear them  
in the narrow . . . . .



II

In . . . . . endlessness  
Snow, . . . . . salt  
He lost his . . . . .

The color white. He walks  
Over a . . . . . carpet made  
. . . . .

Without eyes or thumbs  
He suffers . . . . .  
But the . . . . . quiver

In the . . . . . endlessness  
How . . . . . a wound  
His . . . . . left.

Snow, . . . . . salt . . . . .  
In the . . . . . endlessness.



III

Blue-rooted heron, . . . . . lake  
. . . . . song, like me no traveler  
Taking . . . . . rest, loose-winged water-bird  
And dumb with music . . . . .

I stand upon the waterfront, like him no traveler  
. . . . . , dangling on . . . . . wings.  
Aching for flight, for . . . . .  
I . . . . . and take my rest.

They will not hunt us . . . . .  
The flesh of the . . . . . is . . . . . and is dumb.  
The sound of an arrow, the sight of a hunter  
. . . . . life without wings.

So let us die for death alone is motion  
And death alone will make these herons fly.  
. . . . . wingless . . . . . ocean  
. . . . . die.

Here's how poet Lisa Jarnot did the exercise:

## Jack Spicer Magic Workshop Questionnaire

I.

With the gums gone marching  
are they gone. And though the nose is next to nothing,  
the eye is marching gone.  
And now the downside  
Of the radiator on the downside of the floor  
is it, the even row of it  
fit to raise  
a din of children.  
You will count the teeth of mongoose  
You will stay in the midst of them,  
You will know the mongoose, you will hear them  
in the narrow mongoose dawn.

II.

In the snow endlessness  
Snow, and sea salt  
He lost his sounding snow.  
The color white. He walks  
Over an antelope skin carpet made  
of snow.  
Without eyes or thumbs  
He suffers all the snow  
But the snow flakes quiver  
In the snow and in the endlessness  
How is it that a wound  
His snow is left.

Snow, and sea salt and snow  
In the snow blown endlessness.

III.

Blue-rooted heron, spring lake  
frog song, like me no traveler  
Taking buoyed rest, loose-winged water-bird  
And dumb with music cheeping.  
I stand upon the waterfront, like him no traveler  
traveling, dangling on traveled wings.  
I caw and take my rest.  
They will not hunt us for  
The flesh of the hunter is hunted and is dumb.  
The sound of an arrow, the sight of a hunter  
is hunting a life without wings.  
So let us die for death alone is motion  
And death alone will make these herons fly.  
Dead wingless flycatching ocean  
hybridized to die.

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Spicer left you a couple of ways to handle this, but let me offer at least two more. You could graft from a line in the poem. (See THIS exercise.) You could also construct a narrative response to the questions in the questionnaire, going in order:

I would sing La Marseillaise to the MAGA minions  
whose idea of music's Kid Rock, while plotting  
the magic that would see Trump choke  
(to his long-delayed demise)  
on a Big Mac...



(Points for non-violence if that is possible with question #2.) Maybe wishing those political figures *self-knowledge* would be enough, a curse that does not have negative karmic implications for you, dear revolutionary quarent/poet & yet, gets the job done.

peN  
20-OCT-2024  
Casa del Colibrí

### Works Cited:

Spicer, Jack, *my vocabulary did this to me: The Collected Poems of Jack Spicer*, eds. Gizzi, Peter and Killian, Kevin, Wesleyan University Press, 2008.

<https://www.best-poems.net/lisa-jarnot/jack-spicer-magic-workshop-questionnaire.html>

<https://paulenelson.com/2021/03/15/mammal-grafting/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HM-E2H1ChJM>

