

# Magnetic Adventures I-III

*for John Peck*



Joseph Donahue

I

Buffed by a wet breeze  
from the river, the wide street  
shines as, store to store, unable  
to procure a pomegranate, not even  
a cup of culled seeds, those  
jewels of juice, you wander on,  
until a bird falls silent so a further  
can sing. But when the whole  
forest is lost in choral song  
what sole, agonized note  
will guide you to the slopes  
of incandescent quartz?  
Planetary poles fray, twist.  
Zone by zone the world shuts  
down. The budding dark takes  
many utterly away, leaving  
a suspicion that what is now  
remembered is so by no other.

Dreams return to the unknown:  
 the curfew of consciousness is  
 enforced. Clouds cluster on  
 the horizon. All goes dark.  
 You'll sleep in a large field  
 beside those whose affinities  
 with you have been closely  
 assessed. Your addled soul  
 finds its home in a fever tent.  
 This global death throes is  
 a rapture, black as the  
 hole below Tartarus  
 through which the first  
 rivers race out of, and  
 back into, existence.

## II

The People's Inter-Subjectivity Party  
 convenes on white sands under blue water  
 attendants find no difficulty  
 breathing or moving, there,  
 on the ocean-floor off of  
 Florida, as they nominate  
 candidates pledged  
 to defend the rights of  
 "Created Intelligences" living  
 within the furthestmost limit  
 of thought, to whom our history  
 is a flash of scenes, Agatha,  
 to Ireland, to Arctic ice,  
 to sculptures made from  
 salvaged metal depicting  
 a man patted down by a cop  
 in a festive mood once the  
 gun is found to be keys.  
 They laugh, in the warm  
 sun, on a bridge in Beirut

as a distraught friend says  
a spirituality advanced and  
quite beautiful woman, versed  
in occult matters, will be at  
the temple of a new religion  
and, in the fervor of new truths,  
might be open to romance.  
It had been a long journey  
even before the next message  
arrived the balled-up  
cellophane that might've  
wrapped a muffin, that,  
un-crumpled, held to the light,  
showed a word completely  
transparent but somehow  
visible, as if within, as if  
of, the shining wrap.  
He took the word to be  
Persian, and though that  
fabled tongue of poets  
and philosophers of light  
was unavailable to him  
given his indisputable  
ignorance, the sheer beauty  
of perceiving the word as if  
written in light, and upon light,  
as he pulled the cellophane  
tight, seeing as if into it  
rather than through it  
He knew that it was sent,  
this foreign and sacred word,  
to him from a place long  
thought nonexistent . . .  
As for you, accept what ill  
besets you. A doctor, crossing  
the snow, flails in flames  
in the twilight. All thought  
he might ease the escalating  
death rate, but it seems

that hope parts ways  
 with his fate, in the dark,  
 dropping in agony,  
 while, at his house, his  
 family sits, oblivious,  
 bent over a board game  
 where medieval bestiaries  
 are brought to life with  
 a throw of the dice.

### III

Whispered to, is that right, in your  
 un-forgetting, told some new  
 hope yet to be spoken of by the  
 waking world? You are so  
 deeply healed this may be  
 the last of things as they were,  
 back when you were so broken,  
 now that the waking world  
 is fading as dreams often do,  
 and finally, after a long and  
 insufficient life, you feel  
 rested, you feel finally  
 made whole, ready, at last,  
 to welcome thoughts that  
 travelled far to find you,  
 in the blaze of day, as, once  
 only, in secret at night, where  
 you were shown so much,  
 shown lifetimes in a dream.  
 Such as when Picasso painted  
 a Mayan glyph on the back of  
 a cabinet door, a tangle of  
 arms and legs and faces,  
 fierce and squat, a cube of  
 all that is human. "Whenever  
 you reach for a wine glass,"

Picasso said, “let this guide  
your reflections, this the  
essence of existence, is,  
in the eternal flow of these  
shapes, all that touches upon  
embodiment, all that can be said  
about men and women, about  
how they don’t get along, but also,”  
he added, as he slowly packed up  
his paint and brushes, lost in wonder  
at what his own mind, heart,  
eyes, and fingertips, had made,  
“also, those miraculous moments  
when they do, when a couple  
find, after much misery, that  
they still enjoy each other.  
Though, to be honest, I know  
nothing about the Mayans,  
let this glyph bless this house,  
let affection flow afresh through  
your flesh, and gratitude  
set aglow all you gaze upon.  
As you will see, in your daily  
encounters with my gift,  
as you wake, and life returns,  
every conceivable sexual act  
and yes, some that, in your  
pathos and depravity, you  
have yet to imagine, are  
going on in the glyph, in the  
whirl of limbs and torsos,  
fingers, feet, teeth, tongues,  
as, deep in the negative spaces,  
genitals comply with what  
the universe compels, every act,  
as I said, and, I might add,  
every beneficent feeling that  
leads to, or corresponds with,  
or follows, sexual acts, not

just in men and women,  
either, but what is felt at every  
minute throughout creation.  
It may be what the Mayans  
saw, it is, certainly, what I see  
in seeing what the Mayans  
in the maze of their glyphs,  
saw, what they felt I feel  
in painting in their honor,  
feeling their feeling, seeing  
how such feelings redeem all  
pain, transfigure all suffering.”