Published in Exile: A Literary Quarterly, Volume 5, Numbers 3 & 4 (Toronto, Exile Editions, 1974), pp. 127-176. Copyright © Janine Zend, all rights reserved, reproduced under license.

TYPE SCAPES
A Mystery Story

Robert Zend

A Mystery Story

Robert Zend

A Mystery Story

A Mystery

127

Here is the mystery story of how my type scapes were born. Creation is a mystery, and how I created my type scapes is a story. I am very good at telling stories and solving mysteries. I think mystery, like life, is much overrated. What worries me most is that someday I will have to explain this to my smiling, vivacious, always inquiring daughter, Natalie.

Well, I could publish my type scapes without an explanatory text, but a little voice in my head protests against such a sterile idea: "People won't know what they are . . . how they were born . . . how they developed in the womb of your creative spirit . . . how they were conceived . . . " I argue, saying, finished products are what the public wants, but my voice reminds me: "Aren't you annoyed when your friends enshroud themselves in mystification, handing you their finished products?"

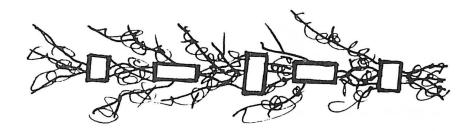


It's true. One friend told me: "I never know why I do something. It just comes." Another evaded the question: "It doesn't matter what it means to me . . . you tell me what it means to you, that's the important thing!" A third cut me off, saying: "I did it on the spur of the moment, that's it." Some got really impatient: "Come on, what is this? Are you a psychiatrist or something? Just leave me alone with my entangled subconscious, okay?"

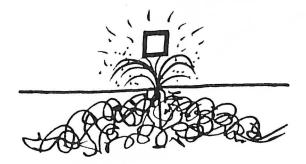


I can't behave like these people. After all, my finished products are only the results of that certain continuity which is called by others (and quite sloppily) Robert Zend. I may not be able to see all the mysteries

in my conscious, subconscious and unconscious self, but I will, at least, try. And I don't want to keep anything secret, I'll show the creative process to anybody who is interested.

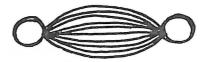


"Spur of the moment." The moment on the spur was, in fact, the final eruption of hidden forces boiling and whirling for years under the surface. My friends must know that. Then why don't they want to talk about those forces? Are they too shy or too lazy to investigate or too scared to face their depths or perhaps they have no depths so that there is nothing to talk about? Perhaps they feel that it was enough to go through trials and tribulations once in order to give life to their ideas — so, why should they start all over again?



Artistic creation is often compared to divine creation, but the mystery of the beginning (the tale that God created everything out of nothing and will annihilate everything at the end) is a special note in our Judeo-Christian tradition. According to other — more Eastern, or more ancient, and, perhaps, more sensible — traditions, the thing called Nothing doesn't really exist except in the human mind as a concept;

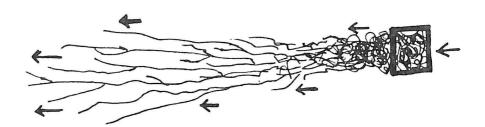
consequently they speak about world ages separated by global catastrophes in which the death of a past age coincides with the birth of a coming age. Thus the concept of creation in the beginning and the end of the world



is replaced by that of eternal change:



Along with the above God-like meaning, the word "mystery" also has an Agatha Christie-like context in which the artist is able and willing to become the self-appointed detective of his own mind and tries — as best he can — to untie the knot his creation seems to be, by separating the numerous external and internal threads which had tied themselves into that knot.



I will attempt to write a mystery-story in the God-like and Agatha Christie-like sense of the word. I'll begin by pointing out that the theory of 'finished products' is usually thought of as 'Classic'; detached,

elegant, free from self-indulgence, sharing in certain universal forms. What follows is conventionally, or perhaps we should say classically, classified as 'Romantic'. This division, however, is arbitrary because it is not supported by the facts:

Picasso, for instance, wasn't a Romantic, but he published a huge book containing his sketches for Guernica. For me, turning the pages of this book is interesting and enjoyable as looking at the finished mural itself

Edgar Allan Poe, Romantic poet, wrote a cold, classical essay about how he had figured out with mathematical precision, first the form and then the content of his famous work, The Raven, so that he might manufacture a bestseller poem. Not many readers (including me) believe him: some think he actually wrote it to mock those mystificators who professed to be spontaneous poets driven by divine inspiration (the spontaneous combustion machine of their minds).

On the other hand, before he wrote the Divine Comedy, Dante's big book was La Vita Nuova (The New Life), a narration-in-prose about his love for Beatrice, illustrated with poems to Beatrice. Or, if you like: a book of poems to Beatrice, with a commentary explaining why and how he wrote the poems. It's hard to decide which is the work and which the footnote.

Or, consider the case of Richard Wagner as he describes it in his essays, Art and Revolution. He confesses that at one point in his spontaneous artistic evolution he got stuck. For a year or so, he couldn't create; he found it necessary to stop creating and clarify on a conscious level what he'd been up to until then. Only after his self-analysis sank into the intuitive regions of his mind could he again go ahead and write spontaneously.

Or, take the case of Pirandello who wrote a finished play (Six Characters in Search of an Author) about the writing of an unfinished play (Romantic?), and then wrote a straightforward essay (or is it a short story and a Classic at that?) about the process of writing the play which was about his reluctance to write the play.

Among contemporaries, Jerzy Kosinski wrote two first-rate essays about two of his novels, The Painted Bird and Steps, and the four are not only highly enjoyable but intertwined, although Kosinsky is neither Classic nor Romantic.

The above and other examples make this much obvious to me: the two categories are two empty boxes constructed retrospectively by



AIKO SUZUKI

FEB. 2 - FEB. 27. — AN EXHIBITION OF FIBRE SUSPENSIONS

non-intuitive critics. For the honest artist, no borderline lies between the finished product and the process. The essays of Poe, Dante, Wagner, Pirandello, and Kosinsky are 'finished products' which describe the 'process' . . . and vice versa: the Cantos of Ezra Pound, some short stories by Borges, the Sweetheart-book by Emmett Williams, etc. reflect a continuous 'process' although they appear to be 'finished products'.

Perhaps the solution to the problem can be found in Stanislavsky's method: the actor must pretend to be spontaneous if he wants to be credible. If he (she) tries to act naturally, as in life, then the result is artificial. This also applies to writing.

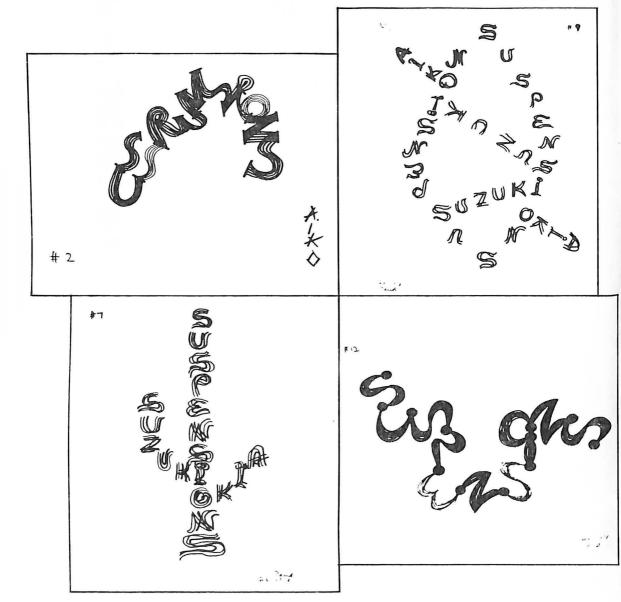
For me, the division makes no sense. How can an artist — being an unfinished, imperfect product himself — create anything finished or perfect? Or rather: how can he sincerely believe that he did so? Maybe that's why Goethe never felt Faust was finished, or Leonardo that the Mona Lisa was finished smiling . . . For me (as my wife said, taking a Marshall McLuhan tone), "the process is the product."

Now that this justification (or apology) is over I will take the liberty to perform a literary striptease and tell you why and how I created my Type Scapes.

The whole thing began on a Thursday night, February the 2nd, 1978. I had been invited to an exhibition of fibre suspensions made by my friend, Aiko Suzuki. There, I met another friend, John Jessop, poet, musician and radio-technician. I have worked with him for years, producing radio-programs for CBC-FM-Ideas. After listening to Dr. David Suzuki's (the geneticist) speech about his sister's art, Jessop told me that he was editing a book of concrete poetry and asked me if I wanted to contribute. "Yes. How many pages of concrete poetry do you want from me?" I asked. "Maximum 8," he said. "In this case you have to come up to my place and select those which you like. I have too many, and all of them are dear to my heart . . . " A few days later, John came and chose 40 pages, promising that in the second volume he'd publish more.

Some of the selected poems were originally written in my mother-tongue, Hungarian, and had to be translated; others had to be retyped to fit the size of the anthology-in-preparation; some xeroxing had to be done as well, so we agreed that I would deliver the bundle in one or two weeks. I felt enthusiastic about such a large contribution, but

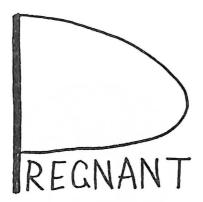
before starting work on it, I couldn't help drawing with color-markers the word SUSPENSIONS in a way that the drawn word would illustrate the art form itself.



This hobby began one day in 1969 when Eric Kettle, a friend in the CBC's Film Editing department, absentmindedly wrote down on a piece of paper the word

UPSET

to which I immediately replied:



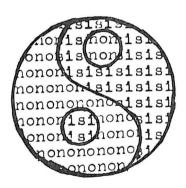
and ever since I've been unable to stop seeing words upon hearing them. Among the thousands of words I drew during the years, here are some examples to illustrate what I am talking about:



Aiko fell in love with my fifteen Suspension-drawings (I don't know whether it was because she loved my art, or hers) and persuaded me to donate them to her (which I did) so that she could frame them and hang them on her wall (which she didn't) (yet).

After this passing incident, I wanted to start working on the concrete poems for Jessop, but then I received a phone call from my other editor-friend, Rainer Maria Magpie, who urged me to finish a certain book he planned to publish. Since I didn't know what to do first, the Jessop-book, or the Magpie book, I escaped into drawing cartoons. Instead of typing the selected concrete poems, I wrote new ones.

Then I remembered that, years ago, I'd typed a concrete poem to illustrate the Taoist Yin-Yang sign by substituting the contrasting black and white colors of the sign, with the words NO and SI. I found the poem. It had been done on the 8th of May, 1971 and it looked like this:



It was a crummy, little design, so I made a larger version of it.

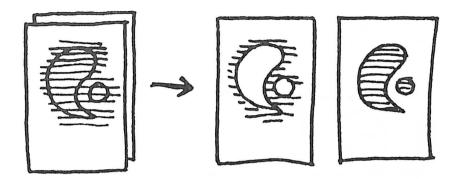
NONONONONO	SISISISISI
NONONONONO	SISISISISI
NONONONONO	SISISISISI
поиоиоиоиои	SISISISISI
NONONONONO	SISISISISI
NONONONONO	SISISISISI
иоиоиоиоиои	SISISISISI

8**∠-٤-**⊅T 14**-**3-78 NOSISON NOSISON

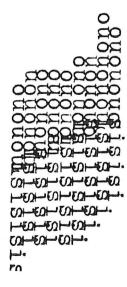
Joyou o you A control of the cont States as a series Onono on it is the test of the

I did this concrete poem by first typing the word NO, then the word SI, in two blocks, and then I cut the pieces out and assembled them by gluing them together, one on top of the other.

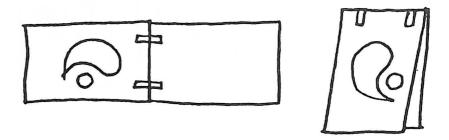
I'd had an idea: I could get rid of the glue by using a sheet of paper as a 'negative' and placing it on another sheet, the 'positive'. I typed across the holes of the negative onto the positive.



I then had finished half of the sign and I took the top-paper off the bottom-paper and turned it around so that now it covered the typed surfaces, and completed the other half. The result was amazing. Due to the thickness of the top-paper, the transition letters were faded, thus giving a much more 3-dimensional look to the sign than the former glued version which, in fact, was 3-dimensional but looked flat. However, the top-paper slipped when I changed it around and the two typings overlapped one another.



To correct this mistake, I scotch-taped the two pages together so that the papers wouldn't move.



I was too cautious and instead of using the automatic metal line-changer with my left hand, I turned the carriage manually with my right hand. The result was another mistake, more annoying than the first one: now 2 lines overlapped, instead of just the edges of the words. How did it happen? The bloody typewriter had a 'half-space' which I hadn't used before. After all, a letter should look like this

DEAR SIR OR MADAM, HEREBY WE NOTIFY YOU

and not like this

HEREBYINE OR MAPAMYOU

I remember taking a coffee break. While sipping coffee and smoking my cigarette, I sulked: "Why do I have to make mistake after mistake?" Then suddenly Norman McLaren's face leapt into my mind's eye. I saw him bending over a "mistake" on a piece of film, with a

8L-2-ST 15-3-78 SINONIS

HONDY CHELETELES OF CONTROL OF SETENCE OF CONTROL OF CO TO TO CONTROL OF THE PROPERTY ים בים המשמם משמם משמם המשמם ה Ø3+103−103−103+103+103−103−103−103−103+103+103+103−103−103−103−103−103−103+103−103−103−103−103−103−103−103−103 ronononanononononononononononononononon ott hotototototototototototototo יינסמסמסמסמסמסמסמסמסמס. - L'ACHOROGOROGOU-

SINONIS

15-3-78

8L-2-ST

loving smile on his face. What was this? I'd never seen Norman working with film, where did this memory come from? Then I knew. Last summer, I made a radio series consisting of 5 programs in which Norman not only spoke about his life, but every night a guest speaker talked about Norman's art. The last of these speakers was NFB executive producer Tom Daly who gave a beautiful talk about the various worlds Norman had created in each of his animated shorts. Among other things, he said that whenever Norman made a mistake, he wasn't angry, as people usually are, but that he contemplated the mistake and tried to take advantage of it so that many times a small mistake became the source of a great innovation. The picture of Norman lovingly bending over his mistake was not a real memory, it was only the memory of the picture I saw in my mind when I heard Tom Daly talking about him.

I went up to my studio and contemplated the mistake. Now I typed another Yin-Yang symbol, deliberately using the mistake. I realized that I could type not only sentences and words: I could type textures:



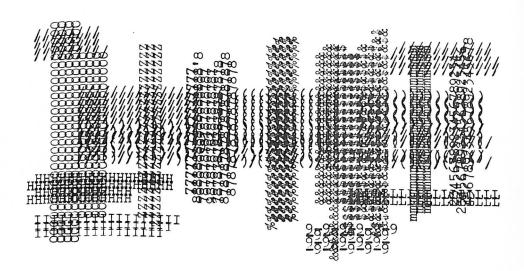
I began experimenting with all the letters and symbols of the typewriter. Each of them had a different soul. Typing this



wasn't the same. I began coupling letters and signs. I was typing away feverishly, on both sides of the paper, not noticing the passing of time.

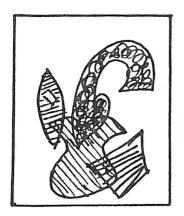
sisi sisi вi

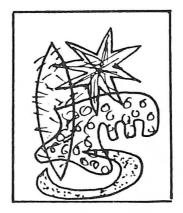
The room got dark around me, so I held up the paper toward the window to see the soul of the textures better. The experiments on both sides of the paper interfused in the light of the setting sun. I saw something strange like this:



And then it struck me. The dream! The haunting, inexplicable dream I had seen a few weeks ago. I was travelling in an unknown, far Eastern country where I met a fantastic poet, an old man who had invented a completely new kind of poetry. I'd never seen his face before, nor did I know his name in my dream. He showed me his poems. They were golden plates on which various shapes appeared, interlocking, overlapping, fusing into one another and each shape had a different texture. Every single shape was filled with words or sentences. Seemingly, none of these words or sentences made any sense, but the shapes, together on the plate, had a unison effect that immediately conveyed an esoteric significance (like an orchestra in which no single instrument has independent melody). Each shape had its own height on the plates, like figures on a bas-relief, and this gave an extra-perspective to the poem by making the golden plate nearly 3-dimensional. I had never seen poems like this before and I expressed my admiration most enthusiastically. The poet (by now he behaved like an old friend whom I hadn't seen for years) initiated me

into the secrets of embossing poem-shapes onto the golden plates and encouraged me to copy his poems after having returned to Canada. In fact, he assured me I would be able to create even better ones than those he'd showed me. The vivid memory of the magical plate-poems haunted me during the whole day following the dream, and by the evening I couldn't resist, I just had to sit down and make sketches of them.

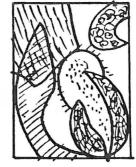




But, drawn with black marker on white paper, they couldn't compare with the radiance of my dream-images, no matter how I tried again and again, even with other poem-plates.



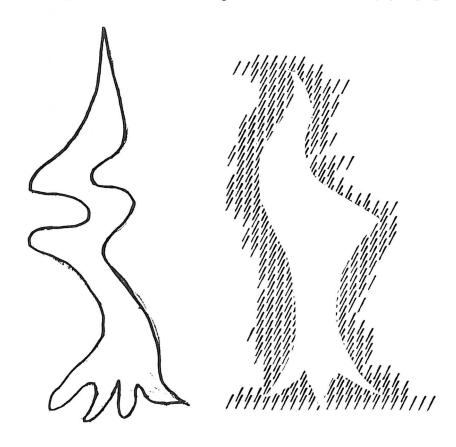




I was extremely disappointed. Not only because — as is usually the case — the dream's magic was untranslatable into the language of

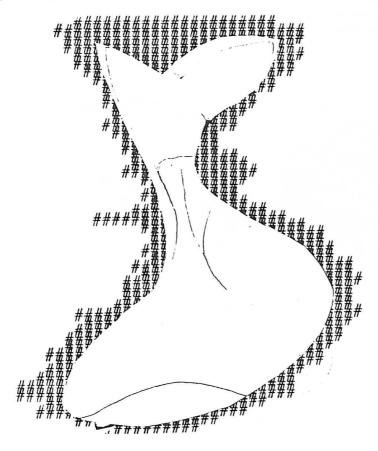
daylight, but also because my unknown dream-friend gave me, as it were, a mandate that I was unable to fulfill. The dream left a sense of duty in me as if I had promised to that evancescent man of that far-Eastern land that I would salvage his creation made of the ephemeral stuff of dreams and recreate it in Canada. A guilty feeling like a cloudy sky darkened over me for days and weeks to come.

But now, here I was sitting, holding up a sheet of paper against the setting sun, with my heart beating faster. Out of a chaos of paper lying



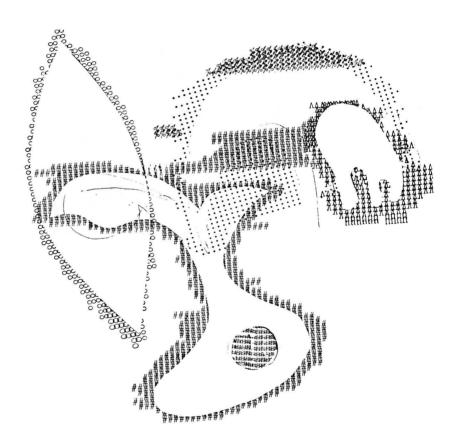
on my shelves, I succeeded in finding the black marker-drawings made on the day following the dream. All the shapes were reminiscent of the dream-plates, yes, but the paper was still lifeless. But now I knew how to breathe life into it.

I began cutting shapes out of sheets of paper, shapes that the old man had shown me. First I used a separate sheet for every new shape,

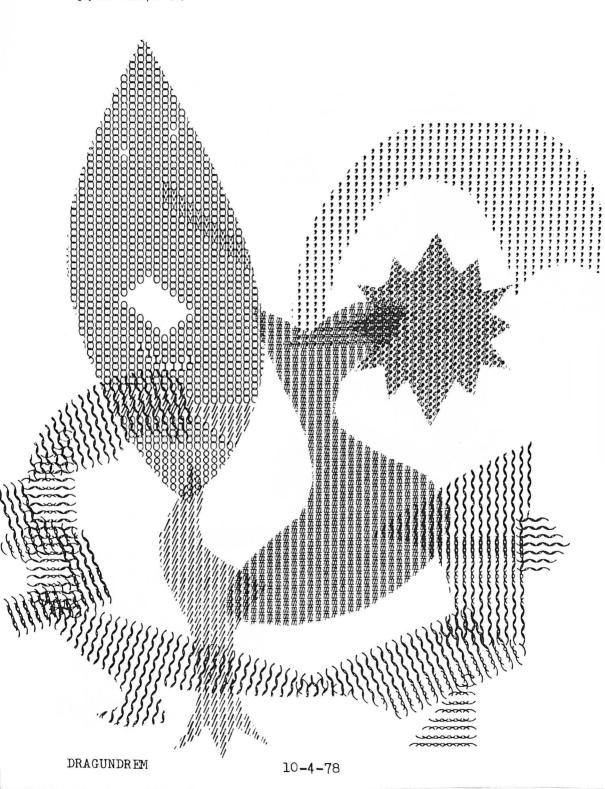


but later on, as I gradually got used to the refined handling of scissors, one was enough. It was a hard and time-consuming business: my typewriter constantly rebelled against the unusual practice and bit into the 'negatives', ripping them at the holes. I had to tame the typewriter . . . patiently, very patiently . . . one careless movement, and I had to start all over again. Several times, the typewriter forced me to alter my original plans and finish the picture as I was able. It wasn't the same as typing a letter or a poem. I had to re-learn typing.

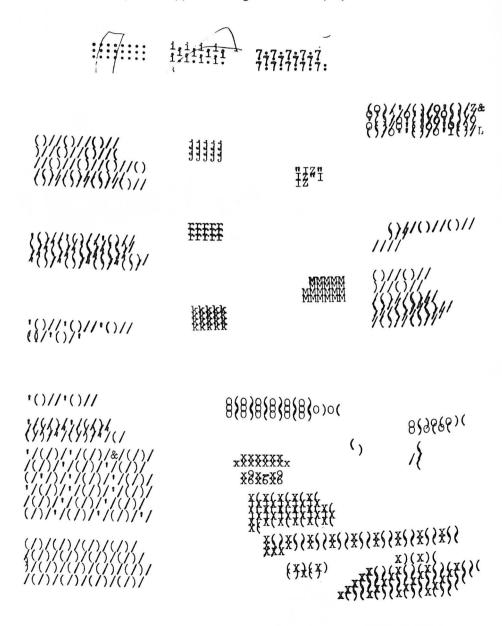
And now a chain reaction of explosions started in my head, a period of . . . I don't know what to call it: fever? inspiration? obsession? During this time, I tried, several times, working on the book for Rainer Maria Magpie and I tried, very hard, working on the concrete poems for Jessop. Every day I decided: tomorrow . . . but next morning, after

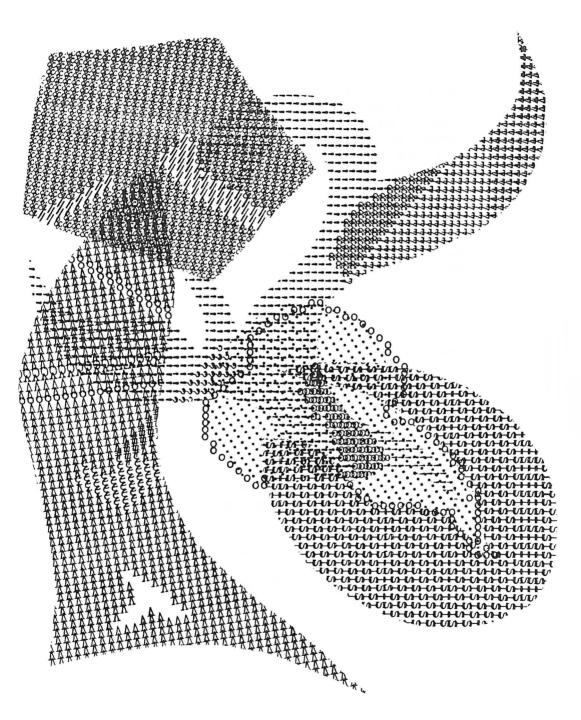


getting up, instead of taking a shower, I staggered to my typewriter promising myself that I would just finish this one, and then . . . there was no way. One thing led to another, one type scape led to a cartoon, one word led to a new title for which a drawing was needed, and so on. I was walking through wife, child, people, friends, business



affairs, as a ghost walks through walls: I wasn't really there or they didn't really touch me, there was only one reality: the Typewriter — there was only one happiness: to go home and play on it.





One day, in the midst of my play, my daughter Natalie asked me how old she was, exactly; 5 or 6? I told her that last summer she was 5, this summer she will be 6. But she wasn't satisfied: "I know how old I was and will be, Daddy. What I want to know is how old I am now. I used to say 5, but then Mom told me, I should say 5 and a half . . . " "Oh, but that was three months ago," I said smiling, "now you are 5 and three quarters." "Okay," said Natalie, "then tell me where I was 6 years ago? And 7 years ago? And 8 years ago? Where?" Suddenly I realized that she considered herself to be (and to have always been) a 'finished product' ("I, Natalie"), and since I didn't feel like explaining to her the whole entangled 'process' which led to her birth 5 and three quarter years ago, I gave her my answer a day later, in the form of a new Type Scape, called, Prenatalia. She loved it because she found herself in it.

That was the way my life went. If someone spoke to me, if I read a poem, it gave me an idea for a new Type Scape. If I saw a decorative plate on a wall, it inspired me to make a Type Scape. If I heard an interesting word, I transformed it into a title and composed a Type Scape for it. If someone told me about a vision, seen years ago, it re-appeared in my next Type Scape. If someone showed me a seashell, beautifully designed by nature, I redesigned it through a Type Scape. The street I was driving on, an emblem on a motorcycle, a Greek myth, the thoughts I thought, my memories, even my own philosophy, everything metamorphosed into Type Scapes. The new poems and short stories I wrote during this period, the new cartoons and self-illustrating words I drew, all ended up in the genre of Type Scape.



Every day new challenges presented themselves, I had to conquer them. Every day new shapes and new letter-combinations occurred to me, I had to explore them. Each was a different experiment, a new station on the road. From abstract I moved to symbolic, then to mystic, then to primitive, then to realistic, then to geometrical, and so on. Sometimes I got carried away and forgot about pure simplicity, but I couldn't help it: my medium wanted me to indulge it, I just followed its calling.

IBM CORRECTING SELECTRIC

ROBERT ZEND IS A TYPOPATH Robert Zend is a typopath

ROBERT ZEND IS A TYPOPATH Robert Zend is a typopath

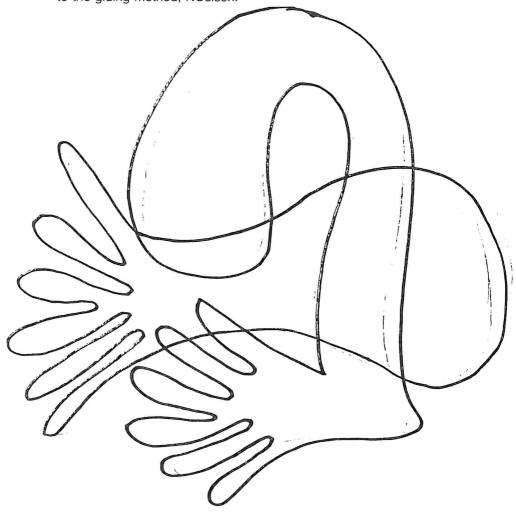
ROBERT ZEND IS A TYPOPATH ROBERT ZEND IS A TYPOPATH.

One day, I discovered the red side of the ribbon, and from then on pictures in 2 colors were born. A friend of mine, Angela Day, had an IBM Selectric on loan for a few days. I bought all the existing ribbon colors and began experimenting with interchangeable type faces. The few pages of experiments were incredible! If I'd had the money I didn't have, I would have bought the most expensive typewriter in the world to manufacture huge, colored, original posters. Unfortunately (or fortunately) this wasn't the case and I had to stick with my poor little manual Smith Corona.

And now I would like to say some words about what each Type Scape means to me. Other people, of course, may have their own interpretations. My list will appear to be out of sequence because the Type Scapes are in the order of their conception, but they are numbered in the order of their completion dates.

#1. NOSISON. The first, glued version of Yin-Yang. Turning it around, I noticed that upside-down is the same as downside-up. I also noticed that the 4 capital letters they contained (N,O,S,I) were reversible. I was lucky! This coincidence allowed me to make up a title that perfectly expresses the essence of the piece.

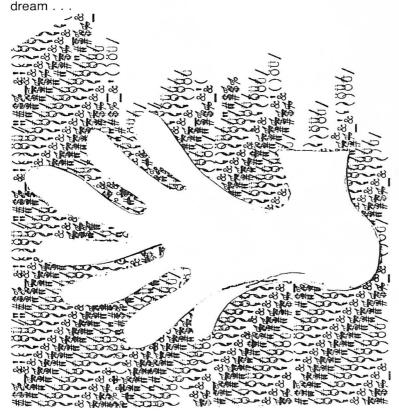
#2. SINONIS. Same as above, made with the new method of typing across a 'negative' top-page. This was a positive achievement, that's why I titled this Type Scape SInonis, and the former one, rejected due to the gluing method, NOsison.



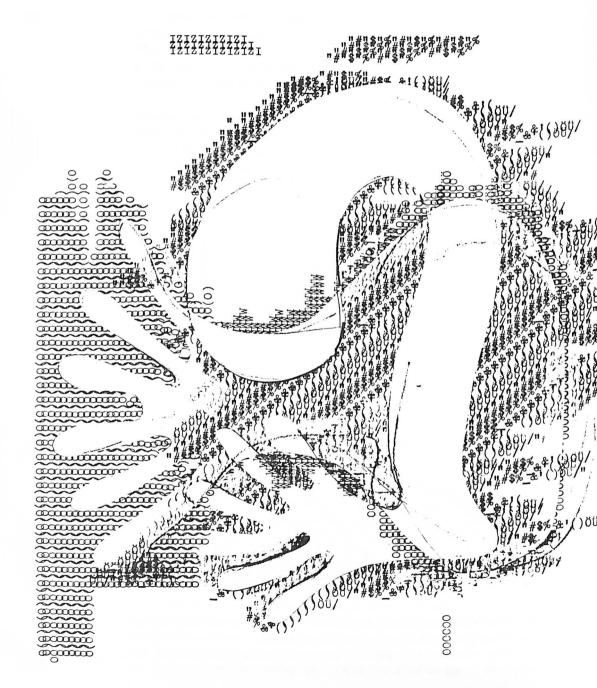
#13. ESPANTAO. A readable version of above. Actually I started it before NOsison, but — due to other zig-zagging inspirations — I finished it much later. I planned a Francotao, too, with these words: Non & Oui. An Anglotao is impossible because 'Yes' has 3 and 'No' has 2 letters, which would lead to an asymmetrical symmetric design.

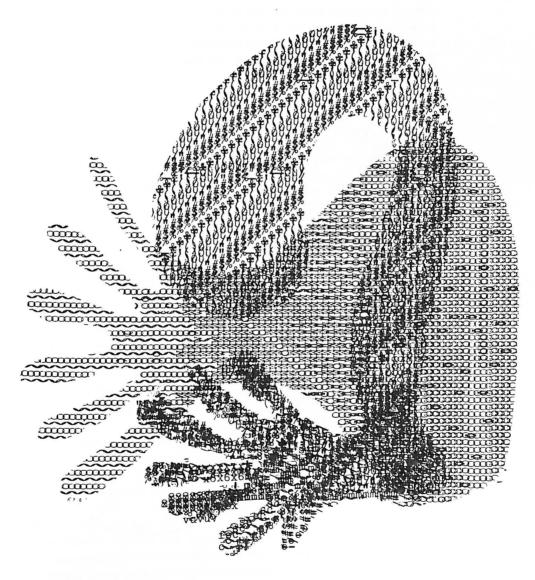
#4. DRAGUNDREM. The dreams of a gigantic prehistoric reptile. What can a dragon dream about? Hot jungles, big palm trees, cacti, tropical sun, plenty of fish to eat. Why don't I call it Dragon's Dream? Because the drawing isn't explicitly that. It could be that. I want my titles to express the essence of my drawings and an abstract drawing cannot have a realistic title.

#6. PREHISTORIA. The same world as Dragundrem. A great, winged creature breaking out of his egg, crystals, big plants, hot tension. Both pictures are actually copies of the old dream-man's plate-poems, along with others not published here. But then I moved away from my



#9. STORMELANCHOLIX. See subtitle. I don't know why, but during the drawing of this picture I couldn't help thinking incessantly about my late friend, cartoonist George Feyer, the funniest and saddest man I ever knew, who committed suicide some years ago.

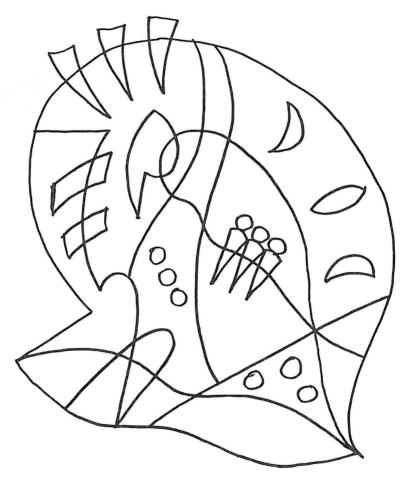




STORMELANCHOLIX

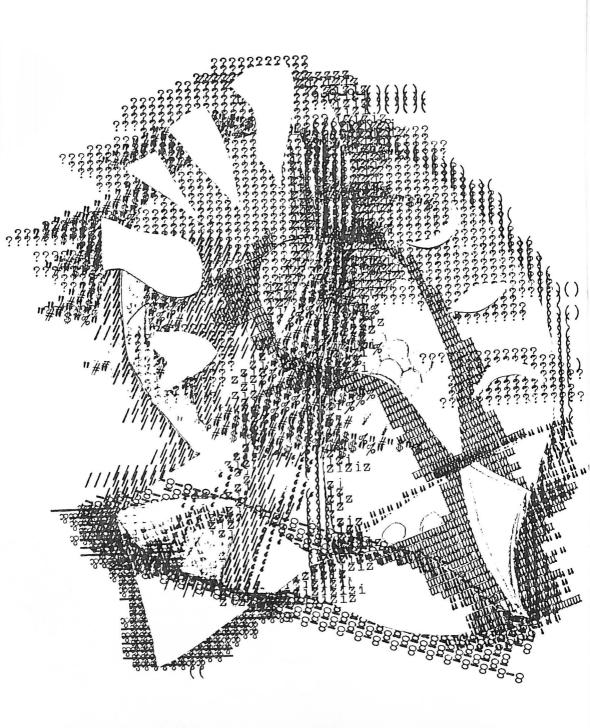
14-478
(Creature is sad because his favorite tree was uprooted by storm)
(Nature's children are all alike: trees have feet and heads, creatures have roots and leaves)

#8. KURDALMION. Stylized representation of the almost invisible fine lines on the silvery crust of a sea shell shown to me by my friend, Jaffa. But it also looks like a helmet. The left side of the design looks hard, like a KURDish casque, the right side is soft like a shell (lat. ALIMONE). Coupling the two words and making the right side of the



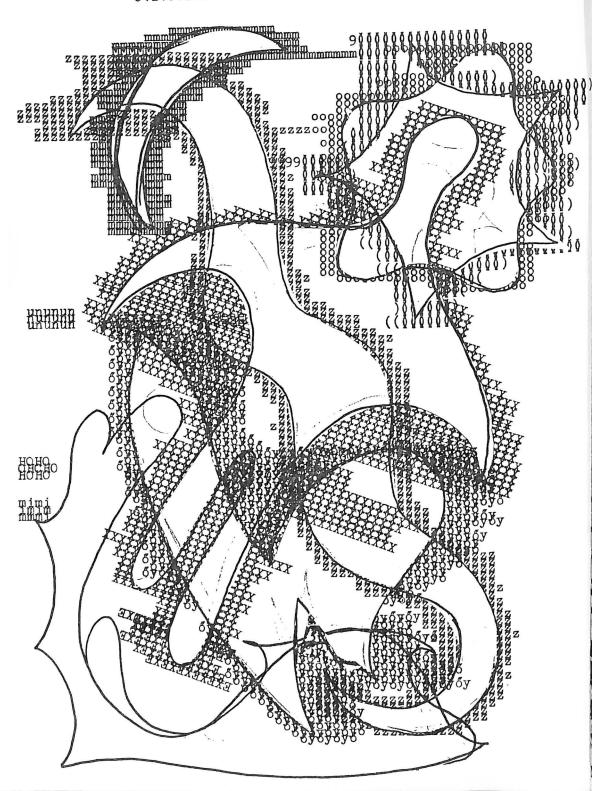
word round, I got Kurdalmion which may make no sense to anyone, but it's alright because neither the helmet, nor the shell is identifiable (The title Shellmet would be a cheap pun, besides the 2 words are in the wrong order).

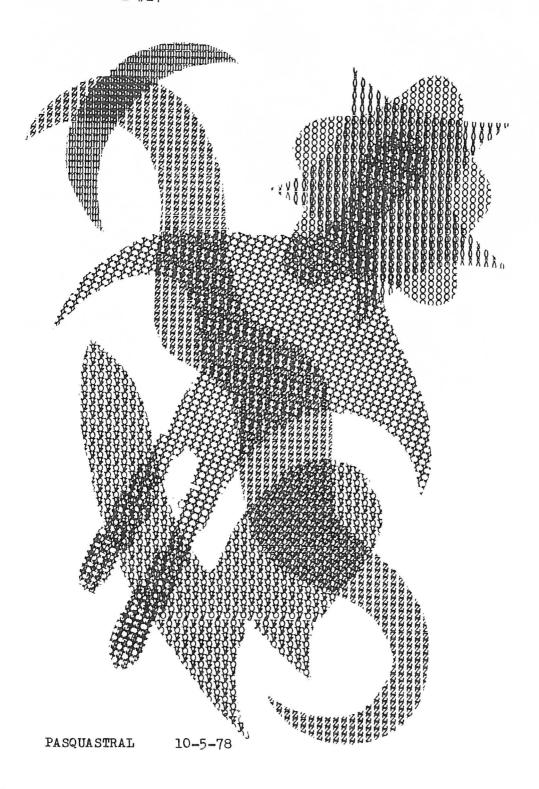
#14. PASQUASTRAL. A man (soul? angel? Jesus? astral body?) ascending toward heaven (moon, stars, sun). He has wings or has been crucified. Long snake shape from top-left to bottom-right could imply the seductions of the material world, but at the same time it is also a wave of the aether on which man floats. In the deep, a plant or a phallic symbol signifies the fading memory of the senses. Ascension — resurrection — Easter — PASQUA — spirit, ASTRAL body; stars are also astral, so together: pasquastral. #25. PRENATALIA. Experiment: using only one symbol (&) and one typing-across. The white of the paper is both outside and inside, the typing is also both outside and inside, like a Klein-bottle or a Moebiusstrip. The first meaning of the title is 'pre-natal', that is, before birth. The second meaning is 'pre-Natalie', that is before the birth of our daughter. The woman in the Type Scape is recognisably my wife Janine. Note that the sac is not around the fetus, but around the grown-up. She is in the sac of life, thus Prenatalia has a third meaning, too: 'before rebirth', if death is the door to another life. But if death is the end, then this Type Scape has a fourth meaning: the sac can be conceived of as a bowling pin, carrying generations within it . . . a bowling pin whose destination is to be hit by a fatal bowling ball and fall. I see this last meaning especially if I imagine the picture in the negative: a white bowling pin surrounded by blackness. #20. OUTSIDINGLOBE. See poem around (or rather, asquare) the drawing. This Type Scape took 3 full days to make. #10. VACRILENDOS. Never before that day had I watched the 6 o'clock news on television. My wife called me to eat dinner, but I just stared at the set, waiting for the first item. What I saw was the tightrope walker Karl Wallenda, 72, falling from a rope shaken by the wind and dying on the street. I had interviewed him 6 years ago in his home at Saratoga, Florida. Now I listened to the old tape again: Zend: Do you have a net under you when you do your high rope walking? Wallenda: No, I never have a net. Zend: But isn't it unsafe? What if you will fall one day? Wallenda: I am a deeply religious man, Mr. Zend. I will have to die one day, anyway. If God wants me to die that way, I will die that way." I dedicated my next Type Scape to the memory of Karl Wallenda. Two legs are walking on a rope which is interfused with a Jesus-head. The words Wallenda and Christos intertwined and changed: Wallenda — Christos. Va-lend-a — Cri-st-os. Va-cri-lend- os.

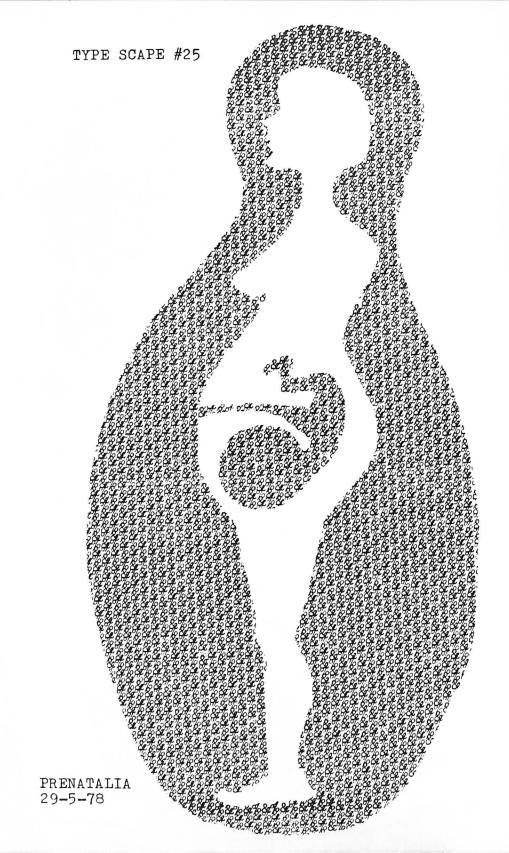


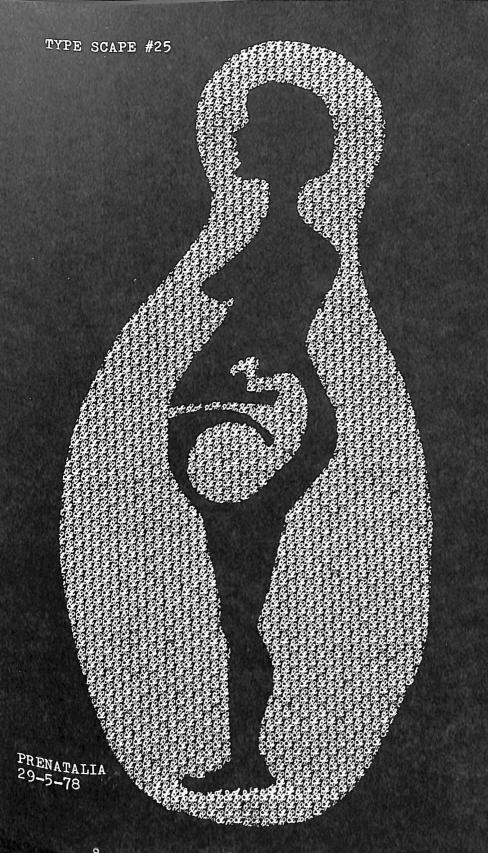


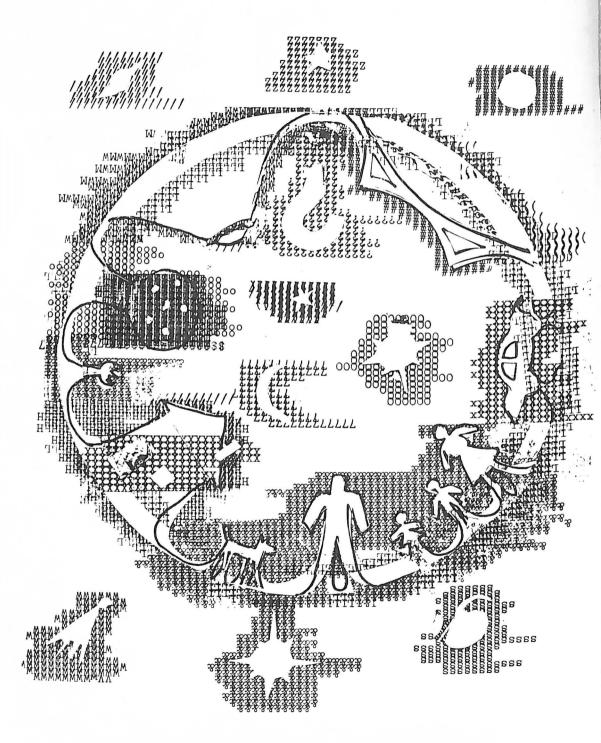
KURDALMION

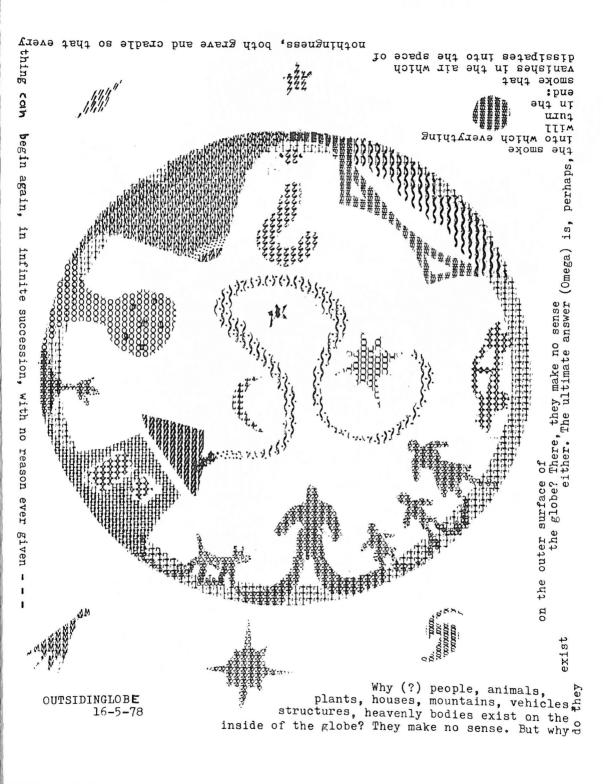


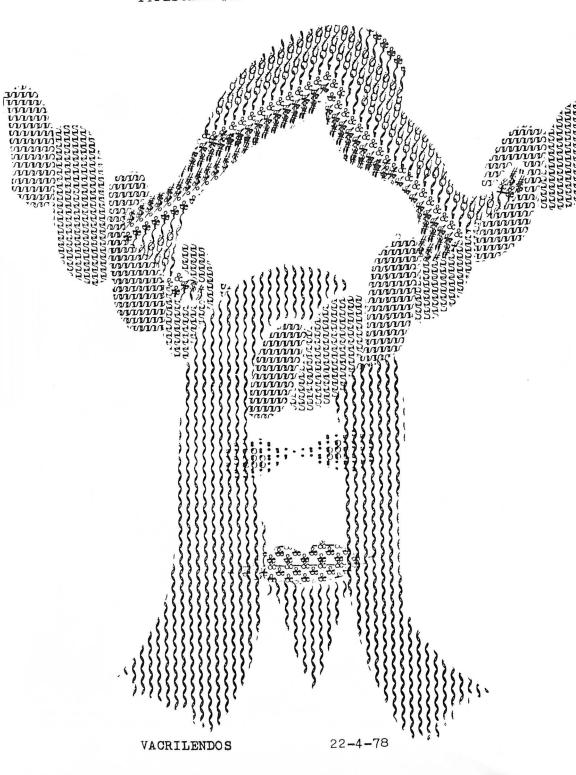


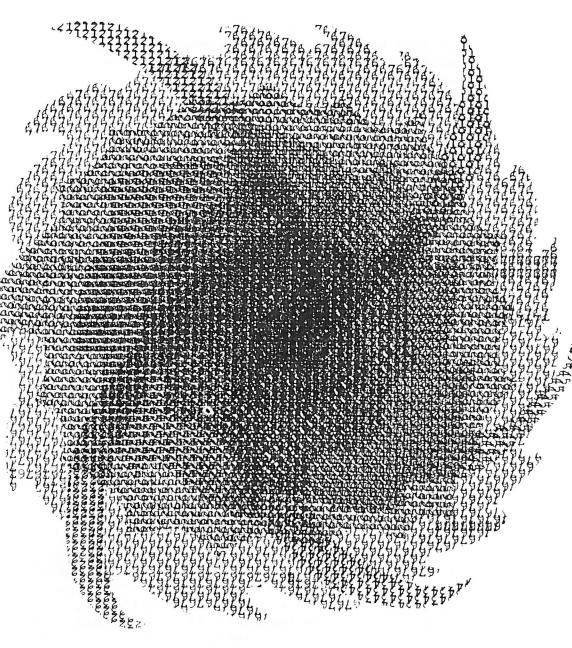








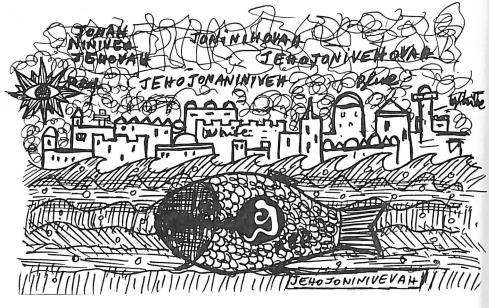




PIRROMAND 24-4-78 (A mandala of fire)

#11. PIRROMAND. The imagined cross-section of the Sun, becoming denser and hotter as we approach the core, has the image of a gigantic mandala painted onto the canvas of the sky. The inside-layer's texture is 0101, the next one 1212, etc.

The period of fever, or inspiration, or obsession started on March 13th and ended on June the 1st, 1978. During this period I typed 27 Type Scapes, drew 58 plans for new Type Scapes,



wrote about 25

new concrete poems, 10 normal (?) poems, 2 short stories and drew about 60 new self-illustrating word-drawings. All of them were connected, parts of the chain-reaction.

During the last week of May, I remember complaining to my friend Bronwyn Drainie: "You don't know what a curse it is for me to live with my brain. It doesn't leave me alone, it never lets me rest. I would like to sleep like others, work from 9-5 like others, be a quiet man, play with my daughter, go to movies, read books, but I can't. I am constantly whipped by the scourge of this non-stop brain. I am the prisoner of Zend! How could I escape?"

And then it happened. One morning, I looked at the sheet left in the typewriter from the night or dawn before. It was a piece of paper.

White. And the typewriter was no longer a musical instrument any longer: it was a boring grey piece of metal mainly for correspondence. It felt like falling out of love and looking at the ordinary flat face of a woman who yesterday was the Eternal Idol; like seeing two chunks of red flesh, her mouth, which yesterday was the Symbol of Kiss; like looking into blue, brown, or green blinking eyes which yesterday were the Magical Mirrors of a Heavenly Soul. I was fed up with paper and scotch tape, with scissors and shapes, with typing and patterns. I was fed up with my aching back and my strained eyes. I was fed up with the monotony of my life. I was fed up with my self. The fever was over. After all, I had succeeded! I had succeeded not only in expressing my entangled subconscious



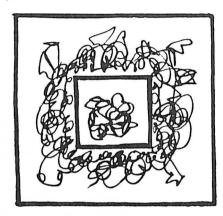
in 'finished' type scapes



but I also had kept a clear account of the mysterious 'process' of creation



so that one day I could write it down with the most acute clarity, so that it would be just another finished product. (This!)



What more could one desire? The only thing I desired was to return to Dream-land and show my Type Scapes to my old poet-friend. To ask him how he liked them. To thank him. Of course, I couldn't return to him, but it was time to return . . . to normalcy.

I asked Rainer Maria Magpie if he still wanted the book. It was too late. I asked John Jessop if he still wanted the concrete poems. It was too late, the book was in the printing shop. I investigated the possibility of blowing up the 8×10 pages into posters but, after a few lethargic moves I noticed I wasn't interested. I started to read books and go to movies with my wife, and visit friends. I started to have long sleeps and help my gardener with the flowers. Summer had come. I started to play with Natalie.

And so it happened that one day she marched up to me and asked: "Dad! Will there be a time when I will be 6 and four quarters?" She had the Type Scape of Prenatalia in her hand. I was surprised.

"You mean 5 and four quarters," I said, suddenly thinking she was probably concerned with her rapidly approaching birthday party.

"No, Dad," said Natalie firmly, "will I ever be 6 and four quarters?"

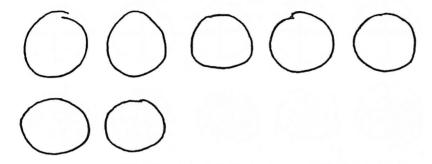
"There is a slight confusion here," I said wisely, "but I shall get you out of it. I've noticed that you are a bit puzzled by Time. Don't worry, I will explain to you everything. I am very good at solving mysteries. Let's go eat lunch now, and after lunch I will answer you."

"Why can't you answer me now?"

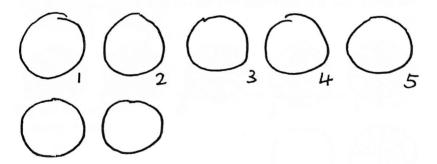
"The question is wrong," I said patiently, "and I need a table, a

piece of paper and a pen to explain to you, why. So let's have lunch first."

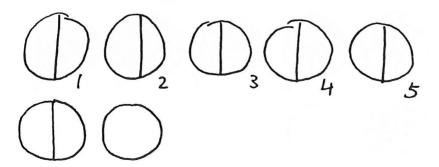
After lunch, I took a piece of paper and drew this:



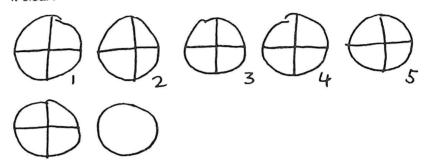
"These are years. One, two, three, four, five. Okay?"



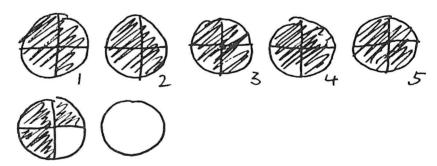
"Okay!" said Natalie. I proceeded: "Two halves are one. This is half a year, one year, one and a half years, two years, two and a half years, and so on. Do you understand?"



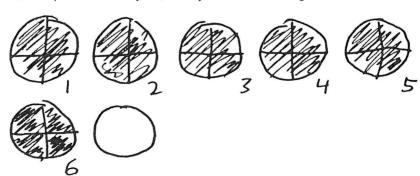
"Yes!" said Natalie. So, I proceeded: "The half of a half is a quarter. Two halves are one. Two quarters are a half. Four quarters are one. Is it clear?"



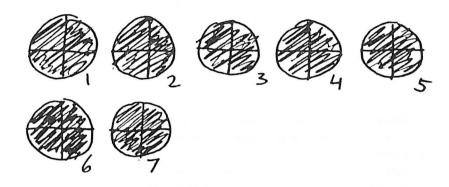
"It is!" said Natalie. So I proceeded: "First you were one year old, then two, then three, then four, then five. You see? And then you were five and a half. You see? Now you are five and three quarters. You see?"



"I see!" said Natalie, so I proceeded: "When you will finish the fourth quarter of this year, then you will be six. Right?"

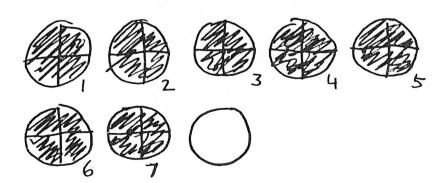


"Right!" said Natalie. So I concluded: "After your 6th birthday, you'll be 6 and a quarter, then 6 and a half, then 6 and three quarters, and then 7. As for your 6 and four quarters, there is no such thing. Four quarters are one, and 6 and 1 is 7 and not 6 and four quarters. You should say seven, instead. You see, that's why I needed the table, the paper and the pen, so that I could explain to you why your question was wrong. Alright?"

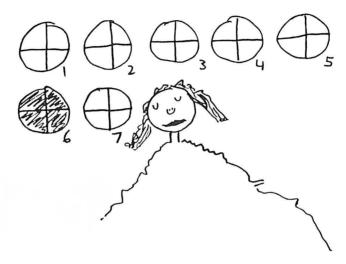


"Well . . . " said Natalie, "would you, please, draw another circle, just like the others?"

"Here!" I said.



Natalie took the paper and in a moment she gave it back to me:



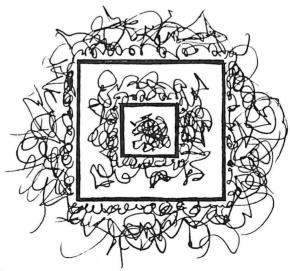
"What's this?" I asked, somewhat astonished.

"That's me!" said Natalie, laughing, her face alive with inner light and gaiety.

"When you will be eight?" I asked logically.

"No. Now!" Natalie said, and ran out to the garden to play with Linda.

I kept staring at the piece of paper.



Mystified . . .