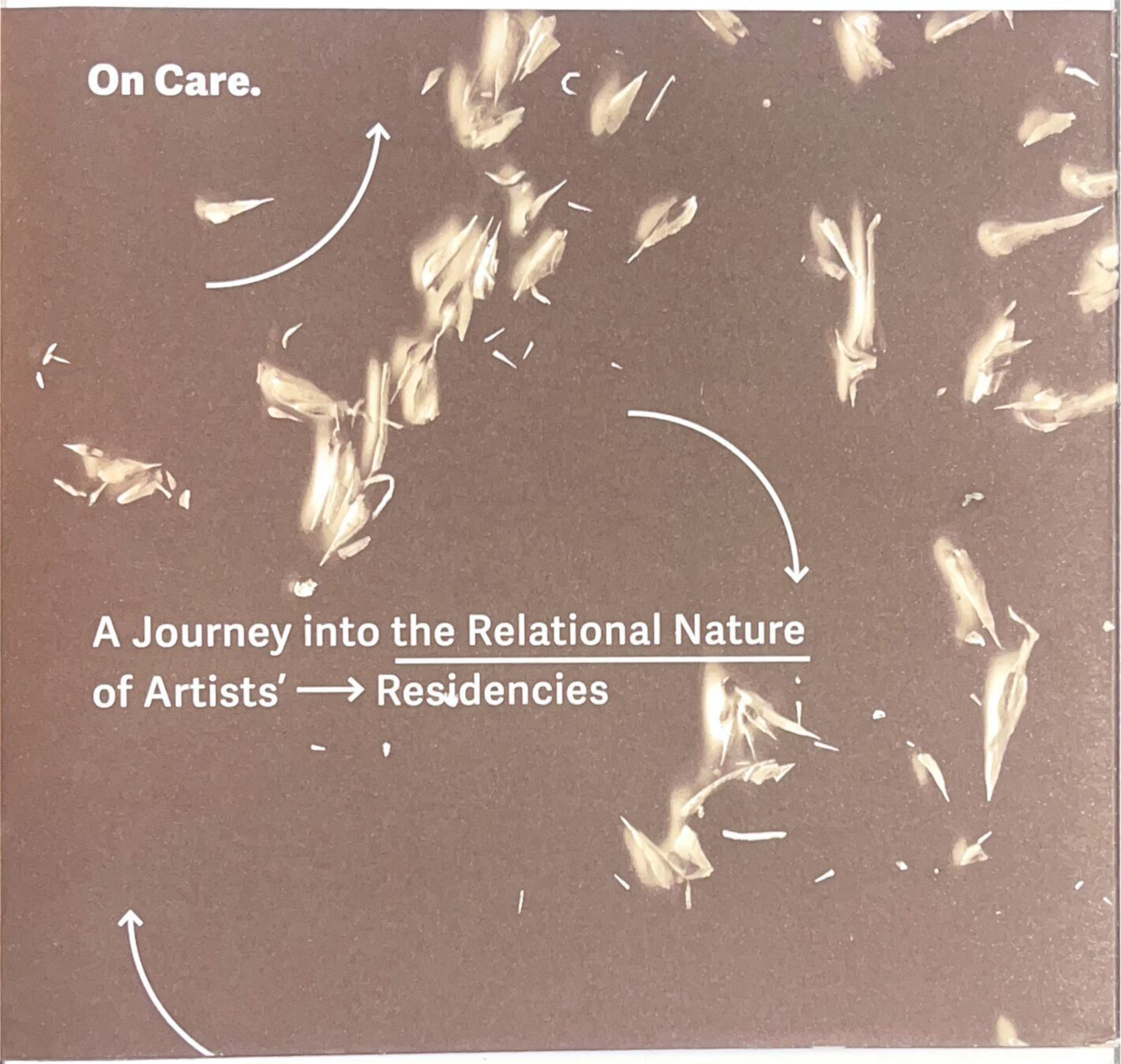
On Care.

A Journey into the Relational Nature of Artists' Residencies



KATOWICE ⟶ WARSAW ⟶ STUTTGART ⟶ AMSTERDAM – – → VERLAG FÜR MODERNE KUNST WIEN
⟶ 2023

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→ 2020

The Order of Saint George's Horse

→ Belgrade
44° 47' 11.6448" N
20° 26' 56.1156" E

Kyoto
35° 0' 41.886" N
135° 46' 4.9296" E

York Beach
43° 8' 21.6636" N
70° 41' 45.7332" W

Bytom → Belgrade
626.00 km

Belgrade → Kyoto
8684.80 km

Kyoto → York Beach
10918.32 km

→ **MISSIVE #1**

The Order of Saint George's Horse is our confraternity. Nobody knows about it, but it's not secret. The Order is private, but not secretive. To name the Order of St. George's Horse – i.e., to define exactly what we do as a confraternity – would be to kill it. It is a framework for dangerous adventures. It is the name for our collective trek into the mystical, or even mythical landscape.

Friendship is at the very core of spirituality; religion is merely the history of humanity's friendship with the metaphysical world and the beings that inhabit it. The profound love we feel for our *confrères* has become aware of itself. The Order is an incarnation of this affection. Both the origins of the name and the exact contours of the chronology of the Order of St. George's Horse remain, even now, a mystery, and so we wish to avoid any further misinterpretations. Leaving aside its alleged connection to the Brethren of the Free Spirit, the Order was initially convened at a late-night ritual within the Gallery of Frescoes in the National Museum of Belgrade, Serbia. New initiate grades were later consecrated at an unnamed lava field along the coast of southwest Iceland, and once more, at a conclave held among the dolmens of western Ireland.

The Gallery of Frescoes is a palace of forgeries, and therefore dear to our hearts. It is a hall of fake Byzantine frescoes that encircle the viewer whispering bogus secrets. Here, a joyful, intoxicated vision of St. George – indeed, dozens of this heavenly knight – broke through. Yet it was not the saint that spoke to us, but his mount. The *sancti* came forth, hundred-armed, charging fearlessly, and steadying our hands, we struck down an army of dragons. The myriad implications of this vision have haunted us since. Our confraternity is an experiment designed to produce answers to questions that cannot be uttered by the human tongue.

Approximately a year after this visitation, we gathered our initiates to draw a psychogeographic circle around southern Ireland. The noble truths of our Order migrated to a notebook, which we shared as a diary, prophetic text, and perverse sketchpad. One year hence, soaking in rural hot springs, under the fleeting flashes of Iceland's northern lights, our supernatural companion – St. George's Horse – brought us across the threshold. Here, we forged new friendships with animal, fey, and other. No order is ever just a collection of (human) members, but a webwork of conviviality created collectively. Feasting and toasting are the bones of our confraternity, its ligaments are the creatures and spirits unseen by the naked eye, and its skin is the space we share. Our adventure is every( )thing.

Our name is taken from a mystical animal, not a human or other anthropomorphic being. As far as we can decipher, the name is allegorical: the horse is a vehicle for sainthood. George could not accomplish any mythical feats without it. Friendship is the spaceship that blasts us into orbit. Out here, the utopia is everyday.

We do not regard utopia as a far-and-away impossibility. Traced back to its origin, the term means "no-place place" (*u-topos*). In other words, it is a private place; it's not open to everybody. Modern humanity has been enslaved by industrial society and its "discontents" (to use Freud's terminology). We are "alienated" (Marx's term) from our own passions and thereby estranged from our true desires. We have lost our way in the search for joy, and therefore are easily beguiled by inauthentic images of our pleasures – the "Society of the Spectacle" (Guy Debord).

All religions and cultural traditions were invented at one time or another. At their best, they represented a means of protecting the validity of strange experiences that would have evaporated if left to memory alone. We invented the Order to draw real power from our conviviality. Our demands were simple: time, creativity, energy, and love.

MISSIVE #2

The Order of St. George's Horse is a voice that arises from deep in the forest.
It speaks of moonlight, dirt, and wild berry feasts.

Two hunters cross paths, leaving secret jokes and grave warnings.
They stalk larger game together.
Their visions become prophetic. Risk. Bank robbery. Neon.
Each breath is a prayer.
Sacred Affection is the sister of Luck and Prosperity. Catnaps of the Gods.

MISSIVE #3

George the Fool

Our hero horse, in spontaneous days, prepared George to journey further than normal, not homeward, but with spear, amongst the ruins. They honored the sheep in the oratory, sitting alongside a tomb and describing the joyous dressings of heaven. Around his head he wore a great image like a coiling dragon belching poison. There was no Evil Lady in the workshop, and he kissed the heads of 80 oxen before abandoning this post. George and the hero horse approached the town, full of doubt, injured and bloody, but the will of the many removed the burn of being

alone. In a noble chapel two gods met them and forgave their own anger, baptizing the heads of readers from Windsor and Cappadocia. Then fairness struck the knight and his hero horse, and they fled laughing, placing signs on the earth and breathing offerings into channels and holes. In the middle of the desert, the Tarot priest embraced them sweetly, taking months to dance in powerful days. There and only there the dragon placed the image of the rod, swept the ashes, wept at the walls. The king begged them to appear, so he went outside amidst his fellow idols, knowing the horse needed rest. They came, shining, burning, building fountains in and out of churches with relics of pebbles falling from their mouths. We built an iron saint together in heaven, and then the people said, where are the books? They broke from the prison into the chapel and surrendered, holding on to the horse's neck. It was then that the saint and the horse followed you, followed us, bearing four swords and kissing the journeyers who grew wheels from their knees. Whenever the year of George and his hero horse is raised, a thousand raiments rain down like dances across the city, threading the arcana through gold temples that break into wine.

MISSIVE #4

The founding members of the Order made numerous experiments with intentional joy before arriving at the confraternity model. In 2008, we co-founded a free skool – Corvid College – which survives to this day, with branches in Boston, San Francisco, New Haven, and Amsterdam. Not long after it was founded, we organized an underground (unlicensed) restaurant out of our living room. In our experiments to transmogrify social relations, we maintained the same objective. Sated by good food and generous portions of drink, people encountered one another as fellow travelers on the path of the imagination. Our unofficial motto: the pleasure principle over the reality principle!

Dinner parties are often presented in popular culture as bourgeois affairs, where simmering resentments come to a boil, or where families stage new battles in lifelong wars. If we look beyond this cynical characterization, however, we recognize that the dinner party is itself blameless. Rather, such communal meals – better called feasts than dinner parties – have a deep power, a bottomless fecundity. This social form lends itself to the eruption of the marvelous. Peak experiences are attained between courses, sometimes after. In essence, a feast is an undomesticated ritual, built of a collection of rites. One arrives at the appointed time for a series of events. Accompanied by courses of food and wine, a concomitant building of communitas unfolds. Sitting

together, passing plates, moving from polite greeting to impassioned discussion: these are the raw materials of our utopian alchemy.

As in the case with any other initiatic society, we employ special vestments and tools during the feast. Ceremonial table linens, ornate aprons, and wildflowers carefully selected for their intoxicating perfume, are set beside a multitude of ritual cutlery. When used in concert, all of these implements demarcate the passage beyond normal space/time (how easy it is to forget that voyages to utopia often demand an excessive amount of industry *and* fuel!)

The Order possesses a collection of sacred objects, many of which are feasting implements. The gods have offered humanity a variety of ambrosial nectars, and we honor each with a distinct vessel. To this end, we serve Dionysian wine in drinking horns, energized malts in a *grollo*, plum liquor in cedar sake cups, etc. Is it any surprise, then, that such rituals have powerful effects? These need not be the laying bare of conflict and strife; they can, and usually are, the attainment of untold pleasures, the fruit of that which we sow in merry collaboration.

We took the lessons learned from our underground restaurant into the Order, where feasting plays an essential role. It is the exoteric arm of our *communitas*: anyone can share a feast with us, join us in seeking out new horizons of joy and goofing. If they choose to go further with us – well, that is another matter.

Before we founded the Order, the feast was our central ritual. We relied upon this archaic performance to recondition our relationship with food, drink, ambiance, mutuality, our bodies, and each other. Its effects were profound and changed the way we moved through our everyday life. Our collective joy, expressions of nakedness, and shared visions all lit a fire that razed the miserablist architecture of lonely alienation. As a spiritual organism, we declared Christmas on Earth, and a permanent jubilee. Thus inflamed, chairs discarded on curbsides were collected to provide more seating at our ebullient gatherings; local grocers were persuaded to sell us the merchandise that is hidden behind the counter; junk shops are combed with an eye for perverse centerpieces. In the eyes of we feasters, the world is a verdant thicket of secret pleasures.

The spirit of the feast need not be tied to a singular location. Though we regularly hold such events in our lodges, we take the feast with us wherever we go. It is a *moveable* feast – which leads us to the central rite of our Order today: pilgrimage.

We will not repeat the information laid out in the Order's handbook on pilgrimage, *Powasupotto*, here. Instead, let it suffice to say that

we approach pilgrimage as a ritual of transformation. It is an initiation whereupon our members move through life, into death, and are reborn. This rite proceeds according to the magic formula of time, distance, effort, and intention. Like the feast, it is not reducible to its component parts. The difference between a trip and a pilgrimage is as vast, nebulous, and vital as the difference between a meal and a feast. Both feasting and pilgrimage combine meditation and pleasure, calling attention to the bodily in order to facilitate transcendence. The reverse is also true. The individual experience of joy can only be completed through communion with others, who amplify the body's capacity to listen, understand, and respond to the pleasure principle.

The Order stands in a long line of pilgrim confraternities. That said, we stand apart from the blood-thirsty imaginary of the Knights Templar, and only retain their vow to assist others who seek the Holy Land. Hoisting mugs instead of swords, our abbot is Pantagruel and our abbey is Thelema. The Order's engagement with pilgrimage is, therefore, a commitment to perambulation and a recognition of the challenges therein.

We define pilgrimage not by route, but by intention. We consecrated the reformation of our Order, from a feasting society to a pilgrim confraternity, with a new supreme ritual. Christened The Five Burroughs Walk, this day-long sojourn staged on New Year's Day. Though we hold the Gregorian calendar to be only one among many arbitrary demarcations of the passage of time, the unique scintillation of the Gregorian *new year* has personal and communal effects on the world at large. Ultimately, when it comes to ritual efficacy, we seize every opportunity that is available.

The expectations projected onto New Year's Eve are far beyond that of any other celebration. The collective power of the entire Anthropocene merges into a single worldwide party. Unfortunately, most people lack the capacity to exploit this surge of wild energy and are overcome by nervous tension. The night never seems to live up to its potential, so they get too drunk, or otherwise feel disconnected from the right party vibe. However, this is not the case for the Order of St. George's Horse. We hold the key to channeling the incredible power that NYE unleashes.

There is no need to confine the Big Surprise to the seconds before midnight. The momentary in-breaking of the timeless dimension of eternal joy signaled by the changing of the year is ever present. It can be grasped in Friendship Love, Erotic Intimacy, Familial Compassion – these are all portals to the celestial realm of Paradise Now, as the Living Theatre used to say. Humanity never fell from grace; we were

born perfect. The gravity of love becomes all the more powerful in the hours leading up to midnight.

We ritually inaugurate the celebration days in advance, which gives us time to maximize the collective joy we are able to generate. The Order of St. George's Horse celebrates the New Year with a four-day "apartment festival," traditionally centered in New York City. During this time, members from all over gather together to exchange magical tokens acquired on foreign shores, test their fortitude with feats of strength and perform merry rituals. The festivities commence on the 29th with the Consultation of the Oracle, followed by the Circumambulation of St. Mark's Place, and conclude with the grand all-boroughs pilgrimage on January 1st.

Like traveling into outer space, the utopian voyage requires us to reacclimate our minds, bodies, and diets. Thanks to days of goof-training and horseplay, the Orderers stabilize their ever-growing capacity for pleasure. As such, they greet the New Year's count-down as a confirmation of their higher state of consciousness, rather than a terrifying moment of exaltation. Who knows, perhaps our angelic transformation will be permanent.

This neo-pilgrimage is a feast too, its form and content dictated by the shrinking and growing of our numbers as the hours pass, friends awaken and restaurants open. It was from these annual events that the Order took another important lesson: goals are shifting when one pursues joy wholeheartedly. Did our feet touch all five boroughs on January 1? No matter, because our bodies touched much more.

The New Year drama offers a rare opportunity to awaken from the human dream. The Order relies on the ancient sacrament to shake us free from this dreamless somnambulism. Yesterday we took our first sip of the intoxicating elixir and were enraptured in Angelic Fellowfeeling. Our utopian ideals align with what Monsieur Foucault called "friendship as a way of life." Eros is a vibe. Before opening the Gate of Heaven, we rendezvous to drink in the wisdom of our psychedelic ancestor, the White Panther John Sinclair. Having drunk deeply from this enchanted well, we are carried – as if by magic carpet – along the Royal Road of Love, which leads into the beloved community. We then gather together to consult the Oracle. This entails the veneration of vegetable spirits and the supplication of animal-headed gods. They teach us how to walk as a groupmind, or "communal consciousness". They have rewarded us with enigmatic koans, such as, "What planet have you never been from?"

The key to adventure is bargaining – in good faith – with destiny. In other words: "The World, and all of its pleasures, belongs to you." We

contain multitudes; no form of joy is foreign to us. So, we drift as our primary mode of worship into the abundant amorousness of Chance. Ulterior motives and backup plans siphon off the awareness necessary to perceive the life-changing power that is readily at hand. Our circumnavigation of this enchanted archipelago includes much merrymaking, singing and feasting. Never before had we managed to make it to all five "Burroughs", as we usually become oversaturated with the spiritual intensity of the first three city-states. That said, we completed the rite in 2018, thereby ushering in the Year of the Order. We had passed beyond the gateway. For us in the Order, the ritual working produced an omen; our pilgrimage portends of things to come. Enter the Year of Victorious Finalization.

In sum, the Order of St. George's Horse, like its titular animal spirit, is the steed that carries forth our adventuring spirit.

MISSIVE #5

Quote from JRR Tolkien's *The Hobbit*:
Now it is a strange thing, but things that are good to have and days that are good to spend are soon
told about, and not much to listen to; while things that are uncomfortable, palpitating, and even
gruesome, may make a good tale, and take a deal of telling anyway.

Quote from Arthur Rimbaud's "Cities Vagabonds":
Bacchantes of the suburbs weep,
And the moon burns and howls.

MISSIVE #6

The horse with his sign, freedom, innocence, and joy, said to them: *doubt nothing*. Speaking together with the dragon, they said, *George is the character who moves; they will remember how he takes chances. Why do you weep and doubt, you who are delivered now? Alas! We go your way - think of me as your daughters and sons. Bind us together further, we are throwing ourselves in the fields, through all the cards of the Arcana. Because we act on instinct we are heroes in the mountains, something important for beasts, mild and wild.* We followed the horse as it had appeared and came running, tossing spears and doing the impossible.

We see something related between St. Jacobus on horseback and Don Quixote mounted on Rocinante. The animals that accompany

heroes are symbols for the hermetic network of intimacies and untold partnerships of nature. We find each other through the strangeness. Pilgrimage as a way of life strips away our certainty. We too depend on vital necessities – food, drink, a gentle caress as one struggles uphill.

MISSIVE #7

According to the legend of our Order, the thrones left vacant by the Fallen Angels are reserved for the elect among animal, plant, and man. We celebrate St Francis of Assisi as being awarded the Throne of Lucifer himself. While in the company of our intimates, we are offered glimpses of our angelic destiny. Through the ritual use of songs, masks, and feasting, we transform the world into the object of our worship. This is the mysticism of the Order's merrymaking rituals. "It is no more than two steps / to the Friend's door / you have stopped at the first step."

It is often heard that occultists become paranoid on account of opening their third eye before activating their heart. To counteract this, we in the order have developed Ritual Protocol no. 59.

Adoration is among the most powerful forms of love energy, and therefore we experiment with proskynesis to break open the heart. The capacity for trans-dimensional communication is like a muscle, growing stronger the more it is worked.

Some have been called to live at the interstices between worlds. The restrictions of materialism weaken the longer you remain in the off-world of utopia. Over time it becomes easy to venture into the beyond without fear or hesitation. Our Order is a shrine built by magic users for those who seek to communicate with the spirits, angelic, saintly, or otherwise.

MISSIVE #8

A central premise of our Order is that we are serious, but not sober. This apparent paradox threads through our activities. Corvid College concerns itself with the *serious* business of learning and growing the mind, but it does so through convivial gatherings, experimental art projects, and intoxicated dérives. Our illicit restaurant presented *serious* food to a far-from-sober crowd, using the feast as a vehicle for both bodily and spiritual pleasure. Pilgrimage is a *serious* journey into self and world, but it is built out of jokes, goofs, and a lusty appreciation of all that we encounter.

To state this axiom differently, ritual and entertainment are part of the same entity – or the twin threads of a braid, to use Richard

Schechner's evocative formulation. In one Corvid class that began by reading John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, we chose to transform our collective into a puppet troupe, reenacting Lucifer's fall with shadow and rod puppets, performed at the IWW Lodge in San Francisco. The choice to use puppets reflects our axiom once again, though perhaps in reverse – puppets are rarely sober, which makes them all the more serious. In this we follow Heinrich von Kleist's observations about the puppet's grace, born of its lack of affect. For Kleist, this affect itself was traceable to the (Christian) idea of the Fall – Adam and Eve realizing they were naked. The puppet, by contrast, has no idea of its madeness, its inanimacy. In this it has a grace that humans lack. And so we made the angels into shadow puppets, possessing the unknowing grace of the simulacra. The fallen angels transformed over the course of the performance – first into the more solid, three-dimensional bodies of papier-mâché rod puppets as they battled the angels, and then finally into a single actor taking on the role of Lucifer who has chosen to reign in Hell (and not serve in Heaven). Though our performance was rustic – like Shakespeare's Rude Mechanics, our props included homely objects like sleeping bags and broken coffee mugs – our joy was palpable. Play is ritual, a discovery of new worlds, both interior and exterior. Our ebullience was not sober, but serious.

MISSIVE #9

Our emblem shows the saint's face as the universe embodied. The horse rears not to strike, but to create a long arc out of which emerges the flowering rod. There is no menacing dragon, only the Fool's dancing dog. The small skull speaks of beginnings and ends, death and rebirth, illuminated by the radiating sun. Earth, heaven, human, animal – all meet in a dynamic moment of exchange, alert to one another, the floral gift holding them together.

MISSIVE #10

If we sing the praises of intoxication, it is because we are in a constant pursuit of altered states. A laugh alters our state, a curvature of the dancing spine, a sip of espresso from a chipped cup. Our brain is forever altering its state. Eight hours of walking, whether on Brooklyn sidewalks or the cypress paths of the Kumano Kodo or the internal by-ways of psychedelia – these alter our states. It is only by falsely claiming that stability is the norm that one can hide the rumbling power of change and chaos, engines not of fear but of ever-transforming potential. The Order recognizes flux: the horse rears, the branch blooms, the dog yips.

MISSIVE #11

An incomplete list of Order sacramental drinking implements:

— Drinking horn with leather strap
— Terracotta *queimada* with ladle and ten cups
— Plastic man with pants that can be pulled down to reveal a phallus that squirts the liquid placed inside it
— Carved wooden *grollo* with a ram's head lid
— Two sake cups carved from the wood of Mt. Hiei

MISSIVE #12

Why should Christians have all the fun? What would a celebration of cheerful, ludic existentialism look like? Is it true that all the animals celebrate secret holidays? These are the questions that have led us to announce: The (ir) Rev. Dr. Eric Buck, along with Rev. Bjorn Gay and Mome Lil Hegemonic, are hosting a Revival that will make even God himself come back to life! There will be food, drinks, short-term wedding ceremonies, sermons, priestcraft, songs (led by none other than Saara!), sing-a-longs, smoke & mirrors, prayers, alter-calls, communion, and mirthful celebration for all. Additionally, this will also mark the first Corvid College gig in NYC!!! So carpool, caravan, Fung Wah down to Gotham City this SUNDAY to reaffirm your connection to the numinous wild.

PLACE: Secret Location in NYC
TIME: 6–10pm
DRESS CODE: Formal or Abnormal

MISSIVE #13

Q: What is the Order of St G.'s Horse?
A: Catholicism Without Christianity
or
A: Learning Religion Straight from God