

ALL THE VISIONS

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Transreal Books

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Preface

I wrote *All the Visions* when I was still using a typewriter—typing it in bursts between June 21 and July 8, 1983. I was thirty-seven, and living as a freelance writer in Lynchburg, Virginia. The book is a memory dump of tales about my quest for enlightenment. But the characters have made-up names. I meant for *All the Visions* to be a beatnik novel.

My inspiration was Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*. To mimic the master, I wrote *All the Visions* on a single long roll of paper. I rigged up the roll on a length of broomstick propped up behind my good old rose-red IBM Selectric typewriter. *All the Visions* was about eighty feet long when I was done.

I improvised most of *All the Visions*, but in a few spots I typed in copies of things I'd written before, such as some short memory sketches, excerpts from my high-school journals, a vision from my novel *Spacetime Donuts*, and some poems of mine. The poems appeared in my early chapbook, *Light Fuse and Get Away*, and in my *Transreal!* anthology. I also typed in a story about a wild day in New York City with my friend Eddie Marritz—the original version of this piece later appeared as “Drugs and Live Sex—NYC 1980” in the long-forgotten *Journal Wired*.

In order to emphasize the book's scrolly origins, I initially formatted it into three very long paragraphs. But in this second edition, I've put in more paragraph breaks, adding them at spots where I might have paused to catch my breath—like a horn-man resting between choruses, as Jack K. would say. In order to indicate my original just-three-paragraphs formatting, I've sectioned the text into three numbered “takes.”

I've also revised *All the Visions* in other ways—tweaking the prose, clarifying the meanings, making some cuts, rearranging blocks of text, and adding a few extra scenes. At first I felt uneasy about making edits, but I feel the second edition is more novelistic, and closer to my original intentions. And of course Jack revised his single-paragraph *On the Road* scroll numerous times between its origins in April, 1951, and its eventual publication in 1957.

Although the narrator of *All the Visions* is passionately interested in math, literature, mysticism, and his family, these concerns are overshadowed by his monomaniacal focus on getting high. In 1983, and for another decade or so after that, I thought it was cool and funny to write this way. I wanted to seem *bad*. I didn't see my characters' binges and freak-outs as sad or painful—I thought of them as bold expeditions into the unknown.

By now I've long since changed my way of life, but I still find *All the Visions* to be an entertaining beatnik riff, a type of book that I've always enjoyed. I like the flow and roll of the long passages, and I'm particularly fond of the final “Take 3,” which appeared in 1987 on its own as “Eschatology Rant” in an underground journal called *Semiotext[e] USA*.

If you'd like to read a more comprehensive and factual version of my life, check out my autobiography, *Nested Scrolls*, published in 2011. And, yes, that book's title alludes to my composition method for *All the Visions*. My more mature memoir is, you might say, a full lifetime's accumulation of scrolls.

Anyway, back in 1983 I sliced my eighty-foot *All the Visions* scroll into page-sized pieces and mailed a copy to my friendly editor Gerard Van der Leun at the august house of Houghton Mifflin. As I mention in the text of *All the Visions*, Gerard mailed the manuscript right back. Our family dog Arf was a puppy then—he dragged the book off the porch and

rolled in it. It was a week before I found the manuscript in the side yard, a “rainstained object of horror to the gods.”

In 1991, my first edition of *All the Visions* was finally published as a slim volume in hardback and paperback from a small press, Lee Ballentine’s Ocean View Books. It was bound back-to-back with *Space Baltic*, a collection of science-fictional poems by my far-out friend, Anselm Hollo, and with a cover by the great underground cartoonist Robert Williams.

In 1995, my musician friend Roy Whelden taped me reading some of the book and he backed the readings with baroque music, letting the celestial contralto Karen Clark sing some of the lyrics as well. The CD is called *Like A Passing River*, and the “Rucker Songs” cut includes telling passages from this book’s “Take 3.” Give us this day our daily rush, on the nod as thou art in heaven.

In 1983 I had no immediate hopes of seeing *All the Visions* published. Instead I used parts of the book as source material for my transreal SF novel, *The Secret of Life*. I should explain here that I use “transreal” to refer to novels that transmute the author’s real life into science-fictional scenarios.

You might say that *Visions* and *Secret* are twin novels with the same characters...and the same goals. *The Secret of Life* is reappearing as part of my new collection, *Transreal Trilogy*.

Note also that *Transreal Trilogy* contains a list of my wonderful Kickstarter supporters—who funded these new editions. See www.rudydyrucker.com/allthevisions for further info.

And now—enjoy my visions!

—Rudy Rucker, June 20, 2014, Los Gatos, California