

Priors Lunch
6/19/73

SONG PURPOSE AND CATEGORIES

In our kind of understanding of life, probably the best one of these bye and bye songs you have ever heard was the Uncle Van Song, as you know.

Like a part of our being nobodies is that not only do we have to have the rewards, but our kind of work is the kind of work where it is impossible to receive the rewards. This is what you would mean is that your reward is in heaven. But heaven is not something that is off there. It is right now.

You have your reward. There are a million ways in which we talk about that. The other major category is, loosely, love. Three kinds at the moment, I see. One is just your love for a woman, or a man, and then another kind is the sickness of love. A good bit of it has to do with the absence, but more than that, like your life is lost without it.

Then a third type is communion, which I think you can begin to point to. You people who are working on this, you may not use these categories, but you have got to get your categories.

I think you have to have twelve of them and I will tell you why in a moment. You have to think those through and then get the songs that will check them. Because you are not starting with some super structure and coming down to organize this, you are trying to listen and see what they are talking about. The other way will get you in trouble in a hurry and will make something pious out of that which is not pious. Because the only place you and I have to go is to some piosity, to get our super structure, to come that way.

The next I call "service." I do not like my major words here, but the other ones I would want to make a case for, a bit. One is the strange callings or election, and the other is just with fellow feeling, and the third and at this point, I think, that you get something like, I put it down here to myself, a "runneth over" type. And the last is with the mystery, but you have to remember that the mystery is in all of these, copied this way. And it is the presence of the mystery.

I am more shocked at this category than any other. I do not think I knew, until the last three or four weeks how many of the popular songs deal head on with the mystery. It is rather shocking.

And then the stranger experience of the yearning for the mystery in its absence. That is to say, you have the presence of the mystery in its absence through a transposed journey, and one day we will get the theology behind this. And then songs about the sense of homeness. Those seem to be the categories. The methods we have been over, and if I were going to give a lecture, it would be on the context, the categories, the methods, and then the results.

The other morning, I spoke on one of the results which is communion with God. Anyway the results, this does not get into the conversation. You are as callous about the conversation as I have tried to be. You are not trying to bring something home, teach them a lesson. However poor this is,

these are my observations in the last few months as we have been trying this, only there was a big long gap when we first started and then finally pushed at it. The first result is that out of this comes a sense of the ever-presentness of the mystery. You participate in this the rest of your life. You are doomed in one way or another to behold the face of God in every situation. Would you not like to make this into a lecture and to deal with it in terms of the terror of it and wonder filled healing of it. Both. Would you not like to deal with it under the rubric of problemlessness.

What is the name of that artist in that book you brought me. I cannot remember his name (Dubouffe). He made it very very clear that, for him, beauty was not a la the Greek, that is the curving form of a woman and other things. Beauty was wherever you looked, or it was the looker that created beauty and a great many of his paintings were on trash heaps. I like that. I mean, I like that. You see the face of God is in your stark daily tragedy. Without any of the tragedy going away, it is not tragedy. Without any of the problems going away, it cannot be a problem. It is God, would you not like to spell this out? I will not do that now.

And then the second result, goodness, all of these are like unto one another. You experience the incessant bleeding of meaning in every situation. I believe that that is a good figure. Of course, it is the divine presence, but this is the other side of the incarnation. It is like, Augustine has just rocked me recently with that, "you love your neighbor in God and God in your neighbor." Now, this is the flip side of it. It is this thing here. I place it right here, the face of God and then Bullshit. What has happened is the meaning that has been tucked away inside of her being, before the foundation of the world begins to drip out, it is her meaning, if you see what I mean, and so with the squashed ant also.

The third then is the communion with God. I think I believe that these next few years you are going to know something about this. you are going to get it thought through. You see, a new religious mode is coming into being and there is nothing you can do to stop it. When that NRM comes into being, there is a new sense of communion with the divine, whatever poetry you use, and this is beginning to happen.

The fourth thing I touched on the other morning, and that is the indicative resolve. Kay Lush is the one who jarred me into awareness of that. When she made me aware, I saw it for a long time. That is, friends, this corporately happens. You find in yourself a resolve that you did not make. You feel like some thief stole into your inner chambers and despoiled it there and that is the resolve that you are never ever again going to allow one second of your life to pass without being aware of the presence of God. Would you not like to spell out the implications of that? Are you not awful sick and tired, as old as you are, of fighting your parents? Are you not awfully sick and tired, as long as you have been married, of fighting your spouse? Aren't you? You see, the resolve is to, it is time to, Would you not like from now on to give up feeling sorry for yourself, would you not like to be so busy not to miss one little ounce of the rich meaning of life that you just could not find the time to have a few bowls of despair? Or feeling that you have been misused, or abused, or that life was mean and brutal and that is what is behind this.

It is about three minutes of two. Before you leave, you just be sure you see these pictures. That is turned. I believe that in painting he is doing what we are doing with pop music and just keep studying these for a few

days. That is, it is almost like I would like somebody to flip them at me. You understand, when he looked there, that is what he saw. That is what he saw. Some have figures that are more distinct. Some I do not see reality at all. He saw it. Here is your key to your new evangelism and to your NRM, I suspect. Hidden somewhere down in the midst of that -

If we sang a song, what song would we sing? *Now is the Hour.*

J.W. Mathews
June 19, 1973